

COUNCILLOR ANNE CHEETHAM, MAYOR

MINUTES OF: THE COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF ROSSENDALE

DATE OF MEETING: 28th February 2023

PRESENT: The Mayor Councillor Cheetham (in the Chair)
Councillors Adshead, Ashworth, A. Barnes, S. Barnes, Coogan, James Eaton, Janet Eaton, Foxcroft, Hodgkiss, Hughes, Johnson, Kenyon, Lythgoe, McInnes, McMahan, MacNae, Marriott, Morris, Neal, Oakes, Powell, Procter, Rooke, Serridge, M. Smith, S. Smith, Snowden, Steen, Thompson, Walmsley, Whitehead and Woods.

IN ATTENDANCE: Adam Allen, Acting Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service
Clare Birtwistle, Head of Legal Services / Monitoring Officer
Karen Spencer, Chief Finance Officer/S151 Officer
David Smurthwaite, Director of Economic Development
Kimberly Haworth, Head of Finance
George Taylor, Mayor's Attendant

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: 1 press
7 Public

A short silence was held as a mark of respect for former councillor and past Mayor, Trevor Unsworth, past Mayoress, Madge Tennant, Mayor's Chaplain, Reverend Les Hallam, former Rossendale and Darwen MP, Janet Anderson, former Mayor's Attendant, Michael Tipper, and two 2nd World War veterans, Bill Pearson, and Lewis Bayham, and also in commemoration of the 12 month anniversary since the start of the war in Ukraine.

The Mayor presented a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the Council to Robert Clegg for his achievement in completing 10 challenges in 2022 to raise funds for the Heart Foundation in memory of his father Ian.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received for Councillors Pendlebury and Rigby.

2. Minutes

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting on 20th December 2022 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

3. Urgent Items of Business

There was one urgent item of business added to the agenda as item E3 (minute 12) regarding Improvements to Whitaker and Stubbylee Parks Tennis Courts.

4. Declarations of Interest

The following non pecuniary interests were declared:

- Councillor McInnes - Member of Whitaker Park Friends (minute 12)
- Councillor Procter - Member of First Choice Credit Union and Rossendale and Hyndburn Citizens Advice (minute 7)

- Councillor M. Smith - Director of Bacup Credit Union (minute 7)
- Councillor Hughes - Member of Whitaker Park Friends (minute 12) and works for Citizens Advice (minute 7)
- Councillor A Barnes – Membership of Rawtenstall Credit Union (minute 7)

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

There were no communications from the Mayor or the Leader of the Council.

The Acting Head of Paid Service informed that Councillor Andy MacNae had replaced Councillor Patrick Marriott on the Development Control Committee and that Councillor Michelle Smith had replaced Councillor Janice Johnson on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and as the Chairperson.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET AND OTHER COMMITTEES

6. Remuneration Review

The Council considered the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel in relation to members' allowances.

Prior to the item being moved and seconded an additional recommendation was proposed to be included at 1.6 as follows:

That future member allowances increase in line with the average percentage awarded to officers.

Thanks was given to the Independent Remuneration Panel for taking their time to review the allowances.

An amendment was moved by Councillor Foxcroft and seconded by Councillor Woods as follows:

To remove recommendations 1.1, 1.2 of the report and also the additional 1.6 and leave the rest with 1.3 being the overriding recommendation.

Members discussed the amendment and it was confirmed that:

- It costs money to be a councillor and this would open up the role to others, make it more representative and inclusive, and deliver equity and equality.
- Lancashire County Council (LCC) had recently vote to increase allowances.
- Members had the options to give to good causes, or not claim the allowance.
- Members had not accepted an increase since about 2003.
- There was a need to look at the cost of living, fuel prices and travel across the borough to get to meetings to carry out councillor duties.

A recorded voted was requested by three councillors.

