

THE CABINET
Monday 17 March 2025

Present:- Councillor Read (in the Chair); Councillors Allen, Baker-Rogers, Cusworth and Sheppard.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Alam and Taylor.

126. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

127. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were nine questions:

1. Councillor Yasseen stated that 17 March was the last day of the Selective Licensing consultation. Over the last decade, Selective Licensing had failed to sustain improvements in private housing standards, as stated on the Council's website. Councillor Yasseen stated that Sheffield, Leeds and Doncaster had ended or narrowed their schemes, but Rotherham was planning an expansion on a failed scheme. She asked if the Council would work with tenants, landlords and wider stakeholders, especially Councillors, to develop an alternative approach instead of persisting with the current proposals?

Councillor Allen stated that the scheme in Rotherham was not an entire expansion. There was one new area, and other areas had been removed or amended. If the Council received information that would lead to an alternative scheme, they would be considered as part of the consultation feedback.

2. Mr Hussain asked a question in relation to Herringthorpe Cemetery, Dignity and Bereavement Services. He asked why the Council were not concluding the contract. Mr Hussain stated that at the liaison group meeting, Dignity had reached out to the Council's legal services, asking to arrange a meeting so that any outstanding matters could be resolved. In the second part of his question, Mr Hussain referenced the independent review of Bereavement Services that had been commissioned by the Council. He had previously asked to see this document but was informed that it was being factchecked by the Council. Mr Hussain believed that it would cease to be independent if the Council manipulated it in any way.

Councillor Sheppard stated that the meeting with Dignity would be taking place next week and he was hopeful that there would be

progress. It was however a long term contract and as such the discussions were very detailed. If any information could be shared after the meeting it would be. In relation to the independent review, Councillor Sheppard explained that the report author was still out of the country and there were a few details in the report that needed to be updated to ensure they were factual before it could be shared more widely.

In his supplementary question, Mr Hussain asked if the meeting next week was to conclude discussions or to fine Dignity for failings. In relation to the independent review, Mr Hussain asked why the Council needed to go back to the author when the author had submitted the final report.

Councillor Sheppard explained that he could not pre-empt what would happen at the meeting. In relation to the report, the Council wanted to make sure the detail was correct before it was published.

3. Mr Azam stated that the latest saga regarding cemeteries, Dignity and the Council had started in August 2024. He had been informed that it would be resolved by December 2024, but it was now March 2025 and discussions were still ongoing. Mr Azam stated that Dignity had to put a large amount of investment in place and were most likely looking at options on how to recover that, along with some contractual changes. He believed that meetings should be taking place weekly to resolve the matter with urgency. Referencing Councillor Sheppard's comments at the previous Council meeting, Mr Azam stated that there was not 1.2 years' worth of capacity for baby graves; there was no capacity. Urgency was required and Mr Azam asked for some proper answers. He stated that the Muslim community felt underwhelmed and fobbed off.

Councillor Sheppard refuted Mr Azam's comments and stated that the Council were working as hard as possible. He reiterated that the borough would not run out of graves but acknowledged the frustration felt.

In his supplementary question, Mr Azam referenced the independent report and stated that the author returned to the country at the end of February. The report had been submitted and the Council had responded with some required changes. Mr Azam stated that the community did not want a presentation. They wanted to see the report so they could work with the Council on how to progress going forward. There were 151 graves that were currently unmarked but there was no urgency from the Council. He asked why the report could not be released.

The Leader stated that Councillor Sheppard had already responded to that question. The Council were waiting for a report that met the terms of reference that had been set out. This had been delayed as the

report author had been away. However, it was standard procedure to make sure an independent report met the terms of reference agreed. Once this procedure had been concluded, the report would be made available.

4. Mr Smart asked what Rotherham Borough Council's definition of racism was.

The Leader explained that, to the best of his knowledge, the Council did not have its own written definition of racism. He would consult with legal services and provide a written response.

In his supplementary question, Mr Smart asked if the Council, Council Members or Council Officers were able to discriminate on any basis?

The Leader answered no. All were bound by the law and the Council's Constitution.

