

**THE CABINET
16th December, 2024**

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

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

79. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made:

Member	Agenda Item	Interest Type	Nature of Interest
Councillor Dave Sheppard	Agenda Item 86 – New Applications for Business Rates Relief for Arc Church	Nonpecuniary	Volunteer at the Arc Church Foodbank

Councillor Sheppard did not take part in the discussion or vote on this item.

80. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were three questions from members of the public:

1. Mr Marston stated that in 1928, the Rotherham Mayor signed an agreement with the National Playing Fields Association and Carnegie UK to accept a grant for the Herringthorpe Gardens and Playing Fields. The agreement was that the playing fields would be used in perpetuity for recreation. The Borough Engineer was instructed to produce detailed plans which had apparently been lost. Mr Marston stated that it was clear that the work had been undertaken to the satisfaction of National Playing Fields and Carnegie UK as the grants were paid out. By implication, the conditions of the grant became effective on the pertinent land areas. In the case of Herringthorpe, the then open land enclosed by Badsley Moor Lane, Middle Lane South and Broom Road, as shown in OS Maps from the 1930's, had uses related to recreation, such as greenhouses and changing rooms. Mr Marston stated that, if the Council wanted to change the use of some parts of Herringthorpe Playing Fields, it had to get the agreement of Fields in Trust, successor of National Playing Fields, possibly with mitigating conditions. Mr Marston asked if the Council had done so.

Councillor Allen explained that, in terms of Boswell Street, the Council had recently carried out investigations as to the legal position. In 1928, the Council had purchased the land and the guidance received in relation to the land and grants received was that there was nothing that required the Council to keep it for recreation and leisure in perpetuity. A meeting was being arranged with ward Councillors although a date had yet to be agreed. Following that, residents who had been engaged with the matter would be contacted.

Mr Marston reiterated that there was an agreement signed by the Rotherham Mayor with Fields in Trust and Carnegie in 1928. The Council had since paid for the demolition of the Leisure Centre, demolition of the Old Pavilion, demolition of the toilet block and removal of the children's play area. The only thing that had been put in was the paths with lighting and the fencing and this had been funded through grant funding. Mr Marston stated that the Council were using a policy of managed neglect to ruin the Playing Fields and ultimately take them over. He stated that a brown field site was not a description of the land, and it did not mean that it was automatically available for housing.

The Leader noted Mr Marston's comments but strongly refuted the suggestion that the Council wanted to ruin the Playing Fields. A significant amount of money had been spent on the running track and more trees had recently been planted. The Council did however have an obligation to ensure it provided enough housing to ensure needs were met across the borough. As such, some of the land which had been built on previously, had been allocated for housing over ten years ago. The legal arguments would continue to be worked through to ensure that everything was being done correctly. Once ward members had been met with, residents would be engaged with. The Leader reiterated that there was no plot to run down the playing fields.

2. Mr Hussain stated that at the last meeting he attended, Mr Horsfield (Assistant Director of Legal, Elections and Registration Services) had stated that, by December, there should have been a resolution to the ongoing negotiations with Dignity in reference to the development of burial space. The matter had been discussed at the Improving Places Select Commission meeting on 10 December and Dignity clearly stated that they had submitted their revised proposals for a contract that had been signed. The Council were now trying to renegotiate that contract. The proposals had been submitted in September. Mr Hussain asked if the discussions had been concluded and if the burial space was ready to be developed.

The Assistant Director of Legal, Elections and Registration Services stated that the discussions had not been concluded and nothing had been signed.

Mr Hussain stated that he was referring to the original contract with Dignity that had been signed a number of years ago. He felt that the group involved were not getting straight forward answers. He asked the Council to find the space or develop the space, otherwise there would be a crisis.

The Leader noted the point being made but confirmed that there had been no new agreements. The conversations with Dignity remained ongoing, precisely because the Council wanted to make sure they were delivering the services as agreed.

Mr Hussain stated that Dignity had stated that they had submitted proposals to the Council for the ongoing contractual agreement and part of that submitted to Cabinet in September. The fact it was being held back was why the space was not being developed. At the last Liaison meeting, assurances had been provided that the matter would be resolved in December, or the contract would be pulled.

