

MINUTES OF: THE CABINET

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 27th November 2019

**Present: Councillor Barnes (Chair)
Councillors Hughes, Oakes Serridge and Walmsley**

**In Attendance: Ms C Birtwistle, Monitoring Officer
Mr P Seddon, Head of Finance
Ms A Wilkins, Locality Officer, Communities Team
Mr M Coogan, Strategic Housing Manager
Mr P Morton, PPU Manager
Mrs J Cook, Committee and Member Services Officer
Mr K Masser**

**Also Present: Councillors Cheetham, Haslam-Jones and Haworth
2 members of the public**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies were received from Councillor Lythgoe.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11th September 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

The Leader of the Council noted that at the last meeting she had agreed to write to Lancashire County Council regarding Disabled Facilities Grants and Occupational Therapists. No response had been received to date and the Leader asked that the County Councillor present chase this item up.

3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

3.1 There were no urgent items.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

4.1 There were no declarations of interest.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

5.1 No written questions had been submitted and there were no questions from members of the public.

6. AMENDMENTS TO THE PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

- 6.1 The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Customers outlined the report which asked members to approve the amendments to the Prevention of Homelessness Strategy. The amendments were outlined and members were reminded to report any homelessness issues to the Housing Team.
- 6.2 The Strategic Housing Manager updated members on the Action plan that would be formulated and the impact of the Rough Sleeper Strategy and the Homelessness Reduction Act. He provided the meeting with data which demonstrated that the Council had been performing well, against national trends. Benchmarking work had been carried out and it was agreed to make this information available to members.
- 6.3 Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:
- The Council was bucking the trend nationally and this was a credit to the team.
 - The team was prevention focussed and had good systems in place.
- 6.4 In response to questions raised it was noted that:
- Access to refuges and domestic abuse services were clarified and it was noted that the Council would be bidding for further funding. More communication of domestic abuse support was required and this would be picked up with the Communications Team.
 - Thanks were noted to the Housing Team.

Resolved:

1. Members approved the amendments to the Prevention of Homelessness Strategy
2. All future minor amendments to the Prevention of Homelessness Strategy were delegated to the relevant Director in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Reason for Decision:

The strategy identifies how the Council endeavours to increase the prevention of homelessness in Rossendale and fulfil its statutory duties under part VII of the Housing Act 1996 and amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, the Localism Act 2011 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

7. AMENDMENTS TO THE DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT POLICY

- 7.1 The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Customers outlined the report which asked members to approve the amended Disabled Facilities Grant Policy, along with the appendices. The amendments were outlined and would allow greater flexibility in terms of displacement grants and raising the discretionary limit for large and complex jobs.

7.2 The Strategic Housing Manager outlined the rationale behind the two amendments and gave brief examples of how this had been effective. It was noted that use of the raised discretionary limit would be rare, but if it was required, then provision was in place.

7.3 Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- The positive direction of travel was noted.
- More publicity would be done on the DFG Policy after the elections.
- Staffing would be kept under review and it was noted that the funding could be used for staffing. There was shortage of staffing expertise in this area.

Resolved:

1. Members approved the amended Disabled Facilities Grant Policy, along with the appendices.
2. All future minor amendments to the Disabled Facilities Grant Policy 2020 were delegated to the relevant Director in consultation with the Portfolio Holder

Reason for Decision:

The new draft policy will assist the DFG grant from the Better Care Fund and improve health outcomes for the residents of Rossendale with disabilities.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

8. UPDATE ON ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME ENFORCEMENT

8.1 The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Customers outlined the report which asked members to note the contents of the report and approve an extension of the current trial period to allow further evaluation and full procurement process, subject to a 60 day notice period from both parties. Members' attention was drawn to the appendices to the report which outlined good news stories and the data. The positive impact on town centres was noted.

8.2 In response to questions raised it was noted that:

- This was just one element of improvement and work was ongoing with regards to commercial waste, fly tipping and other areas. The introduction of PSPOs had had a positive impact on dog fouling.

Resolved:

1. That members noted the contents of the report and approved an extension of the current trial period to allow further evaluation and full procurement process, subject to a 60 day notice period from both parties.

Reason for Decision:

The continuation of the current arrangements for a period not exceeding 12 months will allow a full evaluation of the impact of the trial, along with an assessment of the recently introduced Public Space Protection Orders.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

9. ANNUAL AIR QUALITY REPORT 2019

- 9.1 The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Customers outlined the report which asked members to note the content of the report in relation to the Annual Air Quality report. 20 locations were monitored across the Borough and 2 locations had shown higher than the health based objective for nitrogen dioxide, being Manchester Road, Haslingden and Bacup Road, Rawtenstall. Work had been completed or was in progress to improve air quality which included changing road signage and the Spinning Point/Bus Station developments.
- 9.2 Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:
- It was noted this was a statutory report which came before the Cabinet annually.

