

**IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION
13th June, 2012**

Present:- Councillor Whysall (in the Chair); Councillors Andrews, Astbury, Atkin, Ellis, Falvey, Foden, Jepson, Read, P. A. Russell, Sims, Swift, Wallis and Wright.

Together with:- Mr. Brian Walker.

Apologies for absence had been received from: - Councillors Dodson, Gilding, Gosling, N. Hamilton, Havenhand and Co-opted Members Messrs. Carr and Hartley.

1. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS.

There were no members of the public or the press present.

2. COMMUNICATIONS.

The Chair of the Improving Places Select Commission, Councillor Whysall, welcomed the new members to the meeting and looked forward to working with them over the coming year.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION HELD ON 4TH APRIL, 2012.

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission held on 4th April, 2012, were considered.

Resolved: - That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as a correct record for signature by the Chair.

4. NOMINATIONS TO GROUPS AND OUTSIDE BODIES.

Resolved: - (1) That the following appointments for representatives from the Improving Places Select Commission on groups and outside bodies be approved: -

Rotherham Bond Guarantee Scheme: -
Councillor Sims.

RUSH House Management Committee: -
Councillor Ellis.

Social Concerns Committee Churches Together: -
Councillor Sims.

Environmental Protection – Yorkshire and Humberside Division: -
Mr Jack Carr and Councillors Andrews, Atkin and Beaumont.

Yorkshire and Humberside Pollution and Advisory Council: -
Mr Jack Carr and Councillor Ellis.

Women's Refuge: -
Councillor Sims.

Groundwork, Cresswell, Ashfield and Mansfield: -
Councillor Swift, as a Director of the company.

Health, Welfare and Safety Panel: -
Councillor Swift. Substitute: - Cllr P. A. Russell.

Local Development Framework Members' Steering Group: -
Councillor Whysall, Chair of the Improving Places Select Commission.

Recycling Group: -
Councillors Atkin and Falvey.

[2] That the Housing Options Manager ascertain whether representation is still required on the RUSH House Management Committee and the Women's Refuge.

[3] That the Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods ascertain whether representation is still required on the Social Concerns Committee Churches Together.

5. IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME, 2012/13.

Consideration was given to the report of the Scrutiny Manager, Legal and Democratic Services, Resources Directorate, that outlined options for the Improving Places Select Commission for the 2012/13 Municipal Year.

The submitted report outlined a number of key factors: -

- A retrospective look at what had been achieved during the 2011/12 Municipal Year [attached at appendix A];
 - In addition an analysis of the items to be carried forward into this Municipal Year, including: -
 - Lettings software;
 - Transfer of Rotherham 2012;
 - Tourism.
- An opportunity for members of the Select Commission to feed in issues of concern for consideration by a Select Commission;
- The report outlined the changes that had taken place within the past year with regards to capacity within the Scrutiny Team. The work programme would need to take this into account and realistically set a programme where it's efforts and resources could be most effectively deployed.
- The decision of Cabinet, SLT and Scrutiny Chairs to designate some themes as overarching strategic principles was noted. These themes were: -

- Fuel poverty;
- 11 most deprived areas;
- Troubled Families;
- Welfare Reform;
- Role of local Members in their communities;
- Reducing Health inequalities;
- Special Educational Needs and announced legislative changes.

Discussion ensued, and the following issues were raised by members of the Improving Places Select Commission as suitable for the attention of a Select Commission: -

- Grass cutting; rubbish collection from waste bins, potholes – suitable for a spotlight review;
- Co-mingling of rubbish;
- Section 106 agreement funding in relation to school places.

Resolved: - (1) That the report be received and it's content noted.

(2) That, on the basis of the discussions, a work programme be developed.

6. LOCALISM ACT, 2011.

Consideration was given to the report that outlined pertinent issues resulting from the commencement of the Localism Act, 2011, for members of the Improving Lives Select Commission.

The areas highlighted that were particularly relevant to the Improving Places Select Commission were: -

- Planning;
 - A Neighbourhood Planning event was being run with Planning Aid to engage with Parish Councils to begin working in a collaborative way, rather than in an untried approach.
- Asset Management:
 - Register of Assets of Community Value, costs associated with maintaining the register, compensation issues, publicity and awareness raising.
 - Further Government guidelines and regulations were expected.
- Community Right to Buy:
 - Future use of assets and protecting them for community use only;
 - Purchase of assets would have to be completed through an open market at an open market value.
- Housing:
 - Flexible tenancies;
 - Adapted properties – policy changes.
 - Under occupancy of properties.

Discussion ensued, and the following issues were raised: -

- Referenda and financing implications;
- Staff training needed to be a priority.

Resolved: - (1) That the report be received and its content noted.

(2) That, on the basis of the discussions, a draft work programme be developed and reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

7. PROGRESS UPDATE ON THE "SCRUTINY REPORT OF THE WINTER WEATHER REVIEW GROUP", OCTOBER, 2011.

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Emergency Safety Manager, Environment and Development Services, that provided an update on the development of the Winter Weather Review Group. The report detailed the learning points that had been noted which would further strengthen agencies' ability to respond to incidents of this nature. Reference was also made to the attached action plan that provided a full response to the recommendations made within the Scrutiny report. It was noted that the Borough's Emergency Plan would be refreshed based on the Scrutiny report recommendations.

Consideration was given to the following issues: -

- Decisions of the Senior Leadership Team in consultation with the Borough Emergency Coordinator and the Emergency and Safety manager whether to activate the Emergency Plan.
- The de-brief that was undertaken by the Local Resilience Forum on 6th January, 2011.
- A number of challenges were highlighted by the Local Resilience Forum and within the Scrutiny Review. These points had been implemented following the incident: -
 - Strengthening the recording and review of business continuity plans;
 - Strengthened liaison with partner agencies;
 - Revision and re-issue of an emergency plan template for Parish Councils;
 - Arrangements for Winter 2011/12;
 - Better provision and access to 4x4 vehicles;
 - Some extra provision of salting facilities;
 - Agreements with Farmers for assisting in any future incidents;
 - Working with the Local Resilience Forum to create an overarching Severe Weather Plan, including the dovetailing of individual agency plans;
 - Development of a better understanding between agencies' terminology and using commonly agreed terms;
 - Development and refinement of RMBC's own severe weather arrangements, including the co-ordination activities and external multi-agency liaison arrangements;
 - Continual review of the Borough Emergency Plan and Business Continuity Arrangements.

Further areas for consideration and development had been identified. These factors related to capacity of partners and community resilience: -

- Developing and supporting the role of Parish Councils, Area Assemblies, local groups and volunteers.

Discussion ensued on the issues reported within the report: -

- Working relationships with partner agencies;
- Different agencies' ability to activate the Emergency Plan;

It was suggested that a meeting be convened for the members of the original review sub group with the Emergency Safety Manager to discuss the protocols that collective agencies could work towards.

Resolved: - (1) That the detailed action plan as shown within the submitted report be noted.

8. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING:-

Resolved: - That the next meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission be held on Wednesday 25th July, 2012, to start at 10.30 am in the Rotherham Town Hall.