

MINUTES OF: THE CABINET

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 16th October 2024

**Present: Councillor A Barnes (Chair)
Councillors Harris, Lythgoe and Walmsley**

**Rob Huntington, Chief Executive
Chris Warren, Director of Resources, s151 Officer
Clare Birtwistle, Head of Legal, Monitoring Officer
David Smurthwaite, Director of Economic Development
Andy Taylor, Head of Environmental Services
Ian Walker, Service Assurance Team Leader**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor McInnes.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th September 2024 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

There were no public questions.

6. UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee had not met since the last meeting.

7. LOCAL HOUSING ALLOWANCE SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The Lead Member for Resources outlined the report which asked Cabinet to approve the policy and delegate minor amendments to the Lead Member and Head of Service.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet considered the recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny Committee and approved the Local Housing Allowance 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:

Councils have a duty to ensure payments of Local Housing Allowance are made appropriately to safeguard tenancies. This policy sets out the Councils commitment to this as laid down by The Housing Benefit Regulations 2006.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

8. 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-offs of irrecoverable Council Tax debts and Housing Benefit overpayments.

Cabinet were invited to comment on the report:

- A considerable amount of work goes into the recovery of debts.
- Further support to assist residents was being considered; residents struggling with debts should contact the Council.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet approved the write-off of £63,202.22 in respect of irrecoverable Council Tax debt. Direct cost to Rossendale BC is £8,437.50
2. Cabinet approved the write-off of £6,152.21 in respect of irrecoverable Housing Benefit Overpayments. Direct cost to Rossendale BC is nil.

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.

9. WATERFOOT REGENERATION (MASTERPLAN)

The Leader of the Council outlined the report which asked Cabinet to approve the Masterplan and delegate procurement and project delivery to the Lead Member, Directors and Monitoring Officer.

Cabinet were invited to comment on the report:

- It was a realistic long-term plan which builds on what is already in the town.
- The Towns Board have been working on how the Council engages with young people.
- Implementation of the Masterplan, particularly at Tricketts Arcade, will show the Council's commitment to Waterfoot.
- The Boo have been doing lots of good work around young people, encouraging them to be active and creative.
- Pleased at the level of responses to the consultation by Waterfoot residents.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet approved the proposed Waterfoot Masterplan as a strategic document.
2. Cabinet delegated authority to the Director of Economic Development, Monitoring Officer and Director of Resources in conjunction with the Lead Member to carry out all procurement and securing of permissions to deliver the three projects as part of the UK SPF allocation.

Reason for Decision:

Accepting the Masterplan will be the catalyst for investment in Waterfoot and will be the first step to reaching the town's vision: ***"a place to relax and unwind, a place for adventure, a place for arts and culture to thrive, a place for all"***.

Alternative Options Considered:
None.

The meeting concluded at 7.03pm

_____ CHAIR _____ DATE