

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**  
**18th October, 2013**

Present:- Councillor Whelbourn (in the Chair); Councillors Beck, Currie, Dalton, Falvey, Read, Sims and Steele.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gilding and G. A. Russell.

**62.           DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made at this meeting.

**63.           QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

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

**64.           PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

Further to Minute No. 61 of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 23rd September, 2011, consideration was given to a report, presented by Councillor C. Read, concerning the working group of Elected Members, established to review the way in which public engagement in overview and scrutiny may be improved. The working group had focused principally on three areas:-

- : better use of new technologies and social media;
- : engagement with communities of interest and with scrutiny's co-opted members;
- : better use of press and communications to inform the public.

The report included details of:-

- : information from the Centre for Public Scrutiny
- : examples of the way in which other local authorities engage the public in the scrutiny process;
- : the use of new technologies, web-based technology and social media, enabling the general public to participate in the scrutiny process;
- : encouraging more public participation in the scrutiny process by means of an effective press and media strategy;
- : engagement with communities of interest, scrutiny's co-opted members, the Council's Area Assemblies and the Youth Cabinet.

The report also referred to the procedures used for the recruitment of co-opted members to the Council's Select Commissions (noting that statutory co-opted members are subject to other procedures). Members decided that option two (described in the report) should be adopted, ie: to maintain the current network of 'fixed' co-opted members, but not to recruit replacements whenever those co-opted members decide to leave. Use will continue to be made of the involvement of ad-hoc co-opted members

in specific scrutiny reviews, acknowledging the valuable contributions of co-opted members to the scrutiny process.

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

(2) That the potential of social media to increase awareness of Overview and Scrutiny in Rotherham be noted.

(3) That an examination be undertaken of the feasibility of changing the content and structure of Scrutiny web-pages to make them more accessible and 'issue based'.

(4) That an examination be undertaken of the feasibility of piloting the use of appropriate social media to support the work of Overview and Scrutiny.

(5) That the relevant guidance be re-issued in respect of Council protocols concerning the use of social media.

(6) That work be undertaken with Area Assembly Chairs to identify areas of joint working/shared concerns and they be asked to consider including a standard item on their agenda which outlines issues to be referred to scrutiny.

(7) That, as part of the scoping process, each scrutiny review shall consider its approach to press and communications in a planned way to ensure that there is capacity within the Communications and Marketing Team to accommodate any additional demands.

(8) That the scoping of each scrutiny review shall include a social media strategy, detailing how evidence may be sought from users groups and communities of interests or place.

(9) That, with regard to co-option, option two (described in the report) shall be adopted, ie: to maintain the current network of 'fixed' co-opted members, but not to recruit replacements whenever those co-opted members decide to leave.

(10) That appropriate information be made available for each scrutiny member, so that they are aware of the role of co-opted representatives on the Select Commissions.

(11) That the role of co-opted members be acknowledged accordingly and they be thanked for their input and contributions.

(12) That two Parent Governor Representatives be recruited to the Improving Lives Select Commission.

(13) That an update report be submitted to Members, in six months' time, on the implementation of the recommendations of this scrutiny review, enabling Members to determine the extent of any further action required.

**65. SCRUTINY REVIEW OF DOMESTIC ABUSE**

Further to Minute No. 63 of the meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission held on 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2013, consideration was given to a report, presented by Councillor J. Burton (Chair of the Scrutiny Review Group), containing the findings and recommendations of the scrutiny review of domestic abuse services in Rotherham. The draft review report was also included for consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

The review had focused on the following areas:

- : what does a 'good' service look like? (drawing on national guidance and best practice elsewhere);
- : how well partners work together at a strategic level;
- : how well groups work together operationally;
- : How well the voices of the victim and their families are listened to.

Members discussion of this item included the following salient issues:-

- : commissioning and funding of domestic abuse support and services;
- : the impact of domestic abuse upon children and young people (a suggestion was made that the scrutiny review report be forwarded to the Youth Cabinet);
- : strategies for dealing with domestic abuse (especially the strategy of the Safer Rotherham Partnership);
- : prevention and early intervention; 'target hardening', eg: spending relatively small amounts of money on improved security for the homes of people who are vulnerable to domestic violence;
- : the issues of forced marriage and the 'so-called honour based violence' are to be the subject of a separate scrutiny review by the Improving Lives Select Commission during 2014;
- : the responsibilities of the various partner organisations, including the Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service (IDVA), the Integrated Youth Service and schools' governing bodies;
- : sub-regional links between domestic violence co-ordinators in the four areas (Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield), between IDVA Services and within the South Yorkshire Police; domestic violence is one of the priorities of the Police and Crime Plan prepared by the Police and Crime Commissioner; this issue will be the subject of further work by the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for South Yorkshire;

: the impact of domestic violence upon people with a disability and upon looked after children and children and young people who are carers;

: reporting and referral arrangements and the need to ensure that the various health services are resourced to make appropriate referrals of people who are the victims of domestic abuse.

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

(2) That the findings and recommendations of the report of the scrutiny review of domestic abuse services in Rotherham, as now submitted, be endorsed and be forwarded to the Cabinet for further consideration.

(3) That Cabinet be asked to forward the report to the Safer Rotherham Partnership and to the Health and Wellbeing Board for their consideration.

(4) That the Cabinet response to the recommendations be submitted to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

## **66. CITIZEN'S ADVICE BUREAU**

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board received a presentation from Mr. David Sleightholme concerning the role and function of the Citizen's Advice Bureau;

The presentation included the following issues:-

: details of the impact of the economic downturn and the welfare reforms upon the demand for the services provided by the Citizen's Advice Bureau (eg: significant increase of client referrals, during the past four years, particularly with regard to debt issues (rent and Council Tax arrears and other matters such as Job Seeker's Allowance sanctions);

: the increasing workload of the Citizen's Advice Bureau, especially in advising people on ways of managing their income and expenditure;

: the targeting of services to people in those communities suffering the various effects of deprivation (most often concerning issues of housing, debts and benefits);

: the Rotherham Citizen's Advice Bureau receives annual funding from the Borough Council and also receives Big Lottery funding for its two-years project to introduce a holistic Advice Service, including new advice delivery methods;

: areas such as parts of central Rotherham and parts of East Dene, Dinnington, Maltby and Thrybergh are amongst the 5% most severely deprived areas within the whole of England;

: the use of the 'NelBooker' system of arranging appointments for clients with the Citizen's Advice Bureau and with other advice agencies (the system includes other appropriate agencies, enabling clients to access appointments quickly and within relatively easy reach of their homes);

: the 'AiR' network of advice agencies in Rotherham – and the need to increase public awareness of this network.

Members discussed the following issues:-

: the importance of locally accessible advice provision (eg: advice services at Kiveton Park);

: training for advice workers and ensuring that the Citizen's Advice Bureau and its services are 'fit for purpose';

: the importance of the entire network of advice services available to the public;

: the increase in referral of cases of debt in respect of utility services (electricity, gas, telephone and water); reference was made to voluntary agencies (eg: 'Stay Put') which provide assistance to people who have difficulty meeting the cost of fuel bills;

: the proposed increase in outreach work by the Citizen's Advice Bureau, which is currently the subject of discussion with the Borough Council; Members asked to be informed of further details of this proposal;

: the Borough Council's regular monitoring of the standard and quality of services provided by the Rotherham Citizen's Advice Bureau, for local residents;

: the Citizen's Advice Bureau is represented on the Council's strategic Welfare Reform Working Group;

: a suggestion was made that the Borough Council's mobile library might be used to accommodate the services of the Citizen's Advice Bureau;

: the incidence and amount of debt of people in the Borough area, including the problems caused by 'pay-day' lenders and by the increasing costs of food;

: details of the 'NelBooker' system and of the 'AiR' system should be available within the Borough Council's Customer Service Centres and be provided for all Members of the Borough Council and for Parish Councils.

Resolved:- (1) That David Sleightholme be thanked for his informative presentation and copies of the presentation be provided for all Members of the Council.

(2) That a further report about the role and work of the Citizen's Advice Bureau be submitted to a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board in six months' time.

#### **67. YOUTH CABINET/YOUNG PEOPLE'S ISSUES**

Members noted that the 2013/2014 manifesto of the Youth Cabinet had been launched on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2013. Discussion took place on the suggestion that quarterly reports about Youth Cabinet issues be submitted to the Council's Cabinet meetings.

#### **68. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 20TH SEPTEMBER, 2013**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, held on 20th September, 2013, be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

#### **69. WORK IN PROGRESS**

##### **Self Regulation Select Commission:-**

The Vice-Chair reported on the recent activities of the Self Regulation Select Commission:-

: the scoping of the scrutiny review of the Council's commissioning and procurement processes and the way in which such processes could support the local economy (the review will examine the implications of the provisions of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012);

: the working group has been established to review the performance of the Council's Corporate Plan and financial strategy.

##### **Health Select Commission:-**

The Chair reported on the recent activities of the Health Select Commission:-

: presentation by the Chair, at the Council meeting on 23rd October 2013 concerning the scrutiny of health services;

: the report of the childhood obesity scrutiny review is being considered by the Cabinet;

: the scrutiny review of access to carer support services has begun (jointly with the Improving Lives Select Commission);

: the scrutiny review of access to GP practices will soon begin;

: at the Select Commission's next meeting, there will be a progress report on the review of the Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust and urgent care services.

#### **Improving Places Select Commission:-**

The Chair reported on the recent activities of the Improving Places Select Commission:-

: an initial meeting has taken place of the scrutiny review group of the local economy, with representation from the Self Regulation Select Commission;

: the scrutiny review of homelessness services has begun;

: consideration of Planning Section 106 agreements and the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL);

: grounds maintenance and housing repairs will be considered at a future meeting.

#### **Improving Lives Select Commission:-**

The Vice-Chair reported on the recent activities of the Improving Lives Select Commission:-

: the scrutiny review of access to carer support services has begun (jointly with the Health Select Commission);

: completion of the report of the scrutiny review of domestic abuse services.

### **70. CALL-IN ISSUES**

There were no formal call-in requests.