

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD  
19th September, 2014**

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

Councillor Dalton was also in attendance.

**29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this meeting.

**30. COUNCILLOR G. WHELBOURN, CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD.**

Councillor B. Steele, Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, informed the Board that Councillor G. Whelbourn had resigned from his role of Chair.

All present wished to thank Councillor Whelbourn for his tireless support for scrutiny across the Borough and his quiet style of leadership.

**31. COMMUNICATIONS.**

Councillor B. Steele referred to the publication of the Professor A. Jay OBE report. It was imperative that the report's recommendations were considered carefully by the Council. In the fullness of time the recommendations and implications would be given full and proper scrutiny.

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

There were no members of the public or the press in attendance.

**33. SCRUTINY REVIEW - DEPARTMENT FOR WORKS AND PENSION'S SANCTIONS AND CONDITIONALITY REGIME**

Consideration was given to the report submitted by the Policy Officer (Resources Directorate) that outlined the scrutiny review undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on the potential unfair implementation relating to the Department of Work and Pension's sanctions and conditionality regime and the Cabinet's response to the recommendations made on 6<sup>th</sup> August, 2014 (Minute No. C25 refers).

Matthew Oakley had undertaken a national review of sanctions in 2013. He found that letters to claimants: -

- Were overly long and legalistic in their tone and content;
- Lacked personalised explanations of the reason for sanction referrals;
- Were not always clear around the possibility and process surrounding appeals or application for hardship payments;
- Were particularly difficult for the most vulnerable claimants to understand – meaning that the people potentially most in need of the hardship system were the least likely to be able to access.

The purpose of the review was to ensure that the Department for Work and Pension's conditionality regime was implemented fairly, consistently and flexibly in reflecting the needs and circumstances of claimants with increased transparency and more effective partnership working. The review considered: -

- Flexibility;
- Discretion;
- Vulnerable claimants;
- Local working protocol.

The review group made one single overarching recommendation: -

Partners within the welfare reform steering group, via the Rotherham Partnership, [should] aim to establish a local working protocol.

The Cabinet's response to the Scrutiny Review's six recommendations was noted. All six of the recommendations had been accepted, however, the Cabinet noted some concerns around the realistic implementation of the recommendations. These included that the Job Centre Plus would need to be an active part of the local protocol for it to be effective; liaison with the Local Government Association; speed of processing of the hardship funds for single people and the potential for food banks and others to fill the gap.

Discussion followed and members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board made the following comments: -

- The loss of the budget for crisis loans and the transferral of the risk to the Council;
- Missed appointments leading to benefit sanctions and whether this was being fairly / unfairly and consistently/inconsistently applied.

Resolved: - (1) That the Cabinet's response be noted regarding accepting the review's recommendations, including the central element of establishing a local working protocol to improve communications and provide support for vulnerable claimants.

(2) That the Cabinet's concerns set out in the appended table relating to the realistic implementation of some of the recommendations also be noted.

(3) That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board monitor the implementation of the recommendations and the first monitoring report be presented in six-months' time.

#### **34. SCRUTINY REVIEW - SUPPORTING THE LOCAL ECONOMY**

Consideration was given to the report that outlined the outcomes of the review that the Improving Places Select Commission had undertaken on supporting the local economy. Due to changes in the Local Governance Finance scheme, including business rates, the Council had a focus on supporting the local economy to be buoyant. These would include: -

- Generating an increase in business rates;
- Generating employment and training opportunities for local residents;
- Stimulating the multiplier effect;
- Retaining as much private sector investment in the local economy.

This review complimented the Commissioning review being undertaken by the Self-Regulation Select Commission, which included the role of the Local Authority in stimulating the local economy by its procurement function. The outcomes of both reviews should be considered as a suite of recommendations that aimed to maximise the impact of private and public sector investment in Rotherham's economy.

The recommendations comprised of 'early implementation' and 'longer term strategy'.

Discussion followed and the issues raised covered: -

- A long-term aspirational plan regarding jobs growth would be a positive development;
- The low number of local applications for apprenticeship posts was surprising. Were awareness raising presentations being given in local schools?;
- What types of 'specific expertise' would be required on the review group?;
- The potential benefits of refurbishing existing industrial sites that were empty;
- The long-term aspiration for a university campus on the Dearne Valley area;
- The Borough's top ten development sites;
- The development of the Dearne Valley site.

Specific discussion took place on the need to strengthen some of the recommendations, including apprenticeships, matching-up employers and local schools to facilitate information exchange about apprenticeships, facilitation of councillors with relevant knowledge onto any of the review groups and the use of existing sites and premises.

Resolved: - (1) That the draft recommendations be agreed subject to the above additions being made.

(2) That the report be forwarded on to the next available Cabinet meeting for consideration.

(3) That the Cabinet's response be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board within two-months of it being considered by the executive.

### **35. SOUTH YORKSHIRE - POLICE AND CRIME PANEL - JOINT WORKING PROTOCOLS**

Consideration was given to a report, presented by the Scrutiny Manager, concerning a proposed joint working protocol between the four local authority crime and disorder scrutiny committees (Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield) and the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel. A copy of the protocol was appended to the submitted report.

The covering report noted that Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Board fulfilled the statutory Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee for Rotherham. The Chairs of the four Crime and Disorder Committees were invited to a meeting of the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel to discuss potential joint working protocols and to share information. The Police and Crime Panel was established with the statutory function to scrutinise and hold to account the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Yorkshire.

A draft working protocol between the Police and Crime Panel and the Crime and Disorder Committees had been drawn up and was submitted for consideration.

