

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
5th May, 2017

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

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

134. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest to report.

135. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 31st March, 2017 be agreed as a true and correct record.

136. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

137. CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER'S TAKEOVER CHALLENGE - ACCESSIBILITY OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Consideration was given to the report which highlighted how the Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge on 21st February, 2017 focused on the recommendations made by Rotherham Youth Cabinet in their report "Get in Gear" regarding the accessibility of local public transport for young people.

This report outlined the key points from the discussions with the Cabinet Member, South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive and representatives from local bus, tram and rail operators.

The response from partner agencies to the young people's recommendations following the spotlight session was included and detailed in Appendix 1.

Resolved:-

1. That the report be noted.
2. That a press statement on the report and recommendations in respect of Accessibility of Public Transport for Young People be prepared for publication following the General Election period.
3. That the report be forwarded to the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority Scrutiny Committee.

4. That an update be reported to the Youth Cabinet in November 2017 and any concerns arising from that discussion be reported back to this committee.

138. PROPERTY ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY

Consideration was given to the report which set out how the Council's Land and Property Assets were not only buildings that supported service delivery, but valuable assets that could further the delivery of the Council's plans and objectives, particularly in achieving a modern, efficient Council.

This report defined the proposed Council Policy and Strategy to guide the use of the Council's Land and Property Assets. It proposed the Council's approach to the management, usage and development of the Council's Land and Property Assets in supporting the Council's Corporate Plan and the Asset Management Improvement Plan.

As an initial observation, Members identified that there were various plots of prime land across the borough that the Council should seek to sell as a priority. Particular reference was made to the site of the former leisure centre on Wickersley Road. Officers acknowledged that this had been an issue and indicated that the Asset Management Improvement Plan had been developed to address such issues.

Assurances were sought in respect of the timescales for implementing the provisions of the strategy and it was noted that work was already underway to establish service asset management plans for each area of the Council, which would set out the requirement over a one, three and five year period.

Reference was made to the future use of Riverside House and the costs incurred by the authority in the running and maintenance of the building. Similarly Members felt that it was necessary to have a better understanding of the future requirement in view of the changing face of local government and the reduction in staff numbers cited in the Workforce Strategy.

The Board was particularly keen to understand the link between this Strategy and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Whilst it was explained that the target for capital receipts from the sale of assets had been exceeded in the previous year, Members wanted further detail on the link between the Asset Management Strategy and the MTFS.

Resolved:-

1. That Cabinet be advised that the recommendations be supported.

2. That an update report be submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board in November 2017 detailing the link between this strategy and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

139. BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Consideration was given to the report which detailed how organisations and agencies across Rotherham were working to support stronger, more cohesive and inclusive local communities. The Council's work in this area was a key priority within the Rotherham Improvement Plan, which called for the development of a corporate policy statement on community cohesion. Dame Louise Casey's recent review of "*opportunity and integration*" in local communities was also having a bearing across the whole of the local government sector.

Other partners, including the police, fire service, voluntary and community sector, and health agencies were all seeking to work in the interests of building stronger communities so that the needs of different areas and demographic groups were better understood and services could be better targeted.

The draft "building stronger communities" Strategy appended to this report aimed to provide clear direction for a number of workstreams broadly focused on the cohesion/stronger communities agenda. A draft action plan was also attached setting out a range of actions and milestones across the strategy's key themes, which were:-

- A strong civic community and pride of place.
- Bringing people together.
- Our rights and responsibilities towards each other.
- Expanding opportunity and economic security.

Whilst acknowledging the Council's central role in relation to community cohesion, the Strategy had a clear emphasis on partnership working and – critically – on meaningfully engaging with local communities so that they could help shape the approach.

It was proposed, therefore, that a Stronger Communities Forum (SCF) be established. This could be chaired by the Council Leader, reflecting the Council's pivotal community leadership role, but with membership primarily comprised of community representatives as well as partner public service organisations.

The need for a small grants programme was identified in the action plan. An application for external funding had been made to resource this programme. If the external funding application was not successful, then an internal budget had been identified to provide a £5,000 contribution from the Council to the small grants programme, which would be overseen by the Stronger Communities Forum. The Rotherham Together Partnership had agreed an additional £5,000 for the programme.

Members referred to the section 3.3 of the report which discussed radicalisation in schools and queried how the actions identified would be delivered. In response, it was stated that there was not an easy solution to the issue, however the aspiration was to bring people together outside of schools on a much smaller scale.

The report was broadly welcomed by Members and support was expressed in various ways for the plans detailed therein. Assurances were sought that the work planned would reach beyond the usual suspects and the Leader indicated that the Rotherham Together Partnership would be one route, but it was necessary to understand how the Council and public agencies could reach out to hard-to-reach groups.

Whilst the report was considered to be a step forward, Members further queried whether the document fully appreciated the challenges facing communities and if the policy would do enough within the context of national values. The Leader agreed with the sentiment of the point and indicated that it provided a basis to tackle local issues facing communities in Rotherham, but there were broader challenges nationally and globally that affected the local position.

Members queried how implementation would be monitored in neighbourhoods and what the key milestones would be. The Leader confirmed that there would be a balance between monitoring outputs, which could be measured, and outcomes which were largely around people felt.

Resolved:-

That Cabinet be advised that the recommendations be supported.

140. FLAG PROTOCOL FOR RIVERSIDE HOUSE AND ROTHERHAM TOWN HALL

Consideration was given to a report which identified, following a number of enquiries and requests to fly alternative flags, a protocol being prepared to establish a calendar of dates on which flags should be flown, the circumstances of how those flags should be flown and any associated decision making in respect of flying flags outside of the terms of the protocol.

Whilst the general principle applied by the Authority was to follow the advice provided by Central Government, a framework for local decision making in respect of the flying of flags would assist in the determination of any additional requests.

This report, therefore, sought the approval and adoption of a protocol to govern the flying of flags at Riverside House and Rotherham Town Hall.

Members welcomed the report and considered that the Union Flag should always be flown from the principal flag pole at both Riverside House and Rotherham Town Hall.

Resolved:-

That Cabinet be advised that the recommendations be supported, subject to the schedule of dates for flying flags to make provision for the Union Flag to be flown always as the principal flag.

141. WORK IN PROGRESS (CHAIRS OF SELECT COMMISSIONS TO REPORT)

Councillor Sansome, Chair of the Health Select Commission, reported that meetings had taken place during April to review the quality accounts for the various trusts and indicated that there had been some concerns on performance. Following the April meeting of the Commission, Members had held some initial discussions on the work programme. He further added that he had met with the Chief Executives of the Clinical Commissioning Group, Rotherham Hospital Trust and Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust.

Councillor Allcock, Vice-Chair of the Improving Lives Select Commission, reported that the alternative management arrangement review had concluded and a report had been produced. He wished to record his thanks to all Members that had sat on the Commission and paid tribute to the work of the scrutiny officer and link officer who had supported their activities.

Councillor Mallinder, Chair of the Improving Places Select Commission, paid also thanked the members of that body for their commitment and support for the commission's work during the past year.

Resolved:-

That the update be noted.

142. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board take place on Wednesday 21 June 2017 at 11.00 a.m. (pre-meeting for Members commencing at 9.15 a.m.)