

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
13th February, 2015

Present:- Councillor Steele (in the Chair); Councillors Currie, J. Hamilton, Middleton, Read, Sansome, Sims, C. Vines, Watson and Wyatt.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ahmed and Parker.

94. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this meeting.

95. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

96. SCRUTINY OF ROTHERHAM'S PLANS TO ADDRESS CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Further to Minute No. 86 of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 23rd January, 2015, consideration was given to a report, presented by the Senior Adviser (Scrutiny and Member Development) detailing the draft report and recommendations of the scrutiny review of Rotherham's plans to address child sexual exploitation.

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board commented on the following specific issues:-

: the importance of effective partnership working between the Council, its statutory partners and also the voluntary sector, in tackling child sexual exploitation under a 'shared vision';

: how to find ways of avoiding the negative and ineffective habit of departments and organisations working in isolation, in 'silos';

: the need for improved communications between agencies, including the sharing of confidential and sensitive information;

: the need for clarity about the way in which the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board communicates with the general public about its role and function.

Members also debated the contents of the minutes of the two meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, which had been held on 12th and 18th December, 2014, to consider Rotherham's plans to tackle child sexual exploitation:-

(i) Minutes of the meeting held on 12th December 2014

: it was clarified that the question about the apparent non-attendance of education partners (at the 12 December meeting) had been about the attendance of head teachers and representatives of academies and schools, rather than officers of Children and Young People's Services;

: Members questioned the use of risk assessments in tackling child sexual exploitation and suggested that further information be sought on how the thresholds are applied;

: a specific response, including up-to-date figures, was required to the question about the number of abduction notices which had been issued, by the South Yorkshire Police, in Rotherham, during the past twelve months (and how many children/young people were involved);

: Members acknowledged that the South Yorkshire Police would be unwise to publish information about current and continuing investigations of (any) crime, because such investigations may become compromised; however, it should be possible to publish the number of successful prosecutions relating to child sexual exploitation;

: Members asked whether there was a sufficient amount of support available for victims when Court hearings were pending in respect of the prosecution of offenders (it was acknowledged that the resources of the South Yorkshire Police may be limited in terms of notifying victims who may not ultimately be required to attend a Court hearing as a witness);

: it was noted that the provision of services to witnesses and also the victim support service both received funding directly from the budget of the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner.

(ii) Minutes of the meeting held on 18th December 2014

: the Child Sexual Exploitation Needs Analysis – Members stated that the various questions which they had asked, during this meeting on 18 December 2014 and which have not yet been answered, should be addressed;

: Discussion took place on the reductions in the budget for the South Yorkshire Police Service, which will impact upon its ability to investigate new cases of serious crime; it was agreed that appropriate representations ought to be made to the Home Secretary (with a copy sent to the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner, to the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel and to the three local Members of Parliament) about the implications of the reductions in the Police Service budget;

: Members acknowledged that the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) needed to continue operating effectively.

Members also asked a question about how children who go missing from care and are at risk of child sexual exploitation, are monitored.

Members concluded that a continuous and in-depth scrutiny of the response to the issue of child sexual exploitation, both by this Council and its partner agencies, shall be afforded the highest priority.

A short discussion took place on 'whistle blowing' and the response of large organisations to this issue. Using the recent media coverage of a case affecting the National Health Service, it was agreed that this Council ought to review and, if necessary, update its own 'whistle blowing' procedure, including a search of best practice being utilised across the public sector.

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

(2) That the report, now submitted, of the scrutiny of Rotherham's plans to tackle child sexual exploitation, be forwarded to the Chief Executive for incorporation into this Council's improvement plans, as appropriate.

(3) That a sub-group, comprising the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Improving Lives Select Commission and one Member of the Opposition, shall be established and shall meet initially on a monthly basis to:-

(a) oversee the continuing monitoring and review of the recommendations and actions contained in the report of the scrutiny of Rotherham's plans to tackle child sexual exploitation; and

(b) receive and consider information from relevant officers and agencies regarding the implementation of improvement plans in relation to child sexual exploitation.

