

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**  
**Wednesday 2 July 2025**

Present:- Councillor Steele (in the Chair); Councillors Allen, Blackham, Brent, A. Carter, Keenan, McKiernan, Monk, Tinsley and Yasseen.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bacon and Baggaley.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-

<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

**13. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 4 JUNE 2025**

**Resolved:** That the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 4 June 2025 be approved as a true record.

**14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

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

No questions were received.

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

There were no reasons to exclude the press or public.

**17. COUNCIL PLAN 2022-2025 AND YEAR AHEAD DELIVERY PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE 2024-25**

Members welcomed John Edwards, Chief Executive on his appointment to the Council.

At the Chair's invitation the Leader of the Council, Councillor Read introduced the report, indicating that this was an overview of the final year-end report for the 2024–25 delivery plan, whilst noting that the Council had already agreed on the new plan for 2025–26. He described the current moment as a transitional phase, wrapping up the previous plan while the new one was already in motion.

The Leader noted that 77% of the actions committed for 2024–25 had been delivered and 60% of measurable performance indicators were on target. A number of actions were delayed, and one action may be abandoned due to feasibility issues.

The Leader structured his update around the five themes of the Council Plan:

**1. Thriving Neighbourhoods:**

- PSPO consultation and community safety strategy completed.
- The years Cultural events programme had been delivered.
- Delays in local neighbourhood road safety schemes and CCTV software procurement.
- The Maltby East scheme caused delays in the Towns and Villages Fund.

**2. People are Safe, Healthy and Live Well:**

- Repairs and maintenance policy approved in November 2024.
- The temporary accommodation offer had expanded by 17 homes.
- Domestic abuse delivery model review had been completed but decisions deferred to align with strategy review.

**3. Every Child Able to Fulfil Their Potential:**

- The baby packs had been commissioned and distributed.
- Increase in family registrations which was welcomed.
- The SEN hub building work scheduled.
- Independent training delivered to 24 young people.
- Work on the water splash area at Clifton Park had begun.
- Delays in children's care home programme due to staffing and registration.

**4. Expanding Economic Opportunity:**

- 464 attendees at business workshops for start-ups and new businesses.
- 132 grant offers for financial assistance issued through UKSPF grants.
- Public realm improvements at Riverside Gardens and Co-operation Street were underway.
- Delays in Temple Brook Business Zone due to ownership and stakeholder challenges.
- Local Plan revision delayed due to government target changes.
- Progress had been made on flood alleviation schemes and community energy engagement.

**5. Cleaner, Greener Rotherham:**

- Delays in works at Thrybergh Country Park and some flood defence schemes.
- Fleet replacement plan behind schedule; 23 of 60 vehicles procured.
- Heat decarbonisation plan agreed, but solar canopy work at Riverside House delayed.
- One project—Low Carbon Energy Regeneration Plan—likely to be abandoned due to site issues and feasibility concerns.

**6. One Council:**

- 75,000 online transactions recorded in Q1 2025.
- The continued development of self-service forms and website improvements.
- Early Careers Hub launched in December 2024.

The Leader acknowledged the breadth of the report, noting that while much had been achieved, there were areas requiring further attention or re-evaluation.

The Chair invited members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) to raise questions and queries on the points raised earlier.

Councillor A Cater asked about the decision timeline and status for the projects considered as part of the Our Places Fund. The Leader explained Consultation had been completed and two decisions (Maltby East and Swinton Centre Public Realm Scheme) were made earlier in the year. A further report with more detailed proposals is expected by autumn.

Councillor Yasseen noted the decline in satisfaction and safety perception and asked if there was a deeper understanding of the reasons. The Leader noted that these results were based on a 500-person annual survey. Results could fluctuate and may be influenced by external factors like weather or national sentiment but generally it was moving in the right direction. Long-term trends are more reliable.

Councillor Yasseen felt there could be a correlation between satisfaction and the hate crime outcomes. The Leader acknowledged the concern. Hate crime outcomes were police-led but included for visibility. Further analysis was needed to understand the drop.

Councillor Yasseen went on to query the accuracy of the working-age population employment data? The Leader agreed the data had limitations, but it was the national standard. Supplementary data (e.g. benefit claims) was used internally for programme evaluation.

