

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**  
**Wednesday 19 January 2022**

Present:- Councillor Clark (in the Chair); Councillors Baker-Rogers, Browne, Burnett, A Carter, Cooksey, Elliott, Hoddinott, Pitchley, Wyatt and Yasseen.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Barley and Baum-Dixon.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-  
<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

**83. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Barley and Baum-Dixon.

Councillor Hoddinott noted her thanks and appreciation to Councillor Browne who had provided maternity cover for her over the previous six-months at Overview and Scrutiny Management Board meetings.

**84. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**85. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

There were no questions from members of the public or press.

**86. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no items that required the exclusion of the press or public.

**87. NOVEMBER 2021 FINANCIAL MONITORING**

Consideration was given to a report that was submitted for pre-decision scrutiny ahead of the Cabinet meeting scheduled for 24 January 2022 that detailed the Council's financial position as at the end of November 2021 based on actual cost and income figures for the first eight months of 2021/22. It was noted that the report was the fourth of a series of financial monitoring reports for the current financial year. The Assistant Director - Financial Services and the Head of Corporate Finance attended the meeting to present the report. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Community Safety and Finance was unable to attend the meeting to present the report.

The report stated that as of November 2021 the Council was expecting to deliver the overall outturn within budget for the financial year 2021/22. It was noted that while the Directorates had a current forecast year end

overspend of £8.5m on General Fund expenditure that this should be mitigated by the Government's provision of COVID-19 emergency support grant and Sales, Fees and Charges Income Compensation. It noted that the longer-term impacts of Covid-19, public health measures and the pace at which services can return to normal was unknown, with this situation being further exacerbated by current uncertainties that had been brought about by the Omicron Covid-19 variant that had the potential to create further financial implications for the Council.

The report provided a detailed narrative for the budget position of each directorate. The report also provided information on the delivery of previously agreed savings, the position of the Housing Revenue Account, the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant and the delivery of the Capital Programme.

Members noted that since the production of the report the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant had now been launched and that applications were now being accepted. Members noted that they hoped as many local businesses as possible who were eligible would apply for the additional support that they were entitled to.

Members sought clarification regarding the projected year end overspend of £8.5m on General Fund expenditure and whether all of the overspend could all be attributed to the impact of the pandemic or whether all or some of the overspend would have happened anyway. The Assistant Director - Financial Services noted that the detailed financial returns that were submitted to the Government in relation to Covid-19 Grants showed that these overspends were greater than the projected deficit, and as such this showed that many services across directorates were in fact underspending on agreed budgets, in the main linked to reprioritising work to deal with Covid for which the grant funding was available. The Head of Corporate Finance noted the budget underspends that directorates had delivered during 2020/21 and how the related savings had been used to increase the Council's reserves. The Assistant Director confirmed that as many of the Covid-19 support grants that have been provided by the Government had not been ringfenced with regard to how they could be used that any unspent funds could be kept by the Council and used how the Council deemed appropriate. The Assistant Director advised that further information on how the unspent funds from Covid-19 support grants were being proposed to be used would be provided in the forthcoming budget report.

Members sought further information and clarification regarding the scope, application process and deadline for applications regarding the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant. The Head of Corporate Finance confirmed that the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant was a one-off payment and that applications from businesses would need to be received by the Council by 28 February 2022, with all payments having to be made on eligible claims by 21 March 2022. The Head of Corporate Finance noted that the information, as requested by the Government, that that would need to be provided by businesses was unfortunately more extensive

than had been the case for previous support grants. It was also noted that a separate scheme was available for businesses to apply for support with their business rates.

Members asked for further information regarding the reducing number of older persons placements and the related costs and whether this was a one off situation or a continuing trend. Members noted the significant amount of funding that was being received by the Council to cascade into the local adult care services market that was due to end in March 2022 and asked what impact the ending of this funding would have on the local market for adult care services. The Assistant Director confirmed that there were some one-off issues relating to the reduction in older persons placements and related Covid-19 funding, with some costs that would normally be the responsibility of the Council currently being covered by NHS funding. The Assistant Director confirmed that further information on this situation would be provided in the forthcoming budget report. The Assistant Director assured members that the budget that was being developed to fund Adult Care services in 2022/23 would be sufficient to deliver all required services and that the ability to deliver services would not be negatively impacted by changes related to how some services were currently funded by the NHS.

