

Commissioners' 24 Month Progress Review

to the Department for Communities and Local Government
February 2015 to January 2017

RECOVERY AND RESTORATION
EVIDENCE FILE AS AT FEBRUARY 2017

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1 Introduction from Chief of Staff to the Commissioners

It has been nearly two years since Commissioners began their work in Rotherham.

On secondment from the Department for Communities and Local Government, I have worked day-to-day with Commissioners as we all strive to make sure Rotherham Council is a fit and proper organisation so we can return its powers.

In such a short space of time we have seen a transformation within the Council. A Council with a developed vision and a desire to make the borough attractive to its residents and those working, visiting or wishing to invest here; a Council with many new elected members and a new cohort of senior officials leading to a collaborative and maturing relationship between them; a Council which is demonstrably improving in many of its services to the public; and a Council which is making positive change to its children's services and has been instrumental in helping to convict perpetrators of crimes linked to child sexual exploitation.

The two-year report not only reviews the last six months since August 2016, but also reflects further back to the start of intervention when the Council was in the headlines for all the wrong reasons. It highlights some of the key events and important changes over this time, but also points to future challenges which will require considerable effort from all those involved in and with the Council.

I am proud to have worked with Rotherham's elected members and officers who have all been supportive to the work of the Commissioners and have helped move the Council forward. There is still much work to be done, but this two-year report reflects a Council heading in the right direction.

Steven Nesbit

Chief of Staff to the Commissioners

Rotherham MBC

2 Introduction to the evidence file

This is the Commissioners' 24 month review of progress since the Government Directions to Rotherham Council in February 2015. The report reflects on progress made both since the Commissioners' arrival and within the last six months.

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, most recently on 16th January 2017; we publish notes of our internal monthly meetings; we send out a regular bulletin to external stakeholders; we offer a regular internal video diary; and the Council's Chief Executive writes a weekly news bulletin to all staff.

This 24-month report will be a public document too, but inevitably much of the change we have designed and are implementing is about improved practice, process and systems and, as such, is littered with jargon. We have therefore produced a short summary on page 6 to demonstrate what progress has been made in the last two years. We apologise to any general readers but are willing to explain further if this assists. We are also mindful that others may want to judge in future how the intervention fared. Therefore we have reported in detail, not in outline.

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

There are four distinct phases for our work:

Phase 1

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

Phase 2

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

Phase 3

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

Phase 4

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

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

3 Where we were

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

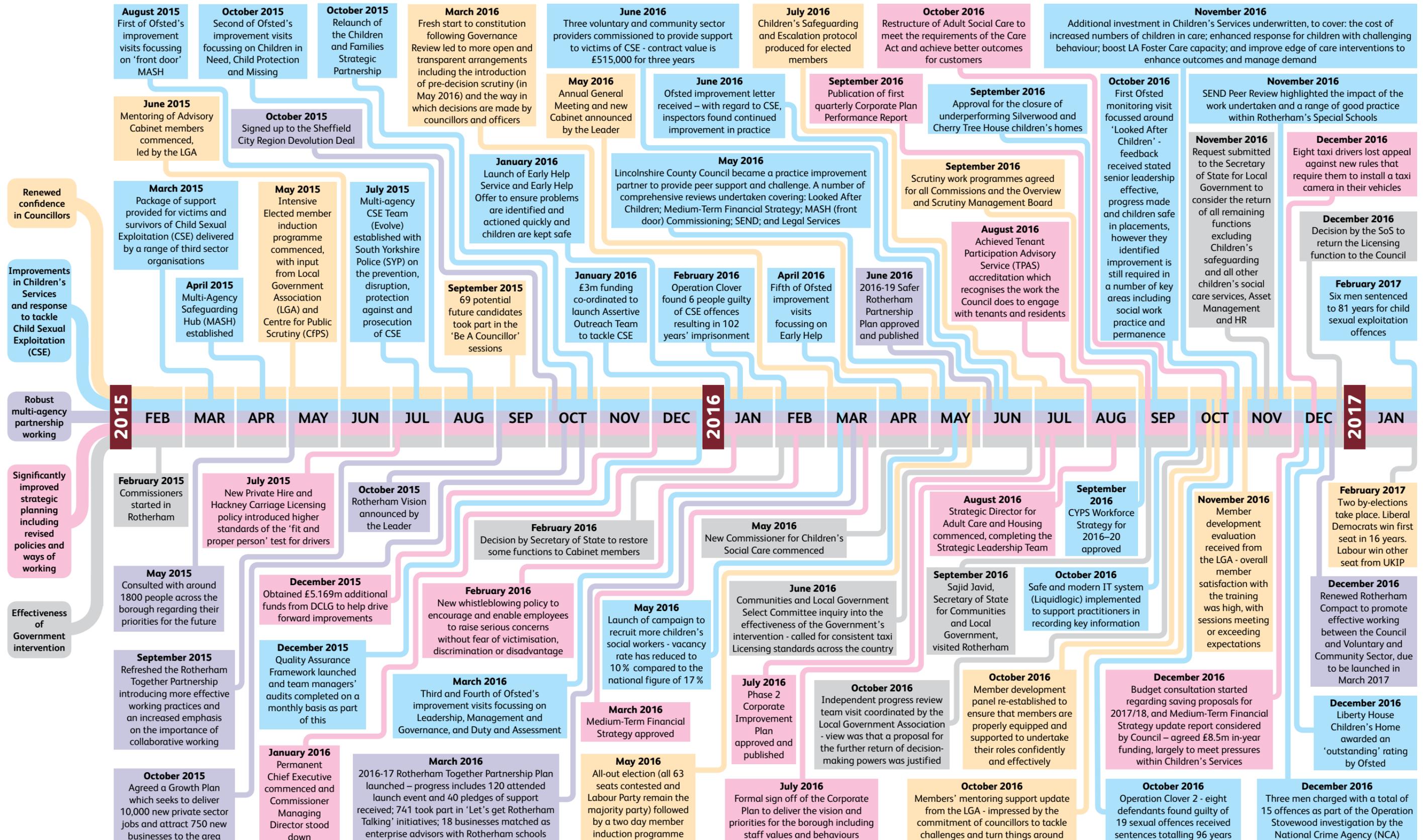
In response to the Council’s failings and following the Secretaries of State Directions of 26th February 2015, the Government appointed five Commissioners to take on all executive responsibilities at the Council and responsibilities of Licensing to drive the improvements necessary to return decision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

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

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

4 Where we are now

Significant progress has been made since Commissioners began working in Rotherham. This report provides details, but it should not be underestimated how much has been achieved in the last 24 months. The chart below highlights some of the key improvements.



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

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

The Children's Improvement Board continues to oversee progress of the Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) Improvement Plan through monitoring, challenging and supporting officers. The Board considers the areas of greatest risk first, and lays the foundations for effective and sustained improvement. This includes challenging whether sufficient progress is being made, i.e. the right amount of progress in the right direction at the right pace.

A Regional Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) Sector-Led Peer Review, which focussed on Looked after Children (LAC) and care leavers, took place in October 2016. This followed a similar review on Leadership, Management and Governance undertaken in June 2016.

Additional peer reviews led by practice partners Lincolnshire, around Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and social care 'front door' and CSE, took place in November 2016. Practice partners have also reviewed the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and commissioning arrangements.

Ofsted has commenced a series of monitoring visits, the first of which took place on the 20th and 21st October focussing on LAC. The Ofsted letter was published on 17th November 2016 and there is a further monitoring visit on 9th and 10th February 2017, focussing on early help and contact, referral and assessment.

The action plan has been updated dynamically to incorporate the findings of all feedback elicited from peers and the regulator.

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

The Children and Young People's Services Improvement Board Action Plan remains the primary mechanism for delivering improvement. However, three significant independent reviews of multi-agency CSE operations have provided a platform for culture change and improved multi-agency practice across the partnership. The next step is to drive forward improvements through a multi-agency action plan jointly owned by the children and adult safeguarding boards. This approach ensures that key learning in respect of responding to the needs of CSE victims applies across children, adolescents transitioning to adult services, and adult survivors. Relationships across agencies are improving and leaders are increasingly modelling behaviours conducive with effective joint working. Public confidence and staff morale across agencies has been boosted by a steady stream of successful prosecutions for online, non-recent, and current CSE.

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

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

A second phase of the Corporate Improvement Plan ('Phase Two Action Plan') from May 2016 was agreed by the Joint Board of Commissioners and elected members, which oversees the implementation of the plan, when it met on 23rd May 2016 and was further endorsed at the Cabinet and Commissioners' decision-making meeting on 11th July 2016. This 'Phase Two' plan further clarified the outline second phase actions and priorities set out in the original 'A Fresh Start' document, as well as ongoing areas of focus from phase one. The Phase Two plan includes 20 overall improvement objectives (and 99 specific milestones) to be delivered over the year to May 2017, with a core focus on embedding strong leadership and a new culture across the organisation.

The Council is now around eight months into this second phase of improvement activity. The most recent performance progress report (considered by the Joint Board on 16th January 2017) covered activity up to December 2016 and set out that 48 of the 99 measurable milestones in the 'Phase Two' action plan had now been substantively delivered. This represented positive progress throughout the autumn of 2016 across all the improvement plan's themes. No activity was highlighted as "at risk" though Commissioners were asked to consider a number of priorities where the precise timeframes for delivery needed to be reassessed, but were assured on the overall progress being made. In total, 48 milestones remain ongoing for completion within the Phase Two period (to May 2017), with activity on a final set of three milestones scheduled to commence in the coming weeks (prior to the end of the Financial Year). Further detail about the latest performance position with the Phase Two action plan is enclosed at Appendix A.

The Joint Board will meet again in February and March to maintain its overview and challenge over the delivery of the Phase Two programme.

4. The Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy

Good progress has been made in the last 6 months to finalise the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as part of the Annual Budget Setting for 2017/18 and a proposed Budget and MTFS is now being finalised. Key dates and events are:

- 2nd March 2016 – Council approved the Budget for 2016/17 which included an additional £12m net investment in Children and Young People's Services. It also included a Medium-Term Financial Strategy and a Capital Strategy for the first time.
- 11th July 2016 – Cabinet approved an updated MTFS based on changes and updates to planning assumptions and new information since the Budget was set.
- 7th December 2016 – Full Council approved additional investment in the key improvement area of Children and Young People's Services as well as Adult Social Care and some corporate areas. This included the allocation of additional in-year funding of £8.5m (£8m of which was for Children's Services) and a further £11m funding for 2017/18 (£9.7m for Children's Services).
- 13th February 2017 – Council Tax and Budget Setting report for 2017/18 to be presented to Cabinet for subsequent approval by Council on 8th March 2017. This is following a full review of previous decisions, implementation plans and will ensure that the Budget is increasingly robust.

