

THE CABINET
Monday 11 May 2026

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

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

159. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

160. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Mr Ashraf stated that Councillor Alam had not responded properly to a question he had asked on 4 February 2026, despite having many Council Officers to help. Mr Ashraf explained that he had asked if Rotherham Council knew how much taxpayers money they sent to South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority or if the Council needed the Combined Authority's permission to release that information. He asked Councillor Alam to respond to the question. Mr Ashraf also confirmed that he would email his question to Councillor Alam again.

The Leader stated that the Council paid £36,000 per year into the Combined Authority for membership.

Councillor Alam stated that he would review the emails and respond.

In his supplementary question, Mr Ashraf asked for a timescale for the response.

Councillor Alam stated that it would be the usual ten working days.

161. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 13 April 2026 be approved as a true and correct record.

162. 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.

163. GENERAL ENFORCEMENT POLICY

Consideration was given to the report which sought approval to adopt the refreshed General Enforcement Policy. The Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006 required the Council to have regard to the Regulators' Code when setting policies and procedures that guided regulatory activity. A 30-day public consultation was conducted from 1 January 2026, followed by internal consultation in February 2026.

The refreshed General Enforcement Policy was more strategic in content, with operational detail signposted to service-specific procedures. Material changes included clearer references to the Council's role as a landlord, updated legislative references, strengthened statements on delegation and emergency arrangements, an expanded partnership-working section, and refined enforcement options. The proposed General Enforcement Policy was attached at Appendix 1, with consultation analysis at Appendix 2.

During the meeting, the Service Director for Community Safety and Street Scene outlined the achievements from the previous Policy, including exceeding targets in relation to fly tipping enforcement and community notices.

Resolved:

That Cabinet approves the refreshed General Enforcement Policy (Appendix 1) for publication and implementation, having had due regard to the Regulators' Code and the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006.

164. NEW APPLICATIONS FOR BUSINESS RATES RELIEF - LIFESKILLS YORKSHIRE LTD

Consideration was given to the report which presented the application for the award of Discretionary Business Rates Relief for Lifeskills (Yorkshire) Ltd.

Lifeskills (Yorkshire) Ltd was a not-for-profit organisation which was registered with Companies House as a private company limited by guarantee without share capital. The organisation aimed to equip adults with learning difficulties and/or autism to gain education, employment skills and other skills to develop their independence and social confidence. The service users were funded, in the main, via a direct payment award from RMBC Learning Disability and Autism Team. The organisation provided training on functional maths and English, internet safety, keeping well in hot/cold weather, employment skills and money handling/budgeting to attendees. Attendance was on either one or two days each week with the majority attending twice weekly.

The building was open on weekends to the general public as a family

activity centre run by an associated company. This partnership with the associated company formed part of Lifeskills (Yorkshire) Ltd's offer to RMBC Learning Disability and Autism Team by guaranteeing the availability of work experience and volunteering opportunities and facilitating the development of employment skills in accordance with the care plans in place.

Lifeskills (Yorkshire) Ltd was seeking an award for discretionary rate relief to assist them in continuing to provide this service. The company was incorporated in August 2024 and had therefore not yet filed any accounts with Companies House to date. Accounts were available in draft form for the first year of trading and had been provided in support of this application.

It was recommended that the application be approved, with a cost to RMBC of £10,147.17 for 2025/26 and £8,595.58 for 2026/27.

Resolved:

That Cabinet approve the application for Discretionary Business Rates Relief for Lifeskills (Yorkshire) Ltd in accordance with the details set out in Section 6 to this report for the 2025/26 and 2026/27 financial years.

165. HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY 2026-2031

Consideration was given to the report which presented the findings from the review of the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2023-2026 and sought approval for the new Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2026-2031. Homelessness remained a significant challenge across the UK, with local authorities facing sustained increases in demand for support against the backdrop of rising housing costs, welfare reform, and ongoing cost of living pressures. Nationally, levels of homelessness continued to rise, with latest estimates (December 2025) reporting that 382,618 people in England were homeless, the highest figure recorded representing an 8% increase in just one year. The national pressures were reflected locally in Rotherham, where the number of people approaching the Council for homelessness assistance increased by 25.6% between 2023/24 and 2024/25, rising from 1,448 to 1,818.

Paragraph 1.11 of the report set out a summary of the key achievements from the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy for 2023-2026. This included a 65.4% increase in successful prevention outcomes within 56 days between 2022-23 and 2024-25. Progress also continued towards the Council's target of 1,000 new council homes by summer 2027, with 791 delivered as of 20 April 2026 and with planning underway for the next programme cycle.

