

Commissioners' 12 Month Progress Review

to the Department for Communities and Local Government
February 2015 – February 2016

RECOVERY AND RESTORATION
EVIDENCE FILE AS AT FEBRUARY 2016

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1 Introduction to the evidence file

This is the Commissioners' 12 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 monthly bulletin to external stakeholders; and we offer a monthly video diary and weekly news bulletin to staff.

This 12 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 of progress on page 5 to demonstrate what has changed at Rotherham Council in the last year.

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 twelve '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.

Within the last progress report we anticipated three 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.

The Council continues to make progress having recently moved into phase 2 and the twelve month report outlines progress made within the last year to get the Council to this stage.

2 Where we were

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

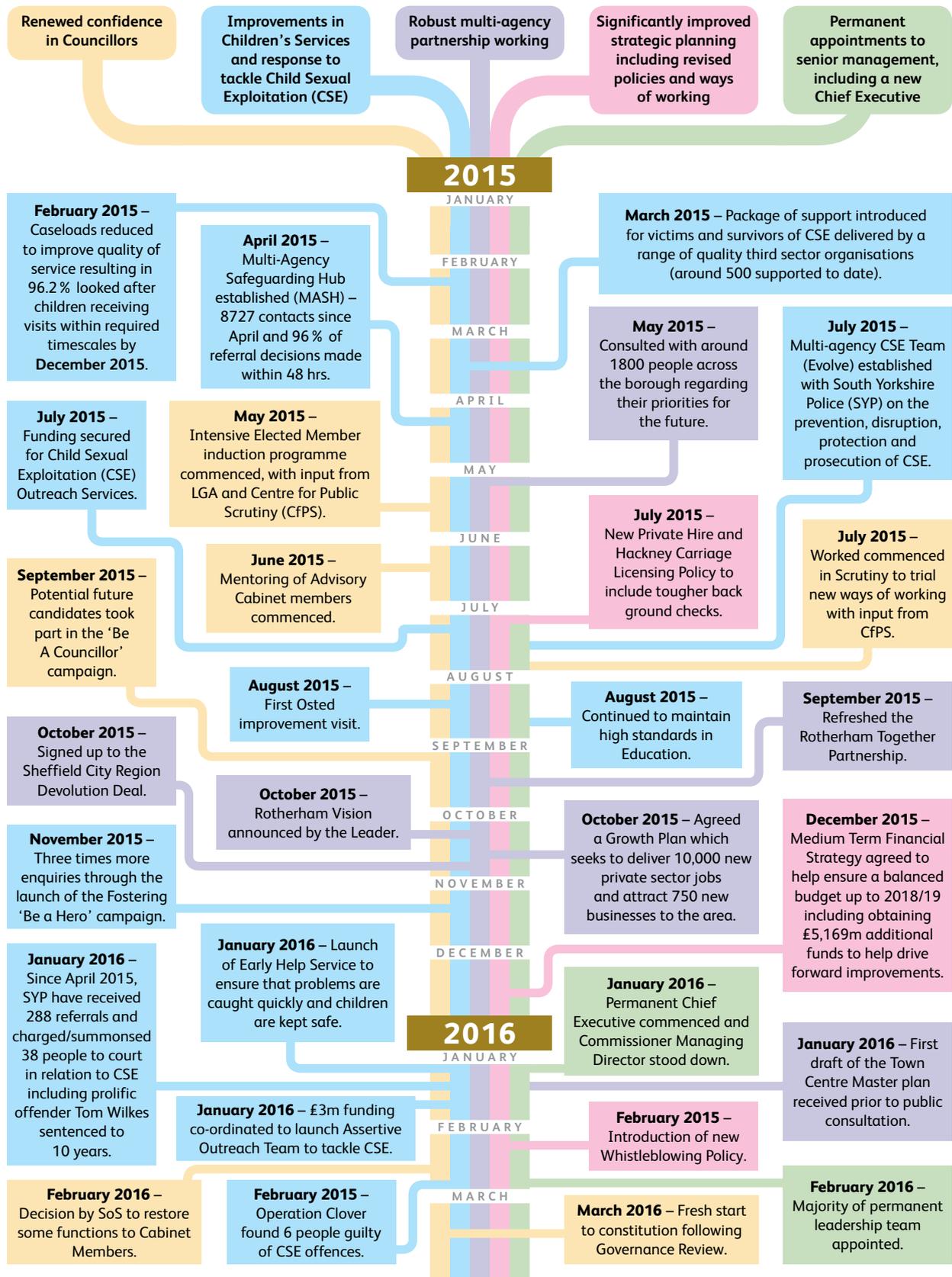
In response to the Council's failings and following the Secretaries of State Directions of 26th February 2015, the Government appointed five Commissioners to take on all executive responsibilities at the Council and responsibilities of licensing to drive the improvements necessary to return decision-making to democratic structures. The Commissioner for Children's Social Care Services has 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' and this report is structured around each of the mission outcomes.

The Council was faced with a 3 year budget gap of £41.083m 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 will detail these but it should not be underestimated how much has been achieved in the last 12 months. The chart below 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 focussed 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 with a focus on longer term improvements and reshaped around the child's journey. The new plan aims to support the Council's commitment in becoming 'a Child Centred Borough' with high quality services. Outstanding actions from the old plan have been transferred to the refreshed plan and implementation has commenced.

2. Rotherham Improvement Plan (A Fresh Start)

The corporate improvement plan ('A Fresh Start') includes 132 separate projects to improve services across the Council to ensure it can deliver its best value duties. At this stage of implementation of Phase 1 ("Transition"), 45% of the actions are completed and all but 4% are on track.

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's Board (RSCB) and the objectives and key actions are reflected in the operational CSE delivery plan. This strategy is discussed in the CSE sub-group and the main board. 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. This maturing partnership between the Council, South Yorkshire Police and other agencies has resulted in several successful prosecutions; most recently the trial and conviction of three men and two women totalling 45 sexual offences committed against 15 young victims. A sixth defendant had already pleaded guilty to offences before the trial.

Ofsted has recently commented favourably on the child-centred approach taken by some of these enquiries, notably in terms of responding to juvenile perpetrators in an educational setting. The current multi agency response to CSE enquiries is employing the approach outlined in this 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 governance structures outlined in this strategy have been implemented and, as the Commissioners have become increasingly reassured that real change is underway, the Commissioner led Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Board has been disbanded. This is an important milestone in moving to a business as usual approach to effective service delivery.

The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy

A Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) has been developed and is currently being refined following the Autumn Statement and the subsequent provisional and final Local Government Financial Settlement announcements in December and February 2016.

Work on the estimated financial challenge for the budget for 2016/17 to 2018/19 is ongoing, with a significant number of proposals (many arising from the 'All Service Review' process) being progressed through the newly formed Member-led Budget Working Group. These proposals are subsequently receiving cross-party Member consideration and are being reviewed by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Board. The Directorate budget savings proposals have also been published for public comment/consultation. With the final Local Government Settlement for 2016/17 now published, the Council is confident that it can now set a balanced budget for 2016/17 and has identified savings proposals which help to significantly address the financial challenge for 2017/18 and 2018/19. The proposed budget for 2016/17 includes an additional investment of £12million in Children's Services. Further work is required to agree a balanced and sustainable MTFs for 2017/18 and 2018/19 and this work is scheduled for completion in summer 2016.

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:

- 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 these functions.

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.

