

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**  
**Wednesday 14 May 2025**

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

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Keenan and Pitchley.

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

**115. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 8 APRIL 2025**

**Resolved:** That the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 8 April 2025, be approved as a true record.

**116. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

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

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

There were no items on the agenda that required the exclusion of the press and public.

**119. NEW COUNCIL PLAN AND YEAR AHEAD DELIVERY PLAN**

The Chair invited the Leader of the Council, Councillor Read to introduce the new Council Plan and Year Ahead Delivery Plan, supported by the Chief Executive, Sharon Kemp OBE and the Assistant Chief Executive, Jo Brown.

The Leader introduced the presentation and made the following points:

- The Council Plan was a strategic document that set out the vision, priorities, and objectives for the next five years.
- The Year Ahead Delivery Plan sat underneath the Council Plan and detailed all the key activities for the next year.
- The Council Plan was structured to ensure a "golden thread" from the council's vision down to individual staff objectives.
- The Council would carry forward any objectives not delivered in the previous Year Ahead Delivery Plan.
- Consultation was conducted between September and November 2024, and included online surveys, focus groups, and public engagements at various locations such as Clifton Park, Dinnington,

Maltby, Aston, and Rawmarsh.

- The consultation resulted in 2,000 interactions.
- Some positive aspects reported in the consultation included access to green spaces, the physical environment, so close to amenities and easy of travel between places, and the community spirit.
- Some areas for improvement highlighted in the consultation were community safety, tackling antisocial behaviour, cleaner streets, road improvements, and town centre regeneration.
- The new plan focused on outcomes rather than just outputs.
- There were five main themes to the new Council Plan which were:
  - Thriving, safe and clean places.
  - An economy that works for everyone.
  - Children and young people achieving.
  - Residents living well.
  - One council that listens and learns.

The Chief Executive continued the presentation and made the following points:

**Thriving, Safe, and Clean Places:**

- This theme focused on vibrant communities, better public spaces, town centre revitalization, and community safety.
- This built on the work already undertaken through the Thriving Neighbourhood Strategy, ward plans and the investment throughout the borough.
- Some of the key actions would be the launch of the Street Safe team, redevelopment of Rother Valley and Thrybergh Country Parks, and investment in community facilities.

**Economy that Works for Everyone:**

- This theme focused on support for local businesses, enhancing skills, and connecting people to opportunities.
- This focused on having a comprehensive package of support and advice that enabled businesses to start, develop and grow along with building on the Council's award-winning Social Value Policy and activity.
- Some of the key actions would be support for 20 businesses to improve shop units in the town centre, economic inactivity trailblazer to help those who were economically inactive to re-enter the workforce, and new tram train stop at Magna, working with partners.

The Assistant Chief Executive continued the presentation and made the following points:

**Children and Young People Achieving:**

- This theme focused on the following three priorities:
  - Fun activities.
  - Enabling children to thrive.

- Keeping them safe from harm.
- The key actions for this theme were the investment in Clifton Park water splash facility, the legacy program from Children's Capital of Culture, and improving access to youth activities.

**Residents Living Well:**

- The Council had made significant strides in enabling residents to lead happier, healthier and more independent lives.
- The theme focused on:
  - Better physical and mental wellbeing.
  - Independent living.
  - Affordable homes.
- The actions for this were the launch of a specialized support service for people who had attempted suicide, the completion of Castle View Day Centre, and the continuation of the Council Homes delivery program.

**One Council that Listens and Learns:**

- This theme would build on the success to date, in terms of being a Council that listened and learned and worked with communities in a strength-based approach recognising it could not do everything itself.
- The theme focused on improving customer experience, working with community partnerships, workforce development, and addressing climate change.
- The actions being undertaken were reducing customer wait times, new consultation software, modern recruitment methods, and the installation of solar panels on town centre properties.

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

Councillor Blackham raised concerns about the consultation process and felt it was skewed towards the town centre, suggesting the more is done to engage with the outlying wards of the borough. The Leader acknowledged there was always a challenge for the Council in terms of engaging residents on corporate consultations. It was understandable that more responses came from the central urban areas, as that was where the bulk of the population for the borough lived. It was noted that more of an effort was made to engage with areas of the borough where engagement with the Council had been lower, but it was acknowledged that more could be done. The Leader felt it had been a reasonable sample of opinions from across the borough and had included engagement with partners and stakeholders.

