

Commissioners' 18 Month Progress Review

to the Department for Communities and Local Government
March 2016 – July 2016

RECOVERY AND RESTORATION
EVIDENCE FILE AS AT AUGUST 2016

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1 Introduction to the evidence file

This is the Commissioners' latest six month review of progress since the Government Directions to Rotherham Council in February 2015.

From the start, the appointed Commissioners have wanted to be transparent and open about their work, its costs and the plans we have adopted. We report in public every quarter; we publish notes of our internal monthly meetings; we send out a regular bulletin to external stakeholders; we offer a monthly video diary and the Council's Chief Executive writes a weekly news bulletin to all staff.

This six month report will be a public document too, but inevitably much of the change we have designed and are implementing is about improved practice, process and systems and, as such, is littered with jargon. We have therefore produced a short summary on page 8 to demonstrate what progress has been made since our 12 month report was published in February 2016.

We apologise to any general readers but are willing to explain further if this assists. We are also mindful that others may want to judge in future how the intervention fared. Therefore we have reported in detail, not in outline.

We have structured our detailed report around the 12 'aims' in the 'Mission Statement' that the Commissioner Team adopted in week one. We acknowledge that this is a limiting reporting structure but it serves to hold us to our central purpose – to deliver the Government's requirements that drove the unparalleled intervention in the first place.

It is anticipated that there are four distinct phases for our work:

Phase 1

- Access, plan and begin change
- Recruit new staff; support new Councillors or those new to responsibility.

Phase 2

- Hand back more leadership responsibility and accountability to Councillors
- Ensure the new senior management team work well with Councillors.

Phase 3

- Propose revised Directions to allow Commissioners to supervise and oversee a Councillor-run improvement programme.

Phase 4

- Arrange a review by suitably experienced third parties to evaluate progress overall. If judged satisfactory, move to end of intervention.

The Council continues to make progress and is currently in phase 2. This latest six month progress report outlines progress made since February 2016 to get the Council to this stage.

2 Where we were

The report of Professor Alexis Jay and the Corporate Governance Inspection (CGI) concluded that Rotherham's Children and Young People's Services failed due to corporate failings across the organisation as well as its wider partnership relations.

In response to the Council's failings and following the Secretaries of State Directions of 26th February 2015, the Government appointed five Commissioners to take on all executive responsibilities at the Council and responsibilities of licensing to drive the improvements necessary to return decision-making to democratic structures. The Commissioner for Children's Social Care Services had already been in place since October 2014 having been appointed initially by the Secretary of State for Education following the failings identified by Ofsted.

In March 2015 the Commissioners launched the 'Statement of Rotherham Commissioners' mission 'To help the Council secure a safe environment for children and ensure good, sustainable services and regulation such that healthy democratic leadership and accountability can be restored'. This report is structured around each of the mission outcomes.

The Council was faced with a three-year budget gap of £41.083m (for 2016/17 to 2018/19) after the inclusion of additional funding for children's social care services on a recurrent basis - £8.4m in 2016/17, £7.4m in 2017/18 and £6.4m in 2018/19. The Council's budget position was understated prior to the Commissioners' arrival due to overspending on children's placements and the overrunning of the adult social care budget.

3 Where we are now

Significant progress has been made since Commissioners' began working in Rotherham. This report details what has been achieved in the last 6 months and the illustration on page 8 highlights some of those key improvements.

Since the intervention the Council has measured its progress through the delivery of three key documents:

1. Children and Young People's Services Improvement Board Action Plan

The first Children and Young People's Services Improvement Board Action Plan focused on delivering actions and outcomes in response to the Ofsted recommendations and to address the 'emergency repair' required. A refreshed second improvement plan was agreed in September 2015 which focussed on longer term improvements and was reshaped around the child's journey in line with the Ofsted Single Inspection Framework, as well as supporting the Council's commitment in becoming a 'child-centred borough' with high quality services underpinning this. Before Commissioner Newsam left in May 2016, he requested that the plan was looked at again to ensure that it was still fit for purpose and that it continued to reflect the current position and key priorities of the service in readiness for the new chair of the Improvement Board, Debbie Barnes. The plan is continually updated to reflect feedback and findings from Ofsted improvement visits and peer reviews.

2. Rotherham Improvement Plan ('A Fresh Start') and "Phase Two" Action Plan

The first phase Corporate Improvement Plan ('A Fresh Start') included 132 separate projects. The plan was divided into two phases, with the first to May 2016 focusing on establishing the core building blocks of an effective local authority. 84% (108) of the phase one actions were assessed as being substantively completed to the required timescales or standards by the end of May 2016.

A second phase of the Corporate Improvement Plan ('Phase Two Action Plan') from May 2016 was agreed by the Joint Board of Commissioners and Elected Members, which oversees the implementation of the plan, when it met on 23rd May 2016 and was further endorsed at the Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision-Making meeting on 11th July 2016. This Phase Two plan further clarified the outline second phase actions and priorities set out in the original 'A Fresh Start' document, as well as ongoing areas of focus from phase one. The Phase Two plan includes 20 overall improvement objectives (and 99 specific milestones) to be delivered over the coming year, with a core focus on now embedding strong leadership and a new culture across the organisation (See Appendix A).

3. Child Sexual Exploitation – The Way Forward for Rotherham 2015-18

This strategy has informed and driven the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) response for the Rotherham partnership via the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Board (RSCB). The objectives and key actions were reflected in the operational CSE delivery plan which was incorporated into the RMBC Improvement Plan in April 2016. The commitment articulated in the strategy is visible in the drive by the multi-agency partnership to support a number of large and complex past and current CSE enquiries. A number of perpetrators are now being brought to justice as a result of this multi-agency approach. The current multi-agency response to CSE enquiries is employing the approach outlined in the strategy: PREVENT, PROTECT, PURSUE and PROVIDE support and this has successfully supported a number of child and adult survivors in obtaining justice and protection. The relationship between statutory services and adult survivors is improving, supporting a number of adult survivors in forming appropriate community interest groups or otherwise influencing culture and practice.

The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy

A Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), which included an additional £12m net investment in Children and Young People's Services, was approved by Council on 2nd March 2016. More recently, a report was considered at Cabinet / Commissioners on 11th July 2016 setting out an estimated minimum Council budget gap of £42m to 2019/20. Children and Young People's Services are currently experiencing significant in-year cost pressures which present a further challenge to the Council. These are demand pressures and, for Children and Young People's Services, also reflect the need to improve services to better meet the needs of vulnerable children and their families. Rotherham faces both the financial challenges that other councils face and the additional cost of improving Children and Young People's Services whilst ensuring the organisation remains financially sustainable.

Work on the estimated financial challenge for the budget for 2017/18 to 2019/20 is ongoing, with directorates working up options to address the three-year budget gap. A number of cross-cutting budget reviews are also being planned as part of the budget setting process, with a greater focus on delivering better value for money. This represents a more strategic approach for Rotherham where previously there has largely been an over-reliance on a traditional top-slicing approach. Budget proposals will subsequently receive cross-party Member consideration and will be reviewed by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Board. Further work is required to agree a balanced and sustainable MTFS for 2017/18 to 2019/20 with proposals being implemented from April 2017.

Return of Functions

In February 2016 the Council made positive steps towards powers and accountabilities being restored and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government issued revised Directions, following a request from Commissioners to return responsibility for a number of functions to Councillors. Those functions returned are:

- Education and schools; education for 14-19 years in all settings; school admissions and appeal system; youth services;
- Public Health;

- Leisure services; events in parks and green spaces;
- Customer and cultural services, libraries, arts, customer services and welfare programmes;
- Housing;
- Planning and transportation policy; highways maintenance;
- The Council's area assembly system and neighbourhood working; responsibilities under the Equalities Act;
- Building regulation, drainage, car parking, business regulation and enforcement (not including licensing), emergency planning;
- Financial services, including revenues and benefits (not including audit); ICT; legal and democratic services; corporate communications; corporate policy; procurement;
- Budget control in these areas, and budget planning;
- Policy arising from Sheffield City Region.

The Commissioners' proposals included functions which were operating well, with no significant value for money deficits; were well-led by officers and had clear definitions of service quality/plans for further improvements in place; had been quality assured by an independent party; and had individual Councillors in a position to exercise executive authority over them.

Licensing

Commissioners met the previous Secretary of State on 12th July, who indicated that subject to reassurance from two independent reviewers currently concluding investigations into Licensing and the wider Council, he would consider restoring licensing powers to the Council. Those letters of reassurance are attached (see Appendix G and H) and have been submitted to the new Secretary of State for consideration. Once new Directions are given, the Licensing Committee will resume the duties and responsibilities of a full committee as in other unitary councils.

