

**THE CABINET  
18th December, 2023**

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

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Alam and Brookes.

**101.       DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**102.       QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

1. Ms. Britton raised a number of issues relation to Peregrine Way Community Centre:

- Confusion around the arrangement of tables and mopping.
- The removal of keys so community centre volunteers were not allowed to lock the building.
- No longer being able to keep chairs in the boiler cupboard and therefore not being able to store as many chairs which had a knock on impact on the number of people who could attend events.
- The changing of the lock code for the boiler cupboard so volunteers could no longer access it. This prevented a light from being turned off for a number of days.
- Disagreements on where cleaning equipment could be stored and whether it was appropriate for the volunteers to use funds to buy more storage space.

Ms. Britton stated that the volunteers felt they were being unfairly treated and had questioned whether to continue. She asked whether something could be done.

Councillor Allen agreed to speak to Ms. Britton following the conclusion of the meeting regarding the matters raised.

2. Mr. Azam stated that at the Cabinet meeting on 7th August, 2023, the 5 year plan and the strategic plan for Dignity were discussed which had been outstanding since March. He stated that the Leader had made a personal commitment in the communications sent out that it would be discussed at Scrutiny in December 2023. The strategic plan had been provided to RMBC from Dignity on 1st October, but it was not presented to Scrutiny. Mr. Azam asked why this was the case?

Councillor Read stated that this was his understanding, but he

referred the question to the Assistant Director of Legal who stated that the 5 year plan had been presented at Scrutiny in December 2023. He confirmed that he would go back and check the details of the commitments made by the Leader and make sure their understandings were aligned. A written response would be provided.

Mr. Azam stated that the commitment was for both the 5 year plan and the strategic plan. In his supplementary he asked that the schedule for the meetings with the Muslim Liaison Bereavement Group be circulated as soon as possible.

The Leader confirmed that this would happen as soon as possible.

3. Councillor Tinsley stated that on 23rd November, 2023, the Planning Board met to discuss proposals for 185 houses to be built on Highfield Park with part of the land being Green Belt and including ancient woodland. Councillor Tinsley stated that concerns around those were dismissed at the hearing. It was his belief that officials had not understood the ecology report for the development and the impact or how it sat within national policy. The policy stated that applications that would require the felling of ancient woodlands should only be granted if there were wholly exceptional reasons. Justification to say that actual presence of trees is limited was not an excuse and the officials still needed to engage with the policy. There were no exceptional circumstances to the building of an access road through Green Belt, yet this was railroaded as not a problem.

Councillor Tinsley stated that there were many other issues with how the application had been dealt with:

- Insufficient time allowed for the site visit – around 15 minutes.
- Some Members had inappropriate footwear so could not participate in the site visit.
- An objection from Yorkshire Wildlife Trust was omitted until the day before the Planning hearing. Councillor Tinsley was unsure if Planning Board Members had had enough time to read the report.
- Two of the Members of the Board who voted in favour had not attended the site visit.
- Residents stated they had not received the Right To Speak notifications.
- Concerns around the lease and no consultation with Ward Members.
- Donations to the Rother Valley Labour Party from the CEO of Hargreaves which was discussed at the planning hearing.

Councillor Tinsley stated that another Council had deferred consideration of an application to allow an investigation to take place into donations. He explained that this was a declared donation and no investigation had yet taken place in relation to this application. He asked whether the Council would revoke the planning application

approval (as the decision notice had not yet been served) and send it back to the Planning Board for reconsideration following a full investigation?

The Leader explained that planning decisions were separate from the executive decisions of the Council. This meant the Cabinet meeting had no role in the decisions that were taken by the Planning Board. Those decisions were taken in accordance with national and local rules. The Leader confirmed that he was not involved in any planning decisions at all and as such, could not comment on things that had happened at the Planning Board. He did, however, state that Members not going on site visits was quite common and not in breach of any rules.

The Leader also responded to the comments regarding the donations to the Labour Party. He stated that the money was given to the Rother Valley Labour Party a number of years ago to support a Parliamentary candidate. It was all properly declared and there were no conflicts of interest. It was the responsibility of individual Members to declare interests. The money donated had not been given to any Councillors. The Leader stated that it would be very complicated to have every Councillor declare an interest for every decision involving a company that had made donations to a political party. He noted that officers were present at the meeting who would take away the concerns raised but as Leader, he could not ask for a review as he was not involved in those processes in anyway.

In his supplementary, Councillor Tinsley stated that he understood that Cabinet could not interfere with the planning functions but asked that they still call for an investigation. He also questioned the relationship the Labour Party had had with Hargreaves for many years.

The Leader stated that all political parties received donations from private companies or individuals, and it was dangerous to speculate beyond that. The Leader was assured that everyone had done what they were supposed to have done and followed the rules appropriately. He encouraged Councillor Tinsley to stop throwing mud around and trying to get political gains from this matter.

The Monitoring Officer responded by stating that the Cabinet could not instruct an investigation into Standards issues. That was a matter for the Standards process. As the Monitoring Officer, he had already been made aware of some concerns and would proceed with the correct process.

4. Parish Councillor Andrew Laird (Maltby Town Council) also asked a question in relation to the development at Highfield Park. He stated that the documents provided to the Planning Board claimed that 185 dwellings would not make a big difference to the infrastructure (roads, dentists, doctors, hospitals etc) of Maltby. The report did not mention

that the 185 houses were being built alongside another 570 houses which in total was 775 houses. In reality that would mean 1,500 additional cars using Maltby's road system. This was all in addition to the new development at Hellaby which would have a huge impact on the roads. Parish Councillor Laird questioned why the report only looked at the impact of 185 dwellings and not the cumulative impact of all the developments? There were already pressures on doctors surgeries following the closure of one practice.

The Leader explained that Cabinet did not hear planning applications so he could not comment on individual developments. It would be inappropriate for him to comment. However, as a rule, each application was treated individually, not cumulatively. Issues around the availability of doctors had been raised in a number of forums. The Leader stated this was due to the health service not receiving the amount of funding that it required. However, the appropriate response was not to say no more houses should be built as people needed somewhere to live.

The Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment explained that planning was governed by the National Planning Policy Framework and the Rotherham Local Plan which included the sites document. This was predicated on growth and development and sites were allocated for development through that process. There were applications that came through that route, but applications could be made for land that was not allocated. All applications were assessed against those policies. There were two mechanisms that could fund infrastructure improvements either through Section 106 agreements or through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

In his supplementary, Parish Councillor Laird stated that there was another parcel of land adjacent to the Highfield Park site that was not part of the current development. He asked if this was going to be developed in the future?

Councillor Lelliott agreed to look into the matter with officers and provide a written response.

**103. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved:-

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20th November, 2023, be approved as a true and correct of the proceedings subject to a clerical correction to the date and time of the next meeting at Minute No. 100.

**104. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Chair advised that Appendix 2 to Minute No. 110, contained exempt information, however, the meeting remained open to the public and press

throughout.

**105. ADULT SOCIAL CARE MENTAL HEALTH REVIEW**

Consideration was given to the report which summarised the findings from the Council's Adult Social Care Mental Health model review which had taken place following approval from Cabinet in February 2023. The report also proposed a new model for the Council's Adult Social Care mental health provision across the Borough. The new model would be built on the principles of enablement and recovery and would be delivered through a collaborative approach with partners.

The proposals also included the co-design of a Mental Health Strategy for Rotherham with people with lived experience, their families, and carers, as well as partners and other key stakeholders. The Strategy would be designed in 2024, post-implementation of the new model, and launched in 2025, subject to Cabinet approval. This approach would ensure prioritisation of the immediate issue to address the risks linked to operational delivery and compliance with statutory duties. Paragraph 3.4 of the report submitted set out a number of ways that the proposals would provide a collaborative, preventative approach by ensuring residents got the right support, at the right time, in the right place. These included raising the Social Care profile; providing an effecting and equitable response for people with mental ill-health; strengthening the recovery model; ensuring all legislative and statutory duties were met; enabling the Council to better evidence Social Care interventions; supporting preparation for formal regulation of Adult Social Care by the Care Quality Commission in 2024; supporting Rotherham Place and solidifying the commitment to form the foundations to progress a collaborative "community hub" model in the future.

Subject to Cabinet approval, implementation planning of the pathway and service model would commence on 1st January, 2024. This would involve:

- Staff structures, role profiles and agreeing new terms and conditions required to operationalise the model, including delivery of a consultation with staff affected by the proposed changes (January – February 2024).
- Scoping recording requirements and implementing system changes (January – March 2024).
- Training needs analysis and training plan (February – March 2024).
- Operating procedures and guidance with defined pathway criteria and remits (March 2024).
- Aligning the Mental Health Review with RDaSH Crisis and the Community Mental Health Transformation (January – March 2024).

The new Mental Health model would be operational from 1st April, 2024.