4 Timeline of key headlines/progress

| | 2015 | | | | | 2016 | |
|--|--|--|--|---|---|--|---|
| | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb |
| Helping Children's Services to improve including tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) | Barnardo's receive £3.1m to support tackling CSE in Rotherham and rebuild the lives of victims. | Refreshed Children and Young People's Services Improvement Board Action Plan and reporting templates. | Closure of Woodview Children's Home following inadequate Ofsted announcement. | Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services appointed on a permanent basis. | Consultation on the future and potential closure of St Edmunds Children's Home, following inadequate inspection. | Launch of Early Help Service to improve support for children and families and ultimately reduce demand for social care. Requests for support from schools treble in first week. | Recruitment begins for Deputy Strategic Director Children and Young People's Services. |
| | £1.2m secured for an innovation programme to support victims and those at risk of CSE across South Yorkshire, including support of specialist foster carers to provide safe placements for young people. | Local Safeguarding Children's Board Chair stepped down. | Review commissioned into residential care and care leavers accommodation. | Early Help co production events commenced to shape a strategy for Rotherham. | Appointed to key roles of Head of: Locality Social Work Services; Quality Assurance; and Principal Social Worker. These posts are critical to stable improvement. | UK's largest dedicated Assertive Outreach Team (Barnardo's) formally launched to prevent CSE. | Cohort of young people identified as at risk of CSE in Rotherham and resources identified to analyse the information held by partners. |
| | First Ofsted Improvement visit reports good front door arrangements (MASH); Good management oversight, performance management and good practice observed in managing complex CSE cases with Police partners. Quality of practice and consistency main areas for development. | Interim appointments made for lead quality assurance and principal social worker roles. | Second Ofsted visit confirms continuing strong front door arrangements and effective CSE practice. Areas for development include quality of assessment and case management. | Launch of the Fostering 'Be a Hero' campaign. | CSE mapping exercise of all young people in Rotherham identified as being of risk of CSE. This is in addition to mapping linked to bespoke investigations. | Since the MASH Team was established, it has received 8727 contacts of which 41 % became a referral and 81 % became an assessment. | First meeting of new Children and Young People's Partnership convened. Task and finish groups established to: embed early help impact; develop workforce across the system; produce Children and Young People's Plan. |
| | Service Improvement Panel established to ensure services are available to support victims and survivors of CSE. | Joint commissioning strategies drafted for children including those with very complex needs and governance arrangements established. | Review of governance conducted by peer professional from Haringey LBC. | Thematic review of EVOLVE CSE cases concluded. | Operation Scorpio escalated to multi-agency senior command team chaired by Director of Children's Services. This is in addition to a number of live CSE investigations, reflecting new proactive approach between RMBC and SY Police. | Director of Safeguarding Children and Families left the post being replaced with a Deputy Director post for Children's services. | Governance. Arrangements for Youth Offending strengthened. |
| | Operation Clover multi-agency victim management process implemented. | Needs analysis underway which inform longer term support for victims and survivors of CSE. Supported by research from Salford University and Public Health data. | New Quality Assurance Framework rolled out. | Increasing management grip evidenced by high % PDRs completed (93 %). | Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Board CSE thematic review of CSE within locality teams agreed and scoping initiated. | Submitted files to Crown Prosecution Service regarding Operations Taffeta and Thole - 47 suspects (27 of whom are under 18 years). Operations have led to engagement with 160 young people of whom 28 were identified as victims of CSE. | Review of accommodation for children in care and care leavers completed for executive stakeholder consideration. Recommendations signal move towards smaller, smarter homes that our children deserve. |
| | Victims and survivors go public on council 'changing for the better' on anniversary of Professor Alexis Jay Report. | Work commences on strengthening supervision for frontline workers. | Work commences on strengthening supervision for frontline workers. | Excellent progress made on NEETs not known (potentially extremely vulnerable children) reducing from 26.5 % - 8.5 %. | All together stronger recruiting campaign launched to secure permanent Heads of Service. | Multi-agency senior command team agreed to multi agency Operation Scorpio enquiry following themes of PREPARE, PREVENT, PROTECT and PURSUE. | Liberty House Breaks Service rated 'Good' by Ofsted. |
| | | Commissioners agree to review pay for social care staff to ensure the Council can compete with other councils regionally. | Commissioners agree to review pay for social care staff to ensure the Council can compete with other councils regionally. | Workforce Strategy drafted 'Enabling Excellence in Practice' setting out a compelling offer for social care professionals in Rotherham. | New Experienced Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) chair appointed following national recruitment campaign. | 100 % of children in need of protection have an up-to-date plan. | Arnold Children's Centre achieves GOLD award for excellence. |
| | | Work underway to develop a robust Medium Term Financial Strategy predicated on principles of early help and sufficiency of appropriate, local community based placements for children in care. | Work underway to develop a robust Medium Term Financial Strategy predicated on principles of early help and sufficiency of appropriate, local community based placements for children in care. | New Experienced Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) chair appointed following national recruitment campaign. | Work commences on development of transformation change programme to build on early success and expedite progress against key priorities. | 96.9 % of looked after children have an up-to-date plan. | Powers for education including youth services returned to council control. |
| | | Secondment of senior early help expert from Sheffield to expedite progress towards a new integrated offer. | Secondment of senior early help expert from Sheffield to expedite progress towards a new integrated offer. | | | | Powers for education including youth services returned to council control. |
| | | Focused work on Looked After Children reveals good progress such as timeliness of visits and % of plans in place. Concerns remain over the high numbers of those placed in residential care and the quality of work in securing better outcomes. | Focused work on Looked After Children reveals good progress such as timeliness of visits and % of plans in place. Concerns remain over the high numbers of those placed in residential care and the quality of work in securing better outcomes. | | | | Programme for March Ofsted improvement visit agreed focusing on leadership, management and governance; quality of work in duty and assessment; CSE; and quality of care planning. |
| | | | | | | Sector led Improvement Peer review agreed for June. | |

| | 2015 | | | | | 2016 | |
|-----------------------------|--|---|--|---|--|--|---|
| | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb |
| Helping the Council improve | Commissioner team meet with Youth Cabinet. | Senior management structure agreed by Full Council and recruitment to posts commenced. | Interviews commenced for senior management posts, including Chief Executive. | Rotherham beat competitors to claim the title of Best Town Centre in the Great British High Street Awards 2015 winning a share of £80,000. | Second poll of Rotherham residents satisfaction undertaken by Local Government Association (LGA). | New appointments to enhance relationships with the voluntary and community sector, tackle equality issues and provide support to Advisory Cabinet. | Adult Social Care 'Meet the buyer' event for care and support providers to find out more about the Councils vision and future opportunities. |
| | Appointment of the interim Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services. | Housing health check conducted by LGA. | Highways and transport; waste management; planning health checks conducted by LGA. | Request to Secretary of State at DCLG seeking approval for some functions to be returned to the Council. | Funding bid for £5,169m approved by DCLG to help the Council address unique funding pressures and move forward. | Closing date for consultation regarding the restoration of functions and letter sent to Secretary of State regarding feedback received. | Permanent appointments made to Strategic Leadership Team (excluding Strategic Director Adult Care and Housing which has been re advertised). |
| | Continued to maintain high standards in Education – Early Years and Key Stage 4 outcomes have exceeded the national average for a number of years. | Rotherham Show which is the largest free show in the North of England includes stalls for 'Be a Councillor and' 'Views from Rotherham'. | Personal Development Review audit identified 96% completion figure – staff supportive of process, however some areas for improvement required around setting SMART objectives and continuous monitoring. | Leisure, culture and sport health check conducted by LGA. | Medium Term Financial Strategy, Performance Management Framework and first draft of Corporate Plan agreed by Full Council. | Secretary of State, DCLG announced plans to return responsibility for the running of a limited number of functions to Advisory Cabinet. | Staff briefing sessions commenced delivered by the Chief Executive and Leader. |
| | | | Voluntary severance opportunity opened for staff to assist the Council's financial challenge. | Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham waste plant site officially opened by the Lord Lieutenant. | Regional Director Ofsted raised no objections with regards to the restoration of functions in Education. | Induction programme commenced for newly appointed Chief Executive, who replaced Commissioner Managing Director at end January. | Report to Health and Wellbeing Board regarding Adult Safeguarding Strategy and improvement plan following independent peer review conducted in May/June 2015. |
| | | | | Vision and strategy paper developed for Adult Social Care. Vision focussed around ensuring that adults with disabilities, older people and their carers are supported to be independent and resilient so that they can live good quality lives and enjoy good health and wellbeing. | | Options presented to Member-led Budget Working Group which would potentially enable the Council to set a sustainable balanced budget for 2016/17 and which significantly addresses the financial challenge for 2017/18 and 2018/19). | Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government agreed to return of some functions to Cabinet. |
| | | | | Adult Safeguarding Strategy presented to Safeguarding Adults Board. | | Proposed Capital Strategy prepared to be considered at Full Council on 2nd March 2016. | Introduction of new Whistleblowing Policy. |
| | | | | 146 voluntary severance requests agreed in principal to assist the Council's financial challenge. | | Directorate budget proposals issued for public comment and consultation. | |
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| | 2015 | | | | | 2016 | |
|---|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|--|-----|
| | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb |
| Helping the Council improve (continued) | | | | | | <p>Since the Taxi Licensing Policy was introduced 67 drivers offered a case hearing and around 70 % licenses revoked. 963 license holders also attended safeguarding children and vulnerable adults training and 171 suspended until complete.</p> <p>Awarded best large outdoor market 2016 in the annual Great British Markets Awards.</p> <p>Agreement to develop an Adult Social Care Development Programme to deliver better outcomes for citizens.</p> | |

