

MINUTES OF: THE CABINET

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, 21st February 2007

**PRESENT: Councillor Ruddick (in the Chair)
Councillors Challinor, Driver, Essex, Farquharson and
Graham**

**IN ATTENDANCE: Carolyn Wilkins, Chief Executive
Helen Lockwood, Deputy Chief Executive
George Graham, Executive Director of Resources
Ilona Snow Miller, Head of Community and Partnerships
Lesley Noble, Head of Policy and Change Management
Carole Todd, Head of Street Scene and Liveability
Phil Seddon, Head of Financial Services
Bill Lawley, Interim Legal and Democratic Services Manager
Heather Moore, Committee Services Manager**

**ALSO PRESENT: Councillors A. Barnes, D. Barnes, Entwistle, Haworth,
Lamb, Neal Robertson and Sandiford
Andrew Neville, Chair of Standards Committee
Dave Jackson, Clerk to Whitworth Town Council
County Councillor Serridge
1 Member of the Public
2 Representatives from the Press**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Ormerod and Smith.

2. MINUTES

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 24th January 2007 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEM OF BUSINESS

The Chair referred to a previous decision of the Cabinet on 15th November 2006 (to which Minute Number 7, decision number 4 refers) relating to the management of car parks. He informed the Cabinet that the Car Park Member Working Group had met to progress the extension of disc parking throughout the Borough. The Working Group were asking the Cabinet to consider delegating the determination of disabled parking bays to the Head of Economic Regeneration and Strategic Housing in consultation with the Group instead of having to report back to Cabinet as this was likely to delay progress of the draft Traffic Regulation Order.

Decision Made:

That the determination of disabled parking spaces on car parks be delegated to the Head of Economic Regeneration and Strategic Housing in consultation with the Car Park Member Working Group.

Reason for Decision:

To ensure that the draft Traffic Regulation Order can be prepared.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Challinor and Robertson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute Number 6 (Strategic Review of Leisure) by virtue that they were Directors of Rossendale Leisure Trust.

Councillor Graham declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute Number 6 (Strategic Review of Leisure) by virtue that a family member was employed by Rossendale Leisure Trust.

Councillor Neal declared a personal interest in Minute Number 16 (Charter Between Rossendale Borough Council and Whitworth Town Council) by virtue that he served on Whitworth Town Council.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A question was raised about Victoria Park Bowling Club and how the Council could support the community to prevent vandalism at the Park. The Leader of the Council thanked the person for raising the question and he indicated that he would look into the matter and keep the person informed of any action that could be taken.

N.B. Councillors Challinor, Graham and Robertson vacated the meeting prior to consideration of the following item of business

6. STRATEGIC REVIEW OF LEISURE

The Leader presented the report of the Head of Community and Partnerships which requested approval for the publication of a White Paper on the future of leisure facility provision in the Borough and to recommend to the Council the confirmation of the previous decision to support the development of a Health and Fitness Suite at Haslingden Sports Centre.

The Leader of the Council reported that the White Paper represented the beginning of a wide ranging consultation process setting out specific options for the community to consider and feedback on.

In response to a question from a Member, the Leader of the Council reported that the Council had a strategic responsibility for leisure and would continue to work in partnership with the Rossendale Leisure Trust and the Local Strategic Partnership to increase participation in leisure activities in order to improve health outcomes in the Borough.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee reported that the Policy Scrutiny Committee would consider the White Paper at its meeting on 22nd February 2007.

Decision Made:

1. That the White Paper be approved for the purposes of consultation, subject to officers incorporating any changes to the consultation questions recommended by the Policy Scrutiny Committee.
2. That the Council be recommended to confirm the previous decision to support the development of a Health and Fitness Suite at Haslingden Sports Centre through the provision of a guarantee to Rossendale Leisure Trust and the agreement of the Terms of such guarantee be delegated to the Heads of Community and Partnerships, Finance and Head of Planning, Legal and Democratic Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Community and Partnerships and Finance and Risk Management.
3. That the Policy Scrutiny Committee be invited to comment upon the questions set out in the White Paper and suggest any changes and that they provide comments to the Cabinet on the Strategy set out in the White Paper.

Reasons for Decisions:

The Council has an opportunity to develop the Borough's leisure offer in a way which addresses the wider policy objectives which need to be delivered in order to generate sustained improvement in health and well being across the Borough. The Health and Fitness Suite at Haslingden Sports Centre on its own, rather than a combined single stage development represents an acceptable degree of financial risk and supports the development of a replacement pool in Haslingden on the Sports Centre as outlined in the White Paper.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

To progress the option of a combined single stage development at Haslingden Sports Centre which would expose the Council and the Rossendale Leisure Trust to an unacceptable degree of risk.

7. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

The Leader of the Council presented the report of the Executive Director of Resources which outlined proposals to revise the corporate priorities.

The Leader of the Council reported that the priorities detailed below would provide greater focus to deliver further improvement in the corporate planning process.

- Delivering quality services to customers (*Customers, Improvement*)
- Delivering regeneration across the Borough (*Economy, Housing*)
- Keeping our Borough clean and green (*Environment*)
- Promoting Rossendale as a cracking place to live and visit (*Economy*)
- Improving health and well being across the Borough (*Health, Housing*)

Enabled by:

- Strong financial management and the delivery of value for money services (*Improvement*)
- Equipping members to fulfil their role as leaders in the community (*Community Network*)
- Effective Human Resource management and maintaining a workforce with the skills to deliver the priorities for the Borough (*Improvement*)

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee reported on behalf of the Chair of the Policy Scrutiny Committee. The Committee agreed in principle to the priorities however they had concerns about the process of developing the priorities and requested the Cabinet to consider holding a session with all Elected Members in the future.

In response, the Leader of the Council reported on the process of developing the priorities whereby the Cabinet facilitated a workshop with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and other key partners to discuss the priorities which residents had raised in a recent survey.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee reported that the Management Committee had considered the priorities as part of the budget consultation process and were recommending their approval. The Committee at that meeting also raised the issue of climate change as a priority area. The Leader of the Council indicated that the priority of keeping the Borough Clean and Green was linked to climate change. In addition, the County Council had established a Policy on Climate Change and the Lancashire Leaders had signed up to joint working on the matter.

Decisions Made:

1. That the Council be recommended to approve the new corporate priorities set out above.
2. That the Cabinet facilitates a session for all Elected Members on future priority setting reviews which would feed into the workshop held with the LSP and other partners.

Reasons for Decisions:

Clear and relevant priorities which accurately target the most significant areas are at the heart of an effective corporate planning process.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

8. UPDATE TO MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Leader of the Council presented the report of the Head of Financial Services which provided an update to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy reflecting the Cabinet's policy proposals.

The Leader of the Council informed the Cabinet that the annual Treasury Strategy had been included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the document introduced the concept of budget savings carry forward for Service Departments.

The Head of Financial Services informed the Cabinet that this was the second update to the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the key assumptions had not changed significantly from those of previous years but new concepts and reports had been introduced.

Decisions Made:

That the Council be recommended to approve the update to the Medium Term Financial Strategy, subject to any final amendments arising from the Council's final budget approval.

Reasons for Decisions:

The Medium Term Financial Strategy allows the Council to demonstrate both the direction of resources into the priorities of the communities it serves and improvements in value for money.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

9. REVENUE BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX 2007/08

The Leader of the Council presented the report of the Head of Financial Services which outlined proposals for the Revenue Budget and level of Council Tax for 2007/08.

The Leader of the Council referred to the representations received as part of the consultation on the budget and he indicated that the majority of responses commented on matters of Street Scene and Liveability and in particular “clean and green” matters. He highlighted that consultation had taken place by way of Area Forum Meetings, Lancashire Local, Overview and Scrutiny, local businesses and the Community Network.

