

IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION

**Venue: Town Hall, Moorgate
Street, ROTHERHAM.
S60 2TH**

Date: Wednesday, 1st July, 2015

Time: 1.30 p.m.

A G E N D A

1. To consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any part of the agenda.
2. To determine any item(s) the Chairman is of the opinion should be considered later in the agenda as a matter of urgency.
3. Apologies for absence
4. Declarations of Interest
5. Questions from members of the public and the press
6. Communications
7. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 25th February, 2015 (Pages 1 - 8)
8. The Cleaner - Greener Agenda (Pages 9 - 12)
9. Ground Maintenance and Street Cleansing Services - Scrutiny Review - Update (Pages 13 - 20)
10. Homelessness Strategy Scrutiny Review - Update (Pages 21 - 33)
11. Supporting the Local Economy - Scrutiny Review - Update (Pages 34 - 44)
12. Representation on Panels, Sub-Groups etc 2015 - 2016 (Pages 45 - 46)
13. Date and time of the next meeting - Wednesday 02 September 2015 at 1.30 pm

Improving Places Select Commission: membership: -

Councillors Atkin, Beck (Chairman), Buckley, Cutts, Godfrey, Gosling, Jepson, McNeely, Pickering, Smith, Reeder, Robinson, Rosling, C. Vines, Wallis, Whelbourn (Vice-Chairman), Whysall and Wyatt.

Co-opted members:- Mrs. L. Shears, Mr. P. Cahill and Mr. B. Walker.

IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION
Wednesday, 25th February, 2015

Present:- Councillor Read (in the Chair); The Mayor (Councillor Foden); Councillors Andrews, Atkin, Cowles, Gilding, Lelliott, Roche, Sims, C. Vines and Whelbourn; co-opted member Mr. B. Walker.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gosling.

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this meeting.

47. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no questions from members of the public or the press.

48. COMMUNICATIONS

Reference was made to Minute No. 97 of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 13th February, 2015, when it had been agreed that, pending any instruction or statement of intent by the Government-appointed Commissioners:

(1) the future meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and of the four Select Commissions shall be considered on a 'case-by-case' basis;

(2) the work that has already started as part of the 2014/15 scrutiny work programme would be completed;

(3) the work on the remaining areas of the 2014/15 scrutiny work programme shall be suspended.

49. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 14TH JANUARY, 2015

Resolved:- (1) That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission, held on 14th January, 2015, be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

(2) That, arising from consideration of the minutes of the previous meeting and with regard to the Winter Weather Response (Minute No. 44):-

(a) it be noted that the review of the Winter gritting routes (highways) will be undertaken shortly;

(b) Members are to be provided with the requested information concerning this Authority's unit cost per dustbin, for refuse collection; and

(c) the proposed scrutiny review of this Council's Winter weather response shall be held in abeyance, pending receipt of the views of the Government-appointed Commissioners and Members shall be informed of progress on this matter in due course.

50. YOUNG PEOPLE AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Reference was made to Minute No. 74 of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 15th November, 2013, concerning the Children's Commissioner's Take-over Day and the issues raised concerning young people's perception of safety in the Rotherham town centre and at the Rotherham passenger transport interchange.

Consideration was given to a report, presented by Alan Heppenstall (Anti-Social Behaviour Officer), Carol Adamson (Community Engagement Officer) and Chief Inspector Martin Sheldon (South Yorkshire Police) concerning the issue of young people's perception of safety in the Rotherham town centre.

This item included a presentation specifically about the safety of young people in the Rotherham town centre.

In order to gain a current insight into what it is like being a young person using public transport, in particular the Rotherham Interchange, the following four groups were consulted in January 2015:

- : Rotherham Youth Cabinet
- : Looked After Children's Council
- : Rush House
- : Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans-gender Group

The young people were asked the following questions:-

1. What experiences are young people having in Rotherham Interchange, both positive and negative ?
2. How can young people be involved in influencing decisions concerning transport ?
3. How can safety be improved for young people waiting at passenger transport interchanges, especially late in the evening ?

The responses from the young people's groups were detailed within the appendix to the submitted report. The majority of respondents felt that things had not improved when using public transport or the Rotherham Interchange.

Various statistics of crime and anti-social behaviour, both in the town centre and in the transport interchange were discussed. Reference was made to the 'See Something, Say Something' initiative concerning safety and security on public transport. It was noted that the number of incidents

of concern in the Rotherham town centre was comparable to the numbers Barnsley, Doncaster and Sheffield, when footfall is taken into account.

Information on the views of young people was also now available from the Education Lifestyle Survey (2014) involving school pupils. Members questioned the phrasing of questions in this survey.

Operation Civilise takes place in and around the Rotherham transport interchange, with directed patrols by Police Officers, special constables and Passenger Transport Executive staff, supplemented by CCTV filming and monitoring. There are now more up-to-date statistics showing that the number of incidents of concern are reducing.

Chief Inspector Martin Sheldon (South Yorkshire Police) added the following contribution to the meeting:-

: the desire to reassure the Select Commission that the South Yorkshire Police is taking appropriate action to try and ensure that young people may visit the Rotherham town centre and the Rotherham transport interchange in safety;

: 'Operation Civilise' is concerned with public safety; reducing shop-lifting; prevention of street-drinking and alcohol abuse; dispersing people who congregate and who perhaps may be seen as intimidating; positive action is being taken by the authorities;

: assuring Members that the Rotherham town centre is a safe place to visit and the South Yorkshire Police will work with the Council and with town centre businesses and other partners to maintain that standard;

: emphasis on responding to the views of young people regarding the safety of the town centre;

: the South Yorkshire Police focus is on the whole of the Rotherham town centre, not only the transport interchange; various crime statistics were highlighted;

: the prevention of child sexual exploitation is a priority of the South Yorkshire Police and, having spoken to past victims, the Police are being made aware of places where such exploitation is likely to occur; current intelligence suggests that the town centre and the transport interchange are not places where this type of exploitation is likely to occur; nevertheless, there is no complacency and the Police and the Transport Executive staff remain vigilant in this matter;

: assistance to elderly people to try and reduce the incidence of purse snatching and pick-pocketing (eg: use of bells and chains on their belongings);

: acknowledging the importance of the various public events and

entertainments in attracting people to visit the Rotherham town centre;

: the business crime portal – an information-sharing agreement, to prevent known offenders committing offences in the town centre.

Members questions highlighted the following issues:-

: the success rate of apprehending / detection of offenders and the impact of measures already in place to reduce crime (eg: closed circuit television has been in place in the town centre for many years); are there any new measures to be implemented ?; it was noted that the Police will actively 'move people on' so as to prevent crime happening;

: 'Operation Civilise' in the Rotherham town centre – Members suggested that this initiative should include a 'zero tolerance' to both people spitting and people dropping litter (Members will be informed of the number of penalty notices issued to people who drop litter in the Rotherham town centre);

: discussions with the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive about the implications of the views expressed by the young people;

: levying a small charge for the use of public toilets, as a means of improving security; it was noted that the public toilets at the Doncaster transport interchange are free to use;

: the safety of the public when travelling on public transport (as well as waiting in the interchange);

: the misuse of alcohol and illegal substances and the effects upon the level of crime; (reference was made to a recent joint action by the South Yorkshire Police and Trading Standards, to try and prevent the supply of illegal and other substances);

: the application of the 'Belfast law' in respect of the misuse of substances;

: are there any specific measures to try and prevent child sexual exploitation in and around the Rotherham transport interchange ?;

: a suggestion that the South Yorkshire Police should issue a press release regarding the perception of public safety in the Rotherham town centre; it was noted that the Police already have a regular dialogue with all forms of local media;

: Members asked whether there were any issues of crime and disorder as a consequence of the opening of the new Tesco supermarket, off Drummond Street; it was noted that a number of anti-social behaviour issues were already being addressed in the vicinity of the store;

: the percentage of crime in the transport interchange, in terms of the numbers of people using this facility;

: comparisons with public safety in the Wath upon Dearne town centre;

: the proposed future development of the Rotherham transport interchange and the provision of information to the public about bus services;

: the joint working between the South Yorkshire Police and the town centre businesses should include licensed premises (eg: effectiveness of the 'Pub Watch' scheme);

: the specific concerns of elderly ladies who do their shopping within the Rotherham town centre; whether there has been any dialogue with victims of theft and/or anti-social behaviour within the town centre; the use of the Victims Support service was mentioned;

: whether there are any incidents causing specific concern which affect people of minority ethnic communities.

