

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
Tuesday 14 January 2025

Present:- Councillor Steele (in the Chair); Councillors Bacon, Baggaley, Keenan, Marshall, McKiernan, Pitchley, Tarmey (substitute for Councillor A Carter), Tinsley and Yasseen.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors A. Carter and Knight.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-

<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

72. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

73. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

74. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

75. CALL-IN - WASTE COLLECTIONS POLICY (LISTED AS ITEM 10, ON THE 16 DECEMBER 2024, CABINET AGENDA)

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Tarmey and Councillor Yasseen expressed their reasons for calling-in the Waste Collections Policy Cabinet decision. In their views the policy contradicted some previously made statements indicated contamination rates were low. A previous Cabinet Member had been asked about the contamination rates and had given assurance, at the time, that everything was fine, rates were low.

The Cabinet Member had recently provided reassurance that recycling rates were fine and now it felt like a policy was being introduced that would be quite punitive for residents. It was felt that education was the way to address this rather than punitive fines. A greater assessment of how residents' behaviours could change should be undertaken as residents may be opting not to recycle as the documents provided to Cabinet did not indicate this. It was queried if residents would need to make additional trips to the household waste recycling centres or would lead to more being added to the non-recyclable waste bins?

The policy did not include enough detail regarding how waste could be attributed to an individual household and how this would be enforced, which could lead to inappropriately fining residents.

The carbon impact assessment did not cover the scope of things such as additional vehicle movements, which could be associated with either enforcement activities or residents making additional trips to the household waste recycling centres. The equality impact assessment did not contain enough detail.

It was noted that English was not the first language for some residents within the borough along with some multi-generational households not fully understanding the contaminations issues.

It was known that recycling rates had reduced however it was felt it was better to reinvigorate people's desire to recycle rather than threaten people with fines. It was important that the reasons for recycling were highlighted and to address the barriers and challenges to communities where the capacity to recycle was lower.

It was felt that new stickers should be placed on bins to educate and encourage residents about recycling. It was noted that the Council Plan made reference to contamination affecting the money the Council received and that the data within the plan was not accurate and hard to understand if the Council was achieving its target. Examples were cited of milk cartons being classed as general waste at the recycling centres however they were put in the appropriate bin for plastics for the curb side recycling collections.

The report did not indicate if various solutions had already been tried to address some of the issues that had impacted on recycling rates going down. No other approaches or interventions had been tried prior to fining people.

Literacy rates within Rotherham were lower so residents may genuinely not understand the requirements. This would also affect the more deprived communities and households across the borough. It was felt that recycling targets needed to be met through consent and co-operation with the communities we served. People needed to feel good about recycling.

The Chair invited members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) to raise questions and queries on the points raised earlier. In response to a query regarding why this issue had been called-in prior to any consultation being undertaken, it was noted that members needed to be confident on the data, for example the report listed one figure for the rates currently being achieved and the Council Plan listed another. The equalities impact assessment indicated that the same service was provided for everyone, whereas it should have listed that it was around having an approach that was varied to accommodate the different groups within the different parts of the borough. The policy risked punitive fines for residents without prioritising education. The carbon impact assessment had not been adequately assessed.

The decision had been called-in because it was felt it was not fit to go out

to public consultation and needed to be amended to focus on education with fines as a last resort.

Upon invitation from the Chair the Cabinet Member for Finance & Safe and Clean Communities, Councillor Alam noted there were two strands to the policy. The first was a review of the previous policies to create one accessible policy for internal purposes. The second element was the external elements of the policy noting he had raised concerns about equalities. It was not the language used but the borough had an aging population, some of whom may have dementia and could put things in the wrong bins. The policy was not designed to penalise the most vulnerable in the community but to take a common-sense approach.

Education and information was the first approach and the Council would collaborate with communities and residents over a number of weeks, with the fine being a last resort. The first thing considered was education, which was paramount, in particular how the Council promoted this and collaborated with residents to increase understanding and knowledge.

Conducting the pilots would give the Council factual evidence because people would be impacted by this change and could provide feedback on what worked and what did not. Once concluded the report and information could be presented to OSMB for further scrutiny. The pilots would provide factual information which could be taken into account before the policy was implemented.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene clarified that the recycling figures within the Council Plan were finalised and published at the end of September however the figures within the report were finalised and published in December, therefore the most up-to-date figures would be used at that time, which would explain some of the discrepancy between the two documents. Section 1.2.3 of the Cabinet Report presented the contamination rates as an average across the borough. It was noted that those impacts and issues would be more prevalent in some areas than others so the numbers would fluctuate dependent upon the area. The decision taken by Cabinet was to conduct a full and extensive consultation with the public in order to inform the final draft of any future policy, along with the decision to run pilots in specified areas, which were yet to be determined. Those pilots would provide more information in terms of the impact of any potential future policy.

