

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
27th March, 2019

Present:- Councillor Steele (in the Chair); Councillors Cowles, Brookes, Cusworth, Keenan, Mallinder, Napper, Sansome, Short, Walsh and Wyatt.

Apologies were received from Councillors Evans.

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

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

185. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 13 FEBRUARY 2019

Resolved:-

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 13 February 2019 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

186. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

187. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

188. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

189. COUNCIL PLAN 2018-2019 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT

Consideration was given to a report which detailed performance data in respect of progress made against the key measures detailed in the Council Plan for the period from October to December 2018 (Quarter 3).

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Members highlighted the measures in respect of economic activity in the town centre and sought assurances from the Strategic Director of Regeneration who indicated that Rotherham was no different to any other town centre in the country due to change in the retail environment, competition from other places and the surge in online shopping. The Rotherham Town Centre Masterplan and other policies recognised that there needed to be a greater mix of leisure, residential and public open spaces in the town centre, however that would take time to be delivered. The Strategic Director anticipated that demand for floor space and retail would continue to be challenging and expected to see a shrinking footprint for retail within town centres.

Following on, Members sought assurances in respect of the steps that the Council was taking to encourage landlords to look at alternative usage for empty retail units. In response, the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment explained that this work was underway and the authority was engaging with numerous landlords and cited the example of space at the Old Town Hall.

Reference was made to the delivery of new homes and that the authority had fallen behind target and sought assurances in respect of when Members could expect to see that measure back on target. In response, it was explained that a lot of work had been undertaken recently and planning permission had been granted for 500 residential properties, with another 500 in delivery. The Planning Service was working closely with colleagues in Housing Services to put together a programme for sites recently granted or stalled to establish what could be done to get some momentum into building on site.

Members sought assurances that the authority's duties in respect of the housing repairs and maintenance contract would be met. In response, the Strategic Director for Adult Care, Housing and Public Health confirmed that robust contract arrangements were in place with partners. Furthermore, the process had begun to identify interested bidders for the new contract. Lessons continued to be learned with current partners and this would be used to influence the future approach to the management of the contract

Referring to the parliamentary impasse in respect of exiting the European Union, Members sought clarity in respect of alternative plans to continue the recent successes in business growth. In response, the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment explained that the authority had a good record for backing start-up businesses and was skilled in drawing down external funding to support economic growth. The position in respect of EU funding remained unclear in view of the parliamentary impasse, but the Strategic Director was confident that there was a strong platform to continue to leverage funding for economic development in future.

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Members referred some recent scrutiny activity in respect of managing the transitions from Children's Social Care to Adult Social Care and indicated that they had confidence that the services had gripped the issue. Assurances were sought in respect of the level of confidence in reducing the numbers of looked after children. In response, the Leader of the Council indicated that the model adopted was robust, but numbers may go up or down depending on individual circumstances. At the time of the meeting, there were 640 looked after children and the hope was that this would have reduced to 600 by March 2020.

Reference was made to the difficulties faced in delivering care assessments and assurances were sought in respect of how budgets were monitored. In response, the Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health agreed that this was an issue, but provided assurances that the investments made in carers assessments were leading to improvements and a dedicated carers offer was being developed to give it the necessary drive.

Members referred to the increase in percentage outcomes for reported hate crime cases and noted that low level incidents with no lines of enquiry were reported. Clarification was sought as to whether this was a realistic or impossible target. In response, it was confirmed that there was a degree of under reporting of hate crime, but South Yorkshire Police were positive about the targets that had been set, which had been agreed in partnership with the police. Following on, Members sought to understand whether there was any way in preventative work could be measured. In response, it was explained that this was a high level measure in the Council Plan, which was supported by a whole host of other measures which included monitoring the delivery of community resolutions by the police. Improving confidence in outcomes and resolutions would lead to increased levels of reporting of hate crime, but the preventative angle would focus around community and educational interventions to assist in changing attitudes.

In noting performance in respect of flytipping, Members made the observation that there had been fewer prosecutions, but higher profile prosecutions and suggested whether it would be appropriate to adjust the measure to look at the scale of prosecutions. In response, officers indicated that this was a good suggestion and would reflect on some of the recent successful prosecutions, but cautioned that the complexity of cases mean that it would take time to finish prosecutions.

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Reference was made to the enforcement contract with Kingdom and the possibility of not meeting the target. Members sought to understand what the financial implications of not meeting the target would be for the authority. In response, officers explained that the contract was being robustly managed via Doncaster Council and the authority was pushing the contractor to get to where they needed to be. Overall, in respect of the financial position, the directorate was balanced, but there would continue to be a risk into the next financial year. The authority was not losing any money and the risk was carried by the contractor, but as targets were not being met there was clearly scope for improvements to be made and the Council was working hard with the contractor to secure improvements.

Members noted that there had been delays in recruiting to key posts with the Culture, Sport and Tourism service and that this had delayed consultation on the emerging Cultural Strategy. In response, the Cabinet Member for Cleaner Greener Communities indicated that interviews would take place for key posts in the first week of April 2019, with a view to the successful candidate being in post by June 2019. The Cultural Strategy would be presented for approval by Cabinet in due course, having been subject to widespread consultation, including with Members of the Improving Places Select Commission.