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

(2) That the current position and action taken to improve the safety and overall perception of young people visiting the Rotherham town centre and including the Passenger Transport Interchange, as detailed in the reports and presentations now considered at this meeting, be noted.

(3) That a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission, in twelve months' time, describing the work being undertaken to ensure the safety of the public, especially young people, within both the Rotherham town centre and the Passenger Transport Interchange, such report to detail the progress made in the intervening twelve months and also providing statistics of the rates of detection of crime.

(4) The members of the Improving Places Select Commission be provided with up-to-date statistics of the rates of detection of crime in respect of incidents occurring within both the Rotherham town centre and the Passenger Transport Interchange.

(5) That every endeavour be made to ensure that the phrasing of questions within the Education Lifestyle Survey is sufficient to obtain the specific views of young people accurately.

(6) That the visible presence of Police Officers, special constables and of Passenger Transport Executive staff within the Rotherham Passenger Transport Interchange be welcomed and the appropriate authorities encouraged to continue this method of regular patrol.

51. DRAFT COUNCIL HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Further to Minute No. 14 of the meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission held on 23rd July, 2014, the Select Commission received a presentation from Mr. David Potts (Programme Manager, Strategic Housing and Investment Service) and Mr. Andy Lumb (Partnering Manager, Contract and Service Delivery) concerning this Council's draft Housing Asset Management Strategy.

The presentation highlighted the following issues:-

- the purpose of the Housing Asset Management Strategy is to set out how the Council will deliver housing asset management services in Rotherham;
- the strategy prioritises how investment is made and how to achieve greater value for money;
- the hierarchy of strategies, relating to asset management;
- key principles of the strategy (eg: reducing 'void' times and provision of energy efficient properties);
- key priorities of the strategy (eg: to ensure that Council housing properties meet and exceed the Decent Homes Standard);
- Housing stock – maintaining data on all housing stock and the proposed re-survey of properties (future implementation of the Keystone computerised asset management system);
- striving to achieve 70% planned and 30% reactive repairs to Council housing;
- timescale for approval of the strategy by the Council (or by the Government-appointed Commissioners) and eventual implementation;
- the next steps – other housing estate investment plans; implementation of a 'scoring' system, identifying priorities important to tenants and to elected members;
- the Strategy is intended to last for thirty years and will be subject to regular review
- the repairs and maintenance service, provided by means of the Council's contractors;
- the annual budget for housing repairs is approximately £19 millions;
- performance indicators and the current performance of the repairs and maintenance service;

- priorities for the future, eg: to develop a Corporate Social Responsibility Strategy; and planning a future procurement strategy for Repairs and Maintenance, post year 2020;

- implementation of the Integrated Housing Management System for repairs and maintenance.

After the presentation, Members' discussion raised the following issues:-

: the effectiveness and fitness for purpose of district heating schemes; it was noted that there will be further investment in such schemes in the future, although a number of schemes have been problematical in the past, they have been decommissioned;

: the annual safety inspection of gas appliances; ensuring that any required remedial works and/or repairs are promptly notified; recent improvements to the repairs service were noted, although it was acknowledged that sometimes delays would occur because of the need to order spare parts;

: the importance of heating repairs being carried out promptly during periods of very cold weather; the use of temporary heating is offered to tenants;

: the occasional business use of the garages on Council-owned garage sites; this issue is being reviewed;

: a suggestion that the Council Housing Asset Management Strategy should be the subject of a scrutiny review;

: reference to previous scrutiny reviews on (i) Council-owned garage sites; (ii) void properties; and (iii) district heating; and whether such issues should be reviewed again in the future;

: monitoring the cost of parts supplied as part of the repairs and maintenance contracts; it was noted that quantity surveyors undertake the bench-marking, comparison and scrutiny of such costs; there is also the use of a schedule of rates by local housing authorities on a national basis; large contracts (eg: roofing schemes) are procured separately on an individual basis; Members will be informed individually of specific items raised.

Resolved:- (1) That the contents of the presentation be noted.

(2) That a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission concerning the eventual implementation of the Council's Housing Asset Management Strategy.

(During the course of this item, Members placed on record their sympathy

to the family, friends and colleagues of Housing Officer Mr. John Brayshaw, who had recently passed away. Mr. Brayshaw had worked extensively on the preparation of the Council's draft Housing Asset Management Strategy).

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Improving Places Select Commission
2.	Date:	Wednesday 1st July 2015
3.	Title:	Cleaner, Greener Agenda
4.	Directorate:	Environment and Development Services
5.	Advisory Cabinet Member	Councillor Sims

5. Summary

- 5.1 The report comprises a scoping paper which identifies a range of issues which have an impact on the cleaner, greener agenda.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 It is recommended that Members determine how the issues outlined in the report are taken forward into the work programme for the Select Commission.

7. Proposals and Details

7.1 Background

7.1.1 The Improving Places Select Commission's work is most closely aligned to the Council's **Corporate Priority 3: Ensuring all areas of Rotherham are safe, clean and well maintained**, and to a lesser extent **Priority 1: Stimulating the local economy and helping local people into work**. In order to inform the Select Commission's future work programme, this scoping report sets out a number of service areas and issues which members of the Commission might consider taking forward.

7.1.2 In the context of the Council's need to achieve substantial savings from its revenue budgets over the next 3 years, Members may also wish to consider how to engage with Parish Councils, the Voluntary sector, Area Assemblies etc. to establish what capacity they may have to work with the Council in discharging its statutory powers in areas such as enforcement where resources have already been substantially reduced.

7.2 WASTE MANAGEMENT

7.2.1 Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) and Bring Sites

The Council operates 4 HWRCs each of which currently closes for one day per week, and the savings proposals for the 2015/16 budget included closure for a second day each week. Savings realised from waste treatment costs have enabled us to defer implementation until later this year, so there is an opportunity to undertake a more fundamental review of what we provide and where.

The Council also provides recycling bring sites across the borough, some of which attract fly-tipping on a regular basis. A number of other local authorities have withdrawn some or all of their bring sites and the costs/benefits of this service could be a topic for an IPSC review.

7.2.2 Waste Collection

The Waste collection service is comprised of a number of different waste streams, residual (black bin), green, blue box/bag for recyclables. The residual waste collections are tied into the Waste PFI contract and so offer little scope for change, but the methods and frequency of collection of other materials (including size and type of bins/containers) are not constrained in the same way. The refuse collection arrangements will be reviewed as part of the 2015/16 budget process, including charging arrangements for elements of the service e.g.:

- Green waste,
- provision of bins
- bulky collections

This is a piece of work that the IPSC could influence.

Note: In order to comply with the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011, every waste collection authority must, when making arrangements for the collection of waste paper, metal, plastic or glass, ensure that those arrangements are *by way of separate collection, where separate collection is Technically, Environmentally and Economically Practicable* – this is the **TEEP** assessment.

7.2.3 Recycling rates

The volumes of recyclable materials are showing a steady decline, probably more associated with the changes in packaging (glass is lighter), reduction in volumes of news print and the level of economic activity than to participation levels. Members may wish to review whether re-investment in *behavioural change* is worth consideration.

7.3 LEISURE & COMMUNITY SERVICES

7.3.1 Grounds Maintenance

Since the last review by IPSC, the HRA has provided funding to provide additional grass cutting around 200 Council owned aged persons (bungalow) complexes and in communal areas around (predominantly) council-owned housing estates. This is in addition to the winter programme of edging back, self-sets, hedges, and shrub bed reductions. Plans for (selective) shrub bed removal from Housing sites are also being drawn up for next winter.

The additional funding has also released capacity to increase the frequency of grass-cutting on non-HRA land which includes public open spaces, parks and highways verges.

A further review might focus on:

- The frequency of grass-cutting across different types of sites and how to obtain the best quality of cut.
- Whether an 'invest to save' strategy for reducing the number and type of shrub beds is viable.

7.3.2 Street Cleansing

There is statutory guidance for Street Cleansing which is laid down in the Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse; this sets out categories of (public) land and the standards against which cleanliness is measured. These standards were previously monitored through a national performance indicator NI 195 – no longer a statutory indicator. NI 195 was in four parts, measuring levels of litter, detritus, fly-tipping and fly-posting.

Substantial reductions have been made in the Street Cleansing budget over the last few years which has made it difficult to consistently meet the standards in the code of practice; IPSC might therefore consider:

- What standards are realistic for the service to achieve
- Whether the response times laid down in the code of practice are achievable
- The impact of the additional £200k funding onto overall cleansing standards

7.3.3 Fly-tipping and enforcement

Nationally there has been a 20% increase in fly-tipping over the last year; this is reflected in the figures for Rotherham. It is well established that failure to remove fly-tipping promptly can lead to further incidents at the same locations. Other factors which may be relevant include the provision and availability of HWRCs and Bring Sites, and the impact of house clearances from private sector housing, particularly in areas where there is a high turnover of tenancies. A review of enforcement strategy might readily be part of that review.

Note: Enforcement is currently managed in Neighbourhood Services, and Fly Tipping is only a part of their role.

7.4 NETWORK MANAGEMENT - Parking services

The focus of most the council's Parking Service is in and around Rotherham Town centre; and it comprises management of off-street car parks, the enforcement of parking restrictions (both on and off-street). Many businesses have for some time been arguing that a 'free parking' strategy would be beneficial to the town centre. The cost of implementing a free parking scheme in Rotherham Town Centre would be substantial, and there is no clear supporting evidence whether or not this is true.

IPSC could look whether adequate parking is available in the right locations, and at the structure of charges for parking.

7.5 TOWN CENTRE – night time economy

IPSC could consider what the impact of the night time economy has on the environmental quality in (Rotherham) town centre, and how we might better engage with businesses such as night clubs and fast food outlets to get them to take some responsibility for cleaning up afterwards.

8. Finance

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

While the programme of reviews are likely to identify potential changes to services, these may not be deliverable if there are financial implications linked to their implementation.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The scope of any agreed reviews will link directly into two of the Council's corporate priorities:

Priority 1: Stimulating the local economy and helping local people into work

Priority 3: Ensuring all areas of Rotherham are safe, clean and well maintained

11. Background Papers and Consultation

- Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act
- Defra: Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse
- The Council's General Enforcement Policy
- Traffic Management Act (decriminalised parking etc)

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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL - REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Improving Places Select Commission
2.	Date:	Wednesday 1st July 2015
3.	Title:	Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Services Review: Monitoring report / update
4.	Directorate:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

This report provides an update on the recommendations from the review undertaken by the Improving Places Select Commission of Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing services in July 2013

6. Recommendations

1. Members note the progress that has been made on each of the recommendations

7. Proposals and details

7.1 The initial review of Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing services was undertaken by the Improving Places Select Commission in July 2012 and a resultant action plan was produced. Progress against the action plan was first reported to the Commission on 27th November 2013. This report provides a final update (Appendix A) against the specific recommendations that resulted from the review. All of the identified actions have been completed, although the nature of some mean that they are ongoing and / or require further work in order to determine the way forward.

7.2 Since the last update report there have been two significant actions that have helped to improve the quality of service provision. Firstly the Grounds Maintenance Service received two year funding (2014/15 and 2015/16) from Housing Services (HRA) to enable additional works to be undertaken on older people's complexes. This has led to a significant increase in the number of positive comments from residents and a reduced number of complaints / requests for service (e.g. down by 65% in May 2015). Discussions are ongoing in respect of the continuation of this funding. Secondly the Street Cleansing Service received an increase of £200,000 to its revenue budget for 2015/16. The Service is in the process of recruiting additional staff, vehicles and equipment and the associated additional work (weed killing, litter picking and litter bin emptying) will commence as soon as the resources are in place.

7.3 The combination of the reviews (Improving Places Select Commission and Internal Service), the associated action plans and the additional funding has enabled both services to make the most of their available resources in order to deliver efficient and effective services to residents. Both services will continue to review operations in order to identify improvements and efficiencies, and to contribute to the forthcoming savings targets that are necessary to enable the Council to operate within its budget over the next 3 years.

8. Finance

The provision of both Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing services may be subject to future budget decisions.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The need for service provision continues to be significantly influenced by the level of funding, the weather conditions and by the behaviour of people in respect of their attitude to all forms of littering.

The planned schedules for both grounds maintenance and street cleansing will continue to be challenging to deliver, particularly in respect of the contribution the services will need to make to future budget savings targets.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Implemented actions / changes and additional funding support have helped both services to better meet performance targets.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Report to the Improving Places Select Commission, 27th November 2013

12. Contact:

Steve Hallsworth, Leisure and Community Services Manager, ext 22483,
steve.hallsworth@rotherham.gov.uk

Cabinet's Response to Review by the Improving Places Select Commission of Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing services

Recommendation	Cabinet Decision <i>(Accepted/ Rejected/ Deferred)</i>	Cabinet Response <i>(detailing proposed action if accepted, rationale for rejection, and why and when issue will be reconsidered if deferred)</i>	Officer Responsible	Action by (Date)	Progress Update June 2015
That the options put forward as part of the initial officer review (appended to this report) that have not been explored further as part of this review be supported in principle and subject to further detailed consideration for ways of improving services and reducing costs.	Accepted	A draft Street Cleansing Action Plan has been produced which will be presented to Cabinet Member for Waste & Emergency Planning before the summer recess.	Director of Streetpride	July 2013	Street Cleansing Action Plan was taken to Cabinet Member for Waste & Emergency Planning as agreed. All actions in the plan have either been completed or are ongoing with the exception of one (bin mapping) which is dependent on the development of supporting IT systems.
That the proposed review of schedules and the removal of the schedule in one pilot area be completed, the pilot evaluated and rolled out as appropriate. The staff involved in the pilot should be consulted as part of the evaluation.	Accepted	The change to service deliver in a pilot area (Clifton) commenced in May 2013. Further alternative service delivery options are also being evaluated.	Leisure & Community Services (LCS) Manager	September 2013	Clifton pilot area has been retained as a way of working as it meets the specific needs in that area. Following consultation with staff and feedback from residents the trial of separate / dedicated bin emptying and litter picking teams proved to be unsuccessful and an amended version of teams doing both jobs but with greater freedom to determine the schedule has now been established. This is proving to be successful in meeting agreed targets.
That the areas detailed in section 5.1, and summarised below are subject to further detailed consideration and proposed actions reported back: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of spare capacity of green waste collection operatives on a Grounds Maintenance winter schedule 	Accepted	In place – green waste collections during the winter period are now scheduled for 4-weekly and spare resources are deployed across other Streetpride functions	Waste Manager	Completed	Green waste collection operatives supported leaf clearance work, however since the suspension of green waste collections in winter, and the move towards seasonal staff there is no longer capacity to do this.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban gardening as an alternative to shrubs 	Accepted	A programme of shrub removal will enable this to happen; officers are working with <i>Rotherham in Root</i> .	LCS Manager	Ongoing	Work has progress to remove shrub beds where the opportunity and budget was available. There has been no progress on urban gardening mainly due to the lack of individuals / groups coming forward and any resource in the service to explore / develop the idea.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment of member of staff to identify sites for alternative use/disposal 	Rejected	This work has been completed within existing resources.	n/a	n/a	A number of sites have been identified and further work needs to be carried out to explore the potential for alternative use / disposal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waiver of legal fees for disposal of sites 	Rejected	The Council has an established policy covering Asset Transfer and the disposal of sites which are declared surplus. Exceptions will continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis.	n/a	n/a	n/a
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of Streetpride's grounds maintenance service to schools 	Accepted	In place – schools have been contacted to make them aware of the availability of the Grounds Maintenance service; quotes have already been provided and will continue as contracts become available.	LCS Area Manager	Ongoing	Ongoing; the GM team continue to market the service to schools as contracts come up for renewal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for grass retardant spraying 	Accepted	Three sites across the borough have been identified – one highway verge, one roundabout and one green space.	LCS Area Manager	Completed	This was trialled to prove to be unsuccessful
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dealing with over grown rural junctions 	Rejected	Sight lines are scheduled for 6 cuts/year, and this is supplemented with monitoring by Highways Inspectors	n/a	n/a	n/a
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consortium for purchase of 	Accepted	Most equipment is provided through existing contracts which	LCS Manager	Ongoing	Based on the success of the contract to date the option to extend for a further two years has

equipment		terminate in 2015. Options will be evaluated for future procurement at the appropriate time.			been taken up. This matter will be considered again at the end of the contract.
That the Council considers the adoption of a Town/Village centre standard for Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing that focuses resources in these areas using the Parish Network where appropriate.	Rejected	The basic approach that is already used is to provide the same outcome from the service. This proposal does not therefore fit in with the principle of targeting resources to areas of most need, and does not reflect the level of reports received through Streetpride Connect. In addition some townships already benefit from the use of a 'lengthsman' to match resources to need. An increased focus on village centres would involve the withdrawal of resources from other areas which inevitably means that standards 'where people live' would be reduced.	n/a	n/a	n/a
That, subject to a positive full evaluation of the pilot, the Council purchasing further Billy Goat machines as and when resources allow.	Accepted	A full review of equipment is included in the Street Cleansing Action Plan, and will be completed this summer.	LCS Manager	September 2013	These are now with the operational teams and are used to remove detritus from footway backs, and where safe to do so carriageway channels.
That the response times for racist and homophobic graffiti is changed from 4 hours to 24 hours, to allow greater flexibility of resources and ensure this target can be met.	Accepted	In place	LCS Manager	Completed	Completed
That a study is completed to identify the most effective use of diminishing staff resources	Accepted	This is already included in the Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Action Plans	LCS Manager	September 2013	Action plans were produced for both Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing. The majority of actions on both plans have either been completed or are ongoing.

<p>That customer contact is improved by the following and that this information is used to inform the Town/Village Centre standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recording contacts with geographical information to gather intelligence on trends and patterns. Weekly lists of big works and schemes Monitoring of standards and reporting back to customers who complain 	Accepted	A review of Customer Services systems is being undertaken across Streetpride which will improve processes.		Ongoing	
	Accepted	In progress – reports have been set up to enable analysis of trends and targeting of resources	LCS Manager & Performance Officer	January 2014	Complete
	Accepted	In place – this has been posted on the Council's website for a number of years	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Partially accepted	All complaints receive a formal reply as part of the corporate system. Responding to every report/request is not possible with current systems unless additional resources are provided.	Service Improvement team	tbc	n/a
<p>That ways to involve the community and generate civic pride are explored including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of an accredited volunteer scheme. Making the right tools for the job available for members of the community who wish to assist with neighbourhood tidying 	Accepted				
	Accepted	Work is in progress to establish a Volunteer Bureau to support services across all Council services. An initial report will be made to SLT this summer.	Director of Housing & Neighbourhood Services/Director of Streetpride	September 2013	Review was conducted by HR and did not progress at the time. However the reorganisation proposed by Commissioner includes provision for a role that can re-evaluate this.
	Partially accepted	The operation of some equipment requires (accredited) training and may not be appropriate for use by volunteers. Basic equipment such as litter pickers is already provided.	LCS Manager	Ongoing	n/a

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of how the Streetpride Champions initiative could be re-invigorated or replaced. • Councillors and staff to become eyes and ears in the community 	Accepted	In progress – a review of the role of SP Volunteers commenced earlier this year.	Service Improvement Officer	September 2013	Commissioner has approved appointment of Love My Streets Coordinator. Recruitment on a 1-year secondment should be complete in July. This post has a critical role in managing the Volunteers programme.
<p>That an exercise to assess over used and under used bins is completed with a view to moving existing bins in line with its findings and that the following methods are used to maintain this over time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff on the ground to monitor usage • Engagement with Planning on bins at application stages and ward members when removing bins • Monitoring of shopping areas 	Accepted	<p>The 'not my job' initiative is being re-launched with LCS Staff including awareness training on Child Sexual Exploitation (July).</p> <p>In progress – initial review has been completed and is being quality checked.</p> <p>In place In place</p> <p>In place</p>	LCS Area Manager	June 2013	<p>Review of bin usage complete. Remedial action will be taken on a rolling programme dependant on available budget.</p> <p>Options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remove and / or reposition under used / misused bins - Phased removal / replacement of concrete bins - Big Bellie Bins – ruled out do to level of investment required
<p>That Cabinet consider any ways in which the Cabinet portfolios covering this area could be clarified and simplified.</p>	Accepted	Changes were made to portfolios for the current municipal year	Cabinet	Completed	New portfolios recently introduced.

That all pilots and initiatives generated as a result of this review are evaluated fully and progress is reported back to the relevant Cabinet Member.	Accepted	Regular updates will be provided to Cabinet Member for Waste & Emergency Planning	Director of Streetpride	Ongoing	Final update and report in June 2015
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ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1. Meeting:	Improving Places Select Commission
2. Date:	Wednesday 1st July 2015
3. Title:	Progress of the Scrutiny Review – Homelessness Strategy
4. Directorate	Housing, Asset Management and Neighbourhood Services

5. Summary

5.1 The Scrutiny Review of the Homelessness Strategy was undertaken by Improving Places Select Commission. The review took place between August 2013 and January 2014 and recommendations were considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, at its meeting on 25th April 2014, and were then reported to Cabinet on 21st May 2014.

5.2 The report was welcomed and provided an opportunity to raise awareness and also explain homelessness procedures. As the review coincided with the renewal of the Homelessness Strategy 2014 to 2018 recommendations from the review were incorporated into the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2014 - 2018.

5.3 This report provides an update of progress on the ten recommendations made by the Improving Places Select Commission.

6. Recommendations:

6.1 That the Select Commission receives and accepts this progress report

7. Background and Proposals:

7.1 The focus of the Improving Places Select Commission Scrutiny Review on the Homelessness Strategy was focussed on improving information for customers who are faced with homelessness and the availability of temporary accommodation. The recommendations from the Improving Places Select Commission Scrutiny Review are outlined below:-

- That the Homelessness Section should undertake work to raise public awareness of the '28 day rule'. Specific awareness raising/training should be undertaken with elected members to increase understanding of the implications of this criteria.
- Information and trends regarding rent arrears in relation to Welfare Reform "bedroom tax" should be monitored and reported to members at the Improving Places Select Commission meeting on a half yearly basis by the Homelessness Manager.
- The Private Sector Housing Officer to explore the option of issuing a newsletter to private sector landlords to promote the benefits of the private rented sector and how they can contribute to reducing homelessness. **Cabinet amended this recommendation to offer an alternative method of communication with private sector landlords**
- Improve communications between the Homelessness Team and private sector landlords via the Private Sector Housing Officer, holding regular meetings and being proactive in reducing the number of empty properties.
- The Homelessness Section continue to explore potential partnership options to address the lack of bed space provision, particularly for women and young people who need additional support.
- Explore the above and other potential opportunities for joint service provision sub regionally via the South Yorkshire Leader's meeting.
- Develop a coherent, cross service approach to tackling empty properties within the Rotherham Borough utilising existing resources.
- Consider ways to provide tenancy support to private sector tenants within Rotherham.
- The Homelessness Manager to arrange implementing the suggested improvements to the crash pad provision.
- The Strategic Housing Investment Team to look at building provision to both prevent and tackle homelessness in future regeneration schemes at the planning stages and consider ways that this could incorporate an extension to the HOPE project or other similar projects.
- For the Council to explore how it invests in property and assets with the aim of reducing homelessness and out of authority placements.

7.2. Progress has been made in accordance with the recommendations agreed by the Scrutiny Review Group and detailed as detailed in appendix 1. Of the eleven

recommendations eight have been completed, one is no longer viable and the remaining two will be completed by March 2016.