2016/17 in-year financial monitoring position

During the last nine months there has been ongoing pressure on Children's Services budgets directly as a result of their continued improvement in safeguarding children. There are also cost pressures on Adult Social Care resulting from demographic patterns although the modernisation programme is underway and will assist the management of these cost pressures in the future. Rotherham continues to face the same financial challenges that other councils face in relation to funding reductions from Government and is managing the additional cost burden of the necessary improvements to services well. The Council remains financially sound and sustainable whilst it will inevitably need to make further service cuts and efficiencies over the next two years.

The Council has implemented stringent spending controls to bring down projected overspending by the end of the financial year and is intending using Government Capital Receipts flexibilities as well as an element of reserves to assist the year-end position.

Budget 2017/18 (and MTFS)

Over the last six months budget savings proposals have been developed and consulted on to help address the budget shortfall in 2017/18 of £24m. These proposals have been considered by Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and a public consultation was carried out through December 2016. Feedback from the consultation will be reflected in the final Budget Setting Report.

To help mitigate some of the pressures within Adult Social Care the Council will be taking up the opportunity to increase the 2017/18 Adult Social Care precept by the maximum 3% allowable announced by the Government in the 2017/18 Provisional Settlement along with maximising its ability to raise income through Council Tax. The Council is now in a position to propose its 2017/18 Budget which, subject to approval, will include the use of around £5.4m of reserves. The extent of the revised three-year financial challenge will become clearer once the final Local Government Settlement is received in late January or early February 2017.

The Council is undertaking a number of cross-cutting reviews which demonstrate a more strategic approach for Rotherham where previously there has largely been an over-reliance on a traditional top-slicing approach. In future budgets there will be a stronger focus on delivering increased value for money as the Council continues to better understand its costs and compares itself with Councils elsewhere. These reviews will provide new budget proposals for 2018/19 and beyond to address some of the funding gaps in those years.

The Council's recent success in securing £6.81m Shared Ownership and Affordable Housing funding to build 227 new homes in the short to medium-term will also assist in growing the Council Tax base to generate greater levels of Council Tax income which will help in addressing the Council's funding gap over the next three years.

Return of Functions

In February 2016 the Council made positive steps towards powers and accountabilities being restored and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government issued revised Directions, following a request from Commissioners to return responsibility for a number of functions to Councillors. In December 2016, Licensing powers were returned to the Council. A list of those functions, and those further functions recommended for return in November 2016 are listed on pages 44 – 45 of this report in Commissioner Myers' update (mission outcome 12).

Bringing Perpetrators to Justice

On 2nd February 2017, six men were sentenced to more than 81 years in prison for their role in the sexual exploitation of two girls in Rotherham nearly 20 years ago. Their convictions and sentencings are the third in a series of high profile historic court cases featuring Rotherham victims and survivors.

In the last 12 months, sentences totalling 279-and-a-half years of jail terms have been handed out to criminals who targeted victims and survivors in the past. In February 2016, Operation Clover led to six people being found guilty of child sexual exploitation offences resulting in 102 years' imprisonment, and in October a further eight men were sentenced to a total of 96 years.

All this does not include more than 70 years handed to perpetrators of more recent child sexual exploitation crimes, following court cases in the last 18 months.

The most recent trial in February 2017 was the last historic case being led by South Yorkshire Police, as the National Crime Agency are now dealing with all other cases and operations. However, the Council continues to work in partnership with South Yorkshire Police on current CSE cases, through its Evolve team.

5 Timeline of key headlines/progress

	2016					2017
	August	September	October	November	December	January
Helping Children's Services to improve (including tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE))	A level results published – 98.6% (*A- E grades) above the national average.	Department for Education progress visit – included visiting the Evolve Team.	Children's social work job fayre to recruit to new vacancies.	Rotherham pathways project (to help vulnerable young people access support services) won the Innovation in Child and Young People's Mental Health category at the Positive Practice in Mental Health Awards 2016.	Ofsted report published on the Inspection of Liberty House – Awarded an 'Outstanding' rating.	Six men sentenced to 81 years for their part in historic child sexual exploitation offences against two girls.
	GCSE results published – attainment 49.4 - 62.0% achieved A*-C in English and mathematics; 75.5% achieved A*-C in English; 67.9% achieved A*-C in mathematics; 20.2% achieved the English Baccalaureate.	Encouraged more people to become foster carers to make sure that looked after children are placed in family placements wherever possible.	First Ofsted monitoring visit focussed around 'Looked After Children'.	New Social Care IT system (Liquidlogic) designed to improve the service provided to children and families went live.	Children's social worker vacancy rate reduced to 10% compared to the national figure of 17%.	Skill audit of all social workers and team managers in Rotherham commenced, and is expected to be completed by March 2017.
	Temporary crash pad service established to provide crisis accommodation and support to children and young people.	Cabinet and Commissioners agreed to the closure of Silverwood and Cherry Tree House children's homes by the end of December following a consultation period and options appraisal.	Regional Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) Looked After Children Peer Review which recognised some improvements had been made to the services for looked after children.	Children's Services Sustainability Strategy agreed by Cabinet/ Commissioners' – an investment improvement strategy.	Operation Stovewood - Three men charged with a total of 15 offences.	
	Peer Review of the Legal Services Social Care Team undertaken by Lincolnshire County Council which recommended an increase in staffing resources within the service.	The Children's Improvement Board signed off the CYPS Workforce Strategy for 2016 – 2020 in September 2016. The Strategy aims to support the ambition to become 'outstanding'.	Operation Clover 2 – eight defendants found guilty of 19 sexual offences received sentences totalling 96 years.	Practice Improvement Partners Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Peer Review. Positive feedback received recognising good progress is being made in implementing the SEND reforms.		
				Publication of Ofsted Monitoring Visit letter - feedback received stated progress made however social work practice and permanence arrangements require improvement.		
				Practice Improvement Partners review of the 'Front Door' MASH and Duty.		
				Young Inspectors received highly commended for the 'youth volunteering and social action award' at the Children and Young People Now Awards 2016.		
				Commissioner Bradwell attended the Improving Lives Select Committee to talk about her views of CYPS and the challenges the service faced – the Scrutiny chair has established a good working relationship with the Commissioner.		

	2016					2017
	August	September	October	November	December	January
Helping the Council improve	Commissioners' 18 month progress report submitted to the Secretaries of State for DCLG and DfE.	Sajid Javid, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government visited Rotherham.	Independent progress review team visit coordinated by the LGA - view was that proposal for the further return of decision making powers was justified.	KPMG Audit Letter presented to the Audit Committee.	Medium-Term Financial Strategy update report considered by Council – agreed £8.5m in year funding, largely to meet pressures within Children's services.	Budget consultation regarding budget saving proposals for 2017/18 closed.
	New permanent Strategic Director for Adult Care and Housing starts.	Audit Committee approved the final Annual Governance Statement (AGS) for 2015/16 document in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations	Staff consultation on the proposed changes to the terms and conditions closed.	Quarter 2 Corporate Plan Performance Report presented to Cabinet/ Commissioners' decision-making meeting – 23 progressing well and 14 not progressed in accordance with target set.	Budget consultation commenced regarding budget saving proposals for 2017/18.	New Head of HR took up post completing the key strategic complement of posts in the Council.
	Company handed £15,000 bill for failing to license property in Rotherham – 1,264 properties applied for a selective licence since the scheme came into force on 1 May 2015.	Staff informed of the proposed changes to the terms and conditions to save £2 million and asked to provide their views.	New round of staff briefing sessions started led by the Chief Executive and Leader, with support from the Deputy Leader.	Increases to day care and transport charges agreed at the Cabinet/ Commissioners' decision-making meeting.	Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP wrote to the Chief Executive to confirm the return of the Licensing function to the Council.	The Council has successfully defended 5 out of 7 taxi driver licence appeals.
	New Assistant Director (AD) appointments made including AD for Culture, Sports and Tourism and AD for Customer, Information and Digital.	Launch of the new One Rotherham Values – staff values honest, ambitious, proud, respectful and accountable and 'Big Hearts, Big Changes' employee awards.	KPMG concluded 2015/16 Audit – qualified conclusion to secure value for money and unqualified opinion on financial statements.	Agreement to commence consultation on the reconfiguration of the Learning Disability Service at the Cabinet/ Commissioners' decision-making meeting.	Eight taxi drivers lost appeal against new rules that require them to install a taxi camera in their vehicles - costs of £525 were awarded against each of the eight appellants, a total of £4200.	Commissioners' Public meeting.
	Clifton Park awarded Green Flag Award – recognises and rewards the best parks and green spaces across the country.	DCLG officials visited Rotherham.	Secretary of State announced plans to return Licensing powers to Rotherham Council, subject to local views.	Representation period closed for people to submit comments regards the proposed restoration of the Licensing function.	Appointment of Assistant Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services.	Carers Strategy endorsed by Cabinet/ Commissioners and the Health and Wellbeing Board.
	Housing and Neighbourhoods achieved Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) accreditation which recognises the work we do to engagement with tenants and residents.	Quarter 1 Corporate Plan Performance Report presented to Cabinet/Commissioners' decision-making meeting – 19 measures progressing well and 12 not progressed in accordance with target set.	Clifton Park celebrated People's Choice Award - one of just ten in the whole of the UK to be successful in Keep Britain Tidy's "People's Choice" Awards.	Appointed to new permanent head of Human Resources.	Final Staff briefing sessions delivered by the Chief Executive and Leader, with support from the Deputy Leader – 7 sessions held in total since October and attended by 249 members of staff.	Redesigned enabling service launched – anticipated full capacity by April 2017.
		Cabinet and Commissioners agreed the Digital Council Strategy 2016-2019 and the establishment of a Digital Council Programme to ensure its delivery.	Commissioners met with the Strategic Leadership following new appointments to set out their requirements.	21 month progress letter sent to the Secretaries of State for the Department for Communities and Local Government and Department for Education proposing the return of all further functions, except CYPS, HR and Asset Management.	Implemented senior management recruitment and procurement approval requirements to reduce spend.	The Council receives positive feedback from the Office of Surveillance Commissioners after inspecting its policies and procedures (in compliance with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act).
		Review of the workings of the Licensing Policy found no significant issues – report presented to the Licensing Board.	New Assistant Director responsible for culture, sport and tourism started.	Library Strategy 2016-19 and future service offer approved by Council.	LGA Resident Satisfaction survey.	
		External Adult Care Change Programme Board established – focussed around the transformational/place based plan.	Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30 Year Business Plan agreed at the Cabinet/ Commissioners' decision-making-meeting.	Overview and Scrutiny Management Board consider directorate proposals to address the budget gap up until 2019/20 throughout November and December.	Meeting with the Minister for Department for Communities and Local Government to discuss the restoration of further functions.	
			First quarterly Licensing performance report presented to the Licensing Board and the Strategic Leadership Team.	First Big Hearts, Big Changes Employee Awards.	Formal consultation on the future offer for learning disability services in Rotherham started – ends 2nd February 2017.	

