

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

Date of Meeting: 2 February 2010

PRESENT: Councillor Sandiford (Chair)
Councillors L Barnes, Crawforth, Lamb, Neal,
Stansfield, and Thorne

IN ATTENDANCE: Rebecca Lawlor, Regeneration Delivery Manager
Jason Foster, Operations Manager
Stephen Stray, Planning Unit Manager
Carolyn Sharples, Acting Committee and Member Services
Manager
Liz Murphy, Head of People and Policy
Pat Couch, Scrutiny Support Officer
Councillor Essex, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources

1 member of the public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Bernard Divine (Co-opted Member).

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2009 and 19 November 2009 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items for discussion.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair agreed to deviate from the Procedure for Public Speaking and allow the member of the public to ask questions as the reports were discussed.

6. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair explained the purpose of the long agenda was because the January meeting had to be cancelled due to bad weather. Two items had been deferred to the 8th March meeting; these are the Environmental Health Report and the Presentation from Green Vale Homes.

The Scrutiny Officer circulated an update from the Principal Policy Officer on items within the minutes of the last meeting in November.

The Chair indicated that at the November meeting Members asked that a letter be sent to LCC with the Committee's concerns regarding the impact of late responses from LCC Highways Department and the ability of Council Officers to meet performance targets. An example given was a recent Alder Grange School planning application. The Scrutiny Support Officer had circulated the letter sent on behalf of the Committee, together with Lancashire County Council's response.

The Planning Unit Manager confirmed that he was happy with the response that had been sent by County and the latest discussions between the County and LCC were very helpful.

7. UPDATE ON DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS

The Regeneration Delivery Manager gave an update on the Council's position in relation to Disabled Facilities Grants.

She gave a brief outline on a short notice inspection in 2008 in relation to housing association. The inspection took place over 3 days, looking at private sector housing, Housing Market Renewal budget, Disabled Facilities Grants and Equity Grants.

The results of the inspection, once received, would be shared with Overview and Scrutiny and the Cabinet. From discussions it appears that the Council were providing a 'fair' service.

With regard to Disabled Facilities Grants, this is a source of funding that the Council has to offer if people require adaptations to their homes. First contact is through Social Services who undertake an assessment and then feedback their decision to the Council for agreement. The Council provide up to £30,000 grant, with any additional required amount being 'topped up' by Social Services.

Government Grants have steadily increased recently to over £320,000 from £150,000 - £220,000. The Regeneration Delivery Manager informed Members that the grants required totalled £700,000 and therefore there was a waiting list for work to be undertaken.

The Audit Commission had requested that an action plan be produced on how to improve the service. The Regeneration Delivery Manager had

asked the Government for additional money and she was to looking at procuring differently.

The Regeneration Delivery Manager suggested the Overview and Scrutiny could set up a Task and Finish Group to look at solutions as to how the Council could reduce its waiting times for Disabled Facilities Grants.

In relation to St Vincent's Housing Association, which was a registered social landlord who offer a package of services aimed at meeting local needs, the Delivery Manager informed the Committee that this service was under pressure and that funding from LCC would cease from 2012. Members agreed to look at this service, together with the Disabled Facilities Grants to provide a coordinated approach on how to deliver the service.

Resolved:

That the Committee agreed to include the Disabled Grants Facilities as part of its Work Programme for 2010/11 and strongly recommend that this piece of work is undertaken as a priority in the new Municipal Year.

8. UPDATE ON PERFORMANCE TARGET LI 82a (ii)

The Operations Manager updated Members on LI 82a (ii) Tonnes of Household Waste Recycled and explained the reasons for the downturn in recycling.

Over the last 12 months street cleansing regimes had increased with more detritus. Last year 545 tonnes of detritus was cleared from streets, and for the 9 months this year (April-January) 1088 tonnes of detritus had been cleared. Therefore, the % was lower because the streets were cleaner.

The Operations Manager provided the following information:

- Overall waste included green bins, fly tipping waste and street cleaning – the target of 27.5% was running at 25.32%
- There had been a significant increase in brown bin recycling.
- Rossendale were disposing less in the green bins
- Recycling of paper had reduced from 27.5% to 25.3% - in January 2009, 263 tonnes of paper was recycled and up to January 2010, 199 tonnes was recycled
- The streets were being swept more

In relation to NI 192 - % of household waste sent for re-use, recycling and composting, the Operations Manager indicated that by 2012 the

target should be 40% - in November 2009 this stood at 38.4% and therefore the Council should reach the target.

A question was raised as to how Rossendale was performing in relation to other Lancashire Authorities and the Operations Manager confirmed that Rossendale was the best performing in Lancashire.

Resolved:

1. That the information be noted.
2. That the Operations Manager provides comparative figures with other Local Authorities for the next meeting.

9. UPDATE ON THE DRAFT PLAY STRATEGY

The Operations Manager provided an update on the revised three year action plan 2010-2013 for the Draft Play Strategy, which was a working document that needed to be consulted on with Members.

In 2007 they began with a 3 year action plan for Worsley Park, Whitaker Park and Sunnyside Play area.

When asked about the Borough's parks receiving green flag status, the Operations Manager indicated that Whitaker Park play area was part of the green flag agenda, but due to costs to achieve this would be approximately £435,000. He had identified opportunities to get the money from 'Parks for People', but it costs £70,000 to put in a bid and there was a need to achieve a suitable management plan.

A member indicated that it was good that a Strategy was in place and that the new equipment already available in some parks was appreciated.

Resolved:

That the draft strategy be noted.

