

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
31st March, 2017**

Present:- Councillor Steele (in the Chair); Councillors Albiston, Allcock, Clark, Cowles, Mallinder, Sansome, Short, Walsh and Wyatt.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Price and Julie Turner.

124. TO CONSIDER WHETHER THE PRESS AND PUBLIC SHOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING DURING CONSIDERATION OF ANY PART OF THE AGENDA.

The Chair reported that there were no items of business on the agenda which would require the exclusion of the press and public from the meeting.

125. TO DETERMINE ANY ITEM WHICH THE CHAIRMAN IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY.

The Chair reported that there were no items of business on the agenda requiring urgent consideration by the Board.

126. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest by Members or officers present.

127. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

It was reported that no questions had been received from the public or press.

128. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 17 MARCH 2017

Resolved:-

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2017 be agreed as a true and correct record.

129. REVIEW OF NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING

Consideration was given to a report which set out the conclusions and recommendations of a review of neighbourhood working across the borough. It was noted that the aim was to undertake a review which would herald the introduction of "a new model of citizen engagement and neighbourhood working linked to a review of Area Assemblies" to provide a focus on communities and introduce a new way of working.

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It was reported that the working group, which had been led by the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working and Cultural Services, had supported a new neighbourhood working model which would result in the 21 electoral wards becoming the key building blocks for supporting councillors in their community leadership role. It was further reported that a complimentary project had been initiated by the Council and Rotherham Together Partnership to examine locality working across the wider partnership. This would present an opportunity to bring together other stakeholders e.g. South Yorkshire Police (SYP), Health, voluntary and community sector, and other Council services to develop a holistic locality model.

The Working Group had made a long list of recommendations regarding the governance and accountability framework for neighbourhood working, the preparation and status of Ward based place plans, devolved budgets and dedicated Ward based support.

It was noted that detailed consultation had taken place with Area Assembly Chairs and Vice-Chairs and that community consultation would be incorporated into the ward plans during the transitional period. It was further noted that the report proposed to Cabinet that transitional arrangement be agreed for the new model to allow a flexible and organic move towards ward based working over a 12 month period.

In presenting the report, the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working and Cultural Services, Councillor Yasseen, indicated that the proposals were not prescriptive and had been developed to enhance accountability, as well as citizen engagement and involvement.

Reference was made to the operation of individual Area Assemblies and how the proposed arrangements may prove to be difficult in bringing wards together in future. The proposed approach was identified as not being radical, although it was acknowledged as the right way to proceed in ensuring that councillors and officers are more active in communities and localities.

Members sought assurances in respect of how the arrangements would work in wards where all three councillors did not represent the same party and where accountability would rest where all three councillors were not agreed on the priorities of the ward plan. In response, the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Working and Cultural Services indicated that members from the same party did not always agree on the priorities for their ward, so the political split in a ward was not necessarily a significant obstacle to the proposed approach. With regard to accountability, the proposal for reports back to the Cabinet Member, along with reports to the Improving Places Select Commission and Council were considered to be adequate. It was noted that the model was designed to bring councillors to work together for their communities irrespective of political persuasion and that priorities should be influenced by community demand.

Members highlighted the absence of an overall neighbourhood working strategy and indicated that this required attention during the transitional arrangements.

Resolved:-

1. That Cabinet be advised that the recommendations be supported.
2. That training be arranged and delivered for Ward Councillors on developing Ward Plans as a matter of urgency.
3. That the Cabinet Member be recommended to initiate the development of an overall strategy for Neighbourhood Working.
4. That an update report on implementation of the new model be submitted to Improving Places in October 2017.
5. That a further report be submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board in March 2018 detailing the review of the new arrangements.

130. FEBRUARY FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT 2016/17

Consideration was given to a report which detailed the financial position for the Revenue Budget at the end of February 2017 and was based on actual costs and income for the first eleven months of the financial year and forecast costs and income for the remaining one month of 2016/17.

It was reported that the revenue position, compared with the revised budget approved by Council on 7th December 2016, showed a forecast overspend of £2.017m. This forecast overspend had reduced by £526k since the December monitoring report. It was further reported that further mitigation of the potential impact on reserves would be addressed through the robust procurement and recruitment controls that had been put in place. It was noted that the majority of the approved budget savings for 2016/17 had been or were going to be achieved, with the main exception being the £1m saving from the review of staff terms and conditions of employment agreed by Council in March 2016 which would not now be delivered in 2016/17. The non-delivery of the 2016/17 £1m saving was reflected in the forecast outturn in the report.

