

**THE CABINET
8th July, 2019**

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

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

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest to report.

19. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

20. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved:- That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 10th June, 2019, be agreed as true and correct record of the proceedings.

21. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:- That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the Agenda Item 14 on the grounds that the appendices involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of such Act indicated, as now amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

22. REVISED FOSTER CARER FEES AND ALLOWANCES PAYMENT SCHEME

Consideration was given to the report which detailed the vision in Rotherham of 'Working with Rotherham's children, young people and families to be safe, resilient and successful' and the aim to improve the care experience for children in Rotherham by ensuring that wherever possible they were looked after in a foster family environment. In the spirit of this ambition the Council was proposing to revise its 'offer' to RMBC foster carers with regard to the fees and allowances that they received. If RMBC foster carer numbers are increased it would also lead to a reduced overall cost in line with budget assumptions.

The needs of children and young people could be most effectively met if they lived in an environment that provided a high quality of care and support. In most cases this would be within a family setting. The ambition also includes that wherever possible, children and young people should be placed within their own community which enables them to continue to have some consistency of education placement and contact with the people and community of most importance to them, thus promoting a strong sense of self, fundamental to resilience in later life.

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council had over six hundred children in care and whilst over a quarter were placed with Rotherham Borough foster carers, there was still a shortage of all foster placements, particularly of placements for adolescents and for larger siblings groups.

The lack of sufficient RMBC foster care placements means that Rotherham relies on the use of Independent Fostering Agencies (IFAs) or residential provision, both of which are significantly more costly.

Comparisons with other authorities within the Yorkshire region have also been carried out and learning from the more successful recruiters had been incorporated into this proposal e.g. Leeds incentivising carers to take additional placements. The proposals in this report would, therefore, increase the incentive for potential foster carers to become RMBC foster carers and also provide an incentive for foster carers (current and potential) to increase the number of children they fostered.

In response to the current sufficiency position, this proposal formed part of the work to transform the local authority's in-house fostering agency 'offer'. This included a review of Rotherham's fostering provision, including a review of the payments to foster carers. It was anticipated that some existing Rotherham foster households may be able to increase the number of children they cared for and provide an opportunity to increase placements.

In reviewing the fee rate and structure and developing the 'offer' it was essential to ensure the fostering service remained financially competitive, whilst supporting the recruitment and retention of more locally based foster carers.

Under the proposed new fee structure the weekly allowance and the skills payment for the first child remained the same, with an additional payment for subsequent children.

Cabinet Members welcomed the proposals on the basis that they compared reasonably across the region and provided a good incentive for existing and prospective foster carers in Rotherham.

This report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as part of the pre-scrutiny process who were in support of the recommendations.

Resolved:- That implementation and changes to Foster Carer Fees and allowances as follows be approved:-

- An additional skill level fee be paid to the carer when caring for more than one child, as set out in paragraph 2.11.
- The weekly allowance, to cover the expense involved in caring for a child, to remain the same.
- Change in payments to foster carers for birthdays, Christmas/cultural celebrations and holiday pay for the child in placement, as set out in paragraph 2.11.

23. ADVICE SERVICES REVIEW - PHASE 2

Consideration was given to the report which detailed how continuing austerity and the impact of welfare reforms including the roll out of universal credit was having a significant effect on many of the most vulnerable Rotherham residents especially people with disabilities and families with children.

The provision of good quality advice services therefore, provided essential support particularly for those individuals and families experiencing difficulties and there was a need to secure a responsive and effective service across the Borough to meet growing demands and complex cases that were developing.

The review of the service was set in the context of significant need for advice services by the residents of Rotherham and the first phase of the review was to bring together arrangements for Council supported open door advice provided in the voluntary sector.

The second phase of the review included advice services provided directly by the Council and the enhancement of partnership working through Advice in Rotherham Partnership.

Proposals now included bringing together under one management Council provided advice services and enhancing partnership working and referral systems. This would provide a more efficient set of inter-related services and improve access and referral routes for clients through a new "Single Advice Model".

