

ROTHERHAM IMPROVEMENT BOARD
Friday, 7th November, 2014

Present:-

Mr. R. Vincent, Independent Chairman
Ms. C. Downs, Chief Executive, Local Government Association
Mr. N. Elvery, Chief Executive, Croydon Council
Ms. E Grant, National Children's Improvement Adviser, Local Government Association
Councillor E. Hoddinott, Deputy Leader
Councillor S. Houghton, Local Government Association Member Peer
Councillor P. Lakin, Leader of the Council
Mrs. J. Ormondroyd, Interim Chief Executive
Councillor P. Reeve, Local Government Association Independent Group – UKIP
Councillor David Simmonds, Local Government Association, Conservative Peer
Ms. G. Taylor, Local Government Association
Councillor C. Vines, UKIP Group Leader, Rotherham

Also in attendance:-

Mrs. J. Collins, Director of Legal and Democratic Services
Mrs. T. Holmes, Head of Communications and Marketing
Mr. P. Howe, Director of Human Resources
Mrs. J. Palfrement, Acting Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services
Mrs. S. Wilson, Performance and Quality Manager

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Councillor C. Middleton, Conservative Group Representative, Rotherham

9. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF THE IMPROVEMENT BOARD HELD ON 26TH SEPTEMBER, 2014

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 26th September, 2014.

Resolved:- That the minutes be confirmed as a true record subject to the inclusion of Mr. N. Elvery and Mr. D. Simmonds in the list of apologies for absence.

10. UPDATE ON APPOINTMENTS

Consideration was given to a report presented by Phil Howe, Director of Human Resources, which provided an update to the recent resourcing activity in respect of senior leadership in the Council following the departures of the Chief Executive and the Strategic Director of Children's

and Young Peoples Services.

The Council took urgent steps in consultation with colleagues at the Local Government Association (LGA) to ensure sufficient capacity and leadership was resourced to provide suitable capacity to deliver Council services. As a result interim appointments had now been secured for the two positions.

The position of Interim Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services had now been offered to Mr. Ian Thomas who would take up the position in January, 2015. Mr. Thomas, currently at Derbyshire City Council, would take the opportunity to work odd days in Rotherham, subject to negotiation leading up to this commencement date.

An immediate arrangement had been made to temporarily assign this responsibility to the Director of Safeguarding, Children and Families, Jane Parfremment, from 1st November, 2014. This was agreed by the Elected Member Appointments Panel last week.

The position of Interim Chief Executive had now been offered to Mrs. Jan Ormondroyd with effect from 3rd November, 2014, on a temporary basis up to the end of May, 2015, following the departure of the former Chief Executive on the 31st October, 2014.

In addition steps would be taken shortly to seek an Interim Director of Public Health following the announcement of the current postholder's retirement.

As part of the plans to look at the permanent recruitment process for the positions indicated above, the Director of Human Resources was being asked to consider the position of Strategic Director of Resources.

Resolved:- That the arrangements and appointments to date be noted.

11. UPDATE ON EXTERNAL INSPECTIONS

Jane, Parfremment, Acting Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services, provided the Improvement Board with an update on the current inspections taking place on the Council.

The Ofsted Inspection report was due to be published on the 19th November, 2014. This was earlier than the usual timescales and was at the request of the Ofsted Commissioner. An initial draft had been received by the Council, which was being checked for factual accuracy.

An invitation had also been received for a meeting on the 17th November, 2014, for the pre-publication of the Child Sexual Exploitation thematic inspection of which Rotherham was one of nine authorities. The inspection results were due to be published the same day as the Ofsted inspection and could lead to Rotherham being identified and associated

with the published results. A copy of the report would only be available on the day of publication.

The Board suggested that consideration be given by the Council, in conjunction with the Local Government Association, to an approach to Ofsted to challenge the publication date as this could have a detrimental effect on the recruitment process and the positive strengths of the appointments moving forward.

The Corporate Government Inspection would be published in a report to the Secretary of State on or after the 29th November, 2014. The inspection remained ongoing and it was uncertain at this stage if there was a formal reporting mechanism for Louise Casey to report back to the Council.

The report into South Yorkshire Police published by the H.M.I.C. had been circulated with the agenda papers and referred to joint working by the Police and the Council and which had led to an integrated child sexual exploitation unit.

The Chairman confirmed the Chief Constable was to be invited to the January, 2015 meeting of the Improvement Board, but this would be subject to confirmation.