5. Ms Boote referenced the exhibition by local residents and artists on Monday 25 November to Friday 6 December 2024. She asked why the exhibition had been subject to censorship, how had that kind of censorship been allowed to happen and had it happened before.

The Leader stated that the items displayed in the library at Riverside House on the dates specified had been removed as the proper process for displaying them had not been followed. There was a process in place relating to the displaying of items in Council buildings that needed to be followed, and it had not been in this case. The Leader was not aware of any particular similar incidents but believed there would have been similar incidents previously.

In her supplementary, Ms Boote asked what steps had been taken to rectify the acts of censorship.

The Leader acknowledged that people could feel what they wanted to but in his view, it was not censorship and to say so was an inaccurate description of what happened. He reiterated that there was a process around displays, and it was common sense to have such a process to determine what was appropriate and how that came to be signed off. In the case referred to, this process was not correctly followed. It was not a matter of censorship or rectifying censorship but of ascertaining if displays were appropriate.

The Leader stated that the process could be shared with Ms Boote.

6. Mr Ramzan stated that at a meeting held with Councillor Sheppard on 2 December 2024, he had promised that an investigation would be undertaken on why the library had censored the Palestine art exhibition by local artists and members of the public. Mr Ramzan asked if an investigation had been done and if any documentation

relating to the investigation could be provided by email.

Councillor Sheppard stated that since the Council had been made aware that the correct process had not been followed regarding the exhibition in the library, work had been done with the museum service who had a more advanced protocol for dealing with artworks. This had been reflected in the library protocol and lessons had been learnt.

In his supplementary question, Mr Ramzan stated that he had previously asked for any documentation relating to the removal of the Palestine art exhibition from the library but had not been provided with anything. He asked if the Council intended to provide any documentation.

The Leader reiterated that the process and rules around displays would be shared.

7. Mr Ashraf asked if all the correspondence on Gaza and Palestine, from any Councillor or Council Officer to any external organisation (including the national government,) could be sent to his email address. This should initially cover the period 7 October 2023 to the current day but then anything preceding that date. Mr Ashraf stated that he would provide a copy of his question to the Leader and to Governance for the sake of clarity as he did not feel his questions and answers were accurately minuted.

The Leader stated that this would not be possible as the Council did not have access to all correspondence sent by individual members. As such, this would also be outside the scope for a Freedom of Information request. As far as the Leader was aware, the Council had already published all the correspondence he as Leader and Councillor Alam had sent and received especially with the government. The Leader agreed to check this and provide correspondence if it was not already in the public domain.

In his supplementary question, Mr Ashraf asked if there were any UK laws that Rotherham Borough Council, Councillors or Council Officers were not subject to and if so, could details be provided.

The Leader answered no. The Council, Councillors and Council Officers were subject to the law in the same way as everyone else.

8. Ms Cartland-Ward asked a question in relation to the information provided at the Selective Licensing consultation meeting on 17 February at the Town Hall. She stated that there was a statement at that meeting saying that Masbrough was poor quality accommodation with 83% of properties failing on first inspection. Ms Cartland-Ward stated that she had been a good landlord, following Selective Licencing rules since it started 10 years ago. There had been no context as to what the 83% represented. Ms Cartland-Ward asked if

this was 83% of properties inspected, 83% of properties that had applied for a licence or 83% of all licensable properties?

Sam Barstow, Assistant Director of Community Safety and Street Scene confirmed that the 83% related to the properties that had been inspected and had failed. Failure meant the identification of category one or category two hazards. He confirmed that he would check the figures and get back to Ms Cartland-Ward in writing.

In her supplementary question, Ms Cartland-Ward stated that category two hazards were, in the main part, advisory and not failures. She also stated that in any Selective Licensing scheme, there would initially be failures over the first few years as it took time to implement changes. Ms Cartland-Ward confirmed that she had sent Councillor Allen and others an alternative proposal. She wanted Rotherham to be the number one Private Rented Sector area in the country. She asked why the 83% was still classed as failing if they had passed, been remediated or reinspected and fined for not applying the desired changes. She stated that the ones still failing now were surely the ones that had not previously been inspected. If this was the case, it felt like the Council was aiming to alienate landlords when some of them wanted to work with the Council, not against.

