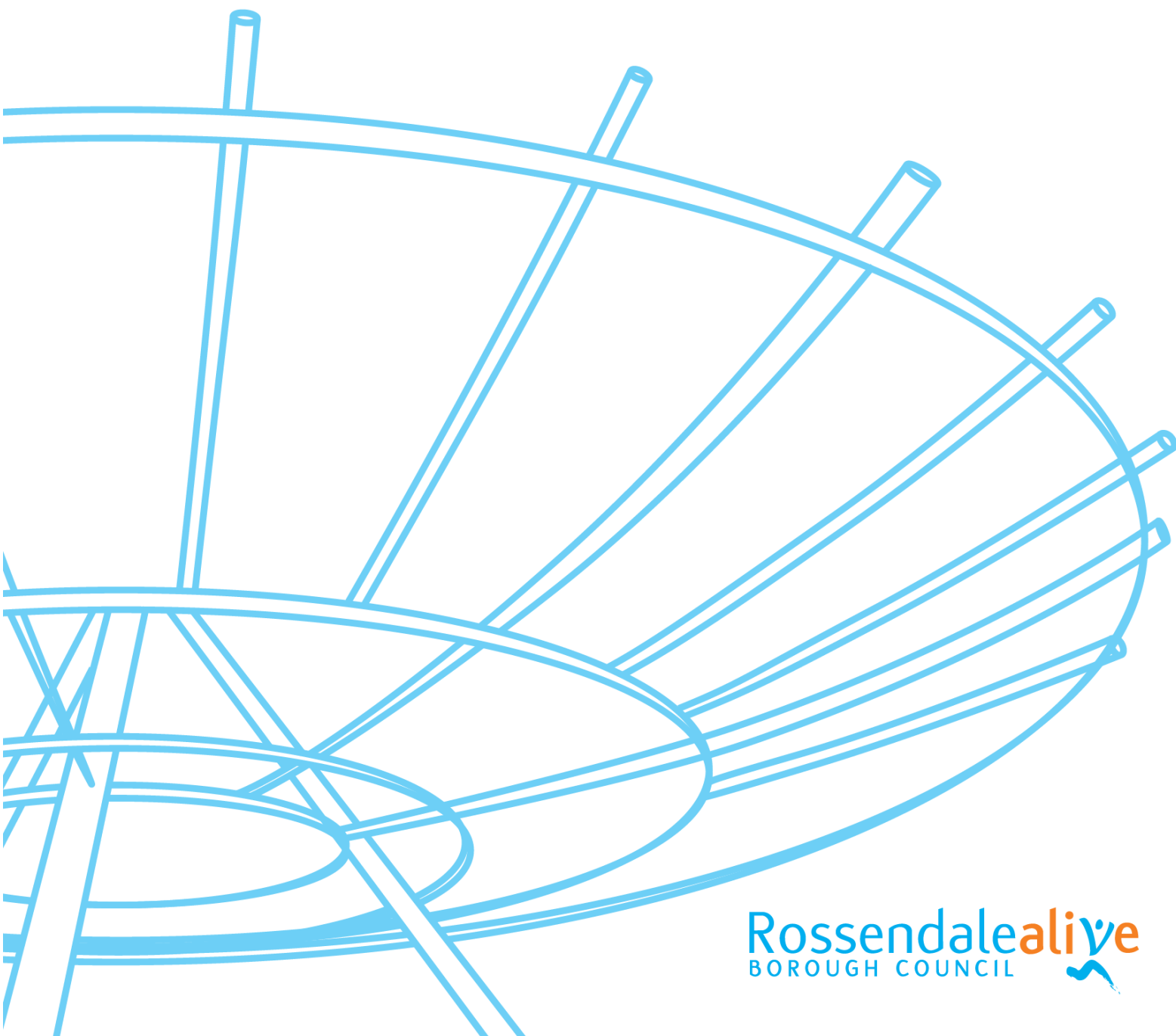




# Annual Report 2008/09



## Introduction

The Annual Report is designed to inform residents and other stakeholders about how the Council performed during 2008-09, combining financial management with a celebration of its achievements. The Council has had another successful year, working hard to make sure we provide high quality value for money services. The recent Place Survey demonstrated that the percentage of people who think that the Borough is a good place to live has increased from 64% to 72% - a move in the right direction. This is testament to the hard work of the Council, our partners and the wider community.

We are committed to continuous improvement and have remained focused on our customers whilst making saving of £727,000 in 2008-09, and working to identify a further £1m of savings to ensure that next year's Council Tax rise will be amongst the lowest in Lancashire. A significant proportion of these savings have been redirected to emerging Council priorities, such as concessionary travel, the Pride in Rossendale initiative and leisure services.

Progress has been made across the Borough in terms of access to services, regeneration, the environment and health policy which has lead to the a new health campus for Rossendale.

We are proud of how far we have come, but conscious that what matters most is being able to have a positive influence on what happens in Rossendale, improving people's lives and the Borough as a whole.

It is important to recognise that Rossendale Council has come a long way. We were commended as one of the 'Most Improved Councils in the Country' at the annual Local Government Chronicle Awards in 2008 and we have continued to improve our performance during 2008/09. In April 2009 our Integrated Performance Report showed that 90% of the actions identified within the 2008-2011 Corporate Plan were on track to be delivered. Furthermore, early in 2009 the Council won the LGC award for Standards and Ethics and along with other authorities in the Lancashire Community Cohesion Partnership, Beacon Status for Cohesive and Resilient Communities.



During 2008-09 the Council refreshed its Corporate Priorities. These acknowledge the issues which are important for residents and are the priorities essential to achieving our vision of Rossendale as a place with strong communities and an attractive place to live, visit and invest. There is a greater focus on people being safe and the promotion of respectful communities as well as an explicit new focus on providing value for money services throughout the Council, building on the good work we have already started.

These priorities show that the Council has evolved into an organisation which is externally focused and committed to engaging with and empowering our communities at a neighbourhood level, thereby ensuring that we are responsive to local needs. We now have a dedicated Communities Team committed to finding local solutions to neighbourhood issues.

Furthermore, the Council has developed into a lean and flexible organisation which can deliver service improvements whilst responding to a changing environment. We champion what is important to local people and work in partnership with others to secure the best possible improvements and outcomes for the local community.



Good teamwork is the key to our success - we are 'Team Rossendale' – one team in which our Councillors and Officers work hard to deliver on our big ambitions for the organisation and for the communities we serve. So please read on to see how we've made a difference to local communities over the past year, our key achievements, how much we've spent and what we're planning for the future.



**Helen Lockwood**  
Chief Executive



**Tony Swain**  
Leader of the Council

## The Borough Vision

The Rossendale Partnership (the Local Strategic Partnership for the Borough) has a vision for the Borough, namely:

**“By 2018 Rossendale will have strong communities with an enhanced environment and heritage. It will be an attractive place to live, where tourists visit and employers invest”**

The Vision can be summarised as Rossendale Alive and is shared by the Council.

Our contribution towards the shared vision is focused through the six corporate priorities, identified below and is also expressed through our Pride in Rossendale Campaign.



## Rossendale Borough Council Corporate Priorities

### Delivering quality services to our customers

- High quality services
- Greater community involvement in the design and delivery of services
- A stronger relationship between the Council and communities



### Keeping our Borough clean, green and safe

- People feeling safer in their communities
- A better environment for all



### Delivering regeneration across the Borough

- A thriving local economy
- Well performing town centres
- A well balanced housing market



### Promoting the Borough

- More people feel satisfied with Rossendale as a place to live
- A thriving visitor economy
- An improved understanding of the Council, its success and how to influence decision making

### Encouraging healthy and respectful communities

- People living longer
- Increased physical activity
- Respectful communities that get on well together

### Providing value for money services

- Effective financial management
- Councillors that can respond effectively to their communities
- Delivery of value for money and high performing services

## Borough Profile and Key Challenges and Opportunities

Our approach to policy making and service development is based on a thorough understanding of the local area and its people. The Borough profile highlights some key facts about the Borough that have an impact on the things we do and the services we provide. We are also committed to consulting with local people through a wide range of methods and on a large number of issues to ensure that we have a good understanding of local priorities and aspirations and a thorough knowledge of what our customers want and need.

### Borough Profile

- 138 Square Kilometres.
- The population of Rossendale is 67,000.
- 94.5% of the population is White, 0.9% are mixed race, 3.9% are Asian/Asian British, 0.3% are Black/Black British and 0.4% are Chinese or other.
- Population density of 486 persons per square kilometre compared to a national population density of 358 persons per square kilometre.
- The two largest religions in Rossendale are Christian (76%) and Muslim (2.9%).
- 14.5% of the population are aged 65 and over compared with 16.1% nationally.
- 5.1% Unemployment level compared with 5.4% nationally.
- In June 2009 there were 1767 people in Rossendale claiming unemployment related benefits.
- The percentage of pupils in Rossendale achieving 5 or more GCSEs at Grade A\*-C (64.9%) is well in excess of the England average of 60.4%.
- Household Recycling and Composting rate of 34.3%.
- Road Casualty Rates for Rossendale (5.5) are above the national rate of 4.3 people injured per 1,000 population of all ages.
- Teenage pregnancy rate in Rossendale is 43.1 per 1,000 15-17 year olds, which is slightly above the national rate of 41.3.
- Life expectancy at birth is low at 75.4 years for men and 80.3 years for women.
- There are 27,112 Households in Rossendale with 71.9% classified as owner occupied.
- Of 354 local authorities in England, Rossendale recorded an average index of deprivation score of 24.23, which gave a rank of average score of 92nd position.
- The current total number of businesses in Rossendale is 2,455.
- Rossendale has a very high proportion of land (23.0%) designated as green belt.
- There are currently more than 260 listed buildings in Rossendale and 9 conservation areas.
- Larger percentage of population commute out of the Borough to work, this is partly due to the proximity of Rossendale to major employment centres and partly due to the decrease in number of jobs available.
- Median gross weekly earnings are £373.20 - this is 95.4% of the median earnings in Great Britain.

