

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**  
**Wednesday, 10th June, 2020**

Present:- Councillor Steele (in the Chair); Councillors Cusworth, R. Elliott, Jarvis, Jepson, Keenan, Mallinder, Napper, Taylor, Walsh and Wyatt.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillor Tweed.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-

<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

**176. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS HELD ON 4, 12 AND 18 MARCH AND 7 MAY 2020**

**Resolved: -**

That the minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on 4, 12 and 18 March and 7 May 2020 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

**177. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Wyatt declared a personal interest in agenda item 6, Rotherham All Age Autism Strategy and Implementation Plan 2020 -2023, as he had a family member who accessed these services.

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

There were no questions.

**179. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**180. AUTISM STRATEGY**

Consideration was given to a report that was submitted for pre-decision scrutiny ahead of the Cabinet meeting scheduled for 15 June 2020 in respect the proposed Rotherham All Age Autism Strategy and Implementation Plan 2020 -2023.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, the Joint Assistant Director Commissioning, Performance and Inclusion, the Assistant Director - Strategic Commissioning and the Service Manager - Commissioning attended the meeting to present the report and to answer members questions.

The Cabinet Member noted that the proposed strategy had been developed with reference to the vision expressed in the Council Plan and in the Rotherham's Integrated Health and Social Care Place Plan, and

that the proposed strategy would also support and progress the outcomes as detailed in the Integrated Health and Social Care Place Plan and in the Councils Housing Strategy.

It was noted that the proposed strategy had been developed with reference to and shared the 'whole life approach' with the Rotherham Health and Wellbeing Strategy and had been the subject of wide and varied consultation, including consultation with service users. The proposed strategy identified key activity, focused on five areas. There were:

- Starting Well: All Rotherham's autistic children and young people are healthy and safe from harm
- Developing Well: All Rotherham's autistic children and young people start school ready to learn for life
- Moving on well to independence: Rotherham's autistic children and young people are provided with the same opportunities to thrive going into adulthood.
- Living well: Autistic adults living in Rotherham will get the right support when needed
- Ageing well: Autistic adults living in Rotherham will be better supported as they grow old.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health noted that the proposed All Age Autism Strategy and Implementation Plan would provide an overarching framework for the Council, NHS Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group other delivery partners and would clearly identify priority areas based on both national requirements and on local findings. It was noted that the Strategy would build on work being carried out in Rotherham and South Yorkshire by individuals, groups and communities, as well as the Council and partners to improve the lives of people with autism and would make Rotherham an Autism friendly Borough.

The Cabinet Member advised that the strategy showed a commitment to personalised approach to the delivery of services and would encourage people to recognise their strengths in a way that would support choice and control over their lives.

It is proposed that both the Strategy and the accompanying Implementation Plan would be delivered over a period of three years, from 2020 to 2023.

The officer's report also contained information on the consultation processes that had been conducted as part of the development of the strategy as well as information on the proposed timelines for the strategy's implementation. The full draft of the All Age Autism Strategy and

Implementation Plan 2020 -2023 were attached as an appendix to the report.

The Chair of the Health Select Commission noted with approval that the comments made by the Health Select Commission during the development of the strategy had been included in the final document. Members asked whether any updates had been received by the Council on the deployment of a new tool for the diagnosis of autism as it had been recognised that the current diagnostic tool had an inbuilt gender imbalance that had the potential to lead to less diagnoses being made in females. The Service Manager advised that there had been no further developments on this matter.

Members asked whether the Covid-19 pandemic would impact negatively on the development of specialist housing provision for people with autism. The Assistant Director advised that the pandemic would have some impact but assured members that interest and commitment from developers in providing this type of housing remained strong. Members noted their approval for the prominent definition of autism in the strategy as it was a condition that was frequently misunderstood by many people.

Members asked for further information on how the strategy would be integrated into education provision and delivered by schools. The Joint Assistant Director advised that a detailed piece of work on the development of a neurological pathway was being carried out that and that this would enable structured support to be provided to people displaying signs of autism whether or not they had been diagnosed, and that much of this support would be delivered via a toolkit by schools.

Members sought assurance that the carer's assessments that were part of the implementation of the strategy would be carried out in timely manner. The Assistant Director provided assurance on this issue and provided details of how the process for carrying out carer's assessments.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, the Joint Assistant Director Commissioning, Performance and Inclusion, the Assistant Director - Strategic Commissioning and the Service Manager - Commissioning for attending the meeting and answering members questions.