Details of the consultation were set out in paragraph 4 of the report and the full findings were included in Appendix 1. 159 people had participated

in the consultation which ran from 7th August to 1st October 2023.

The report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB), who advised that the recommendations be supported. They also requested that an update be provided to OSMB (or nominated Select Commission) on the impact of the policy, 12 months after its implementation. This requested was accepted by Cabinet.

**Resolved:**

That Cabinet:

1. Note the proposals for a new Adult Social Care Mental Health model of provision for the Borough.
2. Approve the development of a co-designed Council Mental Health Strategy for Rotherham, with the Strategy being presented back to Cabinet for approval in 2025, prior to publication.
3. Agree that an update be provided to OSMB (or nominated Select Commission) on the impact of the Policy, 12 months after its implementation.

**106. EXPANSION OF WAVERLEY JUNIOR ACADEMY**

Consideration was given to the report which sought Cabinet approval to progress the expansion of Waverley Junior Academy through the use of Section 106 developer funding to accommodate current and future demand for places. This would be subject to a successful planning application and Department for Education approval for significant change.

Waverley Junior Academy opened in September 2020 in response to need created for primary school places by a new housing development. It was originally developed as a 2-form entry school, providing 60 places per year group, with the potential for expansion if needed. The school was oversubscribed and this trend was set to continue in future years. Projections based on the pupil yield created during the development indicated that the expansion by creation of a third form of entry would be required to meet need across the local area in September 2025.

It had been possible to utilise capacity in other schools across the planning area to meet demand to date and it was anticipated that this would remain the case for entry in 2024. Beyond this time the capacity at schools within a reasonable distance would not be sufficient to meet projected demand. The expansion of Waverley Junior Academy was anticipated to meet growing demand for school places across the planning area as a result of new development on the Waverley development and was, therefore, not projected to impact the overall capacity in local schools.

Under the Section 106 Agreement with the developer, Harworth Group would pay on request to the Council the sum of £2.945m, subject to the Building Cost Information Service index, on occupation of between 1,500-1,700 dwellings. This threshold had now been met with 1,600 dwellings occupied and the amount payable based on the November 2023 forecast was £3,131m.

A project group of key stakeholders across Education, Planning and Asset Management would be established to oversee the planning, development, and implementation of the project. The estimated cost of the expansion, including a 10% contingency and 15% fees was £2,936m. The building work would be procured and delivered by the Council.

**Resolved:**

1. That Cabinet note release of the Section 106 funding, as per the agreement with Harworth, to create additional capacity of 210 places at Waverley Junior Academy now that trigger has been met.
2. That Cabinet approve the addition of the proposed expansion to the Capital Programme.

**107. HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY**

Consideration was given to the report which outlined the proposed key changes to the Home to School Transport Policy and sought approval from Cabinet to commence a period of public consultation. The Council had a statutory responsibility to make suitable travel arrangements to and from school for eligible children of compulsory school age. Statutory guidance was published by the Department for Education (DfE) and set out what local authorities had to do to comply with the law.

The consultation exercise would pay particular attention to any proposed amendments along with those that would ensure compliance with the new statutory guidance. The Policy review also aimed to improve the existing content and accessibility, so that parents and carers could easily source all relevant information, on which to make informed decisions regarding their children's education.

The statutory guidelines had been updated and published on 29th June, 2023. Prior to this, the guidelines were last updated and published by DfE on 18th July, 2014, meaning that there was now a requirement to review the existing Home to School Policy ahead of the new academic year that would commence in September 2024.

Details of the key changes requiring improvement were at paragraph 2.4 of the report and the full draft Policy was attached as Appendix 1. The changes related to:

- Local Authority statutory duties for eligible children and young people
- Clearer definitions of key words which overarched full policy, such as “suitable school”, “home address” and “qualifying schools”
- The definition of what was defined as suitable/qualifying schools
- Statutory walking distances
- Travel Solutions (including Independent Travel Training)
- Behaviour expectations, public transport
- Behaviour expectations on assisted home to school transport (SEND)
- Eligibility and application process children/young people (SEND)
- Local authority discretionary powers
- Safeguarding
- Suitability of transport arrangements
- Parental payments
- Overarching principles

The consultation would commence in January 2024 if approval was given by Cabinet. It would run for a period of 28 days during term time. A final draft Policy would be developed and presented to Cabinet for consideration in March 2024.

**Resolved:**

1. That Cabinet approve the draft Policy for consultation.
2. That Cabinet approve the approach to the public consultation.

**108. FLY TIPPING AND LITTERING FIXED PENALTY CHARGE INCREASE**

Consideration was given to the report which explained that the financial level of fixed penalties that could be issued by Local Authorities to fly tippers and litterers had been increased through the Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2023. The maximum amounts were now £1,000 for fly tipping, £600 for household duty of care waste offences and £500 for littering. The penalty upon conviction via a prosecution for fly tipping remained an unlimited fine and/or imprisonment. Cabinet was asked to agree to the proposed increases and recommend to Council that the increases be adopted by Council as part of the setting of fees and charges for the 2024/25 financial year.

Councils could issue Fixed Penalty Notices where people were found to have littered and could prosecute or issue Fixed Penalty Notices to individuals or companies that commit fly tipping offences. The level of these Fixed Penalty Notices were set through statutory instruments from Government. At the Council Meeting on 1st March, 2023, the Council set fees for the 2023/24 financial year. Included within these fees were the levels of Fixed Penalty Notices for fly tipping and littering offences.

Currently the Council had set the levels of these Fixed Penalties in accordance with the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and the Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (England) Regulations 2017, with the maximum amount for littering at £150 and the maximum for fly tipping at £400.

The proposed charges for individual types of offences were:

- Litter – Maximum fine of £500 reduced to £150 if the fine is paid within 14 days
- Fly-Tipping – Maximum of £1,000 however different scales of fly tipping will be subject to differing fine levels:
  - Tier 1 (1-5 bags) - A proposed fine of £800 reduced to £400 if paid within 14 days
  - Tier 2 (over 5 bags/car boot) – A proposed fine of £800 reduced to £400 if paid within 14 days
  - Tier 3 (Large fly tip /tipper load) – A proposed fine of £1000 Household
- Duty of Care – Maximum of £600 reduced to £300 if paid within 14 days

Officers would retain discretion to take alternative actions or prosecutions where this was deemed appropriate. It was confirmed at the meeting that the Council was committed to robust enforcement action.

**Resolved:**

That Cabinet:

1. Agree the proposed increased level of fixed penalties prescribed by sections 2 and 3 of The Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2023.
2. Agree to recommend the proposed increases in maximum levels of fixed penalties to Council for adoption as part of the setting of fees and charges for the 2024 to 2025 financial year.

**109. AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS ASSISTANCE POLICY**

Consideration was given to the report which sought approval of the new Aids and Adaptations Assistance Policy and of the proposed increase in Disabled Facilities Grant fees from 10% to 15%. The current Aids and Adaptations Policy was adopted in April 2015. On 10th July, 2023, Cabinet agreed to review the Policy and to put in place some temporary delegations to facilitate continued delivery of the aids and adaptations service. The review had now concluded, and the report recommended the adoption of a new Aids and Adaptations Assistance Policy (Appendix 1) including a new set of financial delegations. The proposed Policy set out

how the Council intended to exercise its powers under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002 by consolidating the traditional assistance for aids and adaptations with a range of new discretionary grants.

The review took place between July and October 2023 and details were set out in section 4 of the report. In addition to considering the latest best practice, the review considered best utilisation of the Service, comparing access from residents living in different housing tenures and the most common types of adaptations needed and associated costs and budgets. Views and feedback from stakeholders, partners and Service users was gathered. Council officers heard directly from residents who had lived experience of aids and adaptations. In total more than 200 people were involved in the review.

The review was underpinned and supported by the Government's latest guidance for local authorities, published in 2022. The guidance set out expectations on local authorities and the rights of a disabled person making an application for grants. Officers also consulted with Foundations, the national body for Home Improvement Agencies, in the development of the guidance.

The table at Appendix 1 of the proposed Policy provided an outline of all the aids and assistance schemes. The Policy would help increase the number of people accessing aids and adaptations. This would enable more people to remain living independently in their own homes. The Policy also offered more cost-effective solutions as an alternative to high-cost adaptations through better use of stock and more flexible grant arrangements.

The report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB), who advised that the recommendations be supported. Although it was not a formal recommendation, they did ask that the Service consider creating a register to monitor which properties had aids and/or adaptations. The Cabinet Member agreed to this request. OSMB also requested that an update be provided to OSMB (or nominated Select Commission) on the impact of the Policy, 12 months after its implementation. This requested was accepted by Cabinet.

