

Overview and Scrutiny Update



May - August 2018-19

Check, Challenge, Change

Our Work Programme 2018-19

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

- ◆ Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy
- ◆ Council Plan Performance
- ◆ Commissioning and Contract Management
- ◆ Safer Rotherham Partnership
- ◆ Complaints
- ◆ Revenue Budget Monitoring
- ◆ Energy
- ◆ Poverty
- ◆ Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge
- ◆ Pre-decision Scrutiny

Health

- ◆ Adult Social Care
- ◆ Autism Strategy
- ◆ Public Health
- ◆ Rotherham Integrated Health and Social Care Place Plan
- ◆ Respiratory Services tbc
- ◆ Social and Emotional Mental Health
- ◆ Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- ◆ Carers Strategy Implementation
- ◆ South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw Integrated Care System
- ◆ NHS Trust Quality Accounts

Improving Lives

- ◆ Early Help
- ◆ Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)
- ◆ Safeguarding - Children and Adults
- ◆ Domestic Abuse
- ◆ Lifestyle Survey
- ◆ Looked After Children - demand for placements
- ◆ Children & Young People's Service Performance
- ◆ Monitoring Ofsted inspection outcome action plan
- ◆ School Performance
- ◆ Child Sexual Exploitation - Post Abuse Support

Improving Places

- ◆ Thriving Neighbourhoods
- ◆ Time for Action
- ◆ Dignity - Bereavement Services
- ◆ Cultural Strategy
- ◆ Tenant Involvement
- ◆ Rotherham Town Centre
- ◆ Home to School Transport
- ◆ Modular Housing (Jointly with OSMB)
- ◆ Skills Agenda
- ◆ Asset Management

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Introduction

Welcome to the first Overview and Scrutiny update for 2018-19

The purpose of these updates is to give an overview of the work carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) and the Select Commissions - Health (HSC), Improving Lives (ILSC) and Improving Places (IPSC) during the last few months.

Page 2 provides a reminder of the broad work programme for 2018-19 previously included in the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report. The scrutiny committees have discussed and refined the work programme and scheduling of items during the summer. Inevitably other issues will emerge during the year and it is important that Scrutiny has the flexibility to consider and respond to these in a timely manner as in previous years.

In pre-decision scrutiny the OSMB has already considered a number of major plans and strategies in 2018-19 and is keen to ensure that governance and monitoring arrangements allow for the involvement of non-executive Members in the evaluation of the impact of changes on customer outcomes and experience. The Board also expects to see equality impact assessments (EIAs) for major strategies as part of the assurance process.

The first section of this report covers the pre-decision scrutiny, followed by a section for each committee. Where relevant for this period the update will include details of:-

- Progress monitoring of strategies and plans following past scrutiny
- Recommendations made by the committees
- Outcomes resulting from scrutiny
- Reviews - underway or due to commence
- Sub-group/Task and Finish Group activity
- Member visits
- Public involvement in scrutiny
- Key future items
- Other activity undertaken by the Scrutiny Members

I hope this will be a useful and informative update of overview and scrutiny work undertaken to date in 2018-19.

Cllr Brian Steele

Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

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Pre-decision Scrutiny

The recommendations made in all the pre-decision reports considered by OSMB were supported. Details of additional recommendations made by Scrutiny, plus any requests for specific information and intentions for future monitoring, are outlined below.

♦ Customer Access Strategy

The recommendations were supported subject to no negative implications arising from the equality impact assessment and this was made available after the meeting to provide that reassurance. OSMB recommended that the work programme underpinning the strategy be shared with Members, so they were aware of the timeline for implementation of the projects and how these would be evaluated. Cabinet were also asked to consider how non-executive Members could be involved in the projects and work programme, to provide assurance that the customer experience would be good irrespective of which channel was used to engage with the Council.