Source: Lancashire Profile

### Key Assets & Opportunities

- To maximise opportunity from the two city regions to increase prosperity within the Borough.
- The Adrenaline Gateway to promote tourism and visitors to the Borough.
- The East Lancashire Railway link to increase the connectivity of the Borough.
- Realisation of the Rawtenstall Business Park which will stimulate enterprise.
- The Multi Area Agreement to increase prosperity within the Borough.

### Key Challenges

- Transport connectivity due to transport infrastructure.
- Increasing economic activity rates during a period of economic downturn.
- Provision of appropriate housing to support sustainable growth.
- Managing customer expectations against real term decrease in resources.
- Ongoing expected efficiency savings.
- Delivery of the Mid-Term Financial Strategy.



## The Council's role and governance arrangements

The Council works to achieve positive outcomes for the Borough in a number of different ways and carries out a number of different roles to deliver its priorities. These include working as a service provider, a commissioner, a regulator, a partner and a community leader. These different roles are explained further below.

**Service provider** – the Council it is a direct provider of services and an initiator of projects and actions that have a direct impact on local quality of life and the delivery of priorities and outcomes.

**Commissioner** - the Council recognises it is not always necessarily the right or best organisation to provide services directly. We work in partnership with other organisations such as Capita, the Community Leisure Association for Whitworth (CLAW), and other Councils, to provide or deliver high quality value for money services.

**Regulator** - the Council holds regulatory powers over issues such as planning and building control, licensing, enforcement and other statutory powers. Through these, the Council continues to provide both direct control and indirect influence over the actions of other people and organisations.

**Partner** - the Council has a good track record of working with organisations and groups, through partnerships, to secure improvements for the local community. Partnership working has delivered real improvements in regeneration, health and wellbeing, community safety, the environment and community cohesion. Working as a partner allows the Council to have an impact on issues and services that are not directly within its control. Rossendale Council is a key partner in the Rossendale Partnership and the Lancashire Partnership.



**Community leader** – because the Council is democratically elected it has the legitimacy to speak up for the Borough as a Community Leader. It can take a lead on those issues which are important to the community and lobby others to take action, such as government, the Regional Development Agency, business organisations, Lancashire County Council and neighbouring Councils. The Council cannot force other organisation to do what is in the best interests of Rossendale but it can encourage, support and influence them to do the right thing for the Borough and challenge them if they don't.

To be a successful community leader we are committed to listening to what local people aspire to. Through an extensive programme of consultation activity, council meetings, training for councillors and the annual "State of the Borough" debate we want to involve people in helping to make the decisions that affect them and their community and support them as they challenge us to deliver continual improvement.

**Land and property owner** – through the land and property that the Council holds, we are able to influence development in the Borough. We use our property assets to help meet our priorities. Some assets deemed surplus to requirements can be sold off to re-invest in services and new projects.

## Councillors of the Borough from May 2008

	<b>Thomas Aldred</b> <i>Facit and Shawforth</i> Labour		<b>June Forshaw</b> <i>Longholme</i> Labour		<b>Catherine Pilling</b> <i>Greenfield</i> Liberal Democrats
	<b>Alyson Barnes</b> <i>Goodshaw</i> Labour		<b>Christine Gill</b> <i>Cribden</i> Labour		<b>Jim Pilling</b> <i>Whitewell</i> Liberal Democrats
	<b>Lynda Barnes</b> <i>Facit and Shawforth</i> Conservative		<b>Jason Gledhill</b> <i>Longholme</i> Conservative		<b>Amanda Robertson</b> <i>Whitewell</i> Labour
	<b>William Challinor</b> <i>Greensclough</i> Conservative		<b>Janet Graham</b> <i>Cribden</i> Conservative		<b>Gladys Sandiford</b> <i>Greenfield</i> Conservative
	<b>Anne Cheetham</b> <i>Eden</i> Conservative		<b>Graham Haworth</b> <i>Irwell</i> Labour		<b>Darryl Smith</b> <i>Eden</i> Conservative
	<b>Colin Crawforth</b> <i>Hareholme</i> Labour		<b>Christine Lamb</b> <i>Stacksteads</i> Labour		<b>David Stansfield</b> <i>Worsley</i> Conservative
	<b>Pat Dickinson</b> <i>Worsley</i> Conservative		<b>Fred Lynskey</b> <i>Stacksteads</i> Conservative		<b>Hazel Steen</b> <i>Irwell</i> Conservative
	<b>Judith Driver</b> <i>Greensclough</i> Conservative		<b>Nicola May</b> <i>Hareholme</i> Conservative		<b>Peter Steen</b> <i>Irwell</i> Conservative
	<b>James Eaton</b> <i>Greensclough</i> Conservative		<b>Amanda Milling</b> <i>Helmshore</i> Conservative		<b>Tony Swain</b> <i>Longholme</i> Conservative
	<b>Brian Essex</b> <i>Helmshore</i> Conservative		<b>Granville Morris</b> <i>Greenfield</i> Conservative		<b>Joyce Thorne</b> <i>Worsley</i> Conservative
	<b>Peter Evans</b> <i>Helmshore</i> Conservative		<b>Alan Neal</b> <i>Healey &amp; Whitworth</i> Community First		<b>Trevor Unsworth</b> <i>Hareholme</i> Labour
	<b>Dorothy Farrington</b> <i>Goodshaw</i> Labour		<b>Tim Nuttall</b> <i>Whitewell</i> Liberal Democrats		<b>Roger Wilson</b> <i>Healey &amp; Whitworth</i> Labour

Fig 1.

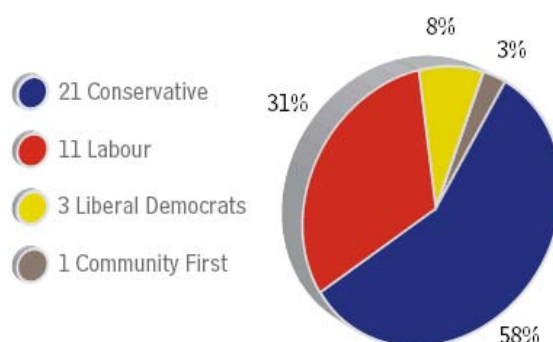
# Councillors and Committees

## Councillors

Rossendale Borough Council has 36 elected Councillors (see Fig 1) representing 14 wards throughout the Borough. They agree council policies, oversee services and decide how money is spent.

## Political Composition

During 2008/09 the Conservative Party held 58% of the seats following the May 2008 elections where they gained two seats. The Liberal Democrats gained one seat.



## Full Council

The Full Council is made up of all 36 Members and is responsible for making the most significant decisions such as setting the budgets, the level of Council Tax and agreeing the Corporate Plan and the Local Development Framework for the Borough. It would not be practical for the Full Council to take all the decisions and therefore the Council operates through a number of Committees with specific responsibilities and these are outlined below.

## The Cabinet

The Cabinet sets the policy in relation to the delivery of services. The Cabinet is currently made up of the Leader of the Council and six other Councillors called Portfolio Holders, each of whom is responsible for a range of services aligned with the Council's priorities.

The Cabinet carries out all the Local Authority functions which are not reserved for Full Council or the responsibility of another committee. In particular the Cabinet guides the Council in formulating its policy objectives with a general aim to enhance the quality of life for the people of Rossendale and contribute to achieving the Local Strategic Partnership's vision. It determines the priorities by which those policy objectives should be achieved, allocates resources to achieve them and then reviews progress made towards achieving those objectives, including making recommendations on the level of local taxes and exercising financial management over the affairs of the Council.

## Committees

Many Council decisions are made at Committee meetings. These include:

- Annual and Full Council
- The Cabinet
- Development Control Committee
- Licensing Committee
- Accounts Committee
- Audit Scrutiny Committee } Combined to an Audit and Accounts Committee in spring
- Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee
- Performance Overview & Scrutiny Committee } Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
- Standards Committee

Reports and Minutes of all committee meetings are available on the Council website at [www.rossendale.gov.uk/meetings](http://www.rossendale.gov.uk/meetings)

There are also Task and Finish Groups appointed to deal with specific projects as and when required, for example scrutiny of the Local Area Agreement and value for money.



## Neighbourhood Forums and Community Engagement

The Council recognises the strong sense of community that exists in different parts of the Borough and the connection and sense of belonging that people feel with the areas where they live. Moreover we recognise the different social, economic, health and wellbeing challenges each community of location or interest faces.

Through our four Neighbourhood Forums we aim find local solutions to local issues, working with our partners and the community to deliver neighbourhood improvements. The forums are chaired by a local Councillor and supported by an Area Manager and Area Officers from the Council's.

## Communities Team

During 2008/09 the Neighbourhood Forums were given real decision-making powers and dedicated budgets to support local voluntary groups and projects.

## Regulatory Committees

Regulatory committees control activities such as the development of land in the Borough, licensing of taxis, gambling premises, the sale of alcohol, live music, and the development and safety of buildings. They also deal with internal regulatory issues such as the standards and conduct of councillors, appeals, audit issues and the Council's accounts.

## Overview and Scrutiny

Overview and Scrutiny Committees carry out a range of functions to improve the quality of council policy and decision making, challenge decisions made by the Cabinet where necessary, monitor the performance of council services and plans and ensure that lessons are learned when something goes wrong. Scrutiny has an important role to play in challenging poor performance, checking that agreed actions are carried out and ensuring that the Council is providing value for money. They also help the Council to formulate responses to consultations from other organisations. Scrutiny can also consider the impact on the community of policies and services that the Council is not responsible for as well as examining joint partnership agreements such as the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP).



## Other Groups

Other committees and structures are set up from time to time by the Council and partners to oversee joint projects. For example, through our commitment to joint working with other council's in Pennine Lancashire we participate in PLACE, which is a partnership of the Pennine Lancashire Leaders and Chief Executives. PLACE is driven by an appreciation that many of the most important social, economic and environmental issues facing the sub-region cut across boundaries, and require collaboration to create opportunities for significant change.

Lancashire Local is another example and is a forum for the County Council in Rossendale. It consists of all the County Councillors who represent seats in Rossendale, together with an equal number of District Councillors, all of whom have voting rights. Lancashire Locals have a variety of devolved decision making powers and budgets, especially around services such as highways and transport. They meet together in public every 6 - 8 weeks. Members of the public can attend meetings and have the opportunity to give their views on agenda items.

## Delivering our corporate priorities in 2008/09

Rossendale's Sustainable Community Strategy identifies the long terms aspirations and priorities which the Council, the local community and partners from the public, private, voluntary and community organisations and groups have identified as being vital to the future of the Borough between now and 2018.

The Council has a key role to play in delivering these important outcomes and has worked hard to align its priorities and actions with the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Periodically, the Council reviews it's corporate priorities to ensure that its activities are focused on the things that are most important to local people and which will have the biggest positive impact on the Borough and its people.

We use local statistics and consultation with local people, councillors and our partners to identify future priorities and actions that need to be taken.

At the current time the Council has six corporate priorities for the Borough.

- [Delivering quality services to our customers](#)
- [Keeping our Borough clean, green and safe](#)
- [Delivering regeneration across the Borough](#)
- [Promoting the Borough](#)
- [Encouraging healthy and respectful communities](#)
- [Providing value for money services](#)

In this Annual Report we take the opportunity to set out what we have done in 2008/09 towards achieving these priorities, how our services have performed and how the funding for each of the priorities has been allocated.

In 2008/09 funding for these six corporate priorities totaled nearly £12.9m which was allocated between each of the priorities as shown in Fig 2.

More details of how these funds were spent can be found on the following pages and on pages 31 to 32.

We also consider four key issues which have had an impact on all six priorities, requiring the Council to work together as one organisation to tackle them.

- Pride in Rossendale
- Coping with the recession
- Cohesive and Inclusive Communities
- Tacking Climate Change

These cross-cutting issues have contributed to more than one priority or outcome throughout the year.

Fig 2.



## Delivering quality services to our customers

Rossendale Council is committed to developing and delivering high performing, high quality, cost effective services which meet the needs of our customers. To help us achieve this we have encouraged a greater level of involvement from the local community in helping to plan and delivery our services and in the process develop a stronger relationship between the Council and the community.

### Overview

Our customers' expectations have continued to rise but we have been able to meet those expectations by continuing to improve our service.

We are now processing new claims for Housing and Council Tax Benefit more than a week more quickly that in the previous year - on average it now takes 20 days compared with nearly 26 days previously.

Improvements have been achieved in the

planning service and high levels of customer satisfaction amongst people using our One Stop Shop and the building control service.

We recognise it is important that we listen to local people and take their views and priorities into consideration when making policies and decisions and when delivering services.

During the year more than 5,000 people have expressed their views on a wide range of subjects. We will use the results of these surveys to develop better and more responsive services that meet the needs of the whole community.

### Funding

GENERAL FUND SERVICES	2007/2008	2008/2009	
	Actual £000s	Original Budget £000s	Actual £000s
<b>Place Directorate</b>			
Customer Services & E-govt			
Revenues & Benefits	469	780	748
Customer Service Centres	308	52	49
E-government	7	183	517
Development Projects	(59)	-	6
Customer Services Management	919	922	1,046
Transport	929	831	862
<b>Total cost of General Fund Services</b>	<b>2,573</b>	<b>2,768</b>	<b>3,228</b>



### Performance of selected indicators in 2008/09

Performance Indicator	2007/08	2008/09		Status
	Value	Target	Value	
Speed of processing new Housing/Council Tax Benefit claims	25.9	20	19.8	😊
Missed collections of bins per 100,000	70	65	66	😐
Minor planning application determined in 8 weeks	85.71%	80%	91.56%	😊
Abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours of required time.	100%	100%	100%	😊

## Increasing customer satisfaction

During 2008/09, the Council arranged two full days of customer service training for all employees in all services as part of our commitment to provide better services. This has helped us to continue to improve our services. As a result we are beginning to see improving levels of customer satisfaction for the majority of individual Council services.

Customer satisfaction is exceptionally high amongst the people visiting our One Stop Shop in Rawtenstall, with 98% of those surveyed saying that they were satisfied.

The majority of our main services now regularly collect feedback from the people using those services. For example, people using for the Building Control service are 100% satisfied with the completed works service.

## In 2008/09 we:

- Emptied 3,525,5470 bins
- Answered 43,000 calls to our switchboard
- Helped 40,000 visitors to our One Stop Shop.
- Listened to the views of more than 5,000 people
- Responded to 2074 community and neighbourhood issues
- Completed more than 1700 searches for people buying land and property
- Gave housing advice to more than 1000 people.
- Processed 546 planning applications
- Involved more than 150 school pupils in local democracy initiatives and 120 residents in our State of the Borough Debate
- Installed 15 new benches.
- Produced three issues of the Rossendale Alive newsletter.

## Developing new and improved services



The Council has continued to take an innovative approach to developing and improving services. During 2008/09 we introduced a freephone service in the One Stop Shop providing a phone link to key support agencies and organisations in the Borough that are able to offer help and services to people using our One Stop Shop.

We have also made significant improvements to our corporate website following a customer survey carried out during the year. The changes have made it easier to search for and find relevant information and services. One of the biggest improvements to

the website has been the planning section. A new system means that planning applications can be submitted through the website and all planning applications and documents are now available to look at online.

Finally, we have invested in our ICT, providing more robust and reliable systems which will help to provide better customer services and improve the reliability of our front line services when unexpected events occur.

## Meeting customer expectations

The people who use our services (our customers) rightly have high expectations. As a Council we are continually striving to improve our services, becoming more effective, more responsive, more accessible and improving the performance of our services. During 2008/09 we:

- Answered 90% of calls to our switchboard within 20 seconds.
- Processed 86.43% of all routine planning applications within 8 weeks
- Made our cemeteries more welcoming by solving historic drainage problems.



- Improved the quality of the information provided to our customers e.g. new Environmental Health guides, improved Building Control advice, a new Conservation Areas Booklet and clearer advice for residents wanting make alterations and extensions to their homes.
- Put in place a new set of more challenging customer service standards for our planning service.
- Resolved more complaints about Council services internally, meaning that fewer people felt they had to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman.
- The changes made to our planning service in recent years resulted in many fewer Ombudsman complaints about planning issues.
- Delivered a new A to Z of Council Services booklet to help local people access our services quickly and efficiently.

### Being more responsive and inclusive towards our customers

We have got better at listening to what residents and people in Rossendale want. More than 5,000 people took part in surveys about Rossendale and local public services and these views are helping us to develop more responsive and inclusive services which local people want and need. As a result of a large scale public consultation initiative the Council has put in place a thorough review of all its leisure services to ensure that we are able to meet the recreational needs of the local community whilst maximising the amount of leisure provision proved with the available funding.

Through the introduction of Community Impact Assessments during 2008/09 we are now much better at considering the impact that our decisions and services have on different neighbourhoods and groups within the community. We know that a number of social excluded groups have difficulty in accessing local government services so we have been working with Lancashire County Council to make all local government services more accessible.



## Delivering regeneration across the Borough

Physical and economic regeneration is crucial to sustainable growth and prosperity for the Borough. The Council has been working hard to develop a thriving local economy with a well balanced housing market, especially in the current recession which has delayed town centre development plans.

### Overview

The recession has had a big impact on residents and businesses throughout Rossendale.

In January we launched Rossendale against Recession and now have a package of measures available to help homeowners keep their homes and businesses to grow and create jobs and opportunities for local people.

Our Regeneration Team has also secured more than £4m of funding from the North West Development Agency which will contribute to the £7m Business Village at Rising Bridge and town centre regeneration for Haslingden and Bacup.

Other key achievements include:

- Improving 205 homes through the £2.4m housing market renewal programme.
- Securing £2.59m for social housing.
- Applying for an £80,000 grant from English Heritage to strengthen conservation work.
- Helping young people get valuable work experience and training
- Developing seven Area Visions to ensure that Rossendale remains an attractive place to live and invest.

We are also working with other council's in Pennine Lancashire to bring investment in the area and have completed several important studies which will help the Council to secure additional funding and resources in the future.

### Funding

GENERAL FUND SERVICES	2007/2008	2008/2009	
	Actual £000s	Original Budget £000s	Actual £000s
<b>Place Directorate</b>			
Regeneration			
Economic Regeneration	161	183	226
Housing Regeneration	266	290	366
Parking	55	62	69
Regeneration Administration	133	97	56
<b>Business Directorate</b>			
Building Control	126	134	158
Planning	437	527	615
Local Land Charges	(12)	(4)	68
<b>Total cost of General Fund Services</b>	<b>1,166</b>	<b>1,289</b>	<b>1,558</b>



### Performance of selected indicators in 2008/09

Performance Indicator	2007/08	2008/09		Status
	Value	Target	Value	
Major planning applications determined within 13 weeks	65.22%	65%	100%	😊
Homelessness prevention support requests	1.8	2	4.2	😊
Length of stay in hostel accommodation	4.71 weeks	2 weeks	0 weeks	😊

## Jobs and Economic Development

In 2008 Rossendale Council launched a new economic strategy to support local businesses and promote economic growth covering four main themes: infrastructure provision; sustainable businesses; attracting people, businesses and visitors and improving economic prosperity for everyone. Key action points include protecting existing appropriate employment sites and identifying new ones as well as ensuring that the Borough can provide the right mix of business support, housing, health and education opportunities to attract and retain skilled workers and their families. Our new economic strategy is complemented by the Pennine Lancashire Integrated Economic Strategy which has been developed and by the regeneration commitments set out in the Pennine Lancashire Multi Area Agreement.

Our Regeneration Team works closely with Lancashire County Developments Limited on joint projects for which the Council has secured over £4m of funding from the North West Development Agency.

The team have worked on funding a new £7m Business Village at Rising Bridge, town centre regeneration for Haslingden and grants to refurbish and modernise vacant commercial properties in Bacup.

The Council has also assisted the Lancashire Economic Partnership to produce a new website which is helping businesses to get information about commercial land and property available in Rossendale as well as business support and funding opportunities.