The primary focus was about education and engagement and support to residents, to increase their understanding of the recycling system. This would support the Council's overall ambitions in terms of delivering a cleaner and greener environment. It was recognised that information and communication needed to be improved to support residents to recycle more and reduce contamination.

It was explained that a robust plan would be developed to underpin the policy implementation. In terms of communications, this would focus on a

range of different things such as effective and routine communications through media outlets. The production of effective tools, such as the introduction of a new traffic light system, containing information as to what could be placed in bins, which would support education and engagement. In terms of promoting best practice or good behaviour, proposals included the use of a green tag to be used when people got recycling right and rectified issues raised. The crucial role that community and voluntary groups played was noted by the service, who were committed to engaging with those groups. Historically, lots of work had been undertaken within schools to educate young people with a view to them sharing that information within their households.

The proposed tagging system was another tool that could be used over a 16-week period to assist with education and engagement, including consulting with those residents regarding their particular challenges to try to avoid any potential punitive measures at the end of the process. It was clarified that these powers had been in existence for a long while as part of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Many local authorities used those powers to effectively manage waste collections however it was critical that the engagement and education approach worked hand in hand with those measures. Fines was a small part of what the service was seeking to deliver. Again, it was clarified that the decision Cabinet took was to go out to public consultation and run pilots in areas to inform the final policy position of the Council.

In response it was noted that the bin calendar was sent to all households across the borough in order to educate and engage with residents regarding which items go in which bin. Whilst not mentioned within existing policies, the draft policy looked at continuing and strengthening the work of officers directly engaging with residents and households. In areas where there was a higher prevalence, officers had engaged with young people in schools to promote education. Officers had routinely engaged with community and voluntary groups as well, particularly in areas of a higher prevalence.

The policy introduced a clear and structured approach to engagement for individual residents where particular issues or challenges were identified, such as the tagging and traffic light systems. Where bins were tagged, additional officers working directly with waste crews would engage with those residents directly. In terms of the concerns raised regarding someone else putting contaminated waste in the bin, clarification was provided that there would be a lengthy process of engagement with those households, with officers returning over a number of collection cycles before considering issuing a fine.

It was noted that there were additional disposal costs for contaminated waste of £300,000. In addition to that, there was a significant amount of recyclable waste going into the general refuse bins, for which the information and data suggested that this equated to just under £900,000 of lost income to the Council in terms of potential recyclable material.

In response it was noted that, central areas were geographically the worst areas and have potentially a more transient population. Officers are aware of a need to vary engagement significantly to engage with as made residents as possible. It was noted that any enforcement undertaken by the Council would be driven by the Council's enforcement policy, which recognised the need for officers to engage, and understand any challenges that individual households may face including language barriers, additional needs, or vulnerabilities and use those factors to guide appropriate enforcement decisions. Information on the wards with the highest and lowest contamination rates could be provided outside of the meeting.

It was clarified that fines would not be issued to generate revenue for the authority, and it was not expected that a high number of fines would be issues as the focus of the draft policy was around education and engagement, supporting residents to change behaviours and manage waste more effectively. It was noted that the Council ran a number of consultations and officers would ensure that the consultation reached as many individuals as possible. A consultation plan would be developed.

It was felt that the people who would be most anxious about the change would be older people. It was noted that the plans being developed focused around offering a robust approach in terms of education and engagement, with a view to ensuring groups are not adversely affected by this. This is also about having that direct engagement with residents on their doorsteps to understand their particular challenges. It was critical to get the waste collection service right, but it was recognised there was room to improve.

A comment was made that whilst the Council encouraged residents to recycle in the home, the Council only offered general waste bins on the street, which was not conducive to changing behaviours.

It was noted that the introduction of the Environment Act 2021 had introduced changes to the way waste was managed and collected. It introduced a legal requirement on local authorities to be able to demonstrate they were efficient and effective in terms of how waste was collected. This in turn meant supporting residents to push up recycling rates. In terms of the two pilot areas, these would be chosen using the data available. One would be an area where there were higher levels of contamination and the other would have moderate levels of contamination. The selection of any pilot areas would be done through engagement with ward members and the Cabinet Member. Concern was expressed by members that the pilot areas were not yet known.

