

Minutes of: PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 12 June 2007

PRESENT: Councillor Sandiford (in the Chair)
Councillors Barnes, Dickinson, Forshaw, Lamb
and Morris

IN ATTENDANCE: Carolyn Wilkins, Chief Executive
Helen Lockwood, Deputy Chief Executive
Linda Fisher, Head of Planning, Legal and
Democratic Services
Carole Todd, Head of Street Scene and Liveability
Lesley Noble, Head of Policy and Performance
Pat Couch, Scrutiny Support Officer

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Brian Essex, Portfolio Holder for a Well
Managed Council
Councillor William Challinor, Portfolio Holder,
Regeneration and Promoting Rossendale
Councillor Judith Driver, Portfolio Holder, Clean and
Green Rossendale
Councillor Alison Tickner, Portfolio Holder, Quality
Services to Customers
Councillor Duncan Ruddick
Councillor Janet Graham, Portfolio Holder, Health and
Wellbeing

1 Member of the public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Neal

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2007 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions were raised under this item.

5. CHAIRS UPDATE

The Chair welcomed Councillor Lynda Barnes as a new Member of the Performance Scrutiny Committee indicating that a Scrutiny Toolkit would be available prior to the Scrutiny training which was being held on 27 June prior to the Council Meeting.

6. SIGNIFICANT EVENT REVIEW – RAMP AT HARDMANS MILL

Councillor Ruddick presented the report of the Chief Executive and explained the purpose of the title 'Significant Event Review'. This title would be used in future reports so that the Council can capture any lessons and amend processes accordingly to make improvements.

Councillor Ruddick reported on a number of matters relating to the ramp He indicated that a delay had occurred due to work requiring agreement of materials. Following this agreement the construction of the ramp was completed within two weeks.

The Chief Executive explained that there were many learning points around performance management and although a risk assessment was undertaken it was not as comprehensive as expected. She indicated that there was a lack of clarity in relation to project management roles and responsibilities.

One member raised concern about the width and depth of the steps. The Chief Executive confirmed that after consulting with building control it was confirmed that the steps conform to regulations.

Resolved:

That the Committee accept and note the recommendations within the report.

7. STREET SCENE AND LIVEABILITY

The Chair gave background information on the purpose of asking the Head of Street Scene and Liveability to attend the Performance Scrutiny Committee. At the January meeting of the Committee members were asked to submit questions relating to Street Scene and Liveability to the Scrutiny Officer. In response to the questions a presentation had been prepared which would answer the points raised within the questions.

Councillor Judith Driver, Portfolio Holder for a Clean and Green Rossendale informed members that the Head of Street Scene and Liveability would provide an update of the service over the years followed by a short presentation on Section 215 and Elevate work undertaken in Bacup and Stacksteads.

The Head of Street Scene and Liveability informed members of the number of calls to their service which were as follows:

30,000 calls between April 2005 – March 2006

36,204 calls between April 2006 – March 2007

9,210 calls between April and May 2007

There had also been 4,556 site visits through the NEAT teams during these periods. Some calls were actioned immediately, whilst other required site visits.

She went on to explain in more detail the following:

- Closure of Police kennels and transfer of services to animal wardens
- Stubblegreen greenhouses and the present situation
- Background on the work of the NEAT team
- Gulley cleaning provided by Lancashire County Council

Members were informed that only 5% of the Borough were on weekly waste collections and a Capital bid had been put forward for a small vehicle, but that that the issue of side waste needed to be addressed first.

The Head of Street Scene and Liveability gave a presentation on the successes so far with Section 215 and Elevate work. The presentation showed the improvements that had been made to different houses in the Borough.

A member raised concern that not all issues had been addressed within the presentation and both the Head of Street Scene and Liveability and the Portfolio Holder for a Clean and Green Rossendale agreed that any member could raise individual matters with them outside the meeting.

The Chair indicated that members could also progress items through the Member Enquiry System.

The Portfolio Holder for a Well Managed Council informed members that it would be more beneficial to go through the member enquiry system to enable issues to be picked up at a strategic level.

Resolved:

That the Head of Street Scene and Liveability be requested to produce a questionnaire to send to all elected Members asking them to identify three areas they feel are good about Street Scene and Liveability and three things that need to improve within the service.

8. REVIEW OF SECTION 106 PROCEDURES

Councillor Challinor, Portfolio Holder for Regenerating and Promoting Rossendale explained the reason for presenting the report was to ensure the Council was open and transparent in its management of the section 106 review.

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the findings and recommendations of the independent review in relation to the management of section 106 agreements.

The objectives of the review were to review the process and procedure surrounding section 106 agreements and undertake a review of case and file management. The review highlighted that there had been no systematic or comprehensive management of 106 agreements, until recently.