It was projected that bringing services under one management could be achieved by September, 2019.

Some of the components of the "Single Advice Model" including a new referral system were now being introduced. Further enhancements to partnership working would be developed in discussion with partners and the changes could be achieved within existing budget and staffing allocations.

Phase 3 would require much better partnership working. The Council remained committed to supporting its most vulnerable residents and it was important that it ensure it was provided the full service.

This report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as part of the pre-scrutiny process who were in support of the recommendations, subject to a monitoring report on the implementation of Phase 2 being brought back to a sub-group of the Management Board, along with outline proposals for Phase 3.

Cabinet Members were fully supportive of the proposals within Phase 2 of the Advice Services Review and believed co-location of relevant staff was a valuable development.

Resolved:- (1) That the management of Council provided advice services be consolidated under the management of Housing Services within the Adult Social Care and Housing Directorate and co-located within Riverside House by September, 2019.

(2) That the role of partnership working through the Advice in Rotherham Partnership (AiR) be enhanced to provide full alignment and added value across advice services in Rotherham through the introduction of a new "Single Advice Model."

24. COUNCIL PLAN QUARTER 4 (JANUARY TO MARCH 2019) AND 2018-2019 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Consideration was given to the report which detailed how the Council Plan was the core document that underpinned the Council's overall vision.

The Plan set out the headline priorities, outcomes and measures that would demonstrate delivery of the vision. The process for monitoring performance against the vision was set out in the Council's Performance Management Framework which explained to all Council staff how robust performance monitoring should be carried out.

The Performance Report and Performance Scorecard included in Appendix A provided an analysis of the Council's current performance against fourteen key delivery outcomes and seventy measures. This report was based on the currently available data and also included an overview of progress on key projects and activities which contributed to the delivery of the Council Plan. For this quarter, the report also included a summary of the Council's achievements during the financial year.

At the end of the fourth and final quarter (January to March 2019) thirty-four measures had either met or had exceeded the target set in the Council Plan. This represented 58% of the total number of measures where data was available or where targets have been set. This is the highest percentage of performance measures that the Council had hit for a number of years and represented a significant improvement in

performance over previous quarters, as only 47%, 45% and 42% of measures hit their targets in quarters one, two and three respectively.

The direction of travel was positive for thirty-two (51%) of the measures calculated in this quarter. This was a deterioration compared to the 58% figure for last quarter and suggests that, although there had been an increase in the number of targets marked as "hit", there were an increasing number of measures where performance was stable or worsening.

In terms of Priority 5 Councillor Alam confirmed that areas performing well or improving were around Performance and Development Review completions, reduction of agency costs, actions from the Equalities Review implemented, complaints closed within the timescale and number of transactions on line.

However, an area for improvement remained days lost to sickness per full-time equivalent employee which was off target at 11.4 days against a target of 10.3 days. A range of activities and interventions to address the increase was in place and would be challenged by senior management.

In terms of Priority 3 Councillor Allen reported on the areas performing well or improving were around number of engagements, customer satisfaction and the number of visits to the Council's Culture and Leisure Services. It was also pointed out that for the first time in a decade the number of active borrowers from libraries had risen with customer satisfaction levels at 99.8%.

Grounds maintenance and street cleansing had received very few complaints, with the initial concerns being raised in Quarter 1, which were due to the weather. The implementation of zonal working should make a real difference and would be a further way of measuring performance. In terms of litter this was a baseline year and would be monitored quarter by quarter.

Councillor Lelliott reported on the measures in her area overall, with three improving performance, three with stable performance and three measures that had worsened. Of those performing well the number of planning applications determined within the specific period remained at 100% and narrowing the gap of working age population with Rotherham above the national average.

The target for the number of new business started with help from the Council was slightly down.

Councillor Hoddinott reported on the good performance of the non-principal road networks in need of repair and the compliments received in Brinsworth, Hooper and Swinton as a result.

