

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
Wednesday, 17th July, 2019

Present:- Councillor Steele (in the Chair); Councillors Cowles, Cusworth, Jarvis, Keenan, Mallinder, Walsh and Wyatt.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Napper.

Also in attendance were Councillors Alam, Hoddinott, Read and Roche, Cabinet Members.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-
<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Resolved:- That the minutes of the previous meetings held on 27th March, 2nd, 10th and 24th April, 2019 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest to report.

3. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

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

4. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

None of the items required the exclusion of the press or public from the meeting.

5. SAFER ROTHERHAM PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT

Consideration was given to the presentation of the Safer Rotherham Partnership Annual Report to Scrutiny by Councillor Hoddinott, Cabinet Member.

This statutory partnership had a number of key partners who worked together to try and bring about lasting change for some of the key issues being faced.

Each area was led by a different partner with strong links with other strategic boards to ensure closer working.

One of the priorities this year was around protecting vulnerable children with focus around children being criminally exploited and work had taken place with a sub-group of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board led by the Police, who were unable to attend today's meeting to share information.

A second priority was around vulnerable adults and in particular criminal exploitation, including issues such as modern slavery. Good work had taken place around mental health and the Council was leading on work to build confident and cohesive communities.

One of the more established priorities was around anti-social behaviour, counter extremism, hate crime and community tensions.

Another priority to highlight was the partnership working on domestic abuse and the work to improve processes and procedures between the partners so victims received a better experience. Areas of development also included female genital mutilation, forced marriage and honour-based abuse alongside stalking and harassment.

A final priority to highlight, again led by the Police, was around serious and organised crime. This was the first year this was being looked at as to how partners could work with the Police to disrupt and bring justice for some of these activities.

Partners were contributing to this work and in addition a small amount of funding was provided by the Police and Crime Commissioner which helped to plug the gaps and do some awareness raising alongside the other projects.

The Board welcomed the report, the good practice taking place and its easy to read format.

A number of questions were raised about information sharing on prolific offenders and the use of criminal behaviour orders. The Board were advised that with the improved structures and partnership working with the Police and the multi-agency meetings taking place, some of the more acute and repeat problems were being highlighted across South Yorkshire. However, further information was awaited on the changes to the Probation Service and how these may impact on local arrangements.

The Board also welcomed the number of positive completions of the perpetrator programme and asked if there were incentives to remain engaged. It further heard that the South Yorkshire wide project worked closely with the Police and Crime Commissioner and local authorities. The programme was offered to some as part of sentencing arrangements in liaison with the Probation Service. However, the intention of the scheme was for it to be offered as a preventative programme to change behaviour prior to offending.

The Board welcomed the comments on the Domestic Abuse Strategy which demonstrated the good work undertaken in partnership. Reference was made that work to counter extremism in schools would be considered by the Improving Lives Select Commission at its meeting on the 17th September, 2019. An invitation was extended to all to attend.

Further questions were asked about the five priorities highlighted above and how Rotherham compared with its South Yorkshire neighbours. It was noted that the Chairs of the Community Safety Partnerships shared information on the various challenges being faced and often undertook cross-partnership working. An example was given on safeguarding children from online extremism.

A further question was raised about whether there was consideration being given to the celebration of other religious festivals in Rotherham. From a Safer Rotherham Partnership perspective key events had been supported over the years and the Diversity Festival was part of the Rotherham Show. Thoughts were being given to a partner calendar showcasing events coming up throughout the year and to look at opportunities to promote and support them. Links had been forged with other communities and the mosques and the Partnership needed to be encouraging core neighbourhood working to bring people together to celebrate such events.

Further information was sought on the stalking and harassment issues and the Board were advised that these were often significant factors in cases of domestic abuse.

The Safer Rotherham Partnership Board were confident that the challenges were being dealt with through a robust strategy in place with a strong action plan. There was now a shift towards stranger stalking and harassment and a paper had been developed to be presented to the Safer Rotherham Partnership Board at its meeting in August highlighting data and demand locally and nationally about the legislation that supported issues of stalking and harassment.

There was strong support in terms of domestic abuse with commissioned services to support individuals through their trauma. However, this kind of structure did not exist where it related to stranger stalking and harassment unless offences were committed. Individuals could access victim support funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner, but this was not the same support to the extent for domestic abuse. This was why the report had been written to highlight those gaps.

