

**THE CABINET
24th April, 2023**

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

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

146. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declaration of interest was made:

Member	Agenda Item	Interest Type	Nature of Interest
Councillor Roche	Agenda Item 9 (New applications for Business Rates Relief)	Personal	Member of the Advisory Board - Manvers Lake and Dearne Valley Trust

147. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present at the meeting and no questions had been submitted in writing.

148. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved:-

That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 20th March, 2023, be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

149. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair advised that appendices to Minute No. 154 contained exempt information, however, the meeting remained open to the public and press throughout.

150. ADULT SOCIAL CARE STRATEGY FOR ROTHERHAM 2024 - 27

Consideration was given to the report submitted which was to support the future delivery of adult social care, the report proposed to refresh the Adult Social Care Strategy, vision and future priorities.

The report described the changing legislative and statutory environment for adult social care since the implementation of the 2017 – 2020 Adult Social Care Strategy and identified a clear rationale for developing a new strategy.

The Adult Social Care Development Programme was agreed at Cabinet in January 2016 and set out an ambitious transformation journey for the Service. The programme included development of an Adult Social Care Strategy, to clearly articulate the vision and priorities in Rotherham for people with care and support needs, their families and carers.

The Care Act 2014 reinforced a direction of travel to move away from traditional services to more personalised approaches. The 2017 – 2020 Adult Social Care Strategy supported this direction of travel by supporting residents in a way that builds on natural supports and maximises independence rather than creating and maintaining dependencies on service.

The recommendations were then proposed and seconded.

The Leader queried what engagement would look like with service users in Rotherham. It was clarified that co-production activities that have already happened over the last 12 months along with the insights from compliments, complaints and workshops would be utilised and this would also check whether the underpinning values would be fit for purpose.

Resolved: That Cabinet:

1. Approved a refresh of the Adult Social Care vision and strategy.
2. Agreed to the refreshed Adult Social Care Strategy being presented back in early 2024 for formal approval prior to implementation.

151. FUTURE OF THE ROWAN CENTRE PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT FOLLOWING A PERIOD OF STATUTORY CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to the report submitted which was a follow up to reports to Cabinet on 21st November, 2022, and 20th February, 2023, where approval was granted to enter into a period of pre-statutory and statutory consultation on the proposal to close the Rowan Centre Pupil Referral Unit following the Department for Education (DfE) prescribed process.

The report outlined that Elements Academy was established under the Department for Education (DfE) Free School presumption procedure and opened in September 2022 as a new Academy for pupils with Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs) with a presenting need of Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH). Elements Academy was situated on the old College site at Dinnington.

All pupils who attended the Rowan Centre Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) had transferred to Elements Academy as a special school specialising in supporting the SEMH presenting need of pupils, and this has been facilitated by amendments to individual pupils EHCPs.

Teaching, support, and ancillary staff who worked at the Rowan Centre PRU, had also transferred to Elements Academy to ensure a continuity of education and support for pupils. Subsequently Rowan Centre PRU has now been completely vacated.

The report of 20th February, 2023, gained approval to commence the statutory processes prescribed by DfE to bring forward proposals to formally close Rowan Centre PRU, following DfE Statutory Guidance for Proposers and Decision makers 2019 – Opening and Closing Maintained Schools. Should the proposal be approved, the site would become available for other educational purposes. It was noted that a period of pre-statutory and formal statutory consultation was undertaken with a wide range of stakeholders during which no representations has been made.

The recommendations were then proposed and seconded.

The Leader asked, given that no representations had been made, whether the Council could be reassured that all voices had been heard. The Cabinet heard that there had been a significant amount of consultation with stakeholders, together with public notices and coverage in the local media.

Resolved: That Cabinet:

1. Noted that there were no representations in relation to the statutory consultation or public notice.
2. Approved the proposal to close the Rowan Centre PRU.
3. Approved that the Department for Education be formally notified of the intention to close Rowan Centre PRU.
4. Delegated authority to the Strategic Director of Children and Young Peoples Services to invite formal expressions of interest to take forward long term usage of the site.

152. DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT HIGH NEEDS BLOCK SAFETY VALVE PROGRAMME ANNUAL UPDATE

Consideration was given to the report submitted which summarised that, as part of the Department of Education work to address long term challenges in the High Needs funding within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), a small number of identified local authorities including Rotherham,

entered into a financial agreement known as a 'Safety Valve Agreement'. The report provided an update at the end of year one (2022/2023) of the 'Safety Valve Agreement' and the associated actions attached to the agreement and confirmed that the Council had received a substantial amount of capital investment due to positive progressions against its strategic and financial plan.

In November Cabinet supported the development of the SEND Sufficiency Phase 4 which would provide an additional 10 resource units in Rotherham based within mainstream schools. The investment would reduce the need of high-cost independent school places outside of Rotherham. The programme of activity would be delivered across the next 3 academic years.

The recommendations were then proposed and seconded.

Resolved: That Cabinet noted:

1. The annual progress of the 'Safety Valve Agreement'.
2. The key risks and areas subject to review within the DfE monitoring of Rotherham progress against the 'Safety Valve Agreement'.
3. That a further Cabinet report would be submitted when proposals for the 10 additional mainstream SEN resource basis have been further developed.

153. NEW APPLICATIONS FOR BUSINESS RATES RELIEF

Consideration was given to the report submitted to consider the applications for the award of Discretionary Business Rate Relief for the organisations listed in Section 1 of the report. This is in accordance with the Council's Discretionary Business Rates Relief Policy (approved by Cabinet on 12th December 2016).

Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act (LGFA) 1988 conveyed power on local authorities to allow discretionary relief that would be additional to the mandatory relief. This was given when the property was used wholly or mainly for charitable purposes by a charity or other non-profit body whose main objects are charitable or benevolent, or concerned with education, social welfare, science, literature or the arts.

The recommendations were then proposed and seconded.

There were 5 applications made which were listed in Section 1 of the report.

It was noted that the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health did not vote on this item in accordance with his declaration of interest.

Resolved: That Cabinet:

1. Approved the applications for Discretionary Business Rate Relief for the organisations listed in Section 1 of the report in accordance with the details set out in Section 6 to this report for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years.

154. REGENERATION PROGRAMME: STRATEGIC LAND ASSEMBLY

Consideration was given to the report submitted which set out the proposed use of the £1million Strategic Acquisitions Fund that was approved by Council in March 2023 as part of the Capital Programme.

The report also built upon the Strategic Acquisitions reports to Cabinet in March and September 2022 and sought the necessary approvals and delegations to enable the negotiation and subsequent acquisition of further third-party land and property as set out in exempt Appendix 1.

The recommendations were then proposed and seconded.

It was noted that Cabinet gave permission for funding to be used to purchase particular buildings or land, with the specifics being kept private for commercial sensitivity reasons, however, once those purchases were complete the information was published through the Officer Delegated Decision process.

Resolved: That Cabinet:

1. Agreed that the Assistant Director for Planning, Regeneration and Transport be authorised to negotiate the acquisition by agreement of the property interests at exempt Appendix 1, in consultation with the Council's Section 151 Officer and the Cabinet Member for Jobs and the Local Economy, and the Assistant Director of Legal Services be authorised to complete the necessary transactions.
2. Approved the use of funds including the £1m Strategic Acquisitions Fund to enable the Council to acquire properties as set out in exempt Appendix 1.

155. COUNCIL PLAN UPDATE

Consideration was given to the report which was the fourth progress report on the Council Plan 2022-25 and the Year Ahead Delivery Plan. As of 27 February 2023, the activities within the Year Ahead Delivery Plan are as follows:

- 65% (60) complete
- 22% (20) were on track to be delivered by original target date

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- 5% (5) were delayed by less than 3 months
- 8% (7) would not be met within 3 months of original target date.

During the meeting the Leader explained the reasons why some of the actions were off target. Cabinet Members then highlighted areas of positivity from their portfolios along with any issues or concerns they had around missed or delayed actions.

- 33 fines and prosecutions had been issued for fly tipping so far this year, a significant increase on previous year
- There had been an increased take up of early years education with 96.4% of 2 year-olds utilising their place against an annual target of 80%
- The number of subscribers to the 'Rotherham Round Up' Ward bulletin had exceeded 9,000 which meant the target has been exceeded
- A Prevention and Health Inequalities Strategy and Action Plan has been completed and actions were in progress
- An evaluation report was completed for a cultural programme for residents aged 55+ and 60% of participants said their wellbeing had improved as a result of attending
- New Century Business Centre at Manvers should be completed in July which would provide support for new businesses
- Work continued to reduce the number of homeless people housed in temporary accommodation
- Progress continued on the ambitious regeneration programme despite the challenging financial situation

Performance/progress would continue to be kept under review within Directorates and reported publicly to ensure that the Council's direction of travel remained positive. The final progress report for 2022-23, covering data for quarter four and year-end performance would be presented to Cabinet on 10th July, 2023.