2016					2017
August	September	October	November	December	January

Helping the Council improve (continued)		Property function health check by CIPFA Performance in Public Services – number of opportunities for improvement identified.	Restructure of Adult Social Care to meet the requirements of the Care Act and better outcomes for customers.	Test-Launch 'I age well' which allows customers to map and plan their ageing journey and provides information regarding available resources and support and how to access these.	New adult case management system, 'Liquid Logic' went live.
			Approval of Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.		
			Approval of investment into the Housing Income team to ensure ongoing support to tenants whilst maximising income.		

	2016					2017
	August	September	October	November	December	January
Supporting Councillors and wider partnerships	Devolution Deal consultation closes seeking peoples feedback regarding how new powers being devolved to the region should be used.	Rotherham Partnership held a 'Let's Drink Tea Together' event in the Town Centre to encourage people to come together and talk.	Members mentoring support update received from the Local Government Association –impressed by the commitment of councillors to tackle challenges and turn things around.	Member development evaluation received from the Local Government Association – satisfaction with the training was high, with sessions meeting or exceeding expectations.	Revised Rotherham Compact and associated dispute resolution process agreed by Rotherham Together Partnership chief executive officers.	The Rotherham Plan (Community Strategy) endorsed by the Rotherham Together Partnership.
	Consultation on the draft Rotherham Compact starts, setting out commitments to improve the way in which public organisations and the VCS work together for the benefit of communities and citizens.	Staff survey and focus group results shared with staff – conducted in May-June 2016 and 1,500 people responded. Action plan developed in response to the feedback received.	First Rotherham Together Partnership public engagement session to discuss progress made in the last 12 months and gather people's views – 4 sessions held in total.	Consultation on the draft Rotherham Compact ended.	Rotherham Council leaders welcomed new report into Trans-Pennine Tunnel which could open up the north.	Partnership protocol and partnership steering group terms of reference developed - aiming to support effective partnership working.
	Place-shaping sessions commenced – session held with Rotherham Together Partnership (RTP) chief executive officers.	Training for elected members appointed to the Staff Appeal Panel.	Lead Commissioner met with the Labour Group.	'Place-shaping' strategy key themes agreed by Rotherham Together Partnership chief executive officers – over 270 people took part in consultation workshops.	Final one to one introductory meeting with the elected members appointed in May – Commissioners met with all 24 elected members during the summer with the final meeting taking place in early December.	'Building Stronger Communities' Framework agreed by partners.
	Personal development survey sent to all members (completed by 60% of members).	Meeting between the Lead Commissioner and Rotherham MPs to update on progress.	Member development panel re-established monthly meetings - overseeing the personal development plan process to ensure that members are properly equipped and supported to undertake their roles confidently and effectively.	First Rotherham Together Partnership e-bulletin published.	To date, all Overview and Scrutiny Management Board recommendations for pre-decision Scrutiny accepted by Cabinet.	First meeting of the new 'Place Board' to oversee the place shaping work.
	92% of members have attended at least one session on corporate parenting or children's safeguarding since May 2015.	Meeting between Lead Commissioner, South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Executive to discuss progress since the Drew Review and Multi-Agency Escalation Procedure.	New vision and principals for neighbourhood working agreed at the Cabinet and Commissioners' decision-making meeting.	White Young Green awarded contract for town centre masterplan - final draft due April/ May 2017.	60 member induction and development sessions held since May 2015.	Agreement of two out of three major capital projects by Sheffield City Region (purchase of Forge Island and works to the A618 Growth Corridor).
		Scrutiny work programmes agreed for all Commissions and the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.		Introductory meeting between Lead Commissioner and Chief Constable, South Yorkshire Police.		Two by-elections. Liberal Democrats win first seat in 16 years (from Labour – Brinsworth and Catcliffe). Labour win seat from UKIP (Dinnington).
		Wates appointed as partners to deliver 200 new homes on a cluster of council sites.		Council Members and officers have led on sharing good practice at LGA seminars across the country on taxi licensing for Councillors.		
				Member personal development plan interviews commenced.		
				Sheffield City Region awarded £1.4million from Department for Transport (DfT) to work up business case for transport infrastructure related to Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District – bid undertaken by Rotherham Council and Sheffield City Council.		

	2016					2017
	August	September	October	November	December	January
Other contributing factors and dealings by others	Select Committee published report regarding lessons to be learnt by Government and local authorities from Rotherham and Tower Hamlets interventions – called for consistent taxi Licensing standards across the country.	Showcased services at Rotherham Show and around 60,000 people attended.	National Hate Crime Awareness week – Locally the Safer Rotherham Partnership partners raised awareness of hate crime, encouraged people to report and promote local support services.	Select Committee chair, Clive Betts MP characterised the Government’s response to their recommendations as ‘deeply concerning’ stating “Children and vulnerable adults will remain at risk in Rotherham for as long as the local authority’s tough new Licensing rules can be undermined by taxis from other areas”.	First charges made as part of Operation Stovewood – Three men charged with a total of 15 offences of indecent assault against a child in Rotherham, following an independent investigation by the National Crime Agency (NCA).	Final Local Government Settlement received.
		Extremely dangerous offender, Terry Gibbons jailed for 26 years for CSE offences.				Since October 2015, SYP have received 307 referrals and charged/summoned 33 people to court in relation to CSE.
		Councillors opposed the intent to re-route HS2 at Council meeting.	Shared Lives Week – information sessions held encouraging people to become Shared Lives carers, a unique form of support for vulnerable adults which allows them to live or spend time with carers in their own home on a long or short term basis depending on circumstances.			Leader of the Council writes to the Home Office reiterating the Council’s position against a proposed EDL national demonstration in the town centre, due 25th February.
		Public Health team raised awareness of World Suicide Prevention Day.	Operation Clover 2 – eight defendants found guilty of 19 sexual offences against three girls between 1999 and 2003 – received sentences totalling 96 years.	BBC One Show featured Esther Rantzen regarding new Childline app – highlighted Rotherham and included interviews with Jayne Senior and some victims/survivors of CSE.		
		Rotherham community carnival organised by the Open Minds Theatre Group - people from across the borough invited to attend.	National Adoption week – urged those considering adoption to get in touch.	National Crime Agency arrested five men in connection with operation Stovewood (independent investigation) – will remain on bail while investigations continue.		
			Government response to the Select Committee report published in August – welcomed and agreed with the recommendations made by the Select Committee.	Chancellor announced that £7.6m will be provided to Wentworth Woodhouse in his Autumn Statement.		
			Gulliver’s submitted planning application to build on 250 acres of the former Pithouse West site – a decision is expected to be made early 2017.	South Yorkshire Police has charged three 15-year-old boys with murder, in connection with the death of 34-year-old Rotherham man.		

The timelines from February 2015 can be found within the following reports:

- February – July 2015 available in the 6 month progress review evidence file submitted in August 2015
- August 2015 – February 2016 is available in the 12 month progress review evidence file submitted in February 2016
- March 2016 – July 2016 is available in the 18 month progress review evidence file submitted in August 2016.

All of the above reports can be found on the Council website: www.rotherham.gov.uk/commissioners

6 Progress against the Mission Outcomes

6.1 Commissioner Patricia Bradwell

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



Outcomes achieved: last two years

- The Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) was established in April 2015, providing a single point of access to report neglect and abuse. Since the MASH was established there has been a 16% increase in contacts, however, contacts are considered within 24 hours in line with statutory requirements.
- Children and young people who have suffered or are likely to suffer harm through CSE are supported and protected through a multi-agency CSE team (Evolve) established in July 2015. The service received 524 referrals in 2015/16 (including all new referrals, both new cases or newly referred historic cases), and 104 referrals up to the end of quarter two 2016/17.
- The number of police prosecutions relating to CSE has increased as a result of joint working on complex operations and investigations. As a result, 20 perpetrators of historical abuse were sentenced to a total of 279 and-a-half years (Operation Clover 1: six defendants sentenced to a total of 102 years; Operation Clover 2: eight defendants sentenced to a total of 96 years; February 2017 six men sentenced to a total of over 81 years) and three men charged with serious sexual offences by the National Crime Agency.
- The Council and South Yorkshire Police have also been working together on joint investigations into current CSE and this has led to numerous convictions, with five men convicted in the last 15 months alone and more expected in the coming months. The convictions have seen these prolific Rotherham sex offenders, who have carried out numerous sex offences between them, given more than 61 years of combined jail sentences.
- In January 2016 the Early Help Service was established to ensure that children and families receive intense, focussed support when problems first emerge, preventing problems from escalating. Exit surveys in the Early Help Service capture direct feedback from service users and are providing positive evidence. 171 have been completed to date, with quarter three data showing that 100% of respondents gave an overall rating of the help and support they received as “Good or Excellent.”
- Improvements are steered by a refreshed and well-functioning multi-agency Safeguarding Children Board. This is further strengthened by the establishment of the new Children and Young People’s Partnership which has produced a multi-agency Children and Young People’s Plan to secure improved outcomes.

- Major improvements have been made in respect of accommodation arrangements for care leavers. Joint work with colleagues in Housing and an external strategic partner has resulted in properties being secured in Rotherham to provide a range of suitable accommodation for those leaving care.
- Evenings and weekends can be a stressful time for families. To ensure responsive support is in place, a 'crash pad' facility has been developed in partnership with a local school, providing short-term support when needed in an emergency. This facility is available for any child requiring emergency accommodation whilst a placement is being sought.
- Performance in relation to the percentage of young people not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET) is currently on track to meet the annual target of 3.1 % (based on an average taken across Nov, Dec and Jan) with performance in December at 3.0 %.
- As part of the implementation of the new social care and early help case management system, Liquidlogic went live on 31st October 2016.
- The establishment of "Improving Lives", the Council's Scrutiny mechanism, is starting to provide effective challenge.
- Rotherham's practice partner, Lincolnshire County Council, completed a peer review of social care legal services and made a number of recommendations which have all been accepted. The service has taken steps to source additional resources to reduce workloads and improve performance.

Overview of progress

Since I was appointed in May 2016, there continues to be evidence of progress in the delivery of services to support children to grow up in safe environments. There is a clear vision, purpose and direction for the service, evidence of more stable leadership and good oversight of the improvement journey. There is evidence of improved political ownership and the re-establishment of 'Improving Lives', the Council's Scrutiny mechanism, is providing effective challenge. However, whilst progress has been made, there is still much work to do at this critical phase in the improvement journey to improve the quality of practice through workforce development.

Next Steps

- The next phase is a relentless focus on improving the quality of practice through workforce development and more robust managerial oversight from a stable cohort of frontline managers, which will lead to improved practice.
- The service has adopted a new operating model ('Signs of Safety', supported by Restorative Practice) which will enable staff to work in a different way with families and improve the quality of practice. Investment has been secured to ensure all staff are trained in this way of working.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, therefore there needs to be more active engagement of partners in the delivery of Early Help. Engagement is improving and the current refresh of the thresholds document through Rotherham Safeguarding Children Board will enhance consistent practice.
- The Council has confirmed its commitment to becoming a Child-Centred Borough where children will thrive in all aspects of their development.

- There needs to be further consolidation of the systems, processes and staffing at the front door (MASH, Duty & Assessment, CSE and Early Help) to ensure a single point of contact for all Council and partner services.
 - We recognise that support for those in crisis out of normal office hours needs to be more responsive. We will further enhance the 'out of hours' options for those in crisis.
 - It is important that the service continues to implement the accommodation strategy to ensure that additional new care leavers' accommodation is available for young people to move into. In addition, the SEND Hub at Kimberworth (the drop in facility for care leavers) will be opened and accessible shortly. The Contact Service will also be in a newly refurbished, safe and comfortable building in the near future.
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Risks and Issues

- Workforce development is critical to cultural and attitudinal shift enabling the quality of practice to thrive. 'Signs of Safety' has been confirmed as the operating model, supported by restorative approaches and investment has been secured to implement this across the workforce. Implementation must progress at pace.
- There have been a number of significant successful outcomes achieved over the last few months with strong strategic commitment to multi-agency working, but strategic intent has not yet been consistently translated across the partnership into operational practice, especially in Early Help.

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

Outcomes achieved: last two years

- Creation of a working environment where good social work practice can thrive is essential. Caseload sizes, which previously were too high, have continued to reduce. Caseloads in Children's Disability Service have now reduced significantly following a specific piece of work and the very low caseloads in the CSE team reflect the complexity and intensity of the work undertaken.
- Although demand for services continues to rise, response times continue to be good: 87.2% of assessments are completed within 45 working days.
- The introduction of refreshed high level performance management has resulted in significant and sustained improvement in the proportion of children, across all case types, with an up-to-date plan. At the end of 2014/15 only 65.1% of eligible Children in Need (CIN) had an up-to-date plan. As of the end of 2015/16 this had improved to 98.6%. This improvement is seen across the whole service.
- Improvements have been recognised by Ofsted. The latest Ofsted monitoring visit in October 2016 focussed on looked after children and recognised that the council has continued to respond positively to the recommendations in the single inspection in 2014. However, they identified that improvement is still required in a number of key areas, including strengthening the oversight of social work practice by frontline managers, improving the quality of plans and ensuring all children who go missing receive a return home interview, specifically those who live out of borough.
- Recruitment and retention of social workers and managers has dramatically improved, leading to stability and resilience in the workforce, with low agency rates and low staff turnover (12.46% compared to 16% nationally).
- Children in care are better supported by social workers with lower caseloads, an active virtual school, and an Independent Reviewing Officer service that has a good oversight of children's outcomes.
- A new safe and modern IT system has been implemented to support practitioners in recording key information about early help, children in need, looked after children and child protection cases.
- Liberty House Residential Children's Home received an "outstanding" judgment in December 2016 - the first ever top rating for social care in Rotherham.
- Compliance with statutory requirements has been embedded into business as usual. This means that service delivery ensures that children and families are helped and supported in line with legal expectations.
- The Council has invested in recruiting and retaining foster carers to ensure that, wherever possible, children will be cared for by a family in Rotherham.

Overview of progress

Over the past six months, there is evidence to confirm that reliable children's care services are well-managed within agreed resources, although the level of resource requirement has increased. A three-year budget has been agreed and investment bids to support the improvement journey are secured. A new operating model ('Signs of Safety') has been adopted and quality assurance mechanisms, including performance monitoring, auditing, peer review and Ofsted monitoring visits, confirm progress. However, drive, determination and corporate and political commitment must continue to be in place. As the service effectively manages the operations, new risks will continue to emerge and these must be dealt with in a responsive way. However, improvements are still required in all service areas but especially within looked after children services. Recruiting permanent team managers is a critical issue which is essential to strengthening the oversight of social work practice and improving the quality of plans.

Next Steps

- Developing and delivering a sustainable implementation plan for the service to adopt 'Signs of Safety', supported by restorative approaches, as its operating model is a priority.
 - Deliver a range of new edge of care and preventative services that will impact on a high level of demand in the system. This is in progress through the establishment of family group conferences and an adolescent response service.
 - Ensure the permanent leadership team has a relentless focus on the quality of practice. Pivotal to their success will be assessing the quality of practice of front-line practitioners, continuing to recruit experienced social workers, and developing a cadre of high quality first line managers. This will be a significant HR challenge and is critical to improving the quality of practice in the Looked after Children service.
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Risks and Issues

- Progress in Children and Young People's Services will be dependent on all members of the Improvement Board continuing to prioritise the service's improvement journey. Without a continued relentless focus at an operational and corporate level, as well as through stronger partnerships, the existing progress will not be sustained.
- As the service implements a robust assessment of front line practitioners, there is a risk that this may result in workers exiting the service, leading to increased vacancy rates. It is critical that a permanent cadre of team managers is recruited to Looked after Children services.
- A new operating model ('Signs of Safety') and new preventative services which staff are trained and confident in, will improve practice. However, the approach to implementation is crucial for success and will need strong project management and strategic leadership and commitment.

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

Outcomes achieved: last two years

- CSE outreach services are in place to raise awareness, support young people who are potentially at risk and provide support to survivors. The ReachOut project, delivered by Barnardo's, became operational in January 2016. The project includes preventative education in schools, as well as direct work with young people and their parents.
- Practical, emotional support, advocacy and therapeutic interventions have been commissioned through the voluntary sector to young people and adults who have experienced CSE, including support for immediate family members. These voluntary sector organisations are providing emotional support and advocacy services that are person-centred, needs-led, responsive, flexible and practical.
- The Vulnerable Persons Team (VPT) within Adult Social Care was established to provide support to adult survivors of CSE. Experienced social workers within the team offer an essential part of the wrap-around service provided for survivors and support them through court.
- Ofsted found continued improvements in practice in relation to CSE in June 2016.

Overview of progress

A period of consolidation and review relating to operational work on CSE has taken place since September 2016. Building on the previous activity in this regard, steps have now been taken to strengthen the joint leadership of the CSE team, further embed multi-agency information sharing and the assessment process and strengthen the mapping activity of the team. Complex abuse processes for the high profile, multi-agency operations concerning current children have been strengthened. Robust activity to understand the profile of CSE in the borough, prevent and disrupt abuse, prosecute offenders and safeguard children continues. In particular, recent activity has focussed on better aligning work with children affected by CSE with mainstream social work functions, whilst continuing to provide specialist support where needed. However, resourcing the significant and complex police-led operations is a priority and we await confirmation that the Fusion Bid to respond to the anticipated ramifications of the NCA's Operation Stovewood inquiry will be accepted. Failure to adequately resource this will have a negative impact on progress, given the additional demand.

Next Steps

- The Evolve Team will be re-modelled to ensure that a CSE worker is allocated to all children where relevant, as well as support workers, to ensure compliance with statutory processes and to strengthen the use of risk assessments.
 - Continued joint work with South Yorkshire Police in the areas of information sharing, investigation and evidence collection, assessment of risk and the evidential burden needed to take safeguarding action. There also needs to be continued work on the disruption of offenders via the Safer Rotherham Partnership to further safeguard our children and young people.
 - Embed and develop improved multi-agency governance arrangements with regard to the CSE function and in relation to the oversight and visibility of multi-agency operations (Operations Scorpio and Taffeta).
 - Ensure the consistent use of multi-agency complex abuse procedures to manage operations in relation to existing child victims in the borough.
 - The Council and its partners have submitted a funding request, the Fusion Bid, to the Department for Education and other government departments to ensure that Rotherham has the skills and capacity to support victims of CSE as part of Operation Stovewood. We have engaged with the CSE Task Force and await the outcomes of this funding request.
 - Multi-agency auditing for CSE cases at a senior level will be introduced across the partnership.
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Risks and Issues

- The financial demands expressed through the Fusion bid need to be addressed urgently.
- Multi-agency auditing will need strategic commitment at a senior level of the multi-agency partnership in order to be effective.
- CSE screening tools and risk assessments need to be consistently applied across the partnership to ensure the effective safeguarding of vulnerable young people.
- All practitioners need to have access to the multi-agency CSE training and managers must ensure attendance so the issue of CSE is robustly addressed at every level and across all partners.

In relation to the “seven tests”, I make the following summary comments:

- **A well-functioning corporate service.** The Chief Executive is fully committed to increasing the capacity and the capability to enable Children and Young People’s Services to be returned to Council control. She is closely but appropriately engaged in improvement activity and has a good understanding of the priorities for the service.
- **Stable and capable leadership.** This has been secured at both senior officer and member level and work to achieve a permanent team manager workforce is in progress. Pivotal to their success will be assessing the quality of front-line practitioners, continuing to recruit experienced social workers and ensuring a cadre of high quality first line managers.
- **Continued improvement in the quality and effectiveness of practice.** There is evidence to confirm that there are no longer widespread failures and that there is good compliance with most statutory arrangements. There is clear progress against the actions in the Children’s Improvement Plan and evidence that recommendations from quality assurance, audits and Ofsted improvement visits have been dealt with promptly and effectively. However, there is still some way to go to ensure all children and families receive a responsive, high quality and effective service.
- **Strong and supportive partnerships.** These are evolving and the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Board is effectively calling agencies to account for their safeguarding arrangements. However, there needs to be greater engagement by partners in the delivery of early help. This is being addressed.
- **Robust financial management.** The Council has increased its capability in financial strategy and strategic planning in order to effectively support the service to continuously improve and mitigate demand. Investment in priority areas and a three-year budget plan have been agreed.
- **Compelling strategy for the workforce.** It is clear that the foundations are in place, and that implementation of ‘Signs of Safety’ as an operating model will improve the quality of practice. The success of the recruitment and retention strategy must be sustained to ensure a stabilised workforce is in place which will promote better practice quality over time.
- **Effective performance information and quality assurance.** These arrangements are effective, but the culture of performance-based accountability needs to be embedded at all managerial levels and must empower managers to be aspirational for quality practice.

6.2 Commissioner Mary Ney

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



Outcomes achieved: last two years

- Implementation of the new Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing Policy including the following requirements and arrangements put in place.
 - Higher standards of the 'fit and proper' test for drivers including dealing with convictions, motoring offences, complaints and softer information from the police and other agencies.
 - Completed audit of all existing drivers, against the higher standards and held case hearings for those who may be in breach. Completed search of old archived files.
 - Arrangements for the police and safeguarding agencies to share intelligence with the Licensing team.
 - Subscription by all drivers to the Disclosure and Debaring Service.
 - Safeguarding training including CSE Awareness.
 - Taxi cameras fitted in vehicles with both video and audio activation requirements.
 - BTEC level 2 qualification in the "Introduction to the Role of the Professional Taxi and Private Hire Driver" or hold an equivalent qualification.
 - Higher standard of vehicle fitness/age.
- Strengthened the way in which member level case hearings are conducted. The Commissioner held a total of 186 individual case hearings for the two-year period and was accompanied in an advisory capacity by the Advisory Chair of Licensing and Councillors from the Advisory Licensing Board. New arrangements for recording hearings, questioning of the driver and statements of decisions were put in place from summer 2015. Annual training programme for members of the Licensing Board established. See Appendix F for all decisions for the last two years.
- Improved the approach to managing appeals and successfully defended 68% of cases where drivers have appealed to the courts following the removal of their licences. The Council also successfully defended eight appeals against the requirement to fit taxi cameras in vehicles.
- Good day-to-day management and leadership of the Licensing team and enforcement activity through a new organisational structure, a number of new senior officer appointments and implementation of a service improvement plan.
- Contributed to achieving higher standards and enforcement across other councils, including sharing best practice with individual councils, speaking at a programme of LGA seminars for Councillors and providing advice to central government departments as part of a review of guidance to councils.

- Reviewed the effectiveness of the new policy after one year during summer 2016, including at a meeting of the Advisory Licensing Board.
 - Licensing function returned to the Council in December 2016 and arrangements for ongoing Commissioner oversight in place.
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Overview of progress: last two years

Since the commencement of intervention in February 2015, councillors and officers have worked hard to restore public confidence in the taxi trade and the Council's Licensing Service and have worked effectively with the Commissioner Team. They have put in place changes to all aspects of the Licensing Function to ensure the taxi trade in Rotherham complies with the highest standards in terms of fitness of drivers and safety of vehicles. They have ensured that the improvements include changes to the culture within the service and the operation of the Licensing Board so that they can maintain high standards and tenacity in their approach to decision making in the future.

They are well placed to resume their full decision making roles with the agreement for the restoration of powers from December 2016. They now function to the highest standards that would be found in any council in the country and are willing to assist other councils to reach the same standards. Indeed, a number of councils have already been in touch with Rotherham MBC and good practice is being shared with councillors and officers across the country.

Next Steps

Arrangements have been put in place for Commissioner Ney to provide ongoing oversight, advice and support as required to both officers and members for a transition period as they resume their powers. The Council will need to keep the policy under review and respond to any new guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Transport in early 2017. The council will also wish to continue to embed the improvements to enforcement activity and to monitor ongoing concerns with the limits of the legal context which can undermine the purpose of the new policy.

Risks and Issues

The risk of legal challenge to aspects of the policy has now largely passed. The Council successfully defended eight cases in the Magistrates Court that were objecting to the requirement to install and operate taxi cameras. In common with other councils there will need to be ongoing efforts to address the challenges of recruitment and retention of staff of the right calibre to both the Licensing and Enforcement teams.

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

Outcomes achieved: last two years

- Council priority given to joint working with the police and other agencies in relation to enforcement, disruption and community reassurance through the appointment of an experienced Assistant Director for Community Safety and Street Scene in early 2016.
- Robust Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP) Board and sub groups put in place from late 2015 following a review of governance arrangements.
- Revised approach to the conduct of SRP Board meetings to include a dedicated “deep dive” topic at each meeting. Topics addressed to date include domestic violence, CSE, community cohesion and tackling hate crime.
- New Community Safety Strategy 2016-2019 with clearly agreed priorities, developed in collaboration with all partners.
- Effective sharing of information and collaboration with the Police on joint operations – examples include concerns relating to CSE, tackling anti-social behaviour and neighbourhood hotspots.
- Strengthened performance management arrangements through the implementation of a new outcome-based performance framework, with good engagement from all partners from 2016.
- Collaborative work to mitigate the impacts of the far-right demonstrations in the town centre, working with the Police, local businesses and the community and keeping the Home Secretary briefed on the impacts.
- Review of the community safety function within the Council and appointment of a new head of community safety to strengthen the Council’s contribution.
- Improved approach to the prioritisation and agreement of funding for proposals for the PCC’s Community Safety Fund, ensuring alignment with the Community Safety Strategy priorities.

Overview of progress: last two years

The first 12 months of the period were focussed on a review of the governance arrangements for the Safer Rotherham Partnership, the development of a new Community Safety Strategy and improved arrangements for performance management. These arrangements are now becoming embedded, strongly led by the portfolio holder Cllr Hoddinott, and benefits on the ground can be identified in terms of improved partnership working and joint operations.

This period has allowed the Council to review its own capacity to contribute strategically, resulting in the establishment of a new post of Head of Community Safety reporting to the Assistant Director to ensure sufficient senior level strategic capacity. The Council and the SRP Board are now better placed to drive improvement across the priorities that they have set.

Next Steps

The Council and the partnership must now use their improved capability to deepen their understanding of community safety and offending behaviour in the borough, to accelerate the identification of gaps in delivery to address priority concerns, and to learn from good practice elsewhere.

Success and confidence in future performance is heavily reliant on the quality, effectiveness and sustainability of partnership working between all of the agencies represented on the SRP Board. The Council's leadership role is at the heart of future sustainability and the restoration of powers is seen by Commissioners as an important component of ensuring the Council is empowered to take this forward with Commissioner oversight.

Risks and Issues

South Yorkshire Police have experienced turbulence in their leadership and reputation over the two year period. This is ongoing and presents a potential risk to the effectiveness of the SRP. Locally, working relationships have developed well enough and this may mitigate, to some extent, the impact of any wider risks.

Rotherham experienced some respite this summer from the occurrence of far-right marches with only one taking place in the spring of 2016. However, this remains an ongoing potential risk to cohesion and the EDL recently announced that they intend to return to Rotherham on 25th February 2017.

6.3 Chief Executive, Sharon Kemp

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

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



Outcomes achieved: last two years

- Implemented 108 actions to improve services and deliver best value duties through the implementation of the phase one Improvement Plan (A Fresh Start) focussed around:
 - Inspirational political and managerial leadership;
 - Robust governance, decision making and performance management;
 - Culture of excellence and outstanding implementation;
 - Strong, high impact partnerships.
- Following delivery of the first phase, a refocused phase two action plan – with 20 objectives and 99 trackable milestones - was set out, covering ongoing improvement priorities through to May 2017.
- Stable, strong and permanent Strategic Leadership Team (fully in place from August 2016) committed to driving forward improvements and change at the Council.
- Comprehensive vision set, which informs all the Council's work and priorities. A 2016/17 Corporate Plan was agreed in July 2016 to underpin the Council's overall vision, setting out headline priorities, outcomes, actions and measures that will demonstrate its delivery; supported by robust and transparent performance management arrangements to scrutinise and challenge its effectiveness and focus on service improvement.
- Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) provides a framework for understanding the strategic, service and financial challenges the Council faces and options for how these may be met over the next three financial years.
- Standardised and consistent approaches across the organisation through the implementation of new corporate policies (e.g. in the areas of corporate safeguarding, equalities and diversity and collaboration with the community and voluntary sector) and new staff values and behaviours.
- Strong working relationships embedded between Cabinet members and officers, including the way decisions are made (in collaboration with Commissioners).

Overview of progress: last six months

The delivery of the 2016/17 Corporate Plan (published in July 2016) has been embedded, with quarterly public performance reports submitted to Cabinet and Commissioners' decision-making meetings in September (covering quarter one performance) and November (quarter two), detailing progress against the 103 separate performance indicators and measures within the plan.

The Corporate Plan includes a mix of performance indicators and measures; some are monitored via monthly data, while others are available only on a quarterly or annual basis. Some measures have very clear targets (e.g. based on national or regional benchmarking), while others are included and measured because they help show the overall picture of what Rotherham is like (for example, there is no set "target" for the number of CSE referrals, but this is nevertheless a key element within the Plan). The performance reporting format has been developed in such a way, therefore, that senior officers are able to set out an overall "narrative" around the data for their service areas, to tell a more meaningful story around performance (rather than relying purely on data and indicators). Measures have been chosen to demonstrate performance and the Council's response to key issues experienced by the public of Rotherham, rather than what is easy or straightforward to achieve. This also responds to the previous CGI report criticisms that the Council had previously over-simplified its corporate performance reporting, before the arrival of Commissioners.

The most recent Corporate Plan progress report was published in advance of the Cabinet and Commissioners' decision-making meeting on 13th February. This shows that, at the end of quarter three (October to December 2016), 43.9% of measures with the relevant data available (i.e. monthly or quarterly) are on target – a rise from 39.7% at the end of quarter two (July to September 2016). Direction of travel is also positive for 47.8% of these measures, a rise from the 43.1% reported in the previous quarter. The report also sets out that 29.8% of measurable indicators are not progressing in line with targets – a worsening from the 24.1% at quarter two – but that the most recent direction of travel for these indicators has been more positive than the previous quarter.

The end of performance year quarter four report is scheduled for consideration at the Cabinet and Commissioners' meeting on 12th June 2017.

Further to the LGA peer challenge of the Council's performance arrangements in July 2016 (which reported at the end of August), recommendations are being implemented with an approved corporate performance model now in delivery phase. This will be further supported by the recruitment of a new head of service for performance, intelligence and improvement, which is in progress.

