

Meeting of: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Time: 6.30pm

Date: 24th June 2024

Venue: Council Chamber, The Business Centre, Futures Park, Bacup. OL13 0BB



Supported by: Carolyn Sharples, Committee and Member Services Manager, Tel: 01706 252422 or email carolynsharples@rossendalebc.gov.uk

The meeting will also be live streamed at the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrLsMDOP7AYxik5pNP0gTIA/streams>

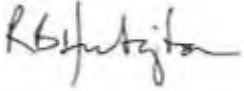
ITEM		Lead Member/Contact Officer
A.	BUSINESS MATTERS	
A1.	Apologies for Absence	
A2.	To approve and sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Meeting held on 5 th February 2024.	
A3.	<p>Declarations of Interest Members are advised to contact the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting to seek advice on interest issues if necessary.</p> <p>Members are requested to indicate at this stage, any items on the agenda in which they intend to declare an interest. Members are reminded that, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 and the Council's Code of Conduct, they must declare the nature of any personal interest and, if the interest is prejudicial, withdraw from the meeting during consideration of the item.</p>	<p>Carolyn Sharples, Committee and Member Services Manager Tel: 01706 252422 Email: carolynsharples@rossendalebc.gov.uk</p>
A4.	<p>Urgent Items of Business To note any items which the Chair has agreed to add to the Agenda on the grounds of urgency.</p>	
B.	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	
B1.	<p>Question Time Members of the public and councillors wanting to speak must be in attendance to participate.</p>	<p>Carolyn Sharples, Committee and Member Services Manager Tel: 01706 252422 Email: carolynsharples@rossendalebc.gov.uk</p>
C.	CHAIR'S UPDATE	
C1.	To receive any communications from the chair.	Councillor S.Barnes

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D.	ORDINARY BUSINESS	
D1.	Valley Plan Update Report 2023-24 (Annual)	Clare Law, Head of People and Policy clarelaw@rossendalebc.gov.uk
D2.	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report and Work Programme	Carolyn Sharples, Committee and Member Services Manager carolynsharples@rossendalebc.gov.uk
D3.	The Forward Plan	Carolyn Sharples, Committee and Member Services Manager carolynsharples@rossendalebc.gov.uk
E.	EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS To consider passing the appropriate resolution under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business since they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information under Part 1 Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.	
E1.	Rossendale Leisure Trust Annual Report and Annual Update	Samantha Sandford, Chief Executive, Rossendale Leisure Trust



Rob Huntington
Chief Executive

Date published: 13th June 2024

MINUTES OF: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 5th February 2024

Present: Councillor S.Barnes (Chair)
Councillors D.Ashworth, Foxcroft, McMahon, Procter (sub), Rooke,
M.Smith (sub), Thompson and Whitehead

In attendance: David Smurthwaite, Director of Economic Development
Karen Spencer, Chief Finance Officer
Clare Law, Head of People and Policy
Carolyn Sharples, Committee and Member Services Manager

Also Present: Councillors Ashworth, Lythgoe and Oakes
1 member of the public

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillor Coogan, Councillor Kenyon (Councillor Procter subbing) and Councillor Norton (Councillor M.Smith subbing).

2. Minutes

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting on 15th January 2024 be approved as a correct record.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

5. Question Time

There were no public questions.

6. Chair's Update

6.1 A briefing note had been circulated prior to the meeting to keep members informed of the work of the Bacup Credit Union and members noted the update.

6.2 In response to actions and queries from previous meetings the following updates were also noted:

- A message had been added to the Invest in Rossendale website stating that the site would be undergoing updates and maintenance throughout February 2024. Updates had also been completed on the Visit Rossendale website.
- The performance measure *Engagements with the Visit Rossendale Website*, had been removed following review.
- Information on savings was available through the Financial Monitoring Reports that went to Cabinet. These were available on the Council website and a link was sent to all members when the agendas were published.
- The age demographics of the workforce were reviewed as part of the annual business planning and continuity process. Plans were developed to mitigate any risks that impact on staffing levels, including monitoring age profile within the service, recruitment and selection monitoring data, planned retirements etc.

- When someone ceased to be a councillor, their email and IT accounts were deleted, meaning that they would no longer be able to access any information previously available to them as a councillor, regardless of whether it was being accessed from a Council device or a personal device.
- The following sites were under development and the Planning Manager would include this information in any relevant future performance summary updates: Reeds Holme on Burnley Road; Johnny Barn Close, Dark Lane, Station Road in Facit and Spring Mill in Whitworth.
- The error previously reported on the Council Tax application system affected management information only and not claimants' entitlement. The issue would be fixed with the next software release.

ORDINARY BUSINESS

7. 2024/25 Council Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy

7.1 The committee considered the 2024/25 Council Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy report, which was presented by the Chief Finance Officer. Members were provided a detailed explanation of the information contained within tables 2, 3 and 4 of the covering report.

7.2 In response to members' questions the following clarification was given:

- At 3.4 the graph showed a small increase in the revenue support grant, but this was still lower than in 2016/17. It was explained that the funding had increased at 4.2.
- The government core spending assumption assumed that our Council Tax growth would have been more. After the 2.99% Council Tax increase had been applied this would mean Core Spending Power would only increase by 4.71%.
- The budget was set at a moment in time based on the assumptions, and would always be a best estimate and subject to change. The efficiency savings element was costed up and monitored quarterly and plans were put in place to ensure the savings could be achieved.
- Regarding the savings report in June, not all the savings had filtered through, but the HVO savings had. If the costs of HVO fell within 15p per litre, this option would be reconsidered as opposed to diesel.
- There would be movement in the budget.
- The consultation on the budget went live at the same time as publication for Overview and Scrutiny.
- There was a typo in 11.6 and the 2023/24 average pay award increase was 6.21%.
- There was consensus between officers at the Lancashire Chief Finance Officers Group to assume a 5% pay increase for next year, as inflation was going down.
- The consultation commenced in January after also consulting with Cabinet in January. There had been earlier consultation, such as the briefing for members in November and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) going to Cabinet in December. As the government settlement was not out till December it made the timeframe impossible to bring consultation on the budget any earlier.
- With single year settlements it was difficult to make any long term plans, and resources were used to bridge the gap. 2022/23 nearly had a balanced budget but inflation had impacted on that.
- The result of funding not meeting inflation would be that reserves would be used to bridge the gap. This is not sustainable.
- At the moment the Council was not in danger of a S114. Prices were still going up, but utilities were coming down and government funding had increased. It would still force a decision on Council Tax increases, and when government were setting the funding, they expected Councils to increase Council Tax by the maximum amount.

- It wasn't always good to sell assets, but it was best to sell assets that cost money and maximise the return on any other assets owned.
- The ultimate decision on the budget was for councillors to make and officers just made a recommendation.
- Rossendale received 14% of the Council Tax collected.
- The £100k for temporary accommodation was additional. It was unknown whether this would be realistic as the call for temporary accommodation was unknown but was increasing. The Council was looking at other options to assist.
- The information in table 3 concerning *Finance not required in year*, was in relation to the cost of us borrowing. This was due to slippage on the Capital Programme. If the Capital schemes had spent to budget we would have had to borrow to finance the expenditure. This is not a saving just reprofiling. We will have to borrow at some point.
- In relation to vacant posts, the Council was looking at doing things differently, including looking at the Capita contract.
- In relation to the New Homes Bonus, we now get a flat rate for each property over a threshold.

The Chief Finance Officer agreed to make minor changes to clarify the point at which members were consulted on the budget.

Resolved:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the recommendations of the report and made the following recommendations to Cabinet subject to the minor changes regarding the budget consultation clarification:

To recommend Council to approve:

1. The proposed revenue budget for 2024/25 of £10.623m, as detailed in this report.
2. The proposed increase of 2.99%, to the Council Tax rate for a Band D property for 2024/25, increasing the Council Tax rate for a Band D property from £299.49 to £308.44, an increase of £8.95 pa.
3. The proposed use of £688k from reserves to support the 2024/25 revenue budget.
4. The proposed fees and charges attached as Appendix 1.

8. Capital Strategy 2022/23 - 2026/27 and Capital Programme 2024/25

8.1 The committee considered the Capital Strategy 2022/23 - 2026/27 and Capital Programme 2024/25, which was presented by the Chief Finance Officer who detailed the programme and the new schemes and funding streams.

Resolved:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the recommendations of the report and made the following recommendations to Cabinet:

To recommend Council to approve:

1. The capital programme for 2023/24 – 2027/28 and associated capital expenditure of £11.064m.
2. The Capital Strategy 2024/25 attached at Appendix B.

9. Quarter 3 Performance Management Report (October, November & December) 2023/24

9.1 The committee considered the Quarter 3 performance report, which was presented by the Head of People and Policy.

9.2 In response to members' questions the following clarification was given:

- The three Town Centre Officers had conducted the field work for the Resident Survey and were active throughout the duration of the survey eg Bacup and Haslingden Library, Rawtenstall Market and any resident engagement sessions held within the period of the survey.
- Recycling was challenging, there were changes coming in and tight budget restrictions. Whilst the Check before you Chuck campaign was a well recognised campaign, it only focussed on small areas with dedicated material. The Council was being careful not to invest in new materials when new requirements for food waste were due to be introduced. Instead the Council was focussing on engaging schools with recycling.
- The quarterly figures reported for new homes only contained figures with regard to those houses that had been completed where the Council's Building Control service had been used, but many housing developers used Private Building Inspectors. The full completion figures would come through after the year end from the National House Building Council (NHBC).
- Corporate Support periodically chase officers to respond to complaints or MP enquiries. Officers were now aware to respond and close down a complaint or enquiry once the action had been agreed and not to wait until the action was completed.
- All the complaints and enquiries were responded to within 30 days and more work was being done with officers to ensure responses were more timely and within the agreed 10 days deadline.
- The complaints at 4.13 related to Capita, but there was no underlying reasons for these.
- Work was ongoing to update and maintain the websites and an action plan was in place. The Visit Rossendale landing page had been updated and Invest in Rossendale had a temporary holding message displayed whilst the website was updated.
- Missed bins for an entire street would be reported back as there would be an underlying reason, such as access issues, and these were already captured on the system, however it didn't report through to customer support. The new system would capture this information to keep residents updated if they phoned in to report a missed bin.
- The number of missed bins reported would be looked into to see if it was accurate, for example if a whole street had been missed, was the system classing it as one missed bin?
- Where an entire location was missed because of inconsiderate parking, it was not classed as missed if the collection managed to take place at a later time.
- The new system was more interactive and flags could be put on the system for certain areas and issues and the collectors would need to confirm collection before moving on.
- New bin requests were also integrated into the system and would be easier to manage.
- Communicating bin collection points for new residents would be looked into.
- It was confirmed that the new system would provide a collection history for houses and streets, making it easier to find where there were recurring issues and it would help keep residents better informed.
- Compliments were only recorded through the formal complaints and compliments process, and informal feedback was not collected.
- Councillors were also able to submit compliments in the same way as members of the public.

- Sweeping side roads was done on a 9 week cycle and included roads that weren't classed as main roads. The new system would be in by September and would be GPS tracked. If a resident rang in, the customer centre would be able to inform of the next sweeping date. Recent issues had been staff related, but the service was now fully staffed and catching up.
- The waste transfer station was in the early stages of design and a consultant would do the first stages of RIBA stages 0-3 site testing. This would give an indication of the budgets. The second stage would look at consultation, however it was still at the feasibility stage at the moment.
- There would be a 6 month window for the building element and at the moment the current site was being considered.
- The Council was looking at its social media presence including the websites, and work was ongoing to identify the right media platforms. Discussion were ongoing regarding the Visit Rossendale and Invest in Rossendale websites.

Resolved:

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the update on the performance of the Council and made the following recommendations:

- To review and rationalise the Council's websites after considering customer use and place an "under review" message on any sites not fully up to date.

10. The Forward Plan

10.1 Members were updated on the Forward Plan and Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for March.

Resolved:

The Forward Plan and Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme items were noted.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 7.50pm)

Signed.....

(Chair)

Date

Subject:	Valley Plan Update Report 2023-24 (Annual)	Status:	For Publication		
Report to:	Overview & Scrutiny Committee Cabinet	Date:	24 th June 2024 16 th July 2024		
Report of:	Head of People and Policy	Lead Member:	Leader of the Council		
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	General Exception	<input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency	<input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached:	No	
Biodiversity Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached:	No	
Contact Officer:	Clare Law	Telephone:	01706 252557		
Email:	clarelaw@rossendalebc.gov.uk				

1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 For the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the Council's Annual Valley Plan Update and associated achievements for 2023-24.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Council's four-year [Valley Plan 2021-25 \(Our Place, Our Plan\)](#) outlines the long-term vision for the borough. The Plan is supported by 4 priorities and 14 outcomes to clearly measure the Council's performance against the Plan's vision and priorities each year, as detailed in Appendix 1.
- The Council produces a Quarterly Performance Management Report to regularly review and monitor the Council's performance against the Valley Plan throughout the year. This report is reviewed by the Corporate Management Team, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.
- During 2023-24, the Council has continued to progressed well in the delivery of the 4 priorities to achieve the objectives within the Valley Plan. Significant external funding has been secured to deliver the Council's work programmes and projects, as well as supporting service improvements to become an effective and efficient council.
- Overall, 40 performance measures were reported within the 'green' RAG status, 10 performance measures were reported within the 'amber' RAG status and 9 performance measures were reported within the 'red' RAG status.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council's Valley Plan 2021-25 was agreed at Full Council on 8th September 2021. The Valley Plan outlines the Council's vision, 4 key priorities and 14 outcomes.
- 3.2 The Council's vision is: "to have a thriving economy, built around our changing town centres, creating a quality environment for all and improving the life chances of those living and working in the borough."
- 3.3 The Valley Plan is reviewed annually to develop the Council's Annual Action Plan and Service Area Business Plans for the forthcoming year.
- 3.4 The Annual Action Plan identifies the Council's work programmes and projects, service actions and performance measures for the year.

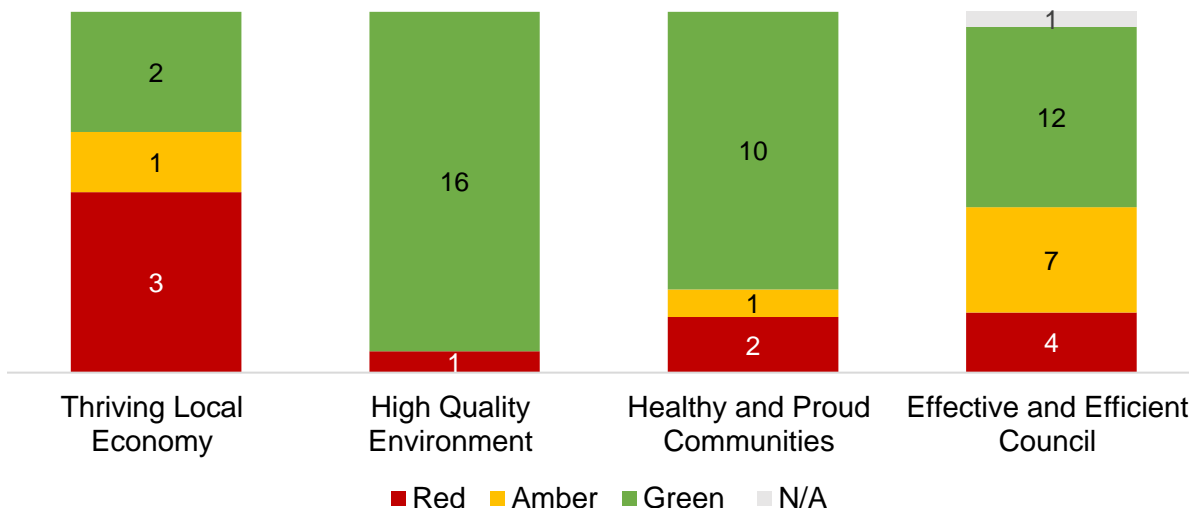
- 3.5 The Annual Action Plan is monitored via the Quarterly Performance Management Report and provides updates on the Council's identified work programmes and projects, service actions and performance measures for each of the 4 priorities. Compliments, complaints and corporate risks are also included within this report.
- 3.6 The Quarterly Performance Management report is monitored by the Council's Corporate Management Team, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.
- 3.7 The Council's work programmes include multiple projects and/or work streams. They are outlined as the following:
- Capital Regeneration – Delivery of Capital Regeneration projects.
 - Town Centre Regeneration – Bacup and Haslingden 2040 Visions.
 - Climate Change Strategy – Carbon reduction throughout the borough.
 - Operations – Improvement to waste, street-cleansing and green spaces services.
 - Property Services – Corporate Asset Review
 - Customer Digital Strategy – Digital efficiencies and customer service.
- 3.8 The delivery of work programmes is monitored by the internal Programme Board and appropriate action is taken to mitigate any underperformance when needed throughout the year.
- 3.9 The Council's performance is monitored using a red, amber, green (RAG) rating status (green – on track, amber – slight concern, red – action required).
- 3.10 An arrow system has been introduced to indicate performance trend throughout the year and in comparison to the previous year outturn.
- 3.11 Performance measures are reviewed annually to promote effective performance management, rather than performance reporting, to ensure that performance is monitored and appropriate mitigations can be identified.
- 3.12 60 performance measures were reported on throughout 2023-24. The measures were split down into two tiers; tier 1 measures reporting on high level strategic targets and tier 2 measures reporting on operational performance.
- 3.13
- Thriving Local Economy – 6 performance measures;
 - High Quality Environment – 17 performance measures;
 - Healthy and Proud Communities – 13 performance measures;
 - Effective and Efficient Council – 24 performance measures.
- 3.14 Due to the significant number of new performance measures introduced, comparison with the previous year outturn was not possible.

4. OVERALL PERFORMANCE

- 4.1 Throughout 2023-24, the Council has continued to progress the successful delivery of the Valley Plan's third-year priorities and objectives. Despite ongoing challenges due to the cost-of-living crisis, inflation, increased cost etc, the Council has delivered effective and efficient council services and is proud of its achievements.
- 4.2 4 of the 6 work programmes have been delivered to schedule and reported in the 'green' RAG status. 2 work programmes were reported within the 'red' RAG status; Capital Regeneration due to lack of progress from Lancashire County Council and Property

Services (Asset Review) due to staffing issues. Appropriate mitigation has been identified for the 2 'red' RAG status work programmes via the internal Programme Board.

4.3



- 4.5 The above demonstrates the Council's performance measures for 2023-24.
- 4.6 Overall, the Council's performance measures demonstrate that the Council has performed well with 40 (66%) 'green' RAG status measures, 10 (17%) 'amber' RAG status measures, and 9 (15%) 'red' RAG status measures.
- 4.7 1 (2%) performance measure was reported as 'N/A' due to inaccurate reporting information.
- 4.8 4 of the 9 'red' RAG status performance measures are national performance measures. The underlying context to the Council's underperformance is detailed within the [2023-24 Quarterly Performance Management Reports](#).

5. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

5.1 Thriving Local Economy

Throughout 2023-24, significant work has progressed the Council's regeneration projects across Rossendale's main town centres and within the rest of the borough.

Relationships with local businesses have been developed through ongoing business support, this supported by increased officer presence within town centres, ongoing communication and public consultations.

The Rossendale Works programme has continued to successfully support 110 economically inactive people into either employment, education or training and will continue to improve the local skills provision for unemployed residents.

5.2 High Quality Environment

The Operations service has continued to deliver effective and efficient waste, street cleansing and green spaces services. A new Operations back-office system (Bartec) has been procured to create internal efficiencies and improve customer service.

Stubby Lee Park, Bacup has retained its 'Green Flag' status for another year and the park Masterplans for Victoria Park - Haslingden, Edgeside Park - Waterfoot and Whitaker Park - Rawtenstall have continued to be delivered with the aim of creating 'clean and green' spaces throughout the borough.

The Rossendale Forest Project has completed its third year of delivery and has come to an end having achieved its target of planting 16,000 trees across the borough, one for each child in Rossendale.

The removal of reported fly-tipping has remained below the 5 working day target and a significant number of reports have been investigated and progressed to legal enforcement penalties.

The Council's Climate Change Strategy has progressed well, delivering energy and carbon audits for the main Council owned (and Rossendale Leisure Trust) buildings and 4 electric vehicle charging points have been installed at Futures Park and Henrietta Street.

5.3 Healthy and Proud Communities

The Council has continued to work with partners to improve access to homes, leisure facilities, and health and wellbeing support for residents.

A new Housing Assistance Policy has been agreed and 126 Disabled Facilities Grants have been approved to allow residents to remain within their own home.

Work has focused on improving the Council's homelessness support and 2 additional properties have been purchased to increase the Council's temporary accommodation capacity.

Throughout the year, 95 Ukraine guests have been provided with support to settle into the community and 2,700 vulnerable households have been provided with financial grants (Household Support Fund) in response to the cost-of-living crisis.

The Council has continued to work with partners to deliver the Rossendale Health and Wellbeing Plan. Further work has focused on the development of a Physical Activity Strategy via public consultations.

5.4 Effective and Efficient Council

Work has continued to support effective and efficient Council services through good governance, financial management and robust performance monitoring.

The Council's Constitution has been refreshed and both the Programme Board and Quarterly Performance Management Report continues to monitor the Council's work programmes and projects.

Throughout the year, the Council has introduced and gradually embedded its new branding and website to improve the Council's brand image and customer service experience.

During 2023-24, the financial statement of accounts for 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23 have been published and a new finance purchasing system has been developed to improve financial services and digital efficiencies.

The Council has continued to develop a safe and skilled workforce, 95% of staff completed their annual appraisal and an annual staff survey has been introduced to measure staff satisfaction and identify opportunities to improve the Council's culture.

Externally, the Council has improved the use of social media platforms resulting in a significant increase in followers and engagement. The annual resident survey had 57.5% more responses than the previous year and the overall satisfaction of residents has improved.

The Council's 'Check before you Chuck' campaign won a PRCA public sector award earlier in the year and has also been nominated for a Local Government Chronicle award, alongside the Rossendale Works Programme.

6. FORTHCOMING YEAR

- 6.1 The Valley Plan 2021-25 will come to an end during 2024-25. Consultations to refresh the Valley Plan will commence throughout the year, with service managers and staff included throughout the new Plan's development prior to formal approval.
- 6.2 The Council will also refresh its Performance Management Framework and Risk Management Strategy, including the RAG status system, to support effective and efficient service deliver and to develop a robust approach to performance and risk management.
- 6.3 Following the Valley Plan Update Report, the Council will review its current Annual Action Plan, work programmes and projects, service actions and performance measures to ensure the delivery of the Valley plan is prioritised within service delivery.
- 6.4 The refreshed Annual Action Plan will incorporate the ongoing delivery of work programmes and projects to deliver effective and efficient service improvements for residents, whilst addressing ongoing challenges and promoting opportunities.
- 6.5 Together with partners, the Council will continue to deliver its ambitions to make Rossendale a place where people want to live, work and invest. The Council will continue to identify efficiencies to ensure it provides best value service for residents. Further work will be required to develop Rossendale's town centres, attractions and visitor offer, as well as increasing local engagement and national recognition for the great work the Council does.

7. RISK

A range of local, regional and national factors can impact on the Council's ability to deliver the priorities within the Valley Plan. The Council continuously monitors these risks through the Corporate Risk Register and Quarterly Performance Management Report to track the overall implementation of the Council's priorities which includes information on progress against the priorities, key programmes and projects and performance measures.

8. FINANCE

There are no additional financial implications arising from this report.

9. LEGAL

There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

10. POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

The Corporate Management Team, Heads of Service and Managers are consulted on the review of the Valley Plan, priorities and outcomes. There are no specific equalities implications in this report.

11. REASON FOR DECISION

The Valley Plan Annual Report is a tool used to summarise the Council's key achievements and progress in relation to the priorities outlines within the Valley Plan. The report is being considered by Cabinet to enable Members to discuss the Council's progress from 2023-24 and celebrate the Councils achievements.

Background Papers	
Appendix 1	2023-24 Achievements Summary
Appendix 2	2023-24 Performance Summary Infographic

Annual Outturn Report 2023-24

Priority 1 – Thriving Local Economy		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To support Bacup, Haslingden and Rawtenstall town centres as better places to provide their unique offers and a destination for local shoppers and visitors. 2. To have secured inward investment in the borough creating a sustainable economy, matching local skills provision with future job and career opportunities. 3. Having a thriving visitor economy which is more widely known with enhanced attractions and a much-improved accommodation offer. 		
No.	Action	Outcome
1.	Bacup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Closure of the Historic England Heritage Action Zone Project in Bacup through a site-visit and celebration event to commemorate the redevelopment to 14 town centre buildings and Hempstead Memorial Gardens on Burnley Road. – Planning permission to demolish the old Barclays Bank (12 Market Street), with the works starting January 2024. – Development of the new Bacup Market concept designs and coinciding consultations in preparation for the final planning application.
1.	Haslingden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Year 2 of the Haslingden 2040 project has been delivered. During the projects’ second year, 51 and 53 Deardengate have been renovated and preparatory works to renovate 41 and 18 Deardengate have been completed. – An additional £729k public realm scheme funding has been secured to further develop Haslingden, with Eric Wright appointed to undertake the works. – The designs for the new Haslingden Market agreed and granted planning permission. A contractor has been appointed, with the works starting March 2024.
1.	Rawtenstall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Public and stakeholder consultations have been carried out develop the Rawtenstall Masterplan and initial concept designs for Rawtenstall’s Gyrotory have been approved. – Concept designs for the new Rawtenstall Market have been agreed and developed in partnership with market traders and Rawtenstall Market’s management company. – Public consultation has been carried out in preparation for the Waterfoot Masterplan and a procurement exercise has been completed to appoint a consultant. – £20m Long-Term Plan for Towns funding has been awarded to develop Rawtenstall, including Waterfoot and Crawshawbooth.
2.	Futures Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The works to the junction at Futures Park, Newchurch Road, started January 2024 and once fully complete will have installed a new controlled crossing, an uncontrolled crossing, upgraded bus stop and new signage.

