

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD  
Tuesday 10 September 2024**

Present:- Councillor Steele (in the Chair); Councillors Bacon, Baggaley, Blackham, Keenan, Marshall, McKiernan, Tarmey and Yasseen.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Knight, Pitchley and Tinsley.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-  
<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

**20. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 24 JULY 2024**

In relation to the previous minutes on the 24 July 2024, it was agreed by the Chair that the minutes on page 20 in relation to the Dennington project, be amended to state that it was critical for the completion of the project to have been finished by the end of the first quarter, 2026.

Resolved: That the minutes with the noted amendments of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on the 24 July 2024 were approved as a true record.

**21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**22. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

There were no questions from the members of the public and press.

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

There are no items on the agenda to exclude the public and the press.

**24. JULY 2024-25 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT**

At the Chair's invitation, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities introduced the report and explained that the report set out the Council's financial position as of July 2024, with an estimated overspend of £6.1 million for the financial year.

This was largely due to demand which had put additional pressures on children's placements, adult social care packages, and home to school transport as well as the expected impact of the Local Government Pay Awards.

In addition, the Council had been impacted by inflationary pressures within the economy. Whilst the actual overspend of £17 million was concerning, it was stated that elements of the overspend had been forecasted and the two key budget contingencies were created as part of setting the Council's Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2024/25. The Council had set Social Care contingency of £3.4 million and a Corporate Budget Provision of £3.5million to support anticipated pressures across social care and home to school transport. The Cabinet Member explained that detailed review work of those services had begun, and operating improvements had been made to reduce cost pressures and create avoidance in further overspend.

The Council's Treasury Management Strategy had continued to perform well as a result of the Councils' approach to borrowing, which had been adapted to minimise its level of borrowing. Members were informed that this position had improved due to reprofiling of the capital programme delivery, which had pushed back the requirement to borrow more. It had been estimated that this would support the Council to generate savings of at least £4 million, however, Members were informed there was still a possibility that this figure could change due to market conditions which were beyond the Council's control.

As a result of the corporate provision and savings, an underspend of £10.9 million had been forecasted within Central Services bringing the Council's net overspend to down to £6.1 million. The Overview and Scrutiny Manager Board (OSMB) was told that uncertainty still remained within the local government sector beyond the 2024/ 25 budgets, in relation to further allocation funding beyond one year. It was acknowledged that the financial challenges faced by the Council were the same challenges faced by other the councils across the country, with some local authorities even being issued with section 114 notices.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for this overview and then invited the Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services, Judith Badger to provide some further context. The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services felt it was important to emphasise the various budget contingencies put in place at budget setting, which were there as some overspend was expected.

OSMB was informed that while some of the overspends were expected, it was important to consider the context of why they had occurred. This was illustrated by an example in relation to the placement pressure on Children and Young People's services which had been managed through a long-term plan which had been in place for several years. This plan had showed positive results with evidence indicating its effectiveness over time. However, despite the plan, overspends would continue to occur, which was why a contingency had been included within the Council's overall budget process to address ongoing overspends. Further to this, it was explained that there was no intention of distorting the future budget for children's services, which should ultimately be lower in value, which

made the budgeting process somewhat complex.

Another significant area of overspend was the home to school transport service. The Council knew that this budget would need to be reset in the future, however extensive work was required to understand the correct level. It was noted that the Council's overarching budget had catered for the overspends to some degree.

The overarching budget position of £6.1 million overspend did raise some concerns regarding next year's budget and beyond however at the moment the Council needed to wait and see what would come from the Chancellors Autumn Budget Statement, which would give an indication of the implications for the following year.

OSMB would have oversight of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy updates later in the financial year. It was noted that eliminating the overspend completely would be a substantial challenge however lots of discussions were taking place.

In response to the overspend in the Council's budget, Councillor Blackham enquired about the measures being taken to reduce the £6.1 million overspend. He also asked if the mitigation would involve using reserves for the current financial year, and if so, which reserve would it come from. The Assistant Director for Financial Services advised that as stated in the report, reserves would serve as a backstop with the remainder of the financial year focused on mitigating the overspend as much as possible. However, it was acknowledged that eliminating the £6.1 million pressure would be a significant challenge for the Council, and therefore it would fall on reserves.

Councillor Yasseen agreed that issues around overspending had been ongoing for the Council and wanted to know why the Council had not allocated the budget directly to services instead of maintaining a contingency fund. In addition, Councillor Yasseen wanted clarification on the financial approach to managing this consistent overspend for the Council. The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services acknowledged that addressing the continued overspending had always been a key priority for the Council. However, she conveyed that there were multiple factors that had collectively impacted the Council's ability to reduce the overspend. An example was the home-to-school transport service, which could not be predicted. It was known that the service would overspend but the pressures for this financial year could not be predicted. The service was undertaking lots of work to understand the needs however if additional funding was provided it could distort the figures further because the additional funding could be too much or too little.

Regarding children's placements, the social care contingency was intended to address less predictable pressures, particularly in adult care. Efforts had been made to increase in-house placements and recruit more

foster carers, although delays could occur due to factors such as property purchases or staffing issues. Allocating additional funds would create confusion for service, as the budget they had was the budget target they needed to meet. The Council's financial approach was to set a realistic budget for the future while managing short-term pressures. It was believed that this approach helped to better understand and manage departmental pressures more effectively and was strongest way to manage the budget.

The Chair then queried as to why costs had gone up so much for the home-to-school transport service, which in parts was outsourced to private companies to deliver the service on behalf of the Council's. In response, the Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene confirmed the Council provided a mix of transport solutions which included a number of in-house routes as well as a number which were contracted to private companies. The rising price of fuel, over the past couple of years had posed a significant challenge and added financial pressure. Efforts were made to reduce costs by placing more young people on the same routes to drive down single occupancy routes. However, it was noted that the underlying pressure for the service was the actual increase in demand, and the impact these measures on further reducing costs.

The Chair asked for clarification on which budget the additional funds would come from if this service continued to overspend, would it be the Children's Services Budget or the Central Budget and then reallocated to the Children's Services Budget. The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services confirmed it would come from the Central Budget as the Council's approach was not to transfer funds from one budget to another. Additionally, members were informed that a complexity with the home-to-school transport budgets meant they currently spanned multiple departments. However, ongoing work by the finance service aimed to align these budgets.