**Resolved: -**

- 1) That Cabinet be advised that the recommendations be supported.
- 2) That a report on the implementation of the Rotherham All Age Autism Strategy and Implementation Plan 2020 -2023 be submitted to the Health Select Commission in due course.

**181. SUPPORT SERVICES FOR ADULT SURVIVORS OF CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION: COMMISSIONING AND PROCUREMENT APPROACH**

Consideration was given to a report that was submitted for pre-decision scrutiny ahead of the Cabinet meeting scheduled for 15 June 2020 in respect a report on Support Services for Adult Survivors of Child Sexual Exploitation: Commissioning and Procurement Approach.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Neighbourhood Working and the Joint Assistant Director Commissioning, Performance and Inclusion attended the meeting to present the report and to answer members questions.

It was noted that the current contracts with providers to support adults who are survivors of child sexual exploitation would be coming to an end in December 2020 and that it was proposed that support services should be recommissioned for at least three more years in order to provide ongoing support to Rotherham residents who were vulnerable due to their historic experiences. It was noted that existing contracts that had been awarded in 2016 for the provision of services with the current providers of support services being Rotherham Rise, GROW and Rotherham Abuse Counselling Service (Rothacs) had been extended until 31 December 2020, so as to enable the procurement of new services in a way that did not leave any gaps in service provision.

The Joint Assistant Director advised that since 2016 there had been many changes to how the impact of historic child sexual exploitation was responded to in the Borough, most notably by the establishment of the NHS Stovewood Trauma and Resilience Service (TRS) in 2018. It was noted that since its establishment the TRS had established its role as a neutral hub that was available for consultation and support, and that the providers of CSE support commissioned by the Council were now fully aligned with the TRS and were benefiting from the level of cohesion and coordination that it provided.

The Joint Assistant Director noted that the role of the TRS had been fully taken account of in the drafting of the needs analysis that would define how CSE support services would look like in Rotherham in the future.

The Joint Assistant Director provided information on how the needs analysis, the key document that would inform the recommissioning of CSE support services had been created, noting that it had been prepared by drawing together a range of qualitative and quantitative information from a range of sources that had included:

- contract monitoring information for the lifetime of the contracts
- a service review undertaken in 2017 in response to concerns about waiting lists
- an independently commissioned pre-consultation report, provided

by the All-Party Parliamentary Group report on Adult Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse

- working directly with service users who had been working with GROW, Rotherham RISE and Rothacs
- a benchmarking exercise with other local authorities who have similar service provision, led by a sub-group of the Improving Lives Select Commission
- a web-based public survey.

The full draft needs analysis was attached as an appendix to the officer's report.

Members noted that it was very positive to see the wide ranging consultation that had taken place as well as the communication that had been carried out with the TRH in creation of the needs analysis.

The Chair of the Improving Lives Select Commission provided further information on the benchmarking exercise that had been carried out by the sub-group of the commission. The Chair advised that the other local authorities that had been contacted to share their experiences regarding the provision of post-CSE support had engaged well, but noted that the work carried out had not been as detailed or as thorough as the sub-group would have liked due to limitations put on it by having to meet the timescales originally allocated for the recommissioning processes. The Chair of the Improving Lives Select Commission noted that the benchmarking exercise had shown that the provision offered by Rotherham compared favourably when compared to other local authorities provision. The Chair advised that the Improving Lives Select Commission planned to continue to benchmark provision in Rotherham with services provided elsewhere.

Councillor Clark, who had been part of the sub-group, and who had been invited to the meeting by the Chair of the Overview and Performance Management Board noted the limitations of the benchmarking work that had been carried out and stated that it was important that the work of the sub-group continued and fed into to how support services in Rotherham were provided.

Members welcomed the report and noted that the continuing support of survivors of CSE was an essential service for the Council to provide. The Joint Assistant Director noted that the new services that would be commissioned would offer 12 months of support before services were stepped down in a managed way so as to ensure that dependency on the service was not created. The Joint Assistant Director assured members that after 12-months re-referrals to the service could be made if required. Members asked for clarification on how the decision to limit service access to 12-months had been arrived at. The Joint Assistant Director advised that this had been informed by an in-depth study of the time spent on the current programmes by existing service users, and noted that as well as not creating dependency, limiting access initially to 12-months

would help to manage waiting lists and ensure that all of those residents needing support could access the services that they required.

Members asked that due to the Covid-19 pandemic whether the proposed timescales for the commissioning and procurement processes could still be met. The Joint Assistant Director assured members that everything that was would be done to ensure that the new services were implemented on time as planned.

The Chair asked for further information on the impact of the current support services on survivors of CSE. The Joint Assistant Director referred to the report and advised that the outcomes from existing service provision have been broadly positive with a majority advising that the services had impacted positively to an extent on their health, their ability to cope and on their ability to make decisions and take control of their lives. The Joint Assistant Director advised that the service users were extremely vulnerable and that even small improvements in how they felt were an achievement, but also noted that moving forwards it was hoped that the new services would help to improve the outcomes for service users further. The Joint Assistant Director provided information on the procedures that would be in place to monitor the performance of the support services that would be commissioned.

The Leader thanked the members of the sub-group of the Improving Lives Select Commission for the benchmarking work that they had carried out and that had fed into the development of the draft needs analysis. The Leader welcomed their commitment going forwards to monitoring performance and to carrying out further benchmarking, noting that this activity and passion clearly showed the commitment of members in ensuring that survivors of CSE in Rotherham were well supported.

The Chair thanked the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Neighbourhood Working and the Joint Assistant Director Commissioning, Performance and Inclusion for attending the meeting and answering members questions.

**Resolved: -**

- 1) That Cabinet be advised that the recommendations be supported.
- 2) That, subject to Cabinet approving the recommendations set out in the report, the benchmarking exercise by Members of Improving Lives Select Commission be continued, with interviews with Members from other authorities being prioritised to better inform the approach to the procurement process.
- 3) That, in view of the individual personal circumstances of victims and survivors, the specification for the contract ensure that the re-referral process be expedited swiftly to ensure that service users receive timely support.

- 4) That Improving Lives Select Commission monitor the effectiveness of the service and contract arrangements on an annual basis.

## **182. FINANCE UPDATE AND BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

Consideration was given to a report that was submitted for pre-decision scrutiny ahead of the Cabinet meeting scheduled for 15 June 2020 in respect of the latest Finance Update and Budget Monitoring Report.

The Leader, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Finance, the Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services, the Assistant Director – Financial Services and the Head of Corporate Finance attended the meeting to present the report and to answer members questions.

The report provided an update on a number of financial matters, including those related to Covid-19. It was noted that the report provided an interim update following on from the approval of the Budget and Council Tax 2020/21 in February 2020 and in advance of the final Financial Outturn report for 2019/20 and Financial Monitoring 2020/21 reports that were scheduled to be submitted to Cabinet for consideration in July 2020.

The report noted that in common with other local authorities across the country the Council had and continued to face significant challenges both operationally and financially due to the Covid-19 pandemic and by the restrictions that had been put in place in order to manage it.

It was noted that the MHCLG had been collating monthly reports to monitor the financial impact of the pandemic on local authorities. The report stated that the latest figures that had been submitted to the MHCLG showed a total estimated financial impact of the pandemic to the Council of £40.1million due to a combination of additional costs incurred, the loss of sales, fees and charges and other income, the non-delivery of required budget savings, an increase in rent arrears and other costs for the Housing Revenue Account and a loss of business rates and council tax income.

It was noted that the majority of the increased costs had been incurred by Adult Social Care in dealing with issues directly linked to the pandemic including dealing with additional demand for services, supporting the local social care market to ensure its sustainability and providing personal protective equipment. The report stated that with regard to loss of income that the Regeneration and Environment Directorate had been most severely impacted due to a loss of sales, fees and charges and income, with the main areas of impact having been incurred by the Cultural and Related Services and Planning and Development services.

It was also noted that the council's response to the pandemic had put at risk its ability to deliver on the £16.3million of savings and cost reductions

that were needed to deliver a balanced budget for 2020/21 budget, and that with the majority of the required savings being within social care services there was a significant risk of the Council being unable to deliver on these due to the impact of Covid-19.

The Strategic Director noted that the Council had received £16.239 million of emergency funding to date in order to deal with the financial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and that this funding would cover the vast majority of additional expenditure incurred directly as a result of Covid-19, but that it would not cover the loss of income for the Council as a result of the pandemic or non-delivery of savings and planned cost reductions. The report provided further information on the funding received and how it had been used to support service provision.

The Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services advised that regular updates on Covid-19 financial impact would be provided within the 2020/21 Financial Monitoring reports to Cabinet. The report also provided a summary of the potential financial impact on each directorate within the Council. The Strategic Director noted the significant financial challenges for the Council moving forward and emphasised that the predicted financial impact had been based on certain assumptions, and as such could change in the future.

Members asked if the calculations that had been made included any assumptions based on the predicted economic impact of the pandemic on the wider Sheffield City Region. The Strategic Director advised that the calculations made related only to the Council's own finances, but as they did include assumptions regarding business rates and Council Tax collection, it was confirmed that these would be impacted on by the wider economic impact in the Borough. Members sought assurance with regard to the robustness of the methodologies used in estimating the financial impact on the Council of the pandemic. The Strategic Director provided information on how extra expenditure incurred by the Council was being recorded and provided assurance that the working practices in place that monitored the financial impact were as robust as was possible in a difficult situation that was constantly changing.

The Strategic Director advised that a key part of the approach to managing the Council's finances continued to be the delivery of the savings that had been approved in the Council's budget in February 2020 and noted that even with the budgetary pressures of the pandemic it was essential that as much of the approved budget strategy, including savings targets were delivered. The Strategic Director noted the difficulties of delivering savings in both Adults and Children's Social Care, where significant savings had been identified to be made, when it Adult Care in particular was the directorate that had faced the majority of increased demand and expenditure during the pandemic.

The Chair asked whether the Council would need to consider cutting or stopping all non-essential spending due the budgetary pressures created



by the pandemic, as had been the case at other local authorities. The Strategic Director advised that this was not something that was currently being considered and the most important thing was to get as much of the budget strategy as possible back on track.

Members asked for information on the lobbying activity that was being made to Government with regard to additional financial support being made available to the Council. The Leader advised that lobbying activity via the Local Government Association had been taking place and that representations to Government had also been made by the three MP's that represented the Borough.

Members asked whether additional pressure on the Children's and Young People's Services budget was expected when more children returned to school and demand for services could increase. The Leader advised that this was a concern, and that an increase of children coming into the care system would create increased budgetary pressures. The Leader reaffirmed that despite the pressures created by the pandemic on the Council's finances, he was committed to carrying on and delivering on the commitments detailed in the 2020/21 budget.

Members asked that with large numbers of staff having worked from home during the pandemic whether future savings could be enabled with reduction of the Council's office space. The Strategic Director advised that this was something that could be looked at in the future in order to deliver some savings, but noted that any savings delivered while welcome, would be modest in scale.

The Chair asked for further information on business rates and Council Tax collection. The Head of Corporate Finance advised that support for businesses with business rates had been provided and that analysis had shown that the impact of reduced business rates collection in Rotherham was potentially not as severe as faced by other local authorities. The Strategic Director advised that support was being offered to residents struggling to pay their Council Tax but noted that it was important when offering support that this support did not create increased and unsustainable burdens of debt for residents.

The Leader noted that it continued to be difficult to assess the financial impact of the pandemic on the Council, and that the situation would become clearer as the economy reopened and scale of the economic recession became clearer.

The Chair thanked the Leader, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Finance, the Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services, the Assistant Director – Financial Services and the Head of Corporate Finance for attending the meeting and answering their questions.

**Resolved: -**

- 1) That Cabinet be advised that the recommendations be supported.
- 2) That the Leader of the Council write to all three Members of Parliament for the borough seeking their support to lobby the Government to ensure the Council is fairly funded to respond to the impact of the Covid19 pandemic.
- 3) That, at an appropriate time later in the year, the Leader of the Council hold an all Member Seminar on the proposals for the authority's recovery from the Covid19 pandemic and the likely financial impact of proposed changes.

**183. COVID-19 DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS GRANTS SCHEME**

Consideration was given to a report that was submitted for pre-decision scrutiny ahead of the Cabinet meeting scheduled for 15 June 2020 in respect of the proposed Covid-19 Discretionary Business Grants Scheme.

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Finance, the Strategic Director of Finance and Customer Services and the Head of Corporate Finance attended the meeting to present the report and to answer members questions.

It was noted that on 1 May 2020 the Government had announced that a new discretionary grant fund scheme would be launched that had been designed to provide grant support to those businesses adversely affected by Covid-19 and who had not been eligible to receive any support under the business support grants that had been announced earlier during the pandemic.

