

THE CABINET
Monday 19 May 2025

Present:- Councillor Read (in the Chair); Councillors Alam, Allen, Baker-Rogers, Cusworth and Taylor.

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

153. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

154. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There was one question from Mr Hussain who stated that he kept attending Cabinet and asking for progress updates on the contract negotiations between the Council and Dignity but was getting no answers. He stated that there was no movement, and the Council had confirmed at the last liaison group meeting that there had been no further progress. Mr Hussain stated that spaces were running out and he asked what the Council were doing about it.

Bal Nahal, Head of Legal, Registrars and Bereavement Services, explained that the Assistant Director of Legal, Registrars and Bereavement Services was still negotiating the contract and there were weekly discussions taking place. The Leader explained that he understood Mr Hussain's frustration but due to the commercial sensitivity of negotiations it was not always possible to provide updates however he could confirm that negotiations were still ongoing.

Mr Hussain asked if the Council could commit to a date by which the negotiations would be completed. The Muslim community needed certainty in relation to the number of spaces available. Mr Hussain also referenced the abandoned building in East Herringthorpe Cemetery. He believed that this was the responsibility of the Council and not of Dignity. Mr Hussain therefore asked if the building could be refurbished and brought back into use.

The Leader agreed to provide a written response regarding the building in East Herringthorpe Cemetery. He could not commit to providing a date by which the negotiations would be complete. The Leader did confirm that the required service was still being carried out at all cemeteries across the borough.

155. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

During the meeting it was agreed that the following amendments would be made to the minutes:

Minute 148 – Economic Inactivity Trailblazer – Paragraph 6: change the “Go Get Britain Working Initiative” to the “Get Britain Working Initiative.”

Minute 149 – Household Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document – Paragraph 1: remove “Consideration was given to the report which.”

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 14 April 2025, as amended, be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings and signed by the Chair.

156. 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.

157. REVIEW OF THE NON-RESIDENTIAL CHARGING POLICY

Consideration was given to the report which provided an update on the proposed review of the Non-Residential Charging Policy. The Policy was last reviewed in 2019 and focused on ensuring ongoing compliance with charging regulations and to ensure equity in approach to charging for all who received services and required a financial assessment. A review by legal officers had highlighted the need for a joint non-residential and residential charging policy. Therefore, it was proposed that a new Adult Care Charging Policy be produced that combined the two.

The aim of the report was to seek approval to produce and then carry out a consultation on a new Adult Care Charging Policy. It would set out the options available for the Council to consider, including options for the financial assessment. An initial review had been undertaken on the current Non-Residential Charging Policy and had identified three areas for consideration. The report referred to the current policy, when benchmarked against other authorities in the region.

The three areas for consideration were:

The Minimum/maximum charge - Currently Rotherham Council had in place a maximum charge of £689 per week per individual for non-residential charges. Of the other Councils in South Yorkshire, only Sheffield currently had a maximum charge. The current minimum assessed contribution was £1 per week for Rotherham. There were currently nine people who paid the maximum charge. Removing this could generate an additional £3,300 a week.

The option was to remove the maximum charge so as to charge up to the full cost of the care, and to retain the minimum charge of £1 per week.

Introduction of an administrative charge for organising care for self-funders - Currently Rotherham Council organised care for self-funders if requested to do so without charging. Both Barnsley and Doncaster charged an administrative fee to do this. Self-funders were customers who had capital assets over £23,250 (or £46,500 as a couple) or customers who had chosen not to be financially assessed. There were currently 224 customers who fell into this category. An annual charge of £350/yr could increase income by over £70,000 a year. The option was to introduce an annual charge to self-funders to organise their care, estimated at circa £350 a year.

Inclusion of all disability benefits in the financial assessment - Currently in Rotherham the process for carrying out the financial assessment took into consideration only the lower or middle rate of Attendance Allowance and Disability Living Allowance, and the standard rate of Personal Independence Payments where services were only received during daytime hours; this was the case even where the service user was in receipt of the higher and enhanced rates of these payments.

There were currently 2,713 non-residential customers, of which 1,291 received a high-rate disability benefit. A sample of 39% would generate an additional £11,000 a week so the full cohort was likely to be significantly higher. The option was to include all legally admissible income when the financial assessment was completed. It was not recommended that this option be included in the consultation because of the detrimental and disproportionate impact on people with the highest care and support needs.