Change of Commissioners

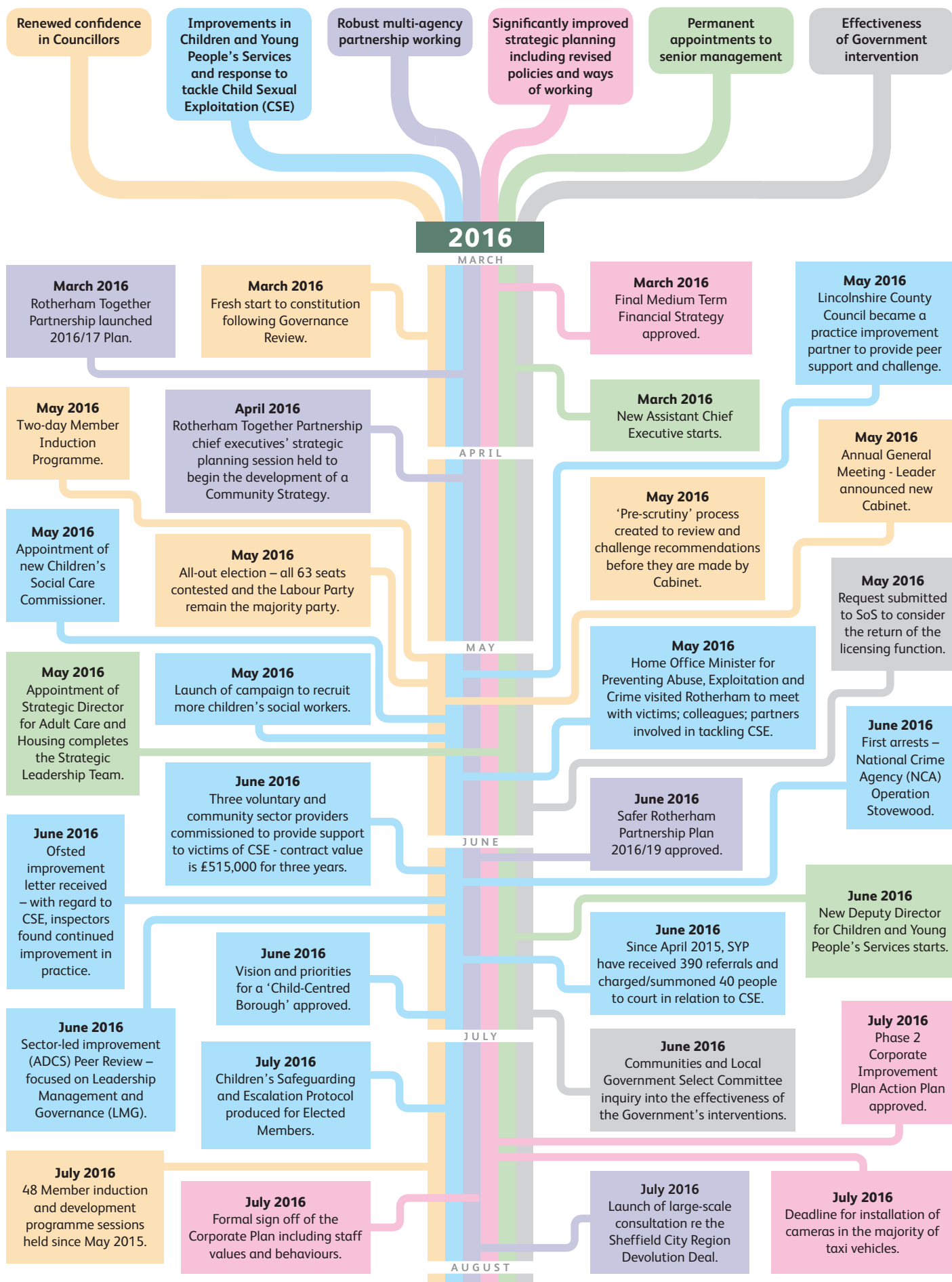
The Commissioner Managing Director, Stella Manzie, stood down from her post on Friday 29th January 2016 and, following a handover period, Sharon Kemp officially took over the chief executive responsibilities on 1st February 2016.

Commissioner Patricia Bradwell, Deputy Leader of Lincolnshire County Council, joined the Commissioners' Team on 10th May as Children's Social Care Commissioner, following the departure of Commissioner Malcolm Newsam.

New Secretaries of State

Commissioners welcome the appointments of The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, and The Rt Hon Justine Greening MP, Secretary of State for Education. We look forward to working with both.

Significant progress has been made since Commissioners began working in Rotherham. This report details what has been achieved in the last 6 months, and the illustration below highlights some of those key improvements.



4 Timeline of key headlines/progress

2016					
March	April	May	June	July	
<p>Helping Children and Young People's Services to improve (including Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE))</p>	<p>Appointment of new Deputy Director Children and Young People's Services.</p>	<p>Local Safeguarding Children Board Sub Group (Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing) adopts 8 key themes for 2016/17 including agreement to hold organisational learning events to drive forward continuous learning and cultural change.</p>	<p>Appointment of new Children's Social Care Commissioner.</p>	<p>RMBC social care job recruitment fair.</p>	
	<p>'National Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Day' – events held across the borough to highlight the issues around Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and to urge everyone to think, spot and speak out against abuse.</p>	<p>Council supports the launch of a Department for Education (DfE) led campaign to encourage residents to have the confidence to report child abuse.</p>	<p>Lincolnshire County Council becomes a practice improvement partner to provide peer support and challenge, led by their Director of Children's Services as practice leader.</p>	<p>Vision and priorities for a 'child-centred borough' approved at Cabinet/Commissioner Decision-Making meeting.</p>	<p>Multi-agency CSE team (EVOLVE) officially launches following relocation to child friendly town centre based premises.</p>
	<p>New performance clinic structure established to provide leadership team with the opportunity to support and challenge services against the targets and outcomes set out in service plans.</p>	<p>Home Office Minister for Preventing Abuse, Exploitation and Crime visits Rotherham to meet with victims and colleagues and partners involved in tackling CSE.</p>	<p>Improvement offer agreed regarding peer support from Lincolnshire County Council.</p>	<p>Final Ofsted improvement letter received summarising findings from the 5 Ofsted improvement visits – with regard to CSE inspectors found continued improvement in practice.</p>	<p>Agree to continue interim independent CSE 'critical friend' role - funded between RMBC, SYP and NCA.</p>
		<p>Youth Offending Board (YOT Board) reconvenes following review, including review of governance arrangements.</p>	<p>'Partners in Practice' Looked After Children (LAC) review.</p>	<p>Independent review team commissioned to review CSE Multi-agency Risk Management Panel.</p>	
		<p>Fourth visit by external consultant (NIB consulting) to review the CYPS Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) – action plan developed to address areas which required improvement.</p>	<p>Sector led improvement (ADCS) peer review – focused on Leadership Management and Governance (LMG).</p>	<p>Multi-agency CSE strategic command group (Gold) integrate into one governance structure involving appropriate statutory and voluntary community sector agencies.</p>	
		<p>'National Foster Care Fortnight' - the foster care team join forces with carers to get the town talking about fostering.</p>	<p>Three voluntary and community sector providers commissioned to provide support to victims of CSE - contract value is £515,000 for three years.</p>	<p>Four employees receive Judges commendation and certificates of commendation from the Chief Constable of SYP for their role in the investigation of Operation Clover, a complex and challenging multi-agency enquiry into non recent CSE.</p>	
		<p>Launch of campaign to recruit more children's social workers.</p>	<p>First arrests – National Crime Agency (NCA) Operation Stovewood.</p>	<p>Children's Safeguarding and Escalation Protocol produced for Elected Members.</p>	
		<p>CSE survivors supported to form community interest group to influence culture and practice.</p>	<p>New Deputy Director for Children and Young People's Services starts.</p>		
		<p>CSE champions embedded in Children and Young People's Services to provide advice and support to colleagues on the steps to take when they are concerned about a child at risk of or experiencing CSE – over 50 champions trained.</p>	<p>Cabinet/Commissioners agrees to begin consultation on the proposed closure of Silverwood and Cherry Tree House children's homes.</p>		
		<p>Monthly Performance Board established, to scrutinise, challenge and inform performance management arrangements in Children and Young People's Services.</p>	<p>New Head of Finance for Children and Young People's Services starts.</p>		
			<p>Star chamber process devised to identify future investments and inform the Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p>		
			<p>Revised Fusion bid submitted to Home Office to seek additional support for CSE victims and survivors – currently with departments.</p>		

