

Overview and Scrutiny Update



June - September
2019

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Overview and Scrutiny Update

Our Work Programme 2019-2020

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

- ❖ Council Plan Performance
- ❖ Safer Rotherham Partnership
- ❖ Complaints
- ❖ Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy
- ❖ Customer Services Transformation
- ❖ Library Strategy
- ❖ Revenue Budget Monitoring
- ❖ Welfare Reform
- ❖ Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge
- ❖ Pre-decision Scrutiny

Health

- ❖ Adult Care Service Development
- ❖ Autism Strategy and Pathway
- ❖ Public Health
- ❖ Rotherham Integrated Health and Care Place Plan
- ❖ Respiratory Services
- ❖ Social, Emotional and Mental Health
- ❖ Maternity Services
- ❖ Gambling and Gaming tbc
- ❖ South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw Integrated Care System
- ❖ NHS Trust Quality Reports

Improving Lives

- ❖ Early Help/Social Care Pathways
- ❖ Safeguarding – Children and Adults
- ❖ Holiday Hunger
- ❖ CYPS Workforce Strategy
- ❖ Looked After Children Sufficiency Strategy
- ❖ Counter Extremism in Schools
- ❖ CYPS Performance
- ❖ Monitoring Ofsted Inspections
- ❖ School Performance
- ❖ Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

Improving Places

- ❖ Thriving Neighbourhoods
- ❖ Social Inclusion
- ❖ Building Stronger Communities
- ❖ Cultural Strategy
- ❖ Litter and Recycling
- ❖ Rotherham Town Centre
- ❖ Major Incident Plan
- ❖ Area Housing Panel Review
- ❖ Employment and Skills Strategy
- ❖ Flooding Alleviation

Welcome to the first update for 2019-20

The purpose of these updates is to give an overview of the work carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) and the Select Commissions - Health (HSC), Improving Lives (ILSC) and Improving Places (IPSC) during the last few months.

Page 2 provides a reminder of the broad work programme previously agreed for 2019-20. Scrutiny also needs to be able to consider and respond to other issues which may arise during the year and the committees frequently revisit and re-prioritise their work programmes. Already we have seen the inclusion of the Employment and Skills Strategy and Flooding Alleviation for IPSC. The Library Strategy and South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service - Integrated Risk Management Plan have been additional items scrutinised by OSMB. HSC has also considered proposals for future services at the Rotherham Community Health Centre.

As last year, much of the work of ILSC so far has focused on scrutinising progress on key strategies, probing specific areas in depth in order to be assured about provision for children and young people.

HSC is continuing to look closely at service transformation and closer integrated working between health and social care, such as developments to simplify the pathways for intermediate care and reablement and to achieve better outcomes for people.

In pre-decision scrutiny OSMB has already considered a number of major plans and strategies in 2019-20 and it is pleasing to see that equality analyses are coming forward routinely and improving in detail and quality.

IPSC has seen positive outcomes from its recommendations on Home to School Transport. Other recommendations around enforcement are expected to progress further over the coming months.

The first section of this report covers pre-decision scrutiny, whether undertaken by OSMB or one of the Select Commissions, followed by sections for each individual committee. Where relevant for this period the update will include details of:-

- Progress monitoring of strategies and plans following past scrutiny
- Recommendations made by the committees
- Outcomes resulting from scrutiny
- Reviews - underway or due to commence
- Sub-group/Task and Finish Group activity
- Member visits
- Public involvement in scrutiny
- Key future items
- Other activity undertaken by the Scrutiny Members

I hope this will be a useful and informative update of overview and scrutiny work undertaken between June and September 2019.

Cllr Brian Steele, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Overview and Scrutiny Update

Pre-decision Scrutiny

The recommendations made in all the pre-decision reports considered by Scrutiny were supported. Details of additional recommendations made by Scrutiny, plus any requests for specific information and intentions for future monitoring, are outlined below.

- ❖ **Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2019 – 2022**
An update will be provided to ILSC in January 2020 on the implementation of the strategy.
- ❖ **Rotherham's Cultural Strategy 2019 – 2026**
Following feedback from OSMB, the protected characteristics in the Equality Analysis had been updated to reflect current terminology prior to consideration of the strategy by Cabinet. As recommended by Scrutiny, a structure chart had been produced to outline the governance arrangements and lines of accountability. OSMB also requested an update in June 2020 on implementation of the strategy.
- ❖ **Rotherham Employment and Skills Strategy**
OSMB made a number of recommendations which Cabinet agreed would be taken back to the Business Growth Board for consideration:-
 - ensuring the document was designed to be accessible
 - steps that could be taken to address barriers to employment or training such as lack of photographic identification or a bank account
 - provision of meaningful work experience opportunities for young people (linked to 2018 Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge)
 - to review the Equality Analysis to make sure it reflected gender inequality in the employment and skills market
 - for a detailed action plan to be provided with clear targets, milestones and measures to IPSC in September 2019
- ❖ **Proposal for a Public Space Protection Order in the Fitzwilliam Road area**
An update will be provided to IPSC on implementation after six months.
- ❖ **Advice Services Review - Phase 2**
OSMB requested a monitoring report on the implementation of Phase 2 to go back to a sub-group, along with the outline proposals for Phase 3.
- ❖ **Adults Independent Advocacy Services - Commissioning and Procurement Approach**
The Board recommended that GPs should be encouraged to learn about the advocacy service in one of their dedicated Protected Learning Time sessions, as the report showed a low number of referrals originated from them. An update detailing performance and outcomes will be provided to HSC following twelve months of operation after the award of the contract.