Sam Barstow stated that Ms Cartland-Ward was right in terms of the context where officers served those notices, particularly where those notices related to issues that were not of an advisory nature. Officers ensured that those issues had been rectified. However, the data suggested a significant level of failure across the properties in the particular areas as identified by officers during those first inspections. The Council was keen to continue to work with landlords and would consider in detail any alternative proposals such as the one submitted by Ms Cartland-Ward.

Ms Cartland-Ward urged the Council to reconsider putting good landlords through more Selective Licensing when it was likely new landlords that were failing.

9. Councillor Thorp asked why the Council were not acting more urgently in relation to Broom Lane crossing. It had been reported by MP's and ward members, but it seemed all the Council wanted to do was use funding from the cycle lane. Councillor Thorp had asked the question of SYMCA if they could use funding for the STRS. An answer had come back, not from SYMCA but from RMBC. Councillor Thorp asked, if the Council were not going to use the funding or not trying to get funding, what were they actually going to do quickly.

The Leader stated that the Council had been out to consultation and were considering a major programme of road traffic management, which included the cycle lane referenced. That would give the Council the opportunity to potentially undertake a substantial piece of work,

more than, for example, putting a signal control crossing in place. The Council needed to look at how it could fund that. It would be strange to put that work to one side and then try and find some money from somewhere else to do something separate. It made more sense to look at the bigger picture and take a more holistic approach given there was funding available to do that. There was a challenge, given the reported levels of poor driving in that area, what steps the community would support.

Simon Moss, Assistant Director of Planning, Regeneration and Transport explained that drivers failing to stop at zebra crossings such as the one at Broom Lane was a huge issue. As the matter had been raised as part of the consultation, improvements were being considered at that location. Simon Moss encouraged Councillor Thorp to engage in the next steps on that project in terms of public engagement. In the meantime, the Council continued to liaise with South Yorkshire Police with a view to attendance on the site to encourage improvements in driving standards.

In his supplementary question, Councillor Thorp reiterated that there was no urgency, and he believed that it would only become urgent when a child got knocked down and hurt or killed. He stated that Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding could be used for the one crossing, and he asked if the Council would be prepared to look at that if it could be done quicker than the prolonged cycle lane extension.

The Leader did not rule it out but in order to use the CIL funding, the Council would need a scheme that was more worked up and this would take time. He also explained that this was not a simple matter of installing traffic lights because if people were willing to drive their cars into the school crossing warden and possibly kill them, they would be willing to drive through red lights. More decisive action was required to stop that behaviour and traffic in general needed to be slowed down. Forcing cars to drive slower and more sensibly would require bigger changes and more funding. The Council would continue its work looking at all the available options before making a decision on how big an intervention needed to be taken.

128. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 10 February 2025 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings and signed by the Chair.

129. 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.

130. CONFIRMATION OF SUPPLEMENTARY PUBLIC HEALTH GRANTS FOR 2025/26 AND APPROVAL OF GRANT SPEND

Consideration was given to the report which provided an update on how the Supplementary Public Health Grant funding for substance misuse treatment and recovery and stop smoking and support had been spent during 2024/25. It also outlined the confirmation of allocations and changes to the supplementary grants for 2025/26. Approval was sought to delegate the 2025/26 spend to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Care and Health, in line with the grant conditions and associated plans.

The Council had received Supplementary Public Health Grants as part of the governments strategies on Drugs and Alcohol, and Tobacco, respectively. Both Grants had specific conditions attached, including maintaining baseline Public Health Grant spend on the respective core services. The supplementary grants consisted of:

- Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant (SSMTRG) – Rotherham allocation of £2,178,186.
- Inpatient Detoxification Grant (IPD) – Rotherham allocation of £64,077.
- Individual Placement Support Grant (IPS) – Rotherham allocation of £165,719.
- the Local Stop Smoking Services and Support Grant (LSSSSG) – Rotherham allocation of £398,587.

