

**THE CABINET**  
**20th September, 2022**

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

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lelliott and Sheppard.

**35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**36. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

A question was received from Mr Smith who referred Cabinet to the minutes of 11th July, 2022, in particular the section on questions from members of the public. He indicated that Councillor Bennett-Sylvester raised a question in relation to the Council's Housing Strategy regarding the loss of green space and section 6, in particular and what would be done in his area which had very little with regard to community facilities. That area had very much the same problems as his own, Dinnington; what was the intention of strategic housing and development to help address the imbalance in the loss of facilities and green space from house building in Dinnington.

The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment explained that in terms of the adopted local plan, there were sites that were available for development, a number of which were on former greenfield sites, including in Dinnington, which then come forward into planning applications. In terms of mitigations, there were lots of policies both nationally and locally in terms of looking at protecting and mitigating against development. One of the new ones coming through was the biodiversity nett gain that was national; the Council was bringing that forward in terms of Rotherham. It looked at developments, protecting biodiversity and if that could not be done within the site, consideration was given to how it could be offset elsewhere.

Mr. Smith asked a supplementary question indicating Dinnington was one of the most deprived areas in the country with major health problems with both adults and children, with no sports and leisure facilities readily available to those who need them the most. In light of this, would the Council support Dinnington, St Johns Town Council's bid for S106 funding?

The Leader explained that the Council was not able to comment regarding bids for S106 funding, but the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment explained that there were mitigations in place within the planning rules, however, these challenges were faced everywhere. The Council could not comment on the S106 other than it would meet its legal responsibilities and its planning requirements.

A question was received from Councillor Tinsley who said earlier in the year the Council unanimously agreed to back a motion regarding lifesaving equipment and to write to the Secretary of State to make it an offence for any to tamper with that equipment; could an update be provided.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene explained that no response had yet been received, however, the Council continued to work with various partners to improve open water safety across the Borough. The Leader asked that a response be chased up from the Secretary of State regarding the original letter.

A question was received from Councillor Ball who mentioned that around 600 new houses were being built in Maltby, however, a decision on the traffic lights on Cumwell Lane regarding the planning application was still outstanding. It was queried if the extra traffic as a result of the additional housing had been factored into the decision on Cumwell Lane.

The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment explained that any planning application submitted for consideration had to take account of traffic implications as part of its approval process.

For his supplementary question, Councillor Ball noted that the building work had now begun, however, the waste was unable to be removed because there were no traffic lights in place. He queried how long it would be before planning was considered and there was concern that the additional housing would not be included in the consideration.

The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment offered to hold a meeting with Councillor Ball to discuss the specifics regarding Cumwell Lane.

### **37. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

It was noted that the minutes of the previous meeting should have included apologies from Councillor Clark rather than confirmation of attendance.

#### **Resolved:-**

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Cabinet held on 11th July, 2022, as amended, be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

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

The Chair advised that Appendix 1 and 2 to Minute No. 46 contained exempt information, however, the meeting remained open to the public and press throughout.

**39. MY OWN PLACE: SUPPORTED LIVING FOR AUTISTIC PEOPLE AND PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY**

Consideration was given to the report which proposed that Rotherham developed a Flexible Purchasing System (FPS) for supported living. The aim of the FPS was to achieve high quality supported living provision across the Borough; flexibility for suppliers to be added to the FPS at any stage of its lifetime; cost saving through increased competition; opportunity to stimulate development in the Supported Living Market; and potential to increase access for Rotherham's small to medium enterprises and support the delivery of Rotherham Council's social value ambition.

There were currently 206 people living in supported living funded by the Council with most (198) living in within Rotherham and 8 outside. The Council currently commissioned supported living for people with learning disabilities and autistic people, most of which was shared accommodation.

Section 2.10 of the report set out observations on Rotherham's current Supported Living Market. It was noted that most development had been ad-hoc due to a market-led approach, but it was felt that market management and engagement were required to better shape the future of supported living in Rotherham. Choice could have been being restricted by a dominance of national providers in Rotherham's externally commissioned providers. In accordance with the Social Value Policy, there were aspirations to develop locally sourced solutions. There was also a dominance on the shared model of supported living. There was a risk that this form of model could lead to housing being allocated based on availability rather than need. A lack of core and cluster accommodation in Rotherham was also reported along with no dedicated supported living units in the area for autistic people. There was a concentration of supported living in Maltby and Wath-upon-Dearne. Learning disability providers had raised that there was a difficulty in meeting the demand for supported living services, particularly the challenge of identifying suitable accommodation.