Rossendale Council recognises the importance of providing job opportunities and training to people in the Borough, particularly during an economic downturn. Through our mentoring programme we have worked in partnership with organisations such as Connexions, The Children's Society, Training 2000, Lancashire County Council and local colleges to provide work experience opportunities for young people and vulnerable adults, particularly for those not in employment, education or training. The council has also made a 'Skills Pledge' to improve the skills of all Council staff.

We also developed and funded the 'Passport to Work' scheme in partnership with Lancashire Young People's Service, Connexions, Training 2000 and several local businesses to train unemployed teenagers to make them ready for employment. 23 young people in Rossendale who were considered as being not in employment, education or training received training in food hygiene and independent living, health and safety and manual handling to NVQ Level 2 standard and have completed work placements with local employers including the Council. Sixteen out of 23 have secured further college training, work or full apprenticeships.

### In 2008/09 we:

- Provided good quality housing advice to more than 1000 people.
- 400 site suggestions were received and investigated as part of our consultation to identify suitable development sites in the Borough for the future.
- Improved 205 homes through the £2.6 million Housing Market Renewal Programme.
- Helped 116 potentially homeless households remain in their homes.
- 88 Disabled Facilities Grants to help vulnerable people adapt their homes.
- A 58% reduction in the number of people going into temporary accommodation.
- A 50% reduction in the number of homeless applications.
- Rent bonds to 35 people to assist them into private rented accommodation.
- Assisting Green Vale Homes to adapt 35 properties for vulnerable people.
- Brought back 26 empty properties into use.
- Consultations on seven Area Visions for the Borough's new development planning strategy.
- 9 equity release loans to assist vulnerable people to improve their homes.
- 5 major new planning studies including flooding, retail and town centres, housing land availability, the housing market and employment land.

As part of the Council's commitment to having a relevant planning framework in place, work to support the communities social, economic and environmental needs we began consultation on seven Area Visions for the Borough's new development planning strategy, including five major new studies examining flooding, retail and town centre development needs, housing land availability, the housing market and land earmarked for employment development.

## Housing Development

The Elevate housing market renewal programme has improved 205 homes in 2008/09. Over £2.4m was spent on environmental works and the face-lifting programme included sand blasting the stone, re-pointing and, where necessary, replacing guttering and down pipes. We have also provided equity release loans to help vulnerable people to improve their homes.



Rossendale Council helped to secure £2.59m for social housing in the Borough. Successful bids to the Housing Corporation included £1.92m for a new £4.9m sheltered housing care scheme for the elderly in Whitworth. Developed in conjunction with registered social landlord partner Green Vale Homes, this project will provide 36 two-bedroomed flats and 6 one-bedroomed flats.



Other successful projects included £408,000 for Irwell Valley Housing Association towards providing 14 three-bedroomed houses for shared ownership at Constable Lee Court to help first time buyers get on the property ladder and £18,000 for a "Places for People" Social Homebuy scheme.

A number of important studies and surveys took place during the year including the Pennine Lancashire Stock Condition Survey, Pennine Lancashire Housing Strategy and Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Rossendale. These will help to ensure that Rossendale is in a strong position to bid for

additional funding and resources in the future.

## Protecting our heritage and environment

As well as looking forwards the Council must also protect the heritage of the Borough. In 2008 we published an information booklet about Conservation Areas in Rossendale to help people understand the special planning permission they may need if they want to extend, demolish or change a property in a Conservation Area. The Council has also received £80,000 from English Heritage to strengthen Borough-wide conservation work. Through our Developers Forum we are also improving working relationships with private sector developers and encouraging sympathetic renovation of older buildings.





## Keeping our Borough clean, green and safe

Rossendale Council wants the Borough to be an attractive place to live, work, visit and invest. We are committed to bringing Council and community resources together to provide clean, safe and attractive environments. We also work with our partners and the community to protect and enhance the environment now and for the future.

### Overview

Local people continue to tell us that the environment is an important priority for them and has a big impact on their lives. They want the Council to work with them to keep our Borough clean, green and safe.

During the year our recycling rate has continued to rise - with more than 38% of household waste now being recycled and composted – that's nearly 8,600 tonnes. We have also kept the cost of waste collection each year to below £50 – a key target for us despite many of our costs rising e.g. fuel.

Street cleaning has also continued to improve with the number of streets classified as having unacceptable levels of litter, waste, fly-posting and graffiti being cut by half since 2007/08. Only

one in twenty streets are now classified as unacceptable. This has been achieved by reorganising our cleansing rounds so that we now clean 300 more streets and alleys than ever before and also regularly clean the Borough's 48 car parks for the first time.

As well as looking after the local environment we have also adopted a Climate Change Action Plan for the Borough and flood risks have been identified through working with the Environment Agency. As a result two land drainage projects have been completed so far to reduce flood risks. Emergency planning arrangements across the Borough have been tested and strengthened with 'What to do in an emergency' cards being distributed to residents during the pre-Christmas power cut.

### Funding

GENERAL FUND SERVICES	2007/2008	2008/2009	
	Actual £000s	Original Budget £000s	Actual £000s
<b>Place Directorate</b>			
Community & Partnerships			
Community Safety	189	197	197
Area Teams	475	384	276
Dog Warden	31	46	40
Public Conveniences	22	26	25
<b>Operations</b>			
SSL General	6	50	84
Refuse & Recycling	1,379	1,450	1,528
Street Sweeping	906	972	981
Open Spaces	1,378	1,419	1,379
<b>Total cost of General Fund Services</b>	<b>4,386</b>	<b>4,544</b>	<b>4,510</b>



### Performance of selected indicators in 2008/09

Performance Indicators	2007/08	2008/09		Status
	Value	Target	Value	
Percentage of household waste recycled	26.07%	26%	28.42%	😊
Percentage of household waste composted	8.21%	7%	9.63%	😊
Cost of household waste collection	£45.35	£50.00	£45.35	😊
Missed collection of bins per 100,000	70	65	66	😐
Abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours of required time.	100%	98%	100%	😊
Instances of criminal damage	1255	1192	1150	😊

## Pride in a cleaner & greener Borough

Our Pride in Rossendale initiative has demonstrated how the Council and the community can work together to tackle local issues and help to create a cleaner and greener Borough which people can be proud of.

Local people have been involved in community clean ups, bulb planting, looking after floral displays and litter picking. The Council has provided the finances for numerous projects and Council staff have supported community initiatives. We have also raised our own game by keeping the streets cleaner and investing in the appearance of our parks and open spaces.

New play areas and play equipment have been installed throughout the valley as part of our on-going commitments set out in the Borough's Play Strategy. This not only contributes to a better environment but also encourages physical activity amongst young people.

Unfortunately, some people do not support this view so the Council has used the powers available to take a tough stance on environmental crimes. We have been successful with prosecutions for issues such as dog fouling and fly tipping. These will be strengthened further as new dog control orders are issued and more staff are trained to issue fixed penalty notices.

No matter how hard the Council and the community work to keep the Borough clean it is important that everyone has respect for our neighbourhoods, their surroundings and each other as part of being a good citizen.

## Looking after the environment for the future

The Council is committed to looking after the Environment for the future, putting in place plans and strategies to minimise the impact of our activities and the activities of other people. We have developed an Environmental Strategy which sets out our plans more clearly and this is linked to Council policies on biodiversity, environmental sustainability, waste and recycling, air quality and climate change. Specific Council initiatives to reduce our carbon footprint include:

- Investing in a modern vehicle fleet which uses less fuel.
- Re-planned refuse and recycling collection routes to improve efficiency.
- Sweeping the streets and alleys more efficiently to save fuel.
- Virtualisation for our new disaster recovery data centre to ensure services are maintained.

We have also been instrumental in helping to raise awareness about the importance of taking care of our environment. We organised an Environment Fair, promoted environmental issues at local events and in schools and organised a poster competition for schools to highlight environmental issues.

## In 2008/09 we:

- Emptied 3,525,547 bins
- The Council and the community planted 10,000 additional spring bulbs planted as part of the Rossendale Pride initiative
- Distributed 3,000 new recycling containers
- Installed 90 street litterbins
- Provided better security locks for 65 victims of burglary
- Achieved a 37% fall in crime since 2003/04 as a result of our Community Safety Partnership.
- Provided new railings and planters to improve the appearance of 16 properties
- Served 12 Section 215 notices resulting in to improve dilapidated land and property
- Organised ten environmental education visits to primary schools, after school clubs and housing associations focusing on issues such as recycling and litter
- Achieved six successful prosecutions for environmental crimes including dog fouling and fly tipping
- Arranged Community Clean-ups at Eagley Bank in Shawforth, Newchurch Road in Bacup, Bacup Road in Waterfoot
- Provided three new lighting schemes in Whitworth, Haslingden and Bacup to improve community safety including solar lights at Fern Street in Bacup
- Provided three new or improved play areas at Greenfield Gardens in Haslingden, Whitaker Park and Sunnyside Park
- Installed two new alley-gating schemes to improving safety
- Funded a new bin store at Bacup Leisure Hall



## Transforming our neighbourhoods



### Dale Street

Dale Street in Bacup has been transformed with new alley gates, floral displays, alleyway resurfacing and a new bin store. This has not only contributed to a cleaner neighbourhood but has also made the street safer for residents.



### The View

Young people helped to transform a community space and play environment (The View) using regeneration funding from Elevate.

Children from came up with ideas and designs and consulted with local residents as part of this innovative regeneration project.

## Safer Communities

Rossendale has been the most successful area in Lancashire at cutting crime as a result of the Borough's Community Safety plan produced by the Crime Reduction and Disorder Partnership. The partnership was highlighted as an example of good practice by Government Office for the North West in a report they produced on effective partnerships in 2008. Rossendale's Crime Reduction and Disorder Partnership is also performing very strongly in achieving national crime reduction targets. Despite the Partnership's success there is still work to be done driving crime down further and crime reduction continues to be a priority for the Council, the police and their partners. We all want Rossendale to be a place where people feel safe.