(4) That the minutes (as now amended) of the two special meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, held on 12th and 18th December, 2014, be approved as correct records.

(5) That the report, now submitted, of the scrutiny of Rotherham's plans to tackle child sexual exploitation, be distributed to all of the agencies and organisations which have contributed to the review.

(6) That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board requests information on the impact of the budget reductions affecting the Police Service and the specific implications for the investigation of cases relating to child sexual exploitation, as part of its scrutiny of the Safer Rotherham Partnership.

(7) That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board notes the commitment of the single Improvement Plan to track and monitor progress and improvements and insists that appropriate actions be taken and monitored in respect of Rotherham's plans to tackle child sexual exploitation.

(8) That a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on the Council's 'whistle blowing' policy.

97. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2014/2015 - PROGRESS UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 16 of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 18th July, 2014, discussion took place on the overall scrutiny work programme for the 2014/2015 Municipal Year.

It was agreed that, pending any instruction or statement of intent by the Government-appointed Commissioners:

(1) the future meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and of the four Select Commissions shall be considered on a 'case-by-case' basis;

(2) the work that already started as part of the 2014/15 scrutiny work programme would be completed;

(3) the work on the remaining areas of the 2014/15 scrutiny work programme shall be suspended.

98. ISSUES REFERRED FROM THE AREA ASSEMBLIES

There were no items to report.

99. YOUTH CABINET/YOUNG PEOPLE'S ISSUES

Arrangements were being made for a meeting between Members of the Health Select Commission and members of the Youth Cabinet, to be held on Wednesday, 25th February, 2015, for discussion about Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

100. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 23RD JANUARY 2015

Resolved:- (1) That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, held on 23rd January, 2015, be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

(2) That, further to item 96 above, the minutes (as now amended) of the two special meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board, held on 12th and 18th December, 2014, concerning the scrutiny of the response to Professor Jay's report about child sexual exploitation, be approved as correct records for signature by the Chairman.

101. **WORK IN PROGRESS**

Self Regulation Select Commission:-

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

(Councillor Currie apologised that he had not provided a briefing for his Vice-Chairman, prior to the previous meeting)

: continuing the monitoring of budget issues;

: the Select Commission has received an update on performance reporting from the interim Chief Executive and would be receiving further updates at a future meeting.

Improving Lives Select Commission:-

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

: consideration of the process of pupils' admission to schools, the planning process and school admission appeals;

: consideration of the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report, 2013/2014;

: consideration of the Education Lifestyle Survey 2014 (survey of Rotherham's school pupils);

: items for future meeting agendas include consideration of the response to the Ofsted inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, looked after children and also the implications of the Care Act 2014.

Improving Places Select Commission:-

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

: consideration, at the next meeting, of safety issues affecting the Rotherham town centre, including multi-agency responsibilities (especially the South Yorkshire Police and the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTe)) and the perception, especially amongst young

people, that the town centre is unsafe (this issue includes feedback from the Education Lifestyle Survey referred to above).

: future consideration of the Council Housing Investment Improvement Strategy;

: review of the provision of travel passes by the SYPTTE (matters concerning agreements under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990);

: a spotlight review of the Council's response to Winter weather conditions (and including related issues raised by the Self Regulation Select Commission).

Health Select Commission:-

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

: consideration of issues affecting the Ambulance Service industrial dispute about response times – further specific details about the Service operations in Rotherham will be included in the Service annual performance report, to be published during May 2015;

: consideration of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), including the proposed meeting with the Youth Cabinet.

Resolved:- (1) That the information shared be noted.

(2) That it be confirmed that the Select Commissions will not begin any additional scrutiny reviews until guidance and/or instruction has been received from the Government-appointed Commissioners.

102. CALL-IN ISSUES

The Chairman reported that notification had been received of the call-in of the decision of the Cabinet meeting of Wednesday, 4th February, 2015, relating to the Magna Trust Loan Renewal (Cabinet Minute No. 141 refers).

It was agreed that a special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board be held on Wednesday, 18th February, 2015, in order to consider this call-in issue.