

Minutes of: PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 27th February 2012

PRESENT: Councillor L McInnes (Chair)
Councillors Aldred, J Gledhill (sub for Morris),
Stansfield, Roberts, Robertson

Irene Divine, Co-opted Member

IN ATTENDANCE: Mike Riley, Communities Manager
Christine Ashcroft, Chair of CLAW
Lisa McDowell CLAW
Catherine Murphy, Bacup Hub
Pat Couch, Scrutiny Support Officer
Liz Sandiford, Head of People and Policy

2 Members of the Public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor L Barnes and Morris and Chris Rowan, CLAW.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 30th January 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items for discussion.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Aldred declared a personal interest as members of the Leisure Trust Board.

Councillor Gledhill declared a personal interest in Marl Pits.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

6. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair reminded Members of the O & S Management meeting on 13th March when there would be a presentation from two representatives from the Job Centre Plus.

There would be two Task and Finish Groups reports on the agenda seeking the Committees approval.

We will also be receiving an update on our last 12 months work.

7. INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 3

The Head of People and Policy presented the Quarter 3 Integrated Performance Report.

The risks to the Council continue to be closely monitored with the first area of risk being the broader funding environment and also the paper prices which have dropped significantly since and which had also impacted on the Council.

The report confirmed that the Council was on track to deliver all the actions it said it would deliver as detailed in the Council's Corporate Plan. Performance within the Council continues to be good.

The report highlighted that currently the Quarter 3 results had evidenced positive performance, some of the achievements were:

- Council Tax Collections remained ahead of target and collection of Council Tax by direct debit remained healthy.
- Housing Benefits and Council Tax Benefit continues to be good
- Minor applications determined in 8 weeks was on target with 35 out of 37 determined on time.

The following indicator would be monitored closely when the Quarter 4 report is presented to the Committee in June 2012

- LI 12 - Working days lost due to sickness
- NI 20 LAA – Assault with injury crime rate

How the Council were performing in managing their risks was an area that would be monitored by the Committee which had increased from 45% in quarter 2 to 55% in quarter 3. The Head of People and Policy explained that Officers were being cautious due to the financial situation, about where they feel they are and she had asked for clarity from some of the service areas as she felt that some of these should have been in the green area and not amber.

The Council had been working in partnership with Lancashire County Council, the North West Development Agency and other District Councils to deliver the Intensive Start-up Support, which provides advice and guidance to individuals who want to start their own business. For Rossendale this created/safeguarded 119 businesses and 144 jobs. The programme came to an end on 16th December.

Whilst the Head of People and Policy highlighted that the Council's new website was now live, a member of the public present indicated that she had experienced some difficulties and it was agreed to report this to the IT team.

The Chair highlighted that Officers were again using acronyms within the note area of his report and the Head of People and Policy agreed to bring this to the attention of Officers.

A number of questions were asked by both Members and the public which were responded to by the Head of People and Policy, with a question in relation to finance to be sent to the Head of Finance to respond direct.

It was agreed that whilst there were some areas of underachievement, a detailed explanation had been given by each service area and therefore there was no need to request further information. Any such areas still underachieving in Quarter 4 would be picked up by the Committee.

Resolved:

1. That the Committee notes the level of performance and risks detailed in the report.
2. That the Committee continues to monitor performance of those indicators that were under-achieving targeted levels of performance and these along with any further increase in 'risks' would be picked up at the next meeting.

8. LEISURE SERVICE PROGRESS UPDATES

The Communities Manager presented an update on the progress of projects implemented as part of the Leisure Review and the subsequent recommendations taken by Council on 28th September 2011, including funding agreements relating to Rossendale Leisure Trust and Community Leisure Association Whitworth.

He provided Members with the key elements of the original business case, including the transfer of the Bacup Leisure Hall in October 2010 which has now been rebranded as Bacup Hub.

Marl Pits Development – the completion of the work undertaken by the utilities company had taken longer than anticipated, but Kier Northern had made a formal start on 31st January 2012 with the erection of fencing and the commencement of excavation work. Key dates going forward were the handing over of the car park on 23rd May 2012, with the project to be completed on 16th October 2012.

A question was asked about the delays which may have resulted in a financial loss and the Communities Manager indicated that they are in negotiations with the utilities company on this issue.

Further questions were asked in relation to:

- Lack of information in the cover report about Haslingden Pool and the Communities Manager informed the Committee that the performance report from the Leisure Trust provided additional information on the progress of the pool.
- Discussion on pricing structures/increases at Marl Pits, which the member of public would be asking for clarification at Full Council.
- It was felt that the reporting of financial information should be made clearer for the public to understand.

The Chair of CLAW presented the quarterly update report as follows:

- Positive increase in bookings for 2012/13, especially weddings
- Increase in enquiries since the new website was established
- Low staff turnover at both facilities
- Increase in '10 week block bookings' for swimming lessons, bringing in £2,000-£3,000 more than two years ago
- More in-house services ie catering
- Savings on heating since the purchase of a new programmable system, which controls different parts of the building
- School proms on the increase with one week dedicated for prom nights.

The Chair indicated that whilst wedding bookings had increased, they had lost some bookings due to the lack of hotel facilities locally.

A question was asked about current lease at the Riverside and Whitworth Pool and whether CLAW now had full repairing lease for the pool. The Chair confirmed that her understanding was that they only had full repairing lease for the Riverside.

The report which had been presented by the Communities Manager and comments by the 151 Officer indicated that current lease arrangements were based on full repairing responsibilities for both sites. A request was made for the report to be amended to reflect the true position.

The Chair informed the Committee that the original seven year lease had never been signed. A member indicated that a long lease was necessary to enable CLAW to pull in grants from other sources.

The financial report from CLAW showed that the 9 months April 2011 to December 2011 there was a net surplus of £15,000, compared to a loss of £15,000 the previous year. The Chair explained that as the figures were for nine months, the next three months had always shown to be the quieter period and she hoped therefore that they would at least break even by 31st March 2012.

The Chair thanked CLAW for their presentation.

Catherine Murphy was welcomed to the meeting to present her first progress report since purchasing the former Bacup Leisure Hall in October 2010.

The report gave an overview of the numerous activities held since the opening of the facility, indicating that whilst she has already offered over 1,000 hours for community activity it had only been used for 100 hours.

Whilst cost for renting out the facility was £25per hour it actually costs £52.43 per hour to run (heating, electric etc).

Following a piece of research it was evident that the majority of people wanted combat sporting events such as WWE, boxing and cage fighting, with 14 more events planned for the year. Whilst there was initial opposition to such events, they proved very popular, bringing people from Ireland, Liverpool and Yorkshire. A recent charity event raised £15,000.

There had been recent a number of recent investments as follows:

- £10,000 on a cinema system
- New table tennis table
- Renewed squash facilities
- A community cafe to be opened in March 2012

The Hub was working closely with the Maden Centre to offer their facilities in the summer/ school holidays.

They have 25 weddings booked during the year and they are expanding their sporting/outdoor events.

A number of questions were asked about how the hub promotes their events and whether they use the media. A suggestion was made that a section be included on the Council's new website to promote the events taking place in the hub.

The hub was at the moment not doing too well with daytime activities and a Member asked about marketing and by what means is the hub being promoted.

A suggestion was made that a section be included on the Council's new website to promote the weekly events taking place in the hub.

Catherine thanked the Communities Manager for his support and the Committee wished Catherine well for the future.

Resolved:

That the Committee note the work carried out to date in relation to the leisure projects.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 8.05pm.

Signed
(Chair)

Date