

THE CABINET
24th January, 2022

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

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

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Brookes.

88. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

89. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

(1) Councillor Tinsley stated that Maltby residents were concerned about the increase in anti-social behaviour and commercial burglaries which had seen most business been robbed and broken into over the last 24 months. He explained that more needed to be done in Maltby including more youth provisions and more support for businesses. Will you provide this extra help?

In response Councillor Alam explained that the Council was working with South Yorkshire Police and Neighbourhoods Officers to make sure that community safety was being promoted. The Council was also looking at the possibility of providing extra CCTV provision in the area to tackle anti-social behaviour and hold the perpetrators to account.

Councillor Cusworth explained that, whilst she was not aware of the particular issues in Maltby, she would happily have a conversation with Councillor Tinsley outside of the meeting to discuss the matter. She did explain that there was more youth provision now than in more recent years due to pressures on budgets and work was ongoing with the voluntary and community sector to provide more activities. Councillor Cusworth explained that Early Help Workers for that area could be involved in the conversations going forward as there was targeting work that could be done.

Councillor Lelliott informed Councillor Tinsley that she would get the Council's Business Advisors to contact the businesses in Maltby via the Neighbourhoods Team and work could progress from there.

In the supplementary question Councillor Tinsley stated that he would gladly take up the offer to have conversations with the Cabinet Members. He also stated that via the Towns and Villages Fund, a project to renew the CCTV on Maltby High Street had been approved and he queried whether this aspect could be sped up in light of the concerns raised.

Councillor Alam agreed to take the matter back to the Community Safer Team to discuss the request. The Leader also confirmed that there was a rolling programme of CCTV improvements so checks could be done to find out where Maltby High Street was on that programme.

90. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

At the meeting it was advised that a correction was required to Minute No. 81, as it should read “a proposal had to be submitted to the DfE by 7th December, 2021” not “7th December, 2022.”

Resolved:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Cabinet, as corrected, held on 20th December, 2021, be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

91. 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.

92. PRESCRIBED ALTERATIONS TO THE WILLOWS SPECIAL SCHOOL

Consideration was given to the report which sought approval of the proposal to make prescribed alterations to the Willows Special school by increasing the number of planned places from 120 to 150. Periods of pre-statutory and statutory consultation had been completed following reports to Cabinet in June 2021 and October 2021 respectively.

The alterations were required as the number of pupils currently on roll exceeded the registered number of 120 by more than 10% or 20 pupils and it was expected that the number would continue to be exceeded by the set criteria for more than 2 years. This was in accordance with the Department for Education (DfE) School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013.

The increase to 150 places would enable parental preferences for placements to continue to be satisfied in the future, thus avoiding the need to seek placement at other schools or out of the authority against the wishes of parents/carers.

Two representations had been received in response to the statutory consultation which was completed by the posting of a public notice between 12th November, 2021, and 10th December, 2021. The representations were broadly supportive.

Resolved:-

1. That the proposal to make prescribed alterations to the Willows Special School by increasing the number of planned places from 120 to 150 is approved; and
2. That the Secretary of State for Education be informed accordingly.

93. THE SAFER ROTHERHAM PARTNERSHIP DOMESTIC ABUSE STRATEGY

Consideration was given to the report which sought approval of the Safer Rotherham Partnership Domestic Abuse Strategy for the period 2022–2027. The previous Strategy had ended in December 2020 and had enabled the Partnership to deliver significant work to reduce domestic violence and support for victims.

As a result of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, the Council had a statutory duty to produce a Domestic Abuse Strategy which sets out how it will deliver the new duties contained in the Act which included the provision of support for victims and family members (including therapeutic support) and the extensions of priority status within homelessness processes for victims of domestic abuse. These offers were currently in place within Rotherham and the Strategy partners were seeking to continue to strengthen this work.

The draft Safer Rotherham Partnership Domestic Abuse Strategy was attached to the report at Appendix 1 and identified 5 key areas of priority: drive change together; prevention and early intervention; justice and ongoing protection; responding to changing need and demand; and minimising harm through the provision of Early Help support for children and families. A key aim was to promote equality of access and bring more visibility to the different types of abuse. There was also a focus on the integration of services between different organisations. As the production of a Domestic Abuse Strategy was now a statutory requirement, there was no alternative option for Cabinet to consider.

Consultation had taken place with a range of partners and external organisations in November 2021 on the 2022-2027 Strategy with 21 responses received. The responses did not lead to change in terms of the strategic objectives but would inform the prioritisation of the annual delivery plan. Further, a number of partners and service users were engaged in order to co-produce the priorities and areas of focus. Details of these activities were set out in Appendix 2.

