

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**  
**Wednesday, 4th November, 2020**

Present:- Councillor Steele (in the Chair); Councillors Cusworth, R. Elliott, Jarvis, Jepson, Keenan, Mallinder, Napper, Taylor, Walsh and Wyatt.

Apologies for absence: - There were no apologies for absence.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-

<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

**231. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 14 OCTOBER 2020**

**Resolved:** - That the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, held on 14 October 2020, be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

**232. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Taylor declared an interest in agenda item 6 (Safer Rotherham Partnership) as he was a Safer Rotherham Partnership Board member.

**233. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

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

**234. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no items requiring the exclusion of members of the public or press.

**235. SAFER ROTHERHAM PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT**

The Cabinet Member for Waste, Roads and Community Safety and the Head of Community Safety and Regulatory Services attended the meeting to present the Safer Rotherham Partnership Annual Report 2018/19. Superintendent Lynn Knox of South Yorkshire Police also attended the meeting.

The report was considered by the by the Board in its role as the Council's Statutory Crime and Disorder Committee as defined by the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009.

The report provided a review of the achievements of the partnership over the previous three years in line with the priorities set out in the Safer Rotherham Partnership Strategy. The Cabinet Member for Waste, Roads and Community Safety noted that the planned review of the priorities included in the strategy, scheduled to take place during 2020 had been delayed due the pandemic, but advised that the information contained in

the report would be used to inform the development of a refreshed set of priorities for the Safer Rotherham Partnership during 2021/22.

In introducing the report, the Cabinet Member advised of some areas of particular note including:

- Actions that had taken place in relation to dealing with and preventing both criminal and sexual child exploitation.
- Activity in dealing with Domestic Abuse and supporting its victims.
- The work of the Youth Offending Team, noting the excellent feedback that had been received from the recent external inspection of the service.

The Cabinet Member noted that the work of the Safer Rotherham Partnership continued to operate in a challenging environment due to the fragmented and short-term nature of the funding for many projects making planning service delivery difficult.

The Cabinet detailed key activities and achievements across the five key areas of activity for the Safer Rotherham Partnership that were:

- Protecting Vulnerable Children
- Protecting Vulnerable Adults
- Building Confident and Cohesive Communities
- Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences
- Serious and Organised Crime

The full Safer Rotherham Partnership Report was attached as an appendix to the officer's report.

Members noted with concern that only 20% of all reports of Hate Crime led to a successful resolution and asked for further information on what the outcomes were for of the other 80% of Hate Crimes that were reported. The Cabinet Member advised that all reported incidents would conclude with an outcome, but that unfortunately only some reached an outcome that was categorised as "positive". The Cabinet Member did note however that due to the time that that some incidents took to investigate that there was often a significant time lag from an incident being reported to the investigation being concluded. The Head of Community Safety and Regulatory Services noted that 20% of cases concluding in a positive outcome was the target level for performance in a very challenging area of criminal investigation. The Cabinet Member advised that there were many reasons why many Hate Crime incidents did not conclude in a positive outcome including lack of evidence and the difficulty of following up leads and identifying perpetrators.

Members noted that while there was some information contained in the report that compared current with past performance, the report contained

large amounts of data and information that lacked context. Members noted that the lack of context and historical comparative data made analysis and comparisons regarding current performance difficult. Members also noted that it would be useful to be able to see performance data from other areas so as to be able to assess how performance in Rotherham compared to other comparable areas. The Cabinet Member advised that comparisons of performance with other areas were often difficult due to different methods of reporting and recording crime being used and noted as an example that the activities that were defined as “Anti-Social Behaviour” varied in different areas.

Members noted the difficulty of assessing performance in Rotherham surrounding key areas of concern such as Domestic Abuse and Hate Crime due to the lack of comparative data on performance contained in the report and noted that information on performance in areas similar to Rotherham would enable a clearer analysis of the issues to be made. The Cabinet Member advised that this information was held and that comparisons were made, noting that performance in Rotherham surrounding the successful resolution of Hate Crime incidents was above the national average. The Cabinet Member noted her concerns on the low number of positive outcomes recorded for sexual offences and advised that this was key area for the Safer Rotherham Partnership to focus on and improve performance.

Members asked whether programmes carried out in schools that were aimed at preventing extremism were still taking place. The Head of Community Safety and Regulatory Services advised that work with schools aimed at preventing extremism were continuing and advised that the way in that programmes were delivered had adapted to the challenges surrounding the pandemic with an increased use of online resources and seminars.