2016

	March	April	May	June	July
<p>Helping the Council improve</p>	Final Medium-Term Financial Strategy approved by Council.	Senior manager (M3) master classes commenced – first session focussed around working in a political environment.	Appointment of new Adult Care and Housing Strategic Director completes Strategic Leadership Team.	Meeting with Tower Hamlets Commissioners and Birmingham Independent Panel Vice Chair to share learning.	Performance, intelligence and research peer review conducted by the LGA – currently awaiting report.
	New Assistant Chief Executive starts.	New Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services starts.	15 month progress letter submitted to Secretary of State - including request to consider the return of the licensing function.	Recruitment begins to appoint three heads of service for Adult Social Care, to oversee £9 million cost reduction.	Phase 2 Corporate Improvement Plan approved by Cabinet and Commissioners.
	New Assistant Director of Legal Services starts.		Phase 2 Corporate Improvement Plan agreed by Joint Board.	Care Quality Commission review of the Home Enabling Service – rated as good in July 2016.	MTFS update report to Cabinet/Commissioners' Decision-Making meeting.
	New Assistant Director for Community Safety and Environment starts.	New Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment Services starts.	Launch of the staff Pulse Survey.	Communities and Local Government Select Committee inquiry into the effectiveness of the Government's intervention.	Deadline for installation of cameras in the majority of taxi vehicles; mandatory BTEC requirement (dependent upon the renewal date and other factors).
	Rotherham Town Centre category and overall winner in the 'Association of Town and City Management's (ACTM) annual awards'.		Cabinet/Commissioners approved the sale of 250 acres to Gulliver's, for the development of a family theme park resort.	13 staff focus group sessions held for those without access to electronic Pulse survey - attended by nearly 100 people.	Medium-Term Financial Strategy for Children and Young People's Services 2016-2021 progress noted at Cabinet/Commissioners' Decision-Making meeting.
	Final staff briefing sessions delivered by the new Chief Executive and Leader – 15 sessions held in total since January 2016 and around 850 staff attended. Similar sessions to be held every 6 months.		Local Government Association (LGA) peer review of the Human Resources function.	Third poll of Rotherham resident satisfaction undertaken by Local Government Association (LGA).	Council's 2015/16 revenue and capital outturn approved at Cabinet/Commissioners' Decision-Making meeting.
	Rotherham's Local Plan submitted to the Secretary of State for consideration - this is a long-term plan for new housing, shopping, employment and travel.		Procurement peer review conducted by Arubium and funded via the LGA – improvement plan currently being implemented.	Consultation on South Yorkshire Waste Strategy to deal with challenges over the next 5 years.	Meeting with Rt. Hon. Greg Clark, Secretary of State and Rotherham Commissioners to discuss return of licensing powers.
				Launch of the Council's Housing Strategy 2016-19.	Review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy 1 year after implementation.
					Formal sign off of the Corporate Plan including staff values and behaviours by Council.
					Waste Partnership won the Best Energy from Waste Initiative category at the 'Materials Recycling World (MRW) national recycling awards'.
				Draft town centre Supplementary Planning Document endorsed by Cabinet and Commissioners.	
				Corporate Safeguarding Policy approved by Council - sets out the Council's commitment to promoting safeguarding across the whole organisation.	

2016				
March	April	May	June	July
Helping the Council improve				Revised Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy endorsed by Council.
				Letters of reassurance issued by Weightmans and Gowling WLG demonstrating no significant areas of concern within the licensing function.
				Tendering commenced for new Town Centre Masterplan.
				Plans agreed to purchase 24 derelict houses in Maltby to refurbish and let as council homes.
				Proposal to absorb the intermediate care provision currently provided at Netherfield Court into Lord Hardy Court and Davies Court approved at Cabinet/Commissioners Decision-Making meeting.
				Legal Services peer review (focused around Children and Young People's Services cases) conducted by Lincolnshire County Council – currently awaiting report.
				94.5% completion rate for Performance Development Reviews.

2016

	March	April	May	June	July
Supporting Councillors and wider partnerships	Fresh start to constitution following Governance Review conducted by Professor Tony Crook CBE – Leader and Cabinet executive model retained, scrutiny process strengthened through the establishment of pre-decision scrutiny and the appointment of chairs and vice-chairs reflecting the political make-up of the Council. Further constitutional amendments to strengthen governance are being considered.	163 candidates stand for Council: • 63 Labour • 41 UKIP • 23 Conservative • 13 Green Party • 13 Independent • 5 Liberal Democrat • 3 Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition • 2 Yorkshire First	Radio Sheffield interview with Lead Commissioner regarding 2016 Elections.	Safer Rotherham Partnership Plan 2016/19 approved by the Safer Rotherham Partnership Board.	New Elected Member introductory meetings with Commissioners.
	Rotherham Together Partnership launched 2016/17 Plan – longer-term Community Strategy to be launched March 2017.	The Chief Executive attended an ‘Audience with’ session organised by Voluntary Action Rotherham to discuss key issues for the sector and the Council.	All-out election – all 63 seats contested and the Labour Party remain the majority party (48 Labour; 14 UKIP; 1 Independent; 0 Conservative (of the 24 newly elected members, at least 12 attended the LGA ‘Be a Councillor’ sessions)).	Compact Working Group meeting established to oversee the review of Rotherham Compact Framework (partnership protocol).	48 member induction and development programme sessions held since May 2015.
	Lead Commissioner held meeting with Cabinet Members regarding their future involvement in the appraisal of senior staff.	Rotherham Together Partnership chief executives’ strategic planning session held to commence the development of a Community Strategy.	Two-day Member Induction Programme to help members understand how the Council and its services work.	‘Big Walk’ event held and supported by the Rotherham Together Partnership to celebrate the thousands of people who give up their time as volunteers to help others and make the area a better place to live.	Children and Young People’s Improving Lives Commission re-established.
	Commissioners’ final Public Meeting with Councillors as joint Cabinet/Commissioners meetings commenced.	Business Minister visited Rotherham whilst union leaders met to discuss the crisis gripping the TATA steel industry to save thousands of jobs	Annual General Meeting - Leader announced new Cabinet – 2 new appointments Cllr Dominic Beck, Housing and Cllr Emma Hoddinott Waste, Roads and Community Safety.		First partnership plan quarterly monitoring report presented to Rotherham Together Partnership Chief Executive Officer Group.
			Launch of hate crime initiative to encourage victims to come forward.		Community Strategy consultation session held with the voluntary and community sector.
			Licensing training for Elected Members.		Dinnington Town Council neighbourhood area application approved by Cabinet/Commissioners - first parish/town council in Rotherham to embark on preparing a neighbourhood plan.
			‘Pre-scrutiny’ process created to allow the Overview and Scrutiny Board and the Select Committee to review and challenge recommendations before they are made by Cabinet.		Launch of large-scale consultation about the Sheffield City Region devolution deal – RMBC hosted a consultation event to encourage people to become involved.
					Launch of new prevention campaign to help those most at risk of suicide ‘Don’t let silence kill you’ – between RMBC, SYP, NHS Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group and Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust.

2016					
	March	April	May	June	July
Other contributing factors and dealings by others	Major new criminal investigation into suspected CSE offences amongst Rotherham's Roma community launched.	New Independent Policing Protests Advisory Panel launched by Police and Crime Commissioner.	Commissioner Newsam, Children's Social Care Commissioner, stood down.	Jayne Senior awarded MBE in the 'Queen's Birthday Honours' for services to protect children in Rotherham.	Sajid Javid announced as the new Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.
	Publication of DREW review - Independent review of South Yorkshire Police in relation to its response to CSE.	Appointment of new South Yorkshire Police Rotherham District Commander.	Jayne Senior - Winner of the overall 'Yorkshire Woman of Achievement 2016' and 'Community Impact' award.	Louise Casey made a dame in the 'Queen's Birthday Honours' in recognition of services to families and local government.	Justine Greening announced as the Secretary of State for Education.
	Publication of Jayne Senior's book 'Broken and Betrayed'.			Government committed to introducing additional taxi licensing guidance nationally to learn from Rotherham's experience.	BBC One Show regarding installation of taxi cameras in Rotherham and out of town taxis.
				Rotherham hosted the first in a series of events aimed at building the Sheffield City Region's Logistics Hub.	'Love Is Louder' launches its 'artbomb' initiative at a number of sites around Rotherham – pro love, anti-hate campaign designed to bring together people from all walks of life, and from all faiths and cultures.
				Communities and Local Government Select Committee – Questions to Marcus Jones MP.	Launch of Community Justice Panels seeking volunteers to make a difference in their neighbourhood.
				Since April 2015, SYP have received 390 referrals and charged/summoned 40 people to court in relation to CSE including prolific offender Tom Wilkes sentenced to 10 years.	Childline founder Dame Esther Rantzen planning new support service 'Is It OK?' inspired by Rotherham's CSE story.
				EU Referendum – 69.56% turnout (total number of ballot papers counted 137,470 – 44,115 remain and 93,272 leave).	Appointment of South Yorkshire Police Interim Chief Constable – commenced on 25th July.
				Right wing anti-Islamic 'silent march' through Rotherham led by EDL	Alternative recommendations for HS2's route and station proposals published.

The timeline for February – July 2015 is available in the 6 month progress review evidence file submitted in August 2015 and the timeline for August 2015 – February 2016 is available in the 12 month progress review evidence file submitted in February 2016.

5 Progress against the Mission Outcomes

5.1 Commissioner Bradwell

MISSION OUTCOME 1: Children will grow up in a safe environment. We will ensure a creative strategy is delivered that includes prevention, detection, and high quality care alongside a robust enforcement approach.



Overview

I am assured that that since my appointment in May 2016, Ofsted monitoring visits, peer reviews, performance information and feedback from the practice partner all confirm that there has been considerable progress in the delivery of services to support children to grow up in safe environments. There is a clear vision, purpose and direction for the service and more stable leadership, with improved political ownership and oversight of the improvement journey. This is enabling systems and processes to be established and embedded to improve the prevention, detection and provision of high quality care for vulnerable children and young people.

