

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**  
**Wednesday 6 May 2026**

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Keenan.

Council Officers in attendance:

- John Edwards, Chief Executive
- Judith Badger, Executive Director, Corporate Services
- Ian Spicer, Executive Director, Adult Care, Housing and Public Health
- Sam Barstow, Service Director, Community Safety and Street Scene
- Simon Moss, Service Director, Planning, Regeneration and Transport
- Rob Mahon, Service Director, Financial Services
- Kevin Fisher, Service Director, Property and Facilities Services
- Lorna Vertigan, Head of Regeneration
- Michelle Kaye, Head of Housing Options
- Jayne Metcalfe, Head of Service Access & Prevention
- Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services
- Barbel Gale, Governance Manager
- Kristianne Thorogood, Governance Advisor

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

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

**140. MINUTES OF MEETING WEDNESDAY 8 APRIL 2026 OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 8 April 2026 be approved as a true record.

**141. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

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

No questions were received.

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

There were no reasons to exclude the press or public.

**144. HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY 2026-2031**

At the Chair's invitation, the Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor

Beresford presented the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2026-2031, outlining a five-year strategic framework to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping in Rotherham. The strategy was aligned with the Government's national plan (December 2025) and the Council's duties under the Homelessness Act 2002, and followed a comprehensive review of local trends, which showed rising demand, including a 25% increase in approaches and growing complexity of need.

It was reported that factors included increasing housing costs, the cost-of-living crisis and limited access to affordable housing. Of 4,254 households owed a homelessness duty, a significant proportion had multiple support needs. The strategy therefore prioritised early intervention, prevention and partnership-led approaches.

Extensive consultation had been undertaken over eight weeks with residents, partners and stakeholders, with 46.8% of respondents having lived experience of homelessness. Four key priorities were outlined: preventing homelessness through early intervention; increasing access to suitable affordable homes; ensuring timely, targeted support; and tackling rough sleeping through prevention and rapid response.

It was noted that the strategy set high-level objectives rather than a detailed delivery plan. Subject to approval, a detailed action plan would be developed with partners and published before autumn, supported by regular performance monitoring, annual review and existing scrutiny arrangements. Overall delivery responsibility would sit with the Service Director for Housing.

The Executive Director, Adult Care, Housing and Public Health, Ian Spicer added that the report highlighted key achievements from the previous strategy, which had informed the proposed priorities. It was noted the continued emphasis on a collective council approach to preventing homelessness, reflecting its ongoing importance as a key strategic priority.

The Chair invited members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) to raise questions and queries, starting with Councillor Blackham, who expressed support for the priorities, but clarification was sought on two aspects. Queries were raised regarding the process and support in place for individuals already rough sleeping, including how they were assisted into accommodation. Clarification was also requested on the support available for those at risk of becoming homeless, noting the importance of early intervention, and further detail was sought on the processes set out in the strategy.

The response from the Cabinet Member for Housing outlined the approach to supporting rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness. It was explained that outreach activity identified individuals through referrals and targeted engagement, working in partnership with organisations such as Shiloh and Rush House. Engagement was

prioritised to enable access to support, including temporary accommodation such as Queen Street hostel. For individuals with complex needs, a multi-agency “Housing First” approach was used, providing wrap around support to help sustain accommodation and prevent repeat homelessness.

In relation to prevention, it was noted that the strategy focused on early intervention to support those at risk of homelessness. This included identifying underlying causes, such as domestic abuse, relationship breakdown or loss of private rented accommodation, and allocating a named officer to develop solutions. Work with private landlords and housing associations was highlighted to help prevent individuals from becoming homeless and reduce reliance on emergency situations.

Councillor Allen expressed concerns about moving from a three-year to a five-year strategy. It was noted that, while a strategic framework was important, clarification was sought on whether current conditions were sufficiently stable to support a five-year approach, or whether a shorter timeframe would allow greater flexibility to respond to emerging challenges. In response the Executive Director, Adult Care, Housing and Public Health explained that a five-year strategy was considered the most appropriate approach to support long-term planning and partnership working. However, reassurance was provided that the strategy would be subject to annual review, allowing for amendments and changes in direction where necessary. It was noted that this approach would ensure sufficient flexibility to respond to emerging issues and changing conditions, such as legislative or economic developments.

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Allen regarding the current number of rough sleepers in Rotherham, it was confirmed that there were three individuals currently rough sleeping, with numbers remaining low, partly reflecting the impact of ongoing partnership work and support services.

Clarification was sought by the Chair on how the impact of the new legislation would be monitored, particularly in relation to increased tenant protections and understanding the circumstances in which individuals may become homeless. In response the Head of Housing Options, Michelle Kaye, reported that staff had received training on the Renters’ Rights Act and that monitoring arrangements would be put in place, including increased enforcement activity. It was noted that closer working with colleagues in CPU was planned, potentially through a jointly funded post, to support monitoring and assess the Act’s impact, with the aim of reducing evictions.

Councillor Brent sought clarification on how success would be measured, noting that increasing the number of council homes was one indicator. It was queried whether data was available to demonstrate how the strategy’s actions were contributing to reductions in homelessness, including how many individuals were being supported into

accommodation and the overall impact on homelessness figures. The Executive Director, Adult Care, Housing and Public Health confirmed that data was available to measure outcomes, although specific details were not provided at the meeting. The Chair agreed that the data could be shared with members at a later stage. Councillor Brent emphasised that, in measuring success, the focus should be on outcomes and impact, particularly in demonstrating reductions in homelessness. Appreciation was expressed for the commitment to provide supporting data.

The Cabinet Member for Housing noted that a reduction in temporary accommodation could be used as an indicator of success. At the end of March, 178 households were in temporary accommodation, representing a decrease of 25. It was acknowledged that while numbers had reduced, new cases continued to enter the system.

Councillor Monk sought clarification on the extent of trauma-informed practice across frontline services. While its inclusion in the strategy was welcomed, specific information was requested on the proportion of staff who had received comprehensive trauma-informed training, particularly in relation to assurance that this approach was embedded throughout services.

In response the Executive Director, Adult Care, Housing and Public Health reported that data on trauma-informed training was not available at the meeting, but that training had been rolled out across housing, adult social care and wider services in partnership with mental health colleagues. It was noted that uptake had been significant and well received. A review of future training provision was underway to consider a broader approach, recognising that different roles required varying levels of training. It was agreed that detailed figures would be shared with members after the meeting.