Cabinet Members placed on record their thanks to Councillor Hoddinott and the Partnership for their work on the delivery of the previous Strategy.

Resolved:-

1. That Cabinet approve and adopt the Domestic Abuse Strategy; and
2. That Cabinet note that regular oversight of the Strategy will be undertaken by the Safer Rotherham Partnership Board.

94. NOVEMBER FINANCIAL MONITORING 2021/22

Consideration was given to the report which set out in detail the financial position as at the end of November 2021 and was based on the actual costs and income for the first 8 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 fourth 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 November 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 £8.5m 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. This had been further exacerbated by the uncertainties brought about by the Omicron variant which could lead to further financial implications for the Council.

The Capital Programme for 2021/22 totalled £171.960m split between the General Fund (£117.021m) and the Housing Revenue Account (£54.939m.) This was a decrease of £20.618m from the position reported at the end of September 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.

Officer delegated decisions had been taken by the Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health in relation to infection control, rapid testing and vaccination fund(s). Details of these decisions were outlined in the report at sections 2.45 to 2.58.

The Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant scheme had been announced to support the business most impacted by Omicron. The allocation for Rotherham MBC had yet to be confirmed. The Council would run the application process for the scheme and ensure that businesses had met the criteria; were trading on 30th December; did not breach subsidy rules

and could provide a business unique identifier. The primary principle of the scheme was to support businesses that offered in-person services in fixed rate-paying premises in the hospitality, leisure and accommodation sectors. Grants of up to £6,000 could be paid. At the meeting it was confirmed that the deadline for submitting applications for the grant, which had been 28th February, 2022, as stated in Paragraph 2.63 of the report, had been extended to 18th March, 2022.

The Government had also announced a further top up of more than £100m to the Additional Restrictions Grant which aimed to provide support packages to businesses impacted by the continuing pandemic. The Council's allocation was managed through the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority but the allocation was yet to be confirmed.

Cabinet was also asked to note the Government's base criteria for the COVID Additional Relief Fund (CARF.) This discretionary fund aimed to provide business rates relief to business impacted by the continuing pandemic. The proposals for the scheme would be developed and recommended to Cabinet in February 2022.

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.

Resolved:-

That Cabinet:

1. Note the current General Fund Revenue Budget forecast of a balanced budget;
2. Note that actions will continue to be taken to ensure that a balanced financial outturn is delivered;
3. Note the Capital Programme update;
4. Note the officer delegated decisions taken by the Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health, as detailed in sections 2.45 to 2.58 of the report;
5. Note the Government's base criteria for the new Business Support Scheme, Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant, as detailed in sections 2.59 to 2.65 and that the Council will administer the scheme in line with Government guidance;

6. Note the Government's announcement of a further top-up to the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG), a discretionary grant to provide support packages to businesses impacted by the continuing pandemic, and that the scheme will be approved via the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA), as detailed in sections 2.66 to 2.68; and
7. Note the Government's base criteria for the Covid Additional Relief Fund (CARF), a discretionary fund to provide business rates relief to businesses impacted by the continuing pandemic, as detailed in sections 2.69 to 2.72 and that proposals for the scheme will be developed and recommended to Cabinet in February.

95. MODERN SLAVERY ANNUAL TRANSPARENCY STATEMENT

Consideration was given to the report which provided the annual update on the activities of the Council and its partners in seeking to both address and prevent modern slavery. The report focussed on the actions following the resolution passed by Council to adopt the Co-operative Party Charter against Modern Slavery in July 2018 and in particular on actions since the last annual report presented to Cabinet in January 2021.

Appendix 1 to the report was the updated Modern Slavery Act 2015 – Transparency Statement. Appendix 2 was the Modern Slavery Charter Action Plan and detailed the completed actions. Of particular note was the compliance in relation to the training of procurement staff alongside the development of advice and guidance for Contract and Commissioning Officers. The Council's Whistleblowing Policy had also been updated to include specific reference to modern slavery.

Between 1st April, 2020, and 30th June, 2021, there were 35 referrals from Rotherham into the National Referral Mechanism. All referrals were reported to the Safer Rotherham Partnership Board through its Performance Management Framework.

Resolved:-

1. That Cabinet note the progress against the commitments made in the Modern Slavery Transparency Statement and Action Plan; and
2. That Cabinet approve the refreshed Modern Slavery Transparency Statement for publication.

