

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2016/17**

**FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIR OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY,  
COUNCILLOR ADRIAN LYTHGOE**



This Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2016/17 highlights some of the significant activity and work of the committee and the Task and Finish Groups.

It is important for scrutiny members to be involved in decisions at an early state to ensure they influence the decision-making process and play an important role of 'critical friend'.

The work undertaken during 2016/17 has been wide-ranging and members have taken evidence from interested parties, highlighting the issues that informed the recommendations as a result of their work.

We have found this year, more than any other year, that members of Task and Finish Groups have difficult decisions to make because of the financial situations of local authorities, not just in Rossendale, but nationally.

We are grateful for those external to the Council who gave up their time to attend meetings and who have contributed to the work of both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Task and Finish Groups.

As always, I would like to thank all members for the contributions they made throughout the year. I would also like to thank Pat Couch, Scrutiny Support Officer who retired in December 2016. Support is now being provided by the Committee and Member Services Team.

## MESSAGE FROM COUNCILLOR JACKIE OAKES – PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES DURING 2016/17



This is my first year as a Portfolio Holder and I am pleased to be given the responsibility of Legal and Democratic Services.

Until two years ago I served on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and last year was Chair of the North West Ambulance Services Performance Task and Finish Group.

Overview and Scrutiny is a crucial process that ensures we are delivering both Council services and those services of its partners in an appropriate way.

The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee continues to support and at the same time, challenge the Cabinet in providing assurance in respect of policy development and review across the Council and its partners, acting as a 'critical friend'.

This year I asked if overview and scrutiny could review the 101 process as many councillors, including myself, had expressed concern that people were waiting a long time to get through to the service and some were even abandoning their calls and ringing 999 instead.

A review of drug and alcohol provision for Rossendale has taken place, and a review of the Performance Management Process and a review of Communications is taking place. Each group has come up with some worthwhile recommendations which are highlighted within this report.

Both councillors and officers continue to work together in these difficult and challenging times ahead to ensure the best provision of services for the people of Rossendale and I have confidence that the scrutiny process will make sure we do this.

**1. Overview and Scrutiny – The Basics**

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny process is a principal way of achieving open and democratic accountability for the provision of public services.
- 1.2 All local authorities operating a Cabinet and Scrutiny model have a Cabinet made up of the Leader of the Council and in Rossendale there are four other members who make up the Cabinet.
- 1.3 The Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) role is carried out by non-Cabinet members. In Rossendale we have one politically balanced committee made up of 10 members and one co-opted member.
- 1.4 Overview and Scrutiny is not a decision making body, but is a body which monitors and influences those that are, i.e. the Cabinet. Overview and Scrutiny report their work back to Cabinet who then decide whether recommendations will be accepted, and if not, why not.
- 1.5 In Rossendale the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a role in performance monitoring which enables members to scrutinise detailed performance reports on a quarterly basis.
- 1.6 Scrutiny members/non-Cabinet members undertake reviews which are called Task and Finish Groups. These are usually made up of 5 members who are asked to look in-depth at particular issues and made recommendations which may suggest a change in policy or service provision. The report would then be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to submission to Cabinet. For 2017/18 the Committee and Member Services Officer is looking at the Task and Finish reporting process.
- 1.7 Overview and Scrutiny is not a mechanism for the investigation or settling of individual complaints. The Council has a separate complaints process. Nor can Overview and Scrutiny look at individual planning or licensing decisions.
- 1.8 Overview and Scrutiny welcomes suggestions from councillors and the general public regarding issues that could be investigated. Committee and Member Services consult with the public, councillors and managers each year and their suggestions are considered for the Annual Work Programme.

## 2. Work carried out in 2016/17

### 2.1 Quarterly Performance Reports

During the year, the committee received quarterly performance reports and looked at the achievement of the council's performance indicators (PIs). If any concerns are raised during an O&S meeting about targets not being achieved, then the Committee can ask the officer in charge to attend the next meeting to provide an explanation.

2.2 Due to concerns about the process of performance management it was agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group to look at how the process fits with the Council's mission statement, how the targets are monitored and how concerns are addressed.

