

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
29th May, 2015

Present:- Councillor Steele (in the Chair); Councillors Cowles, Hughes, Pitchley, Sansome, Turner, Whelbourn and Wyatt.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Beck, J. Hamilton, Mallinder and Reynolds.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Wyatt declared a personal interest in item 7 below (Access to GPs – Survey of 'Sit and Wait' Slots) because his wife was an employee of the Health Services.

2. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

3. REPRESENTATION ON PANELS, SUB-GROUPS ETC., 2015/2016

Resolved:- That Councillor Steele be appointed as the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board's representative on the Health, Welfare and Safety Panel for the 2015/16 Municipal Year.

4. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16

Further to Minute No. 112 of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 24th April, 2015, consideration was given to a report, presented by the Scrutiny Manager, concerning the priorities for this Council's scrutiny function and also the work plan for this Management Board, in the 2015/16 Municipal Year.

The report described the focused approach to the work programme for Scrutiny, to be delivered via the following existing Scrutiny structure:-

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – the Council's Budget and other statutory work;

Improving Places Select Commission – task and finish work on litter/waste;

Improving Lives Select Commission – scrutiny of child sexual exploitation;

Health Select Commission – scrutiny of Health and Social Care integration.

Reference was made to Appendix A to the submitted report, containing a summary of the agreed work programme. This document also summarised the proposed new approaches to scrutiny which were being adopted by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and by the Select Commissions. Appendix B to the submitted report contained a

detailed work plan for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, taking account of the amended terms of reference for this Management Board.

Members noted specifically that this Management Board would receive detailed written reports and conduct detailed scrutiny as a full membership (of the Board) at its scheduled meetings. Witnesses would be required to submit their information at least two weeks prior to the meetings, to facilitate adequate preparation for the meetings.

Reference was also made to the Audit Committee's work plan for the 2015/16 Municipal Year, details of which were to be reported to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

Members also noted that the work plan could include key policy items from the Council's Policy and Performance Teams and that they could maintain an overview of this.

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

5. MEETING DATES AND TIMES

Consideration was given to the starting time of meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, an issue previously reviewed at the meeting held on 12th July, 2013 (Minute No. 28).

Resolved:- That meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board continue to commence at 9.00 a.m.

6. COUNCIL BUDGET SETTING PROCESS 2016/2017

Further to Minute No. 15 of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 18th July, 2014, discussion took place on the arrangements for the scrutiny of the annual budget setting process concerning the financial year 2016/17. Members acknowledged the role of the Government-appointed Commissioners in this budget setting process.

It was noted that the scrutiny of the budget setting ought to include questioning of the methodology used in budget preparation, as well as questioning of the specific content of budgets for each area of this Council's functions.

Resolved:- That the information be noted and the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board shall scrutinise the Council's budget setting process for the 2016/17 financial year at future meetings in 2015 and early in 2016.

7. ACCESS TO GPs - SURVEY OF 'SIT AND WAIT' SLOTS

Further to Minute No. 110 of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 24th April, 2015, discussion took place on the outcome of a survey of GP (doctor) practices, in the Rotherham Borough area, concerning the use of 'sit and wait' slots. Where practices did use 'sit and wait' slots, these were usually in combination with pre-booked appointments for patients, but most practices combined 'book on the day' and pre-booked appointments.

Members were informed of the results of the survey of 26 GP Practice Managers, which had indicated that:-

: only 5 GP practices offered some 'sit and wait' slots; 3 had previously made use of them, but had later ceased and 18 had said they would not consider introducing them;

: reasons given for not using 'sit and wait slots' included : no need to introduce them as their present appointment system worked and practical reasons such as space in the building, difficulties in planning staffing and demand management;

: some patients were in favour of the use of 'sit and wait', even though the result may be very long waiting times to see a doctor;

: there was increasing use of the triage method of initial assessment of patients, sometimes by nurses and sometimes by GPs themselves;

: the use of 'sit and wait' slots appeared to have created an increasing demand whereby patients would present at their GP with minor, non-serious ailments only;

: 1 GP practice, which had struggled to recruit doctors, used the services of 4 advanced nurse practitioners for certain specific levels of patient care, because the cost of the nurses was the same cost as hiring 2 locum doctors;

: other services were becoming available for patient care (eg: the developing 'pharmacy first' system); such services would alleviate the pressure of demand upon GP practices;

: the NHS Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group, together with NHS England, were developing a primary care strategy which would be subject to public consultation;

: the Care Quality Commission had undertaken an inspection of GP practices throughout England and patients' comments about access to their GPs were included in that inspection. The report on the outcome of the local inspection, affecting Rotherham, should be available soon;

: reference was also made to the research being undertaken by the Council's Health Select Commission, relating to patients' access to GPs within other local authority areas. One example (Manchester) was the availability of GPs in hospitals at weekends, which served to alleviate the demand upon the hospital accident and emergency unit.

Resolved:- That the information be noted and further details about this matter shall be reported in due course to a meeting of the Health Select Commission.

(Councillor Wyatt declared a personal interest in the above because his wife was an employee of the Health Services)

8. ISSUES REFERRED FROM THE AREA ASSEMBLIES

There were no issues to report.

Members noted that the Area Assemblies' process and structure were currently under review by the Government-appointed Commissioners. The Management Board asked that the Scrutiny Manager should investigate the links between the Area Assembly and scrutiny processes and report to a future meeting of this Management Board.

9. YOUTH CABINET/YOUNG PEOPLE'S ISSUES

It was reported that the Children's Commissioner Take Over Day would take place on Thursday, 19th November, 2015.

10. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 24TH APRIL, 2015

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, held on 24th April, 2015, be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

11. WORK IN PROGRESS

Improving Places Select Commission:-

The Vice-Chair of the Improving Places Select Commission stated that Members should soon receive a report on the outcome of the review of the Council's Winter Weather response to the severe weather conditions which occurred in late-December, 2014 and in early-January, 2015.

Improving Lives Select Commission:-

The Vice-Chair of the Improving Lives Select Commission reported that Councillor Cowles has joined the review group for the scrutiny of the child sexual exploitation issues in Rotherham. A meeting of the review group would take place on Tuesday 2nd June, 2015.

Audit Committee:-

The Chair of the Audit Committee reported that the Members' induction sessions would include information about the role of the Audit Committee and all Members of the Council would be invited to attend that specific session. The frequency of the Committee's meetings was being considered, in the context of the reporting of essential items, both to the Audit Committee and to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.