In addition, the report outlined the eight-week consultation and

engagement process undertaken with residents, people with lived experience, officers, and key stakeholders. Feedback from this process, alongside national policy, local evidence, and wider housing and homelessness intelligence, had informed the development of the new Strategy. The Council had statutory duties under the Homelessness Act 2002, which required local authorities to carry out a homelessness review, to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on that review, and to publish a new strategy at least once every five years.

The Strategy was structured around four strategic priorities and set out the Council's approach to preventing homelessness and rough sleeping over the next five years. The four priorities were:

- Priority 1 – Prevent homelessness through early, proactive intervention (paragraph 2.7 to 2.9 of the report.)
- Priority 2 – Increase the supply of and access to suitable, affordable housing (paragraph 2.10 to 2.13.)
- Priority 3 – Ensure support reaches those most in need at the right time (paragraph 2.14 to 2.17.)
- Priority 4 – Tackle rough sleeping through prevention and rapid response (paragraph 2.18 to 2.21.)

The Strategy also highlighted the key issues affecting households experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Rotherham, detailed how the Council would work collaboratively with partners to respond to these challenges and demonstrated alignment with wider Council strategies and plans.

A cross working action plan would be developed with key partners including health, social care, community safety and the voluntary sector, to monitor progress and delivery against the Strategy over the five year period. While the Council had a statutory obligation to lead on the development and publication of the Strategy, the action plan was to be collectively owned by partners and stakeholders, reflecting that tackling homelessness was a shared responsibility across the whole system. Cabinet was asked to delegate approval of the action plan and any subsequent updates following its annual reviews to the relevant Executive Director. It was anticipated that minor data updates of the Strategy could be required prior to publication. Cabinet was therefore asked to delegate approval of any final amendments to the Executive Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health.

The report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board who advised that the recommendations be supported. They also made two additional recommendations:

- That the Action Plan clearly indicates any essential (“must deliver”) actions from scalable or discretionary activity, including setting out risk mitigation arrangements where funding or capacity reduces, and ensures any material departure from planned delivery be reported to the relevant scrutiny commission.
- That specific performance measures be developed for households with multiple support needs, covering prevention successes, and repeated homelessness, and that this cohort be reported separately in monitoring reports.

Both recommendations were accepted by Cabinet.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Notes the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy consultation summary report.
2. Approves the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2026 31.
3. Delegates authority to the Executive Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health to approve:
 - a) Any minor data amendments to the Strategy prior to publication.
 - b) The Action Plan, following its development, including any amendments arising from annual reviews.
4. Agree that the Action Plan clearly indicates any essential (“must deliver”) actions from scalable or discretionary activity, including setting out risk mitigation arrangements where funding or capacity reduces, and ensures any material departure from planned delivery be reported to the relevant scrutiny commission.
5. Agree that specific performance measures be developed for households with multiple support needs, covering prevention successes, and repeated homelessness, and that this cohort be reported separately in monitoring reports.

166. SELECTIVE LICENSING UPDATE

Consideration was given to the report which set out the operational model, responsibilities, governance and expected outcomes for both the liaison function and the capital funding in relation to Selective Licensing.

The Council had made declarations for six new Selective Licensing areas

which commenced in February 2026 for a period of five years. While traditional Selective Licensing tools had enabled the Council to regulate private landlords and deal directly with specific housing problems, during the consultation undertaken prior to declaration, the Council also heard from both tenants and landlords about wider problems in their communities. These included environmental and anti-social behaviour problems, and a lack of direct support to tenants.

To maximise the positive outcomes of these new designations, including improved housing standards, stronger community engagement, and enhanced regulatory intervention, as part of the 2026/27 budget setting process, the Council had agreed an additional revenue investment of £362,000 per annum. This aimed to increase the impact of enforcement and regulatory activity, provide additional direct support to tenants, as well as provide increased capacity to ensure local stakeholder groups were well run and well supported. In addition, the Council also agreed the allocation of a £500,000 capital budget over four years, 2026/27 to 2029/30, spread across the six areas, to deliver targeted improvements that complemented enforcement activity. This capital programme would be shaped by the local stakeholder groups, and local teams.

In response to consultation feedback, the Council had agreed to establish new stakeholder panels in each of the designated areas. Stakeholder groups would be multiagency groups representing residents, landlords, partners, elected members and Council services. The groups would identify improvement priorities, review performance of the scheme and impacts locally and propose or review potential capital projects. The panels would also advise on community impacts and emerging issues.

