

## Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 15 February 2011, starting at 6.30pm  
Present: Councillor J S Sutcliffe (Chairman)

Councillors:

A Gridley	C Ross
R Hargreaves	I Sayers
J B Hill	M Thomas
T Hill	N C Walsh
K Hind	J H White
B Jones	

In attendance: Director of Community Services, Principal Policy and Performance Officer and Community Development Officer.

Also in attendance: Councillor B Hilton for items 6a and 6b.

### 672 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors D Berryman and G Geldard.

### 673 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 674 MATTERS ARISING

#### (a) Minute 554 – Quarter 1 Performance Indicators

Councillor Sayers asked if there was any update on the national indicator set. The Principal Policy and Performance Officer commented that this would be dealt with as part of her quarter 3 report later on the agenda.

#### (b) Minute 553 – Complaints Procedure Revisions

Councillor Jones referred to resolution 5 of this minute and asked whether there was any latitude allowed to complaints appeal panels in relation to service committee and service provisions.

The Director of Community Services replied that there were none as yet although this matter would be kept under review but all decisions currently arising from complaints panels would be referred to service committees for any further action.

675 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

676 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

677 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

(a) Health Matters

Councillor Hilton updated Committee on four issues:

(i) Lancashire County Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Health

She reported that this meeting had received a detailed presentation in relation to proposals to cut the County Council's budget by £32m in 2011/12 and by £26m in 2012/13. These proposals were aimed at protecting frontline services wherever possible and vulnerable children and aim to provide more support for partnerships and voluntary groups and services.

(ii) Clitheroe Hospital

East Lancashire Primary Care Trust had met recently with the Council Leader and Chief Executive to explore ways to improve facilities at Clitheroe Hospital in the light of much reduced budgets. A joint working party of Councillors, GPs and the Primary Care Trust had been formed. There was a commitment from the PCT that Clitheroe Hospital would remain open until at least 2013 with every expectation that the hospital would continue beyond that time. A series of consultation road shows had been arranged over the next 2 weeks. These were as follows:

- Clitheroe Market – Tuesday, 22 February, 1pm – 5pm
- Slaidburn Village Hall – Wednesday, 23 February, 9.30am – 12 noon
- Clitheroe Library – Thursday, 24 February, 10am – 12 noon
- Clitheroe Market – Saturday, 26 February, 9.30am – 1pm; and
- Whalley Village Hall – Monday, 28 February, 1pm – 5pm.

The Director of Community Services promised to make this information available on both the Council's website and via Stan the Van.

(iii) Older People's Champion Network

The terms of reference for this group had now been drawn up which covered any issues which affected older people such as social care, law and order, rural isolation etc. A number of task and finish groups had been set up including health, housing and transport, older people as carers and maintaining a positive image for older people.

The Older People's Champion Network's next meeting had been programmed for 21 July and would be held in Ribble Valley Town Hall to which all Committee Members were invited to attend.

(iv) NHS Reorganisation

Councillor Hilton commented that this was a fundamental reorganisation of the NHS, the main points of which were as follows:

- Strategic Health Authorities and Primary Care Trusts to be phased out by 2013.
- Commissioning would go to the new GP Consortia.
- The size of those Consortia still under consideration.
- Provider arm of the PCT split into two parts, children and babies into a Mental Health Trust and adult services into the East Lancashire Hospital Trust, both as a temporary measure.
- All hospital and ambulance service to become Foundation Trusts.
- GP Consortia to operate in shadow format in 2011/12 and in operation by 2013 fully supported by the PCTs.
- New independent National Commissioning Board to look at specialist service and prisons.
- Health and Wellbeing Board to be set up at County level by 2012.
- Possibility of district Health and Wellbeing Sub-Boards also being established.
- A new post of Director of Public Health to be jointly funded by Public Health England and the County Council.

- Public health will return to the top tier authorities - Lancashire County Council.

She stressed that the need for Borough Councils to have an involvement at local level was paramount in ongoing discussions and Members also expressed concern at the size and speed of the proposals for change. It was felt there would be greater choice for patients under the new proposals.

Discussions were underway about merging the three PCT's together with Blackburn-with-Darwen and Blackpool clustering to form one Lancashire wide supporting organisation for the GP Consortia.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Hilton be thanked for her informative report.

(b) Lancashire Scrutiny Partners Forum

The Chairman referred to the recent meeting of the forum held in Bacup and in particular to some work which had been undertaken by Rossendale Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to proposals being made by East Lancashire Primary Care Trust, particularly in relation to the replacement of Rossendale Hospital by Pendle Community Hospital and resultant difficulties which this posed for residents of Rossendale. As a result of some proactive work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in terms of lobbying and scrutiny work, some of the proposals had been changed for the benefit of Rossendale residents. The Chairman therefore wondered whether there were any lessons which could be learnt by this Committee in terms of health scrutiny work in the Ribble Valley.

The Community Development Officer also briefly referred to a presentation at the same meeting which had been made in relation to the Localism Bill which was currently going through Committee stage in Parliament. The Bill which was still very much work in progress, contained elements of already existing legislation. One danger was that the Bill, as currently written, contained certain sections which cancelled out already existing legislation, particularly in relation to Local Authority scrutiny. There were key sections in relation to health scrutiny and crime and disorder which would be both retained and strengthened under the new Bill.

Members then discussed the Localism Bill in terms of its impact and timescale and generally welcomed its introduction.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

678 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Principal Policy and Performance Officer presented her third report of 2010/11 which detailed the Council's performance against national and local

performance indicators. The report comprised two sets of information: Council's national indicators by exception for each of the quarters 2009/10 and summary of the Council's local performance indicators for the same period.

She reminded Members that at the last meeting of this Committee she had informed them of the forthcoming changes to performance management arrangements. The national indicator set was being replaced by a single comprehensive list of the data that Government expected Local Government to provide (The Single Data List). This single list had now been supplied and it was being checked to ensure that this Council could provide all of the data returns listed. A review of our performance information was now almost complete. She commented that for the next meeting of this Committee it was hoped that when the full set of performance information for 2010/11 was presented, the table would also make clear which indicators were being deleted and which would continue. A rationale was being sought for maintaining each indicator. It was either being used monitor service performance or was monitoring a local priority.

The Principal Policy and Performance Officer reported on a number of suggested changes to the format of the information which would be included in the next report.

Members then discussed the report in some detail and highlighted specific indicators and asked a number of questions of the Principal Policy and Performance Officer. In particular, concern was again expressed about the low numbers of health and safety inspections being carried out in relation to the agreed targets.

The Director of Community Services did offer some explanations as to why this figure was low which primarily were around a number of staffing issues and the prioritising of food safety in relation to health and safety issues.

Members then discussed several specific issues which both the Director of Community Services and the Principal Policy and Performance Officer gave responses to.

RESOLVED: That the:

- 1) Head of Environmental Health be invited to attend a future meeting of this Committee to explain how he deploys his limited resources in relation to health and safety inspections; and
- 2) Principal Policy and Performance Officer pass on to relevant officers Committee's wish to see the expected outcome icon element of this report properly completed for future reports.

679 REVIEW OF THE RIBBLE VALLEY WEBSITE

The Director of Community Services submitted his report which asked Members to consider a reference from Planning and Development Committee requesting that this Committee consider the operation of the Ribble Valley website.

He reminded Members that at its meeting on 16 December 2010, the Planning and Development Committee had resolved “that Committee ask Overview and Scrutiny Committee to investigate the operation and testing of the Council’s website, particularly in relation to the receipt of planning applications, and report back to this Committee in due course”. He explained that this recommendation arose from the fact that it had come to light that some householders’ comments on planning issues submitted through the Council’s website had not been picked up by Planning Officers prior to reporting to Committee. In terms of the Council’s reputation the damage, as measured by coverage in the press and other media, was significant. Since that time the duplication had been removed so that the same error could not be repeated.

He went on to explain the expectations of customers for a user friendly website which had to be balanced with limited staffing resources to monitor and keep the site constantly updated.

On 20 January 2011, the Director of Community Services had met with both the Chairmen of this Committee and Planning and Development Committee to consider how to take the request forward. After some discussion and a small amount of empirical testing, it was felt that the following represented a list of some of the key issues that might be explored further:

- Finding information/documents (searching the site).
- Contacting the Council (making comments or responding to consultation).
- Complaining (either in the formal sense through the Council’s complaints system or on a more day-to-day basis).
- Making service requests.
- Ensuring that the site is current/replacing outdated documents.

A number of options were then considered, ranging from employing consultants to come to look at the site, allowing Council’s customers to de-bug the system by responding to complaints and comments over time or Committee to organise a team of Councillors to work its way through the website testing as many parts of the site for the issues listed above.

Members then discussed the operation of the Council’s website in some detail. Whilst it was recognised that it was not perfect, it was also recognised that it was important to regularly test the system to ensure that similar problems did not occur again and that it was fit for purpose.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Committee agree to proceed with option 3, where Committee set in train a system of user testing by inviting Councillors to work as a team to work their way through the website testing as many parts of the site for the issues already identified as problems;

- 2) the Councillors forming this working group for the testing exercise will be Councillors J Sutcliffe, J B Hill, B Jones, R Hargreaves, I Sayers and J White; and
- 3) a report on the working group's finding be then reported back to Planning and Development Committee with any proposals for further action and also a report be submitted to this Committee.

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## REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

### (a) Member Training

Councillor Hind apologised for the lack of a written report, but reported on the progress which had been made on this matter. He felt that Member training needed to concentrate on changes in legislation and relate to new Councillors at the May elections. He had spoken to the Human Resources Section who were in the process of making relevant changes to their Member training regime.

One of his proposals was for a half day refresher course with four Members being chosen to work on a Councillors Guide. It was also proposed for one-to-one work on personal development plans to enable new Members to come up to speed with the demands of being a new Councillor.

There should also be in-service training in relation to new legislation such as the Localism Bill and radical changes in both planning and health legislation.

It was also felt that the Council should consider participation in the North West Employers Member Charter and the Council should attempt to obtain their Chartermark. The question of available budget should also be considered and more advantage perhaps should be taken of the on-line facilities offered by both the Local Government Association and local Government knowledge IdeA now Local Government Improvement and Development (LG Group). Finally he suggested that if these suggestions were acted upon then this Committee should re-visit the issue in January/February 2012 to check on what progress had been made.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

### (b) Energy Conservation in Council Owned Buildings

Councillor Sayers reported on a number of issues including:

- CCTV and IT department issues;
- borrowing thermal camera to look at Council owned buildings;
- lower voltage on electrical equipment;
- switching lights off in public conveniences;

- more methodical ways of switching off Council Office lights;
- more regular meter readings;
- refurbishments to CCTV control room heating.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.54pm.

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