

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 12 October 2026

Report Title

Children and Young People's Strategy

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

Yes

Executive Director Approving Submission of the Report

Nicola Curley, Executive Director of Children & Young People's Services

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The Children and Young People's Partnership Board is part of the Rotherham Together Strategic Partnership alongside the Health and Wellbeing Board, Strategic Housing Forum, Business Growth Board, Safer Rotherham Partnership, Safeguarding Adults Board, Safeguarding Children Partnership, and the Cultural Partnership Board.

Following a pause during the Covid pandemic the Children and Young People's Partnership Board (CYPPB) was re-launched in November 2023 as a co-chaired, youth-led forum embedded in Borough governance, where young people set priorities, challenge leaders, and co-produce solutions alongside senior leaders across the partnership.

In July 2025 the Children and Young People's Partnership Board agreed to develop a strategy that shows how important children and young people are in Rotherham, what is great about Rotherham from a children and young people's perspective and what the Board are going to do to make it even better.

This report provides an overview of current activity undertaken by the Children and Young People's Partnership Board to ensure children and young people's voices are influencing priorities, informing challenge to leaders and co-producing solutions across the partnership.

The report outlines the key activity undertaken in developing the new Children's Strategy, including a needs analysis focused on things that are important to children and young people, consultation and engagement and co-production.

The report seeks endorsement of the Rotherham Children's Strategy and outlines the timeline for implementation to achieve the aims identified.

Recommendations

That Cabinet:

1. Note the activity to date of the Children and Young People's Partnership Board, a co-chaired, youth-led forum embedded in Borough governance, where young people set priorities, challenge leaders, and co-produce solutions alongside senior leaders across the partnership.
2. Endorse the Rotherham Children's Strategy for implementation from October 2026.

List of Appendices Included

- Appendix 1 Rotherham Children's Strategy
- Appendix 2 Children and Young People's Priorities Summary
- Appendix 3 Engagement and Consultation Summary
- Appendix 4 ILSC Minutes Children's Strategy
- Appendix 5 Equality Analysis
- Appendix 6 Part B Equality Impact Analysis
- Appendix 7 Carbon Impact

Background Papers

None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

Improving Lives Select Commission - Children and Young People's Partnership Board
28th April 2026

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Children and Young People's Strategy

1. Background

1.1 Purpose of the report

1.1.1 The purpose of the report is to:

- Provide an overview of current activity undertaken by the Children and Young People's Partnership Board to ensure children and young people's voices are influencing priorities, informing challenge to leaders and co-producing solutions across the partnership.
- Seek endorsement of the Rotherham Children's Strategy 2026 – 2030 and outline the timeline for implementation to achieve the aims identified.

1.2 Context

1.2.1 Prior to the pandemic the Children and Young People's Partnership Board Terms of Reference reflected an adult led, children's services agenda with 4 Youth Cabinet attendees. The minutes and action log demonstrate that the consultation-focused engagement approach at that time did not consistently enable Children and young people in Rotherham to influence the strategic decisions that shape their lives.

1.2.2 The Children and Young People's Partnership Board (CYPPB) was refreshed following the pandemic to shift from an adult decision-making forum offering opportunities for engagement and consultation with children and young people, to a co-chaired, youth-led forum embedded in Borough governance.

1.2.3 The CYPPB is now a Borough-wide strategic partnership forum for children and young people from diverse groups to directly influence senior leaders across Rotherham.

1.2.4 Meeting in the Council Chamber at Rotherham Town Hall, co-chaired by a young person and the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, the Board brings together children and young people from a variety of council and voluntary and community sector groups including Youth Cabinet, Young Inspectors, SEND Guiding Voices, LGBTQ groups and care-experienced young people.

1.2.5 Termly board meetings (with flexible attendance to maximise inclusion) are supplemented by workshops when needed.

1.2.6 Young people review and shape priorities within the Rotherham Plan and key system strategies, providing challenge, insight, and co-produced solutions.

1.2.7 Young people are supported to build confidence, lead agenda items, question decision-makers, and see tangible change from their contributions.

1.3 **Outcomes aligned to Children and Young People's priorities**

1.3.1 Since November 2023, the CYPPB has been busy turning ideas into action. There are lots of examples of things they have achieved.

1.3.2 **Say NO to Vapes!**

Following a presentation on smoking cessation for children and young people, CYPPB challenged the Public Health specialists from Rotherham Council, who then launched a 'Rotherhamised' campaign about vaping – spreading awareness and keeping young people healthy.

1.3.3 **Nature Recovery**

A presentation regarding activity promoting nature recovery led to CYPPB making recommendations, and officers in the Council committing to:

- Creating a Climate Action Group for young people to get involved in protecting the planet.
- Providing more volunteering opportunities for young people to help nature thrive that are age appropriate.

1.3.4 **Toilets Shouldn't Be Locked**

One of the represented groups raised the locking of school toilets in a meeting. Following this, CYPPB challenged schools about locking toilets with support from Public Health and the Lead Member for Children and Young People. Some schools responded and even changed their policies so not all secondary schools lock toilets now. However, many did not respond.

1.3.5 **Safer Travel**

When the community safety team presented their plans for improving safety in the town centre, CYPPB explained that because transport does not feel safe, it can be difficult to get to the town centre. The Chance Group shared their video about the buses, and the Young Inspectors took action. They:

- Designed a bus questionnaire
- Inspected the bus station
- Influenced campaigns for safe cycle lanes

1.3.6 **Standing Up Against Hate**

The Hate Crime Team presented their work in schools around Hate Crime. Following CYPPB challenge, they extended support to home-educated young people. They also:

- Shared the Hate Crime Pledge
- Displayed Youth Cabinet guidance on reporting hate crime in the community

1.3.7 **Mental Health Matters**

Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber NHS Trust talked about Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). They proposed some

suggested changes based on consultation and engagement with children and young people which the CYPPB approved, and so CAMHS introduced:

- A new referral form
- A self-referral process
- Plans for a drop-in service designed with young people

1.3.8 Young People's Voice influencing Plans

Thanks to CYPPB, 'Safety' and 'Having fun things to do' are now priorities in the Council Plan. CYPPB also influenced priorities in the Rotherham Plan, setting themes to improve life for local people and places.

1.4 Shaping Rotherham's Future

1.4.1 In January 2025, the groups represented at the Children and Young People's Partnership Board each presented their priorities for children and young people across the Borough and reviewed these against the work of the other thematic partnerships.

1.4.2 Some priorities were not clearly the responsibility of any of the other Partnership Boards. These priorities and suggested actions are now reflected in the key aims and outcomes proposed for the Children and Young People's Partnership Board.

1.4.3 It was agreed that children and young people need to continue to have a voice and be listened to across the Rotherham partnership. CYPPB members committed to continue to scrutinise the progress against the actions identified in the new Rotherham Plan identified as priorities for children and young people. They will provide support and challenge to the officers responsible to ensure Rotherham is a place for children and young people to be proud of throughout the borough.

1.4.4 Although having fun things to do has been agreed as a Council plan priority, the Children and Young People's Partnership Board want to make sure the fun things to do also help children and young people learn more about other cultures and religions to help them celebrate different occasions together, like Eid and Diwali. Partnership Board Members committed to communicating ongoing events and opportunities (including youth clubs' / community activities) on a greater scale so that young people know what is happening in Rotherham and to create guidance for youth club providers to ensure their offer includes relevant activities and support.

1.4.5 The Children and Young People's Partnership Board felt it was important for children and young people to feel proud of the place they live and shout about it. In July 2025, they agreed to develop a Strategy that shows how important children and young people are in Rotherham, what is great about Rotherham from a children and young people's perspective and what is being done to make it even better.

1.5 Proposed next steps

- 1.5.1 Endorsement is sought for the Rotherham Children's Strategy 2026 – 2030. This will set the key aims for the Children and Young People's Partnership Board and provide an opportunity for children and young people to show why they are proud to live in Rotherham and how important they are.

2. Key Issues

2.1 Developing the Children's Strategy

- 2.1.1 At the July 2025 meeting of the Children and Young People's Partnership Board, it was decided to develop a strategy showcasing what young people are proud of and why it is good to grow up in Rotherham.
- 2.1.2 To ensure the Strategy reflected the views of children and young people, the Board agreed to engage with their peers and conduct a survey across the Borough. This was promoted by Family Hubs, Family Information Webpages, GPs, Libraries and at the Rotherham Show. The survey closed on 30th September 2025. 259 children and young people responded to the survey.
- 2.1.3 On 1 October 2025, members of the Children and Young People's Partnership Board came together at Dalton Youth Centre for a Children's Strategy Workshop. The workshop brought together young people with different lived experience from across Rotherham, with representatives from Youth Cabinet, Young Inspectors, SEND Guiding Voices, In Care Voice and Smiles for Miles.
- 2.1.4 The children and young people considered lots of other strategies to get ideas for their own Strategy e.g. how long it should be, what content is relevant and important, what the design should look like.
- 2.1.5 During the workshop, young people worked together to write a draft introduction to the Strategy, chose the examples they wanted to include in the Strategy to demonstrate that Rotherham values children and young people, selected the data they felt was most relevant to describe children and young people in Rotherham, what it is like to live in Rotherham and what could be used to demonstrate the impact of the Strategy. The workshop concluded by agreeing the content of the draft Strategy and the appropriate next steps, informing the development of the Rotherham Children's Strategy.

2.2 Guiding Principles

- 2.2.1 The Strategy has been co-produced. Children and young people have led the development in line with the principles of the Rotherham Charter (Four Cornerstones): 1. Welcome and care, 2. Value and include, 3. Communicate, 4. Work in partnership.
- 2.2.2 To ensure genuine co-production, the Lead Member for Children and Young People has led the required structural change to agenda setting, facilitation, and environment. It is acknowledged that investing in young people's

confidence is critical and quality participation must not be compromised. Opportunities to influence change must be real and relevant.

- 2.2.3 The Children and Young People's Partnership Board has shifted the way the partnership works with children and young people, moving away from consultation to shared power. Young people are not just heard; they influence and shape strategic decisions at system level.

2.3 **Analysis of local need**

- 2.3.1 Children and young people reviewed the available information about Rotherham and selected what they felt was most important and relevant to children and young people to be included in the Strategy.
- 2.3.2 Rotherham's estimated population is 271,195 with 47,100 children (under 15) and 68,600 adults over 60. 31,193 people are from minority ethnic groups (11.7% of the population). Of these, the Pakistani community is the second largest ethnic group in Rotherham after White British.
- 2.3.3 The results from the 2025 Lifestyle Survey (a survey completed by children in years 7 and 10) show that 62.8% of children completing the survey rated their mental health as either excellent or good, 58.5% said "I am comfortable with my body image" and 39.8% have been bullied in the past 6 months. 46.9% said they ate fruit and/or vegetables more than once per day, 17.3% of students said they never eat breakfast, 12.9% drink one high-sugar fizzy drink per day, 28.2% drink one high-energy drink per week and 10.7% have either used or created a betting account.
- 2.3.4 Under 64.5% of children under 5 are at a good level of development. The Best Start Plan aims to increase this to 73.3% by 2028.
- 2.3.5 70% of Rotherham is open countryside. Rotherham has lots of green space, including urban and country parks, nature reserves, and woodlands. There were 4 million visits to Rotherham's attractions last year, including Wentworth Woodhouse, Gulliver's Valley, and Magna. Rotherham has a strong voluntary and community sector. There are around 1,400 Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations in Rotherham and tens of thousands of volunteers.
- 2.3.6 259 children and young people responded to a survey carried out at Rotherham Show, Family Hubs, Children's Centres, Rotherham Council reception areas, Schools, GPs, Pharmacies, Healthwatch networks, Voice & Influence Groups and across 14 voluntary and community sector networks. 77% of children have strong connections to family and friends. 60% of children chose spending time with family and friends as their favourite thing to do. 36.29% of children think Rotherham would be better if there were more fun things to do (examples included more museums, zoos, shops and arcades), 53.67% if it felt safer, 53.67% if it was cleaner, 25.1% if there was improved access to health services, particularly mental health, 31.66% if the transport across Rotherham was better and 28.19% if there was more support for young

people e.g. more ways to learn, increase skills, more careers advice and pathways to work.

2.4 Rotherham Children's Strategy Actions

2.4.1 Based on the analysis of local need, the following priorities are identified:

1. Continue to scrutinise the Rotherham Plan.

To keep Rotherham a family friendly Borough, the Children and Young People's Partnership Board will make sure children and young people continue to influence decision making and service delivery in Rotherham, challenging and supporting adults.

2.4.2 2. Develop a Youth Club Curriculum.

To improve the support available to children and young people attending community groups and youth clubs, CYPPB will develop a toolkit for workers to use to talk about things that are important to children and young people.

2.4.3 3. Create opportunities for children and young people to develop content to improve communications with children and young people.

To help more children and young people know about the fun things to do in Rotherham and the work the Council and other organisations do to make it cleaner and safer, CYPPB will improve communications.

2.4.4 The Rotherham Children's Strategy details how each action will be delivered (when and what) and the impact under each aim. The Rotherham Children's Strategy is included as Appendix 1.

2.5 Governance

2.5.1 The Rotherham Together Partnership will monitor progress against the Rotherham Children's Strategy actions. Overarching responsibility will sit with the Lead Member for Children and Young People who will report into the Rotherham Together Partnership.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 **Option 1:** Not endorsing the Rotherham Children's Strategy will mean the Children and Young People's Partnership Board do not have a transparent, published Strategy and plan.

3.2 **Option 2 (preferred option):** Endorsement of the Rotherham Children's Strategy will ensure children and young people's voices are influencing priorities, informing challenge to leaders and co-production of solutions across the partnership. This will mean the Children and Young People's Partnership Board have a Strategy and plan in line with the other members of the Rotherham Together Partnership.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 Development of the co-produced Strategy has been led by the Children and Young People's Partnership Board.
- 4.2 To ensure the Strategy reflected the views of children and young people, the Board agreed to engage with their peers and conduct a survey across the Borough. 259 children and young people responded to the survey. This consultation feedback was used by the members of the Children and Young People's Partnership Board to develop the priorities in the Strategy.
- 4.3 On 28 April 2026, Improving Lives Select Commission (ILSC) members attended the Children and Young People's Partnership Board for pre-decision scrutiny of the Rotherham Children's Strategy.
- 4.4 Angel, one of the young people, gave a brief overview of the Strategy and highlighted the pertinent points. Councillor Sutton welcomed the presentation and appreciated both the content and the way it had been presented. A young person asked for social media and online safety to be included within the Strategy, as this was an important issue. A majority vote agreed to include content on social media and online safety. Members volunteered several suggestions on how the Strategy may be improved before it was presented to Cabinet for approval. The suggestions included adding a little more detail to some of the statistics to make them more meaningful for impact, identification of where support was available for young people and expansion of some information in the narrative. The final draft Strategy presented to Cabinet is reflective of these changes (full ILSC minutes are attached at Appendix 4).

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1
- Approval of the Rotherham Plan 2026 – 2036 – June 2026.
 - Endorsement of the Rotherham Children's Strategy– October 2026.
 - Implementation of the actions in the Rotherham Children's Strategy– ongoing.
 - Review of the Rotherham Children's Strategy– March 2028.
 - Review of the Rotherham Together Partnership initial two-year delivery plan – 2028.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications to the Council or CYPS budgets from the implementation of the actions in the Rotherham Children's Strategy. The Rotherham Children's Strategy is intended to be delivered through existing partnership arrangements, governance structures, and services' delivery plans (and resources). The Strategy therefore has no immediate financial impact on the Council's approved revenue budget.
- 6.2 There are no direct procurement implications arising from the recommendations detailed in this report. Should there be a need to engage a third party provider to support delivery of the Strategy, they must be procured in compliance with relevant procurement legislation (Public Contracts

Regulations 2015 or the Procurement Act 2023) dependent on the route to market and the Council's own Financial and Procurement Procedure Rules.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 The Council has a range of statutory duties in relation to children and young people including under the Children Act 1989, the Children Act 2004, the Education Act 1996, the Children and Families Act 2014 and Children and Social Work Act 2017. The Rotherham Children's Strategy supports the Council and its partners in promoting the wellbeing of children and young people, encouraging their participation in decision-making, and supporting effective partnership working across the Borough. The Strategy is consistent with the Council's duties to have regard to the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people when developing policies, services, and strategic priorities.
- 7.2 The development of the Strategy has been informed by consultation and co-production with children and young people from a range of backgrounds and experiences. This approach is consistent with the Council's obligations under the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty contained within section 149 of that Act.
- 7.3 The Strategy is a high-level, non-statutory, strategic document which establishes priorities and intended outcomes and does not create enforceable rights, obligations, or entitlements. Implementation of individual actions arising from the Strategy should continue to be undertaken in accordance with the Council's constitutional arrangements, procurement rules, financial regulations, information governance requirements, and any relevant statutory duties.
- 7.4 There are no legal implications raised by following the recommendations at 3.2 above.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

- 8.1 There are no immediately identified HR implications.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 The Rotherham Children's Strategy aligns with key local partnership priorities and plans reinforcing the involvement of children and young people in strategic decision making, including the Council Plan 2025-30, Rotherham Plan 2026 - 2036 and The Rotherham Together Partnership thematic boards and strategic plans.
- 9.2 The Strategy describes how children and young people and partners will work together to ensure the impact of delivery of plans means that Rotherham is a great place to grow up, where children and young people have the best chance to reach their full potential. This will mean that children grow up happily, safe, in good health and develop the skills and qualifications they need to be successful.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 Equality and human rights are considered within the Strategy.
- 10.2 An equalities impact assessment is attached at Appendix 5 and 6 to this report.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 Wider consideration of indirect implications or unintended consequence of work in this area on CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change is considered across all partners as the Council are committed to long term targets to mitigate these areas of concern in the Borough. An environmental impact assessment has been completed and is attached as Appendix 7 to this report.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 These are referred to in the Strategy. The Strategy describes how children and young people and partners will work together to ensure the impact of delivery of plans has a positive impact for children and young people across the Borough.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 Risks identified during the delivery of the Rotherham Children's Strategy will be raised by the Lead Member for Children and Young People with the Children and Young People's Service Directorate Leadership Team and where mitigation is not effective, this will be escalated through the Rotherham Together Partnership Safeguarding Chairs meeting.
- 13.2 There is a risk that children and young people may choose not to engage in the Children and Young People's Partnership Board which would prevent delivery of the Strategy. The investment in universal youth activities and voice and influence work across the Borough to build relationships with children and young people to develop their skills and confidence will support quality participation. The changes made to the structure of the meetings including the changes to agenda setting, facilitation and environment support continued engagement, and co-production.

14. Accountable Officers

Helen Sweatn – Joint Service Director, Commissioning, Performance and Quality

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	John Edwards	22/09/26
Executive Director of Corporate Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	15/09/26
Service Director, Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	18/09/26

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