It was recommended that the frequency of reporting in 2023-24 moved to twice a year (December 2023 and July 2024). Due to the nature of the actions/activities in the plan, many did not significantly change each quarter and a less frequent report would enable the Council to demonstrate progress.

Quarterly reporting would remain in place internally to ensure officers remained focussed on areas that required extra attention and timely action would be taken when things were off track.

This report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as part of the pre-decision scrutiny process. The Board fully supported the recommendations with the inclusion that consideration be given to how the wider take-up of ward bulletins could be promoted.

Resolved: That Cabinet:

1. Noted the overall position in relation to the Year Ahead Delivery Plan activities.
2. Noted the Quarter 3 2022-23 data for the Council Plan performance measures.
3. Agreed the revised Council Plan performance measure targets and the Year Ahead Delivery Plan for 2023-24.
4. Noted the future performance reporting timetable (see paragraphs 2.17 and 2.18).
5. That consideration be given to how the wider take-up of ward bulletins could be promoted.

156. INDICATIVE HIGHWAY REPAIR PROGRAMME FOR 2023/2024

Consideration was given to the report submitted that reviews the current Strategy for the management and maintenance of Rotherham's Highways and the impact of the recent Council funding on the highway network.

This report described how Rotherham's Highways were strategically managed and maintained, in accordance with the agreed Highway Asset Management Policy, Strategy and Highway Asset Management Plan (HAMP).

In addition, it described the current performance, both in terms of the condition of Rotherham's Highways and in terms of the delivery of highways maintenance services.

The Cabinet heard that the Council had made a significant investment in improving roads which has meant that they were now above the national average and claims had been reduced.

The recommendations were then proposed.

A number of schemes would benefit from the investment which also includes resurfacing pavements and new footway crossings.

Resolved: That Cabinet:

1. Noted the strategic approach to the management and maintenance of Rotherham's Highways.
2. Noted the decision of the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment to approve the indicative Highway Repair Programme for 2023/2024.
3. Approve that the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment may utilise any additional in year funding in accordance with the strategic approach to the Management and Maintenance of Rotherham's Highways as set out in this report.

157. TRANSPORT CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the report submitted that outlined the Transport Capital Programme for 2023-24 and sets out the sources of funding. It provided an overview of the aims of the various project themes that this funding would be used for and described how projects would subsequently be managed within those themes.

Further to a similar arrangement in December 2022, this report went on to seek approval for delegation to the Strategic Director Regeneration and Environment in liaison with the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment to identify and approve specific projects within the project themes set out.

Cabinet was informed of the various road safety improvements that would benefit from this investment which also included major projects.

The recommendations were then proposed.

Resolved: That Cabinet:

1. Noted the allocation of £72.4 million City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) funding as stated in the report in section 1.2 and approve receipt of £1.2 million Local and Neighbourhood Improvement block funding, and £400,000 of Highways Capital Maintenance block funding, noting that the funding will be used to support delivery of the Council's programme of transport projects.
2. Approved the schemes and allocations for use of this funding, and changes to previously approved RMBC capital funding, as set out in paragraphs 2.1 – 2.12 (and appendices 1 and 2) for delivery under the 2023-24 Transport Capital Programme and the RMBC Structural Maintenance Programme.

3. Approved the issue of contracts between the Council and 2 public service bodies (Network Rail and Transport for the North) to enable timely completion of the Outline Business Case referenced in section 2.13.
4. Delegated responsibility to the Strategic Director, Regeneration and Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment, to identify projects within themes described in paragraphs 2.3 (Reserves), 2.6 (Collision Investigation and Prevention), 2.9 (Minor Works), 2.12 Major Projects (CRSTS) and 2.13 (Rotherham Mainline Station) and for the award of contracts relating to design and construction.

158. 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.

159. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:

That the next meeting of the Cabinet be held on 15th May, 2023, commencing at 10.00 a.m. in Rotherham Town Hall.