

**THE CABINET
22nd November, 2021**

Present:- Councillor Read (in the Chair); Councillors Alam, Allen, Beck, Brookes, Clark, Cusworth, Lelliott, Roche and Sheppard.

Also in attendance Councillor Clark (Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board).

64. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest to report.

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There were no declarations of interest to report.

65. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present at the meeting and no questions submitted in writing.

66. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved:- That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 18th October, 2021 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

67. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair advised that there were no items of business on the agenda that would require the exclusion of the press and public from the meeting.

68. HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND AND FUNDING FOR VULNERABLE RENTERS

Consideration was given to the report detailed how the Government had announced two new funding packages in October 2021 to help households struggling to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic; namely the Household Support Grant and the Funding for Vulnerable Renters Grant.

The Household Support Grant was expected to be used to support households in the most need with food, energy and water bills. In exceptional cases it could be used to support housing costs if existing housing support schemes did not meet the exceptional need. The eligibility criteria for use of the grant included that at least 50% of the total funding would be ring-fenced to support households with children.

It was proposed that the grant be split: £1.1m for food vouchers for those eligible for Free School Meals through to Easter 2022; £1.3m to reduce Council Tax liability for working age households eligible for Council Tax Support. This was originally expressed in the report to be for those in active receipt of support in the current financial year as of 31st October, 2021, however, for clarity this support was for working age households who have received Council Tax Support in the current financial year, as at 4th December 2021, not only those eligible for Council Tax Support on 4th December 2021; £30k to support local Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to support vulnerable households over Christmas; £30k for eligible households not passported through means and £29,029 as a contingency to be used for the active management of the programme.

The Funding for Vulnerable Renters Grant was also designed to support low-income earners in rent arrears and prevent homelessness for these people. The eligibility was for the funding to be used to minimise evictions from the private rented sector for single people as well as families.

Resolved:- (1) That the Household Support Grant of £2,489,029.87 be allocated as follows:-

- a. £1.1m for food vouchers to children eligible for Free School Meals for school holidays through to Easter 2022.
- b. £1.3m to reduce Council Tax liability for working age households eligible for Council Tax Support on 4th December, 2021. [For the purpose of clarity, this support is for working age households who have received Council Tax Support in the current financial year, as at 4th December 2021, not only those eligible for Council Tax Support on 4th December 2021]
- c. £30k to support local VCS organisations to support vulnerable households over Christmas/New Year as a supplement to the Crisis Support SLA.
- d. £30,000 to be available to meet eligible need for households not passported through means.
- e. £29,029, would be held as contingency to be used as part of active management of the grant programme.

(2) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, to determine revised and final allocations for the Household Support Grant including provision to include new claimants of Council Tax Support who were not eligible on 4th December, 2021; the delegation to include provision for other eligible actions within the use of Household Support Fund should it not be possible to achieve full spend of the grant through the approved options.

(3) That the £116,416 new Funding for Vulnerable Renters be allocated to increase prevention activity and make payments to reduce rent arrears where there is a risk of homelessness.

(4) That authority be delegated to the Acting Director of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to agree the final scheme based on the engagement with Government.

69. PUBLIC HEALTH PROPOSALS FOR RE-COMMISSIONING ROTHERHAM'S ALCOHOL AND DRUGS SERVICE

Consideration was given to the report which detailed the proposals for the recommissioning of an "all age" model for the Alcohol and Drugs Service with a contract start date of 1st April, 2023.

There were currently two services: one for the needs of the adult population in Rotherham and the 'DIVERT' service for children and young people. Both of these Services had been awarded to Change Grow Live under separate tender exercises.

The adult Drug and Alcohol Service provided support to 1,284 Rotherham residents and offered a range of interventions, advice and support such as needle and syringe exchange, naloxone provision and substitute medication.

The children and young person's Service provided advice and education to under 18's with an average of one hundred referrals per year.

Both contracts were due to expire on 31st March, 2023 and it was seen as an opportune time to introduce an "all age" model as opposed to the two separate services. The type of procurement required for the contract was subject to potential reform as a result of the Dame Carol Black review which was attached to the report at Appendix 4.

It was, therefore, proposed that the contract be awarded for a period of five years with annual extension options after that on a year-by-year basis for up to a further five years. The contract length in total would, therefore, be ten years. The reason for this is that it would provide greater stability and acknowledged that this type of Service needed sufficient time to embed and deliver.

Resolved:- (1) That the recommissioning of an 'all age' Alcohol and Drug Service and the key change to the service model be approved, which is the move to a specialist pathway covering all ages and procured from one lead provider. This is to enable seamless transition between the services and to enhance the offer for younger service users. Within one pathway, there will be an expectation of separate service offers for young people, alcohol misuse prevention and treatment, drug treatment and recovery from all substance misuse.

(2) That there is recognition that this will take place on the outlined timetable subject to any major update from the forthcoming White Paper - Integration and Innovation: Working together to improve health and social care for all; specifically, in relation the proposals regarding supplier selection.

70. 0-19 PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING SERVICES COMMISSIONING

Consideration was given to the report which provided an agreed update on the recommissioning of Public Health Children's Nursing Services, including an update on procurement options and the specification.

In March, 2021, Cabinet agreed to extend the current contract to March, 2023 with the tender for the new contract due to be published in April, 2022. Since March, 2021 a project group had been established, a needs assessment had been completed, two drafts of the specification had been completed and there had been a period of public consultation.

The specification briefing was attached to the report at Appendix 1 and reflected changes to the guidance in relation to Health Visiting and School Nursing.

A market engagement event held in September, 2021 indicated a reasonable market interest and engagements from a variety of Providers. There were proposed reforms to Provider selection for NHS Services and these would form part of the consideration if implemented prior to the publication of the tender.

The final decision on how to procure the service would be delegated to the Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health and the relevant Cabinet Member.

Resolved:- (1) That the good progress made on the recommissioning process against the timeline agreed in March 2021 be noted.

(2) That the parallel timeline of the Health and Care Bill, and its implications in respect of the proposed removal of the current rules for NHS and Public Health Service commissioners when arranging clinical healthcare services be noted.

71. SEPTEMBER FINANCIAL MONITORING 2021/22

Consideration was given to the report which set out in detail the financial position as at the end of September, 2021 and was based on the actual costs and income for the first six months of 2021/22 and forecasted for the remainder of the financial year.

Members noted that financial performance was a key element within the assessment of the Council's overall performance framework and was essential to achievement of the objectives within the Council's Policy agenda. The report was the third in a series of monitoring reports for the 2021/22 financial year which would continue to be brought forward to Cabinet on a regular basis.

As at September 2021, the Council expected to deliver the overall outturn within budget for the financial year 2021/22. However, it was noted that the Directorates had a forecast year-end overspend of £9.8m on the General Fund. This was mitigated by the Government's provision of the COVID-19 emergency support grant and Sales, Fees and Charges Income Compensation. However it was noted that the longer-term impacts of COVID-19, Public Health measures and the pace at which services would return to normal was unknown.

The Capital Programme for 2021/22 totalled £192.578m split between the General Fund (£123.578m) and the Housing Revenue Account (£69.000m.) This was a decrease of £1.111m from the position reported at the end of July 2021. The decrease mainly related to the reprofiling of schemes due to delays caused by COVID-19 and the high volume of capital activity taking place nationally that was straining resources.

The report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as part of the pre-decision scrutiny process and they noted and agreed with the recommendations, subject to a further condition relating to the cancellation of the HS2 leg and the need to press for increased investment.

Cabinet welcomed and endorsed the recommendation.

Resolved:- (1) That the current General Fund Revenue Budget forecast of a balanced budget be noted.

(2) That actions continuing to be taken to ensure that a balanced financial outturn is delivered be noted.

(3) That the Capital Programme update be noted.

(4) That the updated position of the Government's Test and Trace Support Payments and Council's Local Scheme for Self-Isolation Support Payments, as per section 2.46 to 2.48 be noted.

(5) That, in light of the cancellation of the HS2 leg, the matter be raised with the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, the need to press for increased investment in respect of connectivity for the north, specifically looking at transport improvements and connectivity. This will ensure that this area benefits from Government funding, including access to mainline services for the town of Rotherham.

72. MID-YEAR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT UPDATE REPORT - 2021/22

Consideration was given to the report which provided an update on the 2021/22 Housing Development Programme which listed a range of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) sites to be developed for housing, along with potential strategic acquisitions.

Good progress had been made on all projects despite the unprecedented challenges caused by COVID-19 and Appendix 2 outlined the progress against the previous recommendations in the September 2020, January 2021 and March 2021 Cabinet reports on the Housing Development Programme.

Paragraphs 1.9 to 1.12 of the report outlined the recommendations approved by Cabinet in March 2021 and the progress made on those recommendations to date such as an indicative bid submitted to Sheffield City Region Brownfield Housing Fund in relation to the Eastwood Housing Development and Kiveton Park, Thurcroft and West Melton small site assemblies.

Other highlights included progress with town centre housing schemes; commencement of works at Chesterhill Avenue and Whinney Hill; completion of Broom Hayes development; completion of ten bungalows across sites in Wickersley and Bramley; approval to sell the Eldertree Road garage site for private development and a successful virtual Housing Developer Summit.

Appendix 1 to the report provided a photographic summary of the progress.

The report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as part of the pre-decision scrutiny process and the progress made was noted. It was also suggested that Members be consulted and invited to feed into the new local design guide with a view to ensuring new developments were better integrated aesthetically into their surrounding community and that new developers be proactively invited to the housing developer summits.

Resolved:- (1) That progress made with the 2021/22 Housing Development Programme be noted.

(2) That Members be consulted and invited to feed into the new local design guide with a view to ensuring new developments are better integrated aesthetically into the surrounding community.

(3) That new developers to the housing market be proactively invited to the housing developer summits.

73. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Consideration was given to the circulated report, the contents of which were included as part of the relevant items and the details included accordingly.

74. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Cabinet be held on Monday 20th December, 2021, commencing at 10.00 a.m. in Rotherham Town Hall.