

Subject:	2014/15 Scrutiny Work Programme Update	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Partner Scrutiny	Date:	2nd March 2015
Report of:	Scrutiny Support Officer	Portfolio Holder:	Customers, Legal and Licensing
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input type="checkbox"/>	General Exception	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Equality Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment	Required:	No	Attached: No
Contact Officer:	Pat Couch	Telephone:	01706 252425
Email:	patriciacouch@rossendalebc.gov.uk		

1.	RECOMMENDATION(S)
1.1	That members note the 2014/15 Scrutiny Work Programme Update.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To provide an update to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on the 2014/15 Work Programme.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:

- **Regenerating Rossendale:** This priority focuses on regeneration in its broadest sense, so it means supporting communities that get on well together, attracting sustainable investment, promoting Rossendale, as well as working as an enabler to promote the physical regeneration of Rossendale.
- **Responsive Value for Money Services:** This priority is about the Council working collaboratively, being a provider, procurer and a commissioner of services that are efficient and that meet the needs of local people.
- **Clean Green Rossendale:** This priority focuses on clean streets and town centres and well managed open spaces, whilst recognising that the Council has to work with communities and as a partner to deliver this ambition.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no specific risk issues for members to consider arising from this report.

5. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

5.1 Overview and Scrutiny is required to produce and agree a plan of the work it intends to carry out in a Municipal Year, and following a local consultation process this was agreed at its first meeting in June 2014.

5.2 The Work Programme presented in June outlined the work of the two main Scrutiny Committees and the work to be undertaken by the Task and Finish Groups.

5.3 In relation to the Partner Scrutiny Committee, a number of presentations had to be either cancelled or put forward to a future meeting. So far this year the committee has had presentations from the following:-

- June - Coastal Health Care Ltd (MIU Provider)
- June - Dementia Friendly Rossendale
- September – Lancashire Constabulary
- September – Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service
- November – North West Ambulance Service

- March - Leisure Services (CLAW and RLT)
- March - Rossendale Transport – confidential item

5.4 Corporate Scrutiny has so far received 14 reports from numerous officers of the Council.

5.5 Task and Finish groups are also agreed within the Work Programme, although officers or members may request that a group be set up as a matter of urgency to look at a specific issue.

Whilst most Task and Finish Groups conduct an in-depth review of a particular area, they sometimes undertake a 'light touch' review, which is a quick look at a piece of work.

This year Cabinet asked Scrutiny to review the Land and Property Transaction Process as a 'light touch' review.

Land Transaction Process

The Director of Business and the Property Services Manager provided the three members with background information as to why the group had been established.

The Property Services Manager indicated that the purpose of the group was to agree a procedure that the Council could work with in the future for land/property transactions.

Information on processes used from other local authorities were presented to the task group and a number of suggestions were made by members.

The Property Services Manager in consultation with the Legal department prepared a Land and Property Process for the members to consider along with draft letters, which would be sent out to the applicant to inform them whether their application had been successful or refused.

Members also agreed that a non-refundable fee of £100 should be paid by the applicant when they first submit their application.

A second meeting was held in January 2015 as the group felt that further information should be established.

At the meeting in January the Task and Finish Group received more details on how the process would work and who within the Council had authority for the sale of Council owned land. It was also suggested that if a piece of land was for sale then a notice should be erected so that anyone has the opportunity to bid for the land.

Another suggestion was that members are kept informed of any disposal of land/property, through the Member's Bulletin.

The following Task and Finish Groups were undertaken as full reviews:

Rogue Landlords

At the end of December 2013, the Government announced that funding was being made available to 23 councils nationally to tackle rogue landlords. The funding is part of a package of measures that will ensure millions of working and vulnerable tenants get a better deal when they rent a home.

When Rossendale Borough Council found out that they were successful in their bid and were granted £79,000, it was suggested that scrutiny was an ideal way of reviewing the subject of how the Council was going to tackle rogue landlords around the Borough.

This work commenced in February 2014 when it was identified as needing to be undertaken in 2 phases with phase 1 being completed in September 2014. Cabinet responded positively to the recommendations of the Phase 1 report.

Phase 2 began in December with a second meeting in February when the Task and Finish Group received information on the progress of the work. This Task and Finish Group is still ongoing.

Green Vale Homes

Whilst this was not on the work programme, a suggestion was made that Scrutiny needed to undertake a review of the proposed governance changes being made within Green Vale Homes and how they will impact, if any, on delivery in Rossendale both with the Council and other partners.

The Task Group first met in September 2014 and agreed its Terms of Reference. Numerous officers from the CAB and Green Vale Homes have been invited as witnesses and the Task and Finish Group invited the Ian Clark and Steve Close from Together Housing to their meeting to provide an update on the proposals.

A draft report was presented to the Task and Finish Group on 16th February, when recommendations were agreed. A final meeting is to be held to share the recommendations with officers from GVH/Together Housing and the CAB.

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

6. SECTION 151 OFFICER

6.1 Financial implications are noted within the report.

7. MONITORING OFFICER

7.1 All comments are covered within the body of the report.

8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

8.1 The scrutiny process was introduced by the Local Government Act 2000 The purpose of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees is to help improve the way the Council works and to make sure it gets its decisions and policies right. Task and Finish Groups support specific focused pieces of work to produce a report and recommendations.

The four main principles of scrutiny are:-

- Empowering local people working with their local representatives, to challenge the council and other agencies to deal with local concerns
- Ensuring that the views and concerns of local people are heard at the heart of the local authority
- Enabling local councillors as community champions to take the lead in raising issues for scrutiny

- Reinforcing the scrutiny functions as a way to get things changed and improved so that local communities can see tangible results

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 That members note the work of Scrutiny during 2014/15.

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Minutes and Task and Finish Group Reports	Room 213, Futures Park, Bacup