

THE CABINET
Monday 20 March 2023

Present:- Councillor Read (in the Chair); Councillors Alam, Allen, Beck, Brookes, Cusworth, Lelliott and Sheppard.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Roche.

131. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

132. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A question was received from Mr Smith who wanted to know when the Masterplan for Dinnington Town Centre would be available?

The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment explained the plan had been put on hold whilst a bid for the Levelling Up fund had been submitted, this was to enable the Council to submit a higher bid. It was explained that Masterplans took around 6 months to a year to complete.

In his supplementary, Mr Smith noted he had received emails from the Assistant Director, Planning, Regeneration & Transport saying consultation with the Town Council would be undertaken in February 2023 however there had been no contact. He queried why there had been no consultation with Dinnington Town Council if the plan was in draft.

The Assistant Director, Planning, Regeneration & Transport explained this was interlinked with the Levelling Up fund bid so it was prudent to keep the Masterplan in draft.

The Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment confirmed that the engagement with members and others in the locality would take place however the Council was still awaiting details of the criteria and funding from the Government which will also need to be considered as part of that engagement.

A question was received from Councillor Tinsley who noted that Dinnington and Wath had been successful in their bids for the Levelling Up fund, it was asked if the allocated £2m from the Towns and Villages fund be allocated to fund improvements in places like Maltby, Thurcroft and will Maltby high street very much on the agenda locally, will meaningful discussions be held on the Masterplan improvements for Maltby high street?

The Leader responded to explain that the funding for that project had been set aside when the Levelling Up fund wasn't available. Now the Levelling Up fund was available the Council needed to work through the implications to understand what may happen with that funding. The intention through the Towns and Villages fund was to give special priority to that area. There was a great deal of uncertainty at the moment in terms of understanding all the implications around the funding available for that area.

In his supplementary, Councillor Tinsley noted that Masterplans could take up to twelve months to create and queried if Maltby's Masterplan was underway?

The Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment explained that Maltby's Masterplan was underway. The details could be shared in a matter of weeks to enable discussions to begin.

A question was received from Councillor Ball who mentioned that Riverside House cost taxpayers around £5m per year, he asked if it was acceptable to have an average occupancy rate of 31%?

The Leader explained following the pandemic the world of flexible working had moved on at pace. A policy was in place that regulated how services operated. Further work would be undertaken on this which would be considered by the Staffing Committee when completed. The occupancy rate would rise over time however the key thing was that services were delivered effectively for the public.

133. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 13 February 2023 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

134. 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.

135. LEARNING DISABILITY SERVICES

Consideration was given to the report submitted which summarised the achievements of the Learning Disability Transformation Programme as set out in the Cabinet Report "*The transformation of services and support for people with a learning disability*" in May 2018.

The report was asking Cabinet to note the achievements made to date, in particular Conway Crescent, as a respite service that was really well received. The report mentioned some of the community services that had

been developed over the years, along with the plans for Castle View, for those people with high support needs.

It was also recognised that people with a learning disability did not enjoy and equal life on every level, including equal life changes with the rest of the community.

The Council wanted to build on the success and work undertaken so far and refresh the strategy for 2023 and beyond. In order to achieve this there was a need to co-produce that vision with young adults, their families, parents, carers, and people with learning disabilities and providers who were delivering those services on the Council's behalf.

It was anticipated that the new strategy would have a strong focus on how people with a learning disability were supported to become more independent in all areas of life.

Some of the key areas to the strategy were around how and where to live, considering how people lived, what type of supported accommodation did they need. It focused on employment and training opportunities, which was key for people with a learning disability. Consideration to be given on how they got around the borough including how they got to work in terms of travelling. It focused on advocacy and support around people making their own decisions, which was vital, along with being active members of the community. Enabling them to have the ability to contribute to what was going on in their community.

The recommendations were then proposed.

The Leader noted the significant changing in how those services were delivered over the course of the last few years, which it was believed, had realised benefits for service users and their families. It was acknowledged that it had been a big change for a lot of people, which had been at times a difficult change. The way the service had delivered had changed quite dramatically. The fact that the disadvantage was still too great was key to this proposal, to assist people with learning disabilities to be full members of the community. It was a substantial period of consultation that would enable the Council to further explore the next steps to progress.