Members voted on the amendment of the report as follows:

Name	Vote
Cllr Adshead	Against
Cllr Ashworth	Against
Cllr Alyson Barnes	Against
Cllr Samara Barnes	Against
Cllr Cheetham	For
Cllr Coogan	Against
Cllr James Eaton	Against

Cllr Janet Eaton	Against
Cllr Foxcroft	For
Cllr Hodgkiss	For
Cllr Hughes	Against
Cllr Johnson	Against
Cllr Kenyon	Against
Cllr Lythgoe	Against
Cllr McInnes	Against
Cllr McMahan	Against
Cllr MacNae	Against
Cllr Marriott	Against
Cllr Morris	For
Cllr Neal	Abstain
Cllr Oakes	Against
Cllr Powell	For
Cllr Procter	Against
Cllr Rooke	Against
Cllr Serridge	Against
Cllr M. Smith	Against
Cllr S. Smith	For
Cllr Snowden	For
Cllr Steen	For
Cllr Thompson	For
Cllr Walmsley	Against
Cllr Whitehead	For
Cllr Woods	For
For:	11
Against:	21
Abstentions:	1

The amendment was not carried and members returned to the recommendation originally moved and seconded at 1.1 to 1.6.

Members voted on the substantive recommendations.

Resolved:

1. That the basic members allowance is increased in the order of £135 per annum (4.04%) from 1st April 2023 to recompense for the rising costs of petrol and utilities in fulfilling the councillor role.
2. That special responsibility allowances are also increased by the same rate to recompense for the rising costs in fulfilling these roles.
3. That allowances will not increase further, pending a more fundamental review in time for the 2024 all out elections, where there will be a reduction in councillors and a new ward structure introduced by the Local Government Boundary Commission.
4. That any agreed changes are made to the scheme, as well as the changes identified in the following sections to bring the scheme up to date:
 - a) 2.2 Car Mileage Claims
 - b) 7.2 Subsistence
 - c) Schedule 3 – point 6
5. That any changes agreed are also updated in section 6 of the Council's Constitution.
6. That future member allowance increases in line with the average percentage awarded to officers.

Reason for Decision

The Independent Remuneration Panel is required to undertake a 4 yearly review of the Members' Allowances Scheme and make their recommendations to Council, who must have regard to their recommendations.

Alternative Options Considered

As detailed in the original recommendations of the report and the proposed amendment.

POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK ITEMS

7. 2023/24 Council Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Council considered the 2023/24 Council Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Thanks was given to officers for their hard work on the budget.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- No alternative budget had been proposed.
- There had been a comparison made to Burnley Council but this had its differences.

Members voted on the recommendations of the report as follows:

Name	Vote
Cllr Adshead	For
Cllr Ashworth	For
Cllr Alyson Barnes	For
Cllr Samara Barnes	For
Cllr Cheetham	Against
Cllr Coogan	For
Cllr James Eaton	For
Cllr Janet Eaton	For
Cllr Foxcroft	Against
Cllr Hodgkiss	Against
Cllr Hughes	For
Cllr Johnson	For
Cllr Kenyon	For
Cllr Lythgoe	For
Cllr McInnes	For
Cllr McMahon	For
Cllr MacNae	For
Cllr Marriott	For
Cllr Morris	Against
Cllr Neal	For
Cllr Oakes	For
Cllr Powell	For
Cllr Procter	For
Cllr Rooke	For
Cllr Serridge	For
Cllr M. Smith	For
Cllr S. Smith	Against
Cllr Snowden	Against
Cllr Steen	Against
Cllr Thompson	Against
Cllr Walmsley	For
Cllr Whitehead	For
Cllr Woods	Against

For:	24
Against:	9
Abstentions:	0

Resolved:

Council approve:-

1. A revenue budget for 2023/24 of £10.256m, as detailed in this report.
2. A council tax increase of 2.99%, increasing the Council Tax rate for a Band D property from £290.80 to £299.49, an increase of £8.69 pa.
3. Use of £756k from the Transitional reserve to support the 2023/24 revenue budget.
4. The proposed fees and charges attached as Appendix 1.
5. The technical resolution necessary to give effect to these budget proposals attached as Appendix 4.

