

Strategy and Resources Policy Committee

Wednesday 17 April 2024 at 2.00 pm

To be held in the Town Hall,
Pinstone Street, Sheffield, S1 2HH

The Press and Public are Welcome to Attend

Membership

Councillor Tom Hunt
Councillor Fran Belbin
Councillor Angela Argenzio
Councillor Penny Baker
Councillor Dawn Dale
Councillor Dianne Hurst
Councillor Douglas Johnson
Councillor Ben Miskell
Councillor Shaffaq Mohammed
Councillor Zahira Naz
Councillor Joe Otten
Councillor Martin Smith
Councillor Richard Williams

PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE MEETING

The Strategy and Resources Policy Committee comprises 13 Members and has the following responsibilities:

Corporate Responsibilities:

- Cross-cutting responsibility for development and submission to Full Council for adoption of the Budget and Policy Framework
- Providing strategic direction to the operation of the Council by developing and recommending the Corporate Plan (including determination of the priorities set out therein) to Full Council and making decisions on cross-cutting policies and practice where such decisions are not reserved to full Council
- Responsibility for decisions on any commitments to funding in future years not covered within the Council's medium term financial plan
- Responsibility for any issue identified as being of significant strategic importance or financial risk to the Council (which is considered to be by its nature cross-cutting)
- Responsibility, including referral to another Policy Committee for consideration if appropriate, for any policy matter not otherwise allocated to a Committee
- Considering reports which an Ombudsman requires to be published by the Council where it is proposed that the Council take the recommended action

Council Functions:

- Finance and Commercial Services
- Legal Services
- Democratic Engagement
- Human Resources and Employee Engagement
- Organisational Strategy, Performance and Delivery
- ICT and Digital Innovation
- Information Management

Meetings are chaired by the Leader of the Council.

A copy of the agenda and reports is available on the Council's website at www.sheffield.gov.uk . You may not be allowed to see some reports because they contain confidential information. These items are usually marked * on the agenda. Members of the public have the right to ask questions or submit petitions to Policy Committee meetings and recording is allowed under the direction of the Chair. Please see the Council [website](#) or contact Democratic Services for further information regarding public questions and petitions and details of the Council's protocol on audio/visual recording and photography at council meetings.

Policy Committee meetings are normally open to the public but sometimes the Committee may have to discuss an item in private. If this happens, you will be asked to leave. Any private items are normally left until last on the agenda.

Meetings of the Policy Committee have to be held as physical meetings. If you would like to attend the meeting, please report to an Attendant in the Foyer at the Town

Hall where you will be directed to the meeting room. However, it would be appreciated if you could register to attend, in advance of the meeting, by emailing committee@sheffield.gov.uk, as this will assist with the management of attendance at the meeting. The meeting rooms in the Town Hall have a limited capacity. We are unable to guarantee entrance to the meeting room for observers, as priority will be given to registered speakers and those that have registered to attend.

Alternatively, you can observe the meeting remotely by clicking on the 'view the webcast' link provided on the meeting page of the [website](#).

If you wish to attend a meeting and ask a question or present a petition, you must submit the question/petition in writing by 9.00 a.m. at least 2 clear working days in advance of the date of the meeting, by email to the following address: committee@sheffield.gov.uk.

In order to ensure safe access and to protect all attendees, you will be recommended to wear a face covering (unless you have an exemption) at all times within the venue. Please do not attend the meeting if you have COVID-19 symptoms. It is also recommended that you undertake a Covid-19 Rapid Lateral Flow Test within two days of the meeting.

If you require any further information please email committee@sheffield.gov.uk.

FACILITIES

There are public toilets available, with wheelchair access, on the ground floor of the Town Hall. Induction loop facilities are available in meeting rooms. Access for people with mobility difficulties can be obtained through the ramp on the side to the main Town Hall entrance.

**STRATEGY AND RESOURCES POLICY COMMITTEE AGENDA
17 APRIL 2024**

Order of Business

Welcome and Housekeeping

The Chair to welcome attendees to the meeting and outline basic housekeeping and fire safety arrangements.

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Exclusion of the Press and Public

To identify items where resolutions may be moved to exclude the press and public.

3. Declarations of Interest

Members to declare any interests they have in the business to be considered at the meeting.

(Pages 7 - 10)

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

To approve the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 12 March 2024.

(Pages 11 - 30)

5. Public Questions and Petitions

To receive any questions or petitions from members of the public.

(NOTE: There is a time limit of up to 30 minutes for the above item of business. In accordance with the arrangements published on the Council's website, questions/petitions at the meeting are required to be submitted in writing, to committee@sheffield.gov.uk, by 9.00 a.m. on 15 April 2023).

6. Members' Questions

To receive any questions from Members of the committee on issues which are not already the subject of an item of business on the Committee agenda – Council Procedure Rule 16.8. (NOTE: a period of up to 10 minutes shall be allocated for Members' supplementary questions).

7. Retirement of Staff

Report of the Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement

(Pages 31 - 34)

8. Work Programme

Report of the Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement

(Pages 35 - 48)

Formal Decisions

9. **Sheffield City Council Outcomes and Performance Framework 2024-28** (Pages 49 - 86)
Report of Chief Operating Officer
10. **Future Sheffield – Digital Strategy & Customer Experience Strategy** (Pages 87 - 190)
Report of Chief Operating Officer
11. **Joint Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code** (Pages 191 - 292)
Report of Executive Director Neighbourhood Services
12. **Network Services Contract Award - Software Defined Wide Area Network (SD WAN) Service** (Pages 293 - 302)
Report of the Chief Operating Officer
13. ***Heart of the City 2 - Management Arrangements** (To Follow)
Report of the Director of Finance and Commercial Services

NOTE:

(i) it is anticipated that the report at item 13* in the above agenda will not be available to the public and press because it contains exempt information described in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended); and

(ii) the next meeting of Strategy and Resources Policy Committee will be held on (Date to be confirmed)

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ADVICE TO MEMBERS ON DECLARING INTERESTS AT MEETINGS

If you are present at a meeting of the Council, of its Policy Committees, or of any committee, sub-committee, joint committee, or joint sub-committee of the authority, and you have a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest** (DPI) relating to any business that will be considered at the meeting, you must not:

- participate in any discussion of the business at the meeting, or if you become aware of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interest during the meeting, participate further in any discussion of the business, or
- participate in any vote or further vote taken on the matter at the meeting.

These prohibitions apply to any form of participation, including speaking as a member of the public.

You **must**:

- leave the room (in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct)
- make a verbal declaration of the existence and nature of any DPI at any meeting at which you are present at which an item of business which affects or relates to the subject matter of that interest is under consideration, at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent.
- declare it to the meeting and notify the Council's Monitoring Officer within 28 days, if the DPI is not already registered.

If you have any of the following pecuniary interests, they are your **disclosable pecuniary interests** under the new national rules. You have a pecuniary interest if you, or your spouse or civil partner, have a pecuniary interest.

- Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain, which you, or your spouse or civil partner undertakes.
- Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from your council or authority) made or provided within the relevant period* in respect of any expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

*The relevant period is the 12 months ending on the day when you tell the Monitoring Officer about your disclosable pecuniary interests.

- Any contract which is made between you, or your spouse or your civil partner (or a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest) and your council or authority –
 - under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and
 - which has not been fully discharged.

- Any beneficial interest in land which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, have and which is within the area of your council or authority.
- Any licence (alone or jointly with others) which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, holds to occupy land in the area of your council or authority for a month or longer.
- Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) –
 - the landlord is your council or authority; and
 - the tenant is a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest.
- Any beneficial interest which you, or your spouse or your civil partner has in securities of a body where -
 - (a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of your council or authority; and
 - (b) either -
 - the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or
 - if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

If you attend a meeting at which any item of business is to be considered and you are aware that you have a **personal interest** in the matter which does not amount to a DPI, you must make verbal declaration of the existence and nature of that interest at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent. You should leave the room if your continued presence is incompatible with the 7 Principles of Public Life (selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty; and leadership).

You have a personal interest where –

- a decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial standing (including interests in land and easements over land) of you or a member of your family or a person or an organisation with whom you have a close association to a greater extent than it would affect the majority of the Council Tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward or electoral area for which you have been elected or otherwise of the Authority's administrative area, or
- it relates to or is likely to affect any of the interests that are defined as DPIs but are in respect of a member of your family (other than a partner) or a person with whom you have a close association.

Guidance on declarations of interest, incorporating regulations published by the Government in relation to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, has been circulated to you previously.

You should identify any potential interest you may have relating to business to be considered at the meeting. This will help you and anyone that you ask for advice to fully consider all the circumstances before deciding what action you should take.

In certain circumstances the Council may grant a **dispensation** to permit a Member to take part in the business of the Authority even if the member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest relating to that business.

To obtain a dispensation, you must write to the Monitoring Officer at least 48 hours before the meeting in question, explaining why a dispensation is sought and desirable, and specifying the period of time for which it is sought. The Monitoring Officer may consult with the Independent Person or the Council's Standards Committee in relation to a request for dispensation.

Further advice can be obtained from David Hollis, General Counsel by emailing david.hollis@sheffield.gov.uk.

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Strategy and Resources Policy Committee

Meeting held 12 March 2024

PRESENT: Councillors Tom Hunt (Chair), Fran Belbin (Deputy Chair), Angela Argenzio, Penny Baker, Dianne Hurst (Group Spokesperson), Douglas Johnson (Group Spokesperson), Ben Miskell, Zahira Naz, Joe Otten, Martin Smith, Richard Williams and Mark Jones (Substitute Member)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dawn Dale and Shaffaq Mohammed.

2. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the previous meetings held on 21 February 2024 were approved as a correct record.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 Elissa Thompson attended to present the following questions that had been submitted by Mishanth Feinstein: Since September ACORN Burngreave members have been running our #takebackVestryHall Campaign. We are unhappy with the fact that Vestry Hall, given its fantastic location and facilities, remains massively underused - especially given the desperate need for more community facilities in our area.

Following a number of community meetings, we have identified two main reasons for Vestry Hall's massive underuse - the high price of room booking, and the lack of any community outreach or involvement to ensure it is filled. We believe Vestry Hall could and should be a community hub for Burngreave, instead of an near-empty husk which at the moment is best known in the area as a feeding place for pigeons.

Given it is the councillors on the Strategy and Resources committee that set the room booking policy and charges for Vestry Hall, will the committee Chair meet with us to discuss our proposal on how we can turn around Vestry Hall, ensuring

it is used by community groups and becomes the community hub our area needs?

- 5.2 Elissa Thompson attended to present the following questions that she had submitted: My name is Elissa Thompson and I run a new community group with Ekram Ali in Burngreave and Pitsmoor called Clean Zone Community Network. We offer signposting, benefits help, activities such as cultural crafts, healthy eating advice for people with or at risk of type 2 diabetes, physical activities such as walking and running and we encourage letterpicking and environmental work and provide equipment for our members to take part in these activities.

Currently we have no income and all our resources, including food for each week which we provide as part of our healthy eating education, have been paid for from our own bank accounts. We are in the process of looking for funding and networking/hosting with other local charities however we need a central space to hold our drop in. Currently we use Abbeyfield House however this is not central enough and many of the people who would like to attend, especially those who are older and physically vulnerable are unable to get to this location, plus it does not have disability access.

A room at Vestry Hall would be ideal. However due to the cost of Vestry Hall, we are unable to offer our service to the community in this area, as for 4 hours, the cost would be £70, or in some cases depending on security cost and cleaning fees, even more. We are aware of a discount for community groups which we applied for in November but so far have not been awarded.

Vestry Hall is chronically underused - for instance in the months of September and October the Main Hall was unused 86% of the time. Does the council agree that the high price of booking is making it nearly impossible for community groups to use, what is meant to be a community building?

Vestry Hall would be a fantastic location for our drop in, which runs every Friday from 10am till 4pm. We are also hoping to hold an Eid Event mid-April which would be open to all ages, of every ethnic, cultural and religious background, to provide food for the community and offer an opportunity for social cohesion. Holding an event such as this at a central location such as Vestry Hall would be vital as this is easy to access, central, has good transport links and disabled access.

Finally, Ekram and I are both healthcare workers with over 20 years' experience between us (Ekram is a senior support worker and I am a qualified psychiatric Nurse). We understand the complexity of social and mental health issues in the north of Sheffield and have excellent links with the community, having lived and worked here for many years. We feel we can offer our community some vitally needed support, if we are offered the appropriate funding.

Our question is, what can the council do to enable groups like ours to run, free of charge from Vestry Hall which is a prime location, for the long term, given our group is likely to have a significant impact on many of the social and environmental issues Burngreave faces and will help improve the lives of some

of the most vulnerable and socially excluded people in our local community?

- 5.3 Lois Cole attended to present the following questions that she had submitted: When are you going to fulfil your obligations as Sheffield council to the residents of Burngreave?

As you know it's the second most deprived area in Sheffield, yet we don't even have a library. As a local resident I struggle to access any help with benefit and consumer advice and help with job hunting, since the local CAB office shut down several years ago. There is nowhere safe and welcoming where local residents can mix and meet, and get involved in local activities. This is why we need to make Vestry hall a community hub.

- 5.4 Ronnie Lewin attended to present the following questions that he had submitted: As Former Chair of Burngreave New Deal for Communities, I would like to know how the local buildings bought by the Burngreave New Deal programme (which are fully owned by local resident resources for local community income generation) are to be opened up for some free use to enable local resident development, as a part of the "Levelling Up" ... "Left Behind Communities!" agenda.

Currently Vestry Hall is charged by the hour for use by local residents, although, it is fully owned by the very same community! This damages community voice, development and access, by the privatisation of a community owed asset in one of the poorest areas in the city, notwithstanding the entire country!

How will "Levelling Up" change this immediately as apart of the City's plans, in a lasting and meaningful fully costed way?

- 5.5 Elissa Thompson attended to present the following questions that had been submitted by Helen from ACORN Burngreave: Burngreave is the second most deprived ward in Sheffield, out of 28. Average household income is just over £20,000 a year, while nearly 30% of children are on Free school meals. There are wards on the other side of the city (for instance Eccleshall) that have over ten years more in life expectancy. The fact that in these circumstances, the Burngreave Vestry Hall which was built to be used by the community but is at the present time mostly empty, is unconscionable.

Will the Committee Chair commit to meeting ACORN Burngreave and discuss our proposal of turning Burngreave Vestry Hall into a community hub?

Answers to questions 5.1 to 5.5: Thank you all for bringing these questions to us today. Firstly, I want to apologise for the fact these questions could have been addressed at the last meeting of this committee. The advice at the time was that that Strategy and Resources Policy Committee would not be the appropriate committee to answer these questions. That was incorrect and so on behalf of the committee I apologise again for the confusion, and thank you for your patience. Policy matters come under the council's Community Building Review which falls under the remit of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee of the council.

I completely understand the strengthen of feeling of residents for the building and the crucial role it plays for communities. Vestry Hall has a prominent and proud place in Burngreave and we are putting in place a new Community Buildings Policy so that there is open, fair, transparent, and consistent process to enable the management of Community Buildings and for the Council to work with the voluntary, community and faith sector and promote their long-term success.

The Council has around 100 Community Buildings that we manage and maintain, with a further large number owned by the Council, but leased to voluntary, community and faith sector groups and organisations. We want to have a more consistent, sustainable and asset-based approach to community buildings which is why we will today consider the adoption of a new Community Buildings Policy to help us to do that.

This approach is being developed with full engagement with the Voluntary Community and Faith Sector (who are consultees to the policy via the Community Buildings Board). The principles of the policy will be tested and a period of learning will take place during a Pilot period of up to 12 months, at which point the policy can be reviewed.

This is the context for discussion today, and for my answer on the specifics of Vestry Hall.

Regarding the question about fees and charges from Mishanth – Thank you for coming today. The current fees and charges set for Vestry Hall have been in place for some time and were determined by officers considering the operational expenses of each building.

The policy sets out that land and Property is not a free resource – we are under significant budget pressures - and Council Members and officers have a fiduciary duty to ensure that property is effectively financially managed. A standard pricing methodology will be put in place to ensure that users are charged consistently across the Community Building portfolio. In the case of ad-hoc rental of Community Buildings the 'hire-rate' will be set annually, formally as part of the Council's fees & charges setting process.

The North-East Local Area Committee (LAC) in partnership with the Council's Facilities Management Service agreed, as part of a response to a public question at the meeting held at Vestry Hall to look at how we could improve the use of the building for users and its accessibility. We are holding a community consultation event on Thursday 4th April between 1-6pm at Vestry Hall. This event will invite the community to come along and have their say and share their ideas with us. I hope you'll all be able to attend.

The event will also give details on current rates, booking processes and funding available to groups. There will be stalls from services and partners who can provide advice and help to the community, such as cost of living, and housing.

We will share details of the event shortly and send through a flyer. The North-East LAC team will be there to share the community plan and work it has been delivering in the Burngreave area over the past year and ask for your ideas for futures projects. In the first instance I would suggest you meet with the LAC team and your ward councillors to discuss the building but I am always happy to meet residents of the City.

Regarding directly the questions from Elissa Thompson and Ekram Ali. Thank you for coming today and for your long service as healthcare workers. The North East Local Area Committee (LAC) team has been in touch with Clean Zone Community Network and sent through a funding application request form. The LAC has agreed to fund the request for the EID Event of £750.

The request would also like further funding to hire Vestry Hall to hold Healthy Eating and Provide Food drops in sessions. The North East LAC currently has a cost of living small grants scheme live that invites groups to request funding up to the sum of £2,000. This is open until 22nd March, the application form and details have been sent to Clean Zone Community Network.

Concerning specifically the questions from Lois Cole on the lack of library provision. Thank you for joining us today. I would like to note that Burngreave does have a library. It's a volunteer led Library and it's based at Sorby House.

The library does provide Connections to Health services – e.g. self help groups, health chats, access to Health Trainer and Connections to other services: Sheffield Citizens Advice, Community Learning, Work Clubs.

The North East Local Area Committee received additional funding for the Cost of Living around £90,000, it agreed to provide CAB with half of that funding in a sum of £45,000 to help support the advice line and widen their capacity to provide advice across the North East area.

Firth Park library also has a CAB interactive tablet in a private room that can be accessed easily. I have previously mentioned about the North East LAC community consultation event on Thursday 4th April, and I hope you might be able to attend meet with other groups and networks in the area.

Concerning the questions from Ronnie Lewin on how the recent Levelling-up awards, and concerns over the use of this Vestry Hall. Thank you for coming today and for your work with Burngreave New Deal. Sheffield City Council's levelling up programme is geographically based in the Castlegate, Parkwood and Attercliffe areas and therefore there is no resource from the programme for the Burgreave area.

However, the Council is working to implement a Community Buildings Policy and associated Pilot, to be discussed today. As mentioned earlier, this will set out a proposed approach to build a sustainable and asset-based approach to Community Buildings, working closely with residents and stakeholders to do so.

And finally concerning the question from Helen about turning Vestry Hall into a

community hub. Thank you. Understanding the potential of our buildings and interest in them is a key part of the review. We know that provision and use of Community Buildings is a tool which can be used to support communities and forms part of a wider strategy to help local communities. That's why our forthcoming review of community building will involve all local councillors, community organisations, and the voluntary sector in shaping the policies related to community buildings, costs, use and transfers. The event on April 4th is an initial opportunity to discuss future use. Will make sure you are all sent details.

5.6 Julie Pearn attended to present the following questions that she had submitted:

Q. As we understand it, Strategy and Resources is the committee charged with debating matters of "significant strategic importance" and for considering "any policy matter not otherwise allocated to a committee."

In the light of this, we note that the drafting of a statement of unity and solidarity, agreed in full Council on March 6th, has not been referred to a committee per se, but to a "cross-party group". Our questions relate to that group. When will this group meet? What is the composition of that group to be?

Answer: Under the constitution, each policy committee may set up task and finish groups to look in more detail at particular issues. The group referred to in the question will be a task and finish group of Strategy and Resources Committee. Any formal decisions that need to be made in relation to the petition, following the work of the task and finish group will be made by Strategy and Resources Committee in a public meeting as normal. This approach is being adopted because it will allow the committee to move quickly in responding to the issues raised in the petition and debate at Full Council.

The drafting and issuing of a statement is not one that requires a formal decision of the Policy Committee, so will be able to be actioned more quickly and as per the commitment I made as Leader at Full Council last week we will do our best to agree this before the pre-election period.

The composition of the group is Cllr Shaffaq Mohamed, Cllr Douglas Johnson, Cllr Dianne Hurst, and myself. We will meet as soon as possible within the coming days.

Q. Matters pertaining to the composition of the group: In a previous cross-party group of three, a decision was taken by two of the three members to fly the Israeli flag on October 10th 2023. Other West Yorkshire Councils chose to fly the peace flag, so discretion was an option.

Would it be appropriate to reconvene only this group of three, given a past decision by two of them to adopt a partisan position?

Answer: The decision to fly the Israeli flag on 10th October, as I have said before, was taken to show solidarity with the victims of the Hamas attacks on 7th October. That decision will have no bearing on the task at hand now.

The cross party task and finish group will reflect on and consider this very different set of circumstances when making recommendations about the next steps that the council should take in relation to the petition.

Q. Would it be appropriate to include a member who said on March 6th (inter alia) " ...Passing a resolution at Sheffield City Council in November didn't bring about a ceasefire... If you really think that passing a resolution is going to change the situation on the ground, I have to disagree with you."

Does this committee agree that those utterances suggest a lack of understanding of: the central importance of statements of moral leadership to the role of elected representatives? And the way that this builds confidence in the electorate that those elected to serve have high moral integrity?

No, I don't agree. Let me explain why. At Full Council last week I said that words matter, and the words of elected politicians in this chamber do matter. They matter in Sheffield, but can have much greater impact further afield as well.

But I must accept that, however just our calls, however loud our voices, they of course may have limited or no impact at times. This is a reality, and it would be completely incorrect to overstate what the council can achieve. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't speak out,

I am proud that Sheffield has a long history of speaking up, on international matters. This clearly remains the case today, and I do think we have raised our voice loudly on this issue in the last few months.

Q. Can we assure petitioners that the composition of the cross-party group will be made up of members who: inspire confidence that they are equal to the task and understand the clear brief of producing a "statement of unity and solidarity with the Palestinian people" Reflect the supportive tone of Councillors' contributions in the chamber on March 6th?

Answer: I have full confidence in every member of the cross-party task and finish group. We will come together to do what is right, and in a timely manner.

5.7 Annie O'Gara attended to present the following questions that she had submitted:

Q. At the full Council meeting on March 6th, the petition signed by some 7,500 people was discussed. After some intense and revealing debate, it was decided to refer the petition to this committee. Petitioners expressed strong concerns about further delays to the Council's response to this important petition. They had no option but to contrast the numerous supportive measures, offered without let or hindrance by the Council, to the Ukrainian people, clearly demonstrated on the city Council's website. Unnecessary delays will exacerbate concerns about what is seen as the Council's selective morality when it comes to some sorely oppressed people, in contrast to others, like Ukrainians.

Community cohesion, often referred to as a priority by Council leadership, cannot be achieved by failure to oppose genocide, apartheid or by flagrant

double standards on whose lives we value. This committee now has the weighty responsibility of discussing further the petition. Our questions today require urgent answers which must then be communicated to the large number of petitioners. What is the time frame for this discussion? Will the matter be tabled for the April 17th meeting, the agenda of which has not yet been set?

Answer: As referred to in the earlier answer, our clear intention is to issue a cross-party statement of solidarity, in line with the resolution of Full Council, as soon as possible and before the beginning of the Pre-Election Period on 26 March. This does not require a decision of a policy committee.

The other matters contained in the petition will require detailed work, and a report to be brought forward to the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee with options and officer advice.

That will not be able to be considered at the meeting of the Committee scheduled for 17th April as the Council is prohibited from making decisions on issues that may be politically sensitive in the period immediately before an election. This year that period runs from 26 March to the close of poll on 2 May. The report therefore will be considered at the first meeting of the committee after the election.

Q. How will that discussion be structured? E.g. Will the Strategy and Resources committee consider each element of the petition separately and also reach a determination on them separately (as we understood from comments in Full Council)?

Answer: That is to be considered by the task and finish group, but it is likely that each element will be discussed and determined separately as suggested in the question.

Q. Will the Strategy and Resources Committee undertake to reach a full decision on all the petition's elements within that meeting?

Answer: This is the clear intention. However, it is possible that there may be more complex areas that will require further work. But do please rest assured we will do this in timely manner.

5.8 Hilary Smith attended to present the following questions that she had submitted: I note that this committee is today considering a report recommending a new flag protocol, and that the report contains a number of days which will be marked by specific flags being flown each year. I note the absence from that list of the United Nations Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people, marked on November 29th each year.

General Assembly resolution 32/40B, passed in December 1977, introduced the day of solidarity, and the UN has marked the day ever since. The UN resolution also encourages Member states to continue to give the widest support and publicity to the observance of the day of solidarity.

Some of you may not be aware that Sheffield City council flew the Palestinian flag on 29th November each year between 1995 and 2000 but has failed to do so since then. Recently the leader of the Council has reaffirmed that the Council recognises the State of Palestine. If this is to mean anything at all, it is surely time for the Council to commit to fly the Palestinian flag each November 29th. Will this committee agree to do so?

Answer: The annual list of flag days does not include the flags of any sovereign nation other than the United Kingdom, and we would not propose that we should add particular national flags to our annual calendar.

However, as you will see, the new flag protocol includes a mechanism for ad hoc requests to be made to fly particular flags and a clear decision-making route for how those requests will be determined.

The United Nations flag is included on the list to be flown on United Nations day, which is 24th October.

5.9 Chella Quint attended to present the following questions that she had submitted:

Q. Language matters, we have observed that the language in the Charter draft needs updating. Use of terms like sanitary products and repeated use of the phrase women and girls, with only a very brief mention of trans and non-binary people who also menstruate can perpetuate stigmas and exclusion. Will the Council commit to updating the charter language and seek out training to improve this standard going forward?

Q. We believe it is vital for the Council to demonstrate transparency and choice in the procurement process for menstrual products, so as not to tacitly promote one brand over another. Can the Charter ensure fairness and transparency regarding existing relationships with product companies and around new partnerships, purchases, donations and charitable arrangements and ensure environmentally friendly options such as plastic free and reusable products are included.

Q. Our work has been instrumental in shaping Sheffield's approach to menstruation and menopause awareness since long before the very welcome recent motion and Charter and we are proud to see several of our campaigns long standing aims included in several motion and Charter points. How will the Council ensure that the Charter acknowledges the legacy of the voluntary work of our partners, volunteers and colleagues across Sheffield, so that this continues to be recognised and celebrated within the City. In conclusion we are here to ensure that our collective efforts towards menstrual literacy and equity and menopause awareness are acknowledged, respected and continued.

Answer: Thank you for submitting your questions Chella, which I will respond to in a minute, but before I do, I just wanted to acknowledge the contribution you have made with your work over a number of years on period equity, and in particular your Period Positive campaign.

You and colleagues have done a huge amount to raise awareness of the challenges that so many have with access to period products in our city and

across the country, and to advocate for change. I would also like to thank you for working with officers and councillors on the report that we are considering today and I am sure that the rest of the committee will join me in that.

As well as the questions you have asked today, I know that you had wanted to ask many more but given the timescales permitted at today's meeting it is not possible to go through all of these. However, a full written response will be provided and will also be made available online as part of this meetings' record.

On language, we have used the Equality Act as the basis for our understanding and looked at the impact on all protected characteristics. This has included feedback that language has to be simple and understandable to people of different faiths, ethnicities, cultures and backgrounds, to disabled people, to lesbians, bi and trans and non-binary and to people of all ages.

We are happy to take specific feedback and suggestions on how language in the charter may be improved and made more inclusive. The document is published in draft, and we are keen to seek feedback to refine and improve it further.

With respect to procurement, the council notes that donations may take the form of partner to partner rather than via the council and this response relates specifically to council procurement activities. The Council does not currently purchase menstrual products at this time and would be subject to our existing procurement regulations and our own policies if we do in the future, including in relation to social value and ethical procurement. It is important to note that we do not have any existing relationship with any providers of period products.

Finally, the council is proud to have worked alongside a variety of partners over months and years on matters of period equity, menopause and matters of sex and gender equity. Many partners are specifically acknowledged in the annex 2 of the committee report, including Period Positive Initiative. The council has explicitly recognised the contribution of Period Positive and offers thanks for participation at the international women's day event last week, as well as the significant work that it has done with Learn Sheffield and with schools in the city and we hope that this will continue into the future.

6. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

6.1 There were no Members' questions.

7. RETIREMENT OF STAFF

7.1 The Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement submitted a report on Council staff retirements.

7.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

(a) places on record its appreciation of the valuable services rendered to the City Council by the following staff in the Directorates below:-

<u>Name</u>	<u>Post</u>	<u>Years' Service</u>
<u>Children's Services</u>		
Shanti Davis	Support Worker	28
Jane Riddell	Teacher, Limpsfield School	Junior 23
<u>Neighbourhood Services</u>		
Diane Deakin	Cleaning Operative	21

(b) extend to them its best wishes for the future and a long and happy retirement; and

(c) directs that an appropriate extract of the resolution now made, under the Common Seal of the Council, be forwarded to those staff with over 20 years' service.

8. WORK PROGRAMME

8.1 The Committee received a report containing the Committee's Work Programme for consideration and discussion. The aim of the Work Programme is to show all known, substantive agenda items for forthcoming meetings of the Committee, to enable this committee, other committees, officers, partners and the public to plan their work with and for the Committee. It was highlighted that this is a live document and Members input to it was invaluable.

Details of the Council motion on 7 February 2024 in respect of "5 years since declaring a climate emergency" were outlined and it was noted that three aspects of that motion were for Strategy and Resources Policy Committee to respond to. A suggested response in respect of the advertising policy element of this was set out in the report and that further work is required on the other aspects. A suggested response from the Committee to these aspects of the motion would be submitted as soon as possible.

In addition, it was reported that the Chair of the South East Local Area Committee (LAC) had written to the Strategy and Resources Committee, on behalf of that LAC in respect of concerns about the future of Birley Spa Bath House that had been discussed at their last meeting.

This is a formal request of the LAC and needs to be dealt with as set out in the constitution. The Committee has three options as to how to deal with the referral. The three options are: (i) refer the matter to a Strategic Director (ii) refer the matter to another relevant officer (iii) refer the matter to the Committee by way of a report.

8.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy

Committee:-

(a) the Committee's work programme, as set out in Appendix 1 be agreed, including the additions and amendments identified in Part 1 of the report;

(b) Members give consideration to any further issues to be explored by officers for inclusion in Part 2 of Appendix 1 of the next work programme report, for potential addition to the work programme;

(c) approval be given to the consideration of cross cutting issues as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report;

(d) the referrals from Council (petition and resolutions) detailed in Section 2 of the report be noted and the proposed responses set out be agreed; and

(e) the Executive Director Neighbourhood Services be requested to meet with the Chair of the South East Local Area Committee (LAC) to discuss the concerns with regard to Birley Spa Bath and then assess if a report needs to come back to Committee.

9. EQUALITY OBJECTIVES 2024- 28 AND ANNUAL EQUALITY REPORT INCLUDING WORKFORCE REPORT FOR 2022-2023.

9.1 The Director Policy and Democratic Engagement presented a report setting out, for approval, a package of activity to promote equality, diversity and inclusion and meet our statutory duties. It brings together our new Equality Objectives 2024-2028, which were previously accepted in draft on 21 December 2023 by this Committee as part of our Equality Framework "equality is everybody's business", which have now been updated following the consultation. These are accompanied by our Council-level Equality Objectives Action Plan 2024-25, proposed Awareness Days to mark in 2024-25, and our Annual Equality Report 2022-23.

The 2022-23 Annual Equality Report summarises our actions and progress on improving equality in the way we serve the people of Sheffield and how we behave as an employer. It gives an overview of how we are meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) including summary progress against our previous Equality Objectives with examples of a selection of work to improve equality and to meet the Duties. It also includes the council's Annual Workforce Data Report which is part of meeting the Specific Duty under the PSED to publish equality information on our employees. Producing this report enables us to identify any disparities in our workforce profile, understand how fair our workforce policies are and identify any differences in the experiences of different groups in our workforce. The report also details our pay gap information.

9.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

(a) agrees the new Equality Objectives 2024-2028, as detailed in the report;

(b) agrees the Council-level Equality Objectives Action Plan 2024-25 which will monitor progress against the Objectives;

(c) agrees the Annual Awareness days we will mark in 2024-25, as set out in the report;

(d) notes the 2022-23 Annual Equality Report, specifically:

- (i) progress made in meeting our Statutory Equality Duties and
- (ii) our Statutory Workforce Report, including improvements, ongoing challenges and pay gap information

9.3 Reasons for Decision

9.3.1 Although there are many inequalities within the city as noted in the Council Plan and annual report, colleagues across the Council are working hard to tackle these. Many are because of national factors that impact on the city that are outside our control. We do however seek to address these such as work on health inequalities within the work in the Council and city such as via the City Goals and Council plans and strategies. We want to acknowledge the work whether new projects or work that is business as usual and thank our colleagues for working together to help make Sheffield a fairer, accessible and a more inclusive place to live and work in.

9.3.2 It is therefore recommended that Strategy and Resources Committee approve the Equality Objectives as they will support the fundamental repositioning of the council's equality, diversity and inclusion work in line with the ambitions of the Council Plan and our work to embed anti-racism within the organisation and the city. By agreeing the Objectives, the Committee will also ensure that we meet our statutory obligation to publish a set of four-year equality objectives.

9.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

9.4.1 The Council has previously agreed that it should pursue a specific approach to equality rather than one where equality is 'mainstreamed' within other activity. Because of the importance given to equality, diversity and inclusion within the draft City Goals and Council Plan this report does not recommend a change to that approach.

9.4.2 The do-nothing option was discounted when discussing this paper as it is a Specific Statutory Equality Duty to set Equality Objectives at least every 4 years and to report annually on how we are meeting our General and Specific Duties as set out in the annual report.

10. PERIOD EQUITY AND MENOPAUSE AWARENESS CHARTER

10.1 The Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement submitted a report seeking approval for the Council's Period Equity and Menopause Awareness Charter.

It explains the background to and development of the charter and asks for the committee's support in taking forward the commitments set out in the charter.

The comments made in the public questions item earlier in the meeting in respect of the Charter were noted and it was recognised that the Charter presented was a draft and that the consultation on the matter was still open. There is therefore still an opportunity for changes to be made to the Charter, which can be made by the Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee.

10.2 RESOLVED: That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

(a) adopts the draft Sheffield City Council Period Equity and Menopause Awareness Charter (draft charter at appendix 1);

(b) agrees that further work should be undertaken to identify a sustainable approach to funding the provision of free menstrual products in Sheffield City Council buildings that are accessible to customers;

(c) recognises and thanks the partners, organisations and individuals who have contributed to the development of the charter over the last 18 months (list of partners at appendix 2); and

(d) notes that Sheffield has a strong tradition of partnership activism to address matters of period equity and that the city council recognises and wishes to contribute to this work.

10.3 Reasons for Decision

10.3.1 In adopting the Period Equity and Menopause Charter, the Council will take a significant step forward in its commitment to improving the lives of women and girls in the city, as well as clearly setting out our commitments to women in the workplace. The Charter actively supports the achievement of the Council's new Equality Objectives which are aligned to the Council Plan commitments.

10.4 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

10.4.1 This is a project that came from a resolution passed by Council on 2nd November 2022, and the Charter has been created in partnership with other organisations in the city, supported by Sheffield City Council. Due to the fact that this ask for a Charter was from a resolution that was passed we have not considered a 'do nothing' option.

(NOTE: The result of the vote on the resolution was FOR - 10 Members; AGAINST - 0 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 2 Members.

11. COMMUNITY BUILDINGS POLICY ADOPTION AND ASSOCIATED PILOT PROJECT

- 11.1 The Executive Director Neighbourhood Services submitted a report setting out a proposed approach to build a sustainable and asset-based approach to Community Buildings, working closely with stakeholders to do so. It seeks to enable priority work to begin with a number of organisations and community buildings, whilst committing to the longer-term development of the policies, skills and resources we need to deliver into the future.

Members recognised the need to reassure communities and organisations that use community buildings that the Council is fully committed to explore the full range of options and opportunities in respect of the proposed approach to community buildings and emphasised the need for Members and officers to make this point absolutely clear in discussions with such local communities and organisations. The Council is fully committed to work with all of the stakeholders in our communities and to take an inclusive approach to the development of policies and supportive structures to deliver the Community Buildings Review and officers are to redouble their efforts to clearly explain to all relevant organisations what this proposed review entails.

- 11.2 Councillor Joe Otten proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Penny Baker, to delete officer recommendation 3 set out in the report ((c) below).

On being put to the vote, the amendment was lost. (NOTE: The result of the vote was FOR – 5 Members; AGAINST – 7 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 0 Members).

- 11.3 **RESOLVED:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

(a) agrees to adopt the Community Building Policy as detailed in Appendix A to the report;

(b) agrees the proposal for a Community Building Pilot in the South Local Area Committee area, to inform the development of the revised future Community Buildings Policy;

(c) agrees the proposal to prioritise the review of 22 Housing Revenue Account funded Community buildings (see Appendix B) across the city as part of the Pilot; and

(d) agrees that the findings of the pilot project will inform a revised Community Buildings Policy which will be developed working closely with voluntary, community and faith sector representatives and submitted to Strategy and Resources Policy Committee within 12 months.

- 11.4 **Reasons for Decision**

- 11.4.1 The interim Community Buildings Policy will allow the Council to work in a consistent and proactive manner, setting out a clear, transparent the management of Community Buildings. It will enable the Council to make decisions on a number of historic Community Asset transfers that have not been able to progress given the current lack of a policy. As part of these

policies the Council will continue to work with local organisations to ensure that a range of initiatives are in place to support the development of strong and sustainable communities.

- 11.4.2 The policy sets out a framework for elected members, council officers and voluntary and community organisations to provide clarity on the process the management of Sheffield City Council's Community Buildings.
- 11.4.3 The proposed Community Buildings Pilot will fully inform a revised Policy which will ensure that full consultation takes place with the community supported by the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector. The development of a revised policy, working with stakeholders, will deliver a better quality, and more sustainable approach to our Community Buildings in the future.

11.5 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 11.5.1 Do nothing.
Continue to manage and deliver Community Buildings as per the current provision.
- 11.5.2 As part of the Council's Accommodation Review, its Community Buildings / Assets have been considered. As well as these being managed in an inconsistent way across the Council, it is also important that they provide good quality facilities in the locations that the local community need them and that they are in a good serviceable condition and Health and Safety compliant (building safety), all within an affordable financial model.
- 11.5.3 To ensure that these requirements can be met, and the community effectively supported through Community Building provision new Community Building and Community Asset Transfer Policies need to be implemented.

(NOTE: The result of the vote on the resolution was FOR - 7 Members; AGAINST - 5 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 0 Members)

(NOTE: During the discussion of the above item the Committee agreed, in accordance with Council Procedure rules, that as the meeting was approaching the two hours and 30 minutes time limit, the meeting should be extended by a period of 30 minutes).

12. 2023/24 QUARTER 3 BUDGET MONITORING

- 12.1 The Director of Finance & Commercial Services submitted a report bringing the Committee up to date with the Council's revenue outturn position for 2023/24.
- 12.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee notes the updated information and management actions provided by this report on the 2023/24 Revenue Budget Outturn position.

12.3 **Reasons for Decision**

- 12.3.1 To record formally changes to the Revenue Budget and the Capital Programme.

12.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 12.4.1 The Council is required to both set a balance budget and to ensure that in-year income and expenditure are balanced. No other alternatives were considered.

13. **A FRAMEWORK FOR GROWTH: PRINCIPLES AND THEMES**

- 13.1 The Executive Director City Futures submitted a report Tsetting out the Council’s ambition to develop a Sheffield Growth Plan for 2024-2035 and the principles and themes for growth which we are calling the “Growth Framework”. The report seeks approval of these principles and themes, to enable Sheffield City Council officers to move onto Phase 2 of the work and develop a full Sheffield Growth Plan 2024-35 using them as its basis.

This report also seeks approval for the process of developing the Sheffield Growth Plan 2024-35, which will be developed for Strategy and Resources Policy Committee’s future consideration by late Summer 2024.

- 13.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

(a) endorses the principles and themes for growth (‘the Growth Framework’) set out within this report so that Council officers can use them as the basis for the development of a draft Sheffield Growth Plan 2024- 2035 to be produced over Spring/Summer 2024;

(b) approves the process, set out within this report, for developing the Growth Plan which will build on the principles and themes of the Growth Framework; and

(c) agrees to receive and consider the draft Growth Plan in late Summer 2024.

13.3 **Reasons for Decision**

- 13.3.1 Sheffield has ambitious plans for the future of its economy across a range of different policy areas. Bringing this together into a coherent narrative to communicate the city’s priorities benefits the city’s partners, investors and Sheffield citizens. It helps to identify areas of joint working and investment opportunities and sets out the Council’s commitment to the city’s prosperity.

- 13.3.2 The Growth Framework, as the first vital step towards a Growth Plan, establishes the draft principles and themes for the plan, beginning a conversation with stakeholders about the kind of economy they want to see in the city.

- 13.3.3 The Growth Plan will build on this initial engagement, connecting the city’s economic and regeneration activity to the wider social and environmental objectives of the Council Plan and the City Goals.

13.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

13.4.1 Do nothing. This was rejected due to the needs of the city, and the need identified in the LGA Peer Review, for a strong and visible statement of ambition that brings together the city's regeneration plans for partners, investors, elected members and citizens.

13.4.2 Continue with a suite of strategies and action plan with no narrative. This was rejected due to the opportunity to create a coherent narrative across various areas of economic and regeneration activity. In doing so, the narrative can connect the city's growth ambitions, partnerships, investment and community engagement to better support and improve the quality of life of the people of Sheffield.

(NOTE: During the discussion on the above item Councillors Zahira Naz and Joe Otten left the meeting).

14. **FLAG PROTOCOL**

14.1 The Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement presented a report noting that Full Council passed a resolution at its meeting on 1 November which called for a review of the council's flag flying protocol. The report provided details of the outcome of that review and proposes a revised flag protocol which the committee is recommended to adopt.

14.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

(a) adopts the Protocol for flying of flags at Sheffield City Council sites and other commemorative activity as set out in the appendix to the report;

(b) delegates authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee, to make decisions on ad hoc requests to fly particular flags, in line with the provisions of the protocol.

14.3 **Reasons for Decision**

14.3.1 By adopting the new flag protocol, the Strategy and Resources Committee will ensure that the Council has a modern and fit-for-purpose approach to the flying of flags on Council buildings, and a mechanism for making decisions on ad hoc requests to fly a particular flag.

14.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

14.4.1 The only alternative option considered was to retain the existing flag protocol. For the reasons set out at paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4 of the report, the current protocol is not considered to be fit for purpose, and therefore this option was rejected.

15. **LGA PEER CHALLENGE PROGRESS REVIEW**

- 15.1 The Chief Executive submitted a report noting that the LGA Peer Team that undertook a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) of Sheffield City Council in November 2022 returned to review our progress in December 2023.

The report provides a summary of the LGA's feedback and recommendations from the Progress Review.

The LGA Team have recognised that there has been strong and positive progress at the council in the last year, with significant progress made against the recommendations made in the original CPC. This has included collaborating with partners to develop Sheffield's City Goals, producing a focused Council Plan for the organisation, continuing to provide robust and stable financial management and developing mature political culture.

- 15.2 **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:** That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

(a) welcomes the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review report (Appendix 1) which recognises the significant progress that the council has achieved in the last year;

(b) thanks the members of the LGA Peer team for their time and insight in supporting the council's continuous improvement;

(c) recognises the collective effort from Members and officers to deliver vital strategic foundations in the last year – including the development of a Council Plan, proposals for a balanced budget, and collaborating with partners to set out our shared City Goals;

(d) agrees that the council should continue on its improvement journey by embedding the Council Plan across the whole organisation, using the feedback and insight in the LGA's Progress Review report to focus our transformation activity; and

(e) commits to asking the LGA to undertake another Corporate Peer Challenge within the usual timescale (circa 2028).

15.3 **Reasons for Decision**

- 15.3.1 The recommendations recognise the significant progress made by the council in the last 12 months and encourage the whole organisation to continue that journey and deliver the Council Plan.

15.4 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

- 15.4.1 As a condition of undertaking the Corporate Peer Challenge and the Progress Review, the council agreed that the Progress Review report should be considered in a public meeting.

- 15.4.2 The only alternative option would be to reject some or all of the feedback and recommendations in the Progress Review. However, given the positive nature of the feedback and the recognised progress made by the council against the original CPC recommendations, this option is not advised.



Report to Policy Committee

Author/Lead Officer of Report:

Craig Rogerson,
Principal Democratic Services Officer Team Manager

Tel: 474 3355

Report of: *Chief Operating Officer*

Report to: *Strategy and Resources Policy Committee*

Date of Decision: *17 April 2024*

Subject: *Staff Retirements*

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken? Yes No

If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? *(Insert reference number)*

Has appropriate consultation taken place? Yes No

Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-

“The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”

Purpose of Report:

To report the retirement of the following staff from the Council’s Service and to convey the Council’s thanks for their work.

Recommendations:

To recommend that Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:-

- (a) place on record its appreciation of the valuable services rendered to the City Council by the members of staff in the Portfolios stated;
- (b) extend to them its best wishes for the future and a long and happy retirement; and
- (c) direct that an appropriate extract of the resolution now made, under the Common Seal of the Council, be forwarded to those staff with over 20 years' service.

Background Papers:

(Insert details of any background papers used in the compilation of the report.)

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: <i>N/A</i>
		Legal: <i>N/A</i>
		Equalities & Consultation: <i>N/A</i>
		Climate: <i>N/A</i>
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	EMT member who approved submission:	<i>James Henderson</i>
3	Committee Chair consulted:	<i>Tom Hunt</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: <i>Jane English</i>	Job Title: <i>Director of People and Culture</i>
	Date: <i>17 April 2024</i>	

1. PROPOSAL

To report the retirement of the following staff from the Council's Service and to convey the Council's thanks for their work:-

<u>Name</u>	<u>Post</u>	<u>Years' Service</u>
<u>Adults Wellbeing and Care Services</u>		
Louise Chambers	Social Work Consultant	38
<u>Children's Services</u>		
Richard Green	Assistant Homes Manager	40
<u>City Futures</u>		
Rebecca Maddox	Head of Business Development and Strategy Project	22
<u>Neighbourhood Services</u>		
Russell Cooper	Material Resource Controller	42
Mark Freeth	Head of Repairs and Maintenance	39
John Gilpin	Woodlands Project Officer	33
John Gunnee	Community Technician - Electrician	36
John Maher	Principal Officer Commercial	33
Alan Orridge	Surveyor	40
Mark Parry	Environmental Enforcement Team Manager	43
Janet Sharpe	Director of Housing Services	43
<u>Strategic Support Services</u>		
Chris Ashforth	Assistant Finance Manager	39
Pauline Bennett	Revenues and Benefits Officer	39
Carole Gent	HR Consultant	38

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Report to Strategy & Resources Committee

17 April 2024

Report of: Director of Policy and Democratic Engagement

Subject: Committee Work Programme

Author of Report: Craig Rogerson, Principal Democratic Services Team Manager

Summary:

The Committee's Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1 for the Committee's consideration and discussion. This aims to show all known, substantive agenda items for forthcoming meetings of the Committee, to enable this committee, other committees, officers, partners and the public to plan their work with and for the Committee. The report also sets out the priority issues for the Committee, as agreed at the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting on 28 June 2023.

Any changes since the Committee's last meeting, including any new items, have been added for approval, and the document is always considered at the regular pre-meetings to which all Group Spokespersons are invited.

The following potential sources of new items are included in this covering report, where applicable:

- Questions from the public (where notified sufficiently in advance)
- Petitions to this committee, including those referred from Council
- References from Council or other committees (statements formally sent for this committee's attention)
- A list of issues, each with a short summary, which have been identified by the Committee or officers as potential items but which have not yet been scheduled (the source of the items is specified)

The Work Programme will remain a live document and will be brought to each Committee meeting.

Recommendations:

1. That the priority issues for the Committee, as agreed at the meeting on 28 June 2023, and presented at Appendix 1 be noted;
2. That the Committee's work programme, as set out in Appendix 1 be agreed, including any additions and amendments identified in Part 1;
3. That approval be given to the consideration of cross cutting issues as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report; and
4. that the referral from Council (petition and resolutions) detailed in Section 2 of the report be noted and the proposed response, in particular in relation to the Five Years Since Declaring a Climate Emergency motion, set out be agreed.

Background Papers: None

Category of Report: Open

COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

1.0 Prioritisation

1.1 For practical reasons this committee has a limited amount of time each year in which to conduct its formal business. The Committee will need to prioritise firmly in order that formal meetings are used primarily for business requiring formal decisions, or which for other reasons it is felt must be conducted in a formal setting.

1.2 In order to ensure that prioritisation is effectively done, on the basis of evidence and informed advice, Members should usually avoid adding items to the work programme which do not already appear:

- In the draft work programme in Appendix 1 due to the discretion of the chair; or
- within the body of this report accompanied by a suitable amount of information.

2.0 References from Council or other Committees

2.1 Any references sent to this Committee by Council, including any public questions, petitions and motions, or other committees since the last meeting are listed here, with commentary and a proposed course of action, as appropriate:

Issue	Five Years Since Declaring A Climate Emergency
Referred from	Council Motion 7/2/24
Details	Extract from minute: (p) request the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee to consider adding to its work programme, development of an advertising policy which does not support high carbon industries and products harmful to people and nature, such as promoted by Adfree Cities;

	<p>(s) ask the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee to consider adding to its work programme, doing further work on Climate Impact Assessment processes and methodologies so that policy options can be compared on an estimated cost per tonne of CO2 saved basis; and</p> <p>(v) ask the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee to consider adding to its work programme as a matter of urgency, investigation of the practicalities of issuing Green Bonds to raise extra funding to support climate action.</p>
<p>Commentary/ Action Proposed</p>	<p>With regards to (p) a response was agreed at the March Strategy and Resources Policy Committee as follows:</p> <p>The Finance Committee is due to consider an Advertising and Sponsorship Policy at its next meeting on 18 March 2024. It is proposed that the Council adopts a modern authority wide policy to govern advertising and sponsorship opportunities/outputs across the City Council's assets and land. The policy will support the values and priorities of the Council, with restrictions included to support our commitments and priorities on health and the environment, while allowing for increases in income generation within the set criteria.</p> <p>It is proposed that the policy in its current draft format is restrictive of fossil fuel organisations/products, non-electric cars, and flights/flight organisations. In addition, the policy will cover products harmful to people, by restricting advertising/sponsorship of high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS) foods & drinks, alcohol, gambling and vaping products. Details of the proposed policy are available here: Agenda for Finance Committee on Monday 18 March 2024, 2.00 pm Sheffield City Council</p> <p>With regards to (s) the following response is proposed:</p> <p>Our Climate Impact Assessment tool was developed to provide Officers with a flexible and adaptable approach that can be applied to a wide range of decisions. This is necessary as current policy requires all Committee Report with decisions that could affect 2 or more wards or have a value of over £500k must undertake a Climate impact assessment. A more detailed approach was discounted during the tools development as it was not considered as effective or applicable to the variety of reports that are taken to each of our Committees, and that a more complex tool would require additional training for report authors, as well as significant additional resource implications.</p> <p>Calculating or estimating the cost per tonne of CO2 for different report options, especially in relation to policies, strategies and supply chain emissions is a very complex task, particularly if applied across all Committee decisions. Providing the inclusion of emissions data in all Climate Impact Assessments would require both the collation of extensive data from many sources, and the expertise to translate that data into emission value. The Council is not in a position to provide this, and this approach would require significant upskilling across the</p>

	<p>organisation, as well as the need to resource and recruit to specialist posts.</p> <p>We suggest that further work is undertaken to establish that in reports where an initial Climate Impact Assessment is flagging that there is a potential significant climate impact, that a more comprehensive assessment should be considered. Depending on the nature of the report, recommendation or proposal this could include a carbon / emissions assessment of the proposal, particularly where this is a infrastructure / physical development such as a building or new homes.</p> <p>In this instance, Capital Delivery Service are developing a new tool which will provide quantified operational carbon emissions for a proposed capital project. This would be completed prior to submission of the relevant Outline Business Cases, with the intention of placing CO2 emissions at the centre of decision making on capital expenditure and providing measurable metrics for quantitative evaluation purposes.</p> <p>With regards to (v) the following response is proposed:</p> <p>The Council is currently working with partners including the UK Cities Commission for Climate Investment to explore alternative funding and investment models that would support climate programmes such as large-scale domestic retrofit and net-zero neighbourhoods. Officers from Finance and the Sustainability and Climate Change team will explore the practicalities of issuing green bonds and will report back to the Strategy and Resources Committee with their initial findings by September.</p> <p>(Proposed response details provided by Mark Whitworth, Sustainability and Climate Change Service Manager).</p>
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3.0 Member engagement, learning and policy development outside of Committee

3.1 Subject to the capacity and availability of councillors and officers, there are a range of ways in which Members can explore subjects, monitor information and develop their ideas about forthcoming decisions outside of formal meetings. Appendix 2 is an example 'menu' of some of the ways this could be done. It is entirely appropriate that member development, exploration and policy development should in many cases take place in a private setting, to allow members to learn and formulate a position in a neutral space before bringing the issue into the public domain at a formal meeting.

