

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
18th July, 2014

Present:- Councillor Whelbourn (in the Chair); Councillors Ahmed, Currie, Parker, Read, G. A. Russell, Sims, Steele and Vines.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Hoddinott, Middleton and Watson.

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this meeting.

13. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

(The Vice-Chair, Councillor Steele, assumed the Chair during consideration of items 14 and 16 below, in the absence of the Chair)

14. REVIEW OF POLLING PLACES 2013/2014

Consideration was given to a report, presented by the Electoral Services Manager, containing the findings of the review of polling districts and polling places as required under the provisions of The Electoral Administration Act 2006. It was noted that the report is to be submitted to the meeting of the Cabinet, to be held on Wednesday, 3rd September, 2014.

The report stated that The Electoral Administration Act 2006 requires that a full review of polling arrangements be completed every four years. The most recent review had been completed in December, 2011. However, The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of the reviews, so that they would be better aligned with Parliamentary elections. The next compulsory review must be started and completed between 1st October, 2013 and 31st January, 2015 (inclusive).

Included with the report were the following documents:-

: Terms of Reference, setting out the process and criteria for the review.

: Summary of Changes to Polling Arrangements – (i) for the May 2014 elections; and (ii) changes resulting from the current review, which will be implemented with effect from December 2014.

: the Returning Officer's Proposed Polling Scheme, which is the outcome of the review and details the full scheme of polling arrangements to be effective from December 2014.

Members noted the following issues:-

: the difficulty of securing the use of accessible and available community buildings (even those premises which are Council-owned), because of budget limitations)

: the use of schools as polling stations – including advance notification, enabling schools to arrange INSET training days for teachers (the provisions of the Fixed Term Parliaments Act 2011 have enabled arrangements to be slightly more predictable);

: by-elections do allow some limited discretion in setting the date for polling and, if any schools are required for a by-election, the Returning Officer will liaise with the head teacher to minimise disruption as much as possible;

Discussion took place on the following salient issues, affecting polling stations in specific electoral Wards:-

: the effect upon specific premises (used as polling stations) which, (i) had been in place for the elections held on 22nd May, 2014, and (ii) which were to be implemented from December 2014, onwards;

: the location of the one polling station serving Hooton Roberts and whether it is feasible to move the polling station to the Ravenfield Primary School; the age profile of residents of Hooton Roberts, together with the provision of bus services in this area, were both noted;

: the relative difficulty of utilising mobile polling stations, in terms of the absence of suitable sites, facilities for polling staff and accessibility for voters;

: East Herringthorpe – whether there is any possibility of an additional polling station being made available in this area;

: the suitability of polling stations in terms of the health, welfare and safety of polling staff;

: the concentration of four polling stations within a relatively small area in the Rotherham West electoral Ward;

: polling stations are occasionally located in a neighbouring electoral Ward, only in cases where there are no suitable premises within the correct electoral Ward;

: the use of buildings currently used as Children's Centres;

: the prevalence of voting by post.

It was agreed that Electoral Services will review the proposed polling arrangements for Hooton Roberts, East Herringthorpe and Rotherham West, in response to the issues now raised by Members.

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

(2) That, subject to any alterations being made to the proposals as a consequence of the further examination of the issues and suggestions now discussed, the Returning Officer's proposals for future polling arrangements be approved insofar as the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board is concerned.

(3) That it be noted that the Returning Officer's proposals for future polling arrangements will be the subject of a further report to be submitted to the Cabinet meeting to be held on Wednesday, 3rd September, 2014.

15. BUDGET PRINCIPLES AND BUDGET SETTING TIMETABLE 2015/2016

Further to Minute No. 15 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 9th July, 2014, the Chief Finance Manager presented a report which explained that the Council refreshed its Budget Principles last year for setting the 2014/15 Budget in light of announcements that further significant funding reductions for Local Government were likely to continue until at least 2018. Having heard the views of citizens, residents and other interested stakeholders, the Council is to prepare a Budget for 2015/16 and future years in order to offer 'Fair Choices in Hard Times'. The submitted report set out these Budget Principles and the key enablers which would ensure these principles were met, focusing on:-

- Fairness.
- Meeting need.
- Responding to local concern.
- Using funding wisely.

The Cabinet had approved the proposed Budget setting timetable for the 2015/16 Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy and the proposed approach to reporting the Council's in-year financial performance to Cabinet for the financial year 2014/15.

Discussion took place on the following issues:-

: Budget monitoring and budget setting – a request that minority party Members of the Council should be provided with sufficient financial information to facilitate scrutiny of the Council's budget; this request would be referred to the Chief Executive;

: the possibility of services being outsourced and ensuring the removal of the Council's central establishment charges prior to cost comparisons of services being made; the Chief Finance Manager explained the way in

which the unit costs of services and the corporate overhead costs are identified, enabling accurate cost comparisons to be made; the costs of all Council services are to be reviewed in the light of the further expenditure reductions required;

: the role of the Self Regulation Select Commission in budget monitoring;

: the Council has to respond to the budget and grant settlement announcements of the coalition Government, often made during December and affecting the next and future financial years;

: the assumption of the coalition Government providing a 'Council Tax freeze grant' within the funding gap model;

: there will be a seminar about the budget, for all Members of the Council, on Tuesday 9th September, 2014.

