

## ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Self Regulation Select Committee</b>
2.	<b>Date:</b>	<b>27 June 2013</b>
3.	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Performance Clinics Framework and Guidance for the Self Regulation Select Committee</b>
4.	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>NAS</b>

### 5. Summary

The council is committed to delivering its commitments to citizens. Against a backdrop of diminishing resources this is very challenging and requires us to rethink how we monitor and manage performance when expectations are not being met. This report was requested at the Self-Regulation Select Commission meeting on March 28 2013.

The council has successfully used performance clinics in the past but the way these clinics have been used and the frequency with which they are held has changed reflecting the reduced resources available.

In order to reflect this direction of travel and provide to refresh our approach this report suggests three types of clinic that could be used in different circumstances (Managerial, Ad hoc Challenge Events and Planned Challenge ) are described in this report and can be triggered in a variety of circumstances in response to a specific issue, theme or cause for concern.

- Managerial Performance Clinic is internal and managed entirely by the service and P&Q
- Ad hoc Challenge events - recommended by Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Cabinet Members or the Select Committee, usually after managerial action has failed to achieve an improvement in outcomes
- Planned Challenge Events as part of the annual work programme of Scrutiny Service ‘

Resources used to set up and run performance clinics divert resources away from front line problem solving and delivery. Consequently it is important that ‘clinics’ are used appropriately and sparingly. Clinics should not be seen as the default response to poor performance.

### 6. Recommendations

Agree the approach set out in the report

Consider options for appointing an ‘independent chair’ at Member-led performance clinics

## **7. Proposals and Details**

### **Performance Clinic Framework components and triggers**

Changes in the way the council carries out its business, to reflect the reduced resources available mean that Performance and Quality staff are more front facing and actively participate in problem solving, rather than simply holding managers to account. Many performance clinics are conducted as problem solving events, rather than straightforward challenge events.

#### **7.1 Managerial Performance Clinic (Officer)**

Directorate Leadership Teams (DLT) have a fundamental role in managing performance and risk. In the event of DLT, the services themselves, or officers in the Performance and Quality team (P&Q) identifying a single issue with a specific area of work or key performance indicator, a decision will be made about what action is required. If the concern is such that a performance clinic is required then P&Q will organise and facilitate this process in line with performance management frameworks. This will include key performance measures, targets and clear accountability and risk management processes. The clinic will develop and agree an action plan and P&Q will then manage the plan to completion, working in conjunction with the service manager. Progress against the plan will be monitored and reported to the relevant DLT to provide assurances that the issue is under control.

**NB: It is important to note that it is not always appropriate to hold a performance clinic as other interventions may be more appropriate and timely. Where the reason for the issue is understood, specific service improvement work can take place.**

*Trigger points:*

- If performance is below target and is predicted to not meet the year end target.
- If performance is currently on target but due to a known event / issue, is predicted to not meet the year end target.

When a Performance Clinic has taken place and an action plan developed and agreed, it is the role of the P&Q Team in conjunction with the appropriate service to monitor and support and ensure that focus remains whilst the issue is being resolved.

*Role of Scrutiny*

At this stage the accountable Director will manage performance against the outcomes at this stage in the process.

#### **7.2 Ad hoc Challenge Events with Member/Peer involvement**

As part of the Corporate Performance Management Framework we would normally involve Cabinet Members to be involved in a Performance Clinic if performance against a Corporate Plan outcome is still presenting concerns.

Historically, a number of different approaches have been taken with Performance Clinics led by Cabinet Members. This has involved a number of Scrutiny Members and/or Cabinet Members acting as chair.

At the last Self Regulation Select Commission it was suggested that it would be useful to adopt a 'Peer' arrangement, and rather than the Cabinet Member holding the portfolio responsibility acting as chair, identifying an independent Cabinet Member instead.

The Commission expressed a view that if it was helpful then the chair could invite Members of Scrutiny to attend to provide a confirm and challenge approach.

This type of Performance Clinic would record formal minutes along with an action plan which will be monitored via the P&Q team and reported back to the relevant Cabinet Member and Self-Regulation Select Commission (as part of performance reporting).

*Trigger points:*

- Failure to address underperformance in relation to a priority outcome of the council.

*Role of Scrutiny*

Members could have a role in this type of challenge event as well as a scrutiny role of monitoring against agreed actions.

### **7.3 Planned Challenge Events (Scrutiny)**

As part of the annual work programme of Scrutiny some issues are highlighted because of long standing concerns about performance. These types of issues could be addressed through a planned challenge event. This could take the form of a detailed report by the accountable lead officer that shows evidence of the work that is taking place to achieve the outcome and any related targets, both national and/or local. Alternatively, if a more rigorous examination is needed, the Commission can request a 'spotlight' review. On the basis of the evidence gathered, the Commission would make recommendations to Cabinet Members or senior manager to support service improvement. It is felt that this is where real value is added and where barriers to improvement are at a political level or are around policies and strategies.

Details of planned challenge events and corresponding actions and outcomes should be published as part of the performance reporting mechanism.

*Trigger points:*

- If a Scrutiny Select Commission becomes concerned about the performance against a Corporate Plan outcome (for example if performance has been 'red' for two quarters and does not show signs of improvement) and agrees that further work be undertaken.
- Long term issues persist after a member-led performance clinic has been held.

*Role of Scrutiny*

To identify areas of concern and commission a more in depth report to confirm the work that the service is undertaking to achieve the desired outcome.

Scrutiny members will determine the scope of review and areas to be examined, calling upon support from P&Q and Scrutiny support as required. Recommendations emerging from this process will be considered by Cabinet.

## **8. Finance**

As a result of service reductions the Council's ability to deliver all the corporate plan objectives is a high risk. The potential for under performance as a result of budget reductions highlights the importance of integrating performance, risk and financial reporting.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

We proactively manage risks to prevent negative impacts on performance against delivery of services and any associated key performance indicators.

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

All Council services are responsible for key areas of service delivery and therefore have a significant role in the delivery of key national and local performance indicators. These services also support all Council Directorates enabling them to deliver against Corporate Plan outcomes.

Service improvement is a key role for Performance & Quality in addition to managing and monitoring performance with DLT's.

## **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

Self-Regulation Select Commission 28 March 2013: Minute 69

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