

Minutes of: **PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting: 8 January 2008

PRESENT: Councillor Sandiford (Chair)
Councillors Crawforth, Forshaw, Lamb, Morris,
Neal, Smith (substituting for L Barnes)

IN ATTENDANCE: Gary Hood, Chief Executive, Rossendale Leisure Trust
Stephen Jackson, Housing Market Renewal Manager
Pat Couch, Scrutiny Support Officer

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Essex, Portfolio Holder, A Well Managed Council
1 Member of the public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lynda Barnes, Bernard Divine (Co-opted Member) and Lesley Noble, Head of Policy and Performance.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2007 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items for discussion.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions were raised under this item.

6. CHAIRS UPDATE

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Committee, and indicated that following the last meeting a number of items were asked to be presented to this Committee.

The Scrutiny Support Officer had tabled the following briefing papers for information and the Chair indicated that if any member required further information they should either contact the Scrutiny Support Officer or the Officer direct.

- Information from the Head of People and Organisational Development on BV2a (Equality Standard for Local Government and BV11b (Top 5% Earners Ethnic Minorities)
- Information from the Head of Finance on BVPI 156 (Buildings Accessible to People with a Disability)
- Update on Lead in Drinking Water in Rossendale and information on Water Butts from the Environmental Health Officer

A member asked if the Scrutiny Support Officer could contact Street Scene and Liveability to ask if they had any old black bins which could be used as water butts for any member of the public who requires them.

Councillor Essex agreed to liaise with the Communications Manager to ask for a section to be included in the next Rossendale Alive Newsletter informing Rossendale residents that United Utilities have a lead pipe replacement scheme and that residents can apply to replace lead pipes that they own free of charge.

The Chair informed the Committee that the report of the Polling Station Task and Finish Group had been presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee where minor amendments were made to the report. The final report had been sent to the Returning Officer for comment and a copy of the report would be sent to Members.

The Chair indicated that following the presentation at the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee from East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust on their plans to become Foundation Trust, a response had been sent on behalf of the Council. The response would be sent to all Members.

The Chair reminded Members that a meeting with the Post Office Network Team had been arranged for Monday, 14 January at 2.45pm at Hardman Mill. The purpose of the meeting was for the Post Office Network Team to hear the views of Members on future plans for regeneration within the Borough, which could impact on any proposals made by the Post Office Network Team.

The Chair asked Councillor Neal to update Members on the recent meeting of the Road Safety Partnership with Whitworth Town Council in respect of a number of accidents which had occurred in the area. Further meetings were due to take place to which Councillor Lynda Barnes would attend and provide updates to the Committee.

The Chair asked for an update on whether Development Control had been made aware of a request from this Committee that all new builds consider the possibility of using grey waste systems. The Scrutiny Support Officer confirmed that this had been sent to the department.

7. PERFORMANCE REVIEW – ROSSENDALE LEISURE TRUST

Gary Hood, the Chief Executive of Rossendale Leisure Trust presented the performance report of Rossendale Leisure Trust for the period of January to December 2007.

Rossendale Leisure Trust had been operational since 1st June 2004 and managed a large part of the Council's leisure portfolio.

In May 2007 the Council published proposals to improve leisure facilities. The proposals were designed to have a significant impact on participation in leisure activities, which would support priority 5 – Improving Health and Well Being across the Borough.

As well as leisure provision within Rossendale, the Trust also managed the following two community provisions

- Alder Grange High School Sports Hall and Fitness Suite
- Whitworth Community High School Sports Hall and Fitness Suite

The Trust Board comprises eight community representatives, two Council representatives and one staff representative.

A Member asked a question in relation to the Chill Factor, a new facility opened in Trafford and whether there had been any impact on Ski Rossendale. Gary Hood indicated that when the new facility first opened they had seen a decrease in usage of the ski slopes, but this had now improved. They had also reduced the cost of ski lessons for Rossendale children to £4 per lesson.

Councillor Essex agreed to contact the Communications Manager to ask for an advert to be included in the next Rossendale Alive Newsletter advertising the reduced costs of lessons.

The Chair asked a question in relation to the uptake of swimming lessons by schools in the area. Gary Hood explained that pupils were given one term of swimming lessons within their school career. He explained the following substantial funding through the Youth Sports Trust there would be future extension to physical activity within the current curriculum from 2 hours to 5 hours, with swimming a key area of activity.

Councillor Essex in his role as the Council's Champion for Children and Young agreed to contact Lancashire County Council to enquire about

the funding formula for schools and whether there was a distinct separate item for the funding of swimming

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

8. DECENT HOMES ASSISTANCE SCHEME

The Housing Market Renewal Manager presented an update on the implementation of the Decent Homes Assistance Scheme, which offers equity release loans to help vulnerable households to improve the condition of their homes.

The Decent Homes Assistance Scheme was introduced in July 2005 and this replaced the former housing improvement grant regime. The scheme was revised in 2007, moving from two providers into a more joined up scheme provided by West Pennine Housing Association.

Since its introduction the scheme had helped 23 vulnerable people to improve their homes through equity loans. In the six months since the revised scheme a further 16 households were in the process of receiving equity loans. In addition four loans had now been paid and the income would be fed back into the programme to provide additional resources.

A number of questions were raised by Members to which the Housing Market Renewal Manager responded.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

9. QUARTILE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2006/07

Councillor Essex Portfolio Holder for A Well Managed Council introduced the report which outlined Rossendale Borough Council's Quartile position achieved from the Best Value Performance Indicators collected during 2006/07, using the comparison data for all English Councils. The information was released by the Audit Commission in December 2007.

The report showed the Audit Commission's assessment of the overall rate of improvement by Rossendale Borough Council when compared against all other English Councils.

There were a small number of BVPIs which had declined between 2005/6 and 2006/07. Concern was raised in particular about BV199a – local street and environment cleanliness – Fly posting, which had gone from 2nd to bottom quartile. It was agreed that the Head of Street

Scene and Neighbourhood Services attend the next meeting to explain to Members the reason for the decline.

Members were pleased to learn that a number of indicators had an improved quartile position or maintained top quartile position between 2005/06 and 2006/07 and congratulations should be sent to those Heads of Service included in the list.

Resolved:

1. That the Performance Scrutiny Committee notes the quartile performance detailed in the report.
2. That the Head of Street Scene and Neighbourhood Services attend the next meeting in relation to BV199a – local street and environment cleanliness – Fly posting to explain the reason for the decline.
3. That congratulations be sent to those Heads of Service where the BVPIs have improved or maintained top quartile position.

The meeting commenced at 7.50pm and closed at 8.35pm

Signed.....
(Chair)

Date