For 2025/26, the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) had amalgamated several grants into a single Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Improvement Grant (DATRIG). The grants that would be consolidated which were received by Rotherham were SSMTRG and the IPD grant, with the IPS grant remaining as a standalone grant. Rotherham's allocation for the DATRIG had been confirmed as £2,242,263, which was the same as the combined amount received through the SSMTRG and IPD grants for 2024/25 with no uplift for inflation. The DATRIG grant priorities were broadly the same as those for SSMTRG. The renewed areas of focus were detailed in paragraph 1.7 of the report.

The 25/26 Grant Plan had been developed in consultation with the Rotherham Combatting Drugs Partnership (CDP) and was subject to an approval process from OHID. Whilst the DATRIG was made as part of a 10-year national strategy, this was a one year allocation and there was currently no certainty of funding beyond 2025/26.

Rotherham's 2025/26 allocation for the Individual Placement Support Grant was £165,719, giving an uplift on the 2024/25 allocation.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Note the delivery of commitments for 2024/2025 and the impacts of those services for Rotherham.
2. Note the allocations and changes to the supplementary Public Health Grants for 2025/2026.
3. Approve the delegation to Director of Public Health, in consultation with the lead member for Adult Care and Public Health, for spend against the Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Improvement Grant (DATRIG) in line with grant conditions.
4. Approve the delegation to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the lead member for Adult Care and Public Health, for the spend against the Local Stop Smoking Services and Support Grant (LSSSSG) for 2025/2026 in line with grant conditions.
5. Approve the delegation to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the lead member for Adult Care and Public Health, for spend against the Individual Placement and Support Grant for 2025/26 in line with grant conditions.

131. MOVING ROTHERHAM PARTNERSHIP DELIVERY OF PLACE EXPANSION GRANT

Consideration was given to the report which provided an overview of the proposed Sport England investment for Rotherham as part of the Place Expansion programme. It also outlined key activities to be undertaken to expand opportunities for physical activity and develop the existing Moving Rotherham Partnership priorities.

Inactivity in Rotherham was greater than the national average, with almost 1 in 3 adults inactive. Improving physical activity levels across the population, with a particular focus on the least active, would reduce the health risks associated with prematurely developing long-term conditions and improve healthy life expectancy which contributed to wider economic benefits, such as a healthier workforce.

In 2023 Sport England committed to investing £250m over the next 5 years to expand its Place Partnerships to an additional 80. Sport England's focus for funding was:

- Increasing activity (increasing amount of time people spend being active.)
- Decreasing inactivity (decreasing the proportion of population that are classed as sedentary/inactive.)

- Tackling inequality.
- Providing positive experiences for children and young people.

Rotherham had been identified as investment ready due to the acknowledgement of the successful work and partnerships already in place, with the Council being chosen as a partner in phase one of place expansion. This had resulted in the awarding of a £455k Development Award to Rotherham. The investment had the potential to significantly impact on the Moving Rotherham priorities noted in paragraph 1.6 of the report and positioned Rotherham as part of a selected group of local areas that received direct support from Sport England.

The investment from Sport England was in two phases: a development bid, and main award. The development bid was to help better understand the needs and priorities for physical activity in Rotherham ahead of a full award bid being submitted in early 2026. The themes that had been identified to progress the work were set out in paragraph 2.3 of the report with the bid proposals set out in paragraph 2.4. The spend proposals were outlined in paragraph 2.5.

Delivery of the bid elements would additionally enable the partnership to expand its work across the 4 active priorities in areas not directly funded by the grant. Work would include greater reach to inactive people, with additional work to focus on community development, supported by Yorkshire Sport Foundation, and building a stronger disability network to support those with greater barriers to accessing physical activity. It also enhanced the existing work within the Culture, Sport and Tourism service, particularly with local sports providers, such as community sports clubs and voluntary organisations. It would contribute to the development of leisure facilities and green and blue space infrastructure. It aligned to the Children's Capital of Culture programme delivery, supporting a wider range of young people's active opportunities as defined by them.

During the meeting it was noted that this was positive news since there were acute challenges regarding inactivity across the borough. Members were supportive of the links to the Children's Capital of Culture programme.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Approve spending of the Sport England Place Expansion grant in line with Sport England grant conditions and the development bid proposal outlined in this report.
2. Note the ambitions of the Moving Rotherham Partnership beyond the Sport England grant.

