

## **Overview and Scrutiny**

**Annual Report 2009/10**

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## **INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR**



### **Welcome to Rossendale Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2009/10**

The last 12 months Overview and Scrutiny has continued to develop its role, especially with the publication of the new Local Government and Public Involvement Act 2007 and the Local Democracy Bill 2009.

This year has been another busy year for Overview and Scrutiny and again we have made a difference.

Last year I told you about the Community Toilet Scheme which was being piloted in Bacup. This I am pleased to say was very successful and discussions are underway for this to be rolled out throughout the Borough.

In June 2009 you told us you had concerns about the lack of dentists within the Borough. Again we have listened and you will see later in the report what happened when we discussed your concerns with the Primary Care Trust.

As Chair of Overview and Scrutiny I continue to attend the numerous Forums and Network events to ensure I keep up to date on the forthcoming changes to Overview and Scrutiny and what it will mean for the people of Rossendale.

We will continue to work hard to ensure that where possible, concerns are listened to. Sometimes people think that Overview and Scrutiny can look at individual complaints or problems - this is not the case, as there are other mechanisms in place for these to be dealt with.

This year our work has been different to other years. Over the last few years the priority has been to focus on improving Customer Services. Having achieved improved standards in Customer Services, the intention is for us to now focus on value for money.

We wanted to make sure that ratepayers money is being spent appropriately by scrutinising the services provided by organisations who have been given grant money by the Council.

We were also looking at the performance of our Local Area Agreements (LAAs), which are agreements set up between Rossendale Borough Council, Lancashire County Council and other relevant bodies. More information is within the report.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee has been reinstated and throughout the year we have had numerous presentations from outside organisations. I feel this is an important part of our work as we can listen to organisations to get to grips with what they are doing for the people of Rossendale in relation to crime and disorder, health, housing, safety etc.

The Council see Overview and Scrutiny as an important role and for this reason at the Full Council meeting in February 2009 we were asked to establish a regular Overview and Scrutiny process to oversee the transition of the Leisure review. Again more information is contained within the report.

As always I would like to thank all members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for the contributions they have made, together with support from the co-opted members. In relation to co-opted Members, Bernard Divine, who was a very respected member of our Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the last 3 years, died in February 2010 and his contributions will be sadly missed.

I would like to thank Pat Couch, Scrutiny Support Officer and all other Members of the Democratic Services Team who have helped support the Scrutiny Officer during the year.

My thanks are also extended to Portfolio Holders and the 'critical friend' relationship that has developed and will continue to do so over the next year.

***Councillor Gladys Sandiford***  
**(Chair of the Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee)**

**Comments from the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resource, Councillor Brian Essex**



“The Overview and Scrutiny Committees aim to improve services which the residents of Rossendale use.

They do this by monitoring the work of this Council and its partner organisations, such as the County Council, health services and other agencies. They make recommendations on the way services should be provided.

A big piece of work this year has been scrutinising the Rossendale Leisure Trust. This process has been lengthy, rigorous and has formed a basis for the Leisure Review. This has now been accepted by the Council.

I congratulate the Overview and Scrutiny Team for their achievements this last year. Members have worked hard and have been open to new ways of working and have been prepared to ask difficult but honest questions of colleagues and officers.

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IN ROSSENDALE**

### **How do we decide what to include on our work programme?**

Overview and Scrutiny produced a scrutiny form which asks people to tell us if they have an item they would like overview and scrutiny to look at. Other ways to capture the views of the public include:-

- Producing a press release which goes in the local newspapers
- We include a section in Rossendale Alive, which is delivered to every household in the Borough
- The scrutiny form is available on the Council's website and at the One Stop Shop
- We send letters to the Community Network Link which has almost 400 members
- We also send the scrutiny forms to local libraries

Towards the end of May the suggestions are evaluated and a sub group is established to prioritise its work for the year. We try to choose issues that we believe can make a difference and achieve improvements – the 'so what' factor.

### **The Structure of Overview and Scrutiny in Rossendale**

We have two committees, Policy Scrutiny and Performance Scrutiny (their role is explained on the following pages). Each of these politically-balanced committees has 7 members, we also have co-opted members, which are members of the public with a particular interest in a specific subject.

The Overview and Management Committee is made up of members of both the Policy and Performance Committee (see below) and meets four times a year. This Committee approves the work of the Task and Finish Groups and also received update reports on the work of each of the committees.