The following proposals were supported by OSMB without additional recommendations:

- ❖ Adoption of a Sex Establishments Policy
- ❖ Revised Foster Carer Fees and Allowances Payment Scheme
- ❖ Local Plan Core Strategy Five Year Review
- ❖ Strategic Management and Maintenance of Rotherham's Highways
- ❖ Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Phase 2 – New Education Places
- ❖ Community Energy Switching Scheme

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

❖ Council Plan Refresh

OSMB noted a report that outlined the recent update to the Council Plan Performance Management Framework. Although the Council Plan was intended to cover three financial years, it was viewed as good practice to carry out an annual review of the performance measures within it. Services across the authority had reviewed performance throughout the 2018-19 financial year to determine the new targets for 2019-2020. Formal quarterly performance reports would continue to be presented at Cabinet, with an opportunity for scrutiny by non-executive Members.

Members raised a query in relation to the removal from the framework of the measure for successful treatment of non-opiate drug users and information on this would be reported back to HSC. Reference was also made to net new business as a measure, which represented something of a difference between floor space and new business take up and it was requested that consideration be given to restoring the previous measure on that basis.

❖ Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge (CCTOC) – Young Carers

A short report set out the findings from a spotlight review undertaken by Rotherham Youth Cabinet, together with Rotherham Young Carers Council, under the auspices of the CCTOC. The theme was improving access to leisure opportunities for young carers in Rotherham.

The young people formulated a number of recommendations and in summary these focus on:

- an improved offer of discounted access to leisure activities for young carers
- clear eligibility criteria
- support to travel to activities
- good promotion and publicity
- identification of young carers and support

OSMB approved the report to go forward for consideration by Cabinet and partners and requested a detailed response to the recommendations in January 2020.

❖ Safer Rotherham Partnership Annual Report

The Borough's Community Safety Partnership, the Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP), presented its annual report for scrutiny by OSMB. Detail was provided on the work under each of the five key priorities. The Board welcomed the report, the good practice taking place and the easy to read format. Members explored a number of issues in greater depth, including how Rotherham compared with South Yorkshire neighbours on the priority areas; celebration of religious festivals in Rotherham; and stalking and harassment issues.

The SRP also responded to a recommendation made regarding last year's annual report and to a request made in March for more detail on a Council Plan measure.

- That further work be undertaken to establish protocols for sharing local offender management plans, or information supporting such plans, to ward councillors.
 - SRP and its statutory partners created a new meeting structure known as Community Action Partnerships (CAPs) to ensure the exchange of information between the Police, the Council and local ward Councillors. This

Overview and Scrutiny Update

mechanism has enabled positive examples in relation to the release of offenders, however guidance has been offered to officers to ensure that this is relevant and appropriate. Further work has also been undertaken to increase the use of restrictive orders such as Criminal Behaviour Orders which give officers the opportunity to limit the movement of individuals where they may have targeted specific areas previously.

- Further information in relation to the Hate Crime outcome rate, which is a measure within the Council Plan that refers to the percentage of positive outcomes recorded by the Police in relation to hate crimes.
 - Although the 20% target had been missed consistently throughout last year, investigations take time to investigate and conclude which means more recent data remains subject to change as cases conclude. Improvements were anticipated but it was acknowledged that more work was required. During May 2019, South Yorkshire Police launched a new restorative justice partnership across the region and the response to hate crimes is one area which is expected to benefit from an increase in the use of restorative solutions, which are outside of any court process. This renewed approach is consistent with what community members tell services they want to see in response to hate crime, focussing on education and prevention.

OSMB asked for a Member seminar to update them on implementation of the changes to the Probation Service. They requested an update to ILSC on the actions and recommendations to address stalking and harassment. The Board also wished to have a further update on steps taken to address hate crime and agreed to be involved in any pre-scrutiny work on the Hate Crime Strategy and its development.

❖ Council Plan Quarter 4 (January to March 2019) and 2018-2019 Annual Performance Report

Consideration was given to a report which set out the headline priorities, outcomes and measures demonstrating delivery of the vision. The Quarter 4 report indicated that 58% of the total number of measures had been met, which represented a significant improvement in performance over previous quarters. An outline summary was provided of all targets and a snapshot of progress against the 13 delivery outcomes underpinning the Council's priorities and the key performance measures identified to demonstrate progress in achieving these outcomes.

The Board asked the Cabinet Member and lead officer for each priority to comment, drawing any attention to specific areas. This then prompted further questions from Members on issues under each of the five priorities. OSMB noted the achievements and direction of travel and took account of the concerns raised in relation to hate crime. They resolved to include this in their work programme, alongside fly-tipping, work related sickness and steps to address the gender pay gap.

❖ Financial Outturn 2018-19

The final revenue and capital outturn position for 2018/19 was a balanced budget which required £3.2m less use of corporate reserves than planned for in the original budget. A summary of the individual outturn position for each Directorate was detailed in the report, together with the actions and measures taken to deliver a balanced budget. The Council continues to face demand pressures, in particular in respect of social care and has provided additional budget for social care over the next two financial years, but the outlook is still challenging.