Appendix 1 – Work Programme

Priority Issues for 2023/34:

Continuous development of our system of democratic committee governance	Working alongside the Governance Committee, continue to develop our model and how we modernise and embed the committee system. Embed approaches and policies and need to support Member development
Establish a new strategic framework for the city and organisation	Endorsement of the City Goals as they are developed during the summer, which will provide a shared, co-developed statement of our collective ambitions for Sheffield
	Development of a new 5-year Corporate Plan for the organisation which connects to the developing City Goals, sets out what we want to achieve and our priorities and gives clear direction for the whole council, citizens and partners
Cost of living crisis	Continuing and strengthening Sheffield’s citywide response to the cost of living crisis, working with communities and partners to support the people of Sheffield, communities businesses.
Street Trees recommendations and reconciliation	Agreeing the actions we will take forward to deliver the wider recommendations in the Lowcock Report to ensure good progress has been made by the end of the year, with a clear approach to monitoring achievement of these.
Continuing to develop our community involvement and neighbourhood and locality working arrangements	Working with the Governance Committee to <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. consider further devolution of powers and funding to the LACs this year; 2. making neighbourhood working more integral to the culture of the wider organisation (including through the Future Sheffield programme); 3. taking further steps to ensure community voice and community development practices are developed and embedded in the ways of working for the LACs and policy committees
Future Sheffield - our 3-year organisational change plan	Overseeing the organisational change programme which will be focused on becoming the organisation that we need to be to continue to deliver for the people of Sheffield alongside rapid service improvement activity where needed.
Customer Services Strategy	In line with our Future Sheffield transformation programme, developing a new Customer Services strategy that will be focused on the experience that the people of Sheffield have when accessing our services.
Budget delivery and medium-term financial stability	To agree a medium term financial plan (MTFP), and, working with the Finance Committee, oversee delivery of agreed savings and development of budget proposals for 2024/25 – 2026/27 in line with the emerging Corporate Plan priorities
SYMCA relationship	We will work collaboratively with the MCA as part of our regular approach to delivering for Sheffield. This will include taking forward our Inclusive Economic Plan as our place-based plan which will feed into the MCA’s broader economic strategy.

Part 1: Proposed additions and amendments to the work programme since the last meeting:

New Items	Proposed Date	Note
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Network Services Contract Award – Software Defined Wide Area Network (SD WAN) Service	April 2024	A new contract is necessary as the current contract terminates at the end of May with no avenue for extension.
Amended Items		
None		

Cross-Cutting Issues requiring S&R Steer:

Item	Committee	Proposed Date	Note

Outstanding responses to Full Council Motions:

Item	SLT lead officer	Proposed Date	Note
Risk and Opportunities Framework NOTE: Members Q 5/7/23	Claire Taylor	TBC	Response: To be picked up as part of revised risk management arrangements, as part of a suite of supporting plans that will align with the Council Plan.
Reaffirming Sheffield as a City of Sanctuary (Council Motion 5/7/23)	Lorraine Wood/ Beth Storm	TBC	“Requests that the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee considers adding to its work programme consideration of the Council’s relationship with the Home Office and immigration enforcement, and an assessment of its current practices and the impact of the Hostile Environment policy on inclusion, equality and cohesion in Sheffield”
Opposing Minimum Service Levels	Caroline Nugent	June 2024	Council 6/2/23. Item 3 – paragraph (c)(i) - to ask the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee to consider how the Council will, if it can use provisions in the Act, including the discretion not to issue work notices, continue to protect the rights of its workers to strike and how it should be reflected in our policies, such as the ethical procurement policy. Response: Report being prepared for consideration at S&R in June
Petition: Seeking the creation of a dedicated BAMER (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and	James Henderson / Lorraine Wood	TBC	The issues raised by the petition to be the subject of a report to a future Strategy & Resources Policy Cttee.

Refugee) Community Infrastructure Fund			
Debate on a petition requesting the Council to “Stand with Palestine”	James Henderson	June 2024	RESOLVED: That this Council refers the petition to the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee for consideration of all aspects of the petition. (NOTE: In taking the decision to refer the petition to the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee, the Council was assured by the Chair of the Committee (Councillor Tom Hunt) that the Committee would give proper consideration to each constituent part of the petition to assess what actions the Council would legally be able to take in support of the petition, and that a cross party task and finish working group of members of the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee would be convened to oversee that work. The Chair of the Committee gave an additional assurance to develop a cross-party statement of solidarity to be issued as soon as possible and before the start of the pre-election period on 26th March 2024.)

Part 2: List of other potential items not yet included in the work programme

Issues that have recently been identified by the Committee, its Chair or officers as potential items but have not yet been added to the proposed work programme. If a Councillor raises an idea in a meeting and the committee agrees under recommendation 3 that this should be explored, it will appear either in the work programme or in this section of the report at the committee’s next meeting, at the discretion of the Chair.

Topic	None
Description	
Lead Officer/s	
Item suggested by	<i>Officer, Member, Committee, partners, public question, petition etc</i>
Type of item	<i>Referral to decision-maker/Pre-decision (policy development/Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring)</i>
Prior member engagement/ development required	
Public Participation/ Engagement approach <i>(with reference to toolkit in Appendix 3)</i>	
Lead Officer Commentary/Proposed Action(s)	

Part 3: Agenda Items for Forthcoming Meetings

Meeting (23/24)	17 April 24	Time				
Topic	Description	Lead Officer/s	Type of item	Prior member engagement/ development required	Public Participation/ Engagement approach	Final decision-maker (& date)
Council Performance Framework	The council requires a refresh of its Performance Framework following the publication of the new Council Plan.	James Ford		Knowledge briefing.	None	This Committee
Joint Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code	The Local Government & Social Care (LGSCO) & Housing Ombudsman (HO) Ombudsman are currently consulting with Local Authorities regarding the implementation of a new Joint Complaint Handling Code which will become a statutory code by 1 April 2024. The consultation period will end on 23 November 2023 and we are required to provide 'a single co-ordinated and complete response.'	Corleen Bygraves-Paul/ Jen Everill/ Paul Taylor	Decision	The consultation response must include: Chief Exc.; Monitoring Officer; Member(s) responsible for complaint performance within the Council; Director/Senior officer responsible for complaint handling; Director of Housing (If applicable).	This consultation represents an opportunity for interested persons and organisations to provide feedback about the operation of the Code and to influence development of the regime for monitoring compliance with it. This includes, HOS's statutory consultees, private registered providers, local authority registered providers, voluntary members of the Scheme, tenants and residents, and any other stakeholders who have an interest in social housing in England. The government's launch of 'Making It Right' campaign on 9 October 2023, also encourages tenants to report issues and make complaints to address hazards in their home. The government wants to inform tenants of their rights and ensure they escalate complaints to the Housing Ombudsman if concerns are not addressed swiftly or appropriately.	This Committee

Future Sheffield – Digital Strategy & Customer Engagement Strategy	This report proposes a new Customer Engagement Strategy and Digital Strategy to be delivered under the Future Sheffield Programme, the Council’s four-year transformation programme, which is aimed at improving service effectiveness and delivery across the organisation whilst creating a robust long-term financial plan for the Council.	Mike Weston/Tom Smith (Laura Reynolds)	Decision	Future Sheffield Members Group	TBC	This Committee
Network Services Contract Award – Software Defined Wide Area Network (SD WAN) Service	To seek Members approval to award a contract for the implementation and support of our future Network Solution.	Jon Raynor	Decision	Internal ICT SMT and DLT Meetings	N/A	This Committee
Heart of the City 2	To provide an update on the Heart of the City 2 project.	Philip Gregory	Decision			This Committee

Meeting 1 (24/25)	May 24	Time				
Topic	Description	Lead Officer/s	Type of item	Prior member engagement/ development required	Public Participation/ Engagement approach	Final decision-maker (& date)
Response to Council Motion “Opposing Minimum Service Levels” Date TBC		Caroline Nugent				

S&R Committee Climate Statement		Mark Whitworth				
Response to the petition requesting the Council to “Stand with Palestine”		James Henderson				

Meeting 2 (24/25)	June 24	Time				
Topic	Description	Lead Officer/s	Type of item	Prior member engagement/ development required	Public Participation/ Engagement approach	Final decision-maker (& date)
Sheffield City Goals Update	S&R in January agreed that an update on progress and next steps would be given after 6 months.	James Henderson/ Diana Buckley	Update Report			This Committee

Items which the committee have agreed to add to an agenda, but for which no date is yet set.						
Topic	Description	Lead Officer/s	Type of item	Prior member engagement/ development required	Public Participation/ Engagement approach	Final decision-maker (& date)
Street Tree Inquiry Report Progress	S&R have agreed to receive a report against progress on actions during winter 2023 and summer 2024 .	James Henderson	Progress Reports			This Committee

Domestic and Sexual Abuse Annual Report 23/24 (Oct 24)	Report of the work of the DACT team, others across the council and partners on domestic and sexual abuse	Alison Higgins	Decision	None	Partners and stakeholders will be invited to submit information	Cross cutting issue: Domestic and Sexual abuse, violence against women and girls, affect both adults of all ages, including those with a range of vulnerabilities, and children and young people.
Violence against Women and Girls, Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy (November 24)	It is proposed to produce a strategy covering all of Violence Against Women and Girls, Domestic and Sexual Abuse next year to cover the period 2024 to 2027 (in line with statutory requirements).	Alison Higgins	Decision	Political group briefings and committee briefings – in writing then in person if needed.	There will be consultation with stakeholders and the public, building on consultation already undertaken this year specifically in relation to domestic abuse.	These issues affect staff as well as customers and the general public. The White Ribbon Accreditation requires us to have a strategic whole council response to these issues. Although this work sits under Adult Health and Social Care – decision to be taken by Strategy & Resources?
Civic Honours	To bring forward a further paper for decision.	James Henderson/ Jason Dietsch				This Committee/Governance Cttee?
Community Buildings Policy	S&R 12/3/24 agreed to submit revised Community Buildings Policy within 12 months	Sean Mclean/ Tom Smith/ Peter Bartle	Decision			This Committee
Growth Plan	S&R 12/3/24 agreed to consider the draft Growth Plan in late Summer 2024.	Andy Kempster	Decision			This Committee
Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan and HRA Budget 2025/26	S&R January 2025	Ajman Ali	Rec to Council			Full Council February 2025
Revenue Budget and Capital	S&R February 2025	Phillip Gregory	Rec to Council			Full Council March 2025

Programme 2025-26						
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Note:

- Type of item = Decision; Referral to decision-maker; Pre-decision (policy development); or Post-decision (service performance/ monitoring).
- Final decision-maker = This Committee; Another Cttee; Full Council; or Officer decision

Appendix 2 – Menu of options for member engagement, learning and development prior to formal Committee consideration

Members should give early consideration to the degree of pre-work needed before an item appears on a formal agenda.

All agenda items will anyway be supported by the following:

- Discussion well in advance as part of the work programme item at Pre-agenda meetings. These take place in advance of each formal meeting, before the agenda is published and they consider the full work programme, not just the immediate forthcoming meeting. They include the Chair, Vice Chair and all Group Spokespersons from the committee, with officers
- Discussion and, where required, briefing by officers at pre-committee meetings in advance of each formal meeting, after the agenda is published. These include the Chair, Vice Chair and all Group Spokespersons from the committee, with officers.
- Work Programming items on each formal agenda, as part of an annual and ongoing work programming exercise
- Full officer report on a public agenda, with time for a public discussion in committee
- Officer meetings with Chair & VC as representatives of the committee, to consider addition to the draft work programme, and later to inform the overall development of the issue and report, for the committee's consideration.

The following are examples of some of the optional ways in which the committee may wish to ensure that they are sufficiently engaged and informed prior to taking a public decision on a matter. In all cases the presumption is that these will take place in private, however some meetings could happen in public or eg be reported to the public committee at a later date.

These options are presented in approximately ascending order of the amount of resources needed to deliver them. Members must prioritise carefully, in consultation with officers, which items require what degree of involvement and information in advance of committee meetings, in order that this can be delivered within the officer capacity available.

The majority of items cannot be subject to the more involved options on this list, for reasons of officer capacity.

- Written briefing for the committee or all members (email)
 - All-member newsletter (email)
 - Requests for information from specific outside bodies etc.
 - All-committee briefings (private or, in exceptional cases, in-committee)
 - All-member briefing (virtual meeting)
 - Facilitated policy development workshop (potential to invite external experts / public, see appendix 2)
 - Site visits (including to services of the council)
 - Task and Finish group (one at a time, one per cttee)
- Furthermore, a range of public participation and engagement options are available to inform Councillors, see appendix 3.

Appendix 3 – Public engagement and participation toolkit

Public Engagement Toolkit

On 23 March 2022 Full Council agreed the following:

A toolkit to be developed for each committee to use when considering its ‘menu of options’ for ensuring the voice of the public has been central to their policy development work. Building on the developing advice from communities and Involve, committees should make sure they have a clear purpose for engagement; actively support diverse communities to engage; match methods to the audience and use a range of methods; build on what’s worked and existing intelligence (SCC and elsewhere); and be very clear to participants on the impact that engagement will have.

The list below builds on the experiences of Scrutiny Committees and latterly the Transitional Committees and will continue to develop. The toolkit includes (but is not be limited to):

- a. Public calls for evidence
- b. Issue-focused workshops with attendees from multiple backgrounds (sometimes known as ‘hackathons’) led by committees
- c. Creative use of online engagement channels
- d. Working with VCF networks (eg including the Sheffield Equality Partnership) to seek views of communities
- e. Co-design events on specific challenges or to support policy development
- f. Citizens assembly style activities
- g. Stakeholder reference groups (standing or one-off)
- h. Committee / small group visits to services
- i. Formal and informal discussion groups
- j. Facilitated communities of interest around each committee (eg a mailing list of self-identified stakeholders and interested parties with regular information about forthcoming decisions and requests for contributions or volunteers for temporary co-option)
- k. Facility for medium-term or issue-by-issue co-option from outside the Council onto Committees or Task and Finish Groups. Co-optees of this sort at Policy Committees would be non-voting.

This public engagement toolkit is intended to be a quick ‘how-to’ guide for Members and officers to use when undertaking participatory activity through committees.

It will provide an overview of the options available, including the above list, and cover:

- How to focus on purpose and who we are trying to reach
- When to use and when not to use different methods
- How to plan well and be clear to citizens what impact their voice will have
- How to manage costs, timescales, scale.

There is an expectation that Members and Officers will be giving strong consideration to the public participation and engagement options for each item on a committee’s work programme, with reference to the above list a-k.



Report to Policy Committee

Author/Lead Officer of Report: *James Ford, Head of Performance & Business Intelligence*

Tel: *0114 2735611*

Report of: *Claire Taylor, Chief Operating Officer*

Report to: *Strategy and Resources Policy Committee*

Date of Decision: *17th April 2023*

Subject: *Sheffield City Council Outcomes & Performance Framework 2024-28*

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? N/A				
Has appropriate consultation taken place?	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-				
N/A				

Purpose of Report:

This report seeks approval for the refreshed **Council Performance & Outcomes Framework 2024-28** as a companion to the new Council Plan, replacing the process and measures put in place to support the 2022/2023 Corporate Delivery Plan.

The Council Plan approval decision requested that officers prepare a new Outcomes Framework to support monitoring of performance against the Council Plan in early 2024.

To allow continued transparency and assurance for Strategy and Resources Policy Committee on performance against the organisation's priorities through a refreshed set of Outcome Measures that reflect the intent of each priority in the Council Plan.

To ensure that Strategy and Resources Policy Committee can continue to contribute to the Performance System and drive improvement in the organisation. The new Performance Framework provides a system that promotes a culture of

performance and delivery, a model for assurance and a golden thread that shows how all levels of the organisation can measurably contribute to the success of the Council Plan.

It is recommended that the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee:

1. Agree the Performance & Outcomes Framework as companion to the new Council Plan, as set out in Appendix 1.
2. Agree the Outcomes Framework as the way to understand measurable progress against each priority in the Council Plan, as set out in Appendix 2.
3. Agree to continue to receive quarterly and annual reports* that provide an overview of performance against the Outcome measures, describing performance challenges, interventions taken, and the results of changes made. Annually review measures in the context of progress.

*It is recognised that given the increased frequency, breadth and ambition of performance reporting. Future governance reviews may identify a more suitable Committee or sub-committee to consider the quarterly performance reports.

Background Papers:

Appendix 1 – Council Performance Framework 2024-28

Appendix 2 - Council Plan Outcomes Framework 2024-28

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: Jane Wilby, Head of Accounting
		Legal: Nadine Wynter, Service Manager
		Equalities & Consultation: Ed Sexton, Senior Equalities & Engagement Officer
		Climate: Laura Ellendale, Sustainability Programme Officer
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	SLB member who approved submission:	Claire Taylor, <i>Chief Operating Officer</i>
3	Committee Chair consulted:	Tom Hunt, <i>Chair of Strategy and Resources Committee</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: James Ford	Job Title: Head of Performance and Intelligence
	Date: 02-04-2024	

Together we get things done.

Sheffield City Council Performance & Outcomes Framework 2024-28

PROPOSAL

1. Approval of a revised Performance & Outcomes Framework that directly aligns with the outcomes and priorities in our new Council Plan¹.
2. The Performance & Outcomes Framework is a companion to the Council Plan, a further demonstration of the continued improvement journey the Council is on, responding directly to the recommendations of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge in 2022².
3. This builds on the work started in our 2022/2023 Corporate Delivery Plan³ which focused on the organisation's urgent performance challenges, updating the approach to be commensurate with the breadth and ambition of the new plan.
4. The Performance & Outcomes Framework is based on the overarching principle of the Golden Thread that builds the link between strategic intent and measurable impact at all levels, providing a way for services, teams, and employees to see how they contribute to 'shifting the dial' on the measures that evidence the plan is having an impact.

A CULTURE OF PERFORMANCE AND DELIVERY – COUNCIL PERFORMANCE & OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

5. The Golden Thread is enabled by three key components of the Performance & Outcomes Framework.
 - a. Outcomes Framework: Provides the high-level measures that relate directly to specific purpose and intent of each priority in the Council Plan.
 - b. Performance System, Governance and Culture: The oversight, assurance, and management mechanisms that allow continued control and grip of performance at outcome, directorate, and service level.
 - c. Performance Reporting: In support of our ambition for performance management, openness, and transparency a suite of reports will show progress against the Outcome measures.

¹ [Sheffield City Council Plan 2024-28 | Council Plan](#)

² Sheffield City Council (2022) Sheffield City Council LGA Peer Challenge Report, <https://democracy.sheffield.gov.uk/documents/s58181/9%20-%20Appendix%20%20Sheffield%20City%20Council%20-%20CPC%20FINAL%20Feedback%20Report.pdf>

³ Sheffield City Council (2022) Corporate Delivery Plan, <https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-11/scccouncil-delivery-plan-22-23.pdf>

OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

6. Our Outcomes Framework is the way we show measurable progress against the Council Plan. It consists of a broad range of measures that link directly to the spirit and strategic intent of each priority in the plan.
7. This enables us to evidence impact of delivery and distance travelled alongside ongoing monitoring of progress against each Council Plan outcome and priority.
8. Where possible we have selected measures that allow comparison with other authorities and are nationally benchmarked, allowing citizens to assess our performance against our peers.
9. Provides a response to the Office for Local Government's more rigorous and comparative monitoring of local authority performance through its Data Explorer platform.⁴
10. The Outcomes Framework also includes a set of 'corporate health' measures which are critical to a well-functioning Council and the delivery of high-quality services, including Finance, Complaints and Workforce measures.
11. The Corporate Health measures are presented in a consistent format and reported together with Outcomes measures to ensure we have the right foundation on which to deliver the Council Plan.

PERFORMANCE SYSTEM

12. The Outcome Measures form the basis of the wider range of metrics that contribute to the outcomes at Directorate and Service level.
13. Directorates will develop expanded measure sets that contribute to meeting the Outcome Measure.
14. The principle of a connected set of measures provides a clear golden thread through our performance system, allowing our services, teams, and individual members of staff to see their contribution to achieving the Council Plan outcomes.
15. Both outcome and supporting measures will be referenced in Directorate, Service and individual development plans to ensure golden thread alignment, and performance targets calibrated against the progress required in the Council Plan.
16. Directors and Heads of Service are responsible for hosting regular clinics that will ensure the progress against outcome and supporting measures.
17. Measures at Directorate level will form the basis of regular reporting to each policy committee.
18. Performance and Delivery Board has ownership of performance monitoring, management and assurance of the Outcomes Framework measures.
 - a. Provides quarterly reports to Strategy Leadership Board and Strategy and Resources Policy Committee.
 - b. Meets monthly to review measures not performing to target via deep dives, calling in measure owners.

⁴ [Home - Local Authority Data Explorer - GOV.UK](#)

- c. Instigates and manages task & finish groups to drive performance improvement.
19. Performance and Delivery Board manages the performance system, ensuring compliance and leading the performance culture of the organisation.
- a. Ensure that the key performance system elements are in place, e.g. measures, plan alignment, metric quality and clinics.
 - b. Beyond the mechanics, ensures the behaviours that foster a strong performance culture are in place at all levels.

PERFORMANCE REPORTING

20. To fully enable the use of the Performance & Outcomes Framework, a suite of reports will support outcome level performance management.
21. A range of dashboards will bring together the outcome metrics, comparator, targets and narrative updates.
22. These dashboards will be available as a performance management resource internally to support the overall system of governance, and as a public resource to support transparency and accountability.
23. Initially this will be through traditional published report documents. During 2024/25 a set of self-service, interactive reports will be available to officers and members, updated in line with the reporting cycle.
24. We have reviewed best practice from the Local Government Association in providing interactive dashboards to the public, this will be achieved fully during the timeframe of the Council Plan

RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF DECISIONS

25. The recommendations in the report do not of themselves have, financial and commercial legal or climate implications. The information contained in the performance report outputs will enable further decisions to be taken which may have implications for the authority, at which point the implications will be fully considered.
26. The Outcomes & Performance Framework is consistent with the Council's duties under the Equality Act 2010 and its own organisational policies to tackle inequalities. This applies throughout the tiers of the Framework.
27. At Council Plan level, (considered in a separate Equality Impact Assessment and Climate Impact Assessment), there is clear alignment with equality in the Plan's drivers – for example, a significant overlap between health, wealth and environmental impact inequality. Similarly, the strategic outcomes include different expressions of inequality, including as it may relate to age, neighbourhoods and access to green spaces, community support and diversity or transport links, etc.
28. Development of the Framework and measures has been subject engagement and collaboration with services, responsible officers and using other evidence sources (e.g. performance issues, regulator guidance and LGA best practice).
29. Several of the outcome and performance measures at directorate/service level either directly or indirectly relate to inequality. For example, school exclusions, children looked after, educational attainment, homelessness, tenancy standards, anti-social behaviour, social care, benefit/wage/income levels. In many cases, measures relate to service delivery or

projects/plans/proposals that are subject to individual Equality impact Assessments.

30. Several of the outcome and performance measures at directorate/service level either directly or indirectly relate to climate. For example, greenhouse gas emissions, housing Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) ratings, air quality, rate of plug-in vehicles, ULEVs and EV chargers and active travel mode share. In some, measures relate to service delivery or projects/plans/proposals that will be subject to individual Climate Impact Assessments.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

31. do nothing – rejected – as set out in the Strategic Framework 2023/24, we are committed to developing and agreeing a medium-term plan for the council that sets out what we want to achieve for the city in the coming years and how we will contribute to the City Goals. The Council Plan is part of our Policy Framework and a critical step in our continued development as an organisation, connecting the ambitions and priorities of the administration to our Medium-Term Financial Strategy, workforce plans, Council Performance Framework, and Directorate Plans. It also ensures that we deliver on one of the key recommendations of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge, further demonstrating our strategic development and maturity as an organisation.
32. extend the Corporate Delivery Plan performance arrangements – rejected – the Corporate Delivery Plan has provided vital stability and focus for the organisation over the last year, building on the One Year Plan, and bringing clear focus onto a number of key challenges that citizens wanted to see improve. However, the Corporate Delivery Plan was deliberately short term and as recommended by the LGA Peer Team, it is important to bring medium-term focus for the Council so that citizens, staff and partners understand our priorities and ambitions.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

33. The Performance & Outcomes Framework will underpin how we measure progress and monitor impact of the Council Plan. It is aligned to our four-year Medium Term Financial Strategy and the outcomes will increasingly become the focus for our budget, Directorate and Service Plans over the coming year.
34. The Council has a systematic process and a robust corporate performance management framework to track progress.
35. Directly responds to the LGA peer review recommendations around performance management and alignment with council strategic priorities.
36. To ensure that Strategy and Resources Policy Committee contributes to the performance management process and drives improvement across the organisation.
37. Provides mandate for officers to proceed with implementing the full framework, including baseline and target setting for the selected outcomes measures and development of reporting infrastructure.



Introduction

During 2023/24 a fundamental revision and refresh of the council’s performance management framework has taken place. With the agreement of our new Council Plan, strategic outcomes, and priorities we can finalise the framework and fully align with the Council Plan.

Why do we need a refreshed Performance Framework?

Acting as a companion to the new Council Plan, the Performance Framework provides the structure and approach for how Sheffield City Council will provide effective performance management against delivery of the Council Plan outcomes, major programmes of work, and areas identified for improvement.

The Performance Framework sets out how performance measures, management and budget monitoring are aligned to present a comprehensive picture of the Council’s overall performance in terms of council plan outcomes, service delivery and fiscal management.

Through the high-level measures directly linked to the plan in our **Outcomes Framework** we can build an evidence base and narrative that shows the progress we are making against the outcomes in the plan.

The outcome measures are the starting point for Directorates and Services to build the next level of metrics, contributing measures across a range of outcomes where appropriate. This allows our services, teams, and individual members of staff to see their contribution to achieving our priorities and so strengthening the **golden thread** approach.



Excerpt from LGA Officer guide to performance

The framework will bring focus, rigour and ownership of performance and continuous improvement across all levels of the organisation. In addition to ensuring we deliver the best possible services, this framework prepares us for the headwinds facing local government from financial pressures to increased regulation and external scrutiny. A strong performance system and culture will enable us to understand our strengths and those areas requiring improvement, supporting us to successfully navigate internal and external challenges and take advantage of opportunities that arise.

What are the key elements of our Performance Framework?

The performance framework is based on the overarching principle of the **Golden Thread**, how the key framework products, governance and behaviours in the Performance Framework combine and connect with council plan outcomes.

This builds the link between strategic intent and measurable impact. Providing a way for each service, team and employee to see how they contribute to 'shifting the dial' on the measures that evidence the plan is having an impact.

The **Golden Thread is enabled by three key elements:**

1. Outcomes Framework: The key companion piece to the Council Plan, provides the key measures that relate directly to the specific purpose and intent of each priority in the council plan.
2. Performance System, Governance and Culture: The oversight, assurance, and management mechanisms that allow continued control and grip of performance at outcome, directorate, and service level.
3. Performance Reporting: To support our ambition for performance management, there is a need for a strong and consistent reporting infrastructure which delivers a single source of the truth.

1. Outcomes Framework

Our Outcomes Framework is the way we show measurable progress against the Council Plan. It consists of a broad range of measures and targets that link directly to the spirit and strategic intent of each outcome in the plan.



To provide a direct link to the Council Plan, we have chosen several measures for each of the four priorities in each outcome. These measures will function as the way to view and determine progress against the priorities in the Council Plan and will sustain for the 4+ years of the plan helping to show distanced travelled against our priorities.

The Outcomes Framework also includes a set of Corporate Health measures that are critical to a well-functioning council and to delivering high quality services; indicators include Finance, Customer experience, Access to information and Workforce.

Lastly, the Outcomes Framework provides a way to show progress against cornerstone projects that will transform our city with more new homes; a dynamic environment for businesses as part of our world class knowledge economy; and green, reliable transport networks to connect people throughout our city.

The full Outcomes Framework is detailed in **Appendix 1** to this document. This includes the complete list of 70+ measures at Outcome and Priority level along with the rationale for selection and indicative reporting format.

2. Performance System, Governance and Culture:

To enable regular review, control and grip of performance, the framework lays out how we build on existing arrangements to achieve a consistent structure that supports the golden thread across the organisation.

2.1. Performance System

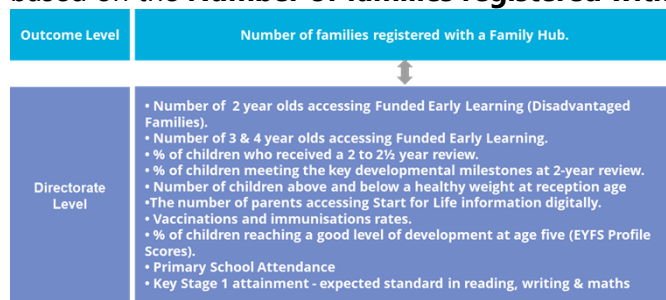
2.1.1. Directorate & Service Measures

At the core of the performance system are the measures used by Directorate Leadership Teams to manage performance and their contribution to the Council Plan outcomes. Directorates will have some choice in which measures are used but some key principles will be followed to ensure consistency with the golden thread approach.

The starting point will be Outcome Measures where the Directorate is Lead for the whole Outcome or where they are listed as Lead Service / Supporting Service. Additional measures will be chosen that contribute to meeting the Outcome Measure.

Directorates will always consider any measures relating to their statutory duties and external regulators. Measures must include any Office for Local Government (Oflog) measures the Directorate is responsible for.

In this reduced example, looking at how the Childrens Services Directorate choose measures based on the **Number of families registered with a Family Hub** at Outcome level.



The measures are a mix of those that support at outcome level such as *'number of parents accessing Start for Life information digitally'* and measures that need to be performing well to ensure success such as *'% of children who received a 2 to 2½ year review'*.

This draws out the thread between what is measured and the positive impacts we will see from succeeding at the outcome level, in this case early years education participation, child health and school readiness.

As well as the approach to selecting performance measures described above, there is a need to consider the element of quality; what measures show and how they are used. We have some principles to guide the selection and use of high-quality measures across the Performance Framework detailed in:

Appendix 2: Selecting High Quality Measure Criteria

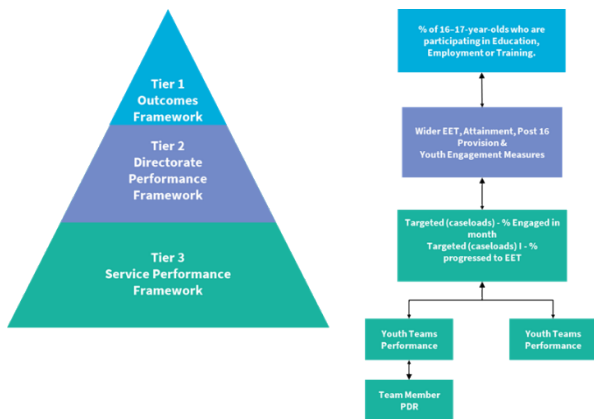


Meeting all the quality criteria is very much an aspiration and will guide us as the performance system matures during the life of the Council Plan.

2.1.2. Directorate & Service clinics

The Directorate measure sets will be used within performance clinics where the measures, targets and comparators will help manage performance at Directorate level.

Directorates will also need to establish the next tier of the performance system, developing Service level clinics and measures sets where appropriate. This allows space for a more granular level of performance data, crossing

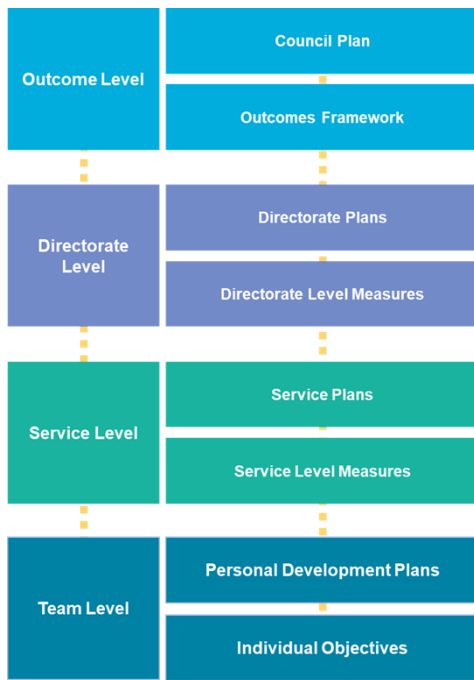


into operational performance that underpins the measures at Outcome level. This tiered structure allows our performance system to bring the **golden thread** to life, allowing our services, teams, and individual employees to see their contribution to achieving the Outcomes.

Below Tier 3 is where framework ceases mandating the approach, recognising local requirements for team and individual performance day to day.

Directors and Heads of Service will be responsible for hosting regular performance clinics using the measures sets they have developed. This provides a mechanism for performance monitoring to ensure assurance, control, and grip alongside performance management which is improvement focused, proactive and forward looking. Together, performance monitoring and management will enable everyone to work towards effective delivery of the priorities in the Council Plan, our statutory duties, and operational responsibilities.

Performance clinics will operate on a regular frequency, generally monthly at Directorate and Service level. The framework enables the **golden thread** of how strategic priorities are reflected in the objectives of the senior leaders and managers, cascading into service, team, and personal development plans.



At all levels this will help us use the framework to focus the right operational action or change activity based on positive improvement of measures and our performance as a council.

Annual Service plans will be informed by delivering on the Outcomes and Priorities in the Council Plan. In terms of performance, measures will be selected from those already defined across the system. Services will set performance targets calibrated against progress required in the plan.

Personal development plans will make the connection to the **golden thread** by setting targets that directly tie-in individual contributions to the Council Plan.

It is expected that Directorate measures will form the basis of reporting to each policy committee. Below is an excerpt from the Adults & Wellbeing directorate measures.

Performance Indicator	Milestone	Direction of Travel	Current Position	Latest Period Available	21/22 Position Baseline	Core Cities Mean	Yorkshire & Humber	Peer Group	England Average
Number of DoLs applications not completed at end of reporting year	To Monitor	Decreased	850	22/23	Mar 22: 1365		717	791	829
ASCOF 1A: Social care-related quality of life score (based on several questions)	20	Increased	18.5	22/23	17.5	18.8	19.2	18.7	19
ASCOF 1I: Adjusted 1A - Social care-related quality of life score - impact of social care serv	0.4	Increased	0.40	22/23	0.32	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
People who use services who feel safe. (ASCOF 4A)	85%	Increased	66.6%	22/23	56.9%	68.1%	71.9%	68.3%	70.0%
People who use services who say that those services have made them feel safe and secur	85%	Increased	85.9%	22/23	79.4%	88.3%	88.7%	87.9%	86.7%
ASCOF 3A: Overall satisfaction of people who use services with their care and support	85%	Same	58.3%	22/23	58.7%	61.3%	65.8%	61.5%	64.3%
% regulated adult social care providers assessed by CQC as good or outstanding under the	100%	Increased	85%	Feb-24	83%	77%	77%	77%	80%
% of Regulated Care – Care Homes - rated good or outstanding (SCC Data)	100%	Decreased	84%	Feb-24	87%	77%	78%	78%	80%
% of Regulated Care – Community based services – rated good or outstanding (SCC Data)	100%	Increased	86%	Feb-24	80%	80%	83%	81%	85%
% Care Home Bed Occupancy	85%	Increased	89%	Feb-24	86%		88%		89%

2.2. Performance Governance

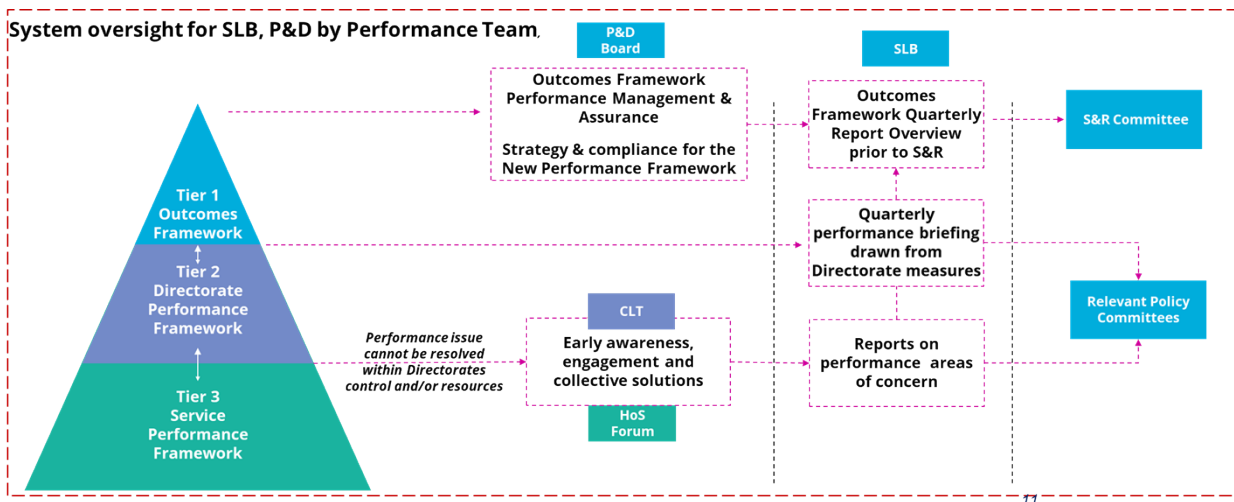
The performance system gives us the capability to manage and resolve performance issues at the lowest level where possible e.g. Directorate boards receiving escalation from service and resolving issues.

However, we require a formal but straightforward system of governance that provides the awareness and assurance of performance issues to senior leadership and policy committees.

Establishing this framework provides the opportunity to review how our most senior performance governance forum, the Performance & Delivery (P&D) Board adapts to the introduction of the framework, shifting its role to:

- Managing performance monitoring, management and assurance of the Outcomes Framework measures and targets.
- Strategy & compliance for the new performance system. Working to support a corporate culture of performance.

Key aspects on governance:



Tier 1:

- Performance and Delivery Board takes ownership of Performance monitoring, management and assurance of the Outcomes Framework measures.
 - Provides quarterly reports to Strategy Leadership Board and Strategy & Resources Policy Committee.
 - Meets monthly to review measures not performing to target via deep dives, calling in measure owners.
 - Instigates and manages task & finish groups to drive performance improvement.
- Performance and Delivery Board shifts to managing the performance system, ensuring compliance and leading the performance culture of the organisation.
 - Ensure that the key performance system elements are in place, e.g. measures, metric quality and meetings in place.
 - Beyond the mechanics, it ensures the behaviours that foster a performance culture are in place at all levels.

Tier 2:

- Performance issues are resolved at the lowest level, within the performance system.
- Where problem measures fall outside the Outcomes Framework and cannot be resolved within Directorates control and/or resources, provides an escalation route to Strategy Leadership Board.
- Provides a route for each policy committee to have regular visibility of performance information by receiving a quarterly performance briefing based on the Directorate performance measures of relevance (this may mean some information being made available to more than one committee), alongside emergent areas of performance concern and the actions being taken to address these.
- Provides an informal route for groups of key directors and heads of service to contribute to solutions.

System Oversight by Performance team

- Performance team will provide support and have representation across the system.

- Provides oversight and combined performance reporting for the Outcomes Framework progress and emergent areas of concern.

2.3. Performance Culture

The Future Sheffield values and behaviours will be reflective across the organisation in everything we do, including how we carry out performance management. Below the values and behaviours have been set out through the lens of performance and improvement.



People are at the heart of what we do

- Organisational understanding of the importance of data, insight and performance outcomes and the wider impact of this on Sheffield's citizens.
- Responsibility for our individual performance and embodying a growth mindset for our own areas of the Council Performance Framework, focuses on outcomes for residents and strengths-based options for improvement.



Openness and honesty are important to us

- Openness and objectivity around performance conversations with a view to improvement rather than judgement or blame.
- Creating empowerment and psychological safety to own performance and bring issues the forefront.
- Timely and honest escalation based on clear understanding.
- Honest reflection of data insights, why and what is needed for improvement.



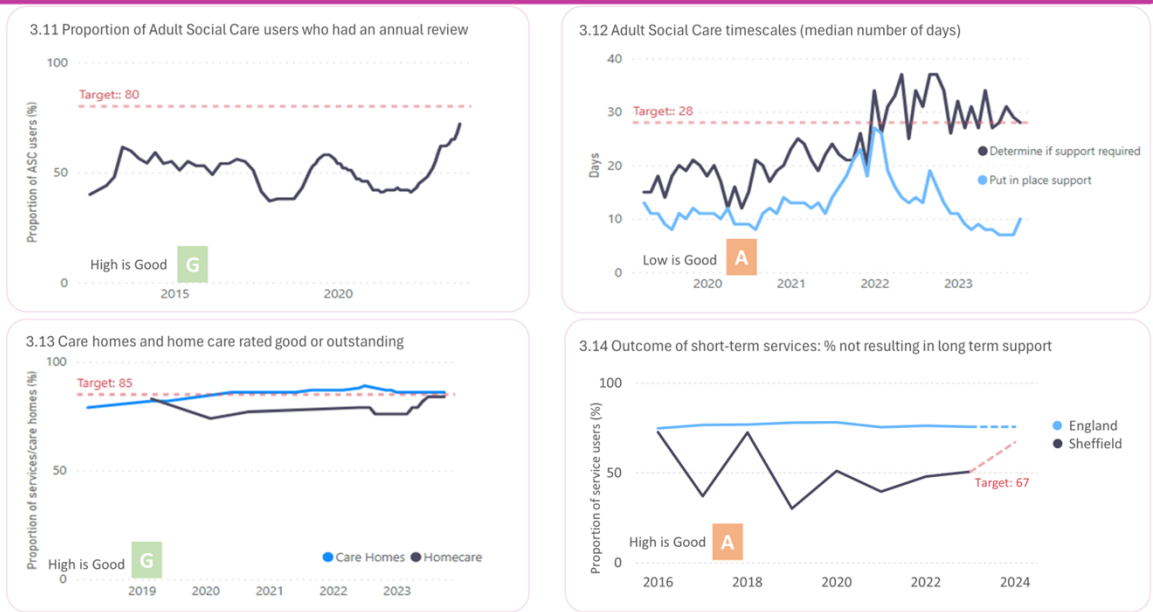
Together we get things done

- Performance management and early intervention are viewed as an enabler to positive change and impact.
- Performance is connected to the state of the Council as a whole, focus on supporting each other to achieve our outcomes.
- Performance conversations are focused, proactive and forward looking.
- To foster motivation, performance successes are celebrated alongside the improvement discussions.

Performance Reporting

Below is a working example for Adult Social Care measures featured in the Outcomes Framework.

People live in caring, engaged communities that value diversity and support wellbeing



3.14 The outcome of short-term services: percentage not resulting in long term support

Service	Strategic Director	Council Plan Priority	Policy Committee
Adult Care & Wellbeing	Alexis Chappell	High quality care and support at the right time and place so people can be independent for longer and stay safe	Adult Health and Social Care

Why is this measure important?

This measures the number of service users who receive short-term services and do not then require long-term support. It provides an indication of level of independence achieved by users of council-funded short-term services and of prevention, as service users' care needs might otherwise develop to the point that they require long-term support.

What targets are we trying to achieve?

Annual targets	Target Value
2024/25	67%

What does good performance look like?

High is good

How are we doing?
2023/24 Quarter 3 Commentary

In 2022/23, the proportion of those that received short-term service, where no further request was made for ongoing support afterwards, or support of a lower level, for Sheffield was 50.2%, which was below the Core English Cities median proportion of 70.2%. In Sheffield this was an improvement on the 2021/22 position and if the target is reached this year Sheffield will be only slightly below the current Core Cities median.

An update on actions underway to work towards this target will be provided by the appropriate service

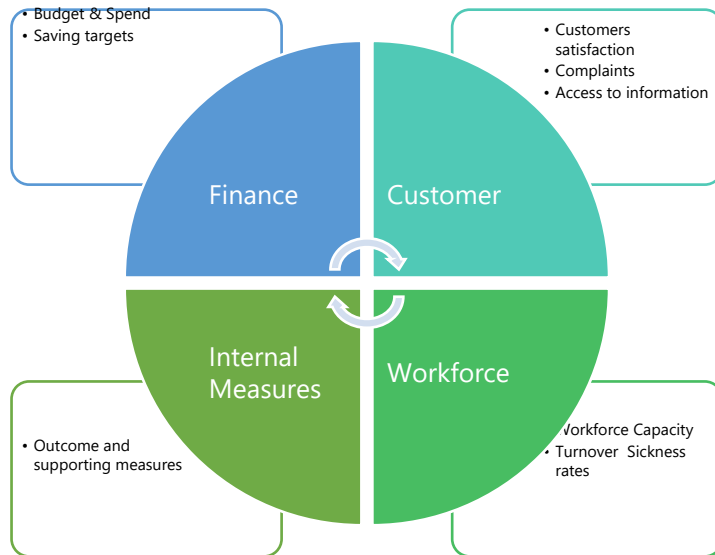
How do we compare?

Additional perspectives and detailed views will be made available through interactive reporting (not shown), providing insight into how measure performance changes for different geographic areas of the city, cohorts and communities, including equality perspectives, e.g. deprivation or ethnicity where appropriate.

These dashboards will be available as a performance management resource internally to support the overall system of governance, and as a public resource to support transparency and accountability. Initially this will be through traditional, static reports moving during 2024 to a set of self-service, interactive reports available to officers and members, updated in line

with the reporting cycle. We have reviewed best practice from the Local Government Association in providing interactive dashboards to the public, this will be tested and achieved fully during the time frame of the Council Plan.

The reporting suite will also bring to life how corporate health and performance measures interplay, across the lenses of customer, workforce and finance. Taking a balanced scorecard approach to show contributing elements that help deliver against the Outcome measures.



The scorecard elements may vary and expand over time to allow different insights beyond the examples here.

The benefits of this approach are its acknowledgement of the relationship between delivering a quality experience and service, a workforce with sufficient capacity who feel empowered and having

adequate financial resources to deliver the level of desired outcome and remain within budget.

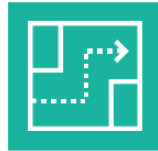
To enable this, we will be developing our financial framework to align with the Council Plan, working towards outcome-based budgeting during the life of the plan.

Appendix 2: Selecting High Quality Measure Criteria



Relevance & Reliability

- Services are involved in selecting and agreeing measures to ensure meaningful and correct for use
- Measures are aligned to the overall Council Plan outcomes and longer term ambition, but also represent the Service's unique priorities within this
- Measures cover both statutory requirements (statutory measures and measuring statutory duty) and tailored priorities for Sheffield
- Measures are supplemented with a clear definition, rationale and wider enabling metadata
- Measures are reported on near-live or timely enough to draw meaningful insights and actions
- Measures are reviewed and refreshed at least on an annual basis to ensure they continue to reflect key priority areas and provide the right insights against this



Achievability

- A target for each measure is selected with a balance between ambition and realism
- The approach to setting measures can be flexed to unique needs at different levels and in different service areas
- *Measures which are challenging to achieve will be discussed and a suitable approach agreed, for example by combining existing measures, including relevant breakdown areas, etc*
- Targets are reviewed and updated each year based on evolving Service Plan priorities, current position and wider context



Usability & Comparability

- Measures which apply to multiple levels or services are clearly labelled with metadata to support their use
- There is clarity between what is qualitative vs quantitative data and how these are used to supplement each other
- Accurate benchmarks and baselines are provided where possible for comparison and challenge
- Comparisons are supplemented with clear trends and narrative to ensure contextual insights
- The whole picture is considered when making comparisons, to recognise all relative improvement, even if not yet at a target
- Performance reviews are completed objectively without singling out individual players contributing to an overall outcome



Control & Grip

- The golden thread of measures enables assurance and control but also focuses on continuous improvement and impact monitoring
- Performance management is tightly interlinked with risk management and financial management cycles
- Measures provide forecast data to spot and mitigate potential risks before they become issues
- Clear risk thresholds provide escalation trigger points between governance levels to ensure any issues are dealt with locally where possible but escalated where necessary
- Public facing measures are selected with the intention of driving transparency and accountability

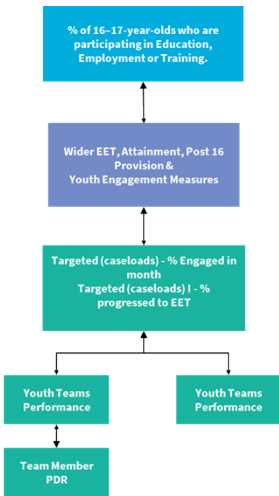
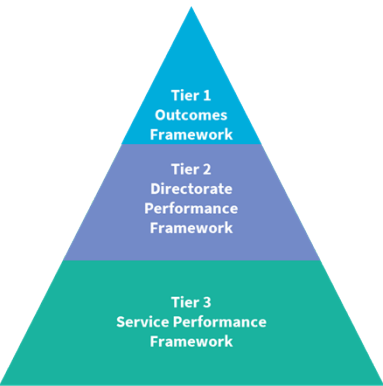


Introduction

Our Outcomes Framework is the way we show measurable progress against the Council Plan. It consists of a broad range of measures and targets that link directly to the spirit and strategic intent of each outcome in the plan.

This builds on the work started in our 22/23 Delivery Plan that focused on the organisation’s urgent performance challenges. Having a comprehensive, 4-year Council Plan allows us to have a wider range of measures that will sustain for the life of the plan. This will enable us to evidence impact of delivery and distance travelled alongside the ongoing monitoring of progress against each Council Plan outcome and priority.

The Outcomes Framework sits within our refreshed performance framework and these measures are the start of the performance **golden thread** for the organisation.



The outcome measures will form the basis of the wider range of metrics that contribute to the outcomes at Directorate and Service level.

This principle of a connected set of measures gives clear structure to our performance system, allowing our services, teams, and individual members of staff to see their contribution to achieving the Council Plan outcomes and priorities.

How we selected the Outcomes Framework measures.

We have worked with a range of officers including Strategic Directors, service representatives and performance leads to carefully identify and choose a set of measures that reflect the strategic intent of the plan at outcome level.

We have reviewed and learnt from Local Government Association guidance and other local authorities who have developed best practice performance frameworks, to inform the choice and structure of measures at this level.

Each outcome in the Council Plan includes four key priorities, we have selected a minimum of three measures for each. This enables performance of the different aspects of each priority to be evidenced and the measurable difference to be demonstrated.

Measures have been chosen that allow us to demonstrate our commitment to the three core principles that shape the plan:

- People – helping everyone in Sheffield to achieve their potential.
- Prosperity – prioritising Sheffield’s long-term prosperity, in a way that makes every part of our city better off.
- Planet – protecting the environment for future generations.



We focused on choosing high quality measures that are relevant, reliable and where we understand the level of influence the council has on effecting improvement. The ability to identify stretching but achievable targets and direction of travel has been a priority. Where possible we have selected measures that allow comparison with other authorities and that are nationally benchmarked, allowing citizens to assess our performance against our peers.

Reporting frequency has been a key consideration as the overall Outcomes Framework will be reported on quarterly.

A number of our key metrics are only available annually e.g. school attainment. We have tried to find a balance across the priorities in each outcome by including measures that report at different frequencies to show overall impact. This ensures regular reporting without sacrificing the close link the measures have to the intentions in the plan.

Appendix 1 provides an insight into the rationale used for choosing the measures for Outcome 1, Priorities 1&2 in the plan.

Core elements of the Outcomes Framework

1. Outcome Measures

The main element of the Outcomes Framework is presented as a full list in **Appendix 2** and consists of 70+ measures linked to the four priorities in each of the five outcomes.



Together we get things done

Directorates and Services have contributed measures across a range of priorities and outcomes where appropriate emphasising the cross-council approach required to deliver the Council Plan.

For many measures this shows how we are one Council that works together, recognising the contribution from all services in achieving our priorities and strengthening the golden thread approach.

Behind each measure there is further detailed information:

- **Rationale:** Which Outcome and Priority the measure supports and the rationale for choosing the measure
- **Detailed views:** The additional perspectives we will provide for the measure, providing insight into how the measure changes for different geographic areas of the city, different cohorts or communities. Where appropriate we provide views that focus on equality, e.g. deprivation or ethnicity.
- **Comparators:** Which other local authorities and datasets we will provide a comparison against, allowing citizens to assess our performance against our peers. This also recognises the growing role of the Office for Local Government (Oflog) which focuses relative and comparative performance.
- **Targets:** What level of impact we plan to achieve. The reporting suite will give the opportunity to feature multi-year targets where appropriate and performance progress and trends will be compared to these targets.

These will be confirmed once the Outcomes Framework measures have been fully agreed.

2. Making it happen – Corporate Health Measures

While the Outcomes Framework provides the way to measure impact and performance for each priority, it is important we continue to monitor key indicators that provide an understanding of how consistent, modern, and high quality our council services are. This provides insight into our ability to deliver the outcomes in our Council Plan effectively and make best use of the funding we have available.

Detailed in **Appendix 3** are measures that are critical to a well-functioning council and the delivery of high-quality services, including Finance, Complaints, Customer experience, Access to information and Workforce measures.

The Corporate Health measures will be presented in the same format to provide a companion to the Outcomes Framework, and reported together to ensure we have the right foundation on which to deliver the Council Plan.

3. Making it real – our policy priorities in action

Beyond the outcome measures the Council Plan sets out a number of cornerstone projects that will transform our city with more new homes; a dynamic environment for businesses to start-up and scale-up as part of our world class knowledge economy; and green, reliable transport networks to connect people throughout our city.

These key projects will be tracked as part of our regular reporting to provide a view of progress; key milestones, progress narrative and an open an honest view of risks to delivery.

The initial key projects are listed below:



**Openness
and honesty
are
important to
us**

Innovation in the city and the Investment Zone	Castlegate
Moorfoot	Neepsend
Furnace Hill and St. Vincent's	Station Quarter
Modern leisure and sport venues across the city	Tram/train expansion
Graves Gallery and Central Library Building	Attercliffe Waterside

4. Reporting & Review

As detailed in the Performance Framework we will report to Strategy & Resources Policy Committee on a quarterly basis with scrutiny by Performance & Delivery Board and oversight of Strategic Leadership Board during each reporting cycle.

To fully enable use and access to the Outcomes Framework and Performance system we will develop a suite of reports to support outcome level performance management.

This will be through a range of dashboards that bring together the outcome metrics, comparator and target information, and narrative updates. This builds on the approach taken to performance management reporting for the 22/23 Delivery Plan.

Appendix 4: Shows examples for Adult Social Care measures featured in the Outcomes Framework.

We will conduct an annual review of the Outcomes Framework to ensure measures and targets remain appropriate. We expect the replacement of measures to be infrequent allowing consistent reporting and distanced travelled against our priorities for the life of the plan. However, we recognise that improved measures and data may become available, alignment with key strategies currently in development may be beneficial and external factors may make change necessary. Taking a structured approach where we have control, the annual review will cover the following:

- Consideration of additional or revised measures.
- Review of targets to ensure alignment, stretch targets where there has been success, or sub targets that enable a more detailed focus on geographic or demographic groups.
- Reporting data at a more granular level to allow detailed insights into outcomes at sub-city level geographies and/or among different demographic groups.

Appendix 1: Measure Development Rationale for Outcome 1, Priorities 1&2.

Sheffield's Family Hub and Start for Life Services are the way we ensure **children and parents get the support they need so that children get the best start in life** by providing services as early as possible.

Published evidence from Local Authorities evaluated in the first wave of Family Hubs indicated positive impacts on other indicators we have chosen for this outcome area, including **educational participation and attainment, first time youth offences and post-16 destinations**, while also improving overall wellbeing and life chances.

