

Minutes of: PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 19th November 2012

PRESENT: Councillor McInnes (Chair)
Councillors Fletcher, Hughes (substitute for Procter),
Knowles, Morris, Shipley, Roberts

IN ATTENDANCE: Steve Riley, Operations Manager
Liz Sandiford, Head of People and Policy
Steve Jackson, Head of Regeneration
Councillor Barnes, Leader of the Council
Councillor Lamb, Portfolio Holder for Operational
Services and Planning
Pat Couch, Scrutiny Support Officer

3 Members of the Public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Procter and Irene Divine (co-opted Member)

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd October 2012, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Knowles declared an interest as he was on a Board Member on St Vincent's and also the Chair of Audit.

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 members of the public to ask questions as the reports were discussed.

6. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair informed members that the next meeting will be a one item agenda from Rossendale Transport, unless there was anything within the

Performance Report which warranted further information to be brought back to Committee.

Two further meetings were scheduled for February and March, with three items for the February meeting and only one item for March. Therefore the Chair asked the Committee if they were in agreement to the one item in March to be brought forward to the February meeting and cancel the March meeting.

Resolved:

That the Committee agreed to the cancellation of the March meeting in consultation with the Chief Executive and Leader.

7. MANAGEMENT OF FUEL AND HOUSEHOLD WASTE INDICATORS

The Operations Manager indicated that the Director of Customers and Communities had provided background information in relation to the management of fuel to the Committee in July and since then there was nothing new to report.

A vast majority of the vehicles were automatics and therefore no training was required to improve efficiencies. Rossendale had a better efficient mileage per gallon than Hyndburn at 4 miles per gallon, whereas Hyndburn was 2.5 mpg.

The Council were putting 80 employees through fuel efficient training, which could make improvements of 10-15% initially.

The Operations Manager explained that the Council ring 3 local fuel suppliers and buy at the cheapest price at the time. The tank at Henrietta Street was not of huge capacity and therefore they cannot buy fuel in bulk to get a reduced discount.

Regular tyre checks were undertaken to ensure they were running at optimum pressure.

The Operations Manager explained that he could not see how improvements could be made to the fuel indicators, unless the bins went to a different landfill site, due to the siting of Whinney Hill in Accrington.

A number of questions were raised by Members and the public as follows.

- How large was the tank at Henrietta Street?
- What was the most economic speed of the wagons?
- Could joint procurement with Rossendale Transport be looked at as a possibility?
- Look at the possibility of partnership ordering 'on block' with other local Authorities to reduce costs

- Were the bin wagons taking 100% of wastage in their wagons?
- Could the Council not change from road vehicle to plant vehicles?
- Do the Council use agency cards?
- A member of the public offered to discuss ideas for savings of fuel costs

The Operations Manager agreed to contact Rossendale Transport to discuss possibly procurement of fuel.

In relation to Household Waste % tonnage collection, the Operations Manager indicated that the paper industry had seen a 15% reduction in the amount of paper for such things as magazine, newspapers etc. Therefore, there was not as much paper to collect.

There had been a slight increase in cans and bottles, due to people drinking at home. There has also been a reduction in blue bins for the first time in years, but the public was proactive in reducing waste.

The Operations Manager explained that the Council have a good deal in place and they would be re-tendering next year for the best price, although due to National Pricing, hardly any company would now fix a price for the tender period.

In relation to a question about cardboard/paper, the Operations Manager explained that the Council co-mingle paper and cardboard and therefore this needed separating when it goes to Leyland.

The Council's waste has to go to Whinney Hill and they would need to come to an agreement to take all waste to Leyland, which would be a cost issue.

The Head of People and Policy asked the Committee if they would be in agreement to deleting the fuel indicators, which was debated further by the Committee.

When asked how the routes were calculated, the Operations Manager indicated that this had been undertaken by an external organisation and the only way this could be done in-house was if the Council had the software.

Members were in agreement that they did not feel in a position to delete the fuel indicators altogether and asked the Operations Manager to bring a 'streamlined' proposal of fuel usage to a future meetings to enable members to make a decision as to whether to continue with the Indicators.

Resolved

That a report be brought to a future meeting on proposals for fuel usage, to enable the Committee to decide on whether/how to monitor performance indicators around fuel.

8. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS

The Head of Health, Housing and Regeneration provided an overview of the procedures and policies related to Disabled Facilities Grants, This was requested by members of the Committee at the last meeting following concerns and the explanation given on the number of urgent cases and the number of cases on the waiting list.

