

THE CABINET
Monday, 11th May, 2020

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)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

2. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

As the Cabinet met virtually in accordance with the provisions of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown regulations, members of the public were invited to email questions that would be read by an officer for the relevant Cabinet Member to answer.

Two questions were received from Mr Rodgers in advance of the meeting:-

1. When are the refunds are going to be made for the garden waste collections that have not been provided?
2. How is the council going to clear the backlog of garden waste which is piling up?

In response, the Cabinet Member for Waste, Roads and Community Safety thanked Mr Rodgers for his questions and thanked the broader public for their patience during the pandemic which had led to a six week pause of the garden waste service, however that service would be resumed on 11 May 2020 (the date of the meeting). The Cabinet Member confirmed that the details of reimbursement were being worked through by officers and the final position would be communicated to residents once that work had been completed.

With regard to the second question, the Cabinet Member indicated that she would work with officers to review the impact of the pausing of the garden waste collection service. Furthermore she recognised that it would take some time for normality to return. The Cabinet Member took the opportunity to pay tribute to the efforts of staff in the Waste service who had continued to work throughout the pandemic to provide refuse and recycling collection services in the borough.

3. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair reported that there were no items of business on the agenda that would require the exclusion of the press and public from the meeting.

4. UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY

Consideration was given to a report submitted for information which detailed the way in which the Council had responded to the Covid-19 emergency since March 2020.

The report detailed specific workstreams which had supported the Council's response to the pandemic, with a focus on the way in which decision making and governance had continued to operate, alongside the development of the Rotherham Community Hub and other specific work streams established to assist with the management of the emergency:-

- Managing the deceased
- Housing
- Rotherham Community Hub (Humanitarian/ Voluntary)
- Communications
- Staff & Workforce
- Data Collation & Reporting
- Corporate Incident & Business Continuity
- Health & Social Care Systems
- Rotherham Pandemic Group
- PPE

The Leader and Cabinet Members provided further details on the specific activities and outcomes associated with their respective portfolios and paid tribute to the work of officers in supporting the community during the pandemic.

It was noted that work was beginning in respect of planning for recovery from the pandemic and further discussions would be held across the Council in respect of the way in which services that been stood down during the pandemic would be returned as previous or in a different way.

Resolved:-

1. That the report be noted.

5. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR OLDER PEOPLES RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Consideration was given to a report which detailed the duties outlined in the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care's letter with a specific focus on care Homes for Older People covering both residential and nursing provision.

It was reported that there are 34 Care Homes for Older People in Rotherham, with a total capacity of 1,677 beds in the independent sector. Care Home sustainability was a key driver in ensuring that the social care system supported NHS hospitals in both Rotherham and Sheffield to discharge Rotherham residents within the three hour limit when they are fit for discharge safely back into the borough within a supportive environment, thereby freeing up the valuable hospital beds for other Covid-19 patients.

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care wrote to all local authorities on 19 March 2020 outlining the financial support available to support the response to Covid-19. The Council had been allocated two un-ringfenced grants totalling £16.2m to support the Council in meeting additional costs associated with its response to Covid-19. Within the grant letter were specific requirements to support Adult Social Care based on the guidance previously issued to local authority commissioners by the LGA, ADASS and the Care Provider Alliance to Adult Care commissioners.

Resolved:-

1. That approval be given to advance additional payments of £15k to each Older Peoples' Care Home in Rotherham (a total cost of £495k).
2. That approval be given to the provision of a £100k contingency fund for Adult Care to utilise should additional emergency funding be required.
3. That the costs be funded from the Government grant referred to within the report.
4. That the position be reviewed after the 12 week period (start date 1 April 2020) and any further requirements be brought back to Cabinet for decision.

6. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR LEARNING DISABILITY DAY OPPORTUNITY PROVIDERS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Consideration was given to a report which had a specific focus on the Adult Care Directorate's second largest area of spend after Older People, with a gross budget of circa £31.6m per annum on supporting people with a Learning Disability and/or Autism, in the light of a letter from the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care in respect of the Covid-19 pandemic.

It was reported that Independent and Voluntary sector provider sustainability was a key driver in ensuring that the Adult Social Care system in Rotherham continued to support people with a Learning Disability and/or Autism through the impacts of Covid-19. The impact of the Governments social distancing measures had been significant on the provision of day opportunity services for people with a Learning Disability and/or Autism, with many of the services having to close or significantly reduce their offer.

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock wrote to all local authorities on 19 March 2020 outlining the financial support available to support the response to Covid-19. The Council had been allocated two un-ringfenced grants totalling £16.2m to support the Council in meeting additional costs associated with its response to Covid-19. Within the grant letter were specific requirements to support Adult Social Care based on the guidance previously issued to local authority commissioners by the LGA, ADASS and the Care Provider Alliance to Adult Care commissioners.

Resolved:-

1. That approval be given to the adoption of the approach for each type of service as described in Option 1 of the report, with a total estimated cost of £970.1k.
2. That the position be reviewed after 12 weeks from 1 April 2020 or sooner if the government amends its guidance and any further requirements be brought back to Cabinet for decision.
3. That the additional costs be funded from the Government grant referred to in the body of the report.

7. 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.