

Minutes of: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 3rd December 2012

PRESENT: Councillor McInnes (Chair)
Councillors Ashworth (substituting for Hughes)
Fletcher, Gill (substituting for Bleakley), Knowles,
Kenyon, Milling, Morris, Oakes, Pilling, Procter and
Shipley

Irene Divine (co-opted member)

ALSO PRESENT: Chief Inspector Russ Procter
Barry Hyde, Rossendale Tourism and Heritage
Group
June Worsley, Rossendale Tourism and Heritage
Group
Pat Couch, Scrutiny Support Officer

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Sandiford

2 Members of the Public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bleakley and Hughes.

2. MINUTES

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd September 2012 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items for discussion.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

6. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair informed Members that an invite had been sent to a tea, coffee and cakes morning on 13th December between 11am and 1pm to celebrate 50 births at Rossendale Birthing Centre. She also provided the Committee with an update on the attendance of patients using the Minor Injuries Unit at Rossendale Primary Health Care Centre, which had exceeded initial expectations.

The Chair also informed Members that at the last Performance Scrutiny Meeting in November, it was agreed that the March meeting would be cancelled as there was only one item on the agenda, which would now be included in the February meeting.

7. PRESENTATION FROM CHIEF INSPECTOR PROCTER

Chief Inspector Russ Procter provided the Committee with an update on Rossendale Community Safety Partnership performance figures for November 2011 – November 2012, compared with the same period last year. These were as follows.

- All crime had reduced by 52 offences
- Serious acquisitive crime had reduced by 55 offences
- Auto crime had reduced by 41 offences
- Robbery down from 19 last year to 6
- Assaults had increased by 19
- All violent crime had increased by 32 offences
- Domestic abuse increased by 33 offences
- Damage and arson reduced by 75
- Anti Social Behaviour reduced by 394 reports

In relation to response times which were graded as follows:

Grade 1 – within 15 minutes (within the East of the Borough they respond within 10 minutes and West within 12 minutes)

Grade 2 – within one hour (within the East of the Borough they respond between 28-55 minutes and West within 28-40 minutes)

Grade 3 – within 48 hours

Grade 4 – no time

Detection rate for all crime was 33.7% (1 in 3 being detected).

Members raised a number of questions which the Chief Inspector responded and agreed to provide additional information to Members through the Scrutiny Support Officer

Chief Inspector Procter then provided further information on the number of initiatives taking place and explained other issues for the Police.

Rural Watch – the Borough is 74% rural, with 9% of the Borough living in rural areas. Therefore, the Police are doing more in these areas around such places as farms.

Metal Theft – They had received central funding of £11,000 to support operations around the communities. New legislation had just been announced around metal theft, and scrap metal dealers are no longer able to pay by cash for scrap metal, only cheques or money paid direct into a bank account. The legislation does not include the travelling communities, which is an issue being looked at further. The Chief Inspector commented that it was not just the value of metal, it was the damage left by metal theft and there was some activity taking place around this.

Members highlighted some of the issues they had been having, particularly in relation to the '101' number and some people not being aware that the number existed.

There was some positive feedback from Members in relation of neighbourhood policing teams within the Borough.

Concern was raised around communications operation which Members were informed was now owned centrally from Hutton Headquarters.

RESOLVED:

That the Chair thanked Chief Inspector Procter for his informative presentation and he agreed to forward information requested by Members to the Scrutiny Support Officer for circulation.

8. PRESENTATION FROM THE ROSSENDALE TOURISM AND HERITAGE GROUP

Representatives from Rossendale Tourism and Heritage Group provided the Committee with background information on their work and their proposed future initiatives.

The Group was officially formed in March 2012, specifically to take on the role of Tourism development and Heritage. Included on the group are two Rossendale Councillors, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Tourism and Leisure, Councillor MacNae and Councillor Jackie Oakes.

A number of relatively basic initiatives had been identified by the Group, which they feel would have a significant and immediate effect on tourist numbers and these were as follows:

- Signage – further dialogue between the Council and LCC was needed in relation to information and directional signage coming into the Valley via the motorway system.

- A Tourism Website – the Council agreed to fund the new website which was launched on 6th October, which was a key tool in promoting the attractions and heritage that exists in Rossendale.
- A Tourist Information Network (TIN) -discussions are ongoing with Ski Rossendale for them to provide a tourist information centre, with other sites being sought at for Bacup, Edenfield, Crawshawbooth and Waterfoot. Funding had been secured through the Council to begin to establish these around the Borough
- Temperance Museum – The group are in the process of applying for funding to develop a Temperance Museum within Fitzpatrick's in Rawtenstall. Discussions had also taken place with the Heritage Lottery Fund, who were very supportive of the project.

The group have set a 5 year plan with the intention of each year setting up a tourist information point around the Borough. This would provide information of what is going on around the Borough. They also intend to have establish 3 carousel based information units per year in strategic footfall areas in smaller towns.

There is also the intention of producing a Rossendale Visitor Guide and they have been approached by a company to do this for them. The group understand that the Guide needs to be self-sufficient with advertisements paying for the full costs. They are looking at getting the Guides delivered to tourist information centres around the North West to promote the Borough.

The Group were due to commence data inputting on their website, with organisations such as Rossendale Revival and Rossendale Town Team already having a presence on the website. They also hope to bring other members into the group who have various skills, such as IT. A suggestion was to contact schools in the Borough who help with such things as the website.

A member of the public suggested that the Tourism and Heritage Group work with Civic Trust and this was welcomed by the Group.

RESOLVED:

The Chair thanked the representatives from the Tourism and Heritage Group for their presentation and wished them well for the future.

9. SCRUTINY UPDATE

The Scrutiny Support Officer circulated an updated work programme which provided information on the work of Overview and Scrutiny for the last nine months.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 and closed at 8.10pm.

Signed
(Chair)

Date