Consultation was to be carried out with stakeholders through an online questionnaire and face to face sessions over a 12-week period. This consultation would be planned for summer commencement 2025, with letters being issued prior, to advise service users of their opportunity to feed back. The outcome of the consultation exercise would inform the future joint residential and Non-Residential Charging Policy for Adult Social Care subject to further Cabinet approval by the end of 2025.

The report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB), who advised that the recommendations be supported.

Resolved:

That approval is given to consult on a new Adult Care Charging Policy, that includes both non-residential and residential charging and will include consideration of the following areas:

1. The removal of the maximum charge for non-residential care, while maintaining the minimum charge of £1. **Recommended.**
2. The introduction of an administrative charge for organising care for people who fund their own care. **Recommended.**

3. The inclusion of all disability benefits when carrying out non-residential financial assessments for services. **Not Recommended.**

158. NEW COUNCIL PLAN AND YEAR AHEAD DELIVERY PLAN

Consideration was given to the report which presented the new Council Plan 2025-2030 and the Year Ahead Delivery Plan 2025-2026. Informed by public consultation, the new Council Plan had been developed for 2025-30 and was attached to the report at Appendix 1. The Council Plan was a key document which set out the Council's vision for the borough and priorities for serving residents and communities. The Plan provided the medium-term basis for targeting resources, informing the budget-setting process and planning cycles, and ensuring that residents could hold the Council to account for delivery. The Council Plan included a suite of performance measures and targets for monitoring purposes.

Between September and November 2024, a programme of public consultation and engagement took place to support the development of the new Council Plan. This included online and postal surveys, focus groups (internal and external), and a series of short interactions and engagement at a number of events and locations across the Borough. There were 214 online and postal surveys returned and over 1,950 interactions in total across all methods of engagement. A summary of the consultation and key findings was attached at Appendix 3 and was available on the Council website.

Informed by this programme of public and stakeholder engagement, the new Council Plan for 2025-30 'Forging Ahead' set out the ambition for the Borough, including medium-term priorities and actions, building on and taking forward commitments made by elected members to the Rotherham community. The Council Plan was framed around five outcomes:

- Places are thriving, safe, and clean
- An economy that works for everyone
- Children and young people achieve
- Residents live well
- One Council that listens and learns.

Three cross-cutting policy drivers ran throughout the Council Plan, informing ways of working and helping the Council to achieve better outcomes:

- Expanding opportunities for all
- Recognising and building on our strengths to make positive change
- Focussing on prevention.

To enable the Council to work towards the Plan outcomes, a Year Ahead Delivery Plan, attached at Appendix 2, had been developed, setting out

the key activities to be delivered over the next year (April 2025 – March 2026). There were 116 priority actions, milestones and measures alongside a further twelve social care measures in the Year Ahead Plan.

To ensure that the Council Plan was managed effectively, six-monthly progress reports would be produced for Cabinet and made publicly available. The reports would include progress in relation to the actions in the Year Ahead Delivery Plan, performance data relating to associated performance measures and case studies. The progress reports would have annual updates on the long-term measures of success as the majority of these were published annually. It was proposed that the first Council Plan 2025-30 mid-year progress report, covering the period April 2025 to September 2025, be reported to Cabinet in January 2026.

During the meeting Cabinet Members highlighted achievements relating to their portfolios from the previous plan and highlighted the outcomes that would be worked towards as part of the new plan:

Councillor Taylor, Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy highlighted the vast improvements to the brought roads, the government investment that had been secured, the opening of the Forge Island development and the success of the Employment Solutions Team. The new Plan would cover the development of Wath Library, Riverside Gardens and Rotherham Market. £300k would be invested in community facilities and work would start on the Health Hub for the Town Centre. Support would be provided for up to 20 businesses to improve shop units in the town centre and on other principal high streets through the new 'shop units grants' programme.

Councillor Cusworth, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, highlighted the millions of pounds of investment in Children's services and the high quality services provided by the Family Hubs network. The Children's Capital of Culture initiative was well underway and successful. Further, an additional 50 school places had been created for children with additional needs. Councillor Cusworth highlighted some of the activity in the new plan that would support Children and Young People. This included ensuring 90% of families registered their children with the Family Hubs network within 6 months of birth; the completion of the work on the Special Educational Needs and Disability Centre at the Eric Manns Building and the delivery of Independent Travel Training to at least 30 children and young people. Work would also be undertaken to improve play areas, improve the time taken to issue Education, Health and Care Plans and to deliver Baby Packs.