The Leader of the Council reported that the proposals represented an increase of 2.9% and Rossendale’s element was approximately 17% of the total bill of other precepting authorities including Lancashire County Council, the Police and the Fire Authority.

The Cabinet considered the advice from the Head of Financial Services in terms of the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of reserves to ensure that there was responsible financial management over the longer term.

The Portfolio Holder for Policy and Performance highlighted the importance of maximising resources to ensure they worked for Rossendale. He indicated that the proposals would support the investment and improvement of services across the Borough and would move the level of Council Tax in Rossendale closer to the average.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee reported that the Committee had considered the options published for consultation. A number of questions had been raised relating to climate change, public transport and grant opportunities.

In response to a question from a Member relating to £5k savings on public transport, the Leader of the Council indicated that Lancashire County Council subsidised bus routes in the Borough and the Council would ask the County Council to apply its policy on those services.

In response to a question from a Member, the Leader of the Council reported that a management fee was received from Rossendale Transport and allocated to the priorities of the Council. The Head of Financial Services also indicated that the fee related to the bus terminal and the post of the bus inspector.

In response to a question from a Member relating to the increase in the Polices’ rate, the Leader of the Council highlighted that the satisfaction of the Police Service in Rossendale had increased and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership was the best performing in Lancashire. He indicated that the increase would fund new officers and would be utilised to deal with serious crime and terrorism.

Decisions Made:

1. That the Council be recommended to agree a net budget requirement for the Council for 2007/08 of £11,199,413.
2. That the Council be recommended to agree that a Council Tax be set based at 2.9% increase on the current year, which would equate to a Band D equivalent rate of £239.32 for 2007/08.

Reasons for Decisions:

The budget will allow the Council to continue its improvement journey and begin the process of moving the level of Council Tax in Rossendale closer to the average.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

10. CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Leader of the Council presented the report of the Head of Financial Services which outlined details of capital expenditure estimates and resources for 2007/08 and 2009/10.

The Leader of the Council reported on prioritising the Council's capital assets over the medium term and to focus on immediate issues together with those emerging over the medium term.

Decisions Made:

That Full Council be recommended to approve the 2007/08 Capital Programme as set out below:

Detail	£000's
Pathways (5 year programme pa)	30
Land Drainage	60
Planning System	85
Wheeled Bins (5 year programme pa)	45
Environmental Projects	80
Sports & Playing Fields (5 year programme pa)	45
Condition Survey Maintenance (additional funding of 2 year programme pa)	100
Private Sector Housing Renewal (<i>in addition £685k funded from Housing Capital Allocation and other grants</i>)	137
Total	572

Reasons for Decisions:

The Council needs to ensure that it is able to generate adequate sources of capital funding to support its capital commitments over the medium term and that it does not over stretch itself in terms of borrowing exposure.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

11. CORPORATE SELF ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE CORPORATE KEY LINES OF ENQUIRY

The Leader of the Council presented the report of the Chief Executive which outlined the Self Assessment that had been prepared to inform the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) which would take place in April 2007.

The Leader of the Council reported that the Self Assessment demonstrated the progress achieved against the five CPA Corporate Key Lines of Enquiry.

The Chief Executive reported that the document would set the scene for the inspection and it should demonstrate the Council's own self awareness of its current position and priorities and what the Council was still planning to achieve.

In response to a question about Elected Member training and development, the Leader of the Council reported that the draft Committee Schedule for 2007/08 proposed one training and development session per month. In addition, the Portfolio Holder for Human Resources and Member Development referred the North West Charter for Member Development which the Council had recently been awarded which further demonstrated Members' commitment to training and development.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee indicated that the Self Assessment recognised those items the Council still had to achieve and the building blocks that were in place to ensure that they would be.

The Portfolio Holder for Policy and Performance stated that it was good to reflect on the Council's achievements and he highlighted that other Council's were now visiting Rossendale in order to capture learning.

Decisions Made:

That the Self Assessment be noted and submitted to Full Council for consideration.

Reasons for Decisions:

The opportunity to improve the Council's 'Poor' rating against CPA will demonstrate the improvement and impact made by the Council against all of its strategic objectives and priorities, including those it shares with the Local Strategic Partnership.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

12. REVISED CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMBERS

The Leader of the Council presented the report of the Head of Planning, Legal and Democratic Services which informed Members of a consultation paper on a draft of a proposed new model Code of Conduct for local authority Members.

The Interim Legal and Democratic Services Manager reported on the key changes to the Code including amendments to rules on personal and prejudicial interests.

Decisions Made:

That the Cabinet request the Standards Committee consider the consultation paper and respond to the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Reasons for Decisions:

The Standards Committee is responsible for promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Councillors and Co-Opted Members.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

13. HOUSING MARKET RENEWAL PROGRAMME 2007/08

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration presented the report of the Head of Economic Regeneration and Strategic Housing which outlined the proposed Housing Market Renewal Programme for 2007/08.

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration reported that Rossendale's allocation of £2.2million was approved by the Elevate Board in January 2007. Officers and Ward Members had discussed the delivery of the programme and developed an outline programme for 2007/08. It was proposed that renewal activity would focus on Bacup and details of face-lifting and block repair were outlined by the Portfolio Holder.

Decisions Made:

1. That the Housing Market Renewal Programme for 2007/08 be approved.
2. That delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning, Legal and Democratic Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration to sign the contract agreements (form of commencement agreements) for the housing improvement works.

Reasons for Decisions:

Rossendale has a successful track record in delivering the Housing Market Renewal Programme in the area which is recognised by both Elevate and the Government Office North West. The 2007/08 Programme provides a real opportunity to improve the quality of life for local residents.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

14. SCHEME OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCES 2007/08

The Leader of the Council presented the report of the Head of Planning, Legal and Democratic Services which outlined the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel and the adoption of a Scheme of Members' Allowances for 2007/08.

The Leader of the Council reported that following a survey of Members' time, the Independent Remuneration Panel noted that time spent by Members had increased to an average of 18 hours per week, which after applying the discount rate provided 12 hours for the purposes of the Basic Allowance calculation.

The Cabinet discussed proposals to accept half the increase proposed by the Panel at the current time.

Decisions Made:

1. That the Council be recommended to approve the recommendations in respect of the Scheme as set out in Paragraph 4.7 of the report, and to agree to half an increase to Members' Allowances, the remainder to be determined by Council when appropriate.
2. That the Minutes of the Independent Remuneration Panel held on 25th September 2006 and 4th December 2006 and their formal recommendations about the Scheme of Members' Allowances for 2007/08 be noted.

3. That Council be recommended to delegate to the Head of Planning, Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Risk Management, the adoption of Schedules within the Scheme in respect of travel and subsistence allowances and 'approved duties', and the rewording of Paragraphs 11 and 14 of the Scheme.
4. That Council be recommended to delegate to the Head of Planning, Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Risk Management, the approval of an amendment to the Schedule of SRAs to reflect the revised structure of Overview and Scrutiny.

Reasons for Decisions:

In determining the Scheme of Allowances for 2007/08, Members considered the Panel's recommendations, whilst bearing in mind the Council's overall financial and budgetary position.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

To implement the recommendations of the Panel in their entirety at the current time.

15. CAPACITY BUILDING APPROACH

The Leader of the Council presented the report of the Chief Executive which set out the Policy Statement in relation to the Council's Capacity Building Approach.

The Chief Executive reported that the approach reflected the fact, that in order to achieve the Council's priorities, and contribute towards the objectives of the Community Strategy, the Council was required to work in partnership with a wide range of groups and organisations.

The Chief Executive informed the Cabinet that the Policy Statement was an important tool for staff as it would provide a more formalised approach to some of the work already undertaken by the Council and it broadened the focus on commissioning.

Decisions Made:

That the Policy Statement be approved.

Reasons for Decisions:

The approach reflects the ranges of ways in which the Council is increasing its operational capacity beyond that of the Council's own direct capacity.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

16. CHARTER BETWEEN ROSSENDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL AND WHITWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

The Leader of the Council presented the report of the Chief Executive which outlined the development of a Charter between the Town Council and Rossendale Borough Council.

The Leader of the Council highlighted that Whitworth Town Council had achieved Quality Parish Council status and as part of the ongoing development of the Council they had expressed interest in developing the Charter.

The Chief Executive reported that the approach was in line with Rossendale Borough Council's capacity building approach and the framework would provide clarity regarding roles and responsibilities.

The Chief Executive reported that a draft of a Charter had been developed by the Town Council to indicate the areas that could be included, a copy of which was appended to the report for the consideration of the Cabinet.

The Cabinet recommended that Paragraph 8 be amended and the word 'help' be removed. In respect of Paragraph 12 it was agreed that reciprocal arrangements should be reflected in the Charter.

Decisions Made:

1. That the amendments to the Charter as set out above be agreed.
2. That the Cabinet supports the development of a Charter to include the areas set out in the description of Phase One as detailed in the report.
3. That Phase Two be developed during 2007/08 and a revised Charter be brought back to a future meeting of the Cabinet for approval.
4. That the Council work with Lancashire County Council and Whitworth Town Council on the Local Area Agreement (LAA) pilot.

Reasons for Decisions:

The development of a charter will formalise the improved working relationship between the two Councils and sets the framework for further development.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

17. CHANGES TO TRADE WASTE COLLECTIONS

The Portfolio Holder for Street Scene and Liveability presented the report of the Head of Street Scene and Liveability which outlined changes in legislation which would affect the way the Council collected trade waste from its customers.

The Portfolio Holder for Street Scene and Liveability informed the Cabinet that certain trade customers would be reclassified as domestic waste as detailed below:

Schools, educational establishments
Residential care homes
Charities
Churches, places of worship
Public meeting rooms

The Portfolio Holder reported that the alternative weekly collection policy would apply to those collection points which were now being designated as domestic waste. It was reported that a charge could not be made for disposal of waste from those premises although a charge for collection could be made.

The Cabinet discussed encouraging schools to recycle and to offer a reward for the school that had the highest recycling rate.

Decisions Made:

1. That all trade waste customer charges be brought into line to reflect the actual service customers receive.
2. That trade waste charges be increased by 20% to take into account the more stringent regulation, the cost of passing on the rise in landfill tax and Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS) and inflation.
3. That the Regulations be implemented regarding the re-classification of trade and household waste and that option one as set out in the report be selected as the most prudent way of ensuring compliance.
4. That there be no increase in charges (with the exception of 1 above) for those organisations who are now reclassified as domestic waste which in effect constitutes a refund of the disposal charge.
5. That requests for increased number of receptacles be not considered unless there is substantial recycling taking place and the cost of any extra receptacles be passed onto the customer.
6. That trade waste customers be informed of the new Regulations which come into effect on 31st October 2007 and adjustments to their collections be made accordingly.

Reasons for Decisions:

It is a statutory requirement to implement changes in collections to trade waste.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Option two as detailed in the report.

18. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND DATA QUALITY STRATEGY

The Portfolio Holder for Policy and Performance presented the report of the Head of Policy and Change Management which set out the Performance Management and Data Quality Strategy.

The Portfolio Holder for Policy and Performance reported that the purpose of the Strategy was to continue to improve performance management, by embedding a consistent set of standards across the Council, together with agreed roles & responsibilities in relation to data quality and performance management.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee reported that the Strategy had been considered by the Performance Scrutiny Committee and Audit Scrutiny Committee and comments on the document were submitted to the Scrutiny Support Officer to ensure that they were included in the report to the Cabinet.

Decisions Made:

That the Cabinet agree the roles as set out in the Strategy and endorse the Council's commitment to performance management and data quality.

Reasons for Decisions:

The Strategy sets out the Council's standards and corporate commitment to performance management and data quality, together with the role of Members in relation to this.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

19. CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES

The Leader of the Council presented the report of the Head of Planning, Legal and Democratic Services which outlined a revision of the Council's Contract Standing Orders and recommended the revised Contract Procedure Rules to Council for approval.

The Interim Legal and Democratic Services Manager reported that it was vital that procurement processes operated within the framework of the Council's corporate Procurement Strategy.

Decisions Made:

That Council be recommended to:

1. adopt the Contract Procedure Rules.
2. delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources to amend the Rules after consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Risk Management and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

Reasons for Decisions:

The efficient and effective procurement of goods, services and works has an important impact on service delivery. The Rules promote good purchasing practice and public accountability and deter corruption.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

20. ROSSENDALE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration presented the report of the Head of Planning, Legal and Democratic Services which set out the revised Local Development Scheme for Rossendale covering the period 2007 to 2010, which would be submitted to the Government Office for the North West.

The Cabinet considered the indicative timetable showing key dates in the preparation of the local development documents proposed for Rossendale.

In response to a question from a Member about the cost of consultants for the Bacup, Stacksteads and Britannia Area Action Plan, the Leader of the Council reported that a response would be sent to the Member.

Decisions Made:

That the Council be recommended to give authority to approve the Local Development Scheme 2007-2010 to the Head of Planning, Legal and Democratic Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration.

Reasons for Decisions:

It is essential that the Council submits a third Local Development Scheme to the Government Office for the North West in March 2007, rolling forward the programme set out in last years Local Development Scheme.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

21. REPORT OF THE LITTER BINS TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee presented the report of the Litter Bins Task and Finish Group. She informed the Cabinet that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee had considered the report at its meeting on 7 February 2007.

Councillor Neal, the Chair of the Task and Finish Group highlighted the key findings of the review together with the recommendations for the consideration of the Cabinet.

It was noted that a letter of congratulations had been forwarded from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to the Head of Street Scene and Liveability which acknowledged the hard work of litter pickers therefore recommendation 6.12 was no longer required.

Decisions Made:

That the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and the Task and Finish Group be agreed as set out in the report with the exception of 6.12.

Reasons for Decisions:

The street scene of the Borough will be enhanced and improvements will be made to customer service.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

22. COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH THE LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

The Portfolio Holder for Policy and Performance presented the report of the Head of Policy and Change Management which provided an update on the Council's ongoing engagement with the Local Area Agreement (LAA) which was now approaching the end of its first delivery year of a three year programme.

The Portfolio Holder for Policy and Performance outlined the themes within the LAA as set out below.

Healthier Communities and Older People
Children and Young People
Safer and Stronger Communities
Economic Development and Enterprise

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee recommended an approach to reporting arrangements for the consideration of the Cabinet.

Decisions Made:

1. That the levels of performance detailed in the report be noted.
2. That the identified roles for LAA lead officers be agreed and the time commitment required be recognised.
3. That the recommended formal reporting arrangements to the LSP be agreed.
4. That quarterly reporting arrangements to the Performance Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet be submitted with the quarterly BVPI report.

Reasons for Decisions:

The four themes of the LAA cross-cut the Council's objectives and those shared with the Local Strategic Partnership. It is important to develop a more tailored relationship between local authorities, key partner agencies and central government.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

23. PERFORMANCE – 2005/06 QUARTILE POSITIONS AND CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN ACTIONS (UP TO JANUARY)

The Portfolio Holder for Policy and Performance presented the report of the Head of Policy and Change Management which outlined performance in respect of BVPIs and the Corporate Improvement Plan.

The Portfolio Holder for Policy and Performance reported that the Corporate Improvement Plan detailed a series of outputs and the report outlined the progress that had been made in achieving the output. It was noted that outputs were marked either green (project on track) or amber (some issues or risks which require action to keep project on track) and the Portfolio Holder was pleased to report that no outputs were marked red (serious issues or risks needing urgent action).

The Cabinet considered the quartile positions that had been assigned to 2005/06 outturns. It was noted that whilst comparisons were historically undertaken against all Districts, the Head of Policy and Change Management reported that the Council had measured itself against all Councils, which showed a greater number of BVPI's in the higher quartiles of performance. The Head of Policy and Change Management informed the Cabinet that she was awaiting advice from the Audit Commission regarding the regulations in performance comparisons against all Councils.

In discussing the respective levels of performance it was noted that whilst there was an overall increase in performance which was to be commended, it was important that the Council continued to implement its plans to improve those indicators that remained in the lower quartiles.

The Cabinet considered the quartile positions that had been assigned to 2005/06 outturns.

It was noted that comparisons were usually undertaken against all Districts. The Head of Policy and Change Management reported that the Council had measured itself against all Councils and a more favourable position was evidenced, which highlighted a significant improvement journey. The Head of Policy and Change Management informed the Cabinet that she was awaiting advice from the Audit Commission regarding measuring performance against all Councils.

Decisions Made:

1. That the Cabinet continues to monitor performance of those actions that are not fully completed.
2. That the Performance Scrutiny Committee be requested to continue to scrutinise and challenge current council performance against BVPIs and the Cabinet remains informed of their actions in performing this scrutiny.

Reasons for Decisions:

Monitoring of performance will ensure that the Council achieves its outputs and ensures that early corrective action can be taken in areas of under-performance.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

24. FINANCIAL MONITORING

The Portfolio Holder for Policy and Performance presented the report of the Head of Financial Services which provided an update on the General Fund estimates for 2006/07, the Capital Programme and Treasury matters together with progress on delivering budget savings and growth.

The Portfolio Holder for Policy and Performance informed the Cabinet that in respect of Capital Receipts, the current forecast indicated a surplus on capital receipts of £675k with the assumption of receipts from GreenVale Homes Right to Buys and capital receipts from land and property sales.

The Portfolio Holder for Policy and Performance reported on the impact on general fund reserves and the receipt of a claim for an historical incident which the Council was unlikely to be able to pass onto its insurers which was estimated at £150k.

Decisions Made:

That the contents of the report be noted.

Reasons for Decisions:

Financial monitoring ensures that strong financial management is embedded throughout the organisation.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

25. LAND AT SYKESIDE, HASLINGDEN

The Leader of the Council presented the report of the Executive Director of Resources which detailed a proposal to enter into a 125 year lease for a parcel of land at Sykeside, Haslingden with Rossendale and Pendle Mountain Rescue Team.

In response to a question from a Ward Member, the Leader of the Council reported that the site required planning permission and the Development Control Committee would consider access.

Decisions Made:

That subject to obtaining planning permission, the Cabinet agreed to enter into a 125 year lease with the Rossendale and Pendle Mountain Rescue Team for the identified site at Sykeside, Haslingden at a rental and on terms to be agreed by the Council's Property Services Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Risk Management.

Reasons for Decisions:

The option of leasing the site to the Rossendale and Pendle Mountain Rescue Team would represent the greatest benefit to the whole community of the options available to the Council.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

To not proceed with the transaction which could leave the Council exposed to the risks around the site.

26. PROVISION OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN EDENFIELD

The Leader of the Council presented the report of the Executive Director of Resources which outlined proposals to grant a lease of the Council's land to facilitate the development and enhancement of community facilities in Edenfield.

The Executive Director of Resources outlined the terms of the lease for the consideration of the Cabinet.

In response to a question from a