

## COUNCILLOR ANDREW WALMSLEY, MAYOR

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

**DATE OF MEETING: 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Rob Huntington, Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service  
Clare Birtwistle, Head of Legal Services / Monitoring Officer  
George Taylor, Mayor's Attendant

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** 1 press  
2 public  
Kimberly Haworth, Head of Finance  
Clare Law, Head of People and Policy

### SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

#### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received for Councillors B Ashworth, S Barnes, Coogan, Rigby and Whitehead.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 3. Whole-Council Elections

The Council considered the Whole-Council Elections report and members were reminded that at least two thirds of the members voting on it was required for approval.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- It would deliver the best service for residents and offer stability.

Councillors Neal, Powell and A Barnes requested a named vote.

Members voted as follows:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Cllr Adshead	Against
Cllr Danielle Ashworth	For
Cllr Alyson Barnes	For
Cllr Cheetham	For
Cllr Driver	For
Cllr Eaton	For
Cllr Foxcroft	For
Cllr Gill	For
Cllr Hodgkiss	For
Cllr Johnson	For
Cllr Kenyon	For

Cllr Looker	For
Cllr Lythgoe	For
Cllr McInnes	For
Cllr McMahon	For
Cllr MacNae	For
Cllr Marriott	For
Cllr Morris	For
Cllr Neal	For
Cllr Norton	For
Cllr Oakes	For
Cllr Powell	Against
Cllr Procter	For
Cllr Rooke	For
Cllr M. Smith	For
Cllr S. Smith	For
Cllr Snowden	For
Cllr Thompson	For
Cllr Walmsley	For
Cllr Woods	For
<b>For:</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Against:</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Abstentions:</b>	<b>0</b>

#### **Resolved:**

1. That Council agrees to adopt a scheme of whole council elections, meaning an electoral cycle of one election every four years with all councillors being elected, with the first such election being held in May 2024.
2. That Council agrees to make an order to alter the years of the ordinary elections of the Whitworth Town Council so that they coincide with the date of whole-council elections.
3. In the event that Council elects to move to whole council elections, the Constitution will be amended to reflect the required changes.

#### **Reason for Decision**

To consider the responses received following the consultation and determine whether to change the electoral cycle to whole-council elections, the first of such election being 2024.

#### **Alternative Options Considered**

None.

### **ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING**

#### **4. Minutes**

An amendment to the minutes was moved by Councillor MacNae. At the last meeting, confirmation had been given that throughout the delivery of the Empty Homes Scheme from the submission of the bid to the end of the scheme, it came under the remit of the Housing Portfolio of former Councillor Helen Jackson. The previous suggestions that Councillor MacNae had oversight of the scheme and was the architect of the scheme were untrue. The scheme had been initiated following the adoption of the vacant property strategy in November 2010 and in response to Government funding announced in October 2010, six months prior to Councillor MacNae being elected. Councillor MacNae confirmed that the change in portfolios were minuted and that he had regularly reported on a wide range of things that the Council was doing which impacted on regeneration.

Various points of order and personal statements were made to which the Mayor responded. In response to a request to Councillor Foxcroft to withdraw a statement made earlier in the meeting, he refused.

The amendment to the minutes was seconded by Councillor Oakes.

The amendment was clarified as follows:

*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.*

**Resolved:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record, with the addition of the following amendment:

- *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.*

**5. Urgent Items of Business**

There were no urgent items of business.

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

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

The Leader of the Council provided the following updates:

The Leader had recently attended a centenary celebration of Rossendale Male Voice Choir and the performance was wonderful. They would be performing throughout their 100<sup>th</sup> year and she encouraged people to attend.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> April Rossendale Council would mark its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and were planning to mark the occasion by reflecting on the past 50 years, whilst also looking forward to the changes over the next 50.

The Council would continue to deliver on priorities including creating a thriving economy around the town centres. A recent announcement of further funding of £20m brought the amount to over £40m investment in the valley. The funding earmarked for Rawtenstall over a 10 year period would provide a huge opportunity to support projects being developed as part of the Rawtenstall Masterplan. The next steps would be to establish a Town Board and pull together a three-year investment plan.

The Forward Planning team had also been successful in a bid for £100,000 to support the council's digital planning capabilities. The project would start in spring 2024.

The delivery of all these projects would involve officers from across the Council.

**ORDINARY BUSINESS**

**7. Statement of Community Involvement**

The Council considered the Statement of Community Involvement.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- It was hoped that paper copies would be provided for those where there was a demonstrable need for them.
- Communication poles can be erected without the need for planning permission and therefore were outside of this document.

- Paper copies would be available at Futures Park. Local Libraries would provide assistance in accessing documents online.

The Planning officers were thanked for their work in preparing and updating the document.

**Resolved:**

1. To adopt the revised Statement of Community Involvement (2024).
2. Any minor modifications to be delegated to the Head of Planning and Lead Member for Planning, Licensing and Enforcement.

**Reason for Decision**

To publish the Statement of Community Involvement Update as soon as possible on the Council's website and to keep a paper copy available for viewing at the Council's offices. This is to ensure compliance with the legislation, whilst agreeing that an early review may be needed to take account of expected forthcoming changes to plan-making and development management, and consider consultation with statutory consultees and other stakeholders.

**Alternative Options Considered**

None.

**8. Urgent decisions**

Council noted the Special Urgency Decision taken 8<sup>th</sup> March 2024 regarding the acceptance of additional Local Authority Housing Fund grant funding and to enter into the Memorandum of Understanding.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET AND OTHER COMMITTEES**

**9. Recommendation of the Governance Working Group - Committee Review**

The Council considered the Committee Review report.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- All members could attend Cabinet meetings and suggest amendments.
- The functions would need to be reviewed further once the reduction to councillors had been made and there had been chance to settle into the new system.

Thanks was given to those who had worked on the report including the Committee and Member Services Manager and the Governance Working Group for looking over the proposals.

**Resolved:**

Council agreed the following committee changes and Constitution changes as detailed in Appendix A (with effect from 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024):

- a) reduce the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to seven elected members.
- b) changes to committee terms of reference and working groups.

**Reason for Decision**

To accommodate councillor workloads and minimise the impact in the reduction of councillors from 36 to 30.

**Alternative Options Considered**

None.

Thanks was given to the Mayor for the way he had conducted the Council meetings over the last 12 months and for being fair and even handed.

**(The meeting commenced at 6.55pm and concluded at 8.10pm)**

Signed.....  
(Chair)

Date .....