Councillor Allen, Cabinet Member for Housing, noted the ambitious Council Homes Delivery Programme which had achieved over 650 new homes across the borough, against a target of 1000 by 2027. High quality homes had been delivered in the Town Centre. Work had also been done to reduce the number of homeless people staying in hotels. The Council

had also received the Northern Housing Award for Best Affordable Housing Development for the East Herringthorpe 'No Gas' Scheme. As part of the new Plan, a new Housing Allocation Policy would be agreed, and work would start or be completed on a number of new housing developments.

Councillor Baker-Rogers, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, welcomed the activities and themes within the new Council Plan. Reflecting on the previous plan she noted the success of the Baby Pack initiative and the improvements in Health Visitor checks and Adult Social Care visits. Key activities from the new Plan that were highlighted included supporting 1000 residents to set a quit smoking day; the start of work on the Town Centre Health Hub and improvements to Rothercare. Councillor Baker-Rogers also confirmed that the building work for the Castle View Day Service would be completed in 2026.

Councillor Alam, Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities, highlighted the activities related to keeping residents safe such as agreeing a new Community Safety Strategy and tackling hate crime and anti-social behaviour. Work would also be undertaken to issue a minimum of 60 fixed penalty notices for fly tipping.

The report was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB), who advised that the recommendations be supported. Concerns had been raised around the consultation process, the lack of prominence of children's services in the consultation and overflowing bins. Additional concerns were raised around how to engage with the South Yorkshire Mayor. As a result of the discussions, OSMB requested:

- A schedule of when bins were emptied in each ward of the authority, including details of how many times those bins have been missed and why they have been missed.
- That consideration be given to widening the consultation process for future significant projects including:
 - A suggestion to consider utilising members in their ward capacity to support consultations.
 - Another suggestion to consider was the collection of consultees postcodes to give an indication of which area of the borough they were from.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:

1. Recommend to Council that the Council Plan 2025-30 be approved.
2. Agree the Year Ahead Delivery Plan for 2025-26.
3. Note that future progress reports will be presented to Cabinet in

January and July 2026.

159. ROTHERHAM ROADS PROGRAMME 2025/26

Consideration was given to the report which detailed the current strategy for the management and maintenance of Rotherham's Highways and the positive impact the recent Council funding had had on the highway network. The report also described the current performance, both in terms of the condition of Rotherham's highways and in terms of the delivery of highways maintenance services.

The additional investment in Rotherham's roads was making a real improvement to the highway network. This was evidenced by the improvement in the condition of the estate roads and classified network and a continued reduction in the number of potholes reported and highway claims received against the Council.

Prior to the meeting an updated version of Appendix 1, the Rotherham Highway Repair Programme 2025-26, had been circulated. During the meeting, the Assistant Director of Community Safety and Street Scene highlighted the positive impact of the investment in the highway network. The previous additional investment in the maintenance of unclassified roads had seen the condition of the unclassified network improve to better than National Average. The Department for Transport's current published National Average condition for unclassified roads showed 17% required repair in March 2024 (most current). In the same month Rotherham's unclassified road Network was reported as 12.69% requiring repair. The Council's unclassified network was over 770km long and the percentage of the unclassified network that required repair was currently measured at 11.1% (December 2024).

Members had been invited to provide their suggestions regarding which unclassified roads in their wards they would like to see repaired. Nominations received by 31 March 2025 had been assessed against the matrix criteria and those meeting the criteria were included on the Indicative Highway Repair Programme.

The Leader noted that significant investment and resulting progress on this matter.

Resolved:

That Cabinet:-

1. Agree the strategic approach to the management and maintenance of Rotherham's Highways and approve the Indicative Highway Repair programme.
2. Agree that a delegation be provided to the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment to approve - in consultation with

the Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy - any further amendments required to the Indicative Highway Repair programme.

3. Agree that for any additional in year funding provided to deliver highways repairs, the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy, may utilise that funding in accordance with the strategic approach to the Management and Maintenance of Rotherham's Highways as laid out in this report.

160. 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.

161. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Cabinet would be held on Monday 9 June 2025 at 10.00am.

Prior to the conclusion of the meeting, Cabinet recorded its thanks to Councillor Allen and Councillor Taylor who would be stepping down from Cabinet on 21 May 2025. The Leader stated that both had served with distinction in what was a very hard job. Councillor Steele expressed his thanks to the outgoing Cabinet Members, on behalf of himself and of Overview and Scrutiny.