#### **Membership of Performance**

**Councillor Gladys Sandiford (Chair)**  
**Councillor David Stansfield (Vice-chair)**  
**Councillor Colin Crawforth**  
**Councillor Christine Lamb**  
**Councillor Alan Neal**  
**Councillor Joyce Thorne**  
**Councillor Lynda Barnes**  
**Mr Bernard Divine (Co-opted Member)**

#### **Membership of Policy**

**Councillor Hazel Steen (Chair)**  
**Councillor Granville Morris (Vice-Chair)**  
**Councillor Nicola May**  
**Councillor Amanda Milling**  
**Councillor Catherine Pilling**  
**Councillor June Forshaw**  
**Councillor Dorothy Farrington**  
**Mr Philip Ham (Co-opted Member)**

## The Committees

### PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

In February 2009 the Council considered a number of financial options for the future provision of leisure in the Borough and approved the delivery of Option H as the preferred option. This option asked that the Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee review the process on leisure to oversee the transition.

The first meeting was held on 21 April when the Committee heard representation from Rossendale Leisure Trust on its future plans. At the meeting the Terms of Reference and Structure for the review were agreed.



The Committee met on a bi-monthly basis, receiving updates on the review. Review panels were set up to look at Bacup Leisure Hall, Pools and Rossendale Ski Slopes.

A report was provided by the Communities Manager which updated Overview and Scrutiny on the work of the review panels, together with continued financial information and also reports from Rossendale Leisure Trust to ensure their Action Plan was on target for being met. The Committee met five times before finalising its report to Council in November 2009.

As well as overseeing the transition of the Leisure Review, the Committee still continued to receive quarterly performance reports on the Council's Performance of their National Indicators (NIs) Local Indicators (LIs) and Local Area Agreement targets.

The Committee also received reports from the different service areas and asked for the Head of Service of the under achieving targets to report back to a future meeting to explain how they intend to improve performance.

We also receive reports from partner organisations such as Green Vale Homes and the Local Strategic Partnership.

In February 2010, the Committee were pleased to note that 91% of the Council's Performance Indicators were achieving/exceeding targets. These have improved significantly since 2006 when 64% were achieving targets.

Overview and Scrutiny is not just there to find fault, it also sends letters of congratulations to those service areas which were exceeding targets. This year seems to be a year of more achieved targets than under-achieved.

## **POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Committee has given its views on around 40 documents over the last 12 months, some of which are highlighted below.

- Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Member Development Strategy
- City Development Company
- Housing and Regeneration Bill
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Pennine Lancashire Housing Strategy
- Road Safety Strategy
- Neighbourhood Management
- Hot Food Takeaways

Having had sight of these documents, Members put forward a number of additional recommendations and amendments, which were agreed and included in the final versions before they were presented to Cabinet.

It is our intention this year to ask to receive updates on some of the above strategies, as well as some agreed the previous year so we can measure outcomes. We will be challenging Officers with the 'so what' factor to ensure that decisions taken have been, or are to be implemented.

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee meets four times a year and receive presentations from different organisations such as the Primary Care Trust, East Lancashire Hospitals Trust, Crime and Disorder Partnership, Probation Service.



At our meeting in September we received an update on the new Rossendale Primary Health Care Hub. The building would be handed over to the PCT in April 2010 with services to be moved in two phases commencing May 2010. Parking would be available for 120 patients and visitors, with 80 staff parking spaces at the old Rawtenstall Health Centre. The Committee visited the new facilities on 19 March prior to its opening.

In November, we heard about the changes to rehabilitation services in Rossendale. They are proposing to centralise the rehabilitation unit at Pendle Community Hospital, which is where the initial assessment would take place. An 'out reach' service would be provided to patients in Rossendale which would involve home visits.

Members were concerned that yet again Rossendale would be losing out on this valuable service despite this unit being in the original plans. This is being strenuously followed up.

The Police and Justice Act 2006 requires Councils to have an Overview and Scrutiny Committee with responsibility for examining crime and disorder issues with powers to hold the Crime and Disorder Partnership to account for the joint delivery of their statutory duties. This is to ensure the high profile and accountability of local partnerships and to provide redress where community safety issues are not being addressed.

We have agreed that this function should be delegated to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee. In November we received a presentation from the Community Safety Manager, along with the Deputy Chief Inspector of Lancashire Police who explained the performance targets of the partnership and gave an outline of the full membership and how the Partnership was funded. Also in attendance was the Lancashire Probation Service who explained about the 'Community Payback Scheme' which helps and supports offenders by providing them with work in the community on identified projects, by assisting with erecting fencing or on landscaping projects. Members requested further information about the scheme and a meeting was held with appropriate officers.

## **THIS YEAR'S TASK AND FINISH GROUPS**

Task and Finish Groups are groups that undertake a specific piece of work for a short period of time, produce a report and then finish.

All Members have been very busy taking part in various Task and Finish Groups over the last twelve months, with some very positive outcomes.

### **Dentistry Task and Finish Group**

Following a presentation from the East Lancashire Primary Care NHS Trust in December 2008, it was agreed that Overview and Scrutiny should look at the potential impact on levels of dental provision in the Borough and therefore the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group to consider the matter.



