

**RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (RESOURCES) COMMITTEE**

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 21 February 2008
 title: Feedback from Performance Clinic on BV 199
 submitted by: Chief Executive
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1 PURPOSE

1.1 This report is to inform members of the outcome of the Performance Clinic looking at BV 199.

2 RELEVANCE TO THE COUNCIL'S AMBITIONS AND PRIORITIES:

- Council Ambitions: Monitoring and challenging our performance allows us to ensure
 - Community Objectives: that we are both providing excellent services for our community as
 - Corporate Priorities: well as ensuring we meet the Council's ambitions and objectives,
 - Other Considerations: which together formulate the corporate priorities. Monitoring the
- performance of our locally provided services provides the key means of assessing how well we are meeting our corporate ambitions and objectives.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A report to this committee in October analysed our performance in comparison to the Audit Commission's draft 2006/2007 quartiles. Analysis suggested that in comparison we have far fewer PI's which are improving as we have so many already in the 'best' quartile. However, we should not be complacent and not seek to improve the performance of those PI's which do not fall into the 'best' quartile.
- 3.2 The performance report highlighted those PI's which fell into either the 'worst' quartile or the 'third' quartile ie performed below average.
- 3.3 Further to the committee meeting in August when the concept of Performance Clinics was approved committee agreed to call BVPI 199 a, b and c to a Performance Clinic.
- 3.4 Clinics are where those who are accountable for a service are asked to report on its performance. They assess and remedy poor performance by developing an action plan or revising existing plans. At each clinic the accountable person is required to present details of their progress towards key performance indicators to their Director and Committee Chair. They are also required to present details of the actions they propose to make to address areas for improvement.
- 3.5 The Performance Clinic was arranged for 20 December 2007. In attendance were:
- Chair of O&S (Res) and Member Champion for Performance - Cllr Stan Taylor
 - Member of O&S (Res) - Cllr Rosemary Elms
 - Vice Chair of Community Committee - Cllr David Eccleston
 - Director – Commercial Services - John Heap
 - Amenity Cleansing Manager - Alan Boyer
 - Corporate Services - Jeff Fenton and Michelle Haworth

4 PROCEEDINGS

- 4.1 Confirmation was given that these performance measures are being continued as part of the revised suite of National Indicators (NI's) currently out for consultation by DCLG.

- 4.2 A brief explanation of the method of data collection and analysis of performance for BV199 was provided to members and then the panel asked a series of questions:
- Have targets been met?
 - How do we compare to others?
 - What can be done to turn this work around?
 - Is the performance problem caused by a lack of capability/capacity/resources?
 - Is their opportunity to prioritise or shift resources?
- 4.3 Are targets being met?**
- 4.4 Targets have been met for BV199a (litter and detritus). However, BV199b (graffiti) and c (fly-posting) are still performing below the targets we have set.
- 4.5 The targets that have been set however are still well below the average performance of other district councils.
- 4.6 How do we perform in comparison to others?**
- 4.7 On the face of it in all three BVPI's we are performing very poorly in comparison to other district councils. In 2006/07 we were in the worst quartile (worst 25%) for all three indicators. Members failed to understand how this could be true and everyone present agreed that the difference between street cleanliness in our borough was markedly better than that of our neighbours, although analysis of performance across Lancashire showed a different picture (see attached). The results from the Best Value General Household Satisfaction survey for street (and relevant land) cleanliness (BV89), showed that 77% of respondents are satisfied with this aspect of the borough. This is top quartile performance and an improvement on the results of the survey in 2003/04 (75%). We have very few complaints relating to street cleanliness. Those complaints we do receive are mostly related to weed control.
- 4.8 During the Audit Commission Environment Inspection of 2005 the inspectors declined the opportunity offered to compare Ribble Valley with our neighbouring authorities.
- 4.9 Is the performance problem caused by a lack of capability, capacity, or resources?**
- 4.10 Alan and John explained that the service operates with roughly a £250k budget, employing 6 men/operatives and covers around 240 mile². This is a huge area covered by a comparatively low level of staff. However, members all agreed that the cleanliness of the area was excellent and commended the work that Alan and his men carry out.
- 4.11 The amount of fly-tipping has increased since Henthorn tip was closed and this has had an impact on the service.
- 4.12 Lancashire County Council has discontinued its weed killing service due to budget cuts. (Unless the weeds are deemed to be creating a hazard ie having an impact on the safety of the highway by breaking up the structure.) Ribble Valley's weed killing budget of £10k was introduced some years ago but additional weed killing could only be undertaken when there is an under-spend in the budget. Unfortunately weeds are classed as an eyesore when calculating BV199a.
- 4.13 The biggest problem area for BV199b is playgrounds. There has been no budget for playground maintenance for 3 years until this current financial year, where an amount has been incorporated into the capital budget. This should improve BV199b this year.
- 4.14 The introduction of wheelie bins and discontinuation of black plastic sacks should also have an impact on BV 199a, as less waste will escape from the wheelie bins on to the streets.
- 4.15 John and Alan confirmed that we have enough resources to maintain our current level of performance. In order to see huge improvements in performance we would need a proportionally large increase in the budget.
- 4.16 The Council has previously tried to introduce a scheme whereby young offenders are used to help improve street cleanliness. Schemes were planned to include painting, removal of graffiti and fly-

posters, general cleaning and tidying. However, Lancashire County Council stopped this scheme on the grounds of Health and Safety.

4.17 Is there opportunity to prioritise or shift resources?

4.18 Alan confirmed that resources are already prioritised to problem areas.

4.19 What can be done to turn this performance around?

4.20 Proposed Actions:

- Members, through Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to make comments to the Audit Commission (including through the consultation process on the new National Indicators) relaying their concerns with the way these indicators are currently measured and the level of subjectivity involved.
- A press campaign to be launched to raise awareness of the problems of fly-posting and general cleanliness issues in the area. Perhaps raise awareness that fly-posting is illegal and offenders could be prosecuted and that some notices/boards should be seeking planning permission.
- Leaflet inserts to NNDR payers, especially those on industrial estates, stating that fly-posting will not be tolerated.
- Consider an additional £10k in the annual budget. This could potentially allow for 2 weed spraying applications rather than one.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

- Resources: None
- Technical, Environmental and Legal: None
- Political: None
- Reputation: None.

6 IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

6.1 Approve the proposed actions as listed above.

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For further information please ask for Michelle Haworth, extension 4421