

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Date and Time:- Tuesday 8 September 2026 at 10.00 a.m.

Venue:- Rotherham Town Hall, The Crofts, Moorgate Street, Rotherham. S60 2TH

Membership:- Councillors Steele (Chair), Bacon (Vice-Chair), Baggaley, Blackham, A. Carter, Ismail, Keenan, McKiernan, Monk, Sutton, Tinsley and Yasseen.

This meeting will be webcast live and will be available to view [via the Council's website](#). The items which will be discussed are described on the agenda below and there are reports attached which give more details.

Rotherham Council advocates openness and transparency as part of its democratic processes. Anyone wishing to record (film or audio) the public parts of the meeting should inform the Chair or Governance Advisor of their intentions prior to the meeting.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive the apologies of any Member who is unable to attend the meeting.

2. Minutes of meeting Wednesday 1 July 2026 of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (Pages 5 - 34)

To consider the minutes of the previous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 1 July 2026 and to approve them as a true and correct record of the proceedings and to be signed by the Chair.

3. Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations of interest from Members in respect of items listed on the agenda.

4. Questions from Members of the Public and the Press

To receive questions relating to items of business on the agenda from members of the public or press who are present at the meeting.

5. Exclusion of the Press and Public

To consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any part of the agenda.

Items for Pre-Decision Scrutiny

In accordance with the outcome of the Governance Review in 2016, the following items are submitted for pre-scrutiny ahead of the Cabinet meeting on Monday 14 September 2026. Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board are invited to comment and make recommendations on the proposals contained within the report.

6. July 2026-27 Financial Monitoring Report (Pages 35 - 62)

Report from the Executive Director of Corporate Services.

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Note the current General Fund Revenue Budget forecast overspend of £5.9m.
2. Note the updated position of the Capital Programme.
3. Approve the capital budget variations as detailed in Section 2.17 of the report.

7. Social Value Annual Report (Pages 63 - 116)

Report from the Director of Policy, Strategy and Engagement.

Recommendations:

That Cabinet:

1. Receive the annual report, noting the social value commitments along with outcomes delivered.
2. Approve that the key priorities for 2026/27 are:
 - a. Continuing to ensure social value commitments made within the procurement process are delivered through contracts.
 - b. Championing democratic business models through employee ownership and 21st century social clubs.
 - c. Continuing to build on opportunities to support residents into employment and strengthen access to good-quality jobs across the borough.
 - d. Enabling more socially productive use of land and property.
 - e. Following the changes proposed nationally, exploring how to maximise local benefits from investment.
3. Agree to delegate authority to the Director Policy, Strategy and

Engagement, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to extend the Social Value Policy approved by Cabinet in March 2024 to March 2029.

For Discussion/Decision:-

8. Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Scrutiny Review – Street Lighting Columns (Pages 117 - 137)

This report is presented for consideration and sets out the findings and recommendations of the OSMB/IPSC Scrutiny Review into attachments to lighting columns which was commissioned following a Notice of Motion approved by Full Council in April 2026.

9. Health Select Commission - Proposal to Appoint the Rotherham Women's Health Network as a Non-Voting Co-optee to the Health Select Commission (Pages 139 - 145)

This report is presented for consideration and sets out the recommendations that the Rotherham Women's Health Network be appointed as a Non-voting Co-optee to the Health Select Commission.

For Information/Monitoring:-

10. Work Programme (Pages 147 - 159)

To consider the Board's Work Programme and any updates provided including:

- OSMB Scrutiny Review - The Council's Consultation Process initial briefing paper
- OSMB Scrutiny Review - Protecting Children, Supporting Honest Businesses and Cracking Down on Illicit Vapes, Tobacco and Underage Sales initial briefing paper

11. Work in Progress - Select Commissions (Pages 161 - 167)

To receive updates from the Chairs of the Select Commission on work undertaken and planned for the future:

- Health Select Commission
- Improving Lives Select Commission
- Improving Places Select Commission

12. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

To review and identify items for pre-decision scrutiny from the Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

Link to: [Browse plans - Forward Plan of Key Decisions, 2025 - Rotherham Council](#)

13. South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee

As part of their role the Chair and Vice Chair of OSMB are appointed to the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Chair of OSMB is the Vice Chair on this committee.

This committee holds the MCA to account and ensure that all aspects of the decision-making process are transparent, inclusive and fair. The Committee are responsible for checking that the MCA is delivering its objectives and that the decisions made in policies, strategies and plans have been made in the best interests of the residents and workers of South Yorkshire.

The published agenda packs and minutes can be accessed via: [South Yorkshire MCA](#).

Members who have comments and queries regarding any item on any agenda should refer this to the Chair of OSMB and the Governance Manager at the earliest opportunity to ensure they're reflected in debate during the relevant public meeting.

14. Call-in Issues

To consider any issues referred for call-in from recent Cabinet meetings.

15. Urgent Business

To determine any item which the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.

The next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will be held on Wednesday 7 October 2026 commencing at 10.00 a.m. in Rotherham Town Hall.



John Edwards,
Chief Executive.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
Wednesday 1 July 2026

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A Carter.

Council Officers in attendance:

- John Edwards, Chief Executive
- Ian Spicer, Executive Director, Adult Care, Housing and Public Health
- Nicola Curley, Executive Director, Children and Young People's Services
- Andrew Bramidge, Executive Director, Regeneration and Environment
- Chris Paddock, Interim Director of Policy, Strategy and Engagement
- Jane Maxwell, Director of Policy, Strategy and Engagement
- Alan Rodgers, Head of Service (HR Shared Services Manager)
- Rob Mahon, Service Director, Financial Services
- Alan Pogorzelec, Service Manager
- Kevin Fisher, Service Director, Property and Facilities Services
- Luke Sayers, Service Director, Customer, Information & Digital Services
- Fiona Boden, Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence
- Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services
- Barbel Gale, Governance Manager
- Kerry Grinsill-Clinton, Governance Advisor
- Kristianne Thorogood, Governance Advisor

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

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

14. MINUTES OF MEETING WEDNESDAY 3 JUNE 2026 OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

The minutes of the previous meeting were submitted for approval as a true record. Councillor Blackham identified two amendments: on page 14, paragraph 1, Minute Reference 5, where "New York" was corrected to "Yorkshire"; and on page 16, paragraph 5, Minute Reference 5, where the reference to "a Member" was amended to name Councillor Blackham as the speaker.

Subject to these amendments, the minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 3 June 2026 be approved as a true record subject the amendments listed above.

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

16. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

No questions were received.

17. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no reasons to exclude the press or public.

18. COUNCIL PLAN AND YEAR AHEAD DELIVERY PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE

At the Chair's invitation the Leader, Councillor Read presented the year-end plan update for the first year of the current cycle, reporting that 82% of priority actions had been achieved, 81% of performance measures had been met, and 79% of long-term measures were moving in the right direction.

The Leader highlighted progress across a number of priority areas, including continued improvements to road conditions, completion of works at Rother Valley and Thrybergh Country Parks, ongoing play area improvements, and the opening of the Castle View Day Centre. Further updates included the securing of £75,000 in match funding for a multi-use games area in Kimberworth Park, the commencement of groundworks for new homes at Eastwood, progress on the Market Hall development, and agreement of contracts for the Whiston Flood Alleviation Scheme.

Several projects remained behind schedule. The Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy had been split into two phases, with the first phase due to be considered by Cabinet and further work on integrated community services continuing. Works funded through the Our Places Fund were progressing in Swinton, although public realm works in Maltby had been delayed until August.

The Leader reported that investment in community facilities had progressed well overall, although further surveys at the Black Hut in Kimberworth Park had identified more extensive works than originally anticipated, with options including a potential rebuild being explored. Delays to upgrades at some business centres had largely been resolved and the programme was back on track.

An update was also provided on independent travel training for children and young people. Delivery had been affected by staff absence during the year, preventing the target from being achieved despite strong demand for the service. Finally, the Leader noted that employee participation in the staff opinion survey had reached 49%, narrowly missing the 50% target.

The Chair invited members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) to raise questions, with Councillor Blackham seeking clarification regarding page 58 of the report, noting that it referred to the demolition of burnt-out buildings on High Street in February and asking which February was being referenced. In response, the Leader advised that some demolition works had already taken place and deferred to Andrew Bramidge, Executive Director of Regeneration and Environment for an update on the programme. The Executive Director of Regeneration and Environment confirmed that the demolition works referred to were scheduled to commence in September 2026 and reported that preparatory works, including the installation of hoardings, were underway and the project remained on track.

Councillor Blackham had observed that the buildings remained in place, noting that only one contractor had been erecting a fence between the Market Hall and the car wash. It was noted that there was no visible evidence of demolition works commencing other than publicity signage and questioned the reference in the report to demolition taking place in February, highlighting that this appeared to be incorrect given the update that works were now scheduled for September.

The Executive Director of Regeneration and Environment acknowledged that the reference in the report was incorrect and clarified that the demolition works had not been scheduled for February but were due to commence in September.

Councillor Yasseen stated that a simpler approach was welcome. However, It was felt the findings should be taken seriously, as much of the deterioration identified was embedded within the more detailed equality analysis and long-term measures, which were considerably more extensive.

From a ward councillor perspective, Councillor Yasseen highlighted several statistics that aligned with three significant complaints received about the Council. These included that 50% of residents did not feel well informed, only 35% believed the Council provided value for money, and just 41% felt the Council acted on residents' concerns.

Councillor Yasseen emphasised that the low level of confidence in the Council responding to residents' concerns was particularly significant, reflecting concerns about delays and a lack of responsiveness over the previous two years.

Councillor Baggaley welcomed the completion of the actions but noted that several had experienced delays, with some impacts extending into the current year. It was queried whether greater visibility could be provided on delayed completed actions and any resulting knock-on effects for future years.

The Leader explained that reports were updated as close to publication as

possible to ensure the most accurate information was included, as actions could be completed after the reporting period ended. The Leader added that, if a simple way could be found to highlight delays in completed actions, this could be incorporated into future reports.

Councillor Monk queried whether the reporting of action trends provided sufficient visibility of known delays, noting that some actions appeared to move from being delayed over multiple quarters to ultimately not being met. Councillor Monk went on to ask whether risks were being identified and managed early enough to prevent this outcome, acknowledging that while some delays were unavoidable, others might present opportunities for earlier intervention.

The Leader acknowledged the frustration caused when anticipated short delays extended beyond expectations. It was explained that some actions depended on specific trigger points, such as surveys, procurement processes, or technical assessments, which could reveal unforeseen issues and lead to further delays. Examples included procurement challenges, a lack of available providers, or works proving more extensive than originally expected. The Leader assured members that Cabinet Members and senior leaders regularly reviewed actions within their portfolios, and that robust scrutiny and oversight arrangements were in place to monitor delivery and manage risks.

The Chief Executive, John Edwards, advised that there was little to add to the Leader's comments. The Chief Executive explained that delivery was closely monitored against key milestones and that actions considered achievable at one stage could be delayed due to unforeseen internal or external factors, such as survey findings or changing circumstances. Assurance was provided that progress against all Year Ahead Delivery Plan actions was subject to close management oversight, with measures in place to address actions that fell off track. The Chief Executive stated that internal scrutiny arrangements were open and robust, while acknowledging that some critical milestones could not always be achieved as anticipated. An offer was made to discuss individual cases in more detail if required.

Councillor Yasseen referred to the earlier discussion on how performance reports should be presented, noting that the Board's role was to assess accountability and outcomes. It was questioned whether residents would feel the benefits if all actions were delivered. While acknowledging that meeting 81% of annual targets appeared positive, concern was raised that only 58% of long-term measures had improved. Assurance was sought that Cabinet gave appropriate weight to long-term measures when assessing whether outcomes for residents were improving.

The Leader advised that only around 50% of the long-term measures currently had available data, although further data would be received later. Of the measures reported, approximately four-fifths were moving in the right direction, and these were considered in detail. It was explained

that the Council's focus was on delivering high-quality services, meeting statutory responsibilities, providing value for money, and improving quality of life for residents where possible.

Assurance was provided that Cabinet Members and services reviewed performance information at a detailed level, alongside complaints data, councillor casework, and local experiences, to assess whether outcomes for residents were improving. Confidence was expressed that progress had been made in improving quality of life in the borough, while acknowledging that further work remained and that some outcomes were influenced by wider national challenges, such as economic conditions and youth unemployment, which were beyond the Council's direct control.

Councillor Keenan queried the continued low uptake of the adults starting the residential rehabilitation placement to receive support for drug/alcohol misuse. (pages 72–73), noting that performance appeared unchanged since the previous report, with only around half of the available places being utilised. Reference was made to the reported delivery shortfall, attributed to high demand and pathway issues, and assurance was sought that the pathway concerns had been addressed, given the service's grant-funded status.

In response, it was acknowledged that the issue remained unchanged from the previous report, with insufficient numbers of individuals ready to enter residential rehabilitation placements. The Leader noted that placing people into rehabilitation before they were ready would be counterproductive and could lead to poor outcomes. Reference was made to significant challenges with the existing drug and alcohol treatment provider, and it was reported that arrangements were being made to appoint a new provider due to concerns that the previous provider had not delivered as expected. Assurance was given that performance was expected to improve once the new provider was in place, although the target had remained difficult to achieve because of the limited number of suitable referrals progressing through the pathway.

The Executive Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health, Ian Spicer, provided assurance that the reasons for the current position were understood and related to the effectiveness of the referral pathway and the preparation of individuals for residential rehabilitation. It was explained that the provider was expected to undertake the necessary preparatory work in a timely and effective manner to ensure individuals were ready to progress into treatment. Where this groundwork was not completed to the required standard, referral numbers would remain low. It was reported that procurement of a new drug and alcohol service provider was underway, with the expectation that this would improve outcomes and increase uptake in future years.

Councillor McKiernan queried whether recruitment difficulties were linked to pay levels. The Leader advised that no general correlation had been identified. It was noted that underspends on new posts were common

where vacancies were filled partway through the year, and that one Street Safety vacancy had resulted from a candidate withdrawing. Delays in job evaluation and budget setting affected salary projections, while some posts remained unfilled for operational reasons. Pay levels were constrained by the Council's job evaluation framework and national pay agreements. Overall, staffing variations were expected to balance out by year end, and no significant concerns were raised about the underspends. The Chief Executive added that salary budgets were based on midpoint pay scales, which could create small variances, although the timing of appointments and payroll start dates remained the main cause of salary underspends.

Councillor Yasseen expressed concern that underspends resulting from recruitment delays were affecting frontline service delivery and resident satisfaction, citing vacancies in areas such as street cleansing, fly-tipping and community safety. Clarification was sought on the timescales for filling vacancies and ensuring sufficient staffing to deliver services. In response, the Leader clarified that the reference to "no financial implications" related only to noting the report and did not suggest that service delivery lacked financial impact. It was noted that the report provided a progress update rather than a full assessment of financial implications. The Leader highlighted ongoing investment in frontline services and emphasised the importance of translating approved funding into service delivery. While acknowledging that recruitment delays could occur, including where candidates withdrew, it was stressed that management was expected to fill vacancies and use budgets as intended to achieve outcomes for residents.

Councillor Baggaley welcomed the progress made in engaging fathers and male carers through Family Hubs and sought an explanation for the decline in registrations during quarters two and three, followed by a subsequent increase, as well as details of actions being taken to increase registrations. In response, the Leader advised that the reasons for the variation were not fully understood. Nicola Curley, Executive Director of Children and Young People's Services, explained that the registration measure was locally defined and set at a challenging level, although performance remained strong compared with other authorities. She noted that families were engaged through partners, including midwifery services, and that participation in schemes such as the baby pack programme resulted in automatic registration. Registration was not required to access services, reflecting the universal nature of Family Hub provision. Performance had exceeded the 90% target in March, and work continued to maintain this level, with fluctuations attributed to varying levels of family engagement.

Councillor Baggaley queried whether the attendance figures reflected a genuine seasonal trend or whether they may have been affected by changes to the Family Hubs introduced around September. Members were advised that there was no evidence of any link, as the centres themselves had not changed. It was explained that the changes related

primarily to rebranding and simplifying service names following Department for Education requirements, and that attendance had not been impacted by confusion about the service or its location.

Councillor Keenan commended the Cultural Services team for the range and quality of activities delivered across the borough over the previous year. Positive feedback was provided on several events and initiatives, including the skate park activities, Armed Forces Day celebrations and the football-themed public art installation. A suggestion was made to expand the programme further and deliver more activities in different parts of the borough in the future.

The Vice-Chair questioned whether the Street Safe service continued to represent good value for money, noting that 50 interventions appeared to equate to a significant cost per intervention. The Leader responded that the team's primary purpose was to improve safety and the attractiveness of town centres, with activities extending beyond enforcement to include tackling antisocial behaviour, supporting police investigations, gathering intelligence, assisting vulnerable individuals and providing a visible presence. Positive feedback from retailers regarding the team's contribution was also noted.

In a supplementary question, the Vice-Chair queried why the service focused on principal towns when antisocial behaviour affected communities across the borough, expressing concern that villages and other areas saw limited benefit. It was suggested that the Council had not fully utilised powers such as PSPOs or worked proactively enough with the police on issues including illegal racing.

The Leader responded that the service had been established to target the borough's busiest high streets, where it could have the greatest impact within available resources. It was noted that the Community Protection Unit continued to address local issues and work with the police on antisocial behaviour. While future expansion could be considered if additional resources became available, the current approach was considered the most effective use of resources given financial constraints and community priorities.

The Vice-Chair raised concerns about levels of antisocial behaviour in town centres and questioned the value for money of the Street Safe service. Reference was made to a personal experience in the town centre, the Council's use of enforcement powers, and the need for clarity on officers' performance measures, working hours, methods of assessing effectiveness, and any recorded reduction in antisocial behaviour over the previous six months.

The Leader advised that Street Safe officers worked into the evening, with shifts recently extended until 10.00pm. It was noted that performance was monitored against a range of indicators previously shared with Members, which could be circulated again. The Leader emphasised the importance

of focusing on practical solutions, making effective use of resources, and improving residents' quality of life, and stated that the Street Safe service formed part of the Council's wider approach to tackling antisocial behaviour and enhancing the town centre environment.

The Vice-Chair welcomed the Shop Unit Grant Programme but questioned whether it would be sufficient to improve the appearance of high streets. It was suggested that greater use could be made of planning controls, partnership working and approaches adopted elsewhere, and clarification was sought on whether the programme or related planning measures would be expanded. The Leader advised that planning controls on shopfront signage already operated in some areas, but there were no plans to extend them more widely due to the potential impact on small businesses. It was emphasised that a balance was needed between improving the appearance of high streets and supporting local traders. The Leader noted that the Shop Unit Grant Programme criteria had been strengthened to encourage shopfront improvements and that trader uptake and outcomes would be monitored.

The Vice-Chair acknowledged concerns about placing additional burdens on businesses but argued that shop owners also had a responsibility to maintain shopfronts and ensure they reflected the character of the area. It was suggested that existing planning controls were not delivering the desired improvements to town and district centres and that both regulatory and funding approaches should be reviewed. Concerns were also raised about the long-term value of grant funding where improvements might not be sustained. A recommendation was proposed that Cabinet and senior officers review current policies to consider whether further measures could support the appearance and maintenance of high streets.

The Vice-Chair proposed an additional recommendation that Cabinet, in consultation with senior officers, review additional mechanisms available to the Council to further enhance and strengthen the Shop Unit Grant Programme.

Councillor Monk sought clarification on the proposed recommendation and asked for greater specificity regarding the improvements being suggested to the Shop Unit Grant Programme. In response the Vice-Chair explained that the recommendation was not intended to place additional requirements on Cabinet, but to request a review of the existing powers and mechanisms available to the Council to enhance the Shop Unit Grant Programme. It was suggested that further options may exist to support the programme's objectives, particularly in relation to shopfront improvements, and that the findings of any review could be reported back to Members for consideration.

Following a majority vote, the recommendations outlined below were approved.

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

1. Note the overall position in relation to the Year Ahead Delivery Plan activities.
2. Note the Quarter 4 data for the Council Plan performance measures.
3. Note the updates on the Council Plan long term measures of success.
4. Note that future progress reports will be presented to Cabinet in January and July 2027.

Additional recommendations to Cabinet from OSMB were that:

5. OSMB recommends that Cabinet ensures the Council clearly demonstrates in future updates how delays affect residents, the seriousness of the associated risks, and the measures in place to mitigate them.
6. OSMB recommends that Cabinet ensures the Council clearly identifies the main reasons for missed targets, demonstrates what actions are being taken to improve performance, and evidence whether those actions are delivering results, supported by named ownership, detailed action plans, progress tracking, impact data, and clear examples of learning and escalation.
7. OSMB recommends that Cabinet, in collaboration with senior officers, undertakes a review of the shop unit grant programme to assess whether the full range of available mechanisms and powers, such as planning controls, design standards, and regulatory tools, were being effectively utilised to maximise long-term improvements to Rotherham's high streets.

Further actions that arose from discussions were:

- OSMB agreed that a workshop be held to identify the key performance measures and information Members want included in future Council Plan and Year Ahead Delivery Plan reports.

19. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Chair invited members to ask questions of the Leader relating to matters within his portfolio. The Vice-Chair began and raised concerns about the financial impact on smaller parish councils of requirements relating to surveys of lighting columns, noting that some councils may struggle to meet their share of the costs despite the support being offered by the Council. Clarification was sought on whether further assistance

could be provided to those councils with limited precepts. Questions were also raised regarding the consultation process, with concern expressed that a number of parish councils had been unaware of the issue. The member asked what lessons had been learned and what improvements could be made to future engagement to ensure parish councils felt informed, consulted and listened to.

The Leader acknowledged that communication about the requirement for lighting column surveys had been inadequate, affecting parish councils and other users. It was explained that the surveys were required to meet legal and insurance obligations and could not be avoided.

The Council had apologised for its communication approach and committed to improving engagement with parish councils. Support available included funding 75% of initial survey costs, joint procurement arrangements, reimbursement for independently arranged surveys, and flexibility to spread costs across budget years. A 50:50 cost-sharing arrangement was proposed for future survey cycles.

The need for formal agreements governing the use of lighting columns was also highlighted to address liability and insurance issues and ensure a consistent approach across all areas. The Council stated that it would continue working with parish councils to address challenges, particularly for smaller councils.

The Vice-Chair sought clarification on why the issue had not been identified and addressed earlier through Member oversight and briefing arrangements, noting concerns about the impact on parish councils and any associated reputational implications. Clarification was also sought on the factors that had contributed to the situation and the lessons learned.

The Leader advised that former Cabinet Members had received verbal briefings when the regulations were introduced. However, no current Cabinet Member had been aware of the requirement prior to the issue arising, and there had been no formal decision notice or published documentation highlighting the changes. It was explained that the situation had resulted from weaknesses in communication processes within the service and that Members had relied on the information provided to them.

Councillor Blackham noted that some lighting columns might fail structural testing and therefore be unable to support hanging baskets or similar displays, raising concerns about the potential impact on the appearance of local areas. It was suggested that discussions be held with parish councils on future replacement programmes, including consideration of prioritising columns in locations where such displays were an important feature, alongside ongoing inspection and testing arrangements.

The Chair noted that a scrutiny review group was already examining the issue and would develop recommendations, informed by officer advice.

The Leader advised that all options remained under consideration and that decisions would be better informed once the initial surveys had been completed and the results assessed. It was noted that both older and newer columns could be affected due to differing design characteristics. While the case for prioritising replacements in key display locations was acknowledged, no commitment could be made at that stage to replace all columns that might not meet future requirements.

The Chair also noted officer advice that the primary purpose of lighting columns was to provide street lighting and that they had not originally been designed to support hanging baskets or other attachments.

Councillor Tinsley BEM sought an update on the Street Safe team, noting recent operational changes, including revised working hours until 10.00pm. Clarification was requested on progress regarding the introduction of parking enforcement powers. The Leader advised that an update was not immediately available and indicated that a written response would be provided following consultation with the relevant service.

The Executive Director of Regeneration and Environment, Andrew Bramidge, advised that the anticipated parking enforcement powers were expected to be introduced later in the year, although confirmation of the implementation date had not yet been received from Government. The Chair noted that a scrutiny review relating to parking was also being undertaken.

Councillor Tinsley BEM raised concerns about the delivery of litter and parking enforcement services in outer borough areas, including Maltby, and sought assurance that staffing levels, service coverage and contractor performance were being monitored. The Leader advised that the current enforcement contract remained in place for a further two years and would be reviewed before renewal to ensure value for money. While an update on the contractor's recruitment position was not available, the importance of effective litter and parking enforcement across the borough was acknowledged. It was noted that extending enforcement powers to Street Safe officers, subject to appropriate training and authorisation, could help strengthen service delivery, particularly in relation to parking offences.

Councillor Yasseen made observations regarding the agenda structure and suggested that future reports should clearly identify the portfolio holders responsibilities. Concern was raised that the Council remained at the "Developing" stage of the Local Government Association's equality framework despite previous aspirations to progress further. It was argued that impact assessments accompanying major policy proposals often lacked sufficient understanding of the communities affected, creating a disconnect between policy development and local needs. Assurance was sought that achieving the next level within the equality framework would

remain a priority during the current Council term through to 2028.

The Leader advised that progressing through the Local Government Association's Equality Framework remained an aspiration. However, as the LGA no longer carried out external assessments, councils were now required to self-assess, meaning independent validation was no longer available. The Leader acknowledged the importance of improving the Council's understanding of local communities, businesses and demographic trends, and noted ongoing work to strengthen the data and evidence used to inform decision-making. It was further recognised that, while some regulatory requirements would still need to be implemented, the Council remained committed to making decisions based on the best available information.

Councillor Tarmey acknowledged the legal and insurance requirements relating to lighting columns and hanging baskets and noted that, while some authorities had adopted similar measures, others had not. Clarification was sought on why the changes had been introduced at that time and why communication with affected parties had not been more effective. Concern was also expressed about public perception and the need for clear communication. The Leader advised that the requirement had been anticipated within the service for some time and had been introduced following legal advice. It was noted that similar approaches were increasingly being adopted elsewhere. The Leader acknowledged concerns regarding the way the changes had been communicated and the limited advance notice provided, emphasising the need to balance legal responsibilities with a proportionate approach to public safety. It was further recognised that earlier planning and engagement could have allowed parish councils more time to prepare and improved the overall implementation of the changes.

Councillor Yasseen congratulated the Leader on the recent appointment as South Yorkshire Deputy Mayor and sought clarification on whether the role could create any conflict of interest with duties as Leader of the Council. The Leader advised that the Deputy Mayor role involved deputising for the Mayor when required and did not change existing responsibilities as a member of the Mayoral Combined Authority Board. It was noted that the position did not attract additional remuneration and that no conflict of interest was considered to arise from holding both roles.

The Chair thanked the Leader for attending and responding to questions. Members were advised that a scrutiny review of the lighting column issue was currently underway, with parish councils having been surveyed as part of the process. It was noted that the review was focused on the health and safety and insurance implications relating to lighting columns and was expected to conclude by the end of July, after which its findings and recommendations would be reported through the Council's scrutiny and decision-making processes.

Resolved that: the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board noted the

responses provided during the Q&A session.

20. DRAFT STREET TRADING POLICY

At the Chair's invitation the Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy, Councillor Williams introduced a report outlining a proposed approach to regulating street trading across the borough. It was noted that street trading could make a positive contribution to local economies and high streets, but that unmanaged activity could also have adverse impacts on communities and established businesses. The proposed approach would introduce a consent-based system for street trading, supported by a new Street Trading Policy. It was explained that, subject to Cabinet approval, a two-stage consultation would be undertaken on both the adoption of the relevant legislation and the draft policy. A further report setting out the outcome of the consultation and proposed policy arrangements would be presented to Cabinet at a later date.

The Executive Director of Regeneration and Environment, Andrew Bramidge emphasised the need for a balanced approach that supported business growth while maintaining attractive and accessible town centres. It was noted that concerns had been raised by residents regarding uncontrolled street trading and its impact on public spaces. The proposed policy was intended to provide a more effective means of managing street trading than existing planning and highway powers, while ensuring that the interests of both businesses and residents were appropriately considered through the consultation process.

Councillor Blackham questioned the rationale for introducing the proposed street trading regime, commenting that the report did not clearly evidence the scale or nature of the issues it sought to address. Concerns were raised regarding the anticipated costs of enforcement, the basis for the proposed trader fees, and the lack of detail around how the scheme would operate in practice. It was suggested that the proposals appeared underdeveloped and that further clarity was needed on the objectives, costs and expected outcomes. Concern was also expressed that additional charges could discourage traders, particularly in areas with lower footfall, potentially impacting local economic activity.

The Licensing Manager, Alan Pogorzelec explained that the proposals were subject to consultation and that feedback from businesses, residents and other stakeholders would help determine whether the approach should be adopted. It was noted that concerns had previously been raised regarding uncontrolled street trading, while the absence of a formal framework also limited opportunities for new traders wishing to operate in the borough. Examples were given of situations where existing traders could operate but there was no transparent process for additional businesses to access the same locations. It was argued that the proposed framework would provide a fairer, more consistent and transparent approach to managing street trading, supporting business growth while

balancing the interests of residents and existing businesses.

Councillor Blackham expressed concern about the proposed consultation period, noting that it would take place over the summer months. Doubts were also raised as to whether the proposed regulatory framework would address practical constraints on street trading, particularly in locations with limited physical space. It was suggested that the policy would not necessarily create additional trading opportunities where capacity was already restricted.

The Licensing Manager advised that the proposed eight-week consultation period was intended to enable consideration of responses and the submission of a further report to Cabinet and Council, with implementation anticipated early in the following year. It was noted that extending the consultation would delay this timetable but would otherwise have no significant adverse effect. In response to concerns about physical capacity, it was clarified that the proposal was not intended to create additional trading space, but rather to ensure that existing locations within the town centre were allocated and managed in a fair and appropriate manner.

Councillor Tarmey expressed concern that the proposed street trading framework could be perceived as placing unnecessary restrictions and costs on small traders, particularly those operating infrequently or in rural communities. Reference was made to local mobile food businesses that were viewed positively by residents, and concern was raised that they could be adversely affected by the proposed fees and regulatory requirements. While acknowledging the case for managing trading activity in busier locations, the member emphasised the importance of ensuring that any new policy was proportionate, supported local businesses, and did not create negative public perceptions of the Council's intentions.

The Executive Director of Regeneration and Environment emphasised that the proposals were not intended to ban street trading but to support and encourage business activity through the introduction of a clear and consistent regulatory framework. It was noted that no such framework currently existed in the borough and that the proposed policy would provide a structured approach to managing street trading while supporting local enterprise.

In response to a query Councillor Tarmey was advised that the proposed fees were not fixed and would be reviewed as part of the consultation process before any final policy decisions were made.

Councillor Monk referred to concerns raised by a resident regarding mobile traders and sought clarification on how the proposed operating restrictions, including specified trading hours, had been determined. Questions were raised as to whether the proposed hours reflected existing trading patterns or could potentially restrict business activity. Clarification was also sought on any assessment undertaken of the

potential impact on affected traders.

The Licensing Manager explained that the proposed requirements for mobile traders were based on existing legislation and national guidance. It was noted that the Control of Pollution Act 1974 restricted the use of chimes to the hours of 12.00 noon to 7.00pm, and this had been reflected in the draft policy. It was further explained that other provisions, such as limits on the duration of music played, were derived directly from Government guidance for ice cream vendors and had been incorporated into the proposed framework.

Councillor Yasseen expressed concern that the proposed street trading framework was not sufficiently developed and lacked supporting evidence regarding the traders who would be affected and the potential impacts on different groups. It was acknowledged that some elements of the proposal may have merit, but concern was raised that the approach could impose unnecessary costs and administrative burdens on traders, including market and street traders who made a positive contribution to local communities and the local economy. It was suggested that further work and reflection were needed before the proposals progressed and indicated that, in their current form, the proposals were not supported.

The Licensing Manager clarified that the proposed policy would not apply to market traders, as trading from a market was not classed as street trading. It was therefore noted that the examples cited of market activity would not be affected by the proposals. It was further explained that, while the Council had sought to regulate and support street trading through existing powers, current legislation did not provide sufficient tools to address all aspects of street trading. It was argued that the proposed framework would create a fairer and more transparent system, enabling new traders to access opportunities that were not currently available, rather than imposing unfair restrictions on legitimate businesses.

Councillor Tinsley BEM questioned whether the issues underpinning the proposed policy were limited to the town centre and whether a borough-wide approach was justified. Concerns were raised about the impact on mobile traders, particularly those supporting pubs and community events, and clarification was sought on restrictions near schools. The need for clear guidance on residential and informal trading was highlighted, alongside concerns that legitimate local businesses should not be adversely affected.

The Licensing Manager advised that small-scale residential sales were proposed to be exempt, in line with existing exemptions for businesses trading from the frontage of their premises. It was acknowledged that the wider concerns raised were valid and would be considered through the consultation process before any final policy decisions were made.

Councillor Tinsley BEM sought clarification on whether the proposed restrictions relating to ice cream vans were intended to address health or

parking concerns.

The Licensing Manager advised that the provisions were based on existing Government guidance and had been included in the draft policy to ensure clarity and consistency. It was noted that they had not been developed locally or intended to address any single issue.

Councillor Tinsley BEM noted that the consultation would allow stakeholders to comment on the proposals and that feedback could be considered before the policy was finalised. It was also noted that a further report would be brought back to Members for consideration.

Councillor McKiernan sought clarification on the scope of the proposed policy, particularly whether it would apply to traders attending community events such as parish council fêtes or larger events such as the Rotherham Show. Concerns were raised about the potential impact on individuals operating small-scale businesses and whether the policy could introduce additional administrative requirements for existing events. Clarification was requested on how such activities would be treated under the proposed framework and whether the policy would create any additional barriers to participation.

The Licensing Manager advised that, as a matter of policy, trading undertaken as part of organised events such as fairs, fêtes and markets would be excluded from the proposed street trading regime. It was clarified that the intention was not to impose additional regulation on these activities, and that existing events would not be subject to further controls under the policy.

Councillor McKiernan sought clarification on the arrangements in neighbouring authorities, asking whether similar street trading frameworks were already in place elsewhere in South Yorkshire or whether the borough would be among the first to introduce such a scheme. Clarification was also requested on how the proposed fees compared with those charged by other councils.

The Licensing Manager advised that the adoption of street trading controls varied between local authorities. It was noted that neighbouring authorities, including Barnsley and Sheffield, had already adopted similar legislation and generally charged higher fees than those proposed. The proposed fee structure had been developed on the basis of reasonableness and in accordance with relevant legislative requirements. It was further noted that the fees would form part of the consultation and could be reviewed and amended, if appropriate, before a final policy was presented for approval.

Vice-Chair observed that, while some regulation could be beneficial, particularly where public safety and compliance were concerned, a degree of flexibility and competition could also support consumers and businesses. Concern was expressed that formalising existing guidance

might create barriers to market entry and discourage traders. Assurance was sought that, if adopted, the policy would be supported by clear and accessible guidance, including information provided through the Council's website and other supporting materials. It was further noted that the number and complexity of the proposed requirements highlighted the need for comprehensive guidance to assist applicants in understanding and complying with the policy.

The Executive Director of Regeneration and Environment explained that one of the objectives of the policy was to bring existing requirements together into a single, clear framework for traders and residents. It was stated that the consultation process was intended to help develop a balanced policy that supported business activity while protecting the public and ensuring a fair and transparent approach to street trading. Assurance was given that, if adopted, the policy and supporting guidance would be widely communicated through various channels, including the Council's website and dedicated information materials.

In a supplementary question, the Vice-Chair sought assurance that the consultation would specifically seek views on how any new policy and guidance should be communicated to traders and other stakeholders, emphasising the importance of clear and accessible information to support compliance.

The Executive Director of Regeneration and Environment confirmed that the consultation would include consideration of how the policy and associated guidance should be communicated and made accessible to traders and other stakeholders.

Councillor Monk echoed concerns that any consultation document would need to clearly explain what was and was not included in the proposed policy to ensure meaningful responses. Clarification was sought regarding the proposed £28 fee for changing a name or address on a licence and whether this would apply to a change of business ownership or only to amendments made by the existing licence holder. The Licensing Manager explained that the fee would apply only to changes made by the existing licence holder, such as a change of name, address or business name. A change of ownership would require a new licence application and the associated vetting process. It was also noted that the £28 fee already existed within the current licensing framework for licence amendments. Councillor Monk expressed concern that the Equality Impact Assessment did not appear to recognise potential implications arising from name changes and indicated that this issue would be raised as part of the consultation response.

Councillor Yasseen expressed concern that references within the draft documents, including wording suggesting the Council had adopted Schedule 4 of the Act, could give the impression that decisions had already been made and potentially undermine the consultation process. It was also noted that the report identified limited evidence on the issues

being addressed, the potential impact on traders and customers, and the effects on protected groups, making it difficult to assess the proportionality of the proposals.

Councillor Yasseen proposed that consideration of the policy be deferred to allow further intelligence gathering and stakeholder mapping, particularly in relation to affected traders, and that clearer evidence on the issues, complaints and potential impacts be established before progressing to consultation.

Councillor Baggaley commented that both the report and discussion had highlighted significant information gaps, resulting in a lack of clarity around the proposals. Concerns were raised that the draft policy did not clearly identify exemptions, including those relating to community and parish council events, and that the provisions for trading from private land could have unintended implications for businesses hosting food vendors.

Further concern was expressed that the criteria and process for granting or refusing street trading consents were not clearly set out. In light of these issues, Councillor Baggaley considered that the policy was not yet ready for consultation and should be revised and clarified before being brought back for further consideration.

The Executive Director of Regeneration and Environment advised that the document had been presented as a draft policy for consultation and did not suggest that any decisions had already been taken. It was explained that the purpose of the consultation was to gather views before any final decision was made by Cabinet, and that this would be made clear to consultees. It was acknowledged the detailed points raised regarding the scope and balance of the proposals and noted that these would be considered through the consultation and policy development process.

Councillor Williams noted that the concerns raised could be explored through consultation, which would provide feedback from street traders and other stakeholders. It was considered that the draft policy already clearly defined street trading and relevant exemptions, and that consultation responses should inform the final policy. It was further stated that the existing arrangements were not considered fair or effective and that a formal policy was needed to create a more consistent and equitable framework for street traders and the local economy.

Councillor Baggaley reiterated that, if Members were unclear about aspects of the document, it was unlikely that residents would fully understand the proposals. It was argued that the number of questions raised during the discussion demonstrated that the draft lacked sufficient clarity and that, as a result, consultation at this stage would not be effective. The view was expressed that the document should be revised and clarified before being issued for consultation to ensure respondents could provide informed and meaningful feedback.

Councillor Blackham highlighted the importance of achieving a balanced outcome through consultation and questioned whether the proposed consultation period was sufficient. Concern was expressed that an eight-week consultation, including four weeks during August, could limit participation at a time when many residents and stakeholders might be away on holiday. It was suggested that, given the significance of the policy, a longer consultation period during a time when more people were available to engage would be more appropriate.

Councillor Williams considered an eight-week consultation period sufficient, noting that affected stakeholders would have adequate opportunity to respond. It was also stated that any Committee recommendation regarding the consultation period would be welcomed and taken into consideration.

Councillor Tinsley BEM sought clarification on how fairness would be ensured where multiple applicants wished to trade from the same location. Clarification was also sought on whether street trading consents could be transferred or sold, or whether a new application would be required from any prospective trader.

The Licensing Manager advised that street trading consents would not be transferable and that any new trader would be required to submit a fresh application. It was explained that where demand exceeded available pitches, locations would be allocated through a fair process, similar to that used for market stalls, rather than on a first come, first served basis. It was noted that a ballot or lottery system could be used where pitches were oversubscribed.

Councillor Bacon noted that concerns had been raised about the lack of evidence and data to support the proposed changes and that the Board had not been provided with sufficient information to fully assess the case for reform. It was therefore suggested that Cabinet be recommended not to proceed to consultation until further evidence, intelligence and supporting data had been gathered and presented.

The Chair advised that the proposed recommendation would effectively defer the policy and request that Cabinet not approve the report in its current form. It was noted that the Board's recommendation would then be discussed with the Cabinet Member, Leader of the Council and Chief Executive.

The Chair then proposed that consideration of the report be deferred until sufficient information and evidence had been provided for Cabinet's consideration, and that Cabinet be requested not to approve the report at its forthcoming meeting. Following a vote, the recommendation was carried by nine votes in favour. It was confirmed that this would be the Committee's sole recommendation to Cabinet for this item.

Resolved: That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

recommends that Cabinet:

1. Defers consideration of the Draft Street Trading Policy and does not proceed to public consultation until further development work has been completed and sufficient supporting evidence is provided to ensure the policy is evidence-led and fit for consultation. This work should include clearer data on current trading activity and issues, improved impact assessments, clearer scope and definitions, and more detailed operational and fee proposals.

21. FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2025-26

At the Chair's invitation the Councillor Alam OBE, Cabinet Member for Finance and Community Safety, reported that the Council had approved its 2025/26 budget in March 2025, setting a £359 million revenue budget for General Fund services, excluding schools and the Housing Revenue Account. The report presented the final revenue and capital outturn position for 2025/26.

It was noted that demand and market pressures, including residential placements and the increasing complexity and cost of adult social care packages, had continued to rise. Market prices had increased above inflation, placing additional pressure on the Council's budget.

The financial outturn had improved from a projected £3.4 million overspend reported to Cabinet in February to a final overspend of £0.3 million. This improvement was attributed to additional savings delivered by services before year-end, maximisation of grant allocations, increased income, and the achievement of further one-off savings. The final overspend of £0.3 million was funded from budget reserves previously approved by the Council.

Rob Mahon, Service Director, Financial Services, advised that the report built on the outturn report previously presented to Cabinet and considered by SLT in May. The additional detail reflected the completion of the technical financial outturn process, enabling a fuller presentation of the final outturn position in July.

The Chair invited members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) to raise questions, with Councillor Monk querying what practical and cost-effective measures could be implemented to reduce medium-term pressures within adult social care, given the continued overspend in the service, and asked when such measures would be introduced. In response, the Service Director, Financial Services advised that the Council's most significant financial challenge in 2025/26 and across the Medium-Term Financial Strategy period remained the increasing demand, cost and complexity of social care services.

In Children's and Young People's Services, work had continued to develop in-house residential and fostering provision to reduce reliance on costly external placements, with expected benefits reflected in the

2025/26 budget. However, external residential placements remained the most significant cost pressure. Financial performance continued to be closely monitored through regular challenge and review processes. In Adult Social Care, increasing complexity of care packages rather than growth in service user numbers had been the main driver of cost pressures. Enhanced oversight of care package reviews had generated savings and helped manage costs, although underlying demand pressures remained.

The Executive Director of Children and Young People's Services acknowledged the ongoing national challenges in children's social care. Investment in the Council's residential programme had increased in-house capacity, with one home yet to open due to ongoing works and recruitment challenges. Occupancy levels had remained high, reducing reliance on external placements, with robust governance and review arrangements in place to manage costs and ensure appropriate care. Work had continued to support young people to safely leave care where appropriate, alongside investment in supported accommodation and the development of the Families First programme to strengthen early intervention and reduce demand for care. It was noted that underlying pressures continued to be influenced by deprivation and wider community challenges.

The Executive Director of Adults, Housing and Public Health advised that adult social care demand and complexity continued to increase in line with national trends, placing significant pressure on budgets. A range of measures, including the Use of Resources Board, care reviews, investment in occupational therapy, assistive technology, enablement services and early intervention, had helped promote independence and ensure resources were used effectively and proportionately. However, significant challenges remained in managing increasing demand and more complex needs.

Councillor Yasseen raised concerns that underspends arising from project delays or staff vacancies were presented primarily as financial savings, without reflecting the associated operational impacts. It was noted that such reporting could overlook issues such as increased caseloads, staff wellbeing pressures, unmet need and impacts on residents' experiences. A request was made for future reports to provide greater visibility of service impacts alongside financial performance, particularly where underspends were linked to vacancies or delayed delivery, as these did not necessarily represent a genuine reduction in demand or expenditure pressures.

The Service Director, Financial Services clarified that vacancies referenced within the financial management report reflected normal staff turnover across a large organisation rather than a deliberate recruitment freeze or targeted savings measure. It was emphasised that recruitment had not been restricted in a way that would knowingly impact service delivery, although ongoing recruitment challenges in some services could

affect service effectiveness.

In response to the point regarding capital programme delays, it was acknowledged that projects should be delivered as planned and that delays could have direct consequences for service delivery. It was suggested that future reports could provide more detail on the operational impacts of delayed capital projects where there was a clear link between project delivery and service outcomes. Councillor Yasseen acknowledged the explanation provided but reiterated that delays in recruitment or project delivery inevitably had operational consequences. Using the markets project as an example, it was noted that delays to the planned development had affected the resilience of the market offer, with events more vulnerable to disruption during adverse weather conditions. While assurances from Cabinet Members and Directors were accepted that these issues were being addressed, concern was expressed that councillors and residents could find it difficult to understand why progress on some developments was taking so long.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Community Safety clarified that vacancies contributing to underspends were not the result of deliberate decisions to leave posts unfilled in order to balance the budget. While recruitment had been paused for budgetary reasons in previous years, this had not been the approach in recent years. The underspends reflected genuine recruitment difficulties and the time taken to fill vacant posts, which could create temporary service pressures. It was emphasised that there was no intentional link between underspends and staffing vacancies.

Councillor McKiernan commented that vacancy-related savings appeared to be a recurring theme across the Council and expressed concern that reliance on such underspends was not sustainable. It was suggested that, if posts were filled more quickly, the Council could face greater financial pressures. A question was then raised as to whether the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) underspend should be interpreted as resulting from a refund of profits generated by Council companies. The Service Director, Financial Services advised that while staffing-related savings had contributed to the year-end position, the majority of the improvement since the December forecast had resulted from grant maximisation. In response to the question on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) underspend, it was explained that this reflected a gain-share arrangement with the Council's two main repairs and maintenance contractors. Under this arrangement, the Council received a share of contractor profits where strong performance resulted in profitable service delivery. It was noted that these returns were only confirmed after the financial year-end and therefore took time to be reflected in financial forecasts.

In a follow-up question, Councillor McKiernan asked whether the proportion of profits returned to the Council under the gain-share arrangement with the repairs and maintenance contractors was known. It was confirmed that this information was not immediately available and

would be provided following the meeting. It was noted that the agreed percentage would be set out within the relevant service level agreements with the contractors.

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

1. Note the revenue outturn position for 2025/26.
2. Note the required transfer from HRA reserves decreased by £4.3m following the revenue and capital outturn position.
3. Note the carry forward of the combined surplus schools balance of £2.395m in accordance with the Department for Education regulations.
4. Note the reserves position set out in paragraphs 2.15 to 2.16.
5. Note the capital outturn, funding position and programme variations as set out in paragraphs 2.17 to 2.25.

22. MAY 2026-27 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Alam OBE, Cabinet Member for Finance and Community Safety, introduced the report, noting that the forecast for the remainder of the financial year was based on actual income and expenditure for the first two months. As at May, the Council was forecasting an overspend of £4.6m, comprising directorate overspends of £7.6m partially offset by projected underspends within central services of £3.0m.

It was reported that the principal budget pressures remained within social care services, driven by increased market costs and a growing number of people requiring support with complex needs. The report also provided detailed explanations of vacancies across each directorate.

Members were advised that the global economic environment had remained volatile since the budget was approved, with market sentiment affected by conflict in the Middle East and ongoing energy cost pressures. It was noted that these factors carried inflationary risks and continued to be monitored through the Council's medium-term financial planning process.

Councillor Yasseen welcomed the report's transparency, particularly the recognition of uncertainties within directorate forecasts. Appreciation was expressed for the clear explanation of assumptions relating to areas such as home-to-school transport, which helped provide a better understanding of the financial risks and pressures facing the Council.

In response to a question from Councillor McKiernan, the Service Director, Financial Services clarified that the table set out the savings formally approved by Cabinet and Council for delivery during 2026/27. It was explained that the middle column showed the savings already secured alongside those still to be delivered during the remainder of the

financial year. In relation to CYPS, it was confirmed that all approved savings had already been achieved and there were no outstanding savings proposals requiring delivery. However, it was emphasised that this did not remove the need for the directorate to continue managing expenditure within its overall budget allocation throughout the year.

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

1. Note the current General Fund Revenue Budget forecast overspend of £4.6m.
2. Note the updated position of the Capital Programme.
3. Approve the capital budget variations as detailed in section 2.17 of the report.

23. TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN 2025-26

At the Chair's invitation Councillor Alam OBE, Cabinet Member for Finance and Community Safety, presented the final Treasury Management report for 2025/26, explaining that its purpose was to review treasury activity against the strategy approved at the start of the financial year. The report set out actual prudential and treasury indicators, in accordance with the requirements of the CIPFA Code, and confirmed that treasury management activities had been undertaken in compliance with relevant legislation, guidance and professional standards, thereby limiting exposure to financial risk.

It was noted that the actual indicators were included in Appendix 1 and that quarterly updates had been provided to the Audit Committee throughout the year. The Council had continued to follow a short-term borrowing strategy on the advice of its treasury advisers, with borrowing undertaken only when required and where repayment was expected to be financed in future years. This approach had resulted in a significant increase in the Council's net under-borrowing position.

Reference was also made to the ongoing economic uncertainty, with inflation having reduced from the historically high levels experienced in previous years, although market sentiment continued to be affected by conflict in the Middle East. Members were advised that treasury activity, economic conditions and associated risks would continue to be closely monitored and reported through regular updates.

The Service Director, Financial Services highlighted that the changing political environment in the UK could also contribute to further short-term volatility within financial markets. In response to previous discussions on Treasury Management Strategy, it was reported that options were being considered to increase longer-term borrowing over the medium term, should opportunities arise, in order to reduce reliance on short-term borrowing and mitigate associated risks.

It was emphasised that there were no concerns regarding the current level of short-term borrowing, which continued to be reviewed regularly with the Council's external treasury advisers. The approach was noted to be consistent with that adopted by many other local authorities across the sector.

Councillor Yasseen sought clarification on why the Council's reported under-borrowing position excluded short-term borrowing, noting that the position appeared significantly different when short-term borrowing was taken into account. It was asked whether there was a legal or technical reason for this approach and whether the overall borrowing position should be a cause for concern. The Service Director, Financial Services explained that the treatment was a technical requirement of the Treasury Management Code of Practice, which defines and measures under-borrowing against long-term borrowing rather than short-term borrowing. While the Council reported both long-term and short-term borrowing positions, the under-borrowing calculation was assessed using long-term borrowing only.

In response to a further question, it was confirmed that inclusion of short-term borrowing would not materially alter the overall assessment of the Council's financial position, which remained robust. However, it was acknowledged that short-term borrowing carried refinancing and interest rate risks, as borrowing would need to be renewed within a relatively short period. Members were advised that these risks were actively monitored by the Treasury team on a day-to-day basis, supported by external treasury advisers. It was further noted that short-term borrowing from other local authorities and the money markets currently remained the most cost-effective means of meeting the Council's cashflow requirements.

Councillor Blackham commented that, as the Council moved towards a larger programme of capital expenditure funded through borrowing, the balance between short-term and long-term borrowing would become increasingly important. It was noted that decisions on when to enter long-term borrowing arrangements required careful judgement to manage market volatility, maintain value for money and minimise financial risk. While acknowledging that professional advice was taken, concern was expressed that the transition to higher levels of borrowing would require particularly careful management.

The Service Director, Financial Services agreed with these observations and acknowledged the complexity and challenges of treasury management. It was confirmed that decisions on long-term borrowing would continue to be taken prudently and at appropriate points in the delivery of capital schemes. Members were advised that borrowing rates could change frequently and that market conditions were continually monitored. By way of example, it was noted that borrowing for the Forge Island development had been secured at the outset of the project when rates were considered favourable, enabling the Council to lock in an advantageous borrowing rate. The importance of carefully assessing the

timing of borrowing for each major scheme was emphasised.

Councillor Blackham concluded by remarking on the commitment required in treasury management to secure favourable borrowing rates and acknowledged the diligence of officers in undertaking this work.

Councillor McKiernan requested further information on the external investments shown within the treasury management table and asked whether future reports could identify the organisations to which the Council was lending, in the same way that borrowing counterparties were reported. It was also observed that the Council both lent to and borrowed from organisations such as the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA), and clarification was sought on this arrangement.

The Service Director, Financial Services explained that the Council's treasury management activities primarily operated within the local authority lending market, through which councils lend and borrow funds from one another via approved brokers. Where the Council held surplus cash balances, these could be invested with other local authorities to generate income while maintaining a low-risk approach. It was noted, however, that the Council's overall strategy was to minimise the level and duration of surplus cash holdings.

In response to the request, it was confirmed that future reports could include details of the local authorities to which the Council was lending. Further clarification was provided regarding borrowing from SYMCA, with it being noted that these arrangements involved short-term loans provided at advantageous rates outside of broker arrangements. This enabled SYMCA to make productive use of funds not immediately required, while also supporting local authorities across the South Yorkshire region through access to lower-cost borrowing.

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

1. Note the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators outturn position as set out in Section 2 and Appendix 1.

24. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026

The Chair presented the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2025/26 and highlighted the continued development and effectiveness of scrutiny across the Council. It was reported that scrutiny activity had become more focused, evidence-led and outcome-driven, resulting in increased pre-decision scrutiny, workshops and site visits, alongside stronger engagement from Members and partner organisations.

The report demonstrated how scrutiny had influenced key strategies and policies, including the Best Start Plan and Housing Strategy, while

contributing to improved governance, transparency and accountability. Reference was also made to scrutiny's role in reviewing issues of importance to residents, including selective licensing, neighbourhood health services, domestic abuse and sexual offences.

The Chair noted ongoing work to strengthen scrutiny arrangements and ensure a consistent approach aligned with the Council Plan and corporate priorities. Thanks were expressed to Members, co-opted members, officers and partners for their contributions throughout the year, with particular recognition given to the officers involved in preparing the report.

In recommending the report for submission to Council in September, the Chair proposed that the Chairs of the Select Commissions also provide brief summaries of their respective committees' work over the previous 12 months to ensure wider recognition of scrutiny activity across all committees.

No additional recommendations were made. Following a vote, the Board approved the report and its submission to Council.

Resolved that: the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board:

1. Acknowledged and considered the content of the report; and
2. Approved the Annual Report for consideration by Council on Wednesday 9 September 2026.

25. WORK PROGRAMME

The Governance Manager presented the current work programme and provided an update on the street lighting columns scrutiny review. It was reported that the review group had met on 3 June and noted that structural testing remained necessary, with costs to be shared on a 75% Council and 25% parish basis, alongside provision for deferred payment arrangements. Progress was being made on procurement for the testing programme, with most parish councils opting for Council-arranged testing, expected to take between six and eight weeks. Members had raised safety concerns regarding the weight of hanging baskets on lighting columns and supported the development of clearer thresholds to ensure a proportionate approach. Officers had been asked to produce further guidance and draft policy revisions for consideration at the next review group meeting on 14 July. The discussion had focused on balancing safety, cost and practicality.

Members were advised that the September OSMB meeting was scheduled to consider reports on the replacement of refuse vehicles and public on-street bin collections.

An update was also provided on the Children's Takeover Challenge. The Youth Cabinet had selected its manifesto themes, although confirmation of the theme chosen for scrutiny engagement and a meeting date was still awaited from officers. It was noted that arrangements would be added to

Members' and senior officers' diaries once confirmed, and that regular follow-up was taking place to secure dates.

The Chair advised that additional items proposed by Members for inclusion within the work programme were being reviewed. A consolidated response would be prepared, with proposals assessed through the work programme matrix and allocated to the appropriate scrutiny committee where relevant.

Councillor Yasseen asked whether one of the submitted suggestions related to the new Neighbourhood Strategy proposals.

The Chair confirmed that the matter had been considered by the Places Select Commission the previous week and indicated that an update would be provided later in the meeting as part of the committee feedback.

Resolved That: The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Work Programme and update be approved.

26. WORK IN PROGRESS - SELECT COMMISSIONS

Update from Health Select Commission:

Councillor Yasseen provided an update from the Health Select Commission. It was reported that representatives from a local group of doctors and hospital clinicians, volunteering to promote and prioritise women's health in Rotherham, had attended the meeting. While the Commission was unable to support all of the group's proposals, support had been offered for a number of initiatives, including a local conference. The Commission had also recommended that a representative of the Women's Health Network be appointed as a co-opted member of the Health Select Commission, subject to the necessary approval process.

An update was also received on the transition to the new Castle View facility in Parkgate. Members discussed previous concerns regarding changes from former provision to the new facility, but it was reported that overall feedback from users moving to the new provision had been positive.

The Governance Advisor confirmed that the recommendation to appoint a representative of the Women's Health Network as a co-opted member of the Health Select Commission would be referred to OSMB for formal approval.

Update from Improving Lives Select Commission:

Councillor Monk reported that the Improving Lives Select Commission had considered the first phase of the SEND Reform Plan, focusing on the expert-led model intended to provide specialist support to schools at an earlier stage. Further scrutiny of the reforms was scheduled for a future

meeting.

Update from Improving Places Select Commission:

Councillor McKiernan provided an update from the Improving Places Select Commission, advising that the Neighbourhood Leadership Strategy and the wider neighbourhoods policy framework would be considered as separate pieces of work. It was also reported that the Commission had considered the Local Nature Recovery Strategy during the pre-consultation stage and had recommended that correspondence be sent to the South Yorkshire Mayor and the relevant Government department regarding matters arising from the review.

Councillor Yasseen sought clarification on the proposed Neighbourhood Leadership Strategy, expressing concern that separating neighbourhood functions could create barriers between councillors and officers and potentially undermine a joined-up approach to neighbourhood working.

Councillor McKiernan explained that the purpose of the strategy was to strengthen the "One Council" approach rather than create further division. It was intended to improve accountability, strengthen the role of neighbourhood teams, enhance tracking of Member enquiries through a casework system and ensure greater involvement of ward councillors in local service decisions and activities. Members were advised that the strategy aimed to improve coordination between councillors, neighbourhood teams and Council services, including engagement at neighbourhood meetings and consultation on local projects.

27. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

The Governance Manager explained that the September OSMB agenda already included reports on the replacement of refuse vehicles and public on-street bin collections. In considering future work programme items, it was suggested that the Board may also wish to review the July Financial Monitoring Report and the Social Value Annual Report, which would provide an update on progress against both new and existing social value commitments.

Members were invited to raise any questions or comments regarding the proposed items for the forward plan.

The Chair advised that the forward plan would continue to be reviewed and updated in consultation with Vice-Chair, Councillor Bacon, to ensure that the Board's future agenda remained appropriately focused on forthcoming priorities and key issues.

Resolved: That the Forward Plan be noted.

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

The Chair advised that there had been no meeting since the Board last met. Members were informed that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on the 7 July 2026 at 2.00pm.

29. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no call-in issues.

30. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 14 September 2026

Report Title

July 2026/27 Financial Monitoring Report

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Executive Director Approving Submission of the Report

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The report sets out the financial position as at the end of July 2026 and forecast for the remainder of the financial year, based on actual costs and income for the first four months of 2026/27.

Financial performance is central to the Council's overall performance framework and the delivery of its policy objectives. As such, this is the second in a series of regular financial monitoring reports for the current financial year to be presented to Cabinet.

As of July 2026, the Council's forecast outturn for 2026/27 is an overspend of £5.9m, made up of a Directorates overspend of £10.9m, offset by a projected Central Services underspend of £5.0m. The main pressures driving this forecast are within Social Care, largely due to market prices and the increasing number of people receiving support and care who have complex needs, and an overspend in Regeneration and Environment Directorate increased by £2.9m, mostly due to additional overspends in Waste and Home to School transport. Detailed explanations of the reasons for variances within each Directorate are provided in the main body of this report.

Following approval of the 2026/27 Budget, the global economic position has remained unsettled. Economic market sentiment has been heavily influenced by the Middle East conflict leading to steepening energy and fuel costs impacting the wider economy and creating uncertainty around inflation, which has risen to 2.9% in July. These financial

challenges are being regularly reviewed as part of the Council's ongoing Medium Term Financial Planning.

The report also provides an updated position on the Council's Capital Programme including a number of programme variations.

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Note the current General Fund Revenue Budget forecast overspend of £5.9m.
2. Note the updated position of the Capital Programme.
3. Approve the capital budget variations as detailed in Section 2.17 of the report.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix 2 Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

[Budget and Council Tax 2026/27 Report to Council on 4th March 2026](#)

[Financial Monitoring Report to Cabinet, 6th July 2026](#)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

July 2026/27 Financial Monitoring Report

1. Background

- 1.1 As part of its performance and control framework the Council is required to produce regular and timely reports for the Strategic Leadership Team and Cabinet to keep them informed of financial performance so that, where necessary, actions can be agreed and implemented to bring expenditure in line with the approved budget for the financial year.
- 1.2 Delivery of the Council's Revenue Budget, Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Capital Programme within the parameters agreed by Council is essential if the Council's objectives are to be achieved. Financial performance is a key element within the assessment of the Council's overall performance framework.
- 1.3 This report is the second in a series of financial monitoring reports to Cabinet for 2026/27, setting out the projected year end revenue budget financial position in light of actual costs and income for the first four months of the financial year.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 Table 1 below shows, by Directorate, the summary forecast revenue outturn position.

Table 1: Forecast Revenue Outturn 2026/27 as at July 2026

Directorate	Budget 2026/27	Forecast Outturn 2026/27	Forecast Variance over/under (-)
	£m	£m	£m
Children and Young People Services (CYPS)	85.0	90.5	5.5
Adult Care, Housing & Public Health (ACH&PH)	157.1	159.3	2.2
Regeneration and Environment Services (R&E)	56.3	59.5	3.2
Corporate Services (CORP)	42.7	42.7	0.0
Policy Strategy & Engagement (PSE)	6.0	6.0	0.0
Central Services (CS)	47.2	42.2	-5.0
Directorate Forecast Outturn	394.3	400.2	5.9
Dedicated Schools Grant			6.4
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)			0.0

- 2.2 As at July 2026, there is a forecast overspend of £5.9m. This position is made up of a Directorates overspend of £10.9m, offset by a projected Central Services underspend of £5.0m. The Council's overspend position at this point is largely due to placement pressures within Children and Young People Services (£5.5m), the high demand and complexity of care packages in Adult Social Care (£2.0m) and overspends in the Regeneration and Environment Directorate (£3.2m), mostly in Waste and Home to School Transport. As has been the case in previous years, the Council will need to put in place actions to mitigate the projected overspend position and mitigate the need for the Council to call on reserves at the financial year end. It is anticipated that the Council will be able to manage this situation and reduce the projected overspend during the course of the financial year, given successful management in previous years; however, the Council cannot forecast that improvement until clear actions have been identified. Work to identify actions will be carried and implemented at pace for maximum effect. This work will primarily focus on the pressures identified within social care placements, care packages and across Home to School Transport and Waste.
- 2.3 The Budget as approved at Council on 4th March 2026 included provisions and allocations for inflation, pay award and anticipated cost pressures. These budgets are held centrally at the start of the year and allocated to services as costs are confirmed and incurred.
- 2.4 The table below sets out the headline reasons for the movement between opening budgets and the latest budget that has been forecast against in this report.

2.5 **Table 2: Budget Movements during 2026/27**

	Opening Budget 2026/27	Pay Budget Changes / Fees & Charges Income Inflation	Contract Inflation & Central Provision Allocations to Services	Service Transfers between Directorates	Latest Budget 2026/27
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
CYPS	78.4	-1.6	8.3	-0.1	85.0
ACH&PH	149.1	-1.4	9.5	-0.1	157.1
R&E	56.7	-1.3	1.2	-0.3	56.3
CORP	41.3	-1.2	0.6	2.0	42.7
PSE	6.3	-0.4	-0.0	0.1	6.0
CS	62.5	5.9	-19.6	-1.6	47.2
TOTAL	394.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	394.3

- 2.6 The Council's Financial Outturn report 2025/26 reported that £0.440m of prior year savings remained undelivered. In addition, the Budget and Council Tax report 2026/27 included the delivery of £3.193m of new savings, giving £3.633m to be delivered during 2026/27. Currently, £2.413m of delivery has been secured. The table below shows the total amount of all savings to be delivered during 2026/27 and the amount that has been delivered to date.

Table 3: Delivery of Agreed Savings

Directorate	2026/27 Saving to be delivered £'000	Secured as at 31st July 2026 £'000	Still to be delivered £'000
Corporate Services	704	704	0
Adult Care, Housing and Public Health	1,089	189	900
Children's and Young People Services	800	800	0
Regeneration and Environment	1,040	720	320
Total	3,633	2,413	1,220

2.7 Activity is ongoing to deliver the remaining £1.220m of savings that relate to Working Age Adults £0.900m, Waste Route Optimisation £0.280m and Waleswood £0.040m.

2.8 The following sections provide further information regarding the Council's current forecast overspend of £5.9m, the key reasons for forecast under or overspend within Directorates and the progress of savings delivery.

2.9 Children and Young People Services Directorate (£5.5m forecast overspend)

2.9.1 Children and Young People Services is forecasting a budget pressure of £5.5m at the end of July 2026, an increase of £0.4m compared with the May position reported. The overspend is primarily driven by continued pressures relating to Children in Care placement costs, partially offset by the slippage of grant-funded expenditure. The main budget pressures within the Directorate are outlined below.

2.9.2 A budget pressure of £6.0m is currently forecast against the Children in Care (CiC) placement budget, representing an improvement of £0.2m compared with the May position. This reduction reflects the earlier than planned ending of a secure placement and lower than anticipated costs associated with a high-cost placement.

2.9.3 The following are key points to note in the latest children in care placements forecast:

- The overall number of children in care has reduced to 481 at the end of July, from 486 in May. The reduction was in placements with independent foster agency carers and in supported accommodation.
- External residential placements remain the main driver of the placement budget pressures, with 48 children placed in external children's homes in July against a budgeted profile of 40. This pressure is further compounded by the increasing number of children placed in high-cost

residential provision (at a weekly cost of £10,000 and above) due to the complexity of their needs.

- Occupancy levels in Council-owned children's homes stood at 76% at the end of July (4 beds remain unoccupied) – a reduction compared to the last reported position of 82%. Efforts continue to place and support more children and young people within Council-owned homes.
- The number of children placed in foster care (i.e. in-house carers, in kinship care with families & friends and independent fostering agencies) currently stands at 313 a reduction compared to 317 in May.

The mix of placement types, limited placement options, increasing unit costs and the growing complexity of children's care needs continue to present significant challenges. Despite these pressures, work is underway to ensure that non-complex external residential placements are regularly reviewed and that progress against the wider step-down plan is closely monitored to identify opportunities to reduce costs while ensuring that children's needs continue to be met.

- 2.9.4 A forecast underspend of £0.5m is currently estimated against the Family Help Services budget. This is mainly attributed to slippage across several grant-funded programmes to date as well as through vacancy and staff turnover savings.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) budgets (£6.4m forecast deficit)

- 2.9.5 A net surplus balance of £1.5m is forecast for all maintained schools in Rotherham for 2026/27 based on submitted budget plans. There is currently 1 school with a forecast budget deficit. A budget recovery plan has been agreed to bring the budget back into a surplus position by next year.
- 2.9.6 The Council is forecasting an in-year DSG deficit of £6.4m, primarily within the High Needs Block, representing a £0.9m deterioration since May due to continued cost and demand pressures across the SEND system. The DSG reserve is forecast to reach a cumulative deficit of £9.3m by the end of 2026/27, rising to £19.9m by March 2028 when the statutory override is due to end. Without further Government funding, the Council would need to absorb this deficit within its General Fund, creating a significant financial pressure.
- 2.9.7 Financial support provided through the Safety Valve Agreement ended in 2025/26, the final year of the programme. The Government has replaced this with a High Needs Stability Grant, which will fund 90% of DSG deficits accrued by local authorities up to 31 March 2026. Access to this funding is conditional on the submission (submitted 19 June) and Department for Education approval of Rotherham's Local SEND Reforms Plan. The reforms are intended to support a more sustainable SEND system through earlier intervention and increased inclusion in mainstream education settings.
- 2.9.8 The Council's DSG cumulative deficit is projected to reach £19.9m by March 2028 when the statutory protection ends and could increase by around £10m per year thereafter if current demand and inflationary pressures continue. While no decision has been confirmed, it is anticipated that the DfE will

continue to provide financial support to local authorities, potentially through an extension of the High Needs Stability Grant (which currently funds 90% of eligible deficits). If this level of Government support were maintained, the Council's financial liability at the end of 2027/28 (when the statutory override protection ceases) is estimated to be in the region of £4m. As these assumptions remain subject to future DfE policy decisions and the implementation of SEND reforms, the position will need to be closely monitored. The financial implications will remain a key consideration in the Council's budget-setting process and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

2.10 Adult Care, Housing and Public Health (£2.2m overspend)

- 2.10.1 The Directorate is forecast to overspend by £2.2m, the same as the May position. High demand and complexity of care packages make up the projected overspend. The cost of care packages is forecast to overspend by £2.0m within Adult Care. There is also an overspend of £0.2m for staffing costs as agency spend and overtime spend is higher than budget to cover gaps in service for in-house care provision and other staffing pressures. Work continues to identify options to address the increased use of agency and difficulties experienced in recruitment.
- 2.10.2 The area of biggest overspend is working age adults with Learning Disabilities. The overspend in Learning Disabilities is largely made up of a small number of individuals with high-cost needs, including Out of Borough placements that cater for individuals with the most complex needs. Work is underway to understand the drivers behind these costs given the Council spends more per working age adult than the national average. The work will assess where there are opportunities to ensure the most cost efficient process is in place, to support the delivery of services within budget and the delivery of the saving of £0.900m approved as part of the Budget and Council Tax Report 2026/27.
- 2.10.3 Public Health is expected to come in on budget at this stage.
- 2.10.4 Housing is underspent slightly at this stage.

2.11 Regeneration and Environment Directorate (£3.2m forecast overspend)

- 2.11.1 The Directorate is forecasting a £3.2m overspend, which is a worsening of £2.9m from the last report to Cabinet. The key variances and movements are detailed below.
- 2.11.2 The Waste service is forecasting to be £1.5m overspent, which is a worsening of £0.9m. This is largely caused by overspends on transport, as the service continues to operate with a high number of hire and spare vehicles, required as the new Council owned, more cost effective vehicles, will not arrive until March 2026 and the route optimisation programme has yet to be delivered in full. It is therefore expected this position will improve once new refuse collection vehicles arrive, though the impact will be seen for the 2027/28 financial year.. Work is continuing to achieve the route optimisation saving approved as part of the Budget and Council Tax Report 2025/26, however, difficulties in collection

experienced during Autumn 2025/26 has meant that the planned removal of two routes has not yet been possible, though is still intended.

- 2.11.3 Home to School Transport is forecasting a £1.1m overspend, which was previously reported as balanced. This position assumes that all children using the service at the end of the academic year will continue to do so in September, so further changes are possible once the 2026/27 cohort is known. Detailed work is underway to understand and quantify which factors have caused this overspend.
- 2.11.4 As in the last report, the Markets service is forecasting an £0.6m overspend because of income shortfalls which is a similar position to previous years. This position will be monitored carefully as the development works continue, following the successful move of traders from the indoor covered market into the new Market Hall.

2.12 Corporate Services (balanced forecast)

- 2.12.1 The Directorate is currently forecasting an overall balanced outturn. Whilst there are pressures across individual services, it is expected that robust budget management across the whole Directorate will be able to address these pressures in year.
- 2.12.2 Property and Facilities Services (PFS) is forecast to be overspent by £1.0m overall, a worsening of £0.7m since the last report. Facilities Management is forecast to overspend by £1.2m due to assorted building costs, largely repairs and maintenance, which has worsened by £0.2m since the last report. The Catering Service is now forecasting to overspend by £0.3m (previously balanced) as the service is affected by lower-than-expected income. These overspends are offset by an underspend of £0.7m within Cleaning Services as income is greater than budgeted. Following a review of the Capital Programme, the Building Consultancy service is now forecasted to balance to budget which is a worsening of £0.3m from the last report.
- 2.12.3 Within the wider Directorate, budget pressures are primarily attributable to a managed over-recruitment within the Customer Services Contact Centre and the continued reliance on locums and external suppliers within Legal Services to address ongoing recruitment challenges. These measures have been implemented deliberately to maintain service continuity and performance in key areas.
- 2.12.4 Regarding Legal Services a substantial amount of the additional demand for solicitors arises from Children's and Adult Social Care activity and demand. Further pressures are also anticipated following a Supreme Court ruling that has significantly changed the approach to Deprivation of Liberty applications, alongside costs associated with ongoing litigation against the Council and legal support required to help with the National Grooming Gang Inquiry. Meanwhile, recruitment to permanent legal posts remains challenging despite ongoing campaigns, reflecting a wider local government workforce issue. As a result, the service continues to rely on locums and external providers, including King's Counsel where necessary, to maintain capacity and meet statutory and

operational requirements. Although some costs are offset by savings from vacant posts, the July forecast outturn remains an overspend of £0.4m, including £0.1m relating to Children's Social Care and £0.2m relating to Adult Social Care.

- 2.12.5 There are underspends within the Directorate that are helping to mitigate these pressures. Reduced costs on some ICT contracts that have renewed, capitalisation where possible and a number of vacant posts that have been challenging to fill are helping to mitigate the pressures. However, further savings and mitigating actions will be required to achieve a balanced financial position.

2.13 Policy, Strategy and Engagement (balanced forecast)

- 2.13.1 The service is currently forecasting a balanced outturn. Overspends due to the cost of the Interim Director of PSE are offset by salary recharges to grant schemes along with part year vacancies.

2.14 Central Services (£5.0m underspend)

- 2.14.1 Central Services has a £5.0m forecast underspend, primarily reflecting savings from Treasury Management activity and underspends on the Councils inflation provision.
- 2.14.2 The Council's Treasury Management Strategy is to minimise the level of borrowing and to borrow short term to ultimately minimise interest costs. This, along with slippage on the Capital Programme in 2025/26, means that the level of financing costs for 2026/27 will be less than anticipated. This is because the Council builds in the financial impact of all capital investment decisions into the revenue budget, at the point those decisions are made. This is an approach that will see the Council generate savings to support Council wide pressures.
- 2.14.3 There continue to be financial challenges as a result of increased market costs, however it is envisaged that the Council is well positioned to address these pressures in year due to actions taken as part of the budget setting process for 2026/27. Ongoing uncertainty in the global and UK economy remains a budget risk.
- 2.14.4 Regarding Legal Services a substantial amount of the additional demand for solicitors arises from Children's and Adult Social Care activity and demand. Further pressures are also anticipated following a Supreme Court ruling that has significantly changed the approach to Deprivation of Liberty applications, alongside costs associated with ongoing litigation against the Council and legal support required to help with the National Grooming Gang Inquiry. Meanwhile, recruitment to permanent legal posts remains challenging despite ongoing campaigns, reflecting a wider local government workforce issue. As a result, the service continues to rely on locums and external providers, including King's Counsel where necessary, to maintain capacity and meet statutory and operational requirements. Although some costs are offset by savings from vacant posts, the July forecast outturn remains an overspend of £0.4m,

including £0.1m relating to Children's Social Care and £0.2m relating to Adult Social Care.

2.15 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) (balanced forecast)

2.15.1 The Housing Revenue Account is a statutory ring-fenced account that the Council has to maintain in respect of the income and expenditure incurred in relation to its council dwellings and associated assets. The HRA is currently forecast to come in on budget.

2.16 Capital Programme Update

2.16.1 The revised Capital Programme is £206.483m split between the General Fund £120.891m and HRA £85.592m. The total change to the programme in 2026/27 is an increase of £25.802m from the previously reported budget of £180.682m to Cabinet on 6th July 2026. The movement is based on revised profiles of expenditure against schemes, including slippage re-profiles and corrections and new grant funding added to the programme.

2.16.2 Table 4: Variations to the Capital Programme 2026/27 to 2029/30

	Total Impact	2026/27 Impact	Post 2026/27 Impact
	£m	£m	£m
Corporate Resources – General Fund	0.144	0.144	0.000
Corporate Resources – HRA	-0.194	-0.135	-0.059
Revised Grant and Funding Estimates	3.194	3.194	0.000
Slippage / Reprofiting	0.033	22.467	-22.434
Budget corrections	0.132	0.132	0.000
Total	3.309	25.802	-22.493

2.16.3 The main items contributing to the reprofiling of the Capital Programme are:

- **Laughton Gate Housing Scheme, 42 units**, £0.953m, slippage. The Council will now see completion of 5 units this financial year and a further 7 units will now complete in 2027/28 as the properties will not be built and ready for handover by 31st March 2027.
- **Community Facilities**, £0.570m, slippage of the initial funding allocation due to replacement funding being available. Work has been carried out and is ongoing on the upgrade of Community Facilities across the Borough and the projected spending by the end of 2026/27 is £0.600m as per the original budget. However, due to the opportunity to utilise Pride in Place grant funding in the current year and the need for that grant to be spent by 31st March 2027,

the corporate borrowing originally intended for the Community Facilities will be slipped into 2027/28. Further surveying works to The Black Hut site are required and this slipped budget will be available to contribute towards the resulting works required.

- **Rotherham Station Quarter**, £0.490m, slippage. This scheme originally had a small budget in 2026/27 but scoping is not yet completed so budget moved into 2027/28 until there is a clearer spend profile for the scheme.
- **Poppyfield Phase 2 Housing Scheme**, £2.175m, acceleration. The Council has now agreed and paid the deposit for 30 properties in this scheme so budget will be brought forward to cover this cost in 2026/27.
- **West Melton pedestrian crossing**, £0.287m, slippage. There are ongoing negotiations between The Council and South Yorkshire Combined Mayoral Authority (SYMCA) regarding a funding agreement for this scheme so there will be lower costs incurred this financial year.
- **Ulley Country Park main building**, £0.200m, slippage. Options for the main building works are currently being completed for consultation and once a preferred option has been agreed the project will commence.
- **ICT Data Storage and Backup**, £0.115m, acceleration. The Council have completed procurement, and the first placed supplier withdrew from the tender exercise. This has resulted in an increased tender price so budget will be brought forward to cover this additional cost. The project will still deliver within this full four-year programme budget allocation.
- **Health Hub Phase 1**, £0.367m, acceleration. This project is due to complete in the summer and the programme has completed sooner than originally planned.
- **Templeborough**, £2.122m, acceleration. This project is progressing well and at pace and additional costs will now fall in 2026/27.
- **Wath Regeneration**, £2.800m, acceleration. The budget for this project has now been updated to reflect the latest position for this scheme as reported to Cabinet in a separate report on 11th May 2026.
- **Hurley Croft Housing Scheme**, £0.794k, acceleration. This scheme is currently being tendered and it is expected that work will now be on site in October 2026 so additional costs will be incurred in 2026/27.
- **Brampton Vale Phase 2 Housing Scheme**, £2.172m, acceleration. The Council has now agreed and paid the deposit for 33 properties in this scheme so budget will be brought forward to cover this cost in 2026/27.
- **Warm Homes Phase 1**, £1.863m, acceleration. This programme was originally due to deliver thermal efficiency upgrades to 462 properties, but the

contractor has additional capacity and can now deliver 613 units this year, so budget is being brought forward to cover this spend in 2026/27.

- **York Road, Eastwood Housing Scheme**, £2.945m, acceleration. This scheme has progressed quicker than planned and preparatory work has commenced on site in July for construction to commence.
- **Netherfield Court, Eastwood Housing Scheme**, £4.686m, acceleration. Site clearance work has been completed sooner than planned and foundations have been completed to a quarter of the plots included on this scheme.
- **Poppyfields, Ravenfield Housing Scheme**, £1.053m, acceleration. Many of the units on this scheme will be completed earlier than planned with just 4 units now being carried forward into early 2027/28.
- **Corporate Resources General Fund**, £0.144m, adjustment. The budget for the Furnished Homes programme has been increased by £0.357m to reflect additional demand for this service, the cost is fully recovered from income the service generates.
- **Corporate Resources HRA**. £0.194m, adjustment. The budget for the removal of asbestos from properties has been taken out of the Capital Programme and the cost of this work will now be funded from the HRA revenue budget.
- **Budget corrections**, £0.132m, adjustment. The budgets for Brampton Vale Strategic Acquisitions, Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) Acquisitions and the Wickersley North ward budget, were incorrect and have now been adjusted to show the correct budgets for 2026/27.

2.16.4 New grant funded schemes are added to the Capital Programme on an ongoing basis in accordance with the Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules. Grant schemes added or reduced since the July Cabinet report are listed below:

Table 5: New Grant/HRA funded Schemes added to the programme

Directorate/Scheme	2026/27
	£m
Corporate Services	
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – additional funding for ward schemes	0.053
Regeneration and Environment	
CRSTS (City Region Sustainable Transport Scheme) - Cortonwood pedestrian crossing	0.010
CRSTS (City Region Sustainable Transport Scheme) - Highways Maintenance allocations - carriageways, structures and potholes.	1.242

SYMCA (South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority) - Network North Fund	2.120
Department for Transport - Clean Air Zone Bellows Road	-0.146
Department for Transport - Clean Air Zone electric charging points	-0.085
Total	3.194

2.17 Capital Programme Variations Requiring Cabinet Approval

2.17.1 The following variations to the Capital Programme cover significant variations between capital projects that are either a key decision value or a change in use of corporate resources and as such need reporting to Cabinet.

A) Our Places Fund (Swinton Development and pedestrian movement)

Swinton Development

2.17.2

The initial two phases of work including the redevelopment of the Civic Hall, refurbishing the Customer Service Centre into a library and additional reading garden along with the demolition of the previous library, have been completed. The final phase is centred on delivering targeted public realm improvements to create a more attractive, accessible, and better-connected environment around the civic core. At Cabinet in December 2024, as part of the Council's Our Places Fund programme, the scope of the public realm works was expanded from cleaning to full replacement of all paving thus securing an indicative allocation of £300,000 to the Swinton scheme. Subsequently, the scope of Swinton public realm intervention was further increased to include planting and an electrical connection in the precinct centre. This expanded scope of works has introduced some additional technical requirements, including structural assessments of surrounding retaining walls, trees and drainage, which have all contributed to a current requirement for additional funding. The variation seeks to allocate an additional £182,850 from the Our Places fund, which will cover the budget deficit arising out of the increased scope and bring the Swinton project to completion.

Pedestrian Movement

2.17.3

There are two main interventions intended for delivery within the Pedestrian Movement scheme, improvements to the underpasses at College Road roundabout and improvements to bus stops. It is proposed to allocate £600,000 of currently unallocated Mayoral Sustainability Fund (MSF) funding and £7,050 Our Places fund (OPF) funding to the 'Pedestrian movement' element of the OPF programme. The reallocation of £607,050 to the Pedestrian movement scheme will allow greater flexibility of the budget for the delivery of a much-needed multi-disciplinary intervention to the College Road roundabout underpasses and improvements to a number of bus stops. Importantly, an increased overall allocation to this scheme will allow delivery of the wider project aspirations, which are aligned with the needs of the

residents of the borough and, also, with the priority areas for improvements identified by SYMCA through their current work.

2.17.4 B) Ickles Roundabout improvement works

The Ickles Roundabout project was awarded SYMCA development funding of £1,050,000 for the development of this site. There is no beneficial scheme at Ickles Roundabout at this time on which the development funding could be usefully spent. Therefore, the variation seeks to reallocate a proportion of this funding as this is no longer required to develop this project on account of its reduced scope. The variation seeks approval to reallocate funding of £490,000 to the Rotherham Gateway Station project. The development funding for the Ickles Roundabout scheme has already been released by SYMCA. The movement of funding between the two schemes has been approved by SYMCA through their change control process.

The Station at Rotherham Gateway is now a key priority for the Council. The mainline and tram-train station will be a catalyst for growth, improving local, regional, and national rail connectivity for all communities and businesses across the Borough, creating employment, and supporting the development of high-quality new homes. Therefore, it is recommended that the funding is transferred to support this scheme.

2.17.5 C) Clean Air Plan (CAP) funding reallocation

The Transport Capital Programme 2025/26 was approved at Cabinet in March 2025. The report included the approval for the delivery of Rotherham Clean Air Plan measures to be reallocated to the Sheffield Council's managed Clean Air Fund. The available Clean Air Plan (CAP) capital funding has a balance of £848,721 and so to ensure the contribution available is as set out in the Transport Capital Programme, a contribution of £25,730 is made from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) Revenue grant fund.

In addition, it is now proposed that the funds are transferred to the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) for delivery on behalf of the Council, rather being transferred to Sheffield City Council. This change has arisen as a result of the development of bus franchising which now means the Mayoral Combined Authority will be procuring the buses as part of this scheme. At the point of Cabinet approval, it was envisaged Sheffield City Council would operate a scheme of grants to which bus operators would apply analogous to the original Clean Air Fund scheme.

2.18 MCA Approvals

- 2.18.1 The South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) acts as accountable body for a number of different Government funding streams and as the accountable body for Gainshare. There are no new approvals to report to Cabinet at this time.

2.19 Capital Programme 2026/27 to 2029/30

2.19.1 The proposed updated Capital Programme to 2029/30 is shown by Directorate below.

Table 6: Updated Capital Programme 2026/27 to 2029/30

Directorate	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	Total
	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
General Fund Capital					
Adult Care & Housing	7.807	7.760	6.927	1.760	24.254
Children and Young People	11.728	10.399	14.389	7.020	43.536
Corporate Services	15.455	16.480	17.103	7.157	56.195
Policy, Strategy and Engagement	0.685	0.210	0.210	0.210	1.315
Regeneration & Environment	85.216	60.392	10.834	2.582	159.024
Total General Fund Capital	120.891	95.241	49.463	18.729	284.324
Total HRA Capital	85.592	62.804	59.911	109.257	317.564
Total RMBC Capital Programme	206.483	158.045	109.374	127.986	601.888

2.19.2 The Capital Programme for 2026/27 remains ambitious even with a significant level of re-profiling of schemes into 2027/28. The Council will therefore need to keep close control of project spend profiles and delivery milestones to keep these projects on track. The Council will also need to review the deliverability of this increased Capital Programme and potentially, re-profile some schemes into future financial years.

2.20 Funding Position of Capital Programme 2026/27 to 2029/30

2.20.1 Table 7: Funding of the approved Capital Programme

Funding Stream	2026/27 Budget	2027/28 Budget	2028/29 Budget	2029/30 Budget	Total Budget
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Capital Receipts	0.215	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.215
Grants and Contributions	65.096	38.376	13.967	3.400	120.839
Revenue Contribution	0.140	0.143	0.146	0.000	0.429
Unsupported Borrowing	55.440	56.722	35.350	15.329	162.841
Total Funding - General Fund	120.891	95.241	49.463	18.729	284.324
Capital Receipts	16.512	3.347	1.327	11.774	32.960
Grants and Contributions	11.100	7.129	0.000	15.246	33.475
Housing Major Repairs Allowance	38.234	28.905	28.768	28.555	124.462
Revenue Contribution	15.029	7.549	7.000	12.137	41.715
Unsupported Borrowing	4.717	15.874	22.816	41.545	84.952
Total Funding - HRA	85.592	62.804	59.911	109.257	317.564
Total	206.483	158.045	109.374	127.986	601.888

2.21 Capital Receipts

- 2.21.1 To date General Fund useable capital receipts of £4.497m have been generated. Although loan repayments will be received during the financial year, these cannot be used to support the revenue budget as only those receipts by the disposal of property, plant and equipment can be used in that way.