♦ Enabling School Improvement

An overview of proposals for the future enablement of School Improvement in Rotherham and proposals to bring together key strategic partners to create a Rotherham Strategic Education Partnership Board (RSEPB) to set and oversee education priorities was scrutinised. The OSMB recommended that members of the Rotherham Youth Cabinet should be appointed to the RSEPB to ensure that the voice of young people is heard and this was agreed by Cabinet. Scrutiny also requested clarification on the governance arrangements to include provision for oversight by non-executive Members, and to have reports from the RSEPB on progress made against the priorities.

♦ Proposals for the future of Rotherham Intermediate Care Centre

The preferred option in the report, to move the provision of rehabilitation from being building based to community based, was supported by the Board. It was agreed HSC would receive updates on the performance of the re-designed Intermediate Care Service to seek assurance that there were no negative implications in terms of customer experience.

♦ Transformation of Services and Support for People with a Learning Disability

A detailed report set out the next steps, in line with the learning disability strategy, vision and the learning from the consultation with people and families. OSMB recommended that prior to any decision on the future of Parkhill Lodge being made, a specific and formal consultation exercise be carried out on the proposed closure. The Board also recommended that consideration be given to how non-executive Members could become involved in the evaluations of client experience in the delivery of the Learning Disability Strategy. Further visits to other local authorities that have implemented a similar approach should be arranged for Members and carers to observe the benefits outlined in the report. Scrutiny also requested monitoring reports six months after implementation of the strategy and underlying work streams, to either OSMB and/or HSC.

♦ The House Project

Consideration was given to a report recommending participation in a project, with funding from the Department for Education, which would aim to co-produce with care leavers an approach to finding alternative housing solutions to secure a permanent home for young people leaving care. Recommendations from OSMB were for the Leaving Care Team to link in with the Scrutiny Review of Modular Housing Solutions to examine how care leavers could be involved in its development and for consideration to be given to how care leavers with additional needs would be included in the House Project. As with other strategies mentioned on this page, the Board sought clarification on the governance arrangements to include provision for oversight by non-executive Members.

♦ Future Designation of Selective Licensing Areas - No additional recommendations resulted.

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Pre-decision Scrutiny

♦ Rotherham Local Plan - Adoption of the Sites and Policies Document

Two additional recommendations were made by Scrutiny - for specific briefings in respect of major planning developments to be delivered to Ward Members on a ward-by-ward basis and for EIAs to be explicitly referenced in the cover report of all items for Cabinet and Pre-decision Scrutiny.

♦ Forge Island Development

OSMB recommended that Cabinet should confirm how it will hold decisions makers to account for exercising delegated powers in respect of the Forge Island redevelopment aspects of the Town Centre Masterplan. Quarterly updates were requested by the Board on the decision making and implementation of the project. The flood alleviation programme was referred to Improving Places as part of its powers to scrutinise flood risk management functions.

♦ Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) Pilot to Build Affordable Homes

This report sought Cabinet approval to deliver 12 bungalows for older people through a pilot to test alternative modern construction methods. MMC is a generic term used to cover different types of homes that are manufactured in a factory environment and either fully or partially assembled in the factory, or the component parts are assembled on site. OSMB recommended that Cabinet consider aligning this project with the Scrutiny Review of Modular Housing Solutions to avoid duplication. Members also recommended that future proposals detail how the Council will market and promote the benefits of MMC for affordable homes.

♦ Community Energy Switching Scheme

The purpose of this paper was to seek approval to assess the feasibility of developing a community energy switching scheme in Rotherham to reduce the number of people paying high tariffs for gas and electricity. Members recommended that Cabinet encourage officers to deliver this project swiftly so that residents across the borough could benefit at the earliest opportunity from potential savings on energy bills. OSMB also requested that, subject to the outcome of the study, consideration be given to the marketing and promotion of the scheme.

♦ Allotments Self-Management

Members were supportive of the proposal and requested a progress update on the project to IPSC.

♦ Strategic Property - Riverside House Lease

OSMB recommended that Cabinet take an “in principle” decision to approve the restructure of the lease arrangement and delegate authority as outlined in the published officer recommendations. Efforts to co-locate more public services in Riverside House should also be supported.