The Leader explained that that was still fundamentally the position in that the contract had to be resolved to the satisfaction of both parties or it would come to an end. The submissions from Dignity did not go to the Cabinet for final sign off until they had been through the legal process first.

The Assistant Director explained that negotiations were ongoing, and the Council were still looking to conclude those in December. The aim was still to ensure the provision of services to meet the needs of the residents.

3. Mr Azam stated that he felt he was being gagged after only being allowed to ask one question at the Improving Places Scrutiny meeting the week prior. He stated that he had previously been allowed to ask multiple questions. However, without notice, he had been informed that he could now only ask one question and one follow up question. He did not feel that this was effective scrutiny as he could not ask all the pertinent questions. Mr Azam also stated that the Council had a contract with Dignity to provide services for 13 cemeteries. However, there were many other cemeteries and chapels outside of that that were not covered in that contract. A Councillor had raised a point regarding the health and safety of one of these chapels at the scrutiny meeting. Mr Azam asked if the Council had its own procedural document for those other chapels and sites and how was its performance against those.

Councillor Sheppard explained that Cabinet did not set the rules for Scrutiny meetings. The particular scrutiny meeting referred to was very busy; there had to be a limit on the number of questions from the public and sometimes, this had to be extended to elected Members. It certainly was not a gagging order as suggested. Councillor Sheppard was sure Mr Azam would provide answers to all of the questions he

wanted to ask. In terms of the health and safety issue, Councillor Sheppard confirmed that Councillor Jones had asked a question relating to the cemetery in his ward. Councillor Sheppard was waiting for further details from Councillor Jones and once those details had been provided, discussions would take place with officers regarding the work that needed doing to ensure the safety of residents.

The Leader confirmed that Mr Azam would get the information about the cemetery Councillor Jones had raised. In relation to Dignity, the Leader confirmed that they managed the cemeteries that were in use. There were other arrangements in place for closed cemeteries.

Mr Azam stated that it would be useful for communities to have an information sheet detailing what was going on with those sites. In his supplementary question, Mr Azam stated that the investment set out by Dignity in their proposals would cost around £5 million. Mr Azam asked for assurances that the Council would provide that investment if the contract with Dignity was terminated. This was vital for services to be delivered across the borough. It would not be right to say the investment was not forthcoming because the contract had been terminated.

Councillor Sheppard confirmed that the Council would ensure all cemeteries, graveyards etc received the level of investment required. Work was already ongoing to make sure buildings in those cemeteries were safe. As for the future of the buildings, Councillor Sheppard confirmed that work would need to be done with community groups to see if the buildings could be repurposed.

Mr Azam asked for confirmation that, whatever decision was made by the Council, the capital investment funding would be in place to provide the services.

The Leader stated that he did not have a list of the investments and the Council had not set a programme of specific investments to the Leader could not commit to that. However, in broad terms, where the works were required in order to keep the cemeteries fully operational, the Council would step in in one way or another. The responsibility currently, was still with Dignity to provide those services.

81. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved:-

That the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 18 November 2024 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings and signed by the Chair.

82. 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.

83. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES SUFFICIENCY PLANNING AT NEWMAN SCHOOL

Consideration was given to report which provided an update on Children and Young People Services (CYPS) Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Sufficiency planning. The update related to the growth of special school places at Newman School. The report laid out proposals for Newman School following the school's academisation to Team Multi-Academy Trust.

In Rotherham 22.2% of pupils had either a statutory plan for Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND), known as an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), or were receiving SEND support (previously known as school action and school action plus). This compared to an average of 18.4% across all England Authorities. In order that the educational needs of children and young people in the Borough with SEND could continue to be met, the Council had a responsibility to create a sufficiency of education provision to meet the needs of all pupils.

The sufficiency of places and capital development of Newman School was identified as part of sufficiency planning in the Phase Three update to Cabinet in November 2020. Improvements and investment on the site had included a new hydrotherapy pool, development of the Dinnington Campus and in September 2023, the opening of the new build Primary Block at the Whiston site.

Continued development of the Newman School site was a key feature of the current phase of SEND Sufficiency which was introduced to Cabinet in March 2024 and was part of the Local Authority's Safety Valve Capital Programme. In support of the latest phase, Schools' Capacity Assessments were completed by an external consultant commissioned by CYPS. This identified that existing special schools were full or were working at close to capacity.

The Council were responsible for funding school growth. The current sufficiency plan included increasing the capacity at the Newman Additional Resource (NAR) to meet the projection that the school would grow to support 195 pupils (the current number was 160). Capital investment was required for adaptations to meet the needs of the NAR cohort. £2.5 million capital investment at Newman School would create the additional 35 school places required and was already factored into the Safety Valve sufficiency plans that had previously been presented to Cabinet.

As of the 1 September 2024, Newman School transferred to TEAM Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). Following academisation, the maintenance and condition of the Newman School estate was the responsibility of the Trust. As part of the academisation process, there was an opportunity for the incoming Trust, TEAM, to apply to the Department for Education (DfE) for capital investment across the Newman Estate through the Strategic School Investment Bid (SSICB) Fund.

To support sufficiency (and increase the number of available school places from 160 to 195) some adaptations would also be made to the existing Dinnington Campus. £2.5 million of capital investment was proposed within the Council's Safety Valve Capital Programme to fund this school growth in line with SEND Sufficiency planning. This investment would supplement the SSICB funding to build a new secondary block on the main Whiston site and refurbishment of the Grade 2 listed building. The Council's capital investment would enable the new build and refurbishment to accommodate additional school places across the sites.

There had been various reports to Cabinet since February 2018 on the phases of the SEND sufficiency planning. It had also been a key area of focus for the Improving Lives Select Commission. Parents and Carers were regularly consulted on the various phases.

Cabinet Members welcomed the update and were excited for the developments.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Note the report and the capital plans brought forward for Newman School following academisation to TEAM Multi-Academy Trust.
2. Approve the decision for the proposed £2.5 million capital investment to create additional school places, as part of the latest round of SEND Sufficiency and in line with the Safety Valve Capital programme at Newman School.

84. CABINET RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS - PREPARATION FOR ADULTHOOD

This item was deferred to a future meeting.

85. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE

Consideration was given to the report which set out an update on the Council's Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2027/28. The update included the standard technical updates required, recognition of financial pressures impacting the delivery of services and the ongoing impact on the Council's base costs from the period of high

inflation. The technical adjustments also included the Council's assessment of the potential impact of the Autumn Statement and Autumn Policy update which had been a positive outcome for Council's, though it did not go far enough to resolve the pressures facing the sector.

The MTFS would be revised further in advance of the Council Budget setting meeting in March 2025, to take account of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2025/26, when issued, along with budget policy proposals on levels of Council Tax, reserves, fees and charges and any budget savings or investments.

The Autumn Policy update announced on the 28 November gave the Council further details about the new funding announced in the Autumn Statement which had helped to shape the MTFS position. However, until the Provisional Financial Settlement was released in mid to late December 2024, the Council would not have specific allocations.

The MTFS review included the impact of the September Financial Monitoring 2024/25 report to Cabinet in November 2024, that projected a financial overspend of £5.3m that would require the use of the Council's reserves to achieve a balanced financial outturn position for 2024/25. However, Directorates were working on recovery plans to mitigate the financial overspend for 2024/25 as much as possible, to minimise the use of reserves. The impact of the budget recovery plans developed to date were factored into the MTFS position, though the Council's approach would be to continue to develop additional opportunities to reduce the current overspend further.

The Budget and Council Tax Report 2024/25 reported that there was a budget gap for 2025/26 of £6.630m. Taking this with the further financial challenges the Council had faced during 2024/25, many of which would continue to present a challenge heading into 2025/26 onwards, meant the Council faced a complicated budget setting process. After taking account of the pressures and some mitigations against them, along with the estimated positive impact of the Autumn Statement, the Council would still face budget gaps for 2025/26 to 2027/28 (as set out in the table in the report summary). This was before budget policy proposals on levels of Council Tax, reserves, fees and charges and any budget savings or investments.