Overview and Scrutiny Update

The Board sought clarification on the reserves, what these were dependent upon and if this was sustainable. It was confirmed that actions to address the budget overspend were mainly from one off opportunities. However, as a result of some of the work taking place fewer reserves were required and these had subsequently been profiled into the financial plan going forward. In terms of sustainability, the service were comfortable with the outturn achievements given the scale of the challenges but the Council could not sustain high level of overspends in the future.

❖ **May Financial Monitoring Report 2019-20**

Following their scrutiny of the outturn report, OSMB's attention turned to the financial position as at the end of May 2019. The Council had a forecast year-end overspend of £4.5m on the General Fund. This was based on actual costs and income for the first two months of 2019-20 and the forecast for the remainder of the financial year. The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services pointed out it would be premature take any drastic measures, but the right actions were taking place in service areas which still faced similar pressures to those reported over the last couple of years.

Members questioned the extent to which projected overspends had delayed implementation of restructuring or the cost-saving measures expected. In response to the Board's concerns about the Council having enough money to fulfil its obligations, the Strategic Director confirmed a number of controls would again need to be implemented, with restrictions on spending. There was the fall-back position of reserves and contingency within the budget that if not used in the current year it may be available for future years.

OSMB noted the forecast overspend and actions to be taken in mitigation. The Board will continue to scrutinise actions taken within Adult Social Care and Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) to reduce the deficits.

❖ **CYPS - High Needs Block Update and Recovery Plan**

After scrutinising the High Needs Block last year, OSMB were supportive of implementing a recovery plan to enable future budget sustainability and had agreed to look at this again as part of the monitoring cycle. The stated aim had been to bring in-year expenditure in-line with the annual budget allocation and to focus on a longer term plan which would contribute to reducing the cumulative deficit.

The Board were advised that Rotherham still faced considerable pressure in continuing to meet the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), with increasing numbers of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and in-borough special school provision currently over-subscribed. Members were aware that consultation had been taking place with schools and Multi Academy Trusts on creating additional provision in Rotherham.

Scrutiny acknowledged that it was early days in the recovery plan process and steps had been outlined to reduce the deficit. The overall position would be closely monitored by the Board and ILSC would continue to monitor the SEND Sufficiency Strategy as part of its work programme.

❖ **Forge Island Update**

Members noted progress towards delivery of the Forge Island Scheme with two key milestones achieved. The legal agreement had been signed setting out pre-conditions that needed to be completed before development began and tenders had been received from potential contractors to deliver the flood defence infrastructure.

Overview and Scrutiny Update

❖ Cabinet Response to Scrutiny Review Modern Methods of Construction (MMC)

MMC is a generic term covering the different types of homes that are manufactured in a factory environment and either fully or partially assembled in the factory, or the component parts are assembled on site. This in-depth review focused on the viability of providing low cost housing for young single individuals and young families in one and two bedroom modular accommodation, incorporating suitable technology where possible to reduce running costs.

In terms of the recommendation “That consideration of any learning points identified as part of the Council’s MMC pilot schemes be used to inform any future MMC housing projects”, the Housing Service were securing final details to enter into a contract with a supplier to deliver eight bungalows in Rawmarsh and a further four bungalows at East Herringthorpe, subject to planning permission. The evaluation process would consider quality, customer experience, costs and maintenance costs, which would help with lessons learned going forward in terms of future schemes. It was agreed that a ‘lessons learned’ report would be submitted to IPSC following completion of the current modern methods of construction pilot project.

Another recommendation was “That each individual MMC property is monitored to demonstrate capital cost and repairs/maintenance costs over a set period of time to allow practical comparison with traditional built homes.” This was also accepted and costs would be broken down in relation to the individually built properties for review and analysis as part of the evaluation work going forward.

Recommendations with regard to potential pilots for family housing and for pods to support housing needs at various locations around the Borough were both deferred as further work was required in relation to single person's accommodation options and the need to build on the success of the bungalow scheme.

In relation to energy efficiency, Members were informed that a piece of work was being developed to look at the introduction of solar panels and energy efficiency measures to all affordable housing stock, rather than just focusing on MMC developments. The Board asked if the Council was considering other options including green credentials and eco-efficient initiatives and were advised that this was being looked at for properties built in Rotherham and Sheffield City Region as a whole. A strategy was under development and it was hoped there would be resources to test new approaches in respect of renewable energy sources to reduce cost and improve reliability. Whilst new technologies were emerging this needed further investigation to look at the whole life cycle costs of those elements, alongside the repairs and maintenance.

Other activity

❖ Consultation - South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service - Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)

This session resulted from a previous OSMB recommendation that when the Fire and Rescue Service consulted on future IRMPs these should be considered by the constituent authorities’ Scrutiny Committees to receive considered feedback. OSMB made the following recommendations for consideration by the Chief Fire Officer.

- That should it be necessary to consider additional savings to address funding pressures which may involve changes to day/night time staffing of fire engines or stations, that the Fire and Rescue Service commits to undertake a full public consultation on a refreshed IRMP.

Overview and Scrutiny Update

- That prior to consultation on future iterations of the Integrated Risk Management Plans being undertaken, detailed consideration is given to ensuring that the consultation adequately targets 'hard to reach' groups and groups with protected characteristics and this is reflected in its consultation plan.
- That there is no deterioration in the number/level of home safety checks undertaken in Rotherham.
- That the Fire and Rescue Service commits to providing further detailed statistical breakdown to the district authorities on emerging adverse trends or concerns relating to performance, home safety checks undertaken and response times.
- That should adverse trends be identified, that the Fire and Rescue Service draws up credible plans to address these concerns and these are shared with district authorities and other relevant groups - households, health partners, businesses etc.
- That the Fire and Rescue Service and South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority give full consideration to the equality analysis prior to the approval of the IRMP and demonstrate what action has been taken to mitigate any potential adverse impact of its proposals on 'hard to reach' groups or groups with protected characteristics.

❖ Visit to Riverside House Reception

Members from across all four Scrutiny committees gave their views on how the reception area looked and operated now and fed in their ideas to inform the future plans. Several points were raised with a focus on flexibility and meeting the needs of all customers in terms of access to services and information. Support for people who were less confident in using digital channels was also discussed. Members inquired about testing out the redesigned process and on-line form in advance and suggested local groups who could also be asked to feed in their thoughts.

❖ Library Strategy

A sub-group undertook detailed scrutiny of the Draft Library Strategy and considered the outcomes of the public consultation, which had asked Rotherham residents for their views on proposed changes to the location of the central library. Members were satisfied that the consultation had been comprehensive and had actively sought to consult with groups who shared protected equality characteristics.

Members were also assured by the proposed direction for the strategy and supported the action plan. In particular, they welcomed co-location of services under the libraries umbrella as a community asset and the prospects for partnership working. Volunteering opportunities were seen as a way of developing skills and ensuring the viability of the service, particularly with proposed longer opening hours. "Digital First" principles were supported, with the proviso that support would be needed for some customers, echoing views from the visit to Riverside Reception.

The sub-group did however want reassurances that a robust mapping exercise had been done on the ability to deliver the opening hours and on the capacity to recruit, train and manage volunteers, who should be reflective of the wider community.

In October

- ❖ Customer Access Strategy
- ❖ Children's Services Financial Monitoring and Review 2019/20
- ❖ Council Plan Quarter 1 - Areas for Improvement
- ❖ Annual Compliments and Complaints Report 2018-19
- ❖ Adult Social Care - budget, performance and Target Operating Model

Health Select Commission

❖ Sexual Health Strategy for Rotherham (Refresh 2019-2021)

The draft strategy sets out the priorities for the next three years for improving sexual health outcomes for the local population. It provides a framework for planning and delivering commissioned services and interventions (within existing resources) aimed at improving sexual health outcomes across the life course. Areas of concern reflected by the Public Health England sexual and reproductive health epidemiology report in 2017 and from the Rotherham Voice of the Child Lifestyle Survey 2018 have been taken into account.

Members probed into the statistics and a number of issues in detail, including awareness raising, work with young people and vulnerable groups, delivery of healthy relationships and education in schools, and access to LARC (long-acting reversible contraception). Concerns were raised that the performance measures focused primarily on infection control rather than covering all the wider issues within the strategy. It was felt that there could be greater focus on issues around healthy relationships, consent, sexual abuse and reduction of sexual assault.

HSC requested that questions on school data be sent to CYPS for a response for future discussion. They asked for the Equality Analysis to be submitted and for consideration to be given by the Sexual Health Strategy Group to developing a broader and SMART range of performance indicators to measure success.

❖ Response to the Scrutiny Workshop - Adult Residential and Nursing Care Homes

The purpose of the review had been to consider progress in bringing about improvements to safety, quality and effectiveness in the sector. In addition, it had provided an opportunity to explore the impact of the Care Homes Support Service, as the care home sector was one of the transformation initiatives under the Rotherham Integrated Health and Social Care Place Plan.

All the recommendations were in place and progressing and in recent weeks emails had been circulated to relevant Ward Members to update them on Care Quality Commission (CQC) ratings for homes in their wards. Detailed briefings were also provided if there were any concerns or if CQC had been in a care home.

Discussion ensued to clarify what work was taking place on training, career pathways and capturing the voice of care home residents. HSC inquired whether the position with a shortage of nursing care beds had improved, as this was a national issue. Assurance was sought about the service being confident in spotting neglect and abuse at an early stage in residential care. The Commission also inquired about progress with the work of the Quality Board and will look to schedule an update next year.

❖ 2018 Annual Report of the Director of Public Health

Previous annual reports focused on the life course but the 2018 report sought to champion the strengths of Rotherham's local communities and share experiences of what kept residents healthy, happy and well. Two main themes flowed through the report – community and the environment – as well as the 'five ways to wellbeing'.

HSC were keen to see coordination between different workstreams, such as Adult Community Learning, neighbourhood working and health to focus on health inequalities. Challenges around behavioural changes were acknowledged.

Overview and Scrutiny Update

HSC supported the actions in the plan with regard to raising awareness of the 'Five ways to wellbeing' and work to tackle loneliness and social isolation; expansion of social prescribing; and initiatives to support "healthy work". The Select Commission asked that its concerns about addressing health inequalities be raised with the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Rotherham Together Partnership. Further information about the incidence of depression was requested and provided.

❖ Developing Rotherham Community Health Centre

The centre had been purpose built to house the walk-in centre, a GP practice, dental services and community/outpatient facilities, but services had changed resulting in much of the centre lying empty. HSC heard about proposals to relocate Ophthalmology Outpatient Services there, which would benefit patients in being a town centre location and help to reduce footfall on the busy Rotherham Hospital site. The proposed change would meet CQC requirements for separate services for children and adults and ensure sufficient space to meet current and future demand.

The Commission requested a follow up report following the public engagement through the summer and this was discussed in September, with the majority of responses in favour. HSC were supportive of making better use of this facility as proposed after verifying what would happen for patients requiring urgent eye care and pharmacy provision. A further report will be considered in 2020 once the new arrangements are in place, to evaluate the impact of the changes.

❖ Enhancing the Respiratory Pathway

Members discussed a presentation that highlighted the rationale for change to the respiratory pathway and what the proposals were. Some of the issues flagged were poorer outcomes; fragmentation across the system; higher numbers going into hospital and longer hospital stays. The proposed changes had been clinically led and should result in greater standardisation of care; improved patient education and support for patients to self-manage; care closer to home through a specialist community respiratory team plus a dedicated respiratory unit at the hospital.

Plans for public engagement throughout September were outlined and although a variety of approaches would be used HSC opined that the timeframe seemed quite short and it was agreed this would be fed back. Clarification was sought on the scale of the difference in outcomes currently compared to other areas and whether prevention would be included as well as self-management. Clear information was requested to show what significant improvement would look like in terms of success measures. A more detailed data pack was shared with Members after the meeting.

❖ Investment and Evolution - Primary Care

A short presentation provided the Select Commission with an overview of the key ambitions for the NHS for the next ten years. In particular the focus was on new models of care and implications for general practice given the requirement to develop Primary Care Networks, which sees a major change in how GPs will work.

HSC delved into various issues including capacity in community services; promotion of appointments at the hubs; use of the Rotherham App; holistic care; First contact physiotherapy; and care navigation. Questions were asked about addressing health inequalities and whether the changes would lead to parity and consistency in terms of access to services. Members were given assurance that population health data would be used and would pinpoint areas where more support might be needed.

Overview and Scrutiny Update

❖ Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Service

Following its previous spotlight review the Select Commission considered a monitoring report on progress with the outstanding recommendations. The current performance and service developments were noted and Members acknowledged the challenges for people with long-term methadone use in leaving services. They questioned performance on non-opiate user service exits and were reassured to learn that a specific psychosocial interventions package had recently been introduced. Progress was being made but there was still work to do to achieve the targets for service exits. Further questions were posed about reviews following the death of service user and learning from cases.

The new joint pathway between drug and alcohol services and mental health services that had resulted from the review provided greater clarity for staff on referrals. Services were asked to provide updates on future pathway developments and to consider encompassing wider issues such as domestic abuse.

❖ Maternity Services and response to “Better Births”

A comprehensive overview of current activity and the planned course of direction for maternity services were presented to Members. Work is focused on the seven key lines of enquiry within the national “Better Births” strategy. Smoking cessation was viewed as a golden thread across all the workstreams, ensuring the best health of maternity hosted network across the Integrated Care System. It was agreed that statistics and information would be reported back on achievement of the future key trajectories, sustainable support and the 35% target for continuity of carer by 31st March 2020. Statistics on smoking cessation and breastfeeding were requested.

❖ Update on proposals for Intermediate Care and Reablement

This followed an introductory presentation earlier in the year and provided HSC with more detail on how the work would be taken forward to implement new integrated pathways between Adult Social Care and Health.

The Commission sought clarification on the success measures that would show the difference the new pathways would make. They queried the role of GPs in the pathways, questioned support for carers and asked about any likely difficulties in both recruiting and retaining staff within the new model. Information sharing and the fact that partners use different IT systems was raised as a potential risk and assurance was provided that the key was to have the same decision points in both systems, consistent and agreed, to remove any confusion.

Two six week pilots, the first of which experienced some initial problems, had taken place in preparation for implementation from the end of October as proof of concept. Good outcomes had resulted from one team operating differently. The new approach involved different ways of working and a cultural shift for both managers and staff. This would then take time to cross over into mental health and learning disability as well but would happen. HSC were supportive of the new approach and will consider another update post-implementation.

In October

- ❖ Rotherham Hospital Update - post-CQC inspection progress
- ❖ Social Emotional and Mental Health Strategy
- ❖ Schools Mental Health Trailblazer
- ❖ Workshop - Refresh of Suicide Prevention and Self-harm Action Plan

Improving Lives Select Commission

- ❖ **Regional Schools Commissioner (East Midlands and the Humber Region)**
The Secretary of State has delegated certain decision making powers in relation to academies to the Regional Schools Commissioners. These include identifying sponsors for inadequate maintained schools; making changes to academies and the formation of Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs); working with Local Authorities, the Diocese and other partners; making decisions on Free Schools; and overseeing the 'school improvement offer' for trusts who meet the criteria. The Commissioners work with academies to ensure they are underpinned by sound governance and finance to deliver good educational outcomes.

It was noted that Rotherham outcomes had not kept pace with improvements seen nationally. The Commissioner stated that there was recognition of this from senior officers and an ambition to make necessary improvements. He gave a commitment to work with Trusts and individual schools in the Borough to drive improvement and leadership. He also observed that coming together in an area could identify where problems arose and help draw on good practice to address concerns accordingly.

Members explored a number of issues with regard to Elective Home Educated pupils ("home schooled") and were assured that data was available and work was underway to analyse trends and good practice, which would be submitted to a future meeting of the Commission (see below). Responsibility for the safeguarding of children who were home educated remained with the local authority.

Clarity was sought on work underway regionally and nationally to support schools with larger numbers of newly-arrived pupils, particularly those who joined the school roll after the standard transfer date, and the challenge of working with transient populations. Members were apprised of the range of approaches taken across the region to mitigate the impact of this and the expectation is that school leaders use their funding allocation appropriately to meet pupils' needs. Following the meeting the Commissioner had written to the Chair in respect of the "census day" (termly collection of details of pupils in every school) and national funding formula. Although there were no plans to make changes to the "census day", the inclusion of an element in the national funding formula to reflect pupil mobility was under consideration.

- ❖ **Rotherham Education Strategic Partnership (RESP) Update**
The RESP brings together the work of key partners from across Rotherham's education system into a coherent and effective strategic plan. The aim is to maximise outcomes and improve life chances for children and young people, promote inclusion and reduce inequalities, to ensure that no school and no child or young person was left behind. Key priorities identified by the RESP are:- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND); Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils; Early Years; Primary; Secondary; Post 16; and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH).

Members probed a number of specific issues including:

- support available for children with SEND or other vulnerabilities
- addressing concerns about the traded offer of services schools could buy in
- dual funding and host schools - a sense of belonging to the community
- home visiting in relation to disadvantaged two year olds
- monitoring Elective Home Education

Overview and Scrutiny Update

Assurance was given that attainment of more able pupils would feature as a strategic priority for RESP next year but individual schools and Trusts would be addressing the needs of high performing and more able pupils in their own plans.

ILSC requested the evaluation of the Early Years Home Visiting Project for a future meeting. Members also asked for a report in December 2019 to reflect the difference that the RESP is making, with details of the key timelines, milestones and outcomes. This should also include information on the actions taken to boost the performance of high performing and more able pupils

- ❖ **Children & Young People's Services (CYPS) 2018-2019 Year End Performance**
A summary of performance in relation to Early Help and Family Engagement; Children's Social Care; Education and Inclusion was presented to Members. This outlined areas that were working well and the areas of concern and actions to address these. Data sets were provided to support the narrative.

In response to a query about persistent absence, details were given about the range of interventions in place to support and escalate concerns. Assurance was given that schools took action and raised concerns promptly, and these were monitored closely by the performance leads in Early Help and Family Engagement.

Members inquired if there were any barriers which prevented completion of Early Help Assessments undertaken by partners. Early Help leads were working closely with agencies to clarify the process and levels of involvement and expected the number to increase from the current low base.

ILSC also asked for clarification on the customer feedback measure, on incentives for accessing Children Centres and if a detailed cohort breakdown of young people not in education, employment or training was captured. Activity to benchmark Rotherham with other areas and the current staffing position were also discussed.

- ❖ **Rotherham Multi-Agency Arrangements for Safeguarding Children**
The Select Commission considered the Rotherham Multi-Agency Arrangements for Safeguarding Children which have replaced the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Board. These arrangements were developed in accordance with statutory guidance, by the three safeguarding partners, in consultation with the wider partnership and became effective from September 2019. The partnership has continued to have an Independent Chair due to additional emphasis being placed on scrutiny and challenge of what partners were delivering.

After a detailed presentation, questions addressed the following issues:-

- Child Death Overview Panel and its functions
- Additional arrangements in Rotherham that went beyond those prescribed
- Ensuring transparency and challenge between partner agencies
- Involvement of schools and powers in respect of school involvement
- Role of the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) Board
- Information sharing protocols
- Child exploitation in all forms
- Funding after the first year
- Continuation of the wider multi-Board meetings around safeguarding issues

Overview and Scrutiny Update

Members resolved that scrutiny of the safeguarding arrangements would continue with the Annual Report to be presented. They also requested an update in six months following the implementation and transition to the new process.

- ❖ **Children Missing from Education and Children Missing from Care and Home**
A short presentation outlined the different legislative frameworks that guide the responses to children missing from care and home and to children missing from education. Reference was made to research which highlighted that missing from care and home could indicate wider safeguarding concerns outside the family. A Missing from Home and Care Scorecard is produced monthly, providing a clear understanding around the Missing Cohort and identifying patterns and trends. Strong links had been established with a range of internal and external partners in relation to Children Missing from Education (CME).

In terms of the increase in new CME referrals, including some recurrent cases, Members were assured that evidence suggests this is largely due to families being transient and then returning to Rotherham, rather than key concerns related to vulnerability and/or safeguarding issues. However, it does have a financial impact on both schools and council services due to the additional resource required to support CME. Looked after children form the largest cohort of missing children and the Return Home Interview (RHI) offers an opportunity to explore why the young person went missing and to reduce future missing episodes.

Clarification was sought on information sharing, particularly in relation to children missing; if any very specific concerns had been identified; and if Child Abduction Warning Notices had been utilised. Further details were required on the increase of numbers of children at risk of CSE who had missing episodes and it was confirmed that there was good oversight in relation to the Missing and CSE teams.

The number of permanent exclusions at primary school has risen and data on exclusions will be provided later in the year as part of the Educational Outcomes report. A further update on progress will also be presented to ILSC as part of its 2020-21 work programme.

- ❖ **Counter Extremism - Work in Schools**
A briefing paper detailed the proactive work RMBC is undertaking in schools and colleges across the Borough to counter extremist narratives and build the resilience of young people to reject extremism, intolerance and hatred. Positive relationships had been developed with schools and colleges to deliver this initiative sensitively and a number of partners were engaged and committed. Future developments will include work with adults with reference to neighbourhood working and engaging people in dialogues about their communities.

Members asked questions around evaluating the impact of the work, training for school staff, targeting resources appropriately and work with schools that were less engaged. They were assured by the work in schools and colleges but requested an update on counter extremism work in the 2020-21 work programme. This should include an evaluation of the work in schools, further details of work with adults and neighbourhoods, and any specific work with parents and carers. ILSC also asked for a report in 2020-21 outlining how the local authority is meeting its Prevent duty.

Overview and Scrutiny Update

❖ Elective Home Education (EHE)

EHE is the term used to describe a legal choice by parents to provide education for their children at home - or in some other way which they choose - instead of sending them to school full-time. Current guidance from the Department for Education is being refreshed and the Directorate will consult with parents and other stakeholders on a revised policy in due course.

EHE Officers conduct home visits to discuss the education a child in EHE is receiving and review samples of work, progress made and future plans. Where there are concerns about the suitability of the education provided, the officers will discuss alternative options with parents/carers. For example, amendments that could be made to improve the education being provided or returning to mainstream or another education setting. However as there is no requirement to collate and publish data in relation to EHE comparative data is not available.

There has been a rise in the number of parents requesting information about EHE or considering alternatives to current schools. Without sufficient EHE Officer capacity to discuss issues rapidly, local knowledge and school admissions/other service links, many families would have elected to home educate without a full understanding of the implications of this decision or the education options and support available to them, often at a time of crisis. It was highlighted that a small, but increasing number of families had declined EHE Officer visits or refused to send supporting evidence that their child was receiving a 'suitable education'.

Members raised a number of concerns that were discussed at length:

- access to public examinations and potential impact of young people having no formal qualifications
- actions to support improvement
- transition to post 16 education, training or work and adult life
- identifiable trends in the rise in EHE applications
- monitoring progress

Assurance was sought that measures were in place to safeguard children properly and if concerns were raised that these could be escalated appropriately. The importance of building and maintaining relationships with parents within the boundaries of legislation relating to elective home education was emphasised. Parents could refuse access but if safeguarding concerns were raised these would be escalated appropriately.

The Chair reflected on the challenge of parental rights to home educate and the Local Authority's responsibilities for safeguarding. Assurance was also provided about good levels of information sharing between agencies and the EHE team links into the Operational and Strategic Missing Groups.

Another update on Elective Home Education will be provided at the end of the 2019-20 academic year for scrutiny by Improving Lives.

In October

- ❖ Early Intervention – Implementation of Early Help Strategy
- ❖ Youth Offending Service
- ❖ Persistent Absence from School

Improving Places Select Commission

- ❖ **Update - Agreement between Dignity Funerals Ltd and Rotherham MBC**
As part of its continuing scrutiny of bereavement services, IPSC considered the Annual Report from Dignity at its meeting in June. In addition to reporting against the contractual performance indicators, the report updated Members on progress with additional recommendations they had made in February.

Good progress had continued during 2018-19. Only three measures/targets were rated as red – provision of environmentally friendly burial options; future land available for burials; and secure storage for registers and records. Members probed these issues in more detail. Issues with waterlogging on one site were raised as a concern and assurance was given that investigations into the cause of the problem were ongoing.

The outcomes of the pilot to extend the time of the last burial at East Herringthorpe cemetery, which runs until the end of September 2019, will be reported back to the Commission in December following evaluation. Members had recommended that the impact on local traffic of the pilot should be monitored and officers reported that no complaints had been received to date and that monitoring would continue. Explanatory letters about the pilot had been sent out to clergy across the borough in February 2019 as recommended by the Select Commission.

- ❖ **Thriving Neighbourhoods - Update Report**
The Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy is framed around three key outcomes which describe what the Council would like to see in each ward across Rotherham:

- Neighbourhoods are safe and welcoming with good community spirit
- Residents are happy and healthy and love where they live
- Residents use their skills and assets to contribute to the outcomes that matter to them

Supporting delivery of the strategy is an implementation plan that is regularly updated, which identifies the following drivers:

- Engage & Develop the Workforce
- Councillors as Community Leaders
- Communication & Engagement
- Asset Based Community Development
- Integrated Place Based Working
- Role of Parish Councils

The Commission considered a detailed report that outlined achievements to date under each of the core drivers, together with an indication of next steps for the coming year. Summaries of ward priorities and individual ward budget profiles showing spending and themes/priorities invested in were also discussed at length.

