

**Date of Meeting:** 6 December 2007

**PRESENT:** Councillor Sandiford (in the Chair)  
Councillors Aldred (substituting for Lamb), L Barnes,  
Forshaw, Morris, Neal, Smith, (substituting for  
Dickinson)  
Bernard Divine (co-opted)

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillors A Barnes, Lamb, Robertson ("Call-in" Members)  
Councillor Ruddick, Leader of the Council and Chair  
of the Cabinet  
Councillor Essex, Portfolio Holder, Well Managed Council  
Linda Fisher, Executive Director of Regulatory Services  
Tracy Brzozowski, Licensing Manager  
Pat Couch, Scrutiny Support Officer

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor Steen  
3 Members of the public  
1 Member of the press

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#### **STATEMENT BY THE CHAIR**

The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting informing them of the reason for the call-in. She explained that four Members of the Performance Scrutiny Committee were also on the Licensing Committee which debated the report which had been called-in.

As over 50% of the Performance Scrutiny Committee would be prevented from taking a full part in the meeting due to having a prejudicial interest, for the reason set out above, the Chair asked for agreement to adjourn the meeting so that Members could apply to the Standards Committee for a dispensation to allow them to take part in the meeting.

#### **Resolved;**

That the meeting be deferred to enable those Members of the Performance Scrutiny Committee with a personal and prejudicial interest to apply in writing to the Standards Committee for a dispensation to enable them to take part in the meeting.

**MINUTES OF:            PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Date of Meeting:**    8 January 2008

**PRESENT:**            Councillor Neal (Chair)  
                  Councillors Aldred (substituting for Lamb), Crawforth, Forshaw and  
                  Smith (substituting for Lynda Barnes)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**    Councillors A Barnes, Robertson (“Call-in” Members)  
                          Councillor Essex, Portfolio Holder, A Well Managed Council  
                          Linda Fisher, Executive Director of Regulatory Services  
                          Tracy Brzozowski, Licensing Manager  
                          Pat Couch, Scrutiny Support Officer  
                          Councillor Steen, Chair of Licensing Committee

**ALSO PRESENT:**    Councillors Sandiford and Morris  
                          Andrew Neville, Chair of Standards Committee  
                          2 members of the public  
                          1 representative from the press

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**1.        DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members of the Committee were asked to consider whether they had an interest in the matter to be discussed at the meeting and the following interests were declared.

Councillor Essex declared a personal and prejudicial interest as he used a preferred taxi company for both business and private use.

Councillors Sandiford and Morris declared a personal and prejudicial interest as they were members of the Licensing Committee who considered the report on 8 October 2007.

Councillor Steen declared a personal and prejudicial interest as Chair of the Licensing Committee

Councillor A Barnes declared a personal and prejudicial interest as a member of the Licensing Committee, later in the meeting.

**2.        PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions from members of the public.

### **3. CALL- IN ON HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE ANNUAL LICENCE AND FEES**

In accordance with the Performance Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules, the Chair introduced the item by outlining the decision of the Cabinet and the reason for the item being called in.

Councillor Essex indicated that he was unclear as to the reason for the call-in as the issue of Group 2 Medical fees had not been a decision taken by Cabinet, but by the Licensing Committee.

The Chair then invited Councillor A Barnes to explain her reasons for calling in the item, which are summarised below.

The increase that was being levied had not taken into consideration the financial impact on drivers. Most valley taxi drivers were over the age of 45 and therefore would need to have a medical every three years which would cost £100-155 (£33-50 per year), in addition to the other additional costs that were being requested.

Call- in Members were also concerned about the liaison process and the trade associations were not given details of the proposed increases at their last meeting.

Councillor A Barnes accepted that the reasons given for the call-in were to focus on the whole issue of fees and not just the medical fees and indicated that there were discrepancies in the figures contained in the reports and were not in accordance with the budget.

Members of the public and elected Members were invited to speak in accordance with the Procedure for Public Speaking.

Councillor Sandiford raised concerns about the handling of the call-in and asked that the Constitution be amended.

Following their representations, Councillors Morris and Sandiford vacated the meeting prior to the commencement of the debate.

Members of the Committee considered the reasons for the call-in and the Portfolio Holder for a Well Managed Council, the Chair of Licensing and the Licensing Manager outlined the reasons for the decision and responded to the questions raised by Members of the Performance Scrutiny Committee.

### **4. DETERMINATION**

The Chair invited the Call-in Members, the Portfolio Holder for a Well Managed Council and the Licensing Manager to leave during the determination of the Call-in.

The Committee proceeded to consider the matter following which, the Chair invited the Call-in Members, the Portfolio Holder for a Well Managed Council and the Licensing Manager back into the meeting and advised them of the decision set out below.

**Resolved:**

The Committee agreed that the call-in was appropriate and concluded that, as the decision was not wholly in accordance with the Council's budget framework it should be referred to Council, to ensure members consider the matter further. Particular reference was made to the omission of detailed financial information justifying the fee increase and consultation responses.

**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

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**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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 .....