**Resolved:**

That Cabinet:

1. Approve the adoption of the new Aids and Adaptations Assistance Policy (Appendix 1) and note the new scheme of delegation for authorising grants.
2. Approve the proposed increase in Disabled Facilities Grant fees from 10% to 15% in order to pay for additional administrative and technical services costs associated with the new Policy and note

that the Council is permitted to include necessary and reasonable fees associated with Disabled Facilities Grant applications within the overall cost of the eligible works.

3. Delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Adult Care Housing and Public Health who can sub-delegate to the Assistant Director of Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing to prioritise or withdraw discretionary assistance in accordance with the Aids and Adaptations Assistance Policy and in line with the available budget.
4. Delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Adult Care Housing and Public Health to make minor amendments to the Policy when the need is identified.
5. Agree that an update be provided to OSMB (or nominated Select Commission) on the impact of the Policy, 12 months after its implementation.

**110. ROTHERHAM MARKETS & CENTRAL LIBRARY**

Consideration was given to the report which provided an update on progress and proposals for the development of the Rotherham Markets complex to create the new Rotherham Markets and Library within Rotherham Town Centre. The report also outlined and sought approval to proceed to the next phase of development and delivery of the project.

The redevelopment and repurposing of the Rotherham Markets Complex was identified as a key project in the adopted 2017 Rotherham Town Centre Masterplan (TCM). Previous public and stakeholder consultation for the Town Centre Masterplan and the Cultural Strategy identified a need to improve the cultural and leisure offer within Rotherham Town Centre. This involved improving the proximity and connectivity between key amenities, upgrading the quality of the built environment and delivering inclusive access to the different facilities on offer. This would have spill over effects for the wider town.

Detailed designs were completed in June 2022 in advance of the submission of a planning application. Planning permission, RB2022/0881, was granted conditionally on 3rd November, 2022. On 7th August, 2023, Cabinet approved the enabling works for the Rotherham Markets and Library development and delegated authority to award contracts for these early phase enabling works. This contract award was made on 26th September, 2023, and Harry Boot Construction Ltd (HBC) commenced works on site in September 2023 with a works programme scheduled to run until March 2024.

To facilitate the proposed redevelopment and delivery of the Council's

regeneration aspirations, a suitable construction works contract was required to allow for the controlled and safe delivery of works on site. HBC had been appointed under a two-stage design and build approach to develop the final redevelopment plans, costings, and delivery approach. The main works contract would act as a standalone agreement with HBC and could be triggered once final costs were secured. It was anticipated that the final costs for the main works would be confirmed in Spring 2024. Once final costs were available, the Council had to act swiftly to proceed with the contract and secure costs to avoid unnecessary additional costs related to inflation and other market pressures. A clear indication of an upper limit of the development costs was detailed in exempt Appendix 2. The report therefore sought authority to approve the scheme within the upper budget limit outlined in Appendix 2.

If the final costs were deemed acceptable, the Council would seek to award relevant contracts by Officer Decision to action the approved redevelopment works and facilitate the current programme being achieved.

At the meeting it was confirmed that this was a major milestone for the development of the Markets and Library complex. The Leader stated action needed to be taken to safeguard the future of the markets in Rotherham and this project would help do that. The Cabinet Member agreed and stated that the Council owed it to the market traders to improve the complex.

**Resolved:**

1. That Cabinet approve development of the Rotherham Markets and Library complex to deliver the proposed Rotherham Markets & Library redevelopment within the values detailed in exempt Appendix 2.

**111. HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING POLICY**

Consideration was given to the report which provided the findings of the consultation exercise in relation to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy. It also proposes approval and adoption of the final Policy document along with a proposal to carry out a further review of vehicle signage and driver identification.

Cabinet had given approval to commence a period of consultation in relation to a number of proposed amendments to the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy in June 2023. There were 624 responses which were included in Appendix 2 to the report. Following the consultation, a number of changes had been included in the final Policy in relation to:

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- Enhanced requirements for Private Hire Operators
- Removal of the limit on Hackney Carriage licences
- Amendment to the vehicle age and emissions policy
- Vehicle signage
- Review of the Conviction Policy
- Requirement for a DBS check as part of a vehicle licence application
- Clarification regarding application requirements

The proposed amendments to the Policy were highlighted in yellow in Appendix 1.

During the consultation it became apparent that compliance with the revised requirements could present operators with practical and technological challenges. It was, therefore, proposed that the requirements be introduced in accordance with the implementation scheme that was attached to the report as Appendix 3. During the meeting, it was proposed that Appendix 3 be amended to include the following:

- Confirmation that the amendment of the limit on Hackney Carriages will only come into effect once the Forge Island development is operational.

