

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
21st February, 2014

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

99. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this meeting.

100. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

101. CORPORATE PLAN UPDATE.

Councillor G. Whelbourn, Chairperson of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, welcomed the Policy and Research Officer (Planning and Regeneration, Environment and Development Services Directorate) to the meeting. The Policy and Research Officer had prepared a presentation in relation to the continuing work around the Council's Corporate Plan.

Minute No. 41 (Corporate Priorities) of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 26th July, 2013, refers.

The proposed updated Corporate Plan Priorities had been subject to public consultation as part of the wider consultation that the Local Authority had undertaken on budget setting.

The presentation included: -

• **Context: - role of the Local Authority: -**

The proposed new Corporate Plan Priorities had been set in response to the Local Authority's current context: -

- Funding;
- Demographics;
- Welfare Reform;
- Devolution and service transformation;
- Public consultation.

The proposed new Corporate Plan Priorities were: -

- Priority One: Stimulating the local authority and helping local people into work;
- Priority Two: Protecting our most vulnerable people and families, enabling them to maximise their independence;
- Priority Three: Ensuring all areas of Rotherham are safe, clean and well-maintained;
- Priority Four: Helping people to improve their health and wellbeing and reducing inequalities within the Borough.

Each priority had a number of specific commitments underneath it and there were ten statements that outlined what success would look like if each of the Priorities were met.

Discussion ensued on the Priorities, commitments and defined success criteria. The following questions and comments were made: -

- In the current climate of reducing resources, the priorities should be realistic;
- The community underpinned all of the values and it was important to build community resilience: -
 - The new Priorities recognised the structural changes brought about by the provisions of the Localism Act and how integrated service provision with partners and service users was taking place, including the Better Care Fund and Troubled Families initiative;
- Continuing Scrutiny Reviews were looking at ways in which the Local Authority could support local businesses across the Sheffield City Region area. Other Local Authorities used their own municipal boundaries as their definition of 'local';
- Frontline staff were continuing to make significant contributions to the Borough. Consideration needed to be given to supporting and protecting the back office functions that supported the frontline workers;
- The inclusion of Rotherham's roads and footpaths being at least as good as the national average – did Rotherham realistically have resources to make this the case, and what was the national average?;
- Were partners included in the Priorities and commitments? – Yes, they were included in the 'business principles' section;
- Would the Council self-assess performance on the success criteria on an ongoing basis? –
 - The Self-Regulation Select Commission was looking at performance measurement and establishing baselines. Directorate monitoring would be ongoing and Cabinet would take an overview. Where it was necessary, interventions and performance clinics would be used.
- Would the Council consider that national averages were based on many factors, including that some authorities had more money than others. For the members of the public, benchmarks meant very

little, and they relied on what they could see and experience in terms of road condition and litter;

- The expectation of personal responsibility was paramount when it came to litter;
- Arrangements in another Local Authority that were employing Officers to enforce issues – did this work?;
- What did success look like?;
- Using the same language as the public when discussing the priorities – for example, PROs and pavements;
- Consultation had focussed on the Budget and very few responses were received relating to the Corporate Plan update;
- Were the Corporate Plan Priorities deliverable?;
- The role of the Council in tackling inequalities and creating happier fairer communities;
- The loss of ‘no community left behind’ – this should be included at Priority 4;
- Some areas did not feature on the Deprived Neighbourhood’s programme but did have pockets of deprivation. Ensuring that these communities did not lose out;
- Linking to other initiatives, including the Think Family programme;
- The language should reflect the resources available, so ‘we will’ should be changed to ‘we will seek to achieve’.

In summary, the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to the proposed Corporate Plan update covered: -

- Ensuring that Rotherham priorities were not submerged in favour of City Region priorities;
- The Corporate Plan update contained overall priorities and not wider performance management measures;
- The ten outcomes should reflect the Local Authority’s aspirations. The removal of ‘no community left behind’ was felt to be a loss to the Plan;
- The importance of reflecting the policy framework.

