

# COUNCIL PLAN 2025-2030: FORGING AHEAD



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# CONTENTS

1 FOREWORD	3
2 OUR STORY SO FAR	4
3 ROTHERHAM TODAY	11
4 WHAT OUR RESIDENTS HAVE TOLD US	12
5 OUR PLAN, VISION AND OUTCOMES	15
6 OUR APPROACH AND COUNCIL VALUES	16

7 OUR OUTCOMES AND THE DIFFERENCES YOU WILL SEE:	17
Places are thriving, safe, and clean	18
An economy that works for everyone	26
Children and young people achieve	33
Residents live well	40
One Council that listens and learns	47
8 DELIVERING ON OUR OUTCOMES	56
9 HOW WE WILL MONITOR PROGRESS	57
10 GET INVOLVED	58

# I. FOREWORD

## **Rotherham is a borough with its sights set on the future.**

Rotherham is forging ahead. As a Council we are ambitious for the borough. From our services for children with special educational needs being officially rated amongst the best in the country, to delivering the largest regeneration programme in a generation and from being almost two thirds of the way to creating 1,000 new council homes, to reducing potholes by 52% since 2015/16, we are working hard to make Rotherham a place to be proud of.

By investing in our libraries, and town and village centres we are making our neighbourhoods cleaner and more pleasant places to live. We've made significant progress for our children and young people and in 2025 we've been working with them to deliver the first ever Children's Capital of Culture, providing a full year of exciting events, and giving them the chance to reimagine their futures.

With the help of our partners, we have protected those struggling in Rotherham by providing financial support and practical help whilst the cost of living has continued to grow. Meanwhile, in under a decade we have almost doubled the amount we spend on adult social care to support our most vulnerable residents with the services they need.

Despite the progress made, the need to deliver change and realise these ambitions for the borough remains clear. For many people in Rotherham life is still very hard. For this reason, our plan is resolutely focused on addressing this, building on the positive progress to date.

Our plan will improve the lives of every resident in every corner of the borough. We will focus extra attention where it is needed, ensuring that everyone can achieve their potential throughout their lives.

As a community we have overcome adversity in recent years, demonstrating resilience and solidarity in responding to major challenges, from floods and violent disorder to the cost of living. The resilience and spirit shown in these responses fills us with confidence that, by working with our partners and our communities, we can deliver real and lasting change and improvement. This new Council Plan marks our commitment to continuing that journey.

Rotherham is our home, and together we will continue building a future we can all be proud of.



**Chris Read,**  
Leader of Rotherham Council

## 2. OUR STORY SO FAR

Three years ago, we agreed our Council Plan for 2022-25. We have already made great progress and achieved so much. Continuously working with our partners and residents to provide support across every area of the borough, we have successfully delivered on our priorities.



**Our local teams continuously work with councillors and communities to deliver on local priorities, working to achieve vibrant and thriving neighbourhoods where residents feel happy, safe and proud.**



- **Produced and delivered annual ward plans** informed by local communities.
- **Improved 23 local towns and villages across the borough** through our Towns and Villages Fund and engaged with residents and communities to hear their priorities for the £4 million Our Places Fund.
- **Repaired 727 (approximately 99 miles) of estate roads** (the unclassified network) across the borough through our £24 million to 2024 roads programme.
- **Hosted cultural and sporting events across Rotherham for all ages and backgrounds**, from the Women's Euro 2022 to the Reytons sell-out home coming concert in 2024, as well as the annual Rotherham Show.
- **Invested over £900,000 to enhance the CCTV service** - significantly increasing the capability and number of cameras deployed across the borough.



**Focussing on prevention, we have continued to support those in crisis and those affected by the rising costs of living, as well as working with local partners to ensure that local people live in good physical and mental health for as long as possible.**



- **Started work on a major new in-house day service** for people with learning disabilities.
- **Created more new Council homes** – Over 650 homes built or purchased by the Council since 2018 and a further 102 homes are already under construction or in the process of being purchased.
- **Delivered £17.9 million cost-of-living support packages to residents**, including committing £4.8 million to support households with their fuel bills, allocating an additional £7.4 million for the free school meals, supermarket voucher scheme and providing financial assistance to families were struggling with school uniform costs.
- **Adopted a new approach to commissioning our public health services** that promote healthy living, aiming to reduce stigma for users.



We continue to ensure that all children and young people are supported to achieve their potential and improve outcomes. This is inclusive of those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The opening of new residential homes for children in our care also means that, where appropriate, more children and young people can be supported locally within the borough.



- **Services provided to children and families were rated as ‘good’ in all areas** by Ofsted in June 2022, with a positive Ofsted Focused visit in May 2024, focused on arrangements for children subject to a Child in Need or protection plans.
- **Ensured that more children can live safely in the borough** by acquiring, developing, and registering two new in-house children’s homes.
- **We have reduced the number of children requiring access to a social worker, as well as those in our care**, by providing support for children and their families at the earliest opportunity.
- **We achieved the highest rating following an Area SEND inspection** of Rotherham Local Area Partnership in September/October 2024.
- **375 activities have been co-produced with young people, attracting 357,000 participants** in the build-up to Rotherham becoming the world’s first Children’s Capital of Culture. 120 young people have also been employed as trainees, hosted by 17 different organisations, 70% of whom have gone on to further education or employment (since October 2021).
- **Established three main Family Hubs and additional wider Family Hub networks** where children, young people and families can go to when they need help, advice, and support across a wide range of areas. Between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, 1,900 group sessions were delivered to families with children aged up to 5 years.
- **Auto enrolled 340 children entitled to free school meals** and generated £449,000 in pupil premiums for their schools.



Significant regeneration schemes have been completed both in the town centre and across towns and villages, helping our economy to grow and creating a great place to live, work and visit. We have also been focused on creating opportunities for people to learn and develop new skills, as well as creating more local jobs paid at the Real Living Wage or above.



- **Secured more than £100 million of government investment** to fund key regeneration schemes across the borough and create jobs. Being awarded the country's first Investment Zone, means that South Yorkshire is set to benefit from an estimated 8,000 new jobs and £1.2 billion of private funding by 2030.
- **Delivered our flagship Forge Island scheme in the town centre**, which saw the opening of the Travelodge hotel and Arc Cinema in 2024, with the first eateries due to open in spring 2025. Forge Island canal barrier has also been operational since 2022.
- **The Employment Hub and Employment Solutions Services have supported more than 1,700 residents.** Of these, 879 participants have secured employment and a further 825 have secured accredited education or training.
- **Delivered our award-winning approach to Social Value**, which has led to commitments of £27.8 million in social and local economic value in the first three years of the Council's Policy being adopted. The Council is also proud to retain its Real Living Wage employer status.
- **Created 64 new starter apprenticeships** at the Council in the last 3 years.





The Council is helping to create a healthier environment for everyone by improving the cleanliness of the borough, establishing better transport systems and contributing to reducing carbon emissions.



- **Invested over £1.8 million towards cleaner streets** (since 2022) and ended seasonal contracts, which has meant staff working through the winter seasons in communities. 284 areas of enhanced cleaning were undertaken in the last 12 months as a result.
- **Green Flag award achieved in 2024 for Clifton Park; Greasbrough Park; Rother Valley Country Park; and Thrybergh Country Park.**
- **Completed the £44 million of works to widen the Parkway and opened the new £11.5 million Parkgate link road.** We have also undertaken repair works to Centenary Way Viaduct.
- **Delivering actions to reduce carbon emissions.** For example, in March 2023 Cabinet approved plans to commit to buy 64 new vehicles to meet modern emission standards as part of the ongoing commitment to reach Net Zero.



We continue to work with our partners to improve outcomes for the people of Rotherham, as well as working with communities to provide modern and efficient services that are accessible to all.



- **Rolled out new high-level customer standards** to improve the customer experience which has resulted in call wait times to the corporate contact centre being reduced to under 4 minutes on average.
- **Working with organisations across the borough**, through the Rotherham Together Partnership, we have successfully delivered the Rotherham Plan 2025. This has resulted in a range of improvements for people and places across Rotherham, from joint commitments on social value and climate change, to cultural events and hate crime projects.
- **The Council awarded Most Improved Council at the 2022 LGC Awards.**



**Our new plan builds on these successes and sets out our ambitions to forge ahead to 2030.**

### 3. ROTHERHAM TODAY



Rotherham is **one of four metropolitan boroughs** in South Yorkshire.



**25 wards** covering a wide range of urban, suburban, and rural areas. 70% of Rotherham is open countryside.



Rotherham's **population of 271,195** mostly live in urban areas. Although growing, this is at a slower rate than the regional/national averages..



**Population is ageing**, with 1 in 5 residents 65 and over. 53,570 (19.8%) people aged 65 years or over.



An increasingly diverse community which includes **31,193** people from **minority ethnic groups** (11.7% of the population). The Pakistani community is the second largest ethnic group in Rotherham after White British.



**75% of residents are satisfied** with their local area as a place to live, whilst 66% of residents are satisfied with the wider borough as a place to live.



There were over **4 million visits to** Rotherham's brilliant culture, sport and **visitor attractions** last year with sites such as Wentworth Woodhouse, Gulliver's and Magna amongst South Yorkshire's most popular tourist destinations.



University Centre Rotherham offers **higher and further education opportunities** in the borough, training the borough's future teachers, engineers, software developers and carers.



**Life expectancy** in the most deprived areas of Rotherham is 9.9 years lower for men and 9.5 years lower for women than in the least deprived. Gaps in healthy life expectancy are more stark: over 18 years for men and nearly 20 years for women.



22% of residents live within the **10% most deprived areas of England** and the borough is amongst the 14% most deprived local authority areas in England. 11,904 children were living in "absolute poverty" (DWP, 2022/23)



Record numbers of people **economically inactive** due to long term sickness (a third of all those economically inactive); 10.6% working age population have no qualification.

## 4. WHAT OUR RESIDENTS HAVE TOLD US

To help inform the strategic aims of the refreshed Council Plan, a public consultation and engagement exercise took place from 6 September to 12 November 2024 to seek the views of Rotherham residents and other local stakeholders.

Participation in the Council Plan consultation overall has been positive with a total combination of 1,963 interactions, survey responses or focus group attendees across all methods of engagement. This is an increase on the 1,300 engagements achieved through the consultation exercise undertaken in 2021 to develop the Plan that was agreed in January 2022.

The focus of the consultation centred around what people thought were the biggest challenges and opportunities facing our communities, as well as their wish for the future of the borough.

Combined findings across the short interactions, online and postal survey.

*The most common responses in order are as follows:*

### What do you like most about where you live?

- **Parks and green spaces** – The main thing that residents liked about where they lived was the abundance of green spaces, countryside and parks
- **The people** – The next most popular response was friendly neighbours and the fact that there was a good community spirit where they lived
- **Peace and quiet** – Respondents also liked the fact that it was nice and peaceful where they lived
- **Close to local amenities** – People felt that they had good local amenities in their area and they liked the fact that they were close by
- **Location** – Respondents liked the area they lived in and the fact that they were in close proximity to other areas.





### What is one thing you would improve about your area?

- **Safety and tackling anti-social behaviour** – The most commonly cited area of improvement was community safety. Respondents wanted more to be done to tackle anti-social behaviour, both in the town centre and in their local area
- **Cleaner streets** – Followed by respondents wanting less litter and cleaner streets, both in the town centre and in their local area
- **Roads** – The next area that residents felt needed improvement was the roads, with people highlighting the fact that roads and pavements needed repairing, along with grass verges at the roadside needing to be cut back
- **Better maintained green spaces** – Respondents also felt that parks and green spaces in their local area needed to be better maintained
- **Regeneration of the town centre** – People also wanted continued investment and regeneration of the town centre, including an improved retail offer.

### What is your one wish for the future for Rotherham?

- **Feeling safer** – Respondents mentioned was that they wanted to feel safer in Rotherham, particularly in the town centre.
- **Proud, prosperous and thriving** – People wanted to feel proud about Rotherham, and for the town to be prosperous and thriving again. They also wanted Rotherham to have a better reputation and to be in the news for positive reasons.
- **Improved retail offer** – Respondents wanted an improved retail offer in the town centre, including more independent shops. However, some people realised that a reduction in the number of shops in town centres was a national issue based on a change in people's shopping habits
- **Regeneration of the town centre** – The main wish for the future was people wanting continued investment and development of the town centre.

- **Cleaner Streets** – As in the previous question, respondents wanting cleaner streets came up again in the top five responses for their wish for the future.

Summary of findings across focus groups (that differed to the online, postal or short interactions).

**Through the focus groups that were undertaken, further views and feedback were gained. In addition to the themes reflected above, the following feedback was provided:**

- **Housing** – including providing high quality, affordable homes and tackling homelessness
- **Young people** – including things for them to do, instilling aspiration, obtaining a good quality education, better SEND provision, improved careers advice and pathways to work, and providing a good work offer for them to want to stay in the borough
- **The environment** – including green spaces, net zero, flooding, climate change
- **Transport** – The need for a better transport offer across the borough – particularly bus services
- **Culture and Leisure** – Improving access to culture and leisure facilities and continuing to maintain parks and play areas to high standards
- **Health Services** – Improved access to health services – particularly mental health
- **Cost of Living Support** – Continued cost of living support to alleviate poverty and inequalities
- **Attracting Investment** – Attracting investment to provide good quality jobs and create opportunities

The priorities in the refreshed Council Plan have been shaped by the consultation carried out during 2024. The Plan reflects the things that residents have told us are important to them and it contains clear goals that we will work towards over the next five years.



This consultation is seen as part of an ongoing dialogue between the Council and residents to help shape delivery and to feedback progress on how the Council is delivering against the targets set out in the Council Plan.

# 5. OUR PLAN, VISION AND OUTCOMES

The Council Plan 2025–2030 ('the Plan') builds on the Council's previous successes and sets out our ambitious programme to continue improving the lives of the people of Rotherham, creating a place people are proud to call home.

Informed by public consultation, the Plan provides a clear framework for how we will work with residents, communities and partners over the next five years to achieve our aspirations and further expand opportunities for all. **We know we cannot achieve our ambition alone.**

## OUR VISION IS:

**"Rotherham is our home, where we come together as a community, where we seek to draw on our proud history to build a future we can all share.**

**We value decency and dignity and seek to build a town where opportunity is extended to everyone, where people can grow, flourish and prosper, and where no one is left behind.**

**To achieve this as a council we must work in a modern, efficient way, to deliver sustainable services in partnership with our local neighbourhoods, looking outwards, yet focussed relentlessly on the needs of our residents."**

## STRATEGIC OUTCOMES:

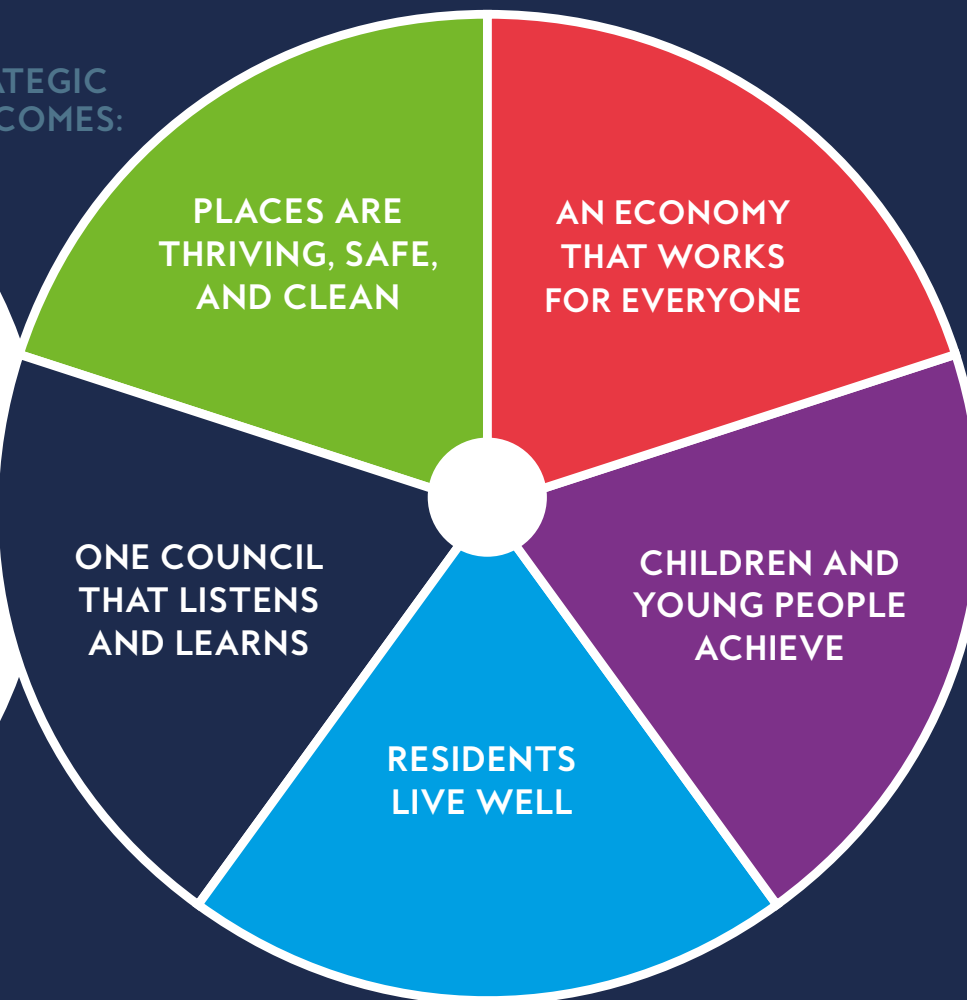
**PLACES ARE THRIVING, SAFE, AND CLEAN**

**AN ECONOMY THAT WORKS FOR EVERYONE**

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ACHIEVE**

**RESIDENTS LIVE WELL**

**ONE COUNCIL THAT LISTENS AND LEARNS**



## 6. OUR APPROACH AND ONE COUNCIL VALUES

Three cross-cutting policy drivers run throughout the Plan, informing our way of working and helping us to achieve better outcomes.

### Expanding opportunities for all

We will target the most help at those who need it, as we open up new opportunities, so no one is left behind.



### Recognising and building on our strengths to make positive change

We will harness the knowledge and skills of community groups and local residents and make the best use of local assets, including buildings, parks and public spaces.



### Focussing on prevention

We will focus on reducing the risk of problems arising in the first place, and when they do, we will intervene early to prevent them from worsening.





Our values are important as they reflect who we are as an organisation, what we stand for and how we treat others.

## CARING

We

- Are inclusive and know our communities
- Take time to listen and understand what matters
- Act as 'One Council' with a spirit of togetherness

## HONEST

We

- Are accountable and take ownership of our actions
- Communicate clearly and openly
- Reflect and learn from our experiences

## PROUD

We

- Are ambitious in everything we do for our people and place
- Start with strengths, and what is working well
- Celebrate Rotherham and act as ambassadors for the borough

# 7. OUR OUTCOMES AND THE DIFFERENCES YOU WILL SEE



## 9.1 PLACES ARE THRIVING, SAFE AND CLEAN

### OUTCOME: Places are thriving, safe and clean

#### Where we are now

We are committed to building a borough where every neighbourhood thrives, green spaces are clean and accessible, and people feel safe – creating a space that residents can take pride in.