♦ Developing an Evidence-Based Programme to reunify Young People who are Looked After

Multi-Systemic Therapy – Family Integrated Transitions (MST-FIT) is a programme with two intersecting phases; it is targeted towards children and young people between the ages of 11 and 15 and their families. The Board were supportive of implementing this model as part of the Looked After Children Sufficiency Strategy to reduce the number and cost of children in care. They favoured option 2 ‘Delivery via an outcome based contract in partnership with a social investor (using a Social Impact Bond) and with funding support from the Life Chances Fund’ although the final decision would be delegated to the Strategic Director.

♦ CCTV Priority Capital Investment and Policy

OSMB recommended that all Members be notified of the arrangements and process for re-locating cameras in their wards and that arrangements also be made to notify residents of deployment and use of mobile cameras. They requested a further report to IPSC reviewing the use of the cameras six months after implementation.

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Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

♦ Scrutiny Reviews: Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Services; Adult Community Learning; and Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge - Work Experience

OSMB approved these review reports to go forward to Council and Cabinet for a formal response.

♦ Budget Setting Process 2019-20 and Medium Term Financial Challenge

Consideration was given to a briefing paper requested by OSMB to inform its approach to scrutiny of emerging budget proposals for 2019-20. The paper outlined the Council's budget setting process and outline timetable for 2019-20 and the anticipated scale of the financial challenge in the medium term. It was noted that Cabinet had established a set of Service Design Criteria, which were guiding the development of budget options.

Members reflected on the financial challenges faced by the Council, noting the specific challenges in adult and children's social care services, and queried what proposals would be brought forward and whether re-engineering of business processes was happening. Discussions also focused on potential approaches to assist in reducing unit costs associated with children's social care and to move away from building based services. Members emphasised the importance of timely submission of proposals for scrutiny and consultation with the public. It was agreed that the Chair of OSMB, the Leader and the Cabinet Member would meet to discuss the development of the budget in more detail, to inform the scrutiny process for the 2019-20 budget.

♦ Council Plan Quarter 4 Performance Monitoring Report

The overall position and direction of travel was discussed at length with Members probing in depth regarding a number of the measures. Their focus was with regard to performance on the Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) priority measures; smoking reduction; information, advice and guidance in adult social care; take up of direct payments; maintenance of unclassified roads; and spending on agency staff, interims and consultants. Officers provided further information on plans to meet these measures. During the discussions, reference was made to concerns about the 101 Connect system and it was agreed to question South Yorkshire Police about the performance of their 101 Connect service at the OSMB meeting in July, which was carried out.

♦ Equality and Diversity Peer Review Findings and Progress Update

OSMB scrutinised a report detailing the outcomes of the peer review undertaken by Barnsley and Doncaster Councils in October 2017 of the equality and diversity function and the progress made in implementing actions arising from the review recommendations. The Peer Review Team agreed with the Council's self-assessment that it was performing at the 'developing' level of the Equality Framework for Local Government. A number of strengths and areas of good practice were identified, including examples where the Council was working above the 'developing' level.

Five areas are being focused on by the Council following the review recommendations:- collection and use of information to inform decision making; equality impact assessments; evaluation of the current policy and action plan and having more outward facing objectives; community engagement; and building the knowledge and expertise to embed equality protocols and practice. Workforce representation from all protected groups should also be increased.

Members highlighted the importance of all nine equality protected characteristics being recognised. They raised concerns regarding the findings in relation to young people and disabled people and sought assurance that actions would address the gap in understanding intersectional issues, such as BME older people or LGBT travellers. The Chair and Cllr Brookes subsequently met with the Cabinet Member and Assistant Chief Executive to discuss OSMB's concerns regarding equalities. Following this meeting a development session on EIAs was held for Board Members.