Measure: Number of families registered with our Family Hubs is a broad indicator that families are participating and will benefit positively from the range of services on offer. As part of securing national funding, multi-year registration targets are agreed that ensure we are engaging at the right scale to expect positive shifts, as seen in the national programme.

Measure: Percentage of children meeting the key developmental milestones at 2-year review (Combined for all 5 areas of development) offers a quantifiable insight into the key areas of early child development and how our activities in **Family Hubs & Start for Life** contribute.

The period from conception to the age of 2 years sets the foundations for a child's emotional, cognitive, and physical development for the rest of their lives. A positive impact should be felt as our 2-year-old cohorts grow up during the life of the plan, improving their readiness for nursery and school which contributes to them **feeling like they can belong and thrive in Sheffield and children and young people have the best start to fulfil their aspirations and potential.**

We want all children and young people to be able to participate fully in education, school and training, nurturing their talents. After the age of 16, those young people not participating Education, Employment or Training are at risk of not reaching their full potential and several other negative outcomes including social

exclusion, poor physical and mental health, future employment outcomes and economic prospects.

Measures: Percentage of 16–17-year-olds who are participating in Education, Employment or Training* nationally recognised measures that allows comparison with other cities.

We have specific measures **for Looked After Children* and those with Education & Health Care Education, Health and Care Plans***, recognising that participation in Education, Employment or Training is key **to fulfilling their potential in Sheffield and making a successful transition to adulthood.**

Being in school is critical to a child's achievement, wellbeing, and wider development, with regular school attendance helping ensure **children and young people are safe across the city** through visibility at school.

Measures: Percentage of pupils who are persistently absence (<90% attendance) and Percentage of pupils with fixed term and permanent exclusion per 100 pupils is how we will show success in this area.

Our strategic intent is to ensure that more children are accessing an appropriate education, reducing rates of exclusion and persistent absence.

We will target inequalities to ensure more of our children and young people are equipped to achieve their ambitions and build successful futures. Young people in receipt of free school meals are more likely to be suspended or be persistently absent. During the timeframe of this plan, we aim to close the gap for this group while improving our overall position.

Evidence shows that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A-Level results, which are critical for **young people to fulfil their aspirations and potential.**

Measure: Percentage of Key Stage 4 pupils achieving level 4+ in English and Maths, as many careers and further education pathways require this as entry criteria including higher level vocational courses and apprenticeships.

Measure: Percentage of pupils who were in sustained education, apprenticeship or employment destination following the end of key stage 4, sustaining a positive destination after key stage 4 is crucial for young people's prospects and opportunities, this measure provides a good indicator for this outcome. This also requires us to work with **schools, businesses, and other partners we will link education, skills, and business investment into career pathways for every neighbourhood, including using our weight as an anchor institution to grow apprenticeships in Sheffield.**

Appendix 2: Our Outcome Measures

A place where all children belong and all young people can build a successful future



Outcome Lead Directorate:	Childrens Services		
Priority	Measure	Lead Service / Supporting Service	Comparators
Ensure all children and young people can feel like they can belong and thrive in Sheffield	Number of families registered with a Family Hub	Communities	Scheme Target
	Percentage of children meeting key developmental milestones at 2-year review	Communities. Public Health	England, Y&H
	Percentage of Key Stage 4 pupils achieving level 4+ in English and Maths	Education & Skills	Core Cities
	Percentage of pupils who were in sustained education, apprenticeship or employment destination following the end of Key Stage 4	Education & Skills / Economy, Skills & Culture	Core Cities
Address inequalities for our children and young people and ensure we are equipped to support them	Proportion of 16–17-year-olds who are participating in education, employment or training (+ 16-25 year-olds with EHCP and Care Leavers aged 18-25 years-old)	Education & Skills / Economy, Skills & Culture	Core Cities
	Percentage of pupils with fixed term and permanent exclusion incidents per 100 pupils	Education & Skills	Core Cities, England
	Percentage of pupils who are persistently absent (<90% attendance)	Education & Skills	Core Cities
	Percentage of newly-made EHC plans issued completed within 20 weeks	Education & Skills	Core Cities
	Percentage of EHCP annual reviews completed within timescale	Education & Skills	Core Cities
Deliver the right care and support to those who need it, at the right time and in the right place	Families achieving significant and sustained success within Sheffield’s Building Successful Families programme.	Children & Families. Integrated Commissioning.	Scheme Target
	Rates of CIN, CP, CLA per 10,000	Children & Families	Core Cities
	Proportion of CLA placements by type and in year placement costs	Children & Families	
Ensure children and young people are safe across the city	Number of first-time entrants to Youth Justice System per 10,000 10-17 year olds	Children & Families, Communities	England, Y&H
	Number of proven serious violence offences as a proportion of the 10 -17-year-old population	Children & Families, Communities	England, Y&H
	Number children aged 0-15 killed or seriously injured (KSI) road casualties	Investment, Climate Change & Planning, Public Health	Core Cities



Great neighbourhoods that people are happy to call home

Outcome Lead Directorate: Neighbourhood Services

Priority	Measure	Lead Service / Supporting Service	Comparators
Increase the availability, quality and range of housing in our neighbourhoods	Number of households on Council Housing waiting list	Housing Services	
	Number of households in temporary accommodation or bed & breakfast	Housing Services	Core Cities
	Average time to re-let Council property (time to make property ready and time to let property)	Housing Services & Operational Services	
	Percentage of homes with EPC rating C or better by tenure type	Investment, Climate Change & Planning / Housing Services	Core Cities
	Tenant satisfaction - percentage satisfied that the home is well maintained	Housing Services	Core Cities
	Tenant satisfaction - overall satisfaction	Housing Services	Core Cities
Ensure more parks and green spaces are high quality and maintained	Percentage of public open space sites in Sheffield managed to Sheffield Standard	Parks, Leisure & Libraries	
	Improved Local Biodiversity - proportion of Local Sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented	Parks, Leisure & Libraries	Core Cities
	Number of Green Flag quality awards accredited to parks, woodlands and green spaces in Sheffield	Parks, Leisure & Libraries	Core Cities
High quality neighbourhoods which are clean, green, resilient and safe, and where people can live healthy lives	Percentage of Household waste recycled (reuse, recycling and composting)	Street Scene & Regulations	Core Cities, England
	Rate of anti-social behaviour offences per 1000 population by LAC	Communities	Core Cities
	Smoking prevalence in adults	Public Health	Core Cities
	National Highways Transportation Survey – satisfaction with condition of highways	Street Scene & Regulations	Core Cities, England
Work with communities to improve the places and spaces that make neighbourhoods great places to live and be active	Sheffield leisure facilities usage - Visits to SCC funded sporting venues and activities (adult and children)	Parks, Leisure & Libraries	
	Youth work sessions - number of young people who have taken part in sessions	Communities	

People live in caring, engaged communities that value diversity and support wellbeing



Outcome Lead Directorate: Adult Care and Wellbeing			
Priority	Measure	Lead Service / Supporting Service	Comparators
High quality care and support at the right time and place so people can be independent for longer and stay safe	Percentage of adults receiving long term support who had an annual review	Adult Care and Wellbeing	
	Median number of days to complete the Care Act Assessment, and to put support in place	Adult Care and Wellbeing	
	Percentage of adult social care providers rated good or outstanding by CQC	Adult Care and Wellbeing	Core Cities
	Outcome of short-term services: % not resulting in long term support	Adult Care and Wellbeing	Core Cities
A new approach to community empowerment and engagement, working with our VCF sector partners and through LACs	Number of people engaged and informed through digital engagement platform	Policy & Democratic Engagement	
Work with communities to ensure people can access support and live the lives they want	Proportion of people who use Adult Care and Wellbeing services who reported that they had as much social contact as they would like	Adult Care and Wellbeing	Core Cities
	Proportion of people who use Adult Care and Wellbeing services who find it easy to find information about support	Adult Care and Wellbeing	Core Cities
	The proportion of carers who find it easy to find information about Adult Care and Wellbeing services	Adult Care and Wellbeing	Core Cities
	Number of people awaiting an Occupational Therapy Assessment	Adult Care and Wellbeing	
Enable everyone to feel valued and supported, tackling inequalities and celebrating the diversity of all our communities	Homelessness prevention and relief outcomes per 10,000 population by ethnicity	Housing	Core Cities
	Healthy Life Expectancy (male / female)	Public Health	Core Cities
	Annual net household income by Sheffield and LAC	Economy, Skills & Culture	Core Cities

A creative and prosperous city full of culture, learning, and innovation



Outcome Lead Directorate: City Futures

Priority	Measure	Lead Service / Supporting Service	Comparators
Drive growth by supporting Sheffield's dynamic business base and building its global reputation	Number of business start-ups in previous 12 months	Economy, Skills & Culture	Core Cities
	Job density (Number of jobs per resident of working age (job density)	Economy, Skills & Culture	Core Cities
	Reputation and engagement – engagement with Welcome to Sheffield website		
	Business density per 10,000 people	Economy, Skills & Culture	Core Cities
Connect more people into the city's prosperity with more good jobs, skills, training and better access to opportunities	Universal Credit claimant rate	Economy, Skills & Culture	Core Cities
	Unemployment and economic inactivity rates	Economy, Skills & Culture	Core Cities
	Median wages (total and by gender)	Economy, Skills & Culture	Core Cities
	Working age population qualification levels	Economy, Skills & Culture	Core Cities
A thriving, liveable and sustainable city centre that plays a major role in our region's economy	City centre footfall	Street Scene & Regulation / Regeneration & Development	Y & H and England
	Number of new homes under construction in city centre within previous 12 months	Investment, Climate Change & Planning	
	Number of new homes completed in city centre within previous 12 months	Investment, Climate Change & Planning	
	Proportion of Heart of City 2 let or sold	Regeneration & Development	
A vibrant and diverse culture offer that animates and inspires Sheffield	Percentage of city centre retail, office and hospitality space occupied	Regeneration & Development	
	Rate of hotel room occupancy	Economy, Skills & Culture	
	Number of jobs in creative industries sector	Economy, Skills & Culture	Core Cities
	Value of Arts Council England awards	Economy, Skills & Culture	Core Cities

A city on the move – growing, connected and sustainable



Outcome Lead Directorate: City Futures			
Priority	Measure	Lead Service / Supporting Service	Comparators
More homes for a sustainably growing city with choice, quality and affordability across Sheffield	Number of new homes under construction within previous 12 months (Sheffield)	Investment, Climate Change & Planning	
	Number of new homes completed within previous 12 months (total and affordable)	Investment, Climate Change & Planning	
	Number of homes acquired or built for Council Housing	Housing	
	Number of planning approvals granted permission in previous quarter	Investment, Climate Change & Planning	
	Percentage of major / non -major planning applications decided on time	Investment, Climate Change & Planning	Core Cities
Develop a reliable, quick and affordable transport system to power our green growth ambitions	Public transport patronage bus, tram and train	Investment, Climate Change & Planning	South Yorkshire
	Proportion of journeys made on foot or by bicycle (modal share survey)	Investment, Climate Change & Planning	Core Cities
	Passenger satisfaction with public transport	Investment, Climate Change & Planning	
	Rate of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents	Investment, Climate Change & Planning	Core Cities
Drive prosperity and lead global industrial transformation through innovation	Annual investment in Research and Development (South Yorkshire)	Economic Development & Culture	Regional
	GVA per job	Economic Development & Culture	Core Cities
	Number of high growth enterprises (employment and turnover)	Economic Development & Culture	Core Cities
Become a leading city in the journey to a net zero, climate resilient future, creating new opportunities	95% Reduction in Council GHG (CO2e) emissions by sector (Council; Domestic - Existing; Domestic - New; Non-domestic; Fleet; Grey Fleet; Streetlighting, Waste Management)	Investment, Climate Change & Planning / Housing / Operational Services / Street Scene & Regulation including Amey ad Veolia	
	Rate of plug-in vehicles, ULEVs and EV chargers per 100,000 people	Investment, Climate Change & Planning	Core Cities
	Average PM10 concentration at relevant locations	Investment, Climate Change & Planning	
	Average annual NO2 concentration at relevant locations	Investment, Climate Change & Planning	

Appendix 3: Making it Happen - Our Corporate Health Measures

Making it happen – Our Corporate Health



Outcome Lead Directorate: Strategic Support Services			
Priority	Measure	Lead Service / Supporting Service	Comparators
Financial stability	Full year budget variance by Committee and Directorate	Finance & Commercial Services	
	Percentage of agreed savings delivered by Committee and Directorate	Finance & Commercial Services	
	Percentage of council tax collection rates (in year)		Core Cities
	Percentage of non-domestic rates collected (in year)		Core Cities
Customer Experience	Overall satisfaction with SCC contact centre	Operational Services	
	Number of complaints received	Operational Services	
	Complaint resolution – percentage of Stage 1 complaints answered within 10 working days	Operational Services	
	Complaint resolution – percentage of Stage 2 complaints answered within 20 working days	Operational Services	
	Number of upheld Ombudsman complaints per 100,000 population	Operational Services	Core Cities
Access to Information	Proportion of FOIs responded to within statutory timescales	Organisational Strategy, Performance & Delivery	
	Proportion of SARs responded to within statutory timescales	Organisational Strategy, Performance & Delivery	
	Number of information security incidents (total and type)	Organisational Strategy, Performance & Delivery	
SCC workforce	Sickness absence – proportion of working hours lost due to sickness	HR & Employee Engagement	
	Staff turnover	HR & Employee Engagement	
	Employees who feel proud to work for Sheffield City Council	HR & Employee Engagement	
	A workforce that is representative of the communities we serve	HR & Employee Engagement	

Example Outcome Catalogue and RAG Overview

Outcomes Framework Performance Overview	Measures			
	R	A	G	
A place where all children belong, and all young people can build a successful future		1	14	15
Ensure all children and young people can feel like they can belong and thrive in Sheffield			4	4
Address inequalities for our children and young people and ensuring we are equipped to support them			5	5
Deliver the right care and support to those who need it, at the right time and in the right place		1	2	3
Ensure children and young people are safe across the city			3	3
Great neighbourhoods that people are happy to call home		2	12	14
Increase the availability, quality and range of housing in our neighbourhoods		2	4	6
Ensure more parks and green spaces are high quality and maintained			3	3
High quality neighbourhoods which are clean, green, resilient and safe, and where people can live healthy lives			3	3
Work with communities to improve the places and spaces that make neighbourhoods great places to live and be active			2	2
People live in caring, engaged communities that value diversity and support wellbeing		2	10	12
High quality care and support at the right time and place so people can be independent for longer and live well			4	4
A new approach to community empowerment and engagement, working with our VCFSE partners and through LACs			1	1
Work with communities to ensure people can access support and live the lives they want		2	2	4
Enable everyone to feel valued and supported, tackling inequalities and celebrating the diversity of all our communities			3	3
A creative and prosperous city full of culture, learning, and innovation		1	12	13
Drive growth by supporting Sheffield's dynamic business base and building its global reputation			3	3
Connect more people into the city's prosperity with more good jobs, skills, training and better access to opportunities			4	4
A thriving, liveable and sustainable city centre that plays a major role in our region's economy		1	2	3
A vibrant and diverse culture that animates and inspires Sheffield			3	3
A city on the move – growing, connected and sustainable		2	15	17
More homes for a sustainably growing city with choice, quality and affordability across Sheffield			6	6
Develop a reliable, quick and affordable transport system to power our green growth ambitions			4	4
Drive prosperity and lead global industrial transformation through innovation			3	3
Become a leading city in the journey to a net zero, climate resilient future, creating new opportunities		2	2	4

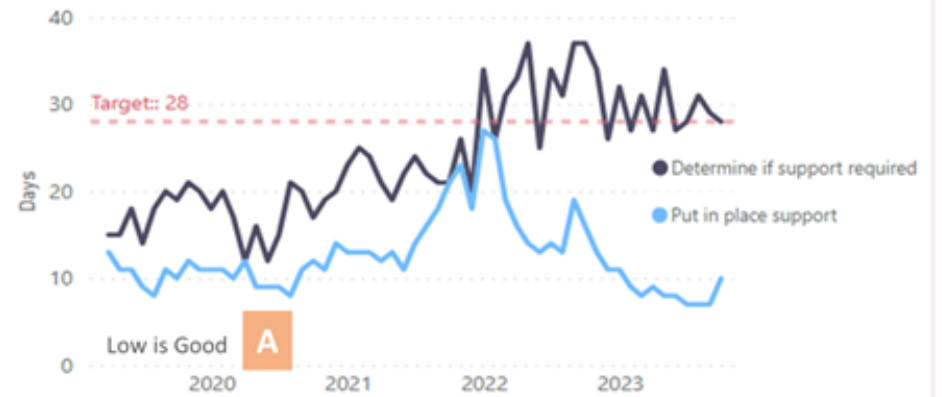
Appendix 4: Examples of Reporting Suite

People live in caring, engaged communities that value diversity and support wellbeing

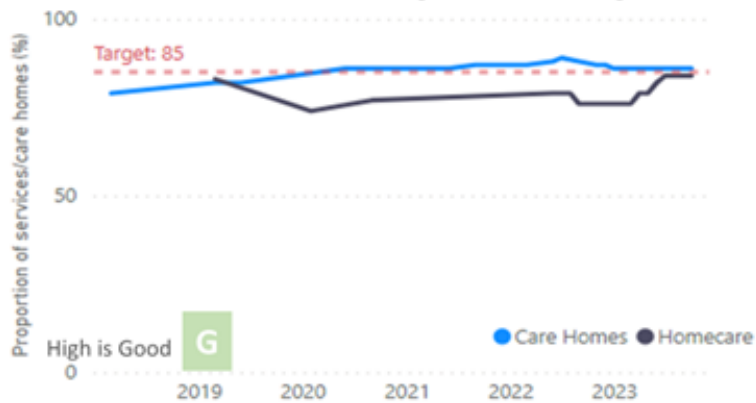
3.11 Proportion of Adult Social Care users who had an annual review



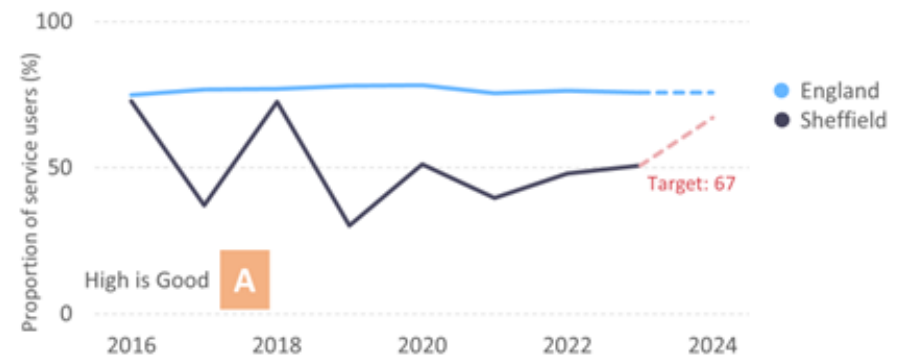
3.12 Adult Social Care timescales (median number of days)



3.13 Care homes and home care rated good or outstanding



3.14 Outcome of short-term services: % not resulting in long term support



3.14 The outcome of short-term services: percentage not resulting in long term support

Service	Strategic Director	Council Plan Priority	Policy Committee
Adult Care & Wellbeing	Alexis Chappell	High quality care and support at the right time and place so people can be independent for longer and stay safe	Adult Health and Social Care

Why is this measure important?

This measures the number of service users who receive short-term services and do not then require long-term support. It provides an indication of level of independence achieved by users of council-funded short-term services and of prevention, as service users' care needs might otherwise develop to the point that they require long-term support.

What targets are we trying to achieve?

Annual targets

Period	Target Value
2024/25	67%

What does good performance look like?

High is good

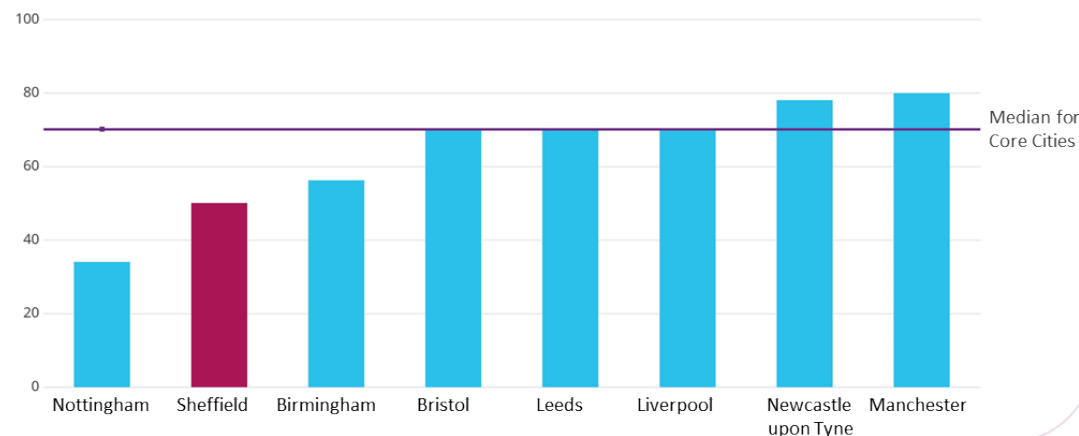
How are we doing?

2023/24 Quarter 3 Commentary

In 2022/23, the proportion of those that received short-term service, where no further request was made for ongoing support afterwards, or support of a lower level, for Sheffield was 50.2%, which was below the Core English Cities median proportion of 70.2%. In Sheffield this was an improvement on the 2021/22 position and if the target is reached this year Sheffield will be only slightly below the current Core Cities median.

An update on actions underway to work towards this target will be provided by the appropriate service

How do we compare?



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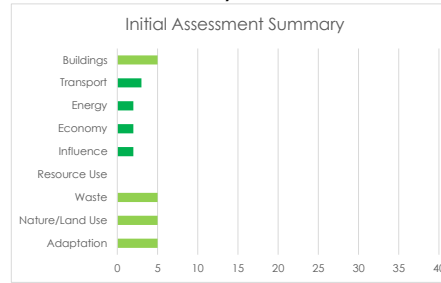
Climate Change Impact Assessment Summary

Project/Proposal Name	Performance & Outcomes Framework 2024-28	Portfolio	Resources
Committee	Strategy and Resources	Lead Member	Cllr Tom Hunt
Strategic Priority		Lead Officer	Claire Taylor
Date CIA Completed	05/04/24	CIA Author	James Ford
		Sign Off/Date	08/04/24

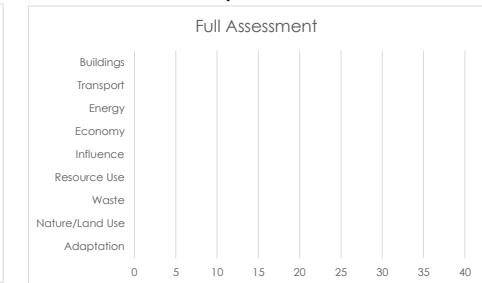
Project Description and CIA Assessment Summary	<p>The Council Plan is written in the context of Sheffield City Council having declared climate and nature emergencies, and having a target to see both the city and council greenhouse gas emissions reduce to net zero by 2030, just two years after the lifetime this plan. Respect for the planet, including our ambitions to achieve net zero by 2030, is a key driver and is woven throughout the plan with a commitment to work towards creating a successful, accessible city which prospers while protecting the environment for future generations.</p> <p>Acting as companion to the council plan, the Performance & Outcomes Framework will directly measure priorities that fall under the heading of Planet. The Outcomes measures will provide the high-level measure of impact across many contributing services and projects delivered during the term of the Council Plan.</p> <p>The next stage of the planning process will be for each directorate to develop robust service plans, and how these plans will be evaluated in terms of performance and outcomes. This is the most appropriate stage for the development of full assessments. For the Plan as a whole, therefore an initial assessment only, has been completed.</p>
---	---

Rapid Assessment	Does the project or proposal have an impact in the following areas? Select all those that apply. Only complete the sections you have selected here in the assessment.		
Buildings and Infrastructure	Yes	Influence	Yes
Transport	Yes	Resource Use	No
Energy	Yes	Waste	Yes
Economy	Yes	Nature/Land Use	Yes
		Adaptation	Yes

Initial Assessment Summary



Full Assessment Summary



>=27	The project will increase the amount of CO2e released compared to before.
21-26	The project will maintain similar levels of CO2e emissions compared to before.
12-20	The project will achieve a moderate decrease in CO2e emissions compared to before.
3-11	The project will achieve a significant decrease in CO2e emissions compared to before.
0-2	The project can be considered to achieve net zero CO2e emissions.

Initial Assessment

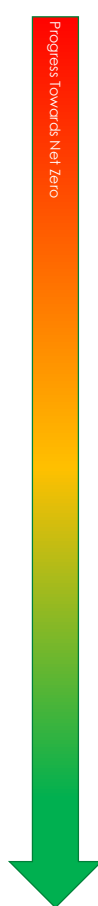
Category	Impact	Description of Project Impact	Score
Buildings and Infrastructure	Construction	Implementation of the Plan will result in more construction within the City - We will deliver the Heart of the City 2 development, transform Castlegate and Fargate, working with the private sector to finalise other key developments. We'll lead the continuing reimagining of our city centre with new neighbourhoods, high streets and spaces for a growing city and enable the delivery of 20,000 new homes in the city centre, creating real communities and a dense urban centre to attract business and investment. We are seeking to have high sustainability standards in the construction that we undertake, with Heart of the City having minimum standards of BREEM Very Good, and our draft Local Plan will also increase standards for building.	5
	Use	More homes for a sustainably growing city with choice, quality and affordability across Sheffield. The Central Library and Graves Gallery is one of the cultural jewels of our city, and its future has been uncertain for too long; we will set out a credible plan for securing the future of this beautiful building and set out a vision for its future and for a 21st Century central library service. Using retrofit, decarbonisation and green energy as a route to tackling cold, damp homes and fuel poverty. Individual projects will need to provide a detailed CIA which will include mitigation proposals.	
	Land use in development	More homes for a sustainably growing city with choice, quality and affordability across Sheffield. The framework will measure progress of construction only, individual projects will need to provide a detailed CIA which will include mitigation proposals.	

transport	Demand Reduction		
	Decarbonisation of Transport	Rates of plug-in vehicles, ULEVs and EV chargers per 100,000 people are included as measures in the Outcomes Framework as an enabling activity. Our progress in these areas will be compared to our relative performance to core cities in the framework reports.	3
	Public Transport	We will continue to develop our active travel network and we will develop proposals to expand our trams to make the daily commute easier and ensure that our low-carbon, mass transit system reaches more parts of the city. The Framework includes high level quantitative measures for public transport patronage and a qualitative measure passenger satisfaction with public transport that will inform our progress in these areas.	
	Increasing Active Travel	We will work with partners to ensure they are safe places for all residents, and to create more and safer options for people to move around, providing choices that support walking, wheeling and cycling. Proportion of made on foot or by bicycle journeys will be measured to show progress in this area. To further support this will measure and compare nationally the rate of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents in relation to safety, with a focus on 0-15 year olds.	

Energy	Decarbonisation of Fuel	Using retrofit, decarbonisation and green energy as a route to tackling cold, damp homes and fuel poverty. The percentage of the city's housing with EPC rating C or better will be measured through the framework. Our progress in these areas will be compared to our relative performance to core cities in the framework reports.	2
	Demand Reduction/Efficiency Improvements	Using retrofit, decarbonisation and green energy as a route to tackling cold, damp homes and fuel poverty. The percentage of the city's housing with EPC rating C or better will be measured through the framework. Our progress in these areas will be compared to our relative performance to core cities in the framework reports.	
	Increasing infrastructure for renewables generation		

Economy	Development of low carbon businesses	We will work with business, making the most of our world class sectors to create the ecosystem for new business to thrive.	2
	Increase in low carbon skills/training	It is also an opportunity: for new jobs, skills and careers in low carbon industries, retrofitting homes and infrastructure; for using our ingenuity and maker expertise to build new industries; for better, more affordable ways of heating our homes, getting around the city and removing proven risks to our health.	
	Improved business sustainability	We need to be making the most of our leading sectors, the move to a low carbon economy, new investment, and new developments to create opportunities for people in every part of Sheffield. We will work with businesses in the foundational economy to prosper and grow in the emerging green economy.	

10	The project will significantly increase the amount of CO2e released compared to before.
9	The project will increase the amount of CO2e released compared to before.
8	The project will maintain similar levels of CO2e emissions compared to before.
7	
6	The project will achieve a moderate decrease in CO2e emissions compared to before.
5	
4	
3	The project will achieve a significant decrease in CO2e emissions compared to before.
2	
1	The project can be considered to achieve net zero CO2e emissions.
0	
Carbon Negative	The project is actively removing CO2e from the atmosphere.



Influence	Awareness Raising	We will be a leader in the transition to a net zero city economy, taking the opportunity to reduce the climate impact of our homes, businesses, our energy sources and how we travel to transform our city. We will lead by example as a council, aiming to reduce our carbon emissions by 95% by 2030 and work with partners to secure external investment to drive our transition and create new green economic opportunities. This 95% reduction will be a key measure in the framework and will be broken down further to show progress in different areas of the council and its delivery partners e.g. Housing existing and new, Fleet; Streetlighting, Waste Management etc.	2
	Climate Leadership	Planet" is one of the three key policy drivers for the Council Plan and is woven throughout. At this time of transition to a net zero economy and society, we have the assets and abilities to be at the forefront of driving positive change again. We are the Outdoor City and as we continue to grow and prosper, we must protect and invest in our unique environment and minimise our climate impact.	
	Working with Stakeholders	A just transition to net zero which maximises the opportunities for our city must involve everyone. Climate change is the biggest long-term risk to Sheffielders' health and wellbeing and we can build resilience by working together in our communities.	

Resource Use	Water Use		
	Food and Drink		
	Products		
	Services		

Waste	Waste Reduction	We will measure the Percentage of Household waste recycled across a number of measures (reuse, recycling and composting) with progress in these areas compared to our relative performance to core cities in the framework reports	5
	Waste Hierarchy	Construction waste impacts will be considered at project level	
	Circular Economy	Construction waste impacts will be considered at project level	

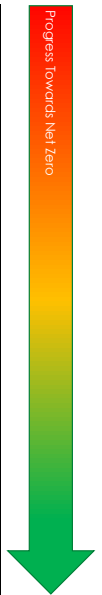
Nature/Land Use	Biodiversity	We will work with communities to keep our parks and green spaces financially and ecologically sustainable for the long term, championing, caring for and protecting the ecology and biodiversity of our city. To further support this, nationally comparable measures relating to Green Flag accreditation and improved biodiversity through positive conservation management are also featured in the framework.	5
	Carbon Storage	Construction waste impacts will be considered at project level	
	Flood Management	Construction waste impacts will be considered at project level	

Adaptation	Exposure to climate change impacts	Energy infrastructure needs to be resilient for future climate impacts and the future energy needs of the city need to be based on future climate e.g. district heating needs to also consider future cooling needs.	5
	Vulnerable Groups	We will work with partners to keep vulnerable people safe, shift resources to provision that supports people to be healthy and ensure services are accessible to all.	
	Just Transition	We are the Outdoor City and as we continue to grow and prosper, we must protect and invest in our unique environment and minimise our climate impact. projects and programmes will support low carbon skills, jobs and supply chains.	

Full Assessment

Category	Impact	Description of Project Impact	Mitigation Measures	Mitigated Score	Procurement Action Required?	Proposed KPI/Measure
Buildings and Infrastructure	Construction					
	Use					
	Land use in development					
Transport	Demand Reduction					
	Decarbonisation of Transport					
	Public Transport					
	Increasing Active Travel					
Energy	Decarbonisation of Fuel					
	Demand Reduction/Efficiency Improvements					
	Increasing infrastructure for renewables generation					
Economy	Development of low carbon businesses					
	Increase in low carbon skills/training					
	Improved business sustainability					
Influence	Awareness Raising					
	Climate Leadership					
	Working with Stakeholders					
Resource Use	Water Use					
	Food and Drink					
	Products					
	Services					

10	The project will significantly increase the amount of CO2e released compared to before.
9	The project will increase the amount of CO2e released compared to before.
8	The project will maintain similar levels of CO2e emissions compared to before.
7	
6	
5	The project will achieve a moderate decrease in CO2e emissions compared to before.
4	
3	The project will achieve a significant decrease in CO2e emissions compared to before.
2	
1	The project can be considered to achieve net zero CO2e emissions.
0	
Carbon Negative	The project is actively removing CO2e from the atmosphere.



Waste	Waste Reduction					
	Waste Hierarchy					
	Circular Economy					
Nature/Land Use	Biodiversity					
	Carbon Storage					
	Flood Management					
Adaptation	Exposure to climate change impacts					
	Vulnerable Groups					
	Just Transition					

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Report to Policy Committee

Author/Lead Officer of Report: Mike Weston
Director Digital Innovation and ICT

Tel: 0114 205 6914

Report of: *Chief Operating Officer
 Executive Director City Futures
 Executive Director Neighbourhood*

Report to: *Strategy & Resources Committee*

Date of Decision: *17 April 2024*

Subject: *Future Sheffield – Digital Strategy & Customer Experience Strategy*

Type of Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken	Initial <input type="checkbox"/>	Full <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Insert EIA reference number and attach EIA		
Has appropriate consultation/engagement taken place?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-		
<p><i>“The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”</i></p>		

Purpose of Report:

This report proposes a new Customer Experience Strategy and Digital Strategy to be delivered under the Future Sheffield Programme, the Council’s four-year transformation programme, which is aimed at improving service effectiveness and delivery across the organisation whilst creating a robust long-term financial plan for the Council.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Strategy and Resources Committee:

- Approve the Customer Experience Strategy attached to this report at Appendix A
- Approve the Digital Strategy attached to this report at Appendix B

Background Papers:

Customer Experience Strategy (Appendix A)

Digital Strategy (Appendix B)

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed.	Finance: Philip Gregory
		Legal: <i>Andrea Simpson, Richard Marik</i>
		Equalities & Consultation: Andrew Shepherd, Katie Mullen
		Climate: Andrew Shepherd, Katie Mullen
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>		
2	SLB member who approved submission:	<i>Claire Taylor, Ajman Ali, Kate Martin</i>
3	Committee Chair consulted:	<i>Tom Hunt</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: <i>Mike Weston</i> <i>Tom Smith</i>	Job Title: <i>Director Digital Innovation & ICT</i> <i>Director Operational Services</i>
	Date: <i>28 March 2024</i>	

1. PROPOSAL

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 This report proposes a new Customer Experience Strategy and Digital Strategy to be delivered under the Future Sheffield Programme, the Council's four-year transformation programme, which is aimed at improving service effectiveness and delivery across the organisation whilst creating a robust long-term financial plan for the Council. The proposed strategies focus on two critical areas of development to ensure an organisation wide approach to customer services and digital transformation.
- 1.1.2 As a council, everything we do is for the people of Sheffield. We face reduced resources, increasing demand and changing customer expectations. Consequently, it is more vital than ever that we are connected and work as one organisation to offer outcome-focused responses for local people which best suit their circumstances.
- 1.1.3 The Council has a vision to become: A digital council, empowering local people, communities, businesses and staff with reliable, seamless, inclusive and intuitive services, which are available 24/7 and managed sustainably.
- 1.1.4 To achieve this will require both a step-change and mind-set change for how the Council approaches digital innovation and transformation. We understand that a 'digital first' choice is not for everyone, but in transforming our digital capabilities and services (both access to information and fulfilment of transactions), a digitally preferred choice will be an option that is accessible for all. This will allow face to face or phone contact to the council to become focused on those people that need it most.
- 1.1.5 Whatever our ambitions, we must have the basics in place to achieve a digital transformation. We need to continue to invest in a secure and robust infrastructure; scope and procure the right sustainable technology and applications; and establish a first-class, modern cyber secure digital estate. Investment in skills will be critical to success. We cannot assume that our workforce has an equality in terms of digital inclusion and literacy. Our digital roadmap puts people, learning and development firmly at the heart of our digital transformation ambitions.
- 1.1.6 We find ourselves in the context of an ever-evolving landscape of a hybrid workforce, intelligent and automated applications, cloud platforms, reusable component-based architecture and the fast-paced growth and adoption of Artificial Intelligence. Understanding how we respond to and embrace emerging technologies but in an ethical and safe way will ensure we are ready for the future where digital evolution

and iteration is the norm and adoption of this way of working is critical to our service delivery.

1.2 Customer Experience Strategy

1.2.1 The Customer Experience Strategy, attached to this report at Appendix A, provides commitments to our customers that we will:

Listen and respond to customers effectively and efficiently, always putting them at the heart of designing, delivering and improving our services.

Empower people to reach the right solution for them by being accessible, inclusive and person-centred.

Be clear, transparent and considerate when we interact with customers, supported by the right digital tools, information, skills and behaviour.

1.2.2 The Council's Customer Experience Strategy sets out the Council's commitments, expectations and plans as one council to achieve a great customer experience for all. It is a council-wide strategy which sets out our shared understanding and ambition for achieving great customer experience across the council. Everyone in the council is responsible for owning and contributing to making it a reality, so we achieve improved outcomes together. Alongside the Digital Strategy, the Customer Experience Strategy will help to deliver our mission and outcomes set out in the Council Plan and City Goals.

1.2.3 Specifically the Customer Experience Strategy sets out how we can achieve better outcomes for our customers, our workforce and the council as an organisation, as set out below:

For customers:

- **Improved access:** Customers will be more able to get to the solution they need, whether online, by phone, or in person.
- **Joined up response:** We will have greater co-ordination of services for customers which considers them as a whole individual, family or community.
- **Quicker outcomes:** Customers will have faster response times and fewer transfers between teams or services when interacting with the council.
- **Clear and consistent approach:** Customers will have a fair, equitable and consistent experience every time.

For our workforce:

- **Enhanced purpose in their roles:** Our workforce will be able to focus more time and effort on those who need their help.

- **Development opportunities:** : Our workforce will have access to the training and career progression opportunities they need to deliver a great customer experience.
- **Increased productivity:** Our workforce will have better digitally-enabled tools, processes and connections to make it easier to deliver outcomes for customers, as well as the skills and confidence they need to use them effectively.

For the Council:

- **Better use of resources:** The council will have the right skills in the right places to best meet customer needs when they contact us.
- **Connected ways of working:** The council will be able to provide a holistic response by better joining up across services, so customers do not need to contact us multiple times.
- **Improved trust and reputation:** The council will see an increase in satisfaction and reduction in complaints as more customers get access to the most appropriate information or support at the right time.

1.2.4 The Customer Experience Strategy is intertwined with the Digital Strategy, as we know improving technology and digital access will play a key role in transforming our customer experiences. They both underpin how we will work and interact with our customers, communities, businesses and citizens in the future in line with our values – people are at the heart of what we do, openness and honesty are important to us and together we get things done.

1.3 Digital Strategy

1.3.1 Sheffield City Council's Digital Strategy, attached to this report at Appendix B, will be:

A council wide strategy - to transform the delivery of council services will require digital to be owned organisation wide. We will embrace the changing landscape of technology and opportunities as we strive to become a Digital Council.

Customer led - a shift to a customer focused approach will ensure we achieve measurable and tangible change and impact for our users (internal and external). We are striving to improve digital access and inclusion and deliver a coherent and intuitive digital customer experience.

Built from a solid foundation - tackling ICT areas of significant impact to staff user experience; continuing to invest in a robust infrastructure; rationalising ICT devices and connections; and focusing on business

systems improvements. We want to ensure we have the basics right from which to build on.

- 1.3.2 Our focus will not be on 'build it once and move on'. As a Digital Council we will need to transform our mind-set to one of iteration, feedback, learning from our mistakes and continually evolving.
- 1.3.3 The Strategy sets out a framework and roadmap of digital change to support the overall vision and goals of the Council. It provides a guide to the future design, development and delivery of digital, and is underpinned by a digital and technology roadmap.
- 1.3.4 The Strategy describes how our digital vision and ambition is underpinned by 4 digital pillars.

Customer First: Putting customer needs and expectation at the forefront of transforming digital services, both internal staff and external – local people, communities, businesses, and visitors.

Knowledge driven: Ease of access to data and insight to assess service delivery, streamline processes, inform continuous improvements, enable automation, procurement and decision-making and model the impact of change.

Skilled & Capable Workforce: Investment in training and skills development to shape a digitally included and literate workforce, who are empowered to deliver a continually evolving Digital Council.

Transformed Service Delivery: Embracing emerging technologies for a transformed future to ensure a digitally preferred route into all services. Establish efficient and effective strategic digital and ICT capabilities to enable frontline service to focus on customer outcomes.

- 1.3.5 To be successful and embrace the shift to a Digital Council will need: leadership and engagement, governance, knowledge and skills, collaboration and alignment across the Council and sustained investment in both staff and technology.

1.4 Next Steps

- 1.4.1 The implementation of both strategies will require investment, and an annual plan for delivery describing deliverable investment plans and potential saving will be needed. Business Cases will be developed outlining how investment will lead to ongoing revenue savings, income generation and cost avoidance. Annual reports on the implementation of the strategies, detailing delivery plan priorities, investments and potential savings, will be presented to future meetings of the Committee.

- 1.4.2 To date external support, from Price Waterhouse Coopers on the Customer Experience Strategy and Entec Si on the Digital Strategy, has been utilised to develop the proposed strategies. This has been funded from the Transformation Budget previously agreed under the Medium-Term Financial Plan. Further external support may be required to assist the Council to deliver the strategies. If so it will be the subject of future decisions.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?

- 2.1 The draft Customer Experience Strategy and Digital Strategy directly support the delivery of Together We Get Things Done, the Council Plan approved by Full Council on 6th March 2024. At the heart of the plan is a focus on the people of Sheffield, ensuring that everyone in the city shares in the benefits of a growing prosperous place.
- 2.2 The Council Plan, along with the Performance Management Framework and Medium-Term Financial Strategy, provides the strong foundation from which the Council will deliver the Future Sheffield Programme and the Customer Experience Strategy and Digital Strategy are key delivery pillars for achieving the transformation we require.
- 2.3 The Customer Experience Strategy is intertwined with the Digital Strategy, as we know improving technology and digital access will play a key role in transforming our customer experiences. They both underpin how we will work and interact with our customers, communities, businesses and citizens in the future in line with our values – people are at the heart of what we do, openness and honesty are important to us and together we get things done.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1 Any appropriate external consultation will be carried out as part of individual projects aligned to each of the strategies, which will be brought forward for approval in the usual way.
- 3.2 Full consultation across Directorates, Senior Leadership Board, Transformation Board and Heads of Services has been carried out to develop the strategies to ensure a whole organisation approach.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality Implications

- 4.1.1 The Digital Strategy aims to have a positive equalities impact for both our customers and workforce, through the development of digital skills, creation of digital services that are more accessible, and better use of the data we hold. We must acknowledge that not everyone is able to

engage digitally, and it is not always the best way of supporting people particularly where there are complex needs or circumstances.

The Digital Strategy won't force our customers and workforce through digital channels, but will provide the option for people who want to. Emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence also provide an opportunity to improve customer and workforce experience, but must be implemented in a responsible, ethical and safe way. The creation of policies built around fairness, reliability, accountability, privacy, inclusiveness and transparency will help ensure that our use of new technologies is supportive of our equality ambitions.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.2.1 The recommendations in this report ask the committee to endorse the Digital and Customer Experience strategies. The committee previously approved a commissioning strategy to implement Future Sheffield on 19 December 2022 which set out the objectives and scope of the work. The commissioning strategy identified the existing annual transformation budget and the budget contingency reserve as sources of funding.
- 4.2.2 Future reports will detail the delivery plan priorities for both strategies including planned investments, potential savings and funding arrangements including the impact on the Medium-Term Financial Analysis (MTFA).
- 4.2.3 The detailed business cases for the delivery of these Strategies are being developed and the funding arrangements will follow for approval once the costs have been determined. When considering the funding approach for the business plans which support these strategies existing budgets and reserves will be considered in the first place.
- 4.2.4 The council has an annual budget for transformation of £4m. This funding is allocated to specific transformation projects by the Future Sheffield board with advice from the Budget Implementation Group. It is anticipated that the cost of external support to further refine the delivery of these strategies will be funded through the existing transformation budget.
- 4.2.5 The government allow the flexible use of capital receipts to fund revenue transformation costs which generate ongoing savings which may be relevant as a funding source for the business cases supporting these strategies. To make use of this flexibility a strategy must be presented to Full Council disclosing the individual projects that will be (part)funded by capital receipts with a copy submitted to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. Sheffield City Council have not yet made use of this flexibility but will consider this in the approach to funding transformational activity within the scope of the Medium-Term Financial Analysis (MTFA).

4.2.6 In addition, consideration will be given to other sources of funding (e.g. grants) or additions to the capital programme where appropriate to ensure that funding arrangements are robust and affordable.

4.2.7 Any changes to 2024/25 budgets will be in line with Finance Regulations which may require approvals from Finance Committee, Strategy & Resources Committee and Full Council as appropriate.

4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 There is no legal requirement to have either a Customer Experience Strategy nor a Digital Strategy and there are no legal implications arising directly from this report. Any proposed actions to implement the strategies, such as those described in section 1.4 of this report, will require further decision making in accordance with the Council's Constitution and the legal implications of each decision, including any necessary compliance with public procurement legislation, will be considered fully at that time.

4.4 Climate Implications

4.4.1 Sheffield has set a target to become a net zero city and council by 2030.

4.4.2 The Digital Strategy and Customer Experience Strategy are strategic documents that supports Sheffield City Council's ambitions with regard to all of its services. The next stage is to develop implementation plans for the strategies, at which point more detailed Climate Impact Assessments will be carried out to consider the carbon and climate impacts of any changes to the delivery of a range of projects and services. It was therefore agreed that an 'initial' Climate Impact Assessment only was appropriate at this stage.

4.4.3 Implementation of digital technology will be key to addressing the climate emergency and achieving our 2030 net zero ambition, as it unlocks decarbonisation at an increased pace and scale through the ability to process more data more effectively, identify problems faster, and test solutions virtually across a number of council services and sectors in the city.

Digital solutions provide opportunities to reduce travel for both our employees and citizens, support more efficient use of our buildings including better energy management, and reduce the use of resources such as paper. We will also continue to focus on recycling obsolete ICT equipment, and utilising cloud-base solutions that are more energy efficient to operate. They are also key to realising the Council's vision set out in the Customer Experience Strategy, by improving communication and access to information, and enabling us to adapt our services and respond quickly and effectively, to support citizens with the impacts of a changing climate in the future, such as during increased extreme weather events.

4.4.4 If realised through the development of aligned implementation plans, the Digital Strategy and Customer Experience Strategy will contribute towards embedding climate at the heart of council activity, and support greenhouse gas emission reductions across both council and city.

4.5 Human Resources Implications

4.5.1 The Digital Strategy will require changes to the target operating model of the Digital Innovation and ICT Service to ensure the appropriate skills and resources necessary to deliver the strategy are put in place.

4.5.2 Equally the implementation of the Customer Experience Strategy is likely to impact on how services are delivered across the Council, and this is likely to result in changes to the way services are organised across the Council.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 The Council could choose not to have either a Customer Experience Strategy or a Digital Strategy. This has been rejected because the strategies are interlinked and together will contribute to successful delivery of the Council Plan through the Council's four-year transformation programme, Future Sheffield.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The Customer Experience Strategy and Digital Strategy are key pillars the Council's four-year transformation programme, Future Sheffield, which is aimed at improving service effectiveness and delivery across the organisation whilst creating a robust long-term financial plan for the Council. The strategies will ensure an organisation wide approach to customer services and digital transformation. This will contribute to achieving the vision and priorities of the Council Plan.

Sheffield City Council

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Customer Experience Strategy

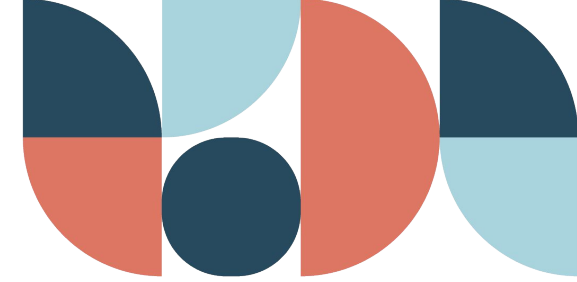
2024 - 2028

v1.0 DRAFT



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Our council-wide vision, ambition and outcomes for great customer experience in the future.

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Knowing our customers

Understanding the diverse people and communities that we work with and setting out our commitments for all customers.

3

Delivering better customer experience

Our future for delivering great customer experience, including embracing new technology and connecting with communities.

4

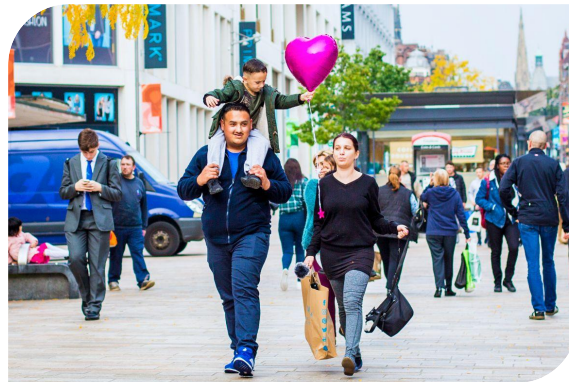
How we will achieve it

How we will make the ambition set out in this Strategy a reality, including our priorities for the next 12 months.

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Our strategy at a glance




Our vision: We offer great customer experiences for local people, communities and businesses by truly understanding and empowering them, being creative, and making it easy to reach the right solution for them.


Over the next four years, we will work as one council to deliver a better customer experience for our diverse people and communities through:




Empowered communities: We will connect more creatively with neighbourhoods and communities of interest, so local people can find the right support and solutions for them, whether provided by the council, themselves or others. This means we can bring our collective support to help people at the right time, and focus council resources on those who most need it.




Digital: We will expand our digital offer for customers to access reliable, seamless, inclusive and intuitive services, which are available 24/7. This means more people will want to use online options when interacting with us.




Phone and in-person: The digital shift means we can focus personalised support for those who rely on speaking with us by phone or in-person. This means customers can access us more quickly and get a better outcome.



Cross-council model: We will develop the roles, skills and tools to support more customers to get to the most suitable outcome when they first contact us. This means reducing demand caused by errors or repeated contact.



Connected response: We will strengthen how we provide a joined up response from the first point of contact to delivering a service. This means freeing up services to focus on people and their specific circumstances.



Developing the tools we need: We will focus on developing the people-centred ways of working, processes and infrastructure we need to deliver great customer experience for the long term, including smarter use of information and feedback from local people. This means we will be able to continuously improve and ensure we can keep meeting customer expectations in changing circumstances.

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Delivering better experiences for our customers will be an ongoing journey, but we have clear priorities for the next 12 months:

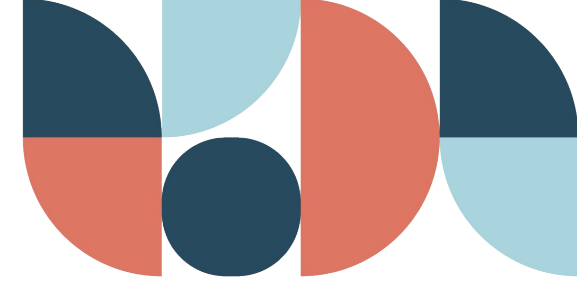
- 1. Improving digital access**
Drive stronger use of digital tools and solutions for customers across all services.
- 2. Empowering communities**
Build creative ways to communicate, connect, empower and work with our communities.
- 3. Modern customer model**
Develop a cross-council model and ways of working to enhance customer experience.
- 4. A smarter experience**
Use data, insight and customer involvement to deliver better and more cost-effectively.



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1 Our vision for customer experience

What 'customer experience' means to us



We use 'customer' in this strategy to mean **anyone interacting with or engaging with the council for a service, information or other type of support.** It is a deliberately broad definition, because customer experience is integral to everything we do. Even teams in the council which do not directly engage with members of the public, such as our support services, should ensure their work best contributes to what we want to achieve for our customers.

Depending on their circumstances, people will have different levels of capacity and willingness to interact with the council. Some people may not view themselves as 'customers' at all, particularly where more complex services are involved such as in some areas of Adult Social Care, Children's Services, and Housing. However, 'customer experience' is relevant to everyone because it is about how we behave and work with every person to get to the best outcome for them.

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Customer experience means

A complete journey for everyone - Providing a professional, accessible and responsive approach for people from the first point of contact to reaching a resolution that suits their circumstances.

Putting people at the heart of what we do - Considering what each person sees and feels in every connection with us, demonstrating flexibility and resilience in the face of changing circumstances.

Working as one council and community - Helping and supporting local people by joining together to achieve better outcomes, instead of tackling issues in isolation.

Customer experience does not mean

Just improving our call centre or our website - We need a connected approach focused on outcomes for our customers across all services, whether they interact with us online, by phone or in person.

A 'one size fits all' approach - We want greater connections and consistency for our customers, but tailored responses which reflect the diverse requirements of our different people and communities.

Being digital only - We will be digitally-enabled and increase digital access for those who want it, while investing in good conversations for those who need them.

Our vision for customer experience

We offer great customer experiences for local people, communities and businesses by truly understanding and empowering them, being creative, and making it easy to reach the right solution for them.



Digital access so you can use services 24/7 when and how it suits you.



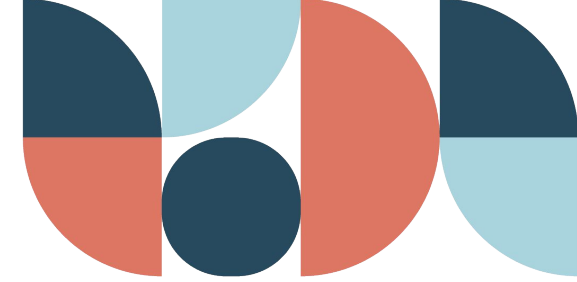
Strong and connected local communities able to help you.



Personal conversations with people who understand what you want and need.



Working with you as one council so we are consistent and inclusive in what we do.



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Our outcomes for customer experience



We want to improve our performance so that we can deliver what Sheffielders want and expect. Putting our Customer Experience Strategy into practice will help us to achieve better outcomes for our customers, our workforce and the council as an organisation.

Our customers



- **Improved access:** Customers will be more able to get to the solution they need, whether online, by phone, or in person.
- **Joined up response:** We will have greater co-ordination of services for customers which considers them as a whole individual, family or community.
- **Quicker outcomes:** Customers will have faster response times and fewer transfers between teams or services when interacting with the council.
- **Clear and consistent approach:** Customers will have a fair, equitable and consistent experience every time.