The working protocol covered: -

- Working together;
- Panel meetings;
- Influencing the police and crime plan;
- Regular exchange of information and intelligence;
- Co-ordinating work programmes;
- Aligning membership;
- Endorsement.

Discussion ensued and the following points were raised: -

- The use of private sessions at previous meetings of the Police and Crime Panel. These sessions were not minuted, meaning that the content could not be scrutinised. It was noted that the first private sessions had been initiated so that legal advice could be taken and that this had not been minuted. The second meeting's private session was so that personal information about applicants could be considered. It was confirmed that this session had been minuted.

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board voted on the proposal, which was seconded, that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board receive six monthly updates on the progress of the joint working protocol. The vote was supported on a majority basis.

Resolved: - (1) That the proposed joint working protocol be agreed.

(2) That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board receive six monthly updates on the joint working protocol.

(3) That the issue of private sessions not being minuted be referred to the Council's Monitoring Officer.

(4) That Officers report on the agreement back to the Police and Crime Panel as appropriate.

### **36. SCRUTINY REVIEW: URINARY INCONTINENCE.**

Further to Minute No. 39 of the meeting of the Health Select Commission held on 11th September, 2014, consideration was given to a report, presented by Councillor J. Dalton, Vice-Chair of the Health Select Commission, and the Scrutiny Officer, concerning the main findings and recommendations of the scrutiny review of urinary incontinence. A copy of the draft review report was appended to the submitted report.

The three principal aims of this scrutiny review were to:-

- Ascertain the prevalence of urinary incontinence in the Borough area and the impact it has on people's independence and quality of life;
- Establish an overview of current continence services and costs and plans for future service development; and
- Identify any areas for improvement in promoting preventative measures and encouraging people to have healthy lifestyles

The Scrutiny Review had made six recommendations: -

- 1) RMBC and partner agencies should ensure all public toilets in the borough are clean and well equipped to meet the needs of people who have urinary incontinence, including suitable bins for the disposal of equipment and disposable products.
- 2) Greater links should be established between the Community Continence Service and Rotherham MBC Sport and Leisure team to support people to participate in appropriate sport and physical activity.
- 3) Rotherham MBC and other sport and leisure activity providers should consider building more pelvic floor exercises into the Active Always programme and wider leisure classes.
- 4) There should be greater publicity by partner agencies to raise public and provider awareness of:
  - a) the importance of maintaining good bladder and bowel health and habits at all life stages (through media such as screens in leisure centres and GP surgeries, further website development, VAR ebulletin and a campaign during World Continence Week from 22-28 June 2015)
  - b) healthy lifestyle choices having a positive impact on general health but also helping to prevent incontinence, such as diet, fluid intake and being active
  - c) the positive benefits of pelvic floor exercises as a preventive measure for urinary incontinence, including the use of phone apps for support
  - d) the need to include the impact of incontinence due to medication, such as diuretics, within a patient's care
- 5) More work should take place with care homes to encourage staff to participate in the training offered by the Community Continence Service and to increase staff understanding of the impact of mobility, diet and fluid intake on continence.
- 6) That the Health Select Commission receives a report in 2015 on the outcomes of the project considering future service development of the Community Continence Service.

Discussion ensued and the following points were raised: -

- It was important to ensure that embarrassment and stigma surrounding the issue was addressed to ensure that it was reduced;
- Were people under-reporting the issue for fear of embarrassment? Were specific groups under-reporting?

- The use of non-invasive marketing, such as signs in toilets telling people where they could access support;
- Strengthen the recommendations by adding which individuals/agencies were the lead/owner.

Councillor Dalton, Chair of the Review, thanked Councillor M. Vines and Janet Spurling for their support during the review.

Resolved: - (1) That the findings and recommendations of the report be accepted, with the amendments shown above.

(2) That the report be forwarded to the Cabinet for their consideration.

### **37. ISSUES REFERRED FROM THE AREA ASSEMBLIES**

The Scrutiny Manager reported that issues around safety would be picked up through Members' Development.

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

No issues were raised under this item.

### **39. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS HELD ON 18TH JULY AND ON 30TH JULY, 2014**

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, held on 18th July, 2014 and on 30th July, 2014 be approved as correct records for signature by the Chairman.

### **40. WORK IN PROGRESS**

#### **Self-Regulation Select Commission: -**

Councillor S. Currie, Chair of the Self-Regulation Select Commission, reported that the Commission were continuing to undertake scrutiny on budget and performance monitoring. The Select Commission had initiated a review into the Council's Standing Orders following a question at the Council meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2014.

#### **Improving Lives Select Commission: -**

Councillor J. Hamilton, Acting Chair of the Improving Lives Select Commission, reported that the Commission's most recent meeting had focussed on the Children and Young People's Plan and Children Missing Education. The Select Commission had received a report at their previous meeting detailing that 468 children were currently classed as Children Missing from Education (CME). The importance of monitoring this information closely was noted and it was agreed that this would be done via the Improving Lives Select Commission.

**Improving Places Select Commission: -**

Councillor C. Read, Chair of the Improving Places Select Commission, reported on the current focus of the Select Commission, which were parking fines, grounds maintenance and a damp review.

**Health Select Commission: -**

Councillor B. Steele, Chair of the Health Select Commission, reported that the Commission were focussing on the CCG's Strategic Plans, CCG spending plans, the Emergency Centre at the Hospital including staffing matters and mental health provision.

Resolved: - That the information shared be noted.

**41. CALL-IN ISSUES**

There were no formal call-in requests.

**42. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING: -**

Resolved: - That the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board take place on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2014, to start at 9.00 a.m. in the Rotherham Town Hall.