

**THE CABINET**  
**5th November, 2014**

Present:- Councillor Lakin (in the Chair); Councillors Beaumont, Beck, Doyle, Godfrey, Hoddinott and Hussain.

Also in attendance were:-

Councillor Steele, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

Councillors Reynolds and C. Vines (UKIP Opposition Party).

**C82            QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

(1) A member of the public asked for an explanation on the point of the consultation on the sites and policies document, when this did not comply with the current planning policy, in light of recent announcements about not bringing the Green Belt into the adopted Core Strategy, and why this was not part of Rotherham's Local Plan?

The Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services would provide a more detailed answer in writing to the question above, but confirmed the Core Strategy did comply with current guidance. The announcements made by the Secretary of State related largely to planning applications rather than applications to the Local Plan.

The allocation of sites was to achieve the demand for housing, which was not as simple as there was insufficient land and could mean that Rotherham could not meet its housing supply.

(2) A member of the public congratulated the Council on its presentation of reports which formed part of the agenda pack to the Cabinet, which was an improvement on recent events which the Council had faced and asked the Cabinet, in addition to the £120,000 allocated to child sexual exploitation victims, whether consideration could be given to diverting further victim support by way of:-

- Top slicing 10% of the £1.2 million paid annually to Councillors.
- Diverting or top slicing all the performance related bonuses provided to senior management or Council officials who had collective responsibility for failure.
- Diverting any underspends from the Community Leadership Funds, which each Councillor was allocated to spend on community activities, rather than returning this to the General Fund.

In addition, the Cabinet were asked if they would sign up individually and collectively to the Jessica Petition, who was campaigning for justice and wanting to raise awareness and funds for victims of child sexual exploitation.

The Deputy Leader spoke about the £120,000 that had been initially allocated to fund counselling services for victims. The South Yorkshire Community Foundation currently had approximately £70,000 available for organisations to bid into for counselling. This work would remain ongoing and every effort would be made to how best support victims and survivors of child sexual exploitation.

As part of the budget process and consultation the public could feed in ideas for consideration with priority being given to children's services and victim support.

The Director of Finance confirmed the need for longer term support for victims and plans going forward could include financial provision in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. It was also noted that the Council had no provision for performance related bonuses for senior officers.

The Leader took on board the matters raised by the member of the public and confirmed that consideration would be given to the suggestion about the use of underspends of the Community Leadership Fund, as would Members' Allowances. In terms of the Jessica Petition, Members would be encouraged to sign up to this.

The Director of Public Health outlined the availability of counselling support via Youth Start (for young people up to the age of 25), to which an extra £53,000 had been made available, referrals through the C.C.G. and R.D.A.S.H. and through General Practitioners.

The two voluntary sector organisations that had received funding were also able to offer specialist counselling support. Information should be passed onto anyone who was not in receipt of support that required it.

(3) A member of the public referred to a recent meeting of the Chamber of Commerce where Sir Kevin Barron, M.P. had tweeted "That the way to deal with child sexual exploitation was to tell the truth" and asked could the Leader confirm that the Cabinet were finally going to do this?

The Leader suggested that the question be put to Sir Kevin Barron himself.

In a supplementary question the member of the public referred to the Cabinet's view that it was telling the truth, but asked if the Leader had attended the recent Rother Valley South Area Assembly, which considered matters relating to child sexual exploitation, to provide protection for the Chair, Councillor Jane Havenhand, who said nothing

about her own position when she had been an Adviser to former Councillor Shaun Wright for five years.

The Leader confirmed he had already been in attendance at three Area Assembly meetings convened to discuss matters relating to child sexual exploitation.

(4) A member of the public referred to the previous Cabinet meeting held on 15th October, 2014 where he raised the question of bullying and named a current Borough Councillor. At a meeting last Monday the same Councillor threatened the member of the public with imprisonment and asked if it was time this Councillor stood down?

The Leader reiterated the same invitation for the member of the public to make an appointment to discuss the matters to which he was referring. Any concerns or complaints relating to Elected Members should be referred in the first instance to the Council's Monitoring Officer.

In a supplementary question the member of the public confirmed he would be taking up the offer to discuss matters further with the Leader, but was currently gathering evidence. However, it was pointed out that over forty complaints had been made about Borough and Parish Councillors of Anston Parish Council, the majority of which had been submitted to the Monitoring Officer and some of which related to Members of the Standards Committee. Should the Borough Councillor, who was conspiring with other Councillors who sat on the Standards Committee, not be investigated with regards to misconduct whilst in public office?

The Leader suggested that all matters be referred to the Monitoring Officer to take this forward and that all current complaints received be considered.