- There is an effective relationship between the Director of Children Services (DCS), Lead Member, Leader of the Council and Chief Executive. Partners have been very complimentary about the leadership style of the independent chair of the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Board (RSCB) and I have some confidence that the Leader and Deputy Leader / Lead Member are committed to the improvement journey. Recently introduced scrutiny arrangements are intended to generate wider political ownership of the improvement journey. With 36 out of 63 Councillors having recently joined the Council following May elections, there is a need for Member development to help these Councillors, who are clearly committed, to have the required capability
- Whilst governance arrangements to ensure children are safe are comprehensive, albeit at an early stage, there is clear commitment to ensuring the vision and strategy for the prevention, detection, and delivery of high quality care are in place. Strategic engagement of partners is enabled through a variety of mechanisms, with improving relationships. The community sector spoke positively about their relationship with the Council and reported that current arrangements are open, honest and enabling. The Chief Executive and the DCS are driving the vision and strategy and all agree that the service is going in the right direction, but that it takes time to consistently translate strategy into practice. In summary, the foundations are in place but there is still some way to go to ensure all children and families receive a responsive, high quality and effective service that engages with them to enable positive change

- The Council has invested significantly in the quality of its performance and auditing arrangements and Ofsted have confirmed that these are effective. Although data shows that performance has continued to improve and that there is strong compliance with policy and procedure, meaning that assessments are completed in a timely way and that children are regularly seen, audits, peer reviews and Ofsted have confirmed that the quality of the work generally must be enhanced. The next phase of work requires a relentless focus on quality of practice
- Following a full service restructure, operationally there have been many improvements. The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) ensures appropriate screening of contacts and referrals, the newly introduced Early Help Service is supporting step down from social care and the Troubled Families programme is highly valued. The pace of improvement in relation to development of Early Help over the past six months has been positive and rapid but unfortunately, the Council has not yet managed to secure the active engagement of partners in the delivery of early help which is critical. Most partners recognise this, but report that they need a clearer “road map” to help them to understand what is expected of them. Whilst threshold descriptors are clear and align with an Early Help pathway, thresholds for access to children’s social care are still not sufficiently understood and the interface between Early Help and the front door needs to be clearer to avoid the need for assessments which don’t result in social care intervention. This is recognised by the service
- A deep dive analysis of the effectiveness of children in care services has taken place through the practice partner with a programme of coaching, mentoring and reciprocal visits being arranged. It is clear that improved performance reporting, coupled with mandated compliance has seen social workers begin to address legacy cases where outcomes for children in care are not good enough. The deep dive analysis confirmed that the foundations have been laid to facilitate a cultural and attitudinal shift within the workforce towards improving quality and consistency. Delivery of the sufficiency strategy and enhancing the voice of the child through care planning are critical issues
- Strong and supportive partnerships are essential in ensuring that children grow up in safe environments. Partners and the recent peer review completed by Lincolnshire confirm that the chair of the RSCB has had a positive impact. Partners report that she has facilitated an appropriately challenging but supportive culture where there is honesty and transparency amongst partners. The peer review was impressed with recent developments under the chair’s leadership, including a review of their governance structure, section 11 audits and the sharing of single agency audits to inform partnership priorities, although there is clearly more to do
- It is recognised that a strong corporate centre is important to enable Children and Young People’s Services to deliver good quality care. The Chief Executive is fully committed to creating the capacity and the capability to enable Children and Young People’s Services to be returned to Council control. She has taken action to address some long standing capacity issues in human resources, legal and finance and has recently secured greater ownership across the corporate leadership team for the improvement plan. The need for additional finance capacity has already been recognised and a senior post recruited to. However, this is only recent and I need to test this further and see more evidence of corporate ownership before I could confirm that the corporate service prioritises children’s social care and that the infrastructure is of good quality.

Next Steps

- The next phase of the journey will be a relentless focus on improving the quality of practice through workforce development and more robust managerial oversight from a stable cohort of front line managers. There is also a need for investment in evidenced based approaches which will improve the quality of direct work with children and young people over time
 - Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility and in order for the “system” to be safe, there needs to be more active engagement of partners in the delivery of Early Help. The development of a “roadmap” which helps partners to understand their role and expectations of them is needed
 - The Chief Executive has taken action to address some long standing capacity issues in the corporate infrastructure which needs to be accelerated to evidence that the infrastructure is of good quality with sufficient capacity
 - With 36 out of 63 Councillors having recently joined the Council, there is a need for Member development to help these Councillors, who are clearly committed, to have the required capability.
-

Risks and Issues

- Workforce development is critical to cultural and attitudinal shift so quality of practice can thrive. It is important that the partnership confirms its operating model and that the above investment is available to deliver the workforce strategy
- There have been successful outcomes achieved over the last few months with strong strategic commitment to multi-agency working, but strategic intent has not yet been consistently translated into operational practice
- Corporate ownership and engagement needs to be accelerated to evidence that the infrastructure is of good quality
- In the coming year, politicians will understandably be focused on getting to grips with those services which have been restored to their direct executive control, but there needs to be a continued focus by the whole Council on the importance of restoring public confidence in the quality of services to vulnerable children and families.

MISSION OUTCOME 2: Good, reliable children's care services, well-managed within agreed resources.

Overview

Ofsted inspectors have reviewed the progress of the improvement plan focusing on contact, referral and assessment, including Early Help, as well as leadership and management. Inspectors found contact and referral arrangements were satisfactory, assessments timely with evidence that the child has been seen, and that analysis of risks had slightly improved. The pace of improvement in relation to development of the Early Help programme over the past six months had been positive and rapid and there had been continued improvement in practice regarding child sexual exploitation which is reassuring. However, given the long standing nature of poor performance, there remains a lot to do to ensure that every single piece of work is being done well and followed through to ensure all children and families receive a responsive, high quality and effective service.

- The Council has made great strides in strengthening its leadership capacity within Children and Young People's Services. The DCS is highly regarded and is taking decisive action to identify areas of weakness and improve outcomes for children and young people. The recently appointed Deputy Director of Children's Social Care has been recruited from an authority judged by Ofsted to be good. The most recent Ofsted monitoring visit was positive about leadership and management confirming: "the thread of high level of motivation, clear direction of travel and determined challenge was evident". This positivity was reiterated though a recent leadership and management peer review. Leadership at every level is essential with the current challenge being to recruit permanent high calibre team managers where there is currently a 47% vacancy rate
- A workforce strategy and implementation plan is in development and a working group oversees recruitment of social workers, vacancies and agency staff, in addition to continuous professional development (CPD) and training for social workers. An Advanced Practitioner Framework has been developed by the University of Sheffield to provide CPD and master's level training for all experienced and aspiring social workers. A partnership workforce development strategy, which needs to confirm an operating model that all partners and Children and Young People's Services can subscribe to, is in development. It is recognised there is much yet to be achieved, but it is clear that many of the foundations of a stable, able workforce are in place
- At a political level, the Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader/ Lead Member retained their seats in the recent local elections, which has provided continuing stability at the executive level of the organisation. As Members resume responsibility for the delivery of some services, I have not witnessed any detachment from their children social care responsibilities which is positive
- The Council has invested considerably in Children and Young People's Services, with £11.6 m of extra funding put into the base budget this year (albeit around 50% accounted for historical underfunding). It is estimated that a further £6-£7.5m investment is needed to enable the transformation plan to be delivered, though this could be reduced through savings delivered elsewhere. Children and Young People's Services has been asked to submit business plans so the Council can make informed decisions on any future investment and track impact relative to service performance and demand management. This additional

investment is not yet confirmed and is dependent upon the Medium Term Financial Strategy being approved, which is a piece of work the practice partner is supporting to ensure external challenge

- The practice partner has recently completed a comprehensive budget review which needs to be presented to the executive, in order to finalise the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The practice partner identified some strengths in financial management, however, costs, especially in relation to children in care placements, are higher than desired so value for money cannot be confirmed, though there are plans to address this. There is recognition that the Council needs increased capacity/ capability to support strategic financial planning, with the focus moving from operational budget management support to greater influence on financial strategy.
-

Next Steps

- The permanent leadership team need to have a relentless focus on the quality of practice. Pivotal to their success will be establishing a permanent cadre of first line managers and social workers, which will be a significant HR challenge, alongside the development of a commissioning infrastructure which can bring down costs within the service, and an effective workforce strategy
 - The Medium Term Financial Strategy needs to be finalised, both to drive cost effective practices through service transformation and deliver necessary savings, whilst continuing the improvement journey. The Chief Executive has already recognised that there needs to be greater capacity to undertake the necessary financial strategic planning.
-

Risks and Issues

- Progress in the service will be dependent on the Council continuing to prioritise improvement in Children and Young People's Services at a service and corporate level, whilst negotiating stronger partnerships for operational delivery. The Council is in a good place to deliver this under the leadership of the Chief Executive and Children and Young People's Services senior leadership team
- The service will continue to struggle to achieve financial balance in 2016/17, with the majority of this cost pressure being attributable to placements of looked after children and a reliance on agency staff. This will not be a quick fix. An improved financial strategy and strategic financial planning as well as a stronger commissioning team will assist the Council to resource its key priorities and secure value for money.