Our workforce



- **Enhanced purpose in their roles:** Our workforce will be able to focus more time and effort on those who need their help.
- **Development opportunities:** Our workforce will have access to the training and career progression opportunities they need to deliver a great customer experience.
- **Increased productivity:** Our workforce will have better digitally-enabled tools, processes and connections to make it easier to deliver outcomes for customers, as well as the skills and confidence they need to use them effectively.

Our council



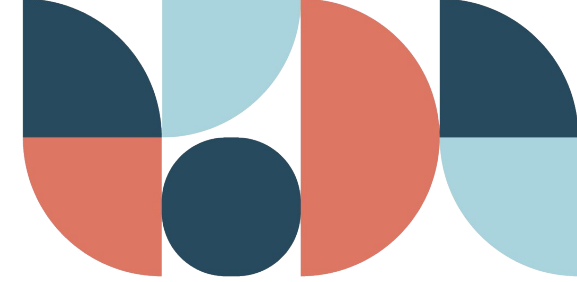
- **Better use of resources:** The council will have the right skills in the right places to best meet customer needs when they contact us.
- **Connected ways of working:** The council will be able to provide a holistic response by better joining up across services, so customers do not need to contact us multiple times.
- **Improved trust and reputation:** The council will see an increase in satisfaction and reduction in complaints as more customers get access to the most appropriate information or support at the right time.



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2 Knowing our customers

The people of Sheffield



Sheffield is a vibrant city – the UK’s first City of Sanctuary, home to people of all different cultures and backgrounds, and a place for many more to invest in, study, or visit. We want a great customer experience for all, regardless of circumstances or background. As set out in our Equalities Framework, we will provide supportive, accessible and customer-centred services which increasingly understand and meet the needs of all Sheffield’s communities.

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556,521 people living in Sheffield across **231,950** households



74.5% of people in Sheffield identify as White British and **20.9%** as Non-White



12% of people in Sheffield do not speak English as their main language

94,819 people aged over 65, and this is expected to rise by **14%** by 2030



207,362 children and young people in Sheffield, with 24% of children under 16 in relative low income households



69% of the working age population in Sheffield are employed. Nearly **14.5%** of people claim out of work benefits



34.4% of people in Sheffield live in the 20% most deprived areas of England



20.6% of people living in Sheffield have a long-term health condition or disability



4.5% of people in Sheffield are a member of the LGBTQ+ community

Our customers – key facts and figures



We work with 100,000s of customers every year, ranging from simple requests to helping with some of the most complex and vulnerable situations that people experience in their lives. The examples below illustrate the breadth and depth of our services – a snapshot of just some of our interactions and conversations with customers taking place every day.

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We handle over **1,250,000** calls directly to the council every year, with more coming into our services and strategic delivery partners.



We have over **7,800,000** views of council web pages each year.



There are over **45,750** in-person visits to our FirstPoint sites at Howden House and in local areas each year.



We have over **20,000 families** currently registered and signed up to receive updates from our Family Hub and Start for Life services across the 7 hubs in the city.



We issue around **10,780** parking permits and over **10,200** Blue Badges each year.



Sheffield has **17,040** businesses, with 86% being micro-enterprises with fewer than 10 employees.



We provide ongoing social care support to nearly **8,000** adults and carry out around **10,000** assessments or reviews each year.



Our social care teams work with over **3,700** children and young people so they feel safe and have a sense of belonging.



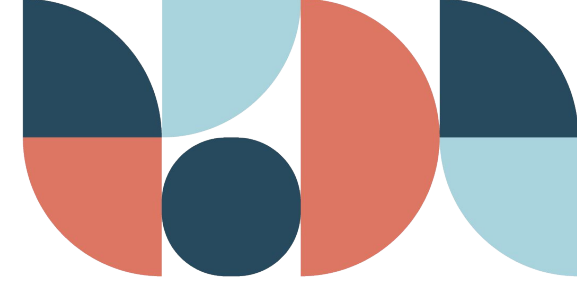
We handle around **4,140** planning applications on average each year.



We own and manage just over **38,000** council properties to around **42,700** tenants, covering repairs and other services.

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How customers prefer to contact us



Sheffielders are positive about the city but they want to see us improve how we as a council work with them:

"Bring the website into the modern age - I can do my shop online, why can't I do more things with the council there?"

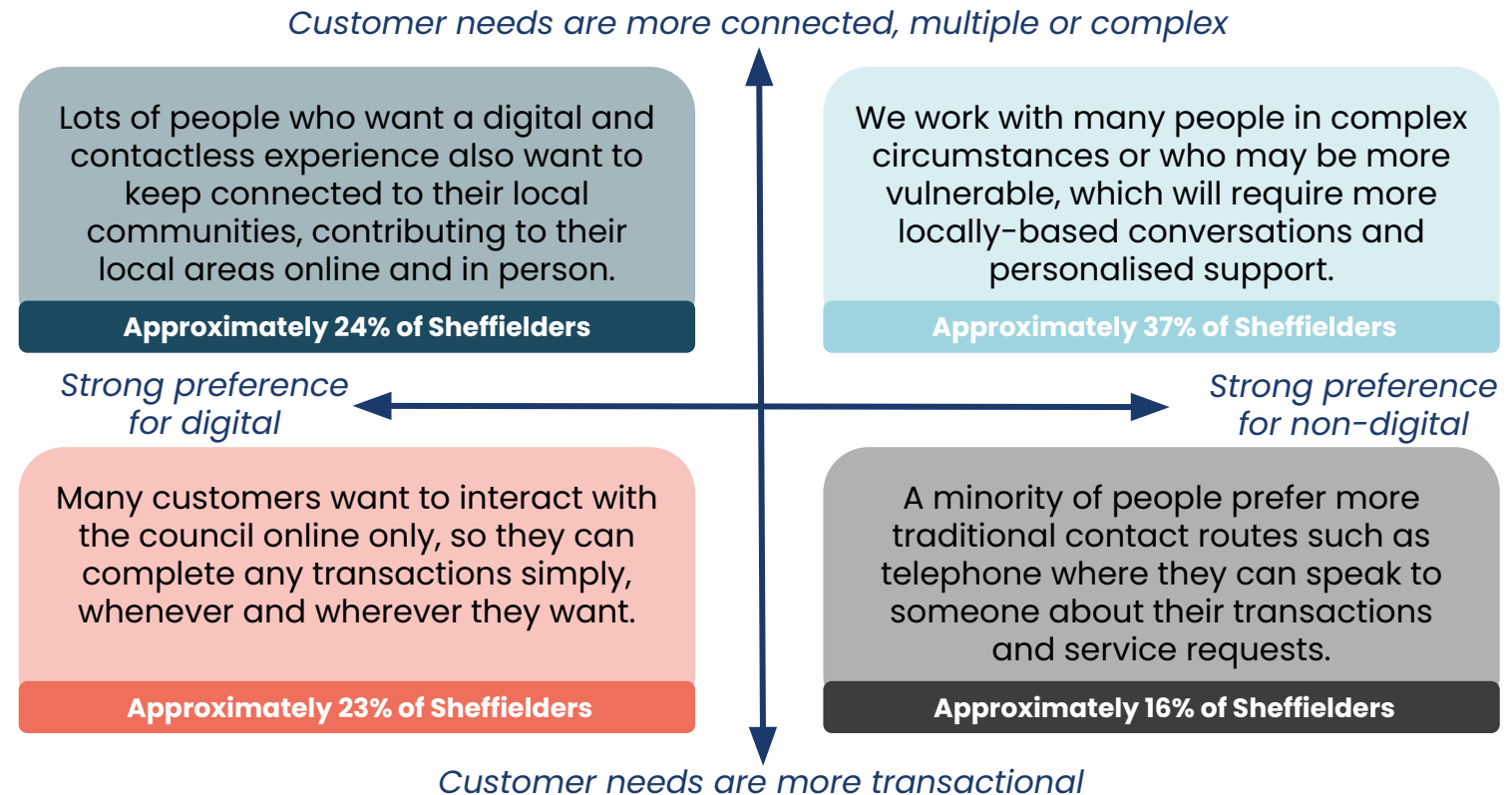
"I had to wait a while when calling but, to be fair, once you get through they were helpful."

"Support new, innovative ideas whilst giving members of communities more autonomy in creative solutions to their local issues."

"Why do I need to go to lots of different places or people to sort things out?"

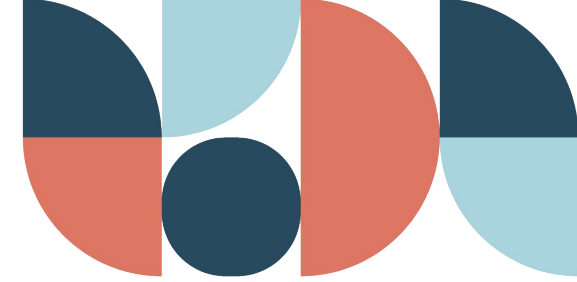
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Our customers have different preferences for how they contact and interact with the council, based on their circumstances, needs and their level of digital skills. The chart below shows how these preferences can vary in different situations. We will make it easy for Sheffielders who want to interact with us digitally to do so. For those who rely on contacting us by phone or in person, we will make our services more personalised and accessible.



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Our current ways of working



What we can build on

We have developed how our customers can access and interact with our services over recent years.

Care and knowledge of our workforce:

Our staff are experts on their services and local areas, and many of them are Sheffielders. We need to make it easier for them to use their knowledge to support their community.

Improving customer service performance:

We have improved our performance in areas such as increasing the proportion of calls answered. We need to help more customers get the right response at the right time.

Expanded online access and payment options:

We have increased the number of online services and improved how customers can pay online. We need to keep growing our digital offer and make best use of technology for customers.

Learning from feedback to the council:

We have improved how we respond to and learn from complaints. We need more two-way conversations and regular feedback from local people to support customer-focused services.



What we want to do better

Although we have made some progress, we need to go further to improve customer experience.

We want to be clearer on where to contact and how:

Customers say our website is confusing and we have too many phone numbers. We need to free up our teams delivering services from managing unnecessary or duplicated customer contact.

We want more reliable ways to contact us, including digital:

Some customers who would prefer to use online options have to phone us instead, which causes longer call wait times and repeated conversations.

We want to make it easier to get to a solution:

We are not delivering great customer experience if people are frequently requesting updates, not getting a clear outcome, or being transferred between services unnecessarily.

We want to strengthen community engagement:

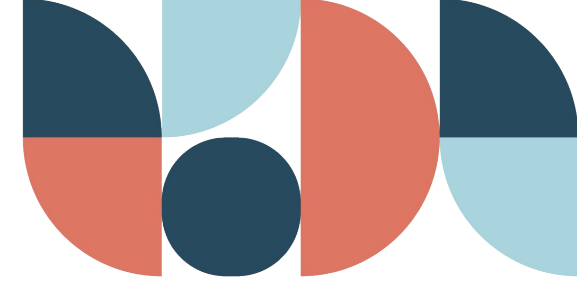
We have lots of relationships with people within their communities, but we cannot always connect them quickly to the resources and help they want.



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Our commitments to all of our customers



It is important that we are clear and consistent in what customers can expect from us as a council, regardless of the service or how they contact us. We will demonstrate flexibility and resilience in the face of changing circumstances and we make the following commitments to engage, empower and enable all of our customers.

Engage

We listen and respond to customers effectively and efficiently, always putting them at the heart of designing, delivering and improving our services.

- We will provide an efficient, responsive and high-quality customer experience, delivering within clear timeframes.
- We will proactively engage with communities and use feedback, compliments and complaints to continuously improve.
- We will be creative in how we work with communities and use technology - including a digital by design approach.

Empower

We empower people to reach the right solution for them by being accessible, person-centred and proactive on equalities, diversity and inclusion.

- We will make it easy for you to find local resources, information and self-serve if you wish to do so.
- Our services will be accessible to all, including local people with disabilities or with additional access requirements.
- We will interact with you with care and sensitivity, respecting your circumstances, preferences and rights.

Enable

We are clear, transparent and considerate when we interact with customers, supported by the right digital tools, information, skills and behaviours.

- We will communicate clearly in plain language and provide transparent information about our services.
- We will ensure our staff and contractors have the training and tools they need to give great customer service.
- We will keep you informed on the progress of your queries and the rationale for decision making or service changes.



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3 Delivering better customer experience

Contacting us in the future



For customers who want to use our services online, we will make it simple and accessible. We can then focus our phone and in-person contact points for people who really need them, providing a quicker, more personal experience. We will work as one council to be flexible and resilient. This means that we will respond effectively to different circumstances and you can contact us online, by phone or in person if you need to.



Online



Phone



In person

We will make it easy for you to use services online, while improving accessibility for those who rely on phone and in-person.

- Our digital offer will be user-friendly, easy to navigate and up-to-date so you will want to use it first where possible.
- Our digital offer will be expanded so you can do more day-to-day transactions online reliably, 24/7.
- We will offer advice and assistance to help you do more online where you can.
- We will use new technologies such as AI and automation safely and securely to enhance your customer experience.

If you want to call, we will use this first conversation to reach a clear outcome or next step for you.

- We will make it clear who you need to call and why by streamlining our contact numbers and using voice automation to help connect you to the right place.
- We will keep your wait time to an absolute minimum and keep you informed of how long you may need to wait.
- If we cannot resolve your call and you need specialist advice or support, we will help you understand what happens next.

We will enable our workforce and inclusive places across the city to help you in person if this is better for you.

- Welcoming in-person places will be available across Sheffield if you cannot access services by other routes.
- We will work in partnership with communities so these places are in the most suitable and accessible locations.
- If you are facing more difficult circumstances, we will work with you in a joined-up way to help find solutions.
- We will support all staff to know how to connect you to someone who can help.

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Connecting with communities in the future



We also need to connect more with our different communities in the future so we can deliver better customer experience. These communities might consist of local neighbourhoods, or shared interests or backgrounds such as younger people or those of a different ethnic identity. Connecting in this way will help us work together to find the right support and solutions, whether provided by the council, yourselves or others.

COMMUNICATING

ENGAGING

EMPOWERING

PARTNERING

WITH OUR COMMUNITIES

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We want you to feel informed about your local communities and our services, so that you can be clear and confident on what is happening and why.

We will help this by using plain language whenever and however we communicate, and improve accessibility for those who speak English as a second language. We will be proactive in providing information through online customer portals, social media or other routes.

We want you to be involved and able to influence services and support in your local communities. We will work with those who feel less engaged to help meet different needs, and tackle inequalities.

We will further develop our Local Area Committees and other community networks to support this. We will work with communities to listen and learn, using your insight to shape and improve what we do.

We want you to feel empowered in using your local knowledge, resources and pride to develop creative ways to address issues earlier together and unlock other opportunities.

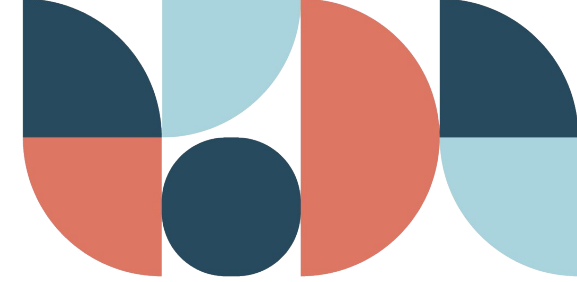
As a council, we will offer our skills and connect others to support this goal. We will get out of the way where others are better placed to help. In this way, we can find better solutions and reduce demand on limited council resources.

We want you to feel that you can trust the council to work with you and on your behalf, always focused on the best interests of our local communities.

We will work with you to ensure that our services are designed and developed for and with you as our customers. This will help your experience to be as seamless as possible from beginning to end, always focused on the right outcomes.

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Enabling customer experience in the future



We must develop how we work as an organisation and with our suppliers and system partners if we want to support delivery of a great customer experience for everyone in our communities. We will need improved customer-focused skills, tools and business intelligence across the council.

Skills and culture

Our workforce will have the training, information, and behaviours they need to support our diverse range of customers, including showing kindness, humility and a focus on each person as an individual. This means:

- Staff appropriately skilled in engaging and responding to customers, including dealing with issues or complaints.
- Our values, including people at the heart of what we do, embedded in our recruitment and management.
- All customer-facing staff able to confidently navigate and connect you to the best point of contact for your situation.



Digital

As set out in our Digital Strategy, we will offer reliable, seamless, inclusive and intuitive services, which are available 24/7 and managed sustainably. This means:

- Embracing emerging technologies and establishing efficient, effective digital and ICT capabilities to support our customer experience ambitions.
- Promoting digitally preferred routes into all services, which enables frontline staff to focus on customer outcomes.
- Offering support to help customers and staff to maximise their use of digital routes and services.



Data and insight

We will combine our data and knowledge to drive great customer experience, using customer insight to improve performance and delivery. This means:

- Developing a better overall view of customers through high-quality, connected data.
- Using data to target resources where they are most needed, improving responsiveness and outcomes.
- You can rely on us to keep and use your information safely and securely.
- Staff can rely on having up-to-date information to underpin great customer experience, services and decisions.



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Customer journeys in the future



The examples below illustrate our ambitions for great customer experience, with people able to reach the right solution for them.

Bhavna - Digitally confident business owner



Bhavna has just graduated from university in Sheffield and she has started her own business in the city. She has recently moved flat and she uses her car a lot to get around.

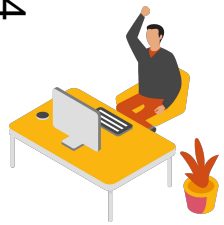
Bhavna logs onto her personalised customer portal online. This enables her to easily pay her business rates, apply for a parking permit, and change her address.

She uses a chatbot to check what her new status as a non-student means for paying council tax. Information she has already provided is used to set up her council tax payments.

Bhavna's online profile guides her to other information that may be helpful as a business owner. She uses this to speak to a specialist advisor about possible business grants.

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Adam - Working council tenant

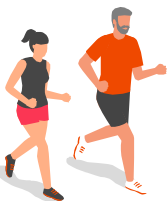


Adam is a working single parent living in social housing. He usually sends some money home to his family, but is currently living paycheck to paycheck and has found it difficult to support himself. He has noticed an issue with his plumbing.

Adam calls the council's main number and organises a repair visit. The advisor guides him through the online process for next time. Noticing some potential debt issues, they point Adam to further support about his financial circumstances.

Adam's shift at work changes but he is able to amend his repair visit appointment online. Following his initial conversation, he is pleased when someone from the council gets in touch and provides early help to address his money difficulties.

Caspar - Concerned about his older mum



Caspar lives in London but he is concerned about his mother Dahlia who is getting older and has recently lost her husband. He wants to know what support is available.

He finds some local services online but is still concerned. He rings the council and speaks with an adviser who is knowledgeable in health and social care services.

Together they arrange to meet with Dahlia at her home. This conversation explores Dahlia's interests and what is important to her. It focuses on how she can live her best life at home.

Dahlia is helped to join some social groups so she feels less lonely, and starts to be supported by a local voluntary service. Caspar can receive regular updates online.

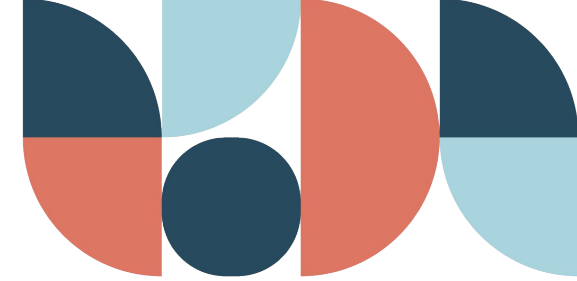
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4 How we will achieve it

Our journey to better customer experience



We have big ambitions for our communities and customers and there is a lot we want to change. Delivering better experiences for our customers will be an ongoing journey. Investing and developing our technology, people and partnerships to support this will take time. However, it is critical for our communities and our sustainability as a council, so we are committed to making the changes we need over the next 3 to 4 years.



Short term

A focus on practical improvements to customer experience online and by phone, while developing the wider foundations we need across the council.

Medium term

Building more consistent and connected ways of working across the council, and trialling more creative approaches to empower communities and use digital.

Long term

Embedding new ways of working, while continuously reviewing where we are innovating and growing what works to keep delivering better customer experience.

Page 16

Improving website and online access

A better path from beginning to end for customers, with clearer presentation of information, and a better look and feel for our main website. Quicker development of online transactions for customers.

Community engagement

Testing new approaches to engaging, empowering and enabling people in local areas.

Implement a modern customer model fit for the future

Connecting teams with the right abilities, responsibilities and behaviours across the council to support the different circumstances of our diverse customers.

Tools and training for our workforce

Enabling our workforce to have the right information, tools and skills to deliver great customer experience.

Increasing use of automation and AI

Using emerging technologies and our digital infrastructure to improve customer journeys and free up staff time to support customers who need more help.

Expanding innovation

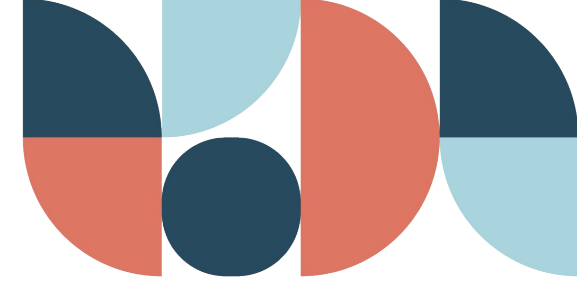
Building on pilots and redesigned customer journeys in key areas to expand what works across the council. This includes establishing how our welcoming in-person places best connect and work with local communities.

Continuously improving

Embedding how we use feedback, local voices and community insight to keep delivering on the expectations of our customers.

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Our priorities for the next 12 months



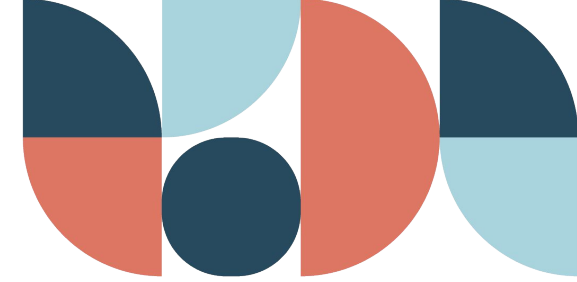
Our priorities for the next 12 months will establish the foundations we need to deliver better customer experience across the council. We are focusing on improving digital access, empowering communities, developing a modern customer model, and a smarter experience.

<p>Priority 1: Improving digital access Driving stronger use of digital tools and solutions for customers across all services.</p>	<p>Priority 2: Empowering communities Building creative ways to communicate, connect, empower and work with our communities.</p>	<p>Priority 3: Modern customer model Developing a cross-council model and ways of working to enhance customer experience.</p>	<p>Priority 4: A smarter experience Using data, insight and customer involvement to deliver better and more cost-effectively.</p>
<p>Quicker development of improvements to customer access through online routes, focusing on the most common day-to-day transactions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Begin work on the integration and user-friendliness of the end to end customer journey through our online presence and digital applications.• Further pilot and expand use of automation to free up time for staff to focus on customer outcomes.• Reduce the number of contact numbers and email addresses we publish, making it clearer and simpler on who to contact when.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review our in-person places across the city and develop plans for their use which support our wider strategic ambitions.• Complete our review of Local Area Committees and implement key recommendations, building greater consistency and connections within communities.• Pilot and compare how 'team around the person/place' models can work best for different communities.• Rationalise and improve all written communications for our most commonly used services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design and begin to implement an effective council-wide model for Customer Experience. This will mean customers engage at the most appropriate point and we are resilient and adaptable to changing circumstances.• Redesign priority customer journeys to reduce transfers and increase resolution at first point of contact.• Build stronger connections, through a strengthened knowledge base and information sharing, between first points of contact and service areas.• Strengthen standardisation for common customer requests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and agree integrated datasets and insight dashboards for monitoring customer performance and outcomes.• Implement customer care training and develop customer service career pathways.• Develop a connected council-wide approach for strengthening use of customer involvement and feedback in the design and delivery of services.• Agree and implement recommendations of the Digital Strategy to underpin digital access.

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How we will know we are delivering successfully



We will be open and accountable in showing how we as a council are putting this strategy into practice and delivering better customer experiences. This will include working together with our suppliers and partners to achieve shared goals.

How we will deliver against this strategy

We will put in place the resources and infrastructure required to deliver the vision and ambitions in this strategy by:

1. Driving delivery through **our council-wide Customer Experience Programme** as part of our Future Sheffield transformation, underpinned by a clear Customer model and business case for change.
2. Regular reporting of progress against the priorities set out in this Strategy to the **Future Sheffield Board** and **Strategy and Resources Committee**.
3. An **annual update on the Strategy** to review overall progress and determine priorities for the next year, so our aims and work for the Customer Experience Programme remain relevant for all of our customers and communities.

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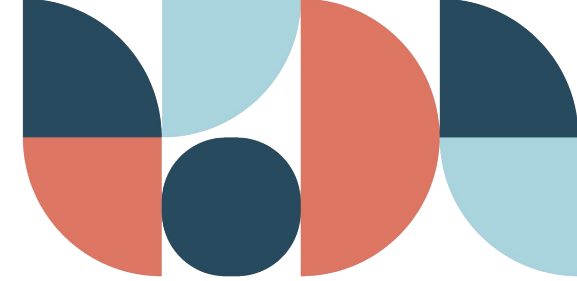
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Measuring success

We will regularly monitor progress against key council-wide success measures regarding customer experience. This may require further development of our data and performance management activities to reflect our ambition, but key measures are likely to be:

Improving digital access	Empowering communities	Modern customer model	A smarter experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in total number of transactions undertaken online. • Reduction in phone calls into our core Customer functions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce number of in person visits to Howden House due to online and local access points. • Increase in people accessing prevention and early help services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase resolution at first point of contact for our core Customer functions. • Reduce average call wait time and call abandonment rate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase overall Customer satisfaction (<i>measured through feedback and resident surveys</i>). • Reduction in total number of complaints and response time.

Listening and learning from all of our customers



Listening and learning from diverse voices across Sheffield will be critical for delivering better customer experiences. This is particularly important for people who may find it more difficult to have their voices heard. This includes those with disabilities, speak English as a second language, or have protected characteristics.

We will enhance our efforts to connect and engage with all different parts of our communities to keep developing and improving how we work, as well as championing equalities, diversity and inclusion across our city.

We will make it easier to provide feedback on our services and your experiences. Key ways of listening and learning from our customers to help deliver better customer experience will include:

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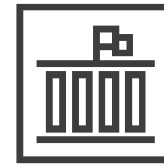
Local people: We will develop a refreshed, modern approach to engagement, consultation and involvement. This will include using new and existing groups of people of all ages, background and communities with lived experience to develop and improve our services.



Businesses: We will use our links with well-established business forums to develop and tailor changes which can best support our business customers. This will be particularly relevant in relation to contacting and interacting with us online.



Our workforce: We will use a Customer Champion network across our workforce to foster innovation and share good practice, empowering teams to make positive changes to customer experience.



Councillors: Our Councillors are vital links into our communities, actively representing local views and driving improvements. Local Area Committees will also enable, engage and empower local people.

We will always try to do our best but we may not always get it right. If you make a complaint, you can expect for us to be prompt and clear in our response. In addition, we will develop how we collectively use feedback, complaints and compliments to learn and improve how the council works.

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Sheffield City Council

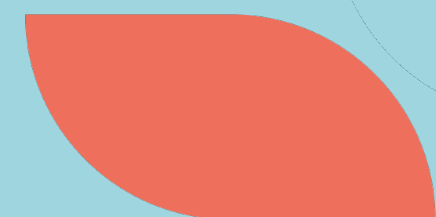
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Digital Strategy

2024 – 2028



Foreword



People are at the heart of what we do, and digital impacts all our lives as citizens, businesses and visitors; living, working and visiting Sheffield.

The rapid growth in emerging technologies presents enormous opportunity to dramatically enhance Sheffield City Council's offer as a major provider of services across the city. Our workforce, partners and local people expect our services to be as good as the best online experiences they access every day, with digital expectations set through our daily use of online banking, shopping and news.

The changes taking place across society lead to an expectation that many Council services will be available online and always 'on'; and that our offline services will be underpinned by high quality digital technology.

We know that digital is core to the delivery of our strategic priorities as set out in our operating model:

Communities and Customer – how we interact with and meet the digital needs of our customers

Service Delivery – how we deliver online services more effectively and efficiently

Enabling Services – how we operate digitally as a council and collaborate to achieve our shared priorities

Commissioning, Supply Chain and Partnerships – how we work with others to excel in the delivery of our digital ambitions.

As we recover from the COVID pandemic, navigate the cost-of-living crisis and react to increasing demand for instant digital access to public services, we must continue to grow and ultimately transform our digital capabilities and offer. In our development, we will ensure we can steer our digital services effectively and efficiently and be able to continue to respond to the continuing shifts in society, emerging technologies and digital expectations for future decades. Investment in skills will be critical to success and we are putting people, learning and development firmly at the heart of our digital transformation ambitions.

Our Digital Strategy is focused on becoming a 'Digital Council' through developing a holistic approach - rather than digital, innovation and IT being considered on a case by case, transaction by transaction, service by service basis. The strategy outlines the need and ambition to transform to become a whole Digital Council.

This cannot be a strategy that is produced and owned by the ICT and Digital Innovation Service in isolation. To become a Digital Council will require the whole of the Council to engage, collaborate and take ownership. The strategy takes account of our triple lock three policy drivers that together guide everything we do: People, Planet and Prosperity.

We will do this through:



People: Building digital capability and expertise across the organisation to develop a consistent, coherent and responsive digital customer experience; transforming online services for the growing population of people living, working and learning in Sheffield; providing equality of access for those who want to choose digital as their preferred way to interact and transact with the Council.



Prosperity: Investing in people, technology and infrastructure to drive efficiencies and achieve savings; supporting an economy of start-ups, small and growing businesses and organisations; and engaging and enabling partnerships across the city, building on the energy and appetite across the council to change and modernise.



Planet: Managing environmental impact and working to minimise this through conserving resources at all stages during the technology life-cycle, ensuring that sustainable, social and economic benefits are maximised.

The strategy enables the delivery of these Council Plan policy drivers, in a way that is achievable within our four-year Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Collaborating and aligning our digital vision, ambition and aims across all directorates, across the whole council, will be key to this.

Together we get things done.

Councillor Fran Belbin
Deputy Leader of the Council

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Our workforce, local people and businesses expect council services to be as good as the best online experiences they access every day, with digital expectations being set through our daily use of online banking, online shopping and news access.



Executive summary

We have a vision to become: A digital council, empowering local people, communities, businesses and staff with reliable, seamless, inclusive and intuitive services, which are available 24/7 and managed sustainably.

To achieve this will require both a step-change and mind-set change for how Sheffield City Council approaches digital innovation and transformation.

We understand that a 'digital first' choice is not for everyone, but in transforming our digital capabilities and services (both access to information and fulfilment of transactions), a digitally preferred choice will be an option that is accessible for all. This will allow face to face or phone contact to the council to become focused on those people that need it most.

But, whatever our ambitions, we must have the basics in place to achieve a digital transformation. We need to continue to invest in a secure and robust infrastructure; scope and procure the right sustainable technology and applications; and establish a first-class, modern cyber secure digital estate.

Investment in skills will be critical to success. We cannot assume that our workforce has an equality in terms of digital inclusion and literacy. Our digital roadmap puts people, learning and development firmly at the heart of our digital transformation ambitions.

We find ourselves in the context of an ever-evolving landscape of a hybrid workforce, intelligent and automated applications, cloud platforms, reusable component-based architecture and the fast-paced growth and adoption of Artificial Intelligence. Understanding how we respond to and embrace emerging technologies but in an ethical and safe way will ensure we are ready for the future where digital evolution and iteration is the norm and adoption of this way of working is critical to our service delivery.

Sheffield City Council's Digital Strategy will be:

- **A council wide strategy** - to transform the delivery of council services will require digital to be owned organisation wide. We will embrace the changing landscape of technology and opportunities as we strive to become a Digital Council.
- **Customer led** - a shift to a customer focused approach will ensure we achieve measurable and tangible change and impact for our users (internal and external). We are striving to improve digital access and inclusion and deliver a coherent and intuitive digital customer experience.
- **Built from a solid foundation** - tackling ICT areas of significant impact to staff user experience; continuing to invest in a robust infrastructure; rationalising ICT devices and connections; and focusing on business systems improvements. We want to ensure we have the basics right on which to build.

Our focus will not be on 'build it once and move on'. As a Digital Council we will need to transform our approach to one of iteration, feedback, learning from our mistakes and continually evolving.

The Strategy sets out a framework for digital change to support the overall vision and goals of the Council and is aligned to our Customer Experience Strategy. It provides a guide to the future design, development and delivery of digital, and is underpinned by a digital and technology roadmap.

A Business Case sits alongside this Strategy outlining how investment will lead to ongoing revenue savings, income generation and cost avoidance.

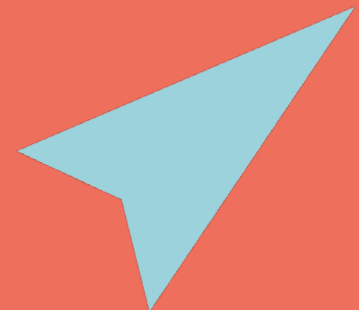
To be successful and embrace the shift to a Digital Council we will need: leadership and engagement, governance, knowledge and skills, collaboration and alignment across the Council and sustained investment in both staff and technology.

Kate Josephs CB
Chief Executive of Sheffield City Council



A digital council, empowering local people, communities, businesses and staff with reliable, seamless, inclusive and intuitive services, which are available 24/7 and managed sustainably.

Our vision ➤



Vision and ambition

Our ambition – what will the future look like?

In five years, we will be a Digital Council with:

This will result in:

Consistent, coherent, modern and intuitive digital customer experience that meets user needs and expectations – both access to information and fulfilment of requests.

Satisfied customers – internal and external
Established trust and reputation of SCC

Quality and connected data that enables easy analysis to inform, streamline processes and support technology investment and developments.

Automated processes and reporting support access to data and a more joined up experience for customers
Informed decision making and procurement
Increased collaboration and partnership engagement

Digitally capable and included workforce supported by learning and development that drives continuous improvement, collaboration and growth across the council and city.

An efficient and well-resourced ICT and Digital Innovation service
Established capability and capacity to drive change and transformation across the organisation
SCC engaged as a key partner in city wide digital growth

Transformed digital service delivery enabled through emerging technology with a digitally preferred choice for those that can and want to access in this way.

Digital offers and self serve that works and is reliable
Productive workforce and efficient service delivery

Sustained investment levels in digital and ICT will reduce ongoing costs and deliver greater value for money and improved services.



Underpinned by

A robust, future proofed and sustainable technology estate, which is an essential enabler for the wider digital customer transformation and where environmental impact and carbon emissions are minimised.

How will we achieve our vision?



Our digital vision and ambition is underpinned by 4 digital pillars:

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**Customer
first**

**Knowledge
driven**

**Skilled &
capable
workforce**

**Transformed
service
delivery**

The digital pillars will be enabled by the right sustainable technology that is managed efficiently and is secure – infrastructure, applications, hardware and connectivity.

Digital Pillars

Customer First

Putting customer needs and expectations at the forefront of transforming digital services, both internal staff and external – local people, communities, businesses, and visitors.

Knowledge Driven

Ease of access to data and insight to assess service delivery, streamline processes, inform continuous improvements, enable automation, procurement and decision making and model the impact of change.

Skilled & capable workforce

Investment in training and skills development to shape a digitally included and literate workforce, who are empowered to deliver a continually evolving Digital Council.

Transformed service delivery

Embracing emerging technologies for a transformed future to ensure a digitally preferred route into all services. Establish effective strategic digital and ICT capabilities to enable frontline service to focus on customer outcomes.



The digital pillars will be enabled by the right sustainable technology that is managed efficiently and is secure – infrastructure, applications, hardware and connectivity.

“Get closer than ever to your customers. So close that you see their world through their eyes and hear what they hear.”
Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple

Putting customer needs and expectations at the forefront of transforming digital services, both internal staff and external - local people, communities, businesses, and visitors.

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Outcomes

- Our digital offer and services are modern, reliable and responsive, meeting the expectations of our customers today – both our internal workforce and local people, communities and businesses
- We have consistent ‘doors’ into the council, so our external customers know this is SCC whatever their route or channel of access
- Our improved digital customer experience results in a reduction of low level, day-to-day transactional requests to the council via telephony and face-to-face channels and will improve accessibility to those services for customers who rely on these channels
- Customers are kept informed about the progress of interactions with the council and fulfilment of their requests and transactions
- Our customers are satisfied and trust the council, we are transparent and share performance and data metrics to build public confidence

Knowing our customers

Starting from the point of view of our customers’ needs and expectations (external customers, our staff and our end users). Learning from insight and user feedback (including direct engagement) to understand how customers use and access digital platforms, applications and systems, and inform technology future requirements.

A consistent digital presence

A consistent visual digital brand, approach and tone of voice that supports all digital channels and the effective delivery of services online. Content and messaging will be produced with the end user in mind, in plain, jargon free language that is accessible to a non-expert.

Content ownership

Sector knowledge and expertise is critical to disseminating information and helping users access services. Content and knowledge is a council wide responsibility to own and maintain. Key to the success of delivering up to date online services will be a devolved content authorship model that ensures up-to-date information on the website, our knowledge base and other digital channels.

Continually evolving

Just as digital technology does not stand still, neither do our customers. Our approach to the development of digital services will be an iterative, continually evolving one, to ensure we put the customer first and respond to changing needs and expectations.

Ease of access to data and insight to assess service delivery, streamline processes, inform continuous improvements, enable automation, procurement and decision making and model the impact of change.

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Outcomes

- We understand what data we hold as an organisation and can harness it intelligently
- We have clear data standards which enables different datasets to be brought together easily
- Our employees have a data platform that enables them to develop insights from disparate datasets
- Services across the council are more joined up and we are able to respond holistically to customers, enabling a 'one council' approach
- Our data platform does the heavy lifting for us, saving time, enabling productivity and collaboration - we have the right information with the right people at the right time

Consistent, quality data

A set of data standards will be established to inform current and future requirements for the capture, storage and use of data across the council. This will help build quality data sets, which is a whole organisation's responsibility, focused on improving services and informing policy.

Data skills

Investing in analytics and interpretation skills and expertise within the ICT and Digital Innovation service, but also across the council will enable the use of data to have value and drive organisational decision making.

Modern data platform

A secure platform that protects the council's data and enables the organisation to use data to monitor and measure, predict, optimise resources, automate decision, model impact and collaboration i.e. on case management.

Shared data sets and information

Developing standardised access to data and sector specialist content which allows different datasets and information to be brought together easily. This will unlock collaboration, cross council and wider partner/organisation working and support the delivery of an improved customer experience. As data across the organisation matures this will provide the opportunity to publish open data sets as well as support the transparency of service delivery impact through sharing timebound information on public digital channels.

Insight, impact

Data to inform continuous improvement to provide better services and drive intelligence to empower people to make informed decisions.

Investment in learning and skills development to shape a digitally included and literate workforce, who are empowered to deliver a continually evolving Digital Council.

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Outcomes

- Our workforce are able, and feel confident, to use digital technology to improve the ways we deliver services to local people, communities and businesses
- Productivity and efficiency is transformed across the council, more time is available for supporting customer and service users, we reduce the back-logs and we get more done
- Flexible and fit for purpose digital training and development is available to all
- We have a permanent Digital Champions network across the council
- We can support the development of digital literacy and inclusion across our customers and end users
- A learning and development approach for digital that supports all our workforce and their differing roles i.e. desk-based, community based, customer facing, case workers, full time and part time

Training is not an afterthought

Development of a Digital and IT training, awareness and learning approach that meets the organisation’s requirements and standards for learning and development. It is acknowledged that training is needed to get the most out of current IT applications as well as to support future system and application roll outs.

Time to learn and play

Learning to use a system, application or new digital approach will take time to embed and adjust ways of working. We will build in time for playing and using equipment and systems to help us learn. Ensuring time is allowed for training and acknowledged as a valuable stage of roll out, to help mitigate and remove the ‘I’m too busy’ or ‘I’ve got no time’ response.

Support and optimisation

Are we getting the most out of our internal technology and systems? Building on the success of the Office 365 champions rollout, we will establish a team of properly resourced digital champions across the organisation to disseminate best practice and knowledge of core systems and applications. This could be as simple as advising on how to get the most out of a digital communication channel, sharing top tips, upskilling users in day-to-day digital competencies or supporting the delivery of formal new system roll out training package.

Continuous digital training approach

Investment in a continuous training approach that provides equality of access and accommodates different learning styles and strategies. A written guide or online webinar will not suit all needs and training will ensure equality of access for all.

Embracing emerging technologies for a transformed future to ensure a digitally preferred route into all services. Establish effective strategic digital and ICT capabilities to enable frontline service to focus on customer outcomes.

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Outcomes

- All services are offered through digital
- For those that wish to, digital is the preferred method of engagement and transactions for our local people, communities and businesses
- For those that prefer telephone or face to face contact with the council, accessibility to these channels is improved
- The use of emerging technologies such as automation and AI have been tested and implemented across the council, in a responsible manner, bringing operational productivity and efficiencies
- Our workforce are kept informed of the future technology horizon and play a part in helping to evolve service delivery
- There are working practices in place to ensure an ethically and safe approach to our use of emerging technologies

Automation and Artificial Intelligence

Emerging technologies supporting the development of intuitive, responsive and reliable digital route into all services.

Responsibility and ethics

Development and alignment of information management and new emerging technology policies to ensure our approach to automation and AI is done responsibly and ethically.

Digital preferred choice

Digital first option to engage with all transactions and services online for those customers that wish to, supported by the right technologies.

Meeting expectations

A digital offer that works, is always on, is reliable, responsive and intuitive, keeping a customer informed of progress through their request or transaction.

Art of the possible

We don't know what we don't know. Guidance for everyone across the Council on the use of technology, sharing opportunities of emerging technology.

Alignment across directorates

Identifying council wide areas for improvement and aligning processes and approach to reduce duplication, learn from others and work with partners to move at pace.



We understand that our Digital and ICT transformation journey as a council is not just about technology. At its heart, is a focus on the customer and for the council to transform into a Digital Council relies on us **all** taking ownership and engaging in the digital change.





How will we work?

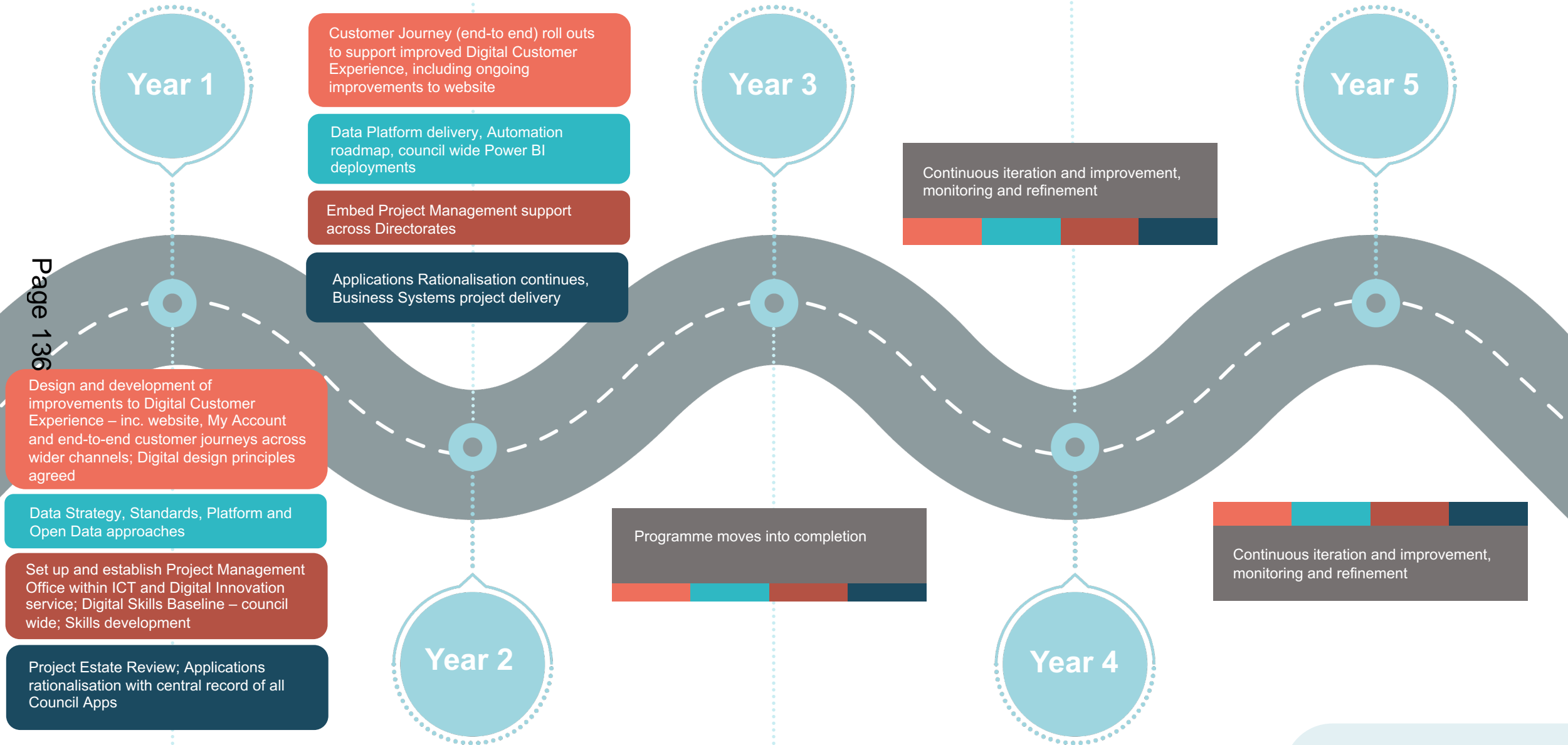
To achieve our ambition to become a digital council, will require the organisation to evolve and work differently.

Underpinned by our values we will:	How will we work:
<p>Develop a leading digital service offer for our workforce, external customers and end users which is adaptable, flexible and applicable.</p>	<p>Engage in iterative development, understand that we won't have all the answers straight away and may not get things right first time. We will learn from our developments, and each other, and use this learning to shape further improvements.</p>
<p>Design and communicate from an understanding of our customers needs, expectations and point of view.</p>	<p>Always start with the end customer. What is it they need? What is it they expect? How can we make their lives easier when engaging with SCC? How can we test this? Collaboration across directorates will be key to help us develop a consistent coherent customer experience for everyone.</p>
<p>Invest in a digitally enabled workforce improving skills and confidence across all staff to deliver Digital Council.</p>	<p>Support ongoing development of digital skills and expertise across the organisation and build in training and learning as part of our solution and application roll out.</p>
<p>Focus on a socially and environmentally conscious transformation across IT and Digital that is managed in a sustainable way.</p>	<p>Be proactive in engaging in sustainable IT and technology practices. This will include being mindful of energy efficiencies, managing our e-wastes, promoting paperless communications and workflows where we can, supporting digital inclusion as an organisation, but also for our customers and end users, and ensuring an ethical focus to procurement and technical development.</p>
<p>Have a clear and consistent approach to IT and Digital procurement to support the Council to get the most out of all investments. Bring efficiencies and savings across application, system and IT equipment procurement.</p>	<p>Embrace and engage in the improvements we will be making to our IT and technology procurement and governance processes, to ensure we have strong, pragmatic and streamlined governance to support effective decision making.</p>
<p>Focus on innovation and emerging technologies and iterative development to improve processes and achieve savings.</p>	<p>Work together to adapt our ways of working and consider how can we use digital to support our service delivery.</p>

Page 135

What will the strategy deliver? – 5-year high level roadmap

The roadmap will be reviewed and refined annually to reflect changes in the Council's digital journey. The digital roadmap delivery is supported and enabled by the technology roadmap delivery, see Appendix C.





Investment in skills will be critical to success. We cannot assume that our workforce has an equality in terms of digital inclusion and literacy. Our digital roadmap puts people, learning and development firmly at the heart of our digital transformation ambitions.



Section 2

Business case



Business case for change



The Business Case provides the rationale for the delivery of the Digital Strategy through a transformational change.

Why do we need this?

Page 139

Digital Strategy

The Digital Strategy for Sheffield City Council presents the future direction for digital services and enabling information and technology over the next five years.

Investment

For any fundamental shift in Digital capability, where sustained investment is required, a strong rationale is needed to demonstrate how these benefits will be realised.

Measurement

At all time outcomes must be **clearly** defined across the digital change, with clear measurable benefits defined and then monitored as the change progresses.

Strategic Direction

The business case must align with and enable the Council's mission, priorities and future Council plan and organisational strategy.

Benefits

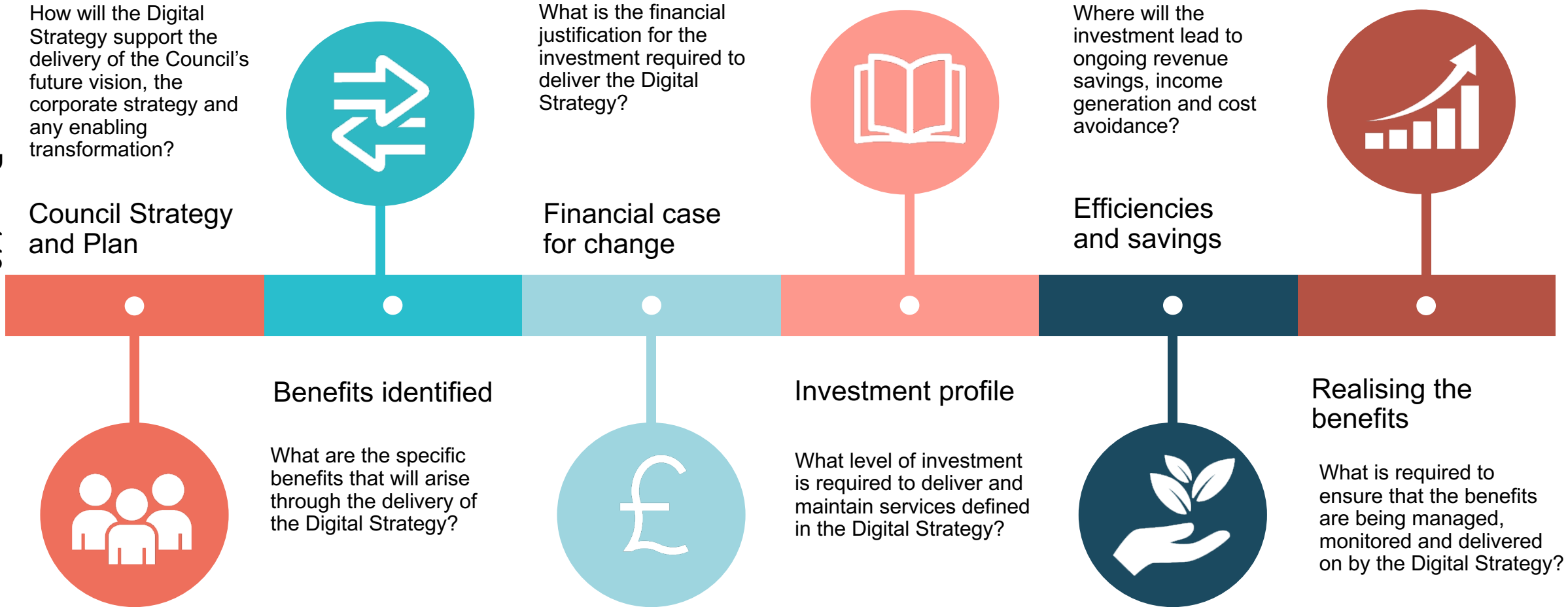
This must be underpinned by a clear business case to identify the business and financial benefits to the Council.



Rationale for business case

The business case must address several key questions to allow the organisation to assess whether the benefits identified will be delivered.

Page 140



Overall case for change

The Business Case aligns to our strategic priorities, as set out in our operating model.

Operational strategic priorities

Communities and Customer

This theme refers to how the future organisation can **better engage and interact with its citizens and local communities** to meet their needs and wants.

Service Delivery

This theme refers to **how customer needs and wants are met by the organisation directly providing support or services in an efficient and effective way.**

Enabling Services

This theme refers to the **functions that support the council to operate efficiently and effectively**, enabling frontline services to focus on delivering outcomes for customers.

Commissioning, Supply Chain and Partnerships

This theme refers to **how the council engages, works with and influences its wide range of external partners to achieve common outcomes and priorities.**

Design Principles

Page 141

- Transformed online service to customers, citizens and partners.
- Enhanced digital connections with communities.
- Rapid and simple access to information and support services online.

- Enabling streamline digital access to meet customer needs and wants.
- Effective and efficient access to support service through online channels.
- Focus on front-line customer facing digital support activities with redefined customer journeys.

- Significantly enhanced and efficiency delivering greater value for money from digital and ICT support services.
- Clear strategic roadmaps for ICT and digital based on council priorities.
- Enhanced and more effective business, ICT and digital services.
- Reduction in the baseline of costs of ICT and digital.

- Established digital engagement platform and ICT system to support external partnering.
- Efficient and digitally enabled commissioning of services through agreed outcomes and priorities.
- Development of wider digital and ICT partnerships to share learning, knowledge, capability and deliver income generation.

Benefits aligned into the key strategic priorities and delivered by applying the Council wide design principles across four key areas of impact.