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Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

♦ Financial Outturn 2017-18 and May 2018 -19 Financial Monitoring Report

Members noted the outturn position for last year and expressed concerns about the significant overspends in social care services for children and adults, seeking assurances in respect of work to analyse and reduce spending in these areas and associated spending in Legal Services. Despite line-by-line analysis of each budget, increased demand was still the main cause of pressure. The forecast overspend for 2018-19 was also noted, together with actions to address areas of overspend and identify additional savings to mitigate shortfalls in the planned savings. The Board concluded the financial position was of concern and agreed to form a sub-group to monitor in-year spend. This group will also receive monthly reports on vacancy management and a breakdown detailing spend in CYPS on the Complex Abuse Inquiry, staffing and the High Needs Block. OSMB recommended that consideration be given to building in adequate time for consultation when planning the implementation of budget savings, to avoid delay in realising savings.

♦ Budget Monitoring - Children and Young People's Services

Following the two general financial reports referred to above, Members also scrutinised the latest position in CYPS in more depth. They requested a detailed breakdown of spend to be provided for the sub-group to provide assurance in respect of extra pressures faced by the service plus further information on in-year mitigations. It was also agreed to invite the new Strategic Director of CYPS to attend OSMB in November 2018 to set out his financial plan for CYPS.

♦ Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP) Annual Report

A presentation detailed the SRP's priorities and achievements the previous year, including revised processes and stronger engagement. A peer review had provided assurance that the SRP was developing in the right way and identified areas for further development, such as aligning resources and commissioning. It was agreed performance information regarding hate crime would be shared with Members. OSMB recommended that further work be undertaken to establish protocols for sharing local offender management plans, or information supporting such plans, to Ward Members.

♦ Communications and Marketing Update

Members were provided with an overview of the major milestones achieved so far with the new Communications and Marketing strategy and those currently being worked on. They welcomed the presentation and acknowledged improvements in Council communications since the turn of the year, with specific reference to the fortnightly Member Briefing. They referred to the mixed quality of information from services regarding notification of works, events or disruption to service provision in wards. This was recognised as an area for development that linked in with neighbourhood working and OSMB supported the suggestion made to establish a dashboard for Members sharing ward intelligence and information to link services, neighbourhood working and civic and community leadership through Members. Clarification was sought on responsibility for consultations and it was confirmed directorates would be responsible for delivering consultation, with corporate oversight, plus support from Communications and Marketing to publicise and make documents accessible.

Other activity

♦ Adult Social Care Improvement Plan and Budget Monitoring Workshop

A workshop took place in July to update Members on the current position, issues and challenges in the service and to set the context for OSMB to inform their future scrutiny of the services.

♦ Call-ins - None in this period

♦ Petitions - None in this period

Coming up

Scrutiny review: Rothercard - Council Plan Performance - Budget

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Health Select Commission

♦ “The Health and Wellbeing of the Working Age Population” - Director of Public Health (DPH) Annual Report

Every DPH must produce an independent annual report on the health of the local population. This year's report was the final one in a series that worked through the life course, focusing on key health issues at different stages of our lives. It highlighted some of the successes in Rotherham, but also provided a frank assessment of the challenges faced as a community.

Members discussed the report at length and probed into specific issues including the decline in women's healthy life expectancy, impact of domestic abuse and other Adverse Childhood Events, use of e-cigarettes, substance misuse, treatment and recovery from cancer, sexual health and work in deprived areas. HSC resolved to ensure services take account of the report in service planning and delivery. They also requested follow up information on several issues, which was provided.

HSC learned more about progress with the Making Every Contact Count (MECC) initiative “Healthy Chats” which includes a programme of online training and train the trainer sessions. A short demonstration of the MECC website illustrated the signposting to services (national or local) and to self-care information. Members asked questions regarding how its impact would be evaluated.

The Commission also agreed to scrutinise the refreshed Sexual Health Strategy later in the year and made a recommendation that it should include a specific element regarding education and communication with people with learning disabilities and those with barriers to communication.

♦ Evaluation of the Health Village Pilot and Implementation of the Integrated Locality Model

A central element of HSC's work programme is scrutiny of health and social care integration and transformation, with integrated locality working being a priority workstream. After several updates and consideration of the interim evaluation report on the pilot, a small cross-party group discussed the key findings and challenges from the final evaluation. The aim was to feed into the discussions about wider implementation, across localities with differing demographic profiles and health needs.

