

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 8

meeting date: TUESDAY, 3 APRIL 2012
title: ANNUAL REPORT (YEAR 2011/12)
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Ribble Valley Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee have continued to find its work both stimulating and effective. The Committee has been involved in the following:

1. Acting as the Council's unbiased and independent scrutiny authority.
2. Selecting and completing packages of work to the benefit of the Council, which do not easily lie within other organisations.
3. Testing the health of the Council by reviewing and commenting on the Council's Performance Indicators.
4. Initiating and successfully establishing a Performance Indicator clinic for the improvement of selected areas of the Council's performance.

The majority of the work carried out by the Committee has centred on preparing and completing packages of work which will benefit the Council, but would not easily lie within the Terms of Reference of other Ribble Valley Borough Council Committees, the Corporate Management Team or outside bodies. This year these have included the following:

1. The expansion and development of the Energy Efficiency programme started in 2010 and now passed to the Community Committee to form the basis of a joint panel to examine energy efficiency measures that may be implemented within the Council for the improvement and efficiency of its energy programme.
2. The introduction of a Councillor Training Programme which could benefit all of the Members using resources that already exist or can be implemented at very little cost. The first phase of this work is due to be completed by April 2012 in time to be further development in 2012. Subject to the report being accepted by the Committee.
3. Safeguarding: Whilst the Borough Council has had a Child Protection Policy in place for a number of years, its role has expanded over recent years, particularly to partnership work with other agencies. There is a real need for more robust procedures within our current arrangements with East Lancashire where we are commissioned to deliver a range of healthy lifestyle programmes.

A new Safeguarding Policy has been developed and was submitted to Policy and Finance Committee for approval at their recent meeting.

4. A working group was established to examine the operation of the current Overview and Scrutiny Committee, its requirement and to update its Terms of Reference. This subject is expected to be complete by April 2012 and passed to the Policy and Finance Committee for consideration of its findings.

5. The Committee have also examined the operation of the Council's website. Although this has improved considerably during 2011/12 further improvements are expected with the introduction into the IT Section of an officer who will have some responsibility for this area.
6. A full review has been carried out of Members involvement with Outside Bodies. This review was completed by December 2011 and passed for action to the Policy and Finance Committee.
7. During the review of the first Quarterly Performance Indicators, it was noted that several PI's were either in the red and forecast to stay there, or in the red and struggling. Five PI's in all were identified, of these two were referred to the relevant Committee and were subject to examination which resulted in the establishment of new targets which would be more realistic to achieve in the future. Three of the five (concerned housing), a Performance Clinic was formed and the 3 PIs discussed between the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Health and Housing Committee and the responsible Council Officer. This resulted in an acceptable way ahead being established for the PIs to be reviewed again in the New Year (2012).

Finally during the year 2011/12, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as the Council's Scrutineer, has not been required either to investigate any shortfalls in the Ribble Valley Borough Council operations, or to deal with any Call-In procedure during this time.

The Committee look forward to receiving a variety of new tasks for 2012 and prioritising them into effective working groups that can improve the operation, efficiency and cost effectiveness of Ribble Valley Borough Council in these acknowledged times of stringent restraint.

COUNCILLOR M J THOMAS

Members of Overview & Scrutiny Committee

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Vice Chair:

Members: Councillor R Bennett
 Councillor S Bibby
 Councillor I Brown
 Councillor S Carefoot
 Councillor P Dowson
 Councillor J Hill
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