In response it was clarified that through the powers within the Environmental Protection Act, officers had legal powers to conduct the enforcement.

It was suggested that there should be a national approach to regulate the colour of bins to aid understanding of what waste should be put in which bin.

The policy details how households may qualify for an additional general waste bin and provides information in relation to damaged bins and how residents could request replacements. It was noted that quite often where households had challenges in terms of the general waste capacity, it could be because they were not recycling properly, so additional education and engagement would help to manage their capacity better.

In response it was clarified that the length of the pilot period had been set to run over a period of time where fines could potentially be issued but the intent was not to issue any fines before the policy was brought back to Cabinet for final approval. The service had a number of out of hours enforcement staff who would be able to visit residents outside of normal office hours.

The consultation period would start from April 2025. Education and engagement to help people understand about rinsing the recycling before putting it in the bins reduces contamination would be included.

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Safe and Clean Communities, Councillor Alam noted that the policy was around culture changes rather than fining residents. The culture could be changed through education, raising awareness, and providing information. All of those aspects would improve recycling rates. The pilots would enable the Council to understand from residents what the issues were. Consultation would be undertaken in an inclusive manner, ensuring those hard to reach, vulnerable groups were included.

As supporters of the call-in, Councillor Tarmey and Councillor Yasseen indicated that they had expressed their concerns with the policy. They felt it was excessively punitive and lacked sufficient focus on education. The right data needed to be available prior to the policy being considered. Concerns regarding the literacy rates within the borough were highlighted as a barrier to reaching everyone along with the impacts of additional vehicle movements that had not been listed within the carbon impact assessment.

The Chair noted that OSMB had three options available with regard to the call-in. The first was that OSMB did not support the call-in request and therefore the original decision could be implemented. The second was to refer the decision back to the decision maker, Cabinet, for reconsideration, with OSMB setting out the reasons in writing. The third was that OSMB referred the matter to Council for consideration.

The Chair noted that a big concern was that the pilot areas had not been listed and it was felt that when a policy such as this was brought forward for consideration the pilot areas should have been included within the

report presented. It was expected that this information would be provided to this committee. If option one was the preferred option, it was suggested that the policy be presented to OSMB before it was considered by Cabinet following the conclusion of the consultation. The report back to OSMB should include a detailed education plan and an updated equalities impact assessment which addressed the concerns raised and provided assurance to OSMB prior to Cabinet's consideration.

A counter view was put forward that the decision should be referred back to the decision maker, Cabinet, for reconsideration. There was no desire for people to be fined. The Chair clarified that option one was that OSMB did not support the call-in request and therefore the original decision could be implemented with the inclusion that officers were clear and provided information about the locations for the pilot areas and that information be provided around the education plan and that it was presented back to OSMB before any fines were issued. It was noted that assurance had been provided that no fines would be issued during the consultation period.

The Chair moved to a vote for those in favour of supporting option one with the additional recommendations. Five members of the Board voted in favour of that option. The Chair then moved to a vote for those in favour of supporting option two, of which five members of the Board voted in favour of option two. The Chair's casting vote was used in favour of supporting option 1 with the additional recommendations.

Resolved: that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board:

- 1. Did not support the call-in request and therefore the original decision could be implemented.**
- 2. Agreed that officers provided information about the locations for the pilot areas to a future meeting.**
- 3. Agreed that information be provided detailing the education plan associated with the policy and that it was presented back to OSMB for consideration prior to agreement by Cabinet.**

76. HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT

At the Chair's discretion and the Boards agreement, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

77. COUNCIL PLAN AND YEAR AHEAD DELIVERY PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE

Councillors Pitchley, Tarmey and Yasseen, left the meeting during the discussions on this item.

The Chair invited the Leader and Chief Executive to introduce the report. The Leader explained this report was the regular update on the Council Plan performance, indicating where the Council was on its activities and the impact of some of those on the wider borough.

The Year Ahead Delivery Plan provided an updated position up to December 2024. In terms of the 'Every neighbourhood thriving' theme, ward plans had been agreed. The pavement parking hotspot activities were underway, and a register of locations was being compiled. The new pedestrian crossing at Upper Wortley Road had been opened. Most of the Towns and Villages fund works had been completed but there were a small number left outstanding. A scheme at Brinsworth had been delayed due to the complex legalities however work was due to begin in a number of weeks.