When consulted, people with a learning disability, autistic people and their families stated that they wanted supported living which was flexible, offered a choice and would enable them to support them to further develop their independence.

The options available were set out in section 3 of the report submitted. The option of a market led approach was not recommended as developments were led and determined by the market and not the needs of residents. It would also create a mixed and uneven supply. The second option was to bring the future provision of supported living 'in-house.' This was not recommended as it would involve the procurement of suitable parcels of land and would require the Council to provide capital and staffing investment for developing 12 units for the next 10 years. This was not currently factored into the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. Further, the Council could not be both a landlord or care provider. The traditional framework of commissioning supported living services through a framework agreement was not recommended as this was seen as a closed system that did not allow new suppliers to join until the next agreement was awarded.

The recommended option was the Flexible Purchasing System as set out in section 3.4 of the report.

**Resolved:-**

1. That Cabinet approve the creation of a Flexible Purchasing System (FPS) to ensure that for the development of future Supported Living contracts, providers are aligned to Rotherham's vision of providing housing for people with learning disabilities and autistic people. This will be based on the principles contained in 'Building the Right Home'.

**40. SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, MENTAL HEALTH FREE SCHOOL (ELEMENTS ACADEMY - DINNINGTON) PROGRESS REPORT**

Consideration was given to the report which provided an update on progress towards the opening of a specialist Social, Emotional, Mental Health (SEMH) Free School in Rotherham. In November 2020, Cabinet had approved the proposal to develop the school and re-build Newman Upper School. In 2021, the Regional School Commissioner made the decision to award the Free School to a preferred Multi-Academy Trust. However, following the due diligence process, the decision was taken not to proceed. Following work between the Council and Department for Education, the decision was made in February 2022 to award the Free School to Ethos Academy Trust with a view to opening in September 2022.

In June 2022, a pre-opening inspection was held at the Dinnington site and assessed the site suitability against the statutory school building requirements, health and safety and Ofsted assessed that all statutory policies and key curriculum requirement were in place. All requirements were successfully met. The new school is to be named Elements Academy.

There had been a number of refurbishments to the site and costs identified have created a budget pressure and increase of capital investment to £3.043m from the original identified budget of £2.2m. This was due to increase in the costs of materials and labour due to external market conditions; increase in adaptation works needed to the building due to Ethos Academy Trust requests to deliver their specific SEMH educational model; building issues; and increase in programme costs caused by moving to an alternative academy provider.

The Assistant Director, Education and Inclusion explained the first group of students had begun to access the school.

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet note the progress and additional capital funding provided to support the opening of the specialist Social, Emotional, Mental Health (SEMH) Free School in the Borough.

#### **41. JULY FINANCIAL MONITORING 22/23**

Consideration was given to the report which set out the financial position as at the end of July 2022 and was based on the actual costs and income for the first 4 months of 2022/23 and forecast 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 second in a series of monitoring reports for the 2022/23 financial year which would continue to be brought forward to Cabinet on a regular basis.

As at July 2022, the Council currently estimated an overspend of £11.4m for the financial year 2022/23. Whilst the core directorates services have a forecast year-end overspend of £7.4m on the General Fund, there was £4.0m of estimated unbudgeted costs resulting from the wider financial impact of the war in Ukraine, inflation, energy price increases excluding the estimated impact of the 2022/23 pay award. This additional financial challenge had been factored into the current forecast following a review of the impact of the pressures on the current year and Medium Term Financial Planning.

Whilst the energy price rises and inflation would impact the Council's costs in the provision of services, there would be some mitigation in future years by increased core funding as business rates income was indexed to the rate of inflation. It was currently expected that the period of high inflation would last for around 2 years before returning to a more normal level but the cost increase being experienced would raise the base cost of services on which future inflation was applied meaning a compounding impact.

As such, the Council faced significant financial pressures that would need to be managed and mitigated through the Medium Term Financial Strategy and through significant use of the Council's reserves. There was no indication as to whether additional funding would be provided to local authorities as part of the financial settlement for 2023/24.