The Council is involved in a number of schemes to reduce crime and reduce the fear of crime. These include funding better security locks for burglary victims, improving street lighting, improving security at the homes of people affected by domestic violence and providing funding for a sanctuary scheme to help the victims of domestic violence.

Rossendale's Crime Reduction and Disorder Partnership is also helping to reduce anti-social behaviour by providing a range of diversionary activities. A new Community Safety Plan has also been developed which focuses on a number of issues including community cohesion, working with young people and crime reduction.

## Promoting the Borough

Promoting the Borough as a place to live, work and invest is one of the Council's six corporate priorities. To achieve this priority we are aiming to increase the number of people who are satisfied with Rossendale as a place to live, develop a thriving visitor economy and promote an improved understanding of the Council, its success and how to influence decision making.

### Overview

Good progress has been made this year in promoting the Borough. The new visitors guide is better than ever before, the Halo Panopticon continues to draw visitors, the bike trails at Lee Quarry have proved to be a huge success, we have supported many successful local events and we now have award winning tourism attractions in the Borough.

The Pennine Lancashire Festival of Food and Culture has become firmly established and has considerable potential for development in future years.

Through our new Town Centre and Tourism Officer, and a strong local tourism working group, we are coordinating efforts to promote the Borough more effectively and working more closely with Visit Lancashire and Visit Britain.

Our Pride in Rossendale initiative means that visitors get a better first impression with less litter and more floral displays and we are actively promoting our markets to attract new visitors.

For a small Council we have done a lot to promote the Borough this year.

### Funding

GENERAL FUND SERVICES	2007/2008	2008/2009	
	Actual £000s	Original Budget £000s	Actual £000s
<b>Place Directorate</b>			
Regeneration			
Tourism	40	41	34
<b>Corporate Services Directorate</b>			
Communications	153	157	140
<b>Total cost of General Fund Services</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>174</b>



### Organising and supporting events in Rossendale

Rossendale has a thriving range of activities and events throughout the year which attract people to the area. The Council continues to work with local people, organisations and groups to support a vibrant programme of events. One of the most successful attractions in the past year has been the Pennine Lancashire Festival of Food and Culture. Ten of the sixty events are based in Rossendale including the now famous Gravy Wrestling which is attracting an international audience. Thousands of people have taken part in the festival events this year. The Council has supported the advertising and promotion of the Pennine Lancashire Festival of Food and Culture and has organised events and helped others to organise their own events as part of the festival.

The Council is also the main funder for numerous other events taking place in Rossendale during the year including the Rossendale Alive Festival and Mela, Christmas light events, the Marl Pits fireworks display and the Rossendale Weekend. These events attract more than 10,000 people.

The Council assists many other local groups to organise events during the year, providing financial support, premises, advice, access to land and moral support. The Council was well represented at this year's Bacup Festival held over Easter weekend and sends representatives to other events throughout the year.

## Attracting visitors to shop and visit

The Council recognises the importance of attracting shoppers and visitors to the Borough. We have increased the number of events promoted on [www.visitrossendale.co.uk](http://www.visitrossendale.co.uk) and have supported an active tourism working group who are working together across the Borough to increase the number of visitors. The group has been involved in making improvements to the Borough's Visitors Guide during the year and in co-coordinating joint marketing opportunities.

With the assistance of the Council's new Town Centres and Tourism manager, four of the Borough's attractions were shortlisted for the Lancashire and Blackpool Tourism Awards with Helmshore Textile Mills Museum winning an award for Small attraction of the year and the East Lancashire Railway coming second to the Blackpool Illuminations in the Event of the year award.

The Council has also worked hard to improve the first impressions that people get when they visit the Borough. Twelve boundary signs on the main roads into the Borough have been repaired and repainted and £36,000 of improvements have been carried out to our car parks to create a positive impression when people arrive. Floral displays have been increased and signage showing visitors where they can park has also been improved. The Council has worked with the East Lancashire Railway to improve information for people arriving in Rawtenstall by train and we are pressing the County Council to improve the bus terminus in Rawtenstall as quickly as they can.

## In 2008/09 we:

- More than 10,000 people from different cultures attended local events such as the Rossendale Alive festival and the fireworks display.
- Planted an additional 10,000 spring bulbs for Pride in Rossendale.
- Responded to more than 440 press enquiries.
- Issued 198 press releases.
- Promoted more than 100 local events through our website.
- Installed 92 new and replacement street litter bins as part of the Pride in Rossendale initiative.
- Improved floral displays and maintenance at 58 sites including the stunning flower meadows.
- 12 boundary signs have been repaired and painted
- 10 community initiatives for Pride in Rossendale including helping schools plant flower beds, providing hanging baskets, community clean-ups involving residents and helping residents create raised beds.
- Litterpicking and environmental education campaigns in nine local schools.
- Five new Pride in Rossendale Awards have been created to recognise the efforts of volunteers and community and voluntary group in Rossendale.
- Improved four 'grot spots' in consultation with local Councillors by undertaking clean-ups at Eagley Bank in Shawforth, Newchurch Road in Bacup, Bacup Road in Waterfoot and Road End in Haslingden.



Shoppers are being attracted to the Borough, in particular through a new advertising and promotional campaign for our three markets in Bacup, Haslingden and Rawtenstall. A new logo has been developed for the markets along with advertising, special events, incentives to traders and increased competition.



### Raising the profile of Rossendale

Throughout the last year the Council has worked proactively with the local media to raise awareness of Council services and achievements. We have also raised the profile of the Council nationally through entering and then winning the Standards and Ethics Award at the Local Government Chronicle Awards. This award recognises the excellent work the Council has done to ensure high standards of probity and ethical decision making.

The Council's efforts to involve and engage with young people in the Borough has also been recognised nationally through the local government trade press who carried an article about the Local Democracy Week events with young people in the Borough including the political "speed dating" session. Rossendale's work to promote community cohesion was also recognised nationally with the Council receiving Beacon Status in a joint bid with other councils and the police across Lancashire.



## Encouraging healthy and respectful communities

Rossendale Council is committed to helping people to live longer, healthier and have more fulfilling lives by encouraging them to participate in physical activity. It is also committed to building better relationships between people from different backgrounds by recognising and respecting differences.

### Overview

We are proud of the progress we have made during 2008/09 but we must not forget that Rossendale suffers poorer than average health and there are some big differences in health between geographical areas and sections of the community.

In response to this we have produced a Health and Well Being Strategy to begin to tackle the inequalities and poor health. As a community leader, a provider of services and as a place-shaper, the Council has a key role to play in achieving better health outcomes in the Borough.

Our Environmental Health Team has continued to provide a Healthy Workplace Scheme and has overseen the successful implementation of Smoke free legislation. We have also been successful in securing a commitment from the NHS to provide a Neighbourhood Health Worker to work alongside our Communities

team to address local health priorities, particularly geographical health inequalities.

Later this year our Leisure Review will report on the forward for sustainable and accessible leisure facilities throughout the Borough. The Council is the primary source of funding for leisure funding in the Borough providing more than £582,000 in funding each year. It is vital that we ensure we are getting well managed, well run, value for money leisure services in return.

Finally, community wellbeing is also important to the Council. We are delighted that 72% of people say that Rossendale is a good place to live and we are working hard with community organisations to encourage all residents in the Borough to get along well together. Through our Community and Voluntary Grants Programme and the Pride in Rossendale Initiative we are also encouraging a strong sense of belonging, community activism and pride in the Borough and it people which will contribute to our overall wellbeing.

### Funding

GENERAL FUND SERVICES	2007/2008	2008/2009	
	Actual £000s	Original Budget £000s	Actual £000s
<b>Place Directorate</b>			
Community & Partnerships			
Pest Control	22	23	28
Communities & Partnerships Gener	128	241	301
Grants & Subscriptions	299	284	280
Discretionary NNDR	48	45	43
<b>Business Directorate</b>			
Environmental Health			
Environmental Health	483	633	497
Licensing	74	115	96
<b>Total cost of General Fund Services</b>	<b>1,054</b>	<b>1,341</b>	<b>1,245</b>



### Performance of selected indicators in 2008/09

Performance Indicators	2007/08	2008/09		Status
	Value	Target	Value	
Actions against domestic violence claims	45%	45%	54%	😊
Buildings accessible to disabled people	79%	99%	85%	😞

## Healthy communities

Our Health and Wellbeing strategy sets out the Council's commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of local people and highlights the areas where the Council can make a difference.

### *Encouraging physical activity*

Without a doubt the Council is the major funder or provider of facilities for sport, leisure and recreational activities in the Borough. We are the main source of funding to Rossendale Leisure Trust and the Community Leisure Association of Whitworth, we provide and maintain many sports and play areas throughout the Borough and tens of thousands of people enjoy walking in our well kept parks.



In 2008, the Council ensured that funding was available for a new 'Lifestyle Centre' at Haslingden Sports Centre to provide high quality facilities at affordable prices.

We have also been instrumental in developing outdoor pursuits in our quarries through the Adrenaline Gateway project and the Valley of Stone initiative. We are also pressing ahead with exciting plans to improve the Irwell Sculpture trail.

In December 2008 the Council launched a full review of leisure facilities and services throughout the Borough to ensure that we will have sustainable facilities that provide value for money and meet the needs of our customers.

### *Healthy living*

The Council has worked in partnership with the NHS to promote and support numerous health campaigns, particularly the 'Saving a Million Years of Life Campaign' and the appointment of a Neighbourhood Health Worker to the Council with funding from the NHS.

Our Healthy Workplace Scheme continues to promote good health with blood pressure checks being offered, smoking cessation support, the promotion of healthy lifestyles within the Council and the community and a new health and wellbeing booklet. The Council has also been instrumental in overseeing the successful introduction of Smoke free legislation in all workplaces.

We have also used the three markets in the Borough to deliver a four week campaign to promote healthy eating and healthy living involving local partner organisations.

Junk food continues to make a significant contribution to poor diet and poor health. We have now drafted planning policy to provide stronger powers to regulate takeaways and stop them opening up near schools. This is subject to consultation and will be considered again later in the year.

## In 2008/09 we:

- Rossendale Alive festival, attracting more than 5,000 people.
- Funding a voluntary organisation to support more than 2,000 domestic abuse victims.
- Streetwise event for 700 young people aimed at providing information on sensible approaches to alcohol, preventing antisocial behaviour, and promoting safe places to play.
- 250 copies of a new wellbeing booklet produced.
- Funding a voluntary organisation to promote healthy eating to more than 200 school pupils.
- Helped 116 households to avoid becoming homeless
- Promoted more than 100 local events through the Council website.
- 88 grants to help assist disabled and vulnerable people in adapting their homes;
- Fifty lock packages provided for victims of domestic burglary.
- Funding for diversionary activities for 40 young people promoting health and wellbeing and preventing anti-social behaviour.
- Assisted Green Vale Homes to adapt 35 properties for vulnerable people.
- Twenty 'Safer Food - Better Business' coaching sessions with businesses in the Borough to ensure the health and safety of those that work in the food industry and our residents.

We are also pressing ahead with



Our Environmental Health Team have continued to monitor the health and safety of those that work in the food industry, ensuring that the people who buy food from them are not put at risk. In 2008-09 twenty 'Safer Food - Better Business' coaching sessions were provided for local businesses to promote high standards of food safety.

### *Healthy housing*

There is a well established link between poor health and poor housing quality. Through our Regeneration Team we are working to improve private sector housing and also tackle issues relating homelessness and support for vulnerable households. We also have enforcement powers available to ensure that private rented accommodation meets basic standards.

We have been successful in reducing homelessness despite the economic recession. Through effective housing advice and support we have helped 116 households to avoid becoming homeless resulting in fewer people in temporary accommodation and 50% fewer homeless applications. We have also been proactive in schools, providing housing advice to young people to help them avoid any difficulties when they become independent and have helped 35 people into private rented homes through offering them rent bonds. We are also delivering the Mortgage Rescue Scheme which specifically aims to help people threatened with homelessness as a result of the recession.

During 2008/09 we have continued to provide invaluable support for vulnerable people in the Borough. We provided 88 Disabled Facilities Grants last year to assist disabled and vulnerable people in adapting their homes and have worked with Green Vale Homes to adapt 35 properties for vulnerable people. The Council also helped to secure £12,000 of funding for a handyperson scheme to support elderly and vulnerable people in the Borough.

### *Respectful communities and community wellbeing*

The Council has a key role to play in promoting respectful and tolerant communities. Through our new Communities Team we are working alongside local people and organisations to find practical solutions to neighbourhood issues. Strong communities and community groups are the lifeblood of successful and tolerant communities.

Through our successful Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership we are addressing a number of respect issues by:

- Funding mediation services to help resolve disputes between neighbours
- Providing environmental schemes to help reduce anti social behaviour.
- Reducing fear of crime through improved street lighting

We are also continuing to fund community events which play a key part in bringing people together, a encouraging community spirit, understanding and respect. The Council funds the Rossendale Alive Festival and the annual fireworks event which both attract more than 5,000 from all parts of the community. It also arranges a Christmas light event and Christmas entertainment on the markets. People have also been brought together through our involvement in the Pennine Lancashire Festival of Food and Culture and the Council has helped to deliver the Rawtenstall Food Festival and has supported the Rossendale Scarecrow Trail.

The Council recognises the valuable contribution that the Borough's voluntary and community groups make to improving the lives of local people and has provided around £200,000 to support the work of the local groups. We have worked with the Rossendale Faith Partnership to produce leaflets aimed at improving religious understanding. The leaflets highlight the similarities and differences between Christianity and Islam – the two main religions within the Borough.

As a result of these initiatives 61% of people in Rosendale now believe that people from different backgrounds get on well together here..

## Value for money services

The Council is committed to developing high quality, value for money services for its customers despite rising costs and a reduced funding from central government. We are also committed to reducing the burden on the Council Tax Payer in the long term by limiting any increases to below the level of inflation. As a result, we have to identify significant savings across the Council and make sure that every penny we spend is spent wisely.

### Overview

At a time of international financial turmoil the Council has delivered economic, efficient and effective financial management and services, whilst championing high ethical standards.

We identified more than £727,000 in savings across the Council in 2008/09 without cutting front-line services and this has freed up money to invest in new priorities. The saving from 2008/09 represented a £34 cut in the Band D Council Tax.

Unfortunately, the Council has not been immune to the economic slowdown. The income we receive for carrying out land charges surveys on properties has dropped as a result of less activity in the housing market and

planning income is down by more than £100,000.

As a result of this downturn we have restructured our teams more efficiently and are making the Council's reserves (savings) work harder. Through careful cash flow management and prudent investment we have raised £227,000 more interest than originally anticipated.

Whilst many of these savings help to cover the increased costs of services such as concessionary travel, leisure services and higher fuel bills, some of the money has been invested into new priorities such as our 'Pride in Rossendale' initiative which is helping to transform the appearance of the Borough, making it more attractive to residents and visitors.

### Funding

Providing Value for Money Services	2007/2008	2008/2009	
	Actual £000s	Original Budget £000s	Actual £000s
<b>Business Directorate</b>			
Legal Services	141	32	26
Democratic Services	992	1,089	1,044
<b>Corporate Services Directorate</b>			
Corporate Management	414	541	475
Financial Services	268	198	194
Property Services	80	31	152
People & Organisational Development	280	144	191
Non-distributed Costs	(214)	481	224
Capital Financing & other costs/income	549	(1,150)	(1,362)
<b>Total cost of General Fund Services</b>	<b>2,510</b>	<b>1,366</b>	<b>944</b>



### Performance of selected indicators in 2008/09

Performance Indicator	2007/08	2008/09		Status
	Value	Target	Value	
Business Rates collected	98.8%	97.5%	98.0%	😊
Council Tax collected	97.2%	97.6%	97.4%	😊
Working Days lost due to sickness	8.7 days	8.5 days	8.63 days	😐
Supplier Invoices paid on time	95.9%	97.5%	95.5%	😞
Speed of processing new benefit claims	25.9 days	20 days	19.8 days	😊

## Cutting costs and delivering greater economy

Economy is about achieving the same results at less cost. In 2008-09 the Council continued to deliver reductions in a number of support costs including information technology where a saving of £700,000 have been achieved over the last 3 years with a further £350,000 of savings likely to be delivered in the next two years.

As well as delivering these savings £90,000 was invested into long term projects to ensure that the Council's computer systems are able to meet the highest possible standards of electronic transactions, data security and provision for disaster recovery.

During the year the Council faced significant rises in energy costs. Through using its purchasing power to negotiate a bigger discount at the contract renewal we were able to limit the increase to less than £43,000.

### A drive for efficiency

Where services have seen reductions in their income, such as planning fees and searches of the land charges register for people buying land or moving home, the Council has tried to achieve greater efficiency in the use of its resources. For example some staff in these service areas have been used to support improvements in other functions, including the extension of postal voting at the elections and the full public review of leisure services.

The Leisure Review is a one-year examination of the performance, costs, usage, needs and aspirations for the provision of leisure services and sporting facilities in the Borough. The outcomes of this review will feed into the 2010-11 budget setting process to ensure that local people continue to receive value for money in the years ahead.

### Improving our effectiveness

It is not always necessary to spend money in order to improve services. By improving our effectiveness and doing things better we can do more for less. For example, the Council is striving to increase community involvement in the way the Council and its services are run.

During Local Democracy Week in 2009 we held our first ever State of the Borough debate, which was attended by more than 120 people. We also organised specific events to involve high-school students in understanding what the Council does and what individual councillors do.

### In 2008/09 we:

- Made £700,000 of efficiency savings including a 20% improvement in efficiency achieved by investing in a modern vehicle fleet.
- Increased the amount of money spent with local suppliers
- Raised £466,825 through the disposal of surplus Council land and property
- Council Tax collection up to 97.4% ensuring that more people pay their fair share.
- £700,000 in savings on IT services over the last three years with further savings of over £350,000 per year expected in future years.
- Secured a better deal on the Council's insurance - saving £115,000
- Will save more than £280,000 in future years through taking the opportunity in 2008/09 to reorganise teams when employees left the Council.
- Increased the payments made by Direct Debit, including benefits to claimants – thus saving around £8,900 per year on processing payments.
- Secured nearly £80,000 from English Heritage to support the Council's work in Conservation Areas.
- Toilet provision in Bacup was improved at minimal cost through the Community Toilets scheme proposed as a result of our Overview and Scrutiny process.
- 97 hours of training provided to our dedicated councilors to help them do their job more effectively and training opportunities were also offered to Whitworth Town Council.
- Responded to 150 Freedom of Information enquiries.



Greater emphasis is being placed on the individual communities within Rossendale through strengthened Neighbourhood Forums with real decision-making powers and dedicated budgets to support local voluntary groups and projects in each area.



We have also worked hard to improve the quality and timeliness of our decision making process, whilst promoting and maintaining the highest possible standards and ethics. Through modernising the Council's Constitution to improve the policy-making process we have been able to ensure that decisions are taken in a more timely way. Our decisions are also more transparent than ever before which was recognised by the Local Government Chronicle in March with the presentation of its Standards and Ethics Award.

Indeed, the Council has made further progress in opening its policies and performance up to scrutiny and challenge by improving the quality of information provided to public inspection. Integrated performance reports now provide combined financial and operational performance information every three months and are considered in detail by the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Committee and the majority of Council policies are now scrutinised by our Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

This Annual Report is a further attempt to provide information about the Council's performance and achievement in an easily accessible format. We believe that opening up the Council's policies and performance to scrutiny will help us to continue to deliver better, more efficient value for money services.



The View - A new community and play area in Bacup.

## Cross cutting focus

There are several issues which the Council has focused on throughout the year which have had an impact on all our priorities. Further details on these cross cutting issues follows.

### Pride in Rossendale

Our Pride in Rossendale initiative is bringing the Council, local groups and the community together to improve the Borough. Projects have included:

- An extra 10,000 bulbs planning.
- 15 new benches purchased.
- 90 new litter bins procured.
- Grant funding established for Community Initiatives.
- Sites for community clean ups identified.
- Flower meadows cultivated and planted.
- Pride Awards to recognise the contribution of individual and groups.
- Programme of boundary sign refurbishment and replacement.

As a result there has been an increased sense of community pride and belonging throughout Rossendale.



### Coping with the Recession

Rossendale has not been immune to the effect of the national recession and the Council has acknowledged this in two ways – managing its own finances and helping our residents and businesses where possible.

- Mitigated rising fuel costs through national purchasing contracts and revising collection rounds
- Finding over £1m of savings to keep the 2009-10 Council Tax rise under 3%
- Processing 8% more Benefit claims whilst cutting processing time by a week.
- Securing over £2.5m investment in social housing schemes
- Launching the mortgage rescue scheme to help home-owners hit by the recession
- Developing a package of measures to revitalise the Borough's markets
- Speeding up bill payments to suppliers and refunds of Council Tax and Business Rates

## Cohesive and Inclusive Communities

The Council has a key role to play in promoting strong, safe and healthy communities which get on well together and respect each other's diversity. Community cohesion is vital to achieving this. As part of our Community Cohesion Strategy we have:

- Appointed a community engagement officer dedicated to working within our communities
- Funded community events to bringing communities closer together and supported the Rossendale Mela.
- Carried out Community Impact Assessments to identify if any council decisions are detrimental or discriminatory to certain sections of the community.
- Supported local group, Positive Start, to challenge extremist views.
- Funded organisations representing older people, younger people, LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender), ethnic minorities and disabled people.
- Worked with the Rossendale Faith Partnership on leaflets to highlight the similarities and diversity between Christianity and Islam and promote mutual respect.

This work contributed to Rossendale Council jointly achieving a Beacon award for cohesive and resilient communities and has resulted in the more people in Rossendale saying that people from different backgrounds get on well together – up from 43% in 2003 to 61% in 2008.



## Climate Change

The Council is committed to promoting sustainability, within its own operations and services as well as amongst the wider community. Climate change is a global problem, but here in Rossendale we have adopted our own environmental strategy – 'How Green is Our Valley', which is already influencing the way that we do things:

- The Mayor's car is an electric hybrid which reduces exhaust emissions
- All our energy is from 'Green' suppliers
- We increased the amount of waste recycled by 523 tonnes in 2008/09
- Reducing fuel use and carbon emissions by investing in modern refuse vehicles

The council is working closely with the Local Strategic Partnership Environmental Theme Group and with Rossendale Climate Change Group to increase awareness of the issues among local residents and businesses.

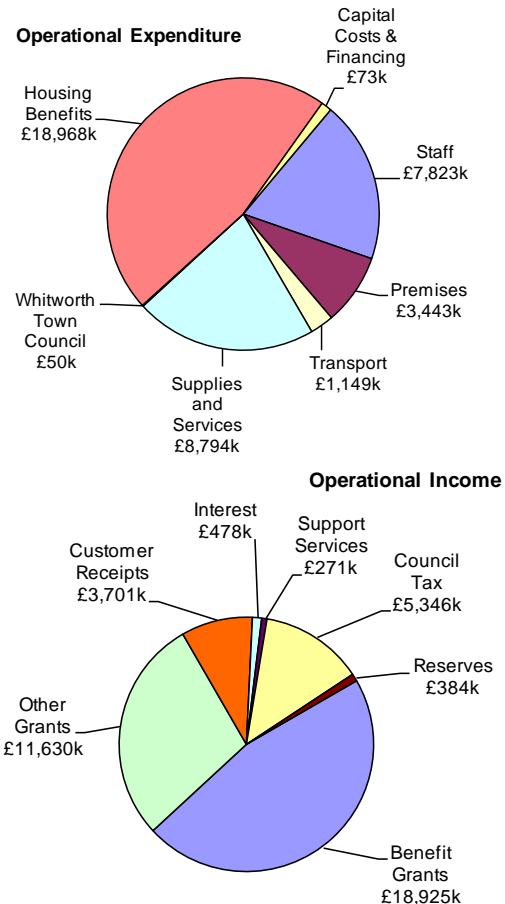
## Council Finances in 2008/09

Strong financial management during 2008/09 helped the Council to cope with the effects of the recession. Prudent management also meant that the Council's cash funds earned £224,000 more in interest than originally expected and bank balances were secured during the economic turbulence. Council funds were only deposited with UK high street banks, minimising the impacts of any international financial risks.

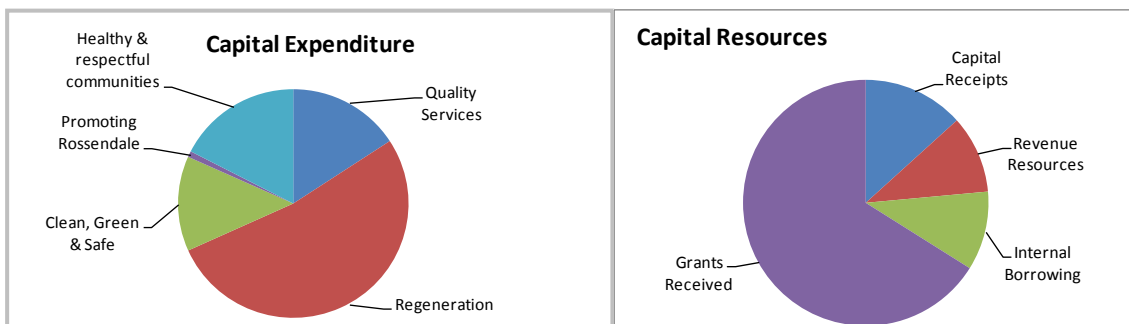
The extra interest earned helped the Council to manage losses in planning income and reduced local land charge searches as the housing market stagnated.

In total during the year the Council saved a further £129,000, on top of the planned £729,000 included within the original budget and Council Tax.

GENERAL FUND SERVICES	2007/2008		2008/2009	
	Actual £000s	Budget £000s	Actual £000s	Budget £000s
Place Directorate				
Communities	1,213	1,246	1,190	
Customer Services & E-govt	2,574	2,767	3,228	
Regeneration	655	672	750	
Operations	3,669	3,891	3,972	
Business Directorate				
Building Control	126	134	158	
Planning	437	527	615	
Local Land Charges	(12)	(4)	68	
Environmental Health	557	748	593	
Democratic Services	1,133	1,121	1,070	
Corporate Management				
Executive Team	414	541	475	
Finance and Property Services	348	229	346	
People and OrgDevelopment	432	301	331	
Non-distributed Costs	(695)	568	99	
<b>Net operating expenditure</b>	<b>10,851</b>	<b>12,741</b>	<b>12,895</b>	
Whitworth Town Council Precept	48	50	50	
Interest Income	(309)	(235)	(459)	
Central Financing items	1,132	(1,002)	(856)	
<b>Amount to be met from government grants &amp; local tax payers</b>	<b>11,722</b>	<b>11,554</b>	<b>11,630</b>	
Council Tax	5,138	5,346	5,346	
Prior year Council Tax Surplus	68	-	-	
General Government Grants	6,518	6,208	6,413	
<b>Amounts received from government grants &amp; local tax payers</b>	<b>11,724</b>	<b>11,554</b>	<b>11,759</b>	
<b>General Fund Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>129</b>	



In addition to annual operational expenditure on services, the Council has a capital budget to purchase, maintain and improve assets from which it receives benefit over more than one year. These include buildings, computer systems, vehicles and other major items such as play equipment. In 2008/09 the Council spent more than £5m on capital projects.



The Council's cash balances remained strong during 2008/09. The £6.4m shown as cash reserves below includes capital receipts of over £1.3m, most of which are required to fund planned future projects and £3.4m earmarked to fund specific revenue costs in the years ahead. This leaves around £942,000 in the General Fund Reserve to support any unforeseen events after the Council Tax has been set.

The Council is part of the Pension Fund administered by Lancashire County Council and has 999 pension fund members. The assets of the fund are valued at £33.5m and the liabilities estimated at £57.3m leaving a £23.8m shortfall. This is shown on the Balance Sheet below as both a long-term amount to be paid and as a non-cash reserve. This amount has increased by £0.9m during 2008/09.

2007-08 £000s	<b>BALANCE SHEET at 31st March 2009</b>	2008-09 £000s
19,950	Land, Buildings and Other Assets	19,599
647	Long-term Investments	2,102
107	Long-term Debtors	111
<b>20,704</b>	<b>Total long-term assets</b>	<b>21,812</b>
9,887	Total amounts owed to the Council & cash in the bank	10,759
(4,580)	Total amounts owed by the Council payable within 1 year	(5,966)
<b>26,011</b>	<b>Total assets less amounts owed within 1 year</b>	<b>26,605</b>
(27,131)	Non-cash amounts owed by the Council payable after 1 year	(27,943)
(1,137)	Cash amounts owed by the Council payable after 1 year	(1,226)
<b>(2,257)</b>	<b>Total assets less all amounts owed</b>	<b>(2,564)</b>
6,548	Cash Reserves	6,421
(8,805)	Non-Cash Reserves	(8,985)
<b>(2,257)</b>	<b>Net Equity</b>	<b>(2,564)</b>

2007-08 £000s	<b>CASH FLOW STATEMENT as at 31st March 2009</b>	2008-09 £000s
74,534	Cash received by the Council	77,377
(75,055)	Cash paid out by the Council	(78,490)
<b>(521)</b>	<b>Net Cash movement in the year</b>	<b>(1,113)</b>
2,014	Cash in hand and at the bank as at 1st April	1,493
(521)	Net Cash movement in the year	(1,113)
<b>1,493</b>	<b>Cash in hand and at the bank as at 31st March</b>	<b>380</b>

The Council's Annual Report and Statement of Accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Accounting Code of Practice. The figures in this summary were originally compiled having regard to proper accounting practices. For the purpose of this statement some modifications were made to provide more meaningful information.