Councillor Tinsley queried if the Maltby High Street targets were realistic and felt there was a lack of ward member engagement. The Leader believed targets were realistic and he encouraged ward members to initiate direct contact for any concerns. The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment indicated he would arrange a session with ward members to improve engagement.

Councillor Monk noted the home-to-school transport savings had been reasonably successful but asked if there had been any family feedback? The Leader clarified that the overall home-to-school transport budget was rising. The policy was re-visited, and public consultation was undertaken involving parents and families. The team had done well to improve the cost efficiency of each journey.

The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment highlighted that considerable work had been undertaken to look at the efficiencies in journeys and over a three-year period a 20% cost reduction had been achieved and put Rotherham on par with neighbouring authorities for costs on home-to-school transport. Positive feedback had been received regarding the independent travel training. A graduation ceremony was held each year, and some parents had indicated that it had transformed their children's lives, given them more self-confidence in their day-to-day lives.

The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services clarified that once work had been completed regarding routes and making the service as efficient as it could be then additional funding would be allocated to reset that budget. That work had now been completed and they were satisfied that they knew how much budget to reallocate, whilst recognising the number of children and their needs may vary over time. It was confirmed that the budget had been reset based on efficiency work.

Councillor Keenan welcomed the increased availability of temporary accommodation but queried if the additional posts in the Homelessness team had been filled and if the team was running at its increased capacity? The Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health confirmed the Homelessness team had gone through a restructure and was now fully staffed and operating under a new, prevention-focused model.

Councillor Monk sought clarification on the workforce data regarding young people with disabilities. The Assistant Chief Executive clarified that 13% of council workforce were young people with disabilities, slightly below the borough average (14%). A range of initiatives were in place to improve representation, including outreach and supported apprenticeships.

Councillor Yasseen noted climate emergency declared by the Council in 2019 and the missed climate and tree planting targets, querying if the Council was treating it as an emergency. The Councillor suggested that the word 'emergency' should be removed, and the Council should move towards a more sustainable plan to achieve that agenda. The Leader indicated there were two trends, one was the return to the workplace following Covid, which placed more energy pressures on the Council. The second was the national grid decarbonisation had not progressed at the expected pace. There were programmes of work, particularly around fleets, fleet procurement, buildings and assets which had not borne fruit but would deliver results. In terms of tree planting, the numerical targets had been met but not area-based ones. The Leader acknowledged future challenges in meeting net zero.

The Chair asked what interventions were in place to improve phonics screening results and reduce attainment gaps? The Strategic Director for Children and Young People's Services explained that the results were not

where they would like them to be, and a development programme had been put in place. English Hubs were available which linked schools together and were meant to provide specialist tuition and support to schools in terms of how phonics sessions were delivered. They hadn't been as successful as hoped. She highlighted that there was a bespoke specialist phonics programme for children with SEND which had been successful but there was still work to be done in this area.

Councillor Allen queried the accessibility of the performance reports such as this, asking if a simplified version was available. The Leader noted that a simplified version did not currently exist. The Communications team tried to translate key messages and consideration would be given to producing the information in a more digestible format.

Councillor Allen asked if a summary of missed targets could be included going forward? The Leader agreed to provide a summary of missed targets in future reports.

The Chair noted the shortfall in meeting the apprenticeships target, asking why? The Assistant Chief Executive felt it was a combination of factors. Managers may not fully understand the flexibility of apprenticeships and the levels at which they could be undertaken. The Assistant Chief Executive explained that work was underway to improve awareness and promotion. In response to Councillor Brent's point, it was noted that work was ongoing with schools and colleges. Cross-directorate efforts were in place to improve employability and promote apprenticeships.

The Chair sought clarification around the road resurfacing delays and what was being done to address them. The Leader explained some works were scheduled for school holidays and weather could cause delays. The Leader indicated that overall, the road condition targets were still being met.

The Chair queried what the implications were of exceeding the target for older adult admissions to long term residential care? The Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health explained the increase reflected higher needs and complexity. Efforts continued to find alternatives, but some admissions were necessary and based on individual choice.

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

1. Note the overall position in relation to the Year Ahead Delivery Plan activities.
2. Note the Quarter 4 data for the Council Plan performance measures.
3. Note that the Council has been using a new Council Plan from June 2025 with this being the final report for the 2022-25 Council Plan.

Further actions that arose from discussions were that:

- Further consideration was given to the development of an easy-to-read summary version of the Council Plan and the Year Ahead Delivery Plan, with the aim of improving accessibility, transparency, and public engagement.
- That future update reports would contain a summary sheet, clearly detailing:
  - Which targets have not been met,
  - The reasons for non-achievement, and
  - The anticipated timescales for completion or resolution.

## 18. ETHICAL PROCUREMENT POLICY

At the Chair's invitation the Cabinet Member for Finance and Community Safety introduced the report noting the following:

- The Council spent approximately £425 million annually with third-party suppliers and contractors across a wide range of goods, works, and services.
- Procurement was seen as a key enabler for the Council to deliver its strategic objectives, using its purchasing power to drive social, economic, and environmental improvements for residents and society at large.
- The Council must comply with the Procurement Act 2023, which provided the legal framework for public procurement.
- The Ethical Procurement Policy consolidated a range of measures, decisions, and commitments the Council had made over the years to promote ethical practices.
- Originally approved in January 2020, the policy was reviewed on a three-year cycle.
- The aim was to create a comprehensive umbrella policy that centralised all ethical procurement-related decisions and practices.
- One notable update was the Council's intention to sign the UK Steel Charter, which replaces the previously signed Sustainable British Steel Charter.

The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services made the following points to provide additional context:

- The policy was now reviewed annually, although most changes were typically minor (e.g., updates to dates or legislation titles).
- The UK Steel Charter update was the main reason the policy was brought to members for review this time.
- The policy included a commitment to support the charter through the pre-procurement business case process, ensuring alignment with the Council's ethical and sustainability goals.

The Chair invited members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) to raise questions and queries on the points raised earlier.

Councillor Blackham queried if anyone had assessed how much the Ethical Procurement Policy was costing the Council, considering that

requiring suppliers to meet ethical standards was likely to increase their costs? The Assistant Director Financial Services acknowledged that the ethical requirements likely increased costs, but it was extremely difficult to quantify. Procurement tenders did not break down costs by ethical components, so the Council could not isolate or measure the financial impact of these requirements.

Councillor Blackham followed up by asking if the Council was now centralising procurement? The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services explained that the procurement process (rules, regulations, tendering) was centralised, but actual purchasing was done by individual services who knew their needs. Centralisation of procurement professionals had been in place since 2016. The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services went on to clarify that while purchasing was decentralised, the Council did aggregate spend where possible (e.g. IT, food contracts) to secure better value.

Councillor Yasseen asked how the Council ethically screened what was included in the policy? Who decided what went in, and was there a framework? The Assistant Director Financial Services explained that major procurements were guided by a business case process, which included ethical considerations. The Council used government lists (e.g. for modern slavery) and internal assessments to guide decisions. The Service Manager explained that before tenders went to market, a horizon scan and market assessment was conducted. Ethical requirements were embedded into tender documents and evaluated through method statement questions.

In her supplementary question Councillor Yasseen raised concerns about a democratic deficit. She referenced the Council's support for a Palestine motion and a large public petition, suggesting that civic mandates should influence procurement policy. The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services explained that officers could consider civic mandates, but the policy was ultimately set by Cabinet. Any civic input must be legally actionable within procurement law. The Assistant Director Financial Services indicated the Council could not legally exclude suppliers based on country of origin or political issues due to national procurement legislation.

In a follow-up Councillor Yasseen argued that civic mandates, like the modern slavery motion, had been included before and should be considered again. The Leader noted that all elements in the policy were based on previous Council decisions. There was currently no legally compliant way to exclude suppliers based on geopolitical issues (e.g. Gaza). If a legal route was found, the Council was open to considering it.

Councillor A Carter asked if the Council could ensure it was not using suppliers who funded or supported conflicts (e.g. Israel-Palestine, Ukraine-Russia, fracking, fossil fuels)? The Leader explained the Council used tools like the Social Value Policy to encourage ethical practices but

could not legally exclude suppliers based on such criteria. The Council was open to exploring options if legal mechanisms become available.

In a follow-up question Councillor A Carter asked if the Council would lobby national government to allow more flexibility in procurement decisions? The Leader indicated he had written to the government following the petition, requesting more flexibility for councils in procurement decisions.