Moving on to the 'People are safe, healthy, and live well' theme, it was noted that the new Learning disability Strategy and the all-age Autism Strategy were in place. Construction had begun at Canklow where the new Castle View facility on Warden Street would be supporting people with complex support needs, and acting as a hub for wider community activity, learning and skill development. More than 1.5 million pounds worth of food vouchers were issued to children from low-income households through the school holidays.

It was noted that the Housing event focussed on securing a pipeline of future investment in new affordable homes was delayed until Quarter 4, as the South Yorkshire Development Partnership Forum was brought forward from Quarter 4 to Quarter 2. Regarding the new homes at Eastwood, which were part of the Housing Growth Programme, these were delayed.

In terms of the 'Every child able to fulfil their potential' theme it was noted that the complete refurbishment of a second two-bedroom residential children's home to make sure Children in Care and young people can stay in the borough had taken place, with three further homes being on track for completion. During the summer period, consultation was undertaken on the new Water Splash facility at Clifton Park with children, parents and carers. The baby pack scheme was going live, where mothers to be reaching the 26 weeks check with their midwives would be offered the opportunity to sign up to receive a baby pack. The Children's Capital of Culture programme was underway, and it was worth noting that no actions were off track in this theme.

Within the 'Expanding economic opportunity' theme the hotel and cinema at Forge Island opened in Quarter 2 2024-25. However, new eateries on the site had been delayed, but negotiations had taken place with alternative operators and were in advanced stages. The demolition of 3-7 Corporation Street had taken place. The redevelopment plans for Wath Library and Dinnington High Street were on track. The Levelling Up Fund schemes at Wentworth Woodhouse and Gulliver's Skills Academy were slightly delayed but expected to be completed within the next six months.

As part of the 'A cleaner, greener local environment' theme, it was highlighted that the Green Flag award had been achieved for Clifton Park;

Greasbrough Park; Rother Valley Country Park; and Thrybergh Country Park. Copies of the Storm Babet report was distributed to residents and businesses affected by the flooding. The structural repair of Centenary Way Viaduct remedial works was completed nine weeks ahead of schedule. The submission of finalised Outline Business Case for Rotherham Mainline Station was now anticipated by February 2025 to South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority and May 2025 to the Department for Transport. A review was being undertaken to fully incorporate the wider economic benefits.

There were delays to the heat decarbonisation plan due to delays in the construction of the Rotherham heat network. This was a technical piece of work which hinged on a private sector partner running it. It was noted that there was a back up plan in place around air source heat pumps but that would require a separate piece of work to be undertaken. No suitable Council site had yet been identified for low carbon energy generation. A wider assessment of suitable land across the borough was being undertaken, but completion of timelines remained uncertain.

Under the 'One Council' theme it was indicated that the Council's Values had been refreshed and were relaunched following an internal staff engagement exercise.

At the Chair's invitation the Chief Executive highlighted some of the performance measures, noting that thirty-three performance measures had hit their targets in quarter two. The Council was outperforming on its new volunteering opportunities. The number of people who thought antisocial behaviour in their area was a big problem showed a decrease of about 10% compared to quarter one. The local principal road networks and local unclassified road networks were classed as green status, which meant they were working well and above their end of year target.

The Council had a steady trajectory for reducing the number of children in care because they were being supported in other ways. The Council was outperforming on the number of engagements with library services where people were getting held with skills or access to jobs. Good progress was being made on digital transactions, meaning the Council was making it easier for people to contact it in ways that helped them.

The Council had thirty-four effective enforcement actions against fly-tipping and over two thousand, four hundred and forty-five effective enforcement actions for other environmental crimes.

It was noted that twenty-four performance measures had missed the target in quarter two however work was being undertaken to ensure these were met by year end. The Council had eighty-one antisocial behaviour and community protection notices issued in quarters one and two with a target of two hundred at the end of year. The Council was noting an increase in the number of people entering long-term residential care and whilst every individual was treated as they needed to be treated, the

Council would want to see less people entering care either because they did not need to, or alternative settings were available. The Council's target for two-year-olds accessing early education places was eighty-five percent. The Council was currently at eighty-three percent however the national average was seventy-four percent so whilst above the national average the Council was not quite at the level it wanted so further work was being undertaken.

The Chair thanked the Leader and Chief Executive for their presentation and invited questions.