In addition, there would shortly be the launch of a campaign about raising awareness of what sexual harassment was. An invitation would be circulated to all Councillors to give people greater understanding of what was and was not acceptable behaviour.

A number of updates relating to elements of the report were requested including implementation of changes to the Probation Service, recommendations relating to stalking and harassment and development of the Hate Crime Strategy.

Resolved:- (1) That the content of the Annual Report be noted.

(2) That a seminar be organised for Members to update them on the implementation of the changes to the Probation Service.

(3) That an update be provided to the Improving Lives Select Committee on the actions and recommendations to address stalking and harassment.

(4) That a further update is provided to the Board on steps taken to address hate crime.

(5) That the Board be involved in any pre-scrutiny work about the Hate Crime Strategy and its development.

6. COUNCIL PLAN QUARTER 4 (JANUARY TO MARCH 2019) AND 2018-2019 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Consideration was given to the report presented by Councillor Read, Leader of the Council, which set out the headline priorities, outcomes and measures demonstrating delivery of the vision.

This fourth quarter report indicated that 58% of the total number of measures had been met when compared to the 44% met this time last year. This was the highest percentage of performance measures that the Council had hit for a number of years and represented a significant improvement in performance over previous quarters, as only 47%, 45% and 42% of measures hit their targets in quarters one, two and three respectively. The priority area with the highest proportion of targets met was Priority 4 (extending opportunity, prosperity and planning for the future) where 75% of measures were marked as on target.

The Leader set out in detail the direction of travel which was positive for 32 (51%) of the measures calculated in this quarter. This was a deterioration compared to the 58% figure for last quarter and suggests that, although there had been an increase in the number of targets marked as "hit", there were an increasing number of measures where performance was stable or worsening.

An outline summary was provided of all the targets and a snapshot of the current progress against the thirteen delivery outcomes which underpinned the Council's priorities and the seventy headline performance measures that Directorates had identified to demonstrate progress in achieving the outcomes. Reference was also made to the performance status broken down by priority with Priority 1 having seven on target, two satisfactory and six off target; Priority 2 having six on target, none satisfactory and three off target; Priority 3 seven on target, two satisfactory and seven off target; Priority 4 six on target, one satisfactory and one off target and Priority 5 eight on target, two satisfactory and one off target (these were all set out in detail as part of the report).

There were a number of measures that did not have information available due to these being annual, termly or six monthly.

The Board asked the Cabinet Member and lead officer for each priority to comment further drawing any attention to specific areas.

Priority 1:-

Jon Stonehouse, Strategic Director, expressed cautious optimism at the progress with looked after children numbers which appeared to be plateauing in their reduction and were in line with budget expectations. The trend was also positive around child in need and child protection numbers and demand indicators.

The Board sought clarification on the number of looked after children and the projections and whether this was done by linear extrapolation from the trend or if the numbers were first estimates.

The Directorate had tried to illustrate the projected position as comprehensively as possible based on a range of variables, including population size and demographics.

A further question was asked by the Board as to why a funding commitment was required from secondary schools to support the appointment of three lead practitioners for English, Maths and Science.

Again the Directorate were looking to develop different approaches to supporting skills and through the Rotherham Education Strategic Partnership decisions were being made in a collaborative way with multi academy trusts to identify improvements and better performance.

In response to the comment above the Board asked further what measures were being proposed or if there was anything specific that required three these three appointments.

The Directorate responded by confirming this decision was building on good practice within the school communities, sharing information and using funding to support school leaders who had already been successful in those areas.

The Board sought further clarification on the increase of the proportion of families already in receipt of Early Help whether the service was good or excellent. This raised the question that this was only being asked of families who had engaged and where the intervention had been successful rather than where families may have been stepped up to Social Care and had not engaged earlier.

The Directorate acknowledged the comment and would take the content on board.

Priority 2:-

Councillor Roche, Cabinet Member, was pleased to report the direction of travel was good for Priority 2 with room for improvement. It was noted that the smoking status at time of delivery had exceeded its target.

The proportion of people subject to a safeguarding enquiry who felt that personal outcomes were met over the full year had achieved its target. However, this decreased from Quarter 3 to Quarter 4 and was subject to further investigation.