The Council's accounts for 2008/2009 have been audited by the Audit Commission and they will make their report to the Council later in the year. A full copy of the Accounts is available in local libraries and can be viewed at the Council's One Stop Shop in Rawtenstall. Alternatively you can download the document from the Council's website [www.rossendale.gov.uk](http://www.rossendale.gov.uk).

**Philip Seddon, ACA, Head of Finance**



## Our future plans for 2009/12

The Council's Corporate Plan 2009-12 sets out the priorities and high level projects that we aim to deliver over the next three years. A summary of the main actions and projects under each of the priority themes follows. They demonstrate the Council's continued drive to improve services, deliver better outcomes for local people and focus on the most important things for the Borough. These are the priorities and projects which we will report back to you on when we produce our Annual Report for 2009/10.

### Delivering quality services to our customers

We are committed to developing and delivering high quality, cost effective services, which meet the needs of our customers.

#### Outcomes:

- 1.1 High quality services
- 1.2 Greater community involvement in the design and delivery of services.
- 1.3 A stronger relationship between the Council and communities.

#### Measures and Targets:

- Answer calls more quickly – 90% of all switchboard calls within 20 seconds.
- Reduce waiting times at the One Stop Shop.
- Remove all abandoned vehicles within 24 hours.
- Decide on 85% of routine planning applications within 8 weeks.
- Step up benefit fraud prevention.
- Increase the speed of processing new Housing/Council Tax Benefit claims to less than 20 days and increase processing accuracy to over 96%.
- Faster Land Charges searches for property buyers.

#### Key Actions:

- Publicise Whitworth Swimming Pool through a new website.
- Consultation with customers using our One Stop Shop and our Benefits service.
- Make it easier for disabled people to visit our parks and cemeteries.
- Implement a 'Choice Based Letting' scheme for social housing vacancies.
- Decent and affordable private rented housing through a landlord accreditation scheme.
- Consultation on new long term development planning policies.
- Involve residents in Local Democracy Week to find out their priorities.
- Make it easier to vote through accessible polling stations.
- Better opportunities to influence our services through our Neighbourhood Forums.
- Action on safe, respectful and tolerant communities delivered through our new Neighbourhood Plans.
- Handyperson scheme providing better support to disabled/ vulnerable people.
- Mini-mayor promoting local democracy to young people.

#### Key Actions (cont):

- Respond positively and promptly to complaints.
- Support the launch of a community cinema in Bacup.
- Involve residents in developing environmental improvement projects in Bacup.

### Promoting the Borough

We are promoting the Borough as a place to live, work and invest.

#### Outcomes

- 2.1 More people satisfied with Rossendale as a place to live.
- 2.2 A thriving visitor economy.
- 2.3 An improved understanding of the Council, its success and how to influence decision making.

#### Measures and Targets

- An above average number of people who feel they know how the Council is performing.
- At least 26.5% surveyed will feel that they can influence local decisions.

#### Key Actions

- Lobby for a new Bus Terminal in Rawtenstall and work with partners to improve transport connectivity.
- Encourage local newspapers to publish more good news.
- Support active Tourism Working Groups in Rossendale.
- Improve the 'Visit Rossendale' website making it easier to find out what visitors can do in Rossendale.
- Establish priorities for leisure and culture to develop sustainable leisure attractions that local people and visitors want to visit.
- Support the Pennine Lancashire festival of food and culture.
- Develop a new Communications Strategy for the Council.
- Encourage more people to become involved in local democracy.
- Implement a revised edition of the A to Z of Council services.

## Delivering regeneration across the Borough

Physical and economic regeneration is crucial to Rossendale's sustainable growth and prosperity. We are well placed between Lancashire and Greater Manchester and need to ensure that everyone benefits from future growth.

### Outcomes:

- 2.1 A thriving local economy.
- 2.2 Well performing town centres.
- 2.3 A well balance housing market.

### Measures and Targets

- Spend £1m with local suppliers.
- 35 additional affordable homes and 20 fewer long-term empty homes.
- More than 55%.of new homes built on previously developed land.
- Maintain rough sleeping at zero.

### Key Actions

- Support appropriate Valley Centre redevelopment.
- Attractive, well maintained open spaces and recreational facilities.



- Attract more people to local markets through a new promotional strategy.
- Sustainable development which protects the countryside, open spaces and historic buildings.
- More CCTV to deter anti-social behaviour and crime.
- Support the development of active business forums in our town centres to support business development and tourism.
- Improve our Homelessness service.
- Secure external funding for new affordable homes.
- Ensure more empty homes being reoccupied.
- Implement mortgage rescue scheme and help for people at risk of losing their home.
- Implement Rossendale Against Recession task force to support local people and businesses.
- Improve more than 140 homes with facelifting.
- Promote equity Loans Scheme to help homeowners to improve their homes.
- Encourage affordable housing and greater choice in new housing developments.

## Encouraging healthy and respectful communities

Too many people in Rossendale suffer from poor health which has a big impact on the quality of their life. Respecting our bodies as well as respecting other people in our community is an important part of having strong and healthy communities.

### Outcomes:

- 5.1 People living longer.
- 5.2 Increased physical activity.
- 5.3 Respectful communities that get on well together.

### Measures and Targets

- More than 22.2% of people exercising three times per week for 30 minutes.
- More than 58% of people satisfied with sport provision.
- Fewer the three racial incidents per 1,000 people.

### Key Actions:

- Deliver health and wellbeing activities.
- Improve our Disabled/Disability Adaptation Service.
- Promote a summer activities programme for children.
- Develop sustainable Leisure facilities following our Leisure Review.



- Fund two play coordinators to promote play activities in rural areas.
- Improve the playground at Hill Street.
- Increase participation in sport through supporting targeted and innovative projects.
- Identify an investor for Ski Rossendale.
- Crime reduction through the Community Safety Plan.
- Involve local people in tackling local problems.
- Promote community safety issues to primary school pupils through the Streetwise Project.
- Help people experiencing Domestic Abuse by supporting the STAR Centre.
- Develop an Allotments Policy to increase allotment provision and usage.
- Demonstrate our commitment to working with voluntary, community and faith groups by agreeing a new COMPACT.

## Keeping our Borough clean, green and safe

Local people want a clean and safe environment. As a Council we are working to achieve this now and for the future.

### Outcomes:

- 3.1 People feel safer in their communities.
- 3.2 A better environment for all.

### Measures and Targets

- Recycle at least 27.5% of household waste and compost at least 7.5% of household waste.
- Work with local businesses to ensure that pollution is controlled and that at least 90% of pollution reducing improvements are completed within a designated timescale.
- Install 15 new benches and install more than 100 new bins.
- Reduce the number of serious acquisitive crimes in the Borough to less than 847 and reduce criminal damage by a further 5%.

### Key Actions

- Improve the standards and availability of publicly accessible toilet facilities.
- Tidier parks and open spaces through revised work schedules.
- Cleaner streets and more streets being cleaned through new cleansing rounds.
- Carry out work to improve footpaths making them safer and more accessible.
- Provide information and advice about drug misuse and support National Tackling Drugs Week.
- Educate young people about the importance of clean streets, recycling, playing in safe places through school visits to 12 schools.
- Involve local people in at least four Pride in Rossendale Community Initiatives.
- Continue to positively promote recycling and composting.
- Switch to environmentally friendly peat free composts and organic fertilisers.
- Improve community safety at Dale Street.
- Implement the Borough Environment Strategy and Climate Change Action Plan



## Providing value for money services

The Council is committed to developing high quality value for money services.

### Outcomes:

- 6.1 Effective financial management.
- 6.2 Councillors that can respond effectively to their communities.
- 6.3 Value for money and high performing services.

### Measures and Targets:

- Collect household waste for less than £50 per household.



- Collect 97.8% of the Council Tax and 97.5% of business rates.
- Pay 97.5% of our bill within 30 days.
- Collect money we are owed within an average of 80 days.
- Agree Personal Development Plans with all Councillors.
- Keep staff sickness levels low and outperform 75% of other councils.

### Key Actions:

- Produce a 1st draft of a new Cultural Strategy.
- Revise our plan for meeting the Council's accommodation needs.
- Ensure that grants to voluntary and community organisation deliver value for money and meet their targets.
- Cut the cost of waste collection.
- Provide further training for Councillors e.g. on planning and probity issues.
- Raise the profile of what councillors do and how to contact them.
- Development of key Regeneration and Employment Sites.
- Investigate using mobile working technology to improve Licensing & Environmental Health services.
- Hold an annual Consultation Event.
- Encourage the County Council to improve grass cutting, weed clearance and tree maintenance.
- Review and improve the homelessness service and the pest control service.

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اگر آپ کو ان معلومات کا خلاصہ سے حروف میں آج تکسٹ پر، یا اگر جی کے علاوہ کسی اور زبان میں اس کا ترجمہ ہوا ہے  
میریانی میں ہے، ہم کو آئی آپ کے لئے اس کا انجام کریں گے۔  
ہماریانی میں ہے 01706 217777 پر ٹیلیفون کریں یا بھریونی ٹیکسٹیشن سے اس پتہ پر رابطہ قائم کریں:

আপনি যদি এসব তথ্যের সার সংক্ষেপ বড় হরফের ছাপায়, অডিও ক্যাসেটে অথবা ইংরেজী ছাড়া  
অন্য কোন ভাষায় পেতে চান তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে আমাদেরকে জানালে আমরা অত্যন্ত খুশী মনে  
তার ব্যবস্থা করব।

অনুগ্রহ করে ০১৭০৬ ২১৭৭৭৭ এই নাম্বারে অথবা কমিউনিকেশন সেকশন, টাউন সেন্টার  
অফিস, রটেপটল বি.বি.৪ ৭এল.জেড. এই ঠিকানায় যোগাযোগ করুন।

If you would like a summary of this information  
in large print, on audio cassette or language  
other than English, please let us know and we  
will be happy to arrange it.

Please telephone 01706 238603 or contact  
Communications Team  
Stubbylee Hall  
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Other formats available on request.  
Tel: 01706 217777 or contact:  
Rossendale Borough Council  
PO BOX 74, Bacup, OL13 0WU

اروو বাংলা

A

Large  
Print



Tape



CD



Braille