132. EARLY HELP STRATEGY: FAMILY HELP IN ROTHERHAM YEAR 1 UPDATE

Consideration was given to the report which provided an update on the progress made in year 1 of the Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024-2029. The Strategy was developed in response to legislative change. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (Working Together) gave every practitioner working in a multi-agency system clarity about what was required of them individually and how they needed to work in multi-agency partnerships to deliver effective services, support and help to children and their families.

The Strategy described three areas of support for children and families. These were Universal and Community Family Help; Focused Family Help; and Specialist Family Help. In line with the new government direction, the Council had adopted the use of the term 'Family Help' as reflected in the Strategy. Going forward, unless referring to documents named under the previous naming configuration, Family Help would be the used term.

A five-year Delivery Plan accompanied the Strategy as a roadmap to achieving the three areas of support for children, young people and families. Phase 1 (2024/25) was titled "Design" and the objectives included:

- Consult with children, young people and families on new ways of working.
- Identify and consult with stakeholders (wider Local Authority, Police, Health etc.)
- Consider the new 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' Framework 2023 and incorporate any required changes for Rotherham (P2.)
- Develop a roadmap - child's journey across the Family Help system.
- Review and update Early Help Systems Guide (July 2024.)
- Budget and HR integration for relevant agencies.

Significant progress had been achieved against Phase 1 in year one of the five-year Delivery Plan and progress updates against each of the design objectives were included in the report.

In November 2024, the Government published 'Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive'. This policy statement set out the Government's ambitious approach to rebalancing the children's social care system toward earlier intervention through Family Help and strengthened multi-agency child protection - alongside other efforts to support children to live with kinship carers or in fostering families and fix the broken care market. The Families First Partnership Programme: Initial guidance document (which would be followed by published guidance in spring 2025) was the first step in confirming the expectations for the national reforms. The guidance was intended to support Local Authorities and partners to start

developing plans for April 2025 and beyond. The expectation for the next year was that Local Authorities and partners will focus primarily on transformation. A number of considerations were encouraged as detailed in paragraph 1.13 of the report.

During the meeting the establishment of a single assessment tool, called a Family Assessment of Need (FAN), was highlighted. This would be used across a child's journey and would be built on as the needs of the family changed. It would be accessed and jointly overseen by all agencies working with the family and would mean families only had to detail their circumstances once.

As Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Councillor Cusworth stated that she was very pleased with the progress in the first year of the Strategy.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Note the progress made in year one of the Early Help Strategy: Family Help in Rotherham 2024 – 2029 Delivery Plan.
2. Note the minimum expectations detailed in The Families First Partnership Programme: Initial guidance document issued in December 2024.
3. Are provided with a further update, and refreshed action plan in autumn 2025, once future government guidance is received.

133. RESPONSE TO OUTCOMES FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD RELATING TO THE CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER'S TAKEOVER CHALLENGE - HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Consideration was given to the report which provided Cabinet's response to the findings and recommendations of the Scrutiny Review – OSMB Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge – Health and Wellbeing. The Takeover Challenge took place on 17 October 2024 and the recommendations were formed by a review group consisting of members of Overview and Scrutiny and members of the Youth Cabinet. These recommendations were presented to Cabinet on 14 January 2025 and Cabinet agreed to provide a response.

The recommendations were set out in section 2.1 of the report and related to Vaping, Mental Health, Physical Activity and Healthy Eating. 12 of the recommendations had been accepted and Appendix 1 set out further detail on how the recommendations had been or would be actioned. Where the recommendations were made for schools, the Council would only be able to accept the recommendation on behalf of maintained

schools.

Recommendation 5 was that consideration be given to how the provision of a dedicated youth space for young people could be achieved, for example, a development of a space similar to the Barnsley Youth Zone. This would require significant capital and revenue investment that was beyond the Council's capabilities at present. It would also mean that all the Council's resource was centred in one area and not distributed across the Borough. Therefore, this recommendation was not accepted at this time.

Members of the Children and Young People's Partnership Board had suggested they would like to support the development of a strategy creating and communicating 'youth zones' for young people across the Borough, including dedicated digital spaces in libraries, youth clubs and 'safe spots'. These requests would be presented to the Rotherham Together Partnership for consideration and allocation to relevant agencies to progress.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board was pleased that the vast majority of recommendations had been accepted and placed on record his thanks to the Youth Cabinet for their work.

Resolved:

That Cabinet approve the response to the recommendations, as detailed in Appendix 1, and note the report.

134. MODERN SLAVERY TRANSPARENCY STATEMENT - ANNUAL REFRESH

Consideration was given to the report which provided the annual update in relation to activities of the Council and its partners in seeking to both address and prevent modern slavery. The refreshed draft Modern Slavery Transparency Statement 2025/26, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, was also presented for consideration and approval prior to publication.

On 1 November 2022, the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) held a 'Spotlight Review' into the Council's and partners responses to tackling Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking in Rotherham. This was supported by a wide range of partners. The findings and recommendations from the review were considered, approved, and incorporated into the current Modern Slavery Action Plan, attached to the report at Appendix 2.

The changes to the 2025/26 Modern Slavery Transparency Statement compared to the 2024/25 statement were detailed in paragraph 1.3 of the report. A range of activities had been delivered in accordance with the established action plan and these included:

- Staff within the procurement team undertook the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPs) ethical procurement and supply training as required in the Co-op Parties Charter for modern slavery in 2018 when the charter was adopted.
- Rotherham Safeguarding Adults Board had commissioned four 'Trafficking and Modern Slavery' training courses that were delivered to 48 professionals from across the partnership.
- As part of Safeguarding Awareness Week, 18 – 22 November 2024, bespoke modern slavery training was delivered to 54 professionals from a cross section of agencies.
- Training was also delivered to 450 members of the health service, including General Practitioners, Nurses and other medical professionals at an open learning event held on 14 November 2024 at the Magna Science Adventure Centre.
- During October 2024, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking awareness raising information has been distributed to social landlords within the Councils Selective Licensing Scheme.
- As a result of work with the South Yorkshire Police Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Team, reporting pathways had been further improved with the introduction of an electronic reporting template available to partners.
- The Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership Manual was updated in December 2024 and now explicitly identified modern slavery and human trafficking and presented a pathway response when the risk was identified within children's services.
- The Council had 8 employees from across directorates who had received the necessary training to be successful in becoming modern slavery Single Point of Contact Officers (SPOCs).

Between April 2022 and December 2024, a total of 126 referrals from Rotherham were made by the Council and other First Responder Organisations to the National Referral Mechanism. All referrals were reported to the Safer Rotherham Partnership Board via the Performance Management framework.

Good progress had been made in respect of the actions within the existing action plan, with the majority of actions now fully completed. Work would now progress through the Modern Slavery Steering Group on the development of a revised action plan, including new, appropriate actions to enable further progression and improvements throughout 2025/26.

The report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB), who advised that the recommendations be supported. OSMB had requested confirmation in relation to action 1C 'to the public and targeted businesses such as letting agencies' in the Modern Slavery Steering Group Action Plan, as to whether the training for taxi drivers had taken place and if not when it was scheduled for.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Note the progress made to date.
2. Approve the Modern Slavery Transparency Statement 2025/26 and its publication on the Council's website.

135. HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025-29

Consideration was given to the report which sought approval for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme for 2025-29. Key areas of focus included improving council homes, providing aids and adaptations, and acquiring and building new council homes. The report summarised the investment that had taken place or was planned to take place during 2024-25, provided an outline four-year Capital Programme (2025-26 to 2028-29) and a detailed programme for 2025-26.

The total planned HRA capital investment in the years 2025-26 to 2028-29 was £290.906m. This sum had been modelled and included with the 2025-26 HRA Business Plan that was approved by Council on the 15 January 2025. The table at Appendix 1 set out the proposed programme, which was split into four areas:

- (a) Improving council homes and estates
- (b) Providing aids and adaptations
- (c) Delivering new council homes (Housing Delivery Programme)
- (d) Investing in IT to support digital transformation

Appendix 3 to the report set out the Improving Homes and Estates budget detail; Appendix 4 set out the Public Aids and Adaptation budget detail and Appendix 5 set out the Housing Delivery Programme budget detail.

The Council was working with an external contractor to undertake a programme of stock condition surveys to 100% of properties over the next three years. A pilot programme of surveys commenced in early February with the full project due to ramp up from April. The outcome of the stock condition survey would inform the evolution of the Capital Programme and in particular the investment required to ensure the Council's housing stock met the Decent Homes Standard.

The detailed 2025-26 programme was attached to the report at Appendix 2. The programme included continued delivery of phased external projects (e.g. roofing schemes) across the borough including, in Catcliffe, East Herringthorpe, Thurcroft, Richmond Park, West Melton and Maltby. The programme also included a major rewiring project at Wharnccliffe flats, the renewal of approximately 1,700 boilers and 200 kitchens or bathrooms. The programme also included £2m for larger planned repairs for example repairs to paths, paving and boundary walls, plastering and

pointing. There was also £2m for ventilation works, which formed part of a wider investment package to help prevent and mitigate damp and mould within properties. The programme also included £6.5m for major refurbishments to properties that became empty and were due to be re-let to a new tenant.

In addition to this there was £1.8million which would see works being undertaken to improve the thermal efficiency of assets which would result in more properties reaching EPC Band C. This could be increased as Rotherham Council had received an £8.8 million grant under the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund Wave 3.

The proposed Capital Programme included £121m to support the Council's Housing Delivery Programme. This included £88m to deliver the existing pipeline of projects to achieve 1,000 new council homes by summer 2027, alongside a further £33m to ensure the continuation of the Housing Delivery Programme beyond 2027. This programme of activity would continue to deliver much needed affordable housing within the borough while increasing rental income to the HRA and helping to reduce the impact of Right to Buy on council housing stock levels. The programme assumed delivery of approximately 440 units across the 4 workstreams:

- New build
- S106 Acquisitions
- Market Acquisitions
- Small Sites Homebuilding Initiative

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Approve the four-year outline Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2025-26 to 2028-29 with total planned investment of £291m broken down into the following areas of investment:
 - Improving homes and estates £154.1m
 - Aids and adaptations to Council homes £13.2m
 - Housing Delivery Programme £121m
 - IT and digital transformation £2.6m
2. Approve the detailed 2025-26 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme with total planned investment of £73m broken down into the following areas of investment:
 - Improving homes and estates £33.1m
 - Aids and adaptations to Council homes £3.3m
 - Housing Delivery Programme £36m
 - IT and digital transformation £0.5m

136. UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND (UKSPF) 2025/26

Consideration was given to the report which set out proposals and recommendations for the use of Rotherham's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) £3.28 million allocation in 2025/26. A transitional year allocation, this built upon the £7.2m of UKSPF that the borough received over three years from April 2022 to March 2025 and preceded the integrated settlement due to be in place for South Yorkshire from April 2026.

For the transitional year of funding, the proposed approach was to:

- maintain delivery of key business support and skills projects prior to the introduction of an integrated settlement from 2026/27.
- continue to support community-based projects across Rotherham, including events and Open Arms one-stop-shop advice sessions.
- provide ongoing support for Children's Capital of Culture during this festival year.
- fund other projects that reflect current priorities for Rotherham, including initiatives to rejuvenate the town centre.

There was no match funding requirement for UKSPF, but the outlined approach would complement budget investments that sought to create an inclusive economy and support residents with the high cost of living. Projects would support Rotherham businesses to start up and grow, enable people to develop their skills and achieve their aspirations, improve the town centre offer and increase footfall, and provide local help and advice in the communities where it was most needed.

Consideration had also been given to the deliverability of projects, bearing in mind that this was a one-year allocation. Most of the projects were therefore continuations from the current programme. A summary of the proposals for each theme was set out in the report, with a more detailed breakdown included at Appendix 2 and an overall financial summary provided in Appendix 1.

Following endorsement of the overall programme by Cabinet, it was proposed that the final and revised allocations for individual projects be approved by the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council. This included use of the unallocated capital funding of £62,500 and unallocated revenue funding of £127,143.