### **C83 QUESTIONS FROM ELECTED MEMBERS**

(1) Councillor Reynolds wished to place on record his objection to being included within the collective "we" when referring to the Council. He was elected on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2014 and could not be held in any way responsible for any of the child sexual exploitation and should not be required to volunteer part of his allowance towards funds for child sexual exploitation as it was more for those who had a conscience. He thought there would have been more resignations from Elected Members following publication of the Jay Report.

(2) Councillor C. Vines asked for details of dates when the general public were able to inspect the Statement of Accounts?

The Director of Finance confirmed the publication of the 2013/14 Accounts of the Council's website at the end of June, 2014. These had now been audited by KPMG and signed off.

In a supplementary question Councillor C. Vines asked where this information had been publicised?

The Director of Finance confirmed information had been publicised in the Rotherham Advertiser and on the Council's website.

**C84        DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest to report.

**C85        WORKPLACE HEALTH PROGRAMME**

Councillor Doyle, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, introduced a report by the Director of Public Health which confirmed that supporting health during a person's working life was a key part of the life course approach to health and the Health and Wellbeing priority of early intervention and prevention.

In June, 2014 Public Health England launched a new workplace health initiative; 'The Workplace Wellbeing Charter'. The Workplace Wellbeing Charter was a national framework for local Health and Wellbeing Boards to use as part of their work to address the health and wellbeing of adults, utilising the national framework would allow the Council to engage businesses and local Chambers of Commerce into making Rotherham's workforce healthier.

The Workplace Wellbeing Charter would contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of working age people through promoting the positive links between health and work and helping more people with health conditions to stay in or return to employment.

Cabinet Members welcomed this programme and were informed that the Council complied fully in the work place and was already providing employees with the tools to help improve their health and wellbeing.

Resolved:- (1) That Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council sign up to the Workplace Wellbeing Charter.

(2) That Rotherham Occupational Health Advice Service deliver the Workplace Wellbeing Charter as part of the Rotherham Public Health Workplace Health Service.

**C86        SCRUTINY REVIEW: ACCESS TO GPS**

Further to Minute No. 253 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 21<sup>st</sup> May, 2014 Councillor Doyle, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, introduced a report by the Director of Public Health, which set out the response of NHS England (NHS E) the GP Service Commissioner and Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to the Review. When the review was compiled it was still unclear to what extent the Care

Quality Commission (CQC) the GP regulator would consider access under its new inspection regime. It was clear that this now formed a major part of the new inspections.

The CCG and NHS England would be developing a Rotherham based plan to improve healthcare in the Borough. Both NHS England and the CCG recognise the contribution the review would make to informing this "place based plan".

All the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review were accepted with the exception of Recommendation 3 which was deferred as it was believed all General Practices should have adequate arrangements to see urgent or same day cases. Appropriate arrangements would vary from practice to practice. These should form part of the new CQC inspections. The Commissioner should be requested to produce a report summarising the adequacy of access on the basis of these reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board in October 2015.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board expressed some concern about the responses in that they did not adequately address the recommendations originally made, particularly around:-

- Appropriate support to G.P. practices and how the extra volume of patients would be accommodated.
- Responses around sharing good practice have been mixed up with other elements of the review.
- Lack of crucial information in the responses to enable an assessment as to whether it would be implemented adequately.

It was, therefore, requested that this response be referred back to the Health Select Commission and that NHS England be requested to attend to discuss this response.

Cabinet Members supported the request and suggested that the Health Select Commission consider the response in more detail to address some of the concerns and this be resubmitted to Cabinet in due course.

Resolved:- That consideration of this report be deferred pending further consideration of the responses by the Health Select Commission and for a revised report to be submitted back to the Cabinet in due course for consideration.

## **C87**

### **CAPITAL PROGRAMME : CAPITAL RECEIPTS UPDATE**

Councillor Beck, Cabinet Member for Business Growth and Regeneration, introduced a report by the Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services, which detailed the half year report on capital receipts for 2014/15 and highlighted changes to the forecast of capital receipts.

In the first half of 2014/15 a total of £3.822 million had been achieved and a further £4.876 million was anticipated to be completed by the financial year end.

The Asset Management service had generated over £15 million in capital receipts over the last two full years and these have helped the Council address its budget challenge by significantly reducing debt management and property running costs.

Resolved:- That the current position on the capital receipts programme be noted.

## **C88 RENT COLLECTION AND ARREARS RECOVERY POLICY**

Councillor Godfrey, Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods, introduced a report by the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods and Adult Services, which outlined the proposed Rent Collection and Arrears Recovery Policy and associated processes which have been refreshed given the challenges faced to maximise income recovery to the Housing Revenue account (HRA) given the ongoing Welfare Reform agenda

The report provided information about the service challenges brought about by the implementation of welfare reform and proposed, in light of the current and ongoing changes, the new rents collection policy and processes required.