2.3 The Group's work is ongoing and is looking at how performance targets are set and the new Corporate Business Plan. More information on the work of this Task and Finish Group is on page 8 of this report.

### 2.4 Local Council Tax Support Scheme

During 2016/17 a report was presented to O&S on the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (CTS) because the Council was required to have any revisions to its scheme in place by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017. Whilst local authorities are able to set their own CTS schemes based on local circumstances and needs, all local authorities are required to provide pensioners with the same level of support received under the previous national council tax benefit scheme.

2.5 Most local authorities now have 'hybrid schemes' whereby those eligible of pension age receive up to 100% of their council tax bill in support, whilst the maximum level of support for working age customers is typically lower. In Rossendale the level of support is currently up to a maximum of 80%.

2.6 The committee indicated that it was important that we, as a Council, continue to try and protect the most vulnerable of our residents.

### 2.7 Portfolio Holder Roles and Responsibilities

In 2016/17 the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny invited Portfolio Holders to attend a committee and to give a brief overview of their portfolio area and the work they carry out. This gave members a better understanding of the Cabinet member roles.

### 2.8 Other Reports

The committee received a variety of reports during 2016/17 with some of them being part of the annual work programme and some being brought to O&S for a specific reason and discussion:-

- Annual Equality Report
- Empty Homes Update
- HR Policies (13 policies)
- Capita Performance Update

- Local Government Ombudsman Annual Letter and Council Feedback (Complaints) Update.
- Community Partnership Projects.
- Housing Options Team (Homelessness) Update

### 3. External Scrutiny

3.1 The committee received a number of presentations from external organisations as follows, which are summarised below.

#### 3.2 Clinical Commissioning Group

The Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) asked to attend a committee to update councillors on the new model of primary care services in Rossendale. The Government is proposing that by 2020 everyone should have access to care from 8am to 8pm. Therefore the CCG have been consulting patients since 2013/14 and asking what they would need.

3.3 Approximately 500 responses were received, providing 1953 comments, 170 people took part in focus groups and 22 people used a paper survey to respond. Members were informed of the services presently on offer and proposals for the future.

3.4 The CCG's research found that patients had been using the Walk-In Centre at Hyndburn for extended GP hours. This was accessible for the whole of East Lancashire but primarily used by Hyndburn residents. As part of the proposals to increase GP access, an alternative service – a hub designed by local GPs would be introduced. There would be 4 hubs in total – Burnley, Pendle, Rossendale and Hyndburn. Two of these hubs (Burnley and Hyndburn) would be open on both a Saturday and Sunday in addition to being open Monday to Friday with the hubs in Pendle and Rossendale open Monday to Friday plus Saturday mornings.

3.5 The committee felt the proposals looked well, however there was a concern that this was a way of saving money and the committee wanted to clarify how the CCG could make decisions when funding levels were not known.

3.6 The CCG agreed that there was a shortage of GPs and they were looking at innovative ways to attract GPs to the area such as having links with a university to make the posts more attractive to applicants. However in the short term the CCG will be working closely with the representative body of the GP Practices in East Lancashire (GP Federation) in terms of getting these local hubs up and running.

3.7 The consultation established that three out of every four East Lancashire residents agreed with the proposed new model of primary care in East Lancashire. It was found that 83% of those responding for Rossendale agreed with the proposals, higher than any other of the East Lancashire Authorities.

3.8 Lancashire Police – Presentation on Crime Figures

3.9 O&S monitors crime and disorder issues and under the Police and Justice Act and related statutory guidance from the Home Office on the scrutiny of crime and disorder, Lancashire Police are invited to the committee each year to give a presentation on performance and progress against crime indicators.