Working in partnership with local organisations and people, the Council is ensuring that local communities are vibrant and well-connected by enhancing towns and villages, improving green spaces and tackling key community issues.

Through the Towns and Villages Fund, we have continued to enhance local neighbourhoods. This includes upgrading road surfaces and road markings, improving accessibility to key community spaces, and creating community gardens. These improvements are designed to foster pride in our neighbourhoods, enhance their visual appeal, and improve the overall environment for all residents.

**£2.8 million investment delivered through the Towns and Villages Fund since 2022/23.**

Our commitment to delivering events across the borough is strong, as illustrated by the Rotherham Show, Signals Festival, Uplift Urban Sports Festival and WOW Rotherham alongside a programme of Civic Events. These events bring communities together, celebrate local talent, and are driven by inclusivity and Rotherham's vibrant cultural scene.

We are also proud to have hosted special events such as the Women's EURO games in 2022 and the Reytons' sell-out homecoming gig at Clifton Park in 2024, where we welcomed more than 20,000 people to the borough, making a £1 million contribution to the economy. This demonstrates our ability to think big and deliver big!

**An estimated 130,000 people attended events across the borough in 2024/25.**



In the town centre, our masterplan is coming to fruition. The new Arc cinema, Rotherham's first in thirty years, has opened on Forge Island, alongside a Travelodge hotel. The markets redevelopment is underway and public realm improvements and new housing are helping to create creating an attractive, thriving environment.

**£133 million investment secured for town centre regeneration.**

Throughout Rotherham, roads and footpaths have benefitted from the biggest investment in resurfacing for a generation.

**Improved 727 roads and repaired 76,530 potholes as part of our “£24 million to 2024” roads programme.**

We have invested in CCTV equipment to assist in tackling crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour, and introduced interventions that seek to reduce hate crime and improve community safety. For example, our ‘Who is your neighbour’ and ‘Step Up, Beat Hate’ projects, the latter of which has been delivered by Remedi and has raised awareness of hate crime, promoted support for victims of hate crime and empowered young people to identify the signs of hate crime and be able to report it in a safe way. Neighbourhood road safety measures have also been introduced, including 20mph zones and nuisance pavement parking schemes.

**£900,000 investment into CCTV equipment since 2021 to modernise the system and allow the viewing of all CCTV assets via one system.**

Rotherham has an abundance of high quality urban green spaces and country parks which we have continued to invest in. Access to green spaces promotes physical activity and improves health, as well as providing environmental and economic benefits.

**Four parks in Rotherham achieved the Green Flag award in 2024, including two urban parks (Clifton and Greasbrough) and two country parks (Rother Valley and Thrybergh). Additionally, Rother Valley, Thrybergh, and Ulley country parks were awarded the Natural England accreditation.**



## Council Plan consultation headlines

- 54 % of respondents who completed the counter box exercise, agreed that the Council should continue to keep parks and green spaces looking good, compared to 46 % of respondents who agreed that the Council should keep streets clean.
- 63 % of respondents who completed the counter box exercise, agreed that the Council should resurface roads, compared to 37 % who agreed that the Council should improve local centres.
- The focus groups highlighted the need to make Rotherham a safer place by tackling anti-social behaviour and improving community safety
- Attendees at the Children and Young People's Partnership Board said they were worried about safety, especially when using public transport in the town centre.
- Throughout the short interactions carried out across the borough, the people we spoke to highlighted a desire for continued regeneration of the town centre with many suggesting that this is key to restoring pride within the borough.
- Other opportunities identified from the focus groups included the need to: improve roads and footpaths; cut emissions; maintain green spaces and improve social cohesion.

## Quotes

*“My wish for the future of Rotherham is to protect green space and develop safe outdoor spaces”*

*“A town where people can thrive, live healthy, happy lives connected to the people you love”*

*“More life bringing into the town centre”*

*“My wish for the future of Rotherham is cleaner streets and less crime”*

## Looking ahead

### Creating vibrant communities

Our people and neighbourhoods are important to us and are at the heart of everything we do. Through the delivery of the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy, we have already come a long way, and we continue to work with local people to find solutions to local issues, building on our heritage and assets. Alongside this, we are delivering events and activities that bring people together, reducing social isolation and enabling people to have an active cultural life. This is a crucial part of transforming our communities, creating a sense of cohesion, belonging and pride.

### The differences you will see:

**£4 million investment to be delivered between January 2025 – March 2026 as part of Our Places, focusing on improvement projects to key gateways into principal towns and villages.**

Councillors engage and work with local people and community groups to shape and deliver ward plans across Rotherham's 25 wards. These ward plans identify neighbourhood priorities, providing a focus for local activity and investment. We will continue to drive local priority setting through ward plans and devolved budgets, ensuring councillors, residents, and partner organisations work together to deliver neighbourhood priorities.

**Bring our communities together through a range of enjoyable activities, cultural and social events, which inspire hope and pride in Rotherham.**

We are delivering an inclusive programme of events across the borough, working closely with local organisations to bring communities together. We want Rotherham to be the best it can, by making sure as many people as possible who live here can take part in high quality cultural, leisure and sporting activities. Through the delivery of the Rotherham Cultural Strategy, we can help build foundations for growth, as well as creating a welcoming place.

**£20 million secured through the Levelling Up funding to deliver investment in Wath and Dinnington town centres..**

As part of our commitment to regenerating town centres and boosting the creative and leisure economy throughout the borough, we are investing in creating welcoming, thriving high streets. The redevelopment of Dinnington will feature high-quality public spaces and landscaping to promote a healthy, sustainable town. In Wath, plans include new commercial space to support a diverse mix of small businesses, enhance green spaces, and create a new library, providing a modern and inclusive community facility.

## Better public spaces

Rotherham benefits from a stunning rural backdrop and extensive parks and open spaces. We know that residents want to see cleaner streets and improvements to roads and pavements, and we want to create places that are clean, safe and sustainable.

Improving our urban and country parks, providing nature-rich environments, and ensuring public spaces are green, clean and safe will help to create neighbourhoods where everyone can enjoy being active.

We will also take steps to reduce the risk and impact of flooding and other environmental emergencies, providing protection and peace of mind for our residents.

### The differences you will see:

#### **£11.6 million investment made into our country parks.**

We are transforming our country parks to create vibrant, accessible green spaces that enhance wellbeing and bring communities together. Work is already underway to improve the amenities at Rother Valley Country Park, which will include a 150-seater eatery and indoor function space with views extending over the lake. The new development will also include external landscaping, as well as a new play area and better parking facilities to improve accessibility and the customer experience. Meanwhile, the redevelopment at Thrybergh Country Park is set to follow during 2025 with an improved café, play facilities and paths.

The new facilities will help to create job opportunities and welcoming places where communities to come together, as well as enhancing green spaces that are unique to our heritage, transforming Rotherham into a major leisure destination.

#### **Improvements to roads and pavements, alongside enhanced roadside cleaning along popular routes.**

We are committed to keeping communities and neighbourhoods safe and well connected by ensuring our roads and footways are well maintained. Across the borough, road and pavement upgrades and improvements will enhance safety and accessibility for all road users and reduce the number of potholes. On popular routes and gateways, we will also build additional capacity in a smarter and more targeted approach to increase the frequency of roadside cleansing to keep streets looking neat and tidy and improve their appearance.

#### **Deliver flood alleviation projects and work with communities and businesses to develop flood resilience measures in the worst-affected areas.**

Investment in critical flood defence schemes will provide much-needed protection for communities at risk of flooding. £6 million has been allocated for the Catcliffe Village Flood Alleviation Scheme, aimed at reducing flood risks by improving the flow path of the River Rother. The project is expected to be delivered within three to five years, providing much-needed protection for affected residents.

## Revitalising the town centre

The ambition is to transform and revitalise the town centre by focussing on delivering regeneration that brings opportunity, including the creation of a community within the Riverside Residential Quarter. The expansion of the leisure economy and pedestrian improvements to connect and attract people to the heart of the town. We want to create a place which people are proud to call home and reinstate pride across the borough.

### The differences you will see:

#### **£45.3 million funding secured for the redevelopment of the markets and new library and the creation of Riverside Gardens in the town centre.**

Building on the progress made, we will continue to focus our efforts on regenerating the town through several key initiatives. The redevelopment of the Rotherham Central Markets and the addition of a new modern and accessible central library will serve as a community hub.

The Riverside Gardens is a new public space which will form a key gateway to the flagship Forge Island leisure development and wider town centre. The introduction of additional green spaces, with connections to the river and nature is a major part of the vision, providing residents with spaces where they can come together.

#### **400 homes to be built as part of the town centre new community.**

The provision of new homes in the town centre was identified as a key regeneration priority in the Town Centre Masterplan and there are ambitions to create an attractive and thriving town centre neighbourhood. Over the next five years, further new homes will provide high-quality distinctive housing, complemented by services for those living in and around the town centre to drive footfall.

#### **We will attract more people into the town centre.**

In addition to our extensive regeneration programme, we remain focused on attracting more people into the town centre. We will continue delivering cultural events in the town centre to bring communities together. Building on the success to date, Rotherham could be the home of future big events, which would boost the local economy, build cohesion, grow civic pride and provide access to training and development for our communities.

A new scheme for 2025 will offer free parking for the first hour in council-operated car parks in the town centre to support local businesses, increase footfall, and encourage residents to shop locally.



