

**CABINET AND COMMISSIONERS'
DECISION MAKING MEETING
Monday, 13th November, 2017**

Present:- Councillor Read (in the Chair); Commissioner Ney, Councillors Alam, Beck, Hoddinott, Lelliott, Watson and Yasseen.

Apologies for absence were received from Commissioner Bradwell and Commissioner Kenny.

Also in attendance were Councillors B. Cutts, Reeder and Sansome.

The webcast of Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meetings can be viewed at:-

<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcasts/enctag/Executive%252BArea>

62. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported.

63. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

(1) A member of the public referred to the district heating standard charge across all the schemes and asked why was this charged at the same rate when the schemes had different efficiencies and cost bases.

Councillor Beck advised, for the benefit of those present, that a discussion had taken place on this issue. The Council made a decision some years ago that all the tenants across all the schemes for 1300 households should be charged the same rate. In the past there had been huge discrepancies on the charges people paid and dependent upon location. There were different costs associated with running the schemes, but Council believed it only fair that all people paid the same.

(2) A member of the public referred to his own tenancy agreement and challenged anyone to show him where it stipulated he had to pay more for his heating to subsidise another. He claimed this was cross subsidisation and not included in his tenancy agreement.

Councillor Beck pointed out details about heating would not be included in the tenancy agreement. Rotherham was not a loan stander of charging for district heating and it was unfair for people to having pay different rates of charges depending on where someone lived. The Council had made a significant amount of investment over the past four years across all the schemes which had brought all the charges down as a result. The report on the agenda today proposed to do this. Councillor Beck disagreed with the premise that someone should be charged differently as a result of location.

(3) In a further question the member of the public had noted from the figures he had received that printing and postage costs were no longer in the Council costs. He asked if tenants would no longer receive statements and if they were who was to pay for these.

The Assistant Director of Housing confirmed statements would still be received by tenants. The cost of this would be borne by the Housing Revenue Account.

(4) A member of the public referred to the removal of the £2.00 standing charge, the confusion around it and the refunds on 5p and then 6p, asked how was this worked out and when was this going to be resolved. Over the last four weeks she had placed £95.00 on her prepaid meter for heating, despite not being home much, and was still in debit by £11.50.

Councillor Beck confirmed implementation of the new charges would take place on the 14th December, 2017 pending approval of the report on today's agenda. Refunds would be backdated to the 1st April, 2017, to the 6.28 p kW level of charge and refunded by cheque. From the 1st to 13th December, 2017, any refunds would be credited back to residents' meters.

The Assistant Director of Housing explained about the combined effect of the previous charge of 7.09 p/kW with the factored in standing charge, which had since been reduced taking out the staffing and administration costs. This was now 6.28p/kW.

In a supplementary question the member of the public explained how three days ago her meter recorded her in debit of £24. She rang the Council for help with regards to the £10 emergency credit and was told by officers to contact her gas supplier. She sought an explanation as to why officers were unable to help if they were not trained or aware of district heating schemes.

The Assistant Director of Housing noted the particular circumstances and would pick these up outside this meeting. Staff had gone through a learning process following the review and were well aware how the district heating schemes worked.

The member of the public pointed out the district heating schemes had been in for many years and could not understand why staff needed to be trained further.

(5) A member of the public asked, on behalf of a number of residents on the Swinton Fitzwilliam estate, about variances on the kW/hour per house. Some properties were only getting charged 4p kW/hour where some were paying up as high as 16p kW/hour. This was having a big impact on cost house to house and tenant to tenant. Certain tests had been undertaken and costs identified when heating had been placed on for one hour resulting in some tenants paying 34.8p at 4 kW/hour, but if the boiler recorded 12kW this was at a cost of £1.04.

The Assistant Director of Housing confirmed all the meters were the same on the Swinton Fitzwilliam estate and all on the same tariff. The amount the consumer used to heat their home would be recorded on that tariff with no difference in cost.

The Leader clarified that it was how much gas was required to heat a property per hour.

The member of the public pointed out that there was a large difference. Tests had been undertaken on four properties for the heating alone for one hour. For some the heat was pumping through at 4kW/hour and resident charged at 34.8p kW/hour and others £1.04 kW/hour.

Councillor Beck apologised for any confusion. The member of the public was correct he too had seen this on meters, but offered his reassurance that it was not how much anyone was getting charged, but an indication of how hard the boilers were working.