Reducing the number of repeat victims of anti-social behaviour had seen a big improvement, although public perception of anti-social behaviour was still high and did not reflect the downward trend in reported incidents.

The number of missed bin collections was an area for improvement, but it was anticipated this would shortly be back on track and monitored closely. There had been some confusion around bin collections and which bin needed to be presented.

The number of customer contacts by service area had also increased, but this was due to the changes in the waste management process.

Hate crime had seen a reported increase of positive outcomes over the year. Efforts to increase positive outcomes and the reliability of data would be challenged.

Councillor Watson reported on the positive reduction in the Children in Need rate and in the number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan.

Improvements were still required on the reduction in the number of Looked After Children and whilst other measures were performing well, this was an area that would be impacted on by the positive performance of others.

A target remaining stable was the target for 16/17 year olds not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS).

Councillor Roche reported on the performance for the measures relative to Public Health, two of which were in Priority 1. The first was around the smoking status at the time of delivery which had an aspirational target and since exceeded. The quit smoking in pregnancy target was also rated green following interventions by the Quit Smoking in Pregnancy Team.

Childhood immunisations were overall green, but there remained a few pockets of low uptake in the Borough.

In terms of Priority 2 successful completion of drug treatment for non-opiate users performance had worsened slightly, but work was taking place with providers.

For Adult Social Care five measures had met or were exceeding targets, one was making satisfactorily progress and another had no baseline data.

The proportion of safeguarding adults at risk who felt their outcomes were met was positive reaching 99.05% during Quarter 3, as was the number of people who were provided with information and advice at the first point of contact.

Areas that required further improvement were the number of carers assessments completed and the proportion of people offered the reablement service are discharge from hospital.

Councillor Beck was pleased to report the number of new homes delivered during the year had increased, but this increase would continue in future years. Work was taking place with developers.

With regards to the number of new homes delivered during the year via direct Council intervention, the measure allowed the Council to track the amount of homes delivered which the Council could actually influence. This had been achieved against a year-end target of 109. Officers were confident this target would be achieved, whilst acknowledging the Council had little influence in terms of housing growth within the private sector.

It was also noted that there was no stock “non-decent” by the end of the year against the target and the number of privately rented properties compliant with the Selective Licensing conditions within designated areas continued to be positive at 95.7% against a target of 95%.

Resolved:- (1) That the overall position and direction of travel in relation to performance be noted

(2) That consideration be given to measures which have not achieved their target and the actions required to improve performance, including future performance clinics

(3) That the performance reporting timetable for 2019-2020 be noted.

(4) That the achievements for 2018-2019 be noted.

25. FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2018/19

Consideration was given to the report which outlined the final revenue and capital outturn position for 2018/19.

The Revenue Budget 2018/19 was approved by Council on 28th February 2018. A budget of £216.876m was set for General Fund services; this excluded schools budgets and Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

The final outturn position was a balanced budget which required £3.2m less use of corporate reserves than planned for. The original budget proposed a planned use of corporate reserves of £5.2m as part of a budget contingency of £10.0m. Additional funding received in year, use of earmarked grants and balances and flexible use of capital receipts had resulted in a reduced call on the planned reserves leaving a balance of £3.2m available to support the budget in later years.

The Council's General Fund minimum balance had been increased from £11.269 to £16.812m, as a result of the planned use and profiling of reserves balances as set out in the Council's Reserves Strategy reported in the Budget and Council Tax Report 2019/20. The reserve was held to protect the Council against unforeseen events and realisation of contingent liabilities.

The Housing Revenue Account had an underspend of £1.4m. This reduced the overall amount required from reserves to balance the budget. The final drawdown from the HRA reserve was just under £11m.

The schools outturn position which was funded by the ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant had an underspend of £1.968m, therefore, increasing schools balances at the end of 2018/19 for the Council's maintained schools and pupil referral units to £3.369m.

