

THE CABINET
9th June, 2025

Present:- Councillor Read (in the Chair); Councillors Alam, Baker-Rogers, Beresford, Cusworth and Williams.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Marshall.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There was one public question from Mr Azam. He asked for confirmation regarding which Cabinet Member now had responsibility for bereavement services and he offered to take them for a tour of the cemeteries like he had previous Cabinet Members. Mr Azam also asked for a progress update on the negotiations between the Council and Dignity. He was very concerned that burial space was running out but there were no confirmed plans for further development. Phase 1 of the development had been expected in 2025, but no plans had yet been approved. He asked how the matter could be moved forward.

The Leader confirmed that Councillor Beresford now had responsibility for Bereavement Services. Councillor Beresford confirmed that she would like to accept Mr Azam's offer of a tour.

Phil Horsfield, the Assistant Director of Legal, Elections and Registration Services, confirmed that negotiations were still ongoing and that the discussions being held were robust. The outcome of the negotiations would impact the plan for future development which was why those plans had not yet been confirmed. Mr Horsfield reiterated what had been said in previous meetings, explaining that the Council would ensure that there was always land available for burials.

Mr Azam confirmed he would contact Councillor Beresford. He also referenced the Independent Equalities Review of Bereavement Services Provision that had been undertaken by Kaushar Tai. This report was due to be discussed at the Improving Places Select Commission on 10 June 2025. Mr Azam stated that he believed the report was a missed opportunity and asked if it would be presented to Cabinet along with costs and actions regarding what needed to be done and what commitments the Council would make.

Mr Horsfield explained that an action plan would be developed as a result of the report. Any future investment would be subject to the usual procedure rules that the Council operated under.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved:-

That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 19 May 2025 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

4. 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.

5. UPDATE ON THE FAMILY HELP STRATEGY IN RELATION TO THE FAMILIES FIRST PARTNERSHIP (FFP) PROGRAMME GUIDE

Consideration was given to the report which provided an update on the published guidance relating to the Families First Partnership Programme. Approval was requested for the governance structure for the management, oversight and scrutiny of the Families First Partnership Transformation Programme, in accordance with the requirements of the Families First Partnership Programme Guide, Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2024, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 and the Children's Social Care: national framework.

Agreement was also sought to delegate authority to the Strategic Director, Children and Young People's Services in consultation with the Lead Member, Children and Young People and the Assistant Director Financial Services to determine the use of the new Children's Social Care Prevention Grant in line with the expectations set out in the Families First Partnership Programme Guide.

The Families First Partnership (FFP) programme guide published in March 2025 provided clear expectations for safeguarding partners to transform how support and protection were provided to families, focusing on early intervention and prevention to avoid crisis situations. It emphasised a whole-family approach, bringing together multi-disciplinary professionals to support families in overcoming challenges and remaining together. The programme also involved greater family network engagement and stronger multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

The programme guide was not statutory guidance and did not replace existing statutory guidance, including Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023: or the Children's social care: national framework. Four chapters set out the vision for transformation in family support, to rebalance the system away from crisis intervention and toward earlier help and support; delivery expectations for Family Help, multi-agency child

protection and Family Group Decision Making and key principles and system enablers and the national delivery support offer.

The Council had been allocated £2.083m children social care prevention grant in 2025/26. The grant was ringfenced for direct investment in additional prevention activity for children and families through the implementation of Family Help and Child Protection reforms. The grant was to be used alongside the existing Children and Families grants (inclusive of Supporting Families funding), which would enable continuation of existing prevention services.

In accordance with the draft grant determination letter, the £2.083m funding was to be used for the following activities:

1. Transformation – the Council was allowed to spend (as one-off and/or set up costs) a proportion of the funding (maximum of 30%) on transformation activity to increase readiness for system change, which would include the following: (1) establishing a transformation team including but not limited to a strategic lead, a senior project transformation lead, a project manager, secondment opportunities for key partners and commissioning, finance, HR and performance resource. (2) Buy-in dedicated resource from partners e.g. health, police, education, voluntary sector, such as secondment arrangements, to support the development of the delivery plan.

2. Service Design – the grant funding was allowed to be used for (1) undertaking a joint family help needs analysis to inform new service delivery models; (2) stakeholder engagement (with local partners) to co-produce and design new service delivery models and strengthen multi-agency working and safeguarding arrangements. A diverse range of service users and practitioners were expected to be engaged in the co-design process.

3. Service Delivery - the grant was expected to be used across the full breadth of preventative services, including Early Help, Family Help, Family Networks, and child protection. Service delivery costs were expected to include additional workforce and commissioned services to enable the Council to offer new and updated services for families and children, which met the policy principles set out in the Programme Guidance. Paragraphs 2.7 to 2.12 provided an indication of some of the key service changes expected from April 2025 to March 2026 and beyond.

A further update on the delivery of Phase 2 of the Early Help Strategy: Family Help including the Families First Programme Transformation, would be brought to Cabinet in November 2025.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Note the expectations outlined in the Families First Partnership Programme Guide issued in March 2025.
2. Agree to the establishment of the governance structure for the management, oversight, and scrutiny of the Families First Partnership Transformation Programme and delegate approval of Terms of Reference to the Chief Executive in Consultation with the Leader and the Lead Safeguarding Partners.
3. Approve the use of the new Children's Social Care prevention grant to deliver transformation activity (30%), increased direct delivery of family help (50%), practice development, workforce development and ICT development (15%) and children and family voice (5%) as described in 2.15.
4. Delegate authority in line with recommendation 3 (above) to the Strategic Director, Children and Young People's Services in consultation with the Lead Member for, Children and Young People and the Assistant Director Financial Services.
5. Agree to receive a further update in November 2025 detailing the progress towards the expectations outlined in the Families First Partnership Programme Guide and expenditure of the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant.

6. FINANCE UPDATE - JUNE 2025

Consideration was given to the report which provided an update to Cabinet on a number of financial matters. The report was provided as an interim update for Cabinet, following on from the approval of the Budget and Council Tax 2025/26 report at Council on 5 March 2025 and in advance of the Financial Outturn 2024/25 report and May Financial Monitoring 2025/26 report to be submitted to Cabinet in July 2025. An update was also provided on the Council's administration of the Local Council Tax Support Top-Up payments.

The Financial Monitoring Report 2024/25 submitted to Cabinet on 10 February 2025 was based on the financial monitoring position as at December 2024, which outlined that the Council anticipated an overspend of £3.1m. This forecast position was also outlined in the Budget and Council Tax 2025/26 report which was submitted to the same Cabinet meeting and to Council on 5 March 2025. The overspend was to be funded from Reserves as approved at Council as part of the Budget and Council Tax 2025/26 report. However, the report noted that the Council's intention was to further improve that outturn position in the remainder of the financial year, if possible, to help reduce the call on reserves.

The actual financial outturn position reflected an overspend of £0.3m for the financial year 2024/25. This position included a final overspend of £12.8m across the core directorates services, however, the directorate overspend was partially offset by the planned £6.9m corporate budget risk contingency within Central Services approved within the Council's Budget and Council Tax Report 2024/25. Taken with savings delivered from the Council's Treasury Management Strategy, the final underspend in Central Services was £12.5m, which reduced the Council's overall outturn to a £0.3m overspend. This was an improvement of £2.8m from the December Financial Monitoring reported to February Cabinet, as service areas delivered savings ahead of year-end, maximised grant allocations, improvements in income were recognised and the Council generated further savings in Treasury Management. The main reasons for the improvements in the Directorate outturn position were set out in paragraph 2.1.4 of the report.

Council approved, as part of the Council's Budget and Council Tax Report on 5 March 2025, continuation of Local Council Tax Support Top Up Scheme to run during 2025/26. The scheme would provide an additional award during 2025/26 of up to £126.12 additional support to low income households most vulnerable to rising household costs, through reduced Council Tax bills. The application of the scheme included all those becoming eligible up to and including 31 March 2026. The 2025/26 scheme had commenced and at the time the report was written, a total of £1.486m had been awarded across 14,632 accounts, with 12,681 of these accounts being reduced to nil. Those bill payers in receipt of this award had been provided with a Council Tax bill that showed the top up support from the Council along with a letter explaining the reason for the award.

The estimated scheme costs were between £1.7m and £1.9m. As agreed in the Budget Report to Council 5 March 2025, this would be funded by a combination of the Household Support Fund for 2025/26 and the Local Council Tax Support Grant Reserve. The 2024/25 Local Council Tax Support Top Up scheme provided additional support of up to £121.96 to low income households most vulnerable to rising household costs, through reduced Council Tax bills. A total of £1.696m had been awarded across 17,422 accounts with 10,684 being reduced to nil in 2024/25.

The report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB), who advised that the recommendations be supported.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:-

1. Note the update on the revenue budget financial outturn 2024/25.
2. Note the Council's progress on the delivery of the Local Council Tax Support Top Up payment.

