

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

2024 - 2025

A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD, CLLR BRIAN STEELE



With the introduction of the government's Devolution bill, it is crucial to recognise the changes in how the Mayoral Authority collaborates with local authorities. We must ensure that services are delivered effectively across all authorities and represent the needs of Rotherham residents in that arena. As the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) and alongside the Vice Chair, I attend the South Yorkshire Mayoral Authority (SYMCA) Overview and Scrutiny Committee to do exactly that. As the Vice Chair of the SYMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee, I feel privileged to be able to represent Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and its communities in scrutiny at that regional level.

2024-2025 was the first year in a four-year term of office for Councillors elected in May 2024, myself included. With a mixture of experienced and new Councillors representing Rotherham's communities, this year represented an opportunity to review, reset and refocus the Council's scrutiny function and to lay the foundations that would deliver impactful, meaningful improvements during that time. That did not mean the day-to-day business of scrutiny was set aside; the important work of influencing Cabinet decision and policy making, scrutinising budget plans, supporting the next generation of scrutineers through working with the Youth Cabinet and continuing to work with partners locally and regionally progressed with pace and purpose.

OSMB, along with the Improving Lives, Improving Places and Health Select Commissions look forward to delivering even more in 2025-26 building upon the considerable groundwork undertaken and encouraging Rotherham's residents to engage with scrutiny, shape the future for Rotherham and drive the changes they want to see.



2024-25 SCRUTINY AT A GLANCE

4 scrutiny commissions



84
substantive
items considered

29

pre-decision scrutiny
reports



2 decisions subject
to call in

7

workshops



5 reviews
progressed

1 site visit



26 off-agenda
briefings

FAQ:

WHAT IS SCRUTINY?

Scrutiny aims to ensure that public services and policies best meet the needs of Rotherham Residents. It acts as the check and balance to the Council's Executive decision makers (the Cabinet) by contributing to policy review and development; holding the Cabinet and partners to account for decisions and performance; investigating issues that matter to residents; working with Council officers and partners to improve services.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

Any Councillor who is not a member of the Cabinet can participate. Committees also have co-opted members and dedicated officer support. Cabinet Members, Strategic Directors, and representatives of partner organisations are invited to attend meetings and discuss issues.

WHAT KIND OF THINGS CAN SCRUTINY LOOK AT?

Councillors and co-opted members prioritise issues. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board manages the overall Work Programme, considering whether scrutiny can make a real difference by looking at an issue.

IS THERE ANYTHING SCRUTINY CAN'T EXAMINE?

Individual complaints or regulatory decisions are not appropriate topics for scrutiny.

CAN I SUGGEST A TOPIC?

Yes, contact your ward Councillor to suggest a topic, or use the [online form](#) to submit your suggestion.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Contact the [Governance Team](#) for more details on anything in this report.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) acts as the principal overview and scrutiny committee of the Council. It considers matters relating to the conduct, structure and procedures of overview and scrutiny, ensures overview and scrutiny of the Council's values, plans and strategies and make recommendations for improvements either directly or via the Health Select, Improving Lives or Improving Places Commissions through oversight of the work programmes of those commissions.

2024-25 KEY CONTACTS



Cllr Brian Steele
Chair



Cllr Joshua Bacon
Vice Chair



Jo Brown
Link Officer



Barbel Gale
Governance Manager

Children's Takeover Challenge

As part of the national Children's Takeover Challenge, Rotherham Youth Cabinet led a focused review on health and wellbeing, engaging over 4,000 young people. The initiative explored four key areas: vaping, mental health, physical activity, and healthy eating. Recommendations included reducing vape advertising, improving mental health support and early diagnosis, enhancing youth spaces and extracurricular activities, maintaining safe parks, and promoting healthy food options in schools. The Council committed to considering these proposals and working with partners to improve outcomes for children and young people across the Borough.