The capital outturn showed slippage and underspend of £8.1m against the estimated spend for 2018/19 included within the Capital Programme. Of this, £7.073m related to slippage on projects which had been factored into the revised Capital Programme 2019/20 – 2022/23.

Cabinet Members noted the financial outturn, but in doing so sought clarity on the High Needs Block and was advised the outturn at the end of March 2019 was an in-year overspend of £5.4m of which £5.1m was the High Needs Block with minor movements of £0.3m across the other blocks.

Resolved:- (1) That the revenue outturn position for 2018/19 be noted.

(2) That the transfer of the £1.4m HRA underspend to the HRA reserve be approved.

(3) That the carry forward of the combined schools balance of £3.369m in accordance with the Department for Education regulations be noted.

(4) That the reserves position set out in section 2.33 be noted.

(5) That the capital outturn and funding position as set out in sections 2.41-2.69 be noted.

(6) That the report be referred to Council to note the updated financial position as detailed in the report and for approval of the updated Capital Programme as set out in paragraphs 2.65 to 2.69 and Appendices A to D.

26. FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2018/19 - TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

Consideration was given to the report which detailed the final treasury report for 2018/19. Its purpose was to review the treasury activity for 2018/19 against the strategy agreed at the start of the year. The report also covered the actual Prudential Indicators for 2018/19 in accordance with the requirements of the Prudential Code.

The report met the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

The Council was required to comply with both the aforementioned Codes through regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003.

Part of the Council's Treasury activities was to address the borrowing need, either through borrowing from external bodies, or utilising temporary cash resources within the Council. The wider treasury activities also included managing the Council's cash flows, its previous borrowing activities and the investment of surplus funds. These activities were structured to manage risk foremost, and then optimise performance. The primary objective was security ahead of liquidity and then yield or return.

For 2018/19 provision was made for the estimated borrowing need for the year to partly reduce the Council's 31st March, 2018 under-borrowed position. However, the Council had continued to take advantage of the current availability of short-term cash loans at very favourable rates and did not take out any new long-term loans in 2018/19.

Resolved:- (1) That the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators outturn position as set out in Section 3 and Appendices A and B of the Annual Treasury Management Report for 2018/19 be noted.

(2) That the report be forwarded to the Audit Committee for information.

27. MAY FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT 2019/20

Consideration was given to the report which set out the financial position as at the end of May, 2019 and was based on actual costs and income for the first two months of 2019/20 and forecast for the remainder of the financial year.

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 first in a series of monitoring reports for the new financial year which would continue to be brought forward to Cabinet on a regular basis. The next report would also include an update on the Capital Programme.

As at May 2019, the Council had forecast year-end overspend of £4.5m on the General Fund.

Resolved:- (1) That the current General Fund Revenue Budget forecast of £4.5m overspend be noted.

(2) That continuing actions to mitigate the forecast overspend be noted.

28. NEW APPLICATION FOR BUSINESS RATES DISCRETIONARY RELIEF FOR RAIN RESCUE

Consideration was given to the report which detailed two applications for the award of a business rate discretionary relief for the same organisation in accordance with the Council's Discretionary Business Rates Relief Policy (approved by Cabinet on 12th December, 2016).

Resolved:- (1) That 20% top up discretionary relief be awarded to Rain Rescue for the animal welfare centre at Summerfield Lodge, Moat Lane, Wickersley, Rotherham S66 1DZ for the period 1st April, 2018 to 31st March, 2020.

(2) That 20% top up discretionary relief be refused to Rain Rescue for the shop at 8 Woodhouse Green, Thurcroft, Rotherham S66 9AQ for the period 6th August, 2018 to 31st March, 2020.

29. RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS:- MODERN METHODS OF CONSTRUCTION

Further to Minute No. 103 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 4th February, 2019 consideration was given to the report which detailed the response to the five recommendations and how the Council's Strategic Housing and Development Service was exploring a range of ways to accelerate the delivery of new housing in the Borough, including the use of modern methods of construction. The Housing Service was also undertaking a pilot to deliver homes built using modern methods of construction of twelve new bungalows.

In considering the five recommendations; two were accepted and were in the process of being delivered and three were deferred pending further work and outcomes of the pilot project. This would be reported back to the Improving Places Select Commission and further dialogue would take place as and when required.

The Service remained fully committed to the innovation of modern methods of construction and were willing to explore different methods of delivering quality homes for the Borough.

Resolved:- (1) That the officer response to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review of Modern Methods of Construction as set out in Appendix A be approved.

(2) That a formal 'lessons learned' report post be provided on completion of the current MMC pilot.

30. **ACQUISITION OF LAND AT FENTON ROAD**

Consideration was given to the report which sought approval to acquire 1.29 hectares of land at Fenton Road from the Watson Estate.

The Council already owned part of this Fenton Road site and the acquisition of the remainder would give the Council full control of this site and enable it to be marketed for housing development. The whole site could accommodate approximately 90 new homes which would make a positive contribution to the Council's Housing Delivery Target.

The sale of the site to a housebuilder would also secure a Capital Receipt for the Council and would be the subject of a further report to Cabinet.

Resolved:- (1) That the acquisition of land at Fenton Road, as detailed in Appendix 3, subject to the land being acquired within the allocated budget be approved.

(2) That the Assistant Director of Planning, Regeneration and Transport negotiates and agrees the terms and conditions of the proposed acquisition, in consultation with the Assistant Director of Financial Services and the Assistant Director of Legal Services.

(3) That the Assistant Director of Legal Services be authorised to negotiate and complete the necessary legal agreements required for the acquisition of land at Fenton Road.

31. **LOCAL PLAN CORE STRATEGY FIVE YEAR REVIEW**

Consideration was given to the report which detailed how, in line with legislative requirements, a desk based five year review of the Local Plan Core Strategy had been undertaken to assess whether some or all of it may need updating.

The review indicated that, although the Core Strategy continued to be broadly up-to-date and complied with requirements set out in national planning policy, a number of areas required an update. Approval was, therefore, sought to commence a partial update of the Core Strategy to

update policies relating to housing, flood risk and water management, climate change and carbon reduction, and the presumption in favour of sustainable development, and to update infrastructure requirements to support new growth.

This report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as part of the pre-scrutiny process who were in support of the recommendations.

Resolved:- (1) That the findings of the Local Plan Core Strategy Five Year Review be noted.

(2) That the commencement of a partial update of the Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted 10th September, 2014) be approved.

(3) That a further report be brought to Cabinet to consider a revised Local Development Scheme setting out the timescale for, and broad scope of, the partial update of the Core Strategy.

32. TRANSPORTATION CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2019/20

Consideration was given to the report which outlined the Transportation Capital Investment Programme for schemes to be delivered and developed in the financial year 2019/20. The report also provides an update on progress on the A630 Parkway Widening Project and the College Road Roundabout.

The appendix set out in detail the Department for Transport categories and project titles, some of which would be brought forward on a worst first basis.

It was also noted that, following the trend of many Central Government departments, the DfT was increasingly responding to national budgetary constraints by reducing the level of grant funding to Local Authorities. This was primarily through the Local Transport Capital Funding allocation, which had witnessed a significant decrease in recent years.

The timelines for the two main schemes; A630 Parkway Widening was for 2020 with a decision awaited in October and College Road Roundabout would be commencing shortly.

Resolved:- (1) That the specific funding allocations for the Transportation Capital Investment Programme for the 2019/20 financial year be noted.

(2) That the proposed programme as identified in Appendix 1 as the basis for further feasibility works, detailed design and implementation during the 2019/20 financial year be noted.

(3) That progress with the A630 Parkway Widening project be noted and implementation is to be expected in 2020/21, subject to Department for Transport approval of the Full Business Case being submitted in Autumn 2019.

33. 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 item and the details included accordingly.

34. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Cabinet take place on Monday, 16th September, 2019 at 10.00 a.m.

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