96. THE TOWNS AND VILLAGES FUND

Consideration was given to the report which explained that the Towns and Villages Fund was a new £4m Capital Programme in Rotherham which aimed to improve the Borough's local town and village centres. Based on projects put forward by Ward Councillors in consultation with their communities, a work programme and associated processes for delivering

projects had been produced. This would ensure a range of projects across the Borough were completed in the next 3 years, delivering on the priorities of residents and Wards.

The overall aim of the scheme is “*to work with neighbourhoods across the Borough, to enhance their lived environment, through a variety of improvement projects, focused on town and village centres.*” Five objectives were proposed to indicate what the programme of work could deliver. By late December 2021 the schemes that had been submitted for consideration had been moderated against the aims and objectives. The schemes were then separated into 4 categories dependent on meeting the objectives of the funding, the complexity of the scheme proposed and the potential cost of the project.

Ward Members had been informed of the outcome of their submissions with those in Categories 1, 2 and 3 moving to the next stage of the programme and individual next steps agreed per project. Those in Category 4 had been invited to resubmit a different work proposal. The drafted work programme for the scheme was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

It was proposed that those schemes in Category 1, as detailed in paragraph 2.6 of the report, were designed and delivered, subject to any complications, by Autumn 2022. During this time due diligence and further engagement would be carried out on Category 2 schemes, as detailed in paragraph 2.7 of the report. By Summer 2022 it was expected that concept design work could be carried out on Category 2 schemes along with further engagement on Category 3 schemes. The concept design of Category 3 schemes was expected to commence in Winter 2022.

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. They also requested that seminar for all Members be delivered on the Towns and Villages Fund.

Resolved:-

1. That Cabinet approve the Towns and Villages programme as detailed in the report and delegate the delivery of Category 1 schemes within the programme to the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy, and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working;
2. That Cabinet receive a further report to update on the delivery of Category 1 schemes and agree to progress delivery of Category 2 and 3 schemes in Summer 2022; and
3. That seminar for all Members be delivered on the Towns and Villages Fund.

97. ROTHERHAM CYCLING STRATEGY (2021)

Consideration was given to the report which provided an analysis of the consultation responses received in relation to the Rotherham Cycling Strategy and detailed the resulting revisions to the Strategy which was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The Council aimed to provide a well-maintained and attractive cycle network to encourage cycling which was a high priority across Rotherham and South Yorkshire. There had been a significant increase in the role of Active Travel to address a range of policy aims from carbon reduction to health and wellbeing outcomes, especially improvements to mental health as well as more recently its role in the recent COVID-19 pandemic. This had brought cycling and provisions to enable active travel into sharp focus.

The draft Rotherham Cycling Strategy had been produced in early 2021 and approved for public consultation by Cabinet in March 2021. The consultation took place between 2nd July and 27th August, 2021, and 86 responses were received. The findings of the consultation were reported in Appendix 2 and summarised in paragraph 2.3 of the report.

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. However, they asked that further consideration be given to how all residents across the Borough could be encouraged to start cycling and to cycle safely by providing facilities that enabled residents to hire cycling equipment such as cycles, cycle helmets and child seats. They also asked that further consideration be given as to how all residents across the Borough, and in particular families, could have better access to green spaces by cycle in order to enable them to be able to cycle in a safe and traffic free environment. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board also advised Cabinet that whilst they supported the draft Cycling Strategy and noted the limitations in funding, further consideration should be given to how the Cycling Strategy could be developed further in order to make cycling accessible and appealing to all residents across the Borough.

Resolved:-

That Cabinet:

1. Note the consultation of subsequent findings;
2. Adopt the Rotherham Cycling Strategy (2021);

3. Agree with the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board that further consideration be given to how all residents across the Borough could be encouraged to start cycling and to cycle safely by providing facilities that enable residents to hire cycling equipment including cycles, cycle helmets and child seats; and
4. Agree with the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board that further consideration be given to how all residents across the Borough, and in particular families, can better access green spaces by cycle in order to enable them to be able to cycle in a safe and traffic free environment; and
5. Agree that consideration be given as to how the Cycling Strategy could be developed further in order to make cycling accessible and appealing to all residents across the Borough. It is also noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board supported the draft Cycling Strategy and notes the limitations of the funding that has been accessed that will enable the upgrade and expansion of cycling infrastructure.

98. 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.

99. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:-

That the next meeting of the Cabinet be held on Monday, 14th February, 2022, commencing at 10.00 a.m. in Rotherham Town Hall.