Some 16 years ago dental services were provided in Rawtenstall and Bacup Health Centres through the Community Dental Service. Due to lack of dentists, services could not be maintained on both these sites. It was agreed that dental services would be provided on one site at Waterfoot Health Centre.

When the new Bacup Health Centre was developed it was agreed to re-establish the Community Dental Service within the new centre (see picture above). A visit was undertaken and Members met with Hilary Whitehead, Clinical Director for Blackburn with Darwen and East Lancashire Dental Service, who gave a brief history of dental provision in the Borough.

Emergency Dental Services are provided at Haslingden Health Centre and Members visited the premises to talk to the Dental Practitioner. The service is open 5 days a week with at least 3 days to provide emergency dentistry and the other days to provide other forms of treatment. Approximately, 18 patients are seen on a daily basis.

The report was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in November, and the Consultant in Dental Public Health attended the meeting to update on an assessment that had been conducted as part of the National Dental Access Program which highlighted that:

- Demand is high
- An oral health need exists
- Access distance is long
- Choice is limited
- There are comparative service provision inequalities

There are now provisional plans to set up a multi surgery practice in Haslingden and also there are plans to expand services in Stacksteads, which would then also cover Waterfoot and Bacup. This development would accommodate the capacity for a further 10,000 patients

The Task and Finish Group hope that their work highlighted the need for additional dental provision and contributed to the PCT's decision for resources to put be into Rossendale.



## **Value for Money Task and Finish Group**

One of the Council's Priorities was to provide value for money services and as part of its work programme for this year it was agreed to look at grant organisations who had received money from the Council, to ensure that money allocated to the organisations had been spent in accordance with the remit of their allocation.

Therefore, we looked at the three organisations who were given the most funding (Rossendale CAB, Sunnycrest Family Centre and Haslingden Credit Union).

Visits were undertaken to each of the organisations and Members were given an outline of the services they provide.

**The Sunnycrest Family Centre** serves the community in providing an excellent service in a deprived area of the Borough. Members were impressed by the work

undertaken with the children at the Centre and agreed that they did provide a value for money service.

**Haslingden Credit Union** is one of the three Credit Unions in Rossendale who encourages regular savers and also provides a fair and reasonable loans service to an increasing number of local residents. It was felt that the three Credit Unions throughout Rossendale (Bacup, Mid Rossendale and Haslingden), should explore the possibility of amalgamating to cut overhead costs, but felt that the service did provide value for money.

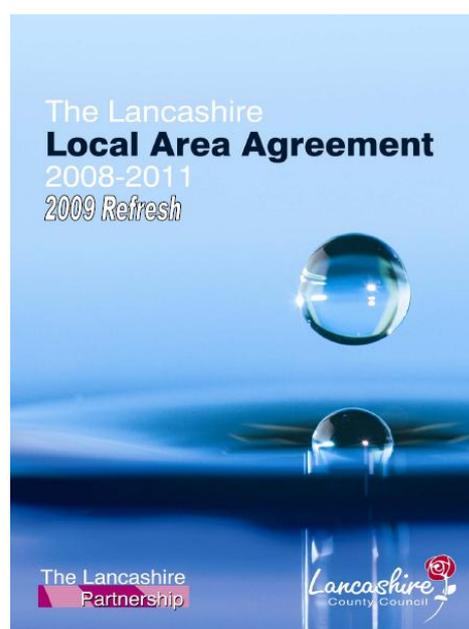
**The Rossendale Citizen's Advice Bureau** receives 42% of the overall community grants budget. This funding goes towards paying overhead costs such as premises costs, utilities and essential staff salaries.

During 2009/10 there has been an increasing demand for monetary advice and there was presently a six-week waiting list. The Task and Finish Group were happy for the Council to explore the opportunity to deliver a benefit and advice service through the One Stop Shop, working closely with Help Direct, which is a signposting agency funded by Lancashire County Council. This should help speed up the service.

The report was discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, and whilst not all Members were happy with the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group, their comments were added to the report for the Cabinet to consider.

At the Cabinet meeting in March they agreed to the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group and also asked that the Overview and Scrutiny Management conduct a 'Value for Money' evaluation of the main recipients of grant to outside bodies funding. This will form part of our work programme for 2010/11.

## **Lancashire Area Agreement (LAA) Task and Finish Group**



The Task and Finish Group agreed to review the performance management arrangements of each of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) Theme Groups.

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is an agreement between Lancashire County Council and its partners and central government about how priorities for Lancashire will be measured and about how much improvement will be made over the next 3 years from 2008 to 2011.

The intention of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) is to address local priorities resulting in improved services and better lives for people in Lancashire

Of the seven cross-cutting themes which affect Rossendale we have so far looked at Environment, Economic Development (including housing) and Older People.