Members noted the “invest to save” projects and the related increased spending that had been previously implemented in Children and Young People’s Services and asked whether these projects were being reviewed in order to assess if the extra spending was still required. The Assistant Director advised that as detailed in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy report that had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and by Cabinet in December 2022 that the level of investment in the Service continued to be assessed with an objective of reducing the increased funding where it was no longer required. The Assistant Director noted that Children and Young People’s Services still had further work to do to deliver the required savings and cost reductions on how it provided services and confirmed that further information on this would be provided in the forthcoming budget report.

Members noted their concern regarding the apparent high costs attributed to the employment of agency workers in the Children and Young People’s Services directorate. The Assistant Director assured members that agency spend in that directorate was monitored closely and assured members that this activity and the tight controls that were in place with regard to the employment of agency staff were an integral part of the overall strategy of reducing costs in Children and Young People’s Services.

Members noted the ongoing budget pressures facing Children and Young People’s Services such as the costs related to emergency placements and asked how much of the current pressures being faced were attributable to long-term issues and which pressures were specifically related to responding to the challenges presented by the pandemic. The

Assistant Director noted that officers from Children and Young People's Services would be able to provide a more comprehensive response but advised that the pandemic had some cost impact on placements (£1.5m noted in the report). There has also been a national issue with some delays in the courts system due to how courts have been able to operate during the pandemic, delays which to some extent could impact upon social care systems.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director - Financial Services and the Head of Corporate Finance for attending the meeting and for answering member questions.

**Resolved: -**

That Cabinet be advised that the recommendations be supported.

**88. ROTHERHAM CYCLING STRATEGY (2021)**

Consideration was given to a report that was submitted for pre-decision scrutiny ahead of the Cabinet meeting scheduled for 24 January 2022 regarding the proposed Rotherham Cycling Strategy. The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment and the Senior Transport Planner attended the meeting to present the report.

The report noted that the draft Rotherham Cycle Strategy 2021 had been approved to be put forward for public consultation by Cabinet at its meeting on 22 March 2021.

In introducing the report, the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment stated that the report provided an analysis of the consultation responses received, and the resulting revisions to the strategy. The Strategic Director advised that in promoting the use of cycling to benefit health and well-being, the economy and the environment, the strategy would deliver improvements to both the Council's existing cycle network and would also set out its ambitions and objectives for investing in and expanding Rotherham's cycling provision.

The full draft Cycling Strategy, along with a summary of the consultation responses were attached as appendices to the officer's report.

Members sought clarification on how the additional cycle infrastructure, including cycle paths would be maintained. The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment advised that in 2020-21 the Council had provided additional funding as part of a wider Streetscene allocation of £450,000 to improve the maintenance of existing cycle routes that included the Council's cycle lane lining, the removal of overgrown vegetation and weeds and more regular maintenance being carried out on cycle paths. The Strategic Director noted that purpose of this investment had been to provide a well-maintained and attractive cycle network and to encourage cycling in the Borough. The Strategic Director confirmed that

proposals were contained in the future budget setting report that would be considered by Cabinet and Council in due course, and if approved would assist with to the maintenance of the existing and extended cycle network.

Members noted with concern the low number of responses (86) that had been received in response to the public consultation on the Cycling Strategy. The Senior Transport Planner advised that further consultation would take place for each scheme before it was implemented noting that consultations on specific proposed schemes attracted higher levels of responses than consultations on broader strategies.

Members noted the major and radical changes that were being implemented on Sheffield Road with regard to creating additional space for cyclists and asked what value there was in creating short and isolated pieces of cycling infrastructure in encouraging more people to cycle. The Strategic Director advised that the focus of the proposed Cycling Strategy was to create greater connectiveness across the network, rather than just implementing more schemes that may be isolated. The Strategic Director noted that the proposed strategy would also improve how the Council worked with other local authorities and agencies in order to ensure greater connectiveness of cycling infrastructure across the wider region.