HSC are conscious of the important role of unpaid carers as an integral part of the health and care system. Members emphasised the need for effective liaison and communication with carers as this seemed to be a gap in the evaluation/next steps, so that carers both understand the new model and are involved in the care planning of the person(s) for whom they provide care. Members also focused on the need for qualitative feedback to supplement the quantitative metrics already in place such as hospital admissions and length of stay. As such, they wished to ensure that patient experience and feedback on the difference the new model has had for them is captured and reported, and similarly with carer feedback, with consideration given to the best ways of obtaining meaningful feedback. They also stressed the importance of capturing staff perceptions of how the multi disciplinary teams were working. These recommendations were conveyed to the relevant officers and a formal response will be received in September when the next update is provided.

♦ Savings from the Integrated Sexual Health Service (ISHS) in 2019-20 (referred from OSMB)

Public Health presented a report on progress made in identifying what amounts to a 2.6% (£56k) reduction in the overall contract value for the service, which is commissioned from The Rotherham Foundation Trust (TRFT). TRFT proposed to stop providing the Sunday clinic for under 25s as it was not as well utilised as other clinics and was more expensive to run. This will result in a saving of £26,000, with the other £30,000 met through changes to delivery of HIV prevention work. TRFT have also undertaken an EIA to consider the impact of the Sunday clinic cessation. After exploring a number of issues, including access to emergency hormonal contraception, HSC noted the EIA and progress made but requested an update on the service user evaluation once collated and an evaluation of any impact on A&E following cessation of the Sunday service.

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Health Select Commission

♦ Scrutiny Workshop: Adult Residential and Nursing Care Homes

HSC held a workshop session in April that scrutinised progress made by the recently established Quality Board for registered services in bringing about improvements to the sector; the impact of the Care Home Support Service (CHSS); contract compliance and an update on four individual care homes rated as inadequate in June 2017 by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

Several themes had been identified by partners to focus on to drive improvements in the sector and HSC wished to explore in more detail plans to address these challenges. The key areas identified were governance, retention of Registered Managers, finance, workforce and operational issues. HSC also examined potential actions that could be taken by the CQC or RMBC through its contract compliance team following an adverse CQC inspection or if there was an issue with a provider. Often there would be a multi-agency response, which is where the CHSS would become involved.

Members were concerned by the fluctuating performance of some providers, some over a period of time, but recognised the CHSS and expertise of the Clinical Quality Advisor are already starting to drive up standards and HSC anticipates this will lead to further improvements across the sector. The work of the Quality Board to drive improvements and its intentions around participation in the Quality Matters initiative and development of the Leadership Academy, learning from good practice elsewhere, will tackle the absence of governance and leadership. In particular being able to retain experienced and suitable Registered Managers in care homes and reducing turnover is critical. The final review report and recommendations will be presented at OSMB in September.

♦ Progress on Carers' Strategy Implementation

This has been a key aspect of the work programme for a number of years with regular updates requested. In July Members received a presentation outlining recent progress and forthcoming work. Members noted progress made in co-production and delivery of training modules; raising awareness of young carers and their needs with schools and GPs; and developing a memorandum of understanding between ASC and CYPS. A number of actions still need to be taken forward and additional resources had been put into the carers workstream. HSC explored how unknown carers would be identified and asked questions about monitoring delivery of the action plan and ensuring the strategy dovetailed with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

♦ South Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Wakefield Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (SYDNoW JHOSC)

Cllr Evans represents RMBC on the JHOSC which scrutinises workstreams and proposals for NHS service reconfiguration that impact on more than one local authority. The committee met in June and received an update on implementation of the changes to out of hours children's surgery and anaesthesia. The Hospital Services Review was also discussed at the meeting following a detailed presentation as the final report has been published, but this work is still at an early stage. Copies of the stakeholder briefing and an informative Q&A document paper on the review have been shared with all HSC members and the review item will be a standard agenda item for HSC. The agreed changes to hyper acute stroke services will also now start to be implemented.

Other activity

♦ Quarterly briefing with Health partners

These meetings discuss current performance of health partners and future work where scrutiny is likely to be involved. After a temporary dip in performance on one of the national measures for cancer waiting times the hospital had taken a number of actions to be back on track.

Coming up

Performance Sub-group 26th Sept - Locality working - Update on RDASH Estate Strategy

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Improving Lives Select Commission

♦ Barnardo's ReachOut Service Update

This service strives to support and protect children and young people in Rotherham who are at risk of CSE, through preventative education, targeted outreach and direct support to individuals and their families. Following their scrutiny of the service last year, ILSC requested this update, to include details of work to evaluate the impact of the train the trainer package and on work with schools and their levels of engagement. It was noted that ReachOut was delivered in most of Rotherham's primary and secondary schools with positive feedback from students and teachers. The Train the Trainer programme had been developed to support staff in schools to deliver the programme themselves and make the project more sustainable. Around 50 staff had participated, from all the schools who had requested training. Members explored engaging more schools, self-referral, referrals from health providers, community engagement, publicity and sharing information.

ILSC agreed to scrutinise the full project evaluation later on and made further recommendations:

- * For discussions with the Young Inspectors about working on areas where the profiles and awareness were not as good as others, or where engagement with schools was less effective.
- * Including information about the service in school newsletters.
- * That the lower levels of engagement with health colleagues be raised at the Children and Young People and Families Partnership where health colleagues attended.

♦ CSE Post Abuse Services Update

ILSC had requested specific information for the 2018 update - a map of provision; impact of funding reductions; contingency plans if funding bids were unsuccessful; post-trial support to survivors; and an assessment of the needs analysis to see if it required refreshing. Responding to this request and to the capacity concerns identified through performance monitoring, a service review was undertaken by Children's Commissioning to quantify and understand pressures on the services.

Members considered a report that presented the key findings of this review, responses to the information requested and longer term recommendations for commissioning post abuse services. These include taking a whole system approach with partners to commissioning support services to avoid duplication, maximise resources and improve the service user experience. A needs analysis would be undertaken to inform future commissioning and external funding bids. Contracts for the services had been extended from 1st April to 30th September 2019 to allow for commissioning a different service offer following the findings of the needs analysis and whole system mapping.

It was agreed to have a further update outlining the impact of the remedial actions and progress made on the proposed joint commissioning, with health partners asked to attend. Clarification was requested on the actions to fill the gaps for post-trial support, bearing in mind funding limitations.

♦ Domestic Abuse Update

Domestic abuse has been a core workstream for several years with ILSC considering regular progress reports and suggesting improvements. The Commission noted the key achievements outlined in the report and probed into areas they had raised previously, such as the perpetrator programme and capturing the voice of the victim and of the child. Concerns were raised about online abuse, such as stalking and harassment and how this is reported, how the risk is assessed and the potential for escalation. Clarification was also sought about risk thresholds across services, particularly when children were present, and ensuring these were consistent.

The officer recommendations were agreed and ILSC will continue to receive updates, specifically requesting an update on the actions to address stalking and harassment. Scrutiny members also intend to meet with service users and providers as part of their triangulation of evidence on progress on implementing the strategy.

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Improving Lives Select Commission

♦ Children & Young People's Services (CYPS) 2017-2018 Year End Performance

ILSC considered a summary report of performance under key themes, supplemented by performance data reports which provided trend data, graphical analysis and benchmarking data against national and statistical neighbour averages. The report outlined where there was good or improved performance and where there were areas for improvement, broken down between Early Help and Family Engagement; Education and Skills; and Children's Social Care services.

Members asked questions about a number of issues including demand for services and caseloads. They focused in particular on Looked After Children, including eligibility for personal education plans and Right Child Right Care plans and noted increased placement stability. The Cabinet Member will be invited to ILSC in September to facilitate further discussion on the year end outturn.