It was noted that new management arrangements introduced in Development Control in October 2006 had started to address the issues identified by the review and many of the recommendations had been addressed.

A number of questions were raised and the Head of Planning, Legal and Democratic Services provided answers. She also highlighted the new electronic system whereby the public would be able to view plans on-line from summer 2007.

There was also discussion on the training of those Members on the Development Control Committee and the Head of Planning, Legal and Democratic Service indicated that more training was being programmed into the training schedule. .

Resolved:

That Members note the report.

9 CUSTOMER SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Head of Customer Service and e-Government gave an update on those BVPIs which were under-achieving at Quarter 3. He explained

the progress which had been made during April and May 2007 and that the BVPIs have improved significantly over these two months.

He then explained that there was a second homes Policy on second homes Council Tax and 40% had been sent reminders with 20% receiving summonses.

There were now 63% of customers paying by direct debit and Capita were in the process of setting up an electronic system for customers receiving refunds within 24 hours.

Councillor Tickner, Portfolio Holder for Quality Services to Customers explained it was a journey as to where we were, where we are now, where we want to be in the future and it was about continuously looking at what we can achieve and be proactive.

Resolved:

That the improvements be noted.

10. END OF YEAR BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (BVPIs)

Councillor Essex, Portfolio Holder for a Well Managed Council, presented the report of the Head of Policy and Performance which detailed the end of year performance (2006/07) against the Council's Best Value Performance and Satisfaction Indicators, Key Success Indicators and Local Area Agreement Indicators.

The Head of Policy and Performance presented a detailed evaluation of the end of year performance which is summarised below.

Out of a total of 77 BVPIs

- The direction of travel for 2006/7 showed a very positive direction of travel with 87% of BVPI's having either maintained or improved their position against previous years.
- Third year of success with over two thirds of BVPIs improving
- 13% of BVPIs had declined between 2006/06 and 2006/07
- 14 were Contextual – meaning they represent 'how it is in Rossendale' (eg BV17b % of economically active ethnic minority population) and therefore it is not relevant to set a target for improvement.
- 1 was amended and therefore comparison with the previous year was not possible.

A number of questions were raised by members and the Head of Policy and Performance provided answers.

In relation to declining BVPIs there was only one concern which was in relation to invoices paid on time and it was accepted that within the Quarter 3 performance there had been significant improvements, but overall over the year there had been a decline. It was agreed to keep this BVPI under review.

The Head of Policy and Performance highlighted a number of service areas which had improved significantly and these are detailed below.

- BV12 - Sickness Absence Management
- BV15 - % of ill health retirement
- BV82a(i) -household waste recycled
- BV84a - household waste collected per head
- BV109a - major applications determined in 13 weeks
- BV170c - Visits to and use of Museum – school groups
- BV166a – Environmental Health Checklist
- BV205 – Quality of Planning Service Checklist
- BV199a – Local Street and Environmental Cleanliness
- BV217 – Pollution Control Improvements Completed on Time
- BV 127a – Violent Crime per 1,000 Population

Resolved:

1. That the Committee notes the levels of performance detailed in the report.
2. That the Committee continues to monitor performance of those indicators that are significantly under achieving target levels.
3. That the Committee commend those areas detailed above that had shown significant improvements.

11. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2007/08

Members considered the Work Programme 2007/08 which had been agreed at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 24 May 2007.

The report included current/ongoing work to include in the 2007/08 Work Programme as set out below.

- The Management of Car Parks in the Borough
- Review of Public Conveniences in the Borough
- Community Cohesion
- Enforcement
- Review of Polling Station

The following areas were identified as priority areas for the next 12 months.

- Risk Management
- Review of the Council's Partnership Register
- Road Safety around the Borough
- Review of Accrington and Rossendale College
- Council's position on Wind Farming

Members raised concern that Town Twinning and the Irwell Sculpture Trail had only been scored with an 'amber' rating and felt that both these areas were important in promoting the Borough.

There was discussion on the Wind Farming item which Members felt should not be included on the Work Programme. The Deputy Chief Executive indicated that guidance notes on such things as wind turbines, including clear roles and responsibilities, could be factored into future planning training.

Resolved:

That Wind Farming be taken off the Work Programme and be replaced with Town Twinning.

12 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2006/07

The Chair presented the Annual Report for 2006/07, which was a combined report also being presented to the Policy Scrutiny Committee and Audit Scrutiny Committee.

She indicated that the work of the Committee should be celebrated as members had positively contributed and played a key part in the improved performance within the Council and paid particular thanks to the two past Chairs, Councillors Peter Starkey and Hazel Steen for their hard work.

Any comments on the report should be forwarded to the Scrutiny Support Officer.

Resolved:

That any comments be forwarded to the Scrutiny Support Officer, following which the report would be recommended for approval to Full Council.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 9.05pm)

Signed.....
(Chair)

Date

