

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

**Date of Meeting:** 4<sup>th</sup> September 2008

**PRESENT:** Councillor Sandiford (Chair)  
Councillors Evans (substituting for L Barnes),  
Robertson (substituting for Lamb), Stansfield,  
Thorne and Unsworth (substituting for Crawforth)  
Bernard Divine, Co-opted Member

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Linda Fisher, Executive Director - Business (Monitoring Officer)  
Andrew Buckle, Head of Customer Services & ICT  
Liz Murphy, Head of People and Policy  
Emy Aceret, Committee Officer

**ALSO PRESENT:** 1 Member of the public

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**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Barnes, Crawforth, Essex, Lamb, Neal and Smith and Carolyn Wilkins, Chief Executive.

**2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

**Resolved:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2008 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**

No declarations were made.

**5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No questions were raised under this item.

## **6. CHAIRS UPDATE**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed the Committee that:

- The Grass Cutting Task and Finish Group had its first meeting on the 30<sup>th</sup> July and generated a list of actions for the Task Group Members,
- The Elections Response Group which will look at the consultation on moving the Election day from Thursday to weekend is now set up and their first meeting will be on Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> September,
- The Congestion Charges Response Group is also due to meet on Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

## **7. Polling District Review Update**

The Deputy Returning Officer in the absence of the Returning Officer explained that there is a duty under Section 16 of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 to undertake a review of Polling Places, Polling Districts and Access Arrangements every four years.

Some issues were raised relating to the changes made and activities to attract voters.

The Deputy Returning Officer explained that there was evidence of improvement in voting as a result of the work done by the Elections Team and Committee and Member Services Team including:

- i) Working with schools during Local Democracy Week
- ii) Encouraging voter registration by being able to register by text
- iii) £100 Prize draw which aims to encourage residents to return their form.
- iv) More publicity

The meeting also discussed polling stations as some Councillors had received complaints on closing polling stations. Compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act was also discussed.

On a separate matter it was suggested that an invite would be sent out to secondary schools and ask for a representative to attend a Full Council meeting.

### **Resolved:**

- 1) That the information be noted.

2. That the Deputy Returning Officer provides data on the number of attainers on the register to see whether there has been any increase in the number of young people registering to vote.
- 3) That the Democratic Services Team and Election Team present a report to a future meeting summarising the work being carried out and future work to be carried out to encourage the involvement of residents in the Democratic process.

## **8. Ombudsman Annual Letter and Annual complaints Review**

The Executive Director - Business provided Members with an update on activities within the Complaints and Feedback Process.

The Executive Director – Business explained that 70% of the total Ombudsman complaints received in 2007/08 against the Council were in relation to Planning matters, however, it must be noted that 30% of that were generated by two individuals.

The Executive Director - Business stated that the Council treated all complaints very seriously and learnt from the outcomes. She reminded the Committee that it was important to consider how many complaints had been upheld and not just to focus on numbers of complaints.

Members raised a number of questions to which the Monitoring Officer and Head of Customer Services and ICT responded:

- Handling frivolous and vexatious complaints
- Council Tax recovery
- Member Enquiry and Complaint status
- Logging complaints with the Service Assurance Team.

### **Resolved:**

1. That Members note the content of the Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Letter for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008 (and place on record their thanks to the Local Government Ombudsman's office for their support).
2. That Members note the content of the report and the improvements carried out within the Planning Unit.
3. That the Head of Customer Services and ICT circulate information to members on numbers of complaints on Council Tax Recovery and how many were justified.

4. That the Head of Customer Services and ICT circulate information to members relating to all complaints and whether they were justified.

## **9. Integrated Performance Report – Quarter 1**

The Head of People and Policy gave a presentation on the new National Indicators (NIs) and informed Members that she would explain the priority National Indicators at the next meeting. The Head of People and Policy explained that the Council under the Local Authority Agreement (LAA35) would take the lead on NI 55 - Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) and would contribute on others as identified in the report. The Head of People and Policy informed the Committee that there was a need to identify the Lead Officer for each National Indicator.

With regard to the Performance Report Quarter1, there were some queries about the colours, signs and notes contained within the report particularly in relation to:

- Priority 6 – A Well Managed Council – Financial Monitoring
- Priority 1 – Delivering Quality Services to our Customers
- Priority 3 – Keeping our Borough Clean and Green – NI 191 and NI 192
- Priority 5 – Improving health and well-being across the Borough – NI 156 and BV156

### **Resolved:**

1. That the Committee agrees that the report which is produced on a quarterly basis should identify the role of the designated officer who has compiled the data.
2. That the Committee notes the performance achievement detailed within the report.
3. That the headline performance of the Council's principal partners: Rossendale Local Strategic Partnership; Rossendale Leisure Trust; Capita; and, Green Vale Homes be subject to scrutiny at subsequent Overview and Scrutiny Committees as part of a planned work programme.
4. That the Manager of Street Scene, the Head of Finance and the Property Services Manager be invited to attend the next Committee meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> October to clarify and explain their department's performance against performance indicators.
5. That the Head of People and Policy provides a document relating to the National Indicators (NIs) and Local Indicators to Members of the Committee.

6. That Cabinet be recommended to delete the following BVPIs from the report as these have been absorbed into the National Indicators:

- BV 126 - Domestic burglaries per 1,000 households
- BV 127a - Violent Crime per 1,000 Population
- BV 127b - Robberies per 1,000 Population
- BV 128 - Vehicle crimes per 1,000 population

7. That Cabinet be recommended to delete the following BVPIs relating to Visits to and Use of Museums under Priority 4 – Promoting Rossendale as a Cracking Place to Live and Visit:

- BV 170a – Visit to and Use of Museums – All visits
- BV 170b – Visit to and Use of Museums – Visits in Person
- BV 170c – Visit to and Use of Museums – School Groups.

**The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 8.50pm**

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

**Date .....**