

THE CABINET
Monday 19 January 2026

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

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Williams.

98. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

99. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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

100. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 15 December 2025 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

101. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair advised that item 9 had exempt appendices however the meeting remained open to the press and public throughout.

**102. INSPECTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY CHILDREN'S SERVICES
(ILACS) INSPECTION REPORT**

Consideration was given to the report which detailed the outcome of the Inspection of Children's Services (ILACS) by Ofsted in November 2025. This was a judgement Short Inspection, and the Local Authority received an Overall Effectiveness grade of Outstanding. All sub-categories also received a grade of Outstanding with the exception of 'the experiences and progress of Care Leavers', which received a Good rating. There were two improvement actions, both related to Care Leavers.

The ILACS had been anticipated for some time and was announced on 27 October 2025. Significant offsite work took place in that first week, including interviews with the Lead Member, the Chief Executive and the Independent Chair of the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership. Fieldwork took place in the second week with 10 Inspectors interviewing staff from all parts of the Service (Family Help, Front Door, Duty and Assessment, Locality, Children in Care, Care Leavers,

Fostering, Adoption, Education services, and Commissioning) and reviewing significant numbers of children's files. Children and young people were also interviewed by the Inspectors and gave their views about services provided by the Council.

A final report was published by Ofsted on 16 December 2025. It was extremely pleasing for the Council to be judged Outstanding across 3 of the 4 categories, with an Overall Effectiveness Judgement of Outstanding. The impact of leaders on social work practice, the experiences and progress of children who needed help and protection and the experiences and progress of children in care were all rated Outstanding. The experiences and progress of care leavers was rated Good.

Inspectors found that the Council placed children's experiences and voices at the heart of decision-making and practice, recognising a strong culture of learning, continuous improvement and cross-organisational commitment to children and families. This outcome reflected years of dedicated work by social workers, practitioners, leaders and partners across Rotherham to improve services, rebuild trust and keep children safe and supported. While this recognition was significant for the Council and the borough, it was important to emphasise that improvement was a continuing journey and that there was still work to do, as evidenced in the actions required in relation to Care Leavers.

Although services to Care Leavers were judged Good, there were also two improvement actions in relation to this area of practice:

- The quality of pathway plans for care leavers.
- The quality of health history information provided to care leavers.

These areas of practice would form part of the Care Leaver Service Delivery Plan, and updates would be reported to the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board at regular intervals. The improvement actions would also be scrutinised formally by the Improving Lives Select Commission.

This achievement placed Rotherham among an elite group of just nine local authorities in England to hold both an Outstanding ILACS rating – the highest possible judgement under Ofsted's Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services framework – and the top Area SEND outcome, which assessed how effectively councils supported children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. It was the only council in the Yorkshire and Humber region to achieve this combination.

Cabinet members applauded the incredible achievement and noted their thanks to the Leader and Councillor Cusworth for their hard work. The efforts of the children's services team and the financial investment that had been provided were also celebrated.

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet note the outcome of the inspection regarding the effectiveness of children's services in Rotherham and endorse the priorities identified for continued focus.

103. NOVEMBER 2025-26 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

Consideration was given to the report which set out the financial position as at the end of November 2025 and forecast for the remainder of the financial year, based on actual costs and income for the first eight months of 2025/26. Financial performance was a key element within the assessment of the Council's overall performance framework and was essential to achievement of the objectives within the Council's policy agenda. To that end, this was the fourth financial monitoring report of a series of reports for the current financial year which would continue to be brought forward to Cabinet on a regular basis.

As of November 2025, the Council's forecast outturn for 2025/26 was an overspend of £3.4m, which was a worsening of the £0.9m overspend position reported in September financial monitoring. The increased overspend was primarily due to increased costs of care packages within Adult Social Care Mental Health placements and a number of backdated payments for packages across Older People and Physical and Sensory Disabilities. The forecast position overall was made up of a combined Directorate overspend of £8.7m, offset by a projected Central Service underspend of £5.3m. The forecast position would continue to be monitored closely but it was possible that even with mitigations, the Council would need to call on reserves to achieve a balanced outturn for 2025/26. In order to help mitigate the position, Directors were expected to take all steps to reduce the overall overspend, ensuring grant maximisation, restricting any non-essential expenditure and delaying recruitment where possible.

