

Policy Statement (draft)

Community Leadership

Introduction

Rossendale Borough Council has a number of roles. These include:

- providing leadership for, and with the community
 - engaging in effective partnerships
 - ensuring delivery of high quality local services, directly, in partnership and through commissioning;
 - performing a stewardship role which protects the interests of local people and makes the best use of resources
 - developing local democracy and citizenship
- (CIPFA 2006)

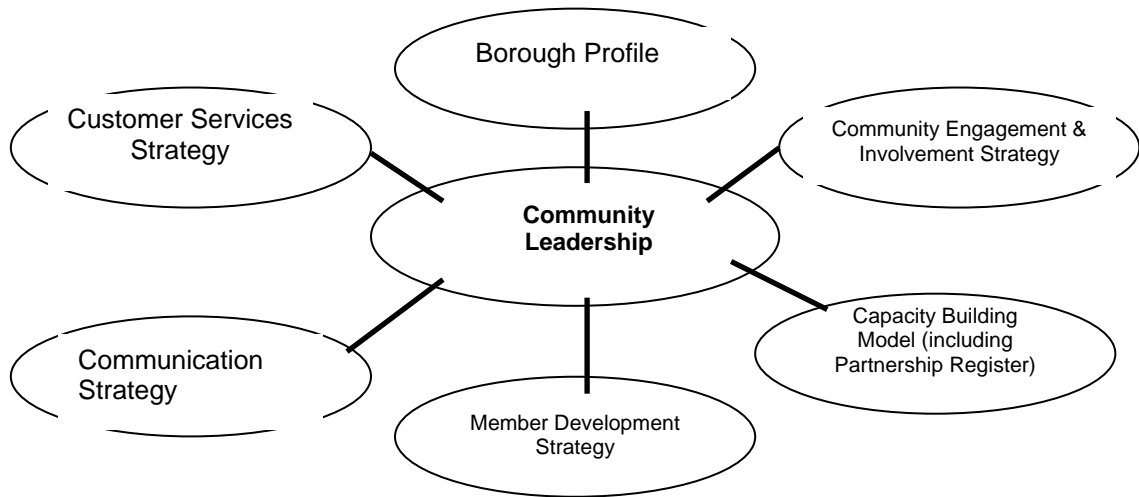
These roles can be included within the general umbrella of 'community leadership' and support the statutory duty provided in the Local Government Act (2000) to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of the local area.

Definition

As a Community Leaders, Rossendale Borough Council will listen to and involve communities in its work, building vision and direction for the area, working effectively in partnership with and for the community as well as acting as advocate for Rossendale locally, regionally and nationally.

Rossendale Borough Council is committed to developing its role as Community Leader. As part of this commitment we volunteered to act as a pilot for Improvement and Development Agency's (I&DeA) Community Leadership Fitness Check during 2006. The outcomes of this process, together with workshops held in November 2005 and March 2006, have been important in our learning process and have informed the development of this Policy Statement. Our Community Leadership role will be developed through the actions contained within this Policy Statement but will also be taken forward through linked and complementary strategies and approaches as indicated below:

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2. Success Factors

The Audit Commission has identified five factors that are critical to successful community leadership. These are summarised below together with the current position for Rossendale Borough Council in relation to each.

Awareness

This includes good local intelligence about local areas and communities. The social, demographic, environmental and economic context of the locality is understood and information from a variety of sources is used. This awareness also needs to be complemented by good consultation and engagement mechanisms, both within and outside the council.

Effective networks need to be in place which enable targets to be set in consultation with partners, residents and the wider community and feedback be provided on the reasons behind council decisions. Capacity is built internally and with local partners.

Rossendale Borough Council

- Borough Profile containing qualitative and quantitative data developed.
- Information provided to Councillors through Members Bulletin.
- Intranet developed as corporate library/memory.
- Communication Strategy adopted in 2005
- Development of Community Engagement and Involvement Strategy to formalise much of the good practice already taking place and set core standards for future work.

Focus and Prioritisation

A clear and ambitious vision to be provided for communities with a defined set of local priorities (which balance national and local priorities). Strong performance management framework in place to maintain focus.

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- Strong role within Rossendale Partnership (the Local Strategic Partnership for the borough)
- Clear Vision for the borough set out in the Community Strategy 'Rossendale Alive'.
- Facilitate development of Community Strategy and development to Sustainable Community Strategy in 2007.
- Facilitate development of performance management framework leading to Amber-Green assessment of LSP in 2005 improving to Green assessment in 2006.
- Partner in development and delivery of Lancashire's Local Area Agreement (LAA).
- Corporate Improvement Plan linked to delivery of Community Strategy and LAA.

Working Together

The benefits of improved joined-up working at strategic and operational levels recognised as key to increasing capacity, pooling resources and delivering better services to users. External challenge is valued.

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The development of the capacity building model of governance is at the heart of the Rossendale approach. Diversity of delivery is valued and co-production of outcomes recognised as the only sustainable way of achieving excellence. Improved partnership working has already led to good outcomes in a number of complex service areas such as the reduction in recorded levels of crime and disorder in the borough.

- Capacity Building Model
- Partnership Policy Statement and Register

Rossendale Borough Council engages in a positive way with external challenge and inspections. Detailed below are those which took place and/or were reported on during 2006:

- Progress Assessment
- Use of Resources (including Value for Money)
- Data Quality Audit
- Environmental Services Inspection
- Strategic Housing review (as part of preparation for the formal inspection in December 2006)
- Local Strategic Partnership performance management framework
- Investors in People assessment for Human Resources
- Community Leadership Fitness Check
- Strategic Housing Inspection

These were in addition to the regular Improvement Board meetings, internal audit and Overview and Scrutiny programmes.

Clarity of Roles

Clarity of roles both within the council and between the council, its partners and stakeholders is critical to guaranteeing effective community leadership. Roles of Councillors and officers need to be clearly defined from the outset, fully understood and valued. Scrutiny needs to be robust and effective and staff understand their roles within the corporate context and local priorities.

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Rossendale's improvement programme has included significant work on corporate governance.

- Code of Conduct
- Induction process for staff and Councillors
- Ethical Governance review
- Introduction of Leader and Cabinet model of governance.
- Overview and Scrutiny developments

Building Leadership Capacity

The Council, individuals within it as well as individuals within the community, all provide leadership at various times and in various ways. Rossendale Borough Council recognises one of the crucial outcomes of community leadership is the creation of an environment in which others can act. This includes providing direct leadership at times, at others providing support or fostering empowerment – or sometimes taking no action at all!

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- East Lancashire Leadership Programme
- Organizational Development Plan
- Member Development Strategy
- Community Involvement and Engagement Strategy

3. Community Leadership Fitness Check

Rossendale Borough Council volunteered to take part in the Improvement and Development Agency's Community Leadership Fitness Check. The process involved focus groups and interviews with Elected Members and Officers. The main messages arising from the review can be grouped into three main areas:

- Learning Opportunities
Internal opportunities
Learning from others
Mentoring – particularly for new Councillors
- Ward Councillors
Recognising and developing the ward councillor role
Links with Overview and Scrutiny
Ward issues

- Roles and Responsibilities
Building on Member/Officer relations
Understanding the role of the Councillor
Reacting to and raising issues

4. Community Leadership in and by Rossendale Borough Council

In Rossendale Borough Council, Community Leadership is taken forward under three main themes. These are:

- **Leading By Example**
Rossendale Borough Council as a well managed, efficient and effective organisation which sets an example within the borough and beyond.

Examples of Actions to be taken or in hand:

- Investors in People across the Council
- Level 3 of Equality Standard
- Effective pay and grading system
- embed strong performance management culture
- embed strong corporate and ethical governance
- effective financial management (including capital strategy and asset management)

- **Developing Skills and Capacity**
Ensuring the necessary skills and capacity are in place across the borough

Examples of action to be taken or in hand:

- 5 key competencies for Rossendale Borough Council staff
- North West Charter for Member Development
- Community Engagement and Involvement Strategy
- Member Support Service in place
- Grants to Outside Bodies
- Organisational Development Plan

- **Strong links between the Council and the local community**
That the Council knows and understands its local communities, acts as a strong advocate for the area and champions the needs and aspirations of local people with other agencies and organisations.

Examples of Action to be taken or in hand:

- Youth Council development
- Ward Walks Programme
- Increased Electoral Turnout
- Improved Area Forums
- Lancashire Locals developed
- Local Democracy week programme of activity
- Community Portal
- Mini Mayor
- Strong role within LSP and other partnerships to contribute to the District Vision
- Engage local people

This work is underpinned by our approach of ‘Listen, Action and Feedback’ (LAF)

5. Outcomes from Community Leadership

In delivering a strengthened approach to Community Leadership it is intended that the following outcomes are realised:

- Councillors taking account of evidence, local knowledge, service users views and public opinion in shaping policies of the Council;
- Councillors influencing the views of others in relation to major issues facing Rossendale
- Services to the public improved by the Council working in partnership to provide joined up planning and service delivery.
- Councillors acting as well-informed champions of their local communities
- Local communities understand and recognise the role and contribution of Councillors
- Good communication and information sharing taking place between the Council and the public.

6. Action Plan

Appendix 1 contains the Action Plan for delivering strengthened Community Leadership in 2006 and 2007. This will be monitored through Overview and Scrutiny and performance management of Business Plans.

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Community Leadership Policy Statement Action Plan 2006-2007

Theme One: Leading By Example					
Outcomes	Outputs	Corporate Objective	Target Date	Lead	Source
To continue to build a financial base upon which the Council can deliver its priorities and ensure Council buildings are fit for purpose for both staff and customers	Asset Management Plan and Capital Strategy completed	Improvement	October 2006	Cabinet Member for Finance and Risk Management Head of Financial Services	Financial Services Business Plan
Employees have clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and how they contribute to the overall vision of Rossendale Alive leading to improved performance levels.	Achieve Investors in People across the Council	Improvement	March 2007	Cabinet Member for Human Resources and Member Development Head of Human Resources	Human Resources Business Plan
Strengthened approach to use of resources and probity issues.	Improved performance in relation to Council's Use of Resources judgement	Improvement	March 2007	Cabinet member for Finance and Risk Management Executive Director for Resources	Financial Services and Legal and Democratic Services Business Plans
To deliver affordable and modernised conditions of service and reward systems to ensure an appropriately skilled and motivated workforce delivering improved services.	Deliver Job Evaluation and establish an effective pay and grading system	Improvement	April 2007	Cabinet Member for Human Resources and Member Development Head of Human Resources	Human Resources Business Plan

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Theme Two: Developing Skills and Capacity					
Outcomes	Outputs	Corporate Objective	Target Date	Lead	Source
Effective Elected Members with the skills to deliver the Council's agenda and Community Leadership role	Implement Member Development Strategy	Improvement	March 2007	Cabinet Member for Human Resources and Member Development Head of Legal and Democratic Services	Legal and Democratic Services Business Plan
To increase effective engagement with the community to ensure services are meeting local needs	In conjunction with Community Network develop a community engagement and involvement strategy	Community	December 2007	Cabinet Member for Customer Services Head of Community and Partnership	Community and Partnership Business Plan
Improved governance and effectiveness of partnership working	Audit of Partnerships Partnership Register Elected Member Partnership Development Programme Partnership Policy Statement	Community	December 2007 December 2007 December 2007	Cabinet Member for Community and Partnerships Head of Community and Partnership/Head of Legal and Democratic Services	Community and Partnership Business Plan

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Theme Three: Strong Links Between Council and Local Communities					
Outcomes	Outputs	Corporate Objective	Target Date	Lead	Source
Improved awareness and understanding of the role of Elected Members	Delivered through activities in Legal and Democratic Services Business Plan	Community	December 2006	Cabinet Member for Human Resources and Member Development Head of Legal and Democratic Services	Legal and Democratic Services Business Plan
Community engagement and social inclusion encouraged	Community Portal introduced	Community Network	December 2006	Cabinet Member for Customer Services Head of Customer Services and E-Government	Customer Services and E-Government Business Plan
To ensure appropriate opportunities are provided for stakeholders to express views and informed policy development and service improvement takes place.	Fit for purpose consultation strategy and framework	Improvement	December 2007	Cabinet Member for Customer Services Head of Community and Partnership	Community and Partnership Business Plan
Equality of access to services and diversity of workforce and communities celebrated.	Achieve Level 3 of the Equality Standard	Customer	March 2008	Cabinet Member for Human Resources and Member Development Head of Human Resources	Human Resources Business Plan

Background Papers

CIPFA (2006) Good Governance in Local Government: A Framework

Corporate Improvement Plan 2006 – 2009, Rossendale Borough Council

www.rossendale.gov.uk

Community Leadership Fitness Check, I&DeA Report 2006

Audit Commission, Local Government Briefing 1: Community Leadership 1 March

2003 www.auditcommission.gov.uk