

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 2nd November 2015

Present: Councillor A Robertson (Chair)
Councillors Bleakley, Eaton, Haworth, Hughes, Kenyon, Lythgoe,
McMahon, Sandiford and Steen

In Attendance: Katie Gee, Corporate Officer
Steve Jackson, Head of Health, Housing and Regeneration
Carolyn Sharples, Committee and Member Services Manager
Councillor Barnes, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for
Regeneration and Leisure
Councillor Ashworth, Portfolio Holder for Customer Services and
Health

4 members of the public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meetings held on 21st September 2015 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

A member of the public asked a question in relation to the previous quarterly report (as per the minutes) and whether 29.2% of the Council Tax collected was of the whole amount, or whether it was 29.2% of the target for that quarter. The Corporate Officer informed that it was of the whole, as it was an aggregated indicator. The collection rate was above target for that quarter.

A member of the public asked about dog fouling. Councillor Robertson confirmed that a task and finish group had started in relation to dog fouling and that a report

would come back to overview and scrutiny in due course.

6. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair informed the Committee of the following items:

- a) The committee were due to receive the performance figures from Inspector Leigh but unfortunately he had left and his replacement only took office a few weeks ago. The presentation had therefore been moved to March 2016, where the committee would receive statistics more or less to year end.

Councillor Barnes noted that if someone was leaving who was due to report to the committee they should pass this action on to the next person, or arrange for someone else to attend to ensure there is continuity. The Chair agreed to write to the Police regarding this matter.

- b) Councillor Lamb had responded to Mr Atherton's question.

Mr Atherton confirmed that he had received a response from Councillor Lamb.

- c) Members had received an email updating them on issues raised at the last meeting, this was also circulated at the meeting as a hard copy and included information on Blue Badge applications, Rosebud Finance, Affordable Warmth and the ethnic make-up of Rossendale.

7. INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTER 2

The Corporate Officer presented the Council's performance report for Quarter 2 (July to September 2015), which showed that the Council was working well towards delivering its actions and performance indicators in the 2015-2016 Corporate Business Plan.

A number of performance indicators had exceeded target and some of these were as follows:

- Waiting times for customers in the One Stop Shop (OSS) were 4 minutes and 1 second less than targeted.
- All planning applications had been determined on time.
- The percentage of telephone calls answered within 20 seconds by the Coventry Call Centre finished above target.
- Percentage of Non-Domestic Rates collected finished above target at 62.70%.
- Accuracy of processing Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit finished above target at 93.30%.
- The time taken to process benefit indicators all finished above target in Quarter 2 (Q2).
- There were no Housing Benefit claims outstanding for over 50 days.
- Housing Benefit overpayments recovered as a percentage of the total amount of Housing Benefit overpayment were 3% above target.
- Percentage of household waste recycled was above target.

- Residual Household waste collected was 7kg per household under target.

In relation to Corporate Business Plan, 87.7% of Actions were green in status in Q2, and 12.3% in amber.

84% of performance indicators were on target or above, which was significantly better than last quarter and also when compared with Q2 last year. Two performance indicators were behind target relating to LI12 and STAN1 and action plans for each of these were detailed on pages 40-43.

In relation to STAN1 members were asked if this indicator could be de-activated to coincide with the end of the business year, as this target would not be achieved until there had been recruitment to the STAN post. In the meantime the Council was promoting people to go to the OSS and were also working with the CAB on emergency cases. Footfall in the OSS was being monitored in the absence of STAN.

There had been a reduction in complaints compared with the last quarter and there were no new Ombudsman complaints. Compliments had reduced compared with the previous quarter but were consistent with the same quarter in the previous year and covered a wide range of service areas.

With regard to the Council's Risks, these had been included in Appendix 1 for members, but the risks would be reviewed by the Audit and Accounts Committee. There had been an addition of Risk HHR2 this quarter relating to "Use of CPO Powers".

A number of questions were raised by members of the public and elected members, which the Corporate Officer answered where possible. She agreed to report back to the next meeting on queries raised which would need further clarification from officers within the Council, these included:

- Finding out whether there should be a target relating to the processing of Licensing applications similar to the processing of planning applications, since this is also a customer facing service.
- Finding out from the Service Assurance Team how many housing benefit overpayments there had been at 5.8.
- To look into setting up a Task and Finish Group looking at how business targets were set and how rigorous those targets were.
- Finding out when the work on the OSS toilet was due to be completed.

Following a question by a member of public relating to the business statements around regenerating and value for money, the Leader agreed to meet with the individual to discuss any queries.

Resolved:

1. That Overview and Scrutiny notes the levels of performance and risks as detailed in the report.

2. That Overview and Scrutiny continues to monitor performance of those actions and performance indicators that are under-achieving target levels of performance.
3. That Overview and Scrutiny agree to deactivate STAN1 until there has been recruitment to the STAN post.
4. That Overview and Scrutiny set up a Task and Finish Group to look at business target setting.

8. ROGUE LANDLORD SCHEME OUTCOMES REPORT

Members considered the Rogue Landlord Scheme Outcomes Report which was presented by the Head of Health, Housing and Regeneration.

The Rogue Landlords Scheme was a 15 month scheme funded through DCLG (Department for Communities and Local Government). It ended in March 2015 and its main remit was to take action against rogue landlords, mainly in relation to those using income to further illegal activities. The weight of evidence required to bring forward a case on these grounds went well beyond the life of the scheme. Therefore, DCLG changed the focus to bring forward tenants with issues and to advise them of landlord responsibilities.

Since the last progress update in September, four of the six actions had been completed and an update was provided in the appendix in addition to the following information:

- Recommendation 1 - officers had been unable to find examples of Fit and Proper Landlord policies outside Rossendale. The Council had no power or authority to enact it. Housing Benefit legislation existed which would allow the Council to consider whether a landlord was a “fit and proper person” to receive Housing Benefit. This was something that an officer would be pursuing.
- Recommendation 2 – this is something which would be done at the appropriate stage once a landlord came to prosecution. It would be put on the Council web site at this point.
- Recommendations 3 and 4 – information was on the web site for both tenants and landlords. Some hard copies were available at the meeting and the Head of Health, Housing and Regeneration agreed to circulate these to councillors via email. This information was also featured in tenant packs and also covered information about how to choose the right area, sharing accommodation, etc.
- Recommendation 5 – working with the Police was already part of the process, especially where suspicious activity had been reported.
- Recommendation 6 – in relation to selective licensing, neighbouring authorities had indicated that it was costly to put in place, and there was a need to look at anti-social behaviour and boundaries alongside it. Selective licensing could have the effect of stigmatising an area. There was currently a legal challenge in Hyndburn in relation to selective licensing.

Although the scheme had finished and there was no budget for any further activity, the Environmental Health Team were still offering advice.

A number of questions were raised by members of the public and elected members, which the Head of Health, Housing and Regeneration answered where possible. He agreed to look into the following:

- a) Whether bins were a consideration of the Food Standards Agency Scores on the Doors Scheme.
- b) Whether the two schemes could be linked together (Fit and Proper Landlord Policy and new housing and planning bill banning orders).

Resolved:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the contents of the report.

9. FORWARD PLAN

Members were asked to consider whether they wished to see any of the policies on the Forward Plan, prior to them going to Cabinet.

Following a question by an elected member, the Leader confirmed that the Local Plan was on target to go to December Council.

Following a question by a member of public relating to the Combined Authority item, the Leader agreed to meet with the individual to discuss any queries.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 7.50 pm

Signed
(Chair)

Dated