The combined Directorate overspend of £8.7m was largely due to demand and market pressures in relation to Children's residential placements and placement types, and the cost of care packages in Adult Social Care. Market prices were increasing at above inflation levels, placing further pressures on the Council's Budget. These pressures were anticipated and a corporate provision of £5.4m was maintained within Central Services as part of the Budget and Council Tax Report 2025/26.

Central Services was forecasting an underspend of £5.3m, reflecting use of the £5.4m Social Care Contingency approved within the Council's Budget and Council Tax Report 2025/26, the impact of the Local Government Pay Award and savings generated within the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

The revised Capital Programme was £169.917m split between the General Fund (£103.770m) and Housing Revenue Account (£66.148m.)

This was a decrease of £41.770m from the position reported to Cabinet on 17 November 2025. The movement was based on the latest profiles of expenditure against schemes, including slippage re-profiles and corrections of £43.449m, new grant funding added to the programme of £1.755m and some minor programme corrections of -£0.076m in 2025/26.

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

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Note the current General Fund Revenue Budget forecast overspend of £3.4m.
2. Note the projected overspend and that whilst the Council aims to manage this pressure, should that not be possible use of reserves will be required to balance the 2025/26 financial position.
3. Note the updated position of the Capital Programme.
4. Approve the capital budget variations as detailed in section 2.17 of the report.

104. NEW APPLICATIONS FOR BUSINESS RATES RELIEF - ROTHERHAM FAMILIES FIRST

Consideration was given to the report which asked Cabinet to consider the application for the award of Discretionary Business Rates Relief for Rotherham Families First. This was in accordance with the Council's Business Rates Discretionary Relief Policy (approved by Officer Delegated Decision in July 2025).

Rotherham Families First was a registered charity which aimed to work within the borough to prevent or relieve poverty. The end users were identified by charities, churches, schools and a range of professionals, then provided with support and goods delivered through appropriate organisations including REMA, the Red Cross and the Refugee Council.

The Charity was requesting an award for discretionary rate relief for the premises at Parkgate which were used to facilitate the receipt, collation and distribution of donated and purchased goods. The charity also organised the annual Rotherham Toy Appeal which launched on 7 November 2025 and had traditionally helped over 2,000 young people and children at Christmas. Whilst that work was the focus during November and December, there remained an ongoing commitment to support vulnerable Rotherham families with their basic needs.

The application for the award of discretionary relief was in line with the Council's qualifying criteria as set out in its Policy. The Charity provided access to support which was open to all sections of the community, and it worked to develop community spirit and improve the lives of the most vulnerable people in the borough.

Rotherham Families First proposed discretionary business rates relief was:

Year	Total Amount of Relief	Cost to RMBC
2025/26	£900.05	£441.02
2026/27	£1360.80	£666.79

(Did not occupy until 13/08/2025)

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet approve the application for Discretionary Business Rates Relief for Rotherham Families First in accordance with the details set out in Section 6 of this report for the 2025/26 and 2026/27 financial years.

**105. COUNCIL HOMES HOUSING DELIVERY PROGRAMME REPORT
JANUARY 2026 UPDATE**

Consideration was given to the report which provided the six-monthly update to Cabinet on the latest developments and plans for the Council's Housing Delivery Programme. The report also sought Cabinet approval to ensure the continued delivery of the programme which, in mid-December 2025, reached the major milestone of 750 new Council homes since 2018 (having reached 742 at the data point of 30 November used throughout the report). This significant achievement had been reached through a mixed programme of delivery across four workstreams, an approach that was vital to managing risk, securing delivery certainty and achieving a balanced and affordable programme.

The four workstreams were:

- New build homes on council-owned sites.
- Delivery by Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SME) developers through the Council's innovative Small Sites Homebuilding Initiative.
- Section 106 acquisitions from developers as part of their planning obligations.
- The acquisition of homes from the open market ('market acquisitions').

Specifically, in the period from 1 June 2025 to 30 November 2025, the programme had delivered a total of 55 new homes. This had been achieved through 10 new build homes on Council owned sites, 27 Section 106 Acquisitions and 18 Market Acquisitions. In the same period work had

continued to bring forward future schemes in the Council's new-build programme. Construction had started on 45 new Council homes across three sites in Maltby, planning permission was granted for 4 homes on one site in Wath and a planning application was submitted for 20 homes at Tenter Street, Thornhill.