The Chair asked how the Ethical Procurement Policy aligned with the Council's Climate Change and Social Value policies? The Leader indicated there was some overlap, especially in encouraging suppliers to reduce carbon emissions, but the policies were separate in terms of decision-making processes.

Councillor McKiernan requested a correction in the document: "Sheffield, Yorkshire, Mayoral Combined Authority" should be "South Yorkshire, Mayoral Combined Authority".

Councillor Allen suggested a minor wording correction: "bed to the Council's partners" should be "embed with".

In conclusion the Cabinet Member for Finance and Community Safety said the Council was open to feedback from scrutiny and would continue to report back. The updated UK Steel Charter would be signed before September.

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

1. Formalise the support of the UK Steel Charter as the successor to the Sustainable British Steel Charter.
2. Approve the updated Ethical Procurement Policy for 2025.

## 19. FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2024-25

At the Chair's invitation the Cabinet Member for Finance and Community Safety introduced the report noting the following:

- It presented the Council's final revenue, capital, HR, and school outturn position for the financial year 2024–25.
- It was the final report in a series of financial monitoring updates provided to Cabinet throughout the year.
- The Council had set a revenue budget of £326 million.
- The four-year capital programme was set at £508 million.
- The Council had faced significant demand and market pressures, particularly in: Adult Social Care and Home-to-School Transport
- Those pressures were compounded by inflation and broader economic challenges, which had increased the Council's base costs.
- In December 2024, the Council forecasted an overspend of £3.1 million.
- The final outturn showed a reduced overspend of £0.3 million,



representing a £2.8 million improvement.

- This improvement was attributed to:
  - Additional savings delivered by service areas.
  - Maximised grant applications.
  - Increased income.
  - Treasury management savings.
- The £0.3 million overspend was funded through the use of reserves.
- The capital programme experienced slippage, with an underspend of £31 million against the budget.
- This was a significant improvement compared to the £140 million delay in the previous year.
- The Council continued to review its operational and non-operational assets.
- The aim was to rationalise the estate and ensure efficient use of resources.

The Chair invited members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) to raise questions and queries on the points raised earlier.

Councillor McKiernan queried a line in the budget showing a negative £2.8 million under “Unallocated Flood Alleviation” for 2027–28, asking if money was being removed from the budget. The Assistant Director Financial Services said it appeared to be a reallocation issue. The unallocated fund was a central pot for future flood schemes. The negative figure likely reflected partial allocation to specific schemes. He promised to double-check the figures.

Councillor Yasseen raised a recurring concern about the consistent overspend in Children and Young People’s Services (CYPS) over the past decade. Asking when the Council would accept this as the true cost of the service and adjust the budget accordingly. The Assistant Director Financial Services acknowledged the consistent overspend but noted that total CYPS spending had been reducing due to savings. Rotherham had historically been a high-spending authority in this area. The Council was waiting for the full rollout of the residential programme before considering a budget reset. It was clarified that a contingency was in place for 2025–26.

In a follow-up question Councillor Yasseen expressed concern that CYPS savings were backloaded in the financial plan, making them harder to achieve. The Assistant Director Financial Services agreed that backloading savings was risky. The Council had improved its approach to savings planning in recent years, applying more scrutiny and starting earlier. Most new savings had been delivered, but legacy pressures remained.

Councillor Yasseen asked a further question regarding plans to replenish reserves after recent usage. The Assistant Director Financial Services indicated that the Council had used reserves minimally and strategically.

Thanks to good treasury management, reserves were in a better position than in 2023–24. The Council assessed reserve levels based on risk and avoided holding excessive reserves.

The Chair noted that CYPS had always overspent in his experience. He expressed concern that Adult Social Care may follow the same path due to demographic pressures. The Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services said the adult social care budget was increased by £17 million to reflect recent pressures. The Council would monitor whether this was sufficient. For CYPS, a reset would only happen once all possible efficiencies had been implemented.

Councillor Allen praised the report for being clear and narrative driven. And requested that the review of capital programme delivery (mentioned in paragraph 2.60) be brought back to OSMB for scrutiny. The Assistant Director Financial Services welcomed the feedback and confirmed that the review findings would be shared with the Board.

