

IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION
Wednesday, 18th December, 2013

Present:- Councillor G. A. Russell (in the Chair); Councillors Buckley, Burton, Clark, J. Hamilton, Lelliott, Read, Roddison and Sharman and Co-opted members Mrs. A. Clough (ROPES) and Mr. M. Smith (Safe@Last).

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Ali, Astbury and Kaye and Co-opted member Ms. J. Jones.

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this meeting.

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

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

38. COMMUNICATIONS.

Nothing was raised under this item.

39. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 6TH NOVEMBER, 2013.

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission held on 6th November, 2013, were considered.

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission be approved as an accurate record for signature by the Chairperson.

40. SCHOOL ORGANISATION - UPDATE.

Further to Minute No. 29 of the meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission held on 24th October, 2012, consideration was given to a report, presented by the Principal Officer – School Organisation, describing the provision of school places throughout the Rotherham Borough area, in response to the increasing pupil numbers and pressure on school places, especially in the primary school phase.

The report provided details of the way in which additional school places would be made available, most often by the expansion of existing schools and also by the construction of a number of new primary schools. These details were provided in respect of each of the Borough's learning communities of schools. The report referred to proposals to build new primary schools at Eastwood (central Rotherham), at Bassingthorpe Farm (Greasbrough) and within the developing community at Waverley, near Catcliffe. Funding for the capital cost of school building projects would be met from the 'Basic Need' allocation to the Council from the Government's

Department for Education. Some additional funding was also available from agreements made in accordance with the provisions of Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The Principal Officer outlined that, in addition to the school expansions detailed in the report, other areas of the Borough were considered under a watching brief and their school place capacity would be monitored.

If all of the school expansions currently undergoing consultation were approved, a total of 945 additional permanent primary school places and 195 additional temporary primary school places would have been created.

The submitted report outlined the total new arrivals to the Borough during the academic years 2007/2008 to 2011/2012 and the numbers of families who had been admitted to school. For the school year 2012/2013 data was currently unavailable. The report noted the mobility of the newly arrived families. The Local Authority had secured temporary external funding for the role of EU Migrant Community Engagement Officer to support the families in attending educational provision.

It was noted that the data for new arrivals to the Borough during the 2012/2013 academic year had not been made available. The Chairperson wished to record that she felt this was unfair on the Local Authority as it made scrutiny of service planning, including capacity planning, and subsequent evaluation, difficult.

The report noted the number of applications that had been processed relating to the 2013/2014 school year, relating to the transfer groups and in-year transfers.

The Fair Access Protocol that the Local Authority was administering to place vulnerable children in a school was also considered.

Discussion ensued and the following issues were raised by members of the Improving Lives Select Commission: -

- **The Waverley housing development was planned over three-decades. Was the school place strategy flexible?** – Yes. Meetings and communications were on-going and all stakeholders were welcome to contribute to these.
- **How were the proposed additional seventeen classrooms at Wickersley School and Sports College being funded?** – Through the Targeted Need funding bid made to the Department for Education.
- **In Rotherham's rural villages, a family failing to get a school place could have long-term implications for the community integration, especially for the child/children involved.**
- **How were working relationships with Academies shaping up?** – All Schools in Rotherham remained signed-up to the principles of Transforming Rotherham Learning. Centrally provided services

could be bought-back by Academies and would be subject to Service Level Agreements.

- **Was the Service confident that there was sufficient school places where they were required?** – As far as possible, yes the Service was confident. The Service's plans had been judged to be sound by external assessors.
- **Was staffing in schools a consideration when they were being expanded?** – The provisions of the Infant Class Size Legislation were considered for all classes up to the end of Year Two, and classes were usually expanded in multiples of 15 to ensure that classes operated with a maximum of thirty children in them. When schools did expand they usually had to apply to the Rotherham Schools' Forum to cover all of the staffing costs in the period before the school generated its own budget based on pupil numbers.
- **Cases had been reported where siblings had not been offered places in the same school. This had negative effects on families.** – Four schools had not been able to accommodate the siblings applying to the reception class of children already in school in the 2013/2014 academic year. The catchment areas of these schools had been analysed to try to avoid similar situations in future academic years.
- **What impact were new arrivals having on school places?** – Although the numbers and movement of newly arrived families was hard to predict, increasing levels of data was helping the planning process. Rotherham also participated in regional forums. Targeted Needs funding bids were being utilised to ensure that sufficient places existed in the right areas.
- **The possible uses of Section 106 funding.**
- **Academies were their own admission authorities, how did this impact on the planning of the Local Authority?** - All academies were currently working with the Local Authority in Rotherham.
- **Children who had attended a Nursery school were not guaranteed a place in the school's reception class which seemed unfair.** – Advice had been taken from the Department for Education on this matter and whether it would be possible to make attendance in the Nursery provision (Foundation Stage One) criteria for admission to the reception class (Foundation Stage Two). The Department for Education had advised that this could lead to unfairness in the system as not all schools had nursery provision and this could impact on children who were not able to attend their catchment area school.