7. STREET SAFE TEAM

Consideration was given to the report which outlined the progress and plans for the new Street Safe Team in Rotherham Town Centre and the principal towns. This initiative aimed to provide a welcoming presence for visitors to the area. The team would undertake a broad range of duties which would include signposting or providing information to the public as well as identifying and addressing issues in relation to the general street scene, such as littering, by enhancing the existing enforcement presence. The service was also aimed at enhancing community safety and improving perceptions of safety in town centres. The report highlighted the importance of collaboration, continuous training, and community engagement in achieving the goals of the Street Safe initiative.

In March 2025, as part of the 2025/26 Budget, Council approved the revenue investment to create a new Street Safe Team. The new team represented a significant investment with 10 new front-line officers fulfilling brand new roles alongside the required management resources. This would be embedded within the Community Protection and Environmental Health Team, working in partnership with a range of internal and external partners across Rotherham Town Centre and the principal towns of Maltby, Dinnington, Wath and Swinton.

In addition to the proactive visible and engaging presence, the Team would also support directly the delivery of a range of Community Protection and Environmental Health services within specific neighbourhoods, including enforcement and regulation, providing regulatory advice and guidance while supporting the delivery of projects aimed at prevention and early intervention, specifically:

- Provide a dedicated resource which will enforce Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO) and wider relevant legislation including the Environmental Protection Act.
- Contribute towards the improvement of efforts to address anti-social behaviour and feelings of safety in and around the town centres.
- Proactively network, support and intelligence gather from partners and other RMBC town centre services and resources.
- Provide a visible presence in the target locations, focus upon priorities and determine a working pattern to ensure appropriate coverage for daytime, evening and weekend issues.
- Identify and report issues in the areas the Team are deployed.
- Provide advice and guidance when approached by members of the public.
- Contribute to the delivery of the Town Centre Strategy.

Paragraphs 2.9 to 2.15 of the report detailed the recruitment and training proposals. The induction programme for new enforcement officers was designed to ensure thorough preparation, integration, and support for the new Team members who would be delivering new functions. The induction would span seven weeks, covering essential training, practical experience, partner collaboration, advanced skills, legal and technical training, and independent patrols. The programme aimed to equip officers with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to perform their duties effectively and learning and development would continue to be reviewed and delivered as part of continuous professional development.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Approve the proposed implementation plan.
2. Commit to receiving a further update in March 2026 once the Team has had time to be established and operational.

8. APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Consideration was given to the report which presented the nominations received for appointments to outside bodies. Outside bodies were external organisations which had requested that the Council appoint a representative to them. Outside bodies had separate governance structures to the Council. Appointments to outside bodies could be an important mechanism for community leadership, partnership and joint working and knowledge and information sharing.

The Council's Constitution stated that Cabinet was responsible for the appointments to Outside Bodies. This report presented the nominations received and recommended the appointment of the nominees to the various organisations and partnerships. Details of the appointments were attached in Appendix 1 to the report.

During the meeting the Leader confirmed the following:

- Councillor Sheppard was to be appointed to the vacancy on Rotherham Allotment Alliance.
- Councillor Baker-Rogers was to be appointed to the vacancy on the Local Government Association – General Assembly.
- Councillor McKiernan was to be appointed to the vacant role of Director at the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Agree that councillors be appointed to serve on outside bodies, as detailed on the schedule in Appendix 1 and as updated at the meeting.
2. Agree that any in year changes are delegated to the Chief Executive in conjunction with the Leader of the Council.

9. SOCIAL VALUE ANNUAL REPORT

Consideration was given to the report which presented an update on progress towards the priorities set out in the Council's Social Value Policy, including the amount of social value committed and delivered through Council contracts. Priorities were also set for the following 12 months. Since the last annual report in March 2024, good progress had continued to be made in achieving the aspirations set out in the Policy. Social value commitments now stood at £32m and, importantly these commitments were increasingly translating into delivery with the validated social value delivered totalling £12.3 million.

The National Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMs) framework, developed by the National Social Value Task Force, provided a clear definition of social value and a corresponding measurement tool for transparent and robust reporting. The Council had selected measures from the National TOMs that would positively impact the economic, social, and environmental wellbeing of the Rotherham community. These TOMs focussed on Employment and Skills, directing suppliers to deliver additional benefits in this area.

Appendix 1 provided details of the measures that the Council's suppliers had committed to and delivered against on contracts procured and awarded between December 2019 and November 2024. Highlights were set out in section 2 of the report.

The Council achieved accreditation as a Living Wage employer from the Living Wage Foundation in September 2021. In 2024, this status was successfully retained for a third year. As a result, the Council continued to display the Real Living Wage logo in its communications and publicity materials. Currently, the Council ensured that all its staff received the Real Living Wage, which stood at £12.60 per hour. Additionally, the Council was committed to extending this standard to all in scope contracts.