Description	Total as at 31st July 2026
	£m
Miscellaneous	-0.016
Land at Worrygoose Lane	-4.481
Total Capital Receipts (Excluding loan repayments)	-4.497
Repayment of Loans	-0.008
Total Capital Receipts	-4.505

2.22 Capital Achievements

- 2.22.1 The following outputs have been achieved during the 2026/27 financial year to date:

Corporate Services

Property and Facilities Services

- Completion of the installation of solar panels on the outdoor covered markets and library.
- Improvement works to Clifton Learning Partnership building
- Remedial works to Mecca Bingo
- Toilet upgrade at Rother Valley Country Park
- Clifton Park Museum boiler replacement
- Kiveton Park Depot structural works to outbuilding

Regeneration and Environment

Planning, Regeneration and Transport

- Work has commenced on the £8.4 million Templeborough Business Zone development, supporting the creation of new business space alongside an enhanced food and drink offer at one of Rotherham's iconic tourist attractions. Funded through a Government grant, the project will help drive economic growth, investment and employment opportunities in the borough.
- The new Market Hall in the Town Centre opened to the public in July. 96% of stalls are let, totalling 37 independent businesses having a home in the new venue. Reactions from the public and market traders have been extremely positive.
- On 6 July, a £2.42 million investment was approved by Cabinet to move plans to redevelop a cluster of prominent town centre sites to the next stage of detailed design and cost plans. The sites include Westgate Car Park, Sheffield Road, Statutes Car Park, Snail Yard and 3–7 Corporation Street.
- Works commenced on site on the Our Places Fund Public Realm Scheme at Swinton, in line with existing approvals. The target completion timeframe is Summer 2026.
- Construction works for Phase 1 of the Health Hub in the Town Centre were completed on 17 July 2026 and the new Abbey Pharmacy is now operational. The works included the refurbishment of part of the lower ground floor and will enable the continuation of pharmacy provision, as well as delivering the first element of the planned health facilities in Rotherham town centre.

Culture, Sport and Tourism

- A new play area at Rother Valley Country Park opened to the public in June. It has been very well received by residents.
- A new Creative Engagement Manager is now in post, allowing the Summer Arts Award programme to begin development.

- Rosehill Park and Herringthorpe Valley Park Tennis Courts refurbishment were completed in June. An opening event took place at Rosehill, and all courts are now back open for residents to enjoy.

Community Safety & Street scene

- The proportion of the “Unclassified” road network classed as “green status” (do not require repair) has increased from 69.84% at the beginning of the quarter to 70.56% at the end of the quarter.
- 95 footways across the borough have been included for repair (2026/2027), which includes resurfacing and treatment repairs.
- 23 fleet vehicles have been replaced with greener alternatives.
- Work has commenced on the Whiston Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme, a £7 million project being delivered in partnership with the Environment Agency to help reduce flood risk in Whiston and better protect homes, businesses and local roads. The scheme will provide a long-term reduction in flood risk by improving water flow through Whiston and increasing the capacity of the drainage system during periods of heavy rainfall.
- Esh Construction has been successful as the winning contractor for the 2 stage (Design and Build) contract for the Catcliffe & Treeton Flood Alleviation Scheme (Treeton Lane Bridge). Current programme estimates suggest that the design phase could take approximately one year, primarily due to the need for third-party approvals, after which construction works would commence.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

Strategic Housing Growth and Development Programme

- In April 2026, RMBC delivered the milestone 800th new home. This was delivered as part of the acquisition of 6 two-bedroom apartments at Waverley.
- In May 2026, the Council submitted a bid to Homes England under the Social and Affordable Homes Programme (SAHP) to support the delivery of 31 new homes in Eastwood. The bid was successful, securing £4,747,107 in grant funding to enable delivery of these homes for social rent, equating to approximately £153k per unit.
- This funding represents a significant achievement for the Housing Delivery Programme, as grant support is essential to ensuring the viability of new developments and enabling the provision of affordable homes for applicants on the housing register.
- The Eastwood scheme has successfully started on site under a single build contract with phased starts. The contractor has access to both sites. A “Spade in the Ground” event was held on the 25th of June. This scheme was identified as a Year Ahead delivery plan target, with a Q1 start on site, which has been successfully achieved.

- The final two homes at the Canklow Warden Street development were handed over in May 2026, completing the wider 15-home scheme. In addition to increasing affordable housing stock within the HRA, the development also delivered specialist accommodation, including a four-bedroom bungalow, to help meet identified housing needs within the borough.
- In Quarter 1, RMBC entered into contracts to acquire a further 63 Section 106 homes across two sites. Delivered by developers as part of their planning obligations, Section 106 properties represent good value for money as they are purchased at a discounted rate. They also provide high-quality new-build homes, helping to meet strong demand from applicants on the Council's housing register.

Improvements and investment in Council Housing stock

The following outputs have been achieved during the 2026/27 financial year to 30th June	Units Delivered
Structural Repairs	37
Major Voids (voids with a replacement element such as kitchen, bathroom, heating system etc, or exceeding c. £5,000 in repair value)	99
East Herringthorpe re-roofing scheme	50
West Melton re-roofing scheme	93
Internal Refurbishments (Kitchens or bathroom replacements) (not including replacements in Voids)	26
Ventilation Works (upgrade of existing, or installation of new mechanical extraction) (not including works in Voids)	755
Ad-Hoc Capital Investment (capital investment works that were unplanned)	21
Thermal Improvements (solar panels, cavity wall insulation, loft insulation and/or ventilation)	89
Boiler Replacements (not including replacements in Voids)	532
Capital Electrical Works (rewires, consumer unit changes etc) (not including works in Voids)	26
Window or Door Replacements (per property)	35
Environmental schemes	1
Loft insulation increases in Void properties	89
Kitchens in Void properties	261
Bathrooms in Void properties	74
Electrical rewires in Void properties	69
Heating system/boiler replacements in Void properties	14

2.23 Updated 2026/27 Capital Budget vs Original Budget

- 2.23.1 In order to enable effective monitoring and scrutiny of the movement in the capital budget during the year the below table shows the current 2026/27 capital budget against the original capital budget reported to Cabinet in July 2026.

Directorate	Original Budget £m	Updated Budget £m
General Fund Capital		
Adult Care & Housing	7.449	7.807
Children and Young People	12.132	11.728
Corporate Services	15.089	15.455
Policy, Strategy and Engagement	0.63	0.685
Regeneration & Environment	74.427	85.216
Total General Fund Capital	109.727	120.891
Total HRA Capital	70.955	85.592
Total RMBC Capital Programme	180.682	206.483

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 With regard to the current forecast net revenue budget overspend of £5.9m that the Council is forecasting, further management actions continue to be identified with the clear aim of ensuring a balanced budget position can be achieved.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 The Council consulted on the proposed budget for 2026/27, as part of producing the Budget and Council Tax Report 2026/27. Details of the consultation are set out in the Budget and Council Tax 2026/27 report approved by Council on 4th March 2026.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 Executive Directors, Managers and Budget Holders will ensure ongoing tight management and close scrutiny of spend this financial year.
- 5.2 Financial Monitoring reports are taken to Cabinet meetings during the year. The Financial Outturn report for 2026/27 will be taken to Cabinet in July 2027.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 The Council's overspend position is detailed within the report along with the estimated impact of current financial pressures from inflation and increases in demand. This position continues to be monitored closely. Control over

spending remains critical to both maintaining the robust Reserves Strategy and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

- 6.2 There are no direct procurement implications arising from the recommendations detailed in this report. Project specific implications have been addressed in the Key Issues section.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 This report forms part of the Council's governance and financial management framework and supports Cabinet in the monitoring of the approved revenue budget and capital programme. In this context, the Council is required to make proper arrangements for the administration of its financial affairs pursuant to the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972 and associated legislation.
- 7.2 Subject to the paragraph above, there are no direct legal implications arising from the Recommendations within this report.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 Whilst there are no direct human resources implications arising from this monitoring report, there are ongoing workforce related pressures reflected in the financial position. These include recruitment and retention challenges in key services and use of agency and locum staffing. These factors will continue to be monitored as part of workforce planning.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 The report includes reference to the cost pressures on both Children's and Adults' Social care budgets.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 This is a finance update report, providing a review of current progress to date on the Council's revenue and capital budgets; any equalities and human rights impacts from service delivery have been or will be detailed as service budgets and capital projects are pulled together for inclusion within the Council's revenue budget or capital programme. The Equality Impact Assessment is attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 There are no direct implications arising from the report. The Carbon Impact Assessment is attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 At a time of economic difficulty and tight financial constraints, managing spend in line with the Council's budget is paramount. Careful scrutiny of expenditure and income across all services and close budget monitoring therefore remain a

top priority if the Council is to deliver both its annual and medium-term financial plans while sustaining its overall financial resilience.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 To any extent that the approved budget, budget savings or compensating mitigations are not achieved, this will require a drawdown on Reserves. The Council's approved Reserves strategy shows that there is a sufficient balance of Reserves to mitigate overall budget risk, however, a continued call on the Reserves over and above that planned over the medium term would be financially unsustainable.
- 13.2 The Capital Programme is funded through a number of sources: Prudential borrowing, capital grants and contributions, revenue contributions and capital receipts. The Council will need to closely consider the level of prudential borrowing it incurs moving forwards post the 2026/27 Budget to ensure that the Council's overall debt position is manageable, can be financed within the Council's Treasury Management Budgets and to help guard against interest rate risk. There is also potential risk that the future years' funding from Government Grants and external sources may vary from that estimated.
- 13.3 Financial Services work closely with Senior Officers and Project Managers to monitor project expenditure and performance through the Capital Programme Monitoring and Delivery Board (CPM&DB). Improvements, like this, introduced to the Capital Programme governance arrangements and enhanced reporting requirements help to ensure that Members will receive early notice of any specific project issues. This will enable early intervention to take place to bring projects back on timetable and cost, or if necessary, agree an additional capital programme funding approval. Where elements of the Programme are reliant on future grant funding, future projects will be continually reviewed to match the programme against funding availability.

14. Accountable Officers

Rob Mahon, Service Director – Financial Services

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers:-

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	John Edwards	27/08/2026
Executive Director of Corporate Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	21/08/2026
Service Director, Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phillip Horsfield	27/08/2026

Report Author: Rob Mahon, Service Director – Financial Services

This report is published on the Council's [website](#).

Initial Equality Screening Assessment (Part A)

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provide a record of both the process and decision. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality and diversity
- whether or not equality and diversity is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an equality analysis.

1. Title

Title: July 2026/27 Financial Monitoring Report

Directorate: Corporate Services

Service area: Financial

Lead person: Rob Mahon

Contact: 01709 254518

Is this a:

☐

Strategy / Policy

☒

Service / Function

☐

Other

If other, please specify

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening

The Council has a framework of budgetary monitoring and reporting that ensures budget management is exercised within annual cash limits.

Each month the Budget Manager receives timely information on income and expenditure to enable them to fulfil their budgetary responsibilities. Following the review of the budget information, each budget manager provides a forecast of their projected outturn position on each service. The Executive Director subsequently provides a consolidated forecast for their directorate to the Chief Finance Officer and relevant Cabinet Member.

A budget monitoring report, which includes an up-to-date outturn forecast, information about significant variances from approved budgets and proposals for dealing with them, is submitted to Cabinet at least 6 times a year, culminating with the Council's Financial Outturn report.

Whilst the framework described above relates to revenue budgets, the capital programme is also similarly monitored and reported alongside the Council's revenue position.

The financial monitoring position report summarises the key variances for each directorate and considers the key financial pressures and risks.

This report is the second financial report in the financial year; it sets out the Council's latest revenue forecast position. The report also covers off any other key items to be noted at this time.

Given that the revenue and capital budgets have been approved by Council in February each year, when equality assessments would have been considered at that time in respect of the budget proposals, there are no further issues in respect of equality and diversity.

3. Relevance to equality and diversity

All the Council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – borough wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality and diversity.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, carers, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and any other relevant characteristics (for example socio-economic status, social class, income, unemployment, residential location or family background and education or skills levels).

Questions	Yes	No
Could the proposal have implications regarding the accessibility of services to the whole or wider community?		X
Could the proposal affect service users?		X
Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics?		X
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal?		X
Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?		X

Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices?		X
If you have answered no to all the questions above, please explain the reason.		
Given that the revenue and capital budgets have been approved by Council in February each year, when equality assessments would have been considered at that time in respect of the budget proposals, there are no further issues in respect of equality and diversity.		

If you have answered **no** to all the questions above please complete **sections 5 and 6**.

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above please complete **section 4**.

4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity	
If you have not already done so, the impact on equality and diversity should be considered within your proposals prior to carrying out an Equality Analysis. Considering equality and diversity will help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and take active steps to create a discrimination free society by meeting a group or individual's needs and encouraging participation. Please provide specific details for all three areas below and use the prompts for guidance.	
How have you considered equality and diversity? N/A	
Key findings N/A	
Actions N/A	
Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	n/a
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	n/a
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	n/a

5. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening:

Name	Job title	Date
Natalia Govorukhina	Head of Corporate Finance, Financial Services	14/08/2026

6. Publishing

This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this screening relates to a **Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision** a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.

A copy of **all** screenings should also be sent to equality@rotherham.gov.uk For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.

Date screening completed	12/08/26
Report title and date	2026/27 Financial Monitoring Report to Cabinet 14 th September 2026
If relates to a Key Delegated Decision, Executive Board, Council or a Significant Operational Decision – report date and date sent for publication	
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	17/08/26

Will the decision/proposal impact...	Impact	If an impact or potential impacts are identified:			
		Describe impacts or potential impacts on emissions from the Council and its contractors.	Describe impact or potential impacts on emissions across the Borough as a whole.	Describe any measures to mitigate emission impacts	Outline any monitoring of emission impacts that will be carried out
Emissions from non-domestic buildings?	None				
Emissions from transport?	None				
Emissions from waste, or the quantity of waste itself?	None				
Emissions from housing and domestic buildings?	None				
Emissions from construction and/or development?	None				
Carbon capture (e.g. through trees)?	None				

Identify any emissions impacts associated with this decision which have not been covered by the above fields

This report constitutes an update on previously approved activity.

Will the proposal affect Council services' resilience to climate change, or the capacity of people living in the Borough to adapt to climate change?

There are no specific impacts on resilience identified as part of this assessment. Significant new actions will be or have been subject to their own climate impact assessments.

Provide a summary of all impacts and mitigation/monitoring measures:

As this report is a financial update on previous events, updates on levels of funding moving forwards and doesn't approve anything directly to happen, it does not have any carbon implications.

Supporting information:

Climate Impact Assessment Author

Nikki Kelly
Finance Manager (Corporate Finance)
Financial Services
Finance and Customer Services

Please outline any research, data or information used to complete this Climate Impact Assessment.

N/A

If quantities of emissions are relevant to and have been used in this form please identify which conversion factors have been used to quantify impacts.

N/A

Validation

Tracking Reference: CIA 688

Louise Preston
Climate Change Manager

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 14 September 2026

Report Title

Social Value Annual Report

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Executive Director Approving Submission of the Report

Jane Maxwell, Director of Policy, Strategy and Engagement

Report Author(s)

Rosie Whitley, Social Value Practitioner

Rosie.Whitley@rotherham.gov.uk

Izzy Andrewes, Inclusive Economy Project Manager

Izzy.Andrewes@rotherham.gov.uk

Fiona Boden, Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence

Fiona.Boden@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

Each year a report is presented to Cabinet updating on progress set out in the Council's Social Value Policy, including the amount of value committed and delivered through Council contracts.

Since the last annual report in June 2025, good progress has been made to further strengthen delivery of the Social Value Policy. Social value commitments now stand at £41.6m. Importantly, validated delivery of social value stands at £23.7m, having increased by 92% compared to the previous annual report.

Resulting in tangible benefits for residents, 454 jobs have been secured for local people and 1,169 apprenticeships weeks have been delivered since the Council introduced this policy.

Priorities are also set for the next 12 months with a particular focus on ensuring progress is made across all five themes of community wealth building that are embedded within the Council's Social Value Policy.

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Receive the annual report, noting the social value commitments along with outcomes delivered.
2. Approve that the key priorities for 2026/27 are:
 - a. Continuing to ensure social value commitments made within the procurement process are delivered through contracts.
 - b. Championing democratic business models through employee ownership and 21st century social clubs.
 - c. Continuing to build on opportunities to support residents into employment and strengthen access to good-quality jobs across the borough.
 - d. Enabling more socially productive use of land and property.
 - e. Following the changes proposed nationally, exploring how to maximise local benefits from investment.
3. Agree to delegate authority to the Director Policy, Strategy and Engagement, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to extend the Social Value Policy approved by Cabinet in March 2024 to March 2029.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Social value annual report
Appendix 2 Initial Equality Screening Assessment (Form A)
Appendix 3 Carbon Impact Assessment

Background Papers

Social Value Policy (2024 - 2027)
Centre for Local Economic Strategies – Progressive Procurement in Rotherham
Social value annual report, June 2025
Public Procurement Notice 026: The social value model, [PPN 026: The social value model - GOV.UK](#)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Not applicable

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Social Value Annual Report

1. Background

- 1.1 In October 2019, the Council adopted a Social Value Policy, which, along with its accompanying toolkit, set out how social value would be maximised in the Borough. Refreshed in 2024, the Council adopted the Social Value Hub definition of social value as:
‘The benefit to the community from a commissioning or procurement process over and above the direct purchasing of goods, services and outcomes’.
- 1.2 Alongside this work on progressive procurement, as part of the Council’s Social Value Policy, a commitment was made to explore the other four pillars of community wealth building, which comprise:
- Plural ownership of the economy.
 - Making financial power work for local places.
 - Fair employment and just labour markets.
 - Socially productive use of land and property.
- 1.3 Each year, Cabinet receives a report on progress against the agreed policy priorities, including key actions set out in the previous report. The key actions for 2025/26 were to:
- Continue the work on employee ownership.
 - Deliver the partnership social value action plan with the Social Value Portal, working towards the delivery of increased social value commitments across Rotherham’s anchor network.
 - Deliver further support to local businesses through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).
 - Upskill Council staff through training initiatives and one-to-one support.
- 1.4 This report also recommends priority actions for 2026/27 to continue to deliver the Social Value Policy. This includes continuing to explore the ways in which the Council can better leverage the five community wealth building (CWB) pillars.
- 1.5 Consistent with previous annual progress reports, data is included on social value commitments in the previous year (from December 2024 to November 2025). The amount of social value commitment achieved is determined by the scale, number and type of contracts let each year.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 This section of this report covers the following two elements:
- A summary of the annual report, setting out progress in the delivery of the Social Value Policy over the previous year.
 - The proposed priority actions for 2026/27.

2.2 Summary of progress in delivering actions from the previous annual report

2.3 The Council is continuing to make positive progress in delivering its Social Value Policy, with key priorities agreed each year through the annual report. Progress against the key priorities set in the previous annual report are summarised in the table below, with further details on progress made over the year included in Appendix 1.

2.4 Priorities set in the previous annual report	Actions undertaken and progress made
Continue the work on employee ownership	In February 2026, the Council became the first local authority in England to offer a feasibility service to enable business owners to explore employee ownership alongside other exit options free of charge (see Appendix 1). The Council has also facilitated awareness raising and business support workshops to ensure information about the employee ownership model is available in the local business community. Over the year, 5 businesses received expert support on employee ownership and a further 30 businesses engaged in awareness raising activity and succession planning discussions, helping to build interest in future. Following significant legislative changes to the Employee Ownership Trust model in November 2025, conversations are taking place to ensure the Council's intervention maximises support for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as they navigate options for their future.
Continue to develop anchor networks with the Rotherham Together Partnership (RTP) action plan	The Rotherham Together Partnership continued to strengthen its collective approach to social value through a second phase of consultancy support delivered by the Social Value Portal. The programme focused on improving organisational capability, increasing consistency and supporting a more coordinated, needs-led approach across local anchor institutions. Support was provided on a one-to-one basis to partner organisations, as well as via six RTP social value

	champion forums, and over the course of this period there have been some significant partner achievements Despite having a largely centralised budget, South Yorkshire Police have prioritised social value where possible and are using a local contractor for the current building works on Rotherham Main Street police station. Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust (RDaSH) became Real Living Wage (RLW) accredited in June 2025, which has increased the pay of almost one in five of their staff. As appropriate on their tenders they now have a pass or fail criteria based on whether the supplier pays RLW (acknowledging that in some markets like the third sector this is not always possible), and have plans to expand this approach. The Trust has also set targets to expand local spend within its communities by moving contracts to local businesses. Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber of Commerce and Voluntary Action Rotherham have shaped their distinct brokerage roles, improving links between suppliers and Rotherham organisations to support business awareness and more targeted and impactful social value delivery to meet local needs. The influence of the RTP's approach to social value is not however limited to Rotherham. Local Integrated Care Board (ICB) colleagues have taken a paper to South Yorkshire ICB executives on how to embed the Rotherham social value model at the sub-regional level. The Rotherham Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has also worked in partnership with Barnsley Hospital to embed social value within a joint procurement. Partners have committed to maintaining momentum through ongoing quarterly meetings, providing a mechanism for peer support, shared learning and accountability across the partnership. Despite some of the key achievements highlighted above, some inconsistencies have been identified due to ongoing periods of change for some partners, as well as different organisational reporting geographies and methods of measurement. Ensuring delivery against social value commitments has also been a challenge experienced by all partners.
Delivering further support to	Through UKSPF (now known as the Local Growth Fund), the Council has continued to work with Go4Growth and the Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber of

local businesses through UKSPF to increase capacity	Commerce to improve business capacity, procurement readiness and local supply chain development. In 2025, Go4Growth delivered 242 business engagements, including procurement training, workshops, online resources and one-to-one support, helping local SMEs build the skills and confidence needed to access public sector and anchor institution opportunities. The Chamber's programme engaged almost 200 local businesses through a series of events, including Meet the Buyer, Chamber Means Business, the Planning & Development Strategic Event, and the Manufacturing Supply Chain Expo. Together, these initiatives have increased awareness of procurement opportunities, strengthened business capability and supported the development of more resilient local supply chains across the borough (see Appendix 1). Alongside the support for business, the borough's UKSPF allocation has also been used to support more people to progress into and within work. This has included supporting young people who are not in employment, education or training to understand the full range of training and skills pathways available to them. Provision of community-based core skills (maths, English and digital) courses with a particular focus on communities of greatest need has also continued. Finally, support has been provided for working people who want to reach their career potential and thrive in their chosen careers.
Upskilling Council staff through training initiatives and one-to-one support	Through a programme of social value workshops, Lunch and Learn sessions and one-to-one support, the Council has continued to build knowledge and capability across the organisation. During the year, 107 officers attended social value workshops and a further 60 officers participated in a Lunch and Learn session, helping to improve understanding of requirements, contract management and delivery. This investment in officer skills has strengthened supplier engagement, improved oversight of commitments and supported more effective social value delivery across Council contracts. This was in addition to supplier upskilling, including the publication of a supplier social value toolkit, 2 well-

	attended annual social value events and 4 training sessions to upskill voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSEs). This aligns with the Procurement Act's aim to reduce barriers to participation for VCSEs and SMEs, whilst helping to ensure that social value commitments made are specific, measurable and deliverable.
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2.5 Social value delivery

2.6 Challenges

2.7 The National Themes, Outcomes and Measures (TOMs) framework, developed by the National Social Value Task Force, provides a clear definition of social value and a corresponding measurement tool for transparent and robust reporting. The Council has selected measures from the National TOMs that will positively impact the economic and social wellbeing of the Rotherham community, with a particular focus on employment and skills.

2.8 Since the introduction of the Social Value Policy, the total social value committed through Council contracts has increased from **£32 million by the end of November 2024 to £41.6 million by the end of November 2025**, representing growth of almost **50% (£13.8 million)**. This demonstrates sustained progress in embedding social value as a core component of procurement activity and contract delivery.

2.9 These figures exclude the housing repairs contracts with Equans and Mears Group due to these contracts being awarded prior to the Social Value Policy's implementation and as such, social value commitments were not included. Despite that, social value has been delivered through these contracts with Mears delivering £11.9m and Equans delivering £180.4k of social value, with both delivering more social value pending validation. For more detail, please see Appendix 1, including case study material.

2.10 Social value is now firmly established as business as usual for procurements valued at over £100,000 following the implementation of the Policy in 2019. This has been supported by increased officer capability, strengthened governance arrangements, and a growing emphasis on place-based delivery aligned with local priorities.

2.11 Importantly, over the past year, the total validated social value delivered has increased significantly, rising from £12.3 million in the previous annual report to £23.7 million. This represents a net increase of £11.3 million, or 92% and has been delivered across the following types of activity (also summarised in Figure 1 below):

- **Rotherham People:** includes commissioned services for residents, such as health and social care provision. Social value delivered

increased from £6.1 million to £11.4 million, a net increase of £5.3 million or 87%.

- **Rotherham Places:** covers construction, facilities management, environment, and transport. Social value delivered increased from £5.5 million to £10.9 million, a net increase of £5.4 million or 98%. This represents the largest absolute and percentage increase.
- **Rotherham Corporate:** encompasses contracts that support the operational running of the Council, including information technology, temporary labour, training, and personal protective equipment. Social value delivered increased from £794,000 to £1.4 million, a net increase of £606,000 or 76%.

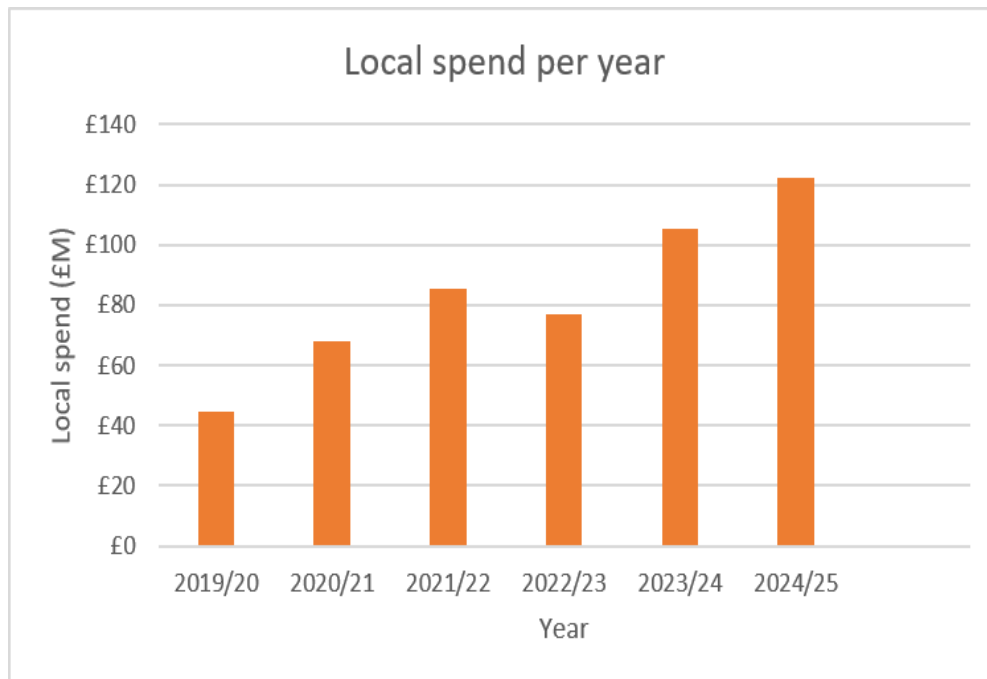
It should be noted that the categories of People, Places and Corporate used above are procurement terms used to group similar items of expenditure.

2.12 **Figure 1: Total value of social value commitments**



Note: The total value is actual, but the figures for Places, People, and Corporate are rounded and may not sum exactly

2.13 The amount of Council expenditure being spent locally has continued to increase from £44.8m in 2019/20 to £122.1m in 2024/25 (shown in Figure 2 below). This is an increase of £77.3m or 172%. A greater absolute amount of Council expenditure is being spent locally, and the proportionate share of expenditure has also increased from 17.8% in 2019/20 to 26.7% in 2024/25.

2.14 **Figure 2: Actual local spend per year**

- 2.15 Further detail on delivery across the People, Places and Corporate themes, including case studies demonstrating impact, is provided in Appendix 1. However, of particular significance is the progress made on local skills and employment, with key achievements including:
- **454 full-time equivalent jobs** secured or retained for local people through Council contracts, equating to £15.1m in social value (NT1)
 - **1,169 apprenticeships weeks** delivered, worth £266k in social value (NT10)
 - **4,985 hours of personalised career mentoring** and employability support initiatives delivered, amounting to £555k in social value (NT11)
 - **728 staff hours supporting local schools and colleges**, totalling £12.3k in social value (NT8)
- 2.16 Overall delivery currently stands at 57% of total social value committed. This has increased from 38% in the previous year. Due to the cyclical nature of procurement, with new social value commitments continually added through contract awards, delivery will never reach 100%, and performance should be considered within this context. Alongside this, a greater proportion of Council expenditure is being spent locally having increased from 24% in 2023/24 to 26.7% in 2024/25.
- 2.17 Together, these demonstrate how social value commitments are translating into tangible benefits for residents, communities and the local economy. While the value secured through contracts continues to increase, the Council's approach is increasingly focused on the quality, relevance and long-term impact of delivery. This ensures that social value commitments contribute meaningfully to local priorities, support inclusive

economic growth, strengthen community resilience, and maximise the wider benefits generated through public spending.