MISSION OUTCOME 3: Survivors of child sexual abuse or exploitation will have access to a good range of multi-agency support services.

Ofsted monitoring visits have found continued improvement in practice in relation to CSE, with evidence of significant learning arising from the review of high profile cases. Ofsted's view is *“reactive approaches to children suffering CSE has developed into proactive, sensitive and robust investigative practice between police and social care”*.

- Audits and Ofsted confirm that considerable efforts are made to identify children and young people at risk of CSE and, when identified, they receive bespoke wrap around multi-agency risk assessment and responses. “Evolve”, the multi-agency CSE team, continues to mature and has been strengthened through permanent social workers to ensure consistency of good practice. The high level processes put in place to manage risk and direct investigations are now demonstrating impact. Wider council services (licencing/ housing/ leisure) are making an active contribution to these arrangements. Support and advocacy for young people who have experienced CSE has been secured through an open tender process. Barnardo's and the Council have secured external funding to develop an assertive outreach project. This project is raising awareness, supporting vulnerable young people who are potentially at risk of CSE and providing support to survivors to become peer educators in future
- I am due to meet with the new Chief Constable of South Yorkshire Police in September where I hope to get confirmation of the Police's commitment to the partnership with Children and Young People's Services. I note the improvements that have been steered by a refreshed multi-agency strategy and the RSCB child sexual exploitation sub-group, which is effectively chaired by an ex-police officer experienced in the field. However, resourcing all of the current high profile CSE operations continues to be a challenge. Operation Stovewood is placing considerable demands on the service and the request for funding through the 'Fusion' bid urgently needs addressing.

Next Steps

- Building on the success of Operation 'Clover', which resulted in successful prosecutions, there is an aspiration that the comprehensive partnership model for investigation and victim support is mirrored across all operations. Myself and the Chief Executive are active members of the strategic group overseeing Operation 'Stovewood', working in partnership with the National Crime Agency, and it is vital that there is funding as requested through the 'Fusion' bid to support victims.

Risks and Issues

- Operation 'Stovewood' is presenting significant resource challenges to the Council and its partners and this will be on top of the continued demands presented by the current operations in progress. There is very little room for manoeuvre within the current financial constraints and the financial demands expressed through the 'Fusion' bid need to be addressed urgently. Without this response, there is a high risk that acquittals will be appreciable, undermining confidence in the criminal justice system; and the trajectory of improvement in Rotherham could stall, as caseloads increase and become unmanageable.

IN SUMMARY – THE “SEVEN TESTS”

In summary, and recognising that I was appointed as Commissioner just over three months ago, it is my view that the Council has made significant progress in services for vulnerable children with clear evidence that services are improving. It is positive to report that the data tells us that there are no widespread failures and that the service has worked hard to achieve staff compliance with statutory procedures. The next step is a relentless focus on improving quality of practice. Capacity to manage work in a timely and safe way in the long-term teams is improving, although there remains significant weakness in some areas, particularly for children in care, and improvement for these vulnerable children is a high priority for the DCS and Lead Member and is a specific challenge from myself.

In relation to Children and Young People’s Services’ “seven tests” put forward by the previous Commissioner Malcolm Newsam, I make the following summary comments:

- **A well-functioning corporate service:** the Chief Executive has recognised and is working hard to improve the corporate infrastructure support, but there is evidence that the corporate centre does not yet consistently prioritise improvement in Children and Young People’s Services. Progress is being made, but in some areas the need for improvement is only just being recognised
- **Stable and capable leadership:** this has been secured at both senior officer and Member level. Securing a cadre of permanent team managers is the current priority
- **Continued improvement in the quality and effectiveness of practice:** there is evidence to confirm that there are no longer widespread failures and that there is good compliance with statutory arrangements. There is clear progress against the actions in the Children’s Improvement Plan and evidence that recommendations from quality assurance, audits and Ofsted improvement visits have been dealt with promptly and effectively. However, there is still some way to go to ensure all children and families receive a responsive, high quality and effective service as, in some areas, the quality of practice remains of concern and needs focus and investment
- **Strong and supportive partnerships:** these are evolving and the RSCB is calling agencies to account for their safeguarding arrangements. However, there needs to be greater engagement by partners in the delivery of the improvement plan
- **Robust financial management:** this is improving operationally and the Council has increased its capability in financial strategy and strategic planning in order to effectively support the service to continuously improve and mitigate demand. This is recent and needs to demonstrate impact
- **Compelling strategy for the workforce:** it is clear that the foundations are in place, although there remains a lot to do
- **Effective performance information and quality assurance:** these arrangements are adequate, but this needs to be embedded at all managerial levels.

The full review of Children and Young People’s Services’ “seven tests” is at Appendix E.

This review has also requested that I consider the capability and capacity of the Council to support improvement and I have also been asked to provide a recommendation to ministers as to what arrangements will secure and sustain the required improvement in performance. It is my view that

improvement is fragile and not yet embedded into practice consistently or across partners. Given where the service was, much has been achieved in Children and Young People's Services and the conditions now exist for further improvement. The first tranche of improvements, once commitment, new resources and direction had been established, came quite quickly. Moving on from where we are now to 'good' or 'outstanding', is likely to take at least another two years of hard work and significant challenge even with the full commitment of all officers and politicians. The Council has set an ambition for its Children and Young People's Services to be 'outstanding' by 2018 and at the moment this remains aspirational. Reflecting on the Ofsted regime, finances, demand and national staff shortages, I am not sure this is realistic.

I consider that insisting on a fast transition to a Trust arrangement would be an unwelcome distraction at this stage of the improvement journey. It would involve large numbers of staff having to think about new arrangements, most of which would, in the short-term, offer nothing to the current cohort of children being assisted. Commissioners therefore think that faith in the current improvement journey should be maintained under the current arrangements, but the Council should be required to bring forward an assessment of its own by the end of March 2017. This would consider whether any kind of alternative governance arrangements would be relevant over the longer-term.

It follows that I am not recommending any change to the intervention Directions for Children and Young People's Services at the present time and indeed, consistent with the look ahead for other services, anticipate that we will not be so recommending in October 2016 either. However, I do recommend a further formal review in 6 months' time.

Terms of Reference for the Children's Social Care Review

The aims of the children's social care review are:

- To review and report on progress against the seven tests set out by Commissioner Newsam
- To examine and report on Rotherham's capability and capacity to improve, with the aim of providing a recommendation to ministers as to what arrangements will secure and sustain the required improvement in performance.

Resource

In conducting the review, the Commissioner will want to draw on the support of the DfE appointed improvement advisor, Debbie Barnes, and her team.

Evidence

In reviewing progress, the Commissioner will want to take into consideration:

- Advice from the Lincolnshire County Council improvement team
- Progress report from Rotherham's DCS against the Children's Improvement Plan
- Other relevant progress reports from Commissioners and Rotherham's officers
- Reports from Ofsted's improvement visits.

5.2 Commissioner Ney

MISSION OUTCOME 4: The borough has licensing arrangements that are fit for purpose.



Overview of progress

Since our last progress report in February 2016, Commissioners submitted a further letter and detailed evidence to the Secretary of State in May 2016 setting out the overall progress made in ensuring licensing arrangements in the borough are fit for purpose and recommending restoration of powers. This report sets out the further progress achieved as follows:

Implementation of the new policy has continued:

- All drivers have now completed the mandatory safeguarding training which includes Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). 34 drivers who have not attended have had their licence suspended and are no longer able to drive
- 6th July 2016 was the implementation deadline for drivers to have made arrangements for the installation of taxi cameras (with the exception of a few drivers whose vehicle licences are due to expire in the next few months and will not be renewed due to age of vehicle). 84 taxi cameras have been installed and a further 281 are scheduled for installation over the next few weeks. An audit of any remaining vehicles will be undertaken to pursue compliance with this condition of the licence
- Eight appeals have been made to the magistrates court against the placing of the taxi camera requirement on the vehicle licence and these are scheduled to be heard in September 2016. This will be a key test of this aspect of the new policy
- The Council has successfully defended over 70% of cases where drivers have appealed to the magistrates following the removal of their driver's licences, which is understood to be well above the national average. This is a mix of cases but includes cases where the licence was removed as a result of the audit of drivers against the higher standards in the new policy. In four cases where the Commissioner's decision was upheld by the magistrates court, the drivers have appealed to the crown court for further consideration of their case
- Appendix J and K is the updated schedule of Commissioner decisions taken on the audit of drivers, new applicants and cases of concern since March 2016.