| | 2015 | | | | | 2016 | |
|--|--|---|--|--|---|---|---|
| | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb |
| Supporting Councillors and wider partnerships | Cabinet Members; Scrutiny Chairs; Chairs of Licensing and Planning and Leaders of Opposition Group allocated LGA Peer Mentors. | Lead Commissioner concluded meetings with newly Elected Members. | Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) considered low risk saving proposals. | Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) considered further savings proposals to meet the overall budget challenge. | Advisory Cabinet expanded from 5 to 8 members and portfolios amended. | Commissioners' public meeting with Councillors - update on progress and proposals to return some functions. | Final Rotherham Together Partnership Plan and timescales for longer term Community Strategy agreed by the Rotherham Together Partnership. |
| | Personal development interviews undertaken with each lead elected member and development support identified. | 69 potential candidates took part in five 'Be A Councillor' sessions (3 open to all and 2 party specific). | Devolution deal signed by Chancellor George Osborne - proposed agreement to devolve certain powers from central government to the Sheffield City Region (SCR). | | UK's first tram train unveiled which will run on networks in Sheffield and Rotherham from, testing to commence Summer 2016. | Budget saving proposals sent to partners for comment and consultation. | |
| | Intensive Elected Member induction programme delivered with input from LGA peers and Centre for Public Scrutiny. | New Rotherham Together Partnership governance model agreed at Full Council. | Rotherham Economic Growth Plan approved by Full Council. To deliver 10,000 jobs over 10 years and 750 new businesses over 5 years. | | First meeting of Rotherham Together Partnership. | First Advisory Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making meeting. | Final recommendations from Governance Review received. |
| | Work commenced on the 2015/16 Scrutiny programme to trial and test new ways of working. This programme focused on the following areas: a. Child Sexual Exploitation b. 2016/17 Budget challenge c. Waste and litter d. Health and social care integration. | First meeting of Rotherham Together Partnership. | First meeting of the new Business Growth Board. | | New Health and Wellbeing Strategy approved to jointly improve health and wellbeing in Rotherham and direct the boards activity over the next three years. | Business sector event held. | |
| | | New Health and Wellbeing Strategy approved to jointly improve health and wellbeing in Rotherham and direct the boards activity over the next three years. | 'Views of Rotherham' consultation report published – based on 27 roadshows and online. 1800 people consulted. | | 'Minded to' decision by Commissioner to sell former opencast colliery site to Gulliver's Family Theme Parks. | First draft of the Town Centre Master plan received. | Business Plan and financial support approved by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) for those affected by Tata redundancies. |
| | | Members of the Licensing Board undertook two days of training on Licensing. | Rotherham vision announced at the Commissioners' public meeting with Councillors. | | Reviewed the governance arrangements of the Safer Rotherham Partnership which has led to a more streamlined structure. | | |
| | | South Yorkshire Police hit out at Rotherham protests and the Leader and Commissioner Ney issued a statement welcoming the announcement by the Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner to review the legal powers deployed to tackle demonstrations. | New independent chair appointed to the Safeguarding Adults Board. | | 'Enough is Enough' online petition launched regarding the number of marches and demonstrations taking place in the town. | | |

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

| | 2015 | | | | | 2016 | | |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|--|--|--|
| | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | |
| Other contributing factors and dealings by others | Former Rotherham Mayor cleared of charges for an offence against a 13-year-old girl in 1987. | Right wing protest (Britain First) (United Against Fascism) in the Town Centre. | Police initiate intelligence gathering operation re possible CSE involving ROMA community (OP Scorpio). | Announcement by Lowell Goddard regarding first independent investigations into child sexual abuse. | Provisional local government finance settlement 2016 to 2017. | 288 referrals have been received and 38 people charged/summonsed to court in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation offences (CSE). | Operation Thunder first court appearance. Six defendants, 27 charges, 2 victims. 1 defendant pleaded guilty and will be sentenced in due course. | |
| | 81 year old man on his way to morning prayers at his mosque attacked and later died in racist attack. | 16 year old teenager left with head injuries following assault in town centre. | Taxi driver sustains head injuries in serious assault. | Rotherham in national media regarding large increases in hate crime. | High-profile Operation Clover trial commences at Sheffield Crown Court. 21 victims, 49 prosecution witnesses in total and 8 defendants. | | | 2 men appeared before the court charged with the racist attack and murder of the 81 year old gentleman who died in August. |
| | One year anniversary since independent inquiry into CSE in Rotherham by professor Alexis Jay. | | | Rotherham man sentenced to 10 years as part of live CSE investigation (Operation Thole). | | | | |
| | Rotherham Abuse Charity (Apna Haq) Faces closure after losing contract with the Council. | | | Alleged racially aggravated assault of a 20 year old man and 16 year old boy outside Asda supermarket. | | | | Operation Clover found 6 people guilty of Child Sexual Exploitation offences. Awaiting sentencing. |

5 Progress against the Mission Outcomes

5.1 Commissioner Newsam

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

The historic and systemic failures within Rotherham to tackle child sexual exploitation over many years is well documented in the Jay and Casey reports and in September 2015, Ofsted identified that the Council's approach to protecting children and young people from child sexual exploitation continued to be inadequate. The Council and its partners have made significant progress since that time and improvements have particularly accelerated in the last 12 months. Both the Council and South Yorkshire Police have benefited from the temporary introduction of additional external expertise alongside the appointment of new managers and staff. Improvements have been steered by a refreshed multi-agency strategy and the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) child sexual exploitation sub-group is effectively chaired by an ex-police officer experienced in the field. High level engagement continues to be reflected through the Children's Improvement Board and my regular meetings with the Assistant Chief Constable of South Yorkshire Police.

Evolve, the multi-agency specialist CSE team continues to mature and has been strengthened with the introduction of permanent managers to drive the team. The high level processes put in place to manage risk and direct multi-agency investigations are now demonstrating impact. The Multi-agency Risk Management Panel considers intelligence, hotspots and directs disruption activity alongside having an overview of all major operations. Wider council services including licencing, regulation, housing and leisure services are now making an active contribution to these arrangements. The service in Rotherham has been transformed by what is an effective multi-agency victim led approach and this has been demonstrated by the impact the Evolve team has achieved since its inception.