A key challenge for 2025/26 and the MTFS was that there remained significant uncertainty as to how Governments Financial Settlement for 2025/26 onwards would look. The Government had stated that they were only providing a single year Financial Settlement for 2025/26, although they had indicated that it would be followed by a 3 year spending period approach, which would be helpful for long term planning. There had been a significant change in approach towards the funding for Local Authorities and a clear acknowledgement in the Autumn Statement that Local Authorities needed more resources to support demand and cost pressures, which was positive for the sector.

During the meeting it was confirmed that the settlement was expected on Thursday 19 December, with the Council expecting more resources and funding. However, there would continue to be ongoing pressures. Officers had tried to be as accurate as possible when producing the report and the additional funding had been built in as well as possible. However, the final figures were required for the complete picture.

Resolved:

1. That the MTF5 2024/25 to 2027/28 update be noted.
2. That Cabinet note the potential requirement to use reserves in order to balance the Council's outturn position for 2024/25.

86. NEW APPLICATIONS FOR BUSINESS RATES RELIEF FOR ARC CHURCH

Consideration was given to the report which presented the application for the award of Discretionary Business Rate Relief for Arc Church, Storage Container, Community Centre, Harding Avenue, Rawmarsh, Rotherham. Arc Church was a registered charity who were active in the local community, mainly with their largest project Rawmarsh Foodbank. The foodbank was part of the Trussell Trust Network whose aim was to seek to end hunger and poverty in the UK. Foodbank vouchers were issued to local people in crisis after receiving referrals from areas including local community groups, schools, social workers, health visitors and housing and advice agencies.

The storage container, which had been brought on to the rating list and was the subject of this application, was situated in the grounds of the Drop-In Centre, Harding Avenue, Rawmarsh. It was utilised to store food that had been donated by the public and by corporate partners prior to it being distributed to those that had been referred for emergency help. The foodbank opened inside the Drop-In Centre on one evening per week when food parcels were distributed to those who had a voucher.

Arc Church was applying for discretionary relief with regards to their 2023/2024 and 2024/25 rates liability. The financial implication to the Council of awarding the relief was £43.52 for 2023/24 and £62.35 for 2024/25 as set out in section 6 of the report.

The organisation was inclusive to all and was considered to be in line with the criteria within the Council's policy.

Resolved:

That Cabinet approve the application for Discretionary Business Rate Relief for Arc Church in accordance with the details set out in Section 6 to the report for the 2023/2024 and 2024/25 financial years.

Councillor Sheppard declared a nonpecuniary interest in this item as he volunteered at the foodbank. He took no part in the discussion or vote on this item.

87. WASTE COLLECTIONS POLICY

Consideration was given to the report which outlined the proposed changes to the Waste Collection Policies following a review. The changes sought to improve the accessibility of information by reducing a number of separate documents into one clear policy for Residential Kerbside Waste Collections (Appendix 1). In addition, the review had identified several legislative changes which had been updated within the document.

The current policies were out of date in relation to legislation and terminology and were not clearly structured or well formatted. As a result, the policies had been updated into a new format and brought up to date. This had involved updating web links and operational processes, to match how they functioned, tidying and removing unnecessary language, adding in new links and including references to the Rotherham bin app, and updating out of date information such as prices.

Alongside the technical changes, specific proposals were also made which sought to improve recycling and reduce contamination of recycling, supporting the Council's ambition to deliver a Cleaner and Greener Local Environment. The enhanced approach would seek to improve communication and engagement with residents whilst also identifying a clear approach to enforcement.

The current Contamination Policy needed updating as it had limited mechanisms to deal with repeat contamination. The extent of the current Policy consisted entirely of not collecting the bin and placing an easily removable tag. In order to improve the approach to managing contamination, it was proposed that a "traffic light" tag system be piloted, along with improving work to engage and educate residents, and a new enforcement process, that would begin with a warning and potentially escalating to a fixed penalty notice if there was no improvement over an appropriate period of time and following three occasions of contamination. It was proposed that this approach be piloted in two specific areas, yet to be identified, and the pilot would run concurrently with the public consultation. The result of both the pilot and the consultation would inform the final Policy and subsequent approach, which would be brought back to Cabinet in due course.

