

Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 13 April 2010, starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor J S Sutcliffe (Chairman)

Councillors:

D Berryman	C Ross
R Hargreaves	I Sayers
T Hill	M Thomas
B Jones	N C Walsh

In attendance: Director of Community Services and Community Development Officer.

Also in attendance: Councillor B Hilton.

950 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors A Gridley, J B Hill, K Hind and J White.

951 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

952 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

953 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

954 REPORT FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

Committee received Councillor Hilton who reported on her attendance at a recent Lancashire County Council Adult Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, where two main topics were under discussion:

- Healthy Streets Initiative; and
- Transforming Community Services.

In relation to the Healthy Streets Initiative, this was currently being piloted in Burnley and covered four main themes:

- Health inequalities.
- Affordable Housing.

- Economic base relating to poor health.
- Climate change.

The Transforming Community Services issue followed on from the recent health review which had recommended a split between the commissioning and provider role of Primary Care Trusts. As yet there was no blueprint for the type of model to be used in East Lancashire. There were proposals to merge some of the support services provided by 3 Lancashire Primary Care Trusts such as information technology, finance and human resources. The impact on patient care had yet to be assessed.

The LCC committee were hoping to invite someone from either Commissioning or Provider Services to a future meeting.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Hilton be thanked for her report.

955 ALCOHOL HARM REDUCTION IN RIBBLE VALLEY

The Chairman welcomed Inspector Chris Saville, Geographic Inspector for the Ribble Valley, Dr Anthony Sudell and Sue Harvey from NHS East Lancashire and Bill Alker from the Ribble Valley Community Safety Partnership, to speak about alcohol harm reduction in the borough.

Inspector Saville gave an overview of police activities around alcohol including high visibility policing in town centre, pub visits, test purchasing from off-licenses and the success of the Pubwatch Schemes in Clitheroe and Longridge. He also provided statistics which showed that the number of alcohol related crimes was reducing although there was still a disproportionate number of crimes related to alcohol.

Bill Alker from the Community Safety Partnership gave details of the diversionary tactics provided for young people by the partnership, especially on Friday nights, the close work with NHS East Lancashire on alcohol awareness initiatives including the provision of polycarbonate glasses to all pubs and clubs and various initiatives which were in the pipeline around the forthcoming World Cup.

Sue Harvey from NHS East Lancashire gave the national perspective as well as the current situation in Ribble Valley which, whilst better than in other parts of East Lancashire, was still giving some cause for concern, especially on hospital admissions. She stressed the economic consequences of alcohol abuse, hidden harm, marketing campaign aimed at adults rather than young people.

Members then asked a number of questions around Rural Pubwatch, figures for teenage binge drinking, alcohol related domestic violence, comparisons with European drinking initiatives and the impact of a substance abuse outreach facility in Clitheroe.

RESOLVED: That Chris, Anthony, Sue and Bill be thanked for their presentation.

TRAFFIC CALMING IN VILLAGES

Councillors Thomas and Sayers made a joint presentation on traffic calming measure in the Ribble Valley towns and villages. The remit of the exercise was to examine traffic calming measures currently deployed in town and villages in the Ribble Valley and then to determine what additions could be usefully introduced to further improve road safety in selected locations.

All Parish Councils had been asked to itemise measures which currently existed in their villages and to indicate what other measures could be used to enhance road safety. Three meetings had taken place with the Lancashire County Council Safety Engineering Department on the methodology used for selecting traffic calming measures for different areas. Meetings had also taken place with all 3 emergency services and a great deal of data analysis and road traffic statistics had been provided by the services. Visits had also taken place to 5 neighbouring towns and villages to look at different types of traffic calming measures already employed.

A full critique of the various measures was produced including pros and cons, costings and descriptions. It was recognised that any traffic calming measure was not the remit of this Council but had to be agreed by the Lancashire County Council as Highway Authority. It was recognised that a balance had to be struck between the wishes of residents and Parish Councils and the concerns of Emergency Services relating to easy access to accident scenes. Due attention also had to be given to available budgets. Some of the measures available were quite expensive. The timescale for traffic calming measures was between and 18 and 24 months from start to finish. A number of recommendations had been produced in the report and Members then discussed the report in some detail.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be referred to Community Committee for their further consideration; and
- 2) Councillors Thomas and Sayers be thanked for their informative presentation.

PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

Committee received a report from the Planning Enforcement Working Group which was presented by Councillor Sayers. The report highlighted the powers available to local authorities to prevent unauthorised activity under Part 7 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The report gave a definition of what constituted a breach of planning control and gave numerous examples of the type of such breaches.

National Guidance and Planning Policy Guidance 18 (PPG18) set out the policy context for planning enforcement and looked at the constraints of reasonableness placed on planning authorities including avoiding unnecessary

costs to small businesses and the self employed and ensuring that enforcement action should always be commensurate with the breach of planning control.

The investigation had been undertaken by the working group, together with Colin Sharpe and Jeff Griffiths from the Development Department. A number of points arose out of this meeting including:

- the discretion of officers to proceed or not with any enforcement action;
- the stages to be negotiated before formal enforcement action was taken, usually as a last resort;
- the right of appeal against enforcement notices;
- the way unauthorised advertising signs were dealt with by negotiation and site visit;
- the fact that the Council does not have a full-time officer solely engaged on planning enforcement; and
- of the 191 complains received during the past 12 months, 185 had been dealt with successfully without recourse to enforcement procedure.

Members then discussed this matter in some detail, especially around the resourcing of enforcement, the need for a more pro-active approach on larger planning projects and increased involvement of Members of the Council.

The Director of Community Services urged caution in relation to the question of providing extra resources for planning enforcement in the light of current budget constraints.

RESOLVED: That this report be now referred to Planning and Development Committee for their further consideration.

958 SPORT AND LEISURE FACILITIES

The Chairman reported that he still had concerns about the ability of Ribble Valley Borough Council and other bodies to apply for relevant grants for sport and leisure facilities.

The Director of Community Services reminded Committee of the dramatic change in the funding landscape of the past few years where lottery funding, via Sport England, was now under such demand that high levels of match funding need to be available for a lottery bid to succeed.

959 WORKPLAN 2010/11

The Chairman invited suggestions for inclusion on this Committee's Workplan for 2010/11. The following items were suggested:

1. Waste management – disposal regime from 1 August 2010.
2. Trees in urban/rural environments.

3. The benefits for Ribble Valley of the coming Olympics including the cultural Olympiad.
4. Single stream of help to the elderly.
5. Reducing running costs at Edisford Pool.

RESOLVED: That the Director of Community Services prepare a report on the viability of these topics to form this Committee's Workplan for 2010/11.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact John Heap (414461).

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