The second year of Rotherham's Improvement Plan features 20 objectives and 99 measurable milestones. 48% of actions were assessed as complete by the end of the 2016 calendar year and activity to deliver all the remaining 51 milestones by the end of the phase two programme period (May 2017) is on track, with no actions flagged as "at risk" of delivery in the most recent performance report. Lead officers for the improvement actions are attending meetings of the Improvement Plan's 'Joint Board' of Commissioners and elected members, to provide comprehensive updates which are scrutinised by Commissioners, with political engagement from the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader, Advisory Cabinet member for Corporate Services and the Leader of the Opposition. Appendix A of this report includes an overview of the most recent performance report to the Joint Board, covering activity to the end of December 2016.

A new “Community Strategy” has been developed and is now being finalised by the Rotherham Together Partnership; on track to be launched in March 2017. This will set out a shared, long term vision for Rotherham which the Council will work to deliver alongside partners across the public, community and private sectors. In the meantime, positive progress is being made on the 2016/17 Rotherham Together Partnership Plan (see also Commissioner Kenny’s update on Mission Outcome 8: Productive working with others).

The Council’s Cabinet has now met in public 12 times as part of the Cabinet and Commissioners’ decision-making meetings. The reports to Cabinet have achieved a good standard, with all papers published within timescales. Protocols for effective officer and member working relationships are in place and there have been no issues requiring formal resolution. The Scrutiny Function has continued to develop with Overview and Scrutiny Board scrutinising decisions prior to Cabinet and Commissioner meetings. This cross-party pre-scrutiny function has performed effectively and all feedback and recommendations from Scrutiny have been incorporated in the final decisions taken. The Scrutiny Select Commissions each have a formal work programme and there are regular review meetings scheduled between Scrutiny Chairs, Cabinet and the Senior Leadership Team to support the scrutiny function, as well as identified link officers within each directorate.

The new permanent Senior Leadership Team was completed in August and almost all Assistant Director (AD) posts are also filled including a number of new appointments following directorate restructures (for example, to enhance strategic focuses on adult social care commissioning, community safety, and culture, leisure and sport). This is providing secure and stable senior leadership across the organisation and the impact on pace of progress is evidenced in the achievements within the Improvement Plan and delivery of the 2016/17 Corporate Plan.

Embedding the vision, corporate priorities, values and behaviours has continued, with the Leader and Chief Executive having a programme of regular engagement sessions with staff, with over 1100 attending to date. The Advisory Cabinet members and Strategic Directors also have a regular programme of engagement events with staff.

Following the recommendation from Commissioners in the report to Government in November 2016 that HR and Asset Management remain as Commissioner-led functions, the following has been undertaken:

- **HR.** A detailed HR Improvement Plan has been developed to support the workforce strategy (produced in consultation with staff and published in October 2016) and to underpin the development and delivery of a supporting action plan.
- **Asset Management.** Further to an external review commissioned by the Council, the Regeneration and Environment directorate is now implementing an action plan overseen by a Property and Asset Management Board, with oversight from Cabinet. A report on progress is due to be published on actions taken so far, including restructure of services and addressing capacity gaps first identified when the Strategic Director arrived.

Work continues to embed the values and behaviours through specific activities such as the recent well-received staff awards, promotion and use within recruitment processes, and internal publicity. Training and development continues to be prioritised to ensure that there are the skills and capacity to deliver on corporate priorities with budgets retained to fund this. A programme of activity to take forward the workforce drivers (“being brilliant at the basics”, “doing the best work of our life”, “knowing our communities” and “smashing the silos”) has been launched and will continue to be developed and broadened to all managers.

A report to Cabinet and Commissioners' decision-making meeting on 10th October 2016 provided an initial update on progress on a new approach to neighbourhood working and engagement, outlining a vision and working principles developed by a cross party group of members who undertook a series of visits to learn from good practice elsewhere. Engagement with partners has continued and is on track to develop a shared partnership approach to neighbourhood working by the end of March 2017. This new approach is being structured around the role of the ward member as the democratic representative of local communities, as well as the opportunities to integrate and align Council services within neighbourhoods to improve outcomes, achieve efficiencies and capitalise on a community asset approach.

The Corporate Safeguarding Group, chaired by the Chief Executive, has continued to review progress against the action plan set out following an external ("section 11") audit of all Council services' understanding of safeguarding responsibilities. This shows that the majority of actions have been completed and the Council has volunteered to undergo a peer review in February 2017 where a Local Safeguarding Children Board partner organisation will externally validate the progress over the last twelve months in making safeguarding everyone's responsibility at the Council, and also identify further areas for action during 2017/18.

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy has been regularly reviewed throughout the year with investments in Children's and Adult Services and savings profiled over a three-year period. Budget proposals have been developed and were subject to public consultation from early December through to early January. Detailed budget proposals for 2018/19 onwards were published on 26th January 2017, in advance of consideration at the Cabinet and Commissioners' decision-making meeting on 13th February; and the Council is therefore on track to approve a balanced, forward-looking Budget at its meeting on 8th March 2017.

Work continues on a series of fundamental reviews in relation to Waste Collection and Grounds Maintenance, both within the borough and across the collaboration with Barnsley and Doncaster. The Cabinet member is leading these reviews and they will be reporting on a phased basis over the coming months.

A new Head of Audit has been recruited and there has been a smooth transition. This role now only focuses on audit and there are clear protocols in place for the escalation of issues.

There have been no significant issues in the services returned to the Council within the last 12 months and there is no loss in momentum in the progress that taxi licensing continues to make following the recent return of powers.

Work has also progressed on:

- The 'Place Plan' for integrated health and social care services in Rotherham has been developed with a clear vision and actions. This has received positive feedback locally and within the region.
- Rotherham is one of 30 local authorities selected for early delivery of the first starter homes being built on brownfield sites across the country. The Council has also been awarded £6.1million from the Homes & Communities Agency for 227 new affordable and shared ownership homes in Rotherham, one of only 3 authorities to receive a grant award in the Yorkshire and North East region. This will contribute to the Council's ambition, set out in its new 2016 -19 Housing Strategy, to see around 900 new homes built within Rotherham each year by the end of the decade.

- The Council has been working alongside Sheffield, Barnsley and Doncaster councils on a rough sleeper initiative and has been rewarded with a grant over the next 3 years to support a new cross border drive to help rough sleepers and tackle homelessness.
 - Rotherham Council's Housing and Neighbourhood Services have been awarded the TPAS accreditation for excellence in tenant engagement. The award recognises the Council's commitment to involving tenants in decision-making processes and demonstrates that tenants are given the opportunity to influence decisions about housing policies, conditions and services.
 - Rotherham is maintaining a proactive role in the Sheffield City Region (SCR) and taking forward the devolution deal agreed with Government. This has included the Leader of the Council continuing to provide the lead elected member role on the SCR Skills Executive Board, and the Chief Executive establishing a new senior officer group to identify opportunities to collaborate further on service delivery across the city region.
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Next Steps

- Secure the new Head of Service role for Performance Intelligence and Improvement
 - Completion of phase two improvement plan and integration of ongoing improvement priorities into mainstream Council business planning
 - Delivery of workforce strategy and action plan now a permanent Head of HR is in post
 - Delivery in response to reviews of Waste and Environmental Health
-

Risks and Issues

- The achievement of the priorities identified within the 2016/17 Corporate Plan and the Phase Two Improvement Plan will continue to be subject to robust monitoring, review and escalation. The most significant risks will be escalated to either the appropriate directorate or the Corporate Risk Register. The enhanced corporate performance management and intelligence function, which is now being established will provide further assurance.
- The launch of the new Rotherham Together Partnership Community Strategy in March 2017 is subject to regular review with partners to ensure that all the important milestones are reached.
- The Corporate Plan will be refreshed for 2017/18 onwards, along with the finalisation of associated Service Plans for each of the Council's directorates, with publication of these by the summer of 2017. These significant activities will continue to be reviewed and risks identified so that a proactive performance focussed culture can be sustained across all Council services.

6.4 Commissioner Julie 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.



Outcomes achieved: last two years

- Following the most extensive consultation with the public in Rotherham's history, a new Council vision was published in October 2015.
- Building on this, a new longer term Community Strategy (The Rotherham Plan) is being finalised and due to be published in March 2017.
- Invigorated and productive revised Rotherham Together Partnership, widely supported by all partners in the borough.
- Through partnership collaboration, new strategies and plans are being implemented including: Growth plan 2015-25, seeking to deliver 10,000 new private sector jobs and attract 750 new businesses; Safer Rotherham Partnership Plan for 2016/19; Rotherham Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015-18; Children and Young People's Plan 2016-19; and Rotherham Housing Strategy 2016-19.
- Latest LGA Survey shows that trust and confidence in the Council have both posted significant increases since June 2015.
- A new Rotherham-wide Compact will further establish strong relationships between the Council and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).
- Work ongoing with a view to long-term infrastructure and support for the VCS and improved service delivery from the sector for front-line services.
- The Council is continuing to have a strong influence in Sheffield City Region and the devolution deal. The Leader and Chief Executive are playing prominent roles in shaping its governance, structures and plans for the effective use of funding devolved from Government, and influencing growth opportunities for Rotherham.

Overview of progress: last two years

Before the intervention, the Council's partnership working was widely regarded as poor and public confidence in the Council was very low. With a relaunched partnership and more transparency with the public, including extensive consultation, there have been significant improvements in the way the Council conducts its business and how - with partners on board - it is driving through an agenda which will meet the demands facing a modern council. I have recommended that the responsibility of partnership working is returned to the Council. More detailed examples of progress are laid out below.

Rotherham Together Partnership

Building on the themes from last year, the new community strategy (Rotherham Plan) will set out the major joint initiatives or ‘game changers’ that partners will be working on between now and 2025 in order to help make Rotherham a place where people want to live, work, study, invest or visit. This will be published in March 2017.

Meanwhile, the Rotherham Together Partnership Plan for 2016/17 (launched last year) continues to be implemented with a range of activities emanating from the earlier consultations under the banner “let’s get Rotherham working, cleaning, talking” etc., all directly linked to the plan’s themes.

A significant piece of work has been commissioned by the partnership to develop a ‘place shaping’ strategy for Rotherham. This has involved a comprehensive programme of stakeholder engagement to identify distinctive themes, ideas and imagery that help to tell the Rotherham story, as a way of promoting the borough to potential investors, visitors and workers. The themes will be launched in February 2017 and a business-led place board established to take the work forward.

Local Government Association (LGA) Resident Satisfaction Survey

The fourth six-monthly LGA Resident Satisfaction Survey was conducted in December 2016. Covering areas including trust, confidence, responsiveness and value for money, every result has seen a percentage rise since the last survey and over 18 months there has been steady improvement.