2.	Business Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Business support has continued through ongoing communication, '60-minute' blast sessions, business start-up workshops and 1-1 support sessions. – Additional business events have been organised to further improve the Council's support including a Low Carbon Business Event, Rush-hour Networking Lunch and Grant Funding/Alternative Finance Event.
2.	Derelict Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Valley Heritage has secured funding and are proposing a partnership to tackle Rossendale's derelict buildings.
2.	Rossendale Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Rossendale Works has support 110 economically inactive residents into either employment, education or training. – The Rossendale Works Skills Hub opened at Futures Park in July 2023 to provide support to residents in partnership with the Department of Working Pensions, National Careers, Lancashire County Council and Citizens Advice.

Priority 2 – High Quality Environment

4. A high quality 'clean and green' local environment where people feel proud to live.
5. Reduced our carbon footprint.
6. Improve the waste recycling rate across the borough.

No.	Action	Outcome
4. 6.	Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bartec, a back-office management system, has been procured and trialled. The new system will create service efficiencies through live updates and service monitoring. – Liaison with Lancashire County Council has continued to establish a solution for the waste transfer station. Henrietta Street has been identified as the proposed site. – Food waste collections have been confirmed by Government and will need to be introduced by 2026. Regular communication has been held with Lancashire County Council in preparation for this.
4.	Parks/community group support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Maintenance plans have been developed to improve the cleanliness of parks and other open green spaces across the borough to ensure resources are available at the appropriate times of the year. – Stubblee Park has retained its 'Green Flag' status and Rossendale Civic Pride have been awarded multiple Britain in Bloom awards. – Over 10,000 bedding plants and 3000 spring bulbs were provided to community groups to be planted. – The Rossendale Forest project has come to an end and has achieved its target of planting 16,000 trees.
4.	Park Masterplans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 3 new tennis courts and a new cycle route have been installed in Stubblee Park - Bacup. – The tennis courts have been cleared in Edgeside Park - Waterfoot to create a large open space. Improvements to the wheeled sports provision has been consulted following the additional FCC Community Action Funding secured.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Path surface improvements and additional seating, picnic facilities and bins have been installed in Victoria Park - Haslingden and Lancashire Environment Funding has been secured to improve the park's wheeled sports provision. – Drainage schemes have been developed to improve Whitaker Park - Rawtenstall. – Investment of £280k has been made into existing play facilities at Weir Park and Moller Ring Park to ensure play facilities are modern, attractive and safe.
4.	Fly-tipping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The 30 tonnes of rubbish fly-tipped at Futures Park has been investigated in partnership with the Environment Agency and Police. Following court proceedings, the perpetrators received suspended sentences. – Investigation of 305 abandoned vehicles and 386 other environmental crimes. With 7 successful prosecutions, 19 Fixed Penalty Notices, 36 community protection warnings, and 11 verbal advisory warnings. – The removal of fly-tipping has remained below target throughout the year and over 80 litter bins have been replaced or added to Rossendale's streets.
5.	Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Energy and carbon audits have been completed for Council-owned buildings, including Rossendale Leisure Trust, and Henrietta Street. LED lighting has been installed at Futures Park to improve energy efficiency. – Secured £2.5m to deliver a Net-Zero Terraced Streets project for the promotion of net-zero heating solutions on terraced streets. – Secured £171k On-Street Residential Charge Point Scheme Funding. Part of this funding has been allocated to install 2 charge points at Futures Park and 2 charge points at Henrietta Street. An electric van has also been purchased to reduce the Council's carbon footprint.

Priority 3 – Healthy and Proud Communities

7. To have delivered more new homes and a good mix of housing ventures.
8. Improved the health of residents through access to better leisure facilities and health services.
9. A more joined up approach to physical and mental wellbeing which is more rapidly reducing health inequalities.
10. Residents share a sense of pride in their immediate community and wider borough.

No.	Action	Outcome
7.	Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The Council's Housing Strategy has been launched. – The housing portfolio has increased by 3 and development of a 4th scheme has progressed. – A new Housing Assistance Policy has been introduced and 126 Disables Facilities Grants have been awarded.
7.	Planning/New Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Development of the Council's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document is near completion ready for approval in 2024-25. – 111 new homes have been added to Rossendale's housing supply.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The determination of planning applications has remained within the statutory timeframe, exceeding national performance.
8.	Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – In partnership with Sport England, a football pitch investment plan has been developed to support the borough's leisure facilities. – Preparatory works and consultation sessions have started to develop a Physical Activity Strategy for Rossendale.
9.	Health and Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A healthy weight programme has been developed following a healthy weight audit, leading to £250k investment over 5 years. – Several health and wellbeing events have been delivered. – 2 new community groups have been created to support health and wellbeing awareness in Stacksteads and Worsley wards.
10.	Community Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 95 Ukraine guests have been supported throughout the year, with 78 moving into their own homes. – 2,700 vulnerable households have been financially supported via the Household Support Fund.

Priority 4 – Effective and Efficient Council


11. Provide good quality and responsive services embracing new technology.
12. Be a financially sustainable Council with a commercial outlook whilst always considering social value.
13. Provide sound governance to enable key decisions and major projects to be progressed in an efficient and professional way.
14. Have a skilled and happy workforce, where we are able to retain and attract good staff.


No.	Action	Outcome
11.	Digital Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Development and launch of the new corporate website. Launched October 2023. – Improvements to the Civica financials and purchasing system, and payroll system to create digital efficiencies and compliance with data security regulations. – Improvements to customer service through mystery shopper exercises and refresh of corporate service standards. – Introduced the Council's new branding.
12. 13.	Council efficiencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The processing of Council Tax and Housing Benefits continues to perform within target. – 7,203 secured garden waste subscribers and 409 commercial waste subscribers. – The Programme Board has continued to monitor work programmes and projects on a quarterly basis to ensure governance and compliance is embedded within the project management. – Amends to the new Constitution agreed by Full Council. – 5 wards have been completed within the Asset Review.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Publication of the 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23 statement of accounts. The Finance Team successfully set the budgets for 2024-25, reviewed the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and completed the 2023-24 year-end closure.
14.	Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A monthly staff training matrix has been introduced to ensure all staff complete mandatory training. – Delivery of the annual Health and Wellbeing day and continuous promotion of the Council’s employee assistance programme. – Staff Engagement Sessions, Rising Stars Programme, Health and Wellbeing Group and Your Voice have continued to engage staff and provide development opportunities. – Annual Staff Pulse survey introduced to measure employee satisfaction and recommendations to improve the culture.
14.	Communications/recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Annual Resident Survey response rate increased by 57.5% from 2022. – Nominated for two Local Government Chronicle awards; ‘Check before you Chuck’ and Rossendale Works programme. – The ‘Check before you Chuck’ campaign won a regional PRCA Public Sector category award. – 71 press releases distributed. – The use of social media platforms has improved, with all platforms seeing an increase in followers and engagement.

2023-24 Performance


Summary

147 businesses supported. 

Market plans developed for Haslingden, Bacup and Rawtenstall. 



Closed the **Bacup HAZ Project** which renovated **14** town centre buildings.

246 food standard inspections. 

57.5% more responses to the annual

Stubby Lee Park retained the 'green flag' status for 2023/4. 

Supported **95** Ukraine guests.


Resident Survey.

£20m awarded to develop **Rawtenstall.** 

Over **£2.5m** secured to deliver the Council's **Climate Climate Strategy.** 

2,700 households provided with financial support via the 


Supported **110** people into employment, education or training.

38 play areas and **32** parks maintained. 

Household Support Fund.

