

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
23rd October, 2015**

Present:- Councillor Steele (in the Chair); Councillors Beck, Cowles, Hamilton, Hughes, Mallinder, Reynolds, Sansome, Julie Turner, Whelbourn and Wyatt.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Pitchley.

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Councillor Hughes declared a disclosable pecuniary interest on the grounds that he was a town centre tenant in relation to ASR Ref. EDS16)

(Councillor Wyatt declared a non-pecuniary interest on the grounds that he was a member of the Parochial Church Council for St. Margaret's at Swinton)

44. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

45. ANNUAL REPORT CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

Consideration was given to a report, presented by Justin Homer, Head of Policy Improvement and Partnership, and Stuart Purcell, Performance Officer, concerning the Customer Complaints Annual Report received by the Council during 2014/15

The report provided information about complaints made to the Local Authority between 1st April, 2014 and 31st March, 2015, under the Corporate Complaint's Procedure, the Adult Social Services, Children's Social Services and Housing Complaint Regulations. The figures in the report included details of the number of customers and the number of complaints made. Each Directorate area had also provided information and a breakdown summary.

Tailored annual complaint reports by Directorate had also been presented recently to senior management teams and these were included in the appendices to the report. The total number of complaints received by the Council in this twelve months' period was 693, being an increase of 3% on the 672 complaints received during 2013/14).

The report also confirmed the Complaints Team had continued to maintain improvements in the following areas:-

- Learning from complaints to identify service improvements.
- All responses quality assured.
- Training provided to investigating managers.
- Fewer Local Government Ombudsman complaints received.

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- Fewer informal complaints received.
- Fewer complaints escalating through the Council's complaint procedure.
- More Councillor Surgery enquiries (via the E-Casework system).

In addition to formal complaints, the report also provided information on compliments received, Councillors' Surgery enquiries and Members' of Parliament correspondence received by the Council, which were managed by the Complaints Team.

A summary of some of the actions being taken during 2015/16 was provided in response to the 2014/15 Annual Report findings in order to effect further service improvement through learning from complaints and ensuring management action was taken to resolve them. An interim update on the latest position with regard to complaints received and managed during the current year, to date, was also provided.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board sought clarification on a number of points including whether complainants were spoken to initially about their complaint, professional input for the handling of complaints especially those escalated past Stage 1, the difference between a complaint and a service request and the advantages of managing complaints through one corporate team.

Commissioner Manzie provided some insight into her own experiences of complaints processes working in four different Local Authorities.

Discussion ensued on the best practice techniques and the advantages/disadvantages of an Elected Member taking ownership/oversight of the complaints process. It was also suggested that complaints form part of the induction process for newly elected Councillors and how these can be progressed. In addition, it was suggested that a drop-in session to raise specific concerns be arranged for all Members.

Councillor Hughes made reference to the percentage of complaints at Stage 2 responded to within timescales and how this had decreased from 2013/14. Information was shared about how complaints were dealt with in directorates and the process for investigations in Children's Services. It was also noted that the majority of the complaints were primarily housing related.

In terms of learning from complaints the report seemed to indicate that some of the complaints were from a previous year and it was suggested for future reporting some explanation and staff outcomes be incorporated into the text.

Commissioner Manzie confirmed discussions had taken place with the Senior Leadership team on various issues and how best these could be incorporated into future reports. The new corporate performance

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framework had been established to ensure that performance in both the management of complaints and responding could be measured and the intelligence fed back into the complaints system.

Councillor Reynolds provided various examples of surgery reports and advice was given that if complaints were still not being addressed this should be raised with the Director for Housing, Asset Management and Neighbourhood Services.

The Chairman sought clarification on how a complaint could be made and was advised accordingly. However, whilst some analysis of the complaints could be made, especially around a post code, it was not possible to differentiate between gender or religion, but it was agreed that this would be considered further.

Councillor Sansome suggested there be some further training with front line staff who may receive complaints, given the staffing changes, and was advised this had already been undertaken or was in the process by the Manager leading on Customer Services.

Councillor Julie Turner also sought advice on how best to take forward a complaint on behalf of residents or from residents wishing to remain anonymous, especially around sensitive community issues. She was also advised accordingly.

Councillor Mallinder had also observed from the report the number of complaints by service area and was advised by officers that this was largely as a result of the majority of complaints about repairs and reflected the number of inspections. It was also pointed out that the number of complaints about repairs had decreased, this was in part due to joint complaints now being registered with the Contract and Service Development Team, but in the main was due to the reduction in the number of complaints about contractors and the amount of resource available.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board were advised about the internal processes for the arrangement of complaints, the current staffing structure under one umbrella and how this was managed.

The concerns about the use of plain English and appropriate training for staff were noted.

Resolved:- (1) That the contents and key messages of the annual Customer Complaints report for 2014/15 be noted.

(2) That the 2015/16 service and performance improvement actions and provide any further comments on areas for further and continuous improvement, in partnership with service teams, moving forward be noted.

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(3) That further information be provided on the demographic information of complaints where appropriate.

(4) That the use of plain English be incorporated into staff training for dealing with the complaints.

(5) That a drop in session to raise awareness/concerns/complaints be arranged for all Members.

46. BUDGET 2016/17 AND MTFs PROGRESS UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 113 of the meeting of Commissioner Manzie held on 15th October, 2015, consideration was given to a report, presented by the Karl Battersby, Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services, and David Burton, Director of Streetpride, which provided details of the Budget Savings Proposals of £1.289 million for the period 2016/17 to 2018/19 in respect of the Advisory Cabinet Portfolio of Waste, Roads and Enforcement

The report set out where savings proposals were supported in principle, with detailed equalities impact assessments and/or consultation being undertaken, as required. The aim was to produce a draft Medium Term Financial Strategy by November 2015, in line with the timescales included in the Corporate Improvement Plan.

Officers reported on the Directorate proposals and Members discussed and queried the various issues, as follows:-

ASR Ref No. EDS 17:-

A. Reduction of the Maintenance Budget

- How much was used from the maintenance budget last year and reducing this further how will it affect the public.
- If some of these chapels were in a state of disrepair and a public risk should they not be demolished.
- Use of alternative funding accessed via Friends Groups.
- Potential for community groups taking over maintenance.

Agreed with further information on the use of last year's budget.

E. Self-service applications for certain licences.

- Better use of software systems and the raising of the profile around taxi licensing.

Agreed.

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F. Business Process Engineering

- Resources in Rotherham Connect and the ability of staff to deal with specific issues.

Agreed.

G Migration of licensing administrative function from Lalpac to Civica App

- Potential for increased costs by Civica and the expectation that the improvements to the functionality will be available in two to three years' time.
- Need for ongoing updates on the Civica proposals.
- Discussions with Lalpac on the future proposals.
- Savings proposed and whether these could be offset by the taxi charges.
- The need for an improvement system.

Agreed with the software proposals being closely monitored over the next year with updates provided to Members.

ASR REF. NO. EDS 18

A. Waste PFI

Duties of the vacant post and any implications for its removal.

Agreed.

ASR REF. NO. 19

A. Waste Treatment

- Reduction in waste targets.
- Sharing of information for the Scrutiny Review as part of the work by Improving Places.
- Spare capacity in the waste plant.

Agreed.

ASR REF. NO. 20

A. Rationalisation of staff

Agreed.

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C. Fleet Renewal

- Implications of changes.
- Disposal of glass and weight of blue boxes.
- Efficiency of the fleet.
- Percentage of reported breakdown of vehicles.
- Risk assessments for the disposal of household waste.
- Costs for disposal of waste now the PFI Plant was operational.
- PFI Plan capacity.
- Potential for a Scrutiny Review around the capacity within the PFI Plant.

Agreed.

G. Alternate week collections for Christmas/New Year.

- Decision made by Commissioner Manzie.
- Disposal of additional bags and relaxation of the closed lid policy.
- Why savings proposed for this year and the budget reduction in next year's budget.
- Issues associated with side waste and the potential for littering.
- Costs of additional cleaning duties.
- Increased recycling centre opening.
- Access difficulties for the public to recycle waste.
- Impact of inclement weather.
- Awareness raising for the general public.

Agreed that this matter be referred back to Commissioner Manzie for reconsideration of the decision due to the implications of a budget saving proposed in 2016/17 and not 2015/16.

ASR REF NO. EDS 23

A. Reduction in the number of gritting vehicles

- Reduction in the funding gap for winter maintenance and addressing the budget pressures.
- Evidence of reducing vehicles from ten to nine and the maintaining of the same level of service.
- Risk of some roads not being gritted.
- The various manual override for gritting solutions.
- Alternative salt barn locations across the borough.
- Met Office update forecasts.
- Awareness raising and publicity to the general public.

Agreed, but with further consideration being given to an increase in the base budget should the winter maintenance budget continue to overspend.

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ASR REF. NO. EDS 24

B. Generate additional income

- Sponsorship on roundabouts.

Agreed.

C. Restructures in Service Teams

- How long positions had been vacant.
- Number of problems encountered if any.

Agreed.

E. LED Street Lighting Replacement

- Advances in lighting technology.
- Lifespan on a LED light.

Agreed.

ASR REF. NO. EDS 25

K. Increase charges to Parish Councils.

Agreed.

L. Off road Motor Vehicle Prevention Budget

- Working arrangements with the Police.
- Budget reductions.
- Changes to the Safer Neighbourhood Teams and the incorporation of some duties.
- Potential to capitalise the spend.
- Further work required with the potential to delay this decision for a further year.

Agreed that this matter be referred back on the grounds of further explanation being provided on the effects of the removal of this budget and whether this could be incorporated in to the work of the new Safer Neighbourhood Teams which would allow for this being delayed by one year.

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ASF REF. NO. EDS 27

A. Pest Control

- Reconsideration of the costs with a view to increasing them in line with other Local Authorities.
- Discretionary allowances to be factored in such as Rothercard and Council tenants.

Agreed subject to further negotiation on the costs.

C. Graffiti Removal

- Potential for increasing graffiti fines.
- Reduction in response times.
- Racially offensive graffiti removal times unchanged.

Agreed.

ASR REF NO. 28

A. Reduced Contracted Services

Agreed.

B. Reduced Training Budget

- How this budget reduction was to be managed, which did not include Health and Safety.
- The amount of spend last year.

Agreed.

C. Team Restructure

- Impact on shared service.

Agreed.

D. Reduction of the Core Budget

Agreed.

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ASR REF NO. EDS 31

C. Retendering of Expensive Routes

- Statutory duty to provide transport and whether there was an option for families to contribute.

Agreed.

D. Developing an "In House" Option

- Advice sought from CYPS and Adult Services.
- Previous Scrutiny Review on this issue. Suggest the relevant Select Commission looks at this again prior to it being implemented.

Agreed.

ASR REF. NO. 33

A. Reduction in M3 Managers

- This should be kept under review

Agreed.

B. Deletion of LCS Manager

- This should be kept under review and workloads closely monitored.

Agreed.

C. Deletion of Corporate Transport Manager post

- Staff awareness of the proposals.

Agreed.

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

(2) That the savings proposals, as detailed in the report now submitted be noted and officers asked to provide further information, in writing, about the various issues now discussed.

(4) That a report be submitted to Commissioner Manzie detailing the comments and requests made at this meeting.

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47. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 2ND OCTOBER, 2015

Further to Minute No. 39 of the meeting held on 2nd October, 2015 Karl Battersby, Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services, responded to the feedback and issues requiring clarification on savings proposals previously submitted.

In terms of ASR Ref. EDS2 it was noted that the proposed increases would have a very minor impact on occupancy. Any adverse impact on occupancy at any meaningful level will mean the benefits could not be achieved. A 2% rental increase across all four business centres would result in an increase in an average charge of £1.50 to £2.00 per week per unit.

With regards to ASR Ref. EDS 16 the concerns were about a blanket increase in the town centre to increase income. This would not be the case as it was designed to get a general agreement to doing this on the understanding that rent increases in commercial properties were in the context only with current lease or when new leases were agreed or when reviewed to recover rents to a market level.

Councillor Hughes expressed his concerns as the margins in the town centre were so small and could place small businesses at risk of trading and for some not economically viable and would still conflict with supporting town centre businesses.

The Strategic Director of Environment and Development Services explained that there was a policy which effectively froze all rents which would only be reviewed as part of the portfolio management and would reflect modest changes.

Councillors Mallinder and Reynolds supported Councillor Hughes' view to prevent any conflict for town centre businesses.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board were unable to support this suggestion and believed the £5,000 rental increase to be minor in comparison and suggested it be referred back.

ASR Ref. EDS 16 also included the cessation of payment of churchyard maintenance. This was a small discretionary amount that was paid to Church Councils and would not lead to any significant health and safety issues as it only covered grass cutting and tree pruning.

Councillor Wyatt confirmed this small amount applied only to open churchyards and supported service provision.

ASR Ref. EDS 21 referred to the proposed reduction of the CCTV budget and the potential to introduce an RMBC-owned fibre communications network in the town centre. There was not much further detail to provide

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due to the fast moving pace of technology and the detailed work had not yet been carried out and would require an invest to save project being developed.

In terms of RES ASR 12 it was noted that the support across the officer leadership team was being reviewed.

Resolved:- (1) That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, held on 2nd October, 2015, be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

(2) That, with regard to Minute No. 39 (Budget 2016/17 and Medium Term Financial Strategy Progress Update) of the previous meeting held on 2nd October, 2015, the Officer responses to the feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on the initial saving proposals, as detailed in the supplementary paper, as submitted under matters arising, be noted.

(3) That ASR Ref. EDS 16 (Increasing Rental Income) be referred back as the Board were unable to support this proposal.

(Councillor Hughes declared a disclosable pecuniary interest on the grounds that he was a town centre tenant in relation to ASR Ref. EDS16)

(Councillor Wyatt declared a non-pecuniary interest on the grounds that he was a member of the Parochial Church Council for St. Margaret's at Swinton)

48. ISSUES REFERRED FROM THE AREA ASSEMBLIES

There were no items referred from Area Assemblies.

49. YOUTH CABINET/YOUNG PEOPLE'S ISSUES

The Scrutiny Manager referred to the proposed Youth Cabinet's Takeover Day and the arrangements for this to take place in January/February, 2016.

The Youth Cabinet wished to focus on mental health issues, the details of which were yet to be finalised, following the work undertaken by the Health Select Commission on CAMHS and mental health.

Further details would be provided shortly for discussion and confirmation.

50. WORK IN PROGRESS

Improving Lives Select Commission:-

The Chair confirmed the next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, 4th November, 2015 and would provide an update following this meeting.

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Improving Places Select Commission:-

The Vice-Chair reported on the recent activities of the Improving Places Select Commission:-

- progress of the Cleaner Greener agenda.
- Consideration of the HAMP report which was discussed at length and referred to Council for approval.

Health Select Commission:-

The Chair reported on the recent activities of the Health Select Commission, which met yesterday:-

- Ian Atkinson, Deputy Chief Officer, Rotherham CCG, presented the annual review of NHS Rotherham CCG's Commissioning Plan
- Jacqui Tuffnell, Head of Co-Commissioning, Rotherham CCG, presented the Interim GP Strategy which set out how the CCG would work with practices to transform services over the next five years.
- Professor Graeme Betts, Interim Director of Adult Services, gave a presentation on the Vision and Strategy for Adult Social Care in Rotherham.
- The work plan was ongoing. A further meeting was also planned and would take place on 17th December, 2015.

Audit Committee

The Chair reported on the recent activities concerning the Audit Committee:-

- an external review of Internal Audit was to take place by PwC to ensure adequate arrangements were in place.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board:-

The Chair reported on the recent activities concerning the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board where he had attended a meeting of the Sheffield City Region where there was a presentation from the Leader and an update by Sir Stephen Houghton on the devolution deal. There would be some additional resources on the scrutiny of this body, but the detail was still to be worked through.

The Scrutiny Manager also confirmed details with regards to the budget timetable which had been circulated by email to Board Members. This would involve the provision of two budget workshops on the 6th and 13th November with the formal meeting taking place on Thursday, 26th November, 2015.

51. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That the next scheduled meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board take place on Thursday, 26th November, 2015 at 9.00 a.m. with two scheduled workshops on Friday, 6th and 13th November, 2015 at 2.00 p.m. and 9.00 a.m. respectively.