The Cabinet Member advised that the grants that would be provided by the scheme were predominantly aimed at assisting small and micro businesses, businesses with relatively high ongoing fixed property-related costs, businesses that could demonstrate that they had suffered a significant fall in income due to the Covid-19 pandemic and businesses that occupied property, or part of a property, that had a rateable value or annual rent or annual mortgage payments below £51,000. It was noted that while the scheme offered some flexibility for each local authority to decide which business it should support; the Government had indicated the types of business that it expected the funding to be used in support of.

The officer's report set out in detail the proposals for how the Discretionary Grant Fund would be utilised by the Council to support business in Rotherham and also the types of businesses that the Council aimed to support. The report also set out in detail the eligibility criteria and application processes. It was noted that there would be a clearly defined time period allowed for applications to be made for the financial support that was available that would enable the Council to assess the value of

the payments needed to be made at an early stage. This approach would enable any surplus funds to be used to make further top-up grants to eligible small businesses in a timely manner.

Members welcomed the proposed scheme and the support that it would provide to business that had been ineligible for assistance from previous support schemes. Members noted their approval on how the scheme had been designed in such a way that both enabled businesses to be supported but also did not over commit the Council to providing support in excess of the funding that it had received.

**Resolved: -**

That Cabinet be advised that the recommendations be supported.

**184. CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER TAKEOVER CHALLENGE - HATE CRIME**

Consideration was given to a report that had been submitted to advise the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on the findings and recommendations that had come from the Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge spotlight review undertaken by Rotherham Youth Cabinet in March 2020 on Hate Crime.

It was noted that The Children's Commissioner's Takeover Challenge (CCTOC) was a national initiative where children and young people took over an organisation or meeting and assumed management and leadership roles. As part of the Council's commitment to the CCTOC, each year the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board supported the Rotherham Youth Cabinet in undertaking a focused piece of work on a topic chosen by the young people.

In 2020 the Rotherham Youth Cabinet had chosen Hate Crime as the theme for the year's takeover challenge, as it was one of the key priorities in their manifesto for 2020.

The report advised that the spotlight review had shown that that good work was taking place in Rotherham in raising awareness about Hate Crime that challenged related attitudes and behaviour. The review also highlighted some areas of concern from members of the Rotherham Youth Cabinet. These areas of concern included:

- the under-reporting of Hate Crime incidents was still perceived to be an issue, in particular in relation for disability-related incidents.
- media coverage of Hate Crime incidents being perceived as often creating divisions and tensions within the local community. It was recognised that this was difficult to control, certainly at national level, although it was hoped that there may be scope for more liaison locally.

- the number of hate incidents experienced by taxi drivers and their families and how further measures could be introduced that would protect drivers.

In light of their findings, the Rotherham Youth Cabinet had developed a set of recommendations, these were detailed the appended report and focussed on:

- partners continuing to engage with young people and to consider having a dedicated young person's seat on the Independent Hate Scrutiny Panel.
- liaison between primary and secondary schools to be undertaken to support preventative work on Hate Crime.
- encouraging all schools to invite the Hate Crime Co-ordinator to work with students, with a focus on work in smaller groups.
- involving young people in a peer educator initiative for Hate Crime awareness raising.
- partners working with the Rotherham Youth Cabinet on a campaign to raise awareness with young people about how and where to report hate incidents.
- sharing the concerns raised by RYC with regard to press coverage of issues that may impact more widely on communities with the local media.

The full report that detailed the findings and recommendations that had resulted from the review was attached as an appendix to the officer's report.

The Head of Democratic Services in presenting the report noted that as the recommendations were cross cutting and involved organisations outside of the Council, a multi-agency response to the recommendations would be provided, and in due course reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

The Chair and members noted their thanks to the members of the Rotherham Youth Cabinet for participating in the review and noted that the meeting had been very constructive and had raised some important issues. The Chair noted his thanks on behalf of the committee to Janet Spurling, Governance Advisor, who would be retiring from the Council over the summer, for all the work that she had put into making the Children's Commissioner Takeover Challenge such a success at Rotherham since its initiation.

**Resolved: -**

- 1) That the report and the conclusions and recommendations as outlined at Appendix 1 of the officer's report, be noted.
- 2) That the report be forwarded to Cabinet and partners for their consideration and to Council for information.
- 3) That a detailed response to the recommendations be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and Rotherham Youth Cabinet in October 2020.

**185. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items of business.

**186. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

**Resolved: -**

That the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board be held on Wednesday 8 July 2020 commencing at 11.00 a.m. as a Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting.