

**IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION
19th September, 2012**

Present:- Councillor G. A. Russell (in the Chair); Councillors Ahmed, Ali, Astbury, Dodson, Kaye, Lelliott, License, Pitchley and Read; co-opted members Mrs. J. Blanch-Nicholson and Mrs. A. Clough; also in attendance was Councillor Doyle, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Buckley, Clark, Robinson and Sharman and from co-opted member Mr. M. Evans.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Kaye declared a personal interest in Minute No. 22 (Proposals for the joint inspection of multi-agency arrangements for the protection of children – Ofsted consultation) because of his wife's employment with one of the affected organisations.

18. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

19. COMMUNICATIONS

The Senior Scrutiny Adviser reported the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) members were unanimous in the decision to refer the JCPCT's decision to recommend closure of Leeds surgical centre to the Secretary of State for Health, on the grounds that the decision was not in the interest of local health services. Notification of the Joint HOSC's decision has been provided to the Secretary of State. The Joint HOSC would be meeting in October 2012 to consider further evidence in support of the referral. A further report would be provided to a meeting of this Select Commission in due course.

20. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 11TH JULY, 2012

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission held on 11th July, 2012, were considered.

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

21. CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES

The Select Commission received a presentation from Councillor John Doyle about his role as Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care. The presentation was entitled "Rotherham People Calling the Shots" and dealt with the following issues:-

: the impact of Central Government cuts on Council services;

: achievements in providing services for vulnerable people in Rotherham, despite funding reductions and by means of re-shaping and integrating different services and by the better use of limited resources;

: safeguarding is the bedrock of adult social care;

: receipt of customer feedback about service provision, noting the reduction in complaints received during the past twelve months;

: the changing Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection regime of residential and nursing homes; the Council's own establishments had passed their inspections;

: access to direct payments, giving vulnerable people more control of their own lives;

: HealthWatch will be in place by April 2013;

: in the year ahead, there will be a continued focus on increasing access to continuing health care;

: increasing the amount of advice and support provided for carers;

: assisting people, wherever possible, to live in their own homes rather than staying in residential care;

: improving outcomes for people experiencing domestic abuse;

: ensuring that the services provided will meet and exceed accepted standards;

: significant challenges (eg: delivering budget savings; dealing with service specific and demographic pressures; being held to account for services provided);

: the Armed Forces Covenant (support for ex-service personnel; funding is provided by Central Government) – which states that no-one who has served in the armed forces will be disadvantaged by that service – this Council has signed up to abide by this Covenant; one example of a service is to establish a drop-in centre in Rotherham; the progress being achieved in Rotherham is now recognised as good practice regionally;

The Select Commission Members asked questions about the following matters:-

: adaptations to homes, to assist people with a disability and the sometimes lengthy waiting times for adaptations to be approved and completed; it was noted that this issue was the responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods, whereas the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care was responsible for specialist items of equipment and aids to living for people who suffered a disability;

: the reduction in the number of people in receipt of social care packages, during the last year; it was noted that the eligibility criteria has not altered; an

individual's care package may change as a consequence of a new assessment and/or an improvement in the individual's own condition;

: issues of domestic abuse and action being taken to reduce these problems; there is continued joint working between the various Council departments and the partner agencies; it is anticipated that there may be additional pressure in respect of domestic abuse, caused in part by the Government's welfare system reforms;

: reducing long-term admissions into residential care and the provision of direct payments to service clients; appropriate systems were in place to ensure that individuals in receipt of direct payments are using that finance to meet their needs appropriately; every customer receives an annual review of their needs and care and support plan;

: ensuring that appropriate systems of monitoring are in place for service providers commissioned by the Council (eg: domiciliary care providers); the Council works with providers to maintain and improve standards, and can impose sanctions whenever standards are found to be unsatisfactory;

: very recent changes to the definition of persons affected by domestic violence and abuse, particularly young people aged 16 and 17 years – previously only adults were considered to be sufferers of such abuse;

: joint working protocols between Adult Social Care and Children and Families' Services (e.g.: joint assessments of families' needs; close working between mental health professionals and children's social workers; care packages for adults with a disability who are caring for young children);

: the Council has its own inspection regime for residential care establishments, which is operated in addition to the CQC inspection regime; 'Home from Home' takes account of the views of residents and customers;

: the Council organises a variety of consultation forums and training sessions for people and organisations involved in the provision of care for vulnerable adults.

