

## Return of Functions – Additional Evidence 14 January

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### Overview

Commissioners have proposed that the following functions can now be restored to Councillor executive decision-making and accountability:

1. Education and schools; education for 14-19 years in all settings; school admissions and appeal system; youth services.
2. Public Health.
3. Leisure services; events in parks and green spaces.
4. Customer and cultural services, libraries, arts, customer services and welfare programmes.
5. Housing.
6. Planning and transportation policy; highways maintenance.
7. The Council's area assembly system and neighbourhood working; responsibilities under the Equalities Act.
8. Building regulation, drainage, car parking; \*business regulation and enforcement (not including licensing); emergency planning.
9. \*Financial services, including revenues and benefits (not including audit), ICT; legal and democratic services; corporate communications; corporate policy; procurement.
10. Budget control in these areas, and budget planning.
11. Policy arising from Sheffield City Region.

***\*Please note** - 8 and 9 have been revised slightly since the original list of functions were included in the Lead Commissioner's 27 November letter to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.*

Commissioners have proposed that these functions can now be restored to Councillor executive decision-making and accountability on the basis that:

- Commissioners have satisfied themselves that the services are operating at a good enough level with no significant value for money deficits.
- They are operating in areas where there is good enough officer leadership and that definitions of service quality and plans for further improvement are in place.
- Where service quality has been assured either by a Peer Review or from other activity carried out under the direction of Commissioners including review by experienced interim Chief Officers appointed from outside the authority.

- Where Commissioners feel that individual Councillors are now in a position to exercise executive authority over these functions.

The evidence in this document addresses these criteria.

In summary, Commissioners consider that the functions and services proposed for return are managed and operating well, and predominantly demonstrate value for money, have improvement plans in place, have undergone a quality assurance check and are those where Councillors are in a position to exercise executive authority. Due to the important nature of Education Services, detailed evidence relating to education and schools, education for 14-19 years in all settings, the school admissions and appeal system and youth services is available below. A shorter set of evidence relating to other functions follows.

The Council is managing a significant number of corporate and cross-cutting risks including: meeting the financial challenge in Rotherham's context; a new senior leadership team including the Chief Executive; Members' development; and achieving continuous improvement including working with partners where relevant. The work being led by Commissioners on making improvements and building in sustainability is helping manage these risks and make positive progress. Specifically, Commissioner Manzie has overseen a change in how the Council manages risks, and these include:

- A full refresh of the Council's risk policy and guidance, including clear processes and roles and responsibilities relating to risk management.
- Training and awareness programme for senior and middle managers.
- A refreshed strategic risk register.
- Fully restated operational risk registers.
- Processes in place for regular corporate reviews of the strategic and operational risk registers.
- Stronger involvement of the Audit Committee, through regular reviews of the strategic and operational risk registers, and advisory cabinet members in presenting their services' operational risk registers to the Audit Committee.
- An ex-Audit Commission and KPMG senior manager has been recruited as an additional risk management resource to help with the further development of arrangements.

A prudent approach is being adopted by Commissioners, and recommendations regarding further proposed return of powers to the Council will only be put forward when there is an appropriate degree of confidence that the Council can continue the progress achieved and secure effective and efficient services on an ongoing basis.

## Restoration of functions from February 2016 – education and youth services evidence

**Function:** Education and schools; education for 14-19 years in all settings; school admissions and appeal system.

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Current responsible Commissioner: *Commissioner Manzie*

Lead Cabinet Member: *Cllr Gordon Watson*

Lead Officer: *Karen Borthwick, Assistant Director, Education and Schools*

### Criteria and evidence for return of function

#### 1. Commissioners have satisfied themselves that the services are operating at a good enough level, with no significant value for money deficits

Rotherham has 93 primary, 16 secondary and 6 special schools. Of these, 42 are academies (12 secondary, 30 primary academies). 83% of pupils attend good or better schools in Rotherham. This is above the national average by 1%.

- Rotherham has been very effective in rolling out the increased entitlement for 2 year old early education places and achieved one of the highest take-up rates in the country when the eligibility criteria changed in September 2014.
- Early years and foundation stage. The Local Authority average for Early Years and Foundation Stage Profile 'good level of development' has increased by 5.2% to 67.4% in 2015. This is 1.2% above the national average and the third year that the Council has exceeded these.
- Primary schools. The percentage of Rotherham pupils achieving Level 4 or above in reading, writing and mathematics combined is 79% in 2015. This shows an increase of 7% from 2013 to 2015 and reduced the gap to the national average to 1%. The percentage of Rotherham pupils achieving the government's 'good level 4' outcome (Level 4b or above in reading, Level 4 or above writing TA and L4b or above in mathematics combined) is 68% in 2015, a 10% increase in two years and reducing the gap to the national average to 1%.

- Secondary schools. (Note - 2015 KS4 outcomes are still provisional and the final data will be published early in the Spring term 2016).
- 5+A\*-C including English and mathematics is 54.4%, 1.6% above the national average of 52.8% (all schools).
- At KS4 GCSE % A\*-C in English was 71.3% in 2015. This is 6.6% above national average (all schools) and 3.2% above national average (state-funded), the fourth year Rotherham averages have exceeded national averages.
- KS2-KS4 progress by 3 levels in English increased by 1% to 77.8%. National averages decreased by 1.6% to 70%. Rotherham exceeds the national average by 7.8%. KS2-KS4 progress by 4 levels increased by 1.3% to 35.3%. National averages decreased by 1.3% to 30.7%. Rotherham exceeds the national average by 4.6%.

Pupil outcomes in Rotherham have shown year on year improvement with the exception of KS4 due to major reforms introduced by the Department for Education in 2014. Early Years Foundation stage and KS4 outcomes have continued to exceed the national average for a number of years, indicating these services are demonstrating good value for money.

94% of primary and secondary pupils attend their first choice of school and benchmarking data (cost per pupil) indicates that Rotherham is ranked 148 lowest (cost per pupil) out of 150 authorities nationally.

## **2. They are well-led by officers, have clear definitions of service quality and plans for further improvements are in place**

Ian Thomas, Strategic Director for Children and Young People's services, joined the Council in January 2015 and has now been appointed on a permanent basis. Ian is an experienced Director of Children's Services and brings new energy and drive to Rotherham. Experienced officers in post have a successful track record in school improvement and are clear about strengths and areas for improvement across Rotherham, which is evidenced in service quality plans.

Rotherham has developed a primary education plan that includes the implementation of an Education Improvement Board with an increased focus on the primary education agenda including the need to increase standards.

As part of the performance management and self-evaluation process, services evaluate themselves against the School Improvement Framework. The framework is updated as soon as information is available.

**3. Where services have been quality assured by an independent party, such as a Local Government Association Peer Review or experienced interim Chief Officers appointed from outside the authority**

In October 2015, Mr Nick Hudson, Regional Director Ofsted North East, Yorkshire and Humber submitted a letter to the Council regarding the provisional 2015 outcomes for pupils in Rotherham primary schools. The Council has been in regular contact with Mr Hudson and at a recent telephone conference, Mr Hudson stated:

*“I appreciate that in Rotherham you are taking educational outcomes for primary pupils very seriously. There is a clear direction of travel for the future”.*

Mr Nick Hudson also said that he has no objections to the restoration of functions in Education and Commissioner Manzie is writing to Mr Hudson as formal agreement.