Councillor Yasseen asked for clarification on why Rotherham spent significantly more on child placements compared to councils like Barnsley and Sheffield. Rotherham's weekly expenditure per child was 27% which was 20% more than other councils. Councillor Yasseen also inquired whether finance had worked with Children's Services to determine if the additional costs were justified by offering better services. The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services explained that prior to 2016, the number of placements had been around 400. Due to increased demand had the number had risen to around 660. She noted that ongoing efforts were focused on reducing costs and enhancing the Council's support for those children and families. This included reducing caseloads through early intervention, which had helped prevent children from entering various care settings. As a result of these efforts, the number of placements had reduced to 500 placements but unfortunately the associated costs had not decreased proportionally. However, work had been undertaken around modelling, and while costs were not fixed due to

factors such as inflation, it was evident that departmental efforts had reduced costs in real terms when accounting for inflation. It was acknowledged that once a child or family was in the system, their appropriate needs were appropriately assessed, and the right service or support provided. This support cannot be abruptly removed but stepped down in a way that would not put children at risk. The service had made significant efforts in this area, focusing on step-downs and transitioning children from one type of support to another aiming to reintegrate them into normal family placements. However, for children with complex needs, the cost of high-cost placements could be substantial. Despite this, efforts over the past few years had led to a reduction in costs. Regarding the number of child placements compared to other local authorities there could be a wide range of reasons and factors for the differences, which might relate to different practices, or varying needs of the children.

The Assistant Director of Financial Services confirmed that the Council had worked to reduce the overspend in relation to the excessive costs within this area. However, efforts undertaken had meant that average unit costs had reduced significantly. The Council had also been trying to transition placement types from external, expensive residential placements to internal residential placements, while maximising its fostering opportunities. However, in relation to other authorities and their placement numbers and costs, it was acknowledged that Rotherham had faced the children's placement challenge much earlier than other areas and had experienced significant rises in costs. Through the work being undertaken the Council hoped to reduce these costs and improve its cost position to a more static level, which was why the budgets had been maintained at the current level.

The Joint Assistant Director for Commissioning and Performance confirmed that reviews on costs and placements had been frequently considered using local benchmarking data on the numbers of children who had gone into care, children in need, and those on child protection plans. It was also acknowledged, that Rotherham's spending had been comparable with most other local authorities in the region, as these challenges had been seen across the country. It was hoped that national efforts could support councils in reducing the costs of external placements for children. Regarding the number of children in care, while other local authorities had experienced a rise in these figures, Rotherham had taken a different path. Despite starting with slightly higher number, the Council had implemented numerous initiatives to support families in caring for their children longer. As a result, there had been a reduction in the number of children entering care, contrary to the trend observed elsewhere. This was a particularly important development, and there had been no negative impacts from this approach.

Councillor Yasseen acknowledged that the Council had done everything to provide the best possible care for the borough's children but had concerns regarding the £5 million overspend even though much had been achieved in terms of progress and interventions.

Councillor McKiernan requested further clarification on the decision-making process for budget overspends, particularly when the budget had already been set but additional spending became necessary across various sectors. He enquired about who was responsible for making those decisions.

The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services explained that once the budget had been set it would go through the Council's decision-making processes and would be agreed by Full Council. However, this would be based on professional advice from both the Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services and the Assistant Director for Financial Services.

Councillor McKiernan was further informed that officers only provided advice on the budget required to deliver on the priorities determined by the Council. For example, officers might estimate the current costs of children's services based on caseloads and activities, and project the costs of actions that could reduce those expenses. The budget was assembled to avoid overspending, based on the best available information and assumptions. However, there could be unavoidable cost pressures, such as an unexpected increase in home-to-school transport needs. In such cases, the goal would be to manage these costs effectively. Additionally, budget holders at various levels had individual budgets, and if they overspent without justification, it became a management issue to address. Efforts to tackle overspending included reviewing all expenditures and identifying areas where costs could be reduced, such as postponing non-essential training courses and other cost-reducing measures. At a detailed level, budget holders managed their own budgets, contributing to the Council's overall financial position. However, the Council's overall overspend was primarily due to two or three key issues, and efforts were being made to address these challenges and manage the problem effectively.

Councillor McKiernan sought further clarification as to who would approve additional spending and at what point would that spending be challenged there was an overspend. The Chair informed Councillor McKiernan that officers were responsible for running the authority operationally and managing budgets. If there was any overspend, they were expected to report and discuss this with the relevant Cabinet Member. Elected members were responsible for setting policy and addressing overspend. OSMB had opportunities throughout the year to scrutinise the budget.

Councillor Keenan remarked that, as a trustee for the homeless charity 'Help for Homeless Veterans,' she had observed a substantial increase in homeless veterans seeking accommodation. Additionally, there had been a rise in early releases from prison without adequate support services, due to current challenges facing the Probation Service. Considering this, along with the ongoing high costs to Neighbourhood Services and housing individuals or families in hotels, Councillor Keenan asked about

the measures Council had taken to address the growing homelessness issue within the borough.

It was noted by the Assistant Director of Financial Services that homelessness presented a significant challenge for the borough, especially since COVID-19 which saw a noticeable increase in homelessness across the country. It was noted that policies during this time, were implemented to ensure councils provided housing for everyone, which had led to a substantial increase in homelessness. OSMB was told that this trend had continued since COVID-19, which resulted in increased use of hotels to meet the demand. The Council had explored a number of options to address this challenge, but was focused on optimising its operational model, especially around temporary accommodation. This had involved using the Councils existing temporary accommodation stock and if a unit became vacant then the property would be repaired and prepared for the next occupant. This approach enabled the Council to maintain a constant flow of available temporary housing.

Additionally, the Council had reviewed the operations of its virtual team and other structures to ensure they were as efficient and effective as possible. This included having the right administrative levels, and the right support structure for prevention and case management. Further to this, work had taken place with external consultants to understand the broader picture of why certain people became homeless, such as veterans, people released early from prisons and other groups. By assessing and analysing the reasons behind homelessness, it was the intention of the Council to develop plans to mitigate homelessness moving forward. All this had been underway for a significant period, and it was acknowledged there would be ongoing challenges in this area for future years.

Councillor Keenan then enquired if this issue would be reviewed by OSMB at a future meeting. The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Service explained that members could choose to nominate an area for further scrutiny through the usual mechanisms. The overview provided by officers at the meeting, focused on the operational business approach, where the service had worked to learn, understand, and try different models to deliver improved outcomes and reduce costs, while ensuring the Council delivered quality services for people with needs.