Members noted the perception held by many residents across the Borough that cycling on roads was dangerous and were put off from doing so which had been highlighted by the consultation. Members asked that in response to these concerns whether there should be a greater focus on building cycling infrastructure that provided a greater level of separation between cyclists and motorised vehicles on roads. Members noted with concern the number of unused cycle paths across the Borough that were near to busy roads and how these appeared to be little used due to potential cyclists feeling that the paths were unsafe. Members noted that there should be a greater focus in the strategy on schemes, such as those that enabled segregation and that aimed to slow down traffic on busy roads to enable cyclists to feel safer when using cycle routes. Members also noted that the proposed strategy would benefit from having a greater focus on the environmental benefits of increasing the number of residents who cycled to get around and on making cycling more accessible to all communities across the Borough.

The Senior Transport Planner assured members that the proposed strategy did promote the implementation of segregation infrastructure on the roads where motorised vehicles travelled at faster speeds so as to enable cyclists to feel safer. The Senior Transport Planner advised that increased numbers of people cycling reduced the number of short car trips but had a much less impact on reducing longer car journeys that were the major cause of pollution, and as such it was important not to overstate the environmental impact of the strategy.

Members noted that if there was to be a more integrated cycle and

transport network then it was important that the cycle network linked in with other travel infrastructure such as railway stations and transport hubs. Members also noted that it would be beneficial if cycle routes could be developed that enabled residents to cycle to visitor attractions, such as country parks. The Strategic Director noted that further work was planned with regard to ensuring that the cycle network connected with other transport infrastructure but stated that for this to be effective that there needed to be adequate cycle storage at railway stations and transport hubs. The Strategic Director advised that consideration would be given to how the cycle network could be developed to create improved access to visitor attractions.

Members noted the high costs that were involved in being able to cycle and that as such the more affluent were more likely than the less affluent to have access to a bike and to regularly cycle. Members also noted that the lack of maintenance of many cycle paths was a major factor in why many people were put off cycling and that improved maintenance of cycle paths would encourage people to cycle more.

Members also asked whether data was available that showed a breakdown of those who regularly cycled by age and gender. The Senior Transport Planner assured members that this information was available and would be used to inform the delivery of the strategy.

Members noted the existing facilities provided by the mobile cycle hubs that enabled the hiring of electric bikes. Members asked whether the offer provided by the mobile hubs could be extended so as to enable the hiring of other equipment such as child seats that could potentially encourage more families to try cycling in a way that was affordable. The Strategic Director advised that the mobile cycle hub was able to provide the hire of electric and pedal bikes, but as this service was revenue funded that the provision of this service could change over time. The Senior Transport Planner advised that he would look into whether the mobile cycle hubs currently offered the facilities to hire other cycling equipment such as child seats and carts and would provide the information to members outside of the meeting.

Members noted the wide-ranging scope and ambition of the proposed strategy and welcomed the additional funding that had been secured to upgrade and expand the local cycle network. Members noted that despite this ambition the proposed strategy did not address how to change the culture around cycling and how cycling was not currently accessible or appealing to many communities across the Borough. Members stated that the proposed strategy should have a greater focus on how the Council would work with communities who were currently disengaged from cycling in order to understand the barriers that were in place that meant that they did not see cycling as something that was accessible for them.

The Strategic Director stated that the proposed strategy was in part linked to the very significant investment in cycling infrastructure and would

enable the drawing down of significant funding that was available , and that could only be spent for the development of cycle infrastructure. The Strategic Director noted the comments regarding how cycling would be promoted in all communities across the Borough and that it would always be desirable to do more activity in this area. The Strategic Director stated that the Council should always be actively looking to access all possible funding streams available for the development of cycle infrastructure. Members questioned whether just because funding was available whether it was always correct to focus on drawing down the funding and diverting activity away from promoting cycling and getting to understand the barriers that prevented many residents from cycling. The Strategic Director noted that one of the most significant barriers to more people cycling was the perception that cycling was unsafe and that the increased investment in cycle paths and other infrastructure would not only make cycling safer, but also make it feel safer and as such encourage more people to take up cycling.

The Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy who was in attendance at the meeting noted that the proposed Cycling Strategy was a starting point and that further activity to increase the number of residents cycling would continue. The Cabinet Member advised that a key element in shifting behaviour regarding how residents travelled in the Borough and reducing car use was the provision of the infrastructure that would enable to residents to cycle safely. The Cabinet Member noted that in order to enable the realisation of this ambition it was essential that the Council sought to access as much funding as was possible in order to provide a high quality and safe cycle network. The Cabinet Member assured members that all communities would continue to be consulted with in order to understand their needs and on what action would be needed in order to get them cycling more.

