

Minutes of: POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 11 August 2009

**Present: Councillor H Steen, (Chair)
Councillors Dickinson, Farrington, Lamb (substituting for Forshaw), Morris, Pilling and Stansfield (substituting for Milling)
Mr P Ham (Co-opted Member)**

**In Attendance: Adrian Smith, Principal Planner, Forward Planning
Jason Foster, Operations Manager, Communities
Andrew Buckle, Head of ICT and Customer Services
Lee Birkett, Project and Performance Improvement Officer
Pat Couch, Scrutiny Support Officer**

Also Present: 1 Member of the public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Milling and Forshaw.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 16 June 2009, be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Morris declared a personal interest in Item D5, as Chair of the Audit and Accounts Committee.

Councillor Dickinson declared a personal interest in Item D5, as a Member of the Audit and Accounts Committee.

Philip Ham declared a personal interest in Item D2, as he indirectly works with some of the private companies suggested for consideration with the 'Call for Sites' exercise.

4. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

No urgent items were raised.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions were raised by members of the public.

6. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee, indicating that the following Policies would be presented to the next Committee; Allotments Policy, Homelessness Policy, Conservation Strategy prior to consultation, Harassment and Bullying Policy, Street Trading in the Borough of Rossendale.

7. INFORMATION SHARING PROTOCOL

The Head of Customer Services and ICT presented the Council's Information Sharing Protocol, indicating that the Council was required to have a Protocol in place in order to pass information between partners. All partners needed to sign up to the protocol so that measures were in place to protect the Council.

Concern was expressed by Members that the information from the Monitoring Officer indicated that the legal department were still advising on the matter. The draft Agreement would form part of a suite of documents that were yet to be prepared and consultation would need to take place between those partners that would need to be committed to the Agreement to ensure that the roles and responsibilities were agreed and that adequate knowledge and skills exist to implement the Agreement.

The Head of Customer Services and ICT explained that Government Connect was a secure method for the electronic transfer of data between departments and local authorities. The Council had sought external legal advice as well as advice from the Information Commissioner.

Members agreed that further information was needed to be included prior to approving the Protocol.

Resolved:

That a more detailed, completed Protocol be presented to the next meeting in October.

8. WASTE AND MINERALS SITE ALLOCATION DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (DPD)

The Principal Planner together with the Operations Manager presented an update on the timescales and work undertaken by the County Council in relation to the Minerals and Waste Site Allocation Development Plan Document.

Lancashire County Council is the Mineral and Waste Planning Authority for Rossendale and all planning policy issues are dealt with through the suite of documents comprising the Minerals and Waste Development Framework. This includes the location of sites for Waste Transfer facilities and quarries. Lancashire County Council wearing a separate hat is also Waste Disposal Authority. Rossendale Borough Council, through the Local Development Framework, was required to plan for every other land use.

A number of potential sites have been forward by developers for consideration in a “call for sites” exercise. With respect to Household Waste sites Rossendale have previously identified a number of potential sites located in the Borough as possible locations, some of which had already had seen some alternative form of development. Prior to Rossendale’s site identification process, Lancashire County Council also assessed a number of sites, some of which had also seen developments. A more recent confidential site search has recently been undertaken by LCC.

Rossendale currently has two household waste recycling sites, one in Duckworth Clough and the other at Rakehead, neither of which were included in the ‘Call for Sites exercise.

Among the sites put forward in the “call for sites”, Lancashire Waste Services had submitted a location at Ewood Bridge (formerly Mayfield Chick) for consideration. This was seen as an ideal location by the Waste Authority for a Household Waste Recycling Site. However, alternative uses for the site were preferred by this Council, including a potential Park and Ride site for the anticipated East Lancashire Railway commercial service.

Lancashire County Council was seeking the views of Members to inform the public consultation. Members felt that the Preferred Options Appraisal consultation, to be held in September/October should be robust to ensure that everyone had the opportunity to comment.

Members raised a number of questions, which the Principal Planner and the Operations Manager responded to.

Resolved:

1. That the timescales and ongoing work being undertaken by Lancashire County Council be noted.
2. That the Council continue to use the two existing sites in Duckworth Clough and Rakehead and that these be forwarded to LCC for inclusion in the Development Plan Document.
3. That Lancashire Waste Services provide more evidence to the Council on what is intended at the Ewood Bridge site, including land requirements and opportunities for co-location with Park and Ride before any decision was made on this option.

9. CORE STRATEGY: SPATIAL VISION AND SPATIAL OBJECTIVES AND REVISED TIMETABLE FOR ADOPTION

The Principal Planner briefed members on the overall vision of the Core Strategy and the Spatial Objectives which would guide the direction of the Plan, together with the revised timescale for the Core Strategy, including key consultation events.

Consultation had already taken place on the eight Area Visions for the Borough which would form part of the Core Strategy. These were presented to each of the

Neighbourhood Forums from the beginning of the year.

A major public consultation would take place in October to consult on the draft version of the entire document, which would include coverage in the press and radio. This would be first reported to Full Council along with a further background Report addressing procedural issues. Details would also be available in libraries, GP surgeries and exhibitions would also be held throughout the Borough.

The Principal Planner explained that the reason for revising the timetable from the original intention to consult in September was due to concerns by Crawshawbooth residents to the Area Vision, which meant that they had to extend consultation period and that it was only fair to extend the consultation to other areas.

Prior to going to the Secretary of State for approval, the Government Office North West would ask the planning inspectorate to give advice and decide if the Core Strategy would likely to be a 'sound' document. The Inspectorate may ask the Council to re-write some sections before being sent to the Secretary of State.

Resolved:

That a further update be presented to the Committee in January, following the consultation process.

10. PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE ADULTS

The Project and Performance Improvement Officer presented the Protection of Vulnerable Adults Policy. The Policy was developed for staff that might come across vulnerable adults during the course of their work.

This was a signposting policy highlighting the Help Direct contact details for helping adults in Rossendale and across East Lancashire. Help Direct offered practical support, guidance and information for adults in need of assistance.

Resolved:

That the Committee approved the adoption of the Policy as a guide for staff on the protection of vulnerable adults.

11. DATA QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Project and Performance Improvement Officer presented the refreshed Data Quality and Performance Management Policy which advised on the changes and requirements of the Data Quality Strategy, which includes the Council's new Priorities.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to the Audit and Accounts Committee the adoption of the Data Quality Strategy.

12. FORWARD PLAN 1st August 2009 to 30th November 2009

The Scrutiny Support Officer reported on the key decisions within the Forward Plan for the period 1st August 2009 to 30th November 2009.

It was agreed that there were sufficient items for discussion on the next agenda.

Resolved:

That the information be noted.

Signed.....
(Chair)

Date