Councillor Bacon then posed several questions regarding the reprofiling of the Capital Programme, particularly concerning the significant slippages reported in capital projects related to the Mainline Station (£4.357 million slippage), Riverside infrastructure (£1.057 million slippage), and Riverside Gardens (£1.585 million slippage). He inquired at what point the slippage would be considered 'out of control' and whether this would be discussed further with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities. He also wanted to know the current stage of the Mainline Station project and how much more slippage was expected, as he felt the project was in its initial stages and had already incurred a £4.357 million

slippage. Finally, Councillor Bacon sought information on the current situation regarding the caravan site mentioned in the report.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities informed Councillor Bacon that the Council had a Capital Project Board which monitored all of the capital projects. He noted that it was an expected part of capital work projects to experience slippages and in relation to larger projects delays were always anticipated. However, the role of the Capital Project Board was to monitor the progress of these projects and they would reschedule wherever possible but in certain case, some delays were out of the Councils control.

The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment informed Members that the Main Line Station was considered a long-term project with no expected end date. The expectation was that it would take at least 10 years to be fully built and opened. However, Members were told that the timeline for this project was not within the Council's or the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority's (SYMCA) control but was ultimately managed by Network Rail and Central Government.

It was noted that within the context of a 10-year project, some slippages in site acquisitions were not critical. Regarding the predicted slippage, it was important to gather the right level of information about the site being acquired to ensure the Council did not acquire an asset that could become a liability due to issues below ground. Detailed site investigations were expected to conclude next year before finalising negotiations with the landowners. The overall project, along with the outlined business case, would be presented to the SYMCA before the end of the year. The Council was also awaiting technical information from Network Rail and cost estimates for the network's likely expenditure and the overall project. It was felt that, despite this being a long-term project, it remained on the programme with the potential to proceed, unlike some other medium-term projects that had been withdrawn.

Regarding the Riverside projects that had been itemised, the riverside infrastructure work was already underway, with visible construction and piling work to stabilise the river wall before introducing the walkways. The Riverside Gardens project was expected to be on site before the end of the month. This followed some work with Yorkshire Water, which had identified a sewer not included in the original plans. Such complications often arise when breaking ground on projects like this.

Councillor Bacon requested further clarification regarding the slippage for the project and whether this was expected. He also sought clarification on the role of the SYMCA and the support it could provide. Additionally, Councillor Bacon resubmitted his question about the caravan park mentioned in the report. The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment reiterated that the Mainline Station project was a long-term strategic project of national significance, and he had no concerns regarding the slippage. He acknowledged that SYMCA had played a vital



role with the Council in discussions with the Department for Transport and had also funded some of the initial development phase on this site, making a close working relationship with SYMCA essential.

Regarding the caravan park, it was acknowledged that there had been ongoing issues combined with potentially over-optimistic income forecasts, which had an impact. The Council planned to undertake a review to establish a sensible income projection for the caravan park for 2025 onwards. The Council had explored mechanisms to share some of the costs between the country park staff team and the caravan park, which would reduce some costs, and aimed to identify a realistic income forecast for the next year.

Councillor Bacon welcomed the update on the projects. He then asked about maintained schools, noting from the report that they were costing the authority money. He inquired whether there was an opportunity to convert these schools into academies, which could potentially save costs for the Council.

The Chair noted that it was up to individual schools if they wanted to become academies. This was confirmed by the Joint Assistant Director for Commissioning & Performance, who explained that the Council did not have the option to force a school to become an academy. In the current system, schools could not initiate this process themselves. If a school received a 'requires improvement' rating and inspection grades were inadequate, they would be asked to become academies. However, the Department for Education (DFE) had recently announced additional information suggesting that this process could change, although full details had not yet been disclosed. The indications were that alongside Ofsted one-word judgements, there might be changes to the policy on academisation, but the local authority still could not insist that a school become an academy.

Councillor Yasseen noted that in the report, Central Services was shown to have a £10.9 million underspend and wanted to know how it could generate such a significant savings underspend and whether this would be just a one-time occurrence or if this could be repeatable. In addition, Councillor Yasseen also queried whether the savings suggested that some services had not fully delivered or if it meant that services would be delivered at a reduced level.

The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services confirmed that no services had been lost or reduced to achieve the financial savings for Central Services. The primary reason for the savings was effective treasury management. Treasury Management focused on optimising the use of funds received on a given day that were not needed until later. This involved managing cash flow and determining the best places to invest money to achieve the highest returns without taking undue risks. Members were informed that there were stringent rules within the Treasury Strategy regarding risk, particularly with council money, which

had to be kept safe within these rules.

Regarding the capital programme, if capital funds were not spent as quickly as expected for various reasons, the Council could avoid borrowing money. Instead, cash flow was managed through the Treasury budget, optimising benefits, and minimising risks, especially when interest rates were favourable for the Council. The biggest benefit here was effective treasury management, which was partly due to the skills and activities of the team handling this function and partly due to favourable interest rates.

The Assistant Director of Financial Services explained that the Central Services budget included provisions for various levies, such as the Integrated Transport Levy, which was repaid to SYPT or SYMCA as it was now known, and Public Finance Initiative (PFI) financing. The Council had several PFI arrangements for waste, leisure, and schools with all financial transactions for PFIs managed through Central Services. Additionally, the budget included contingencies for items such as the pay award. Although the Council did not control the pay award, it did prepare funds to cover the full impact of any award.

Regarding the main savings in the Central Services budget, it was anticipated that contingencies would be utilised, including those for social care and home-school transport. Members were also informed that another significant area of savings had come from treasury management. In recent years, the Council had benefited from its treasury management strategy by holding cash from long-term borrowing in a high-interest-rate market, resulting in savings above the planned amounts. However, as the new financial year progressed, cash balances had significantly reduced, and the Council would only borrow when absolutely necessary. This approach involved some risk, but the Council made informed decisions based on internal expertise, technical guidance, and advice from external consultants and treasury specialists. This strategy would help manage the 2024/25 financial position and achieve the projected savings.

The projected savings for the rest of the year would be as a result of the Council minimising its borrowing costs. Members were informed that the longevity of these savings would be discussed at the Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) setting period. It was acknowledged that the treasury management savings would be a challenging task beyond 2024/25 due to a number of economic factors. In recent years, this included significant fluctuations in the Bank of England Base Rate, rising interest rates, and borrowing costs. These changes made future predictions challenging, but the Council would continue to monitor this position and would be responsive to market conditions from a treasury management perspective.