8. Finance

8.1 The Scrutiny review acknowledged the need for recommendations to be contained within existing resources and in the main there were no financial implications arising from this report.

8.2 The emergency temporary accommodation “crash pads” service is self-financing, and as such there is no budget allocation from the General Fund. It relies wholly on the crash pad nightly charge for income. The income generated from the charge covers all staffing, furniture and operational costs. The scheme has been a financial success with no losses ever been made, this is mainly due to how the scheme was originally created and the tight financial monitoring that has taken place within the service.

8.3. Focusing on homelessness prevention will facilitate a cost saving to the Council as it is likely to create a reduction in the temporary units of accommodation currently needed for homelessness families. In Rotherham we utilise our own temporary accommodation (crash pads) which is our preferred option, and can be managed more effectively. It is more economical than other options used by other authorities, e.g. bed and breakfast, and was highlighted as a beacon of good practice in the recent Gold Standard inspection, and will be shared with other local authorities.

8.3 The majority of the training will be carried out in house by the Homelessness Manager. Additional training and support is provided by National Housing Advice Shelter, Homeless Link and Department Communities and Local Government Practitioner Support Service.

8.4 Prevention activity is mainly financed through the homelessness grant which is set at £91589.63 for 2015/16.

9. Risks & uncertainties

9.1 We are already seeing an increase in the numbers of people contacting the service, who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, and we have to prioritise the work of the team accordingly. This is mainly due to the following:

- Complex lifestyles and the increasing need for support prior to and after rehousing
- Changes to Welfare Reform
- Mortgage and Rent Arrears

9.2 The impact of the changes in Welfare Reform are also increasing the demand on the housing options service and advice is being sought by people feeling that they may be under threat of homelessness due to these changes.

9.3 The prospect of the introduction of Universal Credit also poses a risk, as some people have never had to manage the type of income they will receive in the future, and do not have the necessary budgeting skills, which could result in household charges being neglected and an increased risk of eviction and the threat of homelessness.

9.4 Further changes to welfare benefit, housing benefit regulations and age eligibility, recently suggested by government and announced in the Queens speech.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

10.1 The Homelessness Strategy has considered the impending changes to the Council's Housing Allocations Policy and also contributes to three of the ten commitments within the Housing Strategy:

- Commitment 1 – we will deliver Council Housing that meets people's needs
- Commitment 6 – We will help people to access the support they need
- Commitment 9 – We will help to improve Rotherham's private rented sector

10.2 **Gold Standard Challenge** - In March 2015 a review of the housing options service was conducted as recommended by the National Practitioners Support Service, funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government. The review was a local authority sector led peer review scheme, designed to help local authorities deliver more efficient and cost effective homelessness prevention services. The challenge follows a 10 step continuous improvement approach that starts with a pledge for local authorities aspiring to 'strive for continuous improvement in front line housing services' and culminates in an application for the Gold Standard Challenge.

10.3 The review was successful and we are now able to apply for the 10 challenges to achieve Gold Standard in front line housing services. A Continuous Improvement Plan has been developed following the review and will complement the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Group.

11. Background papers

- Homelessness Act 2002
- RMBC's Housing Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy 2014 -2018
- RMBC's Housing Allocations Policy 2008, revised October 2014
- Localism Act 2011

12. Contact details

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Progress to Scrutiny Review – Homelessness

Recommendation	Cabinet Decision (Accepted/ Rejected/ Deferred)	Progress as at 1 st June 2015	Officer Responsible	Action Completed Yes/ No If No the percentage completed and expected completion date
1. That the Homelessness Section should undertake work to raise public awareness of the '28 day rule'. Specific awareness raising/training should be undertaken with elected members to increase understanding of the implications of these changes.	Accepted	<p>Between April 2014 and March 2015, there were 745 households prevented from becoming homeless.</p> <p>Awareness raising/training regarding the 28 day rule has been included in the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan under the Priority 3 – Providing Quality Information on all Housing Options, action points are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver training to Elected Member's and colleagues on all aspects of homelessness • Develop a Homelessness Prevention Pack for customers offering advice where to get help • Increase opportunities to self-serve and access information on the website or locally <p>Following a recent Gold Standard Inspection by a national government agency, it was noted that the officers were experienced, knowledgeable and confident and that priority need triggers were explained to the customer who confirmed that they understood. This supports Action Point 1</p>	Jill Jones	<p>No – 90% complete</p> <p>Outstanding training to Members on homelessness legislation awareness is to be included in the member development training plan 2015/16</p>

		<p>The homeless team has undertaken work to raise the awareness of the '28 day rule' with partners and wider staff members.</p> <p>A new software system has been introduced in the Housing Options team that identifies people threatened with homelessness and they are contacted by a Homelessness Officer within 1 day. This allows us to offer early intervention and housing advice to ensure rehousing is found to alleviate the threat of homelessness. A housing options pack is now produced electronically for all new customers detailing housing options and additional advice, including information on employment, money advice, and help with substance misuse as well as other additional support services that are available.</p> <p>Access to information on the website and opportunities to self-serve have also been improved.</p> <p>There is an outstanding action to deliver training to Elected Members and is to be included in this year's training plan. This was delayed due to changes in the Council</p>		
<p>2. Information and trends regarding rent arrears in relation to Welfare Reform "bedroom tax" should be monitored and reported to members at the Improving Places Select Commission meeting on a half yearly basis by the Homelessness Manager.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>The information and trends regarding rent arrears are monitored by the Income team. As at 29th May 2015:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,245 tenants have a charge for "bedroom tax" • The total number of tenant with a charge for "bedroom tax" who are in arrears is 2,449, of these 1,624 have only had arrears since the introduction of "bedroom tax" 	<p>Paul Elliott</p>	<p>Complete</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current arrears attributed to bedroom tax are £416,912.- <p>The Rent Policy was subject to a Scrutiny Review. (Six monthly update to be presented to Members)</p> <p>In the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan Priority 5 – Reducing the risk of people becoming homeless due to financial difficulties, action points are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement changes to the Allocation policy (Sandra Tolley) complete • Implement a new Rent Policy (Paul Elliott) complete • Ensure early intervention and prevention is offered through advice to tenants and joint working. (See Below) <p>Early intervention measures have been extended now, and 2 Intervention Officers working within the income team provide early support and advice to tenants who begin to accrue rent arrears. If this is due to housing benefit size criteria (bedroom tax) then advice is offered regarding downsizing to a smaller more affordable property.</p> <p>Where the situation is more serious and there is a risk of eviction, the homeless team work with the tenant and income team to offer advice and support to prevent the loss of the tenancy or to seek alternative accommodation.</p>		
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<p>3.The Private Sector Housing Officer to explore the option of issuing a newsletter to private sector landlords to promote the benefits of the private rented sector and how they can contribute to reducing homelessness.</p> <p>Cabinet amended this recommendation to offer an alternative method of communication with private sector landlords</p>	<p>Amended</p>	<p>Previously a landlord newsletter was produced with private sector support funding but this is no longer available.</p> <p>Other methods of communication, including the Council's website, landlord forums and selective licencing will offer ample opportunities to promote the benefits of the private rented sector and how they can contribute towards reducing homelessness. See also 4 below</p> <p>A successful working relationship that has been established with private landlords by the Private Rented Sector Officer and the Customer Liaison and Development Co-ordinator, and their regular attendance at Landlords Forum has provided an effective link with landlords.</p>	<p>Paul Benson</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>4. Improve communications between the Homelessness Team and private sector landlords via the Private Sector Housing Officer, holding regular meetings and being proactive in reducing the number of empty properties.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Regular contact is made by the housing options team with private landlords and letting agents. The homeless team have developed relationships with new landlords and offer tenancy support to tenants, as well as completing health and safety checks prior to letting.</p> <p>The Private Rented Sector Officer and Customer Liaison and Development Coordinator attend Landlord Forums regularly and deal with any queries landlords may have. More landlords are approaching the Housing Options team offering their properties for rent, due to this action.</p>	<p>Paul Benson Lianne Hancock</p>	<p>Complete</p>

<p>5. The Homelessness Section continue to explore potential partnership options to address the lack of bed space provision, particularly for women and young people who need additional support.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>The Homelessness Service are working closely with the Strategic Investment team to identify potential options for bringing properties back in to use, and working with partners to provide the right accommodation for those in housing need. This includes private landlords, supported accommodation providers and local authority colleagues.</p> <p>The Homelessness Service have recently worked with Action Housing and supported their bid for funding to provide supported accommodation for young people 16-24yrs, including those with a mild to moderate learning difficulty, which is an identified need in Rotherham.</p> <p>There is also an identified need for supported accommodation for people with complex needs and are currently pursuing an initiative called MEAM (Making Every Adult Matter.)</p>	<p>Jill Jones</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>6. Explore the above and other potential opportunities for joint service provision for temporary accommodation sub regionally via the South Yorkshire Leader's meeting.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>To take forward this suggestion of working sub-regionally it was proposed that the issue of lack of bed spaces is raised at the South Yorkshire Leader's meeting to consider how this aim can be achieved.</p> <p>Discussion has taken place with sub regional partners. Sheffield was the only area that may have been able to assist in this suggestion, but due to procedural changes and demand in that area this is not a viable option, and therefore the South Yorkshire Leader's group was not approached.</p> <p>The other issue is that homeless households should be placed in suitable accommodation in the local</p>	<p>Jill Jones</p>	<p>Initial action is no longer viable.</p>

		<p>area. A recent Supreme Court has handed down judgment in the case of <i>Nzolameso v City of Westminster</i> [2015] UKSC 22. A local authority may only discharge its homelessness duties by securing that "suitable" accommodation is available for the applicant. Accommodation must be provided within the district of the authority "so far as reasonably practicable".</p>		
<p>7. Develop a coherent, cross service approach to tackling empty properties within the Rotherham Borough utilising existing resources</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>This is embedded in the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan – Priority 6, <i>Helping more people to access and sustain private rented accommodation</i> encourages landlords to offer up available empty properties to the Housing Options team.</p> <p>The Council has worked with partners to identify suitable properties for renovation or redevelopment to address identified needs and reduces homelessness.</p> <p>The Homelessness Service has considered a number of funding opportunities, and has recently worked with the Strategic Investment team to produce funding bids and also worked with Homeless Link and the National Practitioners Support Service where we gain early awareness of funding opportunities.</p> <p>There is commitment from the Strategic Housing and Investment team to consider the implications of property acquisition and rehousing needs when undergoing regeneration schemes.</p> <p>A recent accommodation project in Kilnhurst has been completed by the HOPE project.</p>	<p>Tom Bell</p>	<p>Complete</p>

		<p>The project provides housing for people with drug and alcohol problems and provides apprenticeships so those in recovery can gain the skills they need for employment. The HOPE Project tackles homelessness and unemployment by providing housing, creating employment and training opportunities. The HOPE project will provide employment if the recent bid for additional supported accommodation is successful.</p>		
<p>8. Consider ways to provide tenancy support to private sector tenants within the Rotherham Borough.</p>	Accepted	<p>There is already provision for tenancy support within all housing sectors which is provided by Supporting People floating support services.</p> <p>In addition, to prevent failed tenancies in the private rented sector, the Tenancy Intervention Officers who are part of the Homelessness team will provide intensive support at the start of the tenancy as required, and will intervene if tenants or landlords have issues which may put the accommodation at risk at any time.</p>	Jill Jones	Complete
<p>9. The Homelessness Manager to arrange implementing the suggested improvements to the crash pad provision, which included provision of local information on arrival to the property. E.g. location of amenities.</p>	Accepted	<p>If a household is believed to be statutory homelessness, then temporary accommodation in a 'crash pad' accommodation can be offered. There are 22 'crash pads' situated in various locations within Rotherham. The provision has recently been recognised by a national government agency as good practice and will be shared with other local authorities.</p> <p>Local information is now available in all crash pads. Reality checks are undertaken every month to ensure all information is available for tenants who access temporary accommodation, and 6 monthly</p>	Jill Jones	Complete

		<p>reviews have been completed.</p> <p>The team consider feedback from customers and respond to suggestions to improve our services.</p> <p>Regular inspections of the properties and the provision of support for occupants are embedded in the service.</p>		
<p>10. The Neighbourhood Investment Team to look at building provision to both prevent and tackle homelessness in future regeneration schemes at the planning stages and consider ways that this could incorporate an extension to the HOPE project or other similar projects.</p>	Accepted	<p>There is commitment from the Strategic Housing and Investment team to consider the implications of property acquisition and rehousing needs when undergoing regeneration schemes.</p> <p>A recent accommodation project in Kilnhurst has been completed by the HOPE project.</p> <p>The project provides housing for people with drug and alcohol problems and provides apprenticeships so those in recovery can gain the skills they need for employment. The HOPE Project tackles homelessness and unemployment by providing housing, creating employment and training opportunities. The HOPE project will provide employment if the recent bid for additional supported accommodation is successful.</p> <p>Action Housing is preparing a bid proposal for the Platform for Life initiative launched by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). Action proposes to redevelop the vacant Parkgate Library/ex-Neighbourhood Office site (being sold by RMBC to Action) into shared accommodation let at an affordable rent. The 36 units will be designed to address the housing needs of young people (18-24)</p>	Tom Bell	Complete

		at risk of homelessness. It is proposed that the existing and new-build buildings will be adapted, extended and designed to provide a range of housing and care support facilities that will help young people acquire the necessary skills to live independently. This project builds on the successful HOPE methodology and also contributes to Action Point 7		
11. For the Council to explore how it invests in property and assets with the aim of reducing homelessness and out of authority placements.	Accepted	<p>The Strategic Housing and Investment Service have supported Key Choices to apply for external funding to invest in property and assets with the aim of reducing homelessness and out of authority placements.</p> <p>Partnership bids have recently been worked on by the Strategic Investment team in conjunction with colleagues and partners for a project for young people and those with a mild to moderate learning difficulty at a former Council owned site.</p> <p>Discussion is also taking place with the Big Lottery Fund to consider specific housing need – this is in the early stages and will be progressed throughout the year.</p>	Tom Bell Jill Jones	March 2016 50% complete

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS
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1.	Meeting:	Improving Places Select Commission
2.	Date:	Wednesday 1st July 2015
3.	Title:	Update on progress against the Scrutiny Review on Supporting the Local Economy
4.	Directorate:	Environment and Development Services
5.	Advisory Cabinet Member	Councillor Lelliott

6. Summary

- 6.1 This report provides an update on progress in implementing the 13 recommendations of the Scrutiny Review into supporting the local economy.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 **That the Commission note the report, the actions taken to date and those proposed for the coming year.**
-

8. Background

8.1 The review was conducted by a group from the Improving Places Select Commission, chaired by Cllr Emma Wallis. It took place between November 2013 and May 2014.

The Objectives of the review were:-

- To analyse the impact of changes to local government finance – particularly business rates,
- To analyse how the Council can create the right conditions for growth in the private sector,
- To influence the development of the Economic Growth Plan for Rotherham, which in turn feeds into the City Region Strategic Economic Plan (SEP),
- To develop a whole Council approach to increase business rates in Rotherham.

Members agreed to focus on the following lines of enquiry during the review:-

- What is the impact of an increase/decrease in business rates on the Council finances?
- What is the impact of this on the local economy?
- How can the Council support economic development and what should be in the Economic Growth Plan? What different models can be adopted?
- How are supply chains supported?
- What incentives can be offered to local businesses?
- How do we evaluate success? How have others achieved it?
- Impact of funding?
- What are Rotherham's growth areas?
- What specifically is the approach to Tourism?
- How can the following services be used to generate business investment?
 - Asset Management
 - Transport
 - Planning
 - Housing
- How do we impact on the most deprived areas of Rotherham?

8.2 The group interviewed a wide range of witnesses during the course of their work; including Council Officers, the Chamber of Commerce and private sector business owners.

8.3 The Group produced 13 recommendations, covering a range of issues relating to the Rotherham economy, which officers responded to in a paper that went to RMBC Cabinet in January 2015.

- 8.4 The attached appendix sets out all 13 recommendations; progress made to date on them, likely activity against them for the coming year and rated the risk level of them not being delivered.

The appendix looks at each recommendation in detail, but some of the main points raised include:-

- The Economic Growth Plan goes to full Council on 8th July. If approved it becomes a live document.
- Setting up of “Task & Finish” groups to set out the details for the delivery of the interventions and priorities from the Economic Growth Plan. This will include challenging and relevant targets/outcomes.
- There has been widespread consultation during development of the Economic Growth Plan.
- The Economic Growth Plan and draft Local Plan are closely linked and will provide sufficient suitable sites to deliver job and business growth targets.
- A plan will be put in place to communicate the performance of the Rotherham economy and the many good things happening in it.
- The Economic Growth Plan will be reviewed to ensure it fully complements the new Community Strategy and vision for the borough which will be in place for 2016.
- Rotherham have been very successful at accessing money through the Regional Growth Fund.
- Although certain parts of the Council are already very business friendly (i.e. RiDO), it is important that all areas of the Council are aware of how they can contribute to the economic growth agenda.

9. Finance

- 9.1 Once the Plan is approved, then going forward it will require the involvement of officers who deal with capital spend and business rates; to review any assumptions and advise on financial implications.

Part of the work with regard to implementation of the Economic Growth Plan is to identify funding sources that are available to provide funding for our priority projects and business support activities. This will include the 2014-20 European ERDF/ESF programme, the SCR Growth Deal with government and some RMBC capital support.

10. Risks and Uncertainties

- 10.1 One risk is the potential impact of the national and international economy on Rotherham, which the Council will not have much influence on being able to mitigate.
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- 10.2 The ability to secure the funding to support the Plan is a potential issue, but improved partnership working with the SCR and Combined Authority teams should ensure that we maximise the funding we can access through them.

11. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

- 11.1 Supporting the economy is a key corporate priority for the Council and a key element of the Sheffield City Region agenda.

The Rotherham Economic Growth Plan will help deliver:-

- 10,000 net new private sector jobs over the next 10 years
- Create 750 additional new businesses over the next 5 years
- Increase gross value added (GVA) for the Rotherham economy

Once the new Community Strategy and vision is produced, then there will be a major review of the Economic Growth Plan to ensure that it picks up those economic priorities that have been included in it.

12. Background Papers and Consultation

- 12.1 RMBC Finance have been consulted on the report.

Officers from Human Resources, Communications, RiDO, Planning, Scrutiny and Economic Development were consulted on, and contributed to, the report.

- 12.2 Response to the Scrutiny Review on Supporting the Local Economy – paper to Cabinet, 14th January 2015.

Contact Name:

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Cabinet’s Response to Scrutiny Review on Supporting the Local Economy

	Recommendation	Progress to date	Future activity (and timescales)	Officer Responsible	Risk rating (RAG)
1	The Economic Development Team within the Council should ensure that the emerging Growth Plan is focused around two key objectives – income generation and employment creation, with very clear actions for achieving this.	<p>The Economic Growth Plan has been approved by the LSP, via the Economy Board on 21st April 2015.</p> <p>It was considered by Cmmr Kenny on 8th June and subject to no call in will be approved on 17th June. Final approval is with full Council on 8th July after which the Plan is “live.”</p> <p>Two main “targets” of the Plan are to deliver:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 10,000 net new jobs over 10 years ➤ 750 net new businesses over the next 5 years 	<p>Three Task & Finish (T&F) Groups will be set up by the Economy Board looking at the priority areas of:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Growth • Skills & Employment • Town Centre <p>The Groups will have a 12 month life in which to identify the priority actions for each area, who will lead on their delivery, potential funding support and timescales for delivery.</p> <p>Overall responsibility for delivery of the Plan will remain with the Council and LSP; mainly the Economy Board, or its successor following the LSP review.</p>	Simeon Leach	Amber
2	Targets and outcomes should be developed for this plan that are smart – suggestions include number of businesses accessing services, the number of young people accessing apprenticeships, the number of new entrants to post compulsory education and the number of over 16s gaining accredited	<p>The Economic Growth Plan includes a suite of outcomes/outputs to measure the impact on the economy of the delivering the Plan.</p> <p>The top levels targets are :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 10,000 net new jobs - 750 new businesses (in 5 years) - Increasing GVA 	<p>More specific targets are set out for each of the 7 themes, although these will be revisited and reviewed as part of the work of the T&F groups.</p> <p>Amongst the current targets, to be achieved by the of the Plan in 2025 are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1,200 new starts per annum - 72.0% achieving 5+ GCSEs at grades A*-C - 2,500 apprenticeship starts p.a. - Increase percentage of resident qualified to Level 4 or higher to 31% 	Simeon Leach	Amber

	qualifications.				
3	The Economic Development Team should ensure that the growth plan is jointly owned by local partners and that it is strongly linked to the Local Plan.	<p>The EDT and Forward Planning Team worked closely together on the development of the Economic Growth Plan to ensure that it fitted with the Local Plan.</p> <p>A wide range of partners and stakeholders have been involved in the development of the Growth Plan. A draft was also open to public consultation from Mid-December 2014 to the end of January 2015.</p>	<p>A number of the borough's larger development sites, with large job creation potential are dependent on adoption in the Local Plan, which should occur by December 2016</p> <p>The T&F Groups set up to develop the delivery section of the Economic Growth Plan will seek to involve as wide a range of partners and stakeholders as possible from across the public, private and Vol/Comm sectors.</p>	Simeon Leach	Amber
4	They should also ensure that it is communicated effectively to partners and stakeholders, as part of an ongoing campaign to "talk up" Rotherham and its achievements. These stakeholders should include the Sheffield City Region structures and the private sector.	Issues linked to business support, town centre development, regional economic growth and inward investment are regularly communicated to a range of key stakeholders, via channels including 'Update' town centre newsletter, weekly staff bulletins, weekly e-newsletter, media releases, social media and online content. Key issues are also being communicated via a new newsletter for all RMBC members.	<p>Publication of the new Economic Growth Plan will be supported by a communications plan – ensuring the council's new economic priorities are communicated with all key stakeholders. Work on this will commence following final adoption of the Plan by full Council.</p> <p>In terms of onward promotion, a proposed new-structure for the council's communications and marketing function aims to provide more strategic and focussed support on key council priorities, including economic growth.</p>	RiDO & Comms Team	Green
5	The Planning Board should identify, in the first instance, its top ten development sites and focus on these in its policies and plans. Within this the identification and delivery of a strategically important site should be the number 1 priority for Rotherham to remain competitive.	Employment sites have been identified, which can accommodate the growth set out in the Economic Growth Plan, (Members involvement has been via Local Plan Steering Group and drop in sessions prior to full Council) and are being taken forward to the publication version of the Sites and Policies Document.	When the Local Plan is adopted sites will be available for development and the RiDO and Economic Development teams will be involved in identifying developers, inward investors and end users for them.	Bronwen Knight	Amber

6	The Council should consider prioritising all town centres and giving a policy mandate for this to happen.	There is a 'hierarchy' of town, district and local centres included in the Local Plan Core Strategy, this can be found on page 92: http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/1571/adopted_rotherham_core_strategy	This is a policy decision and is therefore one for Members (and currently Commissioners) to consider. This could be done via the proposed new community strategy and corporate plan, due in early 2016	Paul Woodcock	Green
7	The Council should consider how Elected Members could input to the development of Council Policy, particularly with regard to economic growth, by utilising the wide range of talent and expertise that exists within this pool. Elected members can further assist with the promotion of Rotherham.	This is now subsumed into sections 1.1 and 21.4 (Re-focusing of "Economy Board" and a positive role in the Sheffield City Region) of the Council's improvement plan.	<p>1.1.1 Council leadership of 'Views from Rotherham' visioning workshops, with Commissioners and Partners to be held across the borough between May and July 2015. A new community strategy and vision for the borough will be in place by 2016.</p> <p>1.1.2 Facilitated joint working between 2015/16 Cabinet and senior officers to enable Leader, Cabinet and controlling group to agree the vision for the Council, (linked to partner agreed vision for Rotherham) its style and approach to service delivery, to be translated into a Corporate Plan, between June 2015 and April 2016.</p> <p>1.1.3 Political mentorship of Cabinet Members and Opposition Leader and other Political Group Leaders, from June 2015.</p> <p>21.4.1 Refocusing of governance arrangements for the city region with support from partners; and 21.4.2 Finalisation of "Growth Strategy" linked to City Region Strategic Economic Plan, both by end of September 2015.</p>	Carole Haywood	Amber

8	<p>RIDO should work with partners to ensure that access to Regional Growth Fund is maximised</p>	<p>Of the £32m RGF grant funding allocated to Sheffield City Region, Rotherham companies have secured £6.37m towards investments totalling £41.9m. Of this, RiDO successfully assisted 10 companies, helping to secure £2.91m against investment of £21.3m, through signposting, guidance and in some circumstances, completing applications for the companies involved. In all of these cases the companies were unaware of the scheme prior to RiDO's involvement.</p> <p>Overall, Rotherham has secured around 20% of the total allocation for the Sheffield City Region, against a proportional business base (% of all business in the SCR) of 12.9%. <i>Source: Nomis [Inter Departmental Business Register (ONS)].</i></p>	<p>The CA has an investment strategy to be applied in making allocations from the additional £52m of RGF over its six year term: £2.5m in 2015/16; £7m in 2016/17; and £10m in each of the four years 2017/18 to 2020/21; plus a further £2.5m from Growth Deal 2.</p> <p>The proposal is for the RGF to be broadly split 50:50 between a fund supporting investment in locally based companies where there is a demonstrable case for grant; and a fund to support significant inward investment of at least £3m.</p>	Tim O'Connell	Amber
9	<p>The Council should aim to establish a multi-disciplinary "Task Force" with the key purpose of providing a co-ordinated holistic approach to generating investment and economic growth in Rotherham, for the benefit of its local businesses, communities and residents. The focus should be on working both internally, and in partnership with the private sector in Rotherham, to include a range of projects in terms of size and value. The external business support process should be led by RiDO as a</p>	<p>The strategic overview of the borough's economy is through the Economy Board, which has responsibility for overseeing the delivery of the Rotherham Economic Growth Plan; with regular reports to the wider Partnership and Council.</p> <p>The "Major Projects Group" is an officer group that meets monthly and leads on developing and delivering projects with a major economic impact (i.e. Forge Island and Pithouse West).</p> <p>RiDO continues to lead on business support within Rotherham, including their Key Account Management for a number of our larger firms and management of the network of Business Incubation Centres, populated by smaller and/or start-up businesses.</p>	<p>As major projects move forward in their development multi-disciplinary teams will be set up for each project to ensure that they are delivered as swiftly and efficiently as possible. This will utilise the model previously used for developments such as Bellows Road in Rawmarsh.</p>	Karl Battersby	Amber

	recognised brand within Rotherham.				
10	The Task Force should include Planning, Asset Management, Housing, Transport, Education and potentially Health partners. These functions will be included on the basis of a unique drivers approach for each project. In line with recommendation 7 above specific councillors (with specific expertise) and ward members should be included in this approach. This model could be adapted for individual projects, with bespoke task groups set up for larger projects including provision for specific expertise to be co-opted.	See answer to recommendation 9.	See answer to recommendation 9.	Karl Battersby	Amber

11	<p>This Task Force should be responsible for ensuring that the strategy should identify land supply, link into work on the Local Plan and also the following issues, with the aim of maximising long term value for the Council's assets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Use of capital and borrowing to develop sites and premises b) The approach to the development of this land – some sites for area based regeneration initiatives c) The development of existing smaller sites and premises for developing local businesses 	<p>The Economic Development and Planning teams have worked closely to ensure that any development is focused on those sites which are in the Local Plan.</p> <p>The sites in the Local Plan, and supported by the Economic Growth Plan, are a mix of major sites, which are needed to deliver the 10,000 new jobs target; plus smaller sites for more local developments, where work will be done to assist local people to access the jobs created.</p>	<p>One of the proposals that may come out of the Economic Growth Plan is the setting up of a "Property Fund" to help bring forward developments which provide jobs and increased business rates for the borough. This would be a more formalised version of the support that RiDO brokered to ensure the construction of 2 new units at the AMP as part of the R-Evolution development. Work on this Fund will be picked up over the next 12 months as part of the work of the "Task & Finish" Groups</p>	Karl Battersby	Amber
12	<p>The Council should consider how to develop a business friendly culture amongst all its staff – skills development and training issues and also the possibility of setting growth targets for employees where appropriate. A key element of this would be</p>	<p>Specific growth targets would relate to those employees who work in areas which have direct potential to impact business growth (i.e. RiDO, Economic Development) and these are picked up in the quarterly performance information they supply to P&Q.</p> <p>However, it is important that all areas of the Council are made aware that economic growth is a priority for the Council and how their Service can contribute to this.</p>	<p>M3 session September 2015: To focus on business growth, business rates and also to update managers on future business development and Town Centre plans and successes so far, as this is something Pulse & Focus Groups told us people what to hear about.</p> <p>June 2015 "You Said, We Did" feedback to employees to include latest business development plans and successes.</p>	Simon Cooper	Amber

	to raise awareness within the Council of the changes to business rates and the importance of them in terms of generating income for the Council.		September 2015 Employee 6 monthly progress session to include business development growth plans and successes.		
13	<p>The Scrutiny function in the Council should consider looking further at the following issues;</p> <p>a) The development of aspirational housing and associated services/ communities in Rotherham</p> <p>b) Work with schools and training providers/colleges around the 16+ skills agenda to establish stronger links with employers and to engender an enterprising and aspirational culture.</p> <p>c) Potential for developing employment initiatives based on the experience of Manchester and elsewhere</p>	These issues would come under the terms of reference of the Improving Places Select Commission. A work programme for the first half of 2015 has been agreed with Commissioners and will focus on task and finish work around the cleaner greener agenda.	<p>Improving Places will be considering a further work programme once this has completed and therefore these recommendations will be included in the planning of this and will feature in the second half of the work programme.</p> <p>Timescales – December 2015 to April 2016.</p>	Deborah Fellowes	Red

Representation of the Council's internal Panels and on Outside Bodies 2015 – 2016

Title	Description	Council Rep.	Frequency	Councillors' Role	RMBC Officer Support	How issues are reported back into the Council	Update
Health, Welfare and Safety Panel:-	To oversee health and safety issues throughout the Council's premises.	one member and a substitute from each Select Commission – last year's Member was Councillor Foden and the substitute Councillor Swift	Quarterly meetings plus visits of inspection (half day per visit and per meeting)	Councillor	Sean Fiander, Principal Health and Safety Officer	Via the Panel meetings and bulletins	.
Local Plan Members' Steering Group	To assist in the production of the Local Plan	The 4 Chairs of the Select Commissions	Monthly	Select Commission	Andy Duncan, Strategic Policy Team Leader	Via Commissioners (and Advisory Cabinet) and Council	Usual practice to appoint Chair to attend
Environmental Protection - Yorkshire and Humberside Division	The work of the Division is carried out voluntarily by members who want to make an impact upon creating sustainable environments for future generations.	4 reps. from the Improving Places Select Commission	1 event and 3 meetings per year	Representative and information sharing	Mark Ford, Safer Neighbourhoods Manager	Information shared between Officers	

Title	Description	Council Rep.	Frequency	Councillors' Role	RMBC Officer Support	How issues are reported back into the Council	Update
RUSH House Management Committee	Providing the strategic direction and the overall decision making body for the accommodation and support service for homeless people aged 16 to 23	1 rep. from Improving Places Select Commission	Bi-monthly	Co-opt member To read papers, receive minutes and report back.	Sandra Tolley, Housing Options Manager	Appointed Member to report to Advisory Cabinet Member annually	