Councillor Russell thanked the Officer for attending and their informative presentation and contribution to the discussion.

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

(2) That an update in one year's time in relation to school organisation be presented to the Improving Lives Select Commission.

41. SAFEGUARDING ADULTS - ANNUAL REPORT 2012-2013.

Further to Minute No. 38 of the meeting of the Cabinet Member and Advisers for Adult Social Care held on 21st October, 2013, consideration was given to a report, presented by the Safeguarding Service Manager – Safeguarding Adults, stating that the Rotherham Safeguarding Adults Board produced an Annual Report of safeguarding adult's activity. The Board has ratified this report for publication to all partner agencies and for publication on the Council's website.

Consideration was given to the contents of the Rotherham Safeguarding Adults Annual Report 2012/2013.

Discussion ensued on the presentation of the annual report. The following points were raised about the content: -

- Was there enough representatives of voluntary sector groups on the Board's constitution and were all areas of the voluntary sector represented?
- Was there one common definition of 'abuse' that was shared and understood by all agencies?
- Warden Service – information sharing and communication.
- Was there a sufficient workforce across all sectors to deliver what was needed to protect vulnerable adults?
- Was the need to achieve efficiency savings likely to negatively impact on the ability of all services to adequately protect people from preventable harm?
 - All Agencies had measurements that would provide alerts to monitor performance. Multiple alerts would trigger that something was wrong. The Contract Compliance Officers were charged with ensuring that the Care Quality Commission's standards were met and had the ability to end placements and close provisions where necessary and they had used these powers in the past.
- The report should make reference to the numbers of people who had been supported over the year and how many people were safe.
 - A victim-led investigation process followed all reports of safeguarding concerns. Victims were visited and assessed within twenty-four hours, although this was often immediately after a concern had been reported.
- Was the profile of who reported concerns reflective of the ethnic make-up of the Borough?
 - No. The vast majority of reports were made by the White British community. An advertisement campaign had been undertaken aimed towards the British Asian community and was beginning to see results.
- How were the best interests of people with learning difficulties and mental health issues represented?
 - Even if individuals did not have the capacity to make

decisions about their care they were always at the centre of the care planning process.

- Were all staff adequately trained?
 - It was a contractual requirement that all staff were trained at all times. Training records were maintained and the Council provided electronic-learning packages that were mandatory requirements across all posts within the Neighbourhood and Adult Service's Directorate and recommended training across the other Council Directorates.
- Would CCTV be placed in residential homes?
 - Not usually, as there were legislative issues. However, if somebody was a victim of anti-social behaviour, for example, they may be installed in their home for their own protection and the evidence gathering process. This would be in conjunction with the Safer Rotherham Partnership.

Councillor Russell thanked the Officers for attending and their informative presentation and contribution to the discussion.

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

(2) That each Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report be considered by the Improving Lives Select Commission.

42. IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION - WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE.

Further to Minute No. 5 of the meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission held on 12th June, 2013, consideration was given to a report, presented by the Senior Scrutiny Adviser, providing details of the progress with implementation of this Select Commission's work programme for 2013/2014.

The report included the progress against the 2013/2014 work programme, including the areas that had been covered and those still to be undertaken.

Discussion was undertaken about the following meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission to be held in the New Year.

Resolved: - That the report be received and its content noted.

43. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING: -

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission take place on Wednesday 22nd January, 2014, to start at 1.30 p.m. in the Rotherham Town Hall.