During the meeting it was confirmed that the posts described in paragraph 2.2.1 of the report had been recruited to.

The report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board who advised that the recommendations be supported. They also made two additional recommendations:

- That officers set out a clear escalation plan where licence application rates fall below expectations and provide the relevant Scrutiny Commission with regular updates on licence uptake, enforcement activity, and any risks to the effectiveness of the scheme.
- Ensure that communications requesting nominations for the Stakeholder Groups clearly indicate that applicants who require reasonable adjustments will be duly considered.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Note the report and progress to date.

2. Approve the approach to the community liaison roles and stakeholder panels.
3. Approve the approach to establishing the capital programme, with stakeholder groups identifying local priorities and delegate agreement for the final governance arrangement to the Executive Director of Regeneration and Environment in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Service Director for Legal Services.
4. Instruct officers to set out a clear escalation plan where licence application rates fall below expectations and provide the relevant Scrutiny commission with regular updates on licence uptake, enforcement activity, and any risks to the effectiveness of the scheme.
5. Instruct officer to ensure that communications requesting nominations for the Stakeholder Groups clearly indicate that applicants who require reasonable adjustments will be duly considered.

167. THE ROTHERHAM TOGETHER PARTNERSHIP - ROTHERHAM PLAN

Consideration was given to the report which summarised the Rotherham Together Partnership's (RTP) new Rotherham Plan, which replaced the expired Rotherham Plan 2025. The new Plan set out the RTP's vision for partnership working over the next decade, focused on the successful delivery of the four identified gamechangers for the borough, to improve quality of life for residents across Rotherham and address inequalities.

The RTP was a partnership which brought together eight key local organisations across the Borough (RMBC, South Yorkshire Police, South Yorkshire ICB, The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust, Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber NHS Trust, Voluntary Action Rotherham, and RNN Group), facilitating strategic collaboration on key issues with the aim of improving quality of life for residents. A number of thematic partnership boards and operational groups had been established.

Since forming in the early 2000s, initially as Rotherham's statutory Local Strategic Partnership, this collective of partners had delivered significant developments for the Borough. The first partnership strategy committed to delivering the Advanced Manufacturing Park (AMP) at Waverley as a breakthrough project. Since 2017, the partnership's work had been guided by the strategic priorities set out within the Rotherham Plan 2025, resulting in wide-ranging achievements including: the development of the Urgent and Emergency Care Centre, opening of University Centre Rotherham, delivery of the world leading Children's Capital of Culture festival year, development of immersive careers education site at Skills Street and opening of the town centre's first cinema in 30 years at Forge Island.

The partnership had identified four gamechangers for Rotherham, as set

out in paragraph 2.6 of the report, which would define the Borough over the next decade and catalyse improvements for residents. These were:

- Growing a fair and thriving economy.
- Enabling strong and thriving communities.
- Unlocking the full potential of Rotherham Gateway.
- Creating vibrant town centres.

The gamechangers comprised key investments and developments which would require a collaborative approach from the RTP to ensure successful delivery. Further to that, the partnership would seek to address inequalities which presented barriers to residents benefitting from the gamechangers.

A two-year delivery plan would be developed in the first instance, to map outcomes and partner commitments to reach the first milestone within the plan. Following that a three-year delivery plan would be developed to reach the five-year milestone, offering a natural review point for the strategy.

Resolved:

That Cabinet endorse the Rotherham Together Partnership's new strategic direction as set out in the Rotherham Plan 2026-2036: A decade of opportunity, focused around the four identified gamechangers.

168. ROTHERHAM MARKETS AND LIBRARIES

Consideration was given to the report which provided a summary of the challenges encountered during the delivery phase of the Wath Library and Rotherham Markets and Library schemes. These challenges had resulted in increased costs and the need to revisit aspects of scope and delivery. Cabinet were asked to approve an increase to the budget allocations for both projects, reflecting the outcome of detailed design development, construction stage risk resolution and updated cost forecasts.

In July 2024, Cabinet approved the delivery of a new Wath Library. The scheme for Wath Library was developed with the aim of transforming a prominent site in one of the Borough's principal settlements, with high quality place making in order to restore the cultural heart of the town centre, increase footfall, boost the local economy, and restore a sense of pride within the community. The scheme included demolition of the existing library and the creation of a brand-new library to deliver a modern, inviting, and inclusive community facility. The redevelopment was designed to enhance the visitor experience between Biscay Way and the High Street to encourage visitors into the town centre. The scheme was approved at Planning Board in October 2024 and demolition of the old library began in February 2026.

