

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**  
**Wednesday 19 April 2023**

Present:- Councillor Bacon (in the Chair); Councillors Baker-Rogers, Browne, A Carter, Cooksey, Elliott, Pitchley and Tinsley.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillors Clark, Baum-Dixon, Wyatt and Yasseen.

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

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

**172. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON FEBRUARY 8 2023 AND MARCH 15 2023**

**Resolved:** - That the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board held on February 8, 2023 and March 15, 2023 be approved as a true record.

**173. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no questions.

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

There were no exempt items.

**176. COUNCIL PLAN UPDATE**

The Vice-Chair welcomed the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive and the Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence to the meeting. Also in attendance was the Assistant Director of Streetpride and Community Safety.

The Board considered a report providing an update of progress made on the activities in the Year Ahead Delivery Plan and Council Plan performance measure data for Quarter 3 (October – December 2022).

The Council Plan 2022-25 was a key document which outlined the Council's vision for the Borough and priorities for serving residents and communities and was informed by public consultation. The Plan provided the medium-term basis for targeting resources, informing the budget-setting process and planning cycles, and ensuring that residents could hold the Council to account for delivery.

To enable the Council to work towards the Council Plan outcomes and achieve the commitments, the Council Plan performance measure targets were reviewed annually, and the Year Ahead Delivery Plan was also updated. These were attached as appendices to the report.

The Vice-Chair invited the Leader to introduce the report. The Leader highlighted that 87% of actions were on track or completed, with examples given of initiatives such as use of the Towns and Villages fund; additional universal youth work and development of social supermarkets. Of the delayed actions, seven would be completed before the end of the performance year, with five moved to the next year. The delays and mitigations in respect of Thurcroft library and housing growth programmes had been discussed at previous meetings. In respect of the Early Help strategy, it was noted this had been paused in light of the Government's Family Hub initiative but would be reviewed in due course. It was noted that further work was being undertaken in respect of local labour agreements.

With regards to performance measures that had declined, the Leader provided clarification about how engagement with domestic abuse services was to be improved. It was noted that in respect of the measure to process new housing benefit claims, changes would be made to the way data was collected to ensure that the measure focussed on the areas of Council responsibility. Changes would also be made to the apprenticeship measure to ensure that this captures new starters.

The Vice-Chair invited questions from the Board and a discussion on the following points ensued:

Clarification was sought regarding the target for issuing Community Protection Orders. It was outlined that the intention was to intervene early to prevent the necessity of issuing enforcement notices. The Assistant Director highlighted that a high proportion of issues were resolved at the warning stage and the service was considering how this type of activity could be captured in future performance measures. It was noted that the service had introduced more qualitative measures to assess street cleanliness.

Clarification was sought if staffing changes had affected enforcement activity in respect of litter, fly-tipping and untidy gardens, with examples given to illustrate the concerns raised at a ward level and perceptions that residents were not seeing improvements. It was acknowledged that there had been staffing changes to build greater resilience in the service. It was noted that there had been no reduction in resources for this service and investment had been made to provide a seven-day, out-of-hours service.

Further details were requested regarding the increase in the numbers of successful prosecutions for fly-tipping. The Assistant Director highlighted that work had been undertaken with the Improving Places Select

Commission to outline actions to address fly-tipping across a number of different services, including street cleansing, grounds maintenance, enforcement and housing. It was outlined that there had been significant investment in the use of CCTV cameras.

Details were sought on the roll-out of ward bulletins and how this could be promoted further using social media and local libraries. It was noted that a target had been set to drive activity to encourage wider take-up.

In respect of access to local libraries and neighbourhood hubs, it was noted that some areas had limited access to local provision and details were sought if this would be addressed. In response, the Leader outlined that the town centre development and relocation of the central library would make the library more accessible in addition to other initiatives, including partnerships with parish councils. It was also noted that there was a home library service that delivers to people who were unable to access buildings.

Clarification was sought regarding the number of business start-ups compared with closures and if support was offered to struggling businesses. The Chief Executive outlined that business advisers engage with businesses and provide advice about local networks, such as the Chamber of Commerce, and available grants. Wider work was also taking place with the South Yorkshire Combined Mayoral Authority at a strategic level to support business expansion and consolidation. It was felt that further emphasis could be given to measuring business retention.

Further explanation was requested regarding the 24.1% of targets that were not at expected levels. The Leader referred to his opening remarks and explained that the plan had a number of stretching targets and whilst performance may fluctuate periodically, the update gave an accurate reflection of progress and mitigating actions.