Councillor Yasseen referred to capital programme variations relating to bereavement services, suggesting re-profiling unspent funds (originally from fines imposed on Dignity) to improve cemetery facilities, such as installing accessible toilets. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Community Safety agreed and would raise the issue with the new Cabinet Member and challenge Dignity to fulfil their obligations along with a commitment to review accessibility across all cemeteries.

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

1. Note the revenue outturn position for 2024/25.
2. Note the budgeted transfer to HRA reserves increased by £4.4m following the revenue and capital outturn positions.
3. Note the carry forward of the combined surplus schools balance of £2.3m in accordance with the Department for Education regulations.
4. Note the reserves position set out in paragraphs 2.52 to 2.57.
5. Note the capital outturn, funding position and programme variations as set out in paragraphs 2.58 to 2.91.
6. Approve the capital budget variations as detailed in section 2.79 to 2.82 of the report.
7. Note the position on CRSTS Revenue Grant as set out in paragraphs 2.92 to 2.94 and delegate the decision to allocate and spend the remaining grant to the Assistant Director Planning Regeneration and Transport in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and the Cabinet Member.

Further actions that arose from discussions were that:

- That the OSMB would receive details of the package of proposed improvements relating to the Capital Programme.

**20. TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN 2024-25**

At the Chair's invitation the Cabinet Member for Finance and Community Safety introduced the report noting the following:

- This was the final strategy report for the financial year.
- It reviewed treasury activity against the strategy agreed at the start of the year.
- It included actual performance against prudential indicators for 2020–2025, as required by the relevant codes of practice.
- The Council's treasury function operated in accordance with, the Local Government Act and associated guidance and professional codes.
- Those frameworks were designed to limit risk in treasury activities.
- The Council had complied with all indicators set out in Section 2 of the report.
- The Council continued its short-term borrowing strategy, based on advice from treasury advisors.
- Borrowing was only undertaken when necessary.
- This approach had led to a significant increase in the net under-borrowed position, meaning the Council had not borrowed up to its full capital financing requirement.
- The strategy helped control interest costs and reduce the need for borrowing.
- Slippage in the capital programme also contributed to reduced borrowing needs.
- Those factors resulted in an £8 million underspend on the treasury management budget.
- The savings were used to support the Council's overall financial position.
- The report met the requirements of the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

The Chair invited members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) to raise questions and queries on the points raised earlier.

Councillor Tinsley queried a short-term loan of £20 million taken out for one month, asking whether this indicated a financial issue? The Assistant Director Financial Services clarified that there was no financial issue. The loan was part of the Council's cash flow management strategy. The Council aimed to minimize cash holdings due to high interest rates, making short-term borrowing a cost-effective solution. This approach was expected to continue over the next few years.

In a follow-up question the Chair asked about the risks associated with short-term borrowing. The Assistant Director Financial Services explained the main risk was interest rate fluctuation. The Council was under-borrowed, meaning it hadn't committed to long-term borrowing for its full capital financing requirement. Eventually, short-term loans would need to

be converted to long-term borrowing, and timing was crucial to secure favourable rates. The Council had previously secured £227 million at 1.6% interest during a market dip, which was highly advantageous.

In a further question the Chair asked how the Council would adapt its borrowing strategy if interest rates continued to fall? The Assistant Director Financial Services explained the strategy would involve timing long-term borrowing to coincide with the lowest point of interest rates. Options included borrowing in smaller tranches or making a large commitment if confident about market conditions. Predicting the bottom of the dip was difficult, but the Council aimed to act when rates were most favourable.

Councillor Yasseen praised the Council's financial prudence and noted its impressive performance in investment benchmarking. Councillor Yasseen suggested the Council consider adopting an Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG) investment policy, similar to other councils like Cardiff and Leicester. The Assistant Director Financial Services thanked her for the positive feedback, going on to explain that ESG was not currently a formal part of the Council's treasury policy. Green bonds had been considered but were currently too costly due to high premiums. However, he agreed that ESG principles should be considered in future strategy development, especially in alignment with the Council's climate goals.

**Resolved:** That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board supported the recommendations that Cabinet: note the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators outturn position as set out in Section 2 and Appendix 1.