Reason for Decision

The financial position for the council, like all local authorities, is challenging and subject to a high-level of risk regarding the current economic position. The council is proposing to set a revenue budget for 2023/24 of £10.256m. 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.

Alternative Options Considered

None.

8. Capital Programme 2023/24 - 2026/27 and Capital Strategy 2023/24

The Council considered the Capital Programme 2023/24 - 2026/27 and Capital Strategy 2023/24.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- The Council was still waiting to hear about Levelling Up funding.

Resolved:

Council approve:

1. The capital programme for 2023/24 and associated capital expenditure of £5.963m.
2. The Capital Strategy 2022/23 – 2026/27 attached at Appendix B

Reason for Decision

The proposed capital programme for 2022/23 and up to 2026/27 represents an affordable plan, as indicated by the prudential borrowing performance indicators the Capital Strategy (Appendix B).

Alternative Options Considered

None.

9. Treasury Management Strategy & Treasury Management Practises

The Council considered the Treasury Management Strategy & Treasury Management Practises report and thanks was given to the Finance Team.

It was requested that thanks be passed back to the officers for their current work, and work they undertake all year round.

Resolved:

Council approves:-

1. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Treasury Management Policy and Practises.
2. To delegate any further minor amendments to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Lead Member for Resources.

Reason for Decision

To approve the adoption of the updated Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Treasury Management Policy and Practises, which will ensure continued compliance with the Code and continue to manage the council's exposure to financial risk. In light of the current economic climate and resultant changing cash flow requirements, Members are asked to delegate any minor amendments required within year to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Lead Member for Resources.

Alternative Options Considered

None.

ORDINARY BUSINESS

N.B. Councillor Rooke left the meeting

10. Local Council Tax Support Fund

The Council considered the Local Council Tax Support Fund.

Resolved:

1. That Council approve the allocation Council Tax Support Fund for 2023/24 as set out in this report.
2. Members are recommended to approve delegated authority to the s151 Officer in conjunction with the lead member for Resources for ongoing allocation of the discretionary element of the fund.

Reason for Decision

The recommendation should be adopted in order to allow for awards of £25.00 to LCTS claimants at annual billing and to all new claims thereafter. It also allows for a flexible approach to distribution of the remaining funds as budget allows.

Alternative Options Considered

None.

11. Pay Policy Statement

The Council considered the Pay Policy Statement.

Resolved:

Full Council approves the Pay Policy Statement.

Reason for Decision

The Pay Policy Statement meets the legal requirements as per the Localism Act 2011.

Alternative Options Considered

None.

12. Improvements to Whitaker and Stubblee Parks Tennis Courts

The Council considered the Improvements to Whitaker and Stubblee Parks Tennis Courts report.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- The security measures would include a security gating system.

Thanks was given to the team that had been involved.

Resolved:

1. That Council approves the acceptance of the grant of £103,541.02 from the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) to fund improvements to the tennis courts at Whitaker and Stubbylee Parks.
2. That Council authorises officers to appoint Fosse Contracts Limited as contractor to carry out the refurbishment works and CIA Fire and Security Limited for the supply and installation of the gate system both having been appointed by the LTA as the national delivery partner framework contractor.
3. That Council approves an addition to the capital programme of a new fully funded capital scheme totalling £103,541.02.

Reason for Decision

The development of these tennis facilities will provide further excellent facilities at Rossendale’s two main parks and the operation model carried out by the Rossendale Leisure Trust will help encourage participation in tennis as a form of physical exercise. This will support the Council’s new vision for Leisure and Wellbeing in the borough.

Alternative Options Considered

None.

(The meeting commenced at 7.05pm and concluded at 8.45pm)

Signed.....
(Chair)

Date