

COUNCILLOR ANNE CHEETHAM, DEPUTY MAYOR

MINUTES OF: THE COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF ROSSENDALE

DATE OF MEETING: 8th September 2021

PRESENT: The Deputy Mayor Councillor Cheetham (in the Chair)
Councillors Ashworth, A. Barnes, S. Barnes, Brennan, James Eaton, Janet Eaton, Essex, Gill, Haworth, Johnson, Kenyon, MacNae, Marriott, Morris, Neal, Pendlebury, Powell, Procter, Rigby, Rooke, Serridge, Steen, Stevens (in part), Thompson, Walmsley, Whitehead and Woods.

IN ATTENDANCE: Neil Shaw, Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service
Clare Birtwistle, Head of Legal Services / Monitoring Officer
Karen Spencer, Head of Finance/S151 Officer
Adam Allen, Director of Communities
Cath Burns, Director of Economic Development
John Illingworth, Mayor's Attendant

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: By remote access – 3 public observers.
1 Press

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received for Councillors Adshead, L. Barnes, Foxcroft, Hughes, Kempson, Kostyan, Lythgoe and Oakes.

2. Minutes

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th July 2021 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

3. Urgent Items of Business

The Deputy Mayor reported that there was one urgent item of business. Members were asked to confirm the appointment of the Director of Economic Development.

Councillors A Barnes, Neal, Pendlebury and Cheetham thanked Cath Burns for her hard work and wished her well.

Resolved:

That Mandy Lewis be agreed as the Director of Economic Development subject to HR policies, references and clearances being completed.

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Communications from the Mayor, the Leader or Head of Paid Service

There were no communications from the Mayor or Head of Paid Service.

The Leader of the Council provided the following updates:

Keith Roscoe “Kez” broke the cricketing bowling record with 1812 wickets in a home game against Nelson. The Leader agreed a visit from the Mayor to be arranged to present a certificate of achievement.

Public Sector Network (PSN) compliance had been achieved for the Council which is the government’s high-performance network, which helps public sector organisations work together, share resources, reduce duplication and demonstrates policies and controls are sufficiently rigorous to interact with it. Thanks was given to the IT Project Officer and the team involved in achieving compliance.

Bright Futures nursery on Plot 1 at Futures Park would be opening soon.

Rossendale were signed up to Afghan refugee scheme and had identified the first house to be used for accommodation.

The Council would write to Tom Hamer and congratulate him for his commitment and attendance at the Paralympic games.

N.B. Councillor Stevens entered the meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET AND OTHER COMMITTEES

6. Our Place, Our Plan: Corporate Plan

The Council considered the Corporate Plan.

Resolved:

Council agreed the council’s proposed new Corporate Plan and action plan.

Reason for Decision

It is important for the council to be clear on its priority areas to ensure it is focusing the use of its resources and has a clear management plan to guide the activity of services throughout the year. The new Plan and annual priorities will also provide clarity to members and the public on the key activity for the council for this year. The Plan relates to the council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy which is used to align resources to deliver on these priorities.

Alternative Options Considered

None.

ORDINARY BUSINESS

7. Civica Contract

The Council considered the Civica Contract report.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- Civica are our provider and relevant processes are already in place.
- Regular reconciliations take place and the data belongs to the Council.
- The platform is in place and is supported.

Resolved:

Council approved entering into a 7 year contract with Civica UK Ltd for provision of the Councils Financial Management System – Civica Financials User Interface (UI), through the Crown Commercial Services (CCS) Data and Application Solutions (DAS) framework agreement at a total cost of £311k.

Reason for Decision

In order to continue to have access to a supported financial software solution the Council is required to either re-tender or call off a framework agreement. The Council's contract procedure rules state 'It is considered desirable and in the best interest of the Council for a tender proposal to be negotiated with a contractor already engaged by the Council '(CPR 2.2 iii).

Alternative Options Considered

None.

8. Community Renewal Fund

The Council considered the Community Renewal Fund report.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- Burnley was the accountable body and would make the payments.
- There was risk giving grants where businesses were not eligible, but the Council had been robust to avoid paying back monies.
- It was all subject to clawback and there was sufficient rigor around this.

Resolved:

1. Members to note this exciting bid to the Community Renewal Fund to provide a business growth and innovation programme across Rossendale, Pendle and Burnley.
2. On the result of an approval of the bid by Central Government, delegate the signing of any necessary contracts with the accountable body and Rossendale Borough Council to the Chief Executive and Head of Legal, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economic Development, given the tight time scale for a 31st March 2022 delivery.

Reason for Decision

The proposed Growth and Innovation Fund will bring significant resources to our Valley businesses in light of the impact of COVID-19 and BREXIT. The programme will be a useful pilot for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which is understood to be coming on-stream in the new financial year.

Alternative Options Considered

None.

9. Business Centre Improvement Works

The Council considered the Business Centre Improvement Works report.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- Mailbox clients would be checked.
- The building was protected with an upgraded fob system.
- This was an opportunity to generate income.

Resolved:

1. To approve Capital Funding for the Post Covid 19 Building Works and Office Moves within the Business Centre at Futures Park Bacup.
2. To approve an addition to the Capital Programme of £44,000 to be funded from either borrowing or capital receipts.

Reason for Decision

To make improvements to better place the private tenant offering and increase revenue potential, review the current room allocation of council officers to improve synergies to

promote effective cross service working, create additional internal meeting rooms and private working areas.

Alternative Options Considered

None.

NOTICES OF MOTION

10. Notice of motion

Councillor Marriott moved the following motion which was seconded by Councillor Serridge:

This Council believes planning works best when developers and the local community work together to shape local areas and deliver necessary new homes; and therefore calls on the Government to protect the right of communities to object to individual planning applications.

Councillor Serridge moved a motion to suspend Standing Orders, which was seconded by Councillor Marriott.

Members voted to suspend Standing Orders but the motion was lost.

Members continued to vote on the notice of motion.

Councillor Marriott and Councillor Serridge requested their individual votes be recorded: both councillors voted in favour of the motion.

Resolved:

To call on the Government to protect the right of communities to object to individual planning applications.

Reason for Decision

To support the motion.

Alternative Options Considered

None.

11. Exclusion of Public and Press

Resolved:

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves disclosure of exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) under Part 1 Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

12. Marl Pits Running Track

The Council considered the Marl Pits Running Track report.

Discussion took place on the item and clarification was provided where requested.

Resolved:

To approve the report recommendations.

Reason for Decision

The current track at Marl Pits is no longer fit for purpose.

Alternative Options Considered

None.

(The meeting commenced at 6.40pm and concluded at 8.08pm)

Signed.....

(Chair)

Date