

**ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Annual Governance Statement  
2018/19**

## **ROTHERHAM MBC ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2018/19**

### **1 SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY**

- 1.1 Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (the Council) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness (the Best Value duty).
- 1.2 In discharging its overall responsibilities, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, and ensuring there are effective arrangements in place for the management of risk.
- 1.3 The Council has a Code of Corporate Governance in line with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework: *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*. The Code can be found at [www.rotherham.gov.uk](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk)
- 1.4 This Annual Governance Statement meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 in relation to the publication of an Annual Governance Statement.

### **2 THE COUNCIL'S OVERALL GOVERNANCE DURING 2018/19**

- 2.1 Following Directions issued by the Secretaries of State for Housing and Communities and Local Government on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015, the Government appointed five Commissioners to take on all executive responsibilities at the Council and responsibilities relating to licensing\*<sup>1</sup>. By the start of the 2018/19 financial year three Commissioners remained, led by Commissioner Mary Ney. The Lead Commissioner was assisted by the Children's Social Care Commissioner, Commissioner Patricia Bradwell and Commissioner Julie Kenny CBE.

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<sup>1</sup> The Commissioner for Children's Social Care Services had been in place since October 2014 having been appointed initially by the Secretary of State for Education following the failings identified by Ofsted.

- 2.2 At the start of 2018/19 the Commissioners retained responsibility for:
- children’s safeguarding and all other children’s social care services,
  - deciding on the appointment and dismissal of statutory officers (the Head of Paid Service, Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer)
  - for adult social care, the Council’s partnership with the NHS and the domestic abuse aspect of community safety.
- 2.3 In addition, the relevant Commissioner could, if they considered a Cabinet decision was particularly significant and carried notable risk in terms of the best value duty, make a formal written recommendation to the relevant Executive Councillor.
- 2.4 On 14<sup>th</sup> June 2018 the results of an independent check (a “Health Check”) of the Council was published. The Health Check was carried out between 27<sup>th</sup> February and 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2018 and was part of the move through the final phases of the intervention. Its purpose was to provide an independent critique on whether the intervention had served its purpose and whether the Council was now fit to continue its improvement journey without Commissioner oversight.
- 2.5 The Health Check reported that, overall, the Council had demonstrated that it was fit to continue its improvement journey without Commissioner oversight. It reported that “the speed and extent of the improvements delivered since 2015 are impressive.” The report recognised that the next stages of improvement would be challenging but it expressed confidence that the right foundations were in place and were sufficiently strong.
- 2.6 As a result of the Health Check, the Commissioner Team recommended to the Secretary of State that the government intervention in Rotherham could be concluded. On the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2018, the Secretary of State announced that he would remove the Commissioners from the Council but that the Council should submit to him an independent review of their performance to ensure compliance with the requirements of Part 1 of the 1999 Act. This report should be submitted no later than 18<sup>th</sup> February 2019.
- 2.7 The final independent review was carried out in February 2019 and the report was sent to the Council on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2019. The review stated that the Council has continued to make good progress since Commissioners were stood down in September 2018 and has acted on the recommendations made by the independent progress review reported in June 2018.

- 2.8 In particular, the report noted that the pace of improvement across the Council had increased beyond the Commissioner's expectations and that this gave assurance that the council was compliant with the best value duty. It also stated that the Council has now assumed an "air of calm and confidence" enabling it to set high ambitions for the future.
- 2.9 The review team were pleased that the Council had made such strong progress over recent months and stated that the Council has the vision, capacity and structures to be a successful council. They stated that it will be important for the Council to:
- Maintain its momentum of improvement
  - To pick up pace in delivery
  - To broaden its ambition and
  - To embrace innovation.
- 2.10 As a result of the findings of the review, the Secretary of State announced on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019 that he was content to let the Directions relating to the governance of the Council lapse on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019, as he saw no evidence that suggested that Government should seek to extend the Directions or put in place new ones.

### **3 THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK**

- 3.1 The Council's general governance arrangements include a range of policies, procedures and activities that are designed to be consistent with the expectations for public sector bodies. They are drawn together by the Council's Code of Corporate Governance which was refreshed and approved by the Audit Committee in November 2018.
- 3.2 The Council has a Council Plan which was refreshed with new performance measures during the year. This Plan sets out the direction and priorities for the year ahead and defines the vision for the borough as

*"Rotherham is our home, where we can come together as a community, where we seek to draw on our proud history to build a future we can all share. We value decency and dignity and seek to build a town where opportunity is extended to everyone, where people can grow, flourish and prosper, and where no one is left behind. To achieve this as a council we must work in a modern, efficient way, to deliver sustainable services in partnership with our local neighbourhoods, looking outwards, yet focused relentlessly on the needs of our residents".*

3.3 Flowing from the vision, there are four priorities for the Council:

- 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

Each of these priorities was underpinned by a fifth priority, “A modern, efficient Council”. The Plan detailed how each directorate contributes to those priorities and included performance measures to be met.

3.4 The governance framework comprises the systems, processes, values and behaviours by which the Council is directed and controlled. It also comprises the activities through which the Council accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

3.5 The Council also has a system of internal control which is a significant part of the governance framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore provide proportionate and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is designed to:

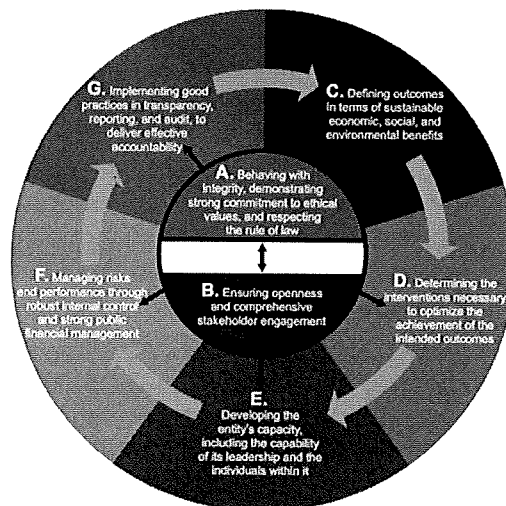
- identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Council policies, aims and objectives
- evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and assess the impact should they be realised, and
- manage the risks efficiently, effectively and economically.

3.6 The table below sets out the key elements of an effective Governance framework, and how they were in place in the Council throughout the 2018/2019 year.

<b>Council Committee or group</b>	<b>Governance Function</b>
Full Council	Endorses the Constitution Approves the policy and financial frameworks
Cabinet	Primary decision making body of the Council Approves the Council plan. Comprises the Leader of the Council and Cabinet members who have responsibility for specific areas
Audit Committee	Considers all issues relating to audit matters, both internal and external. Monitors and reviews the effectiveness of risk management systems, including systems of internal control
Standards and Ethics Committee	Promotes high standards of conduct by elected members and monitors the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct
Overview and Scrutiny Committees	Reviews and scrutinises the decisions and action taken in connection with any functions of the Council, including "pre-Scrutiny" of some recommendations due to be considered by Cabinet. Make reports or recommendations to the Council or Cabinet with respect to the discharge of any functions of the Council
Chief Executive, Strategic and Assistant Directors	Sets governance standards Lead and apply governance standards across the Council
Internal Audit	Performs independent and objective reviews of all areas of the Council Undertakes fraud and irregularity investigations and proactive anti-fraud work
Areas or disciplines which are not directly responsible for delivery of services, for example Performance Management, Risk Management, Finance, HR, Legal, Information Security, Health and Safety.	Responsibilities include designing policies, setting direction and ensuring compliance
Management. Assurance at this level comes directly from those responsible for delivering specific objectives, projects or operational areas.	Responsibilities include identifying risks and improvement actions

## 4 HOW THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK IS APPLIED

- 4.1 The principles set out in both the CIPFA/SOLACE *Delivering Good Governance* Guidance applicable to 2018/19 and the Council's own Code are shown in the diagram below:



- 4.2 The table below indicates the detailed governance arrangements in place during the year and their operation, with reference to these principles:

Principle	Arrangements at Rotherham MBC
Principle A - Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law	<p>The Council has a constitution and a supporting set of rules and procedures that govern its activities in accordance with legislative requirements.</p> <p>All key decisions require review by Legal and Financial Services to ensure all relevant requirements and considerations are taken account of.</p> <p>The Council has arrangements for encouraging the reporting of suspected wrong-doing. The Council's Whistle-blowing policy has been revised in line with current guidance.</p> <p>The Council has a Member/Officer Protocol which has been adopted by the Council. It is communicated to all Members, and is emphasized through training on the Code of Conduct which forms part of the induction programme for Members and their continuous development programme. Codes of Conduct for Members and Officers define conflicts of interest and how they should be treated.</p> <p>The Code of Practice, Officer/Member Protocol, constitution and Whistle-blowing Policy can be found at <a href="http://www.rotherham.gov.uk">www.rotherham.gov.uk</a></p>

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Principle B -  
Ensuring openness  
and  
comprehensive  
stakeholder  
engagement.

The Council is committed to openness and acting in the public interest. The current Council Plan (covering the period to March 2020) is based on a series of public consultation exercises which resulted in a new vision for the borough which was approved 28<sup>th</sup> October 2015. The Council Plan can be found at [www.rotherham.gov.uk](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk)

Delivery of this vision is embedded in day-to-day activities across the Council and is monitored through the performance management framework.

The Council conducts a Residents' Satisfaction Survey every six months, based on the Local Government Association's national model. This has continued throughout the year and the results have been reported through the performance management framework.

During 2018 a new Neighbourhood Strategy was published, covering the period 2018-2025. The strategy sets out the way in which the Council will work with and listen to its communities. It commits the Council to listening and acting on feedback and working with partners to plan for the future.

A new Consultation and Engagement Policy was developed in early 2019 and will be rolled out during 2019-2020. This Policy sets out the Council's commitment to consult and engage with the public and states that the Council will listen, inform and work in partnership with service users and stakeholders, including their views in the shaping, commissioning and delivery of services wherever possible. The Policy is underpinned by a consultation toolkit for services to use so that they comply with the Policy.

The Rotherham Together Partnership is well established and partner organisations have an opportunity to provide the Chair role in future years. The new Partnership strategy, The Rotherham Plan 2025, was published in early 2017. The Plan can be found at <http://rotherhamtogetherpartnership.org.uk/>

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Principle C -  
Defining outcomes  
in terms of  
sustainable  
economic, social,  
and environmental  
benefits.

The Council's Council Plan was in place throughout 2018/19 which set out the principal outcomes required in the course of the financial year. This has been monitored throughout the year in line with the Council's Performance Management Framework. This involves quarterly consideration of the performance measures in public sessions of Cabinet.

Sitting alongside the Council Plan are numerous other strategies which set out more detail around the required outcomes. These include the Rotherham Housing Strategy, Rotherham Economic Growth Plan, Safer Rotherham Strategy,

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Rotherham Local Plan Core Strategy, Municipal Waste Management Strategy and the Rotherham Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Each Service area has a Service Plan which links to both the Council Plan and the relevant Strategies and these Plans are reviewed by individual Services.

In addition to the above, the Council's Risk Management framework links to the Service Plans and enables Leadership Teams to monitor and respond to the risks around each key element of the overall plan that they are accountable for.

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Principle D -  
Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.

As set out above, the Council Plan and associated Service Plans form the basis for all interventions planned by the Council. All Business decisions are accompanied by a business case and options appraisal and the corporate report templates require information explaining the legal and financial implications of decisions.

Delivery of the Plans is monitored through Quarterly Monitoring Reports and Contract Monitoring Reports and the Council has Performance Reports which are aligned to the Council Plan priorities.

All decisions need to be taken in the context of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, the Capital Programme and the Revenue budget process.

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Principle E -  
Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.

The Council has been working with the Local Government Association to support the development of all councillors, and this will continue in future years. Personal development planning is also now available to all Members and take up has now reached 100%.

Job descriptions are in place for all posts throughout the Council and these are supported by recruitment and appointment policies and procedures. There is a comprehensive training programme for officers linked to a Workforce Development Plan and the Corporate Workforce Strategy. Each Council employee has a Personal Development Plan which links to their service's Service Plan and is reviewed at regular intervals.

A series of projects are in place to deliver service transformation across the Council as part of the "Big Hearts, big Changes" programme. Many of these projects are designed to increase the Council's capability and capacity to meet increased service pressures and budgetary constraints.