The member of the public disputed the comments and pointed out the meter clearly displayed how much a resident was paying per kW and then the cost. Unfortunately, there were some houses on the estate which were paying more than others to run their heating.

Councillor Beck was aware there had been problems with some properties, but this had been rectified. If the member of the public was aware of other properties experiencing a problem he asked for the details to be shared so this would be investigated.

The member of the public further asked if every individual property on the Swinton Fitzwilliam estate could be checked for their functionality to see what it was costing each property per hour for heating and heating and water. Some were being charged a variable and this matter had been raised as part of the discussions previously.

The Leader confirmed these matters would be picked up if the details of the four addresses, following consultation with the occupiers, could be provided as a starting point.

(6) A member of the public referred to the current pooled system for seventeen districts, some of which were making a loss and some a profit. This pyramid type situation meant some residents were paying more money to subsidise other less efficient systems and he did not see how this was viable or fair.

Councillor Beck disagreed with the premises that people should pay differently because of where they lived. The Council had invested into improving the efficiency across all schemes and this would continue. The cost of district heating would be subject to review annually as part of the budget setting process. If efficiencies were then demonstrated costs may be reduced further.

The member of the public appreciated the Council had implemented the same tariff to simplify the payment processes, but some areas were still being charged more to cover the districts making a loss. This was found to be unfair and the member of the public asked who was paying more, why and over what timeframe.

The Leader further explained the rationale for the basis of the scheme pointing out the three year programme of investment and the process of paying the same tariff for residents which would see costs reduce year on year.

(7) A member of the public further asked about the houses on the Swinton Fitzwilliam Estate that had been identified as having no cavity wall insulation altogether. The disagreements spanning three/four years had resulted in the member of the public personally drilling into one particular property to prove to the Council that there was no cavity wall insulation. He asked if the tenant would be reimbursed or compensated for the costs associated with heating that particular property because of the lack of insulation.

The Assistant Director of Housing confirmed the Council was continuing to improve the thermal imaging of its stock. Some benefits had already been made to properties on the Swinton Fitzwilliam estate and now the weather had got colder it was easier to identify any properties where there were problems with insulation. A programme of works had already commenced to remedy issues going forward.

The member of the public confirmed works had already started on this particular property, but this had been an ongoing battle for four years. He had to prove there was no insulation and that there was a serious issue due to the cost to heat the home per week. He asked if the tenant was to be compensated for the four years of high costs to heat that property through the Council's error that there had been insulation in the property when clearly there had not.

Unfortunately, there was still a problem with the property and a decision was still awaited from the Council due to the need to lower the footpath due to it being higher than the damp course. Works were now on hold with no guarantee that the remediation would be completed this year. This house remained cold and the tenant was still in a position where she was still having to try and maintain some level of warmth at a high cost for her children.

The Leader confirmed there was no compensation or discretionary scheme. Works would be completed as quickly as they could and the Council was trying to put right any difficulties. The individual circumstances of this case would be picked up separately.

(8) A member of the public, having lived on the Swinton Fitzwilliam estate for eighteen years believed the Council was no further forward with the district heating scheme. Properties on the estate were getting charged at different kW/hour for heating. The tenant's meter was running at 4kW for heating and hot water and her parents on the same street were running through at 16 kW and she asked for a reason why.

The Leader, having answered a similar question, confirmed this was to do how hard the boilers working at any given time. He could not confirm what this meant for payment and asked that the details be forwarded on.

The member of the public confirmed she had attended a meeting on the estate and passed on relevant details to a Council Officer

The Leader confirmed this would be picked up.

(9) A member of the public suggested that the only way of charging fairly was to give everyone the same pay as you go meters.

Councillor Beck explained that the report brought forward today for all the people on district heating schemes would be to see a 28% reduction in the cost of heating their home which was a significant reduction. The Council acknowledged about the difficulties residents, but had listened and would taking the report forward to make it easier for residents to heat their own homes, particularly on the Swinton Fitzwilliam estate.

The member of the public pointed out that tenants on the Swinton Fitzwilliam estate were the only ones that had meters pay as you go. It would make sense for each district to pay for what they were using with no profit or loss in the same way as other gas suppliers.

(10) Councillor Cooksey asked about the proposed redevelopment of York Road given the high number of privately rented properties in this area and asked would any properties in the development be made available for potential owner occupiers.

The Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment explained the proposal in the brief was in-keeping with the Council's request for affordable housing so at the most 25% of the properties would be affordable depending on the viability and the remaining being market houses or intermediaries.

In a supplementary question Councillor Cooksey asked what was considered to be affordable housing.

The Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment explained this was to do with affordable to rent and restricted through Government legislation. There were other combinations including intermediate properties which were partially rented and partially owned.

64. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 16 OCTOBER 2017

Resolved:- That the minutes of the Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meetings held on 16th October, 2017, be agreed as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

65. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That under Section 100(A) 4 of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the agenda items 15, 16 and 17 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of such Act indicated, as now amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

66. SEPTEMBER 2017/18 - FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

Consideration was given to the report which set out the financial position for the Revenue and Capital Budgets at the end of September, 2017 based on actual costs and income for the first six months of 2017/18 and forecasts for the remainder of the financial year. This was the third of a series of monitoring reports for the 2017/18 financial year which would continue to be brought forward to Cabinet and Commissioners on a regular basis.

Delivery of the Council's Revenue and Capital Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy within the parameters agreed at the start of the current financial year was essential if the Council's objectives were to be achieved. Financial performance was a key element within the assessment of the Council's overall performance framework.

As at September 2017 the Council had a forecast overspend on the General Fund of £4.0m, an increase of £0.6m over the £3.4m as at July. The main reason for this increase was a continuing rise in the projected overspend by the Children and Young People's Directorate of £0.961m, chiefly attributable to continued increases in the number of children in care.

Offsetting this increased overspending, the Adult Care and Housing forecast overspend had reduced from £5.142m to £5.066m.

As reported for July, Central Services was still predicted to deliver some £5m in savings the product of a review of Business Rates and Treasury Management.

Management actions to address areas of overspend were also ongoing and the overall budget position would continue to be monitored closely. Overall, however, monitoring showed that the Council's Revenue Budget position had deteriorated by £0.6m since July and to the extent that expenditure could not be contained within budgets by management actions or by identifying additional savings, the Council would need to call on its reserves in order to balance the revenue budget for 2017/18.

In light of this, all services would, therefore, continue to develop mitigating actions and alternative savings to compensate for financial pressures and delays in delivering the full amount of savings. The financial effects of the mitigating actions that have been identified and implemented to date were reflected in the current forecast outturn. Regular updates on the progress made in maintaining a balanced budget position would be reported regularly through these Financial Monitoring reports .

A significant in-year pressure on the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block remained – the projected overspend having increased by £760k from July to the current projection of £7.220m. Whilst this pressure did not directly affect the Council's financial position at this time it was imperative that the recovery strategy was implemented, clearly setting out how this position would be resolved and to avoid any risk to the Council in the future. This included the planned transfer of £3m DSG in 2017/18 to reduce the forecast High Needs Block deficit.

The service had developed a recovery plan which aimed to mitigate as far as possible the in-year pressure and achieve the previously reported position of an overall cumulative deficit of £1.796m by April, 2019.

The 2017/18 Capital Programme was currently forecasting an in-year underspend of £6.676m – a change of £7.7m from the over-commitment reported in the first 2017/18 monitoring report in July.

The majority of the forecast underspend had been re-profiled into 2018/19. This revised and re-profiled Capital Programme would continue to be closely monitored and any further revisions and adjustments to the Programme included within the next monitoring report for Cabinet approval.

Councillor Watson, Deputy Leader, reported on the pressure facing Children's Services, the number of children being brought into care, which was a reduction on last year's numbers due to additional funding, and the potential for these numbers to increase.

In terms of the Dedicated Schools Grant a recovery plan had been developed which aimed to mitigate as far as possible the in-year pressures.

Councillor Roche, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, reported on the forecasted overspend and the measures being taken to bring this down. This was an issue nationally and only three Local Authorities last year had kept within budget for Adult Social Care.

The Leader, in response to a question raised about the issues facing Local Government and future funding, confirmed that a number of professional organisations were lobbying Central Government and making representations to the Treasury.

The level of cuts since 2010 had removed £200 million from Council budgets and this was having a huge impact on the services being provided and on the workforce numbers.

Resolved:- (1) That the current forecast overspend for 2017/18 of £4.012m be noted.

(2) That the management actions that continue to be developed to address areas of overspend be noted and alternative and additional savings be identified to mitigate shortfalls in achieving planned savings in 2017/18.