Compared to the first poll undertaken in June 2015, there are two significant improvements. ‘Trust in the Council’ has risen by eight percentage points to 50%, and this is backed up by ‘confidence in the Council’, which has seen a similar increase. A more detailed narrative of the survey can be found at Appendix C.

Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)

The Council has started a review of VCS infrastructure services which will help to define future service requirements. Infrastructure services provide support that helps VCS organisations across the borough to become more effective and sustainable. This is done through the provision of information, advice and training facilities and help with networking, partnerships, advocacy and campaigning. Both sets of partners are also looking at front-line delivery and work is starting on a longer term funding strategy involving the VCS.

Further progress has been made on the Rotherham Compact which provides the framework for a positive relationship between the Council, other public sector organisations and the VCS. Consultation on the Compact took place over a 12-week period until November 2016. Following further revisions to incorporate feedback from the consultation, a final version is being considered for formal endorsement through the governance frameworks of the partner organisations with a view to a launch event in March 2017.

Neighbourhood Area Application from Dinnington St John’s Town Council

Since my last report, when I highlighted that Dinnington Town Council was the first parish/town council in Rotherham to embark on and submit a neighbourhood area application (approved at the Cabinet/Commissioners’ decision-making meeting on 11th July 2016), Maltby Town Council has now followed in submitting a neighbourhood area application. This is anticipated to be approved at a Cabinet/Commissioners’ decision-making meeting in spring 2017, subject to public consultation.

The Council is committed to getting local people involved in planning for development of their local areas. Now that two neighbourhood plans are being prepared, and more may follow, it will enable local communities to get more involved in the decisions that affect their area. Parish Council training has taken place to provide parishes with the information they need to consider whether to undertake a neighbourhood plan for their area.

Next Steps

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

- Continue to embed positive, action-focussed partnership working across Rotherham Together Partnership and its supporting theme boards;
 - Launch the Rotherham Plan (Rotherham Together Partnership's community strategy) in March 2017;
 - Grow in influence in the Sheffield City Region and secure devolved funding to pursue Rotherham's growth priorities;
 - Work to improve perceptions of the Council, building people's confidence and trust;
 - Launch the Rotherham Compact with partners and the voluntary and community sector.
-

Risks and Issues

- Failure to successfully implement the actions set out in the Rotherham Plan. Work will need to take place alongside partners to ensure that the plan is a success.
- A new combined authority Mayor will be elected – most likely in May 2018. There is a risk that the Mayor may introduce new ways of working which could impact on the devolution of £30m per annum and how that is spent in the region on transformational projects.
- Future LGA survey results are disappointing and could be an indication that changing the perceptions of the citizens of Rotherham may take longer than originally anticipated.

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

Outcomes achieved: last two years

- Publication of the new Housing Strategy 2016-19, encouraging an increased supply of new, good quality affordable homes to support a growing economy.
- Contracts exchanged for the sale of Pit House West and planning application submitted by Gulliver's for new exciting leisure development for Rotherham.
- Enhanced involvement at a Sheffield City Region level both in terms of engagement, influence and impact, leading to submission of three bids for Rotherham totalling over £9m.
- Significant levels of company engagement – from February 2015 to December 2016 – 1,170 companies have been supported through 10,810 individual interactions.
- Development of Town Centre Masterplan. The new plan includes a strong emphasis on a wider town centre area and delivering key sites.
- Successfully managed and coordinated a regional/national response and agreed a package of support with the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in response to TATA steel restructuring.
- Funding to support economic regeneration has been factored into the Council's Medium-Term financial strategy to ensure delivery.

Overview of progress

This has been a strong year for the Council and partners, with the development of key plans such as the new housing strategy, economic growth plan and the town centre masterplan. 2017 has begun with two successful bids: the Council is to receive part of the £1.2 billion national fund to build starter homes in the town centre, and £6.1m has been allocated to support the building of 227 homes for people who need affordable housing. With this in mind, I have recommended the return of economic growth and the town centre to the Council's control. Further examples of continued progress are set out below.

Local Plan

The Local Plan underpins the Council's Growth Plan and Housing Strategy to help boost the supply of new homes and jobs the borough needs. The Examination in Public for the Local Plan (Sites and Policies) started in July with initial hearings and continued into December. Public consultation on limited changes proposed to the plan is expected in late spring 2017. The planned adoption of this document in 2017 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.

Rotherham Economic Growth Plan 2015-25

The Rotherham Economic Growth Plan continues in its implementation phase and in my previous report I set out progress so far. Since then, full business cases have been submitted to the Sheffield City Region seeking funding for three major capital projects: Purchase of Forge Island; road works to the A618 to support development of Gulliver's theme park; and purchase of the Advanced Manufacturing Park Technology Centre.

A monitoring and progress report is being produced for the Plan's first year of operation. This will be available during Q1 of 2017.

Town Centre

The new Town Centre Masterplan will expand to a wider town centre area and focus primarily on delivery of key town centre development sites. Work has started and will require extensive involvement of stakeholders. The completed Masterplan is expected by May 2017.

Meanwhile, the Council is actively pursuing several development options to ensure the town centre is supported through new and exciting physical regeneration projects, including the proposed acquisition of Forge Island for a proposed leisure development, and the redevelopment of the existing bus interchange. Significant capital funding has been approved within the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy for investment in the town.

Awards over the last two years have included winner of the 'Town Centre' category in the 'Great British High Street Awards 2015'. The opportunities for investors and independent retailers and evidence of the strong partnerships were all recognised as contributing factors in Rotherham's win. Rotherham was also named overall winner in the Association of Town & City Management's annual awards in March 2016, as well as coming first in the Diversifying the Business Mix category. Judges said they were impressed with the range of opportunities and support provided to entrepreneurs and the cluster of independent businesses that have helped revitalise the town's retail offer.

Sheffield City Region (SCR) skills agenda

The SCR Skills Board and the Appraisal Board have endorsed Rotherham North Notts (RNN) College's full business case to proceed with its bid for SCR Capital Growth Funds to build a new £11m Centre for High Level Skills. The Centre, due to open in 2018, will work with businesses and communities to address the shortfall in skills.

SCR Area Based Review outcomes will lead to the merger of RNN and Dearne Valley College on 1st February 2017, which will create one of the largest general Further Education (FE) colleges in the country and ensure a broad vocational post-16 learning offer is sustained for Rotherham residents to access.

Skills Bank – a £17m programme delivered by Price Waterhouse Cooper (PWC) from April 2016 to increase the skills of the workforce and productivity by providing training for 40,000 people, including 7,500 apprentices. The Council is working with PWC to promote the programme to Rotherham businesses.

In 2015/16 Rotherham Youth Enterprise worked with 5,530 children and young people on enterprise activities and promoting self-employment; matching 20 schools and businesses in the Enterprise Adviser Programme; supporting 35 new business start-ups; recruiting 12 Young Entrepreneur Ambassadors as volunteers; and delivering Rotherham's flagship Local Employment Advisory Forum event with over 1,000 young people and 70 businesses attending.

TATA Steel

Following my last update highlighting the package of support offered and detailing progress, I can report that - as of 30th November - 155 of those who have left TATA have secured jobs and 192 people have been supported with training packages to help them get new jobs. In total, 481 TATA employees have been provided with 1-2-1 support and advice.

HS2

The Council continues to lobby for the route option via a station at Meadowhall. A study is being commissioned by Doncaster MBC, which Rotherham MBC supports, assessing the economic regeneration benefits of a station at Meadowhall compared with a spur into Sheffield Midland. HS2 is undertaking a study into connectivity in respect of how to best serve the wider South Yorkshire region not otherwise served by a spur into Sheffield Midland (including a Parkway station), should the new alignment be progressed.

Housing

The Council is also undertaking a number of key work streams to work towards the target of 900 homes.

- Rotherham is among the initial 30 council partnerships to deliver the first starter homes. The new homes will be exclusive to first-time buyers between 23 and 40 years old at a discount of at least 20% below market value. The programme initially focusses on Council-owned sites in the town centre.
- Rotherham has successfully secured £6.1m as part of the Shared Ownership and Affordable Housing Programme 2016-21. This puts Rotherham within the top 15% of allocations in the North East/Yorkshire & Humber region and will mark a significant increase in housing delivery by providing over 200 new, affordable homes for rent and shared ownership.
- A land review has identified opportunities to unlock the potential of sites with lower market values by combining them with more attractive sites in a 'cluster deal'. The first cluster deal has been completed and Wates has been appointed to develop the first seven sites. The developments will provide over 200 homes for private sale, council housing and much needed specialist accommodation.
- The Council has also acquired more than 93 new homes for council rent in areas of high demand, and Housing and Adult Services teams will continue to identify opportunities to improve and increase the Council's stock, including new specialist accommodation for older people, young people and people with learning disabilities. The Council's first short stay units opened in November 2016, providing four self-contained apartments as short-term lets for adults with health and care needs.
- Rotherham has played an active role in developing the Sheffield City Region (SCR) Social and Affordable Housing Compact, a landmark agreement between housing providers in the SCR to drive the economy and help deliver much needed affordable homes. The Compact was formally agreed on the 5th December 2016 and was signed up to by 42 councils, ALMOs and housing associations, covering 85% of the city region's social housing stock.
- Rotherham's first Housing Developer Summit was held in October, engaging with a wide cross section of the housing industry.

Next Steps

Continue to implement the Economic Growth Plan by:

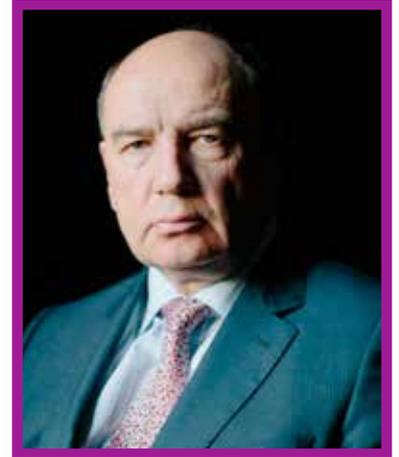
- Completion of the new Town Centre Masterplan in April/ May 2017
 - Delivery of town centre development sites
 - Work to ensure that funding is maximised for Rotherham projects from funding devolved to SCR
 - Progress the Forge Island plan
 - Secure developer interest in Rotherham.
-

Risks and Issues

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

6.5 Lead Commissioner, Sir Derek Myers

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



Outcomes achieved: last two years

- Much discussion at a political level and between paid staff, as well as with partners, service users and carers, to agree a new modern vision and strategy for adult social care, underpinned by a root and branch development programme to modernise services.
- A new chief officer and two significant new appointments at assistant director level.
- An effective Adult Social Care Improvement Board is now in place following a review of governance arrangements.
- New and experienced independent chair of the Safeguarding Adults Board in place to oversee the implementation of the Adults Safeguarding Strategy and improve practices.
- All external inspections by Care Quality Commission of Adult Services in the last two years have received a “good” rating. (e.g. Enabling, Davies Court). The ADASS quarterly Care Act stock takes have also shown a positive upward trend.
- New safe and modern adults case management system (Liquidlogic) implemented to support adult social care staff in recording key information – went live on 16th December 2016.
- Delivery of more integrated services at a local level through joint working with partners. The local place plan was co-produced with all partners and submitted in October 2016.
- More mature discussions with service users and carers about the need to change services.
- An improved multi-agency environment, well led through the Health and Wellbeing Board by the Advisory Cabinet member, Councillor Roche.

