

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Council – 30 November 2022

Report Title

Overview and Scrutiny Update – Improving Lives Select Commission

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

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive

Report Author(s)

Caroline Webb, Senior Governance Advisor

caroline.webb@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The purpose of Overview and Scrutiny updates to Council is to highlight and summarise recent work carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) and the Select Commissions - Health (HSC), Improving Lives (ILSC) and Improving Places (IPSC). This report focuses on the recent scrutiny work of Improving Lives Select Commission and includes a summary of its Work Programme for 2022-23.

Recommendations

1. That the report be received and noted.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Improving Lives Select Commission Work Programme

Background Papers

Constitution of the Council, Appendix 9 – Responsibility for Functions, Section 5 – Terms of Reference for Committees, Boards and Panels

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required

Yes

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Overview and Scrutiny Update – Improving Lives Select Commission

1. Background

1.1 The remit of Improving Lives Select Commission is to carry out in-depth overview and scrutiny reviews as directed by OSMB, including scrutiny of:-

- the ‘Every Child Matters’ agenda (note Health Select Commission responsibilities);
- the “Think Family” and early intervention/ prevention agendas;
- other cross-cutting services provided specifically for children and young people;
- the implementation of Rotherham’s plans to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation.

1.2 The primary Council Performance Priorities (Council Plan 2022-25) associated with the remit of Improving Lives Select Commission are:-

Theme 1 – Every neighbourhood thriving

Theme 2: People are safe, healthy and live well

Theme 3: Every child able to fulfil their potential

Furthermore, Scrutiny Select Commissions of the Council contribute to the overarching theme of “One Council”, supporting the governance function of scrutiny and strengthening the Council’s effectiveness by listening and responding to the voice of Rotherham residents.

2. Scrutiny Activity - improving Lives Select Commission

2.1 A summary of the Work Programme is attached as Appendix 1. Since the beginning of the current municipal year, the Commission’s work has focussed on child exploitation, Children and Young People’s Service performance outturn, adult safeguarding performance and special educational needs and disability provision. Both adult and children’s safeguarding activity will feature on future agendas, with relevant partners being invited to give account of performance in these areas.

2.2 The next meeting of ILSC will focus on the outcomes of the OFSTED inspection and the draft action plan. An update of the progress in the implementation of the recommendations arising from the scrutiny review of Post-Abuse Support will be presented to a meeting early in the new year.

Pre-decision scrutiny activity

2.3 The Commission was invited by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People to review two major strategies prior to decision being taken at Cabinet. The Chair of OSMB supported these requests, attending both meetings.

2.4 The draft Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy (2023-2028) was considered at Improving Lives Select Commission on 6 September 2022. The Commission’s discussions focussed on alignment of performance measures with the aspirations articulated in the strategy,

improving outcomes for looked after children and care leavers and sharing the foster carer 'offer' widely across all communities in Rotherham to encourage greater take-up. The recommendations made have been incorporated into the development of the strategy and associated governance arrangements.

- 2.5 A workshop session was held to discuss the draft Early Help Strategy in mid-September. The purpose of the meeting was to comment and influence the priorities, strategic direction and the delivery of the Early Help 'offer', identifying challenges and potential solutions.
- 2.6 The cross-party working group made wide-ranging recommendations which focussed on the broad principles underpinning the early help offer; measuring impact; links to neighbourhood working; communication and learning and development.

Joint working

- 2.7 Members of ILSC were invited to attend a special meeting of OSMB held on 27 May to discuss the outcomes of the independent report into Child Sexual Exploitation undertaken by a team commissioned by the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership and received by the Council on 13 May 2022.
- 2.8 Members were able to question the report authors' findings in-depth to establish how they had arrived at their conclusions and what evidence had been considered. The Review Team provided assurance that there are robust partnership processes in place to address concerns when they came in. Evidence had been provided to support that conclusion
- 2.9 A series of recommendations emerged from the meeting which included the following areas:
 - Training and awareness raising for elected members;
 - Maintaining partnership engagement with scrutiny activity
 - Communications
 - Clarity about how concerns are escalated
 - Ensuring that the voice of survivor is heard
 - Performance monitoring.

Review of progress will be considered by ILSC in due course.

- 2.10 Recently a joint spotlight review of the Cultural Strategy was presented to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board. The review sought assurances that isolation during the pandemic and financial limitations would not prevent young people across the Borough from having fun things to do and safe places to go.
- 2.11 This recommendation will be submitted to Cabinet on 19 December 2022.

- 2.12 Work is planned with Health Select Commission to review Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. This has been a critical concern for both Commissions.
- 2.13 Members of ILSC have been invited to join other Health Select Commission meetings focussing of Adult Mental Health and Intermediate Care and Enablement.

Local Government Association “Effective Scrutiny of Children’s Services”

- 2.14 ILSC was asked to be considered as part of a LGA learning and development programme. The LGA sessions were part of a wider national pilot to strengthen scrutiny of children’s services (Rotherham is one of a few authorities participating) and the LGA has received funding from the Department for Education to support this work.
- 2.15 The first workshop took place on 4 October. It was an interactive session and focussed on different approaches to scrutiny of children services and how to make it more effective. The second session took place on 25 October using practical examples to plan and scope scrutiny activity. The outcomes of the workshops are being built into the scrutiny work programme.

Reviews

- 2.16 Using the tools and techniques introduced in the LGA workshop, a spotlight review is planned to take place in the new year focussing on the evaluation of the learning from the “Young Producers programme”.
- 2.17 The programme, funded by the Community Renewal Fund, was an innovative project to give young people skills training and opportunities in the creative/cultural sectors. The purpose of the review would be to see what lessons can be used to inform the ongoing work of the Children’s Capital of Culture programme.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the report and continue to participate in the development of scrutiny work programmes for 2022-23. As an information report, there are no alternative options or proposals to consider.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 Whilst this report is submitted to fulfil the constitutional requirement to share updates on scrutiny activity, it is submitted for information and therefore no consultation has been undertaken directly on this report. The work programme of the Council’s scrutiny bodies is developed by Members in consultation with officers, partners and stakeholders.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 There is no decision for the Council to make beyond noting the information detailed within this report.
- 5.2 The Head of Democratic Services is accountable for the effectiveness of the scrutiny function as the Statutory Scrutiny Officer, but the Cabinet are also accountable for the implementation of any agreed recommendations arising from scrutiny activity.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial or procurement implications directly associated with this report. In the event that there are implications arising directly from scrutiny activity or recommendations on specific subjects these will be reported to the Cabinet and Council when considering the proposed and agreed response of the Cabinet to those recommendations.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications directly associated with this report. In considering this report, the Council is meeting the requirement set out in the Council's Procedure Rules to consider a regular update in respect of the outcomes of the scrutiny function.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

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

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 9.1 Any recommendations emerging from this item which have implications for children and young people and vulnerable adults will be forwarded to the relevant agency for consideration and response.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

- 10.1 Whilst there are no equalities or human rights implications directly arising from this report, it should be noted that scrutiny activity focuses on the equalities duty on the Council and its partners in considering proposals or service impacts that reported to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the Select Commissions.

11. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

- 11.1 There are no implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change directly arising from this report.

12. Implications for Partners

- 12.1 There are no implications for partners directly arising from this report.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 There are no risks associated with this report.

Accountable Officer(s)

Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services and Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Approvals obtained on behalf of:-

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	14/11/22
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	10/11/22
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	10/11/22

Report Author: Caroline Webb Senior Governance Advisor
caroline.webb@rotherham.gov.uk

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