Along with most Councils across the United Kingdom, the Council had assumed a 2% pay award for staff for 2022/23. However, the current estimated pay potentially provided staff at the bottom of the pay scale with a 10.4% pay award, reduced to 1.1% for the top salary point. The financial impact of the pay award would be £6.5m greater than the budget assumed. Additional pressures included placement pressures within Children and Young People's Services, Home to School Transport pressures within Regeneration and Environment and pressures relating to longer term recovery from Covid-19 on income generation within Regeneration and Environment.

The Homes for Ukraine Funding Scheme had been launched in March 2022. The Government was providing funding at a rate of £10,500 per person to councils to enable them to provide support to families to rebuild their lives and fully integrate into communities. Initially, the Council had to incur costs in advance of funding being provided but Government had now begun to make the required funding allocations. If all applications were approved (140 potential), the total grant would be £1,470,000. Numbers were being monitored closely, and for prudence, the grant was currently estimated at £1,249,500, being the value of the 119 approved guests. An officer decision would be taken by the Assistant Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to set out how the fund had been used to date, to meet specific emergency requirements as well as setting out how the Council would provide ongoing wrap around support moving forwards.

The HRA was currently forecast to overspend by £1.8m. The budget had included a contribution to the HRA reserve of £2.037m. The transfer was now forecast at £0.277m to reflect the forecast overspend which would bring the HRA back to a balanced position.

The Capital Programme 2022/23 totalled £188.138m split between the General Fund (£135.310m) and HRA (£52.828m.) This was a decrease of £97.145m to the position as at the end of May reported to Cabinet on 11th July, 2022. The majority of this related to the reprofiling of schemes due to delays caused mainly from Covid-19, inflationary pressures on the programme and the high volume of capital activity taking place nationally that was straining resources from an internal and external delivery point. The movement was based on the latest profiles of expenditure against schemes, both new and revised grant allocations (£1.777m) and slippage and re-profiles (£98.922m).

The Council was progressing to deliver the redevelopment of Forge Island in line with the Town Centre Masterplan, with negotiations with private sector partners now reaching the final stages ahead of construction.

The Council's development partners have become aware of issues relating to the funding of the Scheme given the very recent volatility of the financial markets and the challenges this may now pose to private funders providing up-front capital within the requirements previously agreed by the Council. As a consequence, before finalising the funding arrangements, the Council was in conversation with the Developer, the Council's Finance and Legal Teams to ensure that the changes to the financial market did not negatively impact on the delivery of the Project or unnecessarily increase the Council's liabilities.

A report would be presented to Cabinet on 17th October, 2022, that would present the options available to facilitate delivery. The proposed additional recommendation discussed during the meeting empowered Cabinet to choose from the full range of options for delivery including further supplementing or replacing what was expected to be privately raised capital with the Council's own borrowing and capital resources.

Such changes could only be agreed by Cabinet if doing so would ensure that the Council could fulfil its best value duty by financing the scheme through the most cost-effective mechanism.

The Cabinet decision was highly time sensitive due to external factors not within the control of the Council, and there were likely to be significant additional cost pressures should Cabinet not be in a position to decide on 17th October.

This report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as part of the pre-decision scrutiny process. The Board fully supported the recommendations but asked that Scrutiny be provided with a further update on the fleet management vehicle purchase project.

**Resolved:-**

That Cabinet:

1. Note the current General Fund Revenue Budget forecast overspend of £11.4m.
2. Note that actions will continue to be taken to reduce the overspend position but that it was expected that the Council would need to draw on its reserves to balance the 2022/23 financial position.
3. Note the Council's approach to use of the Homes for Ukraine funding, as detailed in section 2.42.

4. That the Cabinet recommends to Council that: Cabinet have authority to approve amendments to the Council's Capital Programme in relation to the Forge Island leisure development, should this be necessary in order to secure best value for the taxpayer.
5. Note the updated Capital Programme.
6. That a further update be provided to scrutiny on the fleet management vehicle purchase project.

**42. NEW APPLICATION FOR BUSINESS RATES DISCRETIONARY RELIEF FOR ROTHERHAM ABUSE COUNSELLING SERVICE**

The Council had received an application for the award of Business Rates Discretionary Relief for Rotherham Abuse Counselling Service. In line with the Council's Business Rates Discretionary Relief Policy, having regard to the financial cost of the proposed relief, the charitable use of premise and the contribution that the organisation makes to the local community, it was recommended that the award of discretionary relief be granted to Rotherham Abuse Counselling Service.

Rotherham Abuse Counselling Service was a registered charity which provided free counselling for women, men and young people who had experienced any form of sexual violence, sexual abuse, domestic abuse or harassment including survivors of child sexual exploitation. The organisation benefitted from an award of discretionary relief at their existing premises which had been awarded continuously from 2019 to date. The property for which the application had been made was used to deliver the Independent Sexual Violence Advocacy (ISVA) service supporting the people of Rotherham who had experienced sexual violence and were pursuing a criminal justice process and included victims identified by Operation Stovewood. The organisation already benefitted from several grants including from the Council to deliver their service and the continuation of the modest additional assistance was considered in line with the criteria within the Council's policy.

The total cost of granting the relief for the financial year 2022/23 was set out in section 6.3 of the report submitted. The total cost was £496.64 with the cost to RMBC being £243.35

**Resolved:-**

1. That Cabinet approve the application for Discretionary Business Rate Relief for Rotherham Abuse Counselling Service in accordance with the details set out in Section 6 to the report submitted for the 2022/23 financial year.



#### 43. SAFER ROTHERHAM PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2022-25

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet endorsement of the Safer Rotherham Partnership Plan. The Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP) had agreed the plan, setting out priorities and commitments for the period 1st April, 2022, to 31st March, 2025. The Council was a key statutory partner of the SRP.

The previous Safer Rotherham Partnership Plan 2018-21 was extended for an additional year to 31st March, 2022, due to Covid-19 pandemic pressures and impacts on crime and community safety. The plan guided the Partnership in delivering significant work to protect vulnerable children and adults, build safer and more cohesive communities and tackle domestic abuse and serious and organised crime. An evidence-based approach had been used to agree new priorities along with a comprehensive consultation to capture the views of key stakeholders, including people who live, visit or work in Rotherham.

The Safer Rotherham Partnership Plan and priorities for 2022-2025 were agreed by the SRP Board in April 2022 in accordance with the outcomes of the Use of the Management of Risk in Law Enforcement (MoRiLE) thematic tool and the Joint Strategic Intelligence Assessment (JSIA.) The priorities, objective area and commitments agreed were:

1. **Protecting Vulnerable Children** (Child Abuse, Child Crime Exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation)
2. **Protecting Vulnerable Adults** (Substance Misuse, Mental Health and Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking)
3. **Safer and Stronger Communities** (Tackling Community Safety Priority Locations, Preventing Hate Crime and Online Crime)
4. **Protecting People from Violence and Organised Crime** (Domestic Abuse, Sexual Abuse and Male Violence Against Women and Girls, Serious Violence, Organised Crime and Counter Terrorism)

Quarterly performance reports would be monitored by the SRP Board with annual reports being provided to wider stakeholders. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, when formally sitting as the Crime and Disorder Committee, would review the annual report of the Partnership in accordance with the legislation.

Following Cabinet endorsement, the Safer Rotherham Partnership Plan 2022-25 (attached as Appendix 1 to the report) would be presented to Council for approval in October 2022.

This report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as part of the pre-decision scrutiny process. The Board fully supported the recommendations but requested that wider engagement takes place to inform future and refreshed plans, including

rural communities, disabled people, minority ethnic communities and those with other protected characteristics.

**Resolved:-**

1. That Cabinet endorse the Safer Rotherham Partnership Plan and recommend it to Council for approval.
2. That Cabinet notes the requirement for scrutiny of the Safer Rotherham Partnership Annual Report, which was discharged by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.
3. That wider engagement takes place to inform future and refreshed plans, including rural communities, disabled people, minority ethnic communities and those with other protected characteristics.

**44. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

Consideration was given to the report which sought approval for the revised Health and Safety Policy. The report also summarised the statutory requirement placed on the Council to ensure a Health and Safety Policy was in place that articulated the Council's approach to managing health and safety.

The aims of the Policy were to keep staff and services users safe; document compliance with legal requirements; offer clarity of expectations across the Council; provide a framework for setting and reviewing Health and Safety objectives; ensure employees understand their obligations; ensure all in a managerial or supervisory role understand their obligation; enable participation, consultation and communication with officers and stakeholders; and to set the framework for continual improvement of health and safety across the Council.