The amount of Council expenditure being spent locally had continued to increase from £77.2m in 2022/23 to £105.5m in 2023/24. This was an increase of £28.3m or 36.7%. Whilst a greater absolute amount of council expenditure was being spent locally, the proportionate share of expenditure had decreased from 27.9% in 2022/23 to 24% in 2023/24.

The annual social value showcase for 2024 took place in July, attracting 67 attendees, including 38 from the private sector and 29 from the public sector. The event featured several workshops covering key issues such as supply chain opportunities and bidding for public sector contracts.

The Rotherham UKSPF social value project saw Go4Growth and Barnsley and Rotherham Chamber deliver a series of events and interventions in 2024/25 to support local businesses. Details of these were set out in paragraph 2.8.1 of the report. Appendix 3 included several case studies that helped to bring some of the activity described in the report to life and described the real life impact on residents and communities.

The key actions for 2025/26 built on the progress made in 2024/25. This included advancing the community wealth-building aspirations set out in the Social Value Policy, as well as continuing the partnership programme with anchor organisations, and delivering further staff training, particularly aiming to ensure that social value commitments were delivered through effective contract management. This was supported by investment from the Council's budget and further funding that had been secured from UKSPF, which would also enable continuation of the work with local businesses delivered by the Chamber and Go4Growth. Work would continue on:

- Employee ownership
- The development of anchor networks
- Upskilling Council Staff
- Supporting local businesses

The report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB), who advised that the recommendations be supported.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:-

1. Receive the annual report, noting the social value commitments along with outcomes delivered.
2. Approve the use of the new national TOMs (Themes, Outcomes, measures) as detailed in Appendix 2.
3. Approve that the key priorities for 2025 include:
 - a. Continuing the work on employee ownership.
 - b. Delivering the partnership social value action plan with Social Value Portal, working towards the delivery of increased social value commitments across Rotherham's anchor network.

- c. Delivering further support to local businesses through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund social value project.
- d. Upskilling Council staff through training initiatives and one-to-one support.

10. CULTURAL STRATEGY

Consideration was given to the report which provided an update on the progress made by the Local Cultural Partnership Board in delivering against the Cultural Strategy since 2018. It also set out the proposed process for the renewal of the Strategy, including related consultation.

At the time of writing the Strategy, Rotherham was approximately 10% behind the national average for participation in physical activity, the arts, museums and libraries. Consequently, the Strategy set out an overarching goal to 'get more people active, creative and outdoors, more often', in order to address lower participation numbers in cultural activities and because of the benefits of participation to improving social, health and economic outcomes. Physical activity levels amongst adults were now 8.6% under the national average and 7.3% behind the Yorkshire and Humber average, demonstrating modest improvement over time. Six years later, the data sample size had been reduced on the current Active Lives Survey and some organisations questioned its validity. Furthermore, data was no longer collated in the same way for Arts engagement, so it was not possible to compare like-for like.

As part of the renewal process, the Cultural Partnership Board would explore the feasibility of recreating the Active Lives survey as was conducted in 2019 to provide a comparable set of figures. If this was not possible, then there was a significant range of alternative metrics now in use, within the control of local partners, which enabled the Council to explore trends and evidence progress.

The Strategy was categorised into 7 "Game Changers" in order to simplify its target work areas and provide structure for its achievements.

These were:

1. A Vibrant Heart
2. Amazing Events
3. Adventures In Rother Valley
4. A Great Place for Wentworth and the Dearne Valley
5. Vital Neighbourhoods
6. Turning Passion into Profession
7. Children's Capital of Culture

Paragraphs 2.2 to 2.8 of the report provided details on the successes against each of the Strategy targets.

The Strategy noted that the Cultural Partnership Board would need to make the best use of resources, reacting positively and swiftly to changing needs and demands, securing new investment from funders who shared the Borough's vision. To date, external investment secured included:

- Increased Arts Council England investment from £136,470 in 2017/18 to £2.8m in 2024/25.
- £2m in ACE Creative People & Places investment.
- £19.2m LUF for leisure economy development.
- £3.3m from Sport England.
- £2,549,454 contributing to total project costs of £3,586,330 (126 different projects) from The Football Foundation.
- Increased average annual investment from Historic England from
- £19,688 prior to 2019, to £448,251 from 2019 to 2024 – securing a total of £2,689,503 in that period.

In addition, organisations within the Cultural Partnership such as Wentworth Woodhouse, Gullivers and Grimm and Co had brought in significant inward investment, contributing to jobs and growth and driving up opportunities to participate.

Renewal of the Strategy would need to begin before the end of 2025 in order to provide sufficient lead in to create a new strategy before the end of 2026. In light of the progress made in delivering the Strategy to date, the Cultural Partnership Board members were of the view that the renewal process for the new Strategy would be straightforward due to the achievements set out under each of the 'Gamechangers' in sections 2.2 to 2.8, and the metrics established for the current Strategy, particularly in areas of joint working such as Children's Capital of Culture. This suggested that the Cultural Partnership Board and its related networks had the knowledge and expertise to produce a credible update. This would avoid the need for significant additional resource to pay for consultants. The proposed timetable for the renewal of the Strategy was set out in Section 5 of the report. Details of the proposed consultation process were set out in paragraph 2.13. It was confirmed that the finalised Strategy would be provided back to Cabinet in September 2026 for endorsement.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Note the achievements of the current Cultural Strategy 2019 – 2026.
2. Note that the Cultural Partnership Board will develop a new Cultural Strategy for 2027 – 2034.

3. Note the proposal to undertake consultation in support of the creation of a new strategy.

11. STREET CLEANSING AND FLY TIPPING IMPROVEMENTS

Consideration was given to the report which outlined the progress towards the implementation of the new investment into Street Cleansing and Fly Tipping improvements. With the funding approved in the 2025/26 budget, the team was aiming to improve rural verge and principal township gateway cleanliness and maintenance and increased management of key activities in the service such as data analysis, deployment of resources, performance management and proactive proposals for prevention and deterrent measures around littering and fly tipping. The report focused on the need for the posts, areas to be targeted, anticipated outcomes and the timeline to implementation. This initiative would help towards delivering a cleaner, greener and more sustainable Borough.

The team currently consisted of four operatives and through the investment that number would be doubled, providing four extra staff within the operational team. The Team at a high level would:

- Provide an additional dedicated resource to the Council's Rural Verge Maintenance Team and will operate on Rural verges at a different time of the year to the current schedule.
- Focus on Principal Township Gateway cleansing and maintenance on a newly developed schedule so the Borough is cleaner and greener.
- Proactively clearing fly tipping when active in Traffic Management restricted areas while working on a maintenance schedule.
- Proactively providing littering and fly tipping intelligence to Officers and Community Protection colleagues.
- Provide a more visible presence along Rotherham's key rural verges and Principal Gateways.

The two additional new Officer posts for performance management would support zonal and Boroughwide operations across a range of grounds and maintenance and cleansing activities and increase key management functions.

The Assistant Director for Community Safety and Street Scene confirmed that recruitment had been successful and it was hoped that the new officers would be in post by July 2025.

Resolved:

That Cabinet note the progress to date and commit to receiving a further update in April 2026 once the team has had time to be established and is fully operational.

12. EMPLOYMENT SOLUTIONS 2025-26

Consideration was given to the report which detailed the core targets and milestones for the Employment Solutions Service in 2025-26. The Employment Solutions Service was set up in 2020 to deliver a European Social Fund (ESF) Employment Support programme and then latterly from January 2024, both the ESF and Inspire projects merged to be delivered as a UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) employment support programme. The programme ran until 31 March 2025. Overall, since October 2020 the Employment Solutions Service has delivered 4 employment support programmes, resulting in over 892 people entering employment and 849 into education and training.

Given the success of the employment support programmes and ongoing uncertainty regarding the sustainability and size of the UKSPF, the decision was taken by Council on 5 March 2025 as part of the Budget and Council Tax Report 2025/26 to fund the service permanently by committing £718,000 per year for the service to continue to support local residents into work or training. With this funding secured, the Employment Solutions Service would continue to offer an integrated programme of bespoke pre-employment activity designed to support unemployed residents and residents on low incomes to access the labour market or improve their earning capacity.

In setting output targets there was a recognition that the Employment Solutions Service would support delivery of the wider Pathways 2 Work programme which was agreed by Cabinet in April 2025. The outputs were yet to be agreed and were subject to a Cabinet decision. As the Employment Solutions Service was no longer reliant on grant funding for the service offer, it was the intention to streamline and refocus on client groups that were not supported via other grant funded services. A series of milestones were detailed at Appendix 3.

The report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB), who advised that the recommendations be supported.

Resolved:

That Cabinet note the proposed Employment Solutions targets and milestones for 2025-26.

13. 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.

14. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:-

That the next meeting of the Cabinet be held on 7 July, commencing at 10.00am.