Digital Experience

Economic & Financial

People & Process

Technology Platforms & Data

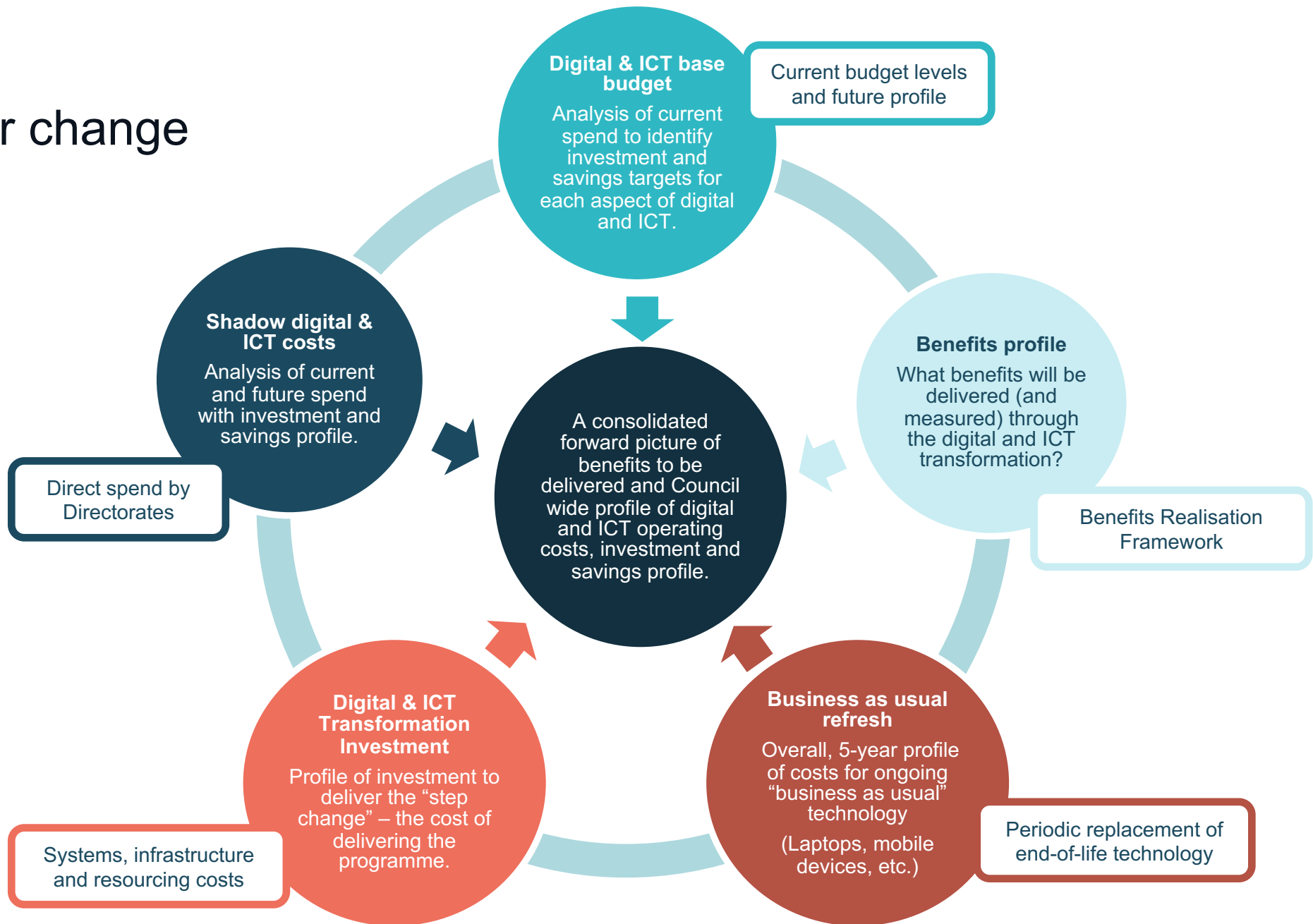
Financial case for change

Page 142

Research confirms that where Councils fail to invest and drive benefits strategically at the appropriate level, ongoing costs continue to increase with a negative impact on operational services.



This leads to the need for much higher short-term investment to catch-up.

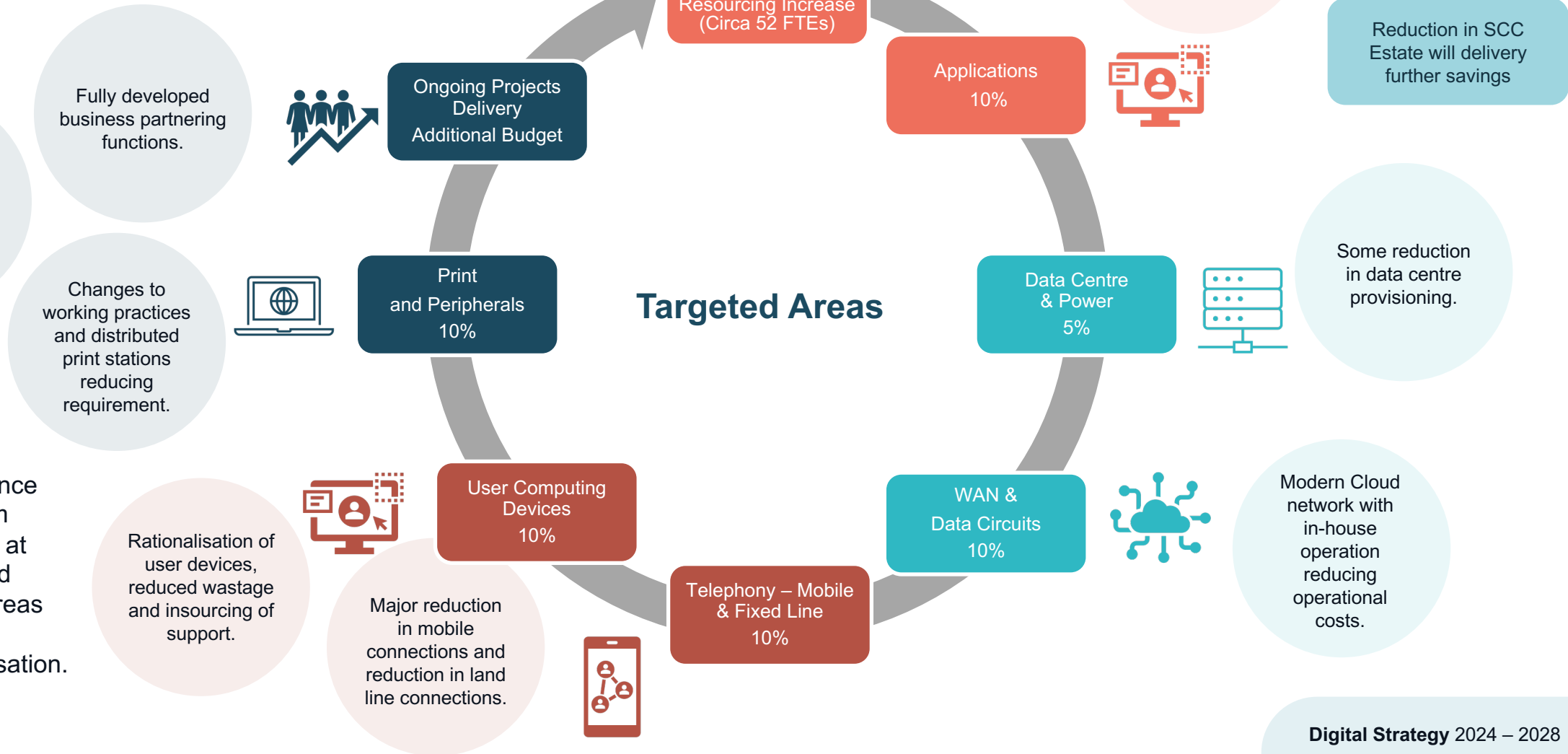


Business case

Digital and ICT benefits and saving opportunities

Page 143

Based on experience and evidence from delivering change at other Councils and analysis of cost areas for digital and ICT across the organisation.



Delivering the financial business case

A robust process will be required to establish an accurate and granular view of projected costs each year with ongoing tracking and reporting of monthly expenditure covering ICT and Digital Innovation budgets and programme spend.



Page 144

Baseline

Set the baseline for cross Council spend

- Complete detailed analysis of total 23/24 end of year outcome spend for ICT and Digital Innovation and Directorates to establish the actual starting baseline for the business case.
- Presentation of actual costs of ICT.

Savings

Robust application across all areas

- Following applications and infrastructure analysis apply specific targets for each area based on any system rationalisations, consolidation, re-procurements, efficiencies and cost avoidance.

Monitor

Build forward profile of spend (Service & Programme)

- Create a tracking process with supporting financial reporting of monthly spend against base line.
- Establish how spend will be tracked across Directorates.
- Implement processes around spend levels and approvals including revised governance.

Sustain

Continuous management of costs and investment

- Establish a culture around best practice with supporting process to continually track and manage financial investment and spend through a transformational approach.

Risks and mitigations

Staff resistance and support to new digital systems and ways of working

Ensure that staff engagement and effective communication are built into the digital change from the start.

User adoption and buy-in undermines benefits and service outcomes

Build in frequent stakeholder engagement, good communications, user engagement in design, effective training and robust change management.

Disruption and impact on existing day-to-day operations

Scenario planning around delivery of change projects to identify potential impacts and establish contingencies. Ensure resourcing to allow for staff engagement and training.

Reputation damage around data breaches, security and system failures

Establish effective data management, security enhancements, regulatory compliance, internal review/assurance and address breaches rapidly.

Financial investment not committed at the right level

Establish robust forward investment plan, with contingency for the transformation including additional business as usual budget resourcing.

Cyber security not effectively implemented and maintained

Apply proactive management of cyber security, through risk assessments, security awareness, security by design, encryption, security and data protection, and continuous monitoring.

Digital change poorly managed with cost, time and resource challenges

Build in thorough cost and budget planning and tracking, realistic timelines and the right resource capacity, capability and skills development.

Engagement across Council directorates to digital strategy not forthcoming

Establish executive sponsorship and buy-in, ongoing stakeholder engagement, clear tailored communication of the vision and objectives and build early success stories around the change.

External suppliers and/or partners not delivering and contract issues

Establish clarity and performance management of contracts, ongoing communication, effective escalation and constructive relationships.

Organisation commitment to change processes and new working practices

Ensure alignment of Council leadership and governance around the change, detailed engagement of staff throughout, with ongoing and effective change management applied.

Potential changes to political landscape in May Elections

This needs to be monitored. Officers can work to ensure that any newly elected councillors are fully briefed on the programme and its benefits.

A digitally skilled and capable workforce is needed to ensure the benefits are achieved

This can be managed through the development of digital requirements and an initial digital skills gap analysis, which needs to be tackled council-wide. A plan to bridge the gaps identified will need to be executed to support the development of staff.



Section 3

Strategy development and baseline



Baseline

The Digital Strategy is established against the current context in Sheffield and nationally across local government.

Sheffield context

- Sheffield City Council is one of the largest metropolitan Councils, with over 8,000 employees and a population over 570,000.
 - No single political group has overall control of the Council which is led by a cross-party administration made up of Labour, Liberal, Democrat and Green councillors.
- The insourcing of the Capita contract from January 2020 along with the need for sustained investment and addressing the challenges of COVID has impacted Digital and ICT services.
- The Council has been collaboratively developing its City Goals and has agreed the Council Plan for 2024-27.
- Significant leadership changes have taken place at a member and office level over the last year.
 - Alongside the Digital Strategy the Council is also developing its key priorities and the future operating model.
 - The development of the Customer Experience Strategy and Digital Strategy has been closely coordinated to align the two interconnected visions with the focus on Customer First.
 - There is a recognition of the importance of Digital, to support and inform the delivery of the Future Sheffield Programme, Council Plan and City Goals, including the aim to be net zero by 2030.

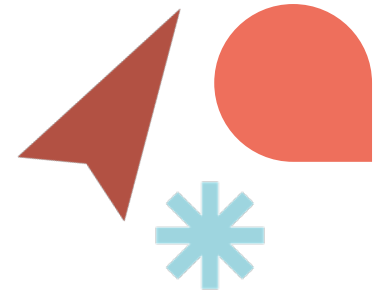
Wider context

- The local government digitalisation almanac published in March 2023, summarises the context and opportunities being faced by all councils into 12 strategic outcomes and critical areas of focus.
- These are: connectivity, data, democracy and participation, economic productivity and growth, ethics and sustainability, inclusion, leadership, organisational capability, partnership, security and resilience, services, and values.
- Since August 2023 we have been undertaking discovery and baselining work with reference to sector best practice, which captured feedback on ICT and digital from across the Council to inform the development of the Digital Strategy.
- The development of IT, infrastructure and digital across Councils has been approached organically, and lacked strategy. All councils are facing the challenge of how to address an ever-evolving technology landscape and increased digital expectations of customers. A strategic approach is required to focus on the future.

“Digital and data are the essential building blocks of all successful organisations. It’s only possible to make effective decisions, meet customer needs and respond to new challenges and opportunities when you have modern technology, real-time access to high quality data, a cadre of skilled digital talent and the right conditions for innovation to thrive.”

Paul Willmott, Executive Chair, Cabinet Office, Central Digital and Data Office

What have we achieved?



- **Move to the Cloud:** Significant progress made in the last two-years in shifting from a physical data-centre based infrastructure into the Cloud.
- **Move to Office 365:** Implementing software as a service applications and establishing robust and scalable remote access has established foundations to future proof the Councils ICT operation. Continuation of this strategic direction will be essential to cover other areas which need attention.
- **Automation projects:** Work is being carried out towards the key enablers for digital innovation to ensure delivery against, automation capability and a modern data platform – including early proof of concepts (i.e. single view of debt) and work towards a responsible AI policy.
- **Improving online transactions:** Delivery of improved webforms i.e. Log a Repair demonstrates work is being informed by customer pain points.
- **ICT and Digital Innovation Service re-structure:** Demonstrates a clear recognition of the digital shift taking place across industry but will require time to become embedded in the approach and thinking of staff in the service.
- **Best practice:** There is a recognition and application within the ICT and Digital Innovation Service of applying best practice standards for ICT service design, service management, workforce / training development and more recently applying the recognised Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA) framework.
- **Laptop Estate:** There has been a significant shift from the more traditional desktop computing to a complete laptop device estate, arising from the COVID impact and the need to support hybrid working. This is now consolidated into an ongoing year-on-year device replacement programme.

Discovery, the 'as is' and the future

For Sheffield City Council to become a Digital Council that supports both the workforce delivering services and local people and businesses accessing services we need to focus on transformation and improvements across six key areas. The understanding the 'as is' underpinned the development of our Digital Pillars (page 9).

Today

The 'as is', where we are operating today, has been captured as part of our 'Discovery and Baseline' stage ahead of the strategy development. We have been honest with where we are as a Council. Engagement from a wide range of stakeholders across SCC has supported this critical appraisal.

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Digital customer experience	Capability and expertise	Data and insight	Technology and infrastructure	Ways of working	Governance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disconnected and inconsistent digital experience is impacting end customers accessing services across SCC and putting unnecessary demand on face to face and telephony contact Onus on customers to work hard to find information Lack of digital customer experience ownership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The level of digital and ICT skills and experience across the Council is uneven Training for end user in new systems and applications is inconsistent No dedicated Project Management Office or project delivery team within ICT and Digital Innovation service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited / siloed data collection, largely captured within applications and in the main requires manual intervention for reporting to support business intelligence Quality of data collected is mixed with no common standards adhered to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inefficient processes and management around equipment, licenses and connectivity impacts the overall cost of the ICT estate Applications/systems and supporting processes are not operating effectively - impacting productivity and user confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disjointed / siloed approaches to IT and Digital results in duplication, increased spend and lack of efficiencies The lack of a strategy results in mixed and competing priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of process, policy and effective governance for IT procurement across the council impacting delivery and progress No strategy and roadmap to inform prioritisation and alignment

In five years' time...

Our future ambition to become a Digital Council, aligned to our vision, Digital Pillars and Technology Principles.

A coherent and consistent digital customer experience. A digital preferred option into all services, improving telephony and face to face access.	Digitally literate and included workforce who are confident can meet the demands of a Digital Council.	A corporate data platform, establish data standards to support bringing together of datasets.	Robust, secure and sustainable future proofed technology landscape supporting hybrid working and the delivery of transformed digital customer experience.	Collaboration and alignment across Directorates of digital activity and decision making across the whole council.	Established robust governance and framework that aligns with strategic operations to support the effective delivering of enabling digital and IT projects.
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Trends and future direction

During the development of the Digital Strategy, we have looked outwards to understand the wider digital, IT and technology landscape. These trends inform our thinking:

Sustainable technology

- Digital solutions and technology choices focused on supporting the city's ambition to be a net zero city by 2030 through decarbonisation, aligning to sustainable and ecologically-responsible processes and materials, and enabling people to travel less through remote working and online access to services.

Human by design

- Technology integrating across every aspect of our lives
- Always on society – expectation you can access a service anytime, anywhere
- Customer centric consolidated platforms – development driven by user need

Data

- Visualisation and access to big, connected data sets and business intelligence at touch of a button
- Collection of data from devices and sensors – growing trend in health and social care sector
- Robust data privacy, ethics and standards

Risk and security management

- Robust cyber security processes and infrastructure for threat detection, instant response, data protection, and privacy solutions

Evolving connectivity, platforms and infrastructure

- Continued shift to Cloud and Hybrid-Cloud native based applications, cloud based wide area networks with enhanced security
- New wireless standards increasing data speeds and network capacity, 5G growth extending device connectivity

Connected workforce

- Remote / hybrid working and digital collaboration within and across organisations
- Technology that enables hybrid working is invisible to the user – it just works

Increased automation

- Increasing application of automation in business scenarios
- AI driven based services, AI agents / chatbot supporting customer contact, Generative AI, Machine Learning
- Workflow streamlining task co-ordination
- Data Privacy and Ethics - privacy, enhancing technologies and ethical AI

Democratisation of platform engineering

- Low code development
- Workforce skilled to create their own low code solutions to meet customer needs and expectations
- Build on platform, reusable components, reduction in bespoke build



Section 4

Digital ambition



Digital presence building blocks

Put simply our digital presence is how Sheffield City Council (SCC) appears online, across all digital channels. This consists of our website, microsites, news, social media, and all 3rd party applications that can be accessed online.

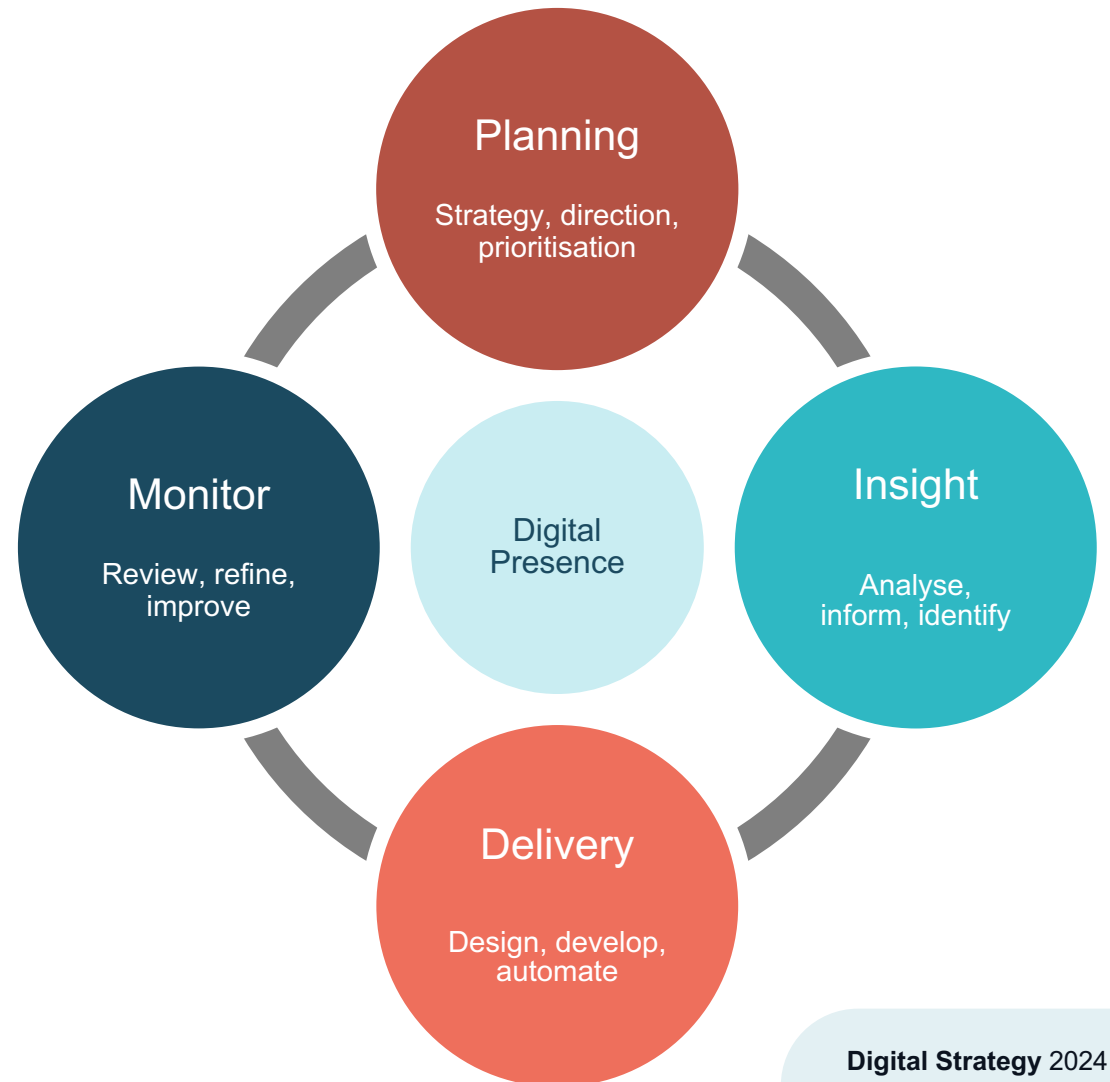
To the end user, they will not distinguish whether they are accessing our services via our website or one of the applications that sits behind a specific service or transaction.

It is therefore important that we:

- have a consistent 'digital face' and contemporary appearance for SCC across all our channels
- provide a smooth and seamless transition between different platforms and applications
- undertake digital content production driven by a clearer understanding of our customers and their journeys. This includes:
 - Access to information – presentation of clear information, which is not overwhelming, is well planned and based on customer journey definition
 - Fulfilment – give feedback to the digital user about where their request is in the process to enable customer to be able to track their information through to completion and to be kept informed.

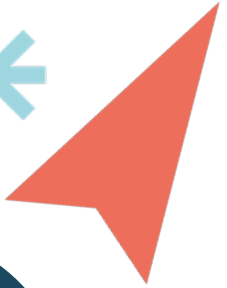
This means that customers will find services more accessible, consistent, and trustworthy whether they are looking for information, requesting services or seeking other support.

How we will achieve our ambition for a **consistent, coherent, modern and intuitive digital customer experience that meets user needs and expectations**



Digital presence building blocks

The delivery of digital presence will include four areas of responsibilities and capabilities:



Planning

Strategy,
direction,
prioritisation

- Defined across the Digital Strategy, Digital Engagement Plan and Customer Experience Strategy
- Underpinned by an understanding of users and customer journey mapping
- Customer account architecture, identification, management and data
- Technical design and delivery prioritised and informed by the technology and digital roadmaps
- Monitor future trends and horizon scanning

Insight

Analyse,
inform,
identify

- Multi channel analysis of customer engagement and interactions
- Alignment of data sets across applications to provide informed view of improvements
- Understand areas of frustration and issues impacting digital customer experience
- Gap analysis and identification of areas of opportunity – commonality / scale of solution

Delivery

Design,
develop,
automate

- Iterative design, development and management of digital channels, to provide seamless customer journeys across platforms and applications
- Content and knowledge production to support digital customer experience
- Delivery of automation processes to ease digital transactions

Monitor

Review,
refine,
improve

- Collection, comparison and analysis of data (website and applications) and publication to inform continuous improvement
- Responsive data analysis and feedback to understand how improved digital customer experience is performing
- Combined with qualitative user testing feedback

Digital customer experience

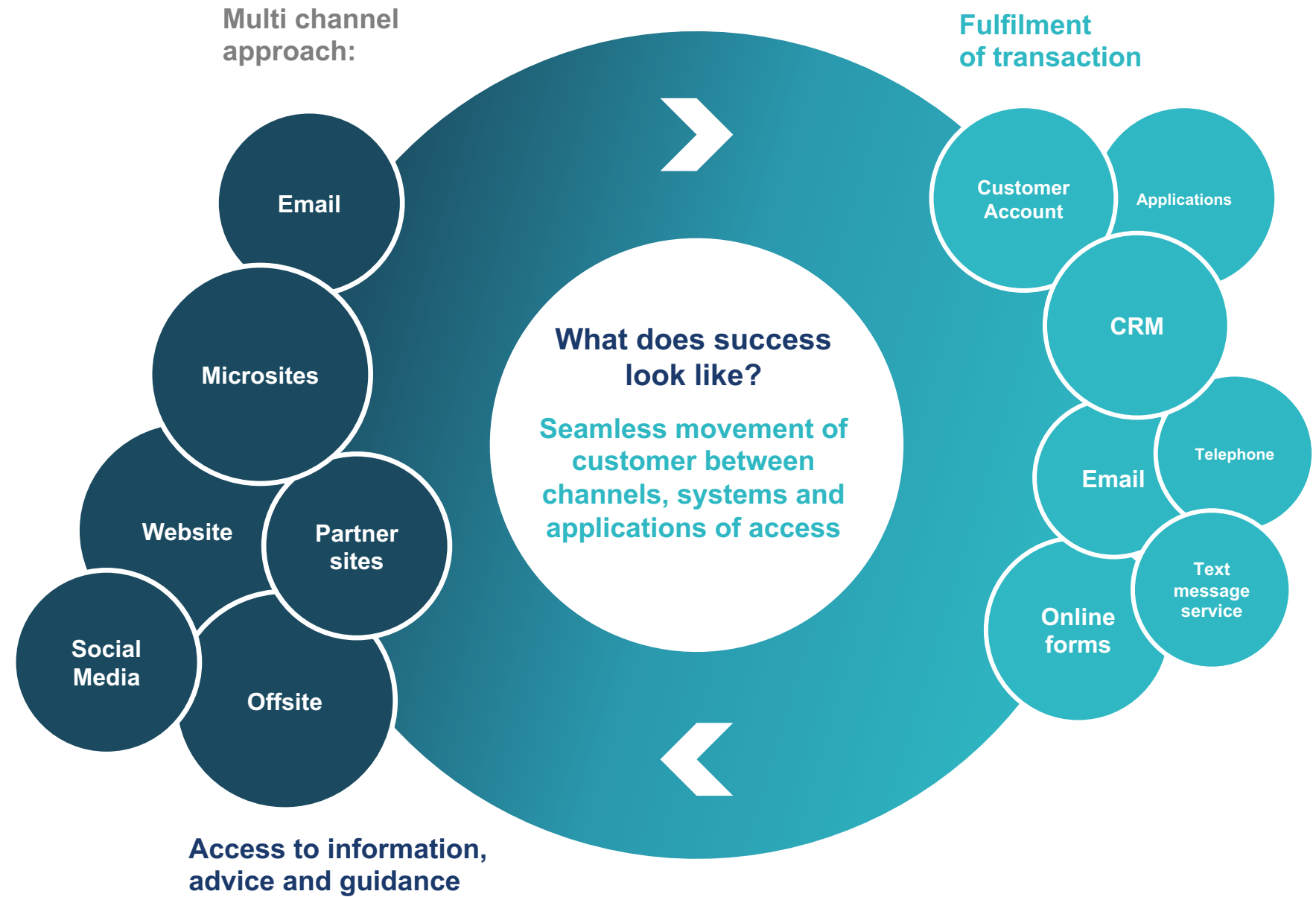
A customer may pass through a range of channels, applications and systems when accessing SCC for a service, whether that is for information advice and guidance or to fulfill a transactional request.

Our ambition is to take a multi channel approach to improvements to ensure a customer's interaction with Sheffield City Council is a seamless process.

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How will we know we have been successful?

- End customer receives a positive customer experience
- End customer achieves the goal they set out to achieve
- SCC is seen as a trusted organisation and reliable
- Reduction in low level contacts to council
- Any customer contact member of staff can answer a customer query whether the request comes in person, on the phone or online



Use cases

A set of use cases (both internal and external) demonstrate the ‘as is’ and compare this to how a customer’s experience with the council could be different in the future.

What happens now?

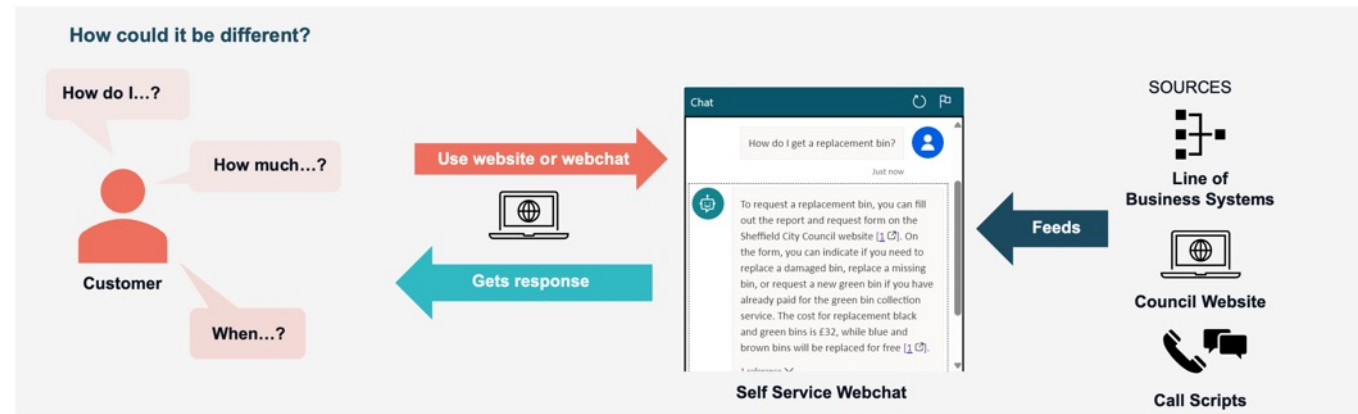
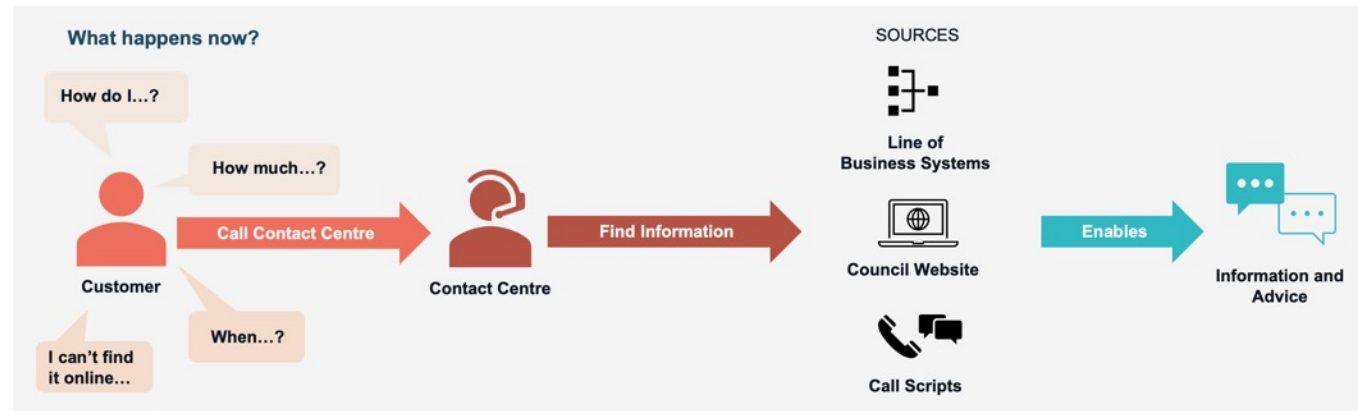
Many customers don’t want to have to phone the Contact Centre for every request, as this often involves sitting in queues and limits the hours within which they can services.

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How could it be different?

Customers who wish to access services digitally and self-serve, want to find what they are looking for on the website or via webchat, resolving their query or transaction at a time convenient for them.

Several use cases are explored in detail in Appendix A and outline what happens now and what will be different as a result of digital transformation and change across the council.





Section 5

Technology, infrastructure and security – delivery



Key directions and themes

Purpose

The purpose of this section is to provide a strategic outline of the broader themes and technologies which will underpin the delivery of the digital vision, pillars and strategy.

The changes inherent across the technology and infrastructure will be transformational, service and customer led, empowering our workforce, reducing disruption of technology issues and enabling a “step change” in ICT and Digital services.

Background

Sheffield City Council has made good progress in developing its overall technology infrastructure in recent years, progressing the transition to Cloud services, delivering Office 365 and moving to a laptop-based estate.

The technology we use day-to-day has become a fundamental enabler for how we deliver services and will require continuous change. The Technology, Infrastructure and Security Strategy and the supporting technology roadmap will define what will change, over what time-line and how this supports the wider Council agenda.

Futures

Technology continues to evolve rapidly, with an increasing dependency in our working lives, but providing opportunities to deliver change with a positive impact on how we work and deliver services.

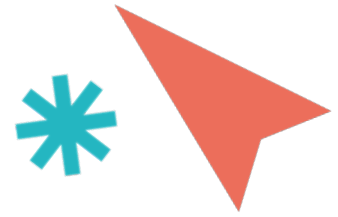
The delivery of the digital strategy will require significant changes to the wider infrastructure to ensure we maintain and deliver on a more resilient, reliable, sustainable, secure and future proofed working environment.

- Technology decisions and direction is consistently based on the requirements of the business and needs of the broader customer base (internal and external).
- Alignment of the technology and infrastructure strategy with the overarching Council strategy and direction with respect to services delivered, changed estate needs and priorities for investment.
- Digital solutions and technology choices focused on supporting the cities ambition to be a net zero city by 2030 through decarbonisation, aligning to sustainable and ecologically-responsible processes and materials, and enabling people to travel less through remote working and online access to services.
- Technology refresh and alignment should be consistent with industry and local government trends, adapting to new opportunities and solutions, reducing overall cost of ownership.
- Always seeking to build broader partnerships across public sector to leverage investment, shared delivery and deliver wider benefit to local people, communities and businesses.



A fully detailed technology, infrastructure and security strategy has been developed to underpin this section. See Appendix E for accompanying documents to the Digital Strategy.

Technology principles



Enabling technologies

Applying technology to provide maximum benefit to the user community in their day to day working lives, releasing capacity for the Council to better support those who are not technology enabled.

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Foundational infrastructure & security

Delivering an infrastructure for users, customers and partners that is reliable, secure, performant, can easily change and will serve the Council over the next 5 to 10 years.

Integrated applications strategy

Developing the applications strategy and roadmap to support the objectives and operations of the organisation, which will enhance efficiency and facilitate the wider digital and organisational transformation.

Sustainable technology and processes

To ensure that environmental impact and carbon emissions are assessed, monitored and minimised, resources are conserved at all stages during the technology life-cycle and that sustainable social and economic benefits are maximised – to deliver the Council’s ambition of net zero by 2030.





Creating an ICT and Digital Innovation Service that can proactively, and responsively, facilitate and support the directorates through the full life-cycle of systems change and support.

Overall outcomes

Establish a transformed, future-proofed and fit for purpose ICT and Digital Innovation Service (Appendix D) designed and developed to meet the needs of the organisation in the delivery and support of digital and technology solutions.



Page 160
Strategic and operational improvements to ICT services and operations for all staff and customers.



Robust, resilient and less complex solutions with reduced outages applying Cloud delivery.



More productive, effective and responsive delivery of ICT services.



Informed decision making through improved information and data management.



Greater value for money and reduced overall cost of ICT contributing to future savings targets.



More effective engagement internally and with strategic partners, through joint working and proactive strategic ICT leadership.



Maintaining and enhancing digital capability through sustained investment, innovation and staff training and development.



Adoption of sustainable technology and processes to minimise and reduce environmental emission and impact.

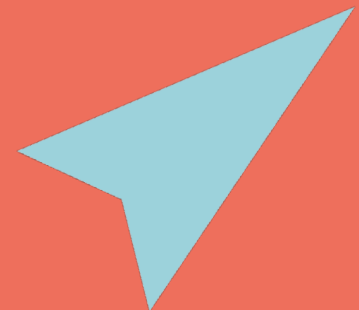


Section 6

What will success look like?

Page 161

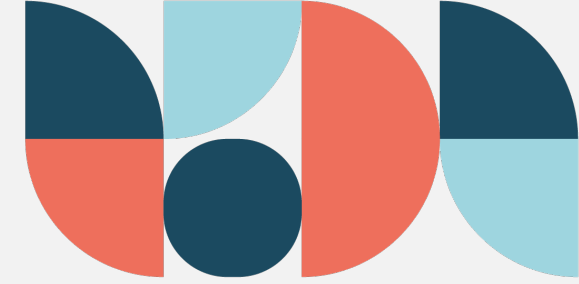
In five years time...



What will success look like?

In five years' time...

The Digital Strategy for Sheffield City Council presents the future direction for digital services and enabling information and technology over the next five years and is striving to achieve:



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A coherent and consistent digital customer experience.

A digital preferred option into all services.

Digitally literate and included workforce who are confident can meet the demands of a Digital Council.

A corporate data platform, with established data standards to bring together quality datasets.

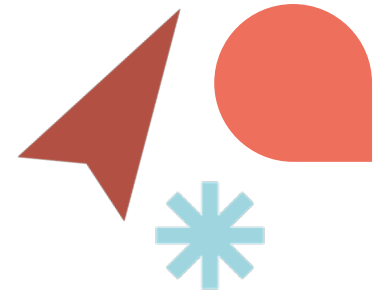
Robust, secure and sustainable future proofed technology landscape.

Collaboration and alignment across Directorates of digital activity and decision making across the whole council.

Established robust governance and framework that aligns with strategic operations to support the effective delivering of enabling digital and IT projects.

What will success look like?

Future experiences



There will be a transformed experience for all customers, both internally and externally.

More efficient, streamlined organisation across processes, repetitive tasks with cost savings, faster service delivery and increased internal productivity.

Meet data protection / privacy, security, and compliance requirements and mitigate cyber security risks.

Enhanced more personal customer experience around seamless interactions and satisfaction, with improved response times to customer queries and requests.

Adaptability to changing customer demands and technological advancements, fostering a culture of innovation and experiment with new ways of engaging with customers.

Through sustained investment deliver cost savings through optimisation, automation, streamlined processes and reducing ICT infrastructure and applications costs.

Application of data analytics and business intelligence to provide insights into customer needs and behaviors, optimise processes and deliver service improvement.

To build scalable, resilient and flexible IT infrastructures and systems that can accommodate growth, changes in demand, and emerging business requirements.

Empowerment and support for staff with the right tools, skills, and training. Address digital inclusion through technology access, digital literacy, skills development and relevant digital services.

To ensure that the delivery of digital reduces the environmental footprint and emissions, minimises waste and applies sustainable and environmentally friendly practices.



Section 7 Appendices



Appendix A

Digital ambition - use cases

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- 50 – Housing Services
- 52 – Children’s Services
- 54 – Adult Social Care
- 56 – Public Health
- 58 – HR

Appendix B

Technology ambition and outcomes

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Appendix C

Future roadmaps

- 67 – Digital and Applications Roadmap
- 68 – Technology and Infrastructure Roadmap

Appendix D

The ICT and Digital Innovation Service

- 70 – The ICT and Digital Innovation Service

Appendix E

Accompanying documents to the Digital Strategy

- 71 – Accompanying documents

Appendices Contents

Appendix A – Digital ambition - use cases

The following use cases are examples to demonstrate what happens now and where we are aiming to be in the future as we work towards our Digital Vision, supported by our Digital Pillars (page 6) and Technology Principles (page 40).

Use Case 1 – Customer Services

Use Case 2 – Housing Services – Damp and mould

Use Case 3 – Children’s Services – Single Care Record

Use Case 4 – Adult Social Care

Use Case 5 – Public Health

Use Case 6 - HR – Navigation policies

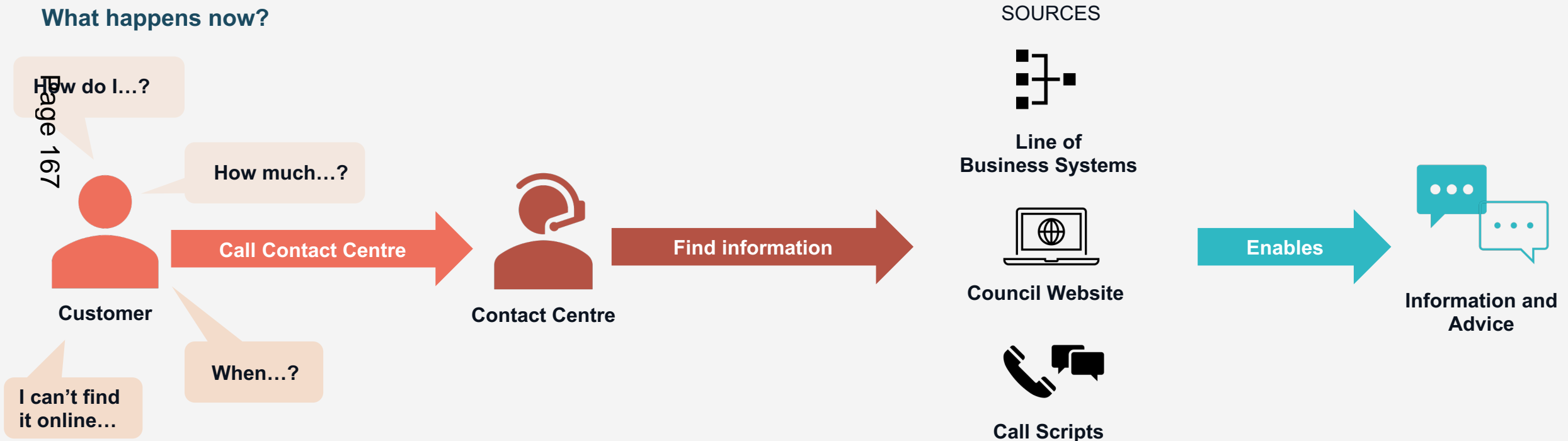
Digital ambition – use case 1

Customer Services



Many customers don't want to have to phone the Contact Centre for every request, as this often involves sitting in queues and limits the hours within which they can access services.

What happens now?



Digital ambition – use case 1

Customer Services



Customers who wish to access services digitally and self-serve, want to find what they are looking for on the website or via webchat, resolving their query or transaction at a time convenient for them.

How could it be different?

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How do I...?

How much...?



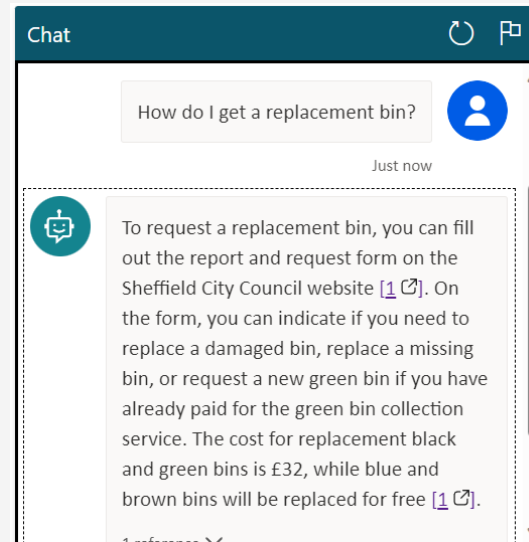
Customer

When...?

Use website or webchat



Gets response



Self Service Webchat

Feeds

SOURCES



Line of Business Systems



Council Website



Call Scripts

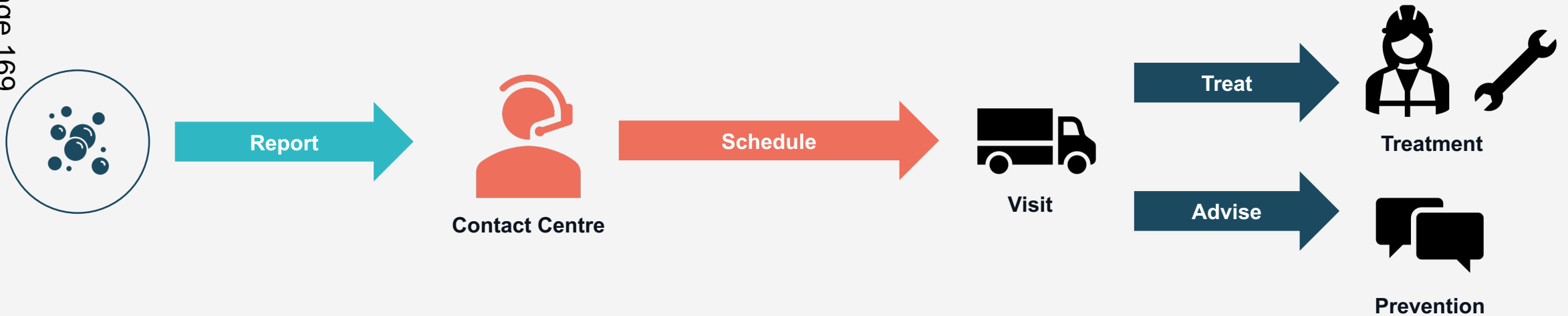
Housing Services – damp and mould



Damp and mould can be difficult to address if it is not fixed quickly and causes health risks for residents if left untreated. Damp and mould issues are usually only identified once there is already an issue.

What happens now?

Page 169

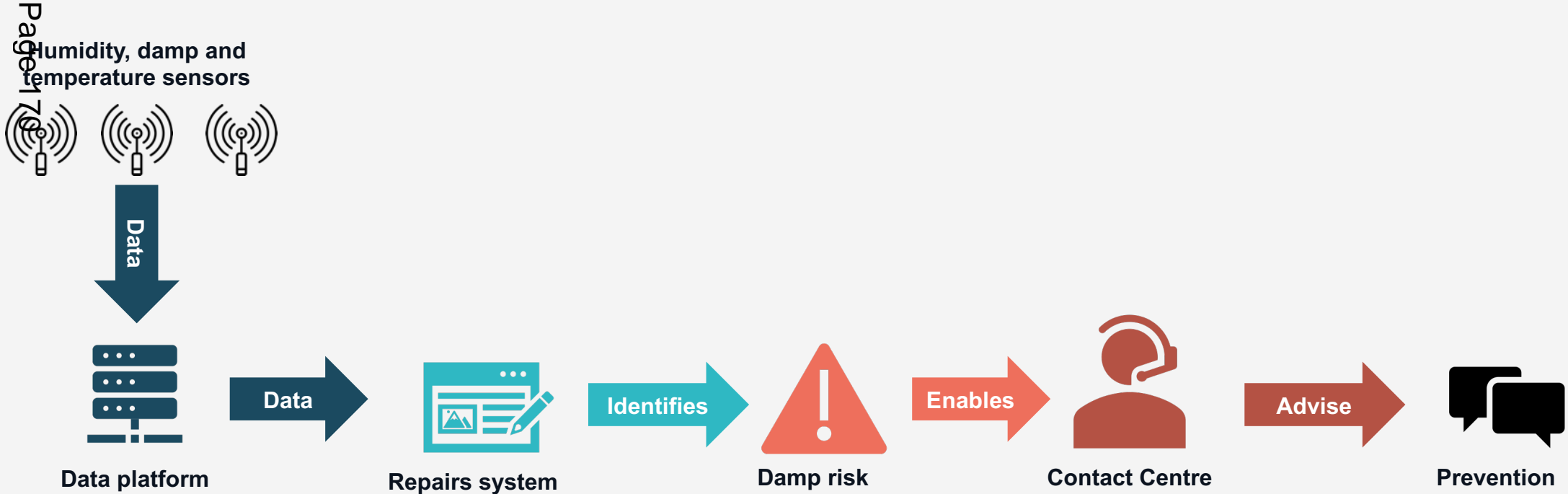


Housing Services – damp and mould



Sensors (Internet of Things) monitor for humidity and damp. Monitoring information is passed to the data platform, which when integrated to repairs system automates alerts when a risk is identified. Advice is given for preventative action before a problem arises.

How could it be different?





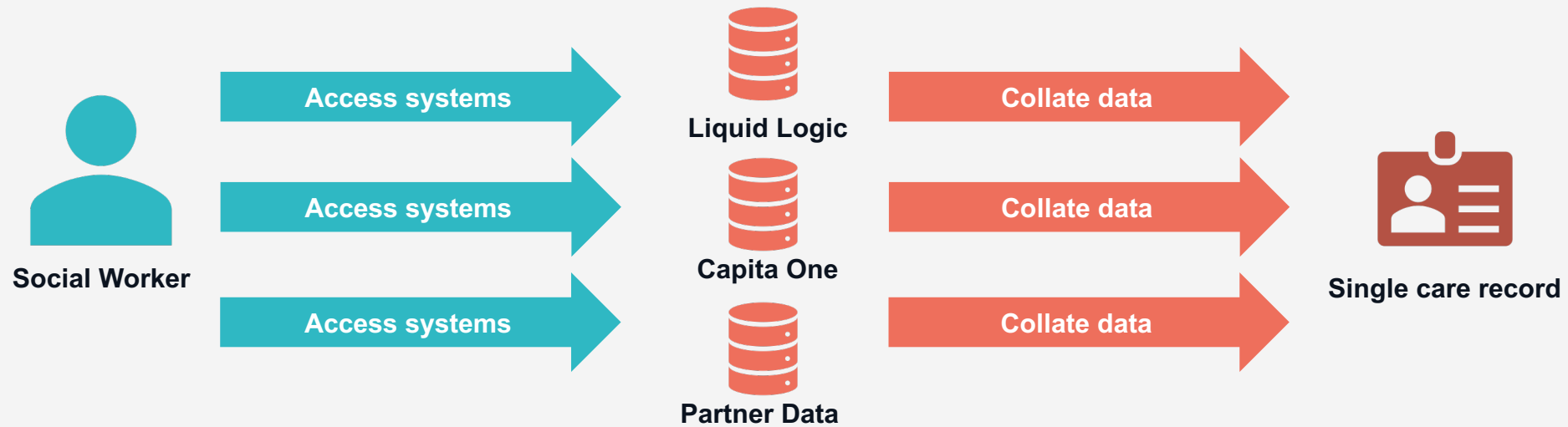
Children's Services – Single Care Record



Some children and their families receive support or have interactions with a range of different public services, but what action is taken and what support is provided is not visible to Social Workers which impacts how they plan care.

How could it be different?

Page 171



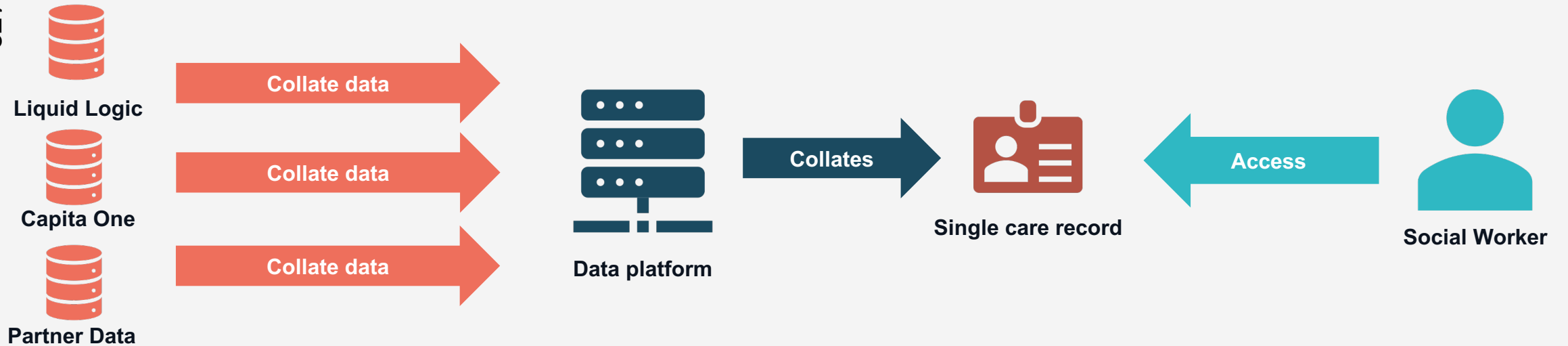
Children's Services – Single Care Record



Data is collated from the different systems that may hold information on a child and their families, this is collated to inform a single care record which the Social Worker can access as and when required.

How could it be different?

Page 172



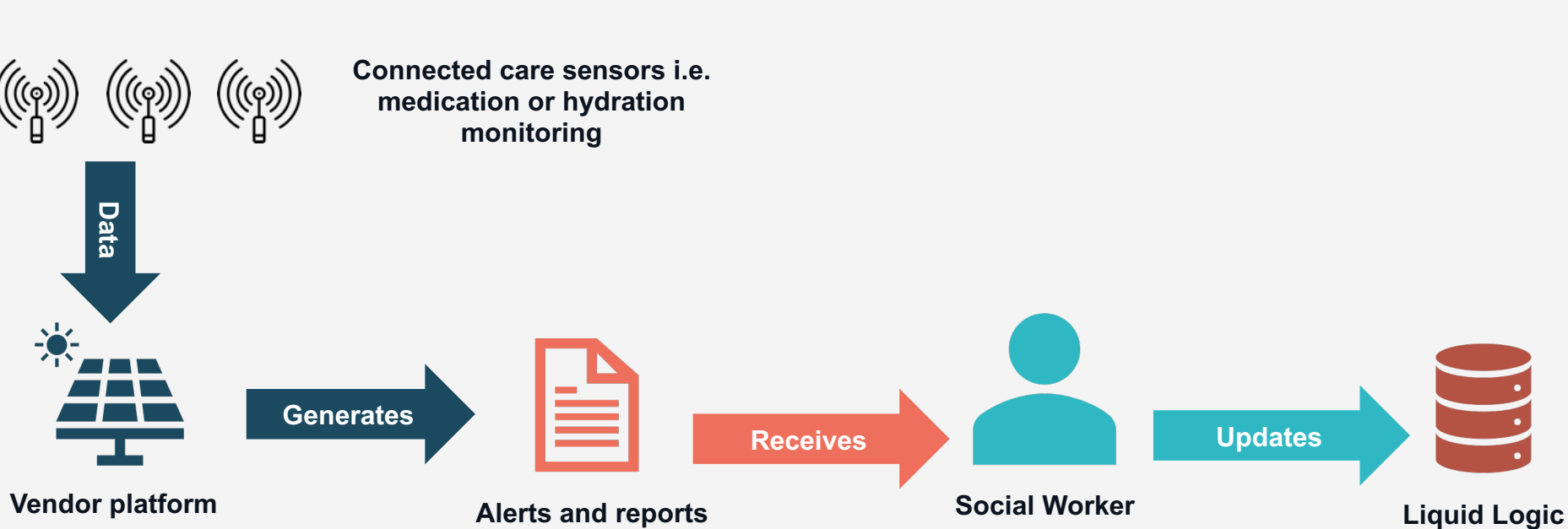
Adult Social Care



Technology Enabled Care: A Connected Care Pilot is current in progress using sensors to collect information around a service user's activities to help identify changes in behaviour patterns that may be of concern. These indicators can then be acted upon. Currently the alert and report is manually entered into the business system.

What happens now?