## Helping people to feel safe in their community

Feeling safe is essential to wellbeing, which is why we're committed to taking robust enforcement action to improve community safety. Working with our partners we want to create an environment where people feel secure when out and about or relaxing at home. We also want to improve public perceptions as we know that safety and tackling anti-social behaviour were highlighted as the main areas of focus when residents were asked 'what is the one thing you would improve about your area' (*Council Plan consultation 2024*) and resident perceptions of safety remain challenging when compared nationally (57% of those surveyed in 2024, felt safe in their local area after dark, against 71% nationally – Resident Satisfaction Survey).

### The differences you will see:

#### Launch a new 'Street Safe Team' focused on increasing safety in towns and village centres.

To improve feelings of safety and build resilience in town and village centres, we will launch a new Street Safe Team – a visible, uniformed Council presence with dedicated resources and the authority to enforce change. The team will target areas including Rotherham town centre, and the principal towns of Dinnington, Wath, Maltby and Swinton. By gathering local intelligence, they will help to address key issues and provide residents with a reliable point of contact, fostering safety and trust.

#### Launch a new Safer Rotherham Partnership Plan 2025-28, to build safer neighbourhoods, tackle violence, abuse and exploitation and prevent offending.

Through our work with the Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP), we will develop and implement plans to make Rotherham safe, protect communities and help communities to feel safe. This will include working with partners to tackle crime and local issues like anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse, as well as tackling violence, abuse and exploitation and preventing re-offending. The new SRP plan for 2025-28 will outline current community safety priorities and describe the joint work that is to take place to address these.

#### Safer roads schemes and initiatives which contribute to Vision Zero and help to improve road safety across the borough.

To deliver improvements relating to road safety, we will be working in partnership through the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) to proactively manage risk, eliminating as far as practicable the incidence of death or severe injury on our roads.

Vision Zero is an ambitious strategy to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads by 50% by 2030.

## Long term measures of success

### **Over the course of this Plan, we expect to see:**

- An increase in the proportion of people satisfied with the Rotherham borough as a place to live.
- An increase in the proportion of people satisfied with their local area as a place to live.
- An increase in footfall in the town centre.
- A decrease in the percentage of vacant units in the town centre.
- An increase in the proportion of people optimistic about the future of Rotherham town centre.
- An increase in the proportion of public that feel safe when outside in their local area during the day.
- An increase in the proportion of public that feel safe when outside in their local area after dark.
- An increase in the percentage of sites classed as (acceptably) free of litter and rubbish.

## 9.2 AN ECONOMY THAT WORKS FOR EVERYONE

### OUTCOME: An economy that works for everyone

#### Where we are now

We have laid the foundations for a fair and prosperous economy where everyone has the opportunity to secure a good job, start and grow a business, and plan confidently for the future.

Significant investment in our people and our places has positioned us at the forefront of the North's manufacturing economy.

We are nurturing our entrepreneurs, with a comprehensive support offer built around our brilliant business centres. Building on the success of the Century Business Centre, we are committed to supporting start-ups and small businesses. Century 2 which opened in November 2023 is a £5.4 million development, providing a fully managed workspace and an additional 16 offices, 20 workshops and 2 lab spaces, with wrap around business support.

**Over 1,700 new and growing local businesses supported over the last three years.**

We're investing in our people – our new Employment Solutions Service is at the centre of a responsive local employment and skills system, providing targeted advice and support to help our residents find secure jobs and pursue fulfilling careers.

**Over 1,700 people supported through the Employment Solutions Service to access employment (including training, education, apprenticeships, and paid employment) since 2020.**



Our young people are benefiting from the investment secured. Skills Street at Gulliver's and the eye-catching Maltby Grammar Business Hub are ambitious, innovative projects that will raise aspirations and boost skills.

This investment in skills – in our people and our places – is reflected in our social value policy. By agreeing additional commitments with our contractors and increasing our use of local suppliers, we are generating massive benefits in terms of work and training opportunities and support for local charities and community groups.

**Increased the proportion of the Council's expenditure, which goes to local businesses and providers by 72%, in the first three years since the Social Value policy was adopted.**

We encourage growth and through our top performing planning and building control teams we are able to provide support and a comprehensive joined up service to anyone wishing to develop and invest within the borough. We will soon be starting to produce a new local plan which will shape development over the next 15 years and offer even more opportunities for our residents and businesses alike.

**Top performing Local Planning Authority consistently determining 100% of submitted applications within prescribed time limits and with over a 90% approval rating to help facilitate growth and key investments.**



## Council Plan consultation headlines

- The majority of respondents (90.3 %) agreed that the Council should help to create new jobs, compared to not delivering this service (9.7 %).
- The focus groups highlighted the need to attract inward investment to provide good quality jobs and create opportunities.
- The children and young people we spoke to wanted to see more support for transitions from school into work pathways (including work experience).
- Other opportunities identified from the focus groups included the need to: deliver jobs at the right scale, raise aspirations across communities, expand support into employment schemes, including volunteering pathways and social value.

## Quotes

*“What I like the most about Rotherham is the redevelopment happening, bringing Rotherham back!”*

*“My one wish for Rotherham is to have better business events to network, learn and grow”*

## Looking ahead

### Developing the economy

Rotherham is on the up. At the heart of the pioneering South Yorkshire investment zone, the Advanced Manufacturing Park in Waverley is the home to blue chip companies such as Rolls-Royce and McLaren, bringing cutting edge research and development into innovative product development.

The Don Valley corridor, a strategic gateway between Sheffield and Rotherham, is critical to our concept of an advanced manufacturing innovation district.

### The differences you will see:

#### **South Yorkshire investment zone - £1.2 billion of private funding, 8,000 jobs by 2030.**

The £8.4 million Templeborough business zone will deliver six modern, managed workspace units tailored for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Alongside its economic benefits, it will provide a dynamic environment for the local community and increase transport connectivity through the introduction of a new tram-train stop and park and ride facility.

#### **Package of support and advice that enables business to start, develop and grow.**

We will foster entrepreneurship by providing comprehensive advice and support for those looking to start a business. This will range from tailored advice and workshops to specific grants and incubation space in our business centres.

We will also support existing businesses to grow and prosper and will help in maintaining and enhancing economic stability across Rotherham. We will continue to help businesses in a range of ways by providing support to source funding, developing a skilled workforce, improving sales and sourcing premises, including through our successful network of business centres.

#### **An increased proportion of Council expenditure going to local businesses and providers.**

We will continue to deliver the aim of our Social Value Policy to increase the proportion of Council expenditure spent locally. Working with the Chamber of Commerce we will provide support and information for businesses in relation to forthcoming contract opportunities through sector-based events. Through Go For Growth, we will also provide one-to-one support for businesses to help them become tender-ready, so they can respond to opportunities that arise.

## Enhancing skills

We know that the opportunities we're creating must reach every corner of our borough. As part of this approach, we need to ensure that residents can improve their skills so that they can access these opportunities and continue to progress in work.

Long-term ill health is the main cause of economic inactivity across South Yorkshire, and poor health is a major barrier to work for many in Rotherham. A healthy workplace also benefits employers, reducing absenteeism and staff turnover and increasing employee health and wellbeing and productivity. The Council is part of the region's economic inactivity pathfinder, which will better integrate the local work, health and skills support system. This will complement our own employment hub and our data-informed approach to tackling health inequalities.

### The differences you will see:

#### **Support more people into and to progress in work, through dedicated and holistic training initiatives.**

Through targeted skills and training initiatives, we aim to give all residents an opportunity to succeed. This means equipping people with the core skills that provide the bedrock for securing employment, as well as offering holistic support to overcome any barriers that are preventing them from finding and maintaining employment. We are ensuring permanent funding is made available to our Employment Solutions service, which has already helped over 1,700 residents into work or training since its launch in 2020. In 2025/26 working with partners across South Yorkshire, we will also be piloting the delivery of a new economic inactivity trailblazer, to provide further support to get people into work.

#### **Deliver at least 500 new apprenticeships through Rotherham Together Partners by 2028.**

In the heart of the town centre, University Centre Rotherham (UCR) is a state-of-the-art campus offering degrees and higher-level qualifications to residents of all ages. Headed by the education and training provider RNN Group and working in partnership with the Council, UCR ensures that the requirements of Rotherham businesses and residents are brought together to create clear pathways for progression into work and to support career development, aligned with local growth sectors.

As well as supporting people into employment, alongside our Rotherham Together Partners, we want to further improve access to training and apprenticeships to support career progression and help people to progress into well paid jobs. Apprenticeships provide opportunities for everyone and there are chances to progress in a range of professions, roles and levels.

#### **Maximise the impact of Rotherham Together Partnership's potential to unlock, deliver and report on a collective potential of £53.5 million of unmeasured social value benefits across the borough.**

On social value, further work with local businesses and our public sector partners will see millions more in direct benefits delivered for local communities and more money spent with local suppliers. We will also continue to pay and promote the Real Living Wage, recognising that people deserve a wage that at least meets every day needs.

## Connecting people to opportunity

Connected communities are more resilient and will help in building a more thriving, inclusive, and sustainable society.

A new mainline rail station at Parkgate promises to transform our transport network, providing faster, direct access to regional and national destinations. With a connection to the tram train network, improvements to walking and cycling routes will also connect the station to the town centre.

Connectivity also means getting people online. The Council will support residents to access the benefits of the digital world; from accessing essential services, to staying in touch with family and friends, or doing the weekly shop. Alongside this, we will focus on developing the digital skills that are vital in today's economy.

