

**Minutes of: PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Date of Meeting:** 28 September 2010

**PRESENT:** Councillor Sandiford (Chair)  
Councillors Aldred (substituting for Crawforth)  
L Barnes, Lamb, Oakes, Stansfield, and Thorne

Irene Divine (co-opted Member)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Liz Sandiford, Head of People and Policy  
Phil Seddon, Head of Finance and Property Services  
Gina Fletcher, Development Officer, Culture  
Norman Hauserman, Chair, Rossendale Leisure Trust  
Sian Roxborough, Assistant Head of Legal  
Alan Billingsley, CLAW  
Christine Ashcroft, CLAW  
Pat Couch, Scrutiny Support Officer  
Councillor Essex, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources  
Councillor Gledhill, Portfolio Holder for Leisure  
Councillor C Pilling  
Councillor Graham

1 member of the public

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**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Crawforth, Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Customer Services, Martin Kay, General Manager, Rossendale Leisure Trust and Michael Riley, Communities Manager.

**2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

**Resolved:**

That the minute of the meeting held on 22 June 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**3. URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items for discussion.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Gledhill declared a personal interest in Marl Pits.

Councillor Aldred declared a personal interest during the Leisure Trust item.

Councillor Stansfield declared a personal interest as he was a member of the Pool Review Panel.

## **5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Chair agreed to deviate from the Procedure for Public Speaking and allow members of the public to ask questions as the reports were discussed.

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

The Chair provided an update to Members on the following:

- Arrangements for the visit to Accrington and Rossendale College to be confirmed
- Further visit to the Rossendale Primacy Health Centre to be arranged in November
- Health update following meeting with the Rossendale Commissioning Lead
- Confirmation that the birthing centre is due to open in December

## **7. LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL LETTER FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2010 AND THE ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REVIEW 2009/10**

The Assistant Head of Legal informed Members of the improvements highlighted within the Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Letter for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010.

Of the 31 complaints against the Council only one was for maladministration, 2 were settled locally, 2 were at the Ombudsman's discretion and 27 of the decisions were 'no maladministration'.

The Local Government Ombudsman requires responses to their investigation enquiries within 28 calendar days. The report highlighted that the Council's average response time had decreased from 44 days in 2008/9 to 22.3 days in 2009/10.

The Assistant Head of Legal explained the improvements put in place across the Council to ensure complaint responses were prioritised and answered promptly. She indicated that there was now a Liaison Officer who had worked hard to build a positive relationship with the Ombudsman staff and members agreed that the work of the Liaison Officer was noted.

The Liaison Officer now has bi-monthly meetings with the Assistant Head of Legal and provides weekly figures to the Service Assurance Team.

In relation to customer complaints and feedback, the Assistant Head of Legal highlighted the further reduction year on year in the overall complaints received, down from 110 in 2008/9 to 99 in 2009/10.

The Assistant Head of Legal had met with a Member to look at the Council's Complaint Procedure and how the complainant can be kept up to date on how their complaint was progressing.

Members agreed that a system needed to be put in place to ensure that fewer complaints were being sent to the Ombudsman.

Whilst Members were pleased with the overall report, there was a comment on the number of Council complaints regarding poor communication which had increased from 6 in 2008/09 to 13 in 2009/10. It was agreed that the Assistant Head of Legal request an update from the Service Assurance Officer on the service areas providing poor communication and that a briefing note be provided for the next meeting.

**Resolved:**

1. That the Committee notes the content of the Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Letter for the period 1st April 2009 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010.
2. That an update be provided to Members at the next meeting on details of the service areas providing poor communication.

**8. LEISURE DEVELOPMENT**

The Service Development Officer for Culture provided an update on the progress and projects implemented as part of the 2009 Leisure Review, including funding agreements relating to Rossendale Leisure Trust and Community Leisure Association Whitworth (CLAW).

She then gave a further update on each of the following:

- Bacup Leisure Hall – the legal paperwork is now in place and the Council are working out detailed issues with the draft contract and should be complete early October
- Ski Rossendale – 2 detailed proposals were submitted and technical assessments were currently taking place on the proposals
- Haslingden Pool and Marl Pits Development – Meetings had been taking place with the Council, Leisure Trust and the project team. Members had first sight of the plans at the meeting and would submit its outline planning

application by the end of September with a view to being sent to Development Control in December

- CLAW and the Riverside – An invitation to quote had been issued for external support to look at opportunities to increase income at the Riverside and to look at business planning for the venue

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure indicated that in relation to Bacup Leisure Hall, negotiations were ongoing to try to achieve the best deal and the Council was close to an agreement.

The Chair of Rossendale Leisure Trust informed Members that the Trust was presenting a new reporting mechanism to the Committee to make it clear on how they were progressing. Members asked for clarification on some of the figures within the report and the Chair agreed to provide written information to Members for the next meeting.

