

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Date of Meeting:** 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020

**Present:** Cllr Johnson (Chair)  
Cllrs Brennan, Janet Eaton, Johnson, Kempson, Kenyon,  
Marriott, Procter and Steen

**In attendance:** Neil Shaw, Chief Executive  
Clare Law, HR Manager  
Mick Coogan, Strategic Housing Manager  
Ken Masser, Rossendale Leisure Trust  
Roger Fulton, Rossendale Leisure Trust  
Phill Holden, Rossendale Leisure Trust  
Karen Ruane, CLAW  
Gillian Bishop, CLAW  
Lisa McDowell, CLAW  
Inspector Clarke, Lancashire Police  
Jenni Cook, Committee and Member Services Officer

**Also Present:** Cllrs A. Barnes (in part), Haworth and Lythgoe  
0 press  
2 public

---

Prior to the start of the meeting the Chair asked members to acknowledge the sad passing of Christine Ashcroft of CLAW in December 2019. Members noted her hard work for CLAW and other Whitworth organisations.

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & SUBSTITUTIONS

- 1.1 Apologies for absence had been received from:-
- Councillor Gill - Councillor Marriott substituting
  - Councillor L. Barnes – Councillor Steen substituting
  - Councillor Morris
  - Zieda Ali (Co-opted Member)

### 2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

**Resolved:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2019 be approved as a correct record.

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

### 4. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

- 4.1 The Chair confirmed that there were no urgent items of business.

## **5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

- 5.1 The Chair noted that she would allow questions to be asked on each item as it was discussed.

## **6. CHAIR'S UPDATE**

- 6.1 The Chair noted the following as part of her update:-

- Following the demonstration of in-cab technology at the last meeting, the officer would return to O&S Committee for an update on the implementation in March 2020.
- Members were reminded to complete the mandatory online Prevent training and to contact Committee and Member Services with any issues.
- There had been some interest in the current position around empty homes and the Chair read out the following statement from the Monitoring Officer:-

*“The police investigation into the empty homes scheme continues and officers and the Leader are due to meet with the police at the beginning of March to receive an update. We will continue to support the police and provide all necessary documentation in order to progress matters. We do not wish to prejudice or jeopardise the investigations that are underway and will update all when we are in a position to do so.”*

## **7. LANCASHIRE POLICE – ANNUAL UPDATE**

- 7.1 Inspector Clarke provided members with an annual update for 2019 and provided an overview of crime and police activities:-

- Spates of break-ins concerning Haslingden shops, convictions and sentences.
- Burglaries in Waterfoot, convictions and sentences.
- Youth disorder around McDonalds in Rawtenstall.
- Serious offences in May 2019, which had included a murder in Haslingden, a rapist and a shooting in Waterfoot. Sentences and convictions were noted.
- There had been a spate of shop break-ins in Bacup and a local male had been sentenced, along with a community banning order.
- During August there had been a murder in Haslingden, two individuals had been charged and this would be in court on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020.
- There had been intoxication/other offences in Stacksteads and this had led to a conviction.
- At the end of September there had been a spate of burglaries for which a suspect was identified. Evidence obtained in Lancashire had been used to obtain a conviction in West Yorkshire.
- Operations targeting criminal gangs were ongoing.
- Criminality regarding a HMO at Thornfield Avenue was noted and work was ongoing with the owner and the Council.
- Car crime continued to be an issue and residents were reminded to lock their cars and hide their keys.

- On-street drug dealing was an issue and the police were targeting this.
- The fracking operation had stood down and officers were not being used for this.
- The services available at Waterfoot were clarified – a telephone was located outside and this was used as a divisional training centre and housed the community first responders.
- An overview of staffing was given and new intakes of officers clarified.
- A Task Force had been established which was split between Burnley and Rossendale.

7.2 In terms of crime statistics, Inspector Clarke noted that a new IT system had been implemented and figures were available, however these figures were still in their infancy and may need further refinement. In his view, crime figures remained similar to last year with some spikes.

7.3 Members and members of the public commented as follows:-

- Hate crime – the public must be confident in reporting hate crimes. There was a hate crime lead, officers had Apps on their phones which contained guidance and legislation. Specialised cars were available – the H8 care and a conference room was available for groups to interact and educate.
- The procedure for monitoring banning orders was clarified.
- Issues regarding drinking in Bacup were being targeted.
- Repeat shoplifting offenders in Waterfoot were noted.
- Advice was provided to shops who had been broken into and members should let Inspector Clarke know of any groups that would benefit from advice and guidance.
- The facilities at Waterfoot, the procedure for reporting crimes and the appointments systems were clarified.

**Resolved:**

The update was noted and Inspector Clarke was thanked for his time.

NB: Inspector Clarke and Councillor Kempson left the meeting.

**8. ROSSENDALE LEISURE TRUST (RLT) 2019 ANNUAL REPORT AND COMMUNITY LEISURE ASSOCIATION OF WHITWORTH (CLAW) 2019 ANNUAL REPORT**

8.1 Representatives from Rossendale Leisure Trust and the Community Leisure Association of Whitworth presented a report which comprised a YouTube video, put together by an Apprentice, and supporting documentation. The YouTube link is available here:-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AiGr749NqZc>

NB: Councillor A. Barnes entered the meeting. Councillor Kempson returned to the meeting.

