

## **COUNCILLOR ANDREW WALMSLEY, MAYOR**

**MINUTES OF: THE COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF ROSSENDALE**

**DATE OF MEETING: 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

**PRESENT:** The Mayor Councillor Walmsley (in the Chair)  
Councillors Adshead, B. Ashworth, D. Ashworth, S. Barnes, Cheetham, Coogan, Driver, Eaton, Gill, Johnson, Looker, Lythgoe, McInnes, McMahon, MacNae, Marriott, Morris, Neal, Norton, Oakes, Powell, Rigby, Rooke, M. Smith, S. Smith, Snowden, Whitehead and Woods.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Rob Huntington, Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service  
Clare Birtwistle, Head of Legal Services / Monitoring Officer  
Karen Spencer, Chief Finance Officer/ S151 Officer  
Kimberly Haworth, Head of Finance  
Darren Kershaw, Mayor's Attendant

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: 3 public**

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received for Councillors A Barnes, Foxcroft, Hodgkiss, Kenyon, Procter and Thompson.

### **2. Minutes**

#### **Resolved:**

That the minutes of the meetings on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023 and 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

### **3. Urgent Items of Business**

There was one urgent item of business regarding Hareholme Viaduct which would be taken at the end of the agenda.

### **4. Declarations of Interest**

The following declarations of interest were made:

- Councillor Marriott was a director for a company with a trade waste contract with the Council (Item C1, minute 6).
- Councillor Adshead was a board member of Rossendale Valley Energy (Item D4, minute 12).

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

There were no communications from the Mayor, the Deputy Leader or Head of Paid Service.

## **POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK ITEMS**

### **6. 2024/25 Council Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy**

The Council considered the 2024/25 Council Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- Provisional savings were included in the report but it was noted that this could change if certain decisions were not made.

- Pressures that the Council was under were widespread across the country.

A number of Point of Orders were raised due to inaccurate statements being made by certain members which were subsequently withdrawn and apologies given. Confirmation was given that throughout the delivery of the Empty Homes Scheme it came under the remit of Housing Portfolio of former Councillor Helen Jackson. Members were reminded to maintain a high standard of behaviour during the debate.

Thanks was given to officers for all their hard work.

Members voted on the recommendations of the report as follows:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Cllr Adshead	For
Cllr B. Ashworth	For
Cllr D. Ashworth	For
Cllr S. Barnes	For
Cllr Cheetham	Against
Cllr Coogan	For
Cllr Driver	For
Cllr Eaton	For
Cllr Gill	For
Cllr Johnson	For
Cllr Looker	For
Cllr Lythgoe	For
Cllr McInnes	For
Cllr McMahon	For
Cllr MacNae	For
Cllr Marriott	For
Cllr Morris	Against
Cllr Neal	For
Cllr Norton	For
Cllr Oakes	For
Cllr Powell	For
Cllr Rigby	Against
Cllr Rooke	For
Cllr M. Smith	For
Cllr S. Smith	Against
Cllr Snowden	Against
Cllr Walmsley	For
Cllr Whitehead	For
Cllr Woods	Against
<b>For:</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Against:</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Abstentions:</b>	<b>0</b>

### **Resolved:**

Council approved:

1. A revenue budget for 2024/25 of £10.599m, as detailed in the report.
2. A Council Tax increase of 2.99%, increasing the Council Tax rate for a Band D property from £299.49 to £308.44, an increase of £8.95 pa.
3. Use of £564k from the reserves to support the 2024/25 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 3.

### **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 2024/25 of £10.599m. 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.

## **7. Capital Programme 2023/24 – 2027/28 and Capital Strategy 2024/25**

The Council considered the Capital Programme 2023/24 – 2027/28 and Capital Strategy 2024/25.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- Contributions to Whitworth Town Council relating to the pool had yet to be considered.

### **Resolved:**

Council approved:

1. The capital programme for 2023/24 – 2027/28 and associated capital expenditure of £11.409m in 2024/25.
2. The Capital Strategy 2024/25 attached at Appendix B.
3. Accept the Swimming Pool Support Fund capital grant of £290k.