Councillor Brent questioned the absence of children's services as a priority and emphasized the need to make children's services a priority in voters' minds. The Leader noted that when consulting with people in broad terms their priorities were the ones that affected most people, however when in the world of social care, there were a relatively small

number of people who were affected, albeit in a profound way. The Leader felt that people should be informed about the way the Council needed to spend its funding, but the Council should be informed by the consultation results, not bound by them. The Council Plan had chosen to have a priority for children who were less advantaged.

Councillor McKiernan sought further information regarding the new business start up initiative. The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment explained the Council's business support team provided business advice to people interested in setting up new businesses. In the last couple of years that team had supported around sixty new business set up each year with a target of 70 for this year. It was clarified that no direct financial support was provided to those businesses. The Leader clarified that the Council did offer some business productivity grants to existing businesses who meet the criteria.

Councillor Yasseen welcomed the continued investment in housing, roads and road safety, free school meals. It would be beneficial to understand what the proposals looked like from a ward perspective.

Councillor Yasseen emphasized the need for a robust policy on children's attainment and addressing child poverty and suggested focusing on free school meals and pupil premiums. The Leader indicated that the Plan measured GCSE results because it was the key national indicator or success through the first sixteen years of a child's life. The roles of Council's in education had been rolled back substantially over the course of the last 20 years so the Council's ability to intervene, even in terms of school improvement, was greatly reduced. The Council was dependent on schools / academies purchasing services to address some of those challenges, although the Council had strong engagement with schools. The Leader confirmed that work was being undertaken to develop an appropriate strategy to address this area.

The Vice-Chair felt the consultation had been focused heavily on the town centre and it would have been good to capture more rural villages as part of it. The Vice-Chair went on to highlighted issues raised within the consultation regarding antisocial behaviour and cleaner streets. The Vice-Chair suggested moving from a perception-based approach to a prevention mindset. The Leader felt there was a particular challenge around perceptions within the town centre and the likelihood of them coming to harm in that place. The proposal around street safety was to provide a degree of assuredness, which helped to tackle some elements of antisocial behaviour along with people's perceptions. Where problems were a reality, the Council would want to see those addressed along with helping their perceptions so that they could go about their daily lives, freely and confidently. The Leader confirmed that more investment had been made to provide additional street cleaning, and more grass cutting.

The Vice-Chair said that he understood that some residents were indicating that some bins had been left unemptied for long periods of time.

To address this query the Chair asked the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment to provide a schedule of when bins were emptied in each ward of the authority, including details of how many times those bins have been missed and why they've been missed. Members of OSMB could then discuss if this should be considered as part of it's work programme for 2025-2026. The Leader noted that members had a responsibility to raise repeated issues in their locations through their neighbourhood and ward-based teams.

The Vice-Chair felt an issue raised as part of the consultation was the roads and pavements and queried if micro asphalt would be used to resurface pavements? The Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment explained the individual treatment would depend on the situation at the time but might include that treatment or could include other treatments.

Councillor McKiernan inquired about the climate change actions in the plan, noting that there were only four actions within the Year Ahead Delivery Plan. The Leader indicated the Council had a Climate Change Action Plan that was reviewed annually.

Councillor Tinsley noted the introduction of route optimisation software for bin collections and suggested setting more ambitious targets for green flag status parks. The Leader noted a piece of work being undertaken which considered the way the Council looked after its green spaces, which may include aspect of improving the quality of them.

The Vice-Chair raised concerns the Uley reservoir had been left behind with improvements being made elsewhere. Concerns were also raised regarding road safety, and it was his understanding that no action could be taken until there was a death. The Leader explained that a decision had been taken as a result of the funding available that capital works at Thrybergh and Rother Valley County Parks would be prioritised. The Leader clarified that the legal requirement in terms of road safety related to fatalities, but this did not mean that nothing could be done until someone was hurt. Additional funding had been made available for the local road safety neighbourhood schemes. This wasn't an infinite amount of cash so there was a limit on works that could be undertaken in a particular area, but work was undertaken locally by ward members in each ward which went towards address some of those road safety concerns. The Chief Executive explained that colleagues in the road safety team were very passionate and cared deeply that residents and everyone who used the borough could do so safely but that they enacted their job in line with national legislation.

Councillor Yasseen queried some of the data provided within the equality analysis and suggested that it should be clarified. The links within the plan to the South Yorkshire Mayoralty were noted and queried how councillors could engage with that in terms of governance, transparency and accountability. The Chair explained that the South Yorkshire Mayoral

authority had a scrutiny body, of which he and the Vice-Chair were members of and could scrutinise the Mayor, his activities and policies. He noted that members of the public could ask questions at those meetings. The Leader noted that members could influence the way the Council did business in the normal ways. The Chair noted that consideration would be given as to how members on the Mayoral Scrutiny group could report back to this Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

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

1. Recommend to Council that the Council Plan 2025-30 be approved.
2. Agree the Year Ahead Delivery Plan for 2025-26.
3. Note that future progress reports will be presented to Cabinet in January and July 2026.

Further actions that arose from discussions were that:

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

## 120. REVIEW OF THE NON-RESIDENTIAL CHARGING POLICY

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health presented the report explaining that the Council charges for social care based on the ability to pay. The policies for non-residential charges were last reviewed in 2019, and it was recommended that another review be undertaken after five years. The report sought approval to consult on introducing two changes to the non-residential element of the policy and incorporating residential charging into a new combined policy.

Regarding the proposal to abolish the maximum charge it was noted that the current policy capped the amount charged for home care, direct payments, and support for living at the standard rate for in-borough residential care (£690 a week). The proposal was to remove this cap, affecting those assessed as able to pay more but currently subsidised by others.

Concerning the proposal to charge a fee for arranging care for self-funders it was noted that the Council had the right to charge for arranging care for people who funded their care themselves. The proposed fee was around £250 a year, affecting 224 people currently in this category.

As regards to the proposal regarding the inclusion of all disability benefits in financial assessments, it was noted that this proposal was considered but not recommended for inclusion in the consultation.

The consultation would be conducted through an online questionnaire and face-to-face drop-in sessions over a 12-week period during the summer. Letters would be issued to inform people of their opportunity to provide feedback. The outcome of the consultation exercise would inform a future joint residential and non-residential charging policy for adult social care, subject to Cabinet approval before the end of 2025.

The Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health clarified that this was part of the process in terms of seeking approval to consult but explained that the Council had gone through a process of reviewing the non-residential policy and upon legal advice, felt the residential and non-residential charging policies should be combined. This would be a new policy even though there would not be any material changes.

The Chair highlighted that additional benchmarking information had been circulated by email outside of the meeting to members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

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

Councillor McKiernan asked for clarification on what the lower middle rate and higher rate was? The Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health explained that the numerous benefits discussed came at different rates depending on the assessment that the person had received in terms of their needs by benefit agencies. There could be a lower rate and a higher rate or different rates within that which were dependent on the assessment for the disability benefit. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health explained that people were asked a number of questions about things such as feeding, washing, their mobility, and interactions with the social environment etc. That led to a point score for each of the criteria, meaning that if the threshold for lower payment was reached, then that would be what was received, more points would mean you received a higher rate. It was a points-based system based on need.

Councillor A Carter expressed concerns about removing the maximum charge for non-residential care and the administrative charge for self-funders for organising care. He highlighted the risk of inadequate home care leading to higher long-term costs. He emphasized that inadequate home care could lead to increased morbidity and mortality, and potentially higher costs for the council eventually.

The Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health explained this was the reason for the consultation to understand what the challenges were, and the issues residents could have with the proposal. No one wanted to see people without the appropriate care, the

appropriate delivery. A number of people chose not to be financially assessed, which was their own choice, and they could choose to ask the Council to organise their care or do it themselves. The Council would offer support as needed but the principle of being able to charge for that service when someone was able to pay the full cost of their care.

Councillor Blackham suggested a tiered charge based on the level of council involvement. He emphasized the need for value for money and that charges should reflect the amount of effort put in by the council.

The Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health explained this was around the principle of charging for a service when someone was deemed able to pay the full cost of care. Other authorities used this approach, and it was something to look into as part of the consultation process.

Councillor Yasseen stressed the importance of effective engagement and mitigating risks. She suggested profiling to identify and address potential gaps. She also highlighted the need for transparency in what the charges covered along with ensuring that no one was left behind due to affordability issues.

The Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health welcomed the point raised around helping people to understand the breakdown of any proposed charges and what that included. He clarified that the advice and information provided was around the procured services, which were under contract. The Council had a flexible purchasing system, where everyone was vetted, and every provider reviewed under the CQC rating. The Council also had its own internal quality assurance process to ensure services were up to scratch and good. The Council wanted to move to co-production and had a co-production board.