Councillor Jamie Baggaley asked about the £6.3 million shortfall in the agreed savings, as mentioned on page 26 of the report. He sought clarification on how these savings were distributed throughout the year

and whether they could be achieved. Additionally, he wanted to know if the savings gap was already included within the forecast to ensure a more balanced financial position for the Council.

The Assistant Director for Financial Services clarified that the savings position shown on page 26 of the report had been accounted for within the budget. All the savings outlined in the report, except those related to children's services, were expected to be achieved within the financial year. Additionally, there would be regulated internal monitoring to track the progress of these savings, with the majority expected to be achieved this year. However, there would still be ongoing pressures on services to achieve these savings.

The residual balance for Children's and Young People's Services (CYPS) had constituted the majority of the Council's savings. These savings stemmed from historical agreements made several years ago, specifically from the 2018/19 budget, to be delivered over time. As previously discussed, significant challenges around children's placements had delayed these savings, and it was now expected that some of these savings would extend into 2025/26. However, continuous efforts were being made to reduce the remaining savings that needed to be delivered. Over the past two to three years, CYPS had broadly seen a £5 million overspend on a reducing budget position with more savings to be implemented each year. Therefore, CYPS spending had reduced, showing a positive trend towards achieving the savings, even though some of these savings still needed to be delivered.

Councillor Marshall enquired about section 2.27 of the report, noting that waste management was currently forecasting a £1.5 million overspend, primarily due to pressures around vehicle costs. She also identified increased staff costs and sought clarification on whether those additional staffing costs were due to the use of agency staff.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene confirmed that agency staff costs were a pressure within the service as mentioned in the report. He confirmed that there were challenges related to vehicle costs and staffing, particularly with recent sickness figures in that area. However, the service had started to manage these issues, which had resulted in modest reductions in sickness levels. Efforts to address those challenges would continue, and additional agency costs were being closely monitored.

In addition, Members were told that the service was exploring options to optimise routes to ensure efficient use of vehicles, fuel, and staff costs. Other factors contributing to the budget pressures included increased costs for waste disposal and fluctuations in commodity prices, which affected recycling income. The service was also working closely with financial services to identify further options to align the budget.

Councillor Marshall queried whether the savings in community safety and regulation services were due to difficulties in recruiting to the vacancies

that the service had or if the vacancies were being maintained to save money.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene explained that community safety and street scenes services, encompassed a wide range of services, which employed around 600 staff who covered various functions. Those vacancies were not related to waste management but were in other areas of the service and were vacancies which required specialist skills or qualifications. Members were informed, this included vacancies such as environmental health officers where the availability of qualified people had been limited and not quite as good as in previous years. To address this issue, strategies had been put in place to help grow and develop internal talent to be able to take up those roles to ensure the service had qualified staff.

However, it was acknowledged that as the budget challenges remained, ongoing discussions would take place with the service, the directorate, and finance about the need and necessity for those particular posts. There could also be opportunities considered which would allow the service to carry some vacancies for a period, to support the budget position (if required) without compromising members' priorities.

The Chair asked the Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Service if assurance could be given that the budget would be kept under control until the end of the financial year with the predicted, £6.1 million overspend.

The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Service responded stating that they had been working diligently with all the directorates and senior officers. They regularly reviewed their activities and maintained pressure by holding everyone accountable for their spending, regardless of the issues causing the overspend.

The Strategic Director further emphasised, that while efforts to reduce the overspend would continue, significant more time was being dedicated compared to previous years due to future economic and demographic uncertainties. They assured Members that their focus remained on the long-term sustainability of the budget and acknowledged that the current position could not be maintained indefinitely. The activities they would undertake included ongoing discussions and in-depth work with directorates to determine what decisions could be made and if there were actions that could save money for the rest of the year. Members were told that some of those decisions would be operational, whilst others would require input from members. If member decisions were required on budgets or overspend, then they would bring these matters forward. The Strategic Director assured the Chair that they maintained ongoing pressure to achieve the best possible financial outcomes for the Council and the people of Rotherham.

The Chair then asked the Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and

Clean Communities if he were also assured that officers would be able to manage the situation, and to make sure that everything would be done by finance to manage the overspend.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities assured OSMB that every Cabinet Member investigated any overspend within their own portfolios and would work to understand the mitigating factors had caused the overspend and worked with senior officers to reduce it. He acknowledged that his central aim was to work within the revenue budget and to hold officers to account. However, as previously highlighted some costs for statutory services, such as homeless services had skyrocketed over the past year. Furthermore, the Council had statutory responsibility to deliver a number of services by law, even if it resulted in overspends on budgets. OSMB was assured that Cabinet Members were also held to accountable to ensure budgets were delivered within allocated spend. Work was also undertaken to review any mitigating factors for overspends and identify what more could be done to reduce those budgets.

The Chair acknowledged that the Council faced many challenges moving forward and noted that OSMB had asked for reports, as part of their work programme, on the transported children's services and overspend.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities, the Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services and the Assistant Director for Finance for their participation at the meeting.

**Resolved:** – That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board supported the recommendation that Cabinet:

1. Note the current General Fund Revenue Budget forecast overspend of £6.1 million.
2. Note that actions will continue to be taken to reduce the overspend position but that it is possible that the Council will need to draw on its reserves to balance the 2024/25 position.
3. Note the updated position of the Capital Programme, including proposed capital programme variations to expenditure profiles and funding.

## **25. BOROUGHWIDE AND TOWN CENTRE/CLIFTON PARK PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS**

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities explained that The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act (2014) provided powers to introduce PSPO's in order to prevent individuals or groups committing anti-social behaviour (ASB) in public spaces.

The current Town Centre/Clifton Park Protection Order and the Borough-

Wide Dog Fouling Protection Order were renewed in January for a period of twelve months. The Town Centre/Clifton Park Protection Order contained a number of conditions linked to anti-social behaviour whereas the Borough-Wide Dog Fouling Protection Order dealt with dog fouling.

The report proposed consultation would take place with established stakeholders to seek their views in relation to both PSPO's and gain support for future designation, which would be sought regarding the conditions not included in the order. The number of complaints related to dog fouling across the borough had steadily increased, and anti-social behaviour continued to be a concern. He also informed members that inconsiderate and rowdy behaviour had been the most prevalent form of anti-social behaviour and had increased further in Quarter 1 of 2024/25 compared to the previous year.