In addition, a meeting earlier this week, involving representatives from the four Local Authorities, South Yorkshire Police Public Protection Unit and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board Chairmen, had discussed how to move forward in terms of the implications of the reviews and specifically around the child sexual exploitation and child protection arrangements.

The Board were informed of the need to firm up accountability and reporting arrangements with appropriate roles and challenge to the responses by the Police and cross agency, to which many of the recommendations of the H.M.I.C. report were linked, but which would be further enhanced with the interim appointments of the Chief Executive and Strategic Director of Children and Young People's Services.

The Board confirmed they would find it helpful if a written summary of these arrangements could be produced and brought back to a future meeting.

The Leader of the Council also confirmed, in response to a query as to how the barriers to the handling of child sexual exploitation intelligence would be removed, that a meeting was to be arranged with representatives from South Yorkshire Police to look at how to tie up the loose ends and look at future monitoring.

Resolved:- (1) That the information on the inspections to date be noted.

(2) That consideration be given by the Council and the Local Government

Association to an approach to Ofsted to challenge the day of publication of the inspection results.

(3) That a written summary of the accountability arrangements be produced following the publication of the H.M.I.C. report and for this to be presented to a future meeting.

12. EXPECTED SHAPE OF AN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Chairman introduced the first draft of the framework of an Improvement Plan for Rotherham which must draw on the findings and recommendations of external reviews and inspections, including the Jay report, C.G.I, Ofsted and H.M.I.C., but must consolidate them into a single statement of the key challenges facing the Council. The challenges must be fully considered and fully owned by the Council and should not be limited by the focus of external processes in setting out the challenges.

The Improvement Plan could not be completed until the outstanding inspections, by OFSTED and Louise Casey, have been reported and the Council have been able to reflect on their findings and recommendations and for the interim Chief Executive to be able to make an assessment.

In order for the Improvement Board to focus on immediate actions and discussion, provide challenge and support a draft list of eleven consolidated challenges were proposed:-

1. Improvements across the partnership and those specifically within the Council for arrangements around Child Sexual Exploitation, ensuring that all fourteen local recommendations from the Jay report are quickly acted upon and improvements made. Detailed progress monitoring arrangements currently sit with the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Board and its CSE Sub Group.
2. Wider improvements in Children's Safeguarding Services to ensure that all services for children in need of help and protection are robust and that children are quickly and adequately safeguarded and protected from harm. OFSTED findings and the reports from Malcolm Newsam will form the basis for defining this area of challenge.
3. Rotherham's responses to these challenges will be made in the context of a period of further severe reductions in public spending both nationally and locally. Managing Rotherham's response to this financial context, and ensuring that the Council re-establishes a clear service offer to local residents, constitutes a third challenge
4. Ensure that the Council has the programme management disciplines and culture that is required to deliver its organisational and service transformation programme.

5. Ensuring that there are clear and appropriate mutual expectations of both the roles of Members and Officers in relation to strategic and operational accountability, challenge and governance. Ensuring too that the culture and inter-personal relationships of the organisation are appropriate.
6. Ensuring that Rotherham's performance management arrangements are embedded at all levels of the authority and that adequate openness, challenge and robustness is evident in these arrangements.
7. Ensuring the most appropriate and effective use of the Overview and Scrutiny functions is in place to secure robust challenge of council decisions and functions of the Council.
8. Ensuring that a robust system for whistleblowing is in place, that there is a culture of welcoming challenge and responding well to it, and ensuring that staff feel comfortable to use the processes with confidence that their voices will be heard and acted upon.
9. Ensure that a comprehensive review of policies, practice and procedures is undertaken in relation to taxi licensing and that standards are enhanced where appropriate.
10. The Council needs to continue to review clarify and build on its partnership working.
11. The Council needs to share its learning from the improvement journey with other local authorities and partners.

In considering the eleven challenges it was suggested that Nos. 1 and 2 be joined together and feed into the bullet points for strands of action. The two suggestions appeared to be intrinsically linked and could be comprehensively dealt with as one, whilst noting that certain areas would be developed at different paces. It was also suggested that there be some consideration to the role of Adult Services in the support to victims and survivors.

In terms of No. 4 it was suggested that this was broadened out more to allow the Council to consider its vision and how it wished to operate in the future with a more open culture embedded.

The Board agreed in principle with all the challenges and suggested that they be simplified somewhat, to ensure the organisation could be fit for purpose. The Improvement Plan needed to be clear and provide the reassurance that improvements were being made and that success was being achieved. It also needed to make the Local Safeguarding Children's Board stronger in its role for the Council and its partners.