This was agreed.

### **Resolved:**

That Cabinet:-

1. Adopt the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2023 attached as Appendix 1.
2. Agree to the implementation of the Policy requirements according to the implementation scheme detailed at Appendix 3, which was amended at the meeting to include the following:
  - Confirmation that the amendment of the limit on Hackney Carriages will only come into effect once the Forge Island development is operational.
3. Agree to a further review in relation to vehicle signage and driver identification, as described in section 2.5 of this report.

## **112. HOUSE TO HOUSE COLLECTION POLICY**

Consideration was given to the report which outlined the findings of the review into the House to House Collection Policy and recommended approval of the revised Policy. The Council's current House to House Collection Policy was introduced in 2019. The effectiveness of the Policy

was assessed in 2020 and found to be delivering the aims of the Policy, and a commitment was made to undertake a further review of the Policy within 3 years. Following a review by Officers of the existing Policy, a draft version was shared for consultation.

In total, the Council had received 73 responses to the consultation. Of these 73 responses, the overwhelming majority were in favour of maintaining the status quo with regard to the Policy requirements. In addition, consultation had also taken place with Members of the Council's Licensing Board, who were generally in agreement that the Policy delivered on the intended the aims.

Comments were received during the consultation regarding the current arrangement of setting a minimum percentage as the amount that would be received by the collection beneficiary. The Policy currently stipulated that at least 80% of the gross proceeds of the collection must be provided to the collection beneficiary. The point was made that the use of percentages was unfair and should therefore be avoided. The principal reason given in support of this position was that the items that were collected only had value once they had been processed by the collector – and that it was unreasonable to limit the amount that could be claimed for this activity to 20% of the total proceeds of the collection (as the costs of adding value to the collected items often exceed this).

This position was assessed during the Policy review, and it was determined that although the Policy referred to a minimum percentage of 80% of the gross proceeds of the collection, it could further support this charitable sector to amend the Policy to provide further scope to decision makers when considering applications, and in recognition of the ongoing pressures as a result of inflation and the cost of living. It was therefore proposed that the Policy be amended so that a minimum of 80% of the net proceeds must be provided to the collection beneficiary, allowing a deduction of up to 20% for the costs associated with the collection and processing of items. In addition, in order to ensure that decision makers were fully aware of the implications of the use of percentages, information from the Institute of Fundraising regarding the use of percentages was presented to decision makers when they were being asked to determine applications for a permit.

Key aspects of the proposed Policy were summarised in paragraph 2.15 to 2.30 of the report and included information on:

- The application process
- Obligations on those that are granted a Licence
- Circumstances that may lead to the refusal of an application
- Consideration of financial information
- Administration / Enforcement

The proposed House to House Collection Policy was attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

**Resolved:**

That Cabinet adopts the House to House Collection Policy that is attached to this report as Appendix 1.

**113. COVID RECOVERY FUND**

Consideration was given to the report which proposed further use of the Council's Covid Recovery Fund reserve. Taking into account approved use for 2023/24 and 2024/25 to support the Council's previously agreed revenue investments, the reserve had a remaining balance of £0.6m. It was proposed that the remaining funding be used to help residents against the backdrop of a cost of living crisis due to inflation and significant increases in energy and fuel bills in particular. The proposal was to re-establish the cash Energy Crisis Support Scheme that the Council had previously used to provide support to households with the cost of energy bills which remained substantially higher than 2 years ago, despite energy bills starting to reduce.

The Household Support Fund April 2023 to March 2024 report to Cabinet in March 2023 approved additional funding for the Council's Energy Crisis Support Scheme (ECSS). In 2023/24 over 2,300 grants of £250 had been paid to households who were eligible for the scheme. The funding allocated to the ECSS through the HSF had been fully spent by the end of June 2023.

To provide support to households with increased energy bills as a result of the winter it was proposed to allocate the remainder of the Covid Recovery Fund to establish a new scheme which would open to applications in January 2024.

**Resolved:**

**That Cabinet agree to:**

1. Approve the proposed use of the remainder of the Covid Recovery Fund as follows:
  - a. £550k cash grant scheme to provide support for households with the rising cost of energy bills; and
  - b. £50k to facilitate the administration of the energy grant proposal.

**114. 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.

**115. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

**Resolved:-**

The next meeting of the Cabinet will be held on Monday, 22nd January, 2024 ,commencing at 10.00 a.m. in Rotherham Town Hall.