

Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 31 January 2012, starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor M Thomas (Chairman)

Councillors:

R Bennett	S Knox
S Bibby	M Robinson
I Brown	C Ross
S Carefoot	I Sayers
P Dowson	N C Walsh
J Hill (6.36pm)	J White

In attendance: Director of Community Services, Head of Cultural and Leisure Services, Principal Policy and Performance Officer.

698 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor K Horkin.

699 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

700 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

701 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

702 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

703 REPORT FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Hilton reported on a recent meeting of the Lancashire County Council Overview and Scrutiny Health Committee where key issues had been discussed:

- Revenue Budget update.
- Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust.
- Reconfiguration of the dementia services in Lancashire.

She also gave a comprehensive update on the ongoing NHS reforms. Amongst the issues which she reported upon were:

- the split of the NHS into health care and public health;

- budget savings of £20 billion by 2014/15;
- concerns of various professional bodies (BMA, Royal College of Nurses and Royal College of Midwives);
- clustering of five Lancashire PCT's into one pan Lancashire model;
- Primary Care Trust to be abolished by 31 March 2013;
- the establishment of six clinical commissioning groups;
- abolition of strategic health authority by 2013;
- establishment of Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board for Lancashire;
- the imminent appointment of a Director of Public Health for Lancashire;
- Health Watch to replace Lancashire Links;
- NHS framework;
- NHS and Local Government to work closer and build new relationships.

Members then asked a number of questions of Councillor Hilton.

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

704 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Principal Policy and Performance Officer presented her third report of 2011/12 which detailed the Council's performance against our local performance indicators. The report comprised quarterly figures for all our indicators reporting by exception.

Members then asked a number of questions in relation to the following performance indicators:

- EH1;
- EH2;
- FS6;
- FS10;
- PL2;
- PL14b;
- PL14c;
- RH5; and
- CL15.

The Chairman commented that the annual review would be undertaken by Heads of Service on all their performance indicators and in particular looking at setting three-year targets. Information will be included in the year end report which will be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

705 REPORT OF WORKING GROUPS

(a) Functioning of this Committee

The Chairman commented that this report was now 90% complete and he aimed to present the final report at the next meeting of this Committee.

He commented that the report would contain a reference to the recent trip by Members and Officers to Richmondshire in North Yorkshire which, although interesting, had shown that Richmondshire operated a totally different Overview and Scrutiny regime to the one operated by the Council.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(b) Member Training

Councillor Bibby referred to her written report and also to a circulated summary of the main points and a number of recommendations to be taken forward.

She commented that Member training was a difficult area to tackle, as there were varying degrees of knowledge and length of service amongst serving Councillors. A lot depended upon the commitment of individual Councillors. She acknowledged that whilst Personnel Section had a list of courses undertaken by Members, this was by no means complete. She also pointed out the wide variety of courses available for Councillors to attend.

One of the key areas was for more experienced Councillors to act as mentors to help train newer Members. She reported that Councillor Sherras had offered to put on a training session for all Councillors on the planning system, aided by the Green Book manual which he had helped to develop with Planning Officers. Other areas of training that could be carried out in-house included IT, Licensing and Budgeting. We would also learn from neighbouring Councils such as Hyndburn and South Ribble.

She commented that she had discussed her report with the Head of Human Resources who was supportive of the main thrust of the report. Members welcomed the report.

RESOLVED: That it be recommended to Personnel Committee that:

1. they adopt a Member Development Framework;
2. they provide a comprehensive up to date induction course for new Councillors that delivered an overview of Council business within a month of election;
3. they work with a training representative/champion from Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Council Leader to nominate Council mentors to train new Members in the practicalities of Committee procedures and protocol;
4. they ensure that all Councillors have a copy of competencies appropriate to Councillor duties;

5. they check that the system for notifying and recording Councillor training development is effective and that feedback from training is recorded for future consideration of training provision;
6. they liaise with training representatives/champions from Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an ongoing basis to find out what training Councillors need;
7. they arrange for in-house training, (currently there were requests for planning training and IT training). It was envisaged that planning training would be undertaken by the Chairman of Planning and Development Committee and that IT training would be discussed as to the best option for provision;
8. they ensure that all relevant opportunities for training and development were notified to all Councillors;
9. they plan the next stage of Councillor training and development, other in-house training and going forward, Councillor training and development plans and work steadily towards the North West Charter on Member Training and Development; and
10. Councillor Bibby be thanked for her excellent report.

(c) Safeguarding

The Head of Cultural and Leisure Services referred to Minute 566(c) of Committee dated 16 December 2011 and now gave an update on progress being made towards developing a Safeguarding Policy for Ribble Valley Borough Council.

He provided a paper on the policy context, on why safeguarding was important, the core principles, what was meant by safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and a draft safeguarding procedure including key staff contacts.

An Action Plan had also been developed listing issues, detail, action, responsible persons and timescale.

Finally three examples of child protection worksheets were circulated. These were around the areas of social contact, physical contact and first aid and administration of medication. These contained some basic do's and don'ts and courses of action for staff involved.

Members then discussed the report and the wider implications of safeguarding.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(d) Energy Efficiency in Council Owned Buildings

Councillor Sayers reported that the next meeting of the Joint Working Group of Members of Community Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee would meet tomorrow evening, 1 February 2012.

He commented favourably on the work which had already been undertaken by officers within budget constraints and highlighted individual areas where savings had already been achieved.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(e) Council Website

The Chairman reminded Members that this Working Group had been led by Councillor A Knox but, as Councillor Knox was no longer a Member of this Committee, a fresh approach was needed. He suggested the formation of a new Working Group consisting of Councillors Sayers, Bibby and White to look at the issues raised by Planning and Development Committee.

The Director of Community Services explained the system in place for putting items onto the website and monitoring of articles on there and its general upkeep.

RESOLVED: That

1. the report be noted; and
2. a further report be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm.

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