3.10 Inspector Pam Holgate attended her first committee in February 2017 and presented an analysis of the crime figures summarised as follows:-

- A reduction in antisocial behaviour incidents with the highest incidents in October. Problematic areas and times were being targeted.
- An increase in domestic abuse offences with violent crime accounting for 70.5% of domestic abuse.
- An increase on non-domestic assaults, which in part was due to changes in recording practice. These incidents were mainly in repeat locations in town centres, being Bacup Road, Rawtenstall and Manchester Road (pubs and nightclubs).
- An increase in sexual offences against under-16s, with December seeing the highest number. Overall quarter 3 had seen an equal number on comparison with the previous year.
- Burglary dwelling offences had increased, with the highest number of offences being recorded in October.
- It was noted that harassment was now recorded under violent crimes and malicious communications.
- Road traffic collisions – there had been a 71.4% increase in serious injuries sustained.
- Further details were given on the increase in violent crime and non-domestic assault and repeat locations outlined.
- Discussion took place on substance misuse and hate crimes and inclusion in future reports.

3.11 The report was based on the Community Safety Partnership figures and could be amended to suit the information that members wanted to know. It was agreed that future breakdowns should include:-

- Substance misuse and related crimes.
- Hate crimes and breakdown of such crimes
- Positive outcomes

3.12 Rossendale Leisure Trust (RLT) Update

Rossendale Leisure Trust presented their annual update in January 2017 and members were informed of the Trust's key achievements, summarised as follows:-

- The success of the Grip and Go facility with 23,875 participants and a £55k operating profit in 2016
- A financial growth of £50k in 2016

- An increase in school coaching provision
- New projects including the Cribden Outdoor Well-being Centre, Marl Pits outdoor sports fields and a potential new fitness facility in Bacup.

3.13 Members requested an update later on in 2017 when the Cribden House Project was up and running.

3.14 Community Leisure Association Whitworth (CLAW)

CLAW also provided the committee with an update in January 2017 and the report highlighted their key achievements in 2016/17:-

- A successful celebration of the Riverside's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary
- £40k refurbishment of the swimming pool changing rooms (during which the pool was kept open)
- £8k capital expenditure to acquire a new hyproliser
- Investment in the Riverside and winner of the 'Best Kept Public Hall' award in the Lancashire Best Kept Village competition
- Increase in wedding and school prom bookings
- Increase in leisure bookings, notably school swimming and other swimming lessons.

3.15 Members noted that it was very important that the Council continued to support leisure in the community.

3.16 Rossendale Transport (ROSSO)

The Managing Director of ROSSO provided the committee with an update at the March 2017 meeting on the achievements of the company over the past year, summarised as follows:-

- Annual turnover was £9.7m with an annual wage bill of £5.5m and 225 staff.
- 3.6m miles were operated each year, with a fuel consumption of 2m litres, and 4.8m passengers carried.
- Rosso was operating significantly in the north and east of Greater Manchester with both commercial and school operations.
- The potential impact of franchising following the Manchester Mayoral elections was outlined.
- Fares and ticket prices and the introduction of SMART cards were outlined, along with future consideration of contactless payments.
- Transport Focus had been commissioned to conduct a nationally accredited survey.
- Engagement took place with the local community and staff and a dialogue is maintained with stakeholders.
- The challenges of Lancashire County Council (LCC), franchising and the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) were outlined.
- The current locations and the new bus stations at Accrington and Rawtenstall were highlighted along with the retrenchment of other operators, which may assist with revenue and passenger growth.

#### **4. Task and Finish Group work in 2016/17**

4.1 Task and Finish Groups are established by the O&S Committee to conduct an in-depth review of any service, policy or issues that affects the Borough. Usually there are 5 politically balanced members (non-Cabinet Members) and at the first meeting a Chair and Terms of Reference are agreed. Some of the Task and Finish Groups have concluded and some are ongoing; summarised below:-

#### 4.2 Dog Fouling

Phase 1 of this group commenced in October 2015 and was reported in last year's annual report. Phase 2 began in July 2016 when the group met with the new Head of Operations. The group heard what actions and changes he proposed to take on the matter of dog fouling and it was agreed that the group's work should be concluded to see if the situation improved. The Head of Operations will be attending O&S Committee in September 2017 to provide an update, to allow members to see if there have been any improvements.