Following a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group in 2010, when they looked at how the grants process worked in Rossendale, a number of recommendations were made, including the request that 25% of the disabled grant budget to be used for those referrals not classed as urgent, with the remaining 75% for urgent referrals. This was because at the time of the review there was a 3 year wait for non-urgent.

Each applicant was assessed by an Occupational Therapist who would decide whether the application was 'urgent' or non-urgent based on the needs of the applicant. The maximum grant from the Council is £30,000. If the cost of the work is more the applicant must fund the money themselves.

Following the scrutiny review, it was agreed that the Council should consider placing a local land charge on properties which received grants over £10,000, which would only be repayable if the property was sold on the open market. This would be at the discretion of the Council and dependent on individual circumstances.

The Council offer a service to assist people with their building projects under this scheme and have a list of contractors that the applicant can use which are reviewed throughout the year. However, applicants may choose to appoint their own architect or agent to look after the grant works.

Resolved:

That the information be noted.

9. INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 2

The Head of People and Policy presented the Quarter 2 Integrated Performance Report.

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.

Members agreed to look at all indicators showing as being 'amber', which were under achieving.

L&EU9 – Finalise Service Level Agreement with Development Control in relation to Planning Enforcement – The Head of People and Policy agreed at the last meeting to provide the Committee with an update. She indicated that Planning Enforcement had undertaken work with Planning but at present this had not progressed due to increased workload within the department.

A question was asked about what work was going on around Haslingden and the Leader of the Council indicated that work was ongoing to regenerate all aspects of the Borough in due course.

In relation to HH14 – Delivery of the Safe Houses Pilot Programme. A question was asked about the timeframe for when they would be in use.

The Head of People and Policy indicated that the scheme was looking at safe houses for two distinct vulnerable groups which were Domestic Violence and those ex-offenders who face homelessness. It was agreed that the Head of People and Policy would circulate timescales to Members of the Committee.

Cmt3 – Deliver Cemeteries Strategy. A question was asked about the Friends of Cemeteries Group and whether Haslingden was included. The Head of People and Policy agreed to check and circulate the information to Members.

DC1 – Implement Actions of the English Heritage/RBC updated Conservation Strategy. Concern was raised by Members about the capability of the planning department due to the number of staff departures. The Head of People and Policy indicated that two positions had now been filled – one for the Planning Assistant and one for a Conservation Officer. The Head of People and Policy agreed to circulate confirmation of the two positions to the Committee.

Members suggested that the Planning Manager should be invited to a future meeting to provide an update on the Core Strategy and Planning Infrastructure.

The Leader indicated that there had been a reduction in staffing in Forward Planning and they are to commence rolling out work around the Urban Boundary. The Bacup and Whitworth element should be going to all members shortly, with Rawtenstall, Haslingden and Edenfield to follow.

A number of questions were raised as follows:

- In relation to Marl Pits – would there be figures of before and after usage available?
- Could the town centre noticeboard be updated?

- Valley Centre Kiosk update – The Head of Health, Housing and Regeneration indicated that they had an application from a private individual who outlined temporary use lease who had applied for and had approved planning permission. The Portfolio Holder for Operational Services and Planning informed the Committee that, having spoken with the individual she was informed that things would progress in the Spring.
- HHR2 – Council Initiatives and are these part of Pennine Lancs. The Head of Health, Housing and Regeneration indicated that 3 projects were being worked on and as a Council with other local authorities we own Regenerate Pennine Lancashire and are represented on its Board of Directors. The funding initiatives listed were available to businesses throughout Rossendale.

The Head of Health, Housing and Regeneration provided an overview of the 'Our Town First', indicating that Rawtenstall Town Team had been awarded £10,000 to support the Town Team's work plan for Rawtenstall. The Town Team would determine how the money was spent.

Further questions were raised by Members as follows, which Officers responded.

- How do small businesses learn about the projects?
- An update was requested on Rossendale Christmas events?
- Would notification be given to traders on Bank Street?
- Costs to stallholders?

RESOLVED:

1. That the Planning Manager be invited to a future meeting to provide an update on the Core Strategy and Planning Infrastructure to the Committee.
2. That the Head of People and Policy and the Head of Health, Housing and Regeneration be thanked for their informative presentations.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 8.20pm

Signed
(Chair)

Date