At the July 2024 meeting it was reported to Cabinet that the total scheme

cost was £9.9m. In July 2025 the Council appointed Tilbury Douglas as the preferred contractor to undertake Stage 4 designs. Having refined the scheme costs, a cost increase of £2.04m had been identified. Cost increases were largely due to:

- Increase in demolition costs of around £800k, largely due to the presence of previously unidentified and significant levels of asbestos.
- Percentage fee increases as related to increase in construction costs.
- Inflationary increases aligned with an extended delivery window due to delays in tendering, contractual negotiations, design and cost assessments.
- Additional design fees to reflect the requirement for more extensive design work.

Prior to approaching Cabinet, an extensive analysis of potential value engineering options had been carried out, including considering the Library Service's brief to identify opportunities to reduce operational and construction costs. The outcome of this work was a potential option for a smaller building footprint and changes to the external design. However, these alterations would have required a full redesign and new Planning approval, causing significant delays to the project. In addition, an increased level of design costs meant that the alternative would not deliver value for money due to the significant reduction in amenity space.

A summary of the resultant cost and budget implications in relation to Wath Library was provided in Appendix 1.

In 2017, Rotherham's Town Centre Masterplan identified seven major development opportunities, all aimed at creating a more diverse, vibrant and attractive town centre that drove increased footfall. Within this vision, which had now been substantially delivered, Forge Island and the Markets and Library were identified as the two catalytic major projects for Rotherham, anchoring the western and eastern approaches into the town centre respectively. Future plans were now being developed for Rotherham Gateway, which would improve the northern approach to the town centre via Effingham Street, and exciting plans for new housing would complete the southern approach to the town centre along Sheffield Road and Westgate.

The Markets complex was recognised as a key anchor in the town centre, both for its historic significance and the potential to be a modern, attractive destination to draw people back into the heart of the town. The Markets occupied one of the most prominent and strategic positions in Rotherham town centre. The relocation of the library into this area, the creation of a health hub, the proximity to Rotherham College, the Interchange, and key pedestrian routes cemented this part of the town centre as a community, enterprise and service hub, creating a unique opportunity to create a cohesive cluster of essential services, leisure, and social spaces.

The scope and costs for the project had been reported to Cabinet throughout the development of the scheme. The last reported cost in March 2024 was £40.89m. The scope as reported previously was set out in paragraph 2.11. Over the course of the project's development, a number of challenges had arisen which has rendered the achievement of the agreed scope undeliverable for the current agreed budget. Further, the delivery of the Outdoor Covered Market and Library had continued, in line with the agreed contract, resulting in insufficient budget to complete the project to the agreed scope.

The challenges encountered related to:

- Delivery Challenges (paragraph 2.15 to 2.16 of the report)
- Project Specification (2.17 to 2.18)
- Value Engineering (2.19)
- Provisional Sums (2.20)
- Health & Safety and Compliance (2.21 to 2.22)
- Design (2.23 to 2.25)
- Unidentified Cost Elements (2.26)
- Contingency (2.27)
- Governance and Resourcing (2.28)
- Eastwood Lane (2.29 to 2.30)
- Public Realm and Events Space (2.31)
- Enabling Activity (2.32)

Taken together, these challenges had resulted in additional costs to the budget previously agreed at Cabinet and therefore a recommendation was made to increase the project budget by £5.95m. A summary of the resultant cost and budget implications in relation to Rotherham Markets and Library was provided in Appendix 5.

While the challenges encountered for both schemes were summarised throughout the report, the Chief Executive of the Council had agreed to commission an investigation into the development and delivery of the Rotherham Markets & Library project which had resulted in the cost increases.

During the meeting both the Leader and Councillor Williams expressed their frustration at the current situation. They both stated that it was not acceptable, and they understood the anger felt. However, both stressed the need to deliver the projects.

The report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board who advised that the recommendations be supported. They also made three additional recommendations:

- That future capital monitoring reports include a clear narrative for the Rotherham Markets & Library scheme explaining how key risks have changed, how contingency has been used, any new cost pressures,

and the actions taken to manage them, so Cabinet and Scrutiny can see whether the project was genuinely stabilising.

- Requests that the Chief Executive's investigation into the development and delivery of the Rotherham Markets & Library project, focusing on causes of cost increases be conducted by an independent external organisation and the findings be presented to OSMB at the appropriate point.
- Notes that the Chief Executive has commissioned a separate independent end-to-end review of the capital project processes with a focus on large-scale development projects with a view to identifying learning and developing recommendations on how to embed best practice going forward and that the findings be presented to OSMB at the appropriate point.