The Cabinet Member explained that several powers that could be used against individuals committing anti-social behaviour, and the PSPO would serve as an additional tool. The town centre, considered part of the Council's regeneration programme which included Forge Island, required available tools to address anti-social behaviour to ensure the successful completion of the projects. Members were informed that the consultation would take place over a few weeks and would involve engagement with key stakeholders including elected members, businesses, partners, and the public.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene informed members that, as indicated in the report, it was part of the legal process for introducing Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO). Public Space Protection Orders gave authorised officers, whether police or council officers, the power to take certain things against individuals committing criminal offences.

Members were informed that PSPOs could only be implemented where specific legal thresholds had been met, as detailed in the legal section of the report. However, PSPO's could only be introduced where activities were carried out in a public place or were likely to impact the quality of life for those in that particular area. Furthermore, the behaviours must be persistent or continuing in nature and sufficient to justify the conditions proposed within the order. The report indicated that the Council was satisfied that these initial thresholds had been met and that the consultation was a legal necessity. The matter would then go for public consultation before being submitted back to Members to seek permission to introduce orders in the future.

Councillor Joshua Bacon asked a question on behalf of Councillor Tinsley, who had provided his apologies for the meeting. He enquired, whether in addition to the dog fouling PSPO, if any consideration be given to other borough-wide PSPO, such as protecting life-saving equipment. He asked if there could be a PSPO for Rotherham's parks, such as Rother Valley, to deter swimming and stipulate that swimming could only

take place with a swimming club. He also mentioned that places such as Maltby suffer from street drinking and could benefit from the reintroduction of PSPOs, such as alcohol exclusion zones which had previously lapsed. He wanted to know if the consultation would include other concerns or issues which could be addressed by PSPOs to reduce other kinds of anti-social behaviour in Rotherham. Additionally, Councillor Bacon (on behalf of Councillor Tinsley) asked if appropriate signage would be put up in places with fenced play areas to prevent loose dogs running around.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene stated that the report had been presented in a specific order, including appendices that were part of the consultation and highlighted certain legal thresholds that needed to be met. One of these threshold's was to have evidence of the particular issues and whether they were persistent and significant enough to require a PSPO. He explained that this had previously been reviewed by the last Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB), and included extensive research on the existing evidence base, particularly concerning the issue raised by Councillor Bacon about life-saving equipment.

Furthermore, the Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene noted that there had only been one recorded incident of damage to life-saving equipment across the entire borough. This presented a challenge determining whether there was a sufficient evidence base to bring any criminal sanction for that type of behaviour, and to date, there had been no incidents raised. Substantiated evidence of such incidents would be required to introduce those types of orders. However, officers from Neighbourhood Teams, Community Safety and Community Protection were keen to work with Ward Members to understand the current local issues and challenges in their wards. It was expected that these officers, along with partners and stakeholders would try everything at their disposal to resolve those issues. If those efforts failed, and PSPO's seemed the most appropriate route, the matter would then be brought back to members for their approval. In addition, it was noted that enforcement had continued to be challenge for the Council, particularly in terms of resourcing and enforcing those orders. This was another challenge that needed to be considered when implementing any such orders.

Councillor Bacon responded and asked when the report about the proposed PSPO's would be sent to Elected Members to gain their feedback as part of the consultation process, so they could provide a full picture of their wards.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene confirmed that he would liaise with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities on how to proceed with any further engagement with Members. He stated that it would be expected for council officers to routinely work with Elected Members to identify and resolve issues in their local areas. Members were informed about problem-solving plans where the Council worked with partners and the police to tackle specific local

issues. However, if this approach failed, council officers would consider further actions in collaboration with Elected Members to implement additional measures. It was expected that this approach would naturally occur during conversations within the Community Action Partnerships, and ward briefings, but it would be jointly reflected upon with the Cabinet Member to determine if further actions were needed by the service.

Councillor Yasseen expressed concerns regarding the history of the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) introduced for Boston Castle. She noted that the initial consultation previously taken place had been poor, particularly highlighted by the significant turnout of frustrated dog walkers at a Clifton Park meeting. Councillor Yasseen enquired how future consultations with Elected Members would be more effective and evidence based. Additionally, she asked what measurable improvements had been observed since the PSPO's implementation, concerning issues like dog fouling and whether evidence could be provided to show that those interventions had made a meaningful difference. She pointed out that dog fouling and anti-social behaviour had increased, suggesting that the PSPO's were not fully utilised.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene confirmed he had just joined the Council when the initial consultation took place at Clifton Park in 2017. He acknowledged there had been failures during the engagement and consultation with that part of the community at that time, but overall, there was still considerable support from the broader public consultation regarding those conditions. However, following discussions, the Council sought to make adjustments on how it enforced the powers and conditions in Clifton Park to address and ease the concerns raised by the dog walkers. It was noted that there had not been the same level of backlash when renewing those orders, which had suggested the adjustments made had been effective in alleviating some of that group's concerns.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene further noted that it was difficult to determine if those measures had been effective, which often happened with preventive measures as it was challenging to know what the impact would have been if these tools or powers were not in place. He also confirmed that this would be an area where the Council would continue its work in the coming years, subject to any orders being granted and approved by Members. He noted that the effectiveness of those powers largely depended on the feedback from officers who utilised them daily, particularly across the town centre, with the most common incidents around individuals surrendering alcohol. It was found that when people complied willingly and handed over the alcohol, it prevented potential offences. The Commission was informed that it only become an offence when someone refused to surrender their alcohol to an officer. In those cases, they were not recorded as a fixed penalty, but officers had reported that the order had been a valuable tool in preventing disruptive behaviours and identifying persistent and repeat offenders.



However, it was evident from the data that anti-social behaviour had continued to increase in the areas mentioned, which often was against a backdrop of decreased anti-social behaviour across other areas. Ultimately, whilst officers had found this tool effective, there needed to be further analysis to understand its impact on this area, especially if the Council was to be successful in designating additional orders.

Councillor Yasseen explained that the reason there had been no backlash since 2017 was that the order had not been fully enforced and, therefore, had not affected anyone. Councillor Yasseen also mentioned that she had met with a group of volunteers from among the dog owners on a weekly basis after that initial meeting in 2017 and wanted to know if that same group would be consulted as part of this new consultation. She felt that the questionnaire should also include Clifton Park, but she had no objections to including the town centre, as it would make for a more appropriate use of resources given the rising anti-social behaviours. Councillor Yasseen then enquired about the clear metrics that would be used in the PSPO to determine whether the measures had been effective, noting that there were still costs associated, even if the police had primary responsibility for the enforcement.