126 Disabled Facilities Grants approved. 

Emptied **99.4%** of bins as per schedule. 

721 new Facebook followers. 

111 new homes in **Rosendale.** 

Secured an additional **£729k** to develop **Haslingden.**

Completion of **Rosendale Forest** planting a total of **16,000** trees. 

95% of staff appraisals completed.

Subject:	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report and Work Programme	Status:	For Publication		
Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Council	Date:	24 th June 2024 17 th July 2024		
Report of:	Committee & Member Services Manager	Lead Member:	Environment and Corporate Services		
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input type="checkbox"/>	General Exception	<input type="checkbox"/>	Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>	
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached:	No	
Biodiversity Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached:	No	
Contact Officer:	Carolyn Sharples		Telephone:	01706 252422	
Email:	carolynsharples@rossendalebc.gov.uk				

1 RECOMMENDATION

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee provide their comments on the Annual Report 2023/24 and Work Programme 2024/25 (Appendix 1) and make the following recommendation to Full Council:

- That Council approve the Annual Report 2023/24 and Work Programme 2024/25.

2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The annual report informs of the work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during 2023/24 and section 6 highlights how scrutiny has made a difference.
- The work programme at section 12 details the proposed scrutiny items for 2024/25.

3 BACKGROUND

The annual report and work programme are required to be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and agreed at Full Council each year.

4 DETAILS

- 4.1 The annual report and work programme summarises the work undertaken during 2023/24 and sets out the proposed work to be carried out by the committee during the coming year in 2024/25. The work programme provides a draft of what is expected to be brought before the committee in 2024/25 and is a working document which allows for fluidity and for new items to be added as required.
- 4.2 The report was sent to Corporate Management Team for their input into the proposed agenda items and timescales for planned work, and a consultation meeting took place with the chair, vice-chair and officers on 5th June.

5 RISK

There are no specific risk issues to consider arising from this report.

6 FINANCE

All work must be contained within existing budgets and resources.

7 LEGAL

The committee is required to produce an Annual Report for Full Council.

8 POLICY AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific policy and equalities implications. All work undertaken by the committee will have regard to equalities and follow Council policy.

9 REASON FOR DECISION

To inform of the work carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during 2023/24 and outline of the work to be carried out during 2024/25.

No background papers.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee



**Annual Report 2023/24 and
Work Programme 2024/25**

Foreword from the 2023/24 Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Councillor Samara Barnes



This report highlights the activity and work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the period of 2023/24 and the expected programme of work for 2024/25.

The committee has been extremely busy during 2023/24, which is reflected in the list of policy items, performance reviews, external scrutiny and task and finish group work which has been undertaken over the course of the year. We are also pleased to highlight how scrutiny has made a difference at section 6.

It is important for scrutiny members to be involved at an early stage to influence the decision making process and to play an important role as 'critical friend' to Cabinet. This ensures the Council's policies and procedures are robust and also supports good governance and effective decision making. The report highlights which policies, plans and strategies have come before the committee for pre-decision review and where changes have been implemented to strengthen policies and processes.

This year there has been a more focussed work programme, and where suitable, reports have been circulated for comment and updates have been provided by briefing notes to allow the committee more time to focus its attention on more significant items.

The committee is also committed to continued development, and this year members have participated in external training provided by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. Continued development in scrutiny will ensure we continue to add value in the work we do.

As always, I would like to thank all members of the committee for the contributions they have made throughout the year, in addition to supporting officers and those external to the Council who have provided us with their knowledge and expertise to assist us with our committee and task and finish work.

Message from the Lead Member 2023/24 Councillor Adrian Lythgoe



The overview and scrutiny process ensures that both Council services and those services of its partners, are delivered in an appropriate way and encourages further development and improvements for members of the local community who access these services.

The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee continues to support and challenge the Cabinet and provides assurance in respect of policy development and review, acting as a 'critical friend'.

Whilst Cabinet members regularly attend the committee meetings, the updates to Cabinet from the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny has kept Lead Members fully briefed on the work being undertaken. This assists our work in capturing suggestions for further improvement of public services.

Both councillors and officers continue to work together to ensure the best provision of services for the people of Rossendale.

Annual Report 2023/24

1. Background

- 1.1 Overview and scrutiny is a way of achieving open and democratic accountability for the provision of public services. Local authorities operating an Executive Leader and Cabinet Model have an overview and scrutiny function which is carried out by non-Cabinet members who act as a critical friend to the Cabinet to hold them to account. In Rossendale the committee is politically balanced and made up of 10 councillors and one co-opted member. Overview and Scrutiny is not a decision making committee, but is there to monitor and influence those that are, i.e. the Cabinet. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee report their work back to the Cabinet who then decide whether recommendations will be accepted, and if not, explain their reasons for their decision.
- 1.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a role in performance monitoring, and also policy development and review. The committee also undertakes more in-depth reviews by establishing task and finish groups. These are usually comprised of five politically balanced councillors (non-Cabinet members), who review specific issues and make recommendations for change and improvements, for example, in policy or service provisions. Task and finish groups are limited to a maximum of two operating at any one time to ensure there are sufficient resources to undertake an effective review.
- 1.3 Overview and scrutiny is not a mechanism for the investigation or settlement of individual complaints, as the Council has a separate complaints/member enquiry process for this. Nor can the committee look at individual planning or licensing decisions.
- 1.4 The committee welcomes suggestions for investigation and suggestions can be put forward at any time. Any suggestions received are considered as part of the work planning process for the Annual Work Programme.
- 1.5 The Council continues to work in line with statutory guidance and the Constitution, and where possible the chair, vice-chair and relevant officers attend North West Employers' Scrutiny Networks to keep up to date on the latest developments in scrutiny.

2. Internal scrutiny

Policy scrutiny

2.1 Pre-decision

During 2023/24 the committee was consulted on a variety of strategies, policies and plans. Feedback and recommendations were sought on the following prior to a decision being made or prior to further development:

- Housing Benefit War Pension and Armed Forces Disregard Policy
- Communications Strategy 2023-25
- Disabled Facilities Grant Policy Review (Housing Assistance Policy)
- Retention and Disposal Policy

A briefing note on the Climate Change Strategy was also circulated to provide members with a progress update.

Performance scrutiny

2.2 Quarterly Performance Reports

The committee continued to monitor quarterly performance reports (which incorporate the quarterly update on the use of RIPA). If required, the committee can call a relevant senior officer to the committee meeting to answer questions and provide further clarification, or matters can be scrutinised in more depth through the Performance Management Task and Finish Group and fed back to the next committee. During 2023/24 the Head of People and Policy provided the quarterly updates to the committee and provided further clarification where requested.

2.3 Performance reviews and ongoing monitoring

The committee received a variety of performance updates during 2023/24 with some items being part of the work programme and some being brought to Overview and Scrutiny for a specific reason for discussion. This internal review and monitoring activity included:

- Annual Equality Workforce Profile – this item is required to be reported to the committee on an annual basis to review the Council’s workforce profile.
- Local Government Ombudsman Annual Letter and Council Feedback Update – this item is required to be reported to the committee on an annual basis and reviews the annual breakdown of formal complaints and compliments.
- Customer & Digital Strategy Projects Update – this item was included in the work programme as a briefing update and provided the opportunity to review the progress of year 1 and year 2 projects as well as inform of the work to be completed in year 3.
- Health and Well-being Plan Update – this item was included in the work programme as a briefing update and provided the opportunity to review the progress of the Health and Well-being Plan.
- Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)/Incorporating the Local Development Scheme – the AMR is required on an annual basis to report on the delivery of the Adopted Rossendale Local Plan, as agreed by the committee on 7th March 2022. This was distributed to all members to keep them updated of its progress.

An Ease the Squeeze Update was also provided to keep members updated on the package of support the Council was delivering to help Rossendale residents through the cost of living crisis.

3. External scrutiny

The committee received a number of presentations and updates from external organisations, which are summarised as follows:

3.1 Lancashire Constabulary

As set out in the Overview and Scrutiny terms of reference, the committee acts as the Council’s Crime and Disorder Committee under the requirements of the Police and Justice Act and related statutory guidance from the Home Office. Lancashire Constabulary attend the committee each year to give a presentation on performance and progress against crime indicators. Chief Inspector Ogdin and Inspector Grey attended in January 2024 to provide the annual update and answered questions from committee members. They also provided a specific update on tackling anti-social

behaviour, particularly in relation to off road bikes. As a result of the update the committee asked Cabinet to ensure that Council officers were working as closely as possible with the Police in relation to dealing with off-road bikes.