Councillors Burnett, A Carter and Yasseen acknowledged the assurances that had been provided regarding future community engagement but noted that they still had concerns regarding the main focus of the proposed strategy being the expansion of the cycle network and infrastructure.

The Chair thanked the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment and the Senior Transport Planner for attending the meeting and answering member questions.

**Resolved: -**

- 1) That Cabinet be advised that the recommendations be supported.
- 2) That further consideration be given to how all residents across the Borough can 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.

- 3) 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.
- 4) That Cabinet be advised that whilst the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board supports 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, that consideration be given to how the Cycling Strategy can be developed further in order to make cycling accessible and appealing to all residents across the Borough.

Councillors Burnett and A Carter voted against resolution one. Councillor Yasseen abstained from voting on resolution one.

## **89. TOWNS AND VILLAGES FUND**

Consideration was given to a report that was submitted for pre-decision scrutiny ahead of the Cabinet meeting scheduled for 24 January 2022 regarding the proposed Towns and Villages Fund. The Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working, the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment and the Project, Initiatives, and Improvement Officer attended the meeting to present the report.

In introducing the report, the Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy stated that the proposed Towns and Villages Fund was a new £4 million capital programme in Rotherham that aimed to improve the borough's local town and village centres. It was noted that based upon projects put forward by ward members that had been developed in consultation with their communities, a work programme and associated processes for delivering projects has been produced. It was noted that the work programme would ensure that a range of projects that delivered on the different priorities raised by residents from across the Borough would be completed over the next three years

The report stated that the Towns and Villages Fund was a capital scheme with projects being allocated funds between April 2021 and March 2024. It was noted that the time taken to deliver all projects was expected to cover the full three-year period of the scheme.

An indicative work programme for the proposed projects to be delivered by the Towns and Villages Fund was attached as appendix to the officer's report.

Members sought confirmation that officers would work with members who had submitted requests for improvement projects that did not fit the criteria of the scheme to develop alternative proposals. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working assured

members that officers and the relevant Cabinet Members were working with and supporting members in their wards to identify potential projects that could be delivered by the Towns and Villages Fund. The Deputy Leader also confirmed that ward members would be supported by the Neighbourhoods Team to identify and obtain additional and alternative funding streams to deliver improvement projects in their wards where the projects could not be delivered via the Towns and Villages fund.

Members noted their approval for the scheme and how they were pleased to have seen how well communities had been engaged with and empowered in order to establish their priorities for improvements in their local areas. Members also noted how well the scheme had been received by residents in their wards. The Deputy Leader stated how excited she was by the development of the programme and how well residents had engaged and provided ideas on how their local areas could be improved and be made better places to live.

Members noted examples of projects that they had suggested for implementation but that had not met the criteria for the scheme but expressed thanks to officers who were now working with them to develop schemes that could be delivered by the Towns and Villages Fund. Members stated that it would be beneficial in order to assist members to submit future projects that would be able to be supported by the fund that an all-member seminar be delivered on the Towns and Villages Fund.

Members sought assurance that the Council was engaging with private landowners where necessary in order to deliver the proposed improvement projects. The Deputy Leader confirmed that where relevant private landowners had been written to and that officers would be enabling the discussions with private landowners that would move the delivery of projects forwards.

Members asked what plans were in place for the wards that would not initially be able to submit projects for consideration to the Towns and Villages Fund due to pending decisions by Government on bids for Levelling Up funding. The Deputy Leader advised that whilst it was hoped that these bids would be successful, that a proportion of the Towns and Villages Fund budget would be held back in case of the bids were unsuccessful. It was noted that should the bids for Levelling Up funding be successful then the funds that had been held back would be made available for projects elsewhere in the Borough.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working, the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment and the Projects, Initiatives, and Improvement Officer for attending the meeting and for answering member questions.

**Resolved: -**

- 1) That Cabinet be advised that the recommendations be supported.
- 2) That an all-member seminar be delivered on the Towns and Villages Fund.

**90. OUTCOMES FROM THE HEALTH SELECT COMMISSION SUB-GROUP ON COMMUNITY HUBS**

Councillor Yasseen, as Chair of the Health Select Commission presented a report that detailed the findings of the Health Select Commission sub-group that had carried out a spotlight review of Community Hubs.

**Resolved: -**

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the following recommendations be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration and response: -
  - a) That the excellent work of Rotherham Community Hub be commended, especially in respect of the befriending service which helped relieve loneliness and isolation throughout the pandemic.
  - b) That Members be encouraged to add the Community Hub to their ward priorities and e-bulletins to better support vulnerable residents and families.
  - c) Whereas the current Community Hub model is due to end in March 2022, should there be a further evolution of the Community Hub model, that an update be brought in 12 months' time.

**91. OUTCOMES FROM THE IMPROVING LIVES SELECTION COMMISSION SUB-GROUP ON POST-CSE SUPPORT**

Councillor Clark, who had been a member of the Improving Lives Select Commission that had conducted a in-depth review of post-CSE support in Rotherham presented a report that detailed the findings of the review.

**Resolved: -**

- 1) That the report be noted, and the following recommendations be submitted to Cabinet for consideration: -
  - a) That post-CSE services are transferred to the Adult Social Care, Housing and Public Health directorate to enable the greater integration and coordination of support pathways that

are available to adult victims of trauma as children.

- b) That further work is undertaken with relevant partners and survivors to improve the ways in which survivors' voices are captured to inform future reviews of post-abuse services (for example drawing on the research from Sheffield Hallam University, the development of voice and influence groups or other survivor's forums).
  - c) That consideration is given to appropriate governance arrangements to enable elected members to provide a steer on the activity that is taking place within the Borough to stop CSE/CCE and support survivors.
  - d) That the Improving Lives Select Commission continue to monitor the provision of post-abuse support to survivors of CSE.
  - e) In relation to recommendations c) and d), that consideration is given how survivors' voices to inform these processes.
  - f) To emphasise the shared responsibility of all elected members, that an annual training event/workshop is delivered. This is to ensure that all elected members are kept up to date with the activity within the Borough to protect young people from being at risk of harm from CSE/CCE and support adult survivors to move forwards in their lives.
  - g) That the relevant Strategic Directors explore options for sharing best practice with other local authorities in the Yorkshire and Humber Region.
  - h) Drawing on the good practice from Durham County Council, that consideration is given is given to the language used in the provision of post-CSE support to ensure that it is positive and inclusive of the needs of those accessing services.
- 2) That the response of Cabinet to the recommendations be reported back to Council within two calendar months of its submission.

**92. OUTCOMES FROM THE HEALTH SELECT COMMISSION SUB-GROUP ON YOUNG CARERS**

Councillor Yasseen, as Chair of the Health Select Commission presented a report that detailed the findings of the Health Select Commission sub-group that had carried out a spotlight review of the support that was available for young carers.

**Resolved: -**

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the following recommendations be submitted to Cabinet for consideration and response: -
  - a) That action plans and performance matrix be supplied as part of the next update in 12 months' time.
  - b) That a plan be developed to address the current data gap in respect of young carers who mature into adult carers, with a view to providing the best preparation possible and making this transition as seamless as possible for young carers who may continue to have caring responsibilities into adulthood.
  - c) That consideration be given to how best to provide additional support to young carers seeking to access employment skills, education and training.

**93. OUTCOMES FROM THE IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION SUB-GROUP ON EXTERNAL FUNDING**

Councillor Wyatt, as Chair of the Improving Places Select Commission presented a report that detailed the findings of the Improving Places Select Commission sub-group that had carried out a spotlight review on external funding sources that were available to the Council for regeneration and transformation projects..

**Resolved: -**

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the following recommendations be submitted to Cabinet for consideration and response: -
  - a) That the ambition of the service in submitting bids be commended.
  - b) That the feedback from the government regarding the Dinnington and Wath bids for Levelling Up Funds be circulated when available.

- c) That the Governance Advisor liaise with the Regeneration Strategy team to coordinate upcoming scrutiny work on markets with a view to feeding into future bids involving markets.
- d) That efforts to ensure Rotherham receives its fair portion of gainshare or “single pot” funds from the Mayoral Combined Authority be noted.

**94. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS - 1 JANUARY - 31 MARCH 2022**

The Board considered the Forward Plan of Key Decisions from 1 January – 31 March 2022.

**Resolved:** - That the Forward Plan be noted.

**95. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board considered its Work Programme.

**Resolved:** - That the Work Programme be approved.

**96. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items.

**97. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

**Resolved:** - That the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will be held at 11am on Thursday 27 January at Rotherham Town Hall.