

MINUTES OF: THE CABINET

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 10th November 2021

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

**In Attendance: Mr N Shaw, Chief Executive
Mr A Allen, Director of Communities
Ms C Birtwistle, Head of Legal (Monitoring Officer)
Mrs K Spencer, Head of Finance (Section 151 Officer)
Mr G Darragh, Head of Regeneration**

**Observers on Zoom: Councillor A Neal
Miss Y Ahmed, Principal Legal Officer
1 member of public**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th October 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. REACTIVE BUILDING REPAIRS FRAMEWORK TENDER

The Portfolio Holder for Resources outlined the report, which asked members to authorise officers to proceed with the tender for the Reactive Building Repairs Framework. That appointment of the successful tenderers be delegated to the Head of People and Policy in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- Environmental consideration criteria to be included in any future tenders.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet authorised officers to proceed with the tender for the Reactive Building Repairs Framework.
2. Cabinet delegated the appointment of the successful tenderers to the Head of People and Policy in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Reason for Decision:

To consider the implications set out in the report and approve the tender process.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

7. ANNUAL AIR QUALITY REPORT 2021

The Portfolio Holder for Communities outlined the report which asked members to note the content of the report.

Resolved:

Cabinet noted the content of the 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. The Climate Change Strategy that has been adopted by Council tackles many of these related issues such as promoting active transport and introducing electric vehicles.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

8. COUNCIL TAX, NON-DOMESTIC RATE & HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENT WRITE-OFFS

The Portfolio Holder for Resources outlined the report which asked members to write-offs in relation to irrecoverable Non-Domestic Rate debt, Council Tax debts and Housing Benefit Overpayments.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- Anyone struggling to make payment was urged to contact the Council.

Resolved:

Cabinet members:

1. Approved the write off of £88,390.53 in respect of irrecoverable Non-Domestic Rate debt (NNDR). Direct cost to Rossendale BC is £35,356.21.
2. Approved the write off of £12,253.29 in respect of irrecoverable Council Tax debt. Direct cost to Rossendale BC is £1,715.16.
3. Approved the write off of £39,231.17 in respect of irrecoverable Housing Benefit Overpayments. Direct cost to Rossendale BC is nil.

Reason for Decision:

The write-offs are within the provisions available and recommendation to write off is made within the grounds of prudence before the financial year-end.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

9. ROSSENDALE YOUTH WORKS

The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development outlined the report which asked members to support a Department of Work and Pensions Flexible Support Grant Funding bid. To authorise the Monitoring Officer to accept the grant and enter into a grant funding agreement and extension of the Service Level Agreement.

An amendment to the report was put forward by the Leader to authorise the Monitoring Officer

to backdate the agreement for the grant to 29th October 2021 for grant period 1st November 2021 to 31st October 2022 to ensure continuity of grant as requested by the DWP.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- Continuity of grant for another year.

Resolved:

Cabinet members:

1. Supported a Department of Work and Pensions Flexible Support Grant Funding bid of up to £72,000.
2. Authorised the Monitoring Officer to accept the grant and enter into a grant funding agreement with the DWP and extension of the Service Level Agreement with Active Lancashire.
3. Authorised the Monitoring Officer to sign and backdate the grant offer acceptance letter to 29th October 2021.

Reason for Decision:

Rosendale Youth Works is one of the leading economic development projects being delivered by the Council in partnership with Active Lancashire. This report will ensure its continuation for a further 12 months until October 2022 dependent on DWP funding. This will be used as a tool to get even more local unemployed people into work.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

10. CITY VALLEY LINK UPDATE

The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development outlined the report which asked members to note progress on the project, accept funding from Lancashire County Council and Restoring Your Railway and authorise the Monitoring Officer to enter into grant funding agreements. To release match funding from reserves, authorise a strategic outline business case study and tender and delegate the subsequent award of contract to the Director of Economic Development And Portfolio Holder.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- It was good news and vitally important to engage with all stakeholders.
- LCC were thanked for the grant.
- Officers were thanked for their hard work.

Resolved:

Cabinet members:

1. Noted progress on the project.
2. Accepted £100,000 from Lancashire County Council and authorised the Monitoring Officer to enter into a grant funding agreement.
3. Accepted the Restoring Your Railway grant of up to £50,000 (exact amount to be confirmed), and authorised the Monitoring Officer to enter into a grant funding agreement and release the required £16,666 Council match funding from reserves.
4. Authorised a strategic outline business case study and tender up to £166,666 in partnership with Lancashire County Council and delegated the subsequent award of contract to the Director of Economic Development and Portfolio Holder.

Reason for Decision:

Progressing the City Valley Rail Link provides a fantastic opportunity to both grow the local economy and enable thousands of local people who commute into Manchester, to improve

their journey time significantly.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

11. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE

The Portfolio Holder for Resources outlined the report which asked members to consider the contents of the report.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- Increase in utility costs resulting from an increase in price not usage.
- Current supplier has ceased trading so a further increase in costs will be seen.

Resolved:

Cabinet noted the content of the report.

Reason for Decision:

There are a number of significant risks outside the Council's control which remain a major concern: ongoing impact of Covid, the uncertainty of if/when the Fair Funding Review and the revised Business Rates scheme will be introduced, also the ongoing impact of the UK leaving the European Union. The Council must remain focused on identifying and delivering further savings and income in order to ensure annual balanced budgets over the immediate and medium term. It must also ensure that all its budget resource allocations are directed to the core functions of the Council and that the use of its resources drives the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities. Failure to do this will result in an accelerated use of finite available reserves.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

The meeting concluded at 6.52pm

_____ CHAIR _____ DATE