

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
5th April, 2013

Present:- Councillor Whelbourn (in the Chair); Councillors Currie, Dalton, Falvey, Gilding, J. Hamilton, License, G. A. Russell, Steele and Whysall.

148. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this meeting.

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There were no Declarations of Interest made at this meeting.

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

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

150. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE REVIEW

Further to Minute No. 53 of the meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission held on 27th March, 2013, consideration was given to a report presented by the Scrutiny Manager concerning the scrutiny review of Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing Services. A copy of the full scrutiny review report was provided for Elected Members.

The agreed objectives of the review were to:-

- i) analyse the impact of budget cuts to the service;
- ii) ensure that risk and impact assessments have been fully considered and are in place for the future;
- iii) develop practical suggestions for improvement of the service within budget;
- iv) consider invest to save options.

There were 3 main themes that had emerged from the findings of the review:-

1. Flexibility of resources (a – g)
2. Local feedback and support (a – b)
3. Information sharing (a – c)

Discussion ensued on the issues presented and the following issues were raised: -

- Working with towns and villages on a charter;
- Liaison with partner organisations, including parish councils, bowling clubs;
- Communication within services and with members of the public;

- Cabinet Member portfolios and how the different issues related to each portfolio;
- Timeliness of Review for the next year's budget consultation;
- Roles and responsibilities of operatives and different teams within the Council;
- Utilising the winter and summer maintenance programmes to respond to need;
- On-going monitoring and evaluation of the plan when approved;
- Ensuring that machinery was operated as effectively as possible;
- Loss of posts due to budget reductions;
- Front-line workers had not been interviewed as part of the Review process;
- In relation to 1b, it be amended to reflect that frontline workers should be involved in the evaluation of the pilot scheme.

Resolved:- (1) That the findings and recommendations, as amended, set out in the report be endorsed.

(2) That the report be forwarded to the Cabinet.

(3) That the Cabinet's response be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

151. CENTRE FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY ANNUAL SURVEY

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Scrutiny Manager which contained the Centre for Public Scrutiny's annual survey of overview and scrutiny in local government (2012/13). Members discussed the various questions contained in the survey and agreed the responses that would be provided on behalf of Scrutiny Services in Rotherham.

The questionnaire related to issues including: -

- Political and gender balance and average size of membership on Scrutiny Panels;
- Number of items covered each year;
- Number of full time equivalent scrutiny support officers within the local authority;
- Scope of Scrutiny's role in Rotherham;
- Resources and a 'wish list' of desired resources;
- Relationship between Scrutiny and the Councillor's Executive and Senior Leadership Team;
- A self-assessment of Scrutiny's impact on services and the lives of people across Rotherham;
- How Scrutiny will look in ten years' time.

Discussion ensued on the survey, and the following point was made: -

- The survey was not 'user-friendly' and did not allow for a fullness of answers that truly reflected Scrutiny in Rotherham. This included the prescriptive answer boxes that did not allow for full responses and limited the quality of answer Rotherham could provide.

Resolved:- (1) That the contents of the report and annual survey be noted.

(2) That the Scrutiny Manager respond to the survey questionnaire as discussed and it be submitted to the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

(3) That the Scrutiny Manager send a letter to the Centre for Public Scrutiny outlining the concerns of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board in relation to the questionnaire used.

152. SCRUTINY ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13

Consideration was given to a report, presented by the Scrutiny Manager, containing a detailed review of progress made to date on the overall work programme for the Scrutiny function during 2012/13, with a focus on the work of each of the Select Commissions, as well as this Management Board. The report also reviewed work still outstanding for this year and provided updates on progress with the emerging work programme for 2013/14.

Discussion ensued on the submitted report in relation to priority setting for 2013/14. A number of suggestions were made to increase as far as possible the ability for stakeholders to contribute to the process: -

- Liaise with the seven Area Assemblies to learn their priorities;
- Communication with all Elected Members to learn their priorities;
- Hold an away half-day of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and Scrutiny Services to identify and plan priorities for the coming year.

A suggestion was made that Chairs of the Select Commissions should make contact with the members of their Select Commission to canvass for their priorities and suggested areas for review. A collated version would then be made available for the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and Scrutiny Service's away half-day. A likely timeframe for this would be towards the end of May or early June, 2013.

Resolved:- (1) That the contents of the report and the progress made to date with the Scrutiny work programme 2012/13 be noted.

(2) That an outline work programme for Scrutiny in 2013/14 be initiated through an email to all Elected Members seeking suggestions for items across all of the Select Commissions, and through the Chairs of Select Commissions to canvas for thoughts from the members of each Select Commission.

(3) That an Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and Scrutiny Services away half-day be arranged to consider the 2013/14 work programme for Scrutiny.

153. YOUTH CABINET/YOUNG PEOPLE'S ISSUES.

The Scrutiny Manager, Scrutiny Services, Legal and Democratic Services, Resources Directorate, reported that the Scrutiny Officer was continuing to work through the issues reported at the 11 Million Take Over Day meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management and building them into a work programme that could be evaluated.

A report outlining a work programme to address the issues raised at the joint meeting with the Youth Cabinet would be presented to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

Resolved: - That the information shared be noted.

154. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 22ND MARCH, 2013

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, held on 22nd March, 2013, be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

155. WORK IN PROGRESS.

Updates were provided to the meeting in relation to the work in progress of the Select Commissions.

Self-Regulation Select Commission: -

Councillor S. Currie, Chair of the Select Commission, provided an update on the progress of the Select Commission: -

- Budget Review – was concluding for the second financial year. The Select Commission was undertaking a lessons learned approach to determine the best methods used, and planning for the next financial year's scrutiny review;
- Commissioning Review;
- Budget Monitoring Review.

Improving Places Select Commission: -

Councillor J. Falvey, Vice-Chair of the Select Commission, provided an update on the progress of the Select Commission: -

- Completed Grounds Maintenance Review;
- Consideration of the Allocations Policy, which has been delayed.

It was also requested that the Management Board look into the correct order for reports to be submitted through Scrutiny and the Executive.

Improving Lives Select Commission: -

Councillor N. License, Vice Chair of the Select Commission, provided an update on the progress of the Select Commission: -

- The Improving Lives Select Commission had utilised a 'pre-meet' opportunity prior to a full meeting to plan the questions they would ask to the Officers in attendance in relation to corporate parent and looked after children's service. This had been a successful approach and had led to a large area being covered;
- The Select Commission had responded to Government consultation in relation to childcare and changing required child to adult ratios;
- Reviews were underway in relation to Bullying, Domestic Violence and Countering Child Sexual Exploitation.

Health Select Commission: -

Councillor B. Steele, Chair of the Select Commission, provided an update on the progress of the Select Commission: -

- The Health Select Commission had utilised a 'pre-meet' opportunity prior to a full meeting to plan the questions that they would ask to the Chair of the Hospital and the Chief Executive of the Rotherham Foundation Trust. Questions had focused on performance measurement, the use of electronic information sharing and ensuring it was fit for purpose and quality analysis of the Services provided.

Resolved: - That the information shared be noted.

156. CALL-IN ISSUES - TO CONSIDER ANY ISSUES REFERRED FOR CALL-IN.

There were no formal requests for call-in to report.