### The differences you will see:

#### **Progress towards the new mainline station to create an integrated transport network, which will provide access to local, regional and national destinations.**

The centrepiece of our transport plans is Rotherham Gateway Station, the new mainline rail station at Parkgate. Expected to be open 2031, the station will reintroduce mainline trains for the first time since the 1980s. Located at Parkgate the station will have both rail and tram services. It is part of an ambitious long-term vision that will also feature a business centre and innovation campus.

#### **Support the franchising of South Yorkshire's buses by the Mayor, subject to the completion of the statutory process.**

As many as half of the local bus routes have been lost since 2010. We are already committing more Council funding to support local bus services, and we will maintain these increases until 2028. But there is also a need for more radical change. Subject to the statutory tests and processes being met, we will support South Yorkshire's buses being franchised by the Mayor.

#### **Work with South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) to bring the first demand responsive bus service to Rotherham.**

We will work with SYMCA in support of their work to bring forward a pilot Demand Responsive Transport service, to improve public transport options for rural communities that have limited options using traditional bus services. The learnings from this pilot project will inform the potential further roll-out of Demand Responsive Transport in the borough.



## Long term measures of success

**Over the course of this Plan, we expect to see:**

- An increase in the value of Rotherham's economy.
- An improvement in the skills of residents in the borough.
- An increase in the proportion of the working age population who are in work (or actively looking for work) in Rotherham.
- An increase in the number of businesses in Rotherham per 10,000 residents.

## 9.3 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ACHIEVE

### OUTCOME: Children and young people achieve

#### Where we are now

We want Rotherham to be a great place to grow up; where all children and young people are safe, valued, and are able to achieve their aspirations. Major improvements in recent years have enabled us to retain an Ofsted 'good' rating for the last 8 years (since 2017). Most recently, the SEND Area Partnership achieved the highest possible grading in the SEND Inspection (Ofsted/CQC). Our ambition remains to achieve 'outstanding': our children, young people and their families should expect nothing less.

We work with children and their families in a restorative way. This means supporting them at the earliest opportunity, reducing the need for social care intervention and ensuring that children are engaging with education. Through joint working with our key partners, we make sure that children, young people and their families get the right support at the right time.

In 2025, Rotherham became the world's first Children's Capital of Culture, designed and delivered by children and young people in the borough. Working in partnership with cultural organisations across Rotherham, the year-long cultural festival is providing an inclusive and exciting programme of events, which includes installations, exhibitions, festivals, sporting events, and workshops. Since 2022, Children's Capital of Culture has rolled out a successful traineeship programme that upskills Rotherham's young people, brings additional capacity to local culture, sport, leisure and tourism organisations, and creates a pipeline of talent into the creative sector.

#### **Delivered 120 creative traineeships through the Children's Capital of Culture since 2022.**

The Council received £3.4 million in government funding to help deliver Family Hubs and the Best Start in Life programme locally, adding value to the existing support available for families in children's centres and early help settings. Families can access information, advice, and support across a range of areas to ensure their children thrive.

#### **In 2024/25 79% of children were registered with a Family Hub within 6 months of birth.**



We put huge emphasis on supporting young people who have special educational needs or disabilities in both mainstream and specialist settings. Forest View is a repurposed post-14 specialist campus that was developed in partnership with the Nexus Multi Academy Trust. It has space for 50 pupils, extending educational opportunities for local young people in a nurturing environment whilst offering additional curriculum opportunities to equip pupils with the essential skills they need to thrive beyond school. We have also worked with mainstream schools to develop bespoke learning, sensory play areas, enhanced provisions and increased accessibility.

**Created 50 new school spaces for children with special educational needs.**

We have also created an independent travel training offer to support young people with special educational needs or disabilities. This provides practical support and life skills, aiming to increase self-esteem, self-confidence and social skills, as well as enabling young people to travel independently, which opens up educational, employment and leisure opportunities.

**Delivered Independent Travel Training to 26 children and young people in 2024/25.**

Having a universal offer for young people across the borough means providing them with things to do and places to go. Rotherham's youth offer is designed to provide inclusive, fun and exciting activities, promoting the personal, educational, creative, and social development of our young people, with a focused offer for those that need it.

**Delivered 208 support sessions to increase youth provision across the borough and support young people to engage with wider universal youth provision.**



## Council Plan consultation headlines

- The short interaction exercise highlighted that 8 % of respondents wanted more services and more activities/things to do for children and young people, both in the town centre and in the outlying areas such as Maltby, Dinnington and Swinton.
- At Rotherham Show, 5 % of respondents wanted more support for Rotherham’s children and young people, including investment in activities, resources, services, and employment advice for teenagers. Respondents also said they wanted to see improved play areas and increased SEND support.
- The Children and Young People’s Partnership Board wanted more fun things to do for teenagers, alongside improved communications regarding ‘what’s on’ and better support for transitioning to adulthood. They also set out their strength of feeling and commitment to the environment, the impacts of climate change and the importance of planning for a green future.

## Quotes

*“Increased hope and aspirations for our children and young people”*

*“We need more things for kids!”*

## Looking ahead

### Ensuring children and young people have fun things to do

We know that children and young people thrive when they have access to fun, safe, and engaging spaces. That's why we're committed to providing a variety of opportunities across the borough – from exciting events to well-equipped play areas, and sports facilities – ensuring every child has a place to play, explore and connect with others.

When speaking to our children and young people, the majority of those we spoke to want more fun things to do and better communication channels regarding activities in the borough. We have therefore made this a key priority in our plan.

#### The differences you will see:

##### **£1.8 million allocated to improve watersplash facility at Clifton Park and play areas across the borough until 2027.**

Rotherham should be a great place to grow up, and listening to children and young people is key to making that happen. Their feedback will help shape our plans, and wherever possible, they will be involved in decisions about the changes that affect them. This is demonstrated through our ongoing investment to improve play areas across the borough, which includes upgrades at the watersplash facility at Clifton Park and Chestnut Grove in Dinnington, Rother Valley and Thrybergh Country Parks. This process will be co-designed, giving children and young people the opportunity to work alongside Council officers to ensure the facilities meet their expectations and needs.

Physical activity and sport are essential for children and young people's physical and mental wellbeing. The introduction of new Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) across the borough will help to enhance this, providing versatile spaces for team-based activities and sports. These areas will offer more opportunities for children and young people to stay active and enjoy a variety of games in their local communities.

##### **Work with young people, local partners and external funders to agree a legacy programme for Children's Capital of Culture.**

Rotherham became the world's first Children's Capital of Culture (CCoC) in 2025, a concept created and shaped by young people in the borough. The CCoC team has established strong partnerships with organisations and communities across the borough, focusing on those facing barriers to creative activities and skills development. These connections have been key in developing a festival programme that is co-produced by children and young people.

##### **Improved access to youth activities and sessions.**

We want Rotherham to be a great place to grow up, where children and young people get the support, they need to reach their full potential, and helping families know about the wide range of activities, events and support opportunities across the borough is a key priority. Through the Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme, and delivery of Family Help Services we will help families get the right support, at the right time, in an easy way.

## Enabling children and young people to thrive

In Rotherham, we want our children and young people to start well, grow with support, and feel safe and heard. We aim to create a place where they can dream big, knowing that no matter their background or challenges, they have the opportunity to achieve their aspirations and reach their full potential.

Providing stability, skills and opportunity for our children and young people will inevitably benefit Rotherham as a whole. By ensuring our young people have the best possible start in life, by empowering them and enabling them to flourish, we can make them feel like they have a stake in our town and encourage them to be part of its successful future.

### The differences you will see:

#### **Deliver baby packs to Rotherham families to ensure every family has access to essential items from the beginning of the child's life.**

Our Family Help offer is based on need and will continue to provide essential support, resources and guidance to help families thrive. By focusing on providing help and support at the earliest opportunity, working with partners undertaking assessments, early intervention, wellbeing and resilience, we empower families to overcome challenges and achieve positive outcomes.

We will continue to work alongside Government guidance as part of the Families First Partnership Programme, which aims to support safeguarding partners with the implementation of children's social care reforms. Our approach provides families and their wider networks with the skills, resilience and support, so that children grow up happy, safe, and healthy, with a strong foundation to develop and reach their full potential.

As part of our commitment to ensuring that every child in Rotherham gets the best possible start in life, we are providing Baby Packs so that families have the essential items they need from birth. These packs will help to ease the pressure for new families for the first six months of the baby's life.

#### **Inclusive SEND provision in the borough, including a new SEND hub in the town centre.**

Investing in inclusive provisions for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Rotherham is a key priority for the Council. We recognise that children and young people have different strengths and needs, and services need to be differentiated so that all children and young people experience success. Due to this, we are committed to continuing to ensure the sufficiency of SEND provision and activity in the borough, so it is inclusive to all.

By working with key partners, the Rotherham Special Educational Needs, Disabilities and Alternative Provision (SENDAP) Strategy is working to drive forward the improvements that have already started across the borough and make the required changes so that children and young people in Rotherham achieve the very best outcomes. Over the next 5 years we will continue to increase the proportion of children who are educated within a mainstream setting. This is so children with special educational needs can be educated in their nearest school, build friendships within their communities and be prepared for life beyond school.

#### **Support for young people to achieve their potential (links to the enhancing skills priority, under the economy outcome).**

Children and young people will benefit from targeted skills and training initiatives that equip them with the tools and knowledge needed to succeed in a dynamic and evolving economy. As a vital part of Rotherham's future, ensuring young people can fulfil their potential and achieve their ambitions is a top priority. This can be achieved by providing access to quality work experience, raising awareness of career paths and progression routes, and removing barriers to success. Promoting apprenticeships, traineeships, and work experience will help young people transition into paid employment and build a strong foundation for their future careers.

