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.