Councillor A Carter noted that the Carbon Impact Assessment and the Equality Impact Assessments seemed superficial and further work would be required to truly consider the potential impacts associated with the proposal. The Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health explained there was no proposed implementation at this time, only a consultation. The report submitted following the consultation process would include more information about the impacts of any proposals. He provided assurance that the Council's commitment to prevention was key in getting help, advice, and information at the earliest stage to residents.

Councillor Marshall raised concerns about the accessibility of the consultation for service users who may not be online. She stressed the need for face-to-face sessions to ensure that everyone affected has the opportunity to provide feedback. She questioned the rationale behind the annual fee and whether it would be fair for those requiring minimal input from the council.



The Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health said it was known that some local authorities charged an initial fee and then a smaller fee in consecutive years, so anything was possible in terms of that charging process.

Councillor Brent sought clarification on whether the assessments for disability benefits were based on national or local definitions, highlighting concerns about the potential impact on service users. He pointed out the need to understand the definitions of need and how they were assessed.

Councillor McKiernan inquired about the potential budget impact of the proposed changes and whether they would significantly improve the budget situation. The Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health said he could not answer that question but felt proposals would increase the income into the Council.

**Resolved:** That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board supported the recommendations to Cabinet which proposes:

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

1. The removal of the maximum charge for non-residential care, while maintaining the minimum charge of £1. **Recommended.**
2. The introduction of an administrative charge for organising care for people who fund their own care. **Recommended.**
3. The inclusion of all disability benefits when carrying out non-residential financial assessments for services. **Not Recommended.**

## 121. WORK PROGRAMME

At the Chair's invitation the Governance Manager provided an update on the work programme as detailed below:

- The Spotlight Review into Life Saving Equipment:
  - An initial meeting was held on 7 May.
  - Further information on bylaws, education, and other aspects would be provided by the Assistant Director within the next two months.
  - A further meeting would be scheduled to take this forward.
- The Grass Cutting and Grounds Maintenance Review:
  - An initial meeting was also held on 7 May.
  - A presentation was being prepared around the subject matter and the previously considered scope.
  - Availability from members of the review group was being sought to hear the presentation and progress the review.

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

1. Approved the current work programme.
2. Agreed that the Governance Manager be authorised to make any required changes to the work programme in consultation with the Chair/Vice Chair and reporting any such changes back at the next meeting for endorsement.

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

Cllr Brent, as a substitute member from the Improving Lives Select Commission advised that the Commission had received and scrutinised reports on the Local Kinship Care offer, including an update on the new procedures, expectations and polices, a progress update on the Youth Justice Service, which included an update on the new inspection framework and the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-2027.

The Improving Lives Select Commission had also scrutinised the Family Prosperity Strategy, before it would be presented to Cabinet for consideration. The Commission felt that the Strategy successfully highlighted the activity in Rotherham to address child poverty and support children and families experiencing poverty. The Commission was interested in Gulliver's Skills Street, the available community mental health support for children and adults, activities for families in school holidays, and the impact of family hubs. A recommendation was provided by the Commission that further information should be included in the strategy about how support for children and families experiencing poverty can be accessed. To address this, further additional information was added into the relevant sections of the Strategy.

The Improving Lives Select Commission had completed a scoping session for a suggested review of "Trauma and Children Missing Education", which had been suggested by a member of the Commission. Members contributed to developing the scope for the review and were happy to take the review forward.

Councillor Yasseen, Vice-Chair of the Health Select Commission advised that an annual update on the adult mental health pathway had been received. The Commission had held a closed session on the oncology transformation programme, focusing on making cancer services more accessible locally. The Commission was in the process of conducting the annual quality account reviews for the hospital, ambulance service, and RDaSH.

## **123. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS - 1 MAY 2025 - 31 JULY 2025**

The Board considered the Forward Plan of Key Decisions 1 May 2025 to 31 July 2025 and agreed to consider three items at the next meeting: financial monitoring update, social value annual report, and employment solutions 2025-2026.

**Resolved:** That the items discussed in the Forward Plan be submitted to June's OSMB meeting for pre-decision scrutiny.

**124. CALL-IN ISSUES**

There were no call-in issues.

**125. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items however the Chair offered the Boards thanks to Councillor Marshall for all the work she's undertaken on behalf of OSMB over the last twelve months and wished she well with her proposed appointment to the Cabinet.

The Chair looked forward to welcoming Councillor Allen, Councillor Brent and Councillor Monk to the Board, depending on the outcome of the coming Council meeting where committee appointments would be considered.