Overview of progress: last two years

Adult Social Care was not seen as a problem area at the onset of intervention. Local politicians had been led to believe services were good and popular. However, when the chief officer and acting chief officer left the Authority, fresh eyes supplied by a first class experienced interim chief officer revealed that value for money had been neglected, services were focussed around institutions not individual needs and the financial outlook for the Council required substantial change in spending patterns.

Such a broad and deep programme of change takes time, but importantly it also takes will, and a sensible if modest investment in the costs of change. The Council has developed the will, and budgeted for some investment in change. The programme will be ongoing over at least another three years and the most high profile changes are yet to come.

But there is a good spirit in the service; the narrative has changed for the better and there is plenty of purposeful leadership at political and officer level.

Next Steps

Classically the service needs to hold its nerve; facing up to the need to understand costs, thinking about how services can continue to change to support individual care packages within sensible limits of affordability, and working hard to explain why change is necessary.

The NHS has its own stresses, but there is a willingness to work together and local plans are pragmatic and professional.

The current leadership is capable and gaining experience all the time. There is a willingness to learn from others and to collaborate where this makes sense. It should be supported.

Risks and Issues

- Money is very tight. Demand may grow leading to more and more demanding decision making about resource prioritisation.
- The service handles risk well and is serious about the protection of those at risk, but a serious incident could be very distracting to the management efforts to effect service change.
- It may take longer to execute plans; legal challenge or industrial action cannot be ruled out.
- The Council is planning and preparing well for change. It is seeking to do this through extensive and continuous dialogue with affected parties. This is commendable.

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

Outcomes achieved: last two years

- Successful ‘Be a Councillor’ campaign – 69 potential candidates took part in the sessions, of which at least 12 new Councillors have been elected.
- 24 new Councillors elected in the 2015 “all out” elections taking the total of new Councillors in the last two years to 36 (out of 63).
- Higher standards for Councillors as set out in ‘A healthy system of democratic leadership and accountability (Local code of conduct)’ and ‘Code for Rotherham MBC senior staff working to Councillors’.
- Enhanced open and transparent governance arrangements introduced following independently-chaired review of the Council’s constitution. Introduction of pre-decision scrutiny and improvements in determining whether decisions should be made by Councillors or officers. To date, all recommendations for pre-decision scrutiny accepted by Cabinet, and all recommendations made by Scrutiny have been accepted by Cabinet.
- Overall confidence and knowledge of Cabinet members and Scrutiny and regulatory chairs has grown since the all-out elections. Extensive programme of mentoring support provided by the Local Government Association (LGA).
- Positive views received from Councillors in relation to member induction and development sessions – since May 2015 over 60 sessions have been held. An evaluation undertaken by the LGA stated member satisfaction with the training was high, with sessions meeting or exceeding expectations and most councillors reporting an improvement in their knowledge and skills base as a result of the training.

Overview of progress: last two years

Rotherham’s recent political history was mired in poor behaviour and unhealthy practice; mistrust between paid officers and elected members; favouritism; and an unwillingness to deal with the problems the borough faced. Following widespread criticism which is well known and I do not restate here, many of the long-standing senior Councillors resigned or were forced to resign, and there was a complete overhaul within the senior ranks of the Council. Commissioners were clear from the beginning that they would set out the highest of standards for not only those who wished to embark on a new political career, but also those who wanted to stay and help turn Rotherham around.

Over the last two years Rotherham has held two local elections including an “all out” election in 2016 as directed by the then Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. In total, the Council has welcomed 36 new Councillors. The balance remains a majority Labour Council with UKIP as the opposition (plus one independent Councillor). At the start of our intervention, Commissioners set out a programme of work designed to support and remind Councillors of their role and responsibilities.

Since this time, there has been a positive change: meetings and Council business are conducted in a professional manner; relationships between staff and Councillors are cordial and productive; and the Leader of the Council is open, reflective and respected both inside and outside the Council chamber. More responsibility is being shouldered by Councillors and with that their confidence is demonstrably improving. The Labour Group has improved its internal governance. Those in positions of responsibility have worked hard, learnt well and developed appreciably.

The opposition still claim there is not enough collaborative working between parties and that certain Councillors remain tainted by being part of the Council during its failure years. As Lead Commissioner, I have observed whether those particular Councillors have behaved responsibly over the past two years and I am satisfied they have.

There has been a recent case of a Councillor convicted of an offence, after which he resigned. Appropriately, the Labour Group had suspended the Councillor quickly and the Leader of the Council called for his resignation.

Next Steps

- Whilst the Commissioners' programme of direct development work is now complete regarding this area, we will continue to oversee the work of the Councillors, and step in if there is evidence Rotherham is sinking back into its old ways. In the meantime, the Council and the LGA continue to support the development of Councillors.
- Currently, the LGA is assisting with:
 - a refresh of the member development strategy;
 - continuation of personal mentoring arrangements;
 - continuing assistance from the Centre for Public Scrutiny;
 - personal development programme interviews and analysis of members' identified training needs;
 - facilitating sessions (as with current programme).

Risks and Issues

- A return to the unhealthy culture which prevailed before the intervention. Whilst Commissioners continue to oversee progress they will be able to spot signs of any lapses. The Leader and senior Councillors are more experienced at challenging poor practice and behaviour.
- A Councillor is found guilty of serious misconduct. The newly refreshed Rotherham Standards and Ethics Committee say they would prefer to have stronger powers to take action against any instances of future breaches of the Code of Conduct. Over the past two years there have been NO referrals but the Committee seem very keen to act on any future allegations.
- Continued poor media coverage of Rotherham and those who run the Council. This will be mitigated by a continued campaign to demonstrate exemplary professional behaviours and that work is getting done. The recent LGA survey (see elsewhere) demonstrated a welcome significant improvement in local residents' trust and confidence in the Council.

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

Outcomes achieved: last two years

- In February 2016, the first tranche of functions recommended by Commissioners for return were handed back to the Council. These were:
 - Education and schools; education for 14-19 year-olds 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.

All the above functions restored to the Council have performed at good enough levels since their return.

- Commissioners have shadowed each returned function and have maintained oversight of all decision reports. The revised Directions provide for Commissioners to give Advice on the content of decision reports, the officer recommendations, and the way in which Cabinet members, now able to make decisions, ought to make decisions. Such Advice is often given but in no case has it been necessary to formally advise that a different recommendation should be considered. In all other cases Advice has been aimed at making sure Councillors make better decisions, better informed by more rounded officer reports, allowing for more informed decisions better balancing competing considerations.
- In December 2016, Licensing powers were returned to the Council. The revised system allows for continuing oversight by Commissioner Mary Ney.

- In line with their obligations under the Directions, Commissioners have, every three months, considered what other functions can be returned and in November recommended the following:
 - Economic growth
 - Town centre
 - External partnerships
 - Community safety
 - Adult social care and the Council's partnership with the NHS
 - Performance management
 - Waste collection
 - Grounds maintenance
 - Audit

Commissioners will retain executive responsibilities for: children's safeguarding and all other children's social care services; asset management; and human resources. These have been assessed as not yet ready for return to the Council. The Commissioners also retain responsibility for deciding on the appointment of statutory officers and for appointments by the Council to outside bodies.

Overview of progress: last two years

- Over a third of functions have now been returned to the Council and at the time of writing we await a decision from the Secretaries of State on whether a further tranche can now be returned.
- By recommending the return of some powers, Commissioners have shown confidence in Rotherham's Councillors that they now meet the expectations of a functioning Council: to understand their area of responsibility; to work with officers and receive the information they require; to challenge and to collaborate; and to act as an ambassador for the Authority.
- This is matched by a strong and increasingly collegiate senior management team led well by the Council's Chief Executive.
- Commissioners have also sought outside opinions on progress, from a series of LGA peer reviews to respected senior practitioners who have helped shaped some of the services within the Council.
- The "all out" elections in May 2016 have given the Council some stability, and the Cabinet which has largely remained intact since the Leader first announced it, continues to grow into its role as demonstrated by a moderate and collaborative approach.
- From the start of the intervention, Commissioners have been respectful of the democratic process and have sought to make sure Councillors are in a position so they can carry out their full responsibilities as in any normal Council, at the most appropriate time.

Next Steps

- Commissioners will review those outstanding functions yet to be returned on a quarterly basis. The next review dates are:
 - 11th May 2017;
 - 11th August 2017;
 - 11th November 2017.
 - Commissioners will continue to supervise, monitor and challenge through to the final date of the intervention, which is currently planned to be February 2019.
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Risks and Issues

- The Council faces severe budget pressures. Inevitably this means competition for resources: between services; between chief officers and Cabinet members; and between front line services and support functions. Even in mature, well performing authorities, these pressures can be destructive. Commissioners will be part of the Council for another two years and can hopefully be a mediating influence, encouraging and insisting on grown up debate, openness with the public and continuous realism.
- It will be important to be straight with the Council. It needs to understand clearly what is sufficient progress to see further reductions in the intervention regime. This is not just because all intervention has to be properly justified but because the costs of the intervention are a burden on local tax payers.
- In particular, the Government department concerned about Children's Services, advised by the Children's Commissioner, needs to clarify what will represent sufficient progress in children's social care. Such a stocktake is appropriate after planned Ofsted visits due in the first part of 2017.
- Being a Councillor or senior officer in Rotherham is a demanding role. The pressure of continual supervision is real. Commissioners hope the current cast will see the job through to the Authority becoming stable, and beyond intervention.
- As the intervention moves into a new phase, the Commissioner and support team presence will downsize and more indirect supervision will be appropriate. This will require a revised set of working protocols.

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