The report had also been considered by the the Improving Places Select Commission on 16th September, 2014 which recommended particular emphasis be placed on minimising the number of tenants falling into increased debt by targeting support work when arrears were below £250.

Proposed changes to the Rent Collection and Arrears Recovery Policy included the introduction of a mixed range of initiatives targeted to support tenants in financial hardship caused by welfare reforms. The key changes within the policy were set out in detail as part of the report.

Cabinet Members raised a number of questions and were informed that the same principles were applied to our approach to the collection district heating charges in terms of managing debt, new tenants were supported with the requirement for one week's rent to be provided in advance, support was available for tenants wishing to downsize to prevent undue hardship by the "bedroom tax" and that discretionary housing payments were available to assist tenants affected by welfare reform and the challenging economic climate.

It was noted that there was to be wider publicity of the Rent Collection and Arrears Recovery Policy across the Borough, including to all Members of the Council and Housing Associations.

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

**(2) Recommended:- That the Rent Collection and Arrears Recovery Policy be approved.**

**C89 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY : DRAFT CHARGING SCHEDULE**

Councillor Godfrey, Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods, introduced a report by the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods and Adult Services, which sought approval for consultation on a Rotherham Community Infrastructure Levy Draft Charging Schedule for a six week period from 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2014 to 5th January, 2015. This would largely be a web-based consultation targeted at key stakeholders.

The Council then has an opportunity to consider issues raised by respondents before the Draft was submitted to Government for independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate. Adoption would then follow as soon as possible.

The Community Infrastructure Levy would largely replace off-site Section 106 financial contributions negotiated on a site-by-site basis (e.g. school places). Section 106 Agreements would still be used, where appropriate, to secure affordable housing and on-site mitigation.

In the majority of cases, the Community Infrastructure Levy charges would replace the amounts currently paid via Section 106 so most developers were not likely to notice a difference in development cost. However, developments that have been below current Section 106 thresholds (in terms of size) would now be required to make a contribution towards cumulative infrastructure costs.

An amount of Community Infrastructure Levy would also be required to deliver a “meaningful proportion” of infrastructure improvements locally by direct payment to local Parish Councils. In Rotherham, this would amount to 15% of any Community Infrastructure Levy revenue generated by development in a Parish’s area. This would be 25% where any local Neighbourhood Plan was adopted and it was noted that there were none in Rotherham at present.

The recommended Community Infrastructure Levy rates were based on the ability of development to pay. The Viability Study had shown that Community Infrastructure Levy remained viable for residential, supermarkets and retail warehouses, but not for any other development type. A new separate charge category for retirement living was also proposed.

Cabinet Members sought clarification on the range of infrastructure improvements and the kinds of development that would be eligible. It was also suggested and agreed that this report be presented to the next meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission as part of the consultation process.

Resolved:- (1) That the consultation on a Rotherham Community Infrastructure Levy Draft Charging Schedule be approved.

(2) That this report be referred to the next meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission for consideration as part of the consultation process.

#### **C90 REVISION TO STANDING ORDERS - QUORUM FOR CABINET**

Councillor Hoddinott, Deputy Leader, introduced a report by the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, which proposed a reduction to the quorum for the Cabinet.

This request was based on the reduction in the number of Cabinet Members from ten to nine and then down to seven. To ensure the smooth running arrangements for the conduct of Cabinet business it was proposed that the quorum, therefore be reduced from the current five to four Members. There were no proposals to reduce the number any further.

**Recommended:- That the Council's Standing Orders be amended to provide for a reduction in the quorum for Cabinet from five to four Members.**

#### **C91 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended March 2006) (information relates to finance or business affairs).

#### **C92 SALE OF UNIT 3, R-EVOLUTION ADVANCED MANUFACTURING PARK**

Further to Minute No. 114 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 6<sup>th</sup> November, 2013, Councillor Beck, Cabinet Member for Business Growth and Regeneration, introduced a report by the Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services, which sought approval to the proposed sale of Unit 3 R-evolution.



Further information was provided on the current agreements in place, level of investment, process of construction and the level of interest in this area.

Cabinet Members sought reassurances on the financial risks association with expansion of the AMP and were informed about the ringfenced funds that would cover off the Council's debt and risk.

Resolved:- (1) That the sale of Unit 3 R-evolution as detailed in this report be approved.

(2) That the Director of Audit and Asset Management negotiates the terms of the disposal of the asset.

(3) That the Director of Legal and Administrative Services completes the contracts for sale to the proposed purchaser.

(The Mayor agreed to exempt this item from the call-in process due to the urgent need to safeguard business growth in this area)