3.2 Citizens Advice

In February Citizens Advice (East Lancashire) provided a briefing for members on their work and range of services offered. They informed how they were funded and noted how Council funding assisted them in attracting additional external sources of funding. They reported on their key outcomes and achievements over the last 12 months as well as highlighting the continued increase in enquires relating to the cost of living, including energy and food.

The following key points were noted from the update:

- According to the 2019 Indices of Deprivation, Rossendale was in the top 20% for employment deprivation in England and the service was working in partnership with Rossendale Works/Active Lancashire to help offer paid employment and work placements.
- At the time of the briefing, the areas with the highest number of cost of living issues in Rossendale were Worsley and Irwell wards.
- Since October last year, the top three types of assistance enquiry related to energy, debt and Personal Independence Payments (PIP).
- Since early 2022 there had been a 150% increase in the number of people contacting the service for charitable support and food bank assistance.

3.3 Credit Unions

The credit unions provided briefing notes to keep the committee updated regarding their work. This included the types of accounts available (for savings and loans), membership information and other services offered, such as their members being able to join Family Funeral Plans. They were also planning volunteer recruitment drives to help attract additional admin staff and board members.

In January, the First Choice Credit Union highlighted the following key points:

- Savings had decreased since 2021 whilst the amount out on loan had increased (including the number of Family Loans).
- There had been an increase in the usage of the mobile app including from established members, and the number of enquiries to the telephone and online service had also increased this year.
- Through the partnership with Fairquid, the number of employers engaged had increased, which would subsequently increase the number of new members and loans issued.
- Over the last year improvements had been made to the website and social media presence to engage more people in the local community.

In February, Bacup Credit Union highlighted the following key points:

- Total loans and advances to members on the 30th September was £200,158. The majority of loans were top up loans and there was a decrease in the overall amounts loaned in 2023, reflecting hardship in the local financial climate.
- The liquidity ratio was in keeping with national requirements for Credit Unions (5.41%).
- This year the use of the online web service had increased, along with significant increases in the use of the telephone service. There would be

further focus on IT infrastructure updates and they were looking to exploit social media more effectively in 2024 in order to to increase the loan book by 10% and increase memberships.

- They had successfully relaunched the schools service and had also facilitated office work experience placements for students.

3.4 Leisure

In September 2023 the Chief Executive of Rossendale Leisure Trust (RLT), Samantha Sandford, provided a mid-year financial and performance update to the committee and highlighted key achievements as well as the planned ongoing work throughout the remainder of the financial year. Members noted the improvement in the quality of the data and information presented. A further update will be provided in June 2024 to reflect on the progress of the business plan for 2023/24 and to share the expectations of the business plan for 2024/25.

4. **Health scrutiny**

4.1 At the time of writing the report, the Lead Member for Health and Leisure is the East Lancashire representative for the Lancashire Leaders Group on Lancashire County Council Health and Wellbeing Board and also represents the Council on the Rossendale Health and Well-being Partnership and Lancashire County Council Health and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee.

4.2 The Rossendale Health and Wellbeing Partnership is open to any councillor to attend and issues of concern can be raised via the Lead Member for Health and Leisure for any of these meetings.

4.3 In November 2023 the committee was provided with a briefing note update on the Health and Well-being Plan which highlighted the progress made to date against the four priorities. The update also informed of the newly formed Men's health network led by a member of Men in Sheds, Haslingden; the Council's continued support in promoting warm and welcome places for local people and where they were available during the Winter of 2023, and the staff wellbeing day which had been held 21st June 2023. Other health events supporting the priorities of the Health and Well-being Plan included:

- The Big Mental Health Connect event delivered by Rossendale Connected on 16th May 2023 and the Big Physical Activity Connect event funded by TaAF on 30th November 2023 at the Ashcroft, Whitworth. Big connect activities take place around every 6 months with different themes from the Health and Wellbeing Plan.
- The first Park Run for Rossendale organised with Together an Active Future (TaAF) on 12th November 2023 in Victoria Park, Haslingden, which now takes place every week with around 90 participants. On the success of this a junior park run in Stubblee Park is also being planned.

5. **Task and finish group work in 2023/24**

5.1 Road Safety

This work took place from September 2023 with the aim of helping residents feel safer when walking and cycling in their local communities by raising awareness of current safety issues and identifying best practice and how this could be

implemented in Rossendale. A final report will be presented once the draft recommendations have been considered by relevant consultees.

5.2 Copies of task and finish group reports are available on the council's website via the link below:

https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/downloads/download/10718/task_and_finish_group_reports

6. How has scrutiny made a difference?

6.1 Overview and Scrutiny continues to perform the important function of holding the executive (the Cabinet) to account, carrying out task and finish work and reviewing policies and strategies before implementation. For 2023/24 the following is worth noting:

6.2 Quarterly performance monitoring:

- Quarter 4 2022/23 – discussions focussed on temporary accommodation for homeless, RAG ratings, planning application targets, the regular review of all milestones, risks and key performance indicators, applying lessons learned and monitoring, the progress on the enforcement contract and Council communications procedures. As a result of the discussions, several actions were recommended and actioned as follows:
 - o *To bring the Communications Plan to the committee with the channels of communication identified, the process for communications, and how it fits in with the external organisation and how it married together with the Communications Plan.* This led to the amended Communications Strategy 2023-25 being presented to the committee, which was subsequently approved by Cabinet.
 - o *To let Overview and Scrutiny have sight of the new quarterly report before the September meeting to enable the committee to ensure there are clear markers for milestones on corporate projects and to better assist the Council in setting realistic targets.* Following the meeting, the committee attended a workshop with Corporate Management Team to discuss this work further. A copy of the new report was also circulated to members prior to the September committee meeting.
- Quarter 1 2023/24 – discussions focussed on previous cost savings, website information, ageing workforce and the measure for Priority 1 – A Thriving Local Economy. As a result of the discussions, several actions were recommended and actioned as follows:
 - o *To put a covering message on the Economic Development websites to say that information was currently under review.* This led to a message being added to the Invest in Rossendale website stating that the site would be undergoing updates and maintenance throughout February 2024. Following the request updates on the Visit Rossendale website were also completed and further work was ongoing.
 - o *Regarding the demographic split on the ageing workforce and risk 5, what contingencies were being put in place as mitigation for this.* The committee were informed that age demographics of the workforce were reviewed as part of the annual business planning and continuity process. Plans were also developed to mitigate any risks that impact

- on staffing levels, including monitoring age profile within the service, recruitment and selection monitoring data, and planned retirements etc
 - *To review whether the performance measure “Engagements with the Visit Rossendale Website” was an effective measure for Priority 1 – A Thriving Local Economy.* Following further review by Corporate Management Team and Cabinet members, this performance measure was subsequently removed.
- Quarter 2 2023/24 – discussions focussed on processes around staff leaving the authority, recycling rates, processes for complaints and enquiries and the target for new housing completion completions. As a result of the discussions, several actions were recommended and actioned as follows:
 - *For the Head of Operations to attend when the next quarterly report is presented to provide further clarity on member questions, particularly in relation to the next steps to improve recycled waste following the recent campaign.* Further information and clarification was provided by the Head of Operations when he attended the February meeting. Whilst the Check before you Chuck campaign had been well recognised, the Council would be focussing on engaging schools with recycling until the new requirements for food waste had been introduced.
 - *To provide examples in the next report of sites under development in relation to the new homes performance indicator.* An update was provided to members and information would be included in future reports where relevant.
 - *To follow up an error being reported on the Council Tax application system.* As a result members were subsequently informed that the error affected management information only and not claimants’ entitlement. The issue would be fixed with the next software release.
- Quarter 3 2023/24 – discussions focussed on town centre vibrancy, waste collections and recycling, road sweeping, new homes figures, complaint responses and Council websites. As a result of the discussions, the following action was recommended and actioned as follows:
 - *To review and rationalise the Council’s websites after considering customer use and place an “under review” message on any sites not fully up to date (e.g. Visit Rossendale).* There were further updates to the Visit Rossendale website and the site would continue to be reviewed and amended.

6.3 Policy development – the committee was consulted and provided feedback on policies before they were approved by Full Council or Cabinet and this included the annual budget reports. The following policies were revised prior to approval following recommendations made by the committee:

Communications Strategy 2023-25 - the committee recommended the following and subsequent changes were made prior to Cabinet approval:

- Making it clear in the report that the Council was working closely with an external provider.
- Making reference to how the decision was made to use an external company.
- Including information to detail what provision was required when the service was contracted out.