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

(2) That the views now expressed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board be forwarded to the Cabinet, to assist the further development and discussion about the corporate priorities.

102. CABINET RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY REVIEW OF DOMESTIC ABUSE.

Consideration was given to a report presented by the Strategic Director, Children and Young People’s Services, that provided an update on the recommendations of the Improving Lives Select Commission Scrutiny Review of Domestic Abuse, presented to Cabinet on 6th November, 2013 (Minute No. C111 refers). The recommendations focussed on the

improvement of service provision to victims of Domestic Abuse in Rotherham.

Joyce Thacker was the Chair of the Domestic Abuse Priority Group in Rotherham. The Domestic Abuse Priority Group was part of the Safer Rotherham Partnership structures. The issue of Domestic Abuse affected thousands of lives across the Borough.

The Review made 20 recommendations. Only one recommendation was deferred (recommendation 1), and one was agreed subject to available funding being identified (recommendation 18). Funding for the Team had been secured on a temporary basis meaning that the Team had time to plan to long-term when funding was agreed on a yearly basis. A permanent source of funding was being pursued. Throughout the Scrutiny Review, a number of best practice ideas were identified and incorporated into the Service.

Councillor G. A. Russell, Chairperson of the Improving Lives Select Commission spoke in support of the Domestic Abuse Service. It remained an important and high-profile priority and something that should have multi-agency buy-in. The role and successes of the Service should be publicised more.

Discussion ensued and the following points were raised: -

- Examples of successful work with school children undertaken by a local sports team in Bradford had given a really positive prevention message. There was a role for Elected Members as community leaders to give out prevention messages;
- Sports strips had been used to display prevention messages and reach a targeted audience;
- A question was asked relating to 'safe houses' in the Borough, did they still exist? - The Strategic Director confirmed that safe houses did exist, some located out of the Authority for the safety of those who needed them. In addition, work referred to as 'target hardening' was also continuing, where security devices were added to homes where necessary to protect those living there;
- The importance of a one-stop-shop or single point of contact to avoid individuals being passed between different agencies, to make reporting a better experience and to help them to feel safe when they reported domestic abuse;
- The future establishment of the Multi-Agency Support Hub in Riverside House was looked forward to by all partners as it would mean that all Child Protection functions would be together in one place, and next door to the Domestic Abuse Hub to enable closer working and information sharing;
 - Methods of making information easier to access, including technology apps and a texting service were suggested;
 - Funding was also provided by the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner.

Resolved: - (1) That the Cabinet response to the Scrutiny Review be noted.

(2) That it be noted that the Cabinet have agreed any further Cabinet response to the report is fed back to the Safer Rotherham Partnership in February, 2014.

(3) That a monitoring report be provided to the Improving Lives Select Commission in six-months' time.

103. UPDATE REPORT ON SCRUTINY REVIEW OF FUEL POVERTY.

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Public Health Specialist that provided a six-month update to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on the Fuel Poverty Scrutiny Review (Minute No. 32 of 12th July, 2013, meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board refers).

The report provided an update on the progress of the 11 recommendations of the Scrutiny Review.

Highlighted actions included: -

- The procurement of three Green Deal Provider Partners who would target the most vulnerable in Rotherham;
- A £1.3M funding application had been submitted to the Department of Energy and Climate Change Green Deal Communities Fund;
- The Warmer Homes Strategy Group was co-ordinating Warm Homes Healthy People funded activity;
- Fuel poverty training and workshops had taken place and had been funded by the Department of Energy and Climate Change and delivered by the National Energy Action;
- RMBC Contracting Partners, Wilmott Dixon and Mears had established a 'Making Every Contact Count' campaign to support clients living in or at risk of fuel poverty;
- Department of Energy and Climate Change funding from the Local Authority Competition 2013-2014 worth £400,000 was successfully received to provide loft and cavity wall insulation;
- £2.6M of capital investment had been made during the year to improve the Council's housing stock.

Clarification was sought on the Green Deal Provider Partners and whether the inaugural partner meeting would report to a member of the Cabinet.