Councillor Yasseen noted that the involvement of individuals with lived experience of homelessness was welcomed, along with the strategy's focus on a whole-service and preventative approach. However, concern was raised that the strategy set out an ambition rather than a detailed, measurable delivery programme. Clarification was sought on the absence of specific, measurable KPIs and how delivery against the identified priorities would be assessed. The Cabinet Member for Housing acknowledged that the strategy represented a continuation of ongoing work to address homelessness, given the evolving nature of need. It was confirmed that the document set out a high-level ambition and strategic framework. It was further noted that, subject to approval, a detailed action plan with measurable KPIs would be developed, with delivery expected by August.

Councillor Yasseen acknowledged that, while the development of a detailed action plan was welcomed, it would have been beneficial to include an initial outline within the report. A further query was raised regarding the impact of previous investment secured around the end of

the COVID period to address homelessness, seeking clarification on how those resources had been used and what difference they had made, particularly in light of continued increases in demand.

The Executive Director reported that previous investment had been directed towards expanding the housing options workforce to enable a more proactive, prevention-focused approach, increasing access to support and early intervention. Funding had also been used to significantly expand the temporary accommodation portfolio and enhance support services to help individuals sustain tenancies and move on successfully. It was noted that this investment had contributed to improved outcomes, including a reduction in the use of hotel accommodation and an overall strengthening of support pathways for those at risk of homelessness.

Councillor McKiernan sought clarification on whether data was available for individuals who remained homeless beyond the 56-day statutory period, and whether this was being monitored to understand the reasons and inform service improvements. In response it was explained that the 56-day period applied to both prevention and relief duties, with continued support provided throughout. If cases were not resolved within this timeframe, a main duty could be triggered, requiring the Council to secure long-term accommodation. It was emphasised that cases were not closed prematurely and support continued until a suitable outcome was achieved unless specific conditions applied. Councillor McKiernan suggested that communication with service users could be clearer, particularly in explaining the process and automated messages. The service acknowledged that this could be improved, and a commitment was given to review communications and consider individual cases where required.

In response to Councillor Monk's questions, it was clarified that data on individuals not owed a homelessness duty was not available at the meeting but could be provided. It was noted that all individuals approaching the service received advice and assistance, with an initial assessment undertaken to determine eligibility. Where a statutory duty was not owed, support focused on prevention through guidance and early intervention. It was further explained that eligibility criteria applied, including factors such as immigration status. In cases where individuals were not eligible for a homelessness duty, advice, signposting and referrals to other services, such as social care where appropriate, were provided to ensure support was still available.

Councillor Tinsley raised concerns regarding the timeliness of the rapid response for individuals presenting as homeless, particularly outside standard working hours. It was noted that those presenting late in the week may not receive in-person support until the following week, which could leave them without immediate assistance. Clarification was sought on whether staffing resources and out-of-hours provision were being reviewed to improve response times and ensure more consistent coverage across all areas. The Executive Director confirmed that a 24-

hour homelessness support line was in place, providing access to assistance outside standard working hours. It was noted that this service could be accessed directly or through partners such as the police or other agencies. While recognising that some individuals may be unable or unwilling to make contact, assurance was provided that out-of-hours support was available and that calls were responded to promptly, including over weekends.

Further clarification was sought by Councillor Tinsley on whether physical, in-person responses were available outside normal hours, as concerns were raised that in practice support had been limited to advice until the next working day. It was suggested that specific cases could be shared for follow-up.

A second query was raised regarding the housing allocations policy, particularly the requirement for a local connection. Clarification was sought on how individuals presenting as homeless from outside the borough were supported and what assistance was available to them. The Head of Housing Options explained that where an individual presented without a local connection to the area, this would be assessed and liaison would take place with the relevant local authority to arrange appropriate support or reconnection. It was noted that this approach was in line with legislation. In cases where there was an identified risk in returning to that area, interim support would be considered while working with the relevant authority to ensure suitable arrangements were made.

Clarification was sought by Councillor McKiernan on whether the strategy included plans to increase supported temporary accommodation, particularly provision with on-site staff to assist residents. Reference was made to the benefits of such models, especially for individuals with complex needs. It was also queried whether this formed part of the multi-agency approach, to ensure more integrated and consistent support was provided. The Cabinet Member for Housing noted that members had previously approved the expansion of the Housing First model as part of the budget. This approach separated the landlord function from support provision, enabling stronger engagement with individuals. It was confirmed that funding had been secured and a procurement process completed to deliver wraparound support through partner organisations, supporting the provision of enhanced supported accommodation.

The Chair sought clarification on the number of individuals becoming homeless from within the Council's own housing stock, for example due to tenancy issues, and whether measures were in place to prevent homelessness wherever possible. The Cabinet Member for Housing confirmed that efforts were made to prevent homelessness within the Council's own housing stock wherever possible through early intervention, including joint working with income recovery, housing officers and support services. It was noted that evictions were rare, with two reported in the current year, and were used only as a last resort, typically in cases of non-engagement or serious issues such as anti-social behaviour.

Councillor Yasseen sought clarification on whether the current budget was sufficient to meet increasing demand and complexity of homelessness cases. Concern was raised that, given the upward trend and anticipated continued pressures, it was unclear whether existing funding would remain adequate or if additional resources might be required in future. In response the Executive Director acknowledged that, while additional resources could not be ruled out, the current position was supported by a range of external grants which were used to target key areas of work. It was noted that efforts were focused on making effective use of existing resources, including improving move-on from temporary accommodation to reduce demand. Ongoing consideration was given to resource needs, including the use of grant funding to enhance supported accommodation and strengthen the housing options service in response to changing pressures.

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

1. Notes the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy consultation summary report.
2. Approves the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2026 31.
3. Delegates authority to the Executive Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health to approve:
  - a. Any minor data amendments to the Strategy prior to publication.
  - b. The Action Plan, following its development, including any amendments arising from annual reviews.

Additional recommendations to Cabinet from OSMB were that:

4. That the Action Plan clearly indicates any essential (“must deliver”) actions from scalable or discretionary activity, including setting out risk mitigation arrangements where funding or capacity reduces, and ensures any material departure from planned delivery be reported to the relevant scrutiny commission.
5. That specific performance measures be developed for households with multiple support needs, covering prevention successes, and repeated homelessness, and that this cohort be reported separately in monitoring reports.

Further actions that arose from discussions were that:

- That data be provided to OSMB demonstrating the impact of the work undertaken on reducing homelessness, along with the percentage of staff who have completed trauma-informed training.
- That data be provided on individuals owed or eligible for the homelessness duty.

#### **145. SELECTIVE LICENSING UPDATE**

At the Chair’s invitation the Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Beresford updated on the Selective Licensing Scheme, covering

progress, investment, and governance.