(3) That the detailed Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Recovery Strategy be noted which would transfer £3m in 2017/18 to reduce the forecast High Needs Block deficit and mitigate the in-year pressure through a series of measures has been set in place.

(4) That the current forecast outturn position on the approved Capital Programme for 2017/18 and 2018-2022 and the proposed re-profiling of expenditure be noted.

67. INTERIM REVIEW OF POLLING PLACES 2017

Further to Minute No. 39 of the Council Meeting held on 12th July, 2017 consideration was given to the report which dealt with an interim, partial review of polling places within the Borough. A public consultation on the current polling scheme and the Returning Officer's proposals commenced on 21st July and ended on 29th September, 2017. This report, therefore, outlined the consultation responses and made recommendations for the implementation of revised polling arrangements.

Resolved:- That Council approve the proposals for polling places as outlined in Appendix 1, in particular that:-

- a. The polling place for AD polling district be changed from Anston Hillcrest Primary School to the Methodist Community Hall, Sheffield Road.
- b. The polling place for CG and KG polling districts be changed from the AMRC Design Prototyping & Testing Centre, Wallis Way to the AMP Technology Centre, Brunel Way.
- c. The polling place for ID polling district be changed from the Maltby Service Centre, Braithwell Road to the Wesley Centre, Blyth Road.
- d. The polling place for KB polling district be changed from the mobile library to Aston Fence Junior & Infant School.

68. CESSATION OF CHARGING FOR PAYMENTS MADE BY CREDIT CARD

Consideration was given to the report which detailed how in June 2015 the Council introduced a surcharge of 1.75% for payments made to the Council by credit card in order to offset charges being levied upon the Council by the card schemes, Mastercard and Visa. This was detailed in Budget Savings Proposal RES24 which was approved within the Council's Budget for 2015/16. Whilst surcharging was a legitimate and widely accepted practice, it was noted at the time that the European Commission was considering legislation to stop surcharging card payments at some point in the future.

The detail of changes had now been released by the European Commission within the 'Payment Services Directive 2', which H.M. Treasury have announced would be incorporated into UK legislation from 13th January 2018. It would, therefore, be against the law to surcharge for most credit card payments from this date.

Making the change ahead of the mandatory January, 2018 deadline would benefit the citizens of Rotherham.

Resolved:- That surcharging credit card payments be stopped across all Council services and payment platforms from 30th November, 2017.

69. BUSINESS RATES DISCRETIONARY RELIEF FOR REVALUATION SUPPORT

Consideration was given to the report which set out how in the Spring Budget of 8th March, 2017, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the introduction of a series of new Business Rates reliefs including Revaluation Support to assist businesses impacted by an increase in Business Rates as a result of the 2017 revaluation. Two national relief schemes – Supporting Small Business and Support for Pubs, which were also announced by the Chancellor have already been implemented by the Council following a report to Cabinet on 16th October, 2017

The new relief was to be granted by Authorities using their Discretionary Relief powers under Section 47 of the 1988 Local Government Finance Act. Each authority had been given their own allocation, being the total relief that they could offer, and still be compensated through a Section 31 grant for their 49% share. Authorities would not be compensated for relief granted above their allocated funding and unused funding **could not** be carried forward to future years.

Rotherham's allocated funding was as follows:-

- 2017/2018 - £365k
- 2018/2019 - £85k
- 2019/2020 - £35k
- 2020/2021 - £5k

No national scheme had been proposed, as the Government believed that local authorities were best placed to judge the particular circumstances of local ratepayers and direct the funding where it was most needed to support local economies. There were, however, some conditions and requirements for local schemes that have been set out:-

- Billing authorities were expected to consult with their major precepting authorities (Fire and Rescue authority).
- De-Minimis State Aid regulations applied.
- Other discretionary reliefs funded by Section 31 Grant should be awarded first before Revaluation Support.

Although councils were free to design their own schemes analysis of a number of other authorities proposed schemes had highlighted some common themes and it was with these in mind that Rotherham's scheme had been designed.

Rotherham's scheme, details of which could be found in Appendix A, had been designed to support small and medium businesses who have seen their Non Domestic Rates bills increase significantly as a result of an increase in the Rateable Value of their properties in the 2017 revaluation.

Resolved:- That the implementation of the Revaluation Support Scheme, as outlined in Appendix A, be approved.