Housing Repairs and Maintenance

OSMB and the Improving Places Select Commission reviewed the Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy, focusing on service responsiveness, contractor performance, and future delivery models. Key issues included damp and mould management, support for vulnerable tenants, and the potential inclusion of fencing in maintenance scope. Members supported an increase in the decorating allowance and endorsed ongoing work to align services with emerging regulations. Performance data would be shared with a further update expected in 2025.



Modern Slavery Transparency Statement

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board reviewed the Council's ongoing work under the Modern Slavery Charter. Progress included strengthened procurement practices, increased staff and partner training, and improved referral rates through awareness campaigns. The Board endorsed the publication of the 2025/26 Transparency Statement and requested confirmation on planned training for taxi drivers.



Annual Compliments and Complaints

The Board reviewed the Annual Compliments and Complaints Report for 2023/24 in November 2024. The report showed a 13% decrease in complaints and a 14% increase in compliments compared to the previous year. While overall performance improved, response times to complaints fell slightly below the Council's target. Housing and Regeneration & Environment received the highest number of complaints, though notable reductions were seen across several directorates. Training and support for staff continue to be prioritised, and a Member Session was agreed to further review the report and strengthen engagement with the complaints process.



Gaza Petition

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board considered Cabinet's response to a petition-led set of recommendations, with five actions in progress and eight completed. Scrutiny focused on resource implications, timelines, and ongoing dialogue with affected communities, particularly regarding the display of the Palestinian flag and peace advocacy. The Board noted the response and agreed to receive a progress update on outstanding actions within six months.



Council Plan & Year Ahead Delivery Plan

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board reviewed progress against the Council Plan and Year Ahead Delivery Plan. Scrutiny focused on service delivery delays, capital programme challenges, and performance targets—particularly in early education, apprenticeships, and care services. Members raised concerns about project slippage, audit findings, and winter gritting effectiveness. The Board supported the reported progress and requested further updates on snow warden insurance and ongoing performance monitoring.

Call-in: Waste Collection Policy and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board reviewed two key policy decisions following call-in requests. On Strategic CIL funding, concerns were explored about project prioritisation and community engagement. The decision was upheld, with a Member Seminar agreed to improve understanding of the process. On the Waste Collections Policy, scrutiny focused on the balance between enforcement and education. The decision was also upheld, with a requirement for pilot area details and an education plan to be presented before final approval.



Budget & Council Tax

OSMB reviewed the Council's 2025/26 Budget, which included £12.5m in new government grants and a proposed 3% Council Tax increase. Key investments target Adult Social Care (£17m), Home to School Transport (£4.3m), and Waste Management (£1.5m), alongside £2.6m in planned efficiency savings. Scrutiny focused on service changes including the PAUSE programme transition, waste route optimisation, and the Street Safe Team rollout. Members requested updates on these initiatives and further details on employment support, food provision, and capital programme monitoring.

Council Plan themes supported by the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board in 2024-25:

EVERY
NEIGHBOURHOOD
THRIVING

PEOPLE ARE
SAFE, HEALTHY
AND LIVE WELL

EVERY CHILD
ABLE TO
FULFIL THEIR
POTENTIAL

A CLEANER,
GREENER LOCAL
ENVIRONMENT

EXPANDING
ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY

2025-26 KEY CONTACTS



Cllr Brian Steele
Chair



Cllr Joshua Bacon
Vice Chair



Phil Horsfield
Link Officer



Barbel Gale
Governance Manager

HEALTH SELECT COMMISSION

The remit of the Health Select Commission (HSC) is to undertake scrutiny in respect of all matters relating to Rotherham in the context of the health and the public health agenda, as described in the relevant legislation. In broad terms, this relates to health service commissioning, partnerships and integrated health and social care services, emergency planning, public health arrangements, measures delivering health improvements and promoting wellbeing, measures intended to address health inequalities, food standards and environmental health. The Chair also represents Rotherham at the South Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC), which considers matters affecting regional or specialist health services and 'matters of substantial variation'.

2024-25 KEY CONTACTS



Cllr Eve Keenan
Chair



Cllr Taiba Yasseen
Vice Chair



Ben Anderson
Link Officer



Kerry Grinsill-Clinton
Governance Advisor

Quality Accounts

The Health Select Commission has been given access to monitor 'Care Opinion' as a direct result of its response to the Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust (RDaSH) Quality Account 2024/25. Care Opinion monitoring access will facilitate real time evaluation of feedback regarding the quality of care received by patients, enabling the identification of patterns and themes and giving scrutiny the opportunity to quickly identify areas where its involvement might encourage service improvement. The Commission believes this represents a real step forward and an opportunity to engage more purposefully with RDaSH over the coming year to address issues that cause concern to those who access its services. They also considered and provided comments on the YAS (Yorkshire Ambulance Service) and TRFT (The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust) Quality Accounts, identifying areas which will inform scrutiny activity in 2025-26.



Oncology Transformation Programme Workshop

HSC's work in conjunction with the JHOSC led to a Members workshop which outlined the Oncology Transformation Programme's plan to relocate Lung Clinic services to Rotherham Hospital. Discussions highlighted a number of areas for service managers and commissioners to consider as part of the implementation of the proposals, and the Health Select Commission's Members developed reporting metrics to measure the success of the Lung Clinic's implementation and its direct impact on Rotherham residents. The Cancer Alliance are due to report against those metrics and outline the long term plan to the HSC in March 2026. In addition, Commission Members asked the Cancer Alliance to liaise with the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority to consider the public transport infrastructure serving the hospital site to ensure steps were taken to minimise the impact on parking availability and minimise impact on those affected by ill health or disabilities, given the direct relevance of the Clinic's services. The Commission's wider focus on this issue has led to the potential of a review in conjunction with the Improving Places Select Commission around how the public transport infrastructure can best serve Rotherham residents and address health inequalities in 2025-26.



Place Partners Winter Planning and Cost of Living Impact on Community Health

In November 2024, the Health Select Commission scrutinised the Place Partners Winter Plan. Arising out of those discussions, having recognised the importance of initiatives such as Open Arms and the contributions of Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Organisations such as Rotherfed and Citizen's Advice (CARD) in delivering support in conjunction with the Council, the Commission requested that the Council consider the mechanisms for gathering data on footfall at Open Arms sessions to inform planning and service delivery, and how that data could be shared with Councillors. That data was subsequently shared, and through further discussions following the identification of spikes in particular wards, plans have been made to increase CARD representation from fortnightly to weekly in affected areas to improve accessibility and ensure that demand is met, without exposing residents to lengthy waits during challenging



Sleep Pathways

In January 2025, HSC scrutinised the Sleep Pathway referred in by OSMB. Members requested the service prepare data allowing conclusions to be drawn regarding possible correlation between sleep issues/disorders and levels of deprivation amongst Rotherham's communities. The intention was to use that data to inform how SYMCA's 'Safe Space to Sleep' programme might be best utilised for Rotherham residents and shape support offers. HSC will also receive a report on the Tier 3 support pilot upon its conclusion to help shape future provision.

Hospital Waiting Times

In March 2025, HSC scrutinised the position of waiting times at Rotherham Hospital and assessed progress made to reduce delays through various initiatives implemented. Members requested further data to allow the identification of service areas where the greatest challenges persisted with a view to prioritising these for further scrutiny in 2025-26, in order to encourage TRFT to maintain its focus on alleviating system pressures, delivering improved services and reducing wait times to benefit the health and wellbeing of Rotherham people.

Same Day Emergency Care Centre (SDEC) Development

HSC members were briefed on significant capital investment to develop a Same Day Emergency Care Centre within Rotherham Hospital to reduce pressure on the Urgent & Emergency Care (A&E) Department which had caused concern for residents. Members provided views which helped shape the implementation plans, asked TRFT's Board to revisit parking facilities and public transport serving the hospital site and are due to receive an update on the impact achieved in March 2026.

Adult Social Care Mental Health Pathway

HSC received an update on the revised Mental Health Pathway implemented and identified successes and potential areas from improvement from the information shared. Members requested benchmarking data held by the service be provided to the Commission to allow them to more accurately assess comparative performance and identify areas to be targeted for further improvement through focused scrutiny. HSC also agreed to undertake pre-decision scrutiny on the Mental Health Strategy prior to consideration by Cabinet in December 2025.

Council Plan themes supported by the Health Select Commission's work in 2024-25:

EVERY
NEIGHBOURHOOD
THRIVING

PEOPLE ARE
SAFE, HEALTHY
AND LIVE WELL

EVERY CHILD
ABLE TO
FULFIL THEIR
POTENTIAL

A CLEANER,
GREENER LOCAL
ENVIRONMENT

EXPANDING
ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY

2025-26 KEY CONTACTS



Cllr Eve Keenan
Chair



Cllr Taiba Yasseen
Vice Chair



Scott Matthewman
Link Officer



Kerry Grinsill-Clinton
Governance Advisor

IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION

The Improving Lives Scrutiny Commission (ILSC) is tasked with carrying out in-depth overview and scrutiny of issues affecting Rotherham's residents including the Borough's education functions, including educational outcomes and expanding opportunities for skills and learning for young people, SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) and reviewing the performance of Children's and Young Peoples Services. Safeguarding children, which comprises of neglect, abuse, CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation) and CCE (Child Criminal Exploitation) and prevention and early intervention strategies including family intervention, fostering, adoption and looked after children. It also considers transition from childhood to adulthood for young people with complex needs and Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), in conjunction with the Health Select Commission as required and Domestic Abuse, including the Domestic Abuse Strategy and response.

2024-25 KEY CONTACTS



Cllr Lyndsay Pitchley
Chair



Cllr Stuart Knight
Vice Chair



Kelly White
Link Officer



Natasha Aucott
Governance Advisor

Preparation for Adulthood for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Review

The purpose of the review was to assess the measures in place to support successful preparation to adulthood for young people with SEND in Rotherham in order to identify any gaps in provision or areas requiring further focus. Following the review, the Recommendations Report was approved by the Commission and taken to Cabinet in October 2024. Cabinet endorsed all recommendations made, which have since been implemented or are in the process of implementation.

Recommendations included further embedding networks and partnerships such as the Rotherham Parent Carer's Forum to maximise SEND families engaged, the review of the Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) process to ensure the young person's voice is present throughout and further focus on improving engagement of children and young people with SEND in marginalised communities. Plans are in place to ensure all recommendations are achieved by September 2025.



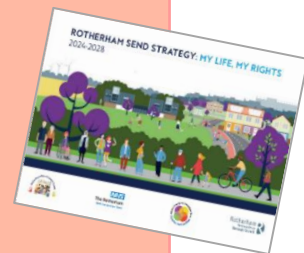
The Family Prosperity Strategy

The draft Family Prosperity Strategy was presented to the Commission for pre-decision scrutiny in April 2025. The purpose of the Strategy was to set out the work undertaken to address child poverty and the forward-facing priorities aimed at tackling the root causes of child poverty and improving equity of opportunity. Whilst Members felt that the Strategy successfully highlighted activity in Rotherham, they felt that the Strategy would benefit from further information relating to the support available for children and families experiencing poverty and how this could be accessed. To address this, further additional information was added. The updated Strategy entitled 'No Family Left Behind' is due to go before Cabinet for approval in Summer 2025.



SEND Strategy Workshop

A SEND Strategy Workshop was held in October 2024 for the Commission to provide their feedback on the SEND Strategy as part of the consultation and co-production process, giving members the opportunity to take part in shaping the revised Strategy. Members contributed to the policy development by providing specific feedback around the need to include further information on disabilities within the Strategy's commitments and requested that a further document be developed to sit alongside the Strategy relating to transitions. Once drafted, the draft Strategy was presented back to the Commission for pre-decision scrutiny work, ahead of presentation to Cabinet in February 2025 where it was subsequently approved.



Elective Home Education Workshop

A workshop on the revision of the Elective Home Education (EHE) Policy was held to capture members feedback as part of the consultation and engagement on the EHE Policy revision, prior to public consultation. Members shared concerns relating to the impact of social isolation for children removed from a school setting. Once drafted, the draft Policy was presented back to the Commission for pre-decision scrutiny, ahead of being presented to Cabinet in October 2025. The Commission requested that any updates on the future changes to government legislation in this area be presented back into the



Radicalisation in Schools Workshop

In May 2025 a workshop was held relating to Radicalisation in Schools, the Prevent Programme and the Protest Recovery Response following the community unrest and disorder within the Rotherham Borough in the Summer of 2024. Members scrutinised all three areas and were reassured that work completed and ongoing would enhance community cohesion and ensure education, information and where appropriate, interventions effectively addressed the threat radicalisation posed.



Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP) Annual Report 2023 – 2024

In October 2024 Members considered the RSCP Annual Report 2023–24, and proposed changes to next year's annual report to include further information relating to training and the uptake to enable better interpretation of data. The Commission also requested further scrutiny on the changes to the Partnership that were due to be presented to Cabinet, which was delivered in February 2025.



Council Plan themes supported by the Improving Lives Select Commission's work in 2024-25:

EVERY
NEIGHBOURHOOD
THRIVING

PEOPLE ARE
SAFE, HEALTHY
AND LIVE WELL

EVERY CHILD
ABLE TO
FULFIL THEIR
POTENTIAL

EXPANDING
ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY

2025-26 KEY CONTACTS



Cllr Gina Monk
Chair



Cllr Rajmund Brent
Vice Chair



Kelly White
Link Officer



Natasha Aucott
Governance Advisor

IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION

The remit of the Improving Places Select Commission (IPSC) is to undertake scrutiny activity in respect of all matters pertaining to the Borough of Rotherham as a place. In broad terms, this remit relates to business and economic development, employment, emergency planning, environment, housing, climate change, leisure, culture and tourism, transport and highways, trading standards and environmental health. The breadth of functions and services that fall within the Commission's remit is significant and varied, with some cross-over with the work of the other scrutiny commissions.

2024-25 KEY CONTACTS



Cllr Cameron McKiernan
Chair



Cllr Adam Tinsley
Vice Chair



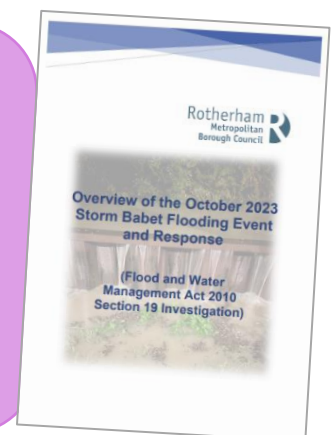
Andrew Bramidge
Link Officer



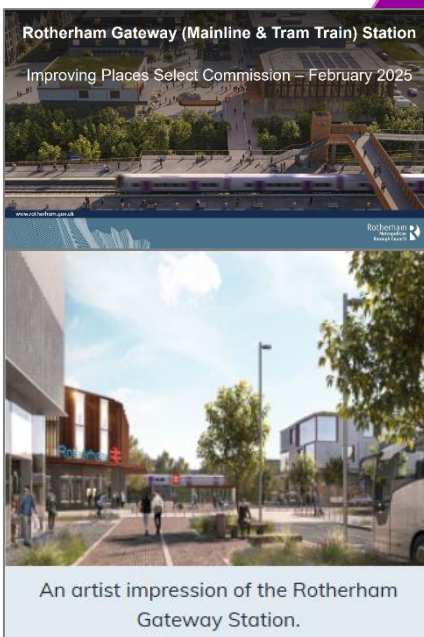
Barbel Gale
Governance Manager

Section 19 Report for Storm Babet

Following the anniversary of Storm Babet in 2023, the Commission received the Section 19 report outlining the causes, impacts, and future mitigation strategies in October 2024. Catcliffe was the most adversely affected area in Rotherham, with flooding also reported across the Borough as a whole. The Environment Agency addressed concerns raised about its communication strategy, confirming improvements to flood warning trigger levels to enhance response times. All partners, including the local community, are collaboratively reviewing flood and emergency plans to strengthen preparedness and resilience.