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<p>Principle F - Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.</p>	<p>The Council has a Risk Management Policy and Guide which is fully embedded and is reviewed annually. This Policy requires the Strategic Risk Register to be reviewed at regular intervals by the Strategic Leadership team and for Directorate and Service level risk registers to be reviewed at least quarterly. Corporate report templates all contain 'risk implications' sections and Risk Management also links closely to Service Plans. The Audit Committee reviews risks and the Risk Management process at every meeting.</p> <p>Performance Reports are aligned to Council Plan priorities and are considered in public and are also linked to the Risk Policy.</p> <p>The Council has an Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy and Strategy which is frequently reviewed and an Internal Audit function which issues an annual opinion on governance, risk management and internal control. The council also has a Corporate Information Governance Group which is responsible for improving its approach to securing information. This group is supported by a dedicated Information Governance team as well as ongoing monitoring of Data Protection Act / Freedom of Information compliance.</p>
<p>Principle G - Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, and audit to deliver effective accountability.</p>	<p>The Council has a Corporate Communications Strategy and this includes the publication on its website of details around budgets and spending, Senior Officer remuneration, Performance Information and reports, the Annual Report and Statement of Accounts and the Annual Governance Statement.</p> <p>The Local Code of Corporate Governance is refreshed annually in accordance with CIPFA/SOLACE principles and any documents proposed for publication are scrutinised and approved by Senior Leadership Team, Cabinet and Audit Committee prior to publication.</p> <p>The Head of Internal Audit presents an annual report to Audit Committee to inform members of Internal Audit activity that has taken place during the year. The Audit Committee meets five times a year and receives reports from both Internal and External Audit. During the year the Audit Committee agreed an update to its Terms of Reference based on CIPFA guidance.</p> <p>The Council is subject to regular inspections from regulatory bodies, including Ofsted, Care Quality Commission etc. The outcomes of these inspections, together with the Council's responses are made available via the website.</p> <p>An appropriate financial control and reporting framework for the Council is in place, with all aspects of revenue and capital spending compared to budget plans being routinely reported throughout the year to the officer Strategic Leadership Team and Cabinet.</p>

### **How is the effectiveness of our Governance Arrangements monitored?**

4.3 The Council reviews the effectiveness of its governance framework, including the system of internal control, every year. The ten key elements of assurance that inform this governance review are:

- 1) The Chief Executive, Strategic and Assistant Directors whose role includes:
  - Corporate oversight and strategic planning
  - Annual corporate governance assessment which is informed by annual Assurance Statements from each Strategic and Assistant Director
  - Implement and monitor regulatory and other governance protocols
- 2) Monitoring Officer who has oversight of:
  - Legal and regulatory assurance
  - Monitors the operation of the Constitution
- 3) The Section 151 Officer who has oversight of the proper administration of the Councils financial affairs
- 4) Information Governance, which is monitored by:
  - The Designated Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO)
  - Data Protection procedures
  - Information Security and Records Management procedures
- 5) The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, who carry out policy review and challenge as well as have an overview and carry out scrutiny of specific topics
- 6) The Audit Committee which;
  - Reviews the effectiveness of internal and external audit
  - Considers the adequacy of the internal control, risk management and governance arrangements
  - Carries out a Self-assessment
- 7) Internal Audit who produce;
  - An Annual opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of internal controls, risk management and governance arrangements
  - An Internal audit plan, reports and action tracking reported to Audit Committee

8) External Audit / Inspections which include:

- Financial statements audit
- Value for Money conclusion
- Care Quality Commission, Ofsted, etc.

9) Risk Management which incorporates:

- A Risk management policy and strategy
- Quarterly monitoring and reporting of Strategic Risks

10) Counter Fraud work, which includes:

- Anti-Fraud and Corruption and Whistleblowing arrangements
- Anti-Money Laundering Policy and supporting arrangements
- Codes of Conduct for Officers and Members
- Financial and Contract Procedure Rules

**What specific assurances does the Council receive about the effectiveness of our Governance Arrangements?**

4.4 The Council receives a number of specific assurances around its governance arrangements from the following:

**Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer)**

4.5 The CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) in Local Government (2016) demands that assurance is provided on a number of governance arrangements relating to the organisation including financial control, reporting, the approach to decision making, compliance with relevant codes and the influence of the CFO within the organisation. These have been considered within the context of this Statement and it has been established that the Council's arrangements conform to the CIPFA requirements and the Section 151 Officer has no significant concerns.