The Board made reference to the Enablement Service and whether this was properly resourced to cope with winter planning or a flu epidemic. It was advised that a situation like a flu epidemic not only affect the Enablement Services, but also Intermediate Care for cases when people were discharged from hospital. Discussions were ongoing between the CCG and the Council to ensure sufficient capacity was in place as the last few winters had not been particularly harsh.

The Board also referred to the effect on the completion of carers' assessments and what had been learnt to date to assist with moving onto the next assessment priority, Addison Road.

The Cabinet Member pointed out that the direction of travel in this area was good, but it still had not met its target. This had only slightly been missed partly due to a capacity issue.

Information shared recently indicated that assessments for carers would take place across a whole age range and whilst it was acknowledged the pace had not been the best, this was now being addressed and for this to feed into the remodelling. From the 21st October, 2019 there would be strategic lead for carers who would discuss with all the relevant stakeholders about how to improve the carer's offer.

Priority 3:-

Paul Woodcock, Strategic Director, wished to highlight that the percentage of the non-principal road network in need of repair had reduced to 4% in need of repair against a target of 6% thus repairing and resurfacing over 700 kilometres of highways and roads. In addition, the number of engagements with the Council's culture and leisure facilities had exceeded their target and visits to libraries had reversed the trend with more visits in the last year.

From a tourism angle, the Waleswood Camping and Caravan Site was now open and Gulliver's had reported they were on target for their opening in 2020.

The Board again sought clarification on public perception of anti-social behaviour and the percentage of the public who regarded the issues as big or fairly big problems and how this might be addressed.

The Board were advised that an in-depth analysis had been undertaken to understand what lay behind this headline figure in terms of specific concerns or locations. Anti-social behaviour was a wide-ranging term and covered a range of activities. In terms of the "Your Voice Counts" survey littering was also included as anti-social behaviour. In counting terms this appeared elsewhere within performance monitoring. Three areas stood out as the areas that people were concerned about – littering, drugs and off-road motorbikes. Officers have been tasked with looking specifically at those areas and consideration would then be given as how this was communicated to residents.

The Board also asked how much of an overlap there was with community cohesion and the perceptions of anti-social behaviour.

The service was drawing up plans with the level of detail and this was heavily linked to not only personal resilience of individuals but wider resilience within communities. Members would be aware that over the past eighteen months work had taken place to co-locate community safety services with the intention of bringing those services closer to the communities that they served to allow them to develop stronger relationships and support the range of positive activities.

Under the Safer Rotherham Partnership it was a priority to build confident and cohesive communities and recognise the intrinsic links. Various activities were supported to engage with communities, to raise the level of confidence within services and it was hoped this would have some impact moving forward. One of the real challenges with perception was the national and international influences through the media and a significant amount of work had been undertaken to try and raise the service's profile and share positive messages online.

The Board reiterated its support for the range of cultural activities taking place in the town, but expressed some concern about the positive outcomes for reported hate crime with an increased number of the LGBT community being targeted. Whilst it was noted there was to be increased awareness and restorative justice in this area, how was this to be promoted.

The service was aware that positive outcomes had dipped, but these measures were going in the right direction. It was important that the public received a positive outcome and community resolutions were being used to try and sort a change in behaviour for both the perpetrator and the victim.

The Police could perhaps elaborate more on how they intended to improve the outcomes and this would be fed back. It was positive to work with partners such as REMA, the Rainbow Project and Speak Up who had been real advocates and on speaking up against hate crime as this would facilitate the sort of resolution outcomes rather than just recording crimes and prosecutions. Outcomes victims had indicated they would like to see were restorative solutions as this had a greater capacity or potential to change those behaviours. Elected Members were key to raising awareness within communities.

The service had worked hard to establish, reinforce and strengthen the independent Hate Crime Scrutiny Panel which many of those organisations attended. There were active challenges in terms of improving the situation around hate crime, but equally supportive of working together to develop a campaign to reinforce to the wider public about both the impact of hate and the potential consequences of those who commit those types of offences.

The Board asked if incidents of hate crime were recorded in terms of race, religion, sexual orientation, disability etc..

Race and religion were by far the biggest areas of recorded hate crime, however there was increase reporting across all areas. Part of the issue was some crimes were under-reported (for example hate crimes against disabled people and trans-people) and it was for the Partnership to reinforce and strengthen engagement.

The focus would continue to be on working with communities and organisations about how the public could be upstanding against hate whilst creating an atmosphere of zero tolerance. In terms of reporting Rotherham had seen a steady increase in reporting of hate crime and showed the public were taking an active role in standing up against it.

The Board also expressed some concern about the reported incidents of fly tipping and were advised that this was a priority area. Action was being taken against some of the organised elements of fly tipping and the range of activities to prosecute.

Of particular concern was the number of adverts of contractors willing to dispose of rubbish for the public only to find it had been fly tipped. The public were then unwittingly contributing to the problem. There were reputable companies who would willingly produce their waste transfer licence which was required.

In terms of investigative methods the Council was exploiting all available opportunities such as CCTV in hotspots and were undertaking a significant piece of work internally to reorganise the way that some services worked and operated.

The Council would continue to strengthen those investigative routes and enforcement processes and raise awareness about the responsibility on the public to dispose of their waste properly.

The Board asked if the Council could provide a respected contractors list for those who held the appropriate licenses and advertise this accordingly to the public on the website. The service agreed this would be considered alongside a wider campaign.

The Board also suggested that a piece of work be considered by the service looking specifically at a wider policy of encouraging the public to visit their local recycling site and for further consideration to be given to the materials and commercial waste that could be disposed of.

Whilst it was acknowledged that the public were responsible for their own rubbish material there were other options to dispose of large items like the Bulky Waste Collection Service.

It was also pointed out that the General Enforcement Policy was currently out to public consultation so the public and Members had the opportunity to share their views.

Priority 4:-

Paul Woodcock, Strategic Director, referred to the excellent performance in the number of planning applications that were being processed (100%) against a target of 95% and in the percentage of the privately rented properties complaint with Selective Licensing.

One of the measures that did not quite hit its target was the number of new business starts with help from the Council the target being sixty which was missed by two at fifty-eight.

The Board referred to the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) initiative and prize winning work undertaken by pupils at Swinton Academy. It also asked whether the Council monitored the gender pay gap in Rotherham and if action was being taken to address it locally.

Citing the recent STEM event at Magna, the Directorate referred to some excellent work that was already taking place with local employers and across the Council to promote this initiative and encourage women and girls in particular into STEM related activities to address their under-representation in these fields. .

In terms of the gender pay gap, as with most other economic indicators, these are based on national statistics and was not something the Council collected locally.

Priority 5:-

Councillor Alam, Cabinet Member, highlighted some of the positive performance headlines with the percentage of PDR completions hitting at 96% against a target of 95%, agency costs reductions in line with agreed plans and actions from the Equalities Peer Review having been completed in line with plans. The only area which had missed its target was the days lost per FTE for sickness absence. Work was being done with managers and trades unions looking at some early interventions.

The Board sought clarification on the actions to reduce sickness and were advised that a working group was looking at areas for improvement with a focus on responsibility, policy, processes and support available.

The Board cited a recent report of a foodbank being set up for civil service staff in London and asked if any staff in the Council were experiencing food poverty as this could be a factor in the days lost to sickness.

The Directorate were mindful that staff had their own individual circumstances, but were not aware of a particular kind of pattern or behaviour. There were some families who were vulnerable to economic shocks and without any kind of resilience could be in trouble. However, there had been some good work with the food banks in Rotherham and the feedback in general was more around welfare reform.

One of the main areas of sickness was stress-related sickness and clearly stress was not always work related. People's personal circumstances could have an impact on stress, but this would be picked up as part of the support and counselling that could be provided as part of the process.

The Board also sought information on whether there was specific themes emerging in relation to sickness for different Directorates and it was suggested that once some analysis had been done this was fed back.

The Directorate were happy to feed back any relevant information.

The Board also sought clarification on whether complaints and casework were logged formally and were advised that the two areas were separately recorded. As the new casework system became embedded this would increasingly provide useful information about what issues were coming through to Members and provide a strong basis for putting resources in the right place.

In closing the debate, Councillor Read, Leader of the Council, in addition to concerns highlighted in relation to hate crime, that the continuing transformation of social care remained a challenge to the Council.

The Board took account of the concerns raised in relation to hate crime and would look to build this in the work programme to be considered by a small working group, alongside fly-tipping, work related sickness and steps to address the gender pay gap.

The Leader referred the Board to the actions outlined in the Employment and Skills Strategy which included information on the gender pay gap within Rotherham, with BME communities experiencing greater disparity.

The Board again thanked authors for the format of the Council Plan and how it was much easier to read and follow.

Resolved:- (1) That the overall position and direction of travel in relation to performance be noted

(2) That consideration be given to measures which have not achieved their target and the actions required to improve performance, including future performance clinics

(3) That the performance reporting timetable for 2019-2020 be noted.

(4) That the achievements for 2018-2019 be noted.

(5) That consideration be given to the inclusion in the work programme for the following performance outcomes; hate crimes, fly-tipping, work related sickness and a further report be provided on the gender pay gap.

7. FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2018-19

Consideration was given to the report which outlined the final revenue and capital outturn position for 2018/19.

The final outturn position was a balanced budget which required £3.2m less use of corporate reserves than planned for. The original budget proposed a planned use of corporate reserves of £5.2m as part of a budget contingency of £10.0m. Additional funding received in year, use of earmarked grants and balances and flexible use of capital receipts has resulted in a reduced call on the planned reserves leaving a balance of £3.2m available to support the budget in later years.

A summary of the outturn position for each Directorate was detailed in the report, together with the actions and measures taken to deliver a balanced budget. The Council continues to face demand pressures, in particular in respect of social care. The Council has provided additional budget for social care over the next two financial years, but the outlook is still challenging.

The Council's General Fund minimum balance had been increased from £11.269 to £16.812m, as a result of the planned use and profiling of reserves balances as set out in the Council's Reserves Strategy reported in the Budget and Council Tax Report 2019/20. The reserve was held to protect the Council against unforeseen events and realisation of contingent liabilities.

The Board sought clarification on the reserves, what this was dependent upon and if this was sustainable.

The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services pointed out that confirmed the actions to address the budget overspend were mainly from one off opportunities. However, as a result of some of the work taking place had meant that reserves were not required and these have subsequently been profiled into the financial plan going forward. In terms of sustainability the service were confident and comfortable with the outturn achievements given the scale of the challenges. The Council could certainly not sustain the high level of overspends in the future.

The Chair of the Audit Committee confirmed that the annual accounts had been presented to the Audit Committee in draft format and no material issues had been identified. These would in turn be submitted to the District Auditor and be open for public comment.

Resolved:- (1) That the revenue outturn position for 2018/19 be noted.

(2) That the transfer of the £1.4m HRA underspend to the HRA reserve be noted.

(3) That the carry forward of the combined schools balance of £3.369m in accordance with the Department for Education regulations be noted.

(4) That the reserves position set out in section 2.33 be noted.

(5) That the capital outturn and funding position as set out in sections 2.41-2.69 be noted.

8. MAY FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT 2019/20

Consideration was given to the report presented by Councillor Alam, Cabinet Member, which set out the financial position as at the end of May 2019 and was based on actual costs and income for the first two months of 2019/20 and forecast for the remainder of the financial year.

This was the first monitoring report of the financial year and would continue to be reported to the Cabinet on a regular basis. As at May, 2019, the Council had a forecasted year-end overspend of £4.5m on the General Fund.

The Strategic Director for Finance and Customer Services pointed out it would be premature take any drastic measures, but the right actions were taking place in service areas.

Budgets were realigned for Children's Services and whilst there were still pressures with looked after children numbers, the numbers were on track for what had been planned for within the budget. The main issue was the cost of particular placements, but work was underway to address this along with the concerns about the High Needs Block within the Dedicated schools Grant.

Rotherham's deficit in the High Needs Block was greater than some Councils, but a recovery plan had been submitted to the Department for Education.

In terms of adult care the pressure was predominantly around the demand for services, demographics etc. Work again was underway around all the different mechanisms and a new operating model had been adopted to properly and safely address the pressures.

There was an underspend already in year around Treasury Management, but the Finance Directorate were cautious in those projections as it was dependent upon interest rates and other market factors around borrowing and investment. The situation may well improve further, but the position on treasury management could support the Budget if it was required to.

Discussion ensued on the extent to which projected overspends have delayed implementation of restructuring or the cost-saving measures expected and it was pointed out that in Adult Social Care there was a significant restructure underway with a new target operating model. One of the other pressures was round assessment packages and the reassessment of people's needs and levels of support. There had been some delays due to external factors, but it was anticipated this would soon be back on track.

As previous reported resources in Children's Services had been diverted, but the service had confidence in a number of initiatives that were either ongoing or ready to commence by the end of the year.

In response to the Board's concerns about the Council having enough money to fulfil its obligations, the Strategic Director confirmed a number of controls would again need to be implemented with restrictions on spending and there was the fall-back position of reserves and contingency within the budget that were not used in the current year which may be available for future years.

Actions initiated were starting to deliver the right outcomes both in service and financially so the Council was on track on what it needed to do.

Resolved:- (1) That the current General Fund Revenue Budget forecast of £4.5m overspend be noted.

(2) That actions taken to mitigate the forecast overspend be noted.

(3) That regular updates continue to be provided to the Board in respect of actions taken within Adult Social Care and Children and Young People's Services to reduce the deficits.

9. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES - HIGH NEEDS BLOCK UPDATE AND RECOVERY PLAN

Consideration was given to the report presented by Jon Stonehouse, Strategic Director for Children and Young People's Services, which set out the position in terms of high needs provision and presented proposals for the High Needs Recovery Plan.

The Board were advised that Rotherham faced considerable pressure in continuing to meet the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). There were increasing numbers of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and in-borough special school provision was currently over-subscribed.

Wherever possible children and young people should have their needs met in their chosen mainstream setting, educated alongside their peers within their local community. However, for children with more complex needs specialist settings were sometimes more appropriate. Whether they were educated in mainstream schools or through specialist provision, these children and young people have a right to have their educational needs delivered. Funding for specialist education provision was provided from the High Needs Budget – part of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG).

Rotherham was a relatively low funded authority and had seen significant pressures on the High Needs Block for many years. The High Needs Budget allocation had increased year on year but, partly due to Rotherham's low funding baseline compared to neighbouring boroughs and nationally, the budget uplifts have not been sufficient to match the acceleration in demand and increase in the cost of provision.

This situation was not exclusive to Rotherham and a nationwide issue. Nevertheless the situation in Rotherham was of such a scale that the Department for Education required the Authority to submit a recovery plan.

Rotherham did not have enough of provision and, therefore, relied on other types of provision out of the borough so creating additional provision in Rotherham was at the heart of the Recovery Plan.

Cabinet were asked a few months ago to approve a period of consultation with the multi-academy trusts and schools to ask them to bring forward proposals around growing provision in the borough. Those proposals would be considered by Cabinet in September. The response had been impressive and closer working would result. The Council was also grateful to parents and carers who were also supportive of this work.

The report also detailed the activities within the recovery proposals, the capital spend to support the work and where additional provision could be created in terms of places for children young people. An update would be provided once a response had been received from the Department for Education.

The Board acknowledged that it was early days in the recovery plan process and steps had been outlined to reduce the deficit. It was outlined that Improving Lives Select Commission would monitor the development of the SEND sufficiency strategy as part of its work programme previously.

It was recognised that this was a national issue and once the autumn term spending review had been received it may be possible to transfer some money from the Schools Block into the High Needs Block to alleviate some of the pressures.

Scrutiny had already been involved in some work which should hopefully start to impact on the deficit. The position would be closely monitored by the Board.

Resolved:- (1) That the proposals set out for the High Needs Recovery Plan be noted.

(2) That the financial model within the High Needs Recovery Plan be noted.

(3) That the arrangements for the management of the Dedicated Schools Grant deficit be noted.

(4) That updates be provided to Improving Lives Select Commission on the implementation of the SEND Sufficiency Strategy.

10. FORGE ISLAND UPDATE

Consideration was given to the report presented by Tim O'Connell, which provided an update on progress toward delivery of the Forge Island regeneration scheme.

Of particular note were the two key milestones in that the legal agreement had been signed setting out pre-conditions that have to be completed before development could take place. This also included the responsibilities of the partners to deliver those pre-conditions, the timetable for those conditions to be delivered and the legally binding date by which that must be agreed.

The agreement also set out the parameters for the Council to take an overriding lease of the whole scheme.

The second milestone was around the appointment of a contractor to deliver the flood defence infrastructure. Tenders have been received and were now being finalised. It was expected that a contractor would be appointed by the end of July.

The Council would need to work together with Muse Developments and the working relationship was positive to deliver the best elements of the scheme for Rotherham.

Resolved:- That the progress towards delivery of the Forge Island Scheme be noted.

11. URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair referred to the special meeting regarding the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service's consultation on the Integrated Risk Management Plan and sought authorisation to write on behalf of the Board regarding the recommendations that were agreed in the meeting.

Resolved:- That the Chair be authorised to write to South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service informing them of the recommendations made at the special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on 10th July, 2019.

12. CABINET RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY REVIEW MODERN METHODS OF CONSTRUCTION

Consideration was given to the report presented by Tom Bell, Assistant Director for Neighbourhoods, which detailed how the Improving Places Select Commission conducted a review of modern methods of construction (MMC), which was reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) on 12th December, 2018.

The report detailed the recommendations following the scrutiny review and it was, therefore, noted that the Housing Service was undertaking a pilot to deliver homes built using modern methods of construction and had fully participated in the Improving Places review.

The scrutiny review made five recommendations which were accepted by Cabinet and these were set out in detail as part of an appendix to the report.

In considering the recommendations it was pointed that in terms of Recommendation 1 the service were securing final details to enter into a contract with the supplier to deliver eight bungalows in Rawmarsh and a further four bungalows at East Herringthorpe, subject to planning permission.

It was anticipated the scheme would be delivered early in the New Year and the evaluation process started once complete to consider quality, customer experience, cost, maintenance costs etc. This in turn would help with lessons learnt going forward in terms of delivering future schemes.

The second recommendation was for further work on how pods could support housing needs at various locations around the Borough. This recommendation was deferred as further work was required in relation to single person's accommodation and options and how tenancies could be sustained going forward.

The third recommendation was around a pilot programme of delivering five homes for family housing. This was again deferred. This was due to the Council considering options around a pilot of single person's accommodation and to build on the success of the bungalow scheme.

The fourth recommendation was to develop options around various energy packages for modern methods of construction. Whilst this had been rejected, a piece of work was being developed to look at the introduction of solar panels and energy efficiency measures to all affordable housing stock, rather than just of focusing on modern methods of construction developments.

The evaluation process of modern method schemes would then help to determine what the whole running costs were for the homes and whether or not it was suitable to be put in solar panels on those schemes.

The fifth recommendation was in terms of looking at the whole costs for individual properties. This was again accepted. Costs would be broken down in relation to the individual built properties for review and analysis as part of but the evaluation work going forward.

The Board asked if the Council was considering other options including green credentials and eco-efficient initiatives and were advised that this was being looked at for properties being built in Rotherham and Sheffield City Region as a whole.

A new strategy was being developed and it was hoped there would be resources to test new approaches in respect of renewable energy sources to reduce cost and improve reliability. Whilst new technologies were emerging this needed further investigation to look at the whole life cycle costs of those elements alongside the repairs and maintenance. This was a complex area, but the Board were assured this was being taken forward.

It was also noted that from the five recommendations only one was rejected, but realistically it was not entirely rejected as an evaluation would be taking place of the pilot project which had some energy efficiencies embedded in the design. It was suggested that separate experiments take place as this may be more robust and provide more accurate results.

The Improving Places Select Commission welcomed being involved in the review into this new concept and asked that as part of the evaluation process was advised that an update would be provided once the project was delivered and an invitation was extended to the Commission to visit the sites at Rawmarsh and Herringthorpe prior to occupation.

Resolved:- (1) That the officer response to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review of Modern Methods of Construction as set out in Appendix A be approved.

(2) That a 'lessons learned' report be submitted to the Improving Places Select Commission post completion of the current modern methods of construction pilot project.

13. YOUTH CABINET/YOUNG PEOPLE'S ISSUES

The Chair advised there had been no Youth Cabinet or Young People's issues raised. However, it was noted that a meeting of Rotherham's Youth Cabinet was taking place today to finalise recommendations from its Children's Commissioner Takeover Challenge and the final draft report would be submitted to the meeting in September, 2019.

14. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS - JULY TO OCTOBER 2019

The Chair referred to the Forward Plan of Key Decisions circulated with the agenda papers.

He asked that Members consider the detail and should there be a request for specific reports to be considered at the next meeting of the Board in September, that this be referred to the Chair or Vice-Chair as soon as possible.

Resolved:- That the Forward Plan of Key Decisions be received and the contents noted.

15. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board be held on Wednesday, 11th September, 2019 commencing at 11.00 a.m. in Rotherham Town Hall.