70. WASTE OPTIONS APPRAISAL - CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to the report which sought approval to carry out consultation on proposed changes to the Council's waste collection service.

Waste collection services in Rotherham have developed over the last fourteen years and currently consisted of a hybrid of previous kerbside sorting regimes and current collection operations.

The Council was keen to consider how the service could be modernised ensuring full consideration was given to maximising recycling and reducing costs and the views of residents on a range of improvements would be sought on:-

- Materials for recycling and the use of wheeled bins.
- Residual waste.
- Garden waste.

The eight week consultation, commencing on 27th November 2018 would ensure customers understood the proposed changes, the reasons for them and communicate how they could contribute to the consultation. Engagement would take place using a combination of drop-in sessions and online feedback. Communications around the proposed changes and the subsequent consultation would be undertaken using a combination of mechanisms, including social media, traditional media and printed material.

Details of the proposed changes for consultation demonstrating how waste collections could be provided in the future over a rolling four week period were outlined.

In terms of garden waste the consultation process included the introduction of a full year round charged green waste collection on an opt-in subscription basis of around £40 per annum.

Cabinet Members sought clarification on the recycling of plastic at kerbside and whether or not this was to be included. It was noted that the waste treatment facility at Manvers currently extracted plastic material and to include this at kerbside was prohibitive due to cost.

Engagement with the public would include a number of drop-in sessions and online feedback, but in addition all households would be written to and given the opportunity to comment on the proposals.

Concerns over the capacity of the residual waste bin and the proposals for this to be reduced were as a result of the improved facilities for recycling.

This report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as part of the pre-scrutiny process who were in support of the recommendations, subject to further consideration being given to consultation on the waste options appraisal with newly arrived communities and those who did not have English as a first language and that the outcome of the consultation and final proposals be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board prior to the final decision.

Resolved:- (1) That consultation with the residents of Rotherham on proposed changes to household waste and recycling collection services be approved.

(2) That further consideration be given to how newly arrived communities and those who do not have English as a first language are consulted on the Waste Option Appraisal.

(3) That the outcome of the consultation and final proposals be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board prior to the final decision.

(4) That a further report be submitted to the Cabinet in February 2018 to report on the outcome of the consultation and the recommended options for approval.

71. **EQUALITY ACT 2010 LICENSED DRIVER MEDICAL EXEMPTION POLICY**

Consideration was given to the report which detailed how the operative parts of Sections 165 and 167 of the Equality Act 2010 came into effect in April 2017. Section 167 of the Act gave Local Authorities the power to publish a list of wheelchair accessible vehicles (known as the Section 167 list). Section 165 placed duties on the drivers of those vehicles in relation to the carriage of passengers in wheelchairs.

Drivers of vehicles that were on the Section 167 list were able to apply for a medical exemption from any of the duties listed under Section 165. In order to process an application for a medical exemption, the Council was required to set out a policy for exempting drivers on medical grounds.

This report, therefore, sought approval of that policy, and proposed arrangements for the maintenance of the Section 167 list.

Resolved:- That the Licensed Driver Medical Exemption Policy, attached at Appendix 1, be approved.

72. **PROVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES - INTEGRATED WELLNESS SERVICE**

Consideration was given to the report which provided an overview and overall context for the design and commissioning of an Integrated Wellness Service model within Rotherham.

The following services were included in the Integrated Wellness Service model:-

- NHS Health Checks Programme (statutory programme).
- Alcohol screening.
- Smoking Cessation Service.
- Smoking in Pregnancy.
- Single point of access (used for weight management services).
- Adult Weight Management Service.
- Health Trainer Service.

The key focus for these services were within the seven most deprived wards, but the services were open to all.

The Public Health Services listed supported the delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Public Health indicators in the Corporate Plan and The Public Health Outcomes Framework (PHOF). NHS Health Checks was a statutory Public Health function as specified in The Local Authorities (Public Health Functions and Entry to Premises by Local Healthwatch Representatives) Regulations 2012.

The procurement process, assessment and tender scoring process have followed the relevant Council policies and best practice have been adhered to during this process, including the completion of any declaration of interest and confidentiality agreements.

Based upon the results the Director of Public Health would be awarding the Integrated Wellness Service contract to Parkwood Healthcare Ltd.

Resolved:- (1) That the award of the contract for the provision of the Integrated Wellness Service to Parkwood Healthcare Ltd (for the period advertised in the specification of three years with the option of extending for a further two years on a year by year basis, contractually defined as 3+1+1 years) be noted.