2.18 Risks and challenges to social value delivery

2.19 Whilst delivery remains positive overall, several challenges remain. Delivery is not consistent across all measures, with some suppliers committing to activities that overlap with existing local provision, such as employability support, whilst higher-priority needs, including work experience opportunities, remain under-served. There is also variation in suppliers' understanding of social value requirements and the importance of delivering commitments throughout the life of a contract, creating barriers in delivery and contract management.

2.20 The Rotherham TOMs agreed in 2025 have created additional challenges in fully evidencing all impact in the borough. As not all work and skills measures are currently reflected within Rotherham's framework, some outcomes cannot yet be consistently recorded or reported. This limits the Council's ability to demonstrate the full value being generated from contracts.

2.21 In the new policy approach announced on the 5th of August, the Government has also adopted a more narrowly defined focus on securing jobs and skills, especially for young people, in their own social value scoring. Whilst the detailed guidance is not yet available (it is due to be published in the autumn), this is consistent with the approach agreed by Rotherham in June 2025. Once available, it will be important to review this alongside local intelligence, as part of the renewal of the Social Value Policy to ensure that the optimum measures are utilised to measure the impact in the borough.

2.22 To address these risks, the Council has strengthened contract management oversight and increased engagement with suppliers to refocus delivery where required. Governance has also been strengthened from quarter 1 2026/27 by the introduction of a new report providing greater visibility of social value delivery performance across contracts by senior leaders. The ongoing development of guidance, training and support resources will help ensure future commitments are more closely aligned to local priorities, more realistic to deliver and capable of generating the greatest possible benefit for Rotherham's residents, communities and economy.

2.23 Plural Ownership of the Economy

2.24 This year the Council launched two new projects under the plural ownership of the economy pillar of community wealth building, to grow and strengthen Rotherham's cooperative and mutuals sector.

2.25 As summarised in the table above, the Council has become the first local authority in England to offer a feasibility service to enable business owners

to explore employee ownership alongside other exit options free of charge (see Appendix 1). During the year, government reduced the Capital Gains Tax subsidy, which is expected to reduce the number of sales to employee ownership trusts. The Council is assessing the impact of this on the project and will implement adaptations accordingly in the coming year of delivery.

2.26 21st Century Social Clubs in Rotherham launched in March 2026, the first business support programme designed and delivered specifically for Clubs in the UK. The programme aims to strengthen Clubs as democratic, member-owned institutions of the future so that they can continue to serve communities for generations to come (see Appendix 1).

2.27 **Broader progress made in the delivery of the Council's Social Value Policy**

2.28 Since the publication of the previous annual report, other notable achievements include (more detail is provided in Appendix 1):

- The Council successfully retained its status as a Real Living Wage Employer in September 2025 and continues to ensure its staff receive the real living wage, which currently stands at £13.45 per hour.
- The annual social value events were successfully held in 2025 and 2026, providing a valuable opportunity to support businesses to better understand and deliver local impact.
- Developed the innovative "Course to Job" programme through the Pathways to Work Trailblazer, aligning training provision directly with employer vacancies.
- Progressed the Council's Employer of Choice programme, introducing new approaches to attraction, recruitment and inclusion.

2.29 **Key actions and development for 2026/27**

2.30 The key actions for 2026/27 will focus on continuing the delivery of social value commitments. Alongside these, renewed efforts will focus on the other pillars of community wealth building that are embedded in the Council's Social Value Policy, approved by Cabinet in 2024, with the key priorities for 2026/27 identified as:

- Continuing to ensure social value commitments made within the procurement process are delivered through contracts.
- Championing democratic business models through employee ownership and 21st century social clubs.
- Continuing to build on opportunities to support residents into employment and strengthen access to good-quality jobs across the borough.
- Enabling more socially productive use of land and property.

- Following the changes proposed nationally, exploring how to maximise local benefits from investment.

2.31 **Continuing to ensure social value commitments are delivered**

2.32 Whilst the terms 'social value' and 'community wealth building' have previously been used interchangeably, the Council will now adopt clearer definitions:

Community wealth building is the overarching approach to retaining and maximising wealth within the local economy.

Social value is one of the key tools used to achieve community wealth building through procurement and commissioning.

Social value underpins the **progressive procurement** pillar, one of five pillars of community wealth building. Progressive procurement aims to leverage public sector and anchor institution buying power to maximise social, economic and environmental benefits.

2.33 One of the Council's key priorities in 2026/27 is to continue to deliver social value within the procurement process. Reporting to senior leaders on the delivery of social value contractual commitments will be embedded within the organisation, to greater ensure and assure that these benefits are realised.

2.34 The Government's August 2026 reforms to its procurement policy for Central Government places a stronger emphasis on social value, requiring major public contracts to deliver tangible benefits for local communities through the creation of jobs, apprenticeships, work placements and skills development opportunities. Under the new approach, the weighting given to social value in central government contracts worth £5 million or more will increase from 10% to 20%, with suppliers expected to demonstrate how they will address local skills needs, support young people into employment and training, and create high-quality jobs. These changes reinforce the growing national focus on using public spending to generate economic, social and community benefits, ensuring that procurement contributes directly to inclusive growth and opportunity in every locality.

2.35 As part of these reforms to central government procurement, the Government has also announced its intention that evidence of poor social value performance may be taken into account when determining whether there are grounds to exclude suppliers from future procurement opportunities. Detailed guidance on the application of these changes within central government procurement is expected to be published in the autumn. The Council will review this guidance, alongside wider sector learning and best practice, to assess the potential opportunities, risks and implications for local government procurement.

- 2.36 **Championing democratic business models through employee ownership and 21st century social clubs**
- 2.37 In 2026/27 the Council will continue to champion democratic business models through the employee ownership and 21st century social club projects. The Council will respond to external legislative changes to the Employee Ownership Trust model and ensure continued support for owner-managed businesses as they approach ownership transition and succession.
- 2.38 **Supporting residents into employment**
- 2.39 The fair employment and labour markets pillar of community wealth building aims to promote fair working practices and reduce barriers to employment. In 2026/27 the Council will explore further ways in which it can reduce barriers to employment across the borough both internally and externally. Being an employer of choice is one of the five priority pillars within the Council's Workforce Plan 2026-2030 and also aligns with theme 4 of the Inclusion Strategy. Work is being progressed to embed inclusion within recruitment and selection processes, with progress regularly reported to the Workforce Board.
- 2.40 Key priorities for the remainder of 2026/27 include:
- Gathering feedback from communities, schools, colleges and job seekers to understand what attracts people to work for the Council and using this insight to improve recruitment approaches.
 - Reviewing stakeholder engagement to ensure seldom-heard groups are represented and developing an outreach plan that supports the Council's ambition to reflect the diversity of local communities.
 - Reviewing recruitment-related policies and processes through enhanced new starter and exit feedback mechanisms, with a focus on inclusion.
 - Exploring alternative recruitment methods to attract more diverse applicants, building on successful initiatives such as the CV-based recruitment process used at Rother Valley Country Park, which attracted over 100 applicants.
- 2.41 The Council is also working with the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority and the other local authorities in South Yorkshire around future skills and employment support, including the use of the Local Growth Fund in 2027/28. In addition, throughout 2026/27 the Council will support 1,000 Rotherham residents to access employment.
- 2.42 **Socially Productive Use of Land and Property**
- 2.43 This pillar aims to manage public and community assets to benefit local, economic and environmental needs. In 2026/27 the Council will complete

the £600k investment in community facilities across the borough to sustain and enable the participation in activities and engagement within them.

- 2.44 Working with partners the Council will also create a Rotherham estates strategy for health and care, which will help inform the need for diagnostic and clinical spaces across the borough to improve services for residents.

2.45 **Maximise local benefits from investment**

- 2.46 This pillar aims to recirculate wealth within communities, increase local investment and ensure financial flows support local people and businesses. In 2026/27 the Council will explore how the recent announcements from the Government can be used to better meet Rotherham's needs.

2.47 **Agreement to extend the Social Value Policy approved by Cabinet in March 2024 to March 2029**

- 2.48 It is recommended that agreement is sought to delegate authority to the Director Policy, Strategy and Engagement, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to extend the Social Value Policy approved by Cabinet in March 2024 to March 2029.

The extended timeline will allow the Council to further embed, monitor and deliver the existing policy requirements.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 **Option One** recommends acknowledging the progress and achievements made in achieving social value commitments and delivery, along with setting out the key actions for the year ahead. In doing so it ensures that the Council's community wealth building aspirations, as set out in the Social Value Policy, are advanced.

- 3.2 **Option Two** would acknowledge the progress made in achieving social value commitments and delivery but would not propose actions to further the Council's community wealth building aspirations, as set out in the Social Value Policy. This is not recommended, as the proposed actions are integral to the overall programme of activities needed to deliver the Social Value Policy with clear objectives for the following year.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 The social value annual report has undergone internal consultation, incorporating views and contributions from officers in procurement and

those engaged in social value working groups. Information has been gathered from partners and local businesses.

- 4.2 The Council is also continuing to enhance engagement with external agencies, local businesses and partners to boost social value outcomes through the development of anchor networks and an annual social value event. This has resulted in a renewed focus on support to SMEs.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 This report presents progress at a specific point in time along a developmental journey. It outlines achievements from the past year and recommends priority actions for the coming year.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 All associated procurement implications are detailed in the main body of this report. Where there is a need to engage third party supplier to support the delivery of any of the aspects detailed in this report, they must be procured in compliance with relevant procurement legislation (Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Procurement Act 2023 dependent on the route to market) and the Council's own financial and procurement procedure rules.
- 6.2 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, and it has no immediate impact on the Council's revenue or capital budgets. The report provides an update on the integration of the Social Value Policy into the Council's procurement procedures and outlines options for the future development of social value activities. Any financial or operational implications associated with the application of the Social Value Policy in future procurement exercises will be considered and assessed as part of the decision-making process for those individual procurements.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 The Council's Social Value Policy supports the delivery of social, economic and environmental benefits through commissioning and procurement activity. In doing so, it reflects the principles contained within the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, which requires relevant authorities to consider how procurement activity may improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the relevant area.
- 7.2 The Council must continue to ensure that its Social Value Policy, associated documentation and procurement practices comply with the Procurement Act 2023, Public Contract Regulations 2015, relevant regulations and statutory guidance.
- 7.3 Subject to paragraphs 7.1 and 7.2 above, there are no specific legal implications arising from Cabinet noting the contents of the annual report. Continued contract management and monitoring arrangements remain

important to ensure that social value commitments incorporated within contracts are evidenced and delivered in accordance with contractual and procurement requirements.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct workforce implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report. Any workforce implications arising from future policy developments or specific projects will be considered through the Council's established HR policies and procedures.
- 8.2 The report aligns with the Council's wider workforce ambitions, including the Employer of Choice agenda and ongoing work to support inclusive recruitment and employment opportunities.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 The outcomes within the Social Value Policy support the Council's priorities: "children and young people achieve" and "an economy that works for everyone" by including support for education, employment and apprenticeship opportunities for these groups as key social value and community wealth building outcomes.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report (see Appendix 2 for equality screening). The Social Value Policy is helping to promote inclusion in terms of strengthening democratic institutions and creating employment, education and training opportunities for excluded groups.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 A carbon impact assessment is attached as Appendix 3. These actions will also promote the local buying of goods and services by both the Council, local partners and local businesses, contributing to reduced emissions through shorter travel distances for contractors.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 Partners have already committed to advancing social value in Rotherham. They are engaged in the direct development and delivery of social value outcomes, particularly in relation to community wealth building and anchor networks. This work is being advanced through previous actions and the key actions of 2026/27.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 A social value action plan will be developed and monitored by officers across the Council to ensure that policy commitments are met through the key actions delivered. Mitigating actions and detailed profiling are used to ensure that key priorities are achieved.

- 13.2 To strengthen governance and ensure senior officer oversight of the delivery of social value commitments in contracts, a contract dashboard was established to review progress at the end of quarter 1 2026/27. This monitoring will be embedded in the organisation throughout 2026/27.

14. Accountable Officers

Fiona Boden, Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	John Edwards	27/08/26
Executive Director of Corporate Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	20/08/26
Service Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	20/08/26

Report Author: Rosie Whitley, Social Value Practitioner
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Social Value Annual report

September 2026
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

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Introduction

Over the past year, social value has continued to play a vital role in supporting Rotherham Council's ambition to create an economy that works for everyone. Through procurement, commissioning, partnership working and community wealth building initiatives, the Council has strengthened its ability to ensure that public spending generates wider benefits for residents, communities and local businesses.

This report demonstrates the significant progress made in embedding social value across the Council and the Borough's wider anchor network. Since the previous annual report, social value commitments secured through Council contracts increased to £41.6m and, significantly, validated social value delivered has increased to £23.7m. Behind these figures are real outcomes, including 454 jobs and 1,169 apprenticeships weeks having been delivered.

The past year has also seen important progress beyond procurement. The Council has strengthened its work on employee ownership, provided support for local businesses, deepened collaboration through the Rotherham Together Partnership and continued to build the skills and confidence of officers, suppliers and community organisations to deliver meaningful local impact.

While there is much to celebrate, this report also recognises the challenges that remain and sets out clear priorities for the year ahead. The focus will be on building on these achievements, strengthening delivery across all five pillars of community wealth building and ensuring that the Rotherham pound works harder for local people, places and businesses.

Social Value delivery



Delivery headlines

The Council continues to use progressive procurement to secure wider **economic and social** benefits for residents and communities.

Since the introduction of the Social Value Policy, total social value committed through Council contracts has increased from **£32m in last year's report** to **£41.6m this year**, an increase of **£9.6m** over the reporting period which ran from December 2024 to November 2025.

Validated delivery of social value stands at £23.7m, having **increased by 92%** compared to the previous annual report and was achieved across the Council's three procurement portfolios:

- **People: £11.4m delivered**
- **Places: £10.9m delivered**
- **Corporate: £1.4m delivered**



As social value delivery continues to grow, the Council's focus is increasingly on **ensuring commitments are aligned to local priorities, delivering meaningful, long-term outcomes for residents, communities and the local economy.**

Pitney Bowes demonstrates how suppliers can develop meaningful local social value delivery with the right support and engagement. Although they are a national print and postal services provider based outside the borough, the company has worked closely with the Council to better understand local needs and opportunities.

This has led to successful partnerships with Oakwood High School and St Bernard's School, where Pitney Bowes has delivered careers events, mock interviews and employability support, helping young people develop skills and confidence for the workplace. Students were also challenged to solve a real business problem and present their ideas to company representatives, providing valuable experience of professional working environments.

Building on this success, Pitney Bowes is now working with the Council's Employment Solutions Team to recruit a local unemployed resident through a tailored programme of job coaching, interview preparation and ongoing support. The partnership demonstrates how proactive contract management can help suppliers move beyond contractual requirements and create lasting benefits for Rotherham residents and communities.

Pitney Bowes Case study



Employment and skills

Social value commitments continue to play a significant role in supporting residents into employment and improving skills development.

Key achievements include:

- **454 full-time equivalent jobs** secured for local people through Council contracts, equating to **£15.1m** in social value (NT1)
- **1,169 apprenticeships weeks** delivered, worth **£266k** in social value (NT10)
- **4,985** hours of personalised career mentoring and employability support initiatives delivered, amounting to **£555k** in social value (NT11)
- **728** staff hours **supporting local schools and colleges**, totalling **£12.3k** in social value (NT8)

These interventions contribute directly to reducing economic inactivity and supporting residents furthest from the labour market.



454 FTE of Local direct employees hired or retained on contract (NT1).



1169 weeks of apprenticeships delivered on contracts Level 2,3, or 4+ (NT10).



£555,168 delivered in social value for support to assist unemployed individuals into work (under and over 24 y.o.) (NT11).

Equans and Mears

Case study

Mears and Equans demonstrate how progressive procurement can create benefits that extend far beyond core service delivery. Through significant investment in the local economy, engagement with their supply chains and a strong commitment to skills and employment, both organisations have become key partners in supporting inclusive growth across Rotherham. Alongside creating jobs and apprenticeships, they have championed opportunities for care leavers, supported more inclusive recruitment practices and worked with their supply chains to maximise the delivery of social value throughout the borough.

- 1,270+ local residents supported or retained in employment
- 546 hours of support provided to unemployed residents
- 1,631 hours spent engaging with local schools and colleges
- 675 weeks of apprenticeships delivered
- 104 weeks of workforce upskilling and apprenticeship development

A neurodivergent resident progressed from work experience placements into employment with Equans through an adapted recruitment process and ongoing mentoring support, demonstrating how inclusive employment practices can create life-changing opportunities.

As the Equans and Mears housing repairs and maintenance contract was procured before the policy these figures are not part of the main monitoring of social value so these numbers are additional to the overall delivered figure.



Maximising the Rotherham £: Increasing Spend in the Local Economy

Progressive procurement is increasingly being used to retain wealth within Rotherham, particularly through strengthening local supply chains.

Across the reporting period: **£11.5m has been spent by suppliers through the local supply chain**, generating **£5.8m of social value**. This reflects a growing recognition of the importance of local economic multipliers and the role anchor institutions can play in supporting SMEs.

The amount of **Council expenditure being spent locally has continued to increase** from **£44.8m in 2019/20 to £122.1m in 2024/25**. This is an increase of **£77.3m or 172%**. A greater absolute amount of Council expenditure is being spent locally and the proportionate share of expenditure has also increased from **17.8% in 2019/20 to 26.7% in 2024/25**.

£5,772,537.4 of Social Value
created as a result of local supply
chain on contracts (**NT18**).



Sanderson Building Services Ltd Case study

Sanderson Building Services, a **Rotherham-based company**, demonstrates how **local businesses** can maximise the impact of public sector contracts. On a single contract, the company spent over **£45,000 with 16 local suppliers, including eight local SMEs**, helping to **retain investment within the borough** and support local jobs and economic growth.

Beyond this, Sanderson has built a strong partnership with Maltby Learning Trust, supporting careers events, work experience placements and employer engagement activities, helping young people gain insight into local career opportunities and the construction sector.



KCM case study

As a long-established, family-run Rotherham business, KCM Waste Management has embedded social value into its everyday operations, ensuring benefits are delivered alongside contract outcomes. The company supports inclusive employment by creating opportunities for local residents, including people who were previously unemployed and those facing barriers to work, having recruited eight local people into employment during the reporting period.

KCM is also committed to strengthening the local economy through its supply chain, spending £20,026 with businesses within the borough. Alongside this, KCM has provided expert support to local VCSE organisations and actively invests in community initiatives, fundraising and local partnerships.

Through a combination of local employment, supply chain investment and community support, KCM demonstrates how businesses can generate lasting social and economic value for Rotherham while delivering high-quality services.



VCSE Support

Suppliers have continued to support the voluntary and community sector through **financial and in-kind donations**.

Key contributions include:

- **£178k** in equipment and resources donated to VCSE organisations
- **554 hours of expert business** advice provided to local SMEs and VCSEs, equivalent of **£56k of social value**

While these contributions are valuable, the Council recognises that their impact is maximised when they are aligned to local need. Working through the Rotherham Together Partnership (RTP), the Council and Voluntary Action Rotherham (VAR) have piloted a new approach with Social Prescribing Hubs to better identify community priorities and connect suppliers with organisations requiring support. This has helped ensure that donations and professional expertise are directed towards areas of greatest need, increasing the relevance and impact of social value delivery across Rotherham.

553.8 hours
of expert business
advice delivered to
VCSEs and MSMEs
(NT15)

£177,573.5
of equipment or re-
sources donated to
VCSE's (NT16)



GM Coachwork case study

GM Coachwork, a specialist provider of accessible minibus conversions based in South West England, demonstrates how meaningful social value can be delivered regardless of geographical location. Whilst supplying 20 accessible minibuses to the Council, the company worked closely with officers to identify a social value opportunity that would create tangible benefits for Rotherham residents.

Through collaboration with the Council, GM Coachwork was connected to Rotherham Parents and Carers Forum (RPCF), a charity supporting children and adults with SEND and their families. Recognising the strong link between its core business and the needs of RPCF, the company provided £2,000 of equipment and resources to strengthen the charity's operational capacity. This support enabled RPCF to redirect funding towards frontline activities and services, helping to maximise its impact on local families.

This partnership highlights how businesses, public services and the voluntary sector can work together to ensure social value is targeted where it can make the greatest difference, transforming a contractual requirement into meaningful and lasting community benefit.



Strengthening Local Supply Chains

Through the **Council's partnership with Go4Growth**, a range of procurement readiness support has been made available to help local businesses develop the skills, knowledge and confidence required to **access public sector and anchor institution supply chains**.

During 2025, a total of **242 business engagements** were recorded across procurement readiness activities, including training, resources and tailored support.

Activity levels varied throughout the year, with the highest engagement recorded in Quarter 3 (84 engagements), driven primarily by workshop participation and uptake of procurement support resources.

The programme has helped local businesses build procurement capability, improve their understanding of public sector tendering processes and increase their readiness to compete for opportunities with the Council, other public sector organisations and local anchor institutions. These interventions support the Council's wider objectives of **increasing local supply chain participation, retaining expenditure within the borough and promoting inclusive economic growth**.



Activity Delivered

- **16 businesses participated in the Public Sector Supply Ready programme.**
- **23 businesses completed online procurement courses.**
- **88 businesses accessed video tutorials.**
- **21 resource downloads were recorded.**
- **8 businesses received tailored one-to-one support.**
- **86 businesses attended procurement workshops.**

Strengthening Local Supply Chains

The Council has been working in partnership with **Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber of Commerce** to support the development of local supply chains and increase opportunities for local businesses to secure contracts.

This investment supported **engagement with almost 200 local businesses** through sector specific Meet the Buyer events and monthly digital promotion of local supply chain opportunities. Together, these activities have strengthened awareness of procurement opportunities, improved business capability, and contributed to the development of more resilient local supply chains across the borough.



Key activities delivered included:

- **Meet the Buyer and Anchor Organisations Event**
- **Meet the Buyer: Retail & Hospitality**
- **Meet the Buyer: Construction**
- **Chamber Means Business**
- **Planning & Development Strategic Event**
- **Manufacturing Supply Chain Expo**

Rotherham Together Partnership



The Rotherham Together Partnership (RTP) continued to build a more coordinated and needs-led approach to social value through a second phase of support from Social Value Portal.

Key Partnership Achievements

- Delivered six RTP social value champion forums, providing peer support, shared learning and practical guidance to partner organisations.
- Supported partners through tailored one-to-one consultancy, helping strengthen organisational capability and consistency.
- South Yorkshire Police prioritised local social value delivery through the use of a local contractor for redevelopment works at Rotherham Main Street Police Station.
- Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust (RDaSH) achieved Real Living Wage accreditation and strengthened social value requirements within procurement processes.
- Barnsley & Rotherham Chamber and Voluntary Action Rotherham established complementary brokerage roles, improving connections between suppliers, businesses and community organisations.
- The Rotherham model has influenced wider system partners, with work underway to explore adoption across South Yorkshire and collaborative procurement approaches developing across NHS organisations.



Rotherham Together Partnership



Through this work, partners have:

- Increased collaboration and knowledge sharing across anchor institutions.
- Strengthened mechanisms for connecting suppliers with local opportunities and community needs.
- Embedded social value more consistently within commissioning and procurement activity.
- Committed to ongoing quarterly partnership meetings to maintain momentum, accountability and continuous improvement.

Future Priorities

While significant progress has been achieved, partners recognise the need to:

- Improve consistency in measurement and reporting.
- Strengthen partner engagement during periods of organisational change.
- Enhance monitoring of social value commitments and delivery.
- Better demonstrate the collective impact being achieved across Rotherham.

Annual Social Value Event



The Council has held 2 annual social value events since the last report, in 2025 and 2026. The sixth annual social value event took place on June 1st 2026 at New York stadium and brought together 112 delegates from businesses, public sector organisations and the voluntary and community sector to share learning, build partnerships and showcase the impact of social value across the borough.

Hosted by the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive, the event featured local case studies, practical workshops and networking opportunities to help organisations maximise their contribution to Rotherham communities.

A highlight of the event was a Q&A session with two care leavers who shared their personal employment journeys and the transformative impact that access to work, training and support had on their lives. Their stories provided a powerful reminder of how social value commitments can create meaningful opportunities and life-changing outcomes for local people.

The event also featured a presentation from KCM Recycling, a local Rotherham business, demonstrating how social value has been embedded within its organisational model and business practices, illustrating how commercial success and community benefit can go hand in hand.

The event helped strengthen understanding of social value, celebrate local success and inspire businesses and partners to play a greater role in delivering positive social, economic and environmental outcomes across Rotherham.

Achievements and Challenges

Built internal capability and accountability through social value training for 107 officers, targeted support for key teams, and enhanced oversight of contract performance by Strategic Directors.

Strengthened supplier and market engagement through the launch of a social value supplier toolkit and delivery of the sixth annual social value event, with 112 attendees, supporting businesses to better understand and deliver local impact

Supported the wider social value local network through partnership working with Go4Growth, Voluntary Action Rotherham and the Chamber of Commerce, including VCSE training programme and promotion of best practice through the Chamber Awards in which the Council sponsored a social value award.

Alignment with local need is required, particularly for employability support where Council provision is duplicated. Increasing activity in areas such as work experience placements would help to maximise impact and better align social value with local need. A review of the current TOMs and area of delivery is taking place to address this.

Supplier understanding could be improved, with some inconsistency in awareness of social value requirements and how to deliver meaningful local impact. To address this, the Council has undertaken a range of engagement and capacity-building activities, targeted market engagement sessions, upskilling of the Business Development Team, and developed social value supplier toolkit.

Measuring impact remains a challenge as significant value is being generated through contracts but the current Rotherham TOMs set does not capture all work and skills measures, limiting the extent to which this impact can be reported.

Plural Ownership of the Economy



Employee Ownership

The Council has set up a feasibility service to allow business owners to explore employee ownership alongside other exit options for free. This has been complemented with outreach and engagement events to encourage conversations around succession planning.

Employee-owned businesses have been recognised as strategically important to the local economy and have become beneficiaries of targeted 1:1 business support via the Council's Key Account Management programme.

- 35 businesses engaged
- 5 businesses supported
- 1 business accessed the Feasibility Service



21st Century Social Clubs

RMBC Social Value Annual Report,
September 2026



21st Century Social Clubs in Rotherham is the first business support programme designed and delivered specifically for Social Clubs in the country. It aims to strengthen Clubs as democratic, member-owned organisations of the future.

- 13 Clubs engaged via outreach and survey.
- 11 Clubs reported financial pressure and risk of closure.
- 8 Clubs receiving support via the programme through workshops and 1:1 support.

“With the right support, we see the next 12 months as a turning point. Our goal is not just to survive, but to stabilise, reduce financial pressure and build a clearer plan for the future”

Fair employment



Fair employment - Employer of Choice

The Council achieved accreditation as a Living Wage employer from the Living Wage Foundation in September 2021. In 2025, this status was successfully retained for a fourth year. As a result, the Council can continue to display the Real Living Wage logo in its communications and publicity materials. Currently, the Council ensures that all its staff receive the Real Living Wage, which currently stands at £13.45 per hour. Additionally, the Council is committed to extending this standard to all in scope contracts.

Rotherham Council is committed to being an employer of choice by creating a supportive, inclusive and rewarding workplace where employees can thrive. The Employer of Choice Steering Group developed data and research-informed interventions to enhance the Council's offer around the full "employee lifecycle" from attraction and recruitment to transition and exiting the Council. The Group currently is reviewing research undertaken with both our workforce and communities on the perception of RMBC as an employer, developing an outreach plan to work with "seldom heard" groups, a range of communities, schools and universities to ensure that we reflect the communities that we serve and that our processes and policies promote inclusion and reduce barriers to employment with the Council. The Council are introducing more diverse recruitment methods and have held focus groups with hiring managers within the Council-an example of this being a pilot using CVs for recruitment to roles at Rother Valley which attracted 100 applicants.

Fair employment - Pathways to Work

At the end of 2025/26, Pathways to Work had **engaged 388 participants onto programme with 87 participants supported into paid work** (22% conversion – which mirrors regional averages across South Yorkshire). Over 45% of jobs started were full time, with 54% of jobs being permanent. 38% of participants moved into work had been long term unemployed or had never worked before.

As part of the Pathways to Work Trailblazer, Rotherham have developed a new “Course to Job” programme. This provision looks at working directly with employers by working backwards from the job role and assessing the type/quantity/training requirements for each role. This has been very successful with provisions for employers such as Centrix and Subcontractors of Yorkshire Water, due to the positive response it is being rolled out to other local employers.



Fair employment - Bridges to Work

Bridges to Work is a partnership initiative supporting people with disabilities and neurodivergent individuals as they transition from education into employment. Led by employers including Magna and Acorn Industrial Services Ltd, the programme helps remove barriers to work by connecting learners, support services and businesses.

Following their own positive experiences of recruiting people with people with disabilities and neurodivergent individuals, Magna and Acorn Industrial have championed the Bridges to Work Expo, sharing learning and encouraging other employers to recognise the significant benefits that a diverse and inclusive workforce can bring to their organisations. The initiative is helping create more accessible pathways into employment and promoting greater inclusion across Rotherham's labour market.



Key Actions for next year

Building on the progress made during the year, the Council and its partners will focus on strengthening the delivery of social value and advancing the wider community wealth building agenda across Rotherham. Key priorities for 2026/27 are:

- Continuing to ensure social value commitments made within the procurement process are delivered through contracts.
- Championing democratic business models through employee ownership and 21st century social clubs.
- Continue to build on opportunities to support residents into employment and strengthen access to good-quality jobs across the borough.
- Enabling more socially productive use of land and property.
- Following the changes proposed nationally, exploring how to maximise local benefits from investment.

Appendix 2

PART A - Initial Equality Screening Assessment

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provide a record of both the process and decision. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions.

Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

- the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality and diversity
- whether or not equality and diversity is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an Equality Analysis (Part B).

Further information is available in the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance – see page 9.

1. Title	
Title: Social Value Annual Report	
Directorate: Policy, Strategy and Engagement	Service area: Policy, Performance and Intelligence
Lead person: Sunday Alonge	Contact: 01709 254441
Is this a:	
☒ Strategy / Policy	☐ Service / Function
☐ Other	
If other, please specify	

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening
This is an annual report that provides progress against the Council's social value priorities, as set out in the approved Social Value Policy. It provides a detailed breakdown of social value commitments and delivery using the established Themes, Outcomes, Measures (TOMs) system. It also includes a review of progress against key actions agreed in the previous annual report, which were to: • Continue the work on employee ownership • Deliver the partnership social value action plan with Social Value portal, working towards the delivery of increased social value commitments across Rotherham's anchor network.

- Deliver further support to local businesses through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF).

Upskill Council staff through training initiatives and one-to-one support. It also sets priorities for the year ahead.

3. Relevance to equality and diversity

All the Council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – borough wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality and diversity.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, civil partnerships and marriage, pregnancy and maternity and other socio-economic groups e.g. parents, single parents and guardians, carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people etc.

Questions	Yes	No
Could the proposal have implications regarding the accessibility of services to the whole or wider community?		x
Could the proposal affect service users?		x
Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics?		x
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal?		x
Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?	x	
Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices?	x	
If you have answered no to all the questions above, please explain the reason		
N/A		

If you have answered **no** to **all** the questions above please complete **sections 5 and 6**.

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above please complete **section 4**.

4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity

If you have not already done so, the impact on equality and diversity should be considered within your proposals before decisions are made.

Considering equality and diversity will help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and take active steps to create a discrimination free society by meeting a group or individual's needs and encouraging participation.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below using the prompts for guidance and complete an Equality Analysis (Part B).

- **How have you considered equality and diversity?**

The report provides information on the achievements of the Council's Social Value Policy, which is underpinned by the aim of supporting the employment (including education and training) of disadvantaged groups who have barriers to accessing the labour market. It also provides information on the upskilling of Council staff to increase knowledge and hold suppliers accountable for their social value delivery, and capacity building for local SMES so that they have the resources and support required to strengthen local supply chains.

- **Key findings**

Addressing inequalities is central to the social value outcomes that have been identified. These include a wide range of groups who will be supported through increased training, school visits, employment, apprenticeships, and other training opportunities. In addition, the policy is also about changing the way the council commissions. Taking forward the policy's principles places emphasis on co-designing services and involving service users throughout the process. This will increase the role and voice of all groups and enhances community wealth building through creating a resilient, locally rooted economy.

- **Actions**

A full equality analysis will be carried out by December 2026. To further ensure equality, diversity, and inclusion implications are considered, it will explore how the Council can deliberately target disadvantaged groups and those with protected characteristics in the procurement process e.g. targeting businesses owned by these groups for support. Priority attention could then be given to them through employment, education, and training support that comes from social value implementation.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	December 2026
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	December 2026
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Sunday Alonge, Policy Officer

5. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening:

Name	Job title	Date
Michael Holmes	Policy and Strategy Officer	3 rd August 2026
Fiona Boden	Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence	7 th August 2026

6. Publishing

This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this screening relates to a **Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision** a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.

A copy of **all** screenings should also be sent to equality@rotherham.gov.uk For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.

Date screening completed	31 July 2026
Report title and date	Social Value annual report
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	Cabinet – 14 September 2026
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	12/08/26

Will the decision/proposal impact...	Impact	If an impact or potential impacts are identified:			
		Describe impacts or potential impacts on emissions from the Council and its contractors.	Describe impact or potential impacts on emissions across the Borough as a whole.	Describe any measures to mitigate emission impacts	Outline any monitoring of emission impacts that will be carried out
Emissions from non-domestic buildings?	None				
Emissions from transport?	Decrease	Council suppliers can offer corporate travel schemes available to employees, e.g. subsidised public transport, subsidised cycling schemes, and storage. Social value is promoting the local buying of goods and services by both the Council and local partners, including contractors, thereby contributing to reduced emissions through shorter travel distances for contractors. Social Value may encourage contractors to operate low or zero			Environmental commitments are monitored through the Social Value Portal where suppliers have committed to relevant environmental TOMs as part of the Social Value procurement process. Monitoring is therefore limited to contracts where environmental commitments have been voluntarily offered and agreed and does not provide a comprehensive measure of climate impacts arising from all Social Value activity.

		emissions vehicles with the aim of emissions reduction in the borough.			
Emissions from waste, or the quantity of waste itself?	Decrease	The Council may encourage suppliers to increase workplace recycling and reducing the use of plastics, these efforts will lead to reducing emissions from waste.			Environmental commitments are monitored through the Social Value Portal where suppliers have committed to relevant environmental TOMs as part of the Social Value procurement process. Monitoring is therefore limited to contracts where environmental commitments have been voluntarily offered and agreed and does not provide a comprehensive measure of climate impacts arising from all Social Value activity.
Emissions from housing and domestic buildings?	None				
Emissions from construction and/or development?	Decrease	One of the aims of social value is to reduce emissions. The Social Value key actions and developments will help businesses and			Savings on CO2 emissions on contract achieved through decarbonisation is being monitored.

		partners understand how they can support the 2040 Net Zero target for Rotherham.			
Carbon capture (e.g. through trees)?	None				

Identify any emissions impacts associated with this decision which have not been covered by the above fields:

Following national changes to the TOMs system in 2024, NT31 (tonnes of CO2 emissions saved on a contract) has been removed (this was the only environmental measure with a proxy value). Alternative measures for NT31 are currently in development.

Actions considered to improve data management, including the use of shared platforms, may have carbon impacts from digital services, such as those arising from data centres' energy and cooling demands. Aligning the Council's and other actors' data capture, monitoring and reporting could mitigate such impacts by avoiding duplicated effort.

Also, Social Value implementation is signposting businesses to the region-wide Low Carbon project for engagement, with the purpose of reducing emissions in the borough and in the region

Will the proposal affect Council services' resilience to climate change, or the capacity of people living in the Borough to adapt to climate change?

While there are no direct impacts of the current measures on climate change adaptation, many of the outcomes related to employment and supporting VCSEs could help improve local residents' resilience more generally, and by extension could help to improve resilience to climate change

Provide a summary of all impacts and mitigation/monitoring measures:

The Social Value Policy has the potential to contribute positively to the Council's climate objectives by encouraging suppliers and partners to consider environmental impacts alongside social and economic outcomes. However, environmental measures within the national TOMs framework currently have limited financial proxy values, and consequently environmental commitments are not consistently offered or monitored across all procurements.

Potential positive impacts include:

- Upskilling local suppliers in procurement and strengthening local supply chains, which may reduce emissions associated with travel and transportation.
- Opportunities for suppliers to commit to environmental TOMs, including sustainable procurement practices and supply chain carbon reduction measures.
- Signposting businesses to regional low-carbon support programmes, helping them identify opportunities to reduce emissions and improve environmental performance.
- Encouraging suppliers to consider initiatives such as sustainable travel schemes, workplace recycling, reduction of single-use plastics and other carbon reduction activities where appropriate.

Supporting information:

Climate Impact Assessment Author	Sunday Alonge Policy Officer Policy, Performance and Intelligence Policy, Strategy and Engagement
Please outline any research, data or information used to complete this Climate Impact Assessment.	Social Value commitments and delivery table Social Value Policy Social Value Annual Report
If quantities of emissions are relevant to and have been used in this form please identify which conversion factors have been used to quantify impacts.	N/A
Validation	Tracking Reference: CIA 687 Louise Preston Climate Change Manager

Public Report

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 08 September 2026

Report Title

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Scrutiny Review – Street Lighting Columns

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No, but it has been included on the Forward Plan

Executive Director Approving Submission of the Report

Jane Maxwell, Director of Policy, Strategy and Engagement

Report Author(s)

Barbel Gale, Governance Manager
01709 807665 or barbel.gale@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

This report presents the findings and recommendations of the OSMB/IPSC Scrutiny Review into attachments to lighting columns.

The review was commissioned following a Notice of Motion approved by Full Council in April 2026 concerning the impact of structural testing requirements on community initiatives such as hanging baskets, festive decorations, remembrance displays and CCTV installations. The review examined the balance between public safety requirements and the financial and operational impact on Parish and Town Councils. Evidence was gathered from officers, Parish Councils, survey responses and examples of practice from other authorities.

The recommendations seek to establish a clear, proportionate and transparent framework that supports community-led initiatives whilst ensuring the safety and effective management of highway assets.

Recommendations

That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board:

1. Receives the following recommendations for consideration and endorsement.

2. Agrees that the report, together with the approved recommendations, be submitted to Cabinet for consideration and a formal response, and that Cabinet be asked to:
 - a. Approve amendments to the Highway Asset Management Plan to incorporate a comprehensive framework for attachments to lighting columns and associated highway assets, setting out requirements relating to permitted and prohibited attachments, risk-based approval arrangements, structural testing and retesting requirements, applicant responsibilities, and enforcement provisions. The framework should apply consistently to all users of lighting columns, including the Council, Parish and Town Councils, contractors and third parties.
 - b. Approve the development and publication of a standalone, publicly accessible Lighting Column Attachments Guidance Document, in consultation with Parish and Town Councils, to provide clear and practical guidance on the application of the Highway Asset Management Plan framework, including attachment classifications, approval processes, testing requirements, responsibilities, communication arrangements, and practical examples of acceptable and unacceptable attachments.
 - c. Establish formal consultation, communication and engagement arrangements with Parish and Town Councils, including consultation on future policy changes, testing programmes and charging arrangements, together with sufficient advance notice of any financial implications to enable effective budget planning, procurement and decision-making.
 - d. Establish clear categories for lighting column attachments, identifying which attachments are permitted without testing, permitted subject to approval and structural testing, or prohibited, and publishes consistent standards for structural testing, assessment criteria, retesting intervals, validity periods and maximum permissible loading thresholds where appropriate.
 - e. Continues to coordinate structural testing arrangements on a borough-wide basis where appropriate and considers longer-term funding, procurement and cost-sharing arrangements to minimise administrative burdens and secure value for money for Parish and Town Councils whilst maintaining compliance with relevant safety standards.
 - f. Ensures arrangements are developed to support the continuation of community display schemes where lighting columns are unable to safely accommodate attachments, including consideration of alternative display solutions, targeted asset replacement where appropriate, the use of structural testing outcomes to identify trends, inform the Council's future investment priorities, replacement programmes and wider asset management decisions.

- g. That the service engages in meaningful discussions with interested parties including Parish Councils, seeking to install displays on lighting columns, with the aim of reaching a shared understanding regarding the timescales and process for replacing damaged or missing columns, and to explore opportunities to facilitate timely installation where feasible.
 - h. Strengthen the enforcement framework for unauthorised attachments by establishing clear compliance procedures and, where legally permissible, implementing arrangements for the recovery of costs incurred in the removal of unauthorised installations, and reviews the effectiveness of the new arrangements within 12 months of implementation, including consideration of feedback from Parish and Town Councils, testing outcomes and enforcement activity, with the findings reported to the relevant Scrutiny Board.
- 3. Asks Cabinet to formally consider its response to the above recommendations within two months of its receipt, in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.
 - 4. In responding to these recommendations, it is requested that any response should identify the proposed actions, responsible officer(s), success measures and target completion dates for each recommendation.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Summary of the Parish Council responses to the review survey

Background Papers

RMBC Information considered as part of the review:

Information provided by RMBC Officers in response to questions raised in the initial meeting

RMBC's interim position 11 May 2026

Attachments to Lighting Columns - Hanging Baskets and other attachments - Briefing Note provided by RMBC Officers – 10 July 2026

External information considered as part of the review:

City of Doncaster - [Street Lighting Attachments Policy January 2026](#)

Derbyshire County Council - [Attachments to Street Lighting Columns Policy April 2025](#)

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council - [Street Lighting Columns: Attachments Technical Guidance Note v.1.01 October 2025](#)

Clerk Lighting Column Meeting - 13 May 2026 - Draft Minutes

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None.

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Scrutiny Review – Street Lighting Columns

1. Background

- 1.1 This Scrutiny Review originated from a Notice of Motion considered and approved by Full Council on 22 April 2026 entitled “Lighting Columns – Cut unnecessary red tape so that our streets can have floral displays, Christmas decorations, poppies and CCTV.”
- 1.2 The Notice of Motion recognised the significant contribution that hanging baskets, festive decorations, Remembrance displays and CCTV installations make to civic pride, local identity, community wellbeing and public safety across Rotherham's towns and villages. Members acknowledged that many of these initiatives are delivered by Parish Councils, community groups and volunteers, demonstrating strong local engagement and ownership.
- 1.3 The Motion also highlighted concerns regarding the increasing requirement for structural assessments of lighting columns before attachments can be installed. Members heard that the costs associated with testing and compliance were increasingly being passed to Parish Councils and community organisations, creating additional financial pressures and administrative burdens. There was concern that these requirements could discourage community participation and place valued local initiatives at risk.
- 1.4 Particular concern was expressed regarding the impact on smaller Parish Councils and voluntary groups, which may have limited financial capacity to absorb additional costs. Members considered that without a more proportionate approach, some communities could be disadvantaged and less able to deliver enhancements that contribute positively to the appearance, identity and wellbeing of their local areas.
- 1.5 The Notice of Motion therefore sought to establish whether the existing arrangements struck an appropriate balance between public safety requirements and the need to facilitate and support community-led initiatives. Members requested that opportunities be explored to reduce unnecessary barriers, identify good practice from other authorities and determine whether a more transparent, consistent and proportionate framework could be developed for the management of attachments to lighting columns.
- 1.6 In approving the Motion, Full Council requested that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) examine the issue as part of its work programme, investigate the impact of current arrangements on community participation and develop recommendations to inform future policy and practice.

- 1.7 In response, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and Improving Places Select Commission (IPSC) established a Scrutiny Review Group to investigate the issues raised through the Notice of Motion.
- 1.8 The review was therefore established to examine the rationale for structural testing requirements, assess the impact of current arrangements on Parish and Town Councils and community organisations, consider approaches adopted by other authorities, and identify opportunities to support community initiatives whilst ensuring the safe and effective management of highway assets.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Alignment with the Council Plan

- 2.1.1 The Review is aligned with the following priorities under the Council Plan (2025-2030), as set out below.
- “Places are Thriving, Safe and Clean”
 - “One Council that Listens and Learns.”
- 2.1.2 This Scrutiny Review aligns principally with the Council Plan outcome "Places are Thriving, Safe and Clean" through its focus on effective highway asset management, the development of a consistent framework for the use of street furniture, the promotion of sustainable community-led environmental improvements, and the protection of public infrastructure for future use.
- 2.1.3 The review also supports the outcome "One Council that Listens and Learns" by adopting an evidence-led approach to policy development, engaging with stakeholders throughout the review process, benchmarking practice across other authorities, and seeking to improve guidance, communication and partnership working with Parish and Town Councils.

2.2 Review Methodology

- 2.2.1 A working group was convened comprising the following members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and Improving Places Select Commission:
- Councillor Steele (Chair)
 - Councillor Adair
 - Councillor Blackham
 - Councillor Sheppard
 - Councillor Thorp
 - Councillor Tinsley

(together, the Review Group)

For the initial meeting Councillor Allen was present as a member of the review group but removed herself when appointed as Cabinet Member for Communities.

2.2.2 Evidence gathering, stakeholder engagement and the development of agreed findings and recommendations were undertaken between May 2026 and July 2026. The Review Group considered evidence through a series of meetings, briefing reports, stakeholder feedback and benchmarking information from other local authorities.

2.2.3 A number of Council Officers and representatives from external partners were invited to participate in both in-person and virtual meetings, with representation from:

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (Council)

- Sam Barstow, Service Director, Community Safety and Street Scene
- Martin Hughes, Head of Neighbourhoods
- Richard Jackson, Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene (where relevant through written submissions)
- Allan Lewis, Group Manager, Street Lighting, Highway Inspections and Street Works Enforcement, (where relevant through written submissions)
- Catherine Oxtoby, Parish Council and Neighbourhoods Liaison Officer

External Partners

- Kate Butler, Parish Clerk at Aston cum Aughton Parish Council

The Review Group was additionally supported throughout by:

- Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services
- Barbel Gale, Governance Manager
- Kristianne Thorogood, Governance Advisor

2.2.3 Stakeholder Engagement and External Evidence:

The Review Group also considered evidence gathered from:

- Parish and Town Councils across the borough through a dedicated consultation survey
- A Parish Council Clerk attending engagement meetings with Council officers
- Benchmarking and policy information from
 - City of Doncaster Council
 - Derbyshire County Council
 - Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

2.2.4 The Review Group reviewed survey responses from Parish and Town Councils regarding the use of lighting columns for hanging baskets, festive decorations, CCTV, commemorative displays and other attachments. The feedback informed the Review Group's consideration of the practical

implications of current arrangements, communication, costs, governance and future policy development.

- 2.2.5 The Review Group, would like to place on record their thanks to all officers, Parish and Town Councils, and external contributors who supported the review and provided valuable evidence, experience and insight which assisted the Review Group in reaching its conclusions and recommendations.

2.3 Discussion themes and key insights

- 2.3.1 Discussions at the meetings centred around the following themes:

2.4 Managing Risk, Safety and Community Expectations

- 2.4.1 The first meeting of the Review Group focused on the use of lighting columns and highway street furniture for hanging baskets, festive decorations, CCTV cameras, commemorative displays and other attachments. Members considered the competing priorities of maintaining public safety, complying with national industry guidance, and supporting community-led initiatives that contribute positively to local environments and civic pride.
- 2.4.2 Members received an overview of the interim arrangements that had been agreed with Parish and Town Councils following concerns regarding the structural integrity of lighting columns carrying additional loads. It was explained that, whilst structural testing had become a necessary requirement following updated industry guidance, the Council had sought to mitigate the immediate impact by agreeing to contribute 75% of testing costs, with Parish and Town Councils funding the remaining 25%. Members noted the importance of balancing public safety requirements with the financial challenges faced by local councils whose budgets had already been established for the financial year.
- 2.4.3 A significant part of the discussion centred on the safety implications associated with attachments. Members learnt that some hanging baskets currently in use could weigh up to 60kg once planted and watered and that concerns had been raised by industry specialists regarding the suitability of lighting columns to support loads of this nature. Members discussed the need for a proportionate approach that recognised the distinction between heavier attachments, which may affect structural integrity, and lightweight commemorative or community displays which present minimal risk. The development of clear thresholds and categories of attachment emerged as a key area for further consideration.
- 2.4.4 The Review Group considered the implications for a wide range of attachments beyond hanging baskets, including CCTV cameras, speed monitoring equipment, public notices and commemorative poppies. Members acknowledged that a "one size fits all" approach was unlikely to be appropriate and that any future framework would need to reflect differing levels of risk depending on the type, size and purpose of the attachment.

Members indicated support for a practical and evidence-based approach that avoided unnecessary bureaucracy whilst maintaining public safety.

- 2.4.5 The issue of unauthorised installations was also examined. Members were informed that concerns had been raised regarding attachments being installed without approval or structural assessment. Discussions focused on the potential legal, safety and liability implications should a structural failure or public safety incident occur. Whilst recognising the frustrations experienced by some Parish Councils, Members emphasised the importance of ensuring that any future framework provides clarity regarding responsibilities, compliance requirements and enforcement arrangements.
- 2.4.6 Members also considered the wider condition and resilience of the borough's lighting column network. Discussion highlighted that a failure to meet structural requirements for additional attachments does not necessarily indicate that a column is unsafe for its primary purpose of supporting street lighting. However, the review identified an opportunity to develop a clearer understanding of asset condition, future investment requirements and the relationship between highway asset management and community use of street furniture.
- 2.4.7 The importance of communication and stakeholder engagement emerged as a recurring theme throughout the review. Members received an update on engagement with Parish and Town Councils and recognised the need to better understand the practical challenges faced by local councils and community groups. The review highlighted concerns relating to communication, consistency of information and understanding of requirements, reinforcing the need for closer partnership working as the review progressed.
- 2.4.8 Members concluded that there was a need for a clearer and more transparent policy framework governing attachments to lighting columns. The development of comprehensive guidance, supported by amendments to the Highway Asset Management Plan, was identified as a key outcome of the review. Members considered that future guidance should clearly define permitted and prohibited attachments, approval requirements, roles and responsibilities, testing expectations and enforcement arrangements. Such an approach would support consistent decision-making, improve understanding amongst stakeholders and help balance community aspirations with the Council's statutory duties as Highway Authority.
- 2.4.9 In summary, the first meeting highlighted the complexity of balancing public safety, asset management responsibilities and community expectations. Whilst Members recognised the value that attachments such as hanging baskets, festive decorations and commemorative displays bring to local communities, there was consensus that a more structured, proportionate and transparent framework was required. The meeting established the key lines of enquiry that would underpin the remainder of the review, including structural safety, stakeholder engagement, policy development, communication arrangements and lessons that could be learned from the approaches adopted by other local authorities.

2.5 Parish and Town Council Engagement and Feedback

- 2.5.1 Members considered feedback gathered through direct engagement with Parish and Town Councils, including discussions held with Parish Clerks and information submitted in advance. The purpose of this engagement was to better understand the practical implications of the Council's requirements and to identify opportunities to improve future arrangements.
- 2.5.2 Survey responses demonstrated the widespread use of lighting columns for community purposes. Fourteen Parish and Town Councils responded to the survey and, of the 24 responses received overall, 92% reported using lighting columns for hanging baskets, 79% for remembrance poppies, 63% for festive decorations and 33% for CCTV installations.
- 2.5.2a The Review Group also noted that awareness of the requirements was not universal. Whilst 67% of respondents believed that permission and structural assessments were required before attachments could be installed, 21% were unsure and 13% believed that no permission or testing requirements applied. Members considered that this highlighted the need for clearer communication and greater consistency in the information available to stakeholders.
- 2.5.3 The Review Group noted that there was broad recognition amongst Parish and Town Councils of the importance of maintaining public safety and ensuring that attachments to lighting columns do not compromise highway infrastructure. However, concerns were raised regarding the implementation of the requirements, particularly in relation to timescales, procurement arrangements, communication and affordability.
- 2.5.4 A recurring theme from stakeholder feedback was the perception that the existing process was complex and burdensome. Survey responses indicated that 54% of respondents found the process difficult or very difficult to navigate, whilst only 13% described it as easy. Members heard concerns relating to delays in obtaining information and approvals, uncertainty regarding costs, and the administrative burden associated with identifying lighting columns and completing application requirements. Whilst the Council had sought to simplify arrangements through the introduction of a coordinated procurement process, Parish and Town Councils expressed a desire for clearer communication, defined timescales and greater certainty regarding the steps required to obtain approval. Members recognised that an effective policy framework would need to be supported by straightforward guidance and a transparent application process.
- 2.5.4a Members were particularly concerned by the impact that uncertainty surrounding the requirements had already had on community initiatives. Survey responses indicated that approximately half of respondents had experienced delays or cancellations to planned activities as a result of testing requirements or associated costs. The Review Group noted that many Parish and Town Councils had already entered into contractual

arrangements for hanging baskets, festive displays and related services before the requirement for structural testing became fully understood.

- 2.5.5 Members noted that most Parish and Town Councils participating in engagement activities had indicated a preference for the Council to undertake procurement of structural testing on their behalf. This was viewed as potentially reducing administrative burdens and improving consistency of approach. However, the discussions also highlighted the importance of ensuring that local councils receive regular updates regarding expected testing schedules and timescales for decision making.
- 2.5.6 The Review Group also considered concerns raised regarding compliance and enforcement. Members were informed that some Parish Councils had indicated an intention to install attachments without obtaining the necessary approvals. Whilst recognising the frustrations expressed by some stakeholders, Members concluded that transparency around responsibilities, liabilities and consequences for non-compliance would be an important component of any future policy framework.
- 2.5.7 Overall, the engagement exercise demonstrated a clear willingness amongst Parish and Town Councils to work within an appropriate safety framework. However, the feedback also identified significant concerns regarding communication, implementation, affordability and administrative complexity. Members concluded that future arrangements should seek to balance regulatory requirements with practical delivery considerations, whilst ensuring that local councils are supported through clear guidance, timely consultation and proportionate requirements.

2.6 Understanding the Scale and Nature of Attachment Usage

- 2.6.1 Members considered information provided by officers regarding the extent to which lighting columns are currently used for community and operational purposes across the borough. This evidence was important in helping the Review Group understand the scale of any future testing, licensing and asset management arrangements.
- 2.6.2 Members noted that the Council is responsible for approximately 36,646 lighting columns across the borough, comprising around 27,888 steel columns and 8,758 concrete columns. The scale and diversity of the asset base reinforced the need for any future framework governing attachments to be proportionate, practical and financially sustainable. Members recognised that arrangements must balance public safety, asset management responsibilities and community aspirations whilst remaining deliverable across a network of this size.
- 2.6.3 The Review Group learnt that there are 31 Parish and Town Councils within the borough and that a significant number currently utilise lighting columns for activities such as hanging baskets, festive decorations and community displays. Initial indications suggested that at least 17 Parish and Town Councils may wish to continue installing attachments in future years.

- 2.6.4 Members noted that usage patterns varied significantly between locations, with some Parish and Town Councils making extensive use of lighting columns to support seasonal and environmental initiatives. This highlighted the need for future arrangements to be sufficiently flexible to accommodate differing local circumstances whilst maintaining a consistent borough-wide approach.
- 2.6.5 The discussions reinforced the importance of establishing accurate records relating to the number, location and type of attachments installed throughout the borough. Members recognised that improved data collection would support future decision-making, help identify infrastructure requirements and contribute to more effective long-term asset management.
- 2.6.6 The Review Group concluded that a greater understanding of current usage patterns would be essential in informing future policy development and ensuring that any requirements introduced remain proportionate to the level of risk presented by different types of attachment.

2.7 Learning from Other Local Authorities and Future Policy Development

- 2.7.1 Members were keen to understand how other Highway Authorities had responded to similar challenges and whether there were examples of best practice that could inform future arrangements in Rotherham. The Review Group examined examples of policies and guidance adopted by neighbouring and comparable authorities, including the City of Doncaster Council, Derbyshire County Council and Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council.
- 2.7.2 Despite differences in local processes, Members observed a high degree of consistency between authorities in relation to key requirements. These included the use of licensing or approval processes, the requirement for structural assessments where appropriate, restrictions on certain categories of column and the allocation of responsibility to organisations seeking to install attachments.
- 2.7.3 Members were particularly interested in how other authorities had differentiated between attachment types and developed proportionate requirements for lower-risk activities. Examples considered by the Review Group included separate arrangements for commemorative poppy displays and simplified approval routes for temporary or lightweight installations. Members recognised that similar distinctions could help improve clarity and reduce unnecessary administrative burdens.
- 2.7.4 The examples reviewed also demonstrated the importance of publishing accessible guidance documents that clearly define responsibilities, application requirements, technical standards and enforcement arrangements. Members considered that the absence of a dedicated public guidance document in Rotherham had contributed to confusion amongst stakeholders and that the development of such guidance should form part of the review's recommendations.

2.7.5 A recurring theme across the authorities considered was the need to balance community aspirations with the Highway Authority's statutory duties and liability obligations. Members recognised that whilst community displays contribute positively to local pride and place-making, robust governance arrangements are required to ensure that public assets remain safe and fit for purpose.

2.7.6 The Review Group concluded that there was a clear opportunity for Rotherham to develop a comprehensive policy framework that reflects national guidance whilst addressing local circumstances. The evidence reviewed suggested that improved guidance, clearer processes and a proportionate risk-based approach would help provide greater certainty for communities whilst ensuring the Council continues to meet its legal and asset management responsibilities.

2.8 Further Evidence and Emerging Findings

2.8.1 Emerging Evidence from the Structural Testing Programme

2.8.2 At the final meeting of the Review Group, Members received an update on the progress of the borough-wide structural testing programme. At that stage, approximately 310 lighting columns had been tested, of which only 10 failed assessments for additional loading, representing a failure rate of approximately 3.2%. Members noted that this was significantly lower than had been anticipated from earlier sample testing and provided greater assurance that many existing community initiatives could continue, subject to compliance with the emerging testing and approval framework. The Review Group considered that these results demonstrated the value of undertaking a structured testing programme and suggested that the scale of the issue may be more manageable than originally feared.

