PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
27th March, 2009

Present:- Councillor Whelbourn (in the Chair); Councillors Austen, Jack, McNeely and Swift.

Also in attendance for Item 207 below (Scrutiny Work Programme) were:-

Councillor Stone Leader
Councillor Akhtar Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods
Councillor Smith Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Development
Councillor Wyatt Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Innovation

Councillor Wyatt also attended for Item 205 below (ICT Strategy).

Apologies for absence were received from The Mayor (Councillor G. A. Russell) and Councillors Boyes, Burton, J. Hamilton, P. A. Russell and S. Wright (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People’s Services)

203. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

204. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

205. ICT STRATEGY

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Wyatt, Mark Gannon (Transformation and Strategic Partnerships Manager) and Richard Copley (ICT Strategy and Client Co-ordinator).

After a brief introduction from Councillor Wyatt, Richard Copley gave a presentation of the ICT Strategy which covered:-

- The Seven Themes
- Achievements to date
- Information Management (Theme 1)
  - Government Connect
  - EDRMS
  - CRM/Revenues and Benefits Integration
  - VOIP Telephony
- Customer Focus (Theme 2)
- CMS – new website
- SMS – texting
- eForm fault logging
- New JSCs and Children’s Centres
- Area Based Profiling

- Member Focus (Theme 3)
  - Laptops
  - Broadband
  - Remote Access (VPN)
  - eCasework – trial underway

- Staff Focus (Theme 4)
  - WorkSmart
  - Identity Lifecycle Management
  - Deskless Workers

- Partnership Focus (Theme 5)
  - RMBC staff co-located in offices with NHS staff
  - ‘Intelligent Network’ in place in Maltby

- Business Continuity through Information Assurance (Theme 6)
  - Expert BCP Consultancy
  - Tape backups – relocation
  - Permanent generator at (current) Civic Building
  - Digital Region- South Yorkshire network
  - Data Centre Consultancy complete
  - Cloud computing – system migration is underway
  - WorkSmart – giving more people remote access

- Learning Development and Training (Theme 7)
  - eLearning solution in place – more than 2000 staff have taken courses via eLearning
  - New Training Module in HR System

- Funding Sources 2006 – 2011

Discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered:-

- use of consultants regarding EDRMS
- VOIP telephony costings
- elected Member linkage to VOIP telephony
- security password systems regarding laptops
- IT systems communicating with each other, internal and partner wise
- Rotherham Information Governance Group

Resolved:- That the information be noted.

206. MINUTES

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th March, 2009 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

207. WORK IN PROGRESS

Members of the Committee reported as follows:-

(a) Councillor McNeely reported that the review of choice based lettings had been completed and was in the process of being written up.

(b) Councillor Austen reported that the debt recovery review was progressing well and three sessions had been held. It was anticipated that interviews would be completed by the end of April with a report drafted by June.

(c) Councillor Jack reported:-

(i) the Adult Services and Health Scrutiny Panel had considered

- potential for a review of the ambulance service
- issues regarding discharge policies and delays in patients leaving hospitals
- results of the consultation on the modernisation of mental health services

(ii) the next meeting of the Adult Services and Health Scrutiny Panel was to consider:-

- presentation on domestic violence to which all Members were welcome to attend
- presentation on Age Concern

(d) Councillor Swift reported that the scrutiny review of road traffic safety around schools was progressing well and teams were beginning to go out to schools

(e) On behalf of the Mayor, it was reported that the scrutiny review report regarding support for newly arrived children in schools would be submitted to the Children and Young People’s Services Scrutiny Panel on
3rd April, 2009

(f) Cath Saltis reported that the report of the review of community use of school buildings was to be submitted to Cabinet at the end of April.

208. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no formal call-in requests.

209. SCRUTINY SELF ASSESSMENT

Cath Saltis, Head of Scrutiny Services, introduced briefly the submitted Centre for Public Scrutiny document – Self Evaluation Framework for overview and scrutiny in local government which covered:

- provide ‘critical friend’ challenge
- reflect the voice and concerns of the public and its communities
- take the lead and own the scrutiny process
- make an impact on service delivery
- other assessment tools and methodologies
- examples of performance indicators for scrutiny
- other useful websites

Tim Littlewood, Performance and Quality Manager, elaborated on the documentation and promoted discussion with the aid of a presentation which covered:

- aim of self assessment
- what should scrutiny achieve
- success of scrutiny
- areas for improvement
- support for scrutiny

Discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were covered:

- how public engagement in scrutiny could be improved
- the level of interest and engagement in reviews compared with
scrutiny meetings
- timing of work and timeliness of reports
- engagement of young people
- attendance at, and commitment shown to, scrutiny meetings
- regional select committees
- relationship between local and regional scrutiny

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted.

(2) That further work/discussions be undertaken with partners and Tim Littlewood report to a future meeting of this Committee as appropriate.

210. SCRUTINY FORWARD PROGRAMME

Cath Saltis, Head of Scrutiny Services, introduced briefly a discussion on the forward programme of work referring to the national and local perspective, policy review and development, performance monitoring overall and finance and resources.

Particular reference was made to the submitted report advising of the Government’s intention to commence Sections 19-21 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 by 30th April, 2009 and highlighting the implications for scrutiny in Rotherham.

Discussion ensued and the following issues were covered:-

- need for a committee/panel to review and scrutinise the crime and disorder function
- need for specific terms of reference regarding the crime and disorder function
- workload of scrutiny panels
- terms of reference of scrutiny panels
- scrutiny panel alignment with Cabinet portfolios

Resolved:- (1) That the information be noted.

(2) That the commencement date for, and implications of, Sections 19-21 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 be noted.

(3) That a working group, comprising Councillors Austen, Boyes, Swift and Whelbourn, be established to consider the terms of reference of the
respective scrutiny panels, including the ownership of, and terms of reference for, the review and scrutiny arrangements in respect of the crime and disorder function.

(4) That a report of the Working Group findings be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee.

211. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairmen welcomed members of the Cabinet and joint discussions ensued on the future work of scrutiny and working arrangements between scrutiny and the Cabinet.

The following issues were covered:-

- current arrangements between scrutiny and respective Cabinet Members
- pre-decision scrutiny
- attendance of respective scrutiny chair and vice-chair at Cabinet Member meetings
- potential for briefing scrutiny chairs and vice-chairs prior to Cabinet Member meetings
- Cabinet Member attendance at scrutiny panel meetings
- scrutiny panel chairs and vice-chairs receiving Cabinet Member meeting agendas
- potential for inviting respective scrutiny panel chair or vice-chair to future Leader’s Meeting/Strategic Director briefing sessions
- joint meetings between Cabinet and Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee

In concluding the discussion, the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions.

Resolved:- That the issues now raised be pursued and considered by the Working Group established at Minute No. 210 above and a report be submitted to this Committee in due course.