Improvements to the administrative arrangements in the licensing team have also progressed in this period as follows:

- The new organisational structure is in place with external appointees having taken up the posts of Trading Standards and Licensing Manager, Principal Licensing Officer and an additional Enforcement Officer appointed. The remaining new post of Senior Licensing Enforcement Officer is under external recruitment and an appointment will be made shortly. All of this will enable the embedding of improvement across the new combined functions of licensing and enforcement

- The improvement action plan is nearing completion and in particular the information sharing protocols are in place
 - The independent external inquiry by Weightmans LLP is nearing completion and is expected to be published in September 2016 following the completion of a ‘Maxwellisation’ process. However, it is known to comment positively on the arrangements and progress made to tackle past weaknesses and it will not recommend any disciplinary action in relation to past weaknesses (see letters of reassurance at Appendix G and H).
-

Next Steps

Over the next six months the following action will be pursued:

- Subject to the approval of the new Secretary of State, arrangements will be implemented for the restoration of decision-making powers to elected members which will include arrangements for ongoing oversight by the Commissioner
 - A review of overall progress and of the new Licensing Policy will be undertaken and considered by the (advisory) Licensing Board in the autumn
 - Further improvement in administration will be pursued in relation to performance of the enforcement function, referrals protocol for the Debarring Service, a voluntary regime for take-aways to improve ability to tackle CSE activity, ensuring young people and children’s organisations in Rotherham are aware of the new standards, and general promotion of ‘how to complain’
 - Work with other local councils in South Yorkshire, and with Rossendale Council (who are licensing drivers from other boroughs, including Rotherham, at a lower standard) to achieve consistency of higher standards and enforcement as a way of tackling the issue of out of town drivers
 - Contributing from our experience to any government review of taxi licensing as indicated by the Police and Crime Bill.
-

Risks and issues

- Aspects of the new policy successfully legally challenged via the appeals process could result in a requirement to review some elements of the policy. To mitigate this, the Council is ensuring robust presentation of its case at appeals. Commissioner Ney is preparing a witness statement
- Failure to appoint to the Senior Enforcement Officer post is slowing progress in this area of improvement. To combat this, external recruitment is currently underway.

MISSION OUTCOME 5: Effective working with the Police to disrupt criminality, enforce robustly and take action against wrongdoers

Overview of progress

Since the last submission in February 2016, the following has been achieved:

- The new governance arrangements for the Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP) have been implemented
- The SRP has developed a new Community Safety Strategy 2016/17 to 2018/19 which was approved by the Partnership in June 2016
- The SRP held two workshops, with good engagement from all partners, to help develop an outcome-based performance framework. This is now being rolled out
- The SRP has indicated its intent to move to a more strategic and commissioning based approach to make the best use of resources and a start has been made with the commissioning of the Community Safety Fund in line with SRP priorities. This will be an ongoing area of improvement
- The new Assistant Director for Community Safety and Environment was appointed externally and took up post in March 2016. This has enabled good progress to be made in embedding partnership working particularly with South Yorkshire Police. A revised organisational structure is now being developed to improve the Council's capacity to respond to the emerging agenda
- Joint working with the police has improved in terms of information exchange and collaboration on joint operations e.g. to tackle concerns regarding CSE or hotspot areas for anti-social behaviour
- The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has established a South Yorkshire Independent Policing Protests Advisory Panel which the Council has participated in. Whilst there has been some respite in the number of far right marches/counter demonstrations taking place in the town centre, this remains an issue of ongoing concern
- The Council has agreed and is rolling out its PREVENT action plan.

Next Steps

- Embedding the new governance and performance framework arrangements for the Safer Rotherham Partnership
- Making progress on the priority issues and actions as set out in the Community Safety Strategy
- Continued attention to the issues of far right marches and the impact on community cohesion
- Continued use of the Council's powers to disrupt criminality, anti-social behaviour and CSE and to pursue joint enforcement activity in hot spots.

Risks and issues

- The Council fails to improve the capacity of its community safety function. To address this, a revised structure is being developed by the Council in consultation with the Commissioner
- Engagement of partners is not sustained. The partnership is using workshops as well as formal meetings to keep a high level of engagement in place
- Partnership and commitment of South Yorkshire Police (SYP) does not meet expectations and is negatively impacted by changes in senior management within SYP. A new Chief Constable has been appointed and Commissioners continue to build relationships at senior level. The Lead Commissioner is due to meet the Police and Crime Commissioner.

5.3 Chief Executive, Sharon Kemp

MISSION OUTCOME 6: A well-performing Council. Reviewing and strengthening other services; ensuring a deliverable forward strategy; a productive working culture

MISSION OUTCOME 7: A successful Improvement Plan. Others care about Rotherham's progress. We want to ensure credible, honest progress is recognised.



Overview

The new vision for Rotherham and draft Performance Management Framework agreed by Council in December 2015 have been taken forward within the new Corporate Plan, which was unanimously agreed by Council in July 2016 (see Appendix C). The plan sets out four priorities for the borough:

- Every child making the best start in life
- Every adult secure, responsible and empowered
- A strong community in a clean, safe environment
- Extending opportunity, prosperity and planning for the future

In addition, there is an organisational priority for “A modern, efficient Council”.

The Corporate Plan includes a refreshed Performance Management Framework and sets out 86 indicators which will be monitored and progress reported to Cabinet and Commissioners on a quarterly basis. The first quarterly performance report will be presented to the Cabinet/Commissioners' Decision-Making meeting on 12th September 2016. Corporate performance arrangements were subject to a Local Government Association peer challenge in July 2016 and an implementation plan for the recommendations is currently being developed for Members' consideration.

Complementing the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan, the Rotherham Together Partnership launched its plan for 2016/17 in March 2016, and a new Community Strategy is being developed for March 2017.

Rotherham's Improvement Plan concluded its first year in May with 108 actions completed and the remainder carried forward into phase 2. Managers across the Council have been engaged in the development and delivery of the plan, which features 20 objectives and 99 milestones (see Corporate Improvement Plan Phase 2 Action Plan at Appendix A and Improvement Plan progress report at Appendix B). There are clear action plans associated with each objective with ownership by both the Senior Leadership Team and senior managers. The Joint Improvement Board continues to scrutinise progress with political engagement from the Leader, Deputy Leader, Advisory Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and leader of the opposition.

The last six months has seen the embedding of new working relationships between Advisory Cabinet Members and Commissioners, including the way in which decisions are made. The Advisory Cabinet has now met in public eight times as part of the Cabinet and Commissioners decision making meetings. A significant number of reports have now been considered under this arrangement following the return of some powers to Members. Six of the eight Advisory Cabinet members retained their roles after the election in May, providing continuity to good working relationships established between Cabinet members and officers working within their portfolio.

The first all-out local elections in Rotherham since 2004 were held in May, followed by the referendum on EU membership in June. Both were efficiently run by Legal and Democratic Services with engagement from all council services on polling day and at the count. Both elections were delivered without complaint, which reflects well on the Council.

The renewal of the senior officer leadership of the Council has continued with eight new senior officers now having been recruited, including the Chief Executive starting in February 2016 and Assistant Chief Executive in March 2016. Most other new senior officers started between March and May 2016 providing a new look to the leadership team and a consequent reduction in interim roles. The post of Strategic Director Adult Care and Housing has been subject to a second recruitment which proved successful and the new appointee will start in August 2016. The Council has continued to benefit from the retention of Professor Graeme Betts as interim strategic director.

Having a permanent senior management team in place has proved positive and whilst still at an early stage, effective working relationships are being built with commitment to drive forward the Improvement Plan and Corporate Plan. Progress has continued with the implementation of the Laying the Foundations restructuring report of 2015. All functions are now in place and recruitment at Assistant Director (AD) level is continuing, with posts of AD Housing and Neighbourhood Services, AD Customer Information and Digital Services and AD Culture, Sport and Tourism currently at interview stage.

Engagement with Council staff has been a priority for both the Chief Executive and Leader, who have now talked to over 850 staff at briefing sessions covering the new vision, priorities and improvement plan. There has been positive feedback from those attending on the visibility of leadership and direction of the Council. There is continued commitment from the Leader and Chief Executive, and Advisory Cabinet and Senior Leadership Team to ongoing engagement to embed the vision and corporate priorities across the organisation and develop a 'one council' approach. Behaviours developed from staff engagement and customer feedback are an important part of the improvement journey and are contained within the Corporate Plan (see Appendix C). The pulse survey conducted in June 2016 and 13 staff focus groups will inform ongoing workforce approaches going forward. The Council is committed to a corporate approach to address cross-cutting priorities: a series of senior management master classes have been delivered already and there is a programme to be rolled out for the rest of the year.

Work on developing a new approach to neighbourhood working was handed over to the Chief Executive and a Member working group led by the relevant Advisory Cabinet Member. The group is making progress in developing proposals by the end of August 2016 with a Member seminar scheduled for September 2016. Visits to other councils to learn from good practice took place in June and July 2016, and were well attended by Members who have seen really positive examples to inform our proposals. Engagement of partners has been positive in understanding and identifying opportunities to develop multi-agency working at neighbourhood level.

Two new policies were agreed at the July 2016 meeting of Council. The Corporate Safeguarding Policy for children young people and adults sets out how safeguarding is the responsibility of all services across the Council, not just those that work directly with children and vulnerable people. The Chief Executive has created a corporate safeguarding group drawing staff from across the Council at a middle management tier to progress a corporate action plan to embed the ownership and accountability expected. The Corporate Equality and Diversity Policy was an action from the Improvement Plan to ensure that the Council is meeting its statutory duties and further embedding good practice across the organisation. The policy was agreed at the July 2016 meeting with a detailed implementation plan under development.