2.8.3 Members also considered the variation in testing outcomes between different locations across the borough. Particular interest was expressed in understanding whether failure rates were influenced by factors such as column age, condition, design characteristics or location. The Review Group recognised that the information generated through the testing programme could provide a valuable evidence base, not only for decisions relating to attachments, but also for the Council's wider highway asset management and investment planning processes.

2.8.4 Consistency and Transparency of Future Testing Arrangements

2.8.5 Evidence presented during the meeting highlighted potential variations in inspection and reassessment periods for individual columns. Members noted that some columns appeared to require further assessment after one, three or five years, rather than following a standard interval. Whilst officers agreed to clarify the position, the discussion highlighted the importance of ensuring that future testing arrangements are transparent, evidence-based and readily understood by stakeholders.

- 2.8.6 The Review Group concluded that stakeholders should be provided with clear information regarding testing outcomes, validity periods, retesting requirements and the reasoning behind different inspection intervals. Members considered that transparency in these arrangements would support confidence in the overall framework and reduce uncertainty for Parish and Town Councils seeking to plan future activities.
- 2.8.7 **Compliance, Enforcement and Accountability**
- 2.8.8 The Review Group considered updates regarding unauthorised installations that remained in place despite requests for removal. Members noted that particular concerns existed where attachments had been installed on concrete columns which are unsuitable for structural testing and not considered appropriate for carrying additional loads.
- 2.8.9 Whilst Members recognised the concerns and frustrations expressed by some stakeholders during the review, there was a clear view that any future framework must be underpinned by fair and consistent compliance arrangements. Members considered that organisations following the agreed processes should not be disadvantaged by instances of non-compliance and that the Council should ensure there is clarity regarding enforcement powers, responsibilities and liabilities.
- 2.8.10 The potential recovery of costs associated with removing unauthorised installations was also discussed. Members considered that, where legally permissible, recovery of reasonable costs may help reinforce the importance of compliance whilst protecting public resources from avoidable expenditure.
- 2.8.11 **Long-Term Sustainability and Future Investment**
- 2.8.12 As the review progressed, Members increasingly focused on the longer-term implications of the emerging testing results. Whilst acknowledging that public safety must remain the primary consideration, the Review Group recognised that testing outcomes may have implications for the continuation of long-established community initiatives in certain locations. Members noted, however, that the overall failure rate emerging from the testing programme was relatively low. Whilst this was encouraging, the Review Group recognised that the impact of individual failures could still be significant in locations where established floral displays or community initiatives relied upon a small number of specific columns.
- 2.8.13 Members concluded that future arrangements should not focus solely on permissions and testing but should also support consideration of alternative solutions where columns are unable to safely accommodate attachments. These could include alternative display methods, dedicated structures designed specifically for floral displays, or the use of testing information to inform future asset replacement and investment programmes. The Review Group considered that such an approach would support both community aspirations and the Council's wider asset management objectives.

2.9 Emerging Themes and Key Insights

2.9.1 Communication and Stakeholder Engagement

2.9.2 One of the most consistent themes arising throughout the review was the importance of effective communication and engagement between the Council and Parish and Town Councils. Whilst stakeholders generally accepted the need for appropriate safety measures, many respondents expressed concern regarding the timing of communications and the limited opportunity to plan for the implications of the new arrangements.

2.9.3 Throughout the review, Members recognised that attachments vary considerably in size, weight, duration and potential impact on highway infrastructure. Evidence gathered through the Parish and Town Council survey demonstrated strong concern regarding the proportionality of the requirements being applied. Of the respondents surveyed, 83% considered the requirements to be either somewhat disproportionate or very disproportionate, whilst no respondents considered them proportionate. Members noted that many stakeholders felt insufficient distinction was being made between lightweight, temporary attachments and larger installations that create more significant structural and safety considerations.

2.9.4 The Review Group concluded that a risk-based framework represents the most appropriate approach to balancing public safety with practical implementation. Members considered that future arrangements should distinguish more clearly between differing categories of attachment, recognising that low-risk commemorative or temporary displays do not present the same level of risk as heavier installations such as hanging baskets, festive decorations, CCTV equipment or speed monitoring devices.

2.9.5 Members further concluded that the proposed categorisation of exempt, conditionally permitted and prohibited attachments would provide a transparent and proportionate framework capable of applying controls according to the level of risk presented. Such an approach would help improve understanding, reduce unnecessary administrative burdens and provide greater confidence that regulatory requirements are both evidence-based and proportionate whilst continuing to protect public safety and the integrity of the Council's highway assets.

2.9.6 Clarity, Consistency and Transparency

2.9.7 Evidence gathered during the review demonstrated a desire amongst stakeholders for greater clarity regarding requirements, responsibilities and processes. Survey responses and engagement activity identified uncertainty in relation to approvals, testing arrangements, maintenance obligations, liabilities and enforcement procedures.

2.9.8 Members considered that future arrangements should be supported by a clearly defined policy framework and comprehensive guidance

documentation. The Review Group concluded that greater transparency would improve consistency in decision-making, reduce misunderstanding and provide increased certainty for all organisations seeking to utilise lighting columns for community purposes.

2.9.9 Proportionate and Risk-Based Regulation

2.9.10 Throughout the review, Members recognised that attachments vary considerably in size, weight, duration and potential impact on highway infrastructure. Evidence indicated a strong desire amongst stakeholders for arrangements that distinguish between low-risk and higher-risk installations.

2.9.11 The Review Group concluded that a risk-based framework represents the most appropriate approach to balancing public safety with practical implementation. Members considered that the proposed categorisation of exempt, conditionally permitted and prohibited attachments would provide a transparent structure capable of applying controls proportionate to the level of risk presented.

2.9.12 Affordability, Capacity and Deliverability

2.9.13 The review highlighted concerns regarding both the direct and indirect costs associated with compliance. Stakeholders referred not only to testing costs but also to the administrative burden involved in identifying assets, coordinating testing, obtaining approvals and maintaining records. These concerns were particularly evident amongst smaller Parish and Town Councils operating with limited administrative resources.

2.9.14 Members concluded that future arrangements should seek to minimise unnecessary administrative burdens and make best use of coordinated approaches where appropriate. Borough-wide procurement, shared testing arrangements and standardised processes were identified as opportunities to improve efficiency and secure greater value for money.

2.9.15 Balancing Public Safety and Community Benefit

2.9.16 Members were mindful throughout the review of the significant contribution that hanging baskets, festive decorations, remembrance displays and other attachments make to local identity, civic pride and community wellbeing. Evidence gathered from Parish and Town Councils demonstrated strong support for these initiatives and highlighted their importance to local communities.

2.9.17 The Review Group concluded that public safety and community benefit should not be viewed as competing objectives. Rather, the review demonstrated that clear guidance, proportionate controls and effective communication can support the continuation of valued community initiatives whilst ensuring that the Council continues to fulfil its responsibilities as Highway Authority.

2.10 Conclusion

- 2.10.1 The Review Group found broad acceptance amongst stakeholders that appropriate safeguards are required to ensure that attachments to lighting columns do not compromise public safety or the integrity of highway assets. Evidence gathered throughout the review demonstrated a willingness amongst Parish and Town Councils to work within an agreed framework where requirements are clearly explained, proportionate and consistently applied.
- 2.10.2 A significant finding of the Review Group was that stakeholders did not generally challenge the principle of structural testing where justified by risk. Evidence gathered through the Parish and Town Council survey, stakeholder engagement, officer evidence and discussions throughout the review indicated broad acceptance of the need to ensure that attachments to lighting columns are managed safely and responsibly. However, concerns were consistently raised regarding the way in which the requirements had been introduced and implemented. In particular, stakeholders highlighted the timing of communications, the limited advance notice provided, uncertainty around responsibilities and costs, and the practical implications for councils that had already set budgets or entered contractual commitments for community display schemes. The Review Group concluded that the long-term success of any future framework will depend not only upon the technical requirements it contains but also upon effective communication, meaningful consultation, transparency and proportionate implementation arrangements.
- 2.10.3 The Review Group concluded that there is a clear need for a comprehensive and publicly accessible framework that provides certainty regarding approvals, responsibilities, testing requirements, maintenance obligations and enforcement arrangements. Such a framework should be supported by detailed guidance, clear communication arrangements and ongoing engagement with Parish and Town Councils to promote consistency, understanding and confidence in decision-making.
- 2.10.4 The Review Group further concluded that future arrangements should be founded upon a proportionate and evidence-based approach. Attachments should be considered according to their level of risk, allowing regulatory controls, testing requirements and resources to be focused where they are most needed whilst minimising unnecessary administrative and financial burdens. A risk-based approach would better reflect the differing characteristics of attachments and help ensure that community initiatives can continue where this can be achieved safely.
- 2.10.5 Members are of the opinion that the review presents an opportunity to establish a clear, proportionate and sustainable approach to the management of lighting column attachments across the borough. By combining robust public safety standards with improved communication, stronger partnership working and greater transparency, the Council can continue to support valued community initiatives whilst fulfilling its statutory

responsibilities as Highway Authority. These conclusions directly informed the recommendations contained within this report.

2.11 How the Findings Informed the Recommendations

2.11.1 The Review Group was satisfied that the recommendations contained within this report are directly supported by the evidence gathered throughout the review. The review identified broad support for community-led initiatives such as hanging baskets, festive decorations, remembrance displays and CCTV installations, alongside widespread recognition of the need to ensure that attachments to lighting columns are managed safely and in accordance with the Council's responsibilities as Highway Authority.

2.11.2 Evidence gathered through stakeholder engagement, the Parish and Town Council survey, officer evidence and benchmarking activity identified a number of recurring themes which directly informed the recommendations contained within this report. In particular, the Review Group found that:

- Stakeholders broadly accepted the need for appropriate safety controls and structural assessments where justified by risk but sought improved communication, consultation and implementation arrangements. This finding informed Recommendations 2(c) and 2(g).
- Existing requirements lacked clarity and consistency, resulting in uncertainty regarding approvals, responsibilities, testing requirements and enforcement arrangements. This finding informed Recommendations 2(a) and 2(b).
- A more proportionate and risk-based approach was required to distinguish between differing categories of attachment and the level of risk they present. This finding informed Recommendation 2(d).
- Parish and Town Councils identified administrative burdens and cost pressures associated with testing, approvals and compliance and expressed support for coordinated approaches capable of reducing costs and improving efficiency. This finding informed Recommendation 2(e).
- The emerging results from the structural testing programme suggested that many community initiatives could continue where supported by an appropriate assessment framework, whilst highlighting opportunities to use testing information to support future asset management, investment decisions and alternative solutions where attachments cannot safely be accommodated. This finding informed Recommendation 2(f).
- Concerns regarding unauthorised installations highlighted the importance of clear compliance expectations, responsibilities and enforcement arrangements. This finding informed Recommendation 2(h).

- 2.11.3 The Review Group concluded that the recommendations represent a balanced and evidence-based response to the issues identified during the review. Taken together, they seek to improve communication, transparency, consistency and proportionality whilst ensuring that public safety, effective asset management and support for community-led initiatives remain central considerations.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 Option A: Do Nothing (Not Recommended)

- 3.1.1 This option would retain the current arrangements without introducing a revised policy framework, additional guidance, enhanced consultation arrangements or changes to approval and enforcement processes.

- 3.1.2 The Review Group does not support this option as it would not address concerns identified during the review relating to communication, consistency, transparency and uncertainty regarding the management of attachments to lighting columns. It would also fail to provide Parish and Town Councils with the clarity and certainty they requested through the review process.

3.2 Option B: Develop a Comprehensive Policy Framework and Guidance (Preferred Option)

- 3.2.1 This option would implement the recommendations contained within this report, including amendments to the Highway Asset Management Plan, publication of a dedicated guidance document, clearer categorisation of attachments, enhanced consultation arrangements and a more transparent approval and enforcement framework.

- 3.2.2 The Review Group considers this to be the preferred option as it provides a balanced approach which maintains public safety, supports community-led initiatives where appropriate, improves communication with Parish and Town Councils, and promotes greater consistency and transparency in decision-making.

3.3 Recommended Proposal

- 3.3.1 The Review Group recommends Option B and asks Cabinet to consider the recommendations set out in this report and provide a formal response within two months in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 Consultation and engagement formed a key part of the review.

- 4.2 Evidence was gathered through:
- Scrutiny Review Group meetings.
 - Officer briefings.

- Meetings with Parish Council representatives.
- A Parish Council survey.
- Examination of practices used by other councils.

4.3 Results from the survey and engagement activities demonstrated broad support for community initiatives but also highlighted concerns regarding communication, affordability and implementation.

4.4 The findings from this consultation have directly informed the recommendations contained within this report.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 Accountability for considering and implementing any recommendations arising from this report will rest with Cabinet and the relevant officers, subject to Cabinet's determination of its response to the scrutiny review.

5.2 In accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, Cabinet is required to formally consider and respond to recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board within two months of receiving this report.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

6.1 The recommendations contained within this scrutiny review do not, in themselves, create an immediate financial commitment. Any financial or procurement implications arising from Cabinet's consideration of the recommendations would need to be fully assessed and costed by the relevant service areas as part of the development of Cabinet's response and any subsequent implementation proposals.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

7.1 The recommendations contained within this scrutiny review do not, in themselves, give rise to any immediate legal implications. Any legal implications arising from Cabinet's consideration of the recommendations would need to be considered as part of the development of Cabinet's response.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 The recommendations contained within this scrutiny review do not, in themselves, give rise to any immediate human resources implications. Any such implications arising from Cabinet's consideration of the recommendations would be considered as part of the development of Cabinet's response.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 The recommendations contained within this scrutiny review do not, in themselves, give rise to any immediate implications for children and young

people or vulnerable adults. Any such implications would be considered as part of the development of Cabinet's response.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 The recommendations contained within this scrutiny review do not, in themselves, give rise to any immediate equalities or human rights implications. The recommendations are intended to support a more transparent, consistent and proportionate approach to managing attachments on lighting columns across the borough.
- 10.2 Any equalities or human rights implications arising from Cabinet's consideration of the recommendations would be assessed by the relevant service areas as part of the development of Cabinet's response and any subsequent implementation proposals, including consideration of whether a full Equality Impact Assessment is required.

11. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 The recommendations contained within this scrutiny review do not, in themselves, give rise to any immediate implications for CO₂ emissions or climate change. Any environmental or climate-related impacts associated with future asset replacement, testing programmes or implementation proposals arising from Cabinet's consideration of the recommendations would be assessed by the relevant service areas as part of the development of Cabinet's response.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 The recommendations have significant implications for Parish and Town Councils, who are the principal users of lighting columns for hanging baskets, festive decorations, commemorative displays and CCTV installations.
- 12.2 The proposed arrangements aim to provide greater certainty, transparency and consistency in decision making.
- 12.3 The recommendations also have implications for community organisations, volunteers and suppliers who support local events and initiatives. Improved communication and clearer guidance should assist these organisations in planning and delivering activities more effectively.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 The review identified several key risks:
- Structural failure of lighting columns carrying additional loads.
 - Public safety incidents.
 - Unauthorised attachments.
 - Financial pressures on Parish and Town Councils.
 - Damage to relationships between the Council and local communities.
 - Inconsistent decision making caused by unclear guidance.

- 13.2 The recommendations seek to mitigate these risks through:
- Risk-based structural testing arrangements.
 - Clear categorisation of permitted, conditionally permitted and prohibited attachments.
 - Improved consultation and communication.
 - Publicly available guidance.
 - Consistent approval and enforcement processes.
 - Better use of testing information to inform future asset investment and replacement programmes.
- 13.3 The Review Group considers that these measures provide the most balanced approach to protecting public safety whilst continuing to support the community-led initiatives that contribute positively to the borough's towns and villages.

Accountable Officer

Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer
Barbel Gale, Governance Manager

Approvals obtained on behalf of:

	Name	Date
Service Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phillip Horsfield	07/08/26
The Executive Director with responsibility for this report	Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services, on behalf of Jane Maxwell, Director of Policy, Strategy and Engagement	26/08/26
Consultation undertaken with the relevant Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Communities - Councillor Allen	10/08/26

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Public Report

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 08 September 2026

Report Title

Proposal to Appoint the Rotherham Women's Health Network as a Non-Voting Co-optee to the Health Select Commission

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Executive Director Approving Submission of the Report

Jane Maxwell, Director of Policy, Strategy and Engagement

Report Author(s)

Kerry Grinsill-Clinton, Governance Advisor
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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The Health Select Commission (HSC) wishes to offer a co-optee seat to the Rotherham Women's Health Network (RWHN) to ensure that women's health issues are represented consistently within the Council's scrutiny process and to strengthen the voice of women in local health decision-making.

During its meeting on 18 June 2026, the Commission examined evidence of significant health inequalities affecting women, including declining healthy life expectancy, long waiting times for routine services, variations in referral quality and concerns that women are not always listened to within the health system. Members considered the Network's role in bringing together partners from health, social care, community and voluntary sectors to improve outcomes and provide valuable patient and practitioner insight.

The Commission recognises that the Network would provide ongoing expertise, lived experience and challenge, helping scrutiny members monitor progress on women's health priorities and future service developments, and as a co-optee, would benefit from a formal mechanism for continued engagement and oversight. As such, the Commission voted to appoint the Rotherham Women's Health Network as a co-optee via a formal report to its 23 July 2026 meeting.

Recommendations

That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board:

1. Approves the appointment of a non-voting Co-optee from the Rotherham Women's Health Network (RWHN) to the Health Select Commission's membership.
2. Approves that the RWHN non-voting Co-optee seat on the Health Select Commission shall remain in place until such time as it is deemed no longer necessary or appropriate by the Commission.

List of Appendices Included

None.

Background Papers

[18 June 2026 Health Select Commission Meeting Minutes](#) (Minute 6)

[23 July 2026 Health Select Commission Meeting Minutes](#) (Minute 18)

[Council's Constitution, Appendix 9 - Responsibility for Functions](#)

[The Local Authority \(Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny\) Regulations 2013](#)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Health Select Commission

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Proposal to Appoint the Rotherham Women's Health Network as a Non-Voting Co-optee to the Health Select Commission

1. Background

- 1.1 The Rotherham Women's Health Network (RWHN) was established in August 2025 by a group of women committed to tackling the health inequalities experienced by women across Rotherham. The voluntary network brings together partners from the Council, primary and secondary healthcare services, and the Voluntary and Community Sector.
- 1.2 Its primary aim is to ensure that women's health remains a visible local priority, addressing inequalities in health outcomes for Rotherham women whilst simultaneously seeking to improve co-ordination between services, gather and analyse health intelligence and lived experience, raise awareness of women's health issues, support service improvement, influence local decision-making and strengthen research and engagement opportunities.
- 1.3 The work of the RWHN is largely synonymous with the Health Select Commission's terms of reference and reflects at least two of the themes of the Council Plan; 'Residents Live Well' and 'One Council That Listens And Learns'. To date, members of the RWHN have actively presented on the topic of women's health at the Health Select Commission's public meetings and contributed to the Access to Contraception and Menopause Reviews completed by the Commission.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The Council's Constitution sets out the following detail in relation to the appointment of non-voting co-optees at Appendix 9, Responsibility for Functions:

'The [Scrutiny] Commissions shall comprise:

- 18 Members of the Council (quorum – 6)
- any non-voting co-optees appointed from time to time by each select commission;'

- 2.2 It also details within the Terms of Reference for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board that it is responsible for Co-optee appointments by virtue of the following:

'20. To appoint non-voting co-optees to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and/or Select Commissions or Task and Finish Groups.'

- 2.3 In relation to the appointment of non-voting Co-optees, the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 does not specifically refer to Local Authority arrangements regarding the appointment of Co-optees, but does state:

'Co-option

31.(1) A county council may arrange for one or more of the members of an overview and scrutiny committee of the council of a district comprised in the area of that county council to be appointed as—

- (a) a member of an overview and scrutiny committee of the county council or another local authority, for the purposes of relevant functions exercisable by the committee in relation to the county council; or
- (b) a member of an overview and scrutiny committee of the county council, for the purposes of relevant functions exercisable by the committee in relation to another local authority.

(2) A county council making arrangements for an appointment under paragraph (1)(a) or (b) may specify that the appointment is—

- (a) for the life of the overview and scrutiny committee; or
- (b) until such time as it decides to terminate the appointment; or
- (c) for the review or scrutiny of a particular matter.'

2.4 As such, should members support the appointment of a representative of the Rotherham Women's Health Network (RWHN), to the Health Select Commission, this would subsequently be taken to the next OSMB meeting for approval, before the appointment could be confirmed.

2.5 The intention is that, if supported, the recommendation to OSMB would be to appoint an RWHN representative as a Co-optee in line with (b) above, until such time as the Health Select Commission decides to terminate the appointment as described in recommendation 2 of this report.

2.6 The expectation would not be for the Rotherham Women's Health Network (RWHN) to attend all Health Select Commission meetings, but would afford them the opportunity to attend all meetings where an item relevant to the women's health agenda and the aims and objectives of the RWHN was due to be considered.

2.7 Non-voting co-optee status would offer the RWHN the ability to ask questions of presenters and to offer views and comments on proposals put before the commission.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 The possibility of issuing invitations to HSC Meetings on a case by case basis was considered, however, it was felt that such an approach would place an additional administrative burden on the Commission to identify relevant topics and make direct contact with the RWHN every time a relevant topic featured on a published HSC agenda. Given the voluntary role of the RWHN members, and as agendas are only published one week ahead of the proposed meeting date, it was felt that this may create difficulties in clearing diaries at short notice to secure attendance and participation. Likewise, it was felt that such an approach would risk the RWHN becoming disengaged with

scrutiny activity, and would therefore undermine the intended mutual benefit of its continued involvement in health scrutiny.

- 3.2 Whilst other organisations such as Healthwatch Rotherham, the South Yorkshire ICB and The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust routinely attend HSC meetings by virtue of either being commissioned by the Council to provide borough-wide health related services for Rotherham residents, or as a commissioner of services for Rotherham residents under the wider NHS infrastructure, the same cannot be said for the RWHN, so it would not be appropriate to conduct a transparent, formal professional working relationship under those same arrangements.

- 3.3 Resultantly, the only viable option which would:

- a) be compliant with the Council's Constitution,
- b) reflect the spirit of the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013, and
- c) facilitate truly flexible and unbureaucratic access and mutually beneficial participation in scrutiny activity

was the proposed option of offering a non-voting co-optee seat on the Health Select Commission to the Rotherham Women's Health Network.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 The possibility of proposing that the RWHN be offered a Co-optee seat on the Health Select Commission was outlined as part of the recommendations agreed during its 18 June 2026 meeting. The Cabinet Member for Adult Care and Health, Councillor Baker-Rogers was in attendance at that meeting, along with the Executive Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health. No concerns have been raised in relation to the Health Select Commission's recommendation, which was unanimously agreed by those present.
- 4.2 Likewise, the Health Select Commission's intention to formally propose the appointment of the RWHN as a non-voting co-optee was outlined to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) during the HSC update to OSMB which formed part of the agenda at its 1 July 2026 meeting. Similarly, no concerns in relation to the proposal have been raised following that meeting.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 A formal report detailing the rationale for the proposal was presented to the Health Select Commission's 23 July 2026, where members unanimously support the recommendation to appoint the RWHN as a non-voting Co-optee.
- 5.2 In line with the Council's Constitution, this report is presented to the 8 September 2026 Overview and Scrutiny Management Board meeting, to approve the appointment in line with the recommendations outlined in this report.

- 5.3 The appointment of the RWHN as a non-voting Co-optee to the Health Select Commission will take immediate effect upon receiving OSMB's approval.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 No financial or procurement implications arise directly from this report or its recommendations.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 There are no human resources implications directly arising from this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 There are no implications for children and young people directly arising from this report.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 Furthering equalities and human rights are scrutiny objectives; therefore, Members considered equalities in the development of scrutiny work programmes, lines of inquiry and in their derivation of recommendations designed to improve the delivery of council services for residents.

11. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 There are no climate or emissions implications directly associated with this report.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 There are no implications for partners directly associated with this report.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 There are no risks directly associated with this report and recommendations. The risks associated with the options considered and rejected have been described within the relevant section.

Accountable Officer

Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Approvals obtained on behalf of:

	Name	Date
The Executive Director with responsibility for this report	Jane Maxwell, Director of Policy, Strategy and Engagement	19/08/26
Head of Democratic Services (if appropriate)	Emma Hill	19/08/26

Report Author: [Kerry Grinsill-Clinton](#)
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This report is published on the Council's [website](#).

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Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – Work Programme 2026-27

Chair: Councillor Brian Steele
Governance Manager: Barbel Gale

Vice-Chair: Cllr Joshua Bacon
Link Officer: Phillip Horsfield

The following principles were endorsed by OSMB at its meeting of 5 July 2023 as criteria to long/short list each of the commission's respective priorities:

Establish as a starting point:

- What are the key issues?
- What is the outcome that we want?

Agree principles for longlisting:

- Can scrutiny add value or influence?
- Is it being looked at elsewhere?
- Is it a priority – council or community?

Developing a consistent shortlisting criteria e.g.

- T: Time: is it the right time, enough resources?
- O: Others: is this duplicating the work of another body?
- P: Performance: can scrutiny make a difference
- I: Interest – what is the interest to the public?
- C: Contribution to the corporate plan

Meeting Date	Responsible Officer	Agenda Item
Wednesday 6 May 2026	Jayne Metcalfe	Progress Update on Future Rothercare Model
	Ian Spicer	Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2026 2031 - Pre-decision scrutiny
	Andrew Bramidge	Rotherham Markets and Libraries - Pre-decision scrutiny
	Andrew Bramidge	Selective Licensing Community Impact - Pre-decision scrutiny
	Barbel Gale	Work Programme
	Each Governance Advisor	Work in progress from Select Commissions
	Barbel Gale	Forward Plan of Key Decisions
Wednesday 3 June 2026	Judith Badger & Rob Mahon	Finance Update June 2026 - Pre-decision scrutiny
	Andrew Bramidge	Renters Rights Act Policy Consultation - Pre-decision scrutiny
	Kerry Grinsill-Clinton	Menopause Scrutiny Review by Health Select Commission
	Barbel Gale	Work Programme
	Each Governance Advisor	Work in progress from Select Commissions
	Barbel Gale	Forward Plan of Key Decisions
Wednesday 1 July 2026	John Edwards	Council Plan 2025 - 2028 & New Year Ahead Delivery Plan - Pre-decision
		Leader Q&A - to be scheduled after Council plan on the agenda.
	Judith Badger & Rob Mahon	Financial Outturn 2025-26 - Pre-decision scrutiny
	Judith Badger & Rob Mahon	Treasury Management Outturn 2025-26 - Pre-decision scrutiny
	Judith Badger & Rob Mahon	Financial Monitoring for May - Pre-decision scrutiny
	Andrew Bramidge	Draft Street Trading Policy - Pre-decision scrutiny
	Kerry Grinsill-Clinton	Scrutiny Annual Report 2025-2026
	Barbel Gale	Work Programme
	Each Governance Advisor	Work in progress from Select Commissions
Tuesday 8 September 2026	Jane Maxwell	Social Value Annual Report - Pre-decision
	Judith Badger / Rob Mahon	July 2026-27 Financial Monitoring Report - Pre-decision
	Barbel Gale	Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Scrutiny Review – Street Lighting Columns
	Phil Horsfield	Health Select Commission - Proposal to Appoint the Rotherham Women's Health Network as a Non-Voting Co-optee
	Barbel Gale	Work Programme
	Each Governance Advisor	Work in progress from Select Commissions
	Barbel Gale	Forward Plan of Key Decisions

Wednesday 7 October 2026	Andrew Bramidge	Replacement of refuse vehicles: Information to be provided to give an update on the procurement of the new refuse vehicles and progress against the target for renewal of the fleet. These briefings should be split to represent the different phases of the programme.
	Andrew Bramidge / Sue Procter / Barry Connolly	Public on street bin collections: Information to be provided regarding the emptying of public bins. This information should include details of how overflowing bins can be reported, how often collections are scheduled for and how those are monitored, what join arrangements are in place with Parish Council's, if any, and a list of the locations of bins under RMBC management, if available.
	Andrew Bramidge	Draft Street Trading Policy 2026 - Pre-decision
	Barbel Gale	Work Programme
	Each Governance Advisor	Work in progress from Select Commissions
	Barbel Gale	Forward Plan of Key Decisions

Extraordinary Meeting proposed for 7 October 2026	Mat Dyson	OSMB Children's Takeover Challenge - The RYC has selected Mental Health as the theme for this year's Takeover Challenge.
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Wednesday 11 November 2026	Andrew Bramidge / Simon Moss / Fiona Fletcher	Progress update on the implementation of the Pathways to Work Economic Inactivity Trailblazer programme - The programme will be a good way through year 2, therefore members will receive an update on both year 1 outcomes, year 2 developments and target forecasts.
	Fiona Boden	Complaints Annual Report - Look to move this to December.
	Kevin Fisher & Judith Badger	Investing in our Community Facilities - Pre-Decision scrutiny - Update report to include the the updated condition survey results
	Barbel Gale	Work Programme
	Each Governance Advisor	Work in progress from Select Commissions
	Barbel Gale	Forward Plan of Key Decisions

Wednesday 9 December 2026		
	Barbel Gale	Work Programme
	Each Governance Advisor	Work in progress from Select Commissions
	Barbel Gale	Forward Plan of Key Decisions

Tuesday 12 January 2027		Council Plan and Year Ahead Delivery Plan Progress Update - Pre-decision
	Barbel Gale	Work Programme
	Each Governance Advisor	Work in progress from Select Commissions
	Barbel Gale	Forward Plan of Key Decisions

Wednesday 3 February 2027		Budget and Council Tax Report 2027-28 - Pre-decision
	Barbel Gale	Work Programme
	Each Governance Advisor	Work in progress from Select Commissions
	Barbel Gale	Forward Plan of Key Decisions

Wednesday 10 March 2027		
	Barbel Gale	Work Programme
	Each Governance Advisor	Work in progress from Select Commissions
	Barbel Gale	Forward Plan of Key Decisions

Wednesday 7 April 2027		
	Barbel Gale	Work Programme
	Each Governance Advisor	Work in progress from Select Commissions
	Barbel Gale	Forward Plan of Key Decisions

Substantive Items for Scheduling		
Nov-26	Andrew Bramidge / Simon Moss / Fiona Fletcher	Progress update on the implementation of the Pathways to Work Economic Inactivity Trailblazer programme - The programme will be a good way through year 2, therefore members will receive an update on both year 1 outcomes, year 2 developments and target forecasts.
Jul-29	Andrew Bramidge / Polly Hamilton	At it's meeting on 10 December 2025 during its consideration of the Library Strategy as part of it's pre-decision work OSMB agreed to receive a mid-point progress update on the implementation of the Library Strategy 2027–2032.
December 2026 / April 2027	Mike Thomas	It was agreed that the final Community Governance Review report would be presented to OSMB as part of its pre-decision scrutiny work ahead of its consideration by Cabinet
TBC		Notice of Motion relating to Stop Polluting Our Rivers and Hiking Our Bills - Considered and agreed by Council on 15 July 2026. 2. Invite the Chief Executives of Yorkshire Water and Severn Trent to a special meeting of [delete] Full Council [insert] Scrutiny with all Members to answer questions from councillors and members of the public and to establish urgent commitments and timescales to improve their infrastructure and reduce sewage discharges in Rotherham.
Reviews for Scheduling		
Completed	Sam Barstow	Lighting Columns - Cut unnecessary red tape
TBC		Consultation Process - Following consideration using the scrutiny prioritisation tool this review was prioritised as a topic for review. This has been added to the work programme report for further discussion at the meeting on 8 September 2026
Following the prioritisation meeting OSMB members agreed that this would be removed from the work programme		Council's expenditure on Taxi and Private Hire Services - To go through the scrutiny prioritisation tool. Following consideration using the scrutiny prioritisation tool this review was not prioritised as a topic for review. This item be removed from the work programme.
Within 6 Months		Notice of Motion: relating to Protecting Children, Supporting Honest Businesses and Cracking Down on Illicit Vapes, Tobacco and Underage Sales - Considered and agreed by Council on 15 July 2026. 4. Request that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) considers this issue within six months and, where appropriate, refers elements to the relevant Select Commission(s). OSMB should receive a further progress report within 12 months. Following consideration using the scrutiny prioritisation tool this review was prioritised as a topic for review. This has been added to the work programme report for further discussion at the meeting on 8 September 2026
Following the prioritisation meeting OSMB members agreed that the interim approach would be to refer the matter to JHOSC in the first instance.		Notice of Motion relating to Protecting Rotherham Residents' NHS and Council Data - Rejecting Reliance on Palantir - Considered and agreed by Council on 15 July 2026. 23. Request the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to consider adding to its work programme a referral to the Health Select Commission to examine: a. ☐ •the present and proposed use of Palantir technology by local NHS organisations; •which patient and non-patient datasets are being processed; •the effect on patient confidence, data objections and the National Data Opt-out; •the equality implications, particularly for minority communities and groups. •alternative systems and the potential costs and risks of withdrawal; •and how Rotherham residents will be consulted before any significant expansion of its use. Given the timeframe of the current review being undertaken by government, which is expected to conclude in Autumn 2026, as this may result in the enactment of the early 2027 break clause it may be a premature/ineffective use of resources to progress detailed work prior to this time. As such, OSMB members agreed that the interim approach would be to refer the matter to JHOSC in the first instance, to ask them consider progressing the issue at regional level if the government's decision is not to enact the early 2027 break clause. If the break clause is not enacted and JHOSC elect not to address the issue this through its formal work programme, OSMB members agreed that at this stage, the matter would be referred into HSC to scope and address accordingly. Resultantly, full scoping and scoring was not progressed at this time, as this would be for HSC to undertake at the relevant stage.
Items to be Considered by Other Means (e.g. off-agenda briefing, workshop etc)		

Nov-26	Andrew Bramidge	An update on progress following the implementation of Waste Service Route Optimisation programme be brought back to OSMB within twelve months via an off-agenda briefing.
November / December 2026	Andrew Bramidge	An update on the progress following the implementation of the Street Safe Team programme be brought back to OSMB within twelve months via an off-agenda briefing.
TBC	Luke Sayers	IT Systems: Workshop to be arranged for members of OSMB to understand what IT systems the Council is using, what the purpose of those systems is, are those systems as up to date as possible, how updates to those systems are managed, how the Council is using artificial intelligence (AI), is the Council using outdated technology, and was the Council spending too much or too little in this area.
TBC	Lynsey Linton	Recruitment: Initially information has been requested to understand how recruitment is carried out across the Council, indicating if the same processes were used across all directorates, detailing if recruitment was centralised, was there a reliance on agency staff to cover staff vacancies. After consideration of the off-agenda briefing Members of OSMB will then consider if a workshop needs to be held to discuss this in more detail.
TBC	Fiona Fletcher	Pathways to Work Economic Inactivity Trailblazer programme: Agreed that a briefing be provided to share the details of the commissioned VCSE organisations and their geographic reach with members of OSMB.
TBC		Smaller Road Schemes - Briefing note - Briefing Note to be shared with Members re. Highway and Transportation Schemes Remit/Funding
Items for Future Consideration		

BRIEFING	TO:	Members of OSMB
	DATE:	8 September 2026
	LEAD OFFICER:	Barbel Gale, Governance Manager
	TITLE:	OSMB Scrutiny Review - The Council's Consultation Process
1. Background		
1.1	The topic was selected for scrutiny review following concerns raised about the effectiveness and accessibility of the Council's consultation processes. In particular, there was concern that some consultations are undertaken during periods such as the summer holidays, when residents, stakeholders and service users may be less able to participate, potentially affecting response rates and the representativeness of feedback received.	
1.2	The review provides an opportunity to examine how the Council engages with interested parties and whether current consultation methods are achieving the desired level of participation. This will include hearing evidence from existing approaches to Consultation across the Council in order to understand the present position, identify best practice, encourage cross-directorate learning and identify any areas for improvement more generally. The review will be supported by the Council's Policy, Performance and Improvement Team who provide central support for those responsible for consultations.	
1.3	A key focus of the review will be accessibility, ensuring that consultation processes are inclusive and enable all sections of the community to participate. The review will also consider examples of good practice from across the Council, including consultation approaches used by each of the Council's Directorates, to identify lessons that could be applied more widely.	
1.4	In addition, the review will explore how feedback is communicated to participants following consultations. This includes considering the effectiveness of "You Said, We Did" approaches and ensuring there is clear communication where suggestions cannot be implemented, helping to demonstrate transparency, accountability and the impact of public engagement.	
2. Purpose of the Review		
2.1	The review will assess whether the Council's consultation arrangements enable residents and stakeholders to participate effectively, particularly where consultation outcomes are intended to inform decision-making.	
2.2	Through examination of selected consultation case studies and stakeholder evidence, the review will identify opportunities to improve accessibility, participation and communication of outcomes.	
3. Scope of the Review		

3.1	The review will examine a small number of recent consultation exercises to assess whether the Council's current arrangements support accessible participation, timely engagement and effective feedback to residents. The review will use selected case studies to identify strengths, areas for improvement and examples of good practice.
3.2	The review will focus on three key areas: • Planning and Governance - including consultation planning, timing, governance arrangements, quality assurance, corporate guidance and the use of consultation tools and platforms. • Accessibility and Participation - including equality considerations, engagement with under-represented groups, digital inclusion, and approaches used to engage children and young people and other communities. • Feedback and Impact - including the analysis of responses, communication of outcomes, transparency, accountability and the influence of consultation findings on decision-making.
3.3	Benchmarking information, case studies and examples of good practice will be used throughout the review to support assessment of these themes and identify opportunities for improvement.
4. Out of Scope	
4.1	The review will not: • revisit decisions already made following individual consultation exercises; • assess specific service policies except where used as case studies; • evaluate political or legislative requirements for consultation; • investigate complaints relating to individual consultations.
5. Key Stakeholders to Engage	
5.1	The review will seek evidence from a small number of key stakeholders representing those responsible for consultation activity and those who regularly participate in, or support participation in, Council consultations. Internal Stakeholders: • Director of Policy, Strategy and Engagement • Head of Communications and Marketing • Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead • Representative from Children's Services • Representative from Adult Social Care • Representative from Corporate Services • Representative from Regeneration and Environment
5.2	The review group would also benefit from speak with the following people or groups: • Community and Voluntary Sector Organisations. • Residents and Community Representatives, such as a Tenant Representative, Parish and Town Council Representative, or a Resident Association Representative. • Young People and Inclusion Groups, such as a Rotherham Youth Cabinet Representative, a School Council Representative, or a Disability Forum Representative

5.3	The review will also draw upon good practice and benchmarking information from a small number of other authorities, including City of Doncaster Council, Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, and Sheffield City Council.
5.4	This mix of stakeholders will provide insight into the Council's current consultation arrangements, the experiences of residents and community groups, and examples of good practice from elsewhere.
6. Proposed Methodology	
6.1	Stage 1: Baseline Briefing and Case Study Selection • An introductory briefing from officers outlining the Council's current consultation arrangements. • Identification of a maximum of 2 recent consultation exercises from each Directorate to be used as case studies throughout the review.
6.2	Stage 2: Evidence Gathering Session • A single evidence session bringing together relevant officers, community representatives and service representatives. • Examination of the selected case studies. • Consideration of accessibility, timing, participation levels and feedback arrangements. • Presentation of benchmarking information from comparator authorities as supporting evidence rather than a separate review activity.
6.3	Stage 3: Findings and Recommendations Workshop • Review of evidence gathered. • Identification of strengths and opportunities for improvement. • Development of practical recommendations for enhancing consultation activity.
6.4	Expected Outputs • Findings based on evidence from selected case studies. • Identification of examples of effective practice. • Recommendations to improve accessibility, participation and feedback mechanisms.
6.5	This provides a concise and proportionate methodology that is achievable within a short scrutiny review while still gathering evidence from officers, residents, stakeholders and comparator authorities.
7. Potential Initial Key Lines of Enquiry	
7.1	KLE 1: Participation and Accessibility • Timing of consultations • Accessibility and inclusion • Engagement with under-represented groups • Participation levels
7.2	KLE 2: Feedback and Influence • How responses are considered • Communication of outcomes • "You Said, We Did" • Confidence in consultation processes • Examples of good practice

8. Draft Evidence Timetable	
	Session 1: Baseline Briefing and Case Study Selection Purpose • Understand current Council arrangements. • Agree case studies for further examination. Witnesses • Director of Policy, Strategy and Engagement • Head of Communications and Marketing • Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead
	Session 2: Combined Evidence Session Purpose • Explore experiences of delivering and participating in consultations. • Examine selected case studies. • Consider accessibility, timing, participation and feedback. Witnesses • Relevant officers • Community representatives • Youth representative • Voluntary sector representative Supporting Evidence • Comparator authority benchmarking summary. • Examples of good practice.
	Session 3: Findings and Recommendations Workshop Purpose • Consider evidence collected. • Identify key findings. • Agree recommendations.

BRIEFING	TO:	Members of OSMB
	DATE:	8 September 2026
	LEAD OFFICER:	Barbel Gale, Governance Manager
	TITLE:	OSMB Scrutiny Review - Protecting Children, Supporting Honest Businesses and Cracking Down on Illicit Vapes, Tobacco and Underage Sales
1. Background		
1.1	The review arises from a Notice of Motion agreed by Council on 15 July 2026 concerning the sale of illicit tobacco, counterfeit cigarettes, illegal vaping products and underage sales. The motion highlighted concerns regarding the increasing availability of illegal products within local communities and the impact upon residents, legitimate businesses and public safety.	
1.2	The motion noted concerns regarding the visibility of vaping retailers and unregulated retail premises in some communities, including locations close to schools, together with reports of increasing youth access to vaping products and the availability of illegal products that exceed legal limits or may contain prohibited substances. Residents, parents, schools, retailers and elected members have raised concerns regarding underage sales and the accessibility of such products to children and young people.	
1.3	The Council motion also recognised the wider impacts associated with illicit tobacco and vaping products, including risks to public health, unfair competition for legitimate retailers and links to organised criminal activity. The motion highlighted national concerns regarding the involvement of organised criminal groups in the illicit tobacco and vaping market.	
1.4	Trading Standards is the lead enforcement authority in relation to these matters, working alongside South Yorkshire Police and other partners. The motion highlighted concerns regarding enforcement capacity and requested a review of Trading Standards staffing, resources and enforcement activity in response to increasing intelligence reports and complaints.	
1.5	The review provides an opportunity to examine the Council's current approach to tackling illicit tobacco, illegal vaping products and underage sales, assess the effectiveness of existing arrangements and identify opportunities for improvement. It also provides an opportunity to consider how the Council can best support legitimate businesses while protecting children and communities from harm.	
2. Purpose of the Review		
2.1	The review will assess whether the Council's current arrangements for addressing illicit tobacco, illegal vaping products and underage sales are effective, proportionate and adequately resourced.	

2.2	The review will consider the extent to which current enforcement powers are utilised and whether existing partnership arrangements enable effective prevention, investigation and enforcement activity.
2.3	Through examination of evidence, stakeholder testimony and examples of good practice, the review will identify opportunities to strengthen the Council's response and support the implementation of the resolutions agreed by Council.
3. Scope of the Review	
3.1	The review will examine the Council's strategic and operational response to illicit tobacco, illegal vaping products and underage sales, with a particular focus on protecting children and supporting compliant businesses.
3.2	The review will focus on three key areas: • Enforcement Capacity and Powers - including staffing and resources, intelligence gathering, investigation processes, enforcement activity, prosecution powers, closure orders, seizures and partnership working with enforcement agencies. • Protection of Children and Public Health - including youth vaping trends, underage sales, test purchasing activity, preventative interventions, education and awareness raising activity. • Business and Community Impact - including the impact of illicit trade on legitimate businesses, community concerns, reporting mechanisms, public confidence and wider links to organised criminality.
3.3	The review will consider the implementation of the Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026 and any implications arising from new legislative requirements and proposed licensing arrangements.
3.4	Benchmarking information and examples of good practice from comparator authorities will be used throughout the review to identify opportunities for improvement and innovation.
4. Out of Scope	
4.1	The review will not: • investigate individual retailers, businesses or ongoing enforcement cases; • duplicate the operational responsibilities of Trading Standards, South Yorkshire Police or the courts; • consider individual complaints concerning specific premises; • examine wider tobacco control or smoking cessation policy except where directly relevant to the review objectives; • revisit decisions already taken by Council in approving the Notice of Motion.
5. Key Stakeholders to Engage	
5.1	The review will seek evidence from a small number of key stakeholders involved in enforcement, community safety, public health and youth protection. Internal Stakeholders • Executive Director of Regeneration and Environment • Interim Service Director, Community Safety & Street Scene

	• Head of Community Safety and Regulatory Services • Trading Standards Manager • Director of Public Health • Representative from Children's Services • Council Legal Services Representative
5.2	The review group would also benefit from speaking with: • South Yorkshire Police • South Yorkshire Trading Standards Regional Representatives • NHS/Public Health Partners • Chartered Institute of Environmental Health • School or Academy Representatives • Rotherham Youth Cabinet Representative • Chamber of Commerce or Local Business Representative • Representative from a Retail Trade Association
5.3	The review will also consider good practice and benchmarking information from comparator authorities that have undertaken significant work in tackling illicit tobacco, illegal vaping products and underage sales.
5.4	This mix of stakeholders will provide insight into enforcement activity, public health concerns, business impacts and opportunities for partnership improvement.
6. Proposed Methodology	
6.1	Stage 1: Baseline Briefing and Overview • Introductory briefing on the scale and nature of illicit tobacco and vaping issues within Rotherham. • Overview of current enforcement responsibilities and available powers. • Presentation of intelligence, complaints, seizure data and enforcement outcomes. • Overview of current structural arrangements.
6.2	Stage 2: Enforcement and Partnership Evidence Session • Evidence from Trading Standards, Legal Services and South Yorkshire Police. • Examination of enforcement powers and interventions. • Consideration of intelligence-led approaches, closure orders, prosecutions and partnership activity. • Presentation of benchmarking information and examples of effective practice. • Evidence of how the effectiveness of current enforcement practices is measured.
6.3	Stage 3: Public Health and Community Impact Session • Evidence relating to youth vaping and underage sales. • Consideration of preventative and educational activity. • Discussion regarding impacts on residents and legitimate businesses. • Exploration of community concerns and reporting mechanisms.
6.4	Stage 4: Findings and Recommendations Workshop • Review of evidence gathered. • Identification of strengths, weaknesses and gaps. • Development of recommendations for submission to OSMB and Cabinet.
6.5	Expected Outputs • Assessment of current enforcement effectiveness. • Improved understanding of available powers and allocation of resources. • Identification of examples of effective practice.

- Recommendations relating to enforcement, prevention, partnership working and public awareness.
- Consideration of progress against the resolutions agreed by Council.

7. Potential Initial Key Lines of Enquiry

7.1 KLE 1: Enforcement Effectiveness

- Volume and nature of complaints and intelligence received.
- Use of test purchasing, seizures, prosecutions and closure orders.
- Barriers to effective enforcement.
- Enforcement outcomes and measures of success alongside benchmarking of resources.

7.2 KLE 2: Protecting Children and Young People

- Scale of youth vaping locally.
- Underage sales intelligence and enforcement activity.
- School engagement and preventative programmes.
- Public health impacts.
- Emerging risks associated with illegal products.

7.3 KLE 3: Partnership Working and Community Impact

- Relationships with South Yorkshire Police and other agencies.
- Impact on legitimate businesses.
- Organised criminality and illicit supply chains.
- Community reporting and intelligence gathering.
- Examples of effective practice from elsewhere.

8. Draft Evidence Timetable

Session 1: Baseline Briefing

Purpose

- Understand the local position.
- Review enforcement and intelligence information.
- Establish the scope of subsequent evidence gathering.

Witnesses

- Trading Standards Manager
- Director of Public Health
- Interim Service Director, Community Safety & Street Scene
- Head of Community Safety and Regulatory Services

Session 2: Enforcement and Partnership Session

Purpose

- Explore current enforcement approaches and powers.
- Consider partnership arrangements and intelligence sharing.
- Examine challenges and opportunities for improvement.

Witnesses

- Trading Standards Representatives
- South Yorkshire Police
- Council Legal Services Representative
- Other cross-border Local Authority partners

	Supporting Evidence • Enforcement data. • Complaint and intelligence trends. • Comparator authority benchmarking.
	Session 3: Public Health and Community Impact Session Purpose • Examine youth vaping concerns and underage sales. • Consider impacts on legitimate businesses and residents. • Explore preventative and educational approaches. Witnesses • Public Health Representative • School Representative • Youth Representative • Business Representative
	Session 4: Findings and Recommendations Workshop Purpose • Consider evidence received. • Identify findings. • Develop recommendations and reporting arrangements.

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Health Select Commission (HSC) Chair's Briefing for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) meeting on 8 September 2026

Items covered since the last meeting:

At the HSC meeting on 18 June 2026 the following items were considered:

1. Health Hub Development Phase 2

The Health Select Commission undertook detailed scrutiny of the proposed Phase 2 Health Hub development, testing whether the scheme would deliver genuine health benefits rather than simply relocate existing services or support town centre regeneration. Members challenged officers on how the hub would reduce health inequalities, improve preventative health outcomes, increase access for disadvantaged communities, support women's health, maintain accessibility for residents in outlying areas, and demonstrate measurable improvements in population health.

The Commission also scrutinised governance arrangements, stakeholder and public engagement, success measures, delivery risks, funding, service integration and the balance between health and regeneration objectives. Through its questioning, the Commission secured commitments around ongoing engagement with health and voluntary sector partners, the development of clear outcome measures and monitoring arrangements, and future evaluation of the scheme's impact.

The value added through scrutiny was reflected in the Commission's formal requests for a wider range of health partners to help shape the final service offer, for Members to be sighted on final proposals as they develop, and for post-implementation evaluations at one, three and five years to assess whether the hub is achieving its intended outcomes in relation to health inequalities, healthy life expectancy and wider population health improvements.

The following recommendations were agreed during the meeting:

That the Health Select Commission:

1. Noted the contents of the presentation received.
2. Requested that the relevant Council Services and health partners including the ICB, TRFT, RDaSH, YAS and any relevant voluntary and community sector organisations engage in discussions to consider and develop firm proposals for services to operate from the Health Hub with the greatest potential of positive impact for Rotherham residents and service providers.
3. Requested that the Health Select Commission be advised of the anticipated timeline for final proposals and be sighted on them once agreed.
4. Requested that a further update be provided to the Health Select Commission at one, three and five year intervals post implementation to allow the Commission to scrutinise

service delivery and assess whether the targeted impact of the Health Hub in terms of health inequalities, healthy life expectancy and general population health was being delivered.

2. Primary Care Network Development

The Health Select Commission scrutinised the development and effectiveness of Rotherham's Primary Care Networks (PCNs), examining how the six networks have evolved since their introduction in 2019, the benefits delivered through workforce expansion, enhanced access services, proactive care programmes and coordinated support for care homes, and their contribution to improving healthcare delivery across the borough.

Members challenged witnesses on key issues including equity of access, the impact of overlapping PCN boundaries, the extent to which additional roles had increased capacity and improved outcomes, how health inequalities are identified and addressed, and whether existing arrangements were delivering measurable benefits for residents. Particular attention was given to the role of PCNs within the emerging neighbourhood health model, with scrutiny focusing on how future arrangements could strengthen integration, reduce inefficiencies and organise services more effectively around communities rather than historic organisational structures.

Through its questioning, the Commission secured assurances regarding the continued development of neighbourhood-based care, highlighted the need for clearer performance and outcomes data, and added value by requesting quantified performance information for each PCN and ongoing updates on how PCN development supports the National Neighbourhood Health Implementation Programme, thereby strengthening future accountability and oversight of primary care transformation in Rotherham.

The following recommendations were agreed during the meeting:

That the Health Select Commission:

1. Noted the contents of the presentation received.
2. Be furnished with data which quantifies the performance of each respective PCN serving the Rotherham borough.
3. Receive updates, via an appropriate method and at appropriate intervals to be determined, in relation to how the Primary Care Network in Rotherham continues to develop to support the National Neighbourhood Health Implementation Programme.

3. Rotherham Women's Health Network Co-optee Proposal

The Health Select Commission considered a proposal to strengthen the voice of women's health within its scrutiny arrangements by reviewing a recommendation to appoint a non-voting co-optee from the Rotherham Women's Health Network (RWHN) to the Commission.

Members were provided with details of the proposal and the governance process required to secure approval through the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, enabling them to assess how the arrangement could enhance future scrutiny activity. The discussion recognised the value of drawing on lived experience, specialist insight and community perspectives to inform the Commission's work, particularly in light of its recent focus on women's health inequalities, menopause, contraception and wider women's health issues.

By supporting the proposal, the Commission added value through strengthening stakeholder engagement, improving the diversity of evidence available to inform decision making, and creating a mechanism for sustained input from the RWHN to help ensure future scrutiny of health services remains informed by the experiences and priorities of women across Rotherham.

The following recommendations were agreed during the meeting:

That the Health Select Commission:

1. Seek approval from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) to appoint a non-voting Co-optee seat from the Rotherham Women's Health Network (RWHN) to the Commission's membership.
2. Seek approval from OSMB that the RWHN non-voting co-optee seat on the Health Select Commission shall remain in place until such time as it is deemed no longer necessary or appropriate by the Commission.

Work programme 2025-26 updates:

- **Health Select Commission Work Programme**

The Health Select Commission has approved its work programme for the 2026/27 municipal year. There are currently no vacant slots remaining.

- **Reviews**

The Health Select Commission is due to meet to scope, score and prioritise the potential review topics under consideration on 26 August 2026, following which the prioritised topics will be progressed.

- **Site Visits**

Health Select Commission members participated in a site visit to the Castle View day Centre on 28 July 2026. Members were able to experience first hand the enhanced provision available to Rotherham residents through the centre and explored options for how to present the proposed update agreed through the recommendations agreed when Castle View featured on the Commission's June 2026 meeting agenda. This was a valuable experience which added to the reassurances given during that meeting, and tangibly demonstrated that the impact reflected during the previous discussions was evident in the day to day operations of the centre.

Items to be discussed at the next meeting:

At the HSC meeting on 24 September 2026 the following items are due to be considered:

- Physical Activity for Health (Sport England Main Bid and progress update)
- Immunisation Programme Commissioning Changes

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Improving Lives Select Commission Chair's Briefing for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board meeting on 8 September 2026

Items covered since the last update meeting:-

Improving Lives held its meeting on 21 July 2026 with one agenda item considered as part of the pre-scrutiny process:-

- **Rotherham Local SEND Reform Plan System Transformation Update – Pre-Decision**

This report provided an opportunity for Improving Lives to consider the content prior to the updated report being formally submitted to Cabinet for approval.

The Commission, therefore considered Rotherham's Draft SEND Reform Plan and ambition of the Vision and Priorities and approved ongoing scrutiny of plan delivery and impact.

Due to the plan pending approval by the DfE, the presentation and plan were exempt from the press and public and the discussion taken in closed session.

The Select Commission welcomed the opportunity to scrutinise this important work at an early stage and to consider the proposed transformation of SEND services in Rotherham.

Members welcomed the ambition of the plan and the significant work undertaken with the Department for Education, partners, schools, academy trusts, parents and carers to develop a more inclusive, sustainable and effective SEND system.

The Commission noted the commitment to increasing local provision, strengthening early intervention, improving inclusion within mainstream school and reducing reliance on out-of-area placements.

The Commission recognised that the SEND reforms presented a significant opportunity to improve outcomes for children and young people but acknowledged the scale of change and the challenges associated with increasing demand, workforce pressures and maintaining parental confidence during implementation.

In addition, the Commission whilst considering the detail of the draft SEND Plan, welcomed the invitation to continue monitoring performance and impact of the Local SEND Reform Plan and, therefore, welcomed this being brought back to the Commission following implementation early in the new municipal year.

Work Programme 2026-27:-

Any additional items, training sessions and upcoming review suggestions would be included as part of the new work programme for the 2026/27 municipal year as and when they were proposed.

Items to be discussed at the next meeting:-**15 September 2026**

- CYPS Performance Annual Outturn Report
- Update on Family Hubs Performance

Improving Places Select Commission (IPSC) Chair's Briefing: for the Overview & Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) meeting on 8 September 2026

Items covered since the last update meeting:

The next meeting of IPSC is due to take place on 1 September 2026 and a verbal update on the items discussed will be provided by the Chair at the meeting (see below).

Updates since last IPSC meeting on 23 June 2026

- **Neighbourhood Leadership Strategy**

At the June meeting of IPSC, Members made the following recommendation, which was endorsed by OSMB to be put to Cabinet at its July meeting:

That Cabinet considers the removal of the following text under "Action Area 4: Ongoing Support and Leadership Development" of the Neighbourhood Leadership Strategy:-

"Within the strategy period, the 2028 local election will be used to reallocate Neighbourhood Coordinators to new wards to ensure Councillors have access to new skills and perspectives. This will be repeated in future electoral cycles."

IPSC Members felt strongly that the proposed introduction of a cyclical rotation of Neighbourhood Coordinators at local elections could be detrimental to neighbourhood working and the aims of the strategy, as significant local knowledge, connections and stability could be lost at a time of potential political change.

Cabinet declined to support this recommendation and the removal of the above wording as it was felt that to do so, would be to interfere too much in the operational workforce needs of the Service in delivering the aims of the Strategy.

Work Programme Updates

- **School Road Safety Review Group**

Work on this in-depth review has now concluded, following a final meeting with officers from SYMCA and work from the Review Group on agreeing the draft recommendations. A report to accompany these recommendations will be going to IPSC at its 1 September 2026 meeting, with a view to onward progression to OSMB in October and Cabinet in November.

Items to be discussed at the next meeting:

At the next meeting of IPSC on 1 September 2026 Members are due to scrutinise the following items:

- Review of the Rotherham Investment and Development Office (RiDO) Business Centres;
- Introducing Housing Improvement and Governance; and
- Improving Places Select Commission Scrutiny Review – School Road Safety.

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