Page 173



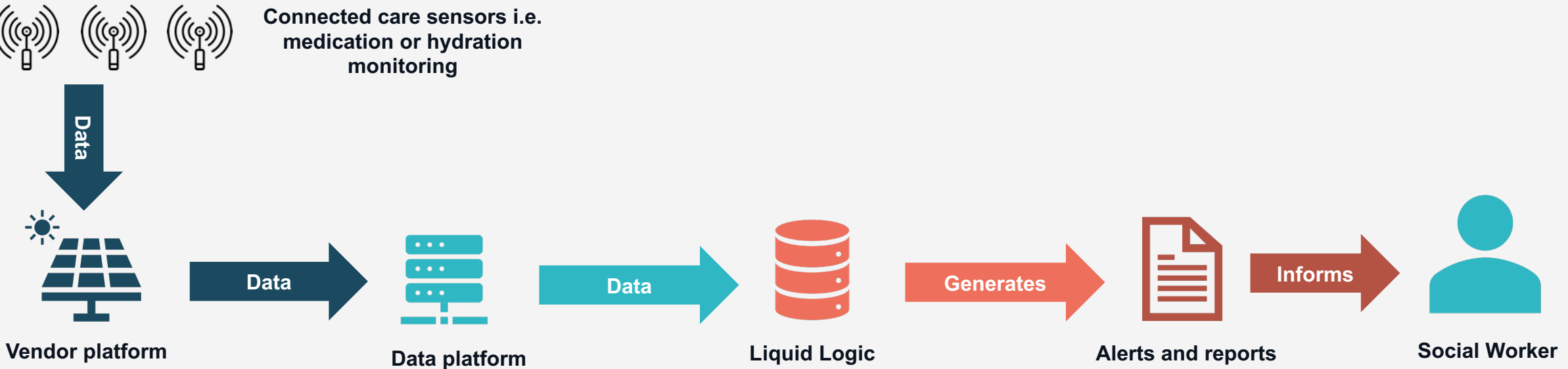
Adult Social Care



Technology Enabled Care: A Connected Care Pilot is current in progress using sensors to collect information around a service user's activities to help identify changes in behaviour patterns that may be of concern. These indicators can then be acted upon. Improved integration with the data platform can help automate the generation and receipt of information

How could it be different?

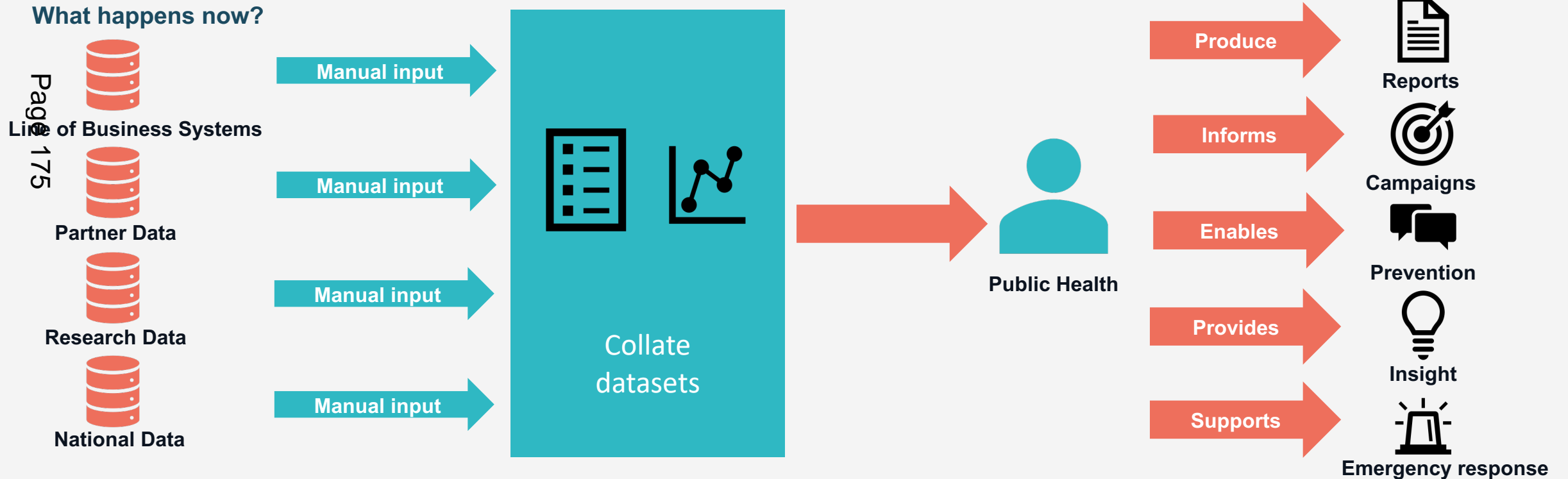
Page 174



Public Health



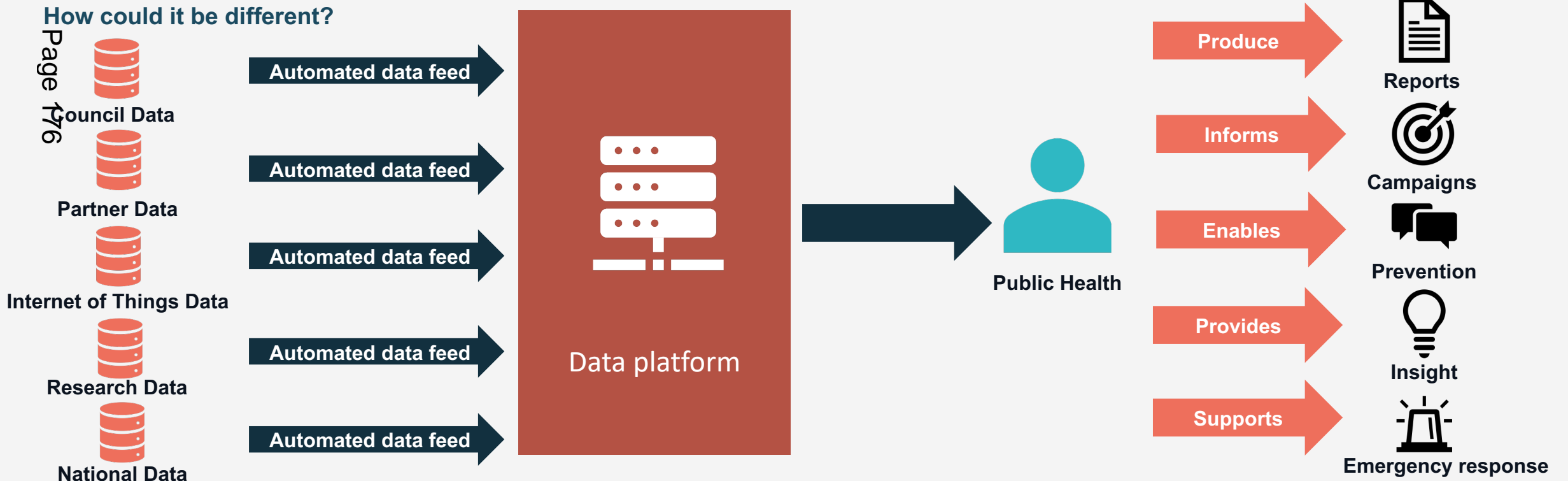
Improving public health is multi-faceted; it includes assessing and reporting on public health initiatives like the Clean Air Zone, developing campaigns, identifying preventative measures (such as heat risk), developing insight and supporting emergency response, such as COVID. Collating different datasets is a key enabler to inform these activities.



Public Health



Improving public health is multi-faceted; it includes assessing and reporting on public health initiatives like the Clean Air Zone, developing campaigns, identifying preventative measures (such as heat risk), developing insight and supporting emergency response, such as COVID. Automation of different data sets would enable a focus on quality of information and release more time to support service users.





HR – Navigating Policies



There are a wide range of policies and procedures that govern how our workforce and managers operate. These policies are often (necessarily) quite lengthy and take time to find the required information.

What happens now?

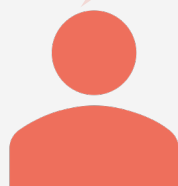
Can I call a witness for my level 1 disciplinary hearing?

Page 177



Employee

Let me check the policy and procedures

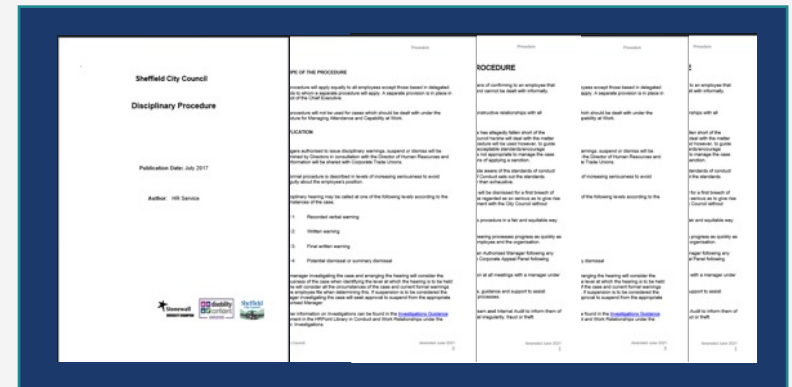
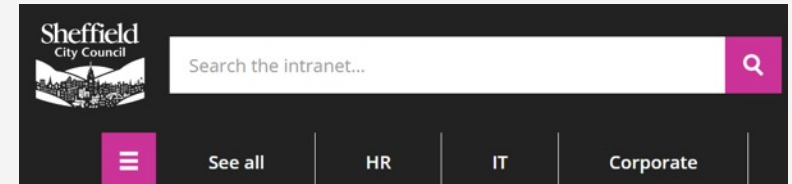


Manager

Yes, you can call a witness during the hearing

Find policy

Manually review policy



HR – Navigating Policies



HR policy content from website and other sources is provided to HR Bot, for employees and managers to question as required and receive immediate response, supporting improvements in productivity.

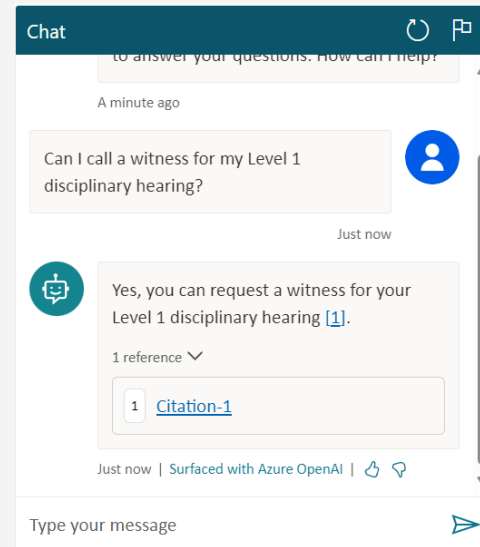
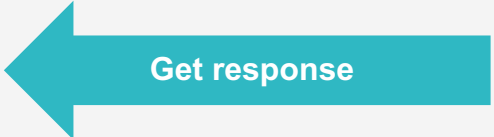
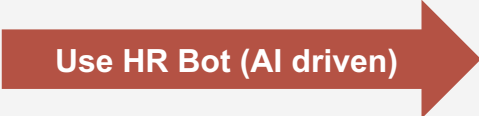
How could it be different?

Page 178

Can I call a witness for my Level 1 disciplinary hearing?



Employee



Appendix B – Technology ambition and principles

The Digital Pillars (page 9) are enabled by the right sustainable technology that is managed efficiently and is secure – infrastructure, applications, hardware and connectivity.

The supporting Technology, Infrastructure and Security Strategy, outlines how the underpinning technology defines what will change, over what timeline and how this supports wider Council Priorities.

This appendix includes:

- Technology ambition
- Enabling Technologies
- Foundational Infrastructure & security
- Integrated applications strategy
- Sustainable technology and processes

Technology ambition

Modern desktop

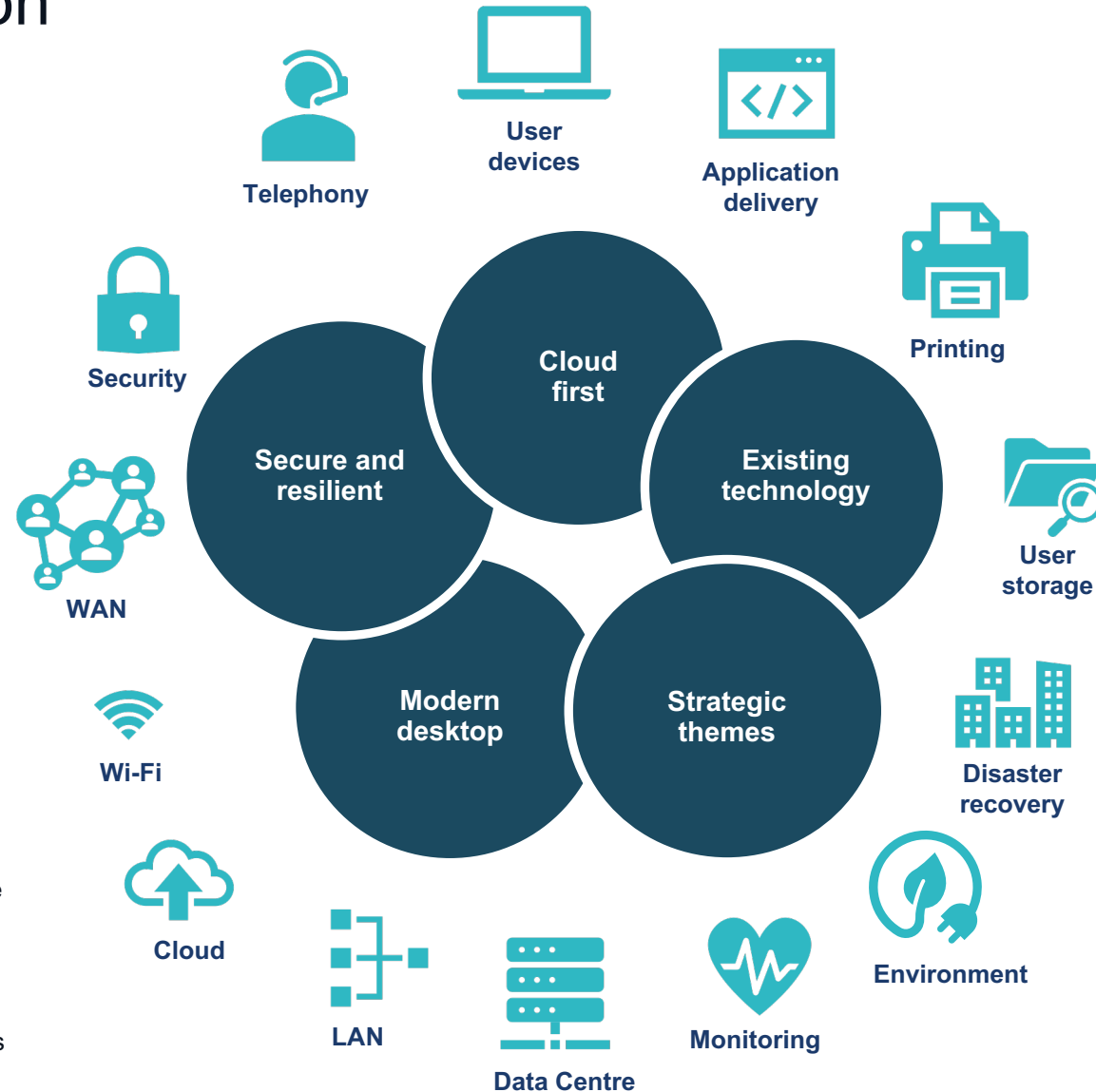
- Enables users to work wherever and whenever they need in a secure, protected environment.
- Deployed and managed in a simple, easily supported manner which minimises support.
- Always current and employing the latest productivity tools, applications and services.

Systems and application delivery

- Established roadmap with directorates of application delivery.
- Defined business practices that aim to use cloud services as far as possible.
- Cloud computing solutions are considered before any others and only host on premise as a last resort.
- To ensure streamlined systems, simplified process and data exchange, integration solutions will be applied where practical.

Strategic

- Application of sustainability and reduction in carbon emissions when considering device choice and procurement, print services and Cloud delivery to support Sheffield City Council's net zero 2030 goal.
- Digital inclusion design and practices will be applied throughout to address digital literacy, skills development and appropriate digital services.



Secure and resilient

- Continued development and maintenance of a safe and secure working environment.
- Ensure authentication, authorisation and continued validation of security configuration.
- All critical services will have resilience built in to support business continuity and disaster recovery situations.

Leveraging existing technology

- Always ensuring we make the most of the current tools and products and that they are good value for money.
- Existing solutions which remain fit for purpose will continue to be used in line with business requirements.
- Make the most of our Microsoft licensing wherever possible.

Environmental Impact

- To ensure that environmental impact is minimised, resources are conserved at all stages during the technology life-cycle.

Consistently seek to enhance value for money and efficiencies across the technology landscape through application of current and adoption of new technologies.



Delivery

Device Replacement

- Replacement of all user devices over the next 1-2 years using the latest technology based on the Windows 11 build and maintaining a four-year phased laptop replacement cycle.



Printing

- Transition to a Cloud based print solution and consolidate the number and proliferation of printers and on-premise print servers with more proactive management of printing services and procurement.



Telephony

- Review the existing policy regarding phone allocation to reduce the number of corporate smart devices across the estate.
- Review of mobile connections and supporting processes to reduce current high levels of licenses.
- Rationalisation of land line connections across the estate with an increased use of Cloud services.



Meeting Rooms

- Develop requirements, confirm device selection and deploy meeting room technology across locations.



User Storage

- Establish and deliver a project to address current challenges around file storage and make best use of Sharepoint, Teams and OneDrive.



Microsoft Applications

- Through a Microsoft applications improvement programme and increased learning and training, greater productivity, shared working and more effective use of the tools will be delivered.

Outcomes

- Our staff will be empowered and skilled to make the best use of the technology they will have access to day-to-day.
- Investment in Microsoft applications will be fully explored.
- A clear user driven strategy will be developed and implemented across the range of Sharepoint, Teams and OneDrive applications.
- The technology will be implemented to work seamlessly, efficiently and effectively in any location and will apply the latest security and management.
- Through a modern delivery model with automation and pro-active device management we will become increasingly customer centric.
- Access to applications will be flexible, automated, streamlined, and fit for purpose enabling staff to operate efficiently and effectively.
- Reduced dependency on print devices across the estate with the use of distributed print stations.
- Significantly improved management of device and license usage for Microsoft applications and mobile technology, with a reduced costs footprint.
- Provision of simple, easy to use and self-serve flexible meeting room technology as part of the wider deployment of meeting room services.

Delivering an infrastructure for users, customers and partners that is reliable, secure, performant, can easily change and will serve the Council over the next 5 to 10-years.



Delivery

Local Networks

- All of the current switch network in buildings which supports the delivery of services will need replacement from 2025 through to 2027.
- On premise infrastructure will significantly reduce with the rationalisation of buildings, shift to Wi-Fi and a more permanent approach to hybrid working.



Wi-Fi

- Complete replacement of Wi-Fi network across all sites, with implementation of Gov Roam to support collaborative working and seamless connection between public sector locations.



Wide Area Network

- Replacement of the current ageing network with a modern Cloud based software defined wide area network (SDWAN) with Internet services delivered at each location.
- Delivering SDWAN will support removal of all virtual private network services.



Cloud Solutions

- A Cloud first solution approach will be applied across all technical and business applications which gives priority to cloud-based solutions and services over traditional on-premises alternatives.
- Microsoft Azure will be applied for all backup services.



Security

- Microsoft Security services which are state of the art, will continue to be developed with new features deployed as they emerge.



The infrastructure development will be critical over the next few years given that key elements including the WAN, LAN Switches and Wi-Fi will need complete replacement.

Outcomes

- Improved service to users through cost-effective Cloud based delivery and management providing improved resilience, agility, scalability, response times and disaster recovery.
- Establishment of a modern, future proofed, simplified and cost-effective wide area network.
- Delivery of fully deployed Wi-Fi as a seamless, reliable, secure and high-speed service, provided to users across locations and from any device. Ensure Wi-Fi is flexible and scalable to support increased usage.
- As the new technology is implemented, optimise performance through network monitoring, identification of issues, management of resources and usage, with planning for future scalability as needed.
- Continue to reduce data-centre usage through Cloud migrations but maintain a reliable hosted and managed storage and server infrastructure for applications, databases, and other services where appropriate.
- Build in redundancy for disaster recovery and business continuity across critical services.
- Continuously adapt to new technology developments as they emerge, with a specific focus around opportunities for deploying new holistic security models.

Delivery



Applications Delivery and Improvement

- The ICT and Digital Innovation Service will engage across the organisation through its business partnering and projects delivery function, to support and facilitate the development and delivery of new applications.
- Where systems and solutions are under-performing or compromised the service will engage proactively to address challenges and drive improvements.
- The applications suite will be overhauled to identify applications rationalisations, re-procurements, proactive management and cost reductions.
- Centralised formal support and governance will be in place for all applications with an agile and responsive development approach.



Alignment with Directorates

- Full ongoing alignment between the needs of directorates across the application portfolio and the overall digital and ICT strategy.



Emerging Technologies

- Working with directorates maintain a forward view of emerging technologies (i.e. AI Services) and platforms, prioritising user experience, satisfaction and enhance productivity.



Cloud Adoption

- Deliver on the Cloud adoption strategy across the future applications assessing cost, scalability, flexibility, data security and compliance.



Data Analytics and Business Intelligence

- Ensure the applications strategy applies data analytics and business intelligence to derive insights and support decision making.

Outcomes

- Establish a full Council wide applications portfolio and change roadmap to manage replacement and adoption of emerging technologies that will bring value to the organisation.
- Modernised, streamlined, resilient and scalable applications delivery.
- Simplify design, improve performance and drive down application implementation and running costs.
- Flexibility and agility to scale up and down with a faster time to implementation.
- Improved security and governance across the applications portfolio.
- Alignment with the goals of the wider organisation and the individual directorates through collaboration and fully understanding business needs and priorities.
- Ensure integration and interoperability between applications.
- Effective selection and management of software suppliers and solutions with clear service levels, contracts managed, commercially compliant and fewer systems and suppliers.



To ensure that environmental impact and carbon emissions are assessed, monitored and minimised, resources are conserved at all stages during the technology life-cycle and that sustainable social and economic benefits are maximised – to deliver the Council’s ambition of net zero by 2030.

Delivery



Cloud

- Continued shift of technology solutions into the Cloud based on an assessment of environmental impact with a reduction in power consumption across the estate.



Technology Selection

- Assessing suppliers’ environmental policies as part of procurement with objective of all services having a zero net carbon emissions target and ensuring an ethical focus to procurement and technical development.



Hybrid working

- Applying modern hybrid and mobile working practices to reduce travel requirements with consequent energy usage reduction.



Supplier Engagement

- Working across the Council’s ICT supplier base to promote and influence their direction to meet the Councils ambition to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2030, including increased use of renewable energy sources to power their operations.



Print

- Consolidation and reduction in printer estate through Cloud migration and proactive management of printing services and procurement.



Disposal

- To ensure that effective and energy efficient processes are applied in the disposal of e-waste across the estate, as applied to devices and systems; and end of life disposal and / or recycling of physical hardware and infrastructure.



Outcomes

- Targets for carbon emission reduction applied across the Council’s technology estate during procurement and operational running.
- Reduction in energy consumption through environmentally friendly technology device choice and data-centre reductions.
- Reduced travel through application of modern working practices, mobile technology and improved communications, linked to hybrid working practices and accommodation review.
- Significant shift to paperless communication with reduction in physical print and increased applications of workflows and digital communications.
- Consistent and sustained application of environmental selection of technology, with the objective of reducing carbon emission across the ICT estate.
- By adopting sustainable technology and processes to minimise environmental emission, ICT will be applied to drive innovation and efficiency in an increasingly environmentally responsible manner.



Appendix C – Digital Strategy – future roadmaps

Two roadmaps outline activity over the next 5 years.

- Digital and Applications Roadmap
- Technology and Infrastructure Roadmap

Page 16 provides a 5-year high level roadmap

Digital and Applications Roadmap

Years run from April to March

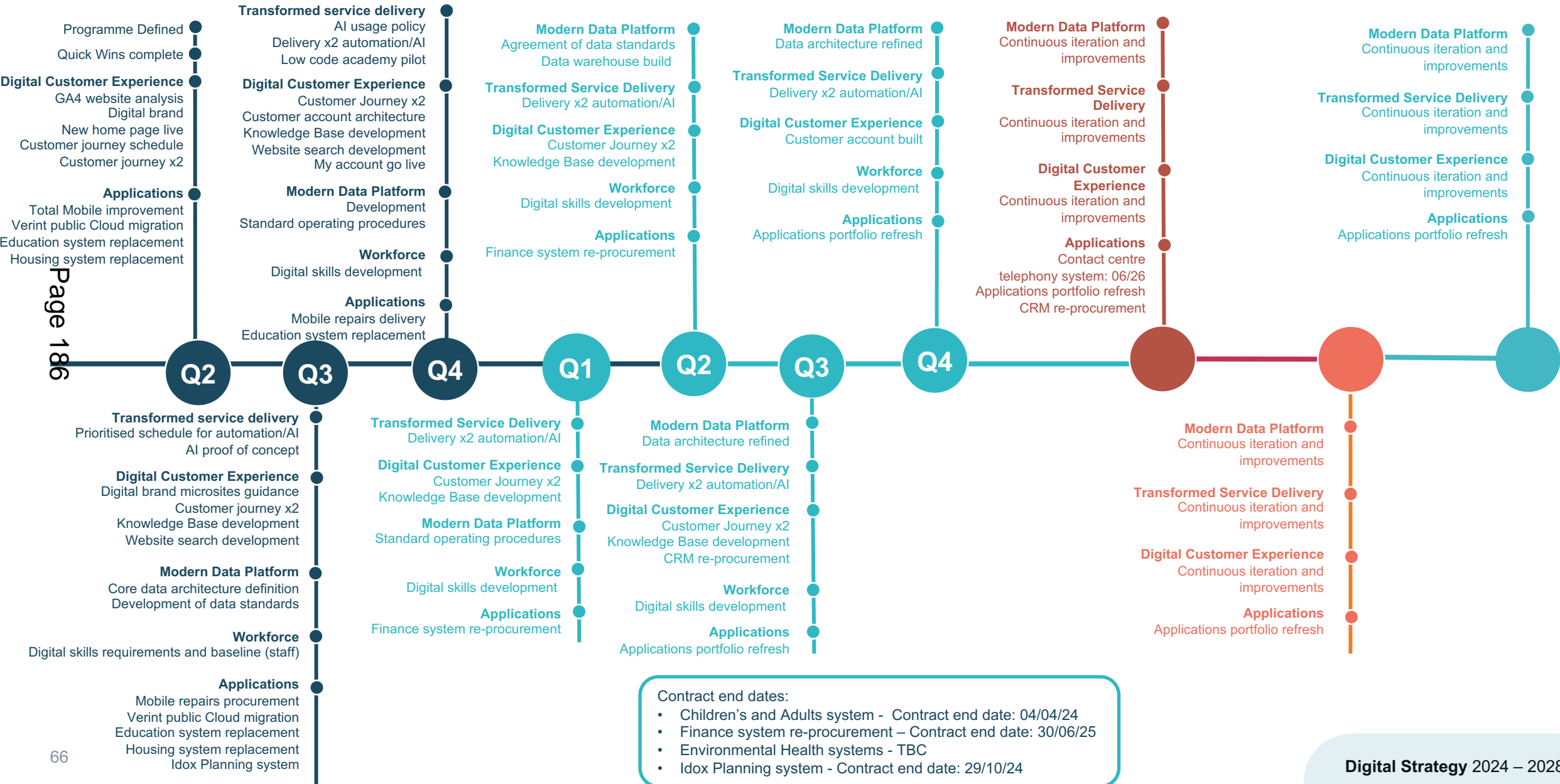
2024

2025

2026

2027

2028



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Contract end dates:

- Children's and Adults system - Contract end date: 04/04/24
- Finance system re-procurement – Contract end date: 30/06/25
- Environmental Health systems - TBC
- Idox Planning system - Contract end date: 29/10/24

Technology and Infrastructure Roadmap

Years run from April to March

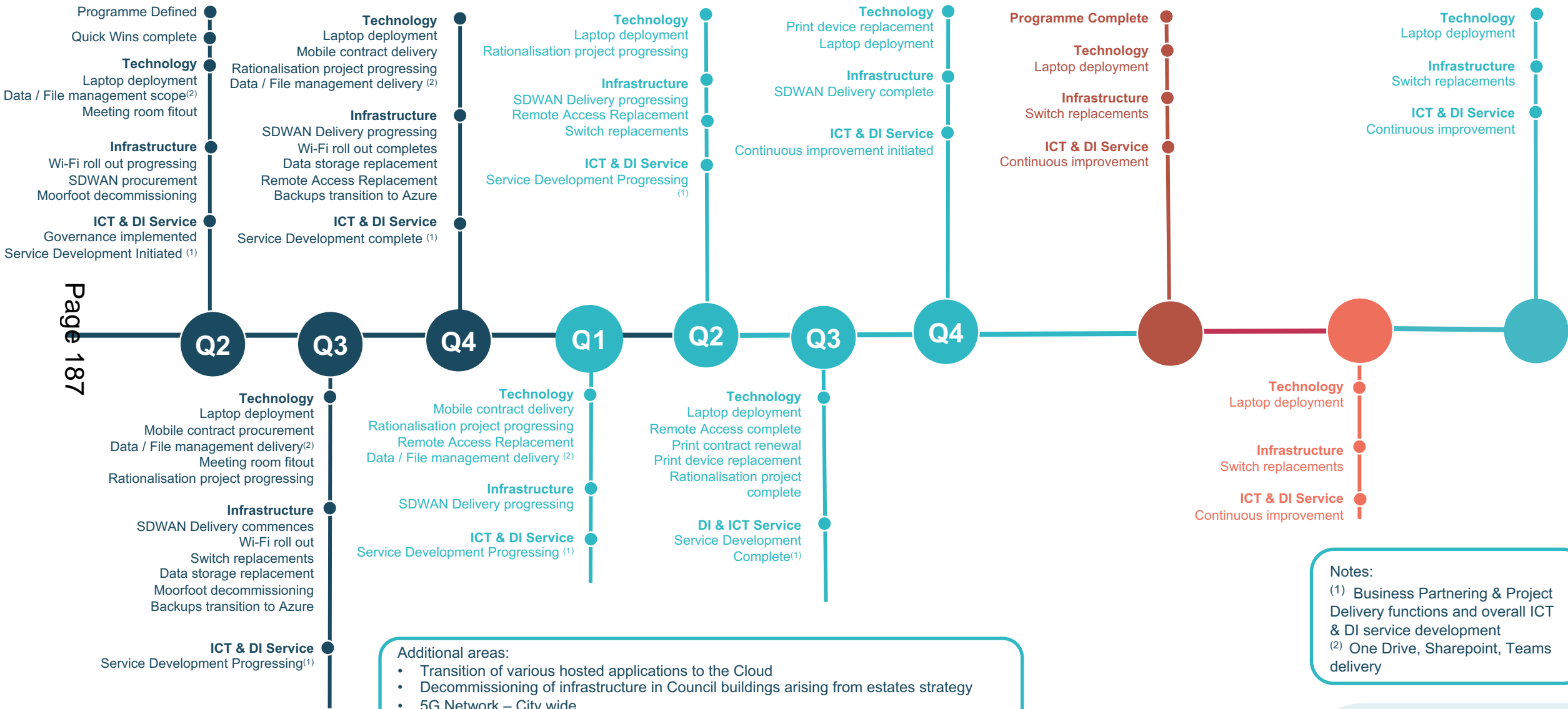
2024

2025

2026

2027

2028



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Additional areas:

- Transition of various hosted applications to the Cloud
- Decommissioning of infrastructure in Council buildings arising from estates strategy
- 5G Network – City wide
- Power Apps deployment

Notes:

(1) Business Partnering & Project Delivery functions and overall ICT & DI service development

(2) One Drive, Sharepoint, Teams delivery

Appendix D – The ICT and Digital Innovation Service

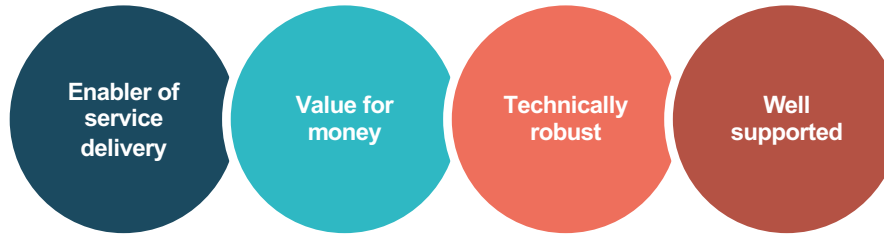
The delivery of this customer led transformational Digital Strategy, will run alongside significant business systems replacements and the continuation of business-as-usual activity.

This will create new resourcing demands with additional capacity and capability requirements to deliver and then support the change.

The ICT and Digital Innovation Service must establish and grow a council wide business partnering and projects delivery team alongside increased digital and innovation capacity, which is underpinned by the Business Case (see section 2).

Transformed ICT and Digital Innovation Service

We have the potential to establish the ICT and Digital Innovation Service as an exemplar of excellence across the region.



Outcomes

- Following industry best practice, improving transparency and service delivery.
- Ensuring all areas are included and that effective relationships are established and maintained.
- Streamlined and simplified with stronger management of outcomes for users.
- Proactively supporting the Council's responsibilities regarding the environment and climate change.
- Improving ICT services for all customers which is tangible in the daily use of technology.
- Integrating the core values of the Council into the ICT and Digital Innovation Service and placing all customers at the heart of the way ICT operates.
- Efficient, effective and agile ICT and Digital Innovation Service capable of supporting the Council's vision. Redesigned and streamlined to ensure a shift to customer delivery rather than firefighting and maintenance.
- Improving governance, control and establishing effective delivery.

Service Desk

Application of best practice, improved transparency, responsiveness and efficiency of service measured through performance metrics.

ICT Processes

Simplified and streamlined ICT and related processes and management applying best practice and recognised standards.

Customer Service

Sustained progression across the service in the delivery of customer services from day-to-day management through systems and technology management to business partnering and projects delivery.

Projects Delivery

Establish a robust well-designed project and programme delivery function with associated governance to deliver excellence in delivering change.

Business Partnering

Establish a function to proactively engage with directorates, establishing effective relationships to support the delivery of new systems and management of existing ones.

Wider Transformation

ICT and Digital Innovation Service as an enabler of business transformation supporting modern, flexible and agile solutions. Working in close partnership across the organisation to enable service change, efficiencies and improvements.

Internal Change

Increased motivation, morale and engagement within the ICT and Digital Innovation Service through engagement with transformation and service development.





April 2024

Sheffield City Council

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Report to Policy Committee

Author/Lead Officer of Report: Corleen Bygraves-Paul, Acting Joint Head of Customer Services
Tel: 07891541201

Report of: *Executive Director Neighbourhood Services*

Report to: *Strategy and Resources*

Date of Decision: *17th April 2024*

Subject: *Implementation of the Ombudsman Complaint Handling Codes*

Type of Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken	Initial <input type="checkbox"/>	Full <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Insert EIA reference number and attach EIA		
Has appropriate consultation/engagement taken place?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-		
<p><i>“The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”</i></p>		

Purpose of Report:

This report concerns new, more closely aligned Complaint Handling Codes developed by the Housing Ombudsman (HO) and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) providing best practice for the handling and management of all types of complaints.

The report outlines the features and implementation of the Codes, and the changes which they introduce. It also presents for approval revised Complaint Policy & Procedures which have been aligned to the new Ombudsman Complaint Handling Codes.

Recommendations:

That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee approves:

- the revised Sheffield City Council Complaint Handling Policy (April 2024) attached to this report at Appendix 1 for adoption with immediate effect to align to implementation of the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code;
- the revised Sheffield City Council Complaint Handling Policy (September 2024) attached to this report at Appendix 1a for adoption with effect from 1st September 2024 to align to implementation of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code;
- corresponding changes to the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure attached to this report at Appendix 2.

That Strategy and Resources Policy Committee recommends to Full Council that:

- the role of the Deputy Leader of Council should include being the Lead Member for Customer Experience (including complaints) to promote a positive complaint handling culture;
- lead Member responsibility for complaints be reserved to Strategy and Resources Policy Committee, with specific responsibilities as described in Section 1.9 of this report;
- Appropriate amendments are made to the Council's Constitution.

Background Papers:

- **Appendix 1 - SCC Complaint Handling Policy – April 2024**
- **Appendix 1a - SCC Complaint Handling Policy – September 2024**
- **Appendix 2 - SCC Corporate Complaints Procedure - April 2024**
- **Appendix 3 - Housing Ombudsman Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**
- **Appendix 4 - Sheffield City Council EIA (see reference 2532)**
- **Appendix 5 - Communications Plan**

Lead Officer to complete:-

1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed.	Finance: <i>(Insert name of officer consulted)</i> Adrian Hart
		Legal: <i>(Insert name of officer consulted)</i> Andrea Simpson
		Equalities & Consultation <i>(Insert name of officer consulted)</i> Louise Nunn
		Climate: <i>(Insert name of officer consulted)</i> Kathryn Warrington
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>		
2	SLB member who approved submission:	Ajman Ali
3	Committee Chair consulted:	<i>(Insert name of relevant Member)</i> Fran Belbin – Deputy Leader
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: Corleen Bygraves-Paul	Job Title: Acting Joint Head of Customer Services
	Date: 20 th March 2024	

1. PROPOSAL

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The Housing Ombudsman (HO) and the Local Government and Social Care (LGSCO) Ombudsman have developed more closely aligned Complaint Handling Codes, providing best practice for the handling and management of all types of complaints.

1.1.3 This report outlines proposals for the implementation of the Codes and presents and recommends for approval revised Complaint Policy & Procedures, which have been aligned to the new Ombudsman Complaint Handling Codes. A revised SCC Complaint Policy (April 2024), ensuring compliance with the HO Code, is attached to this report at Appendix 1. Further minor revisions are proposed to take effect from September 2024 in line with the LGSCO's recommendations for best practice and these are attached at Appendix 1a. The new Corporate Complaints Procedure, effective from April 2024, is attached at Appendix 2.

1.2 Housing Ombudsman (HO) Code Formal implementation from 1 April 2024 – HO Monitoring from 1 April 2024

1.2.1 The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 empowers the HO to issue a code of practice about the procedures members of the Scheme should have in place for considering complaints against them following consultation on the code and places a duty on the HO to monitor compliance with that code. The HO has issued its first statutory Complaint Handling Code, effective from 1 April 2024.

1.2.2 However, since 2021/2022, in anticipation of the revised HO Code being published, the Council had already implemented the majority of the Code's standards for the Council's Housing & Repairs and Maintenance Services, and so from 1 April 2024, has fully adopted the Code, with monitoring by the HO commencing from this date.

1.2.3 A self-assessment (regarding the Council's adherence to the Code) will be completed and submitted to the HO by 30th June 2024.

1.3 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Code Soft Launch from April 2024 with SCC monitoring from 1 September 2024 – LGSCO monitoring from April 2026

1.3.1 The LGSCO has the power to issue 'advice and guidance about good administrative practice' to organisations they deal with under section 23 (12A) of the Local Government Act 1974 and has issued a Complaint Handling Code which is aligned to the HO Code.

Local authorities should follow the Code unless there are good reasons not to.

1.3.2 Whilst the LGSCO does not plan to fully implement monitoring adherence until April 2026, in order to provide consistency of standards across complaint handling and in order to strengthen our commitment to improve complaint handling, Sheffield City Council plans to adopt the LGSCO's recommendations for best practice fully from September 2024.

1.3.3 This will allow time to negotiate with our third-party contractors, so as to ensure that wherever possible their complaint policies and standards are also aligned to the Code.

1.4 Strategic Partners/third party contractors (where possible) to be aligned to the Code by 1 September 2024

1.4.1 Veolia response timescales currently align to the changes made by the Code.

1.4.2 Amey response timescales do not align to the changes. It should be noted that currently Amey response times are longer (20 working days at Stage 1) than those recommended by the Code.

1.4.3 The LGSCO has advised that there is no expectation to revisit existing contractual arrangements (especially if there is a cost involved). However as Amey accounted for 16% (1546 of 9514) of the total complaints received during 2022/23, we will explore the possibility of alignment to the LGSCO Code.

1.5 The Code does not apply to complaints which are subject to an existing statutory code

1.5.1 These Codes will apply across all complaint types, except for social care which has its own existing statutory codes.

1.5.2 This means that some complaints about children's services, adult social care and public health are not covered by the expectations set out in the Code:

Complaints dealt with under the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 and The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 will not be affected by the Code. It will also exclude some complaints about public health matters which are covered by The NHS Bodies and Local Authorities (Partnership Arrangements, Care Trusts, Public Health and Local Healthwatch) Regulations 2012.

1.5.3 Complaints about the behaviour and conduct of elected Members are also not covered by the Code as these are dealt with in accordance with section 28 of the Localism Act 2011.

1.5.4 Details of all exclusions are set out in sections 2.8 – 2.14 of the revised SCC Complaint Policy (April 2024) at Appendix 1 and SCC Complaint Policy (September 2024), at Appendix 1a to this report.

1.6 Non-compliance outcomes

1.6.1 The LGSCO may make a finding of maladministration where a local authority's policies and procedures depart from the Code without sufficient explanation. They may also make a finding of maladministration where, without good reason, a local authority does not meet the standards in the Code when responding to an individual complaint.

1.6.2 If there is evidence of ongoing failures in compliance, the HO will consider using its wider powers, including Complaint Handling Failure Orders.

1.7 Key areas of the revised SCC Complaint Handling Policy

1.7.1 In line with the HO and LGSCO Complaint Handling Codes the revised policy includes:

- universal definition of a complaint and of a service request
- a simple two stage complaint handling process with emphasis on early resolution
- providing easy access to the complaints procedure and ensuring citizens are aware of it, including their right to access the relevant Ombudsman Service
- the structure of the complaints procedure - only 2 stages, with clear timescales set out for responses:
 - **Stage 1** – within 10 working days of acknowledgement (formerly 20 working days from receipt). Any extension will be no more than 10 working days without good reason and the reason(s) will be clearly explained to the complainant.
 - **Stage 2** – within 20 working days of acknowledgement (formerly 20 working days from receipt). Any extension will be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) will be clearly explained to the complainant.
- ensuring fairness in complaint handling with a people-focused process
- taking action to put things right and appropriate remedies
- creating a positive complaint handling culture through continuous learning and improvement
- demonstrating learning in annual reports
- annual self-assessment against the Code (HO only)
- improved governance of the Council's complaints handling performance by the appointment of:

- a senior executive to oversee complaint handling performance
- a Lead Member of Customer Experience - which includes responsibility for complaint handling performance

1.8 Senior executive to oversee complaint handling performance

1.8.1 This role defaults to the Director responsible for the management of the Council's Corporate Feedback & Complaints Team, currently the Director of Operational Services whose responsibilities - as set out in the Management Structure at Part 7 of the Constitution - include Corporate Complaints and being the Lead Director for Customer Experience. This Officer will be responsible for overall complaint performance reporting, assessing any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.

1.8.2 However, this role does not replace the responsibility and accountability of Directors to ensure that any outcomes/learnings/service improvements are implemented and reviewed periodically. This may include escalation and review by the appropriate policy committee as required. Further, this role does not include the statutory responsibilities and the duty to report to the social care regulators of the Director of Children & Families and the Strategic Director of Adult Care and Wellbeing.

1.9 Lead Member for Customer Experience

1.9.1 Both the HO and LGSCO Codes describe the need for and role of a "Member Responsible for Complaints". In the HO Code this role is ascribed to "a member of the governing body (or equivalent)". This reflects the fact that the Code applies to all Registered Providers of Social Housing, who may be local housing authorities, companies or charities, and so "governing body" is used as a blanket term to cover the various forms of governance that may apply. The LGSCO Code, however, is more specific in its application to local authorities, stating that "*organisations should assign lead responsibility for complaints in governance arrangements to support a positive complaint handling culture. We refer to this as the 'Member Responsible for Complaints' (the Member). This role could be carried out by an individual or committee depending on the governance arrangements in place.*"

1.9.2 Sheffield City Council operates a committee system of governance and the governing body is the Council. In its Constitution Full Council delegates responsible for the exercise of most of its functions to committees or to officers. It is proposed that the role of the Member Responsible for Complaints be reserved to the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee and that a recommendation be made to Full Council to amend the Constitution accordingly.

1.9.3 To fulfil this role the Lead Member must receive regular information on complaints which provides insight on the organisation's complaint handling performance. This includes:

- The annual complaints performance and service improvement report
- Regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling
- Inclusion of complaints performance in the Council's quarterly outcomes performance framework. (See *Appendix 1, section 9.7 of the revised Council policy*).

1.9.4 Whilst responsibility for monitoring and decision-making is a committee function, the Lead Member also has an outward-facing role to promote a positive complaint handling culture. It is proposed that the Deputy Leader of the Council should take on this role as Lead Member for Customer Experience and that a recommendation be made to Full Council to amend the Constitution accordingly.

1.10 Revised Council Complaint Policy & Procedures

1.10.1 Subject to the approval of this Committee, Sheffield City Council's Complaint Handling Policy will be updated from 1 April 2024, aligning it to the formal implementation of the HO Code, and later in September 2024, to fully adopt the implementation of the LGSCO Code. **See Appendix 1 & 1a.**

1.10.2 The Council's Complaints Procedures will also be aligned to the Code. **See Appendix 2.**

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?

2.1 The implementation of the Code has synergies with the Council's Customer Experience Strategy, the Council Plan and the Council Values – putting people at the heart of what we do and ensuring that maximising outcomes for our citizens is central to our work as a whole organisation.

2.2 The Council will continue to enhance its complaints handling and management through fully adopting the principles of the new Codes and by increased transparency, accessibility, and complaint handling governance; demonstrating that individuals are at the heart of its service delivery.

2.3 Benefits of adopting this proposal include:

- Promotion of a positive relationship between the Council and

citizens;

- Ensuring a consistent standard for dealing with complaints, meaning that all residents will be treated fairly and will not be treated differently based on the service they are complaining about;
- Improved investigation and resolution timescales, meaning that an issue may be resolved before it becomes worse. Issues not resolved quickly can take significant resource and time to remedy;
- Greater involvement in complaint resolution to further develop staff ownership, decision-making and engagement;
- Senior staff being provided with essential insight into day-to-day operations, allowing them to assess effectiveness and to drive a positive complaint handling culture.
- Improved data collection, recording and analysis to inform key business decisions to drive improvement in service provision.
- Improved feedback processes to obtain feedback from individuals in relation to how their complaint has been handled, as part of the drive to encourage a positive complaint and learning culture.
- Improved governance and monitoring.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

3.1 LGSCO & HO conducted consultations during the period September to November 2023. This included a national consultation exercise inviting all Councils/Housing Associations and members of the public to participate. See:

[Complaint Handling Code 2024 - Housing Ombudsman \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](https://housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

[Complaint Handling Code - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)

3.2 The proposed changes have also been communicated widely within the organisation to ensure that all officers are able to provide support to complainants. **See Comms plan – Appendix 5**

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality Implications

- 4.1.1
- See Housing Ombudsman Equality Impact Assessment - **Appendix 3**
and
 - Sheffield City Council's Equality Impact Assessment – **Appendix 4**

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

4.2.1 Whilst there are no direct financial implications arising from this report,

any costs incurred as a result of implementation or ongoing compliance with the Complaints Handling Codes - and amended Policies & Procedures - will be contained within existing resources.

4.3 Legal Implications

- 4.3.1 In respect of the Housing Ombudsman (HO), the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 has amended the provisions of the Housing Act 1996 to empower the HO to issue a code of practice about the procedures members of the Scheme (which include all social landlords) should have in place for considering complaints against them. Following consultation, the (HO) has issued its first statutory Complaint Handling Code ('the Code') with effect from 1 April 2024. The amendments also place a duty on the Ombudsman to monitor compliance with the Code.

There is no corresponding duty on landlords to comply with the Code. In the event of non-compliance, however, the HO may issue and publish a Complaint Handling Failure Order and recover the costs of doing so from the landlord.

The 2023 Act also imposes a duty of co-operation on the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) and the HO. The RSH has issued a new Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, effective from 1st April 2024, which includes a requirement to ensure that complaints are addressed fairly, effectively and promptly. A failure to comply with the HO's Complaints Handling Code may thus result in a regulatory failure.

- 4.3.2 In respect of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO), the Complaint Handling Code is issued under the powers to provide "guidance about good administrative practice" to organisations under section 23 (12A) of the Local Government Act 1974. For the LGSCO this Code constitutes important advice and guidance to councils, rather than instructions.

The LGSCO's role is to investigate complaints of maladministration and service failure and it may recommend that an organisation takes action to improve services or provide a personal remedy where it finds fault causing injustice to an individual or group of individuals.

Unlike the HO, the LGSCO has no specific responsibility for monitoring compliance with the Code. The LGSCO Code is however aligned to the HO's Code, thus ensuring a common approach to complaint handling by either body.

4.4 Climate Implications

- 4.4.1 There are no climate implications as a result of this report.

5. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 5.1 The Council could choose not to update its own Complaint Handling Policy and Corporate Complaints Procedure or to implement the HO Complaint Handling Code but to do so would risk findings of non-compliance by the HO and regulatory failure by the Regulator of Social Housing.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Statutory compliance required for Housing & Repairs Services from 1 April 2024. Principles to be adopted across whole Council from 1 September 2024 to provide consistent standards across all complaints and demonstrate our commitment to improving complaint performance.
- 6.2 Improved governance and monitoring to ensure performance targets are improved.
- 6.3 Improved performance reporting/monitoring - both internally and externally, including an annual self-assessment (HO), and reporting and analysis of service improvements/learnings to the Strategy & Resources Committee.
- 6.4 Emphasis on the prioritisation of complaints and to engender a culture of listening and learning from complaints.
- 6.5 Revised and comprehensive Complaints Policy & Procedures are needed to align to the new Ombudsman Complaint Handling Codes. Council Policy was last updated in 2014.

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Sheffield City Council Complaints Policy

April 2024

Draft v2.0

Effective Complaint Handling – Complaints Policy

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Sheffield City Council Complaints Policy

Introduction

The purpose of Sheffield City Council's Complaints Policy is to ensure that complaints about our services are dealt with effectively, consistently, and fairly.

Through this Policy, our aim is to provide customers and Council employees with clarity over the way that complaints about Sheffield City Council's services will be dealt with.

We also aim to provide clarity over what types of problems raised by customers will and will not be dealt with through the Complaints Policy.

It is our intention that customers should be able to make a complaint in any way they choose, including through our website, by email, by telephone, in writing or in person.

In implementing the Complaints Policy, our commitment is to focus on solving the problems that customers raise with us.

All employees of Sheffield City Council will carry out our commitment to solving problems and responding positively to complaints.

Our general commitment to customer service, including good complaint handling, is set out in our Customer Experience Strategy. See: [Customer commitments | Sheffield City Council](#)

Sheffield City Council aims to adhere fully to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, which acts as a guide for customers setting out what they can and should expect from an organisation when they make a complaint. The purpose of this Code is to enable organisations to resolve complaints raised by customers promptly, and to use the data and learning from complaints to drive service improvements. It also helps to create a positive complaint handling culture amongst staff and individuals.

See: [Complaint Handling Code - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#) and [Complaint Handling Code | Housing Ombudsman Service \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](#)

As a result, this Policy provides a single policy for dealing with all complaints covered by the Code.

Note: This Code does not replace any existing statutory complaint processes such as The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 or Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009.

These existing statutory responsibilities remain with the Director of Children & Families and the Strategic Director of Adult's Care and Wellbeing. Section 9.4

1 Our approach

1.1 Sheffield City Council values our customers' views on the way we deliver our services. We are committed to using these views to improve our services. When a customer makes a complaint, their complaint will be handled through with the approach set out in this Policy. We will do this irrespective of where and how they make their complaint.

1.2 Our definition of a complaint is ***'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation/landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual/resident or group of individuals/residents.'***

1.3 A customer does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such.

1.4 A complaint that is submitted via a third party (e.g. contractor) will still be handled in line with the Council's Complaints policy. Where a complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor) or independent adjudicator at any stage, it should form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this policy. Complainants will not be expected to go through two complaints processes. See Section 12.

1.5 We recognise the difference between a service request/enquiry and a complaint:

- A **service request/enquiry** is a request from a customer to the organisation requiring action to be taken to put something right. A service request may be defined as, ***'a request that the organisation provides or improves a service, fixes a problem or reconsiders a decision.'***
- This provides organisations with opportunities to resolve matters to a customer's satisfaction before they become a complaint.
- Service requests/enquiries are not complaints but may contain expressions of dissatisfaction. Organisations should have the opportunity to deal with a service request/enquiry before a complaint is made.

1.6 Whenever an individual/resident expresses dissatisfaction we will provide the opportunity for them to raise a complaint.

1.7 A complaint will be raised when an individual expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. We will not stop our efforts to address the service request if the customer complains.

- **A complaint is not** a first request for a service. E.g. in order to raise a complaint about a hole in a roof, a service request for a repair to that roof, must have already been made.

1.8 We welcome feedback about our complaint handling policy and procedures, by means of a survey. Our survey requests will also provide details of how customers may complain so they may pursue any dissatisfaction if they so wish.

1.9 Our approach to dealing with complaints is based on the following principles:

- It should be **easy** for customers to make a complaint.
- We will not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; we will consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.
- When a complaint is made, we will focus on early resolution and, wherever possible, **we will try to solve the complaint at point of contact or within five working days.**
- We want to know why a customer is unhappy, and what they feel we could do to **resolve their complaint.**
- When investigating a complaint, the person dealing with it will **make personal contact** with the complainant, wherever possible.
- We will aim to ensure that **individual needs are taken into account** when dealing with complaints, clarifying any aspects of the complaint they are unclear about.
- We will deal with complaints on their merits, act independently and have an open mind; **provide the complainant with a fair chance to set out their position** and take measures to address any actual or perceived conflicts of interest.
- We will consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.
- Our communication with the complainant will not identify individual members of staff or contractors, except in exceptional circumstances, as their actions are undertaken on behalf of the Council.
- Where a response to a complaint falls outside the timescales set out in this Policy, we will agree with the complainant suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.
- When responding, we will where appropriate, **thank the complainant, clearly explain what happened and what we will do, and will apologise and put in place remedies.**
- Our tone will be **open, responsive and avoid unnecessary formality.** Written correspondence will use Plain English.
- Customers who make a complaint will be **treated fairly** and will not be victimised or discriminated against either in the investigation or conclusion of their complaint, or in any service they receive or request.
- Dealing with complaints is the **responsibility of all Sheffield City Council employees.**
- We will **keep a record** of complaints raised by customers.
- We will **learn from complaints** so that we can improve our service.