During the meeting, the Leader explained that significant contamination cost the Council, as subsequently, cost the taxpayer. By introducing a fixed penalty notice, it was hoped that the cost could be reduced. The fines would act as an incentive for residents to sort their waste appropriately and would be used as a very last resort after multiple

warnings. The Council would not be spying on residents in order to issue a large number of fines. The pilot would start in April and last for a period of at least 12 weeks in order to ensure the full length of the associated processes could be tested.

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet approve the draft revised Kerbside Residential Waste Collection Policy for a public consultation.
2. That Cabinet agree to the commencement of two pilots to test the approach to contamination, with the specific areas to be determined.

88. REFRESHING THE HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Consideration was given to the report which summarised the statutory requirement placed on the Council to ensure a Health and Safety Policy was in place that articulated the Council's approach to managing health and safety. The Policy was attached at Appendix 1 for consideration and recommended for approval (version 3.3) and was the result of extensive consultation across multiple stakeholder groups.

A summary of the changes and amendments made as a result of the review and consultation were set out in paragraph 2.2.1 of the report. Once agreed, the Policy would be communicated across the workforce, as set out in paragraph 2.3.1. Actions to ensure the successful delivery of the key objectives of the Policy were set out in paragraph 2.4.1.

The Health, Welfare and Safety Panel and the Corporate Resilience, Health, Safety and Welfare Governance Group would have oversight of the performance with quarterly reports produced. The Policy would be reviewed in no more than two years' time.

Resolved:

That Cabinet endorse and approve the revised Health and Safety Policy as attached at Appendix 1.

89. BOROUGH WIDE AND TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS (PSPO'S)

Consideration was given to the report which outlined the responses to the consultation that sought the views of the public and partners in relation to the existing Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO's) and the proposed conditions that would be considered as part of any new orders. Cabinet had authorised the public consultation at its meeting on 16 September 2024 following a review of the available evidence.

In summary, the responses had shown support for the PSPOs being in place, recognising they were an important tool in providing assurance around community safety matters. As such, the report recommended the renewal of the two PSPOs in place for a period of 3 years from January 2025. The Consultation Response Data Summary was attached to the report at Appendix 3.

For both PSPOs, over half the respondents confirmed they had confidence in the effectiveness of future Orders, while providing some challenge around the ability of the Police and Council to enforce the Orders. As a result of this feedback, the report also outlined further steps to provide additional assurance and oversight on the application of the tools by both the Police and Council, subject to the renewal of the Orders. It was noted that the wording around the prohibition on consumption of alcohol had been altered based on legal advice in order to enhance the ability to enforce as opposed to material change regarding the intent. This was the only change from the previous version of the Order.

A formal letter of support and comment from South Yorkshire Police was attached at Appendix 2 with the Public Spaces Protection Orders Consultation Activity Tracker attached at Appendix 1. The draft orders for the PSPO's were attached at Appendix 4 and 5 respectively.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Approve the renewal of the Town Centre and Clifton Park Public Spaces Protection Order (Appendix 4) for a period of three years upon expiry of the current Order in January 2025.
2. Approve the renewal of the Borough wide Public Spaces Protection Order (Appendix 5), specifically dealing with dog fouling, for a period of three years upon expiry of the current Order in January 2025.

90. HRA BUSINESS PLAN, RENT SETTING AND SERVICE CHARGES 2025-26

Consideration was given to the report which presented the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, Rent Setting proposals and Service Charge proposals for 2025-26.

The proposed 2025/26 HRA Business Plan incorporated the Council's commitments to continue and extend the Council's Housing Delivery Programme, alongside significant new investment to support decency and thermal efficiency in existing council homes. The Plan included provision for £979m investment in the housing stock over 30 years, including approximately £35m additional investment over the next five years compared to last year's position. This was alongside continuing to fund

day-to-day housing management and repairs and maintenance costs. At the same time the Housing Delivery Programme would continue beyond 1,000 homes. The existing funding provision of £113m for hundreds more Council homes by 2027 would be supplemented with an additional £37m to begin to build the pipeline of schemes beyond 2027.

There had been a number of government policy changes in 2024/25 that would impact on the 2025/26 HRA Business Plan. These were set out in paragraph 1.6 of the report and included:

Plans to revise the current rent policy to give local authorities longer term stability to support borrowing and investment in new and existing homes. From the 21 November 2024 the maximum discount allowed through Right to Buy was reduced. In the Yorkshire and Humber region the maximum allowed discount was now £24,000 and the level of discount would not increase by CPI. There continued to be a strong focus on regulation of the social housing sector with the first rounds of proactive inspections under consumer regulations taking place during 2024/25. During 2025/26 it was anticipated that the Government would confirm its plans for Awaab's Law, 'Decent Homes 2', the Conduct and Competence Standard, and requirements to achieve EPC C by 2030. New regulations for District Heating were also due to come into effect.

The Government target to achieve 1.5 million new homes over five years had been backed by an initial £500m investment to continue the national Affordable Homes Programme. However, this would lead to less receipt income for the Council to fund its Housing Delivery Programme.

Alongside providing the draft HRA budget for 2025/26, the report recommended increases in housing rents, non-dwelling rents, District Heating charges and other service charges for 2025/26. It was recommended that Council dwelling rents were increased by 2.7%, equivalent to CPI+1%, in line with Government policy, as set out in the table at paragraph 2.6.2. There were 12,668 tenancies in receipt of full Housing Benefit or full Universal Credit (UC) who would not be directly affected by an increase in rent. 2,276 tenancies received part Housing Benefit and any increase in rent would be part covered by benefit payments.

The District Heating pricing options were set out in Table 3 at paragraph 2.6.16. Given the volatility of energy prices, the Council took the decision in July 2023 to match the average District Heating bill to the Ofgem price cap for July – September 2023. This approach continued in 2024/25 It was proposed to continue this approach into 2025/26 and match the forecast average District Heating bill to the forecast Ofgem price cap for April – June 2025 meaning an average bill would be £828 per year assuming the price cap remained unchanged. This would mean that the HRA would be paying c£206k in 2025/26 towards the cost of District Heating. The forecast Ofgem price cap had been calculated using market data and was subject to change. As in 2024/25, it was recommended that

authority be delegated in 2025/26 to the Assistant Director for Housing in consultation with Cabinet Member for Housing and Assistant Director for Finance to amend District heating pricing should there be a significant movement in the Ofgem price cap.

Details of other fees and service charges were set out in paragraphs 2.6.12 to 2.6.22 of the report and included furnished tenancy charges and garage rents. Appendix 5 to the report included information on a number of leasehold management charges that were based on the full recovery of actual costs.

The Cabinet Member explained that a key priority was the ongoing work to mitigate the effects of the cost-of-living crisis. The support offered to residents was outlined in Appendix 8.

The report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB), who advised that the recommendations be supported. A number of concerns had been raised in the meeting, but these had been adequately addressed by the Cabinet Members and Officers. A number of additional recommendations had been made, relating to the provision of information for elected Members.

Resolved:

That Cabinet recommends that Council:

1. Approve the proposed 2025/26 Base Case Option 2 for the HRA Business Plan.
2. Note that the Business Plan will be reviewed annually to provide an updated financial position.
3. Agree that Council dwelling rents are increased by 2.7% in 2025/26 (Option 2).
4. Agree that the Council should retain the policy of realigning rents on properties at below formula rent to the formula rent level when the property is re-let to a new tenant.
5. Agree that shared ownership rents are increased by 3.2% in 2025/26.
6. Agree that charges for communal facilities, parking spaces, cooking gas and use of laundry facilities are increased by 2% in 2025/26.
7. Agree that charges for garages are increased by 10% in 2025/26.
8. Agree that the District Heating unit charge per Kwh is set at 13.09 pence per kwh.

9. Agree that the decision to reduce the price of District Heating Charges further during 2025/26 be delegated to the Assistant Director of Housing in conjunction with the Assistant Director of Financial Services following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing. The delegation would only be used to respond to a change in Government policy or a significant change in the Ofgem price cap that has the effect of necessitating a lower unit price.
10. Approve the draft Housing Revenue Account budget for 2025/26 as shown in Appendix 6.

That Cabinet note the following requests:

11. That members of OSMB are provided with the 'Securing the future of Council Housing' Document for their information.
12. That a link to the Acquisitions Policy be shared with Members of OSMB.
13. That the information contained within Appendix 8 of the report titled 'Support For Tenants with Financial Pressures' be circulated to all members of the Council for their information.
14. That a breakdown of the items listed under the category of Supervision and Management in the HRA budget be provided to members of OSMB.

91. COMMUNITY RECOVERY FUND

Consideration was given to the report which set out the proposed indicative programme and allocations for the Community Recovery Fund (CRF.) Rotherham had been allocated £600,000 from the Fund to support the communities impacted by the significant violence and vandalism that took place at the Holiday Inn Express at Manvers on 4 August 2024.

Eligible expenditure for the use of this fund included:

- Immediate action to safeguard life or property.
- To prevent suffering or severe inconvenience.
- To reduce the risk of further disorder in the future.
- To rebuild social trust and promote cohesion between communities.

Following the release of national guidance for the CRF, the priorities from the Council's initial action plan had been integrated into four key focus areas for Rotherham's funding allocation:

- Projects or initiatives that seek to restore civic pride in the Manvers area.

- Projects that support or promote intracommunity relations in priority areas.
- Educational initiatives and youth outreach with children, young people and schools.
- Community safety related projects and investments

The table in Appendix 1 summarised the indicative programme and provisional allocations that would be undertaken under each of the four focus areas. The indicative programme would be delivered by a range of organisations including direct delivery by Rotherham Council services, direct delivery by the voluntary sector, and a grants budget which would allow for further solutions to be co-created and co-designed with community groups and prioritised as part of an overall coordinated approach. This could also include commissioning of projects through the grants budget to address any gaps or emerging issues. A voluntary sector managed grants budget would provide further flexibility within the government guidelines to deliver a programme of activities that could adapt to changing needs and to extend the delivery phase through to March 2026.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Approve the indicative programme and provisional allocations of the Community Recovery Fund Grant of £600,000 as follows:
 - a. £62,975 to cover the costs incurred by the Council in responding to the events on the 4 August.
 - b. £15,000 towards the delivery of a restorative justice project.
 - c. £10,000 to provide resources to support Manvers Community Recovery.
 - d. £10,000 to provide a community cohesion workforce development programme.
 - e. £180,000 to establish a community cohesion 'Rotherham Together' fund.
 - f. £57,000 to appoint a strategic cohesion co-ordinator for the borough.
 - g. £25,831 to put in place lived experience educators.
 - h. £30,000 to provide a community events programme.
 - i. £62,358 to provide activities for children and young people.
 - j. £25,800 for Together for Tomorrow, providing educational initiatives to support schools.
 - k. £30,000 to deliver a series of Challenge events aimed at uniting young people from diverse backgrounds through positive activities.
 - l. £45,000 to improve the safety of town centre events by investing in hostile vehicle mitigation.
 - m. £20,000 to invest in improving street lighting through a pilot initiative.

- n. £10,000 to develop a system for recruiting, facilitating and mobilising volunteers to respond to crisis situations and contribute to public events.
2. Agree to enter into supplementary provisions to the Infrastructure Support Services 2024 – 2027 Service Level Agreement (SLA) for the provision of the relevant elements set out in recommendation 1.
3. Delegate authority to the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to determine revised and final allocations for the Community Recovery Fund Grant.

92. OUR PLACES FUND

Consideration was given to the report which sought approval to develop various thematic interventions into detailed deliverable projects through the £2 million allocation named the Our Places Fund (OPF). In addition, the report recommended that an additional £2million of the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) Mayor's Sustainability Fund be allocated to this project. This fund could be used to enhance the existing OPF scheme which in turn would create more impact and contribute to the Council's priority to make 'Every Neighbourhood Thriving'.

Following analysis of borough-wide consultation, a range of emerging areas for investment had been identified:

- Civic Centre Improvements as set out in paragraphs 2.1.2-2.1.3 of the report. The indicative allocation was £1.5m.
- Cenotaphs, Memorial and Monuments as set out in paragraph 2.1.4 of the report. The indicative allocation was £300k.
- Pedestrian Movement as set out in paragraph 2.1.5 of the report. The indicative allocation was £1.4m.