Cabinet accepted all three additional recommendations.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Approve the revised budget of £12.02m for the Wath Library scheme, including an increase of £2.04m to be funded from unallocated Local Regeneration Grant, as set out in Appendix 1.
2. Approve the revised budget for the Rotherham Markets & Library scheme, increasing the total project budget to £46.84m, representing an additional £5.95m, funded as set out in Appendix 5.
3. Note that the revised budgets reflect the completion of the detailed design, resolution of construction stage risks and the establishment of a more robust and deliverable position for both projects.
4. Note the intention of the Chief Executive to commission an investigation into the development and delivery of the Rotherham Markets & Library project which has resulted in the cost increase noted in Recommendation 2.
5. Agree that future capital monitoring reports include a clear narrative for the Rotherham Markets & Library scheme explaining how key risks have changed, how contingency has been used, any new cost pressures, and the actions taken to manage them, so Cabinet and Scrutiny can see whether the project was genuinely stabilising.
6. Request that the Chief Executive's investigation into the development and delivery of the Rotherham Markets & Library project, focusing on causes of cost increases be conducted by an independent external organisation and the findings be presented to OSMB at the appropriate point.

7. Note that the Chief Executive has commissioned a separate independent end-to-end review of the capital project processes with a focus on large-scale development projects with a view to identifying learning and developing recommendations on how to embed best practice going forward and that the findings be presented to OSMB at the appropriate point.

169. SUPPORTING HIGH STREETS

Consideration was given to the report which provided an update on the establishment of the new Supporting Our High Streets Team and sought approval for the activities guiding the Team's programme of work in principal towns across the Borough. As part of the budget approved by Council on 4 March 2026, a revenue investment entitled "Supporting our High Streets" was agreed. Building on the success of the existing Town Centre Co-ordinator role, this project sought to expand this approach, with a focus on business support, in Rotherham Town Centre and across the other principal towns in the Borough; Wath, Swinton, Dinnington and Maltby.

The main purpose of the roles was to engage with high street businesses in the Borough's principal towns, and to provide a point of co-ordination for businesses in relation to the various activities in each locality: events, Streetscene, Street Safe and crime, business investment, local promotional opportunities and signposting to other business support services.

The posts would have a specific function of liaison with the local business community, providing a local presence, identifying issues of concern, and signposting to other Council services for assistance, where appropriate. They would provide visible and routine engagement in the identified areas and be a known face to businesses and local ward members, providing regular updates on activity and working to solve problems as they arise. Initial business advice would be provided along with help to co-ordinate local promotions. The team would also lead on the delivery of the successful Shopfront Grants project, which had received a further 12 months of funding through the Local Growth Fund for 2026/27.

Various indicators would be used to measure the impact and success of the activities, and would include the number of businesses supported, the amount of vacant building floorspace brought back into use, and the take up of business support and grants by Rotherham businesses.

Appointments to the roles were anticipated in May 2026 with staff onboard, trained and operational by July 2026.

During the meeting, Councillor Williams noted that this was a scheme proposed by the Labour administration of which he was proud. He also noted that opposition groups had opposed the scheme.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Note the establishment of the new Supporting Our High Streets Team.
2. Approve the activities guiding the Supporting Our High Streets Team's programme of work in principal towns across the Borough.

170. ROTHERHAM ROADS PROGRAMME 2026/27

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 reviewed the current strategy for the management and maintenance of Rotherham's highways and the impact the recent Council funding had on the highway network. Further, the report described the current performance, both in terms of the condition of Rotherham's highways and in terms of the delivery of highways maintenance services. This additional investment 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.

Paragraph 2.2.6 of the report set out the allocation of budgets across the highway network in 2026/27. The indicative Highway Works Programme included a schedule of works to improve the accessibility of the footway network. These measures provided people with visual impairments, wheelchair users and others with improved access to the network. The existing footways on the planned list would be adapted with new dropped kerb lines and blister/tactile paving to assist access and promote safer locations to crossroads and access to footways. 34 pairs of crossings would be delivered across the network in locations requested by residents, local Councillors and interested groups. The programme also included footway repair and the delivery of a surface treatment to priority sections of the footway network across the Borough.

Resolved:

That Cabinet note the programme and delegate any amendments necessary for practical delivery or safety purposes to the Executive Director of Regeneration and Environment in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy.

171. 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.

172. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:-

That the next meeting of the Cabinet be held on 8 June 2026, commencing at 10.00am.