**Monitoring Officer**

4.6 The Monitoring Officer is required to report to the Council in any case where it appears that any proposal, decision or omission by the authority has given rise to or is likely to or would give rise to any contravention of any enactment, rule of law or code of practice or maladministration or injustice in accordance with Sections 5 and 5A of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989; (LGHA 89). These have been considered within the context of this statement and the Monitoring Officer has no significant concerns to report.

## **Internal Audit**

- 4.7 In December 2017 Internal Audit was assessed as generally conforming to Public Sector Internal Audit Standards by an internal review. This was confirmed by another internal assessment in January 2019 carried out by a qualified and experienced auditor who had just joined the Council.
- 4.8 It is a requirement of the UK Public Sector Internal Audit Standards that an annual report is produced setting out the work performed by Internal Audit and the opinion of the *Chief Audit Executive* (at Rotherham this is the Head of Internal Audit) on the Council's internal control environment.
- 4.9 The Annual Internal Audit report was presented to the Audit Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2019. The report confirmed positive progress had been made during the year, but also highlighted areas identified from the work of Internal Audit where further improvement could be made.
- 4.10 Internal Audit concluded that the Council has maintained overall an adequate and effective framework of governance, risk management and control.
- 4.11 During 2018/19 the Internal Audit plan included a review of the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement. The report gave substantial assurance that the Statement complies with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework, was prepared properly and is an accurate representation of the governance arrangements within RMBC. No recommendations were made in the report.

## **External Audit**

- 4.12 The Council's external auditor is required each year to carry out a statutory audit of the Council's financial statements and give an assessment of the Council's value for money arrangements. KPMG issued an unqualified opinion on the Council's financial statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 year on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2018.
- 4.13 in addition, KPMG issued an unqualified conclusion on the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2018. This conclusion stated that the Council had, in all significant respects, proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the financial year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.
- 4.14 The Council's new auditors, Grant Thornton LLP, will issue a final ISA 260 report for 2018/19 as well as an opinion on the financial statements and a conclusion on

the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness once their work is complete.

## **5 UPDATE ON MATTERS REFERRED TO IN THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT FOR 2017/18**

- 5.1 Section 2 of this Statement covers in detail the work that has been carried out in the course of the year by the Commissioners which has resulted in the Government's intervention in the Council ceasing on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 and is not repeated here.

### **Adult Social Care**

- 5.2 The 2017/18 Annual Governance Statement reported the progress that Adult Social Care Services had continued to make against their improvement priorities. The AGS reported that a new improvement plan was in place, supported by the Improvement Board and additional peer support and that work was taking place to reduce costs and improve value for money in the service.
- 5.3 Adult Care continues to develop and make improvements to its offer of care and support to the residents of Rotherham. This has been building on a strength based approach to assessments through training and support via the Principal Social Worker role. There is focus on assessment and review activity and this is ongoing as demand and complexity has increased over the 12 months. Staff engagement was initiated in readiness for staff consultation being initiated in April/May 19 around a new operating model, this was positively received. Assurance for all elements of the directorate is monitored via the Project Assurance Meeting chaired by the Strategic Director.

### **Information Governance**

- 5.4 In last year's Annual Governance Statement it was reported that the Council failed to retain its Public Services Network (PSN) certificate due to insufficient progress being made to action the previous years' requirements. This has not had any impact on the business of the Council but there was a risk, should lack of progress continue, that the Council's permissions to share confidential data with other organisations would be removed. It was also reported that an action plan had been developed and action was being taken to deal with the identified weaknesses. Delivery of the action plan has progressed well with 90% of tasks completed during the last 12 months and regular discussion with the PSN office to discuss this progress. One large task remains, which is the replacement of the ageing council telephone system. This will be replaced during 2019/20 and a plan is currently in development.

