

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
9th September, 2011

Present:- Councillor Whelbourn (in the Chair); Councillors Falvey, J. Hamilton, Hughes, Jack, License, Steele and Whysall.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gilding and G. A. Russell.

40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

41. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

42. CREATING A STRONGER COUNCIL DURING TESTING TIMES

Martin Kimber, Chief Executive, gave a presentation to the Board in respect of creating a stronger Council during testing times.

The following aspects were highlighted:-

- Role of the Chief Executive
- Budget
- Priorities
- Unprecedented financial framework
- Stark choice
- Working in different ways: the approach the Council took
- What the Council wants during the change process:- maintain quality service delivery; be a good employer
- Early actions:- re-shaping the Council's budget and current results; working differently; more visible listening Council: integration of back office services; integrating customer contact; re-aligning management; strategic re-positioning of Rotherham 2010 and RBT
- What this means in staffing and budget terms so far
- Next steps

The Chief Executive was thanked for the extensive information provided.

43. REVIEW OF POLLING PLACES 2011

Mags Evers, Electoral Services Manager, presented a report detailing the findings of the review of parliamentary polling districts and polling places as required under The Electoral Administration Act 2006.

It was explained that the Electoral Administration Act 2006 required that a full review of polling arrangements be completed every four years. The last was completed in December, 2007 and the current review commenced on 22 June, 2011 and must conclude by 1st December, 2011.

The review had been conducted under the Terms of Reference (attached to the submitted report at Appendix 1) which were published along with the statutory Notice of Review on 22nd June, 2011.

Stakeholders, including elected members, MPs, political parties, parish councils, community groups and electors were offered an opportunity to make representations (detailed in Appendix 2).

The Electoral Services team had considered polling arrangements throughout the borough and had taken account of the representations received during the review which were detailed in Appendix 3. The Facilities Management team had been involved in the review and Building Managers had provided expertise on accessibility issues and specific knowledge of many of the current and potential polling venues.

Every venue had been evaluated against issues of accessibility, voter convenience, fairness and availability for polling (including at short notice). It should be noted that the outcome of the RMBC Property Rationalisation Savings and Localities Review may affect the future availability of some venues.

The Board considered the Returning Officer's proposals for future polling arrangements detailed in Appendix 4.

It was noted that additional costs were not significant and would be met from the existing election budget.

However, inadequate provision of polling places and polling stations could have a detrimental effect on voter turnout and could be the source of an election challenge.

Resolved:- That the Returning Officer's proposals for future polling arrangements be supported, and a report submitted to Cabinet.

44. PRELIMINARY FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENTS FOR ROTHERHAM (JUNE 2011)

Graham Kaye, Principal Engineer, presented a report relating to the provision of a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessments for Rotherham in accordance with the requirements the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 and the European Floods Directive, which aims to provide a consistent approach to managing flood risk across Europe.

It was explained that the regulations imposed new duties on the Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for Rotherham, including the responsibility for managing local flood risk in particular from ordinary watercourses, surface runoff and groundwater.

Under the requirements of the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 and Flood and Water Management Act 2010, the Lead Local Flood Authorities were responsible for undertaking a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment for local sources of flood risk, primarily from surface runoff, groundwater and ordinary watercourses. As a unitary authority, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council was the Lead Local Flood Authority for the Borough of Rotherham.

The Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment was a high level screening exercise which involved collecting information on past (historic) and future (potential) floods, assembling it into a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment report, and using it to identify Flood Risk Areas which were areas where the risk of flooding was locally significant.

Reference was made to:-

- Six year cycle and four stage process
- Number of residential properties potentially at risk from surface water flooding
- Areas deemed of national significance noting Rotherham had none (other than the floods of June, 2007)
- Requirement to develop and maintain a Local Flood Risk Strategy
- Surface water flood modelling carried out by the Environment Agency
- Programme for the completion of the final Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment

Resolved:- [1] That the contents of the Draft Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment for Rotherham be noted.

[2] That the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment for Rotherham be submitted to Cabinet for approval prior to submission to Defra before December, 2011 for approval.

[3] That the Final Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment for Rotherham be published for public information.

45. TRANSFER OF PRIVATE SEWERS TO WATER COMPANIES

Louise King, Yorkshire Water, gave a presentation relating to the transfer of private sewers entitled "An update on the Private Sewer Transfer – The Big Transfer - working together to make the transfer a big success".

The following points were highlighted:-

- The Government was transferring privately owned sewers, lateral drains and pumping stations to water and sewerage companies
- An increase of approximately 22,000 km of sewers and 2,000 pumping stations – this would almost double our sewer network
- Sewers and lateral drains would be transferred on 1st October 2011
- Pumping stations to be transferred between 2011 and 2016
- Reasons why private sewers were being transferred
- What was changing
- Communications with customers and stakeholders

Zelia Lyne, Severn Trent Water, confirmed that a similar process for communicating with customers in the south of the borough was being developed.

Resolved:- (1) That Ms King and Ms Lyne be thanked for their presentation.

(2) That an invitation be extended to the utility companies to attend this committee at a future date to discuss issues of mutual interest and concern.

46. LOCALISING SUPPORT FOR COUNCIL TAX

Steve Eling, Policy Officer, presented a report relating to the Government's reform of welfare and the announcement that Council Tax Benefit would be abolished and replaced with new local schemes for support for Council Tax, together with a 10% cut in funding.

The Government was currently consulting on these new arrangements and the report set out issues arising from the "scheme" element of the consultation.

Resolved:- (1) That the Board notes the scope of the Localising Support for Council Tax consultation.

(2) That the Board's comments as noted above be included in the Council's response to the consultation.

(3) That the Board receives a further report on the Council's recommended response to the consultation in due course.

47. ANNUAL REPORT

Consideration was given to the Scrutiny and Overview Annual Report, prior to its consideration by the Council meeting.

48. RECYCLING GROUP

Consideration was given to appointing a representative to meetings of the Recycling Group which are scheduled to meet every two months on Tuesdays at 10.00 a.m.

Resolved:- That Councillor Falvey be nominated.

49. LOCAL DEMOCRACY CAMPAIGN 2011/12

Asim Munir, Community Engagement Officer, presented a report updating the Board on the Local Democracy Campaign including what activities were going to take place in Local Democracy Week between 10th and 16th October, 2011, and the latest annual programme of events to ensure local democracy was a year long campaign.

Resolved:- (1) That the Board notes the activities taking place in this year's Local Democracy Week and Local Democracy Campaign.

[2] That the report be referred to the Cabinet Member for Community Development, Equality & Young People's issues.

50. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 22ND JULY, 2011

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 22nd July, 2011 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

51. WORK IN PROGRESS

Members gave details of the range of work in progress.

52. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no formal call-in requests.

53. MR. ALAN HARSTON

Members referred to the retirement of Alan Harston, Principal Committee Services Officer.

Resolved:- That the Board send best wishes for a long and happy retirement.