2024/25 Work Programme

7. Introduction

- 7.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is required to produce and agree an Annual Work Programme which sets out the expected work to be carried out in the coming year.
- 7.2 As well as outlining the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee the programme should also identify proposed work to be undertaken by task and finish groups, of which there can be two running at any one time.

8. Cabinet involvement

- 8.1 As well as being able to make work programme suggestions, Cabinet has previously resolved that Council grant recipients provide the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on their work. Citizens Advice and the Credit Unions have continued to provide updates to the committee annually.

9. Standing agenda items

The Council's Constitution outlines the items Overview and Scrutiny considers on a regular basis. In addition, Overview and Scrutiny can look at other non-key decisions/updates as required. The items outlined in the Constitution are detailed below:

9.1 Routine monitoring of the performance of the Council

To review on a quarterly basis the Performance Report and invite officers of the Council to attend a future meeting if their service area is under-achieving on its target. Alternatively, if a service area is falling behind on their targets, the Performance Management Task and Finish Group may be re-convened to look into the matter.

9.2 Policy development

- a) To deal with emerging policy and assist the Council in reviewing and developing policy as detailed in the Forward Plan.
- b) Review and scrutinise decisions taken internally by the Cabinet, individual Cabinet members or officers of the Council.

9.3 Scrutiny of the Council's budget

To be consulted and make recommendations on the Council's annual budget setting.

9.4 Complaints/compliments

- a) To monitor formal complaints received by the Council
- b) To receive information on the number of compliments received for each service area
- c) To monitor Ombudsman enquiries via the annual letter from the Local Government Ombudsman.

9.5 Councillor Call for Action (CCfA)

To deal with any relevant Councillor Call for Action requests and determine the appropriate course of action.

- 9.6 Call-In
To scrutinise decisions referred under the Council's Call-In Procedure.
- 9.7 Forward Plan
To monitor the Forward Plan and agree those policies to be scrutinised prior to decision by Cabinet/Full Council.
- 9.8 To act as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee
To review local performance and progress against crime indicators.
- 9.9 External/partner scrutiny
To receive information from external organisations and partners whose operations affect the area to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working (with particular emphasis on those who receive funding from the Council).
- 9.10 Leisure scrutiny
To monitor the performance of Rossendale Leisure Trust.

10. Drafting the 2024/25 Work Programme

- 10.1 The draft work programme in the table below is based on updates requested at previous committees, items identified from the Forward Plan and the standing items outlined in the terms of reference and as summarised in section 9.
- 10.2 Although the work programme is formally agreed, it may be amended by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as required. The table at section 12 sets out the basic agendas and planned reports/updates going to each committee. It is important to ensure that there is room for task and finish group reports and for any other items or policies, which may be added to the Forward Plan during the year.
- 10.3 This document was presented to Corporate Management Team on 9th April 2024 for advice, and comments regarding the items and suggested timescales. A meeting was also held with the chair and vice-chair and officers on 5th June to discuss the draft Work Programme and plan how to implement the agreed items. Following these consultations the draft work programme for 2024/25 at section 12 has been proposed.

11. Conclusion

- 11.1 The programme provides members with a clear plan of work and engages with our partners and grant recipients. The work programme is a living document and will be amended throughout the year as necessary.
- 11.2 Details of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings for 2024/25 can be found on the Committee Schedule on the Council website: [committee schedule](#)

12. Work Programme 2024/25

Date	Topic	Proposed areas in scope	Suggested Approach
Jun	Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report and Work Programme (standing item)	To examine the previous year's progress and review the draft work programme for year ahead.	Report for comment
	Corporate Plan Update (standing item)	To review the annual update with a specific focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific objectives and priorities • Reviewing the action plan and performance monitoring 	Report for comment
	Rosendale Leisure Trust Annual Report and Annual Update (external scrutiny) - confidential	To scrutinise the report against the action plan with a specific focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the partner is improving outcomes for residents e.g. health, leisure, culture • Examining how the 2024/25 plan will be implemented • Performance monitoring against the 2023/24 action plan 	Committee presentation/ report
	Cabinet and Council reports	Note reports for Cabinet and Full Council	Report for comment
Jul	Rosendale Borough Council senior management workshop	Review of policy, performance and value for money	Workshop
	Future task and finish topics	Agree task and finish programme	Workshop
Sep	Quarter 4 performance report (standing item)	To scrutinise the performance of the council's services and corporate projects.	Report for comment
	Workforce Profile Report (standing item)	To scrutinise the workforce profile in relation to equalities.	Report for comment
	Ombudsman's Annual Letter Annual Council Complaints Review (standing item)	To scrutinise the Council's performance in dealing with/responding to complaints.	Report for comment
	Cabinet and Council reports	Note reports for Cabinet and Full Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document • Open Space and Outdoor Sports Supplementary Planning Document • Climate Change Consultation 	Report for comment Report for comment Committee report

Nov	Together Housing	To scrutinise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • value for money regarding service charges • evidence from residents associations • arrangements for dealing with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ anti-social behaviour ○ housing condition improvements ○ vulnerable residents 	Deep dive session
Nov	Quarter 1 performance report (standing item)	To scrutinise the performance of the council's services and corporate projects.	Report for comment
	Health and Well-being Plan Review (performance scrutiny)	To scrutinise the Rossendale Health and Well-being Plan with a specific focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the plan and community partners are improving health outcomes for residents • Monitoring outcomes against the action plan • Constructively challenging the specific health objectives and priorities 	Briefing note
	Feedback from Together Housing Deep Dive session	Members to feed back on the Deep Dive session with Together Housing	Deep dive feedback
	Cabinet and Council reports	Note reports for Cabinet and Full Council	Report for comment
Jan	Lancashire Constabulary Annual Update (external scrutiny – statutory standing item)	To scrutinise (as the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee) the effectiveness of external partners in improving the lives of Rossendale residents with a specific focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the partner is improving outcomes for residents e.g. crime outcomes • How effectively are partners using any council funding (where applicable) • How the council can work more effectively with partners in the future 	Committee Presentation
	Quarter 2 performance report (standing item)	To scrutinise the performance of the council's services and corporate projects.	Report for comment
	Citizens Advice Annual Update (external scrutiny)	To scrutinise the effectiveness of external partners in improving the lives of Rossendale residents with a specific focus on:	Briefing note

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the partner is improving outcomes for residents e.g. well-being • How effectively are partners using any council funding • How the council can work more effectively with partners in the future 	
	Cabinet and Council reports	Note reports for Cabinet and Full Council	Report for comment
Feb	2025/26 Council Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (standing item)	To scrutinise the draft budget for 2025/26 with a specific focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocation of resources • Planned fees and charges 	Committee report
	Capital Strategy and Capital Programme 2025/26 (standing item)	To scrutinise the draft Capital Strategy and Capital Programme for 2025/26 with a specific focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocation of resources • Planned projects 	Committee report
	Cabinet and Council reports	Note reports for Cabinet and Full Council	Report for comment
Mar	Quarter 3 performance report (standing item)	To scrutinise the performance of the council's services and corporate projects.	Report for comment
	Cabinet and Council reports	Note reports for Cabinet and Full Council	Report for comment
	Communications Strategy Action Plan	To scrutinise performance against the action plan.	Committee report

Other reports expected during 2024/25:

Council Tax and Non-Domestic Debt Management Policy

ROSSENDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

The Forward Plan sets out the details of the key decisions which the Cabinet or Officers expect to take. The Plan is updated 28 days prior to each Cabinet meeting and is available on the website. All items will be for publication, unless otherwise stated.

Publication dates for 2024/25 Municipal Year are as follows:

- 7th May 2024
- 17th June 2024
- 20th August 2024
- 17th September 2024
- 22nd October 2024
- 14th January 2025
- 18th February 2025

Definition of a Key Decision

1. A Key Decision means an executive decision which is likely:
 - a) to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the budget for the service or function to which the decision relates, or
 - b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising of two or more Wards in the Borough.
2. For the avoidance of doubt, the Council would regard any of the following as 'significant':
 - Any decision by the Cabinet in the course of developing proposals to the full Council to amend the policy framework.
 - Any single item of in-budget expenditure or savings in excess of £100,000.
 - Any decision which is likely to have a permanent or long term (more than 5 years) effect on the Council and the Borough.