Resolved:

1. That members noted the content of the report in relation to the Annual Air Quality report.

Reason for Decision:

Work to identify air quality problems will continue to be a priority for the Council's Public Protection Unit. However success in improving the air that we breathe relies on action by a wide range of organisations and individuals.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

10. AIR QUALITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY 2019

- 10.1 The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Customers outlined the report which asked members to approve the commencement of a formal consultation exercise in relation to the draft Air Quality and Climate Change Strategy. The Strategy would look at practical actions the council could take on a daily basis, as well as engaging with the wider community.
- 10.2 The PPU Manager outlined other work that was ongoing with regards to electric vehicle charging points and the five strategic commitments that had been identified.
- 10.3 Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:
- Thanks were noted to the PPU Team for the work on this matter.
 - The impact of climate change locally was noted.
 - The Strategy would need to be mindful of the financial challenges facing the council.
 - A Climate Change Champion would be appointed at Full Council.

Resolved:

1. That members approved the commencement of a formal consultation exercise in relation to the draft Air Quality and Climate Change Strategy.

Reason for Decision:

Work to identify air quality problems and tackle Climate Change will continue to be a priority for the Council's Public Protection Unit. However success in improving the air that we breathe relies on action by a wide range of organisations and individuals. The adoption of a Climate Change Strategy will provide long term direction in reducing the impact of poor air quality and climate change across the borough and help achieve our carbon reduction targets.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

11. HEALTH AND WELLBEING UPDATE

11.1 The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Customers outlined the report which asked members to note the contents. The report outlined the role of district councils in contributing to health and wellbeing and gave clarity and information regarding the specific projects in which the Council was a delivery partner. These projects included Rossendale Works, Summer Holiday Food and Healthy Place, Healthy Future. The report highlighted the positive work being carried out by the Communities Team.

11.2 Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- District councils had a significant role to play in the health and wellbeing agenda.
- The Council linked in with LCC Public Health and work was currently ongoing regarding suicide rates within Rossendale.
- The Council needed to ensure representation at relevant meetings.

Resolved:

1. That members noted the information on the role of district councils in contributing to the health and wellbeing of local people.
2. That members noted the information about health structures, partnerships and priorities in Rossendale and across East Lancashire.
3. That members noted specific health and wellbeing projects in which the Council was a delivery partner.
4. That members ensured representation and attendance at key local health partnerships to influence services and secure resources for the borough and improve the health and wellbeing of local people.

Reason for Decision:

It is essential that Rossendale Borough Council engages with the emerging local health partnerships and priorities to influence services and secure maximum resources for the borough to begin to address health inequalities and help identify early interventions and prevention projects to be delivered jointly with partners.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

12. COMMUNITY PROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS UPDATE REPORT

12.1 The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Customers outlined the report outlined the work carried out by the Communities Team and key projects and partnerships. This included event support, Love Parks, community awards and the Summer Holiday Food Project.

12.2 Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- The work carried out by the Communities Team put the council at the heart of the community and thanks were noted to the Communities Team for their work.

Resolved:

1. That members noted the content of the report.

Reason for Decision:

For members to note progress made on a number of community projects and partnerships.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

13. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT 2019/20 Q2

13.1 The Portfolio Holder for Resources outlined the report which asked members to note the content of the report and approve the application of surplus monies into the Transitional Reserve in the sum of £282k. The favourable one-off variances were noted, along with the adverse one-off variances.

Resolved:

1. That members noted the content of the report.
2. That members approved the application of surplus monies into the Transitional Reserve.

Reason for Decision:

Robust monitoring of the General Fund and MTFs is essential to control risks.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

14. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE

14.1 The Portfolio Holder for Resources outlined the report which asked members to note and consider the content of the report and make any further recommendations to the report and/or approve the contents and strategic direction of the report. The report outlined a positive direction of travel and noted the risks that the Council still had to take into account. The positive financial implications of the 2019 pension scheme valuation and the efforts of the Section 151 Officer and the Leader were noted. The revenue assumptions were highlighted along with the impact of decline of the New

Homes Bonus, ceasing of the Revenue Support Grant and the impact of the NNDR pooling arrangements.

14.2 Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- The positive direction of travel was noted, however there were financial uncertainties to take into account.
- The work of the Section 151 Officer, the Finance Team and the Economic Development Team was noted and Officers were thanked.

Resolved:

1. That members noted and considered the content of the report.
2. That members approved the strategic direction of the report.

Reason for Decision:

The Council must remain focused on delivering efficiencies and/or income generation in order to ensure balanced and fully funded budgets over the medium term as it still has some way to go. Failure to do this will result in an accelerated use of finite available reserves.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

15. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Resolved:

That the public and press be excluded from the following items of business under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 since the items involved the likely disclosure of exempt information under Paragraphs 1 and 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

16. SUNDRY DEBT MANAGEMENT POLICY (REVIEW OCTOBER 2019)

16.1 Members considered the Sundry Debt Management Policy report which was introduced by the Portfolio Holder for Resources.

16.2 Discussion took place on the item and officers and the Portfolio Holder for Resources provided clarification where requested.

Resolved:

1. That members approved the revisions.

Reason for Decision:

A robust Policy is required to ensure that debts are pursued and collected in a fair and impartial manner, but with the Council's MTFs funding challenges in mind.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 7.30pm

_____ CHAIR _____ DATE