

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
24th January, 2014

Present:- Councillor Whelbourn (in the Chair); Councillors Beck, Currie, Falvey, Gilding, G. A. Russell, Sims and Steele.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Dalton and Read.

89. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Currie declared a personal interest in Minute No. 92 (Scrutiny Review of Support to Carers) on the grounds that he was a carer in Rotherham.

90. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

91. SCRUTINY REVIEW OF CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Further to Minute No. 160 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15th January, 2014, consideration was given to a report, presented by Deborah Fellowes, Scrutiny Manager, containing an update of action being taken on the recommendations of the scrutiny review of childhood obesity.

The majority of the recommendations focused on the prevention of overweight and obesity within the community and the promotion of weight management programmes to support children locally.

The re-commissioning of weight management services was ongoing and would be subject to approval by Cabinet during 2014.

The two deferred recommendations had been accepted in principle, but were subject to further discussion.

Discussion ensued on the deferred recommendation relating to Rothercard and it was noted that this would be reported back to the Health Select Commission following the review.

It was suggested that, as a result of the changes to the Ofsted Framework, that collaborative arrangements within schools be considered under the auspices of School Nurses and that this be included in the update in six months' time.

Resolved:- That the report be received and the contents noted.

92. SCRUTINY REVIEW OF SUPPORT TO CARERS

Further to Minute No. 64 of the meeting of the Health Select Commission held on 23rd January, 2014 consideration was given to a report, presented by Councillor Brian Steele, Chair of the Review Group, which set out the main findings and recommendations of the scrutiny review of support for carers in Rotherham. The full text of the draft review report was also submitted for consideration by Members.

The aim of the review was to ensure carers have access to the right information to enable them to access the support and services they required to assist them in the caring role and to maintain their own quality of life and health and wellbeing. As such it was very important to consider this from the perspective of carers, especially adult carers of adults with long term conditions and to establish:-

- If carers generally identify themselves as carers in line with the carer definition.
- The degree to which carers accessed support or considered they needed support to assist them in their caring role.
- Who carers go to for initial support when they first become a carer.
- Where carers usually go for ongoing support.
- Key factors necessary for ensuring carers received good and timely information.
- Any areas for improvement in current information provision.

Members also wished to complement and add value to the review carried out by Neighbourhoods and Adult Services of current support services for carers, which focused on how support was currently provided to carers and how this may be improved.

A spotlight review was carried out and evidence gathering commenced in October, 2013, concluding in December 2013. This comprised an on-line survey for carers supplemented by direct engagement with carers at two events, followed by two small discussion groups. Further evidence was provided by Council officers and witnesses from partner agencies in health and the voluntary and community sector.

Members recognised the large number of “hidden” carers in Rotherham, who were key to the effective provision of social care. There was a very strong case, both morally and financially, to ensure that carers were provided with the most effective support possible as it was estimated that nationally, carers saved the country an estimated £119 billion in care costs. The review group considered that any resources invested within the carers community in Rotherham, therefore, represented an invest to save opportunity, particularly with the demographic pressures created by an ageing population.

The review group made ten recommendations which focused on:-

- Increasing the number of people recognising themselves as carers and willing to seek support for the vital role they carried out.
- Ensuring that support for carers adequately included emotional support and counselling.
- Providing a multi-agency “carers pathway” that recognised the journey that carers were on and provided them with the correct support and information at the right time and in the right place on that journey.
- Increasing the number of carers receiving a fit for purpose carers assessment, which was reviewed on an annual basis.

Immediately following the meeting of the Health Select Commission on the 23rd January, 2014, a number of appropriate amendments were agreed in terms of the limited availability of finance and resources for service provision and the revised recommendations arising from these discussions were circulated and considered each in turn. There was also some suggestion that this report be referred to the Health and Wellbeing Board as soon as practically possible and there be some relaxation as to the timescales.

Discussion ensued on the scope of the review, the various partnership links, the role of G.P.'s and the newly presented recommendations as listed below:-

1. That NHS England, Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group and Rotherham Council work with GPs to ensure that the first line of support aims to increase the number of carers identified and seeking support.
2. In looking at recommendation 1 above, the partners consider whether professionals should work on the presumption that the close family member or friend is a carer and ask questions to determine if this is the case, and therefore what information resources are required to back this up.
3. That Rotherham Council investigates further with the Advice in Rotherham Partnership (AiR) and the Department of Work and Pensions, what specific information carers need to access benefits that are available to them. This may also help to identify more carers.
4. That NHS England, Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group and Rotherham Council, work with their VCS and other partners to create the carers pathway of support; an integrated, multi-agency response to the needs of carers, using carers assessments and crucially the allocation of a “buddy” or “lead worker” to champion their individual needs. This lead worker should, where possible, come from the most appropriate agency identified for individual needs.

