

NORTH EAST DERBYSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 AUGUST 2015

MINUTE EXTRACT – NO 107 - STANDARDS COMMITTEE

18 JUNE 2015

107 Report of Inspection of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

The Committee considered Report No ADGMO-7/15-16/SS of the Assistant Director – Governance and Monitoring Officer which brought to the attention of the Committee the recent inspection report into Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.

The Committee were advised that a recent report of Professor Alexis Jay OBE into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham described how vulnerable children had repeatedly been failed by the Council.

Following that report the Secretary of State for Communities in Local Government ordered a statutory best value inspection of Rotherham Council and appointed Louise Casey to carry it out. Whilst the report presented a sterling picture of a Council in denial about its failures to prevent children from harm, of particular concern for this Standards Committee would be the failures highlighted in relation to high standards of conduct and governance arrangements.

In particular the report highlighted:-

- A pervading culture of bullying, sexism and misplaced political correctness;
- A failure by Members to hold officers to account through scrutiny and to represent the interests of the local people;
- Serious weaknesses in the Council's taxi licensing procedures.

The Casey report concluded that the Council was failing in its statutory duty to provide best value. It had culminated in the resignation of Rotherham's Cabinet, a move to all out elections in 2016 and the appointment of Government Commissioners to exercise the Council's executive and licensing functions, as well as senior officer level appointments.

Whilst North East Derbyshire showed no signs of the sorts of issues identified in Rotherham, the report highlighted lessons from which all councils could learn.

Members noted recently that the Executive Director – Transformation had given a presentation on safeguarding at a recent Licensing induction session, but felt that safeguarding was a matter for all councillors and needed to ensure it was in place within all the Council's partnership arrangements.

RESOLVED That:-

- (1) The Committee agreed to note the report and recommend to all Scrutiny Committees to examine their remits and to ensure robustness throughout the Council concerning safeguarding.
- (2) The Committee recommends the issue of Safeguarding be raised with all officers, The Assistant Director – Governance and Monitoring Officer to raise with the Executive Director – Transformation in the first instance.
- (3) The Council take steps to ensure safeguarding was in place with all partners (i.e. Rykneld Homes).