The report contained proposed changes to the programme, which were designed to manage overall costs and secure the delivery of 1,000 new Council homes by Summer 2027. Also contained was information on risks to delivery and timescales, and the mitigations in place to manage those risks.

Whilst the current Programme was focused on the delivery of 1,000 new Council homes, work on building a future pipeline of sites and schemes was ongoing and information would be included in the next 6-monthly Housing Delivery Programme Cabinet Report. The Council had successfully secured £240k from the Government's Council Housebuilding Support Fund (CHSF) to support this work, with £80k of match funding from the HRA. The funding would be used to undertake initial feasibility work and technical due diligence on up to 18 Council-owned sites (as detailed in Appendix 6) to confirm the development potential for the future delivery of new social and affordable homes.

The proposed programme retained sufficient flexibility to consider options within the budget allocations for both the current and future programme (from mid-2027). The retained contingency in the current programme had reduced to circa £4.4m, primarily resulting from the addition of 25 Market Acquisitions. In other areas, anticipated costs had reduced as cost certainty improved due to factors including construction cost estimates on Council build schemes reducing through the design stage. The contingency provided cover for any cost increases and mitigation for risk areas in the delivery of the 1000 new homes target.

In line with the Council's Social Value policy, the programme included social value as a contractual commitment which was delivered as an integral part of the procured contracts which formed part of the programme. Social value delivery from these contracts included:

- £353k of equivalent social value delivered across Council build projects at East Herringthorpe, West Melton and Swinton (each project exceeded the contractual commitments).
- £37k of equivalent social value commitments delivered to date on 3 Council build schemes at design stage. Further social value commitments will be delivered as part of the subsequent construction phase contracts.
- £1.3m of equivalent social value delivered to date on the joint Adult Social Care/Housing development at Canklow.
- £1.46m of equivalent social value committed on the construction contract to deliver Council build homes at Maltby.

The need for the continued delivery programme was evidenced by the more than 7,000 households on the Council's housing register. The Council's ability to meet this demand continued to be eroded by the Right to Buy scheme, which had seen 1,245 council homes sold between the beginning of January 2018 and the end of November 2025. Changes to Government policy resulted in a spike of applications in November 2024 which could have contributed to larger numbers of properties lost to Right to Buy by the end of 2025/26. While expected further changes to Right to Buy legislation were likely to see a reduction in sold properties in the longer term, it was anticipated that the loss of Council housing stock to Right to Buy would continue.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Notes the continued progress made in delivering the Council's Housing Delivery Programme, including the delivery of 55 new homes in the period covered by this report, and the ongoing work to deliver 1,000 new Council homes by Summer 2027.
2. Approves the delivery and purchase of homes from any of the schemes identified in Exempt Appendices 1 and 2b, subject to affordability and alignment with current and future programme objectives and the Council's capital approval processes.
3. Approves the programme changes outlined in this report to facilitate the delivery of 1,000 new homes 'on time' (by Summer 2027) and 'on budget' (within the financial resources allocated to the Programme from the Housing Revenue Account). This includes the removal and addition of specific schemes as outlined in Table 3, paragraph 2.4.
4. Approves the appropriation of 18 St Edmunds Avenue (see Appendix 4) into the Housing Revenue Account (subject to Secretary of State approval if required), and work to convert the property into four 1-bedroom flats for use as Council homes via the Market Acquisitions workstream (see paragraphs 2.11 and 2.12).
5. Approves the appropriation of land at Canklow (see plan attached at Appendix 5) into the Housing Revenue Account to enable the delivery of two Council homes as part of the housing delivery programme (see paragraph 2.7).
6. Agrees the intention to undertake initial feasibility work and technical due diligence on up to 18 Council-owned sites (Appendix 6) to assess their development potential for the future delivery of new social and affordable homes, and to inform any subsequent decision to develop or dispose of the land (see paragraph 2.16).
7. Agrees to delegate authority to the Service Director of Housing, in

consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to make any necessary substitutions or changes to the agreed site list (Recommendation 6) to ensure that the programme of feasibility work and technical due diligence remains deliverable and aligned with strategic priorities.