The Council's budget was agreed in March 2016 and significant work to deliver the savings agreed for the current year is underway. The Council is also developing longer term savings proposals to address the 2017/18 to 2019/20 budget gap. As part of the savings to be achieved in 2016/17, 23 staff have left the Council through voluntary severance since April 2016. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board are committed to continuing their review of budget proposals as these are developed. The Medium Term Financial Strategy has been updated and was agreed by Cabinet/Commissioners in July 2016. The report outlined a corporate approach to developing savings proposals for Members' consideration.

Working alongside Commissioners, partners and the Leader of the Council, work has also progressed on:

- City region devolution deal – regular reports to Advisory Cabinet on progress and both Member and officer engagement in consultation on the powers of the Elected Mayor
- Town Centre Masterplan – agreement to develop a new strategy to regenerate the town centre covering retail, housing, transport, culture and leisure
- Standing up for steel – chaired by the Leader, the task group has been working with Tata Steel to safeguard local jobs
- Involvement with Great British High Street including a film for the Cabinet Office of the benefits of the completion won by Rotherham in 2015
- Draft Locality Plan as part of the Sustainability and Transformation Plan – this has been positively received and acknowledged as one of the most cohesive plans across the SCR footprint by Sir Andrew Cash
- Home Enabling service rated as good by the CQC in July after an inspection
- Plans (agreed in July 2016) to purchase 24 derelict houses in Maltby to refurbish and let as council homes.

Next Steps

Priorities for the next six months are:

- Embedding the Corporate Plan and Performance Management Framework
- Developing a new approach to neighbourhood working
- Savings proposals for a longer-term Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Development of the Community Strategy
- Active participation within the devolution deal.

Risks and Issues

- The 20 objectives within the Phase Two Improvement Plan Action Plan (see Appendix A) have detailed delivery plans, co-ordinated by the relevant officers. These link directly to the progress reporting arrangements to the Joint Board and will include risk assessments and mitigating measures required and in place. The most significant risks will be escalated to either the directorate or corporate risk register, as appropriate
- A longer term Corporate Plan will also be required from April 2017 to ensure greater stability, appropriately integrated with the new Community Strategy
- Corporate performance monitoring and reporting are currently fragmented and a review is underway to establish future staffing requirements.

5.4 Commissioner Kenny

MISSION OUTCOME 8: Productive working with others. Ensuring the Council has purposeful relationships with other councils; the voluntary sector and other agencies and bodies that can contribute to the borough's ambitions.



Overview of progress

Clear Vision

The Council vision was agreed and made public in October 2015. The work of the Council is being driven by this vision. A vision is now being sought for the Community Strategy, building upon consultation in 2015/16 and further workshops with partners.

Rotherham Together Partnership

The Rotherham Together Partnership Plan for 2016/17 was launched in March 2016 with wide support across sectors. It is now being implemented with a range of activities emanating from the earlier consultations under the banner 'let's get Rotherham' (e.g. working, cleaning, talking), all directly linked to the plan's themes.

The appointment in May 2016 of a Partnership Engagement and Communications Officer has enabled the partnership to make good progress in promoting partnership activity and improving its communications.

Work has now begun on developing a longer term Community Strategy and vision and extensive consultation is taking place throughout the summer following endorsement of the initial draft strategy by the Partnership's Chief Executive Officer Group.

In addition to the Partnership and its theme boards, the Council has established a Strategic Housing Forum. The forum, chaired by the relevant Cabinet Member, will make sure that all organisations involved in housing in Rotherham come together to discuss cross-cutting strategic issues.

Local Government Association (LGA)

The LGA Resident Satisfaction Survey is conducted on a six monthly basis. An initial baseline review was conducted in June 2015 and the most recent survey conducted in June 2016.

In comparison to the second poll undertaken in December 2015, the most recent survey shows that satisfaction levels in relation to the Council have fallen, whilst overall Rotherham scores remain low compared to national trends. A more detailed narrative of the survey including results can be found at Appendix I.

City Region and Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) meetings

The Leader and Chief Executive have continued to take an active part in the Sheffield City Region and LEP Board meetings. Extensive discussions continue regarding the Devolution Deal and the mayoral elections,

with public consultation at a Sheffield City Region level now taking place. The Leader, Chief Executive and other senior officers are taking part in meetings on governance, structures and plans for the effective use of funding devolved from Government. Rotherham continues to increase its voice and standing in these meetings.

Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)

The Voluntary Sector Liaison Officer started in post in January 2016 and has held extensive discussions within the Council and with VCS representatives on some of the key issues for joint working.

Discussions on a Rotherham Compact (which provides the framework for a positive relationship between the Council other public sector organisations and the VCS) have begun, with a multi-agency working group established to develop an initial draft. The working group is consulting the LGA for advice and guidance to ensure it reflects the national policy context and adopts good practice from elsewhere.

A draft Compact is due to be endorsed by the Rotherham Together Partnership Chief Executives in early August, triggering a 12-week consultation and engagement process to raise awareness and invite comments and suggestions to help refine the document. The Compact will then be approved by all parties in late 2016.

Neighbourhood Area Application from Dinnington St John's Town Council

The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new right for communities to draw up a neighbourhood plan. The act also placed a duty on local planning authorities to support neighbourhood planning by: providing advice or assistance; holding an examination; and making arrangements for a local referendum on the plan.

When adopted, neighbourhood plans become part of the Council's statutory development plan (alongside the Local Plan) and the policies contained within them apply in the determination of planning applications.

Dinnington Town Council is the first parish/town council in Rotherham to embark on preparing a neighbourhood plan. The town council submitted a neighbourhood area application, which was approved at the Cabinet/Commissioners' Decision-Making meeting on 11th July 2016.

The Council is committed to getting local people involved in planning for development of their local areas. Now that this proposal has progressed to the next stage, it will enable the people of Dinnington to get more involved in the decisions that affect their area.

Next Steps

Over the next 6 months the following actions will be pursued:

- Continue to embed positive, action-focused partnership working across RTP and its supporting theme boards
- Continue to develop a Community Strategy for 2017–2025 to be launched in March 2017
- Grow in influence in the Sheffield City Region and secure devolved funding to pursue Rotherham's growth priorities
- Work to improve perceptions of the Council, building people's confidence and trust
- Launch a Compact with partners and the voluntary and community sector.

Risks and issues

- Failure to successfully implement the actions set out in the Rotherham Together Partnership Plan. Work will need to take place alongside partners to ensure that the plan is a success
- A new combined authority Mayor will be elected in the next 12 months. There is a risk that the Mayor may introduce new ways of working which could impact on the devolution of £30m per annum and how that is spent in the region on transformational projects
- The LGA survey responses were disappointing and could be an indication that changing the perceptions of the citizens of Rotherham may take longer than originally anticipated.

MISSION OUTCOME 10: A growing local economy. Ensuring the borough's own efforts and work with others increases the number of good jobs and housing opportunities.

Overview of progress

Local Plan

The Council submitted the Sites and Policies document to central government in March 2016. The public inquiry into the plan started in July with initial hearings and will continue in the autumn. The planned adoption of this document next year will allow for the allocation of new land for housing and employment uses and will accelerate progress towards achieving the Local Plan targets of building over 14,000 new homes and allocating over 235 hectares of employment land by 2028.

Business Growth Board

The Business Growth Board is continuing to progress Rotherham's economic growth agenda, providing the private sector challenge and advice to ensure decisions meet the needs of the Rotherham business community. The board has recently identified a small number of priority projects and is working with Council officers to articulate strong business cases to gain devolved funding.

Rotherham Economic Growth Plan 2015-25

The Rotherham Economic Growth Plan has entered the implementation phase. Progress to note includes:

- Gulliver's Valley leisure development at Pit House West progressing with the sale of land completed in August 2016, providing a significant boost to the local economy and leisure provision in the borough
- Interviews with 30 of Rotherham's growing companies to understand what help they might need to continue their growth
- Y Accelerator (intensive mentoring programme with the aim of fast-tracking ideas into high growth businesses) operational for a second phase – 5 new businesses coming to Rotherham to start up their businesses. Y Accelerator One resulted in two Korean businesses remaining in Rotherham to pursue their business
- Improving school/business connections via the Sheffield City Region enterprise advisor programme
- Development work continues around the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District and Rotherham HE Campus.

Refreshed Town Centre Masterplan

The Rotherham Renaissance Plan refresh has been completed and developed into a supplementary planning document, providing a framework for future planning decisions in Rotherham town centre.

This has highlighted the need for a new Town Centre Masterplan. The masterplan will focus on a wider town centre area and address the issues around deliverability of key town centre development sites. It is expected to be launched in April 2017.

Funding to support major projects

The Council is actively pursuing several development options to ensure the town centre is supported through new and exciting physical regeneration projects, including the proposed acquisition of Forge Island in the town centre for a proposed leisure development, and the redevelopment/refurbishment of the existing bus interchange.

Significant capital funding has been approved within the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for investment in the town and projects are now being worked upon with developers to deliver those plans.

Sheffield City Region (SCR) skills agenda

The Leader continues to be an active member of the SCR's skills executive board, which is putting in place a longer-term strategy to provide a clear focus for spend and activity.