- 5.5 The rate of completion for Freedom of Information Requests within the required timescales continues to improve over previous years and performance is now good. The Right of Access Requests (previously known as DSAR) are also improving, although significant changes to the process have had to take place to achieve this improvement. Electronic redaction methods are now in use and have assisted in beginning to see the completion rates improve significantly, although these levels are not yet at an acceptable level.

### **Medium Term Financial Strategy**

- 5.6 The Council's budget for 2018/19 brought the total amount of savings which the Council has had to address since 2011/12, to £177m.
- 5.7 The Council also continued to face significant cost and demand pressures on social care services. In setting the budget for 2018/19, and in recognition of these continuing pressures, a budget contingency of £10m was earmarked, including planned use of £5.2m of reserves.
- 5.8 The provision of the budget contingency for 2018/19 was to provide time for the outcomes of a number of cross-cutting reviews being undertaken to demonstrate a more strategic approach to the budget and savings, where previously there had been an over-reliance on a traditional "top-slicing" approach. This would provide new budget proposals for 2019/20 and beyond to address some of the funding gaps in those years as well as identifying actions to address the spending pressures in social care.
- 5.9 Close financial monitoring during 2018/19 and early identification of mitigating actions to address adverse budget variances, enabled the Council to achieve a financial outturn which used only £2m of the £5.2m of reserves set aside within the budget contingency, thereby protecting £3.2m of reserves for use in future years.

## **6 OTHER SIGNIFICANT ISSUES ARISING DURING 2018/19**

### **Delivering the Financial Strategy**

- 6.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy was fully reviewed during 2018/19, alongside the development of a two-year budget for 2019/20 and 2020/21, setting out the Council's financial picture to 2021/22.
- 6.2 The biggest challenge for the Council remains the cost and demand pressures on social care services. Following the substantial in-depth work and analysis done on these services during 2018/19, to establish where the cost pressure could be addressed or mitigated without adverse impact on vulnerable children and adults, the budgets for 2019/20, 2020/21 and the MTFs projections for 2021/22 have been rebased for these services. This was done alongside reviews of all Council

budgets and savings options and a refresh of the Council's reserves strategy, resulting in a budget and MTFS which, supported by the reserves strategy, is considered to be sustainable in the medium term.

- 6.3 The biggest risk to the Council remains the pressure on social care services and the ability of all services to deliver the service and cost changes agreed within the budgets.
- 6.4 There is also uncertainty nationally for Local Government funding beyond 2019/20 pending the outcomes of the Fair Funding review, Spending Review 2019 and the proposed revisions to the Business Rates Retention Scheme.


## **7 SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OR DEVELOPMENTS AFTER YEAR END**

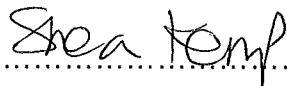
- 7.1 There have been no significant events or developments relating to the governance system between the year-end and the date on which this statement has been signed.



**8 LEADER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE STATEMENT 2018/19**

- 8.1 This Annual Governance Statement fairly reflects the position at Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council during the year and up to the date of signing.
- 8.2 The Council has continued to make good progress on its improvement journey throughout 2018/19 and this is supported by removal of Commissioners and the end of intervention following the positive comments made by the Commissioners in their final review.
- 8.3 The Council Vision remains current and has been reflected in the Council Plan which has been in place throughout the year. This Plan has been monitored through the Performance Management framework which includes public reporting of Council performance against the Plan. Refreshed indicators under the Council Plan have been finalised and were approved in May 2019. The Medium Term Financial Strategy approved in February 2019 sets out the prioritisation and funding of the Council's aspirations. These and other guiding documents developed during the year provide the building blocks for the Council to make further improvements.
- 8.4 The evidence, reinforced by the independent review, supports a conclusion that, throughout the 2018/19 year the Council demonstrated good governance and met its Best Value duty. The action plans in place, which are embedded as part of Service Plans and the wider Council Plan, will continue to drive further improvement throughout the coming year.

Signed  .....  
**Councillor Chris Read,**  
**Leader, Rotherham MBC**  
**Date: 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019**

Signed  .....  
**Sharon Kemp,**  
**Chief Executive, Rotherham MBC**  
**Date: 31<sup>st</sup> July 2019**