## Keeping children and young people safe from harm

The Council plays a pivotal role in keeping children and young people safe from harm in every area of their lives to create secure environments where they can thrive. Working closely with our partners, we provide early help and intervention to protect children, prevent harm, and strengthen family life. Our shared approach ensures families receive the right support at the right time, while also ensuring children and young people can remain with their families whenever possible.

By focusing on early intervention and partnership, we are committed to building a safer Rotherham where every child feels safe, secure and supported.

### The differences you will see:

#### **Provide five new children's residential homes to make sure children in care and care leavers can stay in the borough.**

Continuing to enhance, expand, and invest in our children's residential services is a priority for the Council. We will expand our existing estate, opening a further five new children's residential homes, and taking steps to increase the number of foster carers. This will support children and young people in our care to remain in their communities, as well as help them to maintain links with their friends, see those who are important to them, and provide consistent access to education and health services. Investing in our own residential care services ensures that we have greater influence in the care that our children receive.

#### **Strengthened safeguarding arrangements, particularly addressing harms outside the home.**

The proposed Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill aims to strengthen safeguarding arrangements, particularly addressing harm outside the home, and measures to better identify and support children experiencing exploitation or missing education.

Harm outside the home occurs outside the family context, it could be in schools, community settings or online, through interactions with peers and adults outside the family.

Working with partners and through the delivery of Our Children Exploitation Strategy, we will continue to minimise the risks posed to our children and young people whilst preparing to meet the requirements of the new legislation.

#### **Further support to families to build their resilience and help reduce hardship.**

We know that many factors such as the increasing cost-of-living are making it difficult for some families to provide enough of the things their children need. We will help to address the root causes of poverty and reduce the impact of deprivation for children, young people and families through the introduction of a new 'No family left behind, Rotherham's commitment to addressing child poverty' Strategy.

## Long term measures of success

### **Over the course of this Plan, we expect to see:**

- An increase in the proportion of eligible 2-year-olds taking up an early education place as soon as possible.
- An increase in the proportion of pupils passing the phonics screening in year 1.
- Improve GCSE grades in the borough relative to the national average.
- An increase in the number of children with an Education, Health and Care Plan in mainstream schools.
- Maintain the number of suitable homes that are available for care leavers
- An increase in the proportion of children in care living within 20 miles of home.



## 9.4 RESIDENTS LIVE WELL

### OUTCOME: Residents live well

#### Where we are now

We are making significant strides in enabling our residents to lead happy, healthy and independent lives. Working with our partners, we have focused on prevention to ensure that local people live in good physical and mental health for as long as possible.

Investing in modern social care services has been a major priority for the Council over recent years. Over the last 10 years, the amount we have spent on social care services has almost doubled. Pressure on all our services has risen, from our enablement service to our care homes. As demand for health and care services increases, we will continue to focus on intervening early to prevent problems from developing or worsening, as we aim to increase healthy life expectancy in the borough. Our preventative approach is innovative in social care, reducing the need for intensive or residential services and helping people maintain their independence for as long as possible. To enable people to stay in their home of choice over 2,300 adaptations are carried out each year by the Council.

**Adult Social Care complete over 3,000 assessments each year to ensure that Rotherham residents can remain living independently, in a place of their choosing, with services that meet their eligible needs.**

This preventative approach also covers housing and public health schemes as we recognise that all aspects of a person's life are important to their health and wellbeing. We have created over 650 Council homes since 2018, including 171 across the town centre, and we are on track to build 1,000 homes by summer 2027. These homes are energy efficient, reducing bills and carbon emissions for residents. All our homes are warm, good quality and provide people with stability, underpinning good mental and physical health. We recognise that the availability of affordable, decent quality housing is fundamental to people's feelings of safety, security and independence.

**Over 650 homes built or purchased by the Council since 2018.**



As well as delivering our housing growth programme, we are acting on homelessness – again focusing on prevention - so that less people live on our streets or in temporary accommodation. We are also addressing poor conditions in the private rented sector through selective licensing schemes, making sure that landlords provide decent housing with enough space for all their residents to live healthy and happy lives.

By emphasising prevention and recovery, we have redesigned mental health services, working with our partners and our residents to offer comprehensive support pathways. As a result, drug treatment and recovery services have been expanded, helping those who need our support to break cycles of despair and illness. Health issues are best dealt with in the community, which is why we have delivered a grants programme to address loneliness and isolation in neighbourhoods, and reached out to all our residents with our ‘Say Yes’ campaign, highlighting the lifestyle changes we can all make to prevent ill-health.



**581 staff and volunteers have participated in Making Every Contact Count training to raise awareness on a range of topics to improve people’s health and wellbeing (2024/25).**

Our commitment to working in a strengths-based way, focusing on what matters to people, has seen us co-produce our key strategies, ensuring that unpaid carers, people with learning disabilities and other residents who interact with adult social care provision have a genuine say in how services are designed and delivered. This means our services are more responsive to the needs of our residents and provide them with care which is more appropriate.

A key area of our focus is to support adults with learning disabilities to have more control over their lives. Through the delivery of the ‘My Front Door’ programme and the new Learning Disabilities Strategy 2024-27, co-produced with adults and young people with a learning disability and their families, we are working to ensure that people are empowered, have a strong voice and are enabled to make choices so that they feel included, safe and secure.

**78% of adults who receive support from adult social care feel they have control over their daily life (2023/24).**

Responding to the impact of the increasing cost of living on individuals and communities across the borough, we’re continuing to support our most vulnerable residents. From money off fuel bills and council tax, to the provision of vouchers during the holidays for children and young people eligible for free school meals and providing uniform vouchers, we are ensuring that no one in Rotherham is forgotten or left behind.

**Provided £7.4 million for free school meals, council tax support and energy bills to support people with the rising cost of living.**

## **Council Plan consultation headlines**

- 82 % of respondents who completed the counter box exercise, agreed that homelessness should be a priority, compared to allowing fewer new homes to be built (18 %).
- 8 % of respondents in postal surveys regarded affordable housing as their one wish for the future of Rotherham.
- The focus groups highlighted the need for improved access to health services, particularly mental health and continued cost of living support to alleviate poverty and inequalities.

## **Quotes**

*“Equality with all people to be able to access all services they need to keep their best wellbeing”*

*“A town where people can thrive, live healthy, happy lives connected to the people you love”*

## Looking ahead

### Better physical and mental wellbeing

Improving the health of Rotherham residents is a key priority. Our new Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025-2030, provides the framework for wide-ranging action, with local partners, to enable Rotherham people to live happy, healthy, independent lives within thriving communities, regardless of their background or circumstances.

We will act to ensure children and young people get the best start in life and maximise their potential. We will also support people to maintain and improve their physical and mental health and sustain an environment that encourages healthier living.

#### The differences you will see:

##### **Offer 8,500 NHS health checks a year to people aged 40-74 to spot conditions earlier.**

Through the services commissioned by Public Health, we will offer free NHS health checks and continue to provide services which support people to stop smoking, manage their weight and reduce their drinking.

##### **Work with local communities to embed physical activities into daily lives.**

Our expanding place partnership with Sport England aims to increase physical activity levels, particularly in our more deprived neighbourhoods where we know they are lower, to reduce health risks and improve healthy life expectancy. Through this partnership, we aim to reduce health inequalities in Rotherham, ensuring that your health is not impacted by where you live or what your financial circumstances are.

##### **Improved health provision in the town centre.**

Working with our health partners we want to address health disparities and make it easier for residents to access a variety of healthcare services centrally. More local services will ensure convenience for residents and reduce travel time.

## Assisting people to live independent, safe and well

Adult social care plays a vital role in enhancing the lives of our residents and the health of communities. In Rotherham we aim to enable every resident with care and support needs to live their best lives, with the people they value, close to home and with access to the right support at the right time.

Through our adult social care pathway we can prevent, reduce or delay the need for more intensive or long-term support, target resources to those with complex needs, safeguard people from neglect or abuse and provide high quality services that are accessible to all.

73 % of people who access adult social care feel they have enough choice over their care and support.

### The differences you will see:

#### **Increase in the use of assistive technology and preventative support to maximise independence and delay the need for long-term social care support.**

We will continue to promote independent living, utilising assistive technologies and digital solutions to ensure people can stay safely in their homes wherever possible, and reducing their need for intensive, invasive care.

#### **Castle View day centre will open in 2026, enabling adults with complex needs to maintain their independence and providing respite to carers.**

Through supporting children and young people with eligible support needs, we will help to prepare them for adulthood through a partnership-based transition process. Their voice will be central to this, with support focused on helping them to achieve their goals and aspirations, including help to find employment.

This person-centred ethos also guides our overall approach to supporting residents with a learning disability: giving people choice and control over how they live their lives, engaging with them on the services they want to access, and investing in local supported accommodation so that they can live as independently as possible.

#### **Continue support to residents with the high cost of living, including with food sustainability.**

We will continue to support our residents with the high cost of living, providing support when they need it the most. Additional support will be provided to help those who may be eligible to apply for pension credit, whilst the value of school uniform vouchers will be increased to support families. Finally, we will create a Food Works offer in the borough, complimenting existing provision including social supermarkets and crisis support to help people to live sustainably.

## Good quality, affordable homes for all

Our ambition remains to make Rotherham Council the best housing provider in the country, offering decent, well-maintained homes to residents who need them.

The Rotherham Housing Strategy 2025–30 sets out a clear direction for the next five years to increase the overall number of homes through the creation of new housing and investment in existing homes and communities, as well as our efforts to help tackle homelessness and reduce carbon emissions from homes.

