

MINUTES OF: THE CABINET

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 13th October 2021

**Present: Councillor A Barnes (Chair)
Councillors Ashworth, Hughes and Lythgoe**

**In Attendance: Mr N Shaw, Chief Executive
Mr A Allen, Director of Communities
Ms C Birtwistle, Head of Legal (Monitoring Officer)
Mr G Darragh, Head of Regeneration
Mrs C Walker, Fraud & Compliance Officer
Mr C Finn, Finance Manager**

Also Present: Councillor Neal

**Observers on Zoom: Councillor Oakes
3 members of public**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Walmsley and Councillor Serridge.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16th June 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No written questions had been submitted.

6. PROSECUTION POLICY

The Portfolio Holder for Communities outlined the report, which asked members to approve the Council Tax and Council Tax Support Penalty and Prosecution Policy and to delegate all future minor amendments to the policy to the Head of Customer Services and ICT in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- The Council was committed to supporting residents who were struggling.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet approved the Council Tax and Council Tax Support Penalty and Prosecution Policy.
2. All future minor amendments to the policy to be delegated to the Head of Customer Services and ICT in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Reason for Decision:

To prevent fraud, it is necessary for the Council to have a policy in place to address residents providing incorrect information or claiming benefits which they are not entitled to. There has been no change in national legislation since the original policy was put in place in 2016, however the Council has issued a significant amount of grants relating to Covid. To reflect the increased possibility of fraud in relation to Covid grants, the policy has been updated at point 9.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

7. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY UPDATE

The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development outlined the report which asked members to note the content of the report.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- More promotion was needed on the good work the Council does.
- The Economic Development team were thanked for their work.

Other members were invited to comment on the report:

- Cllr Neal praised the good work of RLT and wished to place on record thanks to Mr Masser

Resolved:

Cabinet noted the content of the report.

Reason for Decision:

For members to note the significant progress on the delivery of the adopted Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan for Rossendale.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

8. ROSSENDALE WORKS UPDATE

The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development outlined the report which asked members to approve an extension of the Rossendale Works project and agree Council match funding; authorise the Monitoring Officer to enter into a grant funding agreement and extension of the current delivery agreement; enter into a grant funding agreement for extra ESF 1.4 funding; approve the Community Renewal Fund acceptance if awarded; authorise the Monitoring Officer to enter into a Community Renewal Fund agreement and the Head of Regeneration to award a lease to Rossendale Works.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- Government should be funding these schemes but this was not currently the case.
- The Council was carrying out brilliant work and should be proud of its achievements.
- Thanks to be passed onto the team for all their hard work.

Resolved:

Cabinet members:

1. Approved an extension of the Rossendale Works project from April 2022 to December 2023 and agreed Council match funding of £52,500 over the next two financial years, starting in 2022/23.
2. Authorised the Monitoring Officer to enter into a grant funding agreement and extension of

the current delivery agreement with Active Lancashire.

3. Agreed to enter into a grant funding agreement for extra ESF 1.4 funding to enable intensive work with those furthest from the labour market.
4. Approved the Community Renewal Fund acceptance if awarded.
5. Authorised the Monitoring Officer to enter into a Community Renewal Fund grant funding agreement and the Head of Regeneration to award a lease to Rossendale Works.

Reason for Decision:

Rossendale Works is one of our leading Economic Development projects being delivered by the Council in partnership with Active Lancashire. Approval will ensure its continuation until December 2023.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME ENFORCEMENT

The Portfolio Holder for Communities outlined the report which asked members to note the contents of the report and approve a formal tendering exercise to secure a possible third party enforcement service. For Cabinet to agree to continue the current contract until a new award is made or a decision is taken to stop the service.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- Communication and prevention – further education would be beneficial.
- The tender process should be in line with best practice.

Other members were invited to comment on the report:

- Cllr Neal requested dog fouling signs for Whitworth.

Resolved:

Cabinet members:

1. Noted the contents of the report and approved a formal tendering exercise to secure a possible third party enforcement service.
2. Agreed to continue the current contract until a new award was made or a decision was taken to stop the service.
3. Resolved to ensure this work was fully targeted on the issues of greatest concern to the council and council members.

Reason for Decision:

Continuation of a third party enforcement service focusing on low level environmental crime will further enhance the Council's ability to improve the quality of the local environment. The procurement exercise will determine if companies wish to provide the service in Rossendale and on what terms. The tender exercise will also ensure that the right balance of education, enforcement and added social value is obtained from any successful provider.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

10. STATION ROAD COVENANT RELEASE

The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development outlined the report which asked members to authorise the release of a restrictive covenant placed on land at Station Road, Whitworth to allow the land to be used for the purpose of residential development. Terms to be delegated to the Director of Economic Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- This was a positive move to support the housing need for affordable housing.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet authorised the release of a restrictive covenant placed on land at Station Road, Whitworth to allow the land to be used for the purpose of residential development.
2. Terms were delegated to the Director of Economic Development in consultation with the portfolio holder

Reason for Decision:

The release of the restrictive covenant at £15,000 allows alternative future use (subject to planning permission being granted) of an advertised site owned by a local business. Any agreement to release would be on the basis that the works required by the EA are completed.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

11. RIPA POLICY

The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development outlined the report which asked members to consider the recommendations of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and approve the updated RIPA policy 2021.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- Use of RIPA was reported to O&S.

Resolved:

Cabinet considered the recommendations of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and approved the updated RIPA policy 2021.

Reason for Decision:

It is necessary for the Council to review and refresh policies to avoid legal challenge and ensure practice and procedures are in line with legislation, codes of practice and good practice.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

12. BACUP HERITAGE ACTION ZONE FUNDING UPLIFT APPLICATION

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Leisure outlined the report which asked members to accept a grant uplift award of up to c.£189,720 and to authorise the Director of Economic Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to accept the award if approved and enter in to a grant funding agreement.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- Thanks to be passed onto the team for securing the funding.

Resolved:

Cabinet members:

1. Accepted a grant uplift award of up to c.£189,720.
2. Authorised the Director of Economic Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to accept the award if approved and enter in to a grant funding agreement.

Reason for Decision:

The funding uplift application will uplift the High Street Heritage Action Zone scheme by c.£189,720 and uplift two buildings within the HS HAZ.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

13. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT Q1 2021/22

The Leader of the Council outlined the report which asked members to note the contents of the Q1 2021/22 financial monitoring report.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- Difficulty providing high quality services with reduced funding.
- A S106 agreement monitoring report would be presented at a future Cabinet meeting.
- The Finance team were thanked for their work.

Other members were invited to comment on the report:

- Thanks were expressed from the residents of Whitworth. The Council has to do more with less.

Resolved:

Cabinet noted the contents of the Q1 2021/22 financial monitoring report.

Reason for Decision:

Robust monitoring of the General Fund and MTFS is essential to control risks expressed in section 4 of the report and the Council continues to undertake this.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

The meeting concluded at 7.18pm

_____ CHAIR _____ DATE