Reference was made to performance in respect of sickness absence and Members sought to understand how the authority compared to the national average. In response, the Assistant Chief Executive explained that the national average was 10.5 days per full time equivalent and the authority's performance was worse than that. Data is compared on a regional basis across Yorkshire and Humberside and year-end figures would soon be available to better understand comparative performance. Further assurances were provided to the Board that sickness absence was being effectively managed on a directorate by directorate basis, with muscular skeletal, stress, infections and viruses continuing to be the biggest causes of sickness absence across the authority. Strategic Directors were reviewing figures regularly and the detail behind the data to understand where those absence were and how they could be effectively managed to enable staff to return to work.

The level of council tax collection was referred to by Members, who queried whether the introduction of Universal Credit was responsible for the impact of the level of collection. In response, officers explained that they believed there to be a number of factors, rather than any exclusivity arising from Universal Credit.

Reflecting on the broader performance framework, Members felt that the overall figures and data did not seem to move very much which could be interpreted as the authority not making major strides from one report to the next, which could be seen as a concern. The Leader of the Council was asked what he and the Chief Executive were doing to look at the overall performance of the authority. In response, the Leader of the Council reminded Members that performance monitoring was an honest

reflection of where the Council and he did not expect to see a significant shift from one quarter to another quarter. A year earlier, indicators from Children and Young People's Services would have stood out with a number of missed targets because there was more demand, but the service was now dealing with it better. He confirmed that a rigorous challenge was applied to the setting of targets for measures in the Council Plan, but it was a complicated picture.

Reflecting on the discussions on this agenda item, the Chair indicated that further consideration would be given to the issues around hate crime when the Safer Rotherham Partnership Annual Report was presented in the summer. Furthermore, close monitoring would be required of performance in respect of sickness absence.

Resolved:-

1. That the performance data within the Council Plan 2018-19 Quarter 3 Performance Report be noted.

190. ADULT SOCIAL CARE - THE BUDGET FORECAST AND CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report submitted by the Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health which set out the position of the budget for Adult Social Care and provided an update on the improvement plan for the service. As the report was submitted immediately prior to the end of the financial year, it was noted that the overspend in the service had been brought down to £5.4m through a mixture of stopping or changing service provision and providing much more challenge on the activities of individual workers. This approach had led to a reduction of £3m over the course of the current financial year.

Members welcomed the update report and the level of detail provided on the change programme within Adult Social Care. It was recognised that the Target Operating Model would be key, but further information was sought on what the shape of that would be and how it would be different to current practices. In response, the Strategic Director confirmed that the major change would be largely cultural and a shift to using technology to aid conversations led by more skilled staff with service users. There would also be a move to a reablement approach, which health partners were open to supporting. Staff would have more autonomy within the system so that service users do not have to wait for anything else.

Following on the point in respect of cultural change in the service, Members recognised that there would need to be a tranche of social work staff who would require further training on how to apply strength based principles. In response, the Strategic Director confirmed that this was already happening and OSMB had previously heard from the Principal Social Worker about the specifics of her role, which was essentially about embedding good practice. The notion of cultural change revolved around

getting people to think differently and focus on autonomy. Training was being provided on having difficult conversations and giving staff the confidence to deliver.

An update was sought on the progress made on the links between care homes, hospitals and social workers in respect of reducing pressures on hospital beds. In response, the Strategic Director explained that the hospital commissioned directly from winter beds and did so from homes that they choose to use. The approach to be adopted would focus on the principle of 'Home First', where people are kept out of hospital unless admission is absolutely necessary.

Assurances were sought from the Strategic Director in respect of the change in model and how managers would deliver the level of service anticipated and that residents deserved. In response, the Strategic Director advised that October 2019 would be a reasonable timescale for the implementation of the new structure, which formed part of the broader journey for adult social care which Members were familiar with. Managers would be absolutely key to the success of the new operating model and were the focus of a lot of development and support.

The Chair thanked the Strategic Director for the report and her responses to Members' questions in respect of the direction that the service was following. Members would continue to monitor progress against key milestones and further conversations would be needed with the Strategic Director in respect of how that would be reported to scrutiny in future, with a particular focus on care assessments and packages.

Resolved:-

1. That the update in respect of the financial position and improvement plan for Adult Social Care be noted.
2. That the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board agree the ongoing approach to scrutiny with the Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health and provide an update to the Board on the way forward with a focus on actions and clear milestones.

191. IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM AGENCY SCRUTINY REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report submitted by the Assistant Chief Executive which provided details of the progress made in implementing the recommendations from scrutiny review of the use of agency, interims and consultants, specific actions related to the recommendations and outcomes arising from them. In presenting the report, the Assistant Chief Executive explained that the current budget forecast for 2018-19 was that spend on agency and interim staff had reduced by £1.2m. He referred to the significant work that had been undertaken by the Workforce

Management Board and across directorates to drive down spend and reiterated how seriously the authority had taken recommendations from the scrutiny review.

