

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**  
**25th April, 2014**

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

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Sims.

**121.       DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Currie declared a personal interest in Minute No. 123 (Access to G.P.'s Scrutiny Review) on the grounds that he was a Trustee for NHS Sheffield.

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

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

**123.       ACCESS TO GPS - SCRUTINY REVIEW**

No communications had been received.

**124.       2011 CENSUS - UPDATE**

Further to Minute No. 160 of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 19th April, 2013, consideration was given to a presentation by Miles Crompton, Policy and Partnerships, which highlighted:-

- The 2011 Census.
- Work Day v Resident Population.
- Ethnicity by Age.
- Residents Born Outside the U.K.
- Ethnicity by Residency.
- Main Community Languages Spoken.
- Pensioners Living Alone in Rotherham.
- Families with Dependent Children.
- Families with Dependent Children Without a Car.
- Tenure by Dwelling Type.
- Tenure by Age of Householder.
- Older Householders Ownership and Social Rent.
- Tenure by Car Ownership.
- Unemployment Rates by Age and Gender.
- Unemployment Rate by Qualification Level.
- Census v Benefit Count – March, 2011.
- Manufacturing Employment.
- General Health – Bad.
- Long Term Conditions or Disability – Limiting.

- Carers 20+ Hours.
- Change in Working Age Qualification.
- No Qualifications By Age.
- Graduates By Age.
- Travel to Work – Measured by Distance.
- Census Users/Requests/Applications.
- Census Actions.
- Future of the Census.

A question and answer session ensued and the following issues were raised and clarified:-

- Expertise within the Council and whether consideration had been given to offering this as a shared service.
- Issues arising from the scrutiny review and the feeding in of relevant information into the Local Enterprise Partnership around manufacturing, employability and skills.
- True ethnicity numbers in Rotherham.
- The need to support those people who were living longer in the future.
- Distinctions between certain categories and whether these could be subdivided by Ward.
- Definition of carers and whether these were paid or unpaid.
- Use of the census as a key source of information.
- Presentation of the relevant information to the relevant Select Commission and how some of this work could feature in work programmes moving forward.

Resolved:- (1) That Miles Crompton be thanked for his informative presentation.

(2) That the information contained be fed into the relevant Scrutiny Reviews.

(3) That a copy of the presentation be circulated to Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

(4) That this information be presented to the Self Regulation Select Commission and an invitation extended to all Members to be present.

## **125. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY - SCRUTINY REVIEW**

Further to Minute No. 60 of the meeting of the Improving Places Select Commission held on 23rd April, 2014, consideration was given to a report, presented by the Chair of Improving Places Select Commission, which set out details of the review group which was established to undertake a scrutiny review of the Council's Homelessness Strategy.

The review identified a wide variety of information, in different formats and locations, to assist people who were homeless or who were potentially becoming homeless. There appeared to be a lack of understanding with clients and with Members regarding the 28 Day Rule.

Information was provided about the amount of rent arrears owing compared with previous year's figures. The figures were comparable and the conclusion reached was that it is too early to draw any conclusions about the impact of the introduction of the Welfare Reform measures around "Bedroom Tax".

The number of emergency bed spaces was low and there was no direct hostel provision in Rotherham. There was also a lack of support for young people with learning difficulties in finding accommodation and employment.

Feedback from tenants who have used the crash pads was positive. Suggestions were made on how to improve the experience.

Rough sleeping was not a major issue in Rotherham. There was a 24 hour telephone service available, however if the person was not in the priority need category, then no immediate help could be provided.

Plans to repopulate the town centre through redevelopment of properties or new build, had been halted due to the effects of the economic downturn in the country. Discussions identified the need for any initiative to tackle the issue of homelessness would be better received if ideas were included at the planning/development stage rather than added on at a later stage.

Currently no comprehensive Empty Properties Strategy was in place which would address the issue of bringing private sector properties back into use. The Private Sector Housing Manager had limited resources and work consisted of providing advice to private property owners. Grants to bring empty properties back into use were available from the Home and Communities Agency, but only to social housing providers.

There was a Landlords Forum in operation, however, the members were not usually the ones with empty properties. Other forms of communications used to contact private sector landlords included the publication of a newsletter and the creation of a website on the Council's site.

A partnership between the Council and Action Housing, provided apprenticeship places to refurbish four empty properties for habitation by the apprentices. The option to extend this scheme to other housing associations could be explored.

The review contains ten recommendations in response to these issues which were set out in detail as part of the report.

The Board welcomed this report and found the contents enlightening especially around the quality of temporary accommodation.

It was also suggested that issues relating to education and location need to be factored in, alongside the revisions to typing errors highlighted by the Private Sector Housing Officer, Recommendation 3 to include implications of the Bedroom Tax, Recommendation 3 to include consideration by this Board before its submitted back to Improving Places, allocation of responsibilities particularly in relation to Recommendations 5 and 9, Recommendation 10 to be smartened and an additional Recommendation 11.

Resolved:- (1) That all those involved in the Review be thanked for their input.

(2) That the report be received and its contents noted.

(3) That the findings and recommendations of the scrutiny review of the Council's Homelessness Strategy be endorsed.

(4) That the report of this scrutiny review be forwarded to the Cabinet for further consideration.

(5) That the Cabinet's response to the recommendations of this scrutiny review be reported to future meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and then Improving Places Select Commission.

#### **126. ISSUES REFERRED FROM AREA ASSEMBLIES**

This was a standing agenda item and at this stage there were no issues to report.

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

There were no issues of concern to report.

#### **128. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 21ST MARCH, 2014**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, held on 21st March, 2014 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

#### **129. WORK IN PROGRESS**

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

## Self Regulation:-

- Councillor Beck was to chair the review looking at new business.
- The meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2014 would be looking at the work programme going forward and include the Census 2011 information.
- The Select Commission would be welcoming a new Chairman in the new municipal year as Councillor Currie had indicated his wish to step down and thanked everyone for their support.

## Improving Places:-

- The Homelessness Review was to be presented to Cabinet shortly.
- Trips and slips on Council footways – this was to be brought back in twelve months time.
- The next meeting would focus on highways issues, repairs and maintenance.

## Improving Lives:-

- The meeting next week would focus on pupil premium, school performance and child poverty.

## Health:-

- The review of Access to G.P.'s was now progressing onto Cabinet.
- A meeting had taken place regarding the hospital budget deficit which had been attended by the new Chief Executive, Martin Havenhand. The position would be monitored and appropriate recommendations made. A further meeting would take place in June, 2014 where future plans would be looked at in greater detail.
- A review into mental health was also scheduled and scoped.
- A meeting was also to take place with the Regional Health Select Commission regarding Leeds Hospital and the report which highlighted concerns about mortality levels.

Resolved:- That the information shared be noted.

**130. CALL-IN ISSUES - TO CONSIDER ANY ISSUES REFERRED FOR CALL-IN**

There were no formal call-in requests.

**131. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board take place at the Town Hall, Rotherham on Tuesday, 20th May, 2014, commencing at 9.00 a.m.