Six licensing areas had gone live in February 2026 for five years, building on earlier schemes that improved housing standards and neighbourhood stability. Delivery was underway, with systems operational, applications processed, draft licences issued, and local improvement plans agreed. Communications had been launched to increase landlord uptake.

The 2026-27 budget approved £362,000 annual revenue funding for three enforcement officers, two community liaison officers, and a management role. Recruitment had begun, with five posts expected to be in place from 5 May. The focus extended beyond enforcement to visibility, early intervention, service coordination, and use of community intelligence.

A further £500,000 capital funding had been approved for small-scale local improvements (e.g. lighting, gating, waste and environmental works), with priorities set locally.

Local stakeholder panels were to be established to identify priorities and review performance, advising on proposals but not making decisions. Oversight would sit with a Selective Licensing Board, ensuring accountability and reporting to Cabinet and scrutiny. Overall, the scheme had shifted to a coordinated, place-based approach combining enforcement, engagement, and visible improvements.

The Chair invited members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) to raise questions and queries and began with Councillor Monk, who asked how stakeholder panels would be supported to enable full participation for those with communication needs, including individuals whose first language is not English, members of the deaf community, and those with disabilities, health conditions, or anxiety affecting communication.

Sam Barstow, the Service Director, Community Safety and Street Scene responded that the panels were intended to be inclusive, enabling all who wished to participate to have their voice heard. It was noted that individual communication needs would need to be understood to determine appropriate support, and officers were committed to considering requests and putting reasonable adjustments in place where required. It was further noted that an Equality Impact Assessment would help ensure the panels were transparent, accessible, and fair.

Councillor Monk asked whether a commitment could be made to communicate clearly about the stakeholder groups, including the support available, and to strongly encourage participation and the Service Director for Community Safety and Street Scene confirmed that such a commitment would be made.

Councillor Blackham noted that the report stated neighbourhood improvement plans had already been formed and adopted, while

stakeholder group recruitment had only commenced in March 2026. Concern was raised that this could indicate decisions had already been made, potentially limiting the influence of stakeholder groups, and clarification was sought on how confidence would be maintained and appropriate membership encouraged in those circumstances.

The Service Director, Community Safety and Street Scene thanked members and reassured them that concerns about stakeholder panels were unfounded. It was explained that, as part of governance and approval processes, draft neighbourhood development improvement plans had been prepared. Stakeholder panels would review these plans, sense-check proposals, and suggest additions. Local officers would report to panels on progress.

Members were advised of governance limitations, particularly regarding capital allocation, which must follow the council's constitutional decision-making processes. However, potential investments would still be considered by stakeholder panels, with many proposals expected to originate from them. These panels would therefore have a significant influence over priorities and support for their local areas. The draft plans were intended as a starting point, with stakeholder panels playing a key role in shaping them and contributing to decision-making.

Councillor Blackham referred to sections 2.11 and 2.22 of the report and raised concerns that the document implied decisions had already been made by management, limiting stakeholder group influence. They questioned how confidence in the stakeholder groups would be maintained under these circumstances.

The Service Director, Community Safety and Street Scene reassured members that this was not the case, explaining that draft neighbourhood improvement plans had been developed to meet governance requirements. Stakeholder panels would review, sense-check, and suggest additions to these plans, with officers reporting progress to them. While capital decisions would remain subject to formal governance processes, stakeholder panels would have a meaningful role in shaping proposals and influencing local priorities.

Councillor Blackham maintained that the document lacked a clear definition of the stakeholder groups' role and requested this be explicitly set out to avoid misunderstanding, including how stakeholder groups and management would work together. The Service Director, Community Safety and Street Scene acknowledged the request, apologised for the misunderstanding, and agreed to provide further written clarification after the meeting. It was noted that a baseline role would be defined, alongside some flexibility for ward members to shape panel composition. The Chair referred to previous housing area panels, noting that similar arrangements had operated in the past. These panels made suggestions on local expenditure, while final decisions were taken by elected members.

Councillor Baggaley asked about levels of engagement across wards, highlighting the importance of stakeholder groups, and queried when these groups would be established and operational. In response it was reported that engagement levels varied across areas, with landlord licensing applications providing a key indicator. Dinnington had the lowest number of applications to date, while Brinsworth had the highest. It was noted that engagement officers had only recently commenced their roles, so detailed feedback on stakeholder panel engagement was not yet available. Further updates would be provided as engagement activity progressed, including information on the establishment and uptake of stakeholder panels.

Councillor Baggaley sought clarification on the expected timeframe for establishing stakeholder groups, expressing concern that the process appeared open-ended. The Service Director, Community Safety and Street Scene confirmed that stakeholder panels were expected to be established within three months of engagement officers commencing work. It was anticipated that meaningful engagement with ward members would take place within four to six weeks.

Councillor Yasseen raised concerns about a perceived cultural issue within the service, noting weak engagement and relationship-building with tenants, landlords, and stakeholders. They stressed the need for stronger, positive relationships to improve housing standards and queried whether steps would be taken to address these cultural challenges going forward. The Service Director, Community Safety and Street Scene expressed a willingness to work with ward members on specific cases. They challenged the view that there had been poor engagement, highlighting evidence of officers building positive relationships with tenants and landlords, which had helped resolve issues. It was emphasised that the Council remained committed to fostering constructive relationships, including within enforcement work, as set out in its policies. Reference was also made to additional investment in engagement officers as evidence of this commitment, while maintaining openness to reviewing individual concerns raised by members.

Councillor Yasseen referred to previous evaluations, noting they demonstrated strong relationship-building, though only around six tenants had been reached, reflecting limited engagement from target groups. They highlighted that, despite the neighbourhood model, no neighbourhood plans had been presented to ward councillors locally. They also sought clarification on how HRA funding could be used in areas with high levels of private rented housing, particularly in relation to spending on the surrounding public realm of non-council properties, and how this complied with HRA rules.

The Chair clarified that the funding was not from the HRA, but additional funding provided to the council, which, as far as they were aware, could be spent across those areas.

The Service Director explained that selective licensing funding could only be used for the delivery, administration, and enforcement of the scheme. Wider resources referenced, such as engagement officers and capital investment, were funded separately through the council's general fund, not from the selective licensing scheme. The Cabinet Member for Housing stated that there was little to add to the previous response, though clarification was sought on references to "cultural" aspects of engagement. It was noted that funding had been approved by full council, separate from HRA, for two community liaison roles to address gaps identified in the previous scheme. The earlier focus had largely been on issues within properties, with limited proactive engagement with private tenants and landlords. It was emphasised that the additional roles and a dedicated management function were intended to strengthen engagement, recognising that the approach should extend beyond enforcement to include active community involvement.