Learning from best practice, the Leader is involved in discussions with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) to put arrangements in place to deal with future economic challenges facing Rotherham and the Sheffield City Region.

Emergency support and additional funding for TATA Steel

The local Tata Steel taskforce has continued to meet on a regular basis, chaired by the Leader. In January 2016, financial support was approved by BIS for business and redundancy support. Progress includes:

- Business Minister visited Rotherham on 4th April 2016
- 478 Tata employees have been provided with 1-2-1 support and advice
- Two job fairs were organised on-site at the Tata premises in Rotherham and were attended by 517 people with 35 organisations looking to recruit
- As of 14 July, of the 319 employees who actually left Tata, 95 have secured jobs. 200 people have been supported with training packages to help them get new jobs
- At 14 July, 113 individuals were still on training courses or waiting for training to be arranged
- Support has been offered to 17 supply chain companies
- Seven introduction to self-employment events were run with 66 attendees
- Four business start-up training workshops held with 46 attendees in total, leading to 23 follow up 1-2-1 meetings, three grant applications being processed and, to date, five former Tata steel employees starting new businesses.

HS2

The Council has been actively involved in the HS2 proposals as part of joint working across Sheffield City Region and Transport for the North (TfN). Key meetings have been taking place, including around the new proposed route through South Yorkshire. The new alignment has significant implications for the borough, its residents and businesses and it therefore remains a high priority for the Council.

Awards

Rotherham was named overall winner in the Association of Town & City Management's (ACTM) annual awards in March 2016, as well as coming first in the Diversifying the Business Mix category. Judges said they were impressed with the range of opportunities and support provided to entrepreneurs and the cluster of independent businesses that have helped revitalise the town's retail offer.

Rotherham town centre was also recently used as a case study as part of the Association of Town & City Management's submission to inform the government on its spending reviews and plans to tackle the housing crisis. The study focused on the importance of town centre management in Rotherham and the local authority's role in attracting investment and transforming vacant properties into in-town living, making use of otherwise underused historic, listed buildings and boosting the local economy.

Housing

Rotherham has submitted a bid to the Government's new £1.2 billion Starter Homes Land Fund to help prepare key sites in the town centre for residential development.

The Council is also undertaking a number of key work streams to work towards the target of 900 homes. Following a comprehensive review of council-owned sites, 10 have been sold, which is expected to lead to the creation of 30 new homes. Other, more substantial, sites are being prepared for informal tender to deliver a larger number of homes. The Council is aiming to unlock the potential of sites with lower market values by combining them with more attractive sites in a 'cluster deal'. Tenders for seven site cluster deals have been received and are being evaluated.

The Council has also acquired more than 90 new homes for council rent in areas of high demand, and Housing and Adult Services teams are collaborating to develop new specialist accommodation for older people, young people and people with learning disabilities and autism. Sites are also being prepared for sale to individuals and small builders for self-build/custom build projects. Purchasing existing properties can often provide better value for money and the Council has successfully negotiated with the owner of the Little London Estate, Maltby to acquire 24 privately owned properties which have stood empty for some time and are in need of investment.

Next Steps

Continue to implement the Economic Growth Plan by:

- Development of a new Town Centre Masterplan
- Delivery of town centre development sites
- Work to ensure that funding is maximised for Rotherham projects from funding devolved to Sheffield City Region
- Progress the Forge Island plan
- Secure developer interest in Rotherham.

Risks and issues

- Delay in the tram-train trial project will delay the connectivity of Rotherham to the Sheffield City Region (SCR)
- Failure to secure additional funding from the SCR devolution funding
- Demonstrable progress in identifying and delivering strategic development sites is necessary to attract and retain developer interest
- The challenging nature of the Rotherham property market means projects may well have viability gaps and financial solutions will need to be found
- The changes without consultation to the HS2 station location/route may cause connectivity issues for the citizens of Rotherham and could create conflict within the combined authority/Local Enterprise Partnership
- The uncertainty around the Brexit decision and European funding may result in a loss of funds to Rotherham.

5.5 Commissioner Myers

MISSION OUTCOME 9: Integrated health and social care. Ensuring good care and a high quality health service within available budgets.



Overview of progress

Under the leadership of a very experienced interim chief officer, Professor Graeme Betts, the service has been awoken from years of mediocre slumber. The service has not been starved of money and in 2013/14 was the 14th largest spender per head of population in England.

The service does face a big financial challenge. In order to live within anticipated budget limits and support more spending in Children and Young People's Services the requirement is to reduce expenditure by £20m over the next three years. Demographic changes add to the pressures with a modelled 62% rise in 65-84 year olds and a 175% rise in over 85s over the next 15 years.

However, arrangements are currently out of kilter with other comparable services. More people have been admitted to residential care and more reliance was put on old fashioned day centres. Homecare was over weight for small packages of care and not enough work was put in to support the neediest people in their own homes.

A new, fresh start, vision and strategy for adult social care have been agreed by the Council.

The service has a well thought through transformation plan called the Development Programme for Adult Social Care – with two broad themes:

- Developing alternatives to traditional services, which covers all services to older people, those with learning disabilities, people with physical disabilities, those with mental health issues and those transitioning from Children and Young People's Services
- Customer journey improvements, which seeks to improve preventative services and maximise services to ensure independence.

This programme comprises eight work streams and is well planned, adequately resourced and well monitored.

Real change, aimed at both improving the experience for service users and utilising resources more effectively, is beginning to happen. Changes have been agreed to free up and release one building previously used for intermediate care provision, with this important care relocated. The Home Enabling Service, which works intensively to support independence for those who might otherwise be at risk of prolonged institutional care, is being radically re-organised and more use has been made of commercial operators. Better commissioning has improved advocacy and other services aimed at promoting customer voice. All change is being planned well with detailed consultation with service users and the workforce. This means change cannot be rushed. Further service changes, including institutional closures, are likely to take place late 2016 and through 2017 and 2018.

To support staff and Councillors to face these necessary changes, visits are being made to other councils. A cross-party working group has looked at the case for change and the scrutiny arrangements are robust.

Due to tight management, the service managed to finish last year with a small underspend of £0.5m.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) conducted an announced inspection of the Home Enabling Service on 29th and 30th June 2016. The service has been rated as 'good' overall and feedback is positive, stating that there are robust systems in place to manage risks to people. The report has been produced using a new approach to regulate and inspect adult social care services.

The Council is undertaking a range of initiatives to improve the way it provides leadership at a local level by reaching out to its partners to understand the work they do and to ensure that joint work is taking place to deliver more integrated services at a local level. New initiatives are being funded at a local level to help build community assets and broaden the range of organisations working in the community. A major initiative which was launched recently is the integrated locality pilot based at Doncaster Gate. This initiative seeks to deliver additional and improved services, ensuring better health and care for local people. The Council and its partners have been able to build on this work to produce the Rotherham Place Plan. This plan sets out the work that will be undertaken in Rotherham to deliver sustainable care and health services over the next few years. Under the leadership of Cllr Roche, this plan has been supported by the Health and Wellbeing Board, with Cabinet and Scrutiny also engaged in the process. The plan leaves Rotherham well placed to deliver significant improvements in locality working across a range of services, which will be of enormous benefit for local people.

Next steps

- The service has been very well led by the interim chief officer, but given the planned length of the improvement journey, a permanent appointment was appropriate and Anne Marie Lubanski arrives from North Yorkshire on 8th August 2016. She joins two new appointments to Assistant Director posts made earlier this year. This transition will be supported by Professor Betts
- Safeguarding vulnerable adults remains an important everyday business. The multi-agency Rotherham Safeguarding Adults Board has a new experienced chair and these arrangements seem to work well.
- The service has plenty of scope for improvements and this will strengthen taxpayer value, as well as improve choice and control for carers and individual service users
- The Advisory Cabinet Member, David Roche, is conscientious and committed and puts in the hours. He is well placed to assume full executive responsibility later this year. Councillor Roche meets with the chief officer regularly and four weekly meetings take place with the Commissioner to look over progress and discuss upcoming decisions
- Rotherham Council is part of one of 44 'footprint areas' planning the future of local health and care services. Final plans are due later this year.

Risks and Issues

- The local health economy is under quite a strain. Relationships with the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) have been strengthened but, given the precarious nature of national NHS finances, there is a potential for disputes between the CCG and the Council
- So far the trade unions have been responsible and mature in their willingness to discuss change. There is a risk, however, that this will break down
- Further human interest stories will arise as services change. This will feel like pressure not to change, and firm political, commissioner and officer leadership will be needed to ensure the case for change is prosecuted whilst appropriate flexibility to protect individuals is offered.

MISSION OUTCOME 11: A healthy local democracy, well prepared to take back responsibilities and accountabilities, probably in stages.

Progress against this mission outcome is contained within the Lead Commissioner's letter to the Secretary of State dated 11th August and can be found [here](#).

MISSION OUTCOME 12: The full range of powers and accountabilities restored. Two government departments will need to be convinced.

Progress against this mission outcome is contained within the Lead Commissioner's letter to the Secretary of State dated 11th August and can be found [here](#).

Supplementary evidence
to support this report
is available
in the separate
Appendices document.