Again for the purposes of Challenge No. 4 it was suggested that this area

also include communication and workforce development looking at how staff and services could operate differently with further work to restore trust and rebuild confidence in the organisation.

Challenge No. 7 relating to overview and scrutiny needed to be done a little quicker in order for Members to understand their roles and to ensure that it was delivered more effectively. There were various models of delivery for scrutiny and it should form part of wider review to help move forward the process and obtain political trust.

The support from the Local Government Association and the Children's Commissioner in taking forward the improvements for Rotherham was acknowledged.

Resolved:- That the challenges contained in the Improvement Plan be revised to reflect the context of the discussion and presented back to the next meeting for further consideration. The Chairman introduced the first draft of the framework of an Improvement Plan for Rotherham which must draw on the findings and recommendations of external reviews and inspections, including the Jay report, C.G.I, Ofsted and H.M.I.C., but must consolidate them into a single statement of the key challenges facing the Council. The challenges must be fully considered and fully owned by the Council and should not be limited by the focus of external processes in setting out the challenges.

The Improvement Plan could not be completed until the outstanding inspections, by OFSTED and Louise Casey, have been reported and the Council have been able to reflect on their findings and recommendations and for the interim Chief Executive to be able to make an assessment.

In order for the Improvement Board to focus on immediate actions and discussion, provide challenge and support a draft list of eleven consolidated challenges were proposed:-

1. Improvements across the partnership and those specifically within the Council for arrangements around Child Sexual Exploitation, ensuring that all fourteen local recommendations from the Jay report are quickly acted upon and improvements made. Detailed progress monitoring arrangements currently sit with the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Board and its CSE Sub Group.
2. Wider improvements in Children's Safeguarding Services to ensure that all services for children in need of help and protection are robust and that children are quickly and adequately safeguarded and protected from harm. OFSTED findings and the reports from Malcolm Newsam will form the basis for defining this area of challenge.
3. Rotherham's responses to these challenges will be made in the context of a period of further severe reductions in public spending

both nationally and locally. Managing Rotherham's response to this financial context, and ensuring that the Council re-establishes a clear service offer to local residents, constitutes a third challenge

4. Ensure that the Council has the programme management disciplines and culture that is required to deliver its organisational and service transformation programme.
5. Ensuring that there are clear and appropriate mutual expectations of both the roles of Members and Officers in relation to strategic and operational accountability, challenge and governance. Ensuring too that the culture and inter-personal relationships of the organisation are appropriate.
6. Ensuring that Rotherham's performance management arrangements are embedded at all levels of the authority and that adequate openness, challenge and robustness is evident in these arrangements.
7. Ensuring the most appropriate and effective use of the Overview and Scrutiny functions is in place to secure robust challenge of council decisions and functions of the Council.
8. Ensuring that a robust system for whistleblowing is in place, that there is a culture of welcoming challenge and responding well to it, and ensuring that staff feel comfortable to use the processes with confidence that their voices will be heard and acted upon.
9. Ensure that a comprehensive review of policies, practice and procedures is undertaken in relation to taxi licensing and that standards are enhanced where appropriate.
10. The Council needs to continue to review clarify and build on its partnership working.
11. The Council needs to share its learning from the improvement journey with other local authorities and partners.

In considering the eleven challenges it was suggested that Nos. 1 and 2 be joined together and feed into the bullet points for strands of action. The two suggestions appeared to be intrinsically linked and could be comprehensively dealt with as one, whilst noting that certain areas would be developed at different paces. It was also suggested that there be some consideration to the role of Adult Services in the support to victims and survivors.

In terms of No. 4 it was suggested that this was broadened out more to allow the Council to consider its vision and how it wished to operate in the future with a more open culture embedded.

The Board agreed in principle with all the challenges and suggested that they be simplified somewhat, to ensure the organisation could be fit for purpose. The Improvement Plan needed to be clear and provide the reassurance that improvements were being made and that success was being achieved. It also needed to make the Local Safeguarding Children's Board stronger in its role for the Council and its partners.

Again for the purposes of Challenge No. 4 it was suggested that this area also include communication and workforce development looking at how staff and services could operate differently with further work to restore trust and rebuild confidence in the organisation.

Challenge No. 7 relating to overview and scrutiny needed to be pursued early in order for Members to understand their roles and to ensure that it was delivered more effectively. There were various models of delivery for scrutiny and it should form part of wider review to help move forward the process and obtain political trust.