In response to a question by the Vice-Chair the Leader explained that increasing costs associated with a capital project would not known as slippage. Slippage was schemes that were not delivered on time, so the funding needed to go back in the program or that something in the scheme required further attention. The cost projections for a project would not be an indicator of slippage. Where something happened, the initial feeling would be of frustration, but the relevant Cabinet Member and Strategic Director would converse to understand the reasons behind the delay to that capital scheme. Some contingency was built into schemes but sometimes there are unforeseen aspects that need addressing to bring the scheme back on track. The Council had a process to look at those type of capital schemes across the board to understand the lessons learned to minimise the risk for future projects.

The Vice-Chair noted the findings of an Internal Audit report that had been considered by the Audit Committee and sought clarification on who commissioned the report. The Leader explained that the capital programme was much larger than it was a number of years ago and though various reasons the Council had lost a lot of capacity amongst its officers. This meant that when funding became available, the Council was not always as prepared, with draft projects, as it would want to be. The report referred to emerged from the instances previous mentioned to ensure the funding received was well spent. It was also noted that the review mentioned was now out of date as a result of the activity taking place in Finance addressing those issues.

The Chief Executive noted that part of Internal Audit's work programme consisted of planned audits that had been requested by chief officers, in conjunction with the Cabinet Members as part of good governance practices. This enabled the Council to identify aspects, learn lessons and through the reports considered by the Audit Committee in a transparent way, show members that actions were being taken. A concern was expressed that if people were critical of audit reports, then officers would not commission them when the purpose was to shine a light on a topic in a transparent manner, to provide learning and improve services. In particular the Council was keen to understand the challenges around the capital programme, one of which was ensuring there were people with the right skills available. The Council would not be able to recruit some of those people, so would look to develop its own staff where possible but be

clear where external skills were required. The report was commissioned by the Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Service following discussions with herself and the Monitoring Officer.

It was noted that there would always be challenges to the capital programme, due to skills, commissioning needs, and increased costs but that did not mean the Council did not want to deliver as much as it could within the available resources.

The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Service indicated the report was commissioned to increase understanding and improve the service provided. It was not felt that these issues affected all capital schemes but there were a number which had cost more than originally anticipated and there was a need to understand the reasons for that.

The Vice-Chair raised concerns about the need for documented procedures and guidelines to be available for officers and indicated the importance of the audit report. Concerns around slippage with various projects had been raised previously. The Chair noted the audit report had been produced as a result of officer's concerns and that it had been considered through the appropriate channels. The Audit Committee had acted and would monitor the outcomes of the report.

Councillor Blackham sought clarification if the land associated with the Dinnington scheme had now been acquired as this could be quite a time-consuming process. The Leader confirmed that the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) was in progress, and it was hoped that conclusions could be reached quite quickly however a particular time limit could not be guaranteed and the Council was using its best endeavours to bring the scheme back on track.

Councillor Yasseen welcomed the creation of the Learning disability Strategy and the all-age Autism Strategy, along with the impact of investment in free-school meals. Looking at Appendix One, it was acknowledged that two data points could exist at the same time however in terms of the performance measures, it was queried if there was confidence that these would revert, and the decline be addressed in the next quarter? The Leader explained that there were many things associated with performance measures that were beyond the Council's control, some that were and other aspects in the middle so it would be wrong to say there was confidence that they would revert, but the report provided a reasonable and factual assessment of the work being undertaken to achieve those performance measures.

Councillor Yasseen welcomed the publication of the ward plans but expressed disappointment that the new starter apprenticeships had not been implemented as it was felt there were two aspects that had not progressed. The first was the employment of Under 25's and the second was the recruitment of those with a Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) background. The Leader clarified that a member of staff within

the Assistant Chief Executive's directorate was tasked with that work to understand where the best places were for the Council to be engaging with people to undertake recruitment. One of the issues identified was the need for a specialist position to hold a masters degree, for example, however if a person held a masters degree, they were probably aged 23 or older so the window for recruiting them as an under 25 was quite narrow.

The Assistant Chief Executive explained that work had been undertaken with communities, partner agencies and voluntary and community groups to engage with a large number of residents to understand the barriers faced. The Council was working with Sheffield Hallam University and had undertaken a range of events, which was resulting in more applications coming through.

Councillor Yasseen challenged the Council's target of eighty-five percent of 2-year-olds taking up early education, querying if it was too ambitious? The Assistant Director, Education & Inclusion clarified the national average was seventy-five percent and the Council wanted to set an aspirational target, which was expected to be met by the end of the year. This showed Rotherham's commitment to early education.

The Vice-Chair noted the audit report discussed earlier only had scope for three projects and there was no guarantee that those issues did not happen across other projects. It was also noted there had been a lot of ice and snow on pavements and it was queried how the Council could improve its outcomes to ensure the paths and roads were gritted more effectively.

The Leader took the opportunity to thank staff who had been working twenty-four-seven across shifts for the last week or so. Once snow was on the pavements and became frozen it was hard to manager. Grit was put on the roads and then people drove on them which helped keep the highways clear. Staff had been out hand salting the pavements. The borough had a lot of snow wardens in place to help as well. In response it was noted that a written response would be provided to OSMB regarding how the Council went about insuring its snow wardens.

Upon the vote the following was resolved:

Resolved: That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board supported the recommendations that Cabinet:

- 1. Note the overall position in relation to the Year Ahead Delivery Plan activities.**
- 2. Note the Quarter 2 data for the Council Plan performance measures.**
- 3. Note that future a progress report covering the remainder of**

the year will be presented to Cabinet in July 2025.

Further actions that arose from discussions were that:

- **Information regarding how the Council insured its snow wardens would be provided to OSMB.**

78. NOVEMBER 2024-25 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Alam, Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean communities introduced the report, noting that as of November 2024, the Council estimated the overspend at £4.6m for the financial year. This was due to demand led pressures on children's residential placements, adults social care packages, home to school transport and the impact of the Local Government Pay Award.

In addition, the Council was still impacted by the inflationary pressures in the economy. Even though inflation had now fallen to 2.3% (albeit an increase from 1.7% in October), the Council's base costs had significantly increased across the recent high inflation period by well in excess of 20%. Increased costs across this period were also being felt by the social care market, in particular leading to market prices increasing at above inflation levels and placing further pressures on the Council's Budget.

Whilst the Directorate overspend which stood at £15.5m was concerning, it had reduced from a peak of £17.2m and elements of this overspend were forecast with two key Budget contingencies created as part of setting the Council's Budget and MTFS for 2024/25. The Council set a Social Care Contingency of £3.4m and a Corporate Budget Provision of £3.5m to support anticipated pressures across Social Care and Home to School Transport, whilst detailed review work of these services was undertaken, and operational improvements were delivered to reduce cost pressures and create cost avoidance.

The Council's Treasury Management Strategy continued to perform well with the Council's approach to borrowing adapted to minimise the level of borrowing and borrow short term, to ultimately minimise interest costs. It was estimated that this should see the Council generate savings of at least £4m for 2024/25, though again market conditions are out of the Council's control.

Although the final forecast overspend was £4.6m at this stage, further management actions were being identified along with trying to bring expenditure in line with budget setting.

The Assistant Director, Financial Services explained they had been actively working with all key service areas facing pressures to reduce costs where possible in year, to maximise grant funding and ensure any non-essential spend was removed. That activity would continue through to the end of the financial year and the aim was to minimise the use of reserves at year end.

Reserves would be required if there was an overspend at year end. It was expected that the £4.6m would reduce a little further through those activities.

The Vice-Chair noted that the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) had been indicating that the government would allow ten percent of capital monies to be used for revenue purposes, would that flexibility become available the Council? The Assistant Director, Financial Services explained that local authorities had had the ability, since 2022, to capitalise some revenue activity if linked to change and transformation programmes however it was not known if the flexibilities for SYMCA would also be available to the Council. It was noted the Council would not want to push too much of its revenue costs into capital against borrowing funded schemes.

The Assistant Director, Financial Services noted that when the budget for home to school transport was set in 2024-25, an overspend was anticipated, in the region of around £3.5million. A programme of change was taking place with various elements being considered.

Councillor Blackham sought clarification regarding the use of reserves to meet the shortfall. The Assistant Director, Financial Services explained that the Adult Social Care pressures weren't foreseen when the budget was set and the shortfall would be filled from reserves already earmarked for financial support.

Upon a vote the following was resolved:

Resolved: That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board supported the recommendations that Cabinet:

- 1. Note the current General Fund Revenue Budget forecast overspend of £4.6m.**
- 2. Note that actions will continue to be taken to reduce the overspend position but that it is possible that the Council will need to draw on its reserves to balance the 2024/25 financial position.**
- 3. Note the updated position of the Capital Programme, including proposed capital programme variations to expenditure profiles and funding.**

79. MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE

At the Chair's discretion and the Boards agreement, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

80. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

At the Chair's discretion and the Boards agreement, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

81. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.