Members noted the financial position and reflected on the budget setting process, which had concluded at the Council meeting on 8 March 2017, and the ongoing concerns around managing potential overspends and underspends. The Board reiterated its concern to the Leader of the Council regarding the robustness of monitoring throughout the year and indicated that it would wish to receive a quarterly budget monitoring report in the 2017-18 financial year.

Resolved:-

1. That Cabinet be advised that the recommendations be supported.
2. That Cabinet continue to monitor the budget on a monthly basis to identify potential variances at an early stage and implement management actions to deal with potential overspends or underspends.
3. That Overview and Scrutiny Management Board receive a quarterly financial budget monitoring report in the new financial year.

131. COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS FOR JOINTLY COMMISSIONED SERVICES WITH ROTHERHAM CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP (CCG) - COMMUNITY OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICES

Consideration was given to a report which detailed the outcome of a review of Community Occupational Therapy Services by the Council and Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group.

It was noted that the Community Occupational Therapy provided assessments for adults, older people and children who were permanently or substantially disabled and their carers. The overall cost of the services in 2016/17 was £746,000 per annum, with the Council contributing £372,000 towards the service and the CCG contributing £374,000 per annum.

It was reported that a formal review had recently been completed by the Council and Clinical Commissioning Group in order to:

- a) Ensure that the service is meeting the needs of customers and their carers
- b) Reduce the waiting times for assessment
- c) Reduce the number of customers being referred to the service by signposting them to alternative services at the first point of contact
- d) Carry out analysis of performance data to predict demand and capacity of service
- e) Carry out analysis and evaluation of customer and carer satisfaction rates and outcomes
- f) Examine whether the service promotes Value for Money.

The review demonstrated that the Community Occupation Therapy service had carried out assessments for low level/single need customers and that resources needed to be diverted towards providing assessments to support complex needs. In addition to this, it was identified that Assistant Practitioners/OT Assessment Officers could be upskilled to carry out assessments for level access showers, straight stair-lifts and ramps and that the level of paperwork completed was onerous and needed to be streamlined.

The report, therefore, recommended that the contract for the Community Occupational Therapy Service be extended for one further year to allow alignment with the Adult Care Development Programme (including the BCF Work Programme) and the evolving Specialist Housing Strategy. Within the extended period to April 2018, providers would be expected to achieve all recommendations highlighted in the COT review report and to work with the Council and the CCG to implement new models of service delivery. The Lead Commissioner arrangements for the Community Occupational Therapy Service were proposed to be assigned to the Clinical Commissioning Group as they had the largest financial stake and greater capacity to lead the activity.

Having reviewed the proposals within the report, Members indicated that they were broadly supportive of the proposal. The Board considered that the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health should seek the input of the Health Select Commission if further work was required on this area at Member level.

Resolved:-

1. That Cabinet be advised that the recommendations be supported.
2. That if additional work is required at Member level, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health be recommended to approach the Health Select Commission to support such activity.

132. REVIEW OF PETITIONS SCHEME

Consideration was given to a report which detailed the outcome of a review of the Council's petition scheme, which had been undertaken to support the ongoing improvement of the authority's governance.

It was noted that the Council had adopted a petitions scheme in May 2010 in accordance with the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. This scheme had been subject to subtle changes following the review of Standing Orders in 2014. It was reported that the statutory provisions governing the petitions scheme had been repealed through the Localism Act 2011.

This report identified that the Council's approach to handling petitions could be improved in a procedural sense and also in terms of the wider trust and confidence held in the Council by the residents of the borough. The report recommended that the current petitions scheme be replaced by guidance which would provide clearer advice to citizens on how to submit a petition and what to expect after submission to the Council.

Members were broadly supportive of the proposal within the report to reduce thresholds to enable debates at full Council and the proposal for any petition with 600 signatures to be referred automatically for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

Resolved:-

1. That the Cabinet be advised that the recommendations be supported.
2. That petitions with 600 signatures be referred to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board for review or investigation and lead petitioners be given 15 minutes to present the petition to that meeting.

133. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board would be held on Friday 5 May 2017.