Members requested the inclusion of a glossary, stating the meaning of abbreviations, in reports presented to this meeting. It was explained that usual practice was to spell out in full terminology in the first instance, followed by the acronym in brackets, and thereafter use the acronym only within the remainder of the report.

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

(2) That the following decisions of Cabinet be noted:-

(a) That the 'Fair Choices in Hard Times' Budget Principles on which the 2015/16 General Fund Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy will be based be approved.

(b) That the proposed budget setting timetable for the Revenue Budget 2015/15 and Medium Term Financial Strategy be approved.

(c) That the proposed approach to reporting to Cabinet the Revenue and Capital forecast outturn position for 2014/15 financial year onwards be approved.

16. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2014/2015

Further to Minute No. 10 of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 20th June, 2014, consideration was given to a report presented by the Scrutiny Manager concerning the overall scrutiny work programme for the 2014/2015 Municipal Year.

Accordingly, consideration was given to the detail of the 2014/2015 scrutiny work programme. The following issues were raised during the debate:-

: review of issues affecting deprived communities (including the impact of the closure of children's centres, which will initially be considered by the Improving Lives Select Commission); Members also noted the arrangements within the Area Assemblies, which have sub-groups considering issues affecting deprived communities in their localities;

: the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions;

: Local Authority Petition Schemes (Localism Act 2011);

: Budget monitoring – continuing consideration by the Self Regulation Select Commission;

: Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services – proposed joint review by the Health Select Commission and the Improving Lives Select Commission;

: continuing consideration of improving health outcomes in the Rotherham Borough area;

: Improving Places Select Commission – study of the role of the Combined Authority for the Sheffield City Region and the Local Enterprise Partnership;

: Improving Places Select Commission – study of the issues previously raised by the Youth Cabinet, in terms of public safety issues in the Rotherham town centre;

: Supporting the Local Economy – scrutiny review;

: continuing examination of the Council's responsibility for the maintenance of highways;

: Improving Lives Select Commission – review of services for safeguarding children and adults;

: the integration of arrangements for the scrutiny of health services for adults and adult social care – proposed joint working between the by the Health Select Commission and the Improving Lives Select Commission.

It was noted that the Members of Cabinet and the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Select Commissions will meet and discuss any variations to the scrutiny work programme, in the light of emerging priorities.

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

(2) That the overall scrutiny work programme for the 2014/2015 Municipal Year, together with the additional issues now discussed, be approved.

(3) That the following reports be submitted to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board:-

(a) an update of progress from the officers' working party on deprived communities;

(b) a report on the progress of the poverty theme and workstream of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy (referred to at Minute No. 9 of the meeting of the Health Select Commission held on 12th June, 2014).

17. REPRESENTATION ON PANELS, SUB-GROUPS ETC., 2014/2015

Resolved:- That, further to Minute No. 6(3) of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 20th June, 2014, Councillor Sims be the representative of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on the Recycling Group for the 2014/2015 Municipal Year.

18. ISSUES REFERRED FROM AREA ASSEMBLIES

Members noted that the Area Assembly Chairs meeting is to consider "issues arising from scrutiny" as a standing agenda item.

19. YOUTH CABINET/YOUNG PEOPLE'S ISSUES

It was noted that the Rotherham Youth Cabinet will launch its manifesto at a meeting to be held on Thursday, 16th October, 2014, at the Town Hall, Rotherham.

20. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 20TH JUNE, 2014

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, held on 20th June, 2014 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

21. WORK IN PROGRESS

Self Regulation Select Commission:-

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

: continuation of the theme of budget and performance monitoring, including the Bedfordshire model of challenge and support from scrutiny for the Executive in their budget setting; consideration of the way in which questions from the public may influence the budget setting and monitoring process;

: scrutiny review of Procurement.

Health Select Commission

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

NHS Rotherham Foundation Trust budget – a scrutiny review will be undertaken;

: report on the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy for Children and Young People 2014-19;

: study of the Health of Rotherham's population;

: consideration of the annual report of Healthwatch Rotherham;

: spotlight review of Urinary Incontinence services.

: progress of the scrutiny review of Mental Health;

: continuing the joint working with the Improving Lives Select Commission.

Improving Places Select Commission:-

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

: scrutiny review of dampness and condensation in Council housing properties.

: private sector housing – selective licensing scheme;

: continuing consideration of housing repairs and maintenance;

: energy supply – collective switching scheme;

: report of the scrutiny review of Improving the Local Economy;

: consideration of the Select Commission's work programme.

Improving Lives Select Commission:-

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

: proposed scrutiny review of childhood neglect;

: study of the issue of children missing from care;

: continuing the monitoring of issues concerning the safeguarding of children and young people (including issues such as forced marriages);

: continuing the joint working with the Health Select Commission.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board:-

The Chair reported on the recent activities of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board:-

: Members welcomed the fact that this Authority's approach to scrutiny reviews, especially the scrutiny of health services, is being regarded as exemplar practice across the country.

22. CALL-IN ISSUES

The Chairman reported that notification had been received of the call-in of the following decisions of the Cabinet meeting of 9h July, 2014:-

Minute No. C17 – Rotherham Local Plan : Adoption of the Core Strategy

Minute No. C20 – South Yorkshire Broadband Project

It was agreed that a special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board be arranged during August 2014, in order to consider these call-in issues.