Cabinet Membership

- Councillor Alyson Barnes – Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Economic Development
- Councillor Michelle Smith – Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Planning, Licensing and Enforcement
- Councillor Adrian Lythgoe – Lead Member for Environment and Corporate Services
- Councillor Liz McInnes – Lead Member for Communities, Housing and Health
- Councillor Andrew Walmsley – Lead Member for Resources

Chief Executive Directorate managed by the Chief Executive – Rob Huntington

- Executive Office
- Housing, Health & Communities
- Public Protection Unit
- ICT, SAT & Customer Services
- Operations
- Rossendale Leisure Trust
- Oversees the services listed below.

Economic Development Directorate managed by the Director of Economic Development – David Smurthwaite

- Planning and Building Control
- Economic Development
- Business Development
- Tourism
- Property Services/Surveying (Estates)
- Strategic Housing
- Housing Options
- Private Sector Housing

Legal Services managed by the Head of Legal (Monitoring Officer), Clare Birtwistle

- Legal Services
- Committee and Member Services
- Elections
- Land Charges

Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer), Karen Spencer

- Finance & Audit
- Revenues and Benefits
- Risk Management & Procurement
- Asset Register
- Rossendale Leisure Trust (Accounting and Project Appraisals)

HR managed by the Head of People & Policy, Clare Law

- People and Policy
- Corporate Support
- Communications

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- Safeguarding
- Emergency Planning/Health and Safety
- Facilities Management

Anyone wishing to make representations about any of the matters listed in the Forward Plan, or obtain copies of the documents listed (subject to disclosure restrictions), may do so by contacting the relevant officer listed against each key decision.

Under the Access to Information Procedure rules set out in the Council's Constitution, a key decision may not be taken, unless:

- It is published in the Forward Plan
- 28 clear days have lapsed since the publication of the Forward Plan; and
- if the decision is to be taken at a meeting of the Cabinet, 5 clear days' notice of the meeting has been given

The law and the Council's Constitution provide an exception that allows urgent key decisions to be made, even though they have not been included in the Forward Plan. This is provided for in Rule 15 (General Exception) and Rule 16 (Special Urgency) of the Access to Information Procedure Rules.

The Forward Plan also contains details of significant decisions which will be considered by the Cabinet with recommendations to Full Council.

Copies of the following documents may be inspected at the Rossendale Borough Council Offices or accessed from the Council's website https://www.rossendale.gov.uk/info/210159/about_the_council/10526/how_decisions_are_made

- The Council's Constitution
- The Forward Plan
- Reports on the key decisions to be taken
- The minutes or decision notice for each key decision, which will normally be published 4 working days after having been made.

Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Cabinet and the dates and times of the meetings are published on the Council's website www.rossendale.gov.uk/meetings or you may contact the Committee and Member Services Section on telephone number 01706 252422 or email democracy@rossendalebc.gov.uk for further details.

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Details of the decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Expected Date of Decision	Relevant Lead Member	Documents to be considered by the decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer
Rossendale LUF Regeneration Programme – Rawtenstall Market Stage 3 Design Approval (Rawtenstall market)	Special Cabinet	19 th June 2024	Economic Development	Report	Sean O'Hagan, Rossendale Regeneration Programme Manager 01706 252572 seanohagan@rossendalebc.gov.uk
Improvements to Victoria Park Wheeled Sports facilities (Victoria Park Wheeled Sports)	Cabinet	16 th July 2024	Environment and Corporate Services	Report	David McChesney, Service Manager – Green Spaces 01706 252584 davidmcchesney@rossendalebc.gov.uk
Victoria Park Masterplan Update	Cabinet	16 th July 2024	Environment and Corporate Services	Report	David McChesney, Service Manager – Green Spaces 01706 252584 davidmcchesney@rossendalebc.gov.uk
Whitaker Park Masterplan Update	Cabinet	16 th July 2024	Environment and Corporate Services	Report	David McChesney, Service Manager – Green Spaces 01706 252584 davidmcchesney@rossendalebc.gov.uk
Food Law Service Plan 2023/24 (Food Standards Agency Annual Report) - yearly item	Council	17 th July 2024	Planning, Licensing and Enforcement	Report	Andy Taylor, Head of Environmental Services 01706 252519 andrewtaylor@rossendalebc.gov.uk
Improvements to the 3G Pitch at the Adrenaline Centre	Council	17 th July 2024	Communities, Housing and Health	Report	Natalie Atkinson Programme Manager – Physical Activity 01706 238640 natalieatkinson@rossendalebc.gov.uk

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Details of the decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Expected Date of Decision	Relevant Lead Member	Documents to be considered by the decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer
Long Term Plan for Towns Funding	Council	17 th July 2024	Economic Development	Report	Megan Eastwood Head of Housing and Regeneration 01706 252480 meganeastwood@rossendalebc.gov.uk
Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rate & Housing Benefit Overpayment Write-offs – yearly item	Cabinet	18 th September 2024	Resources	Report	Ian Walker, Service Assurance Team Leader 01706 252592 ianwalker@rossendalebc.gov.uk
Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document	Overview & Scrutiny Cabinet	9 th September 2024 18 th September 2024	Planning, Licensing and Enforcement	Report	Anne Storah, Principal Planner (Forward Planning) 01706 252418 annestorah@rossendalebc.gov.uk
Open Space and Outdoor Sports Supplementary Planning Document	Overview & Scrutiny Cabinet	9 th September 2024 18 th September 2024	Planning, Licensing and Enforcement	Report	Anne Storah, Principal Planner (Forward Planning) 01706 252418 annestorah@rossendalebc.gov.uk
Edgeside Masterplan Update	Cabinet	18 th September 2024	Environment and Corporate Services	Report	David McChesney, Service Manager – Green Spaces 01706 252584 davidmcchesney@rossendalebc.gov.uk
Stubbylee Masterplan Update	Cabinet	18 th September 2024	Environment and Corporate Services	Report	David McChesney, Service Manager – Green Spaces 01706 252584 davidmcchesney@rossendalebc.gov.uk

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Climate Change Strategy Update – yearly item	Council	2 nd October 2024	Environment and Corporate Services	Report	David Smurthwaite, Director of Economic Development 01706 252429 davidsmurthwaite@rossendalebc.gov.uk
Annual Air Quality Report – yearly item	Cabinet	20 th November 2024	Planning, Licensing and Enforcement	Report	Andy Taylor, Head of Environmental Services 01706 252519 andrewtaylor@rossendalebc.gov.uk
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Update – yearly item	Cabinet	20 th November 2024	Resources	Report	Karen Spencer, S151 Officer 01706 252465 karenspencer@rossendalebc.gov.uk ,
Authority Monitoring Report for 2023 to 2024 – yearly item	Cabinet	20 th November 2024	Planning, Licensing and Enforcement	Report	Anne Storah, Principal Planner (Forward Planning) 01706 252418 annestorah@rossendalebc.gov.uk
Constitution Review	Council	4 th December 2024 To be taken to each meeting unless no changes identified.	Environment and Corporate Services	Report	Clare Birtwistle Head of Legal (Monitoring Officer) 01706 252438 clarebirtwistle@rossendalebc.gov.uk
Review of Public Space Protection Orders for Alcohol, Nitrous Oxide and Off Road Bikes	Council	4 th December 2024	Environment and Corporate Services	Report	Susan Chadwick, Public Protection Manager 01706 238648 susanchadwick@rossendalebc.gov.uk

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Details of the decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Expected Date of Decision	Relevant Lead Member	Documents to be considered by the decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer
Corporate Priorities, Budget, Council Tax and the Medium Term Financial Strategy – yearly item	Overview & Scrutiny Cabinet Council	10 th February 2025 12 th February 2025 5 th March 2025	Resources	Report	Karen Spencer, S151 Officer 01706 252465 karenspencer@rossendalebc.gov.uk
Capital Strategy and Capital Programme – yearly item	Overview & Scrutiny Cabinet Council	10 th February 2025 12 th February 2025 5 th March 2025	Resources	Report	Karen Spencer, S151 Officer 01706 252465 karenspencer@rossendalebc.gov.uk ,
Treasury Management Strategy & Treasury Management Practises – yearly item	Cabinet Council	12 th February 2025 5 th March 2025	Resources	Report	Karen Spencer, S151 Officer 01706 252465 karenspencer@rossendalebc.gov.uk ,
Pay Policy Statement – yearly item	Council	5 th March 2025	Environment and Corporate Services	Report	Clare Law, Head of People and Policy 01706 252457 clarelaw@rossendalebc.gov.uk
Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26 – yearly item	Council	5 th March 2025	Resources	Report	Ian Walker, Service Assurance Team Leader 01706 252592 ianwalker@rossendalebc.gov.uk

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