Resolved: That Cabinet:

1. Noted the achievements and ongoing progress of the Learning Disability Transformation Programme as set out in the Cabinet Report "The transformation of services and support for people with a learning disability – May 2018".
2. Approved a minimum 90-day period of co-production to establish the views and needs of people with a learning disability, their families, and carers and younger people preparing for adulthood, regarding the future vision and strategy for people with a learning

disability.

3. Agreed to receive a further report in late Autumn 2023 proposing a refreshed strategy for people with a learning disability in Rotherham.

136. CABINET RESPONSE TO COVID-19 CARE HOME SAFETY

Consideration was given to the report that provided a Cabinet response to the recommendations from the spotlight review carried out by Health Select Commission on Covid-19 Care Home Safety.

The Health Select Commission was thanked for conducting the review and the resulting recommendations. It was worth noting what Rotherham had a mixed care home market with 94% of care homes being run through the independent sector and of those the Council purchased around 35% of the care home bed capacity. The remaining market was made up of NHS funded placements, through continuing health care or step-down bed, along with a significant amount of self-funded beds. There were also some out of area funded placements as well. This demonstrated how much interaction the Council had with the independent sector. The Council also had 6% of its own care home provision, which provide significant during the pandemic in terms of providing flexibility to needs.

The section was responding to multiple commercial drivers as well as responding to the CQC and the input from the Council strategically.

The Council continued to work closely with the sector in terms of all safety measure, not just pandemic related. In terms of any further Health and Wellbeing Board reviews of the pandemic, the Council would be happy for those to be considered for future scrutiny reviews.

Resolved: That Cabinet endorsed this response to the Health Select Commission's spotlight review and accepted the recommendations.

137. MODERN SLAVERY ANNUAL TRANSPARENCY STATEMENT

Consideration was given to the report which provided the annual update in relation to the activities of the Council and its partners, in seeking to both address and prevent modern slavery. The report focussed on actions following the resolution passed by Council to adopt the Co-operative Party Charter against Modern Slavery on the 25th July 2018 and in-particular on actions since the last annual report presented to Cabinet on 24th January 2022.

A scrutiny spotlight review had been carried on the Council and partners response to modern slavery in Rotherham. The review generated several recommendations which would be considered and once approved incorporated into the action plan. The Chair and members of OSMB were

thanked for their work in this area.

The Safer Rotherham Partnership measured progress throughout the year.

A large part of the work associated with this was around the procurement arrangements and how the Council worked with its contractors and suppliers to ensure that modern slavery did not exist within its supply chains. There was more work to be done going forwards, around expertise for staff, to ensure they could investigate those supply chains and understand what the information may mean in terms of the risks of modern slavery. There was also a need to educate officers and the wider public about what might constitute risk in terms of modern slavery and where to report those issues to including the support available to those victims.

Resolved: that:

1. Cabinet noted the progress made to date.
2. Cabinet agreed for the current Transparency Statement 2022/23 to remain in place in 2023/24.

138. HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY 2023 - 2026

Consideration was given to the report which introduced the proposed Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2026, which explained how the Council and its partners would address the challenges of homelessness and rough sleeping, by focussing on six key priorities:

1. Make homelessness a rare occurrence by focusing on prevention and early intervention.
2. Minimise the use and improve the quality of temporary accommodation and end the use of hotels.
3. Increase access to affordable housing options.
4. Improve access to housing support, employment and health services.
5. Support people with complex needs.
6. End rough sleeping in Rotherham.

It was clarified this was the Council's second strategy with the first being published in 2019. The six priorities built upon the success of the last three years. It was highlighted that over the last three years the Council had reduced the number of rough sleepers counted from 16 in 2019 to zero. Other successes were the number of units available for homelessness accommodation had increased. Supported housing had increased including use for victims of domestic abuse. A new model for supporting young homeless people aged 16-25 had been co-designed.

The pathways in the service for vulnerable people had been improved including those for people leaving prison and hospital. The main aim of the strategy had been around prevention but also included recovery measures where needed. Partnership working was key, and the strategy was around strengthening those partnerships. Another key aspect was around reducing expensive temporary accommodation, including hotel use.

The level of engagement sought during the consultation process was highlighted. The 'Everyone In' programme during the pandemic showed what could be achieved when the Government assisted with funding. A key aim was that homelessness was something that people did not have to face in Rotherham, including working with those at risk of losing their properties to ensure suitable temporary accommodation was available.

It was noted that the pressure on homelessness services was growing long before that particular Government initiative. The rough sleeper count was good news, but it was a snapshot, but the Council was aware that there were people who spent nights on the streets in Rotherham and the Council would continue to work with them.

The partnership working element of the strategy was highlighted. The complexity of needs was growing in the borough and the partnership working with agencies and the voluntary sector was vital.

Housing first was an amazing project and the work being done with the boroughs young people was welcomed.

Resolved: That Cabinet approved the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2023 - 2026.

139. CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN AND ANNUAL REPORT

Consideration was given to the report which identified opportunities for joint action on the climate and nature crises in 2023 and expanded the programme's remit to include climate change adaptation and cohesion with a nature restoration programme.

The Council declared a climate emergency in October 2019. The report covered three main areas, it showed progress made, the actions around decarbonisation and single use plastic.

Key actions for next year included the decarbonisation and retrofitting of the Council's housing stock. Along with further actions on single use plastics including training for staff. More vehicle charging points and the role out of carbon literacy training. A medium and long term action plan would be developed.

This report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as part of the pre-decision scrutiny process. The

Board fully supported the recommendations including an additional recommendation regarding the 'Bin App' which was seeking that, details of the uptake of the Bin App be circulated to members of OSMB. It was clarified that this information had already been provided.

Resolved: That Cabinet:

1. Approved the Climate Change Action Plan in Appendix 2 including nature crisis and adaptation actions, noting the key achievements and opportunities summarised in Appendix 1 and sections 2 and 5 of this report.
2. Approved the Single Use Plastic Action Plan in Appendix 4.

140. HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND 2023/24

Consideration was given to the report which provided recommendations for a provisional allocation of the £4.978m. Any variations arising from actual spend under each of the provisional allocations would be managed through adjusting the allocation made towards the Energy Crisis Support Scheme.

The report also provided the Council's proposed use of the business rates levy surplus distribution, announced by Government alongside the final local government finance settlement 2023/24. The Council's allocation from the business rates levy surplus distribution was £538,415 and related to the financial year 2022/23. It was proposed to use the resource to support the Council's current Energy Crisis Support Scheme, which allowed residents of the borough to claim £400 support towards the cost of their energy.

The funding meant that the Council could commit to a further year of the free school meal vouchers, that further funding was available to go towards the energy crisis grant. The Council could continue to support the council tax support top up fund and the ability to continue with the Christmas hampers and additional support for care leavers with their household costs.

Resolved: That Cabinet agreed:

1. That provisional allocations of the Household Support Fund Grant of £4.978m be made as follows:
 - a. £2.5m for food vouchers to children eligible for free school meals for school holidays up to and including Easter 2024.
 - b. £1.2m to cover the estimated costs of the Council's Local Council Tax Support Top Up Scheme.
 - c. £0.4m additional funding to top up the Council's Discretionary Housing Payments fund.
 - d. £0.563m to support applications from households for assistance with cost-of-living increases, through the

Council's Energy Crisis Support Scheme.

- e. £180k to provide additional tinned food to supplement the supplies available for crisis food parcels provided by local food banks and Community Food Members. This sum would also assist with supplies to social supermarkets, which is a supplement to the Crisis Support service level agreement.
 - f. £90k allocation to support care leavers, being young people leaving foster or local authority care and living independently in their own accommodation who are responsible for paying their own utility bills, providing additional financial support through the cost-of-living increases.
 - g. £45k to support local VCS organisations to support vulnerable households over Christmas / New year through a supplement to the Crisis Support service level agreement.
2. To delegate authority to the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, to determine revised and final allocations for the Household Support Grant to include provision for other eligible actions within the use of Household Support Fund should it not be possible to achieve full spend of the grant through the approved provisional allocations.
 3. £150,000 cost of living crisis grant funding from the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority is used to top up the allocation to Discretionary Housing Payments; of which, £50,000 will be utilised in the current financial year and the remaining £100,000 in 23/24.
 4. Approved use of the Council's Business Rates, Levy surplus distribution allocation of £538,415 to be used to support Energy Crisis Support Payments in 2022/23.