#### 4.3 Performance Management Process

The work began in March 2016 and is an ongoing piece of work. The current corporate plan is dated 2013-2016 and is now being updated, along with the 3 year business plan. Consultation with staff, councillors and the public was held in October 2016.

4.4 Following several meetings and discussions, the Overview and Scrutiny were provided with a draft copy of the Council's new Corporate Strategy and were given an opportunity to give feedback. The Group also came up with several recommendations designed to improve the performance monitoring carried out by O&S. This report will be presented to the Committee in June 2017.

#### 4.5 Review of Drug and Alcohol Provision in Rossendale

This 'light touch' Task and Finish Group was established in response to concerns raised at the loss of the Bacup Road facilities. Inspire (who provide a drug and alcohol service for East Lancashire) were invited to the first meeting to update on services for Rossendale. Members visited the Inspire building and were impressed with the work being carried out within the building and in the community.

4.6 The work carried out by the Group is detailed in its report which was submitted to the O&S Committee in January 2017 and was sent to external agencies, including those who had helped with the report and to Cabinet Agenda Setting. Responses to the Task and Finish Group's report will be presented to O&S Committee in June 2017.

#### 4.7 Review of the 101 Service

This Group was established following concerns raised by Councillors and constituents about the time taken to answer calls to the 101 service. The Operational Control Room Manager attended the first meeting and the Group also carried out a site visit.

4.8 The work carried out by the Group is detailed in its report which was submitted to the O&S Committee in January 2017 and the report was then circulated to external agencies and Cabinet Agenda Setting for comments. The Cabinet's response to the Task and Finish Group report will be presented to O&S Committee in July 2017.

4.9 Communicating with Customers

This Group was established to look at the Council's website, following a suggestion from a Councillor. However, it transpired that work was already ongoing to look at the website and the telephony system. Instead, the Group decided to look at how the Council communicates with its customers and how efficient and effective services are.

4.10 Workshops and meetings took place and an update report will be presented to O&S Committee in June 2017. However, the work of the Group is now almost complete, with one more meeting to be held in late August/early September to review draft customer standards.

4.11 Equalities

This small group was set up in response to queries raised by the Co-opted Member of O&S. This work is ongoing at present and is looking at the Council's Equalities Strategy.

## 5. **Update on 2015/16 Task and Finish Group Work**

5.1 North West Ambulance Service

This piece of work was finalised and reported in the last annual report, with the main recommendation being that Rossendale should employ a Community Specialist Paramedic. In July 2016 NWAS confirmed that the recommendation had been accepted and Richard Peters had been appointed in October 2016, based at Rawtenstall Primary Health Care Centre. It is intended to ask Richard to return to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2017 to update members on his role.

5.2 Counter Fraud Scheme

Again this piece of work was finalised and reported on in last year's annual report, however more information is now available:-

- The Fraud and Compliance Officer is now a permanent role, and their work includes:
  - As at 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016, 33 of the 53 cases received by the council were referred to the Valuation Office and were returned with revised rateable values. This means that increased bills were being issued for those cases.
  - The collective increase rateable value of those 33 cases was £316,815. Once billed and collected, Rossendale will receive approximately £62,600 per annum.

- The other five recommendations in the report had been supported by the Cabinet.

## 6. 2017/18 Meetings and Work Programme

6.1 The meetings for 2017/18 are confirmed as follows (all 6.30pm in the Council Chamber):-

- 19<sup>th</sup> June 2017
- 17<sup>th</sup> July 2017
- 4<sup>th</sup> September 2017
- 16<sup>th</sup> October 2017
- 13<sup>th</sup> November 2017
- 4<sup>th</sup> December 2017
- 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018
- 5<sup>th</sup> February 2018 (Budget)
- 5<sup>th</sup> March 2018

6.2 In March and April 2017 councillors, managers and the public were asked for ideas for the 2017/18 Work Programme. At its first meeting of the municipal year on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2017, the committee will look at the suggested items and decide which to take forward for 2017/18. This could be inviting a service area or external partner to update the committee, or establishing a Task and Finish Group.