2 Scope of the Policy

2.1 Complaints will usually be about the following:

- Problems caused by something we have done or not done.
- Dissatisfaction with the way the customer has been treated.
- Dissatisfaction with a decision or Council policies

- Dissatisfaction with the quality, quantity or timeliness of a service being provided.
- Dissatisfaction with the cost of services or charging mechanisms.

2.2 We will deal with most complaints about Sheffield City Council services through the approach set out in sections five and six of this Policy. This approach is our Corporate Complaints Procedure.

2.3 Complaints about Council Housing Services will be dealt with through the Corporate Complaints Procedure. However, if complainants are unable to resolve their complaint through our complaints procedure, they can refer it to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

2.4 There are specific statutory requirements on complaints about children’s social care, adult social care, and public health. We will handle complaints about these services through separate Complaints Procedures that meet the statutory requirements. However, the principles in section two of this Policy will apply, wherever possible, to complaints about these services.

2.5 *Service requests/enquiries* raised by Members of Parliament or Councillors on behalf of customers are not normally dealt with through the Council’s Complaints Policy. See 1.5 above.

Members of Parliament or Councillor **complaints** will follow the Council’s Complaints Policy.

2.6 Complaints received by The Leader of the Council, Committee Members, the Chief Executive or Strategic Directors will be passed to the appropriate Council service, who will respond to the customer, keeping the Originator of the complaint, updated throughout the complaint process.

2.7 We will deal with anonymous complaints as far as possible and keep a record of the complaint.

Exclusions:

2.8 There are some things that we will not treat as a complaint, because there are other, more appropriate ways of dealing with them. These include situations when:

- The complaint is a first request for a service that can be acted upon and resolved, e.g., a first-time request for a repair to a streetlight that is not working.
- The complaint is about something that the Council is not responsible for. In these instances, we will, when possible, direct the complainant to the organisation that deals with the issue. e.g. bus timetable failures.
- There is an appeals process to deal with decisions. Examples of services where there is an appeals process include parking Penalty Charge Notices,

planning applications, school admissions, special educational needs, rehousing, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support, Council Tax, Business Rates, Discretionary Housing Payments, Council Tax Hardship Scheme, Blue Badges, and Child Travel Passes.

- An issue is being raised by a Council employee about their employment. This is because Council employees have other ways to raise these.
- The complaint is about the management of a school. These are dealt with by the Head Teacher or the school's Governing Body.
- The complaint is about a voluntary or community organisation that receives Council funding, as this should be dealt with by the organisation itself, unless the complaint is about fraud, financial or other serious matters. In this case the Council will consider a complaint, but only if the organisation is in receipt of Council funding.

2.9 We may not be able to fully respond to a complaint until another procedure has been completed. This includes situations where:

- There are safeguarding adults or children procedures.
- There are disciplinary proceedings against employees.
- Police investigations and criminal proceedings are in process.
- Legal proceedings, including insurance claims, are being pursued against the Council by the customer in relation to the complaint. See Section 13 re Complaints involving insurance issues or Council Housing disrepair claims.

If such situations occur, we will advise the complainant accordingly.

2.10 There are some complaints that we will not deal with through this Policy. This includes situations when:

- The same complaint is from the same customer, and it has already been investigated through all stages of the relevant Council complaints procedure. In this instance the customer should contact the relevant Ombudsman.
- The complaint is about something that the customer knew about **more than twelve months** before the complaint was made unless there are exceptional reasons for the delay.
- There are restrictions in place on how we will handle complaints through the application of the Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy. See Section 14.

2.11 If Sheffield City Council decides not to accept a complaint, a detailed explanation will be provided to the customer setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the relevant Ombudsman. If the relevant Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion

has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the organisation to accept the complaint.

2.12 There are some complaints about the Council that are outside the scope of the Complaints Policy:

- Complaints about Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Environmental Information Regulations legislation are covered by a separate procedure. (See; [Freedom of information and environmental information requests | Sheffield City Council](#)) However, if the complaint about these issues forms a small part of a wider complaint, the complaint will be investigated through this policy
- Complaints about the outcome of procurement and contract tendering processes will be dealt with through the Dispute Resolution Process.
- Complaints about the conduct of Councillors. The Audits & Standards Committee oversees the Members' Code of Conduct and is responsible for considering complaints about Councillor. See: [Complain about a councillor | Sheffield City Council](#)

2.13 Complaints about Council Officers including senior executives and Statutory Officers may be dealt with under Sheffield City Council's Officer's Code of Conduct. See [Code of conduct | Sheffield City Council](#)

2.14 We will not exclude complaints about safeguarding or health and safety issues.

3. Accessibility and awareness

3.1 We will make it easy for customers to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. We will consider our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of customers who may need to access the complaints process. We will keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a complainant has disclosed.(see Section 6) Any agreed reasonable adjustments will be kept under active review. See also:

[Access for disabled people | Sheffield City Council](#)

[Equality and Human Rights | Guidance | Housing Ombudsman \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](#)

3.2 Customers can raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All our staff are aware of the complaints process and can pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the organisation.

3.3 We will ensure that our complaints policy is available in a clear and accessible format for all customers. This will detail the number of stages involved, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding.

3.4 The details of this policy will be published on the Council's website, including information about relevant Ombudsman schemes and the Joint Complaint Handling Code. See: [Complain about a council service | Sheffield City Council](#)

3.5 We will give customers the opportunity to have a suitable representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the organisation.

3.6 We will provide customers with information on their right to access the relevant Ombudsman service and how the customer can engage with the relevant Ombudsman about their complaint.

4. Complaint handling staff

4.1 Sheffield City Council has a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties (e.g. contractors) that reflects the need to:

- have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments.
- take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and
- act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.

4.2 Sheffield City Council has designated Complaints Managers and a specific team – the Corporate Feedback & Complaints Team, assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the relevant Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent).

4.3 Our Complaints Managers have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the quick resolution of complaints and report on complaint handling performance. They also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes quickly and fairly.

4.4 Sheffield City Council prioritises complaint handling and promotes a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff are suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling.

5 Dealing with complaints.

5.1 We have a single policy for dealing with complaints. Customers are not treated differently based on the service they are complaining about.

5.2 We will focus on **early and local resolution** and wherever possible seek to **resolve the complaint at the first point of contact or within 5 working days**. If the complaint is resolved in this way, to the customer's satisfaction, then there may be no need for a formal investigation. However, **we will always record the complaint and provide a written response detailing how the agreed resolution has been agreed and provided**.

5.3 The Council will deal with some complaints through a formal Investigation approach due to their complexity. This is a **two- staged process**. (See Section 6 below). We will address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.

5.4 All complaints may be escalated through all stages of the complaints procedure unless there are valid reasons not to do so. These reasons must align with the exclusions permitted under Section 2 above.

5.5 A full record will be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This will include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the complainant, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.

5.6 Sheffield City Council has systems in place to ensure that a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.

5.7 Sheffield City Council also has policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from customers and/or their representatives. We will always provide reasons for putting any restrictions in place and we will keep a customer's restrictions under regular review. See Section 14 below.

6. Complaints stages

6.1 Stage 1

6.1.1 If we have been unable to resolve a complaint through early resolution, further investigation will be required under Stage 1 of the Council's complaints procedure. In all such cases, the complainant will receive **an acknowledgment letter within 5 working days of the complaint being received**.

6.1.2 We will aim to provide **a full written response to Stage 1 complaints within 20 working days of receipt**.

- **For Housing & Repairs Services only, Stage 1 responses will be provided within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.**

6.1.3 We will consider whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and will then inform the complainant of the expected timescales for response. However, **any extension will be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) will be clearly explained to the complainant.**

6.1.4 If we inform a complainant about an extension to these timescales, they will be provided with the contact details of the relevant Ombudsman.

6.1.5 Where complainants raise additional complaints during the investigation, these will be incorporated into the Stage 1 response if they are related, and the Stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the Stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated, or it would unreasonably delay the response, the complainant should be advised that new issues be logged as a new complaint.

6.1.6 Our written response will be provided to the complainant when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions will still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the complainant.

6.1.7 Our written response will address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate. We will be clear which aspects of the complaint we are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.

6.1.8 At the conclusion of Stage 1 we will provide details of how to escalate the matter to Stage 2 if the complainant is not satisfied with the response.

6.1.9 If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the Investigation (Stage1), they may request for a review of their complaint through an Investigation Review. This escalates the complaint to Stage 2 of the Council's complaints procedure.

6.2 Stage 2

6.2.1 If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction at Stage 1, the complaint will be progressed to Stage 2 of the Council's procedure. Stage 2 is the organisation's final response to the complaint. There is no further right to appeal to the Council following completion of the Investigation Review. If the customer remains dissatisfied, they may take their complaint to the relevant Ombudsman or external body.

6.2.2 Where a request for a Stage 2 Investigation Review is requested, we would ask that you do this within the next 28 calendar days from the date of the Stage 1 response letter.

6.2.3 Requests for stage 2 will be acknowledged and logged at Stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received. Within the acknowledgement, we will set out our understanding of any outstanding issues and the outcomes the individual is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, we will seek clarification from the complainant.

6.2.4 Complainants are not required to explain their reasons for requesting a Stage 2 consideration. We will make reasonable efforts to understand why a complainant remains unhappy as part of its Stage 2 response.

6.2.5 Stage 2 considerations will be a review of the adequacy of the Stage 1 response, as well as any new and relevant information not previously considered.

6.2.6 On receipt of the escalation request, we will set out our understanding of any outstanding issues and the outcomes the complainant is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the complainant will be asked for clarification.

6.2.7 The Council Officer considering the complaint at Stage 2 will not be the same person that considered the complaint at Stage 1 and should be a more senior Council Officer than the Officer who responded at Stage 1.

6.2.8 We will aim to provide a **full written response** to Stage 2 complaint investigation reviews, **within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.**

6.2.9 We will consider whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and will then inform the complainant of the expected timescales for response. However, **any extension will be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) will be clearly explained to the complainant.**

6.2.10 If we inform a complainant about an extension to these timescales, they will be provided with the contact details of the relevant Ombudsman.

7. Putting things right and learning

7.1 Where something has gone wrong, we will acknowledge this and set out the actions we have already taken, or intend to take, to put things right. These can include:

- Apologising;
- Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;
- Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons;

- Taking action if there has been delay;
- Reconsidering or changing a decision;
- Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;
- Providing a financial remedy;
- Changing policies, procedures or practices.

7.2 Any remedy offered will reflect the impact on the complainant as a result of any fault identified.

7.3 The remedy offer will clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the complainant where appropriate. Any remedy proposed will be followed through to completion.

7.4 Our approach to remedies will be consistent with the guidance issued by the relevant Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.

7.5 We aim to learn from complaints, so that we do not repeat the same problem. Our focus is on service improvement wherever possible.

8. Self-assessment, reporting and compliance

8.1 We will produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which will include:

- a) an annual self-assessment against the **Housing Ombudsman's** Complaint Handling Code to ensure our complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.
- b) a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the Council's complaint handling performance. This will include a summary of the types of complaints the organisation has refused to accept;
- c) any findings of non-compliance with the Ombudsman's Complaints Complaint Handling Code;
- d) the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;
- e) any annual report about the Council's performance from the relevant Ombudsman; and
- f) any other relevant reports or publications produced by the relevant Ombudsman in relation to the work of the Council.

8.2 The annual complaints performance and service improvement report will be reported to the Council's relevant governing body (or equivalent) and will be published on the on the section of our website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report will be published alongside this.

8.3 Sheffield City Council will also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.

9. Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

9.1 We will look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.

9.2 A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which the Council resolve disputes. We will use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.

9.3 Accountability and transparency are also integral to our positive organisational culture. We will report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as citizens' or residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.

9.4 The Council's **appointed senior executive to oversee its complaint handling performance** and is the **Director responsible for the oversight of the Council's Corporate Feedback & Complaints Team**. This Officer will be responsible for overall complaint performance reporting, assessing any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.

However, this role does not replace the responsibility and accountability of Directors to ensure that any outcomes/learnings/service improvements are implemented and reviewed periodically. This may include escalation and review by the appropriate policy committee a required.

Further, this role does not include the statutory responsibilities and the duty to report to the social care regulators of the Director of Children & Families and the Strategic Director of Adult's Care and Wellbeing.

9.5 In addition to this the **Deputy Leader of the Council** is the Lead Member for Customer Experience (which includes responsibility for complaints), whose role is to support a positive complaint handling culture.

9.6 The Strategy and Resources Policy Committee has lead responsibility for complaints, receiving regular information on complaints that provides insight on the organisation's complaint handling performance. This includes:

- Annual report

- Inclusion in the Council's quarterly outcomes performance framework.

9.7 As a minimum, the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee will receive:

- a) regular updates on the volume, categories, and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance.
- b) regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; and
- c) the annual complaints performance and service improvement report.

10 Data protection and consent policies

10.1 The Data Protection Act 2018 provides protection for personal information to ensure it remains private and confidential. The Council will ensure that the principles of the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) are adhered to. Any information provided for the purposes of investigating a complaint will be held securely. In order to investigate a complaint some personal data, such as name may be shared with other council services, but this is on a need-to-know basis only, as necessary.

10.2 In accordance with the Council's obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018, all personal information provided by complainants is only retained by the Council for as long as necessary. See: [Privacy notice | Sheffield City Council](#)

10.3 All personal data provided will only be used for the purpose of investigating the complaint.

10.4 Where appropriate, the Council will seek consent from the service user so it may correspond with any third party on their behalf. This ensures compliance with data protection and ensures the service user's wishes are being fulfilled.

11 Freedom of information

The Freedom of Information 2000 Act gives people the right to access information held by public authorities. The Council is committed to the principles of openness, transparency, and accountability in its activities. It supports the right of any person to seek information under the Act.

For further information, please see: [Freedom of information and environmental information requests | Sheffield City Council](#)

12 Third Party Complaint Handling

12.1 Legal and policy background

Councils frequently provide local public services by arrangement with a third-party partner, external commercial provider or third party (e.g. contractor).. The law says the Ombudsman can treat the actions of third parties as if they were actions of the council, where any such third-party arrangements exist (Local Government Act 1974, section 25(6) to 25(8)). This means the Ombudsman will hold the council responsible for third party actions, including complaint handling, where services are being provided on behalf of the Council.

The Council has standard clauses in its contracts requiring providers to operate a well-publicised and accessible complaints policy which is reflective of the Council's Complaints policy and provides for early contact, transparency, timely resolution, and for review where appropriate.

Providers are required to fully cooperate with complaint investigations, including any Ombudsman investigations and provide information and/or remedy in a timely manner.

12.2 Handling complaints

Where the council agrees that third parties will respond to complaints on our behalf, there are appropriate arrangements in place to oversee, agree and quality check those responses. The Ombudsman will regard a response from the council's partner/third party (e.g. contractor) as that of the council.

Complaints about service or funding levels and policy will generally be addressed by the council, not a third party (e.g. contractor).

If someone has completed a partner's/ provider complaints process, we would not expect them to then go through the council's complaint process.

A council is responsible for a partner's/third party (e.g. contractor's) action, including complaint handling. The council wish to know about complaints to the third party. This is to monitor the contract or agreement and so it can suggest ways to resolve complaints where appropriate.

12.3 Joint complaint handling

- Where a complaint is about a Council service and another organisation, such as the NHS, the service will aim to work with that organisation to **provide a single joint response**.
- In these cases, the Accountable Manager of the Council service will need to agree with the manager of the other organisation which organisation will lead the investigation.
- When the Council is leading the investigation, it will be carried out in the same way as any other Investigation at the Investigation stage.
- Before the response is sent, it will need to be approved by the Accountable Manager of the Council service and the lead manager of the other organisation.

13 Complaints involving insurance issues or Council Housing disrepair claims

There will always be some matters of Housing disrepair that will be more complex and difficult to resolve than others. Housing Disrepair claims aren't insured claims as they are contractual. Residents may consider resorting to legal claims to get these issues resolved.

Legal action can be stressful, costly, and time-consuming for residents and, for landlords, it can divert much needed funds away from investment programmes. It is, therefore, particularly important that these cases are handled with care to maintain the relationship between the resident and the landlord and to minimise the risk of them becoming protracted and contentious.

Sheffield City Council will only deal with *insurance claims* in relation to damage to property and personal injury, which may occur from housing repair issues. However, in some instances compensation payments may be considered appropriate and these will be dealt with through relevant policies and procedures.

Complainants are able to raise a formal complaint even if an insurance claim is also being made, particularly if a complainant has raised additional issues other than a request to be compensated for damaged belongings or damage to their health.

As a result, customers may have both a legal claim and a complaint running at the same time. To effectively manage these cases, Sheffield City Council will ensure that we are equipped to identify cases at risk of becoming legal issues at an early stage and have appropriate strategies in place to progress them accordingly.

Our processes have continuing emphasis on ensuring that the resident: is kept informed; feels that the landlord is taking the issue seriously; and is assured that the matter is progressing.

We will also be committed to inspect properties as soon as a claim is raised and to completing the repairs needed as soon as is practicable.

For further information see:

<https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Guidance-on-Insurance.pdf>

<https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/landlords-info/guidance-notes/guidance-on-pre-action-protocol-for-housing-conditions-claims-and-service-complaints/>

14 Unreasonable Behaviour from Complainants

14.1 There are a small number of customers who, because of their behaviour and/or the frequency or nature of their contacts with the Council, hinder our consideration of their complaint.

14.2 We refer to such behaviour as ‘unreasonable’ complainant behaviour.

14.3 In these circumstances we will consider invoking sanctions through the Council’s Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy.

- See: [Guidance on managing unreasonable complainant behaviour - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)

14.4 Examples of the behaviours which may cause the policy to be invoked are:

- Constantly changing the basis of the complaint
- Introducing trivial or irrelevant new information
- Adopting a ‘scattergun’ approach
- Making unnecessarily excessive demands on the time and resources of staff
- Submitting repeat complaints
- Use of discriminatory and/or offensive language/views

14.5 Any restrictions placed on an individual’s contact due to unacceptable behaviour will be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

15 How to Contact Us

If you would like to make a suggestion, compliment or complaint, you can contact us directly, or complete an on-line feedback form by visiting Sheffield City Council website or by following this link: [Contact us | Sheffield City Council](#)

If you would like further information about the Complaints Policy, please contact the Council’s Corporate Feedback & Complaints Team at:

Telephone 0114 273 4567

Write to: Customer Services, Corporate Feedback & Complaints Team,
Sheffield City Council, 1 Union Street, Howden House
Sheffield S1 2SH



Sheffield City Council Complaints Policy

September 2024

Draft v2.0

Effective Complaint Handling – Complaints Policy

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Sheffield City Council Complaints Policy

Introduction

The purpose of Sheffield City Council's Complaints Policy is to ensure that complaints about our services are dealt with effectively, consistently, and fairly.

Through this Policy, our aim is to provide customers and Council employees with clarity over the way that complaints about Sheffield City Council's services will be dealt with.

We also aim to provide clarity over what types of problems raised by customers will and will not be dealt with through the Complaints Policy.

It is our intention that customers should be able to make a complaint in any way they choose, including through our website, by email, by telephone, in writing or in person.

In implementing the Complaints Policy, our commitment is to focus on solving the problems that customers raise with us.

All employees of Sheffield City Council will carry out our commitment to solving problems and responding positively to complaints.

Our general commitment to customer service, including good complaint handling, is set out in our Customer Experience Strategy. See: [Customer commitments | Sheffield City Council](#)

Sheffield City Council aims to adhere fully to the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, which acts as a guide for customers setting out what they can and should expect from an organisation when they make a complaint. The purpose of this Code is to enable organisations to resolve complaints raised by customers promptly, and to use the data and learning from complaints to drive service improvements. It also helps to create a positive complaint handling culture amongst staff and individuals.

See: [Complaint Handling Code - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#) and [Complaint Handling Code | Housing Ombudsman Service \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](#)

As a result, this Policy provides a single policy for dealing with all complaints covered by the Code.

Note: This Code does not replace any existing statutory complaint processes such as The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 or Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009.

These existing statutory responsibilities remain with the Director of Children & Families and the Strategic Director of Adult's Care and Wellbeing. Section 9.4

1 Our approach

1.1 Sheffield City Council values our customers' views on the way we deliver our services. We are committed to using these views to improve our services. When a customer makes a complaint, their complaint will be handled through with the approach set out in this Policy. We will do this irrespective of where and how they make their complaint.

1.2 Our definition of a complaint is ***'an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation/landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual/resident or group of individuals/residents.'***

1.3 A customer does not have to use the word 'complaint' for it to be treated as such.

1.4 A complaint that is submitted via a third party (e.g. contractor) will still be handled in line with the Council's Complaints policy. Where a complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor) or independent adjudicator at any stage, it should form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this policy. Complainants will not be expected to go through two complaints processes. See Section 12.

1.5 We recognise the difference between a service request/enquiry and a complaint:

- A **service request/enquiry** is a request from a customer to the organisation requiring action to be taken to put something right. A service request may be defined as, ***'a request that the organisation provides or improves a service, fixes a problem or reconsiders a decision.'***
- This provides organisations with opportunities to resolve matters to a customer's satisfaction before they become a complaint.
- Service requests/enquiries are not complaints but may contain expressions of dissatisfaction. Organisations should have the opportunity to deal with a service request/enquiry before a complaint is made.

1.6 Whenever an individual/resident expresses dissatisfaction we will provide the opportunity for them to raise a complaint.

1.7 A complaint will be raised when an individual expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. We will not stop our efforts to address the service request if the customer complains.

- **A complaint is not** a first request for a service. E.g. in order to raise a complaint about a hole in a roof, a service request for a repair to that roof, must have already been made.

1.8 We welcome feedback about our complaint handling policy and procedures, by means of a survey. Our survey requests will also provide details of how customers may complain so they may pursue any dissatisfaction if they so wish.

1.9 Our approach to dealing with complaints is based on the following principles:

- It should be **easy** for customers to make a complaint.
- We will not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; we will consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.
- When a complaint is made, we will focus on early resolution and, wherever possible, **we will try to solve the complaint at point of contact or within five working days.**
- We want to know why a customer is unhappy, and what they feel we could do to **resolve their complaint.**
- When investigating a complaint, the person dealing with it will **make personal contact** with the complainant, wherever possible.
- We will aim to ensure that **individual needs are taken into account** when dealing with complaints, clarifying any aspects of the complaint they are unclear about.
- We will deal with complaints on their merits, act independently and have an open mind; **provide the complainant with a fair chance to set out their position** and take measures to address any actual or perceived conflicts of interest.
- We will consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.
- Our communication with the complainant will not identify individual members of staff or contractors, except in exceptional circumstances, as their actions are undertaken on behalf of the Council.
- Where a response to a complaint falls outside the timescales set out in this Policy, we will agree with the complainant suitable intervals for keeping them informed about their complaint.
- When responding, we will where appropriate, **thank the complainant, clearly explain what happened and what we will do, and will apologise and put in place remedies.**
- Our tone will be **open, responsive and avoid unnecessary formality.** Written correspondence will use Plain English.
- Customers who make a complaint will be **treated fairly** and will not be victimised or discriminated against either in the investigation or conclusion of their complaint, or in any service they receive or request.
- Dealing with complaints is the **responsibility of all Sheffield City Council employees.**
- We will **keep a record** of complaints raised by customers.
- We will **learn from complaints** so that we can improve our service.

2 Scope of the Policy

2.1 Complaints will usually be about the following:

- Problems caused by something we have done or not done.
- Dissatisfaction with the way the customer has been treated.
- Dissatisfaction with a decision or Council policies

- Dissatisfaction with the quality, quantity or timeliness of a service being provided.
- Dissatisfaction with the cost of services or charging mechanisms.

2.2 We will deal with most complaints about Sheffield City Council services through the approach set out in sections five and six of this Policy. This approach is our Corporate Complaints Procedure.

2.3 Complaints about Council Housing Services will be dealt with through the Corporate Complaints Procedure. However, if complainants are unable to resolve their complaint through our complaints procedure, they can refer it to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

2.4 There are specific statutory requirements on complaints about children’s social care, adult social care, and public health. We will handle complaints about these services through separate Complaints Procedures that meet the statutory requirements. However, the principles in section two of this Policy will apply, wherever possible, to complaints about these services.

2.5 *Service requests/enquiries* raised by Members of Parliament or Councillors on behalf of customers are not normally dealt with through the Council’s Complaints Policy. See 1.5 above.

Members of Parliament or Councillor **complaints** will follow the Council’s Complaints Policy.

2.6 Complaints received by The Leader of the Council, Committee Members, the Chief Executive or Strategic Directors will be passed to the appropriate Council service, who will respond to the customer, keeping the Originator of the complaint, updated throughout the complaint process.

2.7 We will deal with anonymous complaints as far as possible and keep a record of the complaint.

Exclusions:

2.8 There are some things that we will not treat as a complaint, because there are other, more appropriate ways of dealing with them. These include situations when:

- The complaint is a first request for a service that can be acted upon and resolved, e.g., a first-time request for a repair to a streetlight that is not working.
- The complaint is about something that the Council is not responsible for. In these instances, we will, when possible, direct the complainant to the organisation that deals with the issue. e.g. bus timetable failures.
- There is an appeals process to deal with decisions. Examples of services where there is an appeals process include parking Penalty Charge Notices,

planning applications, school admissions, special educational needs, rehousing, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support, Council Tax, Business Rates, Discretionary Housing Payments, Council Tax Hardship Scheme, Blue Badges, and Child Travel Passes.

- An issue is being raised by a Council employee about their employment. This is because Council employees have other ways to raise these.
- The complaint is about the management of a school. These are dealt with by the Head Teacher or the school's Governing Body.
- The complaint is about a voluntary or community organisation that receives Council funding, as this should be dealt with by the organisation itself, unless the complaint is about fraud, financial or other serious matters. In this case the Council will consider a complaint, but only if the organisation is in receipt of Council funding.

2.9 We may not be able to fully respond to a complaint until another procedure has been completed. This includes situations where:

- There are safeguarding adults or children procedures.
- There are disciplinary proceedings against employees.
- Police investigations and criminal proceedings are in process.
- Legal proceedings, including insurance claims, are being pursued against the Council by the customer in relation to the complaint. See Section 13 re Complaints involving insurance issues or Council Housing disrepair claims.

If such situations occur, we will advise the complainant accordingly.

2.10 There are some complaints that we will not deal with through this Policy. This includes situations when:

- The same complaint is from the same customer, and it has already been investigated through all stages of the relevant Council complaints procedure. In this instance the customer should contact the relevant Ombudsman.
- The complaint is about something that the customer knew about **more than twelve months** before the complaint was made unless there are exceptional reasons for the delay.
- There are restrictions in place on how we will handle complaints through the application of the Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy. See Section 14.

2.11 If Sheffield City Council decides not to accept a complaint, a detailed explanation will be provided to the customer setting out the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process and the right to take that decision to the relevant Ombudsman. If the relevant Ombudsman does not agree that the exclusion

has been fairly applied, the Ombudsman may tell the organisation to accept the complaint.

2.12 There are some complaints about the Council that are outside the scope of the Complaints Policy:

- Complaints about Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Environmental Information Regulations legislation are covered by a separate procedure. (See; [Freedom of information and environmental information requests | Sheffield City Council](#)) However, if the complaint about these issues forms a small part of a wider complaint, the complaint will be investigated through this policy
- Complaints about the outcome of procurement and contract tendering processes will be dealt with through the Dispute Resolution Process.
- Complaints about the conduct of Councillors. The Audits & Standards Committee oversees the Members' Code of Conduct and is responsible for considering complaints about Councillor. See: [Complain about a councillor | Sheffield City Council](#)

2.13 Complaints about Council Officers including senior executives and Statutory Officers may be dealt with under Sheffield City Council's Officer's Code of Conduct. See [Code of conduct | Sheffield City Council](#)

2.14 We will not exclude complaints about safeguarding or health and safety issues.

3. Accessibility and awareness

3.1 We will make it easy for customers to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint. We will consider our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of customers who may need to access the complaints process. We will keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities a complainant has disclosed.(see Section 6) Any agreed reasonable adjustments will be kept under active review. See also:

[Access for disabled people | Sheffield City Council](#)

[Equality and Human Rights | Guidance | Housing Ombudsman \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](#)

3.2 Customers can raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All our staff are aware of the complaints process and can pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the organisation.

3.3 We will ensure that our complaints policy is available in a clear and accessible format for all customers. This will detail the number of stages involved, what will happen at each stage, and the timeframes for responding.

3.4 The details of this policy will be published on the Council's website, including information about relevant Ombudsman schemes and the Joint Complaint Handling Code. See: [Complain about a council service | Sheffield City Council](#)

3.5 We will give customers the opportunity to have a suitable representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the organisation.

3.6 We will provide customers with information on their right to access the relevant Ombudsman service and how the customer can engage with the relevant Ombudsman about their complaint.

4. Complaint handling staff

4.1 Sheffield City Council has a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties (e.g. contractors) that reflects the need to:

- have a collaborative and co-operative approach towards resolving complaints, working with colleagues across teams and departments.
- take collective responsibility for any shortfalls identified through complaints, rather than blaming others; and
- act within the professional standards for engaging with complaints as set by any relevant professional body.

4.2 Sheffield City Council has designated Complaints Managers and a specific team – the Corporate Feedback & Complaints Team, assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the relevant Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent).

4.3 Our Complaints Managers have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the quick resolution of complaints and report on complaint handling performance. They also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes quickly and fairly.

4.4 Sheffield City Council prioritises complaint handling and promotes a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff are suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling.

5 Dealing with complaints.

5.1 We have a single policy for dealing with complaints. Customers are not treated differently based on the service they are complaining about.

5.2 We will focus on **early and local resolution** and wherever possible seek to **resolve the complaint at the first point of contact or within 5 working days**. If the complaint is resolved in this way, to the customer's satisfaction, then there may be no need for a formal investigation. However, **we will always record the**

complaint and provide a written response detailing how the agreed resolution has been agreed and provided.

5.3 The Council will deal with some complaints through a formal Investigation approach due to their complexity. This is a **two- staged process**. (See Section 6 below). We will address all points raised in the complaint definition and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate.

5.4 All complaints may be escalated through all stages of the complaints procedure unless there are valid reasons not to do so. These reasons must align with the exclusions permitted under Section 2 above.

5.5 A full record will be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This will include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the complainant, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports or surveys.

5.6 Sheffield City Council has systems in place to ensure that a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Appropriate remedies can be provided at any stage of the complaints process without the need for escalation.

5.7 Sheffield City Council also has policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from customers and/or their representatives. We will always provide reasons for putting any restrictions in place and we will keep a customer's restrictions under regular review. See Section 14 below.

6. Complaints stages

6.1 Stage 1

6.1.1 If we have been unable to resolve a complaint through early resolution, further investigation will be required under Stage 1 of the Council's complaints procedure. In all such cases, the complainant will receive **an acknowledgment letter within 5 working days of the complaint being received.**

6.1.2 We will aim to provide **a full written response to Stage 1 complaints within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.**

6.1.3 We will consider whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and will then inform the complainant of the expected timescales for response. However, **any extension will be no more**

than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) will be clearly explained to the complainant.

6.1.4 If we inform a complainant about an extension to these timescales, they will be provided with the contact details of the relevant Ombudsman.

6.1.5 Where complainants raise additional complaints during the investigation, these will be incorporated into the Stage 1 response if they are related, and the Stage 1 response has not been issued. Where the Stage 1 response has been issued, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being investigated, or it would unreasonably delay the response, the complainant should be advised that new issues be logged as a new complaint.

6.1.6 Our written response will be provided to the complainant when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions will still be tracked and actioned promptly with appropriate updates provided to the complainant.

6.1.7 Our written response will address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate. We will be clear which aspects of the complaint we are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.

6.1.8 At the conclusion of Stage 1 we will provide details of how to escalate the matter to Stage 2 if the complainant is not satisfied with the response.

6.1.9 If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the Investigation (Stage 1), they may request for a review of their complaint through an Investigation Review. This escalates the complaint to Stage 2 of the Council's complaints procedure.

6.2 Stage 2

6.2.1 If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the complainant's satisfaction at Stage 1, the complaint will be progressed to Stage 2 of the Council's procedure. Stage 2 is the organisation's final response to the complaint. There is no further right to appeal to the Council following completion of the Investigation Review. If the customer remains dissatisfied, they may take their complaint to the relevant Ombudsman or external body.

6.2.2 Where a request for a Stage 2 Investigation Review is requested, we would ask that you do this within the next 28 calendar days from the date of the Stage 1 response letter.

6.2.3 Requests for stage 2 will be acknowledged and logged at Stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received. Within the acknowledgement, we will set out our understanding of any outstanding issues and the outcomes the individual is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, we will seek clarification from the complainant.

6.2.4 Complainants are not required to explain their reasons for requesting a Stage 2 consideration. We will make reasonable efforts to understand why a complainant remains unhappy as part of its Stage 2 response.

6.2.5 Stage 2 considerations will be a review of the adequacy of the Stage 1 response, as well as any new and relevant information not previously considered.

6.2.6 On receipt of the escalation request, we will set out our understanding of any outstanding issues and the outcomes the complainant is seeking. If any aspect of the complaint is unclear, the complainant will be asked for clarification.

6.2.7 The Council Officer considering the complaint at Stage 2 will not be the same person that considered the complaint at Stage 1 and should be a more senior Council Officer than the Officer who responded at Stage 1.

6.2.8 We will aim to provide a **full written response** to Stage 2 complaint investigation reviews, **within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged**.

6.2.9 We will consider whether an extension to this timescale is needed when considering the complexity of the complaint and will then inform the complainant of the expected timescales for response. However, **any extension will be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) will be clearly explained to the complainant**.

6.2.10 If we inform a complainant about an extension to these timescales, they will be provided with the contact details of the relevant Ombudsman.

7. Putting things right and learning

7.1 Where something has gone wrong, we will acknowledge this and set out the actions we have already taken, or intend to take, to put things right. These can include:

- Apologising;
- Acknowledging where things have gone wrong;
- Providing an explanation, assistance or reasons;
- Taking action if there has been delay;
- Reconsidering or changing a decision;
- Amending a record or adding a correction or addendum;
- Providing a financial remedy;
- Changing policies, procedures or practices.

7.2 Any remedy offered will reflect the impact on the complainant as a result of any fault identified.

7.3 The remedy offer will clearly set out what will happen and by when, in agreement with the complainant where appropriate. Any remedy proposed will be followed through to completion.

7.4 Our approach to remedies will be consistent with the guidance issued by the relevant Ombudsman when deciding on appropriate remedies.

7.5 We aim to learn from complaints, so that we do not repeat the same problem. Our focus is on service improvement wherever possible.

8. Self-assessment, reporting and compliance

8.1 We will produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny and challenge, which will include:

a) an annual self-assessment against the **Housing Ombudsman's** Complaint Handling Code to ensure our complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.

b) a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the Council's complaint handling performance. This will include a summary of the types of complaints the organisation has refused to accept;

c) any findings of non-compliance with the Ombudsman's Complaints Complaint Handling Code;

d) the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;

e) any annual report about the Council's performance from the relevant Ombudsman; and

f) any other relevant reports or publications produced by the relevant Ombudsman in relation to the work of the Council.

8.2 The annual complaints performance and service improvement report will be reported to the Council's relevant governing body (or equivalent) and will be published on the on the section of our website relating to complaints. The governing body's response to the report will be published alongside this.

8.3 Sheffield City Council will also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.

9. Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement

9.1 We will look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.

9.2 A positive complaint handling culture is integral to the effectiveness with which the Council resolve disputes. We will use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.

9.3 Accountability and transparency are also integral to our positive organisational culture. We will report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as citizens' or residents' panels, staff and relevant committees.

9.4 The Council's **appointed senior executive to oversee its complaint handling performance** and is the **Director responsible for the oversight of the Council's Corporate Feedback & Complaints Team**. This Officer will be responsible for overall complaint performance reporting, assessing any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.

However, this role does not replace the responsibility and accountability of Directors to ensure that any outcomes/learnings/service improvements are implemented and reviewed periodically. This may include escalation and review by the appropriate policy committee a required.

Further, this role does not include the statutory responsibilities and the duty to report to the social care regulators of the Director of Children & Families and the Strategic Director of Adult's Care and Wellbeing.

9.5 In addition to this the **Deputy Leader of the Council** is the Lead Member for Customer Experience (which includes responsibility for complaints), whose role is to support a positive complaint handling culture.

9.6 The Strategy and Resources Policy Committee has lead responsibility for complaints, receiving regular information on complaints that provides insight on the organisation's complaint handling performance. This includes:

- Annual report
- Inclusion in the Council's quarterly outcomes performance framework.

9.7 As a minimum, the Strategy and Resources Policy Committee will receive:

a) regular updates on the volume, categories, and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance.

b) regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; and

c) the annual complaints performance and service improvement report.

10 Data protection and consent policies

10.1 The Data Protection Act 2018 provides protection for personal information to ensure it remains private and confidential. The Council will ensure that the principles of the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) are adhered to. Any information provided for the purposes of investigating a complaint will be held securely. In order to investigate a complaint some personal data, such as name may be shared with other council services, but this is on a need-to-know basis only, as necessary.

10.2 In accordance with the Council's obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018, all personal information provided by complainants is only retained by the Council for as long as necessary. See: [Privacy notice | Sheffield City Council](#)

10.3 All personal data provided will only be used for the purpose of investigating the complaint.

10.4 Where appropriate, the Council will seek consent from the service user so it may correspond with any third party on their behalf. This ensures compliance with data protection and ensures the service user's wishes are being fulfilled.

11 Freedom of information

The Freedom of Information 2000 Act gives people the right to access information held by public authorities. The Council is committed to the principles of openness, transparency, and accountability in its activities. It supports the right of any person to seek information under the Act.

For further information, please see: [Freedom of information and environmental information requests | Sheffield City Council](#)

12 Third Party Complaint Handling

12.1 Legal and policy background

Councils frequently provide local public services by arrangement with a third-party partner, external commercial provider or third party (e.g. contractor).. The law says

the Ombudsman can treat the actions of third parties as if they were actions of the council, where any such third-party arrangements exist (Local Government Act 1974, section 25(6) to 25(8)). This means the Ombudsman will hold the council responsible for third party actions, including complaint handling, where services are being provided on behalf of the Council.

The Council has standard clauses in its contracts requiring providers to operate a well-publicised and accessible complaints policy which is reflective of the Council's Complaints policy and provides for early contact, transparency, timely resolution, and for review where appropriate.

Providers are required to fully cooperate with complaint investigations, including any Ombudsman investigations and provide information and/or remedy in a timely manner.

12.2 Handling complaints

Where the council agrees that third parties will respond to complaints on our behalf, there are appropriate arrangements in place to oversee, agree and quality check those responses. The Ombudsman will regard a response from the council's partner/third party (e.g. contractor) as that of the council.

Complaints about service or funding levels and policy will generally be addressed by the council, not a third party (e.g. contractor).

If someone has completed a partner's/ provider complaints process, we would not expect them to then go through the council's complaint process.

A council is responsible for a partner's/third party (e.g. contractor's) action, including complaint handling. The council wish to know about complaints to the third party. This is to monitor the contract or agreement and so it can suggest ways to resolve complaints where appropriate.

12.3 Joint complaint handling

- Where a complaint is about a Council service and another organisation, such as the NHS, the service will aim to work with that organisation to **provide a single joint response**.
- In these cases, the Accountable Manager of the Council service will need to agree with the manager of the other organisation which organisation will lead the investigation.
- When the Council is leading the investigation, it will be carried out in the same way as any other Investigation at the Investigation stage.
- Before the response is sent, it will need to be approved by the Accountable Manager of the Council service and the lead manager of the other organisation.

13 Complaints involving insurance issues or Council Housing disrepair claims

There will always be some matters of Housing disrepair that will be more complex and difficult to resolve than others. Housing Disrepair claims aren't insured claims as they are contractual. Residents may consider resorting to legal claims to get these issues resolved.

Legal action can be stressful, costly, and time-consuming for residents and, for landlords, it can divert much needed funds away from investment programmes. It is, therefore, particularly important that these cases are handled with care to maintain the relationship between the resident and the landlord and to minimise the risk of them becoming protracted and contentious.

Sheffield City Council will only deal with *insurance claims* in relation to damage to property and personal injury, which may occur from housing repair issues. However, in some instances compensation payments may be considered appropriate and these will be dealt with through relevant policies and procedures.

Complainants are able to raise a formal complaint even if an insurance claim is also being made, particularly if a complainant has raised additional issues other than a request to be compensated for damaged belongings or damage to their health.

As a result, customers may give both a legal claim and a complaint running at the same time. To effectively manage these cases, Sheffield City Council will ensure that we are equipped to identify cases at risk of becoming legal issues at an early stage and have appropriate strategies in place to progress them accordingly.

Our processes have continuing emphasis on ensuring that the resident: is kept informed; feels that the landlord is taking the issue seriously; and is assured that the matter is progressing.

We will also be committed to inspect properties as soon as a claim is raised and to completing the repairs needed as soon as is practicable.

For further information see:

<https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Guidance-on-Insurance.pdf>

<https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/landlords-info/guidance-notes/guidance-on-pre-action-protocol-for-housing-conditions-claims-and-service-complaints/>

14 Unreasonable Behaviour from Complainants

14.1 There are a small number of customers who, because of their behaviour and/or the frequency or nature of their contacts with the Council, hinder our consideration of their complaint.

14.2 We refer to such behaviour as 'unreasonable' complainant behaviour.

14.3 In these circumstances we will consider invoking sanctions through the Council's Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour Policy.

- See: [Guidance on managing unreasonable complainant behaviour - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)

14.4 Examples of the behaviours which may cause the policy to be invoked are:

- Constantly changing the basis of the complaint
- Introducing trivial or irrelevant new information
- Adopting a 'scattergun' approach
- Making unnecessarily excessive demands on the time and resources of staff
- Submitting repeat complaints
- Use of discriminatory and/or offensive language/views

14.5 Any restrictions placed on an individual's contact due to unacceptable behaviour will be proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

15 How to Contact Us

If you would like to make a suggestion, compliment or complaint, you can contact us directly, or complete an on-line feedback form by visiting Sheffield City Council website or by following this link: [Contact us | Sheffield City Council](#)

If you would like further information about the Complaints Policy, please contact the Council's Corporate Feedback & Complaints Team at:

Telephone 0114 273 4567

Write to: Customer Services, Corporate Feedback & Complaints Team,
Sheffield City Council, 1 Union Street, Howden House
Sheffield S1 2SH

Sheffield City Council Corporate Complaint Procedure

April 2024

Draft

**Author: C Bygraves-Paul,
Joint Acting Head of Customer Services**

Effective Complaint Handling – Corporate Complaint Procedure

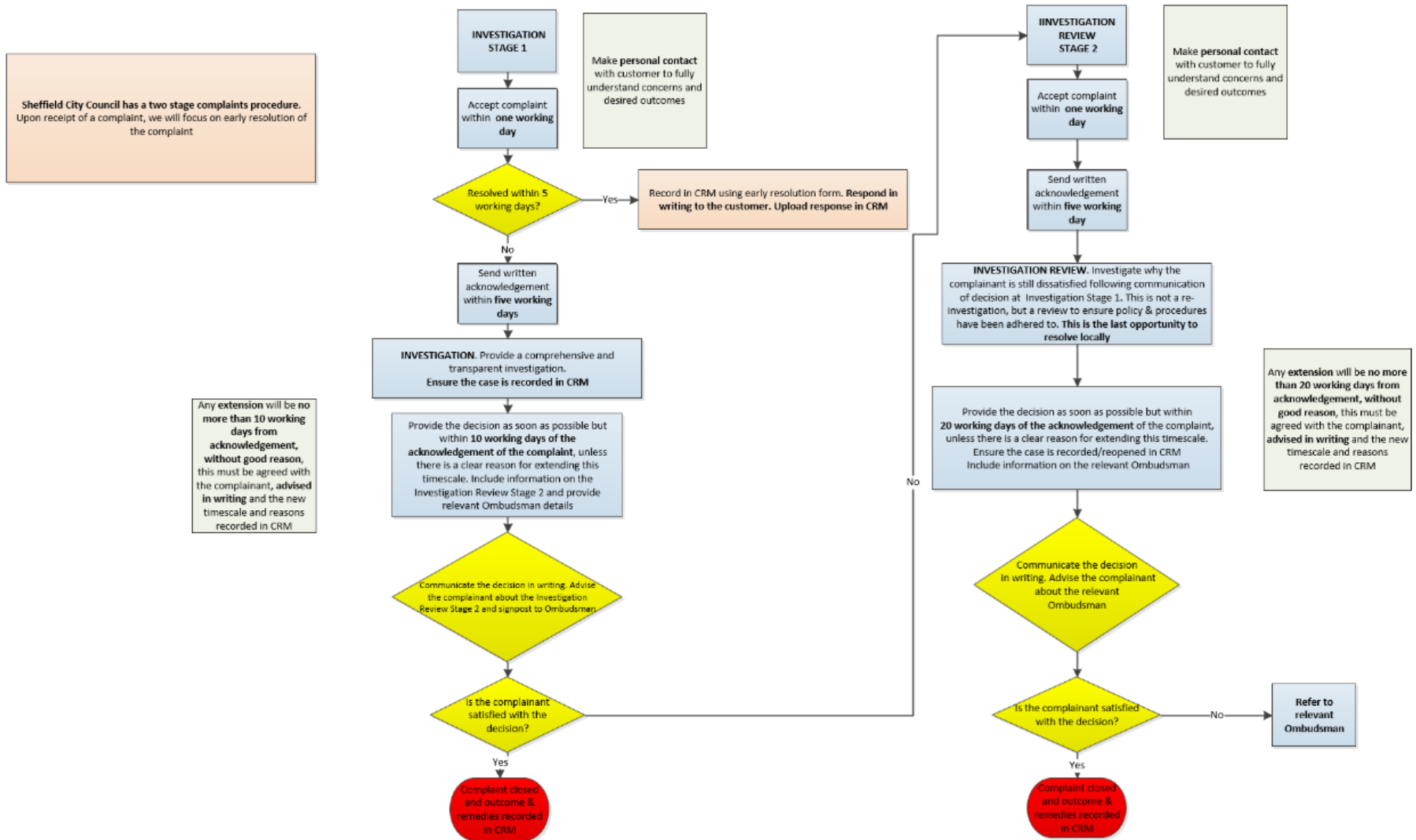
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Effective Complaint Handling – Corporate Complaint Procedures

PROCESS MAP

Note – There are separate procedures for Adults & Childrens statutory social care complaints – see: [Feedback and Complaints - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](https://sharepoint.com)



Effective Complaint Handling – Corporate Complaint Procedure

Roles and Responsibilities

All employees, irrespective of their job role, have a responsibility to deal with complaints. All employees must try to resolve the problem, wherever possible, at the first point of contact

The Council's Customer Services, Corporate Feedback and Complaint team will also provide advice and support for citizens and staff throughout the complaint process.

Contact us via

complaintsmanagers@sheffield.gov.uk or 0114 273 4660

At the Investigation (Stage 1) and Investigation Review (Stage 2) stages, there are six formal roles. Customer Services keep a record of who carries out these roles in each service.

These roles are as follows and are responsible for:

Accountable Manager

(Service Managers/Heads of Service/Directors)

- Service area's adherence to corporate complaints policy and procedures
- Monitoring Investigating Manager's progress, timeliness, and quality of the response
- Approving written responses as required
- Approving and implementing outcomes (remedies and service improvements)
- Embedding learning within recorded timescales

Investigating Manager

(Operations Managers/Team Managers)

- Accept the Complaint (see Stages on page 9)
- Making personal contact and listening empathetically to the complainant
- ***In agreement with the complainant***, understanding what went wrong and how to put it right
- Sending a complaint investigation **acknowledgement letter within 5 working days**
- Conducting a thorough, effective and proportionate investigation
- Keep the complainant updated regularly
- Provide a comprehensive written response within agreed timescales
- **Record the complaint, acknowledgement letter, final response documentation, remedies and outcomes in CRM**

- Keep the Accountable Manager informed of the outcome (remedies) and learning

Effective Complaint Handling – Corporate Complaint Procedure

Reviewing Manager

(Operations Managers/Service Managers/Heads of Service)

- Making personal contact and listening empathetically to the complainant
- ***In agreement with the complainant***, understanding what they remain dissatisfied with and how to put it right
- Sending a complaint review **acknowledgement letter within 5 working days**
- Conducting a thorough and effective review of the complaint
- Keep the complainant updated regularly
- Provide a comprehensive written response within agreed timescales
- **Record the complaint, acknowledgement letter, final response documentation, remedies and outcomes in CRM**
- Keep the Accountable Manager informed of the outcome (remedies) and learning

Designated Person

(MP, Councillor or Designated Tenant Panel)

Complaints about Council Housing Services will be dealt with through the Corporate Complaints Procedure. However, if complainants are unable to resolve their complaint through our complaints procedure they can contact a 'Designated person' who can help find a solution or refer it directly to the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Case Coordinators and Customer Services Corporate Feedback & Complaints team support the administration of corporate and statutory complaints. Corporate complaints are managed through the complaints case management system (CRM):

Case Coordinator

(Staff responsible for allocation/monitoring of complaints within their Service area)

Effective Complaint Handling – Corporate Complaint Procedure

Case coordinator:

- Accurately recording complaints received by the service on the complaints case management system (CRM)
- Identifying the Accountable Manager and Investigating Manager on the day the complaint is received
- Allocating all complaints (on the day of receipt) to an Accountable Manager and Investigating Manager through the case management system (CRM)
- Keeping the Council's complaints case management system up to date. This may include uploading response documentation and any identified learning and outcomes.

Complaints Manager

Includes Statutory Duty

(Customer Services Corporate Complaints & Feedback team)

Regulations require Local Authorities to assign an officer to undertake certain tasks for statutory complaints. This officer is known as the Complaints Manager.

The Complaint Manager also acts as link/liason officer for statutory Ombudsman enquiries/investigations. The role of the Complaint Manager includes:

- Overseeing the council's complaints policy and procedures
- Maintaining customer focus
- Providing guidance, impartial advice, and support to all staff on management of complaints
- Supporting Accountable, Investigating and Reviewing Managers with statutory social care complaints/Ombudsman advice and responses
- Overseeing the arrangements for reporting and publicity
- Liaising with Investigating/Reviewing and Accountable Managers and others (e.g. Independent Reviewing Officer/Ombudsman/Panel Chairs) to identify options for resolution
- Providing reporting at organisational, service, and departmental levels. This enables performance and learning to be identified and acted upon to improve service delivery

Effective Complaint Handling – Corporate Complaint Procedure

Scrutiny & Oversight

Complaints Senior Executive

Director responsible for Corporate Feedback & Complaints Team

Responsible for overseeing complaint handling performance

This Officer will assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.

To have lead responsibility for complaints to support a positive complaint handling culture.

Member Responsible for Complaints

Deputy Leader of the Council

To ensure that the governing body receives regular information on complaints that provides insight on the organisation's complaint handling performance.

Effective Complaint Handling – Corporate Complaint Procedure

Stages:

When a citizen makes an initial complaint, the person dealing with this has an opportunity to **resolve it at the first point of contact or within 5 working days**:

- Make **personal contact, preferably by phone** to establish what the problem is. Get a clear understanding of what the complainant sees as a resolution
- Where possible, agree a way forward and take action to put things right. Explain what happened and apologise to the complainant as appropriate.
- **All complaints must be recorded in CRM:**
 - **Log the complaint in the complaints case management system (CRM).**
[Make a complaint to the council \(sheffield.gov.uk\)](https://www.sheffield.gov.uk)
 - **If the complaint is completed retrospectively (and within 5 working days only)**, please use [Problem Solving \(retrospective recording of a complaint that has been problem solved\) \(squiz.cloud\)](https://www.squiz.cloud)
- If you can resolve matters to the complainant's satisfaction, **good practise is to follow up your discussion in writing**. You should **send a short follow up communication (letter or email)**. Templates are available for you to use to draft this
 - See template letters: [Feedback and Complaints SharePoint site](#) – see 'Corporate Complaints' >Templates
 - **This response should also be uploaded into CRM.**
- If you are **unable to resolve the complaint within 5 working days or the complainant remains dissatisfied**, the complaint should be progressed to an Investigation - Stage 1

MUST DO!

All complaints and responses

MUST be recorded in CRM, including those resolved at the first point of contact or within 5 working days

'How To' guides are available at [Feedback and Complaints SharePoint site](#)

If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome, or with the way their complaint was handled, they may ask for the response to be more fully investigated. This is the Investigation - Stage 1.

Effective Complaint Handling – Corporate Complaint Procedure

Investigation - Stage 1

1. Make **personal contact, preferably by phone** to establish what the problem is. Get a clear understanding of what the complainant sees as a resolution. **Actively listen!**
 - Allow the complainant to state their case and to provide any additional evidence as appropriate
 - Provide the complainant with your contact details and how to contact you throughout the complaint process.
2. **All complaints must be recorded in CRM:**
 - **Log the complaint in the complaints case management system (CRM).** [Make a complaint to the council \(sheffield.gov.uk\)](https://www.sheffield.gov.uk)
3. Check if the complainant has **any vulnerabilities, accessibility** (e.g. BSL user) or **reasonable adjustment requirements** (e.g. support person required). If so, **record in CRM and make/agree the necessary arrangements.**
4. Check if the complaint relates to any sort of **discriminatory behaviour** (e.g. racial discrimination). If so, **record in CRM on the complaint record.**
5. **Agree timescales** with customer for completion of investigation and final response. Wherever possible, you should aim to **RESPOND** to the complaint within **10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged**. If the case is complex and you think more time is needed, **agree an extension period with the customer, providing your reasons in writing**. This **extension should be no more than an additional 10 working days** (max 20 working days in total).
6. **Note – complaints must be RESPONDED to within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged, even if they are not yet fully resolved.**
7. Where possible, agree a way forward and take action to put things right. Explain what will happen next and apologise to the complainant as appropriate. Provide details of when you will next update them. **Keep the complainant regularly updated!**
8. **Send a complaint acknowledgement letter within 5 working days. This must be uploaded within CRM.** Link to templates is provided below.
 - If you can **RESOLVE** matters to the complainant's satisfaction, **good practise is to follow up your discussion in writing**. You should **send a comprehensive response letter (or email)**. This response should be approved by your Accountable Manager. The letter should include details of the relevant Ombudsman for further escalation as required. **This response should also be uploaded into CRM.**
 - Templates are available for you to use to draft this. See template letters: [Feedback and Complaints SharePoint site](#) – see 'Corporate Complaints' >Templates*
9. **Any extension beyond an additional 10 working days must be i) agreed with your Head of Service and if approved ii) agreed with the customer, providing reasons. This extension and reasons must be recorded in CRM.**

- **In all such cases, the complainant should also be provided with the contact details of the relevant Ombudsman (see below).**
- 10. Ensure the **outcome, agreed remedies and any learnings/service improvements are recorded in CRM before the complaint is closed.** Close the complaint in CRM.

Effective Complaint Handling – Corporate Complaint Procedure

Investigation Review -Stage 2

If the **complainant remains dissatisfied**, the complaint should be progressed to an Investigation Review - Stage 2

- Complainants are not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a Stage 2 consideration.
- We will make reasonable efforts to understand why a complainant remains unhappy as part of its Stage 2 response.

The Investigation Review is an important part of the complaints process. It is our **last opportunity to put things right.**

- The Investigation Review is an opportunity to review the investigation process, the conclusions reached, and the steps taken to resolve the complaint. **It is not a full re-investigation.**
- The Investigation Review is led by the Accountable Manager who approved the Investigation (Stage 1) response
- Staff members should remain **objective, responsive, and committed to resolving the complaint.** This should help in preventing any further escalation.
- **Complete steps 1-4 as detailed under the Stage 1 investigation process (see page 10).**
- **Agree timescales** with customer for completion of investigation and final response. Wherever possible this **should be within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged.** If the case is complex and you think more time is needed, agree an extension period with the customer, *providing your reasons*. This **extension should be no more than an additional 20 working days** (max 40 working days in total). **Extension periods and reasons for extension should be recorded in CRM.**
- **Complete steps 6 - 8 as detailed under the Stage 1 investigation process (see page 10).**
- At the end of the Investigation Review, the Review response letter should be agreed and approved by the Accountable Manager's line manager. The letter should include details of the relevant Ombudsman for further escalation as required.
 - Templates are available for you to use to draft this. See template letters: [Feedback and Complaints SharePoint site](#) – see 'Corporate Complaints' >Templates* **This response should also be uploaded into CRM.**
- **Any extension beyond an additional 20 working days must be i) agreed with your Head of Service and if approved ii) agreed with the customer, providing reasons.**

Any extensions with reasons must be recorded in CRM.

- **In all such cases the complainant should also be provided with the contact details of the relevant Ombudsman** (see below).
- Ensure the **outcome, agreed remedies and any learnings/service improvements are recorded in CRM before the complaint is closed.** Close the complaint in CRM.

Effective Complaint Handling – Corporate Complaint Procedure

Ombudsman

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response after the Investigation Review, they can be referred to the relevant Ombudsman.

- The Ombudsman will liaise with the Corporate Feedback & Complaint team. This team will coordinate and manage Ombudsman enquiries and further investigations.
- The Ombudsman will usually redirect any complaints which haven't been through the Investigation and Investigation Review stage. In this case, the Ombudsman will usually direct the complainant back to the Council.
- If the Ombudsman decides to close a complaint without making formal enquiries, this will be recorded on the Council's case management system (CRM). The Corporate Feedback & Complaint team will record this on the system and contact the appropriate service to make them aware.

Timescales

Acknowledgement Letter

WITHIN 5 WORKING DAYS FROM RECEIPT OF THE COMPLAINT

In all cases where a complaint cannot be resolved at the first point of contact or within 5 working days, **an acknowledgement letter should be sent and uploaded to the case management system (CRM).** .

Investigation Stage 1 Response

WITHIN 10 WORKING DAYS OF THE COMPLAINT BEING ACKNOWLEDGED

- Ensure an acknowledgement letter has been sent within 5 working days from receipt of the complaint
- **Within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged**, a comprehensive, **written response** should be provided to the complainant. **This response must be uploaded to CRM.**
- Any extension to the above timescales must be agreed with the complainant and reasons provided. **The extension must not exceed an additional 10 working days without good reason.**
- **Note – You MUST RESPOND within 10 working days of the complaint being acknowledged, even if the complaint is not yet RESOLVED.**

Investigation Review Stage 2 Response

WITHIN 20 WORKING DAYS OF THE ESCALATED COMPLAINT BEING ACKNOWLEDGED

- **An acknowledgement letter should be sent within 5 working days from receipt of the complaint.** This must be uploaded into CRM
- **Within 20 working days** a comprehensive, **written response** should be provided to the complainant. **This response must be uploaded to CRM**
- Any extension to the above timescales must be agreed with the complainant and reasons provided. **The extension must not exceed an additional 20 working days without good reason.**
- **Note – You MUST RESPOND within 20 working days of the complaint being acknowledged, even if the complaint is not yet RESOLVED.**

Effective Complaint Handling – Corporate Complaint Procedure

Ombudsman

- A response to preliminary/informal Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) enquiries is usually received in 3 working days
- The Housing Ombudsman (HO) gives a specific date on cases by case basis
- A response to formal Ombudsman enquiries/investigations usually takes **20 working days for LGSCO and 15 working days for HO**

Effective Complaint Handling – 5 Key Elements

5 Key Elements

There are five key elements to effective complaint handling:

**Identifying & Accepting a
Complaint**

Defining a Complaint

Investigating a Complaint

**Making & Communicating
the Decision**

Putting Things Right

Effective Complaint Handling – 5 Key Elements

1. Identifying and Accepting a Complaint

Our definition of a complaint is, ‘an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standards of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual/resident or group of individuals/residents.’

Being Customer Focussed

Actively Listen! Be Empathetic!

Consider whether you need to make any **reasonable adjustments** for the complainant

Being Open & Accountable

Provide a point of contact!

Citizens should know how they can complain

Acting Fairly & Proportionately

Act independently and have an open mind

Offer citizens support to make a complaint if needed

Putting Things Right

Try to resolve at the first point of contact or within 5 working days

If you find something has gone wrong, do not wait until the complaint process has been completed to put it right

Questions to ask when receiving a complaint:

- Is the enquiry a service request rather than a complaint? See Policy for definitions and differences
- If a complaint, does the complainant require any reasonable adjustments? See: [Access for disabled people | Sheffield City Council](#)
- Does the complainant have/require a representative? If so, do they have the complainant's consent to act on their behalf, and are you satisfied they are acting in the complainant's interest?
- Have you already considered and responded to the complaint? **Check CRM for any history**
- Is the complaint within the scope of the Council's complaints procedure? If so, which procedure should the complaint be considered under and what are the timescales?
- Do parts of the complaint concern another public sector organization (e.g., Health or Police)?

Effective Complaint Handling – 5 Key Elements

2. Defining a Complaint

Seeking Continuous Improvement

What are people complaining about? If you are receiving multiple complaints about the same issue, it can be a sign of systemic failure

Being Customer Focussed

Define what the complainant says went wrong from their point of view and the impact it had on them

Being Open & Accountable

Be clear on timescales and when the complainant will hear from you

The best way to accurately define a complaint is to speak to the complainant.

This will allow you to:

- Check your understanding of the issue they want you to investigate and under which complaint procedure you should consider it
- Identify opportunities to resolve the complaint at the earliest opportunity
- Manage the complainant's expectations and answer any questions about the process
- Hear the complainant's view of what has gone wrong and how they say it has affected them

Best practice:

- Hear the complainant's view of what has gone wrong and how it has affected them
- Define the complaint from the complainant's point of view. Include details of what the complainant thinks has gone wrong and how it has impacted them
- **Within 5 working days**, write to the complainant setting out your understanding of their complaint, what will happen next, and when they can expect a response. This helps reduce the likelihood of a later complaint that you have not addressed their concerns. **See 'Acknowledgement template'** held in: [Feedback and Complaints - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](https://sharepoint.com)
- Always establish the issue at the heart of the complaint and what the complainant wants. If the complainant disagrees with your complaint statement, and you cannot reach agreement, proceed using this information. You should let the complainant know you will proceed on that basis.

***Where we decide the complaint is not within the scope of the complaints procedure or identify reasons for not accepting the complaint, we will inform the complainant of our decision and/or our reasons and provide signposting to the relevant Ombudsman.**

Effective Complaint Handling – 5 Key Elements

3. Investigating a Complaint

What went wrong?

What should have happened?

Once you are clear what the complaint is about, you will need to gather information and evidence to reach a decision. You need to use this information to decide two things:

What should have happened?

- The law
- Government guidance/circulars
- Council policies and procedures
- Case law • Professional bodies
- The Ombudsman's view

What Happened?

- The complainant or representative
- Members of staff
- Third parties
- Case records • Correspondence (emails, phone records, letters)

The information you need will depend on the nature of the complaint. Below are potential useful sources:

You then need to decide what information is relevant, reliable, and important to the issue being complained about. You may ask yourself:

- Who/When/Where is the information from?
- Is it supported by other information?
- Are there any gaps? Do you need more information?
- Do you have enough information to make a decision that will stand up to scrutiny?

The Ombudsman investigates fault causing injustice. When reviewing conflicting information, it is sometimes useful to ask whether what happened disadvantaged the complainant.

Being Open & Accountable

Let the complainant know who is investigating their complaint and how to contact them

Being Customer focussed

Keep the complainant informed at all stages of the investigation, especially if there is a delay

Getting it Right

Spend time planning

Effective Complaint Handling – 5 Key Elements

4. Making and Communicating a Decision

Your complaint, Our decision...

Acting Fairly & Proportionately

Ensure the complainant knows how they can challenge the decision if they remain unhappy

Being Open & Accountable

Share the information you have considered with the complainant so they can understand your findings

Being Customer Focussed

Consider whether the complainant needs support understanding your decision. This may be a meeting to discuss the findings

Putting Things Right

If something has gone wrong tell the complainant how and when you will put it right

Getting it Right

Be clear what your decision is, and what you will do to put things right if something has gone wrong

Questions to ask when communicating a decision:

- Was the authority or its agents at fault?
- Should what happened not have happened?
- If so, how exactly has this disadvantaged the complainant? ➤
- If so, what does the Council need to do to put things right?

A good response letter consists of:

- The statement of complaint (agreed with the complainant at the start of the process)
- The steps you have taken to investigate the complaint
- What you have taken into account
- Your decision and reasons for it
- What will happen next
- If action is to be taken, how, when and by whom?
- An apology (as appropriate)
- Any changes you will make to processes and procedures following the complaint

Effective Complaint Handling – 5 Key Elements

5. Putting Things Right

Put the complainant back in the position they would have been had the fault not occurred

See [Guidance on remedies - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#). It explains the principles underpinning how we remedy complaints.

Making Sure It Doesn't Happen Again!

Your complaint investigation and outcome should help you find the root causes of problems.

Where systems and processes haven't worked properly, make improvements.

This may include changing policies and procedures, or training staff

Seeking Continuous Improvement

Ensure you have a mechanism in place to learn from complaints you uphold

Getting it Right

If you have found something went wrong, what has been the impact on the complainant?

This is what you need to put right!

Putting things right for the complainant:

- Focus less on what went wrong, and more on the consequences, the injustice
- Consider whether the complainant has contributed to the consequences
- Take account of the complainant's views but exercise your own judgement
- Any remedy should be appropriate and proportionate to the harm suffered
- Sometimes specific actions will be required (e.g. a new assessment or appeal)
- If there is no other way to put things right, consider a financial payment **in line with the LGSCO's Guidance on remedies: [Guidance on remedies - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)**
- Assess whether the complainant has been put to a lot of time and trouble pursuing the complaint

If there is something to apologise for, do it!

Effective Complaint Handling

Complaints Involving More than One Service

- A complaint may be about more than one Council service. In these cases, **the Accountable Managers of all the relevant services** will need to agree which service will lead the Investigation stage so that a single response is sent. **This should not cause a delay in the handling of the complaint.**
- Once this has been agreed, a Lead Investigating Manager should be appointed. They will carry out the Investigation, with input from other managers as required.
- The Investigation will be carried out in the same way as any other Investigation at the Investigation stage.
- However, before the response is sent it will need to be approved by **all the Accountable Managers of all services** involved in the complaint

Effective Complaint Handling

Third Party Complaint Handling

Legal and policy background

Councils frequently provide local public services by arrangement with a third-party partner or external commercial provider. The law says the Ombudsman can treat the actions of third parties as if they were actions of the council, where any such third-party arrangements exist (Local Government Act 1974, section 25(6) to 25(8)). This means the Ombudsman will hold the council responsible for third party actions, including complaint handling, where services are being provided on behalf of the Council.

The Council has standard clauses in its contracts requiring providers to operative a well-publicised and accessible complaints policy which is broadly reflective of the Council's Complaints policy and provides for early contact, problem solving, transparency, timely resolution, and for review where appropriate.

Providers are required to fully cooperate with complaint investigations, including any Ombudsman investigations and provide information and/or remedy in a timely manner.

Handling complaints

Where the council agrees that third parties will respond to complaints on our behalf, they should agree appropriate arrangements to oversee, agree and quality check those responses. The Ombudsman will regard a response from the council's partner as that of the council. The council therefore need to be confident the partner is speaking with the same voice.

Complaints about service or funding levels and policy need to be addressed by the council, not a partner/provider (e.g. contractor).

If someone has completed a partner's/ provider complaints process, we would not expect them to then go through the council's complaint process.

A council is responsible for a partner's/provider/third party's actions, including complaint handling. The council wish to know about complaints to the third party. This is to monitor the contract or agreement and so it can suggest ways to resolve complaints where appropriate.

Effective Complaint Handling

Joint complaint handling

- Where a complaint is about a Council service and another organisation, such as the NHS, the service will aim to work with that organisation to **provide a single joint response**
 - In these cases, the Accountable Manager of the Council service will need to agree with the manager of the other organisation which organisation will lead the investigation
- When the Council is leading the investigation, it will be carried out in the same way as any other Investigation at the Investigation stage
- Before the response is sent, it will need to be approved by the Accountable Manager of the Council service and the lead manager of the other organisation

Unreasonable and Persistent Complainant Behaviour

In a minority of cases people pursue their complaints in a way that is unreasonable. They may behave unacceptably or be unreasonably persistent in their contacts and submission of information. This can impede the investigation of their complaint (or complaints by others). It can also consume significant amounts of resource. This can occur while their complaint is being investigated, or once the investigation has finished.

For further information on this, please see:

- [Guidance on managing unreasonable complainant behaviour - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)
 - [Feedback and Complaints - Unreasonable Complainant Behaviour - All Documents \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- Examples of the actions/behaviours which may cause the policy to be invoked are:
 - Constantly changing the basis of the complaint
 - Introducing trivial or irrelevant new information
 - Adopting a 'scattergun' approach
 - Making unnecessarily excessive demands on the time and resources of staff
 - Submitting repeat complaints
 - Use of discriminatory and/or offensive language/views/behaviour

If a service experiences behaviour of this type, **they should seek advice from the Corporate Feedback & Complaint team** and ensure that any restrictions placed on an individual's contact due to unacceptable behaviour are proportionate and demonstrate regard for the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

Effective Complaint Handling

Further information and support

If you would like further information/support about the Complaints Policy, please contact the Council's Corporate Feedback & Complaints Team at:

Telephone 0114 273 4660

Email: complaintsmanagers@sheffield.gov.uk

We will deal with most complaints about Sheffield City Council services through the approach set out in this document. However, it should be noted that there are separate procedures for complaints about Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care and Public Health services.

For further information, see:

- [Joint Complaint Handling Code - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)
- [Designated persons - Housing Ombudsman \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](#)
- [\[Withdrawn\] Complaints procedure - Public Health England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Our commitment to equality | Sheffield City Council](#)
- [Our values | Sheffield City Council](#)
- [The Nolan principles | Good Governance \(good-governance.org.uk\)](#)

Detailed guidance of the Council's complaints case management system (CRM), as well as examples of template letters and other useful documents can be found on the Feedback & Complaint's SharePoint site:

- [Feedback and Complaints - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

The purpose of the Equality impact assessment is to consider the equality implications of your strategy, policy, project or other activity on different groups affected by it and consider if there are ways to proactively advance equality.

The EqIA will need to be completed by the project manager, policy author etc and approved by a Head of Service or Director. For guidance, please refer to the training material and example forms.

Name of activity

Consultation on the Complaint Handling Code and placing it onto statutory footing.

Activity purpose

Placing the Complaint Handling Code for use by all members of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme onto a statutory footing.

To carry out a consultation with member landlords, residents, RSH and DLUHC in preparation for putting the Code onto a statutory footing. The activity is via digital Microsoft application Customer Voice, downloadable forms and email, and paper forms via telephone request.

The consultation is reaching out to landlords, asking them to share the consultation survey with residents.

Consultation starting 28/09/2023.

Activity owners

Daniel Wright Verity Richards

Assessment date

25/09/2023

Assessment completed by

Helen Bradford, Accessibility and Inclusion Manager and HOS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group.

1. Please describe what evidence, data and intelligence you have used to assess the impact of this activity.

Resident customers and representatives

- Diversity profile of social housing tenants - English Housing Survey (EHS)
- Diversity profile of residents accessing the Housing Ombudsman – WorkPro
- [Exploring the UK's digital divide - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

2. List who this activity affects.

Resident customers	Yes
Resident representatives	Yes
Service complainants	Yes
Resident Panel	Yes
Landlord employees/agents	Yes
Colleagues	Yes
Others, please specify	Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) Department of Levelling up Housing and Communities (DLUHC)

3. Describe how these groups are likely to be affected.

Resident Customers and Representatives

Complaint Handling Code:

The Code, once it attains a statutory footing, will affect complaint handling services across the c4.7 million social housing households. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the provisions of the Code do not inadvertently disadvantage any groups of residents and representatives.

Code Consultation

The statutory consultation is with regards to the Code and Self-assessment which will affect the complaint-handling service that landlords will be required to comply with from April 2024. Therefore, it is important that a suitably diverse group of residents and

representatives have the opportunity to feedback on the Code, so that impacts and concerns can be addressed following the consultation period.

Awareness, participation and responses may be affected by the consultation questions and methodology.

The focus on a digital approach to the consultation will affect digitally excluded residents and their opportunity to raise concerns regarding the proposed changes to the code.

Service complainants

Individuals who have complained about the Housing Ombudsman Service will very likely to be social housing residents and therefore be affected by the Code as their landlord will be a member of the Scheme. Members of the Scheme are required to comply with the Code.

Resident Panel

Complaint Handling Code

Members of the Resident Panel are all social housing residents, and therefore will be affected by the provisions of the Code once implemented.

Code Consultation

Similarly to residents and their representatives, the Resident Panel will be affected because they are tenants of member landlords. The outcome of the consultation will lead to a statutory Code which will impact on the complaint handling services of member landlords.

For those who choose to participate as social housing tenants, participation and responses may be affected by the consultation questions and methodology.

Member Landlord employees/third parties acting on their behalf

Complaint Handling Code

The Code and Self-assessment will affect the complaint handling service that landlords will be required to comply with from April 2024. This will include landlord agents (such as contractors, management agents and/or other third parties). This is because they will be required to handle concerns from residents and their representatives in line with the Code.

For third parties (such as contractors or independent adjudicators), the Code specifies that they must comply with its provisions. Therefore, these individuals may be affected by the Code as they must deliver the outcomes set out in each section.

Consultation

The consultation methodologies and the question style and structure are both likely to impact on participation, although it should be noted that landlord employees and/or agents will be participating as individuals/residents only. Organisations will be asked to submit a corporate response.

Colleagues

Complaint Handling Code

Colleagues within the organisation may be affected by the provisions of the Code should they be residents of social housing themselves.

In addition, those who are required to use the Code in their day to day duties, such as intervening on complaints where there is evidence that the Code has not been complied with or in individual case investigations, will be proactively assessing landlords' services against the Code.

Consultation

Colleagues will be informed of the intended consultation, and may decide to participate in the formal consultation if they are residents of social housing. Alongside the formal consultation, colleagues will be given the opportunity to feed into the Complaint Handling Code, including the published frequently asked questions.

For those who choose to participate as social housing tenants, participation and responses may be affected by the consultation questions and methodology.

For those not participating in the formal consultation, their views will be captured through a variety of more informal methods including an internal consultation questionnaire, team meetings and feedback channels.

4. What consultation have you undertaken, detail who you have engaged and consulted with.

The Housing Ombudsman Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group have been consulted and invited to comment on the proposed methodology and consultation questions.

5. Does this activity affect one group more or less favourably than another, on the basis of the Equality protected characteristics.

Age

Proportionally the 65+ age range access the service and complain less than the EHS population. However, 28% of social renters are 65+ years (EHS).

Since 2011, adults over the age of 65 years have consistently made up the largest proportion of the adult internet non-users, and over half of all adult internet non-users were over the age of 75 years in 2018.

Digital exclusion: 17% of social rented households (around 700,000 households) had no internet access at home (EHS).

Impact	Detail the impact, who's affected, the proportion of individuals, and the actions taken to mitigate impact and advance equality, diversity, and inclusion
Positive Impact	<p><u>Complaint Handling Code</u></p> <p>The Complaint Handling Code specifies at 3.1 that <i>organisations must make it easy for individuals to complain by providing different channels to complain</i> which minimises the risk of adults over 65 from being restricted from making a complaint as a result of digital exclusion.</p> <p>In addition, the Code goes on to specify that <i>Organisations must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of individuals who may need to access the complaints process</i>. This further promotes accessibility for those over 65 as landlords will be required to ensure that they are identifying and responding to the needs of their residents.</p>

Impact	Detail the impact, who's affected, the proportion of individuals, and the actions taken to mitigate impact and advance equality, diversity, and inclusion
Negative impact of those over 65+, due to digital exclusion.	<p><u>Consultation:</u></p> <p>The Resident Panel has a higher proportion of older residents and may not be representative of younger residents – who are likely to complete the online survey.</p> <p>With the Resident Panel participation, this may lead to a representative group within the 65+ age group.</p>

Disability

54% of resident households have recorded a disability as part of the EHS. In the ONS housing and disability data, 76% of social renters are recorded as having a disability within their household. Those with a disability are accessing/using the service less when we compare this with the ONS data, but it is comparable if we use the EHS data on disability.

Impact	Detail the impact, who's affected, the proportion of individuals, and the actions taken to mitigate impact and advance equality, diversity, and inclusion
Positive Impact	<p><u>Complaint Handling Code</u></p> <p>In Section 3 of the Complaint Handling Code, it specifies that landlords must <i>consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of individuals who may need to access the complaints process</i>. This aims to ensure that residents with a disability are treated fairly and consistently by landlords, in line with their duties under the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>This is further supported by provisions under section 5.8 which states <i>Organisations must make reasonable adjustments for individuals where appropriate under the Equality Act 2010. Organisations must keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed, as well as a record of any disabilities an individual has disclosed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments must be kept under active review.</i></p>

Impact	Detail the impact, who's affected, the proportion of individuals, and the actions taken to mitigate impact and advance equality, diversity, and inclusion
Negative impact due to digital exclusion.	<p><u>Consultation</u></p> <p>Though the percentage of disabled adults not using the internet has been declining, in 2018, it was 23.3% compared with only 6.0% of those without a disability.</p> <p>Using the online methodology may lead to lower participation by those that are disabled, who account for just over 50% of complainants to HOS.</p>

Ethnicity

Impact	Detail the impact, who's affected, the proportion of individuals, and the actions taken to mitigate impact and advance equality, diversity, and inclusion
Neutral	<p><u>Complaint Handling Code</u></p> <p>Based on the current data, the Code will have no significant impact.</p>
Neutral	<p><u>Consultation</u></p> <p>Based on the current data, the proposed consultation approach will have no significant impact.</p>

Gender

Women make up 63% of residents approaching the Ombudsman which is broadly in line with the proportion of residents in social housing (EHS survey and HOS internal case management system).

Impact	Detail the impact, who's affected, the proportion of individuals, and the actions taken to mitigate impact and advance equality, diversity, and inclusion
Neutral	<p><u>Complaint Handling Code</u></p> <p>Based on the current data, the Code will have no significant impact.</p>
Neutral	<p><u>Consultation</u></p>

Impact	Detail the impact, who's affected, the proportion of individuals, and the actions taken to mitigate impact and advance equality, diversity, and inclusion
	2019 report by ONS indicate that women account for more than half of the non-internet users, potentially putting them experiencing a negative impact of participating via an online survey.

Gender reassignment

Impact	Detail the impact, who's affected, the proportion of individuals, and the actions taken to mitigate impact and advance equality, diversity, and inclusion
Unknown	This information is not collected for residents contacting the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Marriage or civil partnership

Proportionally individuals not married or in a civil partnership made more complaints. This may be reflective that more households are single/lone persons. It may also be indicative of the number of complaints from London Boroughs, where smaller accommodation exists i.e. high rise flats.

Impact	Detail the impact, who's affected, the proportion of individuals, and the actions taken to mitigate impact and advance equality, diversity, and inclusion
Neutral	<u>Complaint Handling Code</u> Based on the current data, the Code will have no significant impact.
Neutral	<u>Consultation</u> ONS Data: Although the percentage of households without an internet connection has generally been declining, those who live alone are less likely to have an internet connection at home, than their peers. 41% of households with a single adult aged 65 years and over had no household internet connection compared with 13% of households with two adults, at least one of whom was 65 years or older. 99% of contact is from those married or in a civil partnership is digital.

Pregnancy and maternity

Impact	Detail the impact, who's affected, the proportion of individuals, and the actions taken to mitigate impact and advance equality, diversity, and inclusion
Unknown	This information is not collected for residents contacting the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Religion or beliefs

64% of the cases don't have an EDI record for religion / belief and 19% of those who provided data opted to record "prefer not to say".

Impact	Detail the impact, who's affected, the proportion of individuals, and the actions taken to mitigate impact and advance equality, diversity, and inclusion
Neutral	<p><u>Complaint Handling Code</u></p> <p>Based on the current data, the Code will have no significant impact.</p>
Neutral	<p><u>Consultation</u></p> <p>Based on known resident data, Hindus and Sikhs indicate preferred contact method is telephone, with less than 35% of contact being done digitally. The judgement is that those individuals are not as digitally active. The assessment has determined the impact neutral, with the option of requesting a survey via the telephone.</p> <p>Proportionally those of a Hindu or Muslim religion, and those who recorded no religion or belief, raised more service complaints.</p>

Sexual orientation

64% of the cases don't have an EDI record for sexual orientation, compared with 41% for age. 16% of those who provided data opted to record "prefer not to say".

Impact	Detail the impact, who's affected, the proportion of individuals, and the actions taken to mitigate impact and advance equality, diversity, and inclusion
Neutral	<u>Complaint Handling Code</u>

Impact	Detail the impact, who's affected, the proportion of individuals, and the actions taken to mitigate impact and advance equality, diversity, and inclusion
	Based on the current data, the Code will have no significant impact.
Neutral	<u>Consultation</u> Based on known data, 57% of contact from the LGBTQ+ community is digital. The assessment has determined the impact neutral, with the option of requesting a survey via the telephone. Proportionally gay/lesbians have raised more service complaints.

Other non-protected characteristics to be considered

Caring

Impact	Detail the impact, who's affected, the proportion of individuals, and the actions taken to mitigate impact and advance equality, diversity, and inclusion
Unknown	This information is not collected for residents contacting the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Socio-economic status (by law Scotland & Wales)

Impact	Detail the impact, who's affected, the proportion of individuals, and the actions taken to mitigate impact and advance equality, diversity, and inclusion
Unknown	This information is not collected for residents contacting the Housing Ombudsman Service.

Literacy

Impact	Detail the impact, who's affected, the proportion of individuals, and the actions taken to mitigate impact and advance equality, diversity, and inclusion
Positive	<u>Complaint Handling Code</u> Within Section 3.2, the Code states <i>Individuals must be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff.</i> This promotes awareness and access for individuals who are less confident in expressing themselves in writing.

Impact	Detail the impact, who's affected, the proportion of individuals, and the actions taken to mitigate impact and advance equality, diversity, and inclusion
	Provisions within Section 6.10 and 6.21 state that <i>Organisations must confirm the following in writing to the individual at the completion of stage 1 in clear, plain language</i> . This requires landlords to ensure that their responses meet the needs of the complainant, including using appropriate language when responding in writing.
Negative	<p><u>Consultation</u></p> <p>This data is not collected, however, the judgement that the proposed consultation process will have a negative impact as participants will need to engage with written documents, even where translated or in plain English. This may be a barrier to participation.</p>

6. If there is a negative impact on any equality target groups, can this impact be legally and objectively justified? Detail the actions that will be taken to reduce any negative impact.

Complaint Handling Code

No negative impacts have been identified.

Consultation:

Due to the potential negative impact on those digitally excluded, telephone and written options should be extended and simplified access to the survey.

The publications and the announcement of consultation should focus on landlords informing residents via their non-digital channels.

7. Assess and detail any potential for dual impact, based on more than one characteristic.

Complaint Handling Code

No negative impacts have been identified.

Consultation:

The approach needs to consider the dual impact on the visually impaired, especially those over 65+ years to take into account the digital exclusions of the 65+ and those with a disability.

8. If the impact unknown, describe the assessment for reaching that conclusion

Gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, caring responsibilities and socio-economic status are all identified as unknown.

This conclusion has been reached as this information is not collected for individuals contacting the Housing Ombudsman. When reviewed, no potential impacts were identified by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusions group.

9. Recommend alternatives to achieving the activity without having an impact.

Not applicable.

10. Considering wider accessibility and inclusion, and those affected by the activity, what other alternative recommendations would support this activity to ensure that it is accessible and inclusive to all.Complaint Handling Code

Non identified

Consultation

Those digitally excluded:

- Provide paper copies of the consultation.
- Provide an extended telephone service officer.
- Produce the consultation in different non-digital media, for example braille.
- Provide guidance to landlords to promote the consultation.
- Consult and approach smaller / specialist housing organisations.
- Reach out to advocacy services.

11. Please give a brief description of how this activity promotes equality.

If there is no evidence that this promotes equality, what changes, if any, could be made to achieve this.

Complaint Handling Code

The Complaint Handling Code sets out provisions for landlords to take action to ensure that residents are treated fairly. Sections 3, 5 and 6 set out clearly that landlords are responsible for meeting their duties under the Equality Act 2010, and in addition, sets out how landlords must proactively identify and respond to the needs of its residents as a collective (Section 3.1) and as individuals (3.2 / 5.8).

Throughout the Code, the intention to ensure consistency in approach whilst ensuring sufficient flex to ensure individual circumstances are considered is clearly stated. This is supported throughout the communications developed for the consultation.

Consultation

Digital exclusion is a strong theme in resident responses, HOS Spotlight reports and is reflected in the English Housing Survey findings referred to above.

Taking a 'one size fits all' approach doesn't promote equality. Expanding to incorporate the wider considerations recommended will enable non-digital access and awareness.

12. Outcome

Outcome	Supporting comments
A – No change required. There is no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. All opportunities to promote equality have been taken.	n/a
B – Adjustments required. This involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality.	<u>Complaint Handling Code</u> The Code sets out several ways that barriers to access, awareness and experience must be minimised by landlords. It also sets the expectation that beyond the provisions of the

Outcome	Supporting comments
	<p>Code, landlords are responsible for proactively understanding and responding to the needs of its residents.</p> <p>Following the consultation, the Ombudsman will review and update its Equality Impact Assessment, taking into account the responses and comments by participants in the consultation activities. This will be published alongside the Complaint Handling Code and regularly reviewed.</p> <p><u>Consultation</u> Steps have been taken to address the barriers around digital exclusion in the communications plan for the consultation.</p> <p>This includes providing the option for telephone responses; printed copies of the consultation; large print and Braille; and working with partners to raise awareness of the exercise.</p> <p>Further work is being undertaken to interrogate potential impacts on groups where we have gaps in data.</p>
<p>C – Continue. There is the potential that the activity has an adversely impact some groups or help some groups more than others. The reasons for this can be well justified and the activity can continue without amendments.</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>D – Cease. The assessment shows that the activity is having a discriminatory effect and should not continue.</p>	<p>n/a</p>

13. Reviewed and approved by (Head of Service or Director)

Daniel Wright, Head of Communications and Stakeholder Engagement | 26/09/2023

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PART A - Initial Impact Assessment

Proposal Name: Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code

EIA ID: 2532

EIA Author: Corleen Bygraves-Paul (CEX)

Proposal Outline:

The Local Government & Social Care (LGSCO) & Housing Ombudsman (HO) Ombudsman are proposing the implementation of a new Joint Complaint Handling Code which will become a statutory code by 1 April 2024. *Note - The Code does not replace any statutory complaint processes such as The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 or Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009. Emphasis is focussed on:

- Single statutory code covering all complaints (except for exclusions outlined above*)
- Prioritisation of complaints and to engender a culture of learning from complaints
- Adopt a 'comply or explain' approach including annual self-assessment which should be published internally and externally
- A focus on keeping complainants updated and informed
- A focus on accessibility to the complaint handling policy and processes (providing complainants with reasonable adjustments where required). A focus on recording complaint documentation and service improvements and remedies identified through the complaint investigation - ensuring that these are implemented in a timely way.
- To accept complaints referred to us within 12 months (formerly 6 months) of the issue occurring or the individual becoming aware of the issue.
- All complaints to be acknowledged within 5 working days of the complaint being received
- Stage 1 – responses within 10 working days from receipt of complaints (currently 20 working days) with a maximum 10 days extension.
- Stage 2 – 20 working days from receipt of complaint (currently is 20 working days), with a maximum of 20 days extension.
- Extensions are only permitted with 'good reason' e.g. delay of complainant response, complex cases or multi partner/service response required.
- Complainants to be provided with Ombudsman contact details at each stage of a complaint.
- Removal of 'partially upheld' designation. Complaints outcomes to be upheld or not upheld.
- The publishing of the annual self-

assessment annual complaints performance report and service improvements to governance body and to a newly appointed: • Senior executive to oversee the complaint handling performance, and • Lead Member (Deputy Leader) to have lead responsibility for complaints.

Proposal Type: Non-Budget

Year Of Proposal: 24/25

Lead Director for proposal: Tom Smith

Service Area: Operational Services - Corporate Feedback & Complaints Team

EIA Start Date: 22/01/2024

Lead Equality Objective: Understanding Communities

Equality Lead Officer: Louise Nunn

Decision Type

Committees: Policy Committees
• Strategy & Resources

Portfolio

Primary Portfolio: Neighbourhood Services

EIA is cross portfolio:

EIA is joint with another organisation: Yes Ombudsman (LGSCO & Housing Ombudsman)

Overview of Impact

Overview Summary:

The Joint Code aims to provide a national standard for councils to work to, which will clarify requirements, simplifying internal processes, and giving assurances to all citizens and local Members about how complaints must be handled. The joint Code sets out clear expectations for the level of staffing, oversight and governance for councils to have a good complaint handling service which encourages the satisfactory resolution of complaints at an early stage and before they go to the Ombudsman. This single model of complaint handling which makes it easier for all citizens to hold their local authority or social landlord to account.

Impacted characteristics:

- Disability
- Voluntary/Community & Faith Sectors
- Age
- Armed Forces
- Carers
- Cohesion
- Gender Reassignment
- Health
- Partners
- Poverty & Financial Inclusion
- Pregnancy/Maternity
- Race
- Religion/Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Consultation and other engagement

Cumulative Impact

Does the proposal have a cumulative

impact:

Impact areas:

Initial Sign-Off

Full impact assessment required: Yes

Review Date: 22/01/2024

PART B - Full Impact Assessment

Health

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: All staff must prioritise the managing and handling of complaints and respond within the proposed timescales. They must provide regular updates to complainants and provide support/reasonable adjustments for the complainant (as required) throughout the complaints process. They must provide written confirmation and a formal response for each complaint. As an organisation we must identify a Lead Director (Director of Operational Services) and a Lead Member (Deputy Leader) who will have oversight for the complaints handling function; and we must provide annual reports and an annual self-assessment to the Ombudsman. Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Name of Lead Health Officer:

Comprehensive Assessment Being Completed: No

Public Health Lead signed off health impact(s):

Age

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Armed Forces

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Carers

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Care Experienced

Staff Impacted:

Customers Impacted:

Description of Impact:

Cohesion

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Disability

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Gender Reassignment

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Partners

Staff Impacted:

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Poverty & Financial Inclusion

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Pregnancy / Maternity

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Race

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Religion / Belief

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Sexual Orientation

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Voluntary / Community & Faith Sectors

Staff Impacted: Yes

Customers Impacted: Yes

Description of Impact: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Action Plan & Supporting Evidence

Outline of action plan: None

Action plan evidence: Please see PDF attachment for impacts.

Changes made as a result of action plan:

Significant risk after mitigation measures: No

Outline of impact and risks:

Review Date

Review Date: 22/01/2024

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Ombudsman Joint Code Handling Communication Plan v 2.0 Jan 24 (Starts March (early and Mid) leading up to Implementation date

This plan is to track and monitor all communications during and throughout the implementation of the Joint Handling Code

Items for the bulletin should be:

- Information or actions that **managers** specifically need to know (if the message applies equally to all employees, then it should be promoted via the Intranet)
- As concise as possible, with signposting to further detail if the reader wants it.

Items should include:

- The title of your item
- Brief bulleted summary of your message
- Details of any actions you want managers to take, if applicable
- A link to further information (usually an Intranet page, which will need to have been amended or created and made live by)

Timescale for Information

Dates	Content of Comms	Completed
Friday 1 st March	New Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code – What is Changing	✓
WC 11 th March	Top tips for IM's and AM's	✓
WC 25 th March	Write article for Intranet – contact is Anne Wanty Look out for Guidance on Sharepoint.	✓

Communications across SCC

Name of Comms	Details	Contact
Monthly Equalities Bulletin	This to all employees across SCC. Email Alaina Briggs	✓
Support to Sheffield	People meetings that involve SCC and outside staff all involved in cost of living, benefits, housing and social cohesion type topics and Cat Arnold sends an update out after the meeting. Readers are members of the public	✓
Behavioural insight	Issy Howie has a developing group across the council.	✓
Managers Bulletin	Marion Reader-Haigh. Katie Ashmore is the contact	✓

Comms do the senior leadership Weekly Message, every week, and there is one on 5 March 2024

Comms also have a Manager Bulletin going out on 6 March 2024 and 25th March 2024

Newsletter	Service / Portfolio	Recipients	Frequency	Contact
Adult care and wellbeing	Adult Care and wellbeing	940	Weekly	Danielle Grant
Practice Development Newsletter	Adult Care and wellbeing	940	Bi-monthly	Andrew Drummond
Education and Skills News Monthly bulletin (next one if mid Feb).	Education and Skills	875	Ad-hoc	John Featherstone
Children and Families, a circular to staff	Childrens Social Services		Weekly	Fiona Addison
Your Home Your Neighbourhood e-bulletin to tenants	Housing Services		Monthly	Fran McGinley
Housing and Neighbourhoods news	Housing Services	865	Monthly	Fran McGinley
Communities Staff Newsletter	Communities	335	Monthly	Steph Warren
PKW Weekly Newsletter	People Keeping Well	325	Weekly	grants@sheffield.gov.uk
The Upload	ICT and digital innovation	111	Monthly	Imogen Wood/Akeem Balogun / Mike Weston
City Futures Update	City Futures	370		Jo Calcutt-Scott, Lorna Jackson
Neighbourhood Services Directorate Staff Newsletter	Neighbourhood Services Directorate	3950		Lesley Blythe
Strategic Support Services	Includes HR etc			Simon Williams
Service Update – Legal Services	Legal Monthly Comms		Monthly	Sharon Pugh
	VCFS			Emma Dickinson

Articles

<p>Message at the beginning of March and wc 25/03/2024</p>	<p>Introduction of the New Joint Complaint Handling Code</p> <p>What is this? The Housing Ombudsman and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman have developed more closely aligned Complaint Handling Codes.</p> <p>The new Codes place statutory requirements on our Housing and Repairs Services. They also provide best practice for the handling and management of all types of complaints.</p> <p>Why is it important to Sheffield City Council?</p>
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They will be implemented and monitored by 1 April 2024 (statutory) for Housing and Repairs Services. For all other areas, the new standards will be implemented by way of a 'soft launch' from 1 April 2024. Monitoring will commence September 2024.

What are the changes?

The new Complaint Codes – applies across all types complains (except for social care which has existing codes).

The complaints procedure is a two staged process:

There will be a revised Policy and Procedure, the main changes are:

All complaints to be acknowledged within 5 working days (currently 3-5 working days) of the complaint being received.

Stage 1 investigation – resolution should now be within 10 working days with a maximum extension period of an additional 10 working days with agreement from customer and reason for the extension. *Any extensions beyond this must be agreed with the complainant.*

Stage 2 investigation review – resolution should now be within 20 working days with a maximum extension period of an additional 20 working days *with agreement from customer and reason for the extension.*

Further changes are: -

- Elimination of problem-solving stage – these should be incorporated as part of Stage 1 (investigation stage). However, we will still try to resolve complaints at the first point of contact or within 5 working days.
- New and strengthened governance arrangements
- Consistent Recording of **all acknowledgements within 5 working days**
- Consistent recording of **all remedies and service improvements and evidence that any service improvements have been implemented.**
- Consistent Recording of **all reasonable adjustments agreed with customer.**
- Consistent recording of **all complaints regarding discrimination/equality – (all protected characteristics)**
- A focus on the prioritisation of complaints, transparency and keeping complainants updated and informed.
- The complainant should be signposted to the Ombudsman, if any extensions are made outside the above timescales and following a Stage 2 response.
- Any extension beyond the published timescales are only allowed with good reason, and the reason(s) will be clearly explained to the complainant and should be routinely recorded in the complaints case management system.

Why do I need to know about these changes?

	<p>If you investigate complaints as an Investigation Manager or you are an Accountable Manager, the new timescales are as detailed above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You keep the customer updated via personal contact and routinely update CRM with all documentation and updates <p>Will all complaints be affected, Statutory as well as Corporate? No just Corporate Complaints. All complaints covered by an existing statutory duty – remain unaffected.</p> <p>What is next, Do I need to do anything?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book a place on the training sessions for Case Coordinators, Investigating/Accountable Managers – available on Go Learn on a monthly basis from April 2024
<p>W/C 25th March</p> <p>Page 292</p>	<p>We should wait now until wc 25th March to send out final comms and update the intranet as suggested. Re the links below – the revised policy and procedures should also be updated. Whilst these won't be officially signed off by Committee until 17th April – I'll let you have the final versions to be submitted before that date. These will need to be updated in pdf versions and all other docs on these pages reviewed. E.g. Problem solving guide name needs amending to 'Early Resolution, Retrospective Recording Guide'. See:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate complaints procedure Sheffield City Council Intranet • Complaints Sheffield City Council Intranet • Complain about a council service Sheffield City Council (internet) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New CC & IM/AM guidance to follow from @Lisa Brennan



Report to Policy Committee

Author/Lead Officer of Report: Jon Rayner, ICT Head of Service

Tel: 07587 163288

Report of: *Claire Taylor, Chief Operating Officer*

Report to: *Strategy & Resources Committee*

Date of Decision: *17th April 2024*

Subject: *SDWAN Network Service Contract.*

Type of Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken	Initial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Full <input type="checkbox"/>
Insert EIA reference number and attach EIA		
Has appropriate consultation/engagement taken place?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-		
<p><i>“The (report/appendix is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”</i></p>		

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to commission a new SDWAN Network Service from an external provider as outlined in this report.

This report explains the current WAN service and its importance to the Council and schools.

This report goes on to describe the SDWAN network service and its potential benefits to the Council.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Strategy & Resources Committee approves the commissioning of a new SDWAN Network Service from an external Provider for a period of 5 years with an estimated value of £3.6M, as set out in this report.

Background Papers:

(Insert details of any background papers used in the compilation of the report.)

Lead Officer to complete:-	
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed.
	Finance: <i>Matthew Ardern, Senior Finance Manager</i> Commercial: <i>Lucy Matthews, Procurement and Supply Chain Manager</i> Legal: <i>Richard Marik, Commercial Lawyer</i>
	Equalities & Consultation: <i>Richard Bartlett, Senior Equality and Engagement Officer</i>
	Climate: Devolved approval authority to Head of Service, Jon Rayner, Head of Service ICT Delivery
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	SLB member who approved submission: Claire Taylor, Chief Operating Officer
3	Committee Chair consulted: <i>Councillor Tom Hunt</i>
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.
	Lead Officer Name: <i>Jon Rayner</i>
	Job Title: <i>Head of ICT Delivery</i>
Date: 17/04/2024	

1. PROPOSAL

Background

1.1 Virgin Media Business (VMB) Business has been partnering with Sheffield City Council for the provision of high-speed fibre-based internet & wide area network (WAN) connectivity since 2014. The Council's existing WAN contract for corporate & school connectivity ends 31st May 2024 which coincides very well with the suitability and availability of next generation Software Defined Wide Area Network (SD-WAN) network technology as the replacement.

1.2 The current Service provision consists of:

- 255 x IPVPN circuits of which
- A managed service covering the delivery, support and maintenance of the above.
- A managed Local Area Network (LAN) Service which supports and maintains the network localised within each location.

255 x IPVPN circuits

1.3 103 of the 255 IPVPN circuits deliver schools with Simple Internet.

1.4 152 of the 255 IPVPN circuits deliver Corporate sites with IPVPN to the core. This solution entails all locations connecting to a central location at Town Hall before breaking out to the Internet.

1.5 An IPVPN is a type of VPN that utilises the Internet Protocol (IP) to create a secure, private network connection over a public network infrastructure, typically the internet.

1.6 IPVPNs establish secure connections by encrypting data packets, ensuring privacy and confidentiality of transmitted information.

1.7 IPVPNs allow organisations to connect geographically dispersed locations, such as branch offices, remote sites, or mobile users, to a centralized network infrastructure securely.

1.8 The core network refers to the central part of a network infrastructure that handles high-volume, high-speed data traffic. It typically consists of robust and high-capacity routers, switches, and other networking equipment.

1.9 The core network facilitates communication between different parts of the network and ensures efficient data routing and delivery.

1.10 "IPVPN to core" therefore indicates the establishment of VPN

connections from remote locations or branches (utilising IPVPN technology) to the central or core network infrastructure of the organisation. This setup enables secure communication and data exchange between remote sites and the centralized network, allowing users at these locations to access resources, applications, and services hosted within the core network securely over the internet.

A managed service

- 1.11 The managed service covers the delivery, support and maintenance of the above.

A managed Local Area Network (LAN) Service

- 1.12 The LAN supports and maintains the network localised within each location.
- 1.13 The LAN:
- provides local connectivity within the organisation's premises;
 - connects devices such as computers, printers, servers, etc., to a local network;
 - acts as the gateway to the WAN, connecting devices to the router within the organisation's network infrastructure; and
 - facilitates internal communication, resource sharing, and access to local services and applications.
- 1.14 The LAN & WAN Service provides network access for all ICT functions. In order to connect to the Internet, or access an application, or print a document, or connect to a Teams meeting, there is a need for a network. The LAN is the local connection that provides connection to a router. The WAN connection connects you from the router to the internet. As such both are fundamentally essential for any ICT use. Every individual logs onto a laptop, there is an authentication to a central server, whether that be in the cloud (internet) or from a central server located in Town Hall. Without the LAN & WAN enabling that connection or access, no user would be able to log onto their laptop.
- 1.15 In essence, LAN and WAN services are indispensable components of any organisation's ICT infrastructure, enabling seamless connectivity, communication, and access to resources both within the organization's premises and beyond. Without these network services, the functionality and productivity of ICT systems would be severely compromised.

Commission

- 1.16 With the contract ending on 31st May 2024, there is a need to commission a new SD-WAN service from an external supplier.
- 1.17 The new service will not include the managed LAN Service.

- 1.18 The removal of this service can be undertaken as the Council are looking to bring the delivery, support and maintenance of the LAN infrastructure in house. The Council has the capacity and capability to undertake this service. Bringing this service in house enables both efficiencies in support and a faster resolution to issues and also enables a significant cost saving of circa £120,000.
- 1.19 The new service will replace the current technology with the next generation of SD WAN network technology. Each circuit we have in place currently will require at the very least the same circuit in place for service and business continuity. However, there is a huge opportunity to replace the existing IPVPN network technology with the latest technology SDWAN, and subsequently delivering a number of benefits.
- 1.20 The benefits of the SDWAN network technology include:
- *Cloud First* – The proposed solution adheres to our Digital principles of cloud first. It will enable direct local access to both public and private Cloud Services from all locations, delivering the best end user experience for key cloud-based applications such as Teams, Microsoft 365 and existing Council cloud services hosted in Azure.
 - *Cloud Efficient* – The proposed solution will enable Local Internet Breakout providing efficiencies in network traffic routing. Instead of network traffic leaving a location, travelling to a central location to then break out to the internet, there is a local break out to the internet. This also potentially provides a performance boost by cutting out non-essential network hops.
 - This also provides a more robust and resilient network infrastructure. Under IPVPN to core solution, if the Town Hall location suffers a complete Power cut, there is impact to all locations, as all locations rely on connecting centrally for an outbound connection to the internet. With SDWAN, each location is an individual identity and is unaffected by the status of other locations.
 - *Guarantees Critical Traffic* – The proposed solution will enable Quality of Service (QoS at Layer2/3 & 7). This is way of giving priority to certain applications to ensure critical business applications do not suffer from any traffic congestion on the network, resulting in a poor user experience and operational inefficiencies.
 - *Fully Managed Service* – The proposed solution will continue to deliver a Proactive monitoring, reporting and alerting service for WAN performance, therefore freeing up Council ICT and admin resource to focus on the day-to-day administration tasks.
 - *Full Data Security* – The proposed solution's SD-WAN service provides an improved security posture over the existing IPVPN solution via improvements in encryption technology.

- *Flexible Architecture* – The proposed solution will enable 3rd Party connectivity support which allows Sheffield City Council to make better use of shared buildings & resources across the City and the wider region, plus with local public and private sector organisations.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?

- 2.1 Network Services are fundamental to the business critical functions required by all users. Everything done by the Council's users from an ICT perspective has a requirement to utilise the network, whether that is to log on to your laptop, connect to a business application, communicate to colleagues or customers, browse the internet etc.
- 2.2 Network Services work towards the Council's strategic aims by, for example, being a Good Council and Delivering High quality Service for all.
- 2.3 While we are proposing that we bring the LAN service in house as we have the capacity and capability, the Council do not have the in-house capacity to deal with the WAN services detailed at paragraph 1.2. Being a good council and delivering high quality services means ensuring our Customers are able to connect to relevant services needed to carry out their duties and thus delivering a high-quality service to all.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1 The Network Services is a back office function with no interaction with the public, therefore public consultation is not required.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality Implications

- 4.1.1 This proposal's impact is a positive impact; by continuing to provide the Network Service, all staff will benefit from an efficient, robust, cost effective and value for money support service.
- 4.1.2 We continue to support Service Delivery through our IT. We are mindful that some people who use our services are vulnerable, and we are aware of sensitive data we may hold. We have an obligation to adhere to strict GDPR guidelines.
- 4.1.3 The Network Service provides LAN & WAN and enables all our customers business critical connectivity to applications and services needed to carry out their duties. This ensures we continue to ensure our

IT service fully supports our Council services in alignment with all Council strategic objectives. The Council continue to strive to ensure accessibility and inclusivity within the IT landscape.

4.2 Financial implications

- 4.2.1 The proposal pricing currently sits within the existing budget envelope for Corporate sites and assumes any refreshed values will not exceed those already quoted.
- 4.2.2 The proposal excludes the ongoing cost of LAN support currently charged at £142k PA and that this will be provided by existing BAU resources.
- 4.2.3 It is assumed for Schools the current process and funding will continue, with services be delivered within the existing budget envelope. Any shortfalls post contract agreement, would be funded by efficiencies in the DI&ICT service.
- 4.2.4 The move to SD WAN requires Sheffield to supply Project Management and Technical resource. It is assumed that this will be from existing resources at no additional cost.
- 4.2.5 A saving of £120k resulting from this re-contracting has been included in the Digital Strategy from 25/26 which contributes to the overall funding of transformation activities.
- 4.2.6 The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 will apply in full to the tendering of this contract as the value is above the threshold. A procurement professional will lead to ensure compliance with the regulations.
- 4.2.7 A contract will be let up to a maximum term of 5 years which will include any extensions. This is considered the optimum term to provide stability and best value for the Council.

4.3 Legal Implications

- 4.3.1 The Council has a variety of powers and duties in relation to its constituents and employees, many of which are facilitated by access to the internet. The commission of the services proposed in this report are calculated to facilitate, or are conducive or incidental to, the discharge of these functions in accordance with s111 Local Government Act 1972. The proposal to allow schools to access the services proposed in this report is facilitated by the Local Authorities (Goods and Services) Act 1970.
- 4.3.2 The contracting proposals in this report are facilitated by the Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997.
- 4.3.3 The services proposed in this report are not “commonly recurring” under

the Council's constitution as the proposed service term exceeds 4 years.

4.4 Climate Implications

4.4.1 Implementing SDWAN as a Network Solution should provide a positive impact on Energy consumption.

4.4.2 SD WAN intelligently analyses network conditions, such as bandwidth availability, jitter and latency, enabling efficient routing of traffic across the network. SD-WAN directs traffic down the most optimal path. This intelligent routing improves network performance and reduces unnecessary data transmission.

4.4.3 Modern and specialised hardware, benefiting from significant energy improvements over legacy equipment, helps optimise traffic processing to lower energy consumption and decrease carbon emissions. By minimising network traffic and using more efficient hardware, organisations can contribute to a greener ecosystem and lower their energy costs.

4.4 Other Implications

4.4.1 No other implications

5. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

5.1 Option 1: Do Nothing

This is not an option because the current contract for the services will end on 31st May 2024. As the services are still required, a new contract will be required.

5.2 Option 2: Provide SDWAN Network Service in house (in addition to the managed service).

The Council does not have resource or the expertise in house to deliver the services outlined in paragraph 1.2. As such there is a necessity to contract out.

6. **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 It is recommended that the Council approves the commission of a new SDWAN Network Service. This will:

- Deliver Savings against current contract.
- Deliver a more robust, efficient and simpler network service.
- Delivering a major project at a minimal cost of change with no dual running cost, transformational, project or upfront costs

- Provide in service performance upgrades to many of the locations with increases in bandwidth at no additional cost.
- Provides flexibility within the contract to account for estate rationalisation to work with the Accommodation review.

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