The Chair referred to a previous point regarding the neighbourhood model and asked how members would be able to influence spending within their areas. In response, it was stated that once resources were in place and staff had completed induction and training, engagement with members would begin within four to six weeks. Members would be invited to participate in stakeholder panels to help shape local priorities, recognising that local input was essential to determine what was appropriate for each area. It was noted by the Service Director that there was a clear expectation for ward members to be engaged in the development of neighbourhood improvement plans. Reference was made to an update email sent to affected ward members in late November, outlining progress on selective licensing and encouraging involvement in plan development. It was confirmed that this would be checked to ensure engagement was continuing as expected.

Councillor Tinsley BEM reflected on the previous selective licensing scheme, questioning whether it should still be regarded as a success, particularly in relation to Maltby. It was suggested that some elements, such as additional enforcement and community safety resources, could have been applied more widely across other wards rather than solely through the scheme. Concern was raised that, following the end of the scheme in Maltby, similar issues remained but resources had not been sustained to maintain progress. It was further noted that enforcement activity, including action on issues such as untidy properties, had reduced with the loss of selective licensing resources, and that there had been limited continuation of work to preserve earlier improvements.

The Chair reminded members that the selective licensing policy had previously been considered by scrutiny on multiple occasions, with opportunities for member input and recommendations. It was noted that, while past decisions could not be revisited, the focus was now on building on improvements and extending progress across the borough.

In response, the Service Director, Community Safety and Street Scene

emphasised that the council retains powers under the Housing Act in areas without selective licensing, and that work should continue with ward members to ensure awareness and use of available services. It was noted that recent investment included a new private sector housing manager role, with responsibilities both for selective licensing and for broader regulation of the private rented sector. It was also highlighted that forthcoming changes, including the implementation of the Renters Reform Act, would further shape this work. Ongoing engagement with ward members was encouraged to address local concerns and improve service access.

Councillor McKiernan began by seeking clarification on what a draft licence was. In response, it was explained that a draft licence was a preliminary version of the licence setting out expected requirements for the landlord, which may be issued while final internal checks are still being completed.

The member went on to ask about how a draft licence progressed to a full licence, expressing concern about the terminology and process given the expected volume. In response, it was explained that a draft licence was effectively a provisional or conditional version outlining the proposed terms. Once all required checks were completed and the council was satisfied, a final licence was then issued.

In a follow-up question, Councillor McKiernan asked whether lower uptake had been due to previous licence holders not yet renewing, and how landlords were identified where properties were known to be tenanted. In response, it was explained that uptake had typically been higher in areas with prior schemes, though figures remained unreliable until the end of the 90-day grace period, when applications usually increased.

The Service Director, Community Safety and Street Scene further outlined that landlord identification was informed by various sources, including council tax data, complaints, and cross-departmental intelligence, alongside efforts to encourage tenants and landlords to come forward.

The Service Director also highlighted that addressing compliance gaps and delivering the scheme required collaboration across council services, including neighbourhoods, enforcement, waste, and housing teams, as well as external partners such as the police, particularly in tackling issues such as anti-social behaviour and supporting homelessness prevention.

Councillor McKiernan asked which departments were expected to be most involved in delivery, noting the roles of housing officers and neighbourhood teams, and queried how coordination would be managed across multiple council services.

In response, it was stated that this approach was not unusual and reflected existing ways of working in local areas. Ward meetings and neighbourhood teams were identified as primary points of contact and key

stakeholders in delivery. It was explained that these sat within wider area-based structures where teams already worked collaboratively to address issues, providing a foundation for joint working. Stakeholder panels were also highlighted as an important forum for coordination, alongside governance through the Selective Licensing Board, which ensured senior officer oversight and addressed any challenges in joint working.

Councillor Blackham emphasised the importance of effective engagement with stakeholder groups, noting that meaningful involvement and genuine influence were essential to sustain participation. It was highlighted that, without this, landlords and other participants may disengage due to time constraints. It was further stressed that maintaining strong relationships with stakeholder groups, actively considering their input, and ensuring it informed decision-making at a management level were critical to the success of the approach, as failure to do so could result in reduced participation. In response the Service Director agreed with the point, emphasising that stakeholder panels needed a clear role and the ability to meaningfully shape the approach at a local level.

Councillor Yasseen asked for further detail on the capital funding allocation, including how the figures had been determined and the criteria for distribution across the six areas. In response, it was explained that the figures had been based on estimated costs of small-scale interventions in each area, informed by previous activity, though these would be refined as proposals were developed. It was noted that funding was intended to be broadly distributed across the selective licensing areas, with some flexibility depending on the scale and impact of identified schemes. It was also highlighted that stakeholder groups would play a key role in shaping proposals, while overall allocation would be subject to a scheme-wide view and governed through the council's formal capital governance processes.

With the final question, Councillor Yasseen raised concerns about the capital budget, querying how it had been determined and how it would be allocated. Concern was expressed that funding might be disproportionately directed towards crime prevention measures, particularly CCTV, which was not considered effective, and that this could duplicate work of the police. It was also suggested that the funding could have been better aligned with broader neighbourhood planning rather than linked to selective licensing, and that its use would be monitored closely.

The Service Director, Community Safety and Street Scene confirmed that CCTV systems were actively monitored and had been used successfully to support prosecutions, with further information available to members if required. It was clarified that significant investment had already been made in CCTV in recent years and that the current funding was not intended to be focused solely on this area. It was also emphasised that the council has statutory responsibilities for crime prevention, making

such investment appropriate. Finally, it was noted that the additional funding had been introduced in response to consultation feedback, to deliver wider visible improvements alongside selective licensing schemes.

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

1. Note the report and progress to date.
2. Approve the approach to the community liaison roles and stakeholder panels.
3. Approve the approach to establishing the capital programme, with stakeholder groups identifying local priorities and delegate agreement for the final governance arrangement to the Executive Director of Regeneration and Environment in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Service Director for Legal Services.

Additional recommendations to Cabinet from OSMB were that:

4. That officers set out a clear escalation plan where licence application rates fall below expectations and provide the relevant Scrutiny Commission with regular updates on licence uptake, enforcement activity, and any risks to the effectiveness of the scheme.
5. Ensure that communications requesting nominations for the Stakeholder Groups clearly indicate that applicants who require reasonable adjustments will be duly considered.

Further actions that arose from discussions were that:

- Provide an outline of the role of the stakeholder panels to members of OSMB.

## **146. ROTHERHAM MARKETS AND LIBRARIES**

At the Chair's invitation the Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy, Councillor Williams reported that a cabinet report relating to the Wath Library and Town Centre Markets and Library regeneration projects would be presented the following week, setting out revised budgets and additional funding requirements.