## 21. MAY 2025-26 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

At the Chair's invitation the Cabinet Member for Finance and Community Safety introduced the report noting the following:

- The Council was projecting a small underspend of £0.1 million; this was composed of an overspend of £4.2 million within directorates and offset by a £4.3 million underspend in central services.
- The main financial pressure was within Children's Services, particularly due to the increased demand for placements and rising costs in the children's social care market.
- The Treasury Management Strategy continued to perform well.
- The Council was using a strategy of minimising borrowing levels and relying on short-term borrowing to reduce interest costs.
- This approach had been supported by delays in capital programme delivery, which has pushed back the need to borrow.
- The treasury strategy was expected to generate savings that would help offset wider budget pressures across the Council.
- In the current climate of economic difficulty and financial constraint, it was essential that spending remained aligned with the Council's budget.
- Close monitoring of expenditure and income across all services

would remain a top priority.

The Chair invited members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) to raise questions and queries on the points raised earlier.

Councillor Blackham expressed frustration over the continued overspend in Children and Young People's Services (CYPS), stating that it undermined the credibility of the budget process. He emphasised the need for a realistic budget that reflects actual service costs. The Assistant Director Financial Services acknowledged the concern and reiterated that CYPS spending had been reducing year-on-year. The overspend was due to non-delivery of savings plans. The Council had included a contingency for CYPS in the 2025–26 budget and expected to reassess the budget alignment during the year, especially after the residential programme was fully implemented.

The Chair asked how the Council was managing the financial risk associated with the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit, especially with the statutory protection being removed. The Assistant Director Financial Services confirmed that the statutory override had been extended for two more years, reducing immediate risk. The Council was continuing its DSG reduction plans, focusing on increasing local pupil placements to avoid expensive out-of-borough placements. The DSG deficit had been reduced from £23 million to around £1 million, projected to be £3 million at the end of the financial year. However, national SEND reforms were still pending and could impact future funding.

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

1. Note the current General Fund Revenue Budget forecast underspend of £0.1m.
2. Note the updated position of the Capital Programme.

## 22. WORK PROGRAMME

The Board considered its Work Programme.

The Chair explained that an email had been sent to all elected members requesting ideas and contributions for the 2025–26 scrutiny work programme. The deadline for submissions was set for Friday, 4 July 2025. The next step was that a meeting of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the select commissions would be convened to finalise the programme. This could involve using the prioritisation matrix (previously agreed by the Board) to assess which suggestions would be taken forward.

The Governance Manager provided an update on the Gaza petition action tracker. Confirming that all actions had been completed except one: the ongoing requirement for the Cabinet Member to maintain dialogue with the petitioners as needed and this action would remain open for the foreseeable future.

Councillor Yasseen expressed concern that the Gaza petition update had been circulated via email rather than being included as a formal agenda item. She emphasised the petition's unique public mandate and the importance of transparency, noting that previous updates had been discussed in public meetings with petitioners present. She requested that the Gaza petition update be reinstated as a full agenda item for the September meeting to allow public engagement.

The Chair proposed a compromise: that he would personally speak with the relevant Cabinet Member (both current and former, if necessary) to get an accurate and up-to-date position before deciding whether to include the item on the September agenda. He asked Councillor Yasseen to email her concerns to him and copy in Barbel Gale, the Governance Manager. Councillor Yasseen, agreed to the proposed approach for now but reiterated that the issue was not just her personal view, that it reflected wider public interest and expectations.

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

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

The Chair invited the Chairs of each of the Select Commissions to provide an update on their work, which has been detailed below.

### **Health Select Commission**

**Presented by:** Councillor Rose Keenan, Chair

#### **Key Updates:**

##### **1. Adult Contact Team Referral Process:**

- Members welcomed the information provided.
- The service returned to update on the implementation of AI in the referral process.
- Members expressed interest in seeing how this could be replicated in other areas.

##### **2. Health Hub Development (Pre-Decision Scrutiny):**

- A major item scrutinised ahead of Cabinet on 7 July.
- Members raised concerns about:
  - Appropriateness of services to be housed in the hub.
  - Accessibility and public transport infrastructure.
  - Ensuring services reflect areas of greatest need.
- Despite concerns, members supported the recommendations to Cabinet.
- An additional recommendation was submitted that this item be returned to Health Select at appropriate stages during Phase Two to provide reassurance that improved health outcomes, tackling health inequalities and service delivery

gaps remained at the heart of that phase.