The Cabinet Member noted the challenges of dealing with activity that encouraged extremist thoughts and behaviour, and advised that this was particularly concerning at a time when children and young people were spending more time online and potentially accessing harmful and misleading sources of information. The Cabinet Member advised that online radicalisation that led to individuals acting on their own was a growing problem nationally.

Members noted the challenges of reporting anti-social behaviour during the pandemic, as in normal times ward councillors would receive information on incidents from being out and about in their wards. Members agreed that that it was important that residents were made aware of the various methods by which they could report incidents of anti-social behaviour.

Members noted with concern the number of child sexual exploitation (CSE) cases that had been reported and asked about activity that was taking place to encourage people who had concerns about CSE taking

place to report them. The Cabinet Member agreed the number of cases of CSE that had been reported was concerning but advised that it was positive that the incidents had been reported so that action could be taken. The Cabinet Member also noted her concern about the delays that the pandemic had created in processing CSE cases through the court system. The Head of Community Safety and Regulatory Services provided information on the activities that had been taking place to ensure that concerns regarding CSE were reported and investigated in a timely manner.

Members also asked for further information on the partnership's approach to stalking by strangers. The Head of Community Safety and Regulatory Services provided information on the processes that had been set up to address the issue and confirmed that while the situation was closely monitored there had been no incidents of stalking from strangers in Rotherham over the previous year.

Due to technical difficulties, Superintendent Lynn Knox of South Yorkshire Police had been unable to comment on the points raised in the meeting and it was advised by the Head of Community Safety and Regulatory Services that written comments would be circulated to members of the Board.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for Waste, Roads and Community Safety and the Head of Community Safety and Regulatory Services for attending the meeting and answering members' questions.

**Resolved: -**

- 1) That the Safer Rotherham Partnership Annual Report be noted.
- 2) That future reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board contain historical, as well as current data for all areas of performance monitored to enable members to clearly see changes and trends in performance.
- 3) That historical data on key areas of activity be circulated to members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to enable members to clearly see changes and trends in performance.
- 4) That future reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board contain information on performance on key areas of performance in other local authority areas in order to enable members to assess how performance in Rotherham compares to performance in other local authority areas.
- 5) That a meeting be arranged for the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to meet with the Chairs of the Select Commissions to review the report further in order to

highlight any further areas of concern and to consider the role of scrutiny in addressing these issues.

## **236. ADULT CARE - BUDGET UPDATE**

The Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health and the Head of Finance Adults, Housing and Public Health attended the meeting to present a report that provided an update on the report on the forecast budget position for Adult Care, the Housing General Fund and Public Health that had been submitted at the September 2020 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

In introducing the report, the Strategic Director noted that day care services had now reopened which was enabling an aspect of normality to return to service users' lives and was also allowing the process of re-assessments to recommence.

The Head of Finance Adults, Housing and Public Health noted that overall the Directorate was forecast to have an overspend of £6.4m on general fund services after taking account of the additional one-off budget support of £4.65m for 2020/21. This was an improved position to that reported in September where the forecast overspend had been £8.4m. It was noted that the Covid-19 pandemic had created a negative cost impact of £8m on the Adult Care budget, with £5.9m of the overspend being caused by the need for additional expenditure in areas such as new packages of care; financial support for the independent care sector and the provision of personal protective equipment.

The Head of Finance further advised that the pandemic had delayed the work required to deliver £2.1m of identified savings in the Directorate as due to the pandemic staff resources had been diverted to support work related to the pandemic and away from planned transformational activity. It was also noted that anticipated additional income had also reduced as the implementation of social distancing measures had prevented some of the tasks required from taking place.

The Strategic Director advised that the delay in the delivery of savings beyond 2020/21 was currently being assessed along with potential mitigating actions and noted that any change to the expected saving profile would be addressed in the Council's Budget reports. The Strategic Director also noted that challenges were appearing in the staffing budget due to reduced staff turnover in teams across the directorate that the

The report noted that the Neighbourhood Services' (Housing) budget was forecast to be delivered on target and that Public Health budget was projected to have an overspend of £100,000 due to increased staff resources required to manage the response to the pandemic. The report included tables that provided financial information on the Revenue Monitoring 2020/21 position as at July 2020, a summary of budget variances and the savings delivery forecast.

Members sought assurances regarding the resourcing of and support for the Public Health team. The Strategic Director advised that the team was adequately resourced and that she was providing active support for the team and was speaking to the team daily. It was noted that the new Director of Public Health would be taking up the post in January 2021.