♦ Children and Social Work Act 2017 - Implications for Practice

The Act is intended to improve support for looked after children (LAC), promote the welfare and safeguarding of children, and make revised provisions about the regulation of social workers. It sets out corporate parenting principles for the Council as a whole. IPSC discussed a report on improving support for LAC, which outlined the main legislative changes and how the Council aims to implement them locally. The Commission noted the changes in practice that would be required under the Act and the specific implications for CYPS. They sought clarification on whether Pupil Premium funding was ringfenced. Members agreed that the Corporate Parenting Panel would keep the implications of the Act under review as they developed.

♦ Spotlight Review following the Ofsted Inspection of Adult Community Learning (ACL)

As agreed at OSMB following scrutiny of the Council Plan, a small working group examined actions taken to address the issues raised by the Ofsted inspection in 2017, which had made a judgement of inadequate in relation to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Members sought assurance that underlying issues that had led to this judgement were fully understood and that clear plans were in place to ensure learners had pathways to secure employment or skills training.

Ofsted had raised areas of concern arising from its previous inspection in 2014 which had not been addressed in a timely manner. It had further identified that quality improvement plans were not enacted sufficiently quickly and that Members had not received clear information with regard to performance. Following management intervention significant improvements had been made but without time to embed fully prior to Ofsted coming in. Delivery of ACL has since been transferred from the Council to Rotherham and North Notts College and as IPSC will be looking at the skills agenda there will be scope to consider how ACL is contributing to Council priorities in this area. The review group has formulated a small number of general recommendations looking to improve both Member oversight and performance management of any areas of concern resulting from external inspections or reviews and these will be presented at OSMB in September.

♦ CYPS Edge of Care Provision

An update was provided on implementation of the following services - Family Group Conferencing, the Edge of Care Team, Multi-Systemic Therapy and Pause Rotherham. Members discussed each in depth, seeking clarification on who each service worked with and how many cases there were, in addition to how each service operated and which practitioners were involved in each area. ILSC had been supportive of initiating the Pause Project in Rotherham and noted that it had commenced in July 2018. The officer recommendations were agreed and it was suggested for future scrutiny of performance that the scorecards should be submitted quarterly to the performance sub-group.

Coming up

Performance sub-group 12th September - Special Educational Needs and Disability - Early Help

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Improving Places Select Commission

♦ Communications and Engagement - Changes to Refuse and Recycling Collections Services

Following a pre-decision scrutiny recommendation made by OSMB last April regarding the Waste Collections Service Review, a report and presentation outlining further details of the proposed communications and engagement strategy was provided to IPSC for their input.

Communications will support the changes at each transition stage, in the autumn and the New Year, using a range of methods. These will include direct mail to all households, calendars, bin tags advising that “the next collection will be the last with this bin”, bin stickers and promotion of the garden waste service. These direct communications mechanisms will be supplemented with engagement events and targeted intensive engagement work in a number of priority areas.

Members raised various issues in relation to the collections, including which types of plastic may or may not be recycled; cross-contamination of waste and cleanliness of the bins; payment methods for the garden waste service; and use of communal bins in places where both space and road access for waste collection vehicles is limited.

Specifically with regard to communications, the Commission suggested involving community groups, Parish Councils and Area Housing Officers in disseminating information about the service changes. They also emphasised the importance of effective communications and having clarity and simplicity in the messages delivered to the public about the new services. They noted the information provided by officers and recommended holding a Member seminar on the changes to the Council’s waste and recycling services.

♦ Dignity Funerals Ltd. and RMBC Contract Update

As part of its continuing scrutiny of bereavement services, IPSC considered the Annual Report from Dignity at its meeting in July, which included reporting against identified performance indicators in relation to the current contract. The performance management framework covers availability requirements, performance requirements and agreed service improvements. Members noted that sufficient land suitable for burials had now been identified in Maltby for the next ten years. A review of lined grave options had been carried out and a Muslim community liaison meeting held on 3 July.