Details of the percentage of the road network classed as “green” was requested. It was highlighted that the current performance stood just below the target of 81%.

In closing, the Vice-Chair thanked the Leader and Chief Executive for the presentation and asked for suggestions for the work programme. The Leader confirmed that he would respond in due course.

**Resolved:**

- 1) That Cabinet be advised that the following recommendations be supported.
  1. Note the overall position in relation to the Year Ahead Delivery Plan activities.
  2. Note the Quarter 3 2022-23 data for the Council Plan performance measures.

3. Agree the revised Council Plan performance measure targets and the Year Ahead Delivery Plan for 2023-24
  4. Note the future performance reporting timetable.
- 2) That consideration be given to how the wider take-up of ward bulletins can be promoted.

**177. SCRUTINY REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS - ACCESS TO PRIMARY CARE**

The Senior Governance Advisor introduced the report, summarising the findings and recommendations of the Health Select Commission spotlight review into access to primary care. The review was prompted by insight provided by Healthwatch Rotherham, regarding continued enquiries from residents who were having difficulty accessing GP appointments.

The report seeks approval for the recommendations to be submitted to NHS South Yorkshire / Rotherham Place Board for consideration and response.

The Vice-Chair welcomed the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health and the Director of Public Health to the meeting.

The Vice-Chair invited questions from Members of the Board and a discussion on the following points ensued:

Further details were sought on how the Commission had arrived at its recommendations. In the absence of the Commission's Chair, a request for was made for further details to be shared.

The Cabinet Member was asked for his views on the review and findings. He highlighted that the review reflected a national problem in access to primary care. He noted that services in Rotherham compared well regionally although improvements were still required. It was outlined that the Place Board and NHS South Yorkshire were part of the Health and Well-Being Board and in his role, would recommend that partners gave consideration to the recommendations.

The Director of Public Health observed that the focus of the review was access to GP services rather than the broad of primary care. However, he noted that GP practices were working collaboratively to drive improvements.

Examples were given of difficulties to access GP surgeries and questions were asked about the definition of reasonable waiting times. It was suggested that patients may present to emergency care if they were unable to secure an appointment, which may exacerbate pressures on those services.

It was noted that the key recommendations of the report referenced

national issues and longstanding structural problems with GP contracts. A view was expressed that the deprivation formula for funding acted as a disincentive for practices to work in communities often with more complex health needs. It was also noted that demand for services had increased significantly since 2017. An example was given of a practice in a neighbouring borough doubling its number of GPs however, there were still pressures on available appointments. It was suggested that a structural change was required to encourage more people to work into primary care and retain existing staff. It was also highlighted that recent changes to the GP contract to offer same-day appointments may increase additional pressures on primary care.

The Chief Executive outlined in her role as co-chair of the Place Board, that it was recognised that national change was required and this would be raised through this forum and the Integrated Care Board. However, it was reiterated that unless change was affected at a national policy level, there was limited influence that could be exercised locally.

**Resolved:**

1. Cabinet notes the following recommendations and considers its response.
2. Cabinet approves the submission of the recommendations to NHS South Yorkshire / Rotherham Place Board for consideration and response.
  - a) That the principle be agreed that responsibility for patient access to primary care is shared between the primary care practices and their patients.
  - b) That consideration be given to how all Place Partners demonstrate responsibility to communicate honest wait times, where this information is available, for all health and care services system-wide.
  - c) That any trend connecting a practice or GP with excessive delays or Urgent and Emergency Care Centre attendances be analysed, and appropriate action taken.
  - d) That consideration be given to how to increase general understanding of how to recognise symptoms as needing medical attention, where to seek help, and within what timeframe.
  - e) That Place partners, including the Primary Care Networks (PCNs), consider how to expand general understanding of the wider options when seeking medical advice, with a view to expediting consultation with the most appropriate professional or service to be able to address their need.

- f) That NHS South Yorkshire/Rotherham Place Board give due consideration to enhanced safety-netting to mitigate risks associated with an increasingly patient-led model of care initiation and follow up.
- g) That NHS South Yorkshire/Rotherham Place Board consider how messaging and communications will figure in managing patient expectations around waits in the evolving model of care.
- h) That consideration be given to how Councillors may play an expanded role in signposting and managing expectations among Rotherham residents, as the sector works toward a new model of care which takes account of ongoing resource pressures on health services.
- i) Whereas recruitment remains a limiting factor for expansion of social prescribing, that recruitment to social prescribing roles be prioritised, and consideration given to how to make participation in social prescribing in Rotherham more attractive to professionals.

