

**REPORT OF THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR OF THE POLICY AND REVIEW
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

1. Purpose of the Report

This report presents a brief outline for all Committees and their approach to topic reviews since the last regular meeting of the Policy and Review Committee on the 18th November.

2. Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme – brief overview for each Committee:

Children’s services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Attainment

The Committee received a presentation at their meeting on the 25th November, outlining the attainment of children in the borough: This included a comparison with other authorities and details of achievements over time in the borough. They also received a detailed presentation setting out the interventions to ensure that underachieving groups achieve their potential and improve performance against other groups. This information will form the basis of discussions with the head teacher of Beardwood High School and trade union representatives who will discuss the issue with the Committee early in the New Year.

Child poverty

A further meeting is being arranged to discuss issues arising from a presentation by the Strategic Director for Children’s Services. Comparisons will then be made with other Authorities, using the Child Poverty Action Group and the Joseph Rowntree Trust as critical friends. Contact has been established with other authorities who lead the field in this area of provision. The Committee will then look at ways that the authority can develop in the future to meet its requirements and the government’s targets to eliminate child poverty by the year 2020.

Integrated Youth Support Services

This work is being jointly carried out with the Blackburn with Darwen Youth Forum who will deliver their report on the issue in March next year – work is ongoing. The Committee received a presentation from the Youth Forum at the last meeting with an overview on what they plan to do. There are a number of further visits are in the process of being arranged including Bolton Lads and Girls Club and other youth clubs in the borough.

Recommendations

In January (the evening before Council) the Committee will be meeting to look at the recommendations from last year in the New Year and this will ensure that the progress of the Committee is maintained addressed and real benefit achieved.

Sustainable Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Housing Market Renewal

A meeting is being arranged with the Chief Executive of Regenerate Pennine Lancashire to discuss progress of the programme in the borough and how this will be taken forward into the future. This will be incorporated with a tour of examples of HMR in the borough.

Customer services

Following on from an overview report on this topic, a sub group will be established and will provide recommendations to the Committee. A fact finding meeting will be set up first with the Director of Neighbourhoods, Housing and Customer Services to put together information for Members to develop questions for putting to the Executive Member. Members want to look at:

How we got to where we are now and how the original vision of Bdirect is delivered and amended to meet the needs of the customer. Where we are heading? How are we doing- feed back from customers, inspections etc?

Re:refresh

Overview presentation received at the November meeting from which Members are looking to visit refresh schemes in the community in the New Year.

Call In

A Call In of Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment Process and a Proposed Renewal Area for Griffin was held in place of the scheduled Committee meeting on the 4th December.

Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Dentistry

Mindful of recent feedback regarding the size of the work programme, the Committee agreed at their November meeting to close Dentistry topic.

Local Strategic Partnership

At the same meeting the committee held discussions with the Chair of the LSP Health thematic group on the work programme being delivered under the LSP umbrella.

Day Care Services Review task and Adult Safeguarding task groups.

The Committee's two task groups (Day Care services and Adult safeguarding) reported back recent meetings and future areas of interest. The work on both these topics remains ongoing, however members of the Committee are mindful of the burgeoning size of the overall work programme.

Care Quality Commission

It has reached that time of year when the Care Quality Commission – NHS asks Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council to undertake a series of evidence gathering sessions that support final response. However the Committee still need to agree how to respond as some of the organisations have not been engaged with the Committee throughout the year.

Regeneration and Technical Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Recommendations

In November the Committee received feedback from the Executive Member on recommendations they had made during 2008-09. The feedback was largely positive, as most recommendations had been accepted or implemented, with plausible explanations given for those that had not.

Markets

Members of the Committee have been out to the markets, conducting surveys with traders, the outcomes of which discussed with the Executive Member, following which, an overview of the outcomes and the responses of the Executive Member were shared with those who had participated.

Small to Medium Enterprise assistance from Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council

The Committee are in the process of gathering evidence of advice given to small businesses on the help available to them – as part of this review discussion with the Executive Member on information found – visited the innovation centre - to view first hand the advice they were giving to members cold calling as mystery shoppers.

Highways

The Committee received an outline report on HAMIS.

Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Local Strategic Partnership – Finance group

The Chair of the LSP and the Chair of the LSP finance group held Discussions with the Committee – this was as a result of earlier requests from Members of the Committee to establish the work programme and lines of accountability within the LSP structure and its relationship with council and wider partnership decision making processes.

Gateway Review

The Director for Regeneration gave an updates presentation on the Gateway review which was largely well- received by the Committee. However some questions still remain outstanding on process and finance which there is a commitment to respond to.

Recommendations

Positive feedback on recommendations, largely the same as Regeneration and Technical Overview and Scrutiny Committee; the Committee received feedback from the Executive Member on recommendations they had made during 2008-09. The feedback was mainly positive, as most recommendations had been accepted or implemented, with plausible explanations given for those that had not.

Policy and Review Committee

Following an Extraordinary meeting of the Policy and Review Committee on 13th January 2010 to hear the Call In of the Executive Member Decision on PTS Plumbers Merchants, Byrom Street, Blackburn. In accordance with the Call In procedure and following a named vote, the Committee resolved to accept the decision with the following additional recommendations: a) That Legal Services look at the issue relating to listing background papers to both Part 1 and Part 2 Executive Board and Executive Member reports. b) That the level of detail included in briefing reports be reviewed to ensure that all relevant information is available to Members. The Minutes of the meeting will be submitted to the next meeting of the Policy and Review Committee on 24th February.

3. Recommendations

Members are asked to note this report.

Derek Hardman
Chair

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Vice Chair

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