Questions ensued on a number of issues around the budgets, such as the possibility of being able to bid for any underspend from ward base budgets that would otherwise return to the central pot; capital spend; avoiding duplication with parishes; and decisions by Area Housing Panels. More detail was provided on the Community Sport and Health Apprenticeships and how these roles would not focus solely on neighbourhood working or community development but also work actively

Overview and Scrutiny Update

with residents, dealing with some of the Council Plan indicators across the Borough and working with partners.

Progress on delivery of the Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy and the Neighbourhood Working model was noted and IPSC requested guidance regarding spending devolved budgets during the pre-election publicity period.

❖ Enforcement Contract - Kingdom/Doncaster MBC

The 'Time for Action' initiative provides a means to deliver enhanced enforcement around enviro-crime, particularly littering and parking offences. Joint arrangements with Doncaster Council have been operational since September 2018 and have delivered enhanced enforcement and greater visibility across various locations.

A report provided an updated position in relation to service performance, together with an indication of challenges being faced. Detailed breakdowns of parking charge notices issued and litter and dog fouling fines and patrols by location were examined.

Members explored a number of practical and operational issues and requested further information in relation to cases heard at the Single Justice Court. A further update in six months was requested as some of the previous recommendations from Scrutiny were still being progressed and delivery overall had been mixed, influenced by software reporting capabilities and contractor staffing turnover.

❖ Home to School Transport Update - Implementation of the new policy

Following their previous scrutiny in 2018, IPSC received a further progress update on implementation of the refreshed Home to School Transport Policy. Members learned that annual transport reviews were now undertaken at the same time as Education, Health and Care Plan reviews to assess the suitability of existing transport, and the ability to partake in Independent Travel Training. The targeted uptake for young people on Personal Travel Budgets was on track and 'Train the trainer' Independent Travel training had been delivered.

The briefing also included a response to the two recommendations made by Scrutiny:

- To consider looking into the use of contactless cards on buses to support independent travel by young people who might have less visible support needs, such as autism.
 - SYPTE advised officers that 'journey cards' were available for travellers which could be shown to bus drivers when boarding the vehicle to inform them of a disability. The cards covered a number of disabilities that were not always recognised by sight and where the driver might be able to provide support to enable the person to travel independently. SYPTE will be happy to work with the Council to develop cards to cover disabilities or activities that were not already covered.
- To reconsider the appeals process for the renewal of a home to school bus pass in cases where a family's circumstances had not changed from the previous year.
 - The need for young people to apply each year is enshrined within the Policy but the service reviewed the appeals process and will issue guidance saying that if circumstances have not changed year on year, a pass could be granted on the basis of exceptional circumstances without recourse to the

Overview and Scrutiny Update

appeal process. Should any change in circumstances occur a full reassessment would take place in accordance with the Policy.

❖ Rotherham Employment and Skills Strategy 2019-2025

The strategy was approved by the Rotherham Together Partnership in April 2019, with implementation under way, overseen by the Employment and Skills sub-group of the Business Growth Board. IPSC was updated with regard to progress on mapping and identifying existing employment and skills provision; development of a detailed delivery plan; schools' involvement with the Business Growth Board; and the launch of Skills Bank 2 and Skills Support for the Workforce to provide funding for businesses to train and upskill their existing workforce.

When the draft strategy had been considered by OSMB during pre-decision scrutiny a number of issues had been raised and the report set out a response to each of these issues. The Equality Analysis had been updated and although a more detailed action plan was being developed this was likely to be in Quarter 1 of 2020. Use of colours in the document was again raised as a concern for some readers.

Members inquired about plans for working with specific cohorts of people such as people with learning disability, carers and women. They also explored funding streams, ways of encouraging more businesses to become involved and links with schools. An update will be provided to Rotherham Youth Cabinet in November on how their recommendations for improving opportunities for quality work experience are being progressed through the strategy.

Follow up information was requested on a number of issues and the comments from IPSC will be fed back to RiDO and the Employment and Skills sub-group. Members also asked to see the outcome of the mapping exercise of present employment and skills provision and the detailed action plan once finalised. A future update on implementation will be scheduled for 2020.

[Response to Joint OSMB and IPSC Scrutiny Review: Modern Methods of Construction](#) – see OSMB

Other activity

❖ [Workshop on Council Plan Performance Indicators](#)

A short session familiarised the Commission with all the performance indicators that fall within its remit under Priorities 3 and 4 of the plan. In line with the new approach to scrutiny of the Council Plan, the particular focus of the discussion was on areas of underperformance and also to identify any potential issues to include in the work programme.

❖ [Briefing on Worksmart](#)

As part of their ongoing scrutiny of Asset Management, a short briefing paper on Worksmart was shared with IPSC. This workstream looks at the use of modern, agile and flexible working principles and supporting technologies to make best use of the estate. It also links in with wider transformation initiatives and supports a number of key plans.

In October

- ❖ [Visit to RotherFed](#)
- ❖ [Allotments Self-Management](#)
- ❖ [Traffic Impact from Waleswood Caravan Park](#)
- ❖ [Workshop - Area Housing Panels Review](#)