#### **178. SCRUTINY REVIEW RECOMMENDATIONS - MODERN SLAVERY**

The Vice-Chair welcomed the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Finance and Customer Services to the meeting.

In the absence of the Chair of OSMB, Cllr Browne introduced the report. The review was prompted following the Council's adoption of the Charter against Modern Slavery, to examine the effectiveness of partnership interventions which aim to tackle modern slavery in Rotherham.

The report details the lines of inquiry; invited witnesses and background information; a summary of its discussions and key findings. By its very nature, this spotlight review was an overview rather than in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of partnership arrangements in place to address modern slavery in Rotherham. In the course of the review, there was an opportunity to discuss with partners the key challenges faced in dealing this issue, explore what was working well and exchange ideas on areas for improvement.

The Cabinet Member, officers and partners were thanked for their openness in responding to enquiries. The review group were assured by the commitment across the South Yorkshire Modern Slavery Partnership to tackle exploitation. The examples given showed the complexity and sensitivity of this work and the part each agency plays.

The Vice-Chair invited the Cabinet Member and Assistant Director to comment on the review. The Cabinet Member welcomed its findings, commenting on the positive partnership working and areas for improvements. The Assistant Director noted that officers had found this

work valuable. It was outlined that training and awareness raising was being delivered and a network of champions were in place.

It was noted that the recommendations reference good practice in other authorities. Clarification was sought on if the Council benchmarked itself against other authorities and implemented relevant learning. It was confirmed that the Council was an active member of a sub-regional forum and worked with third sector organisations.

**Resolved:**

1. That Overview and Scrutiny Board approves the following recommendations:
  - i. That the Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP) gives consideration to rolling out a targeted learning and development offer/campaign to raise awareness of modern slavery, how to spot the signs, risks and how to raise concerns and make referrals:
    - a) to front-line staff across key agencies;
    - b) to elected members;
    - c) to the general public and targeted business such as letting agencies (commercial and residential).
  - i. That the SRP gives consideration to mapping the local modern slavery landscape to identify high risk industries and hot spots (using the example of Bristol City Council).
  - ii. That consideration is given to establishing an RMBC Internal Governance Group including representation from services who may encounter modern slavery (for example, Procurement, Licensing, Environmental Health, Training Standards, Neighbourhood teams, Social Care and Housing).
  - iii. That consideration is given to how young adults at risk or experiencing modern slavery are safeguarded during the transition from children to adult services and are age assessed appropriately.
  - iv. That consideration is given to developing referral pathways to ensure that modern slavery victims (both adult and child) have access to appropriate support (housing, advocacy, mental health support) on a timely basis.
  - v. That consideration is given to re-launching the Strategic Partnership information sharing group at the earliest opportunity to improve the way that agencies can share data and intelligence, including examining how IT systems can work better together.
  - vi. That consideration is given to widening the levels of investigation and auditing of contracts procured by the Council to focus on the 'layers' of sub-contractors, including binding specifications to

audit or 'dip sample' contracts along the supply chain.

- vii. That consideration is given to how the Procurement Team can engage with the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) Supply Chain Advisor to improve processes, joint working and awareness.
  - viii. That consideration be given to allowing victim advocates to make representations to Housing Assessment Panels on behalf of victims of modern slavery.
2. That the recommendations as approved, be submitted to Cabinet for consideration and response.
  3. That the recommendations as approved, be submitted to the Safer Rotherham Partnership for dissemination to the South Yorkshire Modern Slavery Partnership for consideration and response.

#### **179. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board considered its Work Programme.

**Resolved:** - That the Work Programme be approved.

#### **180. WORK IN PROGRESS - SELECT COMMISSIONS**

The Chair of Improving Lives Select Commission outlined that consideration was being given to the work programme for the 2023-24 municipal year.

The Vice-Chair of Improving Places Select Commission gave a summary of the work of the Tenants Scrutiny Panel and its focus on communications and repairs. A briefing on the Environment Bill was planned.

**Resolved:** That the updates be noted.

#### **181. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS 1 APRIL 2023 TO 30 JUNE 2023**

**Resolved:** That the Forward Plan of Key Decisions be noted.

#### **182. CALL-IN ISSUES**

There were no call-in issues.

#### **183. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items.

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

**Resolved:** - That the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will be held at 10am on Wednesday 10 May, 2023 at Rotherham Town Hall.