The Chair asked for further information on how the reduced staff turnover was impacting the staffing budget. The Strategic Director advised that the budget contained allowances for periods when a post would be vacant between one person leaving and their replacement starting, but that due to the pandemic staff turnover had reduced so the amount of time when posts were vacant had reduced, and that this had in turn put pressure on the staffing budget. The Strategic Director also noted that increased use overtime and of agency staff had increased pressure in this budget area.

Members asked for further information on the progress of re-assessments of service users with learning disabilities. The Strategic Director advised that these had been delayed by the pandemic and due their complex nature would take a significant amount of time to complete.

The Chair thanked the Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health and the Head of Finance Adults, Housing and Public Health for attending the meeting and answering members' questions.

**Resolved: -**

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the Chair be given the discretion to request a further update to be brought to the January 2021 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, subject to the budget situation at that time.

**237. CUSTOMER AND DIGITAL PROGRAMME - PROGRESS REPORT**

The Assistant Director, Customer, Information and Digital Services and the Head of Customer Services attended the meeting to provide a progress report on the council's Customer and Digital Programme.

The report stated that the council's Customer and Digital programme aimed to ensure that high quality services were provided in a modern, efficient and joined up way so that all customers, regardless of their circumstances, had access to the services they needed as well as always receiving a consistently positive experience.

The Assistant Director, Customer, Information and Digital Services made a presentation to the meeting that provided information on:

- The redesign of the Rotherham MBC website and its positive

impact on the user experience and the increased number of services that could be accessed online.

- How the website had been used to support the council's response to the pandemic.
- Activities surrounding how the programme was reviewing and redesigning the way in which the council was delivering services in order to improve the customer experience.
- Processes that had been implemented to enable and encourage customers to use self-serve processes, reduce avoidable contact and to remove unnecessary or duplicated actions in back office processes.
- How the Customer and Digital Programme was supporting the delivery of the council's Year Ahead Plan.
- The £662,000 of financial savings that the programme had helped to deliver.

Members noted the importance of services being accessible via other channels and not just online, as not all residents could access services online. The Assistant Director assured members that access to services would never just be online only and that residents would be able to continue to access services in other ways. Members noted that many residents frequently advised that they found the Planning function on the council's website difficult to use. The Assistant Director advised that while the planning portal used to manage planning applications was an external site, discussions were taking place with the Planning Service on how to make the site more accessible.

Members asked for clarification around the number of visitors to the website in the period April – September 2020 that the officer's report stated to be one million, as to whether they were visits from unique users. The Assistant Director advised that the figures quoted for website visits were those from unique users. Members noted the upcoming focus of the programme to transform services and deliver savings in the Regeneration and Environment Directorate and asked for further information on the planned activity in this area. The Assistant Director advised work was taking place with teams in that directorate to identify systems and processes that needed to be improved, and that many areas for development had already been identified. The Assistant Director noted the challenges of carrying out the work required to enable the changes and to deliver the subsequent savings while the council was also managing its response to the pandemic.

Members welcomed that the vision of the Customer and Digital Programme was clearly showing results and that new processes were delivering savings and improving residents access to council services.

Members noted the high levels of satisfaction of residents with council services that were being reported and asked for further information on how customer satisfaction was measured and recorded. The Assistant Director advised that not all services that were accessed by residents were managed by Customer Services, and that the methods for recording satisfaction over these services was not done uniformly, so that assessing customer satisfaction accurately was not straightforward.

Members stated their satisfaction with the new council website, noting its user-friendly layout and modern look. Members also noted their satisfaction with the new member casework system that was being trialled by some elected members.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director, Customer, Information and Digital Services and the Head of Customer Services for attending the meeting and answering members' questions.

**Resolved: -**

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the Minutes of the discussion on the report be fed into the considerations of the sub-group of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on Communications, with the recommendations of the group being subsequently reported at a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

**238. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board considered its Work Programme.

**Resolved: -** That the Work Programme be approved.

**239. WORK IN PROGRESS - SELECT COMMISSIONS**

The Chairs of the Improving Lives, Improving Places and Health Select Commissions provided an update on the work of the Select Commissions.

The Chair provided a progress report on the work of the sub-groups of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board as well as an update on the work of the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**240. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS**

Members considered the Cabinet Forward Plan for the period 1 October to 31 December 2020.

**Resolved: -** That the Forward Plan be noted.



**241. CALL-IN ISSUES**

There were no call-in issues.

**242. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items of business.

**243. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

**Resolved:** - That the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will be held at 11am on Wednesday 18 November 2020 as Microsoft Teams meeting.