Prior to this formal scrutiny there had been discussion between the Council and members of the local Asian community regarding arrangements for Muslim burials. The Chair and Vice Chair, together with officers, met with approximately 30 community members on 24 July who were encouraged to speak in an open and frank manner about their concerns. The key issues raised were times during the day when burials can take place, costs and a general lack of satisfaction. Rather than attend IPSC, the community members felt that a way forward would be to meet with senior representatives from RMBC and Dignity to discuss their concerns. Another suggestion that emerged was to form an all faith group to consider any issues for people of other faiths.

The Commission noted the Annual Report and progress made on establishing new contract management arrangements following the transfer of this function to Registration Services. They requested that future performance reports should utilise the red-amber-green (RAG) reporting system where possible. Members also supported the proposal to establish a joint RMBC/Dignity Project Liaison Group, to facilitate discussions with the community and with faith groups about bereavement, burial and cremation issues, which linked well to the feedback from the community.

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Improving Places Select Commission

♦ Scrutiny Review of Modular Housing (joint with OSMB)

The purpose of the review is to look into the viability of providing low cost housing for young single individuals and young families in one and two bedroom modular accommodations, incorporating suitable technology wherever possible to reduce running costs and also if possible retaining the ability to move the buildings to where they are most needed.

The review, chaired by Cllr Cowles, is progressing well and the aim is to report the findings and recommendations by the end of 2018. Information has been gathered in relation to the:

- * housing situation in Rotherham and identifying need for a particular type of accommodation
- * different potential renewable energy sources to be used by the homes
- * types of modular housing and container homes currently available - two visits have already taken place with a further visit planned for early September (see image below)

As recommended by OSMB following pre-decision scrutiny of the House Project (see page 4), officers from Leaving Care are working with the young people to encourage them to be involved in the review by putting their views and opinions forward.



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Improving Places Select Commission

♦ Young Tenants Housing Scrutiny Review Action Plan - Progress Update

Following the review by RotherFed Tenant Scrutiny Working Group, IPSC receives regular reports on progress against the resulting action plan. All recommendations are on track with some positive achievements reported showing improved engagement with young tenants. These include the development of the Younger Tenants Forum; young tenants having input into key policies such as the Housing Strategy and Housing Revenue Account Business Plan; and their involvement in areas of work such as pre-tenancy workshops and customer care training. The Council is also working with young tenants to inform options for tenant involvement and the digital inclusion agenda.

Three young tenants were welcomed to the meeting, who shared their personal experiences. They were congratulated for their courage and the positive impact they were making which had resulted in en-suite bathrooms provided for shared accommodation and a recycling initiative using cans. Discussion ensued on other forms of support that could be put in place to support young tenants. It was agreed that a sub-group would be set up with representatives of the Young Tenants to explore options around furniture and tool donation schemes. Members requested further details on the role of the Young Tenants Forum and also recommended that consideration be given to the inclusion of a young tenant on the RotherFed Board.

♦ Rotherham's Cultural Strategy - Update on Progress

A report provided the Commission with an update on the positive progress made on developing a Cultural Strategy for Rotherham, which will be the overarching document that sets the direction for culture, sport and tourism across the Borough. Spatial priorities have been identified: North: the "Great Place" – Wentworth, Elsecar and the Dearne Valley; South: Rother Valley Country Park, Gulliver's and the surrounding canal network; and Central: Rotherham town. It is anticipated that the draft strategy will be launched at Rotherham Show, and approved in October 2018.

Development of the strategy will include wide-ranging consultation with the public, partner organisations and other stakeholders. Members asked a number of questions regarding the consultation and how officers would ensure it was effective, include all wards in the Borough and involve "hard-to-reach" groups. They also asked questions regarding consultation with children and young people and links to schools and colleges. IPSC agreed to establish a working group to consider the contents of the draft Cultural Strategy for Rotherham in detail and requested further information about the Embassy for Reimagining Rotherham.

Coming up

- Revised Housing Strategy
- Neighbourhood Working Update
- Rother Valley Caravan Park

C h e c k , C h a l l e n g e , C h a n g e