5. That Rotherham Council considers via its review of services to carers, and in light of the new requirements imposed by the Care Bill, reconfiguring its advice and information offer for Carers including; Assessment Direct, Connect 2 Support, Carers Corner and outreach services, to ensure that flexible support is offered within existing resources.
6. That the “triangle of care” presented by RDaSH be considered as part of this process as something that could be adapted and rolled out to all partners providing support to carers.
7. That Rotherham Council reviews its carers assessment tool in the light of the Care Bill to ensure it is fit for purpose. This should involve considering whether it could be less onerous. The correct title of the document “Carer’s needs form and care plan” should be used by partners to reflect that it is an enabling process rather than an “assessment”.
8. That Rotherham Council looks to set more stretching targets for carers assessments and regular (annual) reviews.
9. That steps are taken to ensure that the Joint Action Plan for Carers meets the recommendations of this review and is more accountable in terms of its delivery, seeking to influence external partners accordingly.
10. Whilst the review group has sought to make recommendations that can be accommodated within existing resources it also recognises that there is a strong case for further investment in this sector, in line with the prevention and early intervention agenda. It therefore recommends that the allocation of resources to carers (including the Better Care Fund) is reviewed to demonstrate how the changes to services proposed within this review are to be achieved.
11. Although outside the original scope, the review group recognised the important role public, private and third sector employers, play in providing flexible employment conditions for carers and therefore recommend that the findings of this review are shared with partners as widely as possible. In addition they reaffirmed the commitment in the Carer’s Charter to actively promote flexible and supportive employment policies that benefit carers.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board wished to place on record their appreciation of the work undertaken by this Scrutiny Review Group.

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 support for carers, as now submitted, be endorsed.

(3) That the scrutiny review report be forwarded to the Cabinet for further consideration.

(4) That the Cabinet be asked to submit its response to this scrutiny review, to a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, within two months.

93. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2013/2014

Consideration was given to the work programme for 2013/14 presented by Deborah Fellowes, Scrutiny Manager, which provided progress on the delivery of the work programme at the half way point. It summarised achievements, changes and requests decisions regarding flexing the programme in the remaining half of the year.

The Board considered how to progress its two reviews currently outstanding; one on MKember structures and one on deprived communities. The Cabinet had informally requested that, as a result of issues emerging from the budget, the Board consider prioritising Member structures as their next review and a small group of Board Members look to approving the scope of the review.

It was suggested that as the deprived communities and poverty reviews overlapped with economic and regeneration, this did not just sit with Improving Lives. As the Community First meetings were coming up to their third year, it was suggested that this all encompassed under one umbrella and possibly be considered by all the Vice-Chairs, within current staffing constraints.

Each of the Select Commissions via their Chairpersons gave their current status and progress of their reviews.

Self Regulation:-

- Commissioning Review was underway with Councillor Beck taking the lead.
- Community Plan Outcomes was underway and was being chaired by Councillor Atkin.
- Council House Rents was awaiting the outcome of the review of Neighbourhood Centres.

Health:-

All reviews were on target apart from possible deferment of Mental Health Services to next year.

Improving Places:-

- Improving Places work programme was on target.
- The Homelessness Strategy was almost complete.
- The Customer Service Centre and Libraries was now complete.

Improving Lives:-

- Poverty review is merging with Deprived Communities and moving to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board work programme.
- The review of the Integrated Youth Support Services was delayed due to the proposed changes.

Resolved:- (1) That the achievements so far be noted.

(2) That the changes to the work programme be approved.

(3) That the recommendations to merge the deprived communities and poverty reviews and allocate to Improving Lives and the Member Structures as the next priority for this Board (to be scoped) be approved.

(4) That Councillors Falvey, Steele and Whelbourn consider the scope of the Member structure review.

94. YOUTH CABINET/YOUNG PEOPLE'S ISSUES

Deborah Fellowes, Scrutiny Manager, reported on the involvement of the Youth Cabinet with the Self Harming Review, which was really valuable and informative.

95. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 13TH DECEMBER, 2013

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, held on 13th December, 2013, be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

Reference was made to Minute No. 82 (Anti-Social Behaviour in Rotherham) and the suggestion that the crime statistics be referred to the Police and Crime Panel, which the Scrutiny Manager agreed to raise.

It was also noted under the same Minute that a visit to the Vulnerable Persons' Unit had not yet been arranged. It was suggested, however, that a presentation be made to a future meeting and consideration then given as to the value of a visit.

It was also pointed out that the status of the recommendations would be established, particularly around the circulation of recommendations and the escalation of concerns to a national level.

96. WORK IN PROGRESS

An update was provided by representatives from each of the Select Commissions.

Self Regulation:-

- The final tranche of the budget proposals, rent increase and district heating charges had been presented for consideration at the last meeting.
- The scope had now been agreed for the procurement/commissioning review and targets around local support chains.

Improving Places:-

- The issue of the Parking Van was to be considered
- The Customer Service Centres/Libraries was complete.
- The proposed 60 mph speed limit on the M1 was to be included as an agenda item during February, 2014, along with a review of the local plan in February/March, 2014.

Improving Lives:-

- An update into CSE had been well received at the last meeting and was well attended and received.

Health:-

- Two meetings had been held recently specifically looking at proposals for the hospital (in closed session), sexual health, trends and STI's and HIV.
- Dorothy Smith had also been in attendance for the item relating to the proposed Integrated Health, Education and SEN Service.
- The Carers' Review had been debated at length.

Resolved:- That the information shared be noted.

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

There were no call-in requests to report.

98. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board take place on Friday, 21st February, 2014 at 9.00 a.m.