### **Reason for Decision**

The proposed capital programme for 2023/24 and up to 2027/28 represents an affordable plan, as indicated by the prudential borrowing performance indicators the Capital Strategy (Appendix B).

### **Alternative Options Considered**

None.

## **8. 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.

### **Resolved:**

Council approved:

1. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement, including the borrowing strategy.
2. The Investment Strategy, including Investment Indicators.
3. The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement.
4. 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 potential 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**

**9. Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/25**

The Council considered the Council Tax Support Scheme 2024/25.

**Resolved:**

Full Council approve the Rossendale Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2024/25 as set out in the report.

**Reason for Decision**

Councils are required to set a Council Tax Support scheme annually, before the 11<sup>th</sup> March on the charge year, in this case 2024/25. No conclusive case for significant amendment to the scheme has been identified at this time.

**Alternative Options Considered**

None.

**10. Pay Policy Statement**

The Council considered the Pay Policy Statement report.

Thanks was given to the Head of People and Policy and the team.

**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.

**11. Lancashire County Council Weight Management Collaboration**

The Council considered the Weight Management report.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- Previous schemes had been funded for a year. The take up in past years had not determined the reduction in funding.

**Resolved:**

That Council authorises statutory officers to:

1. Accept the collaboration agreement between Lancashire County Council and Rossendale Borough Council for the delivery of the weight management programme (2024 – 2029).
2. Accept the associated grant funding of up to £392,016, (split between the years 2024/25 to 2031/32 at £49,002 per annum), subject to continued Government Public Health Grant funding.
3. Delegate authority to award the contract to the successful delivery partner to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Lead Member for Communities, Health & Wellbeing.

### **Reason for Decision**

To enable the Council to accept the grant funding and deliver the Healthy Weight Management Service in Rossendale through the appointment of a delivery partner.

### **Alternative Options Considered**

None.

## **12. Net Zero Terrace Streets Funding**

The Council considered the Net Zero Terrace Streets Funding report.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- The Council would ensure the liabilities stayed with the limited companies involved.
- It was an innovative scheme with Rossendale leading the way.
- The Council had the resources to deliver this as two officers were being appointed using the funding.
- Developers need to be encouraged to work towards such initiatives in their schemes being brought forward for planning permission.
- The individual organisations had liability for their elements of the scheme.
- In relation to the partner local authority, part of the funding required bringing other Councils on board.

### **Resolved:**

1. That Rossendale Borough Council to become the Lead Partner in the delivery of the Net Zero Terrace Street project.
2. That Council approves the acceptance of the grant funding from Innovate UK for £2,522,874 in order to deliver the Net Zero Terraced Street Project.
3. To delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the S151 Officer and the Lead Member for Environment and Corporate Services to make amendments to the grant offer letter and accept it on behalf of the Council.
4. To delegate authority to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the S151 Officer and the Lead Member for Environment and Corporate Services to enter agreements with partner organisations to establish the terms of payments and related items between Rossendale Borough Council and project partners.

### **Reason for Decision**

For Rossendale Borough Council to take the project lead and accept the grant funding offer from Innovate UK.

### **Alternative Options Considered**

None.

## **13. Urgent Decisions**

Council noted the Special Urgency Decision taken 12<sup>th</sup> January 2024 regarding the acceptance of On-Street Residential Charge Point Scheme (ORCS) funding.

## **14. Hareholme Viaduct**

The Council considered the Hareholme Viaduct report.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- It had significant heritage importance.
- It brought health and wellbeing as a cycleway.

**Resolved:**

Full Council to approve the addition of a further £36,050 to the existing Hareholme Viaduct capital scheme to carry out additional necessary works as set out in the report, to be funded by borrowing or capital receipts.

**Reason for Decision**

To approve completion of the deck surface with 65mm bituminous macadam to ensure effective protection of the viaduct. To approve replacement of the remaining weathered pointing, whilst the scaffolding is in situ. To approve an unfunded budget increase of £36,050 to complete the required works. If the approach to LCC for a contribution is successful, the additional expenditure will be partially funded.

**Alternative Options Considered**

None.

**(The meeting commenced at 6.36pm and concluded at 8.20pm)**

Signed.....

(Chair)

Date .....