Discussion ensued and the following issues were raised: -

- How did the Local Authority identify and raise awareness? – By working with Age UK, the deployment of a Voluntary Action Rotherham Pilot and awareness training for front-line officers;
- Examples were shared where agencies had not worked together and an older person had many visits to fix their radiators when it had been an issue of fuel poverty;
- Youth Cabinet had highlighted fuel poverty as one of their key issues – a project led by Sheffield Hallam University – Warm Well Families – had been run in Rotherham alongside GROW and CYPs;
- Tasabee work that had taken place had worked with vulnerable members of the community to educate people on how to improve their fuel efficiency;
- The report offered good news on how funding was being secured and was meeting a real need;
 - Keeping Ward Members informed about the work that was taking place in their areas – This is a good idea. A Communications Plan was being brought together; however, due to the complex nature of the available funding, communications needed to be targeted on a household level to ensure accuracy.

All in attendance commended the level of work that had taken place and how it had benefitted the residents of Rotherham.

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

(2) That a follow-up report be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board in September, 2014, or sooner if performance started to decrease.

104. YOUTH CABINET/YOUNG PEOPLE'S ISSUES

It was reported that the Children's Commissioner Take Over Day would take place on Thursday 27th February, 2014. All members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board were asked to attend the joint meeting that would take place with the Youth Cabinet.

105. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 24TH JANUARY, 2014.

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, held on 24th January, 2014, be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

106. WORK IN PROGRESS (CHAIRS OF SELECT COMMISSIONS TO REPORT)

Self-Regulation Select Commission: -

Councillor S. Currie, Chairperson of the Self-Regulation Select Commission, reported that the final meeting relating to the budget setting

process had taken place. The meeting had reflected on the process, what had worked well and what questions were useful to scrutinise the budget setting process on behalf of the electorate.

The Members' Training Session on chairing skills had been well received.

The Scrutiny Review of Procurement was continuing positively. Officers were really engaged and providing information.

The Performance Management Sub-Committee was convened and Councillor Atkin was chairing the meeting.

Improving Places Select Commission: -

Councillor K. Sims, Vice-Chairperson of the Improving Places Select Commission, reported on the inspection of the Local Plan and the Inspector's report.

The Select Commission had considered the consultation in relation to the 60 miles per hour speed-limit on the M1, which was also relating to the proposed four-lane carriageway and local air quality.

The Scrutiny Review into Homelessness was continuing, evidence had been taken and a progress report on housing repairs and voids was also ongoing. The Select Commission aimed to present a draft at the next meeting in March.

The Local Economy Scrutiny Review was also ongoing and two sessions were planned for evidence gathering. A draft report would be submitted to a future meeting.

Improving Lives Select Commission: -

Councillor G. A. Russell, Chairperson of the Improving Lives Select Commission, reported on the single item agenda of the previous meeting of the Commission. This had focussed on Rotherham's efforts to counter Child Sexual Exploitation. The meeting had been well attended by Scrutiny Members and representatives of agencies involved in this work. The next meeting would focus on outcomes for Looked-After Children and Corporate Parenting. This meeting would be open to all Scrutiny Members. Training for all Members on their role as a Corporate Parent was being provided.

Health Select Commission: -

Councillor B. Steele, Chairperson of the Health Select Commission, outlined two Scrutiny Reviews that were ongoing. One related to GP's practices and one to Continence. The Select Commission intended to meet with the Chair and Chief Executive of Rotherham Hospital around their Forward Plan.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board: -

The Scrutiny Manager reported that the Department for Work and Pensions' sanctions review had completed hearing evidence. This issue had also been considered by the national Select Committee. The review would be making a number of key recommendations predominantly around the development of local protocols. These would be shared with the Welfare Steering Group to be held in March. Two Scrutiny Reviews were planned to start, one relating to Member Structures and one on Deprived Communities.

Resolved: - That the information shared be noted.

107. CALL-IN ISSUES

There were no formal call-in requests.