Significant concern and frustration were expressed regarding the need for additional funding, particularly for the Town Centre Markets and Library project, which had previously required further funding. It was noted that the Wath Library project required an additional £2 million (bringing the total to just over £12 million), and the Town Centre scheme required an additional £5.95 million (bringing the total to just over £46 million).

Assurance was provided that the additional funding would not require new borrowing but would be met through existing regeneration budgets and unallocated funds, including the capital programme contingency established to address cost pressures such as inflation.

It was acknowledged that the report set out, in a transparent manner, the issues contributing to cost increases. For Wath Library, a significant proportion of the additional cost was attributed to the discovery of asbestos. For the Town Centre project, a range of issues relating to design, cost management, and governance were identified.

It was confirmed by the Chief Executive that there would be two separate pieces of work: an investigation into the specifics of the markets and library project, and a review into the wider approach to delivering large regeneration projects. The investigation would be commissioned to examine the Town Centre project in detail, with a view to understanding what had gone wrong. It was also emphasised that a review into the lessons learned would inform future capital projects to prevent similar issues. Finally, it was indicated that a further report on the outcomes of the review and lessons learned would be brought back to the committee.

The Chair invited members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) to raise questions and queries and began by asking whether an asbestos register had been in place for the Wath building and whether this should have identified the extent of asbestos and the associated removal costs.

In response, Simon Moss, the Service Director, Planning, Regeneration and Transport explained that assumptions had been made based on surveys undertaken to estimate the level of asbestos. However, it was noted that the full extent often only became apparent once intrusive works and more detailed surveys were carried out, which had been the case in this instance.

In the supplementary question the Chair sought assurance on health and safety grounds, stating that an asbestos register should have been in place to identify the presence of asbestos in the building and inform any required works. The Service Director, Property and Facilities Services, Kevin Fisher, confirmed that asbestos management requirements were in place, noting that all buildings should have an asbestos survey and a health and safety file containing an asbestos management plan. It was explained that buildings constructed before 2001 were generally assumed to contain asbestos, and management approaches were based on this assumption.

It was further clarified that fully invasive surveys were not normally undertaken unless necessary, with asbestos instead managed based on available information. In this case, while asbestos had been anticipated, the extent was greater than initially expected.

It was also highlighted that the council had committed to reassessing its estate, with approximately 90% compliance achieved to date. Although compliant from an asbestos management perspective, it was acknowledged that a more robust approach to asbestos management would be pursued going forward.

The Chair expressed concern that, given the significant additional costs encountered at Wath, similar issues could arise in other older buildings, particularly those constructed in the 1960s and 1970s where asbestos was more likely to be present. It was suggested that a clear plan should be developed to assume higher levels of asbestos in such properties and ensure its safe removal. In response the Service Director, Property and Facilities Services agreed and added that, without pre-empting the forthcoming investigation, a more thorough asbestos assessment should have been undertaken once the building became vacant. It was acknowledged that the project proceeded on assumptions rather than a full investigation, and agreement was expressed that a more robust approach was needed in future.

Councillor McKiernan referred to previous investment in additional resources to address cost underestimation in regeneration projects, noting this indicated prior awareness of such issues. It was queried whether an investigation was necessary given this existing knowledge, and whether the plans in question had been developed prior to those resources being in place.

The Service Director, Planning, Regeneration and Transport explained that there had been a significant period of growth in regeneration and related teams, alongside lessons learned and improvements in resourcing and project delivery. This included the introduction of additional project management capacity, increased quantity surveying resources, and external cost control support. It was noted that the project had a longer development history, originating from a 2019 funding bid, with the main contract entered into in March 2024. It was therefore likely that the additional resources introduced in more recent years came after key decisions had been made, limiting their ability to address some of the fundamental issues within the project.

The Executive Director of Corporate Services, Judith Badger, reminded members that, in recent years, internal audit work had been commissioned on capital projects following a number of overspends. This review, which examined a sample of schemes across different service areas and scales, identified causes of cost overruns and informed subsequent improvements, including additional resourcing and the creation of a capital programme contingency.

It was noted that the issues referenced were likely those highlighted in that earlier audit work. However, it was explained that the schemes discussed in the report pre-dated those findings and changes, meaning there remained a risk associated with longer-standing, more complex projects. It was also acknowledged that the forthcoming review would identify the specific issues relating to the projects in question.

Councillor McKiernan asked whether the proposed review should be conducted externally rather than internally. In response, the Chief

Executive, John Edwards, stated that the process had not yet been finalised ahead of Cabinet, but it was anticipated that the investigation would be undertaken by an external party, subject to further consultation.

Councillor A Carter expressed concern regarding the high costs of the Wath Library and Town Centre Markets and Library projects, questioning their value relative to other priorities. Concerns were raised about delays in tendering and prolonged contract periods, noting previous assurances that processes had improved. It was questioned what assurances could be provided to prevent further cost increases, and whether continuing to fund the projects represented value for money. In response, the Chair acknowledged the concerns raised but emphasised that, once projects had commenced, there was an expectation to complete them. It was noted that halting the Wath Library project could lead to dissatisfaction among residents. However, agreement was expressed on the importance of ensuring robust tendering processes at the outset of future projects.

Councillor Yasseen acknowledged the comments made but expressed concern that the issues represented a significant governance failure, including at the early stages of the project. It was noted that key decisions, including contract award, appeared to have been based on assumptions and insufficient design information, with risk not effectively managed. Concern was raised that this reflected past failures in governance, particularly in relation to risk exposure and long-term commitments, and that lessons from previous experiences had not been fully applied. While support was expressed for an independent review, it was queried how assurance could be provided that similar issues were not occurring across other projects, and what immediate steps were being taken to minimise risk going forward.

The Executive Director of Corporate Services outlined that there had been a number of historical issues, including compliance concerns across council buildings. It was noted that significant improvements had since been made in property management, processes, and record-keeping, with compliance levels having increased. It was emphasised that, while these improvements related primarily to general property management rather than large capital projects, stronger processes and oversight were now in place. It was acknowledged that some issues related to long-standing projects stemmed from earlier decisions, and these were being identified as projects progressed under improved arrangements. Assurance was provided that, although risks could not be entirely eliminated, current processes were more robust, supported by service restructuring and better alignment of resources to strengthen oversight and delivery.

The Chief Executive added that there was little to add to the previous comments, noting that a Capital Project Board had recently been established to provide oversight of the full programme and support a more open and transparent approach. It was acknowledged that, while the council had skilled staff, stronger culture and processes were required to ensure major projects were delivered effectively, on time, and within

budget. It was emphasised that the forthcoming investigation would support learning and improvement, alongside wider work to strengthen project management, clarify responsibilities, and ensure the necessary skills and processes were in place from project inception through to delivery.

The Service Director, Planning, Regeneration and Transport agreed with previous comments and noted that significant improvements had been made in recent years to capital project and programme management. These included the introduction of project gateway processes, improved contractual and procurement approaches, and greater alignment of responsibility between project managers and sponsors. It was acknowledged that, for this particular project, some challenges had been inherent from the outset. While subsequent improvements had helped to identify and mitigate issues, they had not been able to fully resolve them. Assurance was provided that lessons learned had been applied to other projects, which were now being delivered successfully across the borough.

The Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy agreed with the concerns raised regarding governance and assurance, noting these had been key issues. However, it was emphasised that it was not appropriate at this stage to attribute accountability to individuals. It was stated that the priority had been to ensure transparency through a clear and direct report, followed by an independent investigation to establish findings and conclusions. It was confirmed that a further report setting out the outcomes and lessons learned would be brought back to the board. The Chair added that the findings of the external review should be reported back to the board in due course.

Councillor Yasseen expressed appreciation for the discussion but stated they did not feel fully assured at this stage, while welcoming the forthcoming investigation and the transparency of the process. Concern was raised regarding organisational culture, particularly around values, behaviours, and the level of professional scrutiny applied. It was questioned whether sufficient challenge was being exercised by both officers and Cabinet, and whether relationships may have become too close, potentially limiting effective oversight. It was noted that this perception could also be shared by residents.

In response, the Chair acknowledged the concerns but emphasised that it would be inappropriate to criticise individuals prior to the outcome of the independent review. It was reiterated that the report had been brought forward to ensure openness and transparency, and that conclusions should be considered once the investigation findings were available.

Councillor Allen expressed agreement with concerns raised, thanked the Cabinet Member for the transparent approach, and acknowledged the need to support the recommendations to ensure the safe completion of the projects.

Support was also given for an external review. It was further asked whether there was an anticipated timescale for completion of the review following the Cabinet decision, and when the findings would be reported back to the board.

The Chief Executive stated that no fixed deadline had yet been set for the review. It was explained that commissioning arrangements were still being determined in consultation with the Cabinet Member, and that an appropriate independent provider would need to be appointed. An indicative timeframe of a small number of months was suggested, though it was emphasised that flexibility would be retained to ensure the investigation could be completed fully and thoroughly. It was noted that timelines could vary depending on the chosen approach, and that the intention was to report back promptly once the investigation had concluded appropriately.

Following up Councillor Allen reiterated concerns regarding organisational culture and the need to identify and implement lessons quickly to avoid impacts on other projects. While welcoming the proposed review, it was emphasised that findings should be delivered as soon as possible to ensure any improvements could be applied promptly across similar schemes. The Chief Executive agreed with the point, noting that improvements to processes, project documentation, management arrangements, and governance oversight had already been implemented. It was acknowledged that the project in question had been ongoing for some time, but it was emphasised that there was a shared interest in progressing the investigation promptly. It was also stressed that, while timeliness was important, the review should not be rushed, and a definitive timescale would be confirmed once the scope and approach had been agreed with an appropriate independent provider.

Councillor Brent thanked the Cabinet Member for the transparency shown and raised concerns about the wider decline of Wath town centre, noting reduced commercial activity and vacant premises. It was suggested that this posed a risk to attracting commercial tenants within the regeneration scheme and that this should be considered as part of the review. In response, the Chair acknowledged the concerns but emphasised that discussion should remain focused on the report, specifically the additional expenditure for the library projects. It was noted that broader town centre regeneration issues could be addressed separately. Councillor Brent clarified that the point related directly to risks identified in the report, particularly around attracting commercial interest, and reiterated concerns about investing in the scheme given the area's current economic challenges. The Chair concluded by noting it was believed that there remained strong local demand for the library and that it continued to be used by residents.

The Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy thanked the member for their contribution and acknowledged the concerns raised,

noting familiarity with the issues affecting Wath. It was recognised that town centres were facing wider challenges.

It was clarified that the proposed review related specifically to the Town Centre Markets and Library project, not the Wath Library scheme. The Wath project was described as a positive proposal, delivering a modern, purpose-built library alongside wider community facilities, commercial space, and public realm improvements. It was noted that local feedback indicated support for the scheme and a desire to see it completed. It was also highlighted that the council was taking broader action to support town centres, including the introduction of high street support officers, dedicated funding for local initiatives, enhanced street services, and the continuation of grant schemes to support local businesses. Despite ongoing pressures, these measures were presented as part of a wider commitment to supporting high streets.

Councillor Monk referred to risks relating to unmet trader expectations and potential reputational damage, noting recent media coverage suggesting some traders had already lost confidence in the project. It was asked what engagement and support was being provided to those affected to rebuild trust and encourage their return once the development was complete, ensuring continued activity within the building.

The Service Director, Planning, Regeneration and Transport emphasised that traders were central to the success of the scheme and that significant efforts had been made to maintain their engagement. It was noted that the provision of a temporary market had been introduced in response to trader concerns, allowing them to remain on site during the works. It was further outlined that measures had been taken to mitigate disruption, including a 50% rent concession, a commitment that traders would not pay more than their current rates during the temporary period, a reduction in the closure period to one week, and an extension of the rent-free period to three months. It was also highlighted that a new market team had been introduced, bringing renewed focus and improved communication with traders. While acknowledging that disruption and concerns remained for some, it was considered that engagement had strengthened and that the relationship with traders was in a more positive position.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Monk asked whether there were plans in place to promote the new facility upon opening, including potential launch activities to attract visitors and support traders following a prolonged period of disruption. In response, it was explained that the indoor market was due to relocate to a temporary site in the new market hall in summer, with an indicative date of June, subject to confirmation with the construction programme. Traders would be kept informed as soon as dates were finalised. It was further stated that plans were in place to promote the new offer and generate interest. It was acknowledged that, despite current challenges, the development was expected to provide a positive boost to the town centre, with investment anticipated to increase footfall and support a more vibrant local economy.

Councillor Baggaley asked what the reallocated funding would prevent from being delivered and whether any schemes were at risk. It was confirmed that the project would still deliver its core scope and outputs, including the new library, market hall, refurbished indoor market, and public realm. While cost pressures had required value engineering, potentially limiting investment in some areas, no other projects were delayed or impacted, as additional costs were met from the Council's capital contingency.