The team has achieved major successes with two large operations involving the engagement of over 160 young people, the subsequent identification of nearly 30 victims and the identification of a significant number of suspects. The team have pioneered some exemplary work on developing support plans for juvenile perpetrators and schools in the community. To date, there has been one successful conviction with the defendant receiving a lengthy custodial sentence. The first trial of a multi-agency investigation into non-recent child sexual exploitation has now concluded resulting in the conviction of three men and two women, found guilty of a total of 45 sexual offences committed against 15 young victims. A sixth defendant

had already pleaded guilty before the trial. The victim management strategy employed by the team has been an outstanding success with none of the survivors withdrawing from the process. This has involved the collaboration of six separate agencies that have provided intensive support to these survivors, many with complex and challenging needs. Further multi-agency investigations are progressing well and will continue throughout 2016 and into 2017.

Next Steps

In January 2016 a further multi-agency enquiry into suspected child sexual exploitation within a minority group commenced and this may become a significant challenge later in the year. Preliminary enquiries have so far identified a number of children from a minority group believed to be at risk of sexual exploitation and drugs misuse. This operation is still at the earliest stages but could have major resourcing implications as it gains momentum and it is important that the Council and South Yorkshire Police continue to demonstrate the excellent practice that has led to the successful outcomes to date.

Operation Stovewood, directed by the National Crime Agency (NCA), is now taking shape and they have now referred to the Council a number of potential suspects or victims for further information gathering. This is already beginning to present a strain on the existing resources within the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub. The NCA has submitted a funding request to the Home Office based on their forecast of 300 potential suspects and 600 possible victims. This request includes £3 million towards the cost of the social care element of the investigation team.

Risks and Issues

Despite the successful outcomes achieved over the last 12 months, effective multi-agency arrangements are not yet firmly embedded and tensions between the police and children's social care at an operational level can still too easily emerge. Effective relationships at a senior level have managed to negotiate these issues, but it will require continued attention throughout 2016 to ensure the gains of the last 12 months continue to be stabilised.

Progress has been highly dependent on a number of key individuals brought in to provide temporary support to both South Yorkshire Police and the Council. It will be critical to ensure that, as these people move on, the progress they have made is continued and sustained.

Operation Stovewood will present 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 existing 2016/17 indicative budget and the financial demands these new challenges present will need to be kept under close review.

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

Overview

The September 2014 Ofsted inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers, judged Children's Services as inadequate in every domain other than adoption which was judged as requiring improvement. The front door arrangements for receiving and filtering work were seriously inadequate. Referrals were not being responded to appropriately or in a timely fashion and child protection arrangements were not compliant with statutory guidance. There was a lack of engagement from partners in the assessment of risk to vulnerable children. The Police had not been supporting social workers in child protection investigations and strategy discussions had not included health, schools or other agencies routinely. There was a serious lack of middle management capacity to provide effective oversight, insufficient social workers, unmanageable workloads and a significant failure to comply with statutory minimum standards.

In the last 12 months, the Council has made great strides in strengthening its leadership capacity within Children's Services. It now has in place an experienced permanent Strategic Director of high national standing, a new expanded team of permanent Assistant Directors and has almost completed the appointment to its middle management structure. In February, the Council is recruiting to the post of Deputy Director of Children's Social Care and this will provide additional senior capacity. There is an improved approach to governance within the Directorate but this still needs to be firmly embedded. Alongside this, a new and experienced independent chair of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) commenced role in the autumn and she is providing clarity and direction to the Board. She has led on a creative bid to the Department for Education's Innovation Fund to strengthen the governance and performance management of the LSCB which is currently being evaluated.

The service now has sound performance and management information arrangements in place and this is effectively interrogated by senior managers, with team managers held accountable for the performance of their teams through fortnightly meetings with the interim Deputy Director. The Council is commissioning a new Integrated Children's Service (ICS) system and this is projected to go live in early summer. Quality assurance arrangements are being strengthened and there are signs that this is achieving better traction, although it is clear that this will need consolidating throughout the year. There are no longer widespread failures in the service, all cases are allocated, and there are no untoward delays in children and families being assessed and receiving services. There is good compliance with statutory arrangements to visit children and complete plans. However, the Council needs to strengthen the quality of its first line management: it remains too reliant on temporary managers and social workers and this seriously impacts on the sustainability of these improvements and the overall quality and effectiveness of practice.

After a slow start, the Council is now making progress on its early help strategy. The early help pathway and reconfigured services were rolled out in January 2016 and step down arrangements were put in place in February. It is too early to see the impact of these new arrangements but the enthusiasm of partners is encouraging. The Council and its partners have strengthened the front door arrangements with a secure

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Ofsted confirmed the arrangements appeared sound during their last improvement visit and since that time the Council has commissioned an independent assessment which has also commended the calibre of the operational lead and decision making processes. Single assessments are completed in a timely fashion. (This year to date 89% have been completed within 45 days and less than ten exceed the 45 day limit at any one time). Increasingly the duty teams are concentrating on ensuring the time taken on an assessment is proportionate to complexity and the required inputs. The service has recently completed a major restructure to separate out its long-term child protection arrangements from its service for looked after children. This is providing the opportunity for better focus and the Heads of Service are now attending to the long-term legacy of drift and the ineffectiveness of plans particularly for children in need.

It is anticipated that this new structure will also have significant benefits in improving attention to the needs of Looked after Children. The specialist social work teams have manageable caseloads which will allow them to have a real positive impact on children's lives. The Council has moved swiftly to tackle the weaknesses within its residential sector following two disappointing residential care home inspections in the autumn of 2015. It has commissioned a review of its residential sector and has since closed two residential care homes. Encouragingly Ofsted inspected the Council's short breaks residential facility in February of this year and rated it as good.

Good progress has been made to complete a sufficiency strategy and a new fostering campaign has generated an encouraging level of applicants. Plans are in place to enhance the fees for foster carers and special guardians subject to available funding and this will help accelerate the Council's plans to reduce its reliance on high cost placements. However, there remain significant weaknesses in the Looked after Children service. While the sufficiency strategy has been produced, commissioning and procurement arrangements for Looked after Children are poorly developed and will need to be strengthened if the inappropriate use of high cost residential and agency fostering placements is to be reduced. Alongside this, accommodation and services for young people leaving care needs to be considerably improved.

Next Steps

The new permanent team within children's social care will now need to consolidate progress and ensure it is reflected in higher quality practice and more effective outcomes for children. They will need to maintain the trajectory of improvement across the service while delivering this within the financial envelope set out by the Council. Pivotal to their success will be establishing a permanent cadre of first line managers and social workers which will be a significant human resources challenge alongside the development of a commissioning infrastructure which can bring down costs within the service.

Risks and Issues

Progress in the service will be dependent on the Council continuing to prioritise improvement in Children's Services. Given the challenges across the Council it has struggled over the past 12 months to provide the high quality human resources, financial and infrastructure support which deliver rapid progress in failing councils. The Council is now in a better place overall, and with the appointment of a new Chief Executive and senior leadership team there is an opportunity to begin to address these weaknesses.

The service will continue to struggle to achieve financial balance in 2016/17. While the Council has endeavoured to protect children's services and has increased the budget by £12 million for the forthcoming year, it remains about £4.8 million below the expenditure forecast for 2015/16. As the majority of this cost pressure is attributable to placements of looked after children and a reliance on agency staff, this will not be subject to quick and painless remedy. Plans are in place to provide additional financial expertise to the Children's Departmental Leadership team to support an understanding of the cost drivers and potential savings within the service and work has now commenced on a five year financial strategy to put the service on a sustainable financial platform.

In the coming year, Members of the Council will understandably be focused on getting to grips with those services which have been restored to their direct executive control. However, this cannot be at the cost of a focus on the importance of restoring public confidence in the quality of services to vulnerable children and families. The Secretary of State for Education has asked for a review of the conditions by which children's social care could be returned to the Council by September and this will set the context for the continued improvements that are required in the next six months.