The support from the Local Government Association and the Children's Commissioner in taking forward the improvements for Rotherham was acknowledged.

Resolved:- That the challenges contained in the Improvement Plan be revised to reflect the context of the discussion and presented back to the next meeting for further consideration.

13. FINANCIAL PLANNING PROCESS

The Chairman provided feedback on the morning's workshop session which had focused on the medium term financial processes of the Council.

Key points that were considered at the workshop included a need for:-

- Clarity on the future of the Council, its role in the context of severe budget reductions in public spending.
- Clarity on the role of Elected Members and future Council arrangements and the implications for developing them.
- Clarity on the political process and governance structure.
- Clarity on the operating structure/model of the Council and whether it was fit for purpose.
- The Council's culture and roles of members and officers in relation to strategic and operational accountability, challenge and governance.
- Transformational programming and how the Council could achieve the change.
- Capacity of the organisation and its future transformation.
- Provision of public good/engagement with the public with clarification of partnership working with Public Health and the Police.

It was suggested that the elements of the above feature in the next draft

of the Improvement Plan and for this to be revised and presented back to the next meeting.

The Board acknowledged the extent of the work involved, especially around the operating model within the financial context. Much of the work involved needed to be undertaken urgently, with clear and explicit headlines, whilst being realistic in a plan that was sustainable and deliverable.

The Board did not wish to lose sight of the expectations required within the revenue streams of the Council. Public confidence needed to be rebuilt in order to sustain the long term strength within the Council.

Resolved:- That the points raised about be incorporated into the Improvement Plan and for this to be presented back to the next meeting for further consideration. The Chairman provided feedback on the morning's workshop session which had focused on the medium term financial processes of the Council.

Key points that were considered at the workshop included a need for:-

- Clarity on the future of the Council, its role in the context of severe budget reductions in public spending.
- Clarity on the role of Elected Members and future Council arrangements and the implications for developing them.
- Clarity on the political process and governance structure.
- Clarity on the operating structure/model of the Council and whether it was fit for purpose.
- The Council's culture and roles of members and officers in relation to strategic and operational accountability, challenge and governance.
- Transformational programming and how the Council could achieve the change.
- Capacity of the organisation and its future transformation.
- Provision of public good/engagement with the public with clarification of partnership working with Public Health and the Police.

It was suggested that the elements of the above feature in the next draft of the Improvement Plan and for this to be revised and presented back to the next meeting.

The Board acknowledged the extent of the work involved, especially around the operating model within the financial context. Much of the work involved needed to be undertaken urgently, with clear and explicit headlines, whilst being realistic in a plan that was sustainable and deliverable.

The Board did not wish to lose sight of the expectations required within the revenue streams of the Council. Public confidence needed to be rebuilt in order to sustain the long term strength within the Council.

Resolved:- That the points raised about be incorporated into the Improvement Plan and for this to be presented back to the next meeting for further consideration.

14. DATES AND TIMES OF THE NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

Consideration was given to dates and times of future meetings moving forward.

Resolved:- That the following dates of the Improvement Board be confirmed with workshop sessions as indicated in the mornings commencing at 10.30 a.m., followed by the formal meeting at 1.30 p.m.:-

- Friday, 28th November, 2014
Workshop – looking at the core issues around child sexual exploitation. Invitations to attend extended to Malcolm Newsam, Children’s Commissioner, and Councillor Christine Beaumont, Cabinet Member for Education and Children’s Services.
- Friday, 9th January, 2015
Workshop – looking at the Corporate Governance Inspection and the shape of the Improvement Plan.
- Friday, 6th February, 2015
Workshop – to be confirmed.
- Friday, 6th March, 2015
Workshop – to be confirmed. Consideration was given to dates and times of future meetings moving forward.

Resolved:- That the following dates of the Improvement Board be confirmed with workshop sessions as indicated in the mornings commencing at 10.30 a.m., followed by the formal meeting at 1.30 p.m.:-

- Friday, 28th November, 2014
Workshop – looking at the core issues around child sexual exploitation. Invitations to attend extended to Malcolm Newsam, Children’s Commissioner, and Councillor Christine Beaumont, Cabinet Member for Education and Children’s Services.
- Friday, 9th January, 2015
Workshop – looking at the Corporate Governance Inspection and the shape of the Improvement Plan.
- Friday, 6th February, 2015
Workshop – to be confirmed.
- Friday, 6th March, 2015
Workshop – to be confirmed.