8. Agrees to delegate authority to the Service Director of Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to appoint appropriate consultants to carry out this work following the Council's procurement process.
9. Agrees to delegate authority to the Service Director of Housing, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and Service Director of Legal Services, to enter into a Grant Funding Agreement with the Homes and Communities Agency (trading as 'Homes England') in relation to the Social and Affordable Homes Programme 2026 – 2036 (see paragraph 2.37).
10. Agrees to continue to receive an update on the Housing Development Programme every six months.

106. TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES AND HOUSING REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

Consideration was given to the report which presented the 2025/26 mid-year Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM). The survey results showed that overall tenant satisfaction stood at 77.6%, representing a slight decrease of 0.6 percentage points from 2024/25, but an improvement of 0.7 percentage points compared to 2023/24. A positive development was in tenant satisfaction with repairs: overall satisfaction had risen to 78.9%, up 0.3 percentage points from last year and 4.8 percentage points from 2023/24. Satisfaction with the time taken to complete the most recent repair had also improved significantly, reaching 79.5% - a 1.9 percentage point increase from 2024/25 and 7.4 percentage points from 2023/24.

11 out of 12 tenant satisfaction measures were currently above the national median, based on 2024/25 data published by the Regulator of Social Housing. Moreover, when comparing Local Authorities (LAs) only, the Council ranked in the upper quartile for 11 of these 12 measures. However, areas such as complaints handling and anti-social behaviour (ASB) management continued to present challenges, with scores in these categories showing slight declines compared to the previous year.

Targeted actions had already been taken to address these areas, with further improvements planned for 2025/26. Key initiatives included:

- The development of the recently launched tenant-led Learning from Complaints Panel.
- Review of the service operating model for tenancy and ASB case management to improve efficiency and outcomes.

- Delivery of a targeted training and development programme for area housing teams, focusing on ASB tools and powers, hate incidents, and effective case handling.

The ten council-reported TSMs remained strong. Repairs performance was a particular strength, mirroring the positive perception survey results:

- 98.9% of non-emergency repairs were completed within target timescales (16.4 percentage points above the national median.)
- 98.4% of emergency repairs were completed within target (3.5 percentage points above the national median.)

In addition, the Council had achieved full compliance across all health and safety related measures, except for Gas Safety, which stood at 99.9%. 26 properties were currently non-compliant, and actions were underway to try and obtain access to those properties. Progress also continued on achieving the Decent Homes Standard, with the proportion of non-decent homes reducing from 7.2% at the end of 2024/25 to 6.38% at the mid-point of 2025/26. For context, the median non-decency rate for Local Authorities in 2024/25 was 3.2%. It was important to note that levels of non-decent stock would fluctuate as the current Stock Condition Survey Programme advanced.

A comprehensive Stock Condition and Housing Health and Safety Rating System survey programme began in April 2025 and aimed for 6,000 surveys by March 2026. As of October 2025, 2,943 properties had been surveyed. Data from those surveys would inform future investment and asset management strategies.

During the meeting it was noted that the proactive nature of the survey programme meant issues would be identified and there was a robust programme of repairs in place which would help to ensure that residents continued to live in quality homes.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Notes the content of the report.
2. Agrees to receive a further update in six months' time.

107. COUNCIL PLAN AND YEAR AHEAD DELIVERY PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE

Consideration was given to the report which presented the first progress report on the Council Plan and Year Ahead Delivery Plan for 2025-26. Appendix 1 to the report set out the Council Plan Progress Report – Mid-Year Report for 2025/26 and Appendix 2 was a summary of this report.

The Year Ahead Delivery Plan milestone trackers (included in Appendix 1) outlined progress against the 89 actions within the Year Ahead Plan. As of 8 December 2025, the activities within the Year Ahead Delivery Plan were rated as follows:

- 24% (21) complete
- 49% (44) on track
- 18% (16) are delayed by less than 3 months
- 9% (8) will not be met within 3 months of original target date.

The Year Ahead Delivery Plan also included a performance tracker (included in Appendix 1) which provided an analysis of the Council's performance against the 27 performance measures and 12 social care measures; each were given equal priority.

For the report covering Quarter 2, the status of the performance measures was as follows:

- Performance was on or above target – 20 measures (74%)
- Currently performance was not at expected levels. Confidence that the target would be achieved by year-end – 1 measure (4%)
- Performance was not currently on target. High risk that year-end target would not be achieved – 5 measures (18%)
- Target could not be assessed this quarter (i.e. Annual measure or awaiting publication of data) – 1 measure (4%)
- Information measure targets not applicable (i.e. Volume / Demand measures where 'good' is neither high or low) – 0 measures (0%)

For the report covering Quarter 2, the status of the 12 social care measures was as follows:

- Performance was on or above target – 5 measures (41%)
- Currently performance was not at expected levels. Confidence that the target would be achieved by year-end – 0 measures (0%)
- Performance was not currently on target. High risk that year-end target would not be achieved – 2 measures (17%)
- Target cannot be assessed this quarter (i.e. Annual measure or awaiting publication of data) – 2 measures (17%)
- Information measure targets not applicable (i.e. Volume / Demand measures where 'good' is neither high or low) – 3 measures (25%)

During the meeting, Cabinet Members highlighted achievements from their portfolio's along with known delays and the reasons for those delays.

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

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Note the overall position in relation to the Year Ahead Delivery Plan activities.
2. Note the Quarter 2 data for the Council Plan performance measures.
3. Note that a progress report covering the remainder of the year will be presented to Cabinet in July 2026.

108. STRATEGIC COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) UPDATE

Consideration was given to the report which summarised the application process for Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (Strategic CIL) funding that had taken place for the 2025 bidding round. It provided the outcome of the Strategic CIL officer panel assessment of the submitted projects against relevant criteria, to determine the infrastructure that would most support new growth areas and help bring forward development sites to implement the Local Plan.

The Council had a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in place for Rotherham, to secure contributions from developers towards infrastructure to support development. CIL payments were required alongside planning permission for certain types of development and work in tandem with payments negotiated as section 106 planning obligations. The CIL Regulations allowed the Council to apply CIL to reimburse expenditure already incurred on infrastructure. Where the Council had borrowed money for the purposes of funding infrastructure, it could apply CIL to repay that money, and any interest, if certain conditions were met.

The assessment methodology for Strategic CIL applications was approved by Cabinet in July 2024. The assessment covered key areas for project suitability, in summary:

- Part 1 set out a series of “gateway tests” that were aimed at ensuring that projects were eligible and suitable for Strategic CIL funding, including whether the project was identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Study.
- Part 2 required information about the nature and timing of the project.
- Part 3 addressed potential deliverability concerns.
- Part 4 reflected important funding and financial issues.
- Part 5 provided an important link between the infrastructure project and new development, examining the links to allocated sites in the Local Plan and the need for the infrastructure.

- Part 6 enabled an assessment of the benefits of the infrastructure project against the Strategic CIL objectives, including its contribution to Social Value.

The applications for the 2025 bidding round had been assessed by the CIL officer panel, using the Cabinet-approved methodology. Of the eleven applications, five projects passed the gateway tests but only one scored above the 70% threshold that was also applied for the 2024 bidding round. A list of priority projects was presented in the report, and Cabinet approval was sought for the Strategic CIL funds to be allocated as recommended to the Whiston Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme. The allocation proposed was £3million. This bid passed the gateway tests, the project was critical infrastructure; detailed costings were provided; permissions and land acquisitions were in place or in progress; project delivery was in 2026, with future maintenance funded; the project could not happen without CIL funding; the project would protect Whiston village properties and facilitate two large Local Plan housing sites; the project benefits aligned with CIL protocol objectives. Its score was 71.43%.

The Projects Scoring Summary was attached at Appendix 1. The percentage figure in the final column represented the total score against the criteria and methodology as approved by Cabinet on 29th July 2024. A summary was provided in paragraph 2.7 of the report.

The report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board who advised that the recommendations be supported. Councillor Steele wished to place on record his thanks to the service for the quality of the report provided on this matter.

The Leader asked that future reports include updates on the delivery of CIL funded projects.

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet approves the allocation of Strategic CIL funds to the Whiston Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme (£3,000,000).

109. 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.

110. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:-

That the next meeting of the Cabinet be held on 9 February 2026, commencing at 10.00am.