The Chair acknowledged the comments submitted on this issue made and assured Members that in relation to PSPO's and parks, if dog owners were responsible and followed the guidelines within the PSPO, then they would not be fined.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene concurred with the Chair that responsible dog owners would not be fined if they followed the designated guidelines when walking their dogs in parks. He informed Members that, as a result of discussions with the dog walkers back in 2017, a concern had been raised about the immediate issuance of fixed penalty notices when a dog crossed a designated line. Consequently, specific guidance was developed for officers to ensure if such situation arose, they would ask the dog owner to recall their dog and demonstrate full control before any enforcement actions would be taken.

He also confirmed that he would discuss consultation methods further with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities. He advised that, for many of these conditions, it would not be appropriate to separate the town centre from Clifton Park. For instance, with alcohol consumption he noted that the risk of displacement into other areas could be significant if treated separately. However, in relation to dog control, he acknowledged that the impact might vary across various locations, particularly since many people visit Clifton Park specifically to walk their dogs. He confirmed that he was open to exploring the possibility of developing more tailored questions to be used as part of the consultation to include Clifton Park.

The Chair proceeded to ask a couple of questions on this issue. He wanted clarification as to who would be consulted and if Parish Councils

would be included. In addition, he queried how long the consultation activity would take.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene confirmed that the consultation period would take around six weeks and would start from mid-September to the end of October. The consultation would include a variety of different consultation methods to gather feedback which he knew had been effective from previous consultations he had delivered. However, he informed Members that the most valuable method of consultation would be the face-to-face engagement, so it was intended that council officers would collect feedback directly from the community in Clifton Park by either using iPads or paper questionnaires. Furthermore, Parish Councils Members would be contacted and included in the consultation. The consultation would also utilise digital channels, this includes emails to provide further information on the consultation, and newsletters. Additionally, he planned to work closely with colleagues from Neighbourhood Services and other areas to ensure a wider selection of people were engaged.

Councillor Bacon appreciated the Council was taking anti-social behaviour seriously. However, he stated that current anti-social behaviour figures reflected only 50% of the actual situation in Rotherham, as he felt people lacked the confidence to report these issues. He asked if anything else could be done by the service or the Council to improve reporting figures, so they accurately reflected of the problems within Rotherham. Councillor Bacon then queried what plans and metrics were in place to measure the success of the PSPO, and whether a decrease in reported incidents was anticipated. Finally, Councillor Bacon asked if there were any plans by the Council to lobby the Police and Crime Commissioner or to have more targeted action days across the town centre and in the borough to combat the rising figures.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene acknowledged the importance of fostering public confidence in reporting issues and emphasised that concerns extended beyond just the specific behaviours discussed. He notes that non-reporting, also applied to many other types of criminal behaviour such as domestic abuse, where a considerable number of incidents would occur before a crime was reported. He assured Members that this had been a priority for the Safer Rotherham Partnership, which was chaired by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Safe and Clean Communities which was the legal body in place. This partnership had prioritised addressing anti-social behaviour and community safety concerns for some time and was entering a revised priority-setting process, which would shape the partnership's strategy for the next few years. This priority setting would also include discussions with Members to help determine future priorities.

Although the Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene was not in a position to pre-empt any decisions, he assured Members that community-based concerns, particularly in relation to anti-social

behaviour, would remain a key focus for the Council and Members. He confirmed that he would advocate for a reduction in anti-social behaviour across the town centre, which would serve as a key indicator of success. Additionally, he acknowledged that the Council needed to enhance its operational delivery, and this success would depend on how effectively systems were established to record enforcement actions, as current systems had not been fully adequate. It was acknowledged that there also needed to be improvement in the exchange of information between council officers and the police regarding interventions, to enable more accurate data capture and reporting.

Regarding the Police and Crime Commissioner, Members were informed that role was now a part of the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA). The Council aimed to continue collaborating with partners across the region and engage in various forums that would address anti-social behaviour issues affecting Rotherham and the region. Members were informed that there was a strong partnership working across teams co-located together, enabling closer collaboration with police colleagues to drive enforcement activities and achieve better solutions.

Councillor Bacon further asked if the proposed PSPO could include both drugs and alcohol in the order, as the report only referred to alcohol. He had felt that changing the wording might provide additional tools and powers to help prevent drug-related anti-social behaviour in the town centre. He also enquired if the service would commit to any targets at this stage or even to a percentage decrease in their targets.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene stated that it would be difficult to commit to specific targets at this stage, as part of the challenge faced by the Council was the under-reporting of incidents, as previously discussed. He agreed with Members that more needed to be done to encourage and enable people to report incidents. However, he also noted that having specific targets in place could adversely affect reporting rates. In relation to including with drugs or other substances in the PSPO, he stated that existing laws were in place, which already addressed this issue. It needed to be noted that the Council would be unable to duplicate existing statutes through the PSPO, especially when those laws carried more significant penalties. However, it was acknowledged that the broader concerns and challenges facing the town centre were experienced throughout the country, and the service was keen to address the issues in whatever capacity it could.

Councillor McKiernan then asked about paragraph 2.14 in the report, which referred to external funding from the Home Office. He wanted to know what would happen if the funding was not extended for another additional year. He also sought clarification on how much the consultation would cost the Council?

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene confirmed

that the costs for the consultation would be covered by existing resources within the service's budget. In relation to the funding, it was confirmed that the extra funding from the Home Office would be for the Safer Street's initiative, and the Council was currently on round six or seven of that funding. He noted that historically, the funding primarily supported capital-related projects, such as improving lighting in Clifton Park, and enhancing CCTV across the borough. However, the latest rounds of funding would be allocated for more revenue-based activities. This would allow the Council to apply for funding to deploy extra patrols and provide more police and council officer coverage, without relying on overtime. Members were informed that this funding represented more additional money on top of any separate commitments from the Home Office, which would be used for more police officers on the street and would be reviewed in terms of impact and outcome at the appropriate time.