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

The Jay Report identified potentially 1,400 survivors of child sexual exploitation. The Council responded in 2014 by investing in additional immediate support services but this was in the absence of a detailed understanding of the needs of survivors, the role different partners could play and an understanding of the role services in the community could play.

Over the past 12 months the Council has made good progress in strengthening its approach to victims and survivors. A detailed needs analysis has now been completed and this was supported in late summer 2015 by a piece of research undertaken by Salford University to capture the voice of survivors, their families and those in the voluntary and community sector supporting them. The Council has now issued a tender, totalling £200,000 a year for three years to provide support to survivors. The three areas of service included are:

- Practical, emotional support and advocacy for young people (up to the age of 25) who have experienced child sexual exploitation. This includes support to immediate family members;
- Practical, emotional support and advocacy for adults who have experienced child sexual exploitation. This includes support to immediate family members;
- Evidence based therapeutic interventions for young people and adults who have experienced child sexual exploitation.

At the end of January 2016, the new assertive outreach service for children and young people at risk of CSE was launched. Known as ReachOut, it is funded by contributions from the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Department for Education, the Council, Barnardo's and the KPMG Trust. The team of 15 staff will be engaging with children, young people and families as well as community groups, schools, colleges and health services and will also raise awareness of how to spot the signs of sexual exploitation. The team has already been successfully engaged in supporting recent CSE operations.

Next Steps

The newly commissioned services for survivors will be coming on stream from April 2016. Following meetings with the Department of Health and NHS England, the Council and its partners are now working on broadening this approach into a comprehensive service model based on the impact and treatment of trauma in communities. The intention is to supplement and support community well-being services with existing mental health and drug misuse services which already provide therapeutic services to many of the same population.

Risks and Issues

The anticipated take up of the services by survivors is based on the existing usage. Volumes may well increase with the introduction of new accessible services and as partners identify more needs through investigations and subsequent prosecutions. Accordingly, the contracts have been designed flexibly to ensure that resources can be focused where services are most needed.

5.2 Commissioner Ney

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



The Jay and Casey reports identified failings in the functioning of licensing services and in particular taxi licensing, as well as concerns at the links between child sexual exploitation and the taxi trade. As part of the intervention all decision making on licensing matters has been taken by Commissioner Ney.

Since February, the following has been achieved:

Private Hire and Taxi Licensing Policy

The Council had produced and consulted on a draft policy in the autumn of 2014. However this was considered to be inadequate to secure the safety of the public and a revised policy was produced, further legal advice sought, and a consultation process undertaken including extensive engagement with the taxi trade. The new policy was agreed by the Commissioner on 6th July together with an implementation scheme which set requirements for compliance with the policy. The new policy includes higher standards of the 'fit and proper person' test of drivers including: how convictions, softer intelligence and complaints are considered; revised requirements for training, including Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) and compulsory safeguarding training; and more stringent requirements regarding safety, age of vehicles and use of taxi cameras.

Implementation of the new Policy

An audit of all drivers against the new standard identified that 6% of drivers may be in breach. All of these (67) were offered the opportunity of a case hearing which has resulted in around 70% of these licenses being revoked. The audit is expected to be complete by March 2016.

By January this year, 963 drivers had attended training sessions on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults; the remaining 171 drivers are suspended until they complete the training. If they fail to do so within the required timescale, the license suspension will take full effect.

The Council's specification for use of taxi cameras and a privacy impact assessment has been reviewed by the Camera Surveillance Commissioner and the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and discussions are ongoing. Suppliers who can meet the specification have been identified and an open day held for the trade.

Arrangements to move all drivers to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) on line service have been put in place as well as arrangements for referring drivers to the Barring List.

Licensing Decisions

By the end of February the Commissioner will have held individual hearings and taken decisions on around 135 taxi licensing cases plus a further 3 reviews of public house licences and grants of house to house collections permits.

Members of the Council's Licensing Board have sat with the Commissioner for all decisions and, to ensure consistency of approach and high standards, have also taken part in two training days, held a review meeting on the implementation of the new policy, and a discussion on decisions to date.

The Commissioner introduced revised arrangements for the way in which hearings are conducted, content of reports, recording of hearings and the statement of decisions.

In addition, the approach to managing appeals to the Magistrates' Court has been reviewed and improved. Appeals to the Magistrates' Court have increased, particularly in relation to the application of the higher standards of fitness to existing drivers.

The Licensing Service

In parallel, the Council's licensing function has been reviewed and a revised structure is being implemented which brings together policy administration and enforcement within one structure. Also, arrangements for the two existing IT systems to interface are being pursued.

Importantly, arrangements for the exchange of information between the service and South Yorkshire Police (SYP) and the participation by the Business Regulation Manager in the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) intelligence exchange meetings has ensured that licensing are playing their full part in tackling CSE and other safeguarding issues.

Reflection on the position reached

Since the commencement of intervention a new licensing policy has been successfully agreed and implemented. The process has allowed frank engagement with the trade, the Council's staff and members about the failings of the past. The Chair of the Licensing Board has been involved with the Commissioner in all meetings with the taxi trade and attended every case hearing. All members have been diligent in taking on the considerable extra workload of case hearings sitting alongside the Commissioner (in 2014 the Board heard only 59 cases). Likewise there has been a considerable additional workload on council officers who have worked with the Commissioner and members to put the new requirements in place. There remains outstanding work to consistently raise the standards and performance of the service and it is considered that the proposals for changes to the structure referred to above will help to facilitate that.

During the summer of 2015 there was some resistance from the trade to the changes being proposed, largely concerning the impact of the cost of the new measures. More recently some of the trade associations have appointed a solicitor to pursue representations on their behalf. However, overall, the trade and individual drivers have continued to cooperate with the changes and some of the anxieties have been abated by the measured approach to adoption and implementation which has been put in place.

Next Steps

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

- Completion of implementation of the new policy requirements;
 - Review of the policy after one year in July 2016;
 - Implementation of the new organisational structure within the Licensing Service; together with measures to improve performance;
 - Management of appeals against revocations/refusals to grant;
 - Continuing preparation of members for return of decision-making.
-

Return of Licensing Functions to the Council

The Commissioners' 'decision-making' powers in relation to licensing have always been exercised in conjunction with the Advisory Chair and members of the Advisory Licensing Board. The following have been undertaken to prepare members for the roll back of powers:

- Two days of training on licensing matters and conduct of hearings
- Revised procedures for reports, conduct of hearings and statement of outcomes
- Advisory members sitting along-side the Commissioner in case hearings
- Meetings of the Advisory Board to consider progress in implementing the new policy and to review 'decision-making' of decisions and establishment of consistency

In parallel the structure and working arrangements within the Licensing and Enforcement Service have been reviewed and changes are being implemented. Once fully in place with some new appointments, this will improve the performance of the service and its ability to support good 'decision-making'.

Taking all this into account and the audit of all license holders which will be completed by March 2016, Commissioners now agree that the Council is in a position to have its Licensing functions returned. Commissioner Ney will continue to attend a sample of Licensing Committees for a further period and provide Advice in accordance with the Directions issued in February 2016.

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

The Casey report indicated failures in the functioning of the Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP) and in holding the Police to account. In addition the Council had failed to use all of its powers to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and had disparate arrangements for the coordination of different aspects of community safety. Since February 2016, the following has been achieved:

Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP)

The Council has reviewed the governance arrangements of the SRP and revised proposals to provide a more streamlined structure were put in place in October 2015.

Community Safety Strategy

The SRP has commenced a process of review and analysis of the Joint Strategic Intelligence Assessment with a view to the adoption of a new three-year Community Safety Strategy in April 2016. This review will provide a route to give greater priority to joint work with the Police and other agencies particularly in relation to enforcement, disruption and community reassurance.

The Council has established a new senior post to provide the corporate lead on community safety and police liaison. This will strengthen the ability for the Council to hold the Police to account as well as bringing together currently disparate community safety activity under this post holder. The new post holder will take up employment in March 2016.

The new Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) architecture put in place by the Council has included representation from other service areas to improve information flow and ensure that all parts of the Council are contributing to tackling CSE. This will be further facilitated by the new lead senior manager role.

The Council has continued to work with the police to mitigate the impact of frequent far-right demonstrations in the town centre. Community tensions have increased as a result of these marches and 4 racist attacks which took place in autumn 2015, one of which resulted in the tragic death of an elderly man. The Council has kept the Home Secretary briefed on these incidents and their impact and has contributed to a Home Office review of legal powers in response to such public disorder incidents.

Reflections on position reached

The Council now has some of the basic requirements in place to improve its work on community safety, tackling criminality and its ability to hold the Police to account. The new officer capacity and senior leadership role will enable swifter progress to be made to tackle individual issues and the cultural change which is required within the Council.

The Safer Rotherham Partnership is now operating within its new structure and needs to focus on developing an effective performance management framework which is focused on outcomes.

The Council is aware of the need for it to lead further activity with the Police to deal with community tensions and increased incidents of hate crime working in partnership with community and faith leaders, local businesses and the wider voluntary sector.

Next Steps

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

- Producing and consulting on the new Community Strategy 2016-2019 and putting the delivery plan in place to deliver on the agreed priorities;
- Embedding a performance management framework for the SRP;
- Establishing the new Assistant Director role within the Council and across the partnership, developing corporate working and the required culture within the Council in relation to the Council's community safety duties, tackling criminality and relationship with the Police;
- Providing practical leadership in dealing with further disruption from far right demonstrations and tackling community tensions;
- Ensuring the Council uses all of its powers to disrupt criminality, anti-social behaviour and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and uses joint enforcement activity to tackle hot spot areas.

5.3 Commissioner Manzie

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.



Inevitably the proposals made in November by the Lead Commissioner to the Secretary of State for partial return of powers to the Advisory Cabinet have led to considerable work and effort by Legal Services, led by interim Catherine Parkinson, to look at the governance and constitutional implications and ensure they were ready to implement once endorsed by the Secretary of State following consultation. Senior officers have also been adapting to the increase in number of the Advisory Cabinet members with the Leader, Cllr Chris Read helpfully increasing the Cabinet from five to eight members. Supporting this process has meant some adjustment by senior officers with a need to brief the new members of the Cabinet. Rotherham's Advisory Cabinet (now 'Cabinet') is one of the most gender-balanced and diverse in the country.

A major step forward for the Council was the agreement to a Vision for the Council generated by the Leader from the huge consultation exercise led by him and the Lead Commissioner. This Vision has now been encapsulated in the draft Corporate Plan, which, along with a new Performance Management Framework was agreed at Council on 9th December. The new Chief Executive will now be working on the challenging task of embedding these processes in the organisation. There are already good signs of the Vision being properly reflected in the Council's reports and policies moving forward, as is appropriate.

The Council is reaching a very significant milestone in its improvement journey, having successfully achieved appointment of seven out of eight originally planned senior management posts over a period of five months: Chief Executive; Assistant Chief Executive; Assistant Director Community Safety and Street Scene; Strategic Director Finance and Customer Services; Assistant Director Independent Living and Support; Assistant Director Strategic Commissioning; Assistant Director of Legal Services; plus one more post of Strategic Director Regeneration and Environment not in the original plan but resulting from a move of an existing post-holder.

This was a major exercise for the organisation, done in collaboration with Hays recruitment, involving co-ordination of complex panels of Commissioners and Elected Members and a rigorous three stage assessment process. Feedback from all candidates including the unsuccessful ones was that it was a very strong process which they found very testing but very professional.

There is only one post to which the Council was not able to recruit to first time, that of Strategic Director Adult Care and Housing. This process is now being relaunched with a higher salary and a more targeted approach. The Council has been fortunate in being able to retain the services of Professor Graeme Betts to whom it has given the wider responsibility of Housing as well as Adult Care as an interim solution while the substantive candidate is recruited.

There has also been successful recruitment to posts identified as a requirement in the “Fresh Start” Improvement Plan: the Corporate Equalities and Voluntary Sector Co-ordination posts.

The new Chief Executive, Sharon Kemp, took up her post on 1st February 2016 following a handover period with Commissioner Managing Director Stella Manzie, who has now stood down from her post.

In addition to the implementation of the Commissioner Managing Director’s June “Laying the Foundations” proposal, in November the Commissioner Managing Director proposed a restructuring of the Environment and Development Services Directorate including a renaming of it as the Regeneration and Environment Directorate in order to give a greater emphasis to the economy and an increase in the growth of prosperity for people of all income levels. This is being done on a cost neutral basis but involves rearranging some functions in such a way as to enable an Assistant Director with a focus on culture, sport and tourism as part of the drive both for regeneration and increased opportunities for families to spend their leisure time together. The Commissioner Managing Director, as part of the Improvement Plan has also undertaken work on neighbourhood activity which she is handing over to the new Chief Executive to take forward.

The other defining feature of the last few months has been the management of the budget process and the process of voluntary severance to support that process. Achieving a legal budget has been achieved with the assistance of additional support from the Department of Communities and Local Government and by some excellent technical work by the Council’s Finance function. However, the Council will have continuing challenges as they implement the savings made to achieve the 2016/17 budget and seek to achieve a more sustainable budget for 2017/18. 146 members of the workforce are leaving through voluntary severance to support the budget process. A more corporate budget process has been operated than in any year in recent memory, with full involvement of Scrutiny through the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

There has been continuing cultural development of a properly working corporate council, manifested in a range of issues e.g. proper consistent corporate briefing of staff about the budget implications and using the M3 top managers’ meeting to brief and engage senior managers across the organisation on various subjects including the election in 2016, the proposals to modernise adult social care, corporate governance issues and the proposals for a performance management framework, to name but a few.

The other key feature is that member officer relations have continued to develop positively. There is much more work to be done and these aspects of the Improvement Plan have been deliberately left till last because of the need to have the Senior Management Team on board to build those relationships.

One of the most encouraging features of the last year is that in addition to focusing on the important parts of the Improvement Plan the authority has also done many things which you would normally expect of a metropolitan authority not in intervention.

These have included:

- The Sheffield City Region devolution deal
- Launch of the Barnsley Doncaster Rotherham waste plant
- Responding to flooding on the ground floor of Riverside House and adapting the building to new customer requirements
- Standing up for the steel business and its workers
- Maintaining high standards of secondary education
- Supporting major staff changes to improve services or make savings
- Winning awards for the revamped High Street and for business advice
- Being well forward on key planning policies
- The Sheffield-Rotherham Tram Train pilot starting
- A successful Rotherham Show and a well-reviewed and popular Cinderella at the civic theatre.

In addition to the corporate governance issues which need improving there are of course other key services which need to be improved, such as primary education and the ICT service but there are detailed programmes and plans in place to support these.

Most importantly, it has been fed back to the Commissioner Managing Director that despite the budget challenges and the threats to jobs, there is a better spirit of optimism in many parts of the organisation. This needs to be maintained by continuing good communication and visible senior management. There is some feeling of progress because of the appointment of a stable management team and a feeling that if the right Cabinet strategic leadership relationships can be built, there will be a good foundation for further progress to be made.