**3. Future Work:**

- Upcoming scrutiny of the ADASS (Association of Directors of Adult Social Services) peer review.
- Review of the Healthwatch Annual Report.
- Equality account responses from TRFT (The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust), RDaSH (Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust), and the Ambulance Service.
- Planning a menopause workshop in September, open to all members and involving partners including Rotherham United.

**4. Work Programme:**

- A well-rounded outline work programme had been agreed, which maintained flexibility to accommodate emerging issues.
- The Commission's work was recently referenced on BBC News, highlighting its impact.

**Improving Places Select Commission**

**Presented by:** Councillor McKiernan, Chair

**Key Updates:**

**1. Muslim Burial Provision Review:**

- An independent review was presented.
- The reviewer and bereavement services officers answered questions.
- Several recommendations are expected to follow.

**2. Rotherham Employment and Skills Strategy:**

- Discussion slightly overlapped with education and skills, which was outside the Commission's core remit.
- Members engaged in strong discussions, particularly around apprenticeships.

**3. Housing Strategy 2022–25 Final Report:**

- Reviewed the outcomes of the three-year strategy.
- Members raised questions about the updated housing policy, which had now been delayed.
- The Chair expressed frustration at the delay in considering the Housing Strategy 2025-2028.

**4. Upcoming Items:**

- Tenant scrutiny review on tenancy health checks.
- Ongoing work on the School Road Safety Review, led by Councillor Tinsley, Vice Chair.

- A meeting with Cabinet members clarified that the Commission's review will proceed independently, with a different scope than Cabinet's.

**5. Work Programme:**

- Awaiting further submissions via email.
- Anticipates several items being allocated to Places Commission.

**Improving Lives Select Commission**

**Presented by:** Councillor Brent, Vice-Chair

**Key Updates:**

**1. Kinship Care Local Offer:**

- Reviewed the draft offer ahead of Cabinet consideration.
- Recommendations included:
  - Adding information on trauma and relevant resources.
  - Developing a short, accessible booklet for families.
  - Ensuring the language is inclusive and accessible, especially for young people.

**2. Work Programming Session:**

- Members met to agree on statutory, annual, and outstanding items from the previous year.

**3. Upcoming Items:**

- July meeting would scrutinise:
  - Children and Young People's Services Performance Report.
  - Revised Elective Home Education Policy (pre-decision scrutiny).
- A training session on child-specific trauma was being arranged via the Member and Democratic Panel.
  - This would support a potential future review on trauma and children missing education.

**24. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS**

The Board considered the Forward Plan of Key Decisions July 2025 to September 2025.

The Chair introduced the item and invited the Governance Manager to walk members through the forward plan for July to September 2025. The purpose was to identify which key decisions should be scheduled for pre-decision scrutiny at the next OSMB meeting on 9 September 2025.

The Governance Manager Gale outlined the key and non-key decisions



scheduled for Cabinet in September, grouped by directorate:

**Adult Care, Housing and Public Health**

- Draft Housing Strategy 2025–2030
- Housing Allocations Policy
- Rotherham Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2025–2030
- Smoke-Free and Vape-Free Places Policy

**Children and Young People's Services**

- No Family Left Behind Strategy

**Finance and Customer Services**

- July 2025–26 Financial Monitoring Report (confirmed to come to OSMB)
- Investing in Our Community Faculties
- Property Transactions

**Regeneration and Environment**

- Community Safety Strategy 2025–2028
- Bassingthorpe Farm Supplementary Planning Document
- Local Validation List for Planning Applications
- Rotherham Employment and Skills Strategy (noted as a potential item of interest)

**Licensing and Regulation**

- Selective Licensing Policy (to be scrutinised by Improving Places Select Commission; OSMB members will be invited to attend)
- Licensing Act 2003 – Statement of Licensing Policy

**Non-Key Decisions**

- Adult Social Care Local Account 2024–25
- All-Age Autism Strategy Update 2024–2027
- New Applications for Business Rates Relief

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

1. Noted the Forward Plan of Key Decisions - July 2025 to September 2025.
2. Agreed that the following items would be added to the July agenda as part of OSMB's pre-decision scrutiny work:
  - July 2025-26 Financial Monitoring Report.
  - Community Safety Strategy 2025-2028.
  - Rotherham Employment and Skills Strategy.

**25. CALL-IN ISSUES**

There were no call-in issues.

**26. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items.

