

COUNCILLOR JEFFREY CHEETHAM MAYOR

MINUTES OF: THE COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF ROSSENDALE

Date of Meeting: 29th June 2005

PRESENT: The Mayor Councillor J Cheetham (in the Chair)
Councillors Atkinson, A Barnes, L Barnes, Challinor,
Crosta, Disley, Driver, Eaton, Entwistle, Graham, Hancock,
Huntbach, McShea,, J Pawson, S Pawson, Robertson,
Ruddick, Sandiford, Starkey, H Steen, P Steen, Thorne,
Unsworth, and Young

IN ATTENDANCE: George Graham – Executive Director of Resources
Lynn Hurrell – Director of Housing Services
Angela Foster – Legal Services Manager
Chris McConville – Principal Administrative Assistant

APOLOGIES: Councillors: D Barnes, Farquharson, Forshaw, Lamb,
Marriott, Neal, Nicholass, Ormerod, Pilling and Swain
Owen Williams - Chief Executive

The Mayor introduced Wendy Oliver, the Mayors Chaplin who addressed Members at the commencement of the meeting.

1. MINUTES

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 27th May 2005 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were made.

3. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR, THE LEADER OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

There were no such communications to report to Council

4. MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME

Councillor Hancock asked a question relating to the consultation exercise in respect of the Constitution of the Council currently being undertaken and pointed out that he had received a number of reports from different areas in the Borough where the consultation document had not been delivered to residents. He asked whether the Council would consider extending the time limit for the circulation and the return of the consultation document.

The Leader replied that the distribution company had advised that they had delivered all the documents supplied to them although he was aware that not all households had received a copy. He pointed out that to extend the deadline would cause difficulties in the process towards the decision making arrangements but he reminded Members that this was a consultation exercise and not a referendum. The consultation process had been advertised in the Rossendale Free Press, Rochdale Observer, on the Council's web site and through the Area Forums and he suggested that where it was known that people had not received a copy of the document they should be encouraged to write to the Council to convey their views and it was not necessary for their views to be on the formal return form.

The Leader advised that the Council would be considering the new constitution at the meeting on 13th July and that any responses to the consultation exercise received up to that date would be considered.

Councillor Challinor asked whether the Leader could advise on progress on the future redevelopment of the Valley Centre.

The Leader replied that the Executive had agreed redevelopment proposals for the Valley Centre in conjunction with the owners of the Centre, The Valley Centre Ltd (part of the CNC Group).

The proposals included the reconstruction of the existing building across its footprint and Council-owned land to the rear. It was proposed that the new scheme would create approximately 70,000 sq ft of new retail accommodation, 2,700 sq ft of leisure, a multi-storey car park for 318 vehicles and 75 residential units including a proportion targeted at the affordable housing market. He pointed out that the precise details would be subject to formal planning and normal development procedures.

Councillor Disley asked if it would be possible for the current arrangements in respect of the help desk for computer services to be altered so that Members could ring a number at the Town Hall Rawtenstall rather than ringing a number in London.

The Leader replied that the Council had a contract with Vivista in respect of computer services and part of that agreement involved calling the help desk in London.

Councillor Unsworth asked whether Councillors would be provided with printers to go with the laptops recently provided to Members.

The Leader replied that one of the objectives of the roll out of laptops to Members was to reduce the amount of paper generated. All papers forwarded to Members by email were accessible via the laptop screen and if Members wished to use a printer they were entitled to attach their own printer to the laptop.

Councillor Graham asked whether the Council fully supported the staff, patients, relatives and other Rossendale residents in their fight to prevent the nurse-led rehabilitation ward at Rossendale Hospital from being closed.

She pointed out that the ward had been used successfully for its current purpose for the last four and a half years and served as a half way house between the acute wards of the major hospitals in the area and home for mainly elderly patients. She spoke of the very skilled and dedicated workforce who provide nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy both in the ward setting and as follow up care as the patients are discharged. The patients using the ward were predominantly from Rossendale and their care in the local community facilitated family support which in turn kept to a minimum the readmission of such patients.

The Leader replied that the Conservative Group on the Council supported the fight to keep the ward open. He had been in touch with the relevant NHS Trust and accessed information from the Department of Health on the issue. He informed Council that he had been advised that there was no masterplan to close the hospital but that a full review of clinical services was to be undertaken.

Councillor Hancock advised Council that the Labour Group supported the campaign and Councillor Young advised that the Liberal Democrat Members on the Council also supported the campaign.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions were submitted on behalf of the members of the public.

6. CORPORATE PLAN AND BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN 2005/8

Resolved:

1. That Council approves the Corporate Plan/Best Value Performance Plan 2005-8; and
2. That Council gives delegated authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader to make any necessary final changes.

In answer to a question from a member the Director of Corporate Resources advised that the delegation to the Chief Executive and Leader in respect of changes to the document were minor changes involving the correction of typing errors and completion of certain figures which were not currently included in the BVPI figures.

In answer to a further question the Director of Corporate Resources confirmed that performance would continue to be monitored by Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

(The meeting started at 7.00 pm and finished at 7.40 pm)

Mayor