

**MINUTES OF: THE CABINET**

**Date of Meeting: Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

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

**Rob Huntington, Chief Executive  
David Smurthwaite, Director of Economic Development  
Clare Birtwistle, Head of Legal (Monitoring Officer)  
Clare Law, Head of People & Policy  
Karen Spencer, Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer)  
Anne Storah, Principal Planner (Forward Planning)  
Ian Walker, Service Assurance Team Leader**

**Also present: Councillors D Ashworth and Walmsley  
2 members of the public**

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**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 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023 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. UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Leader gave a brief overview of the items discussed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023. The Chair of Overview & Scrutiny was thanked for the report.

**7. HOUSING BENEFIT WAR PENSION AND ARMED FORCES DISREGARD POLICY**

The Lead Member for Housing and Customer Services outlined the report, which asked Cabinet to consider the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, approve the policy and delegate minor amendments to the Head of Service and Lead Member.

**Resolved:**

1. Cabinet considered the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and

approved the Housing Benefit War Pension and Armed Forces Compensation Disregard Policy.

2. Cabinet delegated any minor amendments to the policy to the Head of Customer Services and ICT in consultation with the Lead Member.

**Reason for Decision:**

The Social Security Administration Act 1992 requires the Council to formally adopt any modification of the Housing Benefit scheme where the whole or part of any War Pension or Armed Forces payment is disregarded.

**Alternative Options Considered:**

None.

**8. RE-USE AND RE-DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYMENT LAND SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)**

The Lead Member for Planning, Licensing and Enforcement outlined the report, which asked Cabinet to adopt the Supplementary Planning Document and delegate minor amendments to the Head of Service and Lead Member.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- The clarity provided by the SPD was welcomed along with the content around biodiversity.
- Members need to be mindful of the local plan and loss of employment land.

**Resolved:**

1. Cabinet adopted the Re-use and Re-development of Employment Land Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
2. Cabinet delegated minor amendments to the SPD to the Head of Planning and Lead Member prior to publication.

**Reason for Decision:**

Adopting the Re-use of Employment Land SPD will enable the Council to ensure developments that require planning permission will fully consider the retention of sites and premises in employment use prior to proposing any changes of use, including to residential use. This is to ensure that the needs of the Borough in terms of employment land are met in order to protect the local economy and deliver sustainable communities.

**Alternative Options Considered:**

None.

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

The Lead Member for Resources outlined the report, which asked Cabinet to approve the write-off of Non-Domestic Rate and Council Tax debt.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- The effort that goes into recovering debts was noted.
- The total cost isn't being met by the authority.

**Resolved:**

1. Cabinet approved the write off of £152,711.76 in respect of irrecoverable Non-Domestic Rate debt (NNDR). Direct cost to Rossendale BC is £61,084.70.
2. Cabinet approved the write off of £19,689.57 in respect of irrecoverable Council Tax debt. Direct cost to Rossendale BC is £2,669.51.

**Reason for Decision:**

It is prudent practice to clear any debts from the ledgers which are now deemed to be irrecoverable.

**Alternative Options Considered:**

None.

**10. CORPORATE PLAN UPDATE REPORT 2022-23 (ANNUAL REPORT)**

The Leader of the Council outlined the report, which asked Cabinet to consider the Annual Corporate Plan Update, the Council's achievements and agree to rename the plan to the Valley Plan (Our Place, Our Plan).

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- The hard work of officers during challenging times was acknowledged, and thanks was expressed to them all.
- Great things were being achieved across the borough for our communities.
- Work on the Haweswater aqueduct will be challenging.
- An amendment to the report was required as The Whitaker Park Masterplan was not yet agreed as stated but work continued on the plan.

**Resolved:**

1. Cabinet considered the Annual Corporate Plan Update and associated achievements for 2022/23 (Appendix 1) and agreed to rename the Corporate Plan to the Valley Plan (Our Place, Our Plan).

**Reason for Decision:**

The Annual Report is a tool to summarise and report on the Council's progress. The report is being considered by Cabinet to enable members to discuss the Council's progress over the last twelve months and to celebrate its achievements. The report will be publicised to enable residents to understand what progress the Council is making.

**Alternative Options Considered:**

None.

**11. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT QUARTER 4 2022-23 & RIPA UPDATE**

The Lead Member for Resources outlined the report, which asked Cabinet to consider and note the performance of the Council as detailed in the report.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- Thanks were expressed to the Head of People and Policy and her team.
- Digital Strategy – work continued on the new Website which is progressing well.

- Concerns were expressed around the challenges of homelessness.

Other members were invited to comment on the report:

- It is important to read the content as the red rating could be seen as alarmist.

The Chief Executive outlined the direction of travel for the revised performance framework.

**Resolved:**

1. Cabinet considered and noted the performance of the Council as detailed in the report.

**Reason for Decision:**

Monitoring of the Council's performance will enable Cabinet to identify any actions, projects, performance indicators or risks.

**Alternative Options Considered:**

None.

**12. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT QUARTER 4 2022-23 – INDICATIVE OUTTURN**

The Lead Member for Resources outlined the report, which asked Cabinet to note the content of the Quarter 4 Financial Monitoring report.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- It was important to stress that the financial situation was being felt across the country due to the cost of living, pay awards and current economic climate.
- Budgets are given so late which makes it difficult for the Council to plan.

Other members were invited to comment on the report:

- The local government finance settlement is allocated too late in our budget setting and this needs feeding back to the MP.

**Resolved:**

1. Cabinet noted the content of the Q4 financial monitoring report.

**Reason for Decision:**

To note the Quarter 4 monitoring report.

**Alternative Options Considered:**

None.

**The meeting concluded at 7.09pm**

\_\_\_\_\_ CHAIR \_\_\_\_\_ DATE