Rob Mahon, the Service Director, Financial Services explained that unallocated Town Centre Investment funding originated from borrowing approved at the outset of the programme, with remaining resources reflecting success in securing external grant funding. The Capital Contingency Fund, introduced in 2022–23 due to the scale of the capital programme and anticipated economic and inflationary pressures, had been maintained and increased through savings and additional funding. While the use of this contingency represented an opportunity cost, it had been intended for such circumstances and no wider programme impacts were identified.

Following up on the original question, Councillor Baggaley suggested that the report also be referred to the Audit Committee to consider wider issues beyond capital funding, including governance, health and safety, and overall funding arrangements. Consideration was given to whether this could be undertaken jointly with the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board or as a separate review, subject to further advice.

Councillor Blackham emphasised that the report should both identify the causes of issues and set out how processes could be improved going forward. Reference was made to seeking external professional advice to inform more robust project management arrangements, which may have implications for organisational structures. The importance of establishing accurate cost estimates at the outset of projects was highlighted, along with the need for assurance on current forecasts and future projections. Concerns were raised regarding the delivery and momentum of capital projects, and it was noted that a clearer focus and stronger processes were required to ensure projects are delivered as intended and provide confidence in cost and outcomes.

The Chief Executive clarified that two separate pieces of work were being undertaken: a project-specific investigation for the Town Centre Markets and Library regeneration project to understand what had occurred, and a broader review of end-to-end processes for major capital regeneration projects. The latter would focus on identifying improvements and embedding best practice, potentially with input from an independent external organisation, to strengthen future delivery.

Councillor McKiernan queried what schemes or proposals might no longer be funded as a result of utilising unallocated Town Centre Investment

Fund resources. Concern was expressed regarding the availability of this funding and whether its use for the current scheme would limit other planned or potential projects.

In response the Service Director, Financial Services explained that the surplus within the Town Centre Investment Fund reflected success in securing external funding and delivering some schemes below anticipated costs. As the funding relates to corporate borrowing, it had been retained unallocated until required, avoiding unnecessary borrowing costs. It was noted that clarification on any schemes not delivered as originally planned would be provided by the relevant service lead.

It was confirmed that no funding was formally earmarked against the unallocated resources. While there remained potential for further investment opportunities, most projects identified within the 2017 town centre masterplan had either been delivered or were in progress, with only one scheme not taken forward. It was noted that a new masterplan for the town centre was being developed from which future projects and funding priorities would be identified.

Thanks were expressed by the Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy for members' contributions and questions. The situation was acknowledged as disappointing and frustrating. It was emphasised that lessons would be learned, particularly in relation to the markets and library project, with a review commissioned and supported. A clear commitment was made to improving the delivery of capital projects in the future.

A commitment was reiterated by the Chief Executive to commission an independent investigation into the Town Centre Markets and Library regeneration project, alongside a separate independent review to identify best practice for the delivery of major capital projects going forward. It was noted that findings from both would be reported back for consideration. Ongoing work to strengthen governance and project management arrangements for current projects was also highlighted, with a continued organisational focus on improving delivery.

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

1. Approves the revised budget of £12.02m for the Wath Library scheme, including an increase of £2.04m to be funded from unallocated Local Regeneration Grant, as set out in Appendix 1.
2. Approves the revised budget for the Rotherham Markets & Library scheme, increasing the total project budget to £46.84m, representing an additional £5.95m, funded as set out in Appendix 5.
3. Notes that the revised budgets reflect the completion of the detailed design, resolution of construction stage risks and the establishment of a more robust and deliverable position for both projects.

4. Notes the intention of the Chief Executive to commission an investigation into the development and delivery of the Rotherham Markets & Library project which has resulted in the cost increase noted in Recommendation 2.

Additional recommendations to Cabinet from OSMB were that:

5. That future capital monitoring reports include a clear narrative for the Rotherham Markets & Library scheme explaining how key risks have changed, how contingency has been used, any new cost pressures, and the actions taken to manage them, so Cabinet and Scrutiny can see whether the project was genuinely stabilising.
6. Requests that the Chief Executive's investigation into the development and delivery of the Rotherham Markets & Library project, focusing on causes of cost increases be conducted by an independent external organisation and the findings be presented to OSMB at the appropriate point.
7. Notes that the Chief Executive has commissioned a separate independent end-to-end review of the capital project processes with a focus on large-scale development projects with a view to identifying learning and developing recommendations on how to embed best practice going forward and that the findings be presented to OSMB at the appropriate point.

Further actions that arose from discussions were that:

- That OSMB asks the Audit Committee to consider a review into the capital programme, focusing on risk management, health and safety, project oversight, and value for money, and exploring the potential impact of organisational behaviour and culture to directly address concerns raised around perceived lack of professional challenge.

## **147. ROTHERCARE - UPDATE REPORT**

At the Chair's invitation the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, Councillor Baker-Rogers introduced the report, providing an update on the first year of the reconfigured service and outlining progress and future development plans. It was noted that, since implementation in April 2025, the service had operated within its financial envelope while supporting over 8,000 individuals across more than 6,000 households. Activity levels were highlighted, including over 2,000 new referrals, significant volumes of alarm alerts, and associated responses. The successful transition from analogue to digital systems ahead of the national deadline was also noted, with no disruption to service users. Members were asked to receive the report, note progress, and support ongoing periodic reviews to ensure the service remains effective and customer focused.

The Executive Director, Adult Care, Housing and Public Health, Ian Spicer, noted that, following earlier concerns when the hybrid delivery model was introduced, the update provided assurance on service

performance and future demand. Since implementation, the service had seen an increase of approximately 600 households, reflecting both demand and the positive impact of the new approach. The hybrid model was reported to be operating effectively, with partnership arrangements supporting both technical provision and response services. Reassurance was given that the service was functioning well under the revised model.

Councillor Yasseen expressed positive feedback on the strengths of the service and its impact on residents, noting the high level of activity delivered by a relatively small team. They also raised a query regarding the recent price increase and whether this had led to any service users discontinuing the service due to affordability. In response the Executive Director acknowledged that concerns had existed regarding pricing changes and the decoupling of the service from tenancy arrangements. It was reported that only a very small number of individuals had chosen to discontinue the service, and no significant drop-off in usage had been observed. On the contrary, usage had increased. It was confirmed that no individuals had been unable to access the service due to financial constraints, as support mechanisms were in place to ensure continued access where needed.

Jayne Metcalfe, Head of Service Access & Prevention reported that the service had continued to see growth in new users and that the increase in charges had not significantly deterred uptake. While growth had been modest, it had remained positive, and the service continued to be well received by users despite pricing changes.

A follow-up query was raised regarding whether the decoupling of the service from tenancy arrangements had been fully implemented, with specific reference to whether this applied to locations such as Shaftesbury House. It was confirmed that the service had been fully decoupled from tenancy agreements across all settings. This was welcomed by Councillor Yasseen as a significant outcome, recognising the importance of personal choice in accessing the service, while noting that appropriate advice would still be provided where the service was considered beneficial.

In a further question Councillor Yasseen provided positive feedback on the service, recognising its strong reputation among users. They suggested that the report could place greater emphasis on the preventative benefits of the service, including its role in avoiding hospital admissions and more serious interventions. They also recommended that prevention-related outcomes and key performance indicators be more clearly evidenced and documented to better demonstrate the value and impact of the service. Agreement was expressed by the Executive Director that the service delivered preventative benefits; however, it was noted that evidencing this impact through measurable data was challenging. While qualitative evidence, including case studies and user feedback, demonstrated significant positive outcomes and reassurance for users and carers, the availability of quantifiable data to directly measure prevention remained limited.

The Chair raised a query regarding the medium and long-term financial viability of the service beyond 2026–27, and whether it would remain sustainable if demand continued to grow. In response it was explained that initial modelling included a two to three-year programme of agreed price increases, after which the position would be reviewed. The aim was for the service to become self-funding, with current growth supporting this trajectory. It was noted that further decisions on future charging and long-term sustainability would be brought forward following a review of the service's position.

A query was raised, by the Chair, regarding the contingency arrangements in place with technology partners, specifically what would occur if a provider exited the market or service delivery was disrupted.

The Executive Director, Adult Care, Housing and Public Health noted that, following the failure of a national provider, contingency arrangements had previously been implemented successfully without impact on the service. In such circumstances, the service had the capacity to deliver elements in-house on a temporary basis to ensure continuity. It was acknowledged that the market is limited, with only a small number of national providers, and that this presents a wider regional and national risk. Ongoing monitoring of provider performance and financial sustainability was therefore in place.

In a follow up question, the Chair expressed concern regarding the limited number of providers in the market and the potential risk that this could lead to increased costs due to a lack of alternative options. It was acknowledged that the limited number of providers in the market presented a concern, which was recognised at a national level. Assurance was given that contingency plans were in place to maintain service continuity if required, and that contracts were kept under review, with alternative arrangements to be considered should risks become unacceptable.

A query was raised by Councillor McKiernan regarding whether there had been any significant service outages or failures involving the technology partner. In addition, it was asked whether the partner was considering the use of artificial intelligence and whether this would present an acceptable or unacceptable risk to the Council. In response, it was noted that no digital system was entirely fail-proof and that occasional issues arose, typically relating to wider network connectivity rather than the equipment itself. Robust alert and response processes were in place to manage such incidents, ensuring users and families were informed and supported, with the ability to undertake remote and direct testing where required.

In relation to technological developments, it was highlighted that partnership arrangements supported access to ongoing innovation, enabling improvements to the service offer. It was acknowledged that emerging technologies, including learning-based systems, formed part of

this development and would be assessed as they evolved to ensure any associated risks remained acceptable.

Resolved: That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board:

1. That members note the Rothercare update report and associated development plans.
2. That members note the intention to undertake periodical reviews of the service to ensure it remains fit for purpose and customer focused, as part of its continuous service improvement journey.

#### **148. WORK PROGRAMME 2025-2026**

The Governance Manager provided an update on the work programme.

Following the Council meeting at which the motion on lighting columns was agreed, a joint scrutiny review had been established, chaired by Councillor Steele and involving members from OSMB and the Improving Places Select Commission. An initial scoping meeting had taken place, identifying key lines of enquiry and information requirements from officers. It was noted that a survey of parish councils would be undertaken to gather their views. The next meeting was scheduled for 3 June, and the initial meeting was reported to have been positive.

Resolved: That the Work Programme be approved.

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

Update from Health Select Commission:

This update was noted as presented within the agenda pack.

Update from Improving Lives Select Commission:

Members were advised that updates from the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board had been received and welcomed, including positive feedback. The annual report was considered in detail, with clarification sought on a range of issues, resulting in additional recommendations relating to placement data and national work to address stigma surrounding children in care and care leavers.

The Child Exploitation Strategy update was also scrutinised, with assurance sought on delivery of its priorities. Further recommendations were made regarding work in primary education, information sharing on risks linked to unlicensed premises, and support for non-traditional partners to identify and respond to exploitation.

Members also attended a Children and Young People's Partnership Board session to scrutinise the Children's Strategy, where young people presented their priorities. The session was positively received, and suggestions were made to strengthen the strategy ahead of Cabinet

consideration.

An update was also provided on the Children's Capital of Culture Impact and Legacy workshop, where members reviewed interim evaluation findings and participated in discussions to inform future delivery. Overall, it was noted to have been a productive period of activity.

Update from Improving Places Select Commission:

It was confirmed that the report accurately reflected activity. It was further noted that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy had been successfully brought forward for scrutiny, with satisfaction expressed at its progress and inclusion despite earlier challenges.

**150. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS**

A list of items scheduled for Cabinet consideration in June was outlined, including property transactions, the financial update, health and safety policy, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Renters' Rights Act fees and charges, draft street trading policy, the Care Quality Commission assessment outcome, responses to scrutiny recommendations, business rates relief applications, and appointments to outside bodies.

It was suggested that the financial update, Renters' Rights Act fees and charges, and the draft street trading policy may warrant scrutiny, with members invited to provide their views.

It was clarified that the items listed were those scheduled to be presented to Cabinet, rather than those currently included on the work programme. It was explained that the existing work programme covered the 2025–26 municipal year and concluded at the current meeting. Following the Annual General Meeting, a new work programme for 2026–27 would be developed and published, with no items currently scheduled for June. It was agreed that the three identified items would be included on the agenda.

Resolved: That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board:

1. Agreed that the following items would be added to the June agenda as part of OSMB's pre-decision scrutiny work:
  - Finance Update June 2026
  - Renters Rights Act Fees and Charges
  - Draft Street Trading Policy

**151. SOUTH YORKSHIRE MAYORAL COMBINED AUTHORITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Chair noted that no meetings had taken place since the last update. However, further meetings had been scheduled for early June and July, including joint sessions for newly appointed members.

**152. CALL-IN ISSUES**

There were no call-in issues.

**153. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items however the Chair placed his thanks on record to outgoing members for their contributions, with particular appreciation expressed for their work over recent years. It was noted that there would be a new committee membership for the forthcoming municipal year, and best wishes were extended to future members.

Members were reminded that meetings were scheduled for three hours to allow thorough scrutiny. The date and time of the next meeting were confirmed as Wednesday 3 June 2026 at 10:00am. The meeting was then closed.