Consistent and positive comments have previously been received from Ofsted regarding the support the local authority provides to schools.

**4. Where Commissioners feel individual councillors are in a position to exercise executive authority over these functions**

The Deputy Leader, Cllr Gordon Watson has responsibility for Schools, Children’s Social Care, Child Sexual Exploitation and support to survivors. Cllr Watson was previously a teacher for 36 years. The knowledge he has acquired in this time provides him with the experience required to conduct this role.

Since June 2015 a Member Development Support Programme has been in place, delivered by the Local Government Association and all Advisory Cabinet Members have been receiving support from a mentor. Each mentor is required to report to Commissioners on progress, including any areas of concern. To date, there have been no areas of concern regarding Cllr. Watson.

**5. Risk assessment – proportionate level of risk**

**Note** - Please see overview for risk assessment across the Council.

The risks relating to the Education Service are:

- The Council fails to maintain effective strategic planning for the service and convert this into successful delivery plans.
- It is unable to successfully implement national reforms.
- It fails to maintain effective partnership working to ensure maintained and academy sector schools continue to achieve strong and improving standards.
- Performance and progress is not achieved across all learning groups, including looked after children and children with special needs.
- Strong leadership is not maintained.

The overall risk assessment is regarded as low.

The Council has an established strategic planning process in place for achieving current and future statutory responsibilities and securing ongoing improvement in education. Performance in relation to Early Years and the secondary school years has been above the national average for three years and performance in primary schools has been improving faster than the national average since 2013, closing the gap with the average during this period.

There are robust relationships with schools through the School Improvement Service, and strong and increasing links with teaching school alliances. The Service has risk management arrangements in place that register the risks of failing to achieve objectives, and the risks are regularly reviewed and risk management actions monitored for effectiveness.

Leadership is being strengthened through a corporate support programme and includes the Advisory Cabinet Member's involvement in a support programme provided by the LGA and peers are required to report to Commissioners on progress.

## **Function: Youth Services**

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Current responsible Commissioner: Commissioner Manzie  
Lead Cabinet Member: Cllr Gordon Watson  
Lead Officer: David McWilliams, Assistant Director Early Help and Family Engagement

### **Criteria and evidence**

#### **1. Commissioners have satisfied themselves that the services are operating at a good enough level, with no significant value for money deficits**

##### **Background** (as requested by DCLG)

The Youth Service, delivered as part of the wider Early Help and Families Service, provides a range of universal and targeted services for young people age 11 to 19 years (and up to 24 years for those with learning difficulties or a disability) including youth work, information advice and guidance, health and youth offending services.

The service fulfils statutory requirements in relation to Section 507B of the Education Act 1996 through:

- A youth offer jointly co-produced with the voluntary community and faith sector and youth information website outlining the offer ([www.youthi.org.uk](http://www.youthi.org.uk))
- A universal youth work curriculum calendar including health and well-being community cohesion and equalities curriculum delivered through open access and detached
- Providing positive activities as part of arrangements for delivering effective packages of targeted support
- Providing information, advice and guidance, supports young people's participation in positive activities and reduces NEET (Not in Education, Employment and Training)
- Having an active Youth Cabinet and youth focus groups around Looked After Children, LGBT and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

### **Evidence**

The Youth Service Section 251 outturns return (2014/15) shows that 19% of funded work is universal and 81% is targeted. Risk assessments have been completed with regard to sufficiency in light of 2016-2018 saving proposals and these will be incorporated into the transformation programme within Children Services.

Our current NEET performance is a good example of an effective service with the November NEET figure showing 5.4% (in line with statistical neighbours) and our Year 12 participation showing 96% better than Regional and National comparators. Our Not Known figures also compare well regionally with 5.6% for Rotherham against a regional figure of 10% and national 10.6%.

Our youth work 'reach' for open access work is showing 10.3% and is on track for our target figure of 15% for the year. Working alongside Commissioners, spending levels within Youth services have been reviewed as part of the 2016/17 budget setting process. Effective financial management over the past four months has resulted in moving from a projected £250k overspend to a projected underspend (£142k) and further work is ongoing to significantly transform services with a reduced budget requirement from 2016/17.

## **2. They are well-led by officers, have clear definitions of service quality and plans for further improvements are in place**

Youth Services now sit within the reconfigured Early Help Service. Since intervention, Services secured new structures successfully and appointed three Heads of Service and nine Locality Team Managers. The new managers come from a variety of professional backgrounds and have considerable experience from other local authorities. There is good management grip on the fundamental tenements of a well-run organisation (e.g. 100% of Staff performance development reviews and 100% budget outturns and Monthly Performance information).

The service has a clear service specification and definitions of service quality. Plans for further improvements are in place through the Early Help Action plan, and the governance and oversight of the Children's Improvement Board chaired by Commissioner Newsam; the Early Help Review Board chaired by Cllr Ahmed, and transformation programme within Children's Services overseen by the Director of Children's Services.

## **3. Where services have been quality assured by an independent party, such as a Local Government Association Peer Review or experienced interim Chief Officers appointed from outside the authority**

Quality Assurance of provision undertaken regularly across all delivery sites and detached provision through site visits and one to one observations of professional practice. The service undertook the National Youth Agency (NYA) Quality Mark for Youth Work in



2014 and was informed the service met the required standard. A key part of moving this work forward has been the involvement of young Inspectors in inspection of provision and incorporating current practice into the wider Early Help Quality Assurance framework.

#### **4. Where Commissioners feel individual councillors are in a position to exercise executive authority over these functions**

The Early Help Review Board is chaired by Councillor Shabana Ahmed and supported by the lead Cabinet Member, Cllr Gordon Watson. This group is responsible for:

- Strategic oversight of the development of the Early Help Offer
- Providing support and challenge in order to secure continuous improvements in the Early Help and Families Service.
- Oversee the implementation of the All Service Review (ASR) 3 Year savings profile

The Review Board are accountable to the Leader of the Council and reports regularly to the Children's Improvement Board, Children and Families Strategic Partnership and Improving Lives Committee.

#### **5. Risk assessment – proportionate level of risk**

Risks relating to the Youth Service are:

- The Council fails to maintain effective strategic oversight for the service and convert this into successful delivery plans
- It is unable to successfully complete the transformation programme over the next 2 years
- It fails to maintain effective partnership working to ensure delivery of the statutory youth offer and achieve targets
- Performance and progress is not achieved across our most vulnerable groups, including looked after children and children with special needs
- Strong leadership is not maintained.

The overall risk assessment is regarded as low.

The Council has an established strategic planning process in place for achieving current and future statutory responsibilities and securing ongoing improvement in through the governance and oversight of the Children's Improvement Board, The Early Help Review Board and the Departmental Transformation Board.

The service has risk management arrangements in place that register the risks of failing to achieve objectives, and the risks are regularly reviewed and risk management actions monitored for effectiveness.

Leadership is being strengthened through a corporate support programme and includes the Advisory Cabinet Member's involvement in the Early Help Review Board and the Leader of the Council at the Children's Improvement Board.

## Restoration of all other functions from February 2016 - evidence

Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
<b>Public Health</b>			
1.	<b>Commissioners are satisfied are operating well, with no significant value for money deficit</b>	Robust processes in place to ensure contracts are monitored and re-commissioned. E.g. proposals to re-commission three major Public Health Services and revise the specifications within the next 6-12 months. These include sexual health, 0 – 19 children’s health services and substance misuse (in 2 stages - recovery and secondary care clinical services).	Report presented to Commissioner Manzie’s decision-making meeting on 14th December.
		A post CSE multi agency support service specification has been developed alongside partners and victims, survivors and parents, currently out to tender.	The service will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practical, emotional support and advocacy for young people and adults who have experienced child sexual exploitation</li> <li>• Evidence based therapeutic interventions for both young people and adults who have experienced child sexual exploitation.</li> </ul>
	<b>Are well-led by officers, have clear definitions of service quality and plans for further improvements are in place</b>	A new Director for Public Health was appointed and started work in Rotherham on 29 <sup>th</sup> June 2015	Teresa Roche has brought 30 years of experience in health to Rotherham and a vision to fully embed public health principles within service organisations, to maximise health improvements and address health inequalities for the benefit of the community.
		The newly appointed Director has reviewed the current structure and strategy for the service and a new fit for purpose structure is fully implemented. The new	Initial report presented to the Strategic Leadership Team on 29 <sup>th</sup> September 2015 regarding the review

Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
		<p>structure aims to strengthen cross Directorate and multi-agency working.</p>	<p>and proposed consultation.</p> <p>Consultation document produced for 22 September 2015 to 22 October 2015</p> <p>The main changes proposed relate to line management and, in some cases, changes to staff roles and responsibilities. These changes are to meet gaps in the public health statutory functions and to ensure the service is aligned with the priorities of the Council.</p>
		<p>A new Health and Wellbeing Strategy has been developed which sets out the future priorities for Public Health.</p> <p>To demonstrate a positive culture of partnership working the Health and Wellbeing Board structure now includes a formal Vice Chair role from the CCG, who works alongside the Chair on agenda setting and challenging progress.</p>	<p>The Health and Wellbeing Strategy places particular emphasis on a shared vision and leadership for improving health and care services.</p> <p>The Director for Public Health led on the development of the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy, but with wider support from corporate policy at the centre of the organisation and key input from children's and social care services, as well as other directorates.</p>
	<p><b>Have been quality assured by an independent party, such as a Local Government Association Peer Review or experienced interim Chief Officers appointed from outside the authority</b></p>	<p>The Director of Public Health was appointed from outside the local authority and has therefore been able to provide an independent review of the service.</p>	

Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
	<p><b>Individual councillors are in a position to exercise executive authority over these functions</b></p>	<p>The Cabinet Member responsible for Public Health is Cllr. David Roche and regular meetings take place between the Cllr. Roche and the Director for Public Health.</p> <p>Cllr Roche is also currently taking part in a support programme provided by the LGA and peers are required to report to Commissioners on progress.</p>	<p>Advisory Cabinet members continue to be able to draw on advice and guidance of Commissioners.</p> <p>The constitution has been reviewed and protocols updated to ensure clarity around decision making. Each Advisory Cabinet member has a defined portfolio.</p>
<b>Leisure services; events in parks and green spaces</b>			
2.	<p><b>They are satisfied are operating well, with no significant value for money deficit</b></p>	<p>A health check of Rotherham Leisure, Culture and Sport Health services was conducted between 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> November 2015.</p> <p>Headlines contained within the draft report include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impressed by the quality of the services and the operational management</li> <li>• Generally users are highly satisfied</li> <li>• Approach to performance management is strong across all the services. In particular impressed by the use of customer insight to drive continuous improvements</li> <li>• Budget reductions and transformational change have been well managed</li> <li>• Need for an improved coherent strategic direction and better positioning of the service</li> <li>• Lack of a medium to long-term financial strategy</li> <li>• If the Council moves to a strategic commissioning</li> </ul>	<p>In preparation for the peer review an introductory document was produced setting out there structure and where the services have come from and where they are now.</p> <p>The report was produced by Liz Blyth, Director of Culture and Neighbourhood Services, Leicester City Council</p> <p>Martyn Allison, LGA Associate in November 2015.</p> <p>Although performance was strong it was recommended that some change was required to demonstrate impact on outcomes and key priorities, effectiveness in terms of access and benchmarking against other local authorities.</p> <p>The draft report includes 14 recommendations to enhance service delivery.</p>

Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
		<p>model the culture, leisure and sport will need to play a key role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve inclusiveness for all Rotherham communities</li> <li>• Positive examples of joint working.</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Are well-led by officers, have clear definitions of service quality and plans for further improvements are in place</b></p>	<p>Feedback received within the draft Health Check report stated that the peer assessors were impressed with the operational management of Leisure, Culture and Sport services (See above)</p>	
	<p><b>Have been quality assured by an independent party, such as a Local Government Association Peer Review or experienced interim Chief Officers appointed from outside the authority</b></p>	<p>See above health check of Rotherham Leisure, Culture and Sport Health services was conducted between 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> November 2015</p> <p>Leisure Centres throughout Rotherham – which are run through an external partner, ‘Places for People’ have been successful in winning a number of awards due to the high quality of the services provided (See opposite column).</p>	<p>Maltby Leisure Centre was named ‘Leisure Centre of the Year’ UK (Active Flame fitness industry awards) July 2015</p> <p>Aston Leisure Centre awarded QUEST Excellent Sept 2015 – national industry award, carried out by third party independent assessors, for quality of all round service provision including sports development work</p> <p>Rotherham Leisure Complex awarded QUEST Excellent Oct 2015</p> <p>Wath Leisure Centre awarded QUEST Excellent Dec 2015</p>
	<p><b>Individual councillors are in a position to exercise</b></p>	<p>In December the number Cabinet Members for increased 5 to 8. The newly appointed Cabinet</p>	<p>Advisory Cabinet members continue to be able to draw</p>

Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
	<b>executive authority over these functions</b>	Members responsible Leisure services; events in parks and green spaces is Cllr Taiba Yasseen.  Cllr Yasseen will be supported by peers through the LGA support programme for members and peers are required to report to Commissioners on progress.	on advice and guidance of Commissioners.  The constitution has been reviewed and protocols updated to ensure clarity around decision making. Each Advisory Cabinet member has a defined portfolio.
<b>Customer and cultural services, libraries, arts, customer services and welfare programmes</b>			
3.	<b>They are satisfied are operating well, with no significant value for money deficit</b>	A health check of Rotherham Leisure, Culture and Sport Health services was conducted between 11 <sup>th</sup> and 12 <sup>th</sup> November 2015, and for headlines, please refer to Section 2 above.	<i>See section 2 above</i>
		Internal and external partnerships have been established ensuring better use of resources and supporting other services to achieve corporate priorities. This includes service level agreements which are in place.	These include both Council services (e.g. Housing, Waste management, Streetpride, Adult Social Care) along with a wide range of external organisations (e.g. local, regional and national groups supporting improvements relating to health, social isolation, advice, wellbeing, skills development)
		Services demonstrate value for money and have achieved year on year savings.	The service budgets as considered during the health check have reduced from a total of £7,032,140 in 2012/13 to £4,993,817 in 2015/16. In addition the services have consistently achieved in year “underspends”.
	<b>Are well-led by officers, have clear definitions of service quality and plans for further improvements are in place</b>	Feedback received within the draft Health Check report stated that the peer assessors were impressed with the operational management of Leisure, Culture and Sport services (See above)	
		The Customer Access Strategy and Library Strategy	The Library Strategy 2011-15 has been refreshed to cover the period 2016-19. It will go out to consultation

Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
		<p>are in place and are being refreshed</p>	<p>shortly. The Customer Access Strategy 2011-15 has been refreshed to cover the 2015-16 period. During that time it will be developed further in tandem with the ICT strategy to form an overarching "Digital Council" strategy.</p>
		<p>The Health Check feedback received stated that there are effective Performance Management arrangements in place (See above).</p> <p>The arrangements in place include reviewing customer feedback including; comments, compliments and complaints are monitored and services are improved as a result of the feedback received</p>	<p>Monthly reporting arrangements in place including performance clinics where necessary to challenge poor performance.</p> <p>Local performance indicators have been agreed.</p> <p>Performance reports are presented to the management team.</p>
	<p><b>Have been quality assured by an independent party, such as a Local Government Association Peer Review or experienced interim Chief Officers appointed from outside the authority</b></p>	<p>A health check of Rotherham Leisure, Culture and Sport Health services was conducted between 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> November 2015 (See above).</p>	
		<p>Specific services have been reviewed externally and received awards and accreditations.</p>	<p>VAQAS accreditation of Clifton Park museum, Registration service.</p> <p>Clifton Park and Museum has been awarded the certificate of excellence from TripAdvisor (rating 4.5 out of 5).</p> <p>Clifton Park Museum and the York and Lancaster Regimental Museum are awaiting the outcomes of their external accreditation assessment.</p> <p>The Registration service is reviewed regularly by the General Register Office.</p> <p>The customer service function was reviewed externally</p>



Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
	<p><b>Individual councillors are in a position to exercise executive authority over these functions</b></p>	<p>In December the number Cabinet Members for increased 5 to 8. The newly appointed Cabinet Members responsible for this service is Cllr Taiba Yasseen.</p> <p>Cllr Yasseen will be supported by peers through the LGA support programme for members and peers are required to report to Commissioners on progress.</p>	<p>in February 2015, as part of a wider review of ICT related functions. An improvement plan was drawn up as a result and is in the process of implementation.</p> <p>Advisory Cabinet members continue to be able to draw on advice and guidance of Commissioners.</p> <p>The constitution has been reviewed and protocols updated to ensure clarity around decision making. Each Advisory Cabinet member has a defined portfolio.</p>
<b>Housing</b>			
4.	<p><b>They are satisfied are operating well, with no significant value for money deficit</b></p>	<p>The health check of Rotherham Housing services was conducted between 22<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> September.</p> <p>The report stated that overall services were ‘good’ with a few areas for improvement identified.</p> <p>Headlines contained within the draft report include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core housing services in Rotherham are ‘Good’</li> <li>• Performance data indicates Housing Services are performing well</li> <li>• Impressed by enthusiasm and commitment from staff</li> <li>• Stated that there was room for improvement in the strategic contribution housing makes to borough regeneration, however this was an issue for the Council as a whole</li> <li>• Outsourcing of repairs and maintenance services had been successful</li> </ul>	<p>In preparation for the peer review, a document was produced setting out the structure and where the services have come from and where they are now. This electronic document contained hyper-links to over 100 separate policies, plans, reports or other forms of evidence relevant to the review.</p> <p>The inspection report was produced by Sharon Thomas, Assistant Director of Economic Development at Middlesbrough Council and Chris Wood who works with a range of public and private sector clients in the property sector. Chris previously worked in local government for 25 years, and held housing director posts in two local authorities, and was formerly CEO of LB of Newham Council</p> <p>The draft report included 8 areas for improvement to enhance service delivery.</p>

Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff committed to driving efficiencies, innovations and making changes</li> <li>• Excellent example of innovation provided</li> <li>• Estates toured were well maintained</li> <li>• Call centre demonstrated high standards</li> </ul> <p>Housing Services produce an annual report to report performance and progress to members of the public</p> <p>The last Housing Annual Report produced is for 2013/14.</p>	<p>The annual reports include the following content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How money is spent</li> <li>• Complaints, compliments and comments</li> <li>• Performance ranked nationally</li> <li>• How things have been made better for tenants and leaseholders</li> <li>• Plans for improving services over the next 12 months</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Are well-led by officers, have clear definitions of service quality and plans for further improvements are in place</b></p>	<p>The Council has a Rotherham Housing Strategy 2013-2016 (Part 1) and this is currently being implemented. The plan includes 12 commitments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will deliver Council housing that meets people's needs</li> <li>• We will increase and improve the supply of affordable rented housing in Rotherham</li> <li>• We will deliver against our Local Investment Plan</li> <li>• We will make communities safer</li> <li>• We will work with partners to ensure everyone can afford to heat their home</li> <li>• We will help people to access the support they need</li> <li>• We will help people in our most disadvantaged communities</li> <li>• We will engage with communities and individuals so that we have a better understanding of how to meet their needs and aspirations</li> </ul>	<p>Part 2 currently under development</p>

Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will help to improve Rotherham's private rented sector</li> <li>We will help people who wish to own their home</li> <li>The Housing Strategy 2016-19 is due to be agreed by the Advisory Cabinet on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2016</li> </ul>	
		The service works to a 'Housing Excellence Plan' which is continually updated.	
		Senior management structures are in place.	
	<b>Have been quality assured by an independent party, such as a Local Government Association Peer Review or experienced interim Chief Officers appointed from outside the authority</b>	A health check of Housing services was conducted between 22 <sup>nd</sup> – 23 <sup>rd</sup> September. (See above)	
		The vast majority of Housing Services are placed in the top quartile by the national benchmarking service Housemark.	
	<b>Individual councillors are in a position to exercise executive authority over these functions</b>	<p>In December the number Cabinet Members for increased 5 to 8. The newly appointed Cabinet Members responsible for Housing Services is Councillor Emma Wallis.</p> <p>Cllr Wallis will be supported by peers through the LGA support programme for members and peers are required to report to Commissioners on progress.</p>	<p>Advisory Cabinet members continue to be able to draw on advice and guidance of Commissioners.</p> <p>The constitution has been reviewed and protocols updated to ensure clarity around decision making. Each Advisory Cabinet member has a defined portfolio.</p>
<b>Planning and transportation policy; highways maintenance</b>			
5.	<b>They are satisfied are operating well, with no significant value for money deficit</b>	<p>A health check of Highways and Transport services was conducted between 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> October.</p> <p>The overall feedback received stated that services were</p>	The peer review was conducted on 7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> October by Mark Widdup, Director of Neighborhoods at Rochdale Borough Council and James Bailey, Commissioner Highways and the Built County,

Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
		<p>good enough with some suggestions for further improvement.</p> <p>Headlines contained within the draft report include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivered by a highly committed and loyal workforce</li> <li>• Appropriate strategies, policies and procedures are all in place with a sound approach to performance management</li> <li>• Service could be viewed as ‘old fashioned’ in its approach to service delivery</li> <li>• Clear transition plan which has been well communicated to this service and the wider Council</li> <li>• Majority of the staff who we met felt that Rotherham could ‘grasp an opportunity out of adversity’</li> <li>• A clear communications strategy would be beneficial</li> </ul>	<p>Staffordshire County Council.</p>
		<p>A health check of Planning Services was conducted between 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> October 2015.</p> <p>The overall feedback received stated that the Planning service is ‘Good’.</p> <p>Headlines contained within the draft report include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service is well lead and efficient. Visible senior officer leadership, strong internal relationships with key internal colleagues and a culture of continuous improvement</li> <li>• Good use of IT</li> <li>• Performing well against national performance measures.</li> </ul>	<p>The peer review was conducted on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> October by Simon Machen, Director of Growth &amp; Regeneration, Peterborough City Council and Darienne Law, LGA Associate Consultant, who has worked with and in Local Government in various senior roles over the last 25 years and has conducted many planning reviews for the Planning Advisory Service (PAS).</p> <p>Areas for further consideration included: Need to consider alternative and creative approaches to funding.</p> <p>The council should consider the business case of investing in project management capacity effective leadership and excellent communication Commitment and ownership of the Local Plan by the</p>

Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service is well regarded by internal stakeholders and highly respected by developers and is seen locally to be “one of the best”</li> <li>• The service is on track to deliver Rotherham’s Local Plan within the timetables set and is ahead of others in the region</li> <li>• Seen as flexible and willing to negotiate to achieve the right planning outcomes</li> <li>• Positive working with the region</li> </ul>	<p>council as a key part of delivering the growth agenda will need effective leadership and excellent communication, particularly when contentious sites are considered.</p>
		<p>Rotherham consistently reports top quartile performance in all categories of the speed of decision making on planning applications.</p> <p>Performance states major 100%, minor 99.31% and other 98.78%.</p>	
	<p><b>Are well-led by officers, have clear definitions of service quality and plans for further improvements are in place</b></p>	<p>The planning health check (As outlined above) stated that the service was well led and its planning policy has made significant progress towards delivering a Local Plan, having recently consulted on, and examined and adopted Rotherham’s Core Strategy. The service is on track to deliver the sites and polices work stream within the timetable set, making the Rotherham one of the most advanced, in policy terms, in the region.</p>	
		<p>Rotherham adopted its Local Plan Core Strategy in 2014, following extensive public consultation and examination by a planning inspector. Rotherham is the only local planning authority in South Yorkshire to have adopted a Core Strategy compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework.</p>	<p>Local Plan – national requirement for Local Authorities to have a Local Plan in Place by 2017.</p>

Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
		<p>The Council has moved on to publish a Sites and Policies document in 2015 that identifies the specific development sites required to deliver the Core Strategy targets and the Growth Plan.</p>	
		<p>The Highway Asset Management Policy, Strategy &amp; Plan was adopted on the 21st October 2015.</p> <p>The plan sets out the objectives that the Council aspires to achieve from the management of its highway assets. It also sets out the major highway assets that the Council has and how we intend to manage them.</p> <p>The policy sets out what the service want to achieve and links to the Council's Corporate Vision.</p>	<p>The Council's approach to highway maintenance is based on two principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep Rotherham's roads and footways in a safe condition and to national standards</li> <li>• Carry out programmed maintenance as cost-effectively as possible</li> </ul>
		<p>The Council has a Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP), policy and strategy which sets out our approach to manage highway assets. This was adopted on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2015. The HAMP enables services to be delivered more efficiently through having better information about the asset, highway budgets can then be used to prevent deterioration as much as possible and optimise service delivery within the available resources.</p>	<p>Officers, have worked with members to provide them with a better understanding of Highways Asset Management, and used their local knowledge to help identify priorities for inclusion in the work programmes. This was the springboard to securing additional capital funding to improve the condition of unclassified (estate) roads.</p> <p>The Council has developed a capital programme for the replacement of street lights with LEDs which is achieving substantial energy savings. Rotherham led on the procurement of the LED fittings, and the framework contract is now being used by other SY authorities.</p>
		<p>A new Transport Strategy for the Council has been</p>	<p>A key indicator of performance is its ability to</p>

Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
		<p>developed and consultation has been completed with the majority of responses being positive and supportive. The Strategy will be considered by Council at its meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016.</p>	<p>successfully bid for external funding to deliver the Transportation and Highway projects that benefit residents, businesses and highway users in Rotherham.</p> <p>Over the last 4 years transportation and highways projects have led and/or contributed to a number of successful bids, which have secured over £380m for SY and over £77m for schemes in Rotherham.</p>
		<p>Interim Strategic Director for Environment and Development Services appointed.</p>	<p>The interim Strategic Director for Environment and Development Services commenced in Rotherham on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2016.</p> <p>The first stage interviews for a permanent Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment will take place on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2016.</p>
	<p><b>Have been quality assured by an independent party, such as a Local Government Association Peer Review or experienced interim Chief Officers appointed from outside the authority</b></p>	<p>Health checks of Highways and Transport services and Planning Services have been conducted (See above).</p>	
		<p>Quality of service Assessed by Planning Advisory Service - "Planning Quality Framework".</p>	<p>In 2015 Rotherham was identified as within the top 10 from the benchmarking exercise which assessed quality measures in relation to time and resources.</p>
		<p>Successful delivery of the DfT funded Pinch Point Schemes (Pool Green and Old Flatts Bridge).</p>	<p>Letter from DCLG which confirms the completion of the Pool Green project following a successful ERDF audits.</p>
	<p><b>Individual councillors are in a position to exercise executive authority over these functions</b></p>	<p>The Cabinet Member responsible for planning and transportation is Councillor Denise Lelliott.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member responsible for highways maintenance is Councillor Kath Sims.</p>	<p>Advisory Cabinet members continue to be able to draw on advice and guidance of Commissioners.</p> <p>The constitution has been reviewed and protocols updated to ensure clarity around decision making.</p>

Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
		Both councillors are currently taking part in a support programme provided by the LGA and peers are required to report to Commissioners on progress.	Each Advisory Cabinet member has a defined portfolio.
<b>The Council's area assembly system and neighbourhood working; responsibilities under the Equalities Act</b>			
6.	<b>They are satisfied are operating well, with no significant value for money deficit</b>	The Managing Director Commissioner Manzie has completed a review of Area Assemblies and proposals are scheduled to be discussed with Officers, Elected Members and Partners as part of the consultation process. Value for money will also be considered.	
		Officers continue to receive practical support on equality assessments and consultation.	
		A review and assessment of the Council's equality and diversity policies is being undertaken.	
		The Council's 2016/17 budget is being subject to an Equality Analysis and senior managers are being supported to complete Equality Analysis on individual service changes.	
		Equalities training has been provided to Elected Members.	Training delivered on 8 <sup>th</sup> December and further training scheduled for 25 <sup>th</sup> February 2016.
	<b>Are well-led by officers, have clear definitions of service quality and plans for further improvements are in place</b>	The Council has appointed a new Equality & Diversity Coordinator. This new role will have a key role in reviewing the council's current equalities policies.	The new officer commenced on 5 <sup>th</sup> January 2015.
	<b>Have been quality assured by an independent party, such as a Local</b>	The Managing Director Commissioner Manzie has conducted a review of Area Assemblies as outlined	



Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
	<b>Government Association Peer Review or experienced interim Chief Officers appointed from outside the authority</b>	above.  In addition Area Assemblies touched on as part of the Housing health check conducted, although they are not part of core housing services.	
	<b>Individual councillors are in a position to exercise executive authority over these functions</b>	In December the number Cabinet Members for increased 5 to 8.  The newly appointed Cabinet Member responsible for equalities is Councillor Saghir Alam.  The newly appointed Cabinet Member responsible for Area Assemblies is Councillor Taiba Yasseen.  Both councillors will be supported by peers through the LGA support programme for members and peers are required to report to Commissioners on progress.	
<b>Building regulation, drainage, car parking; business regulation and enforcement (not including licensing); emergency planning</b>			
7.	<b>They are satisfied are operating well, with no significant value for money deficit</b>	Rotherham Building Control successfully negotiated a partnership with national construction company Kier for undertaking Building Control services for their new school programme throughout Northern England.  Building Control has seen a 15% increase in the number of applications received over the past twelve month period when compared to 2014. Significantly, this increase has been reflected in applications for commercial projects.	

Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
		<p>For Building Regulation, there has been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rise in applications/no of complaints over a timescale.</li> <li>• Key performance indicators (three, % ten day app turn round: % Decisions within 8 week Stat: period: %Completion certs issued on time).</li> </ul>	
		<p>Emergency Planning is a shared service with Sheffield City Council. This arrangement has been in operation for a number of years and remains cost effective.</p>	<p>A benchmarking exercise has shown that the costs and resources for the shared service are lower than other comparable authorities in the north of England.</p> <p>The shared service was developed on the back of the Council having been awarded Beacon Status for Emergency Planning.</p>
		<p>The Council is the Lead Local Flood Authority for the area.</p>	<p>Duty to manage flood risk from 'local sources' in a way that makes best use of our resources. Our Local Flood Risk Management Strategy provides the framework for this.</p>
		<p>The campaign against Blue Badge Fraud commenced in 2010 and has resulted in 89 successful prosecutions in the Magistrates Court since the Anti-Blue Badge Fraud Team was established.</p>	<p>The Council has received awards for the scheme and best practice methods for blue badge fraud investigations / prosecutions have been shared with others.</p> <p>The Council's standards and approach to parking enforcement (e.g. the 10 minutes grace period before PCNs are issued) anticipated the change in guidance which came from the Secretary of State in 2015, and was implemented about 12 months beforehand.</p> <p>Resources have been reviewed and changes in working arrangements have enabled the service to</p>

Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
			reduce staffing, while maintaining the standards of service.
		<p>The Business Regulation service is responsible for the regulation of approximately 2,500 food premises, 1,500 other work places, 3,500 retail/manufacturing premises. It has exceeded its inspection performance target over the last 3 years, whilst operating consistently within the cash-limited budget. This has been achieved primarily as a result of improved performance management and staff ownership of individual workloads.</p>	<p>The Trading Standards team takes on a lead role in reducing access by young people to age restricted products such as alcohol, tobacco, knives and 'legal highs'. In the past two years, the team has been active in tackling sources of illicit tobacco (addressing supplies to children and adults).</p> <p>In 2015, 100% of high risk premises due for a trading standards inspection are inspected within the required timescale.</p>
		<p>The Council has entered into a ground-breaking 35 year Public Private Partnership with Dignity Funerals Ltd to provide Bereavement Services in Rotherham. This has delivered a significant (capital) investment in facilities in the borough with associated service improvements while generating a significant income for the Council.</p>	<p>Food safety inspections and compliance with standards are slightly exceeding targets; performance is good and inspections are undertaken of all food businesses categorised A-C with other programmed interventions taking place for low level category Ds.</p> <p>The Business Regulation Service consistently receives high levels of positive customer feedback, with 98% of respondents being satisfied or very satisfied that the service they have received has been helpful and that they have been treated fairly.</p>
	<p><b>Are well-led by officers, have clear definitions of service quality and plans for further improvements are in place</b></p>	<p>Interim Strategic Director for Environment and Development Services appointed.</p>	<p>The interim Strategic Director for Environment and Development Services commenced in Rotherham on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2016.</p> <p>The first stage interviews for a permanent Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment will take place on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2016.</p>

Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
		<p>Officers, working with the SY Flood Risk Partnership and developed guidance for adoption of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.</p> <p>A Flood Risk Strategy has been agreed by the Council, and Surface Water Management Plans which meet the requirements of the Flood and Water Act are now in place.</p>	<p>The Council has been successful in attracting grant funding for both Property Level Protection schemes (through FDGiA and Levy contributions, as well as directly from the EA).</p>
		<p>Business regulation and enforcement was reviewed in 2015, and a new structure is being implemented which will ensure that the service can improve its performance on the completion of compliance checks.</p> <p>A review of community protection and enforcement has been completed and will be reported to Commissioners &amp; Members late January 2015. It is recommended that the team structure is simplified so that staff doing similar roles work together under one manager.</p>	<p>The new structure reinforces and improves capacity in the main Business Regulation functions such as Food Safety, Health &amp; Safety and Trading Standards.</p> <p>The review builds on a report 'A strengthened approach to enforcement' which was approved by Cabinet in December 2013. The approach identified a change in the way in which the Council delivered environmental enforcement activity and identified additional staff that would have authority to undertake a wide range of enforcement activities.</p> <p>A new Joint Enforcement Team between the Council and the Police was approved in principle by the Strategic Leadership Team in May 2015 with responsibility activity designed to improve public safety and to prevent vulnerable children and adults from becoming future victims of abuse or harm. The team is not yet in place, but the recommendations contained in the above report support this approach and would provide improved focus on the prioritisation of resources to meet the Council's and partnership</p>

Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
			objectives.
	<b>Have been quality assured by an independent party, such as a Local Government Association Peer Review or experienced interim Chief Officers appointed from outside the authority</b>	<p>Several new buildings across Rotherham, including houses and a school, have been acclaimed in the Local Authority Building Control (LABC) regional South Yorkshire and Humber Building Excellence Awards.</p> <p>South Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum (LRF).</p> <p>Peer Review 2014 was conducted by the Chair of Nottinghamshire LRF and Head of Resilience at Nottingham County Council. A detailed action plan was produced out of the review, which is being managed through a series of sub-groups to the LRF.</p> <p>A 2012 review by the Food Standards Agency, confirmed that the Food Safety arrangements fully complied with the standards set out in the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Framework Agreement and Food Law Code of Practice.</p> <p>An external audit of the Trading Standards Service to assess the council's compliance with the EU Measuring Instruments Directive was carried out in December 2015.</p>	<p>Detailed evidence of progress against the action plan is reported back to the LRF at its twice-yearly meetings.</p> <p>The audit only identified two minor observations which have now been addressed. Inspection was conducted by Chief Inspector of Weights &amp; Measures (Derbyshire CC).</p>
	<b>Individual councillors are in a position to exercise executive authority over these functions</b>	<p>The councillor responsible for building regulation and car parking is Councillor Denise Lelliott.</p> <p>The councillor responsible for drainage and business regulation and enforcement is Councillor Kath Sims.</p> <p>In December the number Cabinet Members for</p>	<p>Advisory Cabinet members continue to be able to draw on advice and guidance of Commissioners.</p> <p>The constitution has been reviewed and protocols updated to ensure clarity around decision making. Each Advisory Cabinet member has a defined portfolio.</p>

Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
		<p>increased 5 to 8. The newly appointed Cabinet Members responsible for Emergency Planning is Councillor Saghir Alam</p> <p>All councillors are supported by peers through the LGA support programme. Peers are required to report to Commissioners on progress.</p>	
<b>Financial services, including revenues and benefits (not including audit), ICT; legal and democratic services; corporate communications; corporate policy; procurement</b>			
8.	<b>They are satisfied are operating well, with no significant value for money deficit</b>	<p>Evidence relating to the work of Financial Services is included within the budget control and budget planning section below (See section 9).</p> <p>The Revenues and Benefits Service in Rotherham continuously demonstrates high performance nationally against Metropolitan Councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Tax in year collection 97.2% 14/15, (5<sup>th</sup> best)</li> <li>• Non Domestic Rates in year collection 98.3% 14/15 (6<sup>th</sup> best)</li> <li>• Time to process HB/CTR claims 20.01 days 14/15 (6<sup>th</sup> best)</li> <li>• Council Tax cumulative arrears per property £66.92 14/15 (3<sup>rd</sup> best)</li> <li>• Council Tax w/o as % of collectable debt 0.51% 14/15 (14<sup>th</sup> best)</li> </ul> <p>Changes to staffing structures in the Revenues and Benefits Service are planned for 2016/17 and these will result in continued delivery of a high quality service at</p>	<p>Performance is in comparison to the 36 metropolitan boroughs.</p>

Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
		low cost.	
		A new Corporate Communications Strategy has recently been developed.	
		The ICT and Information Governance Services reviews identified that there were no value for money concerns.	
		Services have undergone 'All Service Reviews' as part of the budget setting process to support the Council's budget challenges.	
		A number of improvements are currently being implemented within procurement as outlined within the Rotherham Improvement Plan (A fresh Start) regarding clear lines of responsibility by Procurement in relation to contract management and purchasing.	
		<p>Comprehensive provision of Legal advice provided through a mixed provision of dedicated in-house team and external use of Counsel.</p> <p>Members of EM Lawshare consortium providing fixed competitive rates for specialist legal advice; agreement in place with Chambers to secure agreed competitive rates for use of Counsel.</p>	Proactive discussions being held with South Yorkshire Chief Legal officers regarding opportunities for shared services.
		Legal and Democratic Services and Revenues and Benefits subscribe to the National CiPFA Benchmarking Clubs.	<p>The benchmarking reports are used in Service and Improvement planning.</p> <p>Services compare well against other members of the benchmarking club.</p>
	<b>Are well-led by officers, have clear definitions of</b>	The Communications and Marketing Team has been reviewed and substantially restructured to modernise	

Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
	<b>service quality and plans for further improvements are in place</b>	the communications function	
		Proposed new structure for the ICT and Digital Service has been approved by Commissioners and consultation with staff is underway. The new structure will be in place by the end of March 2016.	
		A new Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services has been appointed from outside the Council and will join in March. The Council is recruiting externally for an Assistant Director of ICT and Digital Services and expect this post to be filled by April 2016.	
		Appointment of Head of Policy, Improvement & Partnerships, Justin Homer.	
		Interim Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic joined the Council in August 2015, with a permanent appointment currently being made through an external recruitment process.	Catherine Parkinson joined the Council on 17 <sup>th</sup> August 2015 and brought over twenty years experience of working at chief officer level in unitary and metropolitan authorities.
		New Democratic Services Manager post established. Final interviews with three external candidates being held 14 <sup>th</sup> January.	Laying the foundations report approved by Council on 3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2015 approved the creation of Assistant Chief Executive (ACE) and Democratic Services manager posts.
		A permanent Assistant Director Legal Services has been appointed from a large metropolitan city council and will join the Authority on 7 <sup>th</sup> March.	
A new post of Assistant Chief Executive (ACE) was	The ACE role critical in helping to address the concerns		



Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
		<p>created and external appointment made. Shokat Lal appointed as ACE and joins the Authority on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016.</p> <p>External appointment of a new post of Assistant Chief Executive, with the role appointed and joining the authority in March 2016.</p> <p>Head of Policy, Improvement &amp; Partnerships position was created in 2015 which has also been providing strategic, high level support to the MD Commissioner and this will continue for the newly appointed Chief Executive.</p> <p>Formal corporate posts in the areas of Voluntary and Community Sector Liaison, Equalities and Diversity, and policy support to the Cabinet have also been re-established, form internal staff changes, to further enhance the corporate centre of the organisation.</p> <p>The Revenues and Benefits Service have experienced officers and management in place.</p>	<p>raised in the CGI report about the absence of a strong, corporate centre to the organisation.</p> <p>The new Assistant Chief Executive, when in post from March 2016, will provide, through its senior management team - covering workforce, communications, performance, democratic services, policy, improvement and partnerships - a core, central infrastructure for the authority to work more corporately and more collaboratively across Directorates.</p> <p>Laying the foundations report approved by Council on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2015 approved the creation of Assistant Chief Executive (ACE) and Democratic Services manager posts.</p>
	<p><b>Have been quality assured by an independent party, such as a Local Government Association Peer Review or experienced interim Chief Officers appointed from outside the authority</b></p>	<p>ICT and Information Governance Services have undergone an in-depth review by an ex-Strategic Director of relevant services from a City Council. The review also included an assessment of the technical infrastructure by third party technical consultants.</p> <p>Both reviews identified many areas of good practice and technical excellence and no value for money concerns were raised. Several areas for improvement were also identified – particularly around customer engagement, exploitation of information assets and</p>	<p>Improvement works that have already been completed. The proposals for the future of RMBC's ICT service are ambitious and comprehensive: they fundamentally change the current operating model and bring together key ICT, Information, Customer Access, Web and Business System Support resource into a new ICT and Digital Service.</p>

Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
		project control.	
		The interim Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic services is conducting an initial assessment and health check review of the in-house team focusing on providing resources to match the workload demands of the Directorates.	Management information provided through the Iken case management system is enabling a targeted approach to the way that support is provided in particular to CYPS and the Child care team to mitigate and reduce the use of external solicitors as advocates in child care proceedings.
		Legal Services have received the External Quality Assurance Lexcel (Law Society's Legal practice quality mark)	Further annual re- assessment based on the new criteria to be undertaken at the end of February.
	<b>Individual councillors are in a position to exercise executive authority over these functions</b>	In December the number Cabinet Members for increased 5 to 8. The newly appointed Cabinet Members responsible for Corporate Services and Budgeting is Councillor Saghir Alam.  Cllr Alam will be supported by peers through the LGA support programme for members and peers are required to report to Commissioners on progress.	First Advisory cabinet / Commissioners decision making meeting being held in public on 18 <sup>th</sup> February 2016.  Advisory Cabinet members continue to be able to draw on advice and guidance of Commissioners.  The constitution has been reviewed and protocols updated to ensure clarity around decision making. Each Advisory Cabinet member has a defined portfolio.
<b>Budget control in these areas, and budget planning</b>			
9.	<b>They are satisfied are operating well, with no significant value for money deficit</b>	A Medium Term Financial Strategy has been developed which sets out the Council's challenges and financial approach for the next 3 years.	The strategy has also been refined following the Autumn Statement.  The MTFS will be in place by February 2016.
		'All Service Review' approach adopted to tackle the financial challenge for the budget for 2016/17 to 2018/19.	Proposals received cross-party Member consideration and are being reviewed by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
			A robust balanced budget for 2016/17 will be in place by February 2016.
		The Council's 2016/17 budget is being subject to an Equality Analysis and senior managers are being supported to complete Equality Analysis on individual service changes.	
	<b>Are well-led by officers, have clear definitions of service quality and plans for further improvements are in place</b>	<p>A new Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services has been appointed from outside the Council and will join the Council in March.</p> <p>As part of the all service review there has been significant finance and joint service working to develop budget proposals to address the financial challenge in the MTF3 over the next 3 years.</p> <p>Services are well supported through effective finance business partnering arrangements.</p>	
	<b>Have been quality assured by an independent party, such as a Local Government Association Peer Review or experienced interim Chief Officers appointed from outside the authority</b>	The Council has consistently received an unqualified audit opinion for a number of years from the external auditors with no significant recommendations for improvements	
		There are been no significant areas for improvement in the ISA260 (Other than a qualification on the VFM judgement – this is something the Commissioners have been brought in to address)	
		LGA peers have provided support for members around the budget setting process	
	<b>Individual councillors are</b>	In December the number Cabinet Members for	Advisory Cabinet members continue to be able to draw

Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
	<b>in a position to exercise executive authority over these functions</b>	<p>increased 5 to 8. The newly appointed Cabinet Members responsible for Corporate Services and Budgeting is Councillor Saghir Alam.</p> <p>Cllr Alam will be supported by peers through the LGA support programme for members and peers are required to report to Commissioners on progress.</p>	<p>on advice and guidance of Commissioners.</p> <p>The constitution has been reviewed and protocols updated to ensure clarity around decision making. Each Advisory Cabinet member has a defined portfolio.</p>
<b>Policy arising from Sheffield City Region</b>			
10.	<b>They are satisfied are operating well, with no significant value for money deficit</b>	<p>Strong representation at the Sheffield City Region (SCR) and Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) combined Authority meetings, ensuring that the Council has a voice and is able to share its views to influence growth in Rotherham and the wider region for the benefit of the borough.</p> <p>All elected members and officers are supported to develop a better understanding of City Region and economic issues – including formal briefings provided to Full Cabinet on the nature of the devolution deal (16 September 2015), and an All Member Seminar (11th January 2016) on the current devolution public consultation.</p> <p>Projects and deliverability of the major projects in the council's new 10-year Economic Growth Plan have been reviewed (see below).</p> <p>In October the Council signed off on a new determined and long term Economic Growth Strategy for the borough which fits in with the ambitions of the Sheffield</p>	<p>Effective, informal influencing and advisory networks are now also in place, with active Rotherham participation.</p> <p>Including core assets such as the Advance Manufacturing Park (AMP) where work is progressing towards expanding this into a major Advanced Manufacturing Innovation District (AMID) as part of the Sheffield City Region (SCR) devolution plan.</p> <p>New, supporting partnership Governance has been put in place via the Rotherham Business Growth Board (established in September 2015) to help lead and</p>

Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
		City Region Economic Plan.	challenge the delivery of the Growth Plan. This work has been led by Commissioner Kenny in partnership with the Leader and relevant Cabinet Members.
		The Council has had key involvement in the formation of the devolution proposals and has agreed to the “in principle” devolution settlement to a new Mayor and City Region. This has included direct involvement of the Leader in particular in negotiations and meetings with Government Departments and Ministers.	In line with other SCR authorities, the council will be expected to formally ratify the final Deal in February/March 2016, led in this by the Leader given his positions on the Combined Authority and Local Enterprise Partnership.
		Agreement has been reached with Rotherham College of Arts and Technology (RCAT) to site a new, £12m Higher Education Campus on land owned by the Council and £4m of Sheffield City Region Skills Capital Funding has passed through the first phase.	This addresses the fact that Rotherham is currently the only significantly sized town in the SCR without HE provision and paves the way for the Growth Plan’s ambitions around higher skills, as well as a more vibrant and diverse town centre.
	<b>Are well-led by officers, have clear definitions of service quality and plans for further improvements are in place</b>	Commissioner restructure proposals are nearing completion which establish a stronger focus on regeneration activity and the specific importance of the SCR agenda. The retitled Regeneration and Environment Directorate is to be structured to emphasise the critical role in influencing within the City Region for the benefit of Rotherham’s businesses and communities.	
		The new 10-year Economic Growth Plan (see above) provides the core strategic framework for this activity.	
		A well-established network of officers is also now in place, which is coordinated from the corporate centre and has a key role in ensuring briefings for Members and Senior Officers engaged in SCR decision making	

Ref	Criteria	Evidence	Further information
		structures (see above).	
	<b>Have been quality assured by an independent party, such as a Local Government Association Peer Review or experienced interim Chief Officers appointed from outside the authority</b>	While the Council's interests in the SCR agenda are wide ranging, a key role is focused within the Regeneration and Environment Directorate (see above), to which a new Strategic Director is shortly to be appointed. This will provide fresh perspective on the council delivering against the potential offered by the City Region and devolution agenda.	
	<b>Individual councillors are in a position to exercise executive authority over these functions</b>	The Leader of the Council has taken up a leadership position over the planning of the new skills agenda – see also Section 10 above.	A strong focus on developing wider elected member and officer understanding of the SCR and agenda is further supporting a better collective understanding of the opportunities presented by devolution.