### The differences you will see:

#### Committed to providing 1,000 new council homes by 2027, alongside improving the quality of existing Council homes.

We recognise the importance of improving both quality and affordability of homes across the borough. The average house price is now 5.5 times the average annual salary of someone working in Rotherham and the average rent for a three-bedroomed property has increased by 46% over the last five years.

We are actively working on expanding our housing stock to meet the growing demand for affordable homes.

But it's not just about building more new homes. Good housing that is free from damp and mould is essential to good health, and maximising energy efficiency is crucial in reducing heating costs and preventing fuel poverty. We want to make houses in Rotherham warmer and cheaper to run for our residents. For this reason, all new council houses will be rated at least EPC grade C, ensuring that they are efficient and warm. We will also be improving energy performance of our existing houses, towards the national target of all rented homes achieving at least EPC grade C by 2030.

Keeping our homes decent and safe is a key priority and significant additional investment has been earmarked over the next five years.

#### Improving prevention outcomes for those at risk of homelessness and reducing use of emergency hotel accommodation.

It is vital that we take steps to prevent homelessness, providing temporary accommodation and working with partners to offer other support, such as help to find work or address health issues, including treatment for drug or alcohol addiction. We want to give people who are or are at risk of becoming homeless the support which they need to find a stable home. We will work with a preventative ethos to help people make permanent change to their living situation and get their lives back on track.

#### Work with developers to facilitate delivery of good quality and affordable homes.

We will continue to work with housing developers/ housebuilders and registered providers of social housing to enable key strategic housing sites identified in the Local Plan to be developed, delivering much-needed homes and contributing to meeting our housing targets. Continuing to provide a high quality, efficient planning service will help to accelerate housing delivery, including pre-application advice for housing developments.

The focus of activity will be council-owned sites with housing potential across the borough, and in pursuit of our ambition to deliver a revitalised town centre and a new urban community, such as the development of a garden community at Basingthorpe Farm. This development will be situated amongst ample green space and the community will also contain shops, a primary school, allotments and parks.

We are also considering options to review the Local Plan due to the implications of the revised National Planning Policy Framework.

## Long term measures of success

### **Over the course of this Plan, we expect to see:**

- An increase in the proportion of adults supported by social care who feel they have control over their daily life.
- An increase in the proportion of adults who felt their Safeguarding outcomes were at least partially met.
- An increase in the number of people supported to live healthier lifestyles through weight management and help to stop smoking.
- An increase in the proportion of households supported who were prevented or relieved from homelessness.
- An increase in the number of new homes delivered with council support.
- An increase in the proportion of council homes meeting 'Decent Homes' standard.

## 9.5 ONE COUNCIL THAT LISTENS AND LEARNS

### OUTCOME: One Council that listens and learns

#### Where we are now

As a Council we have an important part to play in addressing the challenges the people of Rotherham face and achieving better outcomes for them. Our vision is to work with communities to deliver responsive and modern services that are easily accessible for everyone. We seek to do this by listening to our residents and staff to learn and improve the ways in which we work and how we deliver services.

The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge findings from June 2023, stated: 'Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council serves the town well and is today an impressive organisation. Being named the 'Most Improved Council' in the country at the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Award in 2022 provides ample evidence that it is now in a very good place. It is ambitious and has well-established and robust foundations, along with several notable and commendable practices that other councils can learn from'.

Our focus remains on Rotherham residents, building relationships based on trust, and working with people and communities to solve problems and make the most of opportunities. Through the implementation of consistent standards, we have been working to improve how we interact with customers to help build trust and confidence.

**Implemented a new set of customer service standards and reduced call waiting times to the customer contact centre to below 4 minutes on average to improve the quality of our customer contacts.**

Through our Consultation and Engagement Framework we strive to work with our communities and be responsive to their needs. We aim to listen, inform and work in partnership with service users and stakeholders, and wherever possible include their views in the shaping, commissioning and delivery of services. We conduct an equality analysis within every consultation and engagement to identify groups that may be affected by any changes to policy, procedure, function or service and mitigate any impacts.





We also collaborate with partners across the private, voluntary and wider public sectors through the Rotherham Together Partnership. The five themes of their work are: a place to be proud of, inclusive economy, climate and environment, health and wellbeing and building stronger communities. The Rotherham Together Partnership is a prime example of our commitment to collaborating with other organisations in Rotherham to deliver better solutions for our residents in different ways.

### **The Rotherham Together Partnership is delivering the Rotherham Plan.**

Through the Health and Wellbeing Board the Council, NHS and other key partners work together to reduce health inequalities and ensure health services are effective and accessible. This will help us to reduce the significant gap in life expectancy across the borough. The board and partners are looking to ensure that all of Rotherham people can live longer and healthier lives.

Our neighbourhoods approach is grounded in strengths-based working, with local residents integral to identifying local priorities and shaping ward plans. This means recognising and building on the skills, resources, knowledge, experience and heritage within our communities and empowering residents to find creative solutions to the local issues that matter most to them.

We encourage collaborative working between elected members, council services, police, parish councils, community groups, residents and other stakeholders within neighbourhoods. This helps to better tackle locally identified issues, bringing communities together through a range of enjoyable activities, cultural and social events, inspiring hope and pride in Rotherham.

### **Ward Priorities ensure we utilise strengths-based working to embed local solutions into service delivery.**

Through our Workforce Plan we have been developing capacity and skills across the Council and working to attract a talented workforce that serves the borough well. Work to promote the Council as an employer of choice has been underway to join up the 'early careers' offer, including work experience, placements, supported internships, apprenticeships and graduate roles. We have also been focused on workforce engagement and development and developing new ways of working, including relaunching and embedding our new staff values, which reflect who we are as an organisation and what we stand for.

### **Engaged with over 200 young people at schools and universities to better understand their views of the Council as a potential employer.**

In 2019, we declared a Climate Emergency alongside a plan of action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions generated by the Council and the wider borough. This was done in response to the impact of climate change being felt in Rotherham with devastating floods and heatwaves.

Progress towards achieving our ambitions is managed through the delivery of annual Climate Change Action Plans, which set targets for our services and operations. This is driven by changes we make inside the council itself, but also in the amount of change we can influence across the rest of the borough.

### **Reducing our impact on the environment as we work to Net Zero.**



We have worked closely with a number of energy companies to promote and support the installation of more efficient boilers to homes across the borough. A total of 328 installations took place, funded by energy companies to a value of £2 million. This has supported some of the most vulnerable people in our communities in reducing their energy bills and as well as supporting our borough wide drive to decarbonisation.

We are testing the approach to more sustainable fuels in our refuse vehicles, using Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO) in several vehicles in 2024 resulted in carbon reduction of 80 tonnes and less pollutants being released into the atmosphere. We will now look to roll this out wider, complementing our electric fleet with HVO vehicles.

In 2024, over 11,500 trees were planted, enhancing our woodlands, towns and villages across the borough. The planting of trees helps with removing harmful carbons and other pollutants from the air and supports with having more suitable woodland and urban greenspaces for all our communities.

We have carried out engagement sessions with residents, schools, colleges and businesses across the borough to provide advice, updates and guidance on several areas, including energy savings and management, skills and jobs in the decarbonisation sector and the benefits of renewable technology and how changing our behaviours can have a positive impact on our pockets as well as the climate.

### **Council Plan consultation headlines**

- 24 % of people asked in the short interactions said that the thing they liked the most about where they live is the community spirit.
- 17 % of people asked in the online and postal survey said that their one wish for the future of Rotherham was an improved reputation.
- 14 % of people asked in the online and postal survey said that the thing they liked the most about where they live is the people.

### **Quotes**

*“We need to promote civic mindedness – encourage people to feel that their voices are important”*

*“It is nice to see council officers interested in what people think”*

## Looking ahead

### Better Customer Experience

We aim to provide high quality services that are customer focused, efficient and accessible to everyone. We want to deliver outstanding experiences to every customer, be they a resident, visitor, colleague, elected member, or partner.

Exceptional customer service is a commitment to those we serve. We aim to be a Council that places the customer at the heart of all we do so that we are a Council that: makes it easy to deal with us, keeps you informed, and gets it right.

#### The differences you will see:

##### High quality services informed by customer feedback.

Every one of our employees has the same responsibility for putting the customer first, following the standards we have set and understanding what they need to do to make sure all our customers receive the same high-quality services. We will:

- Make it easy for you to deal with us
- Keep you informed
- Get it right.

We will seek to continue to redesign our services to improve standards, make it easy to contact us, keep our residents informed and reduce wait times. We will also ensure that services are delivered consistently.

Through the feedback we receive via complaints, from our residents, and community engagement we will continue to improve customer experience.

##### Increase the number of services available digitally (links to connecting people to opportunities priority, under an economy that works for everyone outcome).

We want to make it easier for residents to contact us and make sure that those in need of support can quickly receive the help and advice they need.

We will enable residents to access the services they need in the easiest way possible, by increasing the range of digital services designed to meet the needs of our customers and enhance the customer experience. Customers will be able to self-serve on a wider range of council services, including booking services, paying for services, and customer updates.

##### Easy to access services, regardless of the method customers choose to contact us.

We understand that not every customer is the same and that one size does not fit all. As well as increasing services available to customers online and the range of digital tools available to interact with the Council, customers will have the ability to chat to customer services via the telephone or book an appointment to meet in person.

Assisted access will also be offered to customers who require our support and the services we provide to our most vulnerable residents will be enhanced, particularly face-to-face.

## Working in partnership with our communities

Continuing to build on the positive progress made, we want to increasingly co-design and co-develop our services with our residents and communities. As reflected in our approach, this will mean that we are working with our communities and strengths-based working.