The Trust was financially meeting its targets and they had a vision to end up with quality facilities. Since the last meeting sickness absence had increased, although the Trust was working to get staff to return to work in light duties, where possible.

Members were updated on the numerous events that the Leisure Trust had held over the summer period. The Lifestyles Team had completed a successful Sport Unlimited programme with over 107 young people and Members commended the work of the Team.

The Chair informed Members of the closure of the main Ski Slope lift due to health and safety reasons. The cost of the repairs would be £20k-£25k.

A number of questions were raised to which the Chair of the Leisure Trust and Portfolio Holder for Leisure responded which included;

- Loss of business due to ski lift problems
- Need for improved marketing of the Ski slopes and other leisure facilities

Alan Billingsley, CLAW, gave Members a progress update on actions/progress to date.

The Committee were informed that CLAW had a shared facilities lease with Marl Pits and The Service Development Officer for Culture confirmed that work was ongoing on developing the lease.

An invitation to quote had been issued for external support to look at opportunities to increase income at the Riverside and to look at business planning for the venue.

Mr Billingsley confirmed that they had a low turnover of staff.

The representatives from CLAW and the Leisure Trust were thanked for their presentations.

The Chair and the Portfolio Holder for Leisure thanked Gina Fletcher, who was leaving the Council, for all her hard work whilst working on the Leisure Development.

**Resolved:**

1. That members note the contents of the report and progress made to date in relation to the leisure projects.
2. That written clarification on some of the figures within the performance report be provided for the next meeting.

**8. INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 4 (April 2010 – June 2010)**

The Head of People and Policy presented the Quarter 1 Integrated Performance Report for April 2010 to June 2010, indicating that this was a good document to look at what activity is happening within the Council.

The report highlighted the following information:-

- Current performance against the Council's priorities
- Current performance against Local Performance Indicators and National Indicators including the associated action plans
- Position of identified risks
- Financial Position
- Complaints
- Compliments

Currently 85% of actions identified within the Corporate Plan were on track to be delivered.

The following indicators were not achieving:-

LI 156 – Buildings Accessible to People with a Disability

LI 218a – Abandoned Vehicles - % investigated within 24 hrs

NI 156 LAA Number of household living in temporary accommodation

Action plans had been produced for each of the above targets and Members agreed that some of those static red levels were beyond the Council's control.

The Committee were pleased to note a number of positive improvements in the Performance Indicators which were as follows:-

1. LI 156 Buildings Accessible to People with a Disability – An Action Plan for this Indicator is included in the report.
2. LI 218a Abandoned vehicles - % investigated within 24 hrs.
3. NI 156 LAA Number of Households living in temporary accommodation.

### **Improvements and Positives in Performance Indicators**

- LI 12 Working Days Lost Due to Sickness Absence is back on track after being identified in quarter 4 2009/10 as not achieving its target.
- NI 181 Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events has seen good improvement exceeding the annual target of 19 days.
- 85% of Business Plan Actions are on target after the first quarter with no projects in jeopardy.

Members raised concern about the following indicators:

- Cmt3 – Revitalising Rossendale Markets Strategy – Stage 2: Implementing the recommendations of Cabinet. Members asked whether the amount of advertising really made a difference and did it add value for money. The Head of People and Policy indicated that a report was being presented to Cabinet in November providing information to Members on costings to improve the markets
- CS&ICT1 – Perform a best value review on Capita contract – The Head of People and Policy informed Members they were looking at how performance impacted on the service and costs
- Cmt19 – Development of Communications Strategy in relation to the Confidence Agenda – It was agreed that as this national indicator had been scrapped, there was a need for clarification on how this would be monitored.
- CS&ICT1 – Data/Information Security – Clarification was sought on the amount of IT security the Council has in protecting the residents' personal information. It was agreed that the Head of People and Policy would contact the Head of ICT and Customer Services to provide a briefing note to Members on the issue.

The Head of People and Policy indicated that at present there was uncertainty of how performance would be measured. There is discussion that this could be undertaken on a Lancashire-wide basis. Members would be involved in discussions on this before the end of the year. Members agreed that indicators should be measured on a local footprint and not Lancashire-wide.

### **Resolved:**

1. That the Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the level of performance detailed within the report.

2. That the Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee ask for a presentation to the next meeting from the Community Safety Manager in relation to the Confidence Agenda
3. That clarification be presented from Rossendale Leisure Trust on visitor activity to the leisure facilities, which would be included in the Chair's Update
4. That a briefing note be included in the Chair's Update from the Head of ICT and Customer Services on the Council's IT security protection.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm at finished at 8.50pm

Signed: .....  
**(Chair)**

Date: .....