During the meeting the Leader confirmed that the Council were urging the government to continue a similar form of funding going forward.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Endorse the projects for submission to South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority for award of UKSPF for 2025/26 as follows:
 - a) Local Business Support
 - i) £945,256 for sub-regional business support supporting three strands of Launchpad (start-up support), Productivity and Low Carbon.
 - ii) £390,000 (£270,000 capital) for shop unit grants and market improvements.
 - iii) £137,667 for social value to increase opportunities for local businesses and ensure delivery against commitments.
 - b) People and Skills
 - i) £444,985 for a skills programme incorporating Ambition (children and young people), Core Skills (community-delivered basic skills training) and Advance (support to progress in work).
 - ii) £275,000 for Children's Capital of Culture to extend the traineeship programme.
 - c) Communities and Place
 - i) £200,000 for Children's Capital of Culture, to provide additional capacity during the festival year, supporting ongoing programme development and delivery, as well as marketing and design costs.
 - ii) £255,000 for Events, delivering a wide-ranging programme of events and festivals in the town centre.
 - iii) £359,549 for community-based support, including ongoing delivery of local advice sessions and engagement events through Open Arms Rotherham, and further funding for Reaching Out (£30,000) - strengthening connections with Rotherham's diverse communities.
 - iv) £86,000 (capital) for Active Lives, providing match funding to enable delivery of a multi-use games area.
2. Agree to delegate authority to the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to determine revised

and final allocations for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This is to include provision for other eligible actions within the use of the fund should it not be possible to achieve full spend of the grant through the allocations above.

137. TRANSPORT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/2026

Consideration was given to the report which detailed the Transport Programme for the upcoming 2025-26 financial year for both revenue and capital, including its funding sources and programme areas, and explained how projects would be managed within them. In July 2022, the Department for Transport (DfT) confirmed a new round of funding called the City Regions Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS). This funding was distributed to Local Transport Authorities within Combined Authority areas for a funding period from 2022-2027. The DfT had allocated £570 million to South Yorkshire, of which a total of £72.4 million capital was designated for schemes in Rotherham.

The funding included a £6 million allocation over the 5-year period (2022-2027) for a Local Neighbourhood Complementary Transport Programme (LNCTP) that was intended to support localised transport improvements, including the Local Neighbourhood & Road Safety schemes and specific interventions, such as pedestrian crossings and minor works. The report considered the LNCTP funding that remained to be allocated in the 2025-26 financial year.

There was also an additional allocation of £426,400 for highway structures asset maintenance. This was part of the separate CRSTS Network Asset Maintenance block funding. Further, Rotherham Council had been invited to bid for Active Travel Fund tranche 5 (ATF5), as part of a wider South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority bid. It was not confirmed if this bid was successful at the time of writing the report; approvals were sought subject to that bid being successful so as to allow work to commence promptly.

The report reflected on some of the successes from the previous year. Most notably, Rotherham was the first of the four South Yorkshire authorities to complete its Transforming Cities Fund programme. Additionally, the Council had delivered two highway structure projects and had delivered three new pedestrian crossings.

The report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB), who advised that the recommendations be supported. OSMB had requested further information on the process of how new crossings were assessed and prioritised.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Approve the schemes and allocations of funding outlined in Section 2 of this report.
2. Delegate authority to the Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy, to determine the type and location of pedestrian crossing to be designed per paragraph 2.2.4 following the prioritisation process.
3. Approve the reprofiling of £175,000 previously allocated to the Collision Investigation & Prevention workstream, to enable these funds to be allocated, subject to subsequent Cabinet decision, in the 2026/27 Transport Capital Programme as set out in paragraphs 2.2.11 and 2.2.12.
4. Delegate authority to the Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy, to determine the schemes to be delivered with the Structures and Minor Works allocations.
5. Delegates authority to the Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy, to determine new schemes for delivery in Rawmarsh West and Wath wards, within budgets approved in March 2024, as part of tranche 2 of the Local Neighbourhood and Road Safety programme.

138. LICENSING ACT 2003 - STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

This item was deferred to the next meeting of Cabinet which would take place on Monday 14 April 2025.

139. 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.

140. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**Resolved:-**

That the next meeting of the Cabinet be held on Monday 14 April commencing at 10.00am