141. SOCIAL VALUE ANNUAL REPORT

Consideration was given to the report which set out the key achievements over the year to the end of November 2022 and identified priority areas of work for 2023. Those priorities would further embed social value to secure the best possible outcomes and returns for the people of Rotherham.

It was clarified that it was the third year of progress reporting on the social value policy. The purpose was to ensure the Council was spending more money in the local economy and to ensure that the Council was getting the maximum value from its suppliers and to ensure the Council was tackling poverty and encouraging use of the real living wage.

The Council was slowly starting to see the benefits increase over time and it did show that the overall spend with third party suppliers within the borough had nearly doubled over the past three years

It was explained that a correction within the report summary was needed

to confirm that more than £13m had now been secured from Council contracts, rather than the £113m listed in the summary.

This report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as part of the pre-decision scrutiny process. The Board fully supported the recommendations.

Resolved:

1. That the annual report is received noting the increased social value commitments along with outcomes achieved.
2. That Cabinet agreed the following key priorities for 2023 include:
 - a. Continue to embed the foundations of strong social value delivery through contract manager and supplier learning and development, tools and evaluation.
 - b. Support new and existing businesses to enter into new markets, from which the Council buys goods and services through the work of Rotherham Investment and Development Office and meet the buyer events.
 - c. Hold a Social Value celebration event for suppliers to showcase impact and inspire others.
 - d. Formally launch Rotherham Social Value Anchor Networks to raise awareness and engagement of more partners.

142. FINANCIAL INCLUSION STRATEGY

Consideration was given to the report which sought approval for the Financial Inclusion Plan. The Plan detailed the support available to the residents of Rotherham.

The UK was facing the highest inflation rates in over 40 years leading to significant increases in the prices of food, heating, and clothing and the Council had strategically used its Household Support Fund to help those most in need to help.

The aim of the plan was to continue to help residents and tenants to improve their quality of life by maximising their income, increasing levels of education and improving their potential to gain employment.

The plan would be implemented by the Financial Inclusion team within the Housing Service, but it would also have access from all directorates to ensure the council was offering services to all residents.

The plan could not stand alone in delivering solutions; therefore, it was a co-ordinated approach that brought together the wider council services, partners and agencies which would achieve greater success.

This was part of a wider wrap around support for all residents of the borough, so that people who wanted to get into work could be helped

along every step of the way, through the support of the Employment Solutions team.

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet approved the Corporate Financial Inclusion Plan 2023-24

143. FLEET REPLACEMENT PLAN

Consideration was given to the report which considered options to implement a long-term phased approach to the procurement, operation, maintenance, replacement, and disposal of Council fleet vehicles, which were essential tools in delivering services across the Borough.

The report detailed the current vehicle assets owned or leased by the Council and proposed a Fleet Replacement Plan to make best use of the available Capital funding, with a view to supporting the Council's commitment to net zero by 2030.

It was a significant report due to the amount of investment in replacing, modernising and renewing just over a third of the council's fleet. The council operated and ran around 337 vehicles and through the report it was proposing to replace 119 of those, 64 of which were proposed to be electric vehicles.

The two main ways this had been approached was replace many of the vehicles that were leased or hired along with purchasing 16 bin lorries that the council leased.

The proposal supported the Council's climate change agenda and it wanted to embrace all different types of renewable options available.

A huge amount of work had been undertaken with colleagues in procurement in finance had been undertaken during the development of these proposals.

This report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as part of the pre-decision scrutiny process. The Board was pleased to see the significant investment that would benefit everyone in the borough. The Board fully supported the recommendations.

Resolved: That Cabinet:

1. Approved the approach to fleet replacement, which refreshes 35% of the current fleet by 2025/26 that works towards the Council's strategic objective of achieving 'Net Zero' status by 2030, and Borough wide by 2040.
2. Noted the intention to strengthen centralised fleet management,

including Council-wide requests for additional vehicles, acquisition, disposal, maintenance, and redeployment of assets to ensure best utilisation and value.

3. Delegated authority to the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment, in consultation with the S.151 Officer, and Cabinet Member for Transport and the Environment to enter into the necessary procurement agreements to effect the delivery of the report objectives.

144. 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.

145. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved: That the next meeting of the Cabinet be held on Monday 24 April 2023, commencing at 10.00 a.m. in Rotherham Town Hall.