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

Work has continued to build good partnerships and better integrated working. The Health and Well-being Board has excellent attendance by the most senior players in the health and social care world and is well led by Cllr David Roche (Cabinet Member RMBC) and Dr Julie Kitlowski (CCG Chair). The Board is moving towards a strong focus on health inequalities between neighbourhoods and this is likely to be picked up by the Council and other partners in different fora, linked to the “Fresh Start” references to neighbourhoods and communities. Good processes of implementation of the Health and Well-being Strategy are being put in place led by the Director of Public Health and there will be regular monitoring of progress.

Meanwhile Cllr David Roche, Advisory Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, and interim Strategic Director Graeme Betts, have been leading the work to modernise Adult Social Care within the Council, part of which involves complex work with the health organisations in Rotherham. Some of this is conducted under the Better Care Fund umbrella and some of it under a wider strategic agenda. This has involved close briefing of Elected Members via the Scrutiny process as well as political dialogue. Trade unions have also acknowledged the regular briefings of staff which Graeme Betts and other colleagues have led. The appointment of permanent Assistant Directors for Strategic Commissioning and Independent Living and Support will considerably assist in this process.

Key areas of focus for modernisation and an increase in independence and choice for vulnerable adults are: enablement; activities during the daytime for elderly people; residential opportunities for learning disabled people; the style of respite care; and Shared Lives (support within a family environment). There is recognition across the organisation that there will need to be corporate support and sophisticated work with the voluntary and community sector in order to provide a wide range of care options and opportunities for high quality activities and social contact in communities, sometimes described as the short-hand of “community assets”. This subject has really engaged the senior top three tiers of management of the Council and will be a big part of the work of other parts of the Council such as Libraries.

It must be acknowledged that the programme of change is extensive and will sometimes be controversial with users, carers and families until there is a greater understanding of what the proposed changes are designed to achieve. However, other authorities have been through these processes and Rotherham will do the same. That process will need to be supported corporately as well as well led within the Directorate. It is essential that they do because of the need to get the best use possible out of the finances available, in order to reach more people, but to drive out savings which meet the financial targets being imposed.

Finally, the Director of Public Health and other colleagues in Children and Young People’s services (CYPS) have been working on a commissioning strategy for children’s health services. She has been working specifically with colleagues in the Foundation Trust to try and ensure better school nursing services in Rotherham as part of the Council’s focus on children and this work continues.

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.



The Council was judged to have weak partnerships. Its arrangements were too complex and confusing and not focused on achieving outcomes.

The Community Strategy was deemed to be weak. The partnership had poor leadership and a lack of Vision.

Since February 2015 the following has been achieved:

Clear Vision

28 visioning roadshows and several consultation meetings with citizens and businesses throughout the borough have allowed the Council to agree and publish a Vision from which a Corporate Plan for the Council and Community Strategy can be developed.

New inclusive Partnership called Rotherham Together Partnership

The Rotherham Partnership, now relaunched as the Rotherham Together Partnership, has undergone a thorough review of its purpose, structure and governance, with new (wider) membership and terms of reference agreed within the Council and by partners. The first meeting of the new partnership took place in September 2015 and regular meetings are being held to ensure collaborative working to meet shared partner objectives.

Rotherham Community Strategy

The Rotherham Together Partnership Plan for 2016/17 will be launched in March 2016 along with consultation on the new vision and longer term Community Strategy. The Community Strategy will be launched in March 2017 and will look at how partners can work collaboratively, targeting and pooling their resources to deliver maximum benefit for local people.

Local Government Association (LGA) Resident Satisfaction Survey

The LGA Resident Satisfaction Survey is conducted on a six monthly basis. An initial base review was conducted in June 2015 and the most recent survey conducted in December 2015. There is some early evidence that feelings and perceptions of trust and confidence in the Council and how it conducts its business has improved (see Appendix I).

One year on interviews with Rotherham Together Partnership Board

Partners who sit on the Rotherham Together Partnership Board were interviewed between January and February 2016. The feedback received has revealed positive feedback about the Council, including remarks

about the Council being more open and transparent, with no evidence of bullying or poor behaviour and positive comments regarding the Leader who partners said is visible and contributed positively to the visioning roadshows (see Appendix J).

Sheffield City Region and Local Enterprise Partnership meetings

The Council is represented at the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority and Local Enterprise Partnership meetings, with the Leader and Chief Executive (and previously the Commissioner Managing Director) attending regular meetings and participating fully in these sub-regional structures to ensure effective working and influence growth opportunities for Rotherham. The Council has also had significant involvement in the formation and implementation of the Devolution Deal.

Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector

The Council has improved its direct working with the Voluntary and Community Sector across Rotherham and consulted with the sector on two occasions.

The partnership contributed to 'The state of the voluntary and community sector in Rotherham 2015' report published in January 2016 to understand the size of the sector and economic benefits it provides. The Council is also undertaking a review of its funding arrangements to ensure they are fair, effective and provide good value for money.

A designated liaison officer post for the Voluntary and Community Sector commenced in January 2016.

Reflection on the position reached

There has been a successful refresh of the partnership and rebuilding of partnership relationships, however there is significant work needed to develop a longer term Vision and Community Strategy for 2017.

Perceptions of the Council from partners and the public have improved which is positive and must be maintained.

Working with the staff and Advisory Cabinet Members in the first year of the intervention has been a positive experience with some real desire and willingness to work hard and move the Council forward.

Next Steps

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

- Continue to develop the Rotherham Together Partnership
- Launch of the Rotherham Together Partnership Plan for 2016/17 in March 2016 along with consultation on the new Vision and longer term Community Strategy
- Launch of a longer term Community Strategy March 2017
- Continue to influence the Sheffield City Region and secure devolved funding to pursue Rotherham's growth priorities
- Continue to improve perceptions of the Council, building people's confidence and trust
- Continue to work with partners and the Voluntary and Community Sector to deliver shared priorities.

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.

Since February 2015 the following has been achieved:

Local Plan

Following adoption of the Local Plan Core Strategy, the Council is now on target to submit the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document to central government, with a public inquiry expected to be held in the summer. 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

A Business Growth Board has been established, supported by three sub-groups which advise the Partnership on Business Development, Skills and Employment and the Town Centre. Each sub-group has a clear set of milestones and outcomes.

26 businesses have volunteered to get involved in the Rotherham Growth agenda and are contributing time and effort to achieve the outcomes contained within the Economic Growth Plan. The businesses are meeting regularly supported by the Council's Rotherham Investment and Development Office (RIDO) officers and are currently setting targets and milestones.

Rotherham Economic Growth Plan 2015-25

The Rotherham Economic Growth Plan aims to achieve 10,000 net new jobs over the next 10 years and 750 net new businesses over the next five years and is complemented by the new Town Centre Masterplan.

Following approval in October 2015, the Growth Plan is now in the implementation phase, overseen by the Business Growth Board. Progress indicates:

- The number of employee jobs located in Rotherham has increased for the third year in a row;
- There have been four years of continuing growth in the number of businesses with over 600 net additional businesses over the last year alone;
- The number of business starts continues to accelerate with almost 1,000 new starts in the last year compared to just over 600 four years ago;
- The number of residents in employment is continuing to grow with the employment rate rising by over four percentage points in the last two years, going above 70% for the first time since the 2008 recession. At the same time unemployment has fallen to under 7%.

Work has been taking place to deliver a number of major projects within the Growth Plan. These include the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District, an innovation district based around the Advanced Manufacturing Park, and a higher level skills centre with Rotherham College, which is the subject of a bid for

Sheffield City Region skills capital funding . The centre would house up to 1000 students and be focused on meeting the skills needs of Rotherham businesses. Discussions have also been taking place with developers, land owners and partners.

The Council has successfully negotiated the allocation of a site and investment for Gulliver’s Valley which will create 250 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs and 120 FTE jobs in the construction phase.

The Council was involved in the securing of the first Tram-Train trial in the UK in Rotherham/Sheffield. The Tram-Trains, which will allow passengers to make a single journey between tram stops and conventional rail stations between Rotherham and Sheffield from early 2017, will undergo testing before being introduced on the Supertram network in Summer 2016, providing extra services at busy times.

Refreshed Town Centre Masterplan

The Council has commissioned a refresh of the Town Centre Masterplan to support the delivery of the Growth Plan. Consultation with partners and businesses has been undertaken and a first draft of the Masterplan has been received and is currently being finalised. This plan will support the sustainable economic regeneration of the town centre and will go out to widespread consultation in mid-April. Early indications highlight the need for an improved culture and leisure offer in the town centre to attract a more family orientated audience.

Review of the Council’s regeneration function and funding for major projects

There has been a review of the Council’s regeneration function including funding to ensure the deliverability of the major projects within the Growth Plan.

Funding to support economic regeneration has been included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy of the Council.

Sheffield City Region (SCR) skills agenda

There has been a strong focus on ensuring the Council is playing its full part in the SCR skills agenda and the Leader of the Council has taken up a leadership position on the Combined Authority’s Skills Executive Board.

Emergency support and additional funding for TATA Steel

The Council backed a support package for the steel industry to support employees (450) and the supply chain (1400) at TATA following their announcements of 450 redundancies in Rotherham. Financial support up to £1.5 million was approved by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

Awards

The Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) led to a total investment of £4.7m from the Heritage Lottery Fund, RMBC and property owners to restore and refurbish properties in the town centre and provide funding to those locating in the buildings.

Since the investment the town has been successful in securing two national awards. In November 2015, it beat tough competition to become High Street of the Year in the Great British High Street Awards. Recently, it won the best large outdoor market 2016 in the annual Great British Markets Awards (The National Association of British Market Authorities).

Housing services

A Health check of Housing Services was conducted from 22nd-23rd September. The health check report stated that overall services were 'good' with a few areas for improvement identified.

The Council commissioned the Department of Town and Regional Planning at the University of Sheffield to produce a new Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Rotherham and the final report was published in June 2015. The report assists in our understanding of the wider housing market and provides an accurate assessment of future housing need; both market and affordable. The analysis forms part of the Local Plan evidence base and supports the new Housing Strategy objectives (approved Feb 16).

Reflection of the position reached

The Economic Growth Plan is still in the early stages and it is important now to secure the necessary investment, the right developers and plans to bring key projects to fruition.

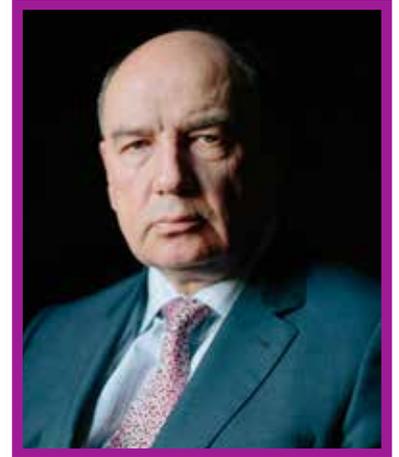
Working with the staff and Advisory Cabinet Members in the first year of the intervention has been a positive experience with some real desire and willingness to work hard and move the Council forward.

Next Steps

- Continue to develop the Business Growth Board;
- Deliver the projects within the Growth Plan and the Town Centre Masterplan

5.5 Commissioner Myers

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



This work strand sought to impact directly on the assumption that politics in Rotherham had been unhealthy: too closed; vulnerable to over-assertive behaviours; too sharply adversarial; dismissive of data; with too sharp a divide between an inner circle and other Councillors and between leading Councillors and staff.

Also, we wanted the next generation of Councillors to be demonstrably competent, confident and fully on top of any role responsibilities. The component parts of the work have been:

- Mentors arranged by the Local Government Association (LGA) for the Advisory Cabinet Members; Chair of Planning; Chair of Scrutiny; and Leader of opposition (see progress report at Appendix H).
- A transparent development plan for processes inside the Labour Group (see Appendix E).
- Individual interviews with all leading Councillors and all new 2015 Councillors by the Lead Commissioner.
- A workshop with four representative members of the public and some Councillors to take through and agree a new supplementary Code of Conduct additional to the National Code (see Appendix F).
- A set of discussions with Advisory Cabinet Members and scrutiny representatives to devise a new Code of working between Councillors and senior staff.
- Encouragement for Councillors to attend LGA training opportunities.
- A revamp and re-launch of the Standards Committee.
- A revamp of the Audit Committee, with an independent non-councillor voting member for the first time, and a more ambitious proactive work programme.
- Constant modelling of more formal behaviour between Councillors and Commissioners and senior staff – “polite not matey; respectful not dismissive; formal in official meetings”.
- Active feedback from Commissioners, commenting on desirable behaviours and seeking to impact on less desirable habits.
- Installing Members’ facilities in the same headquarters building as staff (where previously Councillors had mostly stayed in a separate building).
- Roadshows to ensure the Leader meets staff (covering over 400 staff so far).
- A revised, better publicised, whistleblowing procedure.
- The Council set up a review of governance systems, independently chaired by Professor Anthony Crook of Sheffield University (a summary of the improvement outcomes is at Appendix D.)
- The Council set up a review of governance systems, independently chaired by Professor Anthony Crook of Sheffield University (a summary of the improvement outcomes is at Appendix D and these are to be considered at a future meeting of the Council.)

Success?

Much of this is about culture change. Most Councillors report a more professional atmosphere. Backbench Councillors report a greater sense of knowing what is going on. Some opposition Councillors claim there is too much secrecy and aspire to a more collaborative cross-party approach. By observation, party politics is alive and well but more moderate; less rude; with more listening. The Leader of the Council is a strong model for reasonable, deliberative, more open politics.

There have been no misconduct issues to investigate, save for one anonymous complaint which was judged to be unjustified.

My conclusion is that politics in Rotherham is now healthy enough. Competence and confidence for office holders will continue to grow. I aspire that cross-party dialogue and agreement will continue to grow.

Plans for the next six months

The planned activities are either complete, or planned to ongoing. Mentoring continues.

The changes agreed as part of the Governance Review are to be implemented from the May 2016 Council AGM.

As necessary new activity will start. A likely example will be a focused piece of work assisting the “ten Councillors who can make most difference” to Children’s Services to maximise their contribution.

Risks

- The Council’s reputation could be affected by significant Councillors’ misconduct. Our mitigation will be to try to sustain a culture of high expectations.
- External commentators might continue to believe or choose to believe nothing has changed. Mitigation of this is difficult but good communications and behaviour in signal issues will help.
- The previous culture may re-emerge. Commissioners are always vigilant about ‘signal behaviours’ and we are ready to robustly challenge.

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

Since the inception of the intervention Commissioners have encouraged and required Councillors to ‘act the part’, as though they are executive Councillors: attending all relevant meetings; developing opinions, getting (and sometimes critiquing) briefings from officers; presenting issues to their colleagues; representing the Authority at other non-decision making meetings.

This has undoubtedly shown Commissioners’ respect for Councillors’ democratic mandate but also actively helped Councillors prepare to “do the full job” at an appropriate stage.

The quarter three report at the end of November recommended the restoration of a set of executive functions to Councillors and this has now been agreed.

Each quarter Commissioners will report on whether they wish to recommend further functions to be restored. This report recommends the restoration of the powers of the Licensing Committee from end May 2016.

Subject to the outcome of the local elections it is likely that Commissioners will want to recommend the restoration of further functions to the Councillors in 2016.

Commissioners would continue with the right to supervise, monitor and challenge through to the final date of the intervention.

The next review dates are:

- End May 2016
- End August 2016
- End November 2016

Risks

- Risks on this outcome are the same risks as can be identified in the other parts of the intervention.
- Maintaining the motivation, confidence and skills of the Commissioner Team will be important.

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