We will continue to build on our established and successful working relationships with partners to support the delivery of our ambitions and priorities.

### The differences you will see:

#### **Agree and deliver a new Rotherham Together Partnership Plan.**

We remain ambitious in delivering on our priorities through collaborating with partners across the borough and with the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA).

Where we can, we look to use our position as the lead organisation in the borough to deliver better solutions and outcomes to the people of Rotherham, harnessing the capabilities of other Rotherham-based organisations to deliver what residents want to see in their community. We have had proven success with this approach and will look to further utilise existing and new partnerships to consult, engage and empower our residents.

#### **We will focus on developing our locality-working model in partnership and with communities, ensuring that we tackle issues and seize on opportunities.**

We recognise the importance of building on the existing strengths of our communities, utilising skills, resources, knowledge, experience and heritage to empower residents to find creative solutions to the local issues that matter most to them.

#### **Create a more inclusive consulting and engagement process through a new online tool and by increasing co-production.**

Public consultation and engagement are important parts of improving our services and we are committed to ensuring ongoing conversations with our residents. New specialist consultation software will help ensure consistency in our approach and most importantly, improve the customer experience with a more user-friendly system.

We will work with services, partners and communities to promote equality, celebrate diversity and ensure fairness for everyone. We know that our customers are best placed to help us deliver better services. Through working with particular interest groups and building on the successes of existing boards, we will co-produce changes to new and existing services. This will include a new approach to working with our council housing tenants through a new Tenant Engagement Framework.

We will also look to continue the valuable work we have delivered in our communities, such as schemes delivered by the Safer Rotherham Partnership which has made progress in protecting vulnerable children, protecting vulnerable adults and building safer and stronger communities.

## A Workforce that is ambitious and proud

Our workforce is critical to delivering the Council's priorities and our workforce strategy will help us to ensure that staff feel valued, supported and empowered as they continue to deliver the best possible services for local people.

### The differences you will see:

#### **We aim to have a workforce that is more representative of the communities we serve.**

Our One Council Values reflect our workforce, the way that we operate and how we perceive our relationships with the local communities and our partners within Rotherham. These values are incorporated into council services and our workplaces. Our organisational culture mirrors the values felt in the communities that we work to represent.

We recognise the importance of having a workforce which is representative of the borough. By providing support and development opportunities, including structured career pathways with entry points tailored to individual skills and different sections of the community, we look to ensure that local talent is recognised and developed, making the Council an attractive employer of choice for local residents.

#### **A suitably skilled workforce that can help us to achieve our ambitions.**

To enable us to effectively meet the needs of our residents and proactively respond to the opportunities and challenges ahead, we will ensure our workforce is effectively supported through comprehensive development programs. This proactive approach will seek to equip employees and build a more resilient and adaptable workforce.

#### **Strengthen career pathways and development opportunities for the whole workforce.**

We understand the importance of ensuring that there are clear career pathways.

Through the development of a structured approach, we will facilitate career pathways from entry level and also promote internal progression, ensuring we retain and develop our talented workforce.

## Responding to Climate change

We understand that our climate, our natural environment and our borough's prosperity are linked. Through this plan, our aim is to support a fair transition towards a sustainable future, building resilience in our places and maximising opportunities for our residents, developing our green economy and creating jobs and new skills across the borough as we mitigate and adapt to climate change induced issues.

### The differences you will see:

#### **A focus on decarbonising our corporate estate and fleet.**

We are focussing on decarbonising our buildings by adopting new technologies, cutting down on activities that waste energy and resources, and transitioning towards environmentally-friendly vehicles for our fleet. We aim to secure greater energy security, by investing in renewable technology to reduce our energy bills and the use of National Grid supply, creating our own energy through renewable resources.

Further developing our approach to greener council vehicles, will also have a positive impact on the environment. This will include extending the purchase and use of electric vehicles and look to increase the use of Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO) in our fleet. Working with our suppliers we will continue to test new technologies as they come to the market, ensuring the vehicles that support a wide range of service delivery are sustainable and continue to support a reduction in carbon emissions.

Continuing to monitor and report on carbon emissions will provide the evidence base to support intelligence-led policy, strategy and operational decisions. This will include Climate Impact Assessments to ensure carbon emissions and climate change impacts are considered when making decisions.

#### **Work with our Rotherham Together partners to co-create an inclusive net zero strategy for the borough.**

Alongside reducing our own greenhouse gas emissions, we will use our influence to encourage our partners, other anchor institutions, local businesses, and our residents to be mindful of their environmental impact and take action to be more sustainable. A co-created strategy will be produced by working closely with our Rotherham Together partners and community groups to better understand our borough and ensure that a just transition is at the heart of our next steps towards a net zero borough.

We will build stronger partnerships with businesses and our Rotherham Together partners, fostering greater engagement with our communities to provide information, set direction and develop knowledge in areas of carbon, climate and energy. Working with schools, colleges and universities will enable us to develop green and renewable skills for the future that will support the infrastructure that is being developed and delivered within the borough, creating jobs and opportunities for our residents and businesses.

#### **Increase the number of publicly available electric vehicle charge points through delivery of the public EV Charging Infrastructure Strategy.**

By delivering a more developed public electric vehicle charging infrastructure we will make this service more accessible to all communities across the borough. We aim to achieve this through working in partnership with all South Yorkshire Authorities and the private sector to provide a network across our region that is accessible and meets future demand.

## Long term measures of success

### Over the course of this Plan, we expect to see:

- An increase in the proportion of residents who feel that the Council keeps them informed.
- An increase in the proportion of residents who feel that the Council acts on their concerns.
- An increase in satisfaction with specific council services (Waste collection; street cleaning; road maintenance; pavement maintenance; sport and leisure services; services and support for older people; services and support for children and young people; parks and green spaces).
- An increase in satisfaction with the Council as a housing landlord.
- The Council's workforce is more representative of the borough's population.
- A reduction in the Council's net carbon produced by operational activities, such as through vehicle emissions and energy used in our buildings.

## 8. DELIVERING ON OUR OUTCOMES

**Rotherham Council is a metropolitan borough council and is responsible for providing a range of services including social care, planning, housing, revenue and benefits support, licensing, business regulation and enforcement, electoral registration, refuse and recycling, leisure, culture, parks and green spaces, economic growth, highway maintenance, education and skills, community safety and public health.**

It also has an important role in working with other providers of public services across Rotherham.

The Council's constitution sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to ensure that this is efficient, transparent, and accountable to local people.

The Council has 59 elected councillors, representing 25 wards inside the Rotherham Borough geographical boundary. The Council is currently led by a Labour Cabinet of 7 Members.

Several committees and panels are responsible for decision making, including Council, Cabinet, Audit Committee, Standards and Ethics Committee and Scrutiny.

Details of all these, as well as copies of agendas, papers and official minutes of proceedings can be found on the Council's website here.

The day-to-day management of the Council, and its services is overseen by the Strategic Leadership Team and led by the Chief Executive.

The Council is split into five directorates (see below).

All directorates will collectively work together over the next five years to achieve the commitments set out within each of the five outcomes.

The Council's focus is on delivering its priorities in accordance with the agreed budget. This is set against the additional financial pressures of the increased cost of living, inflation and increasing demand for services due to population growth and changing demographics in Rotherham.

The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy submitted to Cabinet in December 2024 provides a four-year outlook of the Council's anticipated resources and budget requirement and sets out our approach to deliver a sustainable budget position up to 2027/28.

The Council is also focused on its leadership role across the borough and particularly where it can have greater influence.

Partnership working is recognised across all services as being essential to the future of the borough; combining knowledge, ideas, expertise, and resources to deliver tangible improvements, deliver efficiencies and economies of scale, and helping to strengthen our communities.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S  
SERVICES

ADULT SOCIAL CARE, HOUSING  
AND PUBLIC HEALTH

REGENERATION  
AND ENVIRONMENT

FINANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES

ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DIRECTORATE



## 9. HOW WE WILL MONITOR PROGRESS

**To monitor the impact of our work, a small suite of long-term success measures will be reported on annually, many of which will require the support of our partners across the borough.**

Alongside the Council Plan, we will produce an annual Year Ahead Delivery Plan, setting out the actions and activities we will undertake to work towards improving the long-term success measures. This will include performance output measures, where appropriate, to help monitor the impact of our work.

Six monthly public reports will be produced for Cabinet in January and July to track our progress. The reports will be available here and will include updates on the Year Ahead Delivery Plan activities, alongside case studies. Each year-end report will include progress against the long-term success measures.

Our policy drivers will help to ensure that the changes we are making are having a positive impact for all of our residents, that we are working with people rather than 'doing to' them, and that we focus on prevention wherever possible to improve outcomes for people and reduce long-term pressures and costs.

We will take action to improve outcomes for different communities and protected characteristic groups and break down barriers, publishing equality analyses to ensure appropriate consideration of equality, diversity and inclusion. We will also demonstrate our commitment to considering climate impacts through the publication of carbon impact assessments.

Within directorates, on an annual basis, each Assistant Director is required to produce a service plan to demonstrate their contribution to the delivery of the Council Plan, which in turn will inform team plans and individual performance and development reviews.

## 10. GET INVOLVED

**We want residents to be at the heart of everything we do and are committing to ongoing conversations with our residents and partners. There are lots of different ways for people to get involved, providing views on our services, helping to shape plans and priorities, and keeping up to date on news and views. This includes ward plans, neighbourhood newsletters, social media and consultations.**

For further information visit the Council website at [www.rotherham.gov.uk](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk)

If you would like this information in another language or format, **please ask us.**