- 8.2 The video and supporting documentation highlighted the following:-
- The work of the staff and impact on local people.
  - Forming partnerships across the valley, e.g. CLAW and Pioneer Gym.
  - The success of 'Friday Hangouts' for ages 13-18 in Haslingden.
  - Challenges, in particular ageing facilities across the valley and the impact of the rise in minimum wage on the operating surplus going forward.
  - The increasing role of the Leisure Trust in the community e.g. community coaching, board memberships etc.

- 8.3 Members and members of the public commented as follows:-
- The impact of 'pay as you go' apps were noted and RLT were monitoring possibilities.
  - Swimming lessons and private club membership was clarified.
  - Minimum wage rise implications were discussed and noted.
  - More promotion and publicity around achievements was needed.
  - RLT were welcome to attend Community Partnership meetings to promote their activities and achievements.
  - Potential for extending the Friday Hangouts across the valley was being considered and data would be made available regarding this.
  - The main source of strong revenue growth remained gym memberships, with input from Grip & Go and Pioneer Gym.
  - Clarification was provided regarding facility rentals and arrangements with the council.

- 8.4 In terms of CLAW, the committee were thanked for their kind words regarding Christine Ashcroft and these would be taken back to her family. Proposals were noted to reduce the annual grant from £60k to £50k, which would present a financially challenging position to CLAW. The Council was asked to consider keeping the grant at £60k for a few more years to ensure that this could be re-invested into Whitworth.

**Resolved:**

The update was noted. Rossendale Leisure Trust and CLAW were congratulated for their hard work and achievements over the past year.

NB: Lisa McDowell, Karen Ruane and Gillian Bishop left the meeting.

**9. ADOPTION OF A REVISED COMMON ALLOCATIONS POLICY**

- 9.1 The Strategic Housing Manager introduced the report which asked members to consider the amended B-with-us Common Allocations Policy and asked for members' view and recommendations to Cabinet. The officer covered the following points:-
- The council had a duty to prioritise housing and this was driven by the Homeless Reduction Act duties.
  - A summary of the choice-based letting arrangements was provided.
  - Proposed changes to the Common Allocations Policy were highlighted including eligibility, qualification, local connection, debt, homeowners' equity, circumstances and banding.

- Clarification was given on current and proposed banding and the impact.
- Changes would require investment in software systems which would be met from existing B-with-us reserves.
- Members could feed back individually and as a committee with a deadline of 24<sup>th</sup> January 2020. The Policy would be heard at the March meeting of the Cabinet with a view to implementation in April 2020.

9.2 Members and members of the public commented as follows:-

- Clarification was given regarding priority to the Armed Forces and their families and definitions of ‘close family member’.
- Debts were discussed and whether someone in debt, but on a successful repayment plan, would be reconsidered. If this placed them at risk of homelessness then the Council could override the policy under the Homelessness Reduction Act duties.
- Allocation of affordable housing, the Local Plan and S106 agreements were discussed, along with current and planned affordable housing.
- Older people and accessible housing needs were noted.
- Concerns were expressed regarding homeowners’ equity.

**Resolved:**

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested that the Cabinet give due regard to their concerns regarding the £120k equity limit.
2. That if approved, all future minor amendments to the B-with-us Common Allocations Policy are delegated to the relevant Director in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.
3. That if approved, the council reviews the existing Civica software contract to ensure it is fit for purpose and provides value for money.

**10. TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT: ROSSENDALE SUICIDE AND DRUG RELATED DEATHS LOGIC MODEL ACTION PLAN**

10.1 The Chair introduced the report which outlined the work undertaken by the Task and Finish Group. A Scrutiny Day had been held and out of this, the Group had generated 12 recommendations, contained both in the covering report and appendix. Corporate Management Team had endorsed the work and recommendations. The Cabinet had formally responded on, and accepted, the group’s recommendations. The HR Manager provided members with an update on work carried out on the recommendations, in relation to officer and member training, to date.

10.2 Members and members of the public commented as follows:-

- The amendment to the standard of proof required by a Coroner would likely have an impact on figures.
- There was partnership working between LCC and a local high school following recent events.
- NWAS and front-line NHS staff were unable to carry much paperwork and used an App called ‘Hub of Hope’ which directed people to support services locally.

- Recommendation 6 noted engagement with local employers and this work would be reported on when a further update was brought to the committee.

NB: Councillor Janet Eaton left the meeting.

- There was a need to normalise discussions around suicide and not sweep under the carpet.
- Support was important for the rural community.

**Resolved**

1. That the work carried out by the Task and Finish Group is noted.
2. That it be noted that the Cabinet has accepted the recommendations in the Task and Finish Group's report.
3. That an update on the recommendations, progress and work being carried out is provided at a future meeting.

**11. THE FORWARD PLAN**

11.1 The Forward Plan had been published with the agenda and tabled upcoming Cabinet decisions that the committee could consider for the O&S Committee. It was noted that Transdev had been invited to the March 2020 committee.

11.2 In terms of February's meeting, the provisional agenda was as follows:-

- Annual budget items
- Quarterly performance report

**Resolved:**

The plan was noted.

**The meeting started at 6.30pm and finished at 8.45pm**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_