The revised Policy (attached as Appendix 1 to the report) contained a number of changes as a result of the review and consultation. These were set out in the report at section 2.2. If agreed, the revised Policy would be communicated to the workforce and all employees would be made aware of the Policy and its intentions. Section 4 of the report set out how the objectives within the Health and Safety Policy would be delivered.

If approved, the Health and Safety Policy would be reviewed at intervals not exceeding 2 years. Any revisions would be subject to consultation with officers, Trade Union representatives and Elected Members.

As the production of a Council-wide Health and Safety Policy was a statutory requirement under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety Regulation 1999, there were no alternative options. The revised Policy had been widely consulted on by a number of services and groups. The Council's Health and Safety Policy approach was also the subject of an internal audit. A draft report from the

audit showed substantial compliance in the area considered with no recommendations for improvement. Quarterly statistics and the performance dashboard would be presented to the Health, Welfare and Safety Board and the Resilience, Health, Safety and Welfare Governance Group.

**Resolved:-**

1. That Cabinet approve the revised Health and Safety Policy (attached as Appendix 1).

**45. STRATEGIC ACQUISITIONS**

Consideration was given to the report which set out the proposed use of £1 million Strategic Acquisitions Fund that had been approved by Council in March 2021 for the Capital Programme and spend within the Towns Fund. This was reported to Cabinet in March 2022.

The report addressed the need for public sector intervention to acquire land and property owned by the private sector which was required for the regeneration of Rotherham by delegating powers where necessary to negotiate and acquire key strategic sites. In March 2022, a report was presented to Cabinet seeking approval to acquire a number of properties to facilitate Rotherham's ongoing regeneration programme. A further 2 properties were now required for the implementation of the Town Deal programme. Those properties were identified as 1a and 1b in exempt Appendix 1.

The March report sought approval to negotiate acquisition of sites 3 and 4 in exempt Appendix 1 but did not specify a funding source. Since March, successful negotiations on surrounding land had led to the proposal to allocate the Council's £1m Strategic Acquisition Fund to the acquisition of these properties. A further property, identified as 2, in exempt Appendix 1 was also proposed for acquisition with the Strategic Acquisition Fund. Should negotiation on properties 2,3 or 4 prove to be unsuccessful, alternative sites for acquisition were identified in exempt Appendix 1 and would be considered for the Strategic Acquisition Fund in consultation with the Strategic Director for Regeneration & Environment, the Council's Section 151 Officer and the Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy.

The properties identified as Site 1a and 1b in Appendix 1 were required for the continued development of an improved leisure offer in the town centre. Site 2 was a building which had lacked a secure future for many years. Sites 3 and 4 had previously been identified for acquisition and would continue development at the Riverside Residential Quarter and Leisure & Culture Quarter. Doing nothing was not a recommended option considering the Council's ambitious plans for economic growth and regeneration in the borough.

**Resolved:-**

1. That the Assistant Director for Planning, Regeneration and Transport be authorised to negotiate the acquisition by agreement of the property interests at sites 1a, 1b and 2 at exempt Appendix 1 (principally through Government grants and the Council's Strategic Acquisitions Fund), in consultation with the Council's Section 151 Officer and the Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy, and the Assistant Director of Legal Services be authorised to complete the necessary transactions.
2. Should negotiation on any site in exempt Appendix 1 prove to be unsuccessful, the purchase of the alternative sites as identified in Appendix 1 be progressed as approved by Cabinet in March 2022. That the Assistant Director for Planning, Regeneration and Transport be authorised to negotiate the acquisition by agreement of the property interests at sites in Appendix 1, in consultation with the Council's Section 151 Officer and the Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy, and the Assistant Director of Legal Services be authorised to complete the necessary transactions.

**46. SECOND COUNCIL PLAN 2022-2025 AND YEAR AHEAD DELIVERY PLAN PROGRESS REPORT**

Consideration was given to the report which was the second progress report on the Council Plan 2022-25 and the Year Ahead Delivery Plan. As of 25th August, 2022, the activities within the Year Ahead Delivery Plan were rated as follows:

- 32% (29) complete
- 51% (47) were on track to be delivered by original target date
- 11% (10) were delayed by less than 3 months
- 5% (5) would not be met within 3 months of original target date
- 1% (1) was not yet due to start.

In agreement with South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, there had been an extension to the bus, tram and cycle improvement schemes which formed part of the Transforming Cities Fund Programme until March 2024 (Year Ahead Delivery Plan Tracker 5.5). This action was currently marked as 'known delays', however, it was recommended that the dates in the Year Ahead Delivery Plan were amended to reflect the revised dates.

The in-depth progress report on the Council Plan and Year Ahead Delivery Plan was attached as Appendix 1 to the report. The next update was due to be provided to Cabinet in December 2022.

This report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as part of the pre-decision scrutiny process. The Board fully supported the recommendations but made a number of recommendations that were accepted by Cabinet and included in the resolution.

**Resolved:-**

That Cabinet note:

1. The overall position in relation to the Year Ahead Delivery Plan activities.
2. The data for the Council Plan performance measures for the first quarter of 2022-2023.
3. The agreed extended competition dates, as outlined in paragraph 2.13, for the bus, tram and cycle improvement schemes which form part of the Transforming Cities Fund Programme until March 2024.
4. The performance reporting timetable for the remainder of the 2022-2023.

That Cabinet approve the following recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board:

5. That consideration be given to the format of future reports to provide an infographic overview of progress and challenges as part of an executive summary.
6. That the Improving Lives Select Commission consider the measures relating to domestic abuse referrals.
7. That a briefing be circulated to Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and Improving Lives Select Commission on unaccompanied asylum-seeking children placed in Rotherham.
8. That further work be undertaken to address the issues raised by members in relation to improving call-handling.

**47. HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND OCTOBER 2022 - MARCH 2023**

Consideration was given to the report which provided an update on the Household Support Fund which had been extended again to the end of March 2023 following a Government announcement. Draft grant guidance had been provided but no details of the grant amount were yet available. However, based on the method for calculation of the grant by population weighted by a function of the English Index of Multiple Deprivation, a best

estimate suggested that Rotherham would be allocated £2.489m, being the same as provided for the first half of the year.

The report provided an overview of the eligible uses, together with recommendations for a proposed allocation of the estimated grant. Any variations arising from details of the final grant guidance or final grant allocation were proposed to be managed through adjusting the allocation made towards the Energy Crisis Support Scheme.

The Household Support Fund was made available by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to County Councils and Unitary Authorities in England to support those most in need. This funding initially covered the period October 2021 to the end of March 2022 and was then extended to the end of September 2022. Local Authorities were given discretion about exactly how this funding was used within the scope set out in guidance. The expectation was that it should primarily be used to support households in the most need with food, energy and water bills. It could also be used to support households with essential costs related to those items and with wider essential costs. In exceptional cases of genuine emergency, it could additionally be used to support housing costs where existing housing support schemes do not meet this exceptional need.

For the period October 2022 to March 2023, the ringfencing of allocation to benefit specific age groups had been removed. New criteria for the grant set out in particular that authorities could target the most vulnerable households; that authorities must operate an application-based service for support; and that authorities can proactively identify households who would benefit from support.

**Resolved:-**

1. That subject to the receipt of final grant guidance and allocation of grant, that provisional allocations of the Household Support Fund Grant of £2.489m be made as follows:
  - a. £899k for food vouchers to children eligible for free school meals for school holidays up to and including Easter 2023.
  - b. £1.4m to support applications from households for assistance with cost-of living increases through the Council's Energy Crisis Support Scheme.
  - c. £45k allocation to support care leavers, being young people leaving foster or local authority care and living independently in their own accommodation who are responsible for paying their own utility bills, providing additional financial support through the cost-of-living increases.

- d. £30k to support local VCS organisations to support vulnerable households over Christmas / New year through a supplement to the Crisis Support service level agreement.
  - e. £90k to provide additional tinned food to supplement that available for crisis food parcels provided by local food banks and Community Food Members alongside assisting with supplies to social supermarkets, a supplement to the Crisis Support service level agreement.
  - f. £25k to provide additional non-food products for inclusion in crisis food parcels covering personal hygiene, sanitary and household products.
2. Unless the final grant was substantially different from the estimate, to delegate authority 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 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.

**48. 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.

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

**Resolved:-**

That the next meeting of the Cabinet be held on Monday, 17th October, 2022, commencing at 10.00 a.m. in Rotherham Town Hall.