Rotherham Gateway (Mainline and Tram Train) Station



The Commission scrutinised plans in February 2025 noted this was a key infrastructure project aimed at improving regional connectivity and supporting economic growth. Discussions focused on the station's location at Parkgate, access challenges, and integration with Rotherham's existing transport infrastructure. Members raised concerns about connectivity for communities in the south of the borough, such as Maltby, and the lack of direct public transport links.

Officers confirmed that the site was selected following a detailed strategic assessment and that the project would improve journey times to major cities, though London connections would remain via Doncaster. Funding implications were considered in detail, with the outline business case already funded and further stages progressing through regional and national bids.

Land acquisition was being supported through the Towns Programme, with no financial risk to the Council. The station was identified as a top priority for South Yorkshire, alongside the Sheffield–Rotherham airport corridor, and formed part of a wider vision to enhance transport links and regeneration opportunities across the borough.

Flooding Alleviation Update

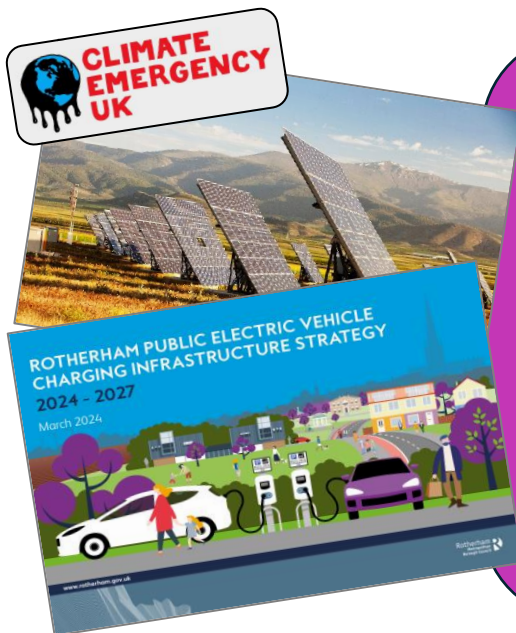
In December 2024, the Commission received an update on Borough-wide flood risk management. The presentation outlined key schemes, funding arrangements, and mitigation actions. Members were assured that flood resilience remains a Council priority.



Housing Strategy 2022-25

In June 2024, the Improving Places Select Commission reviewed the year two progress of the Housing Strategy 2022–25. Members noted rising homelessness pressures and reaffirmed the Council's commitment to expanding housing stock through both development and acquisition. Garage sites were identified as key opportunities for delivering new council homes, particularly bungalows, which are in high demand and the Commission committed to reviewing the repairs and maintenance policy before it was considered by the Cabinet.

ROTHERHAM'S HOUSING STRATEGY 2022-2025



Climate Emergency Annual Report

In March 2025, the Commission scrutinised progress on climate action in Rotherham, focusing on EV infrastructure, renewable energy, and sustainable transport. Key points included expanding EV charging, supporting businesses to decarbonise, and exploring local energy generation.

Concerns were raised about solar farms on green belt land, battery safety, and disposal of lithium and solar panels. The Council was assessing district heating options, improving energy efficiency in housing, and trialling alternative fuels like Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO). Work is ongoing to address on-street EV charging and future-proof infrastructure through the Local Area Energy Plan.

Council Plan themes supported by the Improving Places Commission's work in 2024-25:

EVERY
NEIGHBOURHOOD
THRIVING

PEOPLE ARE
SAFE, HEALTHY
AND LIVE WELL

A CLEANER,
GREENER LOCAL
ENVIRONMENT

EXPANDING
ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY

2025-26 KEY CONTACTS



Cllr Cameron McKiernan
Chair



Cllr Adam Tinsley
Vice Chair



Andrew Bramidge
Link Officer



Kristianne Thorogood
Governance Advisor