

Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 5 April 2011, starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor J S Sutcliffe (Chairman)

Councillors:

D Berryman	I Sayers
A Gridley	M Thomas
R Hargreaves	N Walsh
B Jones	J H White
C Ross	

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

Also in attendance: Councillor B Hilton.

825 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors J Hill and T Hill.

826 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

827 MATTERS ARISING

Minute 677(a)(iii) Older People's Champions Network

Councillor Sayers asked whether the next meeting of this body scheduled for 21 July 2011 was still going ahead. Councillor Hilton confirmed that it was.

828 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

829 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

830 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Hilton updated Committee on the following matters:

(a) Health and Social Care White Paper Seminar at Deepdale, Preston

Speakers included Mike Calvert from LCC Adult Social Care, who spoke about problems with a challenging budget settlement. Stephen Gross addressed the issues of the management of the assessment process and direct payments from social care to the client, the importance of prevention and early intervention and the value of volunteering. Peter Higgins asked the meeting what type of consortia would best serve Lancashire as consultants were not happy that GP's were getting all the budgets and the consultants themselves were threatening to walk away from the process.

She then gave an update on NHS reforms which had been put on short-term pause by the Government:

- Some Ribble Valley GP's had applied to become Pathfinders.
- GP's and Practice Managers to have a meeting with Ribble Valley Borough Council Officers this week.
- Only one PCT now in Lancashire with three having merged into one.
- Health Watch England was now in shadow form.
- Planning and improvement governance meeting – Councillor Hilton to attend.

She also drew Committee's attention to the following:

- The Primary Care Trust would continue to take responsibility for consortia until March 2013.
- Health and Wellbeing Board – there was recognition that Borough Council's need to be involved in this process.
- Shadow Public Health Service – to be in place by 2012.

(b) Lancashire County Council Health Scrutiny Meeting

Lancashire County Council Health Scrutiny meeting had set up safeguarding boards with a number of recommendations:

- Protection of older and vulnerable people should be a statutory duty.
- Obtaining a national definition of "abuse" and "vulnerable adult" should be a priority.
- multi-agency training is essential and it is recommended that there should be no cuts in this budget.

- NHS staff in particular should be offered in-depth training.

Work planned for the next 12 months was discussed, including ongoing discussions between Lancashire County Council and Ribble Valley Borough Council on public health remit of the Health and Wellbeing Board, development of Health Watch and the clustering of PCT's. Health Watch would replace Lancashire Link and would have their first meeting tomorrow (Wednesday, 6 April 2011).

(c) North West Older People's Champions Network

North West Older People's Champions Network had set up three task and finish groups:

- Employment of Grandparents.
- Housing and Transport.
- Image of Older People.

A Councillor questioned whether the Housing and Transport Groups had linked in with Ribble Valley Community Transport and how Members could ensure that the voice of community transport was heard. Councillor Hilton confirmed that the Housing and Transport Groups looked at issues and groups across the whole of Lancashire.

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

831 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Principal Policy and Performance Officer informed Committee of changes in the Council's performance management framework. She commented that this framework had seen many changes over the past 12 months following the coalition government being formed. In October 2010 the Council received a letter from the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, outlining changes to Local Authority performance arrangements. The letter gave information on two areas of performance, the national indicator set and Local Area Agreements.

She had been using the period of change brought about by the coalition government to review all of the Council's performance management arrangements. A 'wiring' diagram had been produced in 2007 which outlined the Council's performance management and strategic planning framework. This had been updated to reflect the changes highlighted. She gave details of the key areas where changes would occur:

- The Council's Corporate Strategy.
- Service Planning.

- Performance Indicators.
- Local Area Agreements.
- Benchmarking and the Lancashire Performance Group.
- The Ribble Valley Locality Plan.
- Community aspirations and satisfaction.

Members asked a number of questions around individual indicators.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

832 REVIEW OF ENERGY USE IN RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL FACILITIES

Councillor Berryman and Councillor Sayers presented their report on the above matter and commented that the purpose of the review was to establish levels of energy use in the Council's facilities attempting to highlight any anomalous levels of use and to make recommendations for savings both now and in the future.

Approximately 18 months of utility bills had been provided, several brief interviews had been conducted and a site visit to the market entrance building had been made. Utility bills were analysed to ascertain monthly or quarterly usage in the main sites to establish patterns of use for analysis.

The annual spend on electricity by the Borough Council was approximately £60,000 and this was felt to be only likely to increase over the coming years. It was noted that the Council currently purchased its energy supplies via a central purchasing body which was the largest local authority purchasing consortium in the country.

There was a recognition of several innovative measures already take to reduce energy use by the Council including the lighting in the Council Chamber, soft starts for the compressors at Ribblesdale Pool, virtualised servers in the IT Section and changes to some of the fuels used in Council buildings specially from oil to gas at Ribblesdale Pool and electric to gas at Edisford Changing Rooms.

Details of levels of consumption at various sites were provided and details of gas use for 2009/10 were also itemised.

The following facilities were considered to be worthy of investigation:

- (a) Council Offices, where analysis of the electrical usage data showed some slightly odd patterns with high use of electricity during summer nights. The most likely reason for this was the need to run air conditioning to keep the IT servers cool at night.

- (b) The Market entrance building, which had a relatively high use of electricity with significantly more being used in the winter months, possibly due to antiquated electrical heating system.
- (c) Platform Gallery – data available showed fairly constant use, there was some variation within the year with slightly higher use in winter. Analysis was slightly complicated by irregular meter readings although this had been now rationalised to a single meter.
- (d) Salthill Depot – whilst the depot had only been occupied for 5 years, it had been built with energy economy in mind. The site was heated using oil as there was no gas supply to the area.

A number of future actions were suggested; short term all of the larger Council facilities should have a meter reading taken regularly, at least once every two months and preferably every month, to allow accurate tracking of use.

There were currently on the market voltage optimisation/stabilising devices which may reduce electrical demand in lighting, computing equipment and other appliances.

The use of virtual servers by the IT Section should not only reduce electrical use but also the heat output and necessary cooling by the AC units.

The relatively high electricity use in the Market entrance building would suggest a review of that facility, especially the heating system.

There were several technologies that could be looked at in the short-term such as air curtains and solar glass/double glazing when suitable refurbishment schemes were undertaken.

Phase Change Materials (PCM's) had recently been put on the market as a means to smooth out temperature fluctuations in industrial office buildings.

A thermal imaging infrared camera survey of the larger Council facilities may yield some good information about the insulation of the buildings. Mid-term to long-term we should take the opportunity of feed-in tariffs which was currently being missed by the Council. Legislation now allows Councils to generate electricity and sell it to the National Grid. There had been a proposal for a wind turbine at Roefield which was ultimately dropped but currently the fastest advances taking place in renewable energy are in photovoltaic panels. There are several south facing roofs on the buildings which the Council own which could be fitted with these panels. In the medium to long-term as heating systems need replacing, the Council should look at investing in more innovative technology which may have higher capital costs but lower running costs.

Councillor Sayers then gave more detailed information of 4 potential areas where technology could benefit energy savings:

1. Voltage control.

2. Phase change materials.
3. Infrared camera.
4. Photovoltaic panels.

The Director of Community Services gave his comments on the findings of the report which reflected the fact that much good work had already been done by appropriate officers although there were still areas which could be improved. He assured Committee that officers would incorporate the findings of the report into the Council's energy-management operation where possible.

RESOLVED: That

1. Councillors Berryman and Sayers be thanked for their report;
2. a final version be provided for the Director of Community Services and relevant officers; and
3. the findings of this report be shared with those officers and also submitted to Community Committee in due course.

833 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That by virtue of the next item of business being Exempt Information under Category 7 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be now excluded from the meeting.

834 REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS 2010/11

The Community Development Officer presented his annual report on the number, nature and content and action taken on formal complaints received from the 1 April 2010 to the 31 March 2011.

He reminded Members that the Council had operated a Complaints Procedure since the early 1990's. This procedure had recently been reviewed in November 2010 and reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the last meeting. A number of changes were made to our procedure at that time and Committee resolved to:

- reject the idea of doing away with the Complaints Appeal Panel instead offer the complainant the option of either going to Corporate Management Team or to the Complaints Panel;
- agree to develop a pool of Councillors drawn from all Members of the Council by invitation to form the Complaints Appeal Panels;
- agree that necessary training with relevant complaints officers be updated;
- endeavour to ensure that adequate training is given to all pool Members and a comprehensive briefing be undertaken for those panel Members;

- ensure that relevant Ward Members are made aware of any complaints in their Ward; and
- ask officers to look at the authority of the panel and clarify the latitude that the Complaints Appeal Panel has in relation to committee and service provision.

He reported that during 2010/11 there had been an increasing number of referrals to the Complaints Appeal Panel stage with 5 out of this year's total of 16 complaints going to Complaints Panel. Over the 12 month period the breakdown of the type of complaints received was as follows:

Planning	-	7
Refuse Collection	-	2
Environmental Health	-	2
Building Regulation	-	1
Events Safety Advisory Group	-	1
Sewers	-	1
Corporate Policy	-	1
Outdoor Recreation	-	1

Members then discussed the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.47pm.

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