The issue of domestic abuse is to be included in this Select Commission's future work programme.

The Select Commission thanked Councillor Doyle for his informative presentation.

22. PROPOSALS FOR THE JOINT INSPECTION OF MULTI-AGENCY ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN - OFSTED CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Business Manager of the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board, stating that, with effect from June 2013, HM Government will implement a multi-agency framework for the inspection of Child Protection Services. This was one of the main recommendations from the Munro Review of Child Protection which reported to the Government in 2011. Currently the Inspectorate which undertakes these inspections is the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), whose main

focus is the local authority Children's Social Care Services. The proposed revised framework (which was appended to the submitted report) will incorporate a number of other Inspectorates who will also evaluate the Health, Police and Probation response to and services for children at risk of harm. The proposal for the new framework has been published for consultation, which will end on 4th October, 2012.

It was noted that where an area has a Young Offenders' Unit and/or a Mother and Baby Unit within a prison establishment, any inspection of that establishment must have arrangements in place for the protection of young people.

The Select Commission's discussion of this issue included the following salient matters:-

: Members supported the view that the composition of the inspection team should be balanced and proportionate, reflecting the respective responsibilities and role of each of the partners;

: ensuring that all agencies are held to account for their actions in terms of safeguarding and protection of children; the effect upon an inspection judgement of any single agency being assessed as not performing satisfactorily;

: joint working between the various partner agencies, in the safeguarding and protection of children and the role of schools; appropriate systems are in place to ensure the strict control of the sharing of information between agencies; (it was suggested that the issue of sharing information might be included in this Select Commission's future work programme);

: discussion took place on the various questions contained in the Government's consultation document;

: there was criticism of a lack of detail in certain of the proposals contained in the consultation document;

: Members considered that the role of the Police in child protection must be subject to official inspection;

: leadership, governance, the quality of partnership working; that the importance of Elected Members as decision makers and the role of Scrutiny Members in holding bodies to account – these issues should be included in the response.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That the Improving Lives Select Commission shall receive a further report about the arrangements for the revised inspection framework.

23. CARE FOR OUR FUTURE: WHITE PAPER AND DRAFT CARE AND SUPPORT BILL

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Scrutiny and Policy Manager concerning the Government's publication of its vision for a reformed

Care and Support System in a White Paper and draft Bill. Consultation was currently taking place on the draft Bill and the White Paper for Adult Social Care in England, entitled "Caring for Our Future: Reforming Care and Support". Responses to the consultation had to be submitted by Friday, 19th October, 2012. The report summarised the key headlines from both documents and outlined the themes and questions in relation to the Bill, upon which the Government was seeking views.

The consultation is in an online format, therefore it is being proposed that a separate group of Scrutiny Members, from both the Health Select Commission and the Improving Lives Commission, be established to scrutinise the documents in detail and respond accordingly.

It was noted that this matter had been considered by the Health Select Commission at its meeting held on 13th September, 2012.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(2) That Councillors Ahmed, Astbury and Lelliott be nominated as the representatives of the Improving Lives Select Commission to the sub-group, established by the Health Select Commission, to consider the consultation documents and prepare a response.

24. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE: 2012/13

Further to Minute No. 6 of the meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission held on 6th June, 2012, discussion took place on the Select Commission's work programme for the 2012/2013 Municipal Year.

Resolved:- (1) That the details of the Select Commission's work programme be received.

(2) That the following subjects be included in the future work programme of the Improving Lives Select Commission:-

(i) services provided for people suffering domestic violence and abuse

(ii) the process of assessment of children at risk, including the Common Assessment Framework

(iii) agencies' joint working and information sharing, in respect of the protection and safeguarding of children.