

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

meeting date: TUESDAY 17 OCTOBER 2023
title: GENERAL REPORT
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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update committee on a variety of developments in sports, arts and community development and performance of the Platform Gallery.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:
 - Helping to make people's lives healthier and safer
 - To ensure a well-managed Council

2 CASTLE KEEP

A structural survey has been carried out as part of the preparatory work for repointing the Castle Keep.

The findings from this report show serious concerns about the various openings into the structure. There are 5 in total plus the fireplace.

Such was the concern expressed that a decision was taken on 29/9/23 to close off all access to the Castle Keep.

In the meantime, further information has been sought from the structural engineers on the best way to both secure the site and rectify the issues as part of the overall repointing project.

Consultation with Historic England is continuing, and the full project is being scoped to ensure the long term safety of the castle.

The bonfire organisers will use an alternative launch site for the fireworks for this years event.

3 RIBBLESDALE POOL

A number of operational opportunities have been identified to help with improving energy efficiency and the following measures are being implemented; -

As a first step procedures for collating energy information, analysis and target setting have been introduced which includes taking daily meter readings of gas and electricity consumption for comparison of daily usage and trends.

The Pool Hall ventilation system has been turned down out of hours. Settings have been adjusted to reduce the Pool Hall supply overnight whilst maintaining the humidity level below the recommended level of 60%. Slight adjustments have been made to the day-time air temperatures so that they are now at or below the water temperature. Overnight the temperature can be lowered even further, and these overall reductions are expected to make savings without compromising user experience or humidity levels.

Pool covers are positioned on both the Main Pool and Teaching Pools every night and an application has been submitted to Sport England's Pool Support Fund capital programme (2nd Phase) to purchase new automated pool covers for the Main Pool.

Reducing pool water circulation out of hours is another measure in conserving electricity consumption. The circulation rates overnight have been reduced to below 50% of normal running.

Further planned work is the insulation of pipework and valves in the plant room and improving insulation between areas requiring different temperatures; (such as the pool hall and reception areas).

Improvements and maintenance to the Building Management System (B.M.S.) have also been identified including;

- Replacement of combined temperature and humidity space sensors required to achieve full control.
- Work to enable remote operation of Teaching Pool temperatures.
- Installation of Ethernet cabling to allow improved remote connection with the Council Offices for system monitoring purposes.

4. SPORT ENGLAND SUPPOT FUND PHASE 1

Sport England announced earlier this year that they were setting up a £20m fund to support pools in tackling rising energy costs. The intention of the fund was to help Councils and operators with these cost increases thereby avoiding pool closures.

The Council applied for funding and we were recently notified that our bid had not been successful. Not surprisingly the fund was oversubscribed, and indices of deprivation played a part in determining where the funding was allocated. Funding was also prioritised to those pools at risk of imminent closure.

A second phase of funding, £40m has been allocated to capital schemes designed to help reduce energy costs. The Council has registered its interest for this fund and will be making an application for funding to upgrade the main pool cover.

5. PLAY AREAS

Work has progressed steadily on the refurbishment programme for the play areas. Wet pour safety surfaces have been replaced or repaired at Mardale, John Smiths in Longridge and Henthorn in Clitheroe.

It has proved very difficult to secure a painting contractor to strip and repaint play equipment. A contractor has now been secured who has previously worked in Clitheroe and Longridge.

The poor weather over recent weeks has hampered both contractors, though they will continue to carry out their work as long as they can into the Autumn. Neither pieces of work can be carried out once temperature levels drop and air moisture increases.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE

A report on Climate Change was presented to Economic Development Committee on the 28th September. This report was to establish the priorities for the work of the Climate Change Working Group. This area of work is cross cutting across other committees, in particular the Community Committee. Many of the proposed projects will be delivered by officers in Community Services and affect our services. The proposed areas of work for the working group are summarised below:

1. Overseeing the refresh of the Climate Change Strategy and action plan based on the 2023 Peoples Survey – Life in Ribble Valley.
2. The installation of solar panels at Council Offices
3. In March 2023, Policy and Finance Committee agreed that an invest to save scheme be developed to add solar panels to the council office buildings. Agreement has now been granted by Electricity North West to connect solar panels to the electrical grid. A company is now in the process of final design for the panels.
4. The installation of Electrical Vehicle Chargers on rural car parks and at Longridge and Edisford.
5. In September 2023 Policy and Finance Committee agreed that £50k of the Rural Prosperity Funding for 23/24 could be used to install electrical vehicles chargers in five of our village car parks. An independent report has been completed providing possible locations and confirming electrical supplies can be accessed. We are now putting together a tender for the works to ensure that the Council gets the best possible return from any investment. Funding is being sought from the Shared Prosperity Fund for further charging points at Edisford and Longridge.
6. The feasibility of rolling out HVO to all refuse vehicles.
7. In March 2023, Community Committee allocated £15k funding to pilot the use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil in our refuse fleet. A tank has been installed at Salthill depot and HVO is now being used in certain vehicles. The use of HVO can reduce Carbon emissions by approximately 80 percent and is likely have the biggest impact of any one scheme. HVO is however more expensive than diesel and a clear business case will need to be prepared following the pilot in order for members to assess the benefits against the increased cost.
8. Upgrading all Council Office lighting to LED.
9. In March 2023, Policy and Finance Committee agreed capital funding of £97.75k for the upgrade of the electrical systems and further installation of LED lighting in Council offices. This scheme will ensure that all lighting used in Council Offices is energy efficient and is controlled effectively.
10. Launching a recycling campaign.

11. The collection and disposal of both domestic and commercial waste has a significant impact on the environment due to the high use of fossil fuels used in collection but also through the impact of landfill and the treatment of waste. Ribble Valley does not compare favourably with other Lancashire Districts in terms of recycling, coming seventh lowest out of twelve. Lancashire also has very low recycling rates generally and, as a consequence, Ribble Valley does not compare well nationally either, coming 136th out of 174 districts. It is proposed that the climate change working group work in collaboration with the officer waste strategy group to better promote recycling and encourage residents to recycle and separate their waste correctly.
12. Launching a “Good Housekeeping” initiative for staff to reduce energy and waste.
13. A low cost/no cost initiative to further reduce our carbon emissions is to promote good practice in the efficient use of energy in all aspects of our work. An awareness and monitoring campaign will be developed which will also look at the possible use of electric pool cars and other sustainable transport options for staff.

7 WASTE COLLECTION

A Continual Improvement group has been established to look at Waste collection in the Borough and how it can be improved whilst also implementing the requirement of the Environment Act 2021.

The waste collection services in Ribble Valley are considered to be the best in Lancashire. We are the only authority offering a weekly general waste collection and a free garden waste service.

A full report will be provided to next committee, however key highlights of the work are:

The introduction of a POPS (Persistent Organic Pollutants) collection service. These materials are generally soft furnishings which when put in landfill can pollute watercourses. Legislation is now in force that requires us to collect all POPS material separately and for it to be incinerated. This process is now fully implemented and a replacement vehicle is budgeted for which will be purchased early next year, following trials with different vehicle types.

A further new waste stream that will be introduced in the next year or so is food waste. Details remain sketchy at the moment and an implementation date is not set, however best estimates suggest towards the end of 2025. This will require weekly collections and separate receptacles. The group are working on options to present to Committee once the government provide greater detail.

Through training of frontline staff we are working to reduce contamination in bins and drive better recycling. We are also developing a borough wide recycling campaign crossing over with our climate change work. Recycling for Quarter One this year saw a 72% increase up to 39.6%. This moves us up to be one of the best performing authorities in Lancashire.

In total we collect 57,000 bins each week from 28,500 households and perform better than most regarding bins that are missed.

Improvements can always be made however and we are working to improve services by examining how we best work with the call centre and how we best utilise technology

such as mobile phones in Cabs. We are also examining how we can better promote trade waste to generate further income.

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