10. UPDATE ON PERFORMANCE TARGET DC3 – PLANNING

In light of the Overview and Scrutiny's Committee's previous concerns in relation to the performance of the Planning Team, the Planning Unit Manager presented an update on Performance Target DC3 – The Planning Manager advised that the Planning Department had benchmarked customer satisfaction through a service level questionnaire and had consulted with customers to identify those issues which created concern. Further to the information received a customer improvement plan had been developed. Since the implementation of the plan, the planning service had re-benchmarked their performance and identified that customers were now more satisfied with the service. Members asked for actual percentage figures on the number of responses received

and the Planning Unit Manager agreed to provide these to the Chair for the next meeting.

The Committee recognised the value of the questionnaire and suggested reducing the length of it to encourage responses.

The Planning Unit Manager informed Members that he hoped to extend and increase the way the planning service was being evaluated through including the questionnaires with letters they send to neighbours who would be affected by future planning applications.

Resolved:

1. That the information be noted.
2. That the Planning Unit Manager provides percentages on the actual number of responses received, for the next meeting.

11. UPDATE ON COMMITTEE AND MEMBER SERVICES PERFORMANCE TARGETS

The Acting Committee and Member Services Manager provided an update on Committee and Member Services Performance Targets following concerns raised at the last meeting that these targets were underachieving. She explained the following:

C&MS2 – to achieve Level 2 of the North West Charter for Member Development.

The Acting Committee and Member Services Manager indicated that at the present time Level 1 of the Charter was up for review and they would be looking at achieving Level 2 as a longer term action for the future, Level 2 being an intense process.

In relation to the Level 1 review, they are awaiting confirmation from North West Employers Organisation as to how to progress with the assessment. Discussions are also ongoing with the Member Development Working Group in relation to the topic and evaluation process for level 2.

C&MS3 – to deliver a joint programme of ward walks with the County Council

The Acting Committee and Member Services Manager indicated that a report had been sent to the Senior Management Team to review the current arrangement for future ward walks. Feedback from Members indicated that ward walks are not as effective as they could be. There had been a suggestion that they could be undertaken through the Neighbourhood Forums with involvement from partner organisations ie Police, PCT etc.

C&MS4 – implement actions arising from the Local Democracy Bill (Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009)

The Acting Committee and Member Services Manager gave a brief update on the different parts of the Act, although further guidance was still awaited on the following:

- Democratic Arrangements
- Electronic Petitions and the need for a procedure to be in place by April 2010

C&MS10 - community governance reviews

The Acting Committee and Member Services Manager gave a brief update on Community Governance Reviews. She informed that whilst the detail and considerations required of a community governance review had been noted it would be a long term target rather than something that is achieved by March 2010. A review would only be required every 10-15 years and at present the neighbourhood forums provided members of the public with an opportunity to feed back to the Council on current issues.

Resolved:

That the information be noted.

12. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Head of People and Policy presented the Organisation Development Plan 2009/2011, which was a strategic plan in relation to the delivery and resourcing of formal organisational development opportunities undertaken within the Council by employees during 2010/11. The plan identifies everything the Council has delivered in the last 12 months and identifies areas for priority over the next 12 months.

The Head of People and Policy gave details on the future training needs including health and safety related training and skills for life within the operations team. In addition she advised of progress against the National Performance Indicators NI 163 and NI 165 which relate to NVQ's Level 2 and 4..

The Portfolio Holder indicated that Rossendale has high reputation with North West Employees Organisation.

Resolved:

1. That the Organisational Development Plan be noted and agreed.

2. That all future amendments to the Plan be delegated to the Head of People and Policy in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

13. INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTER 2

The Head of People and Policy presented the Quarter 3 Integrated Performance Report for October – December 2009.

The report highlighted the following information:-

- Current performance against the Council's priorities
- Current performance against Local Performance Indicators and national Indicators including the associated action plans
- Position of identified risks
- Complaints
- Compliments

Currently 91% of actions identified within the Corporate Plan were on track to be delivered. This achievement compared to the same quarter last year where 87% of actions were on target to be delivered, showing an improvement of 4%.

The following indicators were not achieving:-

LI 12 - Working Days Lost Due to Sickness The Head of People and Policy explained that a number of measures were currently being taken to try and get this indicator back on track. A new Occupational Health provider had been appointed. A revised absence management policy had been drafted and was subject to consultation with the Trade Unions. The Head of People and Policy advised that stages and warnings were being undertaken in accordance with the existing policy. However, despite these measures she did not envisage meeting the target set. There had been a number of cases of long term sick and flu which had affected the outturn.

LI 156 – Buildings Accessible to People with a Disability

LI 82a (ii) – Tonnes of Household Waste Recycled

NI 156 LAA Number of household living in temporary accommodation

Action plans had been produced for each of the above targets and Members agreed that some of those static red levels were beyond the Council's control.

The Committee were pleased to note the following which were exceeding targets:

LI 78a – Speed of processing new HB/CTB claims

LI 64 – Number of private sector vacant dwellings that are returned into occupation or demolished

NI14 – Avoidable contact: the proportion of customer contact that is of low or no value to the customer

LI 82b (i) - % of household waste composted

LI 218a – Abandoned vehicles - % investigated within 24 hours

LI 218b – Abandoned vehicles - % removed within 24 hours of required time

Members were also pleased to note LI 8 - % of invoices paid on time, which earlier in the year had been of concern, had remained above target for the 5th consecutive month.

The Chair asked that the Project & Performance Improvement Officer be thanked for ensuring that all data quality objectives were being achieved in relation to the Performance Report.

Resolved:

1. That the Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the level of performance detailed within the report.
2. That due to the very positive report, no Officers are requested to attend the next meeting.
3. That thanks be sent to those areas detailed above that are exceeding target levels

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm at finished at 9.25pm

Signed:
(Chair)

Date: