

## **COUNCILLOR MICHELLE SMITH, DEPUTY MAYOR**

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

**DATE OF MEETING: 11<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

**PRESENT:** The Deputy Mayor Councillor M. Smith (in the Chair)  
Councillors Adshead, Ashworth, A. Barnes, Bauld, Belli, Cheetham, Eaton, Gill, Hancock, Harris, Harrison, Hodgkiss, Holland, Kenyon, Lythgoe, McInnes, Neal, Norton, Payne, Procter, Royds, Walmsley and Woods.

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

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** 5 members of the public  
Chris Warren, Director of Resources/s151 Officer  
Kimberly Haworth, Head of Finance  
David Smurthwaite, Director of Economic Development  
Anne Storah, Principal Planner – Forward Planning  
Alastair Newall – Forvis Mazars  
Katie Kingston – Forvis Mazars

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

Apologies for absence were received for Councillors S. Barnes, Bleakley, Driver, McMahon, Looker and S. Smith.

### **2. Minutes**

#### **Resolved:**

That the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2024 be signed by the Deputy Mayor as a correct record.

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

There were no urgent items of business.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

### **5. 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 communication:

The Leader of the Council congratulated Councillor Alan Neal on being made an Honorary Townsman of Whitworth. Alan's dedication to the people of Whitworth and his service as a Whitworth Town Councillor for over 37 years was an outstanding achievement, and he was deserving of the award.

## **ORDINARY BUSINESS**

### **6. Edenfield Neighbourhood Plan referendum**

The Council considered the Edenfield Neighbourhood Plan referendum report.

In response to questions from members the following was noted:

- Thanks was given to the Edenfield Community Neighbourhood Forum.
- Timescales would be published for the referendum so residents could have their say.
- Thanks was particularly given to Anne Storah for her work throughout the process and also Mr Freeman for his independent examination.
- The Tatton garden at Whitaker Park demonstrates how we can use permeable surfaces.
- There was a legal responsibility to prepare a local plan, which was very challenging.

**Resolved:**

1. To agree the Regulation 18 Decision Statement for the Edenfield Neighbourhood Plan (Appendix 1).
2. To agree to the modifications proposed by the Examiner to the draft Neighbourhood Plan as set out in the Regulation 18 Decision Statement.
3. To agree that the Neighbourhood Plan proceeds to a referendum, subject to the modifications set out in the Regulation 18 Decision Statement) with a voting area to be the same as designated for the Neighbourhood Area.

**Reason for Decision**

The Council has considered the Examiner's Report in detail and the recommended modifications set out in the report, as has Edenfield Community Neighbourhood Forum. The Council agrees with the modifications, and therefore considers that the draft Edenfield Neighbourhood Plan, subject to modification, meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements and can therefore proceed to Referendum.

**Alternative Options Considered**

None.

**7. Review of Public Space Protection Orders for Alcohol, Nitrous Oxide and Off Road Bikes**

The Council considered the review of Public Space Protection Orders for Alcohol, Nitrous Oxide and Off Road Bikes.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- Illegal off-road bikes had been tackled with Fixed penalty Notices being issued.
- Thanks was given to the officers.
- The off-road bikes cause hazards to legal visitors of our outside spaces.

**Resolved:**

That the attached Public Spaces Protection Order as amended be formally varied and extended for a further 3 year period.

**Reason for Decision**

The facilities and enjoyment of our towns, parks and open spaces should be open to everyone without fear, intimidation or harassment, and these measures will ensure that this is the case for the foreseeable future.

**Alternative Options Considered**

None.

**8. Response to recommendations under paragraph 2 of Schedule 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014**

The Council considered the response to the Auditors recommendations as detailed in the report.

In response to questions from members the following was noted:

- Thanks was given to officers and Forvis Mazars for their work.
- There was a shortage of local authority auditors and it was a fundamental problem nationally.
- Treatment of the sale of bus company had been an issue resulting in delay.
- There was a need to focus on the present and to look forward.
- Auditors were signing the accounts under backstop arrangements.
- There was a need to work collaboratively.

**Resolved:**

1. That Council notes the report and actions taken to date.
2. That Council accepts the recommendations in the auditors' letter of 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

**Reason for Decision**

As required by Schedule 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 the Council is required to consider the recommendations of the Auditors made under paragraph 2 and confirm its acceptance of the same with action to be taken as necessary.

**Alternative Options Considered**

None.

**9. Public Meeting Schedule**

The Council considered the Public Meeting Schedule report.

**Resolved:**

That Council agree the Public Meeting Schedule containing dates of public meetings for 2025/2026 as detailed at Appendix A.

**Reason for Decision**

To agree a committee schedule in order to ensure that the Council can effectively conduct its business.

**Alternative Options Considered**

None.

**10. Urgent decisions**

Council noted the Special Urgency Decision taken 15<sup>th</sup> October 2024 regarding the acceptance of the Household Support Fund 6 grant (HSF6) and to approve funding to partner organisations to enable them to support the most financially vulnerable Rossendale Residents.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET AND OTHER COMMITTEES**

**11. Recommendation of the Governance Working Group**

The Council considered the Dispensations report.

**Resolved:**

To agree to update the Council's Constitution in relation to the granting of a general dispensation to all members of the Council for a period of 4 years from 14<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

**Reason for Decision**

To enable councillors to participate in any discussion and vote taken in relation to the Council's budget and the setting of Council Tax. The Council is required by law to implement a Constitution and it is in the interests of the Council to regularly review and update the document.

**Alternative Options Considered**

None.

**(The meeting commenced at 7.12pm and concluded at 8.06pm)**

Signed.....  
(Chair)

Date .....