In addition to the OPF consultation and continuing the theme of investment in local centres, there was existing evidence of demand for further intervention from communities where development work was already underway, areas such as Wath, Dinnington, Maltby and Swinton. In Maltby, as part of the Towns & Villages Fund, an extensive scheme of public realm improvements would be undertaken. In response to consultation on the proposed scheme, an additional allocation (£500k) would be made from OPF to enable the works to extend along the full length of the High Street. In Swinton, a redevelopment of the town centre was underway and had to date provided a refurbished library and Civic Hall. Works due to be extended included public realm upgrades. In response to previous community comments throughout the lifespan of this project, additional funding from OPF (£300k) would enable additional public realm works to be undertaken.

Cabinet Members noted that this was very welcome and exciting.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Approve the inclusion of the additional £2million from the Mayor's Sustainability Fund which was allocated through SYMCA, so that the allocated funds for the OPF total £4million.
2. Approve the development of thematic interventions described at Section 2 and delegate authority to the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Council's Section 151 Officer to add, amend or replace a scheme should it become unfeasible or undeliverable.

93. INDICATIVE HIGHWAY REPAIR PROGRAMME 2024/25 - ADDITIONAL SCHEMES

Consideration was given to the report which 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.) The report also provided a review of the current Strategy for the management and maintenance of Rotherham's Highways and the impact the recent Council funding had had on the highway network. Current performance, both in terms of the condition of Rotherham's highways and in terms of the delivery of highways maintenance services was outlined.

The additional investment over a number of years in Rotherham's roads was making a real improvement to the highway network. This was evidenced by the improvement in the condition of the estate roads and classified network and a continued reduction in the number of potholes reported and highway claims received against the Council.

The report provided further detail on the Highways Maintenance Programme on the basis of the additional funding approved at Council in February 2024. The schemes were set out in the last two pages of Appendix 1 and were recommended for approval. The name for the 4-year programme was the 'Rotherham Roads Programme'.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Note the strategic approach to the management and maintenance of Rotherham's Highways.

2. Approve the indicative Highway Repair Programme for 2024/2025 as set out in Appendix 1 which includes the additional Councillor suggestions.
3. Note that the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment may utilise any additional in year funding to deliver highways repairs in accordance with the strategic approach to the Management and Maintenance of Rotherham's Highways as laid out in this report.

94. BUILDING COMPLIANCE POLICIES

Consideration was given to the report which presented a suite of new policies which had been developed in relation to building compliance. The Property and Facilities Services Legionella Policy was attached at Appendix 1; the Property and Facilities Services Fire Policy at Appendix 2; and the Property and Facilities Services Asbestos Policy at Appendix 3.

The Legionella Policy set out the legal and regulatory framework for managing water safety. It covered assets within the responsibility of the Council's housing and corporate service, including residential properties, neighbourhood centres, as well as safety within schools, care homes, offices, or commercial properties.

The Fire Policy set out the regulatory framework for managing Fire Safety and strategies for both Housing and Corporate property. The provision of a coherent Policy ensured that buildings met a criterion of 100% compliance, with the policy supporting a range of compliance procedures, such as risk based Fire Risk Assessment's, regular dynamic inspections and competent persons to carry the inspection, testing and review.

The key objective of the Asbestos Policy was to describe how the Council would manage Asbestos Safety Risk so far as was reasonably practicable. It was considered that delivery of the commitments within this Policy would ensure that the requirements of other legislation, such as the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and Landlord Tenant Act 1985 would also be met.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Approve the Property & Facilities Services Legionella Policy (Appendix 1).
2. Approve the Property & Facilities Services Fire Policy (Appendix 2).
3. Approve the Property & Facilities Services Asbestos Policy (Appendix 3).

4. Delegate any further changes to building compliance policies, in line with service needs and the evolving regulatory and legislative context to the Duty Holder (Head of FM and Compliance), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy.

95. 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.

96. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

That the next meeting of the Cabinet be held on Monday 20 January 2025, commencing at 10.00am in Rotherham Town Hall.