Clarification was sought by the Board as to whether the figures provided included the costs of the consultants brought in to the authority to assist with projects. In response, the Assistant Chief Executive confirmed that it did not.

Following, Members suggested that serious consideration should be given to the establishment of a bank of temporary staff for specific roles which could be called upon when required at a lower cost than those taken on through employment agencies.

The Board welcomed the progress that had been made in implementing the recommendations from the review, but wished to see greater progress made on the adoption of a bank of temporary employees. In addition, Members indicated that they wanted a report back detailing the breakdown in spend on consultants and assurance that funds were being spent in accordance with the budget agreed by the Council.

Resolved:-

1. That the report be noted and improvements made be welcomed.
2. That a further report be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board in the autumn of 2019 providing an update on the implementation of agreed recommendations from the review and specifically detailing the breakdown in spend on consultants.

192. SEASONAL AND AGENCY WORKERS IN COMMUNITY SAFETY AND STREET SCENE SERVICES

Consideration was given to a report submitted by the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment which outlined the work that had already been undertaken to reduce agency usage within Community Safety and Street Scene Services for the 2019/20 financial year. It outlined the ongoing resource demands within the service, both for cover, and for seasonal work, and presented options for further reductions in agency usage. In doing so, the report detailed the potential additional costs associated with these options.

In presenting the report, the Assistant Director of Community Safety and Streetscene explained that the service had projected to spend £880k on agency staff in the 2019/20 financial year, which was a reduction of 50% that would be deliverable as a result of changes in the waste management service, which had been resource intensive during the roll out of the changes to waste and recycling collections during 2018-19. In addition, the service had fully introduced seasonal working into the

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grounds maintenance team and a successful apprenticeship programme had been developed in the Highways team.

The Board referred to the use of relief staff to cover for staff who were absent through sickness, rather than using agency staff. Officers confirmed that the costings of such an approach would require some analysis and any relief arrangements would have associated administrative and management costs.

Members welcomed the update and recommended that the use of relief staff be further examined and be included in the update report in respect of the scrutiny review of the use of agency, interim and consultancy staff in the autumn of 2019.

Resolved:-

1. That the report be noted.
2. That a further report detailing the outcome of analysis of an approach using relief staff be incorporated into the next formal report on the implementation of recommendations arising from the scrutiny review of the use of agency, interim and consultancy staff in the autumn of 2019.

193. YOUTH CABINET/YOUNG PEOPLE'S ISSUES

The Chair advised that the members of the Rotherham Youth Cabinet would join Overview and Scrutiny Management Board for the Children's Commissioner Takeover Challenge meeting on Tuesday 2 April 2019 at 5.00 p.m. The focus of the meeting would be on young carers and what could be done to better support them across public service providers and other sectors.

Resolved:-

That the update on Youth Cabinet and Young People's issues be noted.

194. WORK IN PROGRESS - SELECT COMMISSIONS

The Chairs of the Select Commissions provided updates in respect of recent and planned work.

Health Select Commission

Councillor Short, Vice-Chair of Health Select Commission, reported that Members had visited the Drug and Alcohol Services at Carnston House on 30 January 2019 and had found positive progress being made and were impressed with the treatment facilities available. The quarterly briefing with health partners had taken place on 1 February 2019. In addition, the Performance Sub-Group had looked at the final Adult Social

Care Outcomes Framework measures and benchmarking nationally and across Yorkshire and Humberside.

The Select Commission had met on 28 February 2019, where the main items had been:-

- Briefing from The Rotherham Foundation Trust on the Care Quality Commission Re-inspection report with an in-depth discussion on the findings and actions to improve
- Update on developments in general practice (including appointments in 3 hubs, Rotherham App, development of primary care networks)

A scrutiny workshop on the transition from children's to adult services, jointly with Improving Lives Select Commission had been held recently which had provided reassurance on the approach and progress made.

Improving Lives Select Commission

Councillor Cusworth, Chair of Improving Lives Select Commission, reported that at the last meeting on 5 March 2019 there had been a busy agenda:-

- Barnardo's ReachOut Service Update and Barnardo's ReachOut Final Evaluation Report – the Commission asked for more detail on how they're engaging schools.
- Phase 2 and 3 of Early Help Strategy.
- Presentation on the Ofsted Annual Conversation Update
- Presentation providing an update on the Looked After Children Sufficiency Strategy
- Improvement Partner Peer Review of the Looked After Children Service

Improving Places Select Commission

Councillor Mallinder, Chair of Improving Places Select Commission, reported that the last meeting had taken place on 7 March where Members had received an update on the Rotherham Community Infrastructure Levy. Furthermore, an additional meeting had taken place with Dignity in respect of the bereavement services contract and Members were pleased that the company had taken on board the recommendations in respect of a trial extension of burial hours in cemeteries.

195. CALL-IN ISSUES

The Chair reported that there were no call-in issues for the Board to consider following recent Cabinet meetings.

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196. URGENT BUSINESS

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

197. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:-

That the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board for the Children's Commissioner Takeover Challenge be held on Tuesday 2 April 2019 commencing at 5.00 p.m. in Rotherham Town Hall.