Following presentations from Council Officers in relation to the Economic Theme Group it was agreed that the Councils' focus should be given to ensuring that Rossendale received a large a share as possible of the new jobs to be created as part of the Pennine Future Jobs Fund.

In relation to the Environmental Theme Group, Members were briefed on what action Rossendale Borough Council had undertaken so far, including the Rossendale Saver scheme, which was launched in July 2009, was on offer to residents in Haslingden and Bacup, but which could be extended to other areas of the Borough, depending on available funding.

Members were also given an overview on the several measures in place to save energy and use renewable energy within Council owned premises.

The last theme to be looked at was Older People and David Halpin, the LAA Older People's Theme Lead from Lancashire County Council, gave an overview of the National Indicators relating to Older People.

Discussion took place on the support which was available for older people and their carers and it was noted that Help Direct could potentially play a significant role in this matter.

The report and the recommendations of this Task and Finish Group will be presented to the Local Strategic Partnership's Executive Board in April.

## **RESPONSE GROUPS**

At the request of the Chief Executive, Overview and Scrutiny has responded to a number of consultations. A response group, made up of three members, meets to discuss a particular consultation document and once a response letter has been produced it is sent to the Chief Executive for signing off. The following consultations were undertaken.

- Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service
- Petitions Duty
- Adult Social Care Commissioning
- Climate Change and Natural Environments – Planning Policy Statement

## **PROGRESS UPDATE ON PREVIOUS REVIEWS**

### **Dog Fouling**

A number of recommendations were considered by the Cabinet and following training of Officers, enforcement for dog fouling is now being undertaken.

Signs are also being erected in parks notifying the public of enforcement.

The Communities Team give out free dog poo bags with letters sent to residents which inform of the problems and enforcement associated with dog fouling. They are also given out by officers on dog fouling patrols. This is a positive incentive to residents to pick up after their dogs.

### **Community Toilet Scheme**

In the last Annual Report we said we would provide an update on the Community Toilet Scheme, which was piloted in Bacup . The pilot scheme in Bacup proved to be a success and it is hoped that this will be rolled out throughout the Borough in the near future.

### **Grass Cutting**

This piece of work first began in 2007/8 and proved hard to take forward. A report went to Cabinet and although it took time for them to respond to Overview and Scrutiny there appears to be some positive ideas being taken forward.

The Local Strategic Partnership are organising a joint workshop in June or July to discuss how to take forward joint initiatives undertaken by both Lancashire County Council and Rossendale Borough Council, which go some way to ensuring a positive approach to grass cutting in the future.

## **WORK BEING CARRIED OVER TO 2010/11**

You were told earlier in the report about the seven-cross cutting themes, of which the LAA Task and Finish Group looked at three during the year.

Over the next 12 months we intend to scrutinise the Children and Young People Theme Group and also Communities Theme Group.

The other two theme groups were Crime and Disorder (mentioned earlier in the report), and Health and Wellbeing, these are both being covered at the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

As far as Value for Money is concerned, this Task and Finish Group will continue throughout 2010/11, looking at solutions as to how the Council could reduce its waiting times for Disabled Facilities Grants together with the St Vincent's Housing Association to provide a coordinated approach on how to deliver the service.

## **THE YEAR AHEAD – Next Year’s Work Programme**

We are already planning our work for the next 12 months and asking people what they want us to review during the next 12 months. This we are doing via the media, at Neighbourhood Forums and the Council’s website, where we have a scrutiny form for people to complete and send back to us. These forms are also available at the one stop shop.

All the meetings detailed below are open to the public and start at 6.30pm in our new Council Chamber at Futures Park, Bacup.

<b>Performance Scrutiny</b>	<b>Policy Scrutiny</b>	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Management</b>
<b>2010</b> 22 June 3 August 2010 28 September 19 October 16 November	<b>2010</b> 15 June 27 July 21 September 9 November	<b>2010</b> 7 June 7 September 7 December
<b>2011</b> 25 January 7 February 14 March	<b>2011</b> 18 January 8 March	<b>2011</b> 2 February

## **HAVE YOUR SAY!**

At each meeting, there will be a public question time, where you are able to ask a question of the committee.

### **Scrutiny can't consider**

- Individual complaints
- Individual issues about members of staff
- An individual's planning or licensing application

There is also a scrutiny form available on the Council's website to complete if you have an issue or concern that you would like scrutiny to investigate.

For further information or assistance, please email [democracy@rossendalebc.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@rossendalebc.gov.uk) or complete the form below and return to the One Stop Shop in Rawtenstall or post to The Business Centre, Futures Park, Bacup, OL13 0BB.

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I would like to suggest the following issue/service as part of the Work Programme for 2010/11

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### **Please state why you think we should look at this issue**

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.....  
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**Name** .....

**Address** .....

.....

**Tel (optional)** .....

**Email** .....