

PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE
22nd October, 2010

Present:- Councillor Whelbourn (in the Chair); The Mayor (Councillor McNeely); Councillors Austen, Gilding, J. Hamilton, Jack, License, G. A. Russell, P. A. Russell, Swift and Whysall.

Also in attendance were Councillors Kaye and St. John for Item 78 below.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Steele.

75. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Councillor Jack declared a personal interest in Item 77 (Sheltered Housing) on the basis of a tenancy.

76. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS.

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

77. SHELTERED HOUSING

Kirsty Everson, Director of Independent Living and Shona McFarlane, Director of Health & Wellbeing gave a presentation detailing the following:-

The Background

- Warden Service and Care Enabler Service – highly valued services with excellent customer satisfaction
- Proposal builds on successful pilots - York Gardens
- Why a merger?
 - The two services carry historical overspends of approx £ 1.2 million per year
 - Duplication, inefficiencies, future opportunities
- Merger proposal agreed by Cabinet on the 10th August, 2010 to assist with in-year budget pressures
- 12 week Consultation underway, ends 12th November
- Final proposals are going back to Cabinet Members 29th November

Proposal

- Amalgamating existing roles of the Care Enablers, and Sheltered Housing Wardens
- one multi-skilled team
- single line management arrangement

- borough wide visiting service, providing support, personal care, or both
- Generic workforce, 7 days a week , ward and area based teams
- Staff will carry out planned visits to deliver care enablement or more preventative visits focused on general support and wellbeing
- Capacity to deliver unplanned visits responding to a crisis, where the focus would be on broader support provision
- Making better use of Rothercare
- Investment in electronic home care scheduling – better service for customers

Consulting for a new service

- Staff meetings
- Unions engaged
- Member information
- A consultation exercise with 2,100 customers to get their individual views
- Focus group with customers receiving care

Workforce issues

- Approx 490 staff affected
- Up to 110 redundancies – potential for 90% of this to be achieved voluntarily
- More flexible working patterns
- Changes to roles and some new roles e.g. activity coordinator
- Training will be provided

Consultation points

- Generic workforce, area based team approach
- Visit only when required/ agreed
- “step up” “step down”
- Make better use of technology e.g. Rothercare
- Individual support plan
- Charges for the new service

Members reviewed the general position and asked a range of questions which were answered.

Resolved:- (1) That the position be noted and the consultation exercise be supported fully.

(2) That an update report be submitted to this Committee on a

quarterly basis.

(Councillor Jack declared a personal interest in the above item on the basis of a tenancy)

78. BARR PARK UPDATE

Phil Gill, Green Spaces Manager, gave an update on the good progress being made with transferring this Park to the Council.

Councillor St John reported that he hoped to finalise the details of the transfer at his delegated powers meeting on 9th November, 2010.

Resolved:- That the position be noted.

79. SECTOR SELF REGULATION AND IMPROVEMENT - LOCAL GOVERNMENT GROUP CONSULTATION

Julie Slatter, Head of Policy and Performance, presented the submitted report which stated that, with the abolition of the Comprehensive Area Assessment and the Audit Commission, the Local Government Group had set out its proposals for a system of self improvement for councils.

The Sector Self Regulation and Improvement consultation paper invited views from local authorities about the overall approach and its key components. Attached to the report was a copy of an initial response to the seven questions contained within the consultation document for consideration and comment.

The deadline for responses to this consultation document was 1st November, 2010.

There currently remained a whole range of uncertainties around the performance agenda in the absence of any national guidance. It was imperative that the Authority remained focused on performance and continued to maintain the good performance management practices which had led to successful outcomes in previous years.

The Authority needed to ensure it was aware fully of proposals and needed to ensure existing structures and reporting regimes could be adapted according to any new arrangements. All the risks, and in

particular the uncertainties, had been highlighted in the initial response to the seven consultation questions.

Members suggested a number of changes to the response.

Resolved:- That the report be noted and a response made to the Local Government Group.

80. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

Rob Houghton, Governance and Risk Manager, presented the submitted report which showed the Council's most significant risks and a summary of how they were being managed.

Attached to the report was the current corporate risk register summary. The summary showed the risks associated with the Council's most significant priorities and projects, and actions being taken to mitigate those risks. The report was presented to the Strategic Leadership Team on 11th October, 2010.

A small number of risks (e.g. relating to the Local Area Agreement) were currently being reviewed as a consequence of recent major budget and legislative announcements made by the Government, and any changes to these would be reflected in the next quarter's report.

There were 5 red residual risks, relating to Children's Services (4 risks) and achievement of the Cultural Quarter aspirations.

It was important to review the effectiveness of the approach to capturing, managing and reporting corporate risks on an ongoing basis, to ensure risks relating to the Council's key projects and priorities were monitored effectively and managed by the Strategic Leadership Team and Members.

A number of comments were made.

Resolved:- (1) That the updated corporate risk register summary, attached at Appendix A to the report, be noted.

(2) That the comments of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee be fed back to the appropriate officers.

81. SCHOOL CLOSURE DUE TO EXTREME WEATHER

Councillor G. A. Russell presented the submitted report which set out the findings and recommendations of the scrutiny review into

'School closure due to extreme weather', undertaken by the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Panel.

The report stated that last winter was confirmed as the coldest since 1978-79. The heavy snowfall on Tuesday, 5th January, 2010 and prolonged period of freezing temperature caused considerable disruption to a number of services, including schools, public transport and businesses. The following day almost 90% of Rotherham schools were closed.

Questions were raised about the procedures for closure of schools during periods of adverse weather or in other emergencies. The Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Panel was asked to undertake a short review to see if lessons could be learnt to ensure that future disruption was minimised.

The report was submitted to the Panel at its meeting of 15th October, 2010. The report was attached as Appendix 1.

In circumstances of extreme weather conditions, the decision to close a school was delegated to its Headteacher in consultation with their chair of governors. Given the likelihood of extreme weather events occurring more frequently in future years, the Local Authority and schools should work together to develop comprehensive plans to mitigate against potential disruption.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be noted and submitted to Cabinet.

(2) That Cabinet's response to the recommendations be fed back to the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Panel within two months of its submission.

82. MINUTES

Resolved:- That the minutes of the meeting held on 18th October, 2010 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

83. WORK IN PROGRESS

Each member gave an update on activity, meeting agendas and discussions and on Scrutiny Reviews.

84. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no formal call - in requests.