Councillor Blackham then raised a valid concern regarding the ongoing issue of anti-social behaviour at Greenland's Park in Anston. He noted that while the police had responded to a recent incident, to help reduce anti-social behaviour in that area there had been ongoing discussions about locking a gate at Greenland's Park. A resident with council-owned property beyond the gate had attempted to secure it, but the situation had been complicated due to the proximity of their house to the Health Centre next door. Councillor Blackham wanted to know about the responsibility for locking this gate as he believed that it would be a simple solution that could reduce anti-social behaviour, and in turn be less demanding on resources.

The Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene acknowledged these concerns but confirmed that he would meet Councillor Blackham privately to discuss these issues further, as he was unable to go into specifics of this incident during the meeting. However, he agreed that dynamic thinking to address such problems should be considered and the Council would always look for creative ways to reduce the demand on resources. He explained that legal requirements compelled the Council to explore alternative options, and much was being done to promote this approach. He assured Members that there were collaborations with colleagues and partners on strength-based strategies, which focused on leveraging existing community assets and infrastructure. He further stated that this was a prime example of how various approaches could be combined to develop more dynamic solutions that effectively addressed issues whilst minimising resource strain.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene for his participation at the meeting.

**Resolved:** – That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board supported the recommendation that Cabinet agree:

1. To carry out a consultation in relation to the future Town Centre

and Clifton Park Public Spaces Protection Order.

2. To carry out a consultation in relation to the future Borough wide Public Spaces Protection Order specifically dealing with dog fouling and control.

**26. SCRUTINY REVIEW - PREPARATION FOR ADULTHOOD FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)**

The Chair explained to members that this agenda item had been a scrutiny review, which had been carried out by the previous Improving Lives Select Commission (ILSC) and was a review of adults and children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, known as SEND.

The Chair informed Members that the Chair of ILSC (Councillor Pitchley) was unable to attend to present the report. However, the Joint Assistant Director for Commissioning & Performance and the Assistant Director for Adult Care and Integration were present at the meeting to answer any questions from Members in relation to the review.

The Chair explained that once the report had been considered by Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB), it would then be considered by Cabinet who had an eight-week period to respond back to the OSMB. The Chair then asked if members if they had any questions or comments in relation to the report.

Councillor Yasseen stated that she had been involved in the spotlight review at some stage and had contributed to the report. She felt it was crucial for Cabinet to understand this situation, given the previous discussion around the Council's overspend and weekly expenditure for Rotherham's Children in Care.

Councillor Yasseen raised her uncertainty as why Rotherham had such a high percentage of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) compared to the national average and other councils such as Barnsley, Doncaster, and Sheffield. She felt that this report did not provide clarity on the issue. Additionally, Councillor Yasseen was concerned that the long-term implications for Rotherham, particularly around the school-to-home transport service. She stated that a higher number of SEND children would contribute to increased transport costs and affect transition services into adult social care. She suggested that there should be an academic inquiry or a commissioned report from scrutiny to better understand why Rotherham had such high prevalence of SEND pupils, as this could lead to further overspend for years to come.

The Joint Assistant Director for Commissioning & Performance stated that

the area raised by Councillor Yaseen would be more relevant to an independent inquiry from the service. However, she informed Members that it had not been in the scope for this particular review to consider why Rotherham had such high SEND numbers. She apologised for being unable to provide a response to the question at the moment.

Councillor Yaseen was concerned that as this report would go to Cabinet it did not include any in-depth investigation as to why Rotherham was an outlier which should have been considered within the report. She believed to really understand the reasons behind such high figures there should be an academic piece of work undertaken if there was not the right expertise in Children's Services. Councillor Yaseen stated that as these young people entered into transition services there would be a greater impact on the system, which would result in a greater overspend for the Council. She proposed that an additional recommendation should be submitted to Cabinet, in addition to the report.

The Chair acknowledged Councillor Yaseen's comments and assured Members that there were experts in Children's Services who understood SEND and could provide further information on Rotherham's criteria and threshold. He suggested that the high figures could possibly be due to Rotherham's thresholds being much lower than Barnsley, Doncaster, or Sheffield.

Councillor Yaseen agreed and emphasised the importance of receiving a response on this matter. She noted this was not a new issue and that the actual figures showed Rotherham had the highest number of cases at 22.1%, compared to Barnsley at 6.9%, Doncaster at 17.9%, Sheffield at 19% and Leeds at 10.2%. She asked whether Rotherham's threshold was different from that of other councils, if the characteristics varied, and how the assessment of SEND pupils was conducted. Councillor Yaseen acknowledged the report's value but expressed that the current version did not adequately address these concerns.

The Joint Assistant Director for Commissioning & Performance commented that the issues raised by Councillor Yaseen had not been included in the original scope of the review, which had been conducted by ILSC. However, she did state that the Board jointly chaired by the Joint Assistant Director for Commissioning & Performance and the Assistant Director for Adult Care and Integration had recently reviewed their plans. These plans fed into the SEND Executive Board as well the SEND Delivery Plan for the whole borough addressing some of the concerns raised at the meeting.

The Joint Assistant Director for Commissioning & Performance stated that there were specialists within Children and Young People's Services who actively worked with schools to ensure they could effectively identify children as SEND. It was noted that Rotherham and its partners had been particularly pro-active in this area, and were engaged in understanding the needs of children, including those related to SEND and safeguarding.

She informed Members, that the figures for Rotherham actually showed a higher number of children and young people who had been diagnosed with autism.

The Joint Assistant Director for Commissioning & Performance assured Members that the national framework was being used by the Council and regular engagement was maintained with schools to benchmark against the framework. In addition, Rotherham also had a graduated response system that instructed schools to identify children or young people as SEND in accordance with this framework. The Joint Assistant Director for Commissioning & Performance concurred with Councillor Yasseen that exploring and analysing the reasons behind such high numbers for Rotherham and its associated needs could possibly exceed the expertise of officers within Children and Young People's services and may need an external academic review.

Councillor Yasseen confirmed that it was an accurate scrutiny report and appreciated that the issue in relation to SEND was not part of the original scope. However, she felt it was important to understand why Rotherham had such a higher prevalence as it could have significant implications for the service in terms of pressures and costs.

The Chair suggested that as this had not been in the original scope of the report that this issue be referred back to ILSC for them to consider and investigate the reasons why Rotherham has such high SEND figures, particularly when compared to other local authorities and the national average.

The Chair then thanked the Joint Assistant Director for Commissioning & Performance and the Assistant Director for Adult Care for their participation in the meeting.

**Resolved:** - That Overview and Scrutiny Management Board:

1. received the report and considered the following recommendations for onward transition to be considered by Cabinet.
  - 1) **School Effectiveness:**
    - a) That the support available for preparation for adulthood for children and young people with SEND in mainstream education, in both the early years and post sixteen settings, is further enhanced.
    - b) That education pathways relating to preparation for adulthood for children with SEND are reviewed, ensuring clear communication of the pathways to parents and carers.
  - 2) **Inclusion and Communities:**
    - a) That information relating to the support available to parents and carers within communities is developed, enabling a

seamless service that supports and empowers parent carers.

- b) That the feedback from the Autism Strategy Consultation is reflected in the support offer available, to ensure children and young people feel safe within their communities, at school and online.
- c) That there is a further focus on enhancing equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in relation to this area of activity, with a particular focus on improving engagement levels with children and young people with SEND in marginalised communities.

3) **Communication:**

- a) That established networks and partnerships, such as the Rotherham Parent Carers' Forum, are further embedded, to increase awareness raising and increase the number of SEND families that are engaged and reached in the Borough.
- b) That the process relating to Education, Health and Care Plans is reviewed to ensure the young person's voice is present throughout the process.

- 2. Agreed that the ILSC give consideration to investigating the reasons why Rotherham has such high SEND figures, particularly when compared to other local authorities and the national average.

**27. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24**

The Chair introduced the Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/2024 and confirmed that this was on the agenda for Overview & Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) and would be going to Full Council on 11 September and would be presented by the Chair and Vice-Chair, Councillor Bacon.

No comments or questions were raised, and the Chair thanked Members for their consideration of this report.

**Resolved:** That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board:

- 1. Noted the Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24; and
- 2. Noted that the Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24 was being presented to Council on 11 September 2024.

**28. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board considered its Work Programme which was attached for members information and was related to a previous workshop held at the beginning of August. Members at this workshop had discussed and reviewed the work programme which represented all the Scrutiny Commissions as well as Overview & Scrutiny Management Boards



(OSMB) own work programme. The Chair then invited Members for any comments or questions relating to the work programme.

Councillor McKiernan commented that in relation to the Improving Places Select Commission there had been some disappointment from Councillor Jones as this Commission would not be reviewing the Grounds Maintenance Policy but instead this would fall to OSMB. Councillor McKiernan accepted that it was a decision that already had been taken and it had gone to OSMB for the reasons in relation to grass cutting. However, Councillor Jones expressed that he had hoped to look at the overall Grounds Maintenance Policy and just asked then OSMB would themselves, look at the whole policy and not just the aspect of grass cutting within that policy.

The Chair stated that if OSMB had done the full resolution which had not been submitted to Full Council the process would have taken two years to have done a full this review. Following discussions with the Vice Chair of OSMB and officers, it was agreed that the best approach would be for OSMB to look at just the grass cutting section. However, the Chair reiterated that any Member could put themselves forward as part of a working party which would look at this area.

**Resolved:** - That the Work Programme be approved.

## **29. WORK IN PROGRESS - SELECT COMMISSIONS**

The Chair asked Councillor Kennan to provide a progress update on work by the Health Select Commission.

Councillor Kennan explained that the agenda for the Health Select Commission (HSC) would include the Annual Report from TRFT, which was the Rotherham Hospital, and they would also receive an introduction and overview from Healthwatch, Their work programme also included Place Partners 'Winter Planning,' Adult Social Care Update and the Director of Public Health Annual Report.

In addition to this the HSC were also looking at new ways of dealing with some of the other issues that had come up for consideration, such as Menopause and Sexual Health and Reproductive Rights. The Commission would be also working in a very dynamic way with Council's partners such as Rotherham United Community Sports Trust and RDaSH.

It was hoped that HSC would undertake reviews as well as conducting workshops. In addition, the Commission would explore a new topic to its work programme 'Veterans' Mental Health and GP Practices.' Councillor Keenan informed Members that this had originated from the Armed Forces Covenant Working Group which involved collaborative work with the veterans from the Covenant Group and would be brought into the Commission. Another topic was Physical Activity for Health (Sport England).

Councillor Keenan noted that she has had incredible support from the Governance Officer who was supporting this Commission and allowed HSC to approach reviewing important topics in a unique way. She explained that instead of reviewing items scrutiny would be done in a more interactive way through workshops and other interactive methods.

Councillor Keenan noted that it was an exciting programme for the Commission over the next included variety of interesting topics including 'Sleep Pathways' which would be a forthcoming report. Councillor Keenan then offered an open invitation to Members for them to attend HSC meetings if they were interested in any of the areas discussed.

Councillor McKiernan then proceeded to discuss the work programme for Improving Places Commission (IPSC) but noted that due to the General Election there had been some delays with meetings which had been frustrating for its Commission members. However, they were looking forward to their future meetings and their new work programme.

Councillor McKiernan confirmed that the upcoming IPSC meeting in October, would focus on the 'Section 19 Flood', which he believed would be an interesting area. He mentioned that he would be inviting external partners that contributed to the report so they could be questioned as part of this review.

Councillor McKiernan acknowledged the significance of this topic as it was an area that affected the entire borough. However, he noted that this review would only focus on the areas highlighted within the report and asked Commission Members to suggest who they should invite to the meeting to discuss 'Section 19 Flood'.

Councillor McKiernan then stated that the next item for the Commission would be 'Flood Alleviation' which had been delayed due to the 'Section 19 Flood' which needed earlier considered given its importance when there could be considerable flood-related work in the borough over the forthcoming months.

Additionally, Councillor McKiernan explained that while IPSC currently did not have any workshop-style sessions, he was exploring the possibility of turning some scheduled items into workshops and awaiting responses, which could lead some of the Commission's planned becoming interactive sessions over the next year.

**Resolved:** - That the updates from the Chairs of the Select Commissions on work undertaken and planned for the future were noted.

**30. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS - 1 SEPTEMBER 2024 TO 30 NOVEMBER 2024**

The Board considered the Forward Plan of Key Decisions 1 September 2024 to 30 November 2024, which had been circulated along with the OSMB's papers.

He informed members that this was a standard item on the agenda and asked if members had any questions relating to it. He reaffirmed that the Forward Plan and Key Decisions could also be used to identify future areas for review by any of the Commissions.

**Resolved:** - That the Forward Plan be noted.

**31. CALL-IN ISSUES**

There were no call-in issues.

**32. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items.