(2) That the significant change to the model of delivery of Public Health lifestyle and behaviour change services brought about by the awarding of the contract be noted.

73. VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES REVIEW

Consideration was given to the report which detailed how infrastructure services provided support that helped voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations across the borough to become more effective and sustainable.

Active and vibrant community groups and voluntary organisations were the backbone of local communities and work collaboratively with residents and with the Council to make a positive difference. The Council's funding for infrastructure support meant that local groups and organisations could access capacity building support and be part of a Rotherham-wide network.

Community and voluntary organisations have an important role in helping to build resilient communities across the borough and in supporting residents - particularly the most vulnerable.

The current infrastructure services were provided by Voluntary Action Rotherham (VAR) with the engagement of Rotherham Ethnic Minority Alliance (REMA). The current arrangements ran until the end of March 2018.

As part of considering arrangements for the next three years, a review into the infrastructure support needs of the VCS in Rotherham had been completed. The purpose of this review was to assess the effectiveness of the existing service and to identify future needs. The outcome of this was the recommended continuation of infrastructure support (in line with the commitments of the Rotherham Compact), with a priority focus on activity and support aligned to communities and neighbourhoods as set out in the Council and Rotherham plans.

The next stage in the process was to invite bids for there to be a lead infrastructure organisation to work with the Council to develop full proposals and then lead the delivery over the next three years.

This report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as part of the pre-scrutiny process who were in support of the recommendations, subject to there being greater clarity on the outcomes arising from the activity (as outlined in Recommendation 1.3) to ensure that value for money was achieved on the Council's investment.

Resolved:- (1) That the activities and outcomes of the review into voluntary and community sector infrastructure services be noted.

(2) That the start of the grant bidding process and to the appointment of a lead provider for voluntary and community sector infrastructure services delivery; with a grant funding agreement to be in place for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2021 with a three year value of £560,578 be approved.

(3) That within the generality of infrastructure services, umbrella support and communications, the grant funding agreement be to prioritise the following activity:-

- a) Supporting the move to North, South and Central community based working and the evolving Council approach to neighbourhood working by providing capacity building support to current, new and emerging community and voluntary sector organisations based in the areas across the borough;
- b) Supporting the development of active citizenship by helping to build social capital in communities through volunteering (both informal and formal);
- c) Encouraging greater participation of the VCS at both strategic and operational level across networks and partnerships in the borough;
- d) Providing the support and development opportunities for individuals working in the voluntary and community sectors to participate in policy development and partnership working with the Council and other local partners;
- e) Providing external funding support to community and voluntary sector organisations, achieving increased external funding into the borough; and
- f) Promoting equalities and tackling inequalities, including building stronger communities through helping different communities to work together (particularly those facing social exclusion) to foster community cohesion.

(4) That there be greater clarity on the outcomes arising from the activity (as outlined in Recommendation 1.3) to ensure that value for money is achieved on the Council's investment.

74. MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Consideration was given to the report which detailed how the Member Development Panel had worked with councillors, officers and the Local Government Association to prepare a strategy to direct the Council's approach to learning and development for Members.

The approach to learning and development set out in the strategy was already being implemented following involvement with the Local Government Association and work continued to develop a plan of activity which reflected the objectives of the strategy and the overriding themes which have emerged from personal development plan interviews with Members.

This strategy had been prepared to reflect the ambitions in the Council Plan and enhance the skills, knowledge and behaviours of Members and sought formal approval by the Cabinet.

Cabinet Members welcomed the strategy and sought assurances that all Members of the Council received training on Safeguarding and were advised this was mandatory.

This report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as part of the pre-scrutiny process who were in support of the recommendation.

Resolved:- That the Member Development Strategy be approved.

75. **PROPOSED ROTHER VALLEY COUNTRY PARK CARAVAN SITE**

Consideration was given to the report which detailed the extensive work that had been undertaken to develop outline proposals for a new caravan site at Rother Valley Country Park and to assess its business potential.

Financial projections suggested that such a development could enable the park to generate a significant net revenue stream for the Council, particularly if it were operational by the time that Gullivers opened in 2019. It would also improve greatly the availability of affordable overnight accommodation in Rotherham, and enhance Rotherham's reputation as a welcoming and enjoyable visitor destination.

Operating cost estimates were based on trade data and, where appropriate, experience gained from operating similar facilities elsewhere in the park. All such costs, including any additional staff required, would be met entirely from caravan site income. The modelling indicated that the proposed caravan park would generate profits to support the Council's wider revenue budget.

It would meet Gulliver's requirement for a caravan site within the vicinity of their major new visitor attraction on the adjacent Pithouse West site.

Cabinet Members welcomed this proposal and the enhancement this would bring to the borough and the value to the economy.

Resolved:- (1) That Council include Rother Valley Country Park Caravan Site project within the approved Capital Programme as an invest-to-save initiative.

(2) That the project be developed further in accordance with the preferred options detailed in the report, including obtaining planning and any other required permissions, and obtaining tender prices for construction of a caravan site with additional pitches for tents, both with and without an optional second toilet and shower block.

(3) That, following receipt, tenders be evaluated to identify which option was most economically advantageous and, following consultation with the Cabinet Member, the preferred contractor to build the caravan site be appointed.

76. DISTRICT HEATING SCHEME CHARGES REVIEW

Consideration was given to the review of district heating which had been undertaken following capital investment made to infrastructure that had improved the efficiency and concerns raised by tenants on the Swinton Fitzwilliam Estate about the high cost of heating.

A previous report to Cabinet in July 2017 recommended that a weekly standing charge of £2 be introduced to enable a reduction in kwh charge to 5.65p so mitigating a payment spike for residents on the Swinton Fitzwilliam Estate who were on pre-payment meters. The equivalent charge per kwh if no standing charge was levied would have been 7.09p per kwh. There were concerns expressed by some tenants and Ward Members that prompted a further review of charges to be undertaken.

Subsequently, the review focused on anticipated costs for 2017-18 based on full year operating costs for 2016-17 now being available and the known cost reductions from significant investment in district heating infrastructure over the last three years now coming to fruition.

Option 3 was the favoured option and this would limit cost recovery to fuel costs only. All staffing, administration and metering costs have been omitted and would in future be funded through general HRA resources which was the same as staffing costs associated with Gas Servicing and Safety inspections for individual central heating systems. All charges would be applied retrospectively from 1st April, 2017 and relevant refunds placed on the rent account and issued as part of district heating quarterly billing cycle. Tenants on pre-payment meters would be issued with refunds for the period 1st April to 30th November, 2017 following decision by the Council. The remaining refund for the period 1st December to 13th December, 2017 would be applied as a credit to the heat meter. By processing the refunds in this way it would ensure tenants received a refund prior to Christmas. The new charge rate would be applied to the meter remotely on 14th December, 2017.

This report, therefore, recommended the reduction of the kwh charge to 6.28p per kwh with no standing charge for 2017-18 which would be applied retrospectively from 1st April, 2017. These cost reductions would mean that charges for district heating in Rotherham for 2017-18 were comparable to both Sheffield and Doncaster.

This report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as part of the pre-scrutiny process who were in support of the recommendations.

Individual circumstances relating to specific concerns would be investigated further and work would continue with Ward Members.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and the contents noted.

(2) That Council:-

- a) Approve the revised district heating cost model.
- b) Reduce the unit Kwh charge across all district heating schemes to 6.28p per kwh (incl. VAT) and apply retrospectively from 1st April, 2017.
- c) Reduce weekly pre-payment charges on all pooled schemes as detailed in Option 3 of the report.

77. DEVELOPMENT BRIEF FOR SITE AT YORK ROAD, EASTWOOD

Consideration was given to the report that sought approval for the Development Brief for York Road, Eastwood and its proposed submission to developers.

The redevelopment of York Road, Eastwood by the Council, in partnership with a developer, would enable control of the nature and quality of the development to be retained, ensuring that all needs were met.

In addition, the Brief requested that developers approach the proposal with a focus on creativity and a view to providing a catalyst for further improvements in the area. It was expected that the redevelopment would be innovative in design and quality terms and that the homes provided would enhance the community further, creating a new customer base for existing businesses and increasing the viability of the area. However, the detail of the eventual development would depend upon its viability and on developer's views on deliverability.

A number of options were considered (as set out in detail as part of the report) with some soft market testing and on this basis Option 5 was preferred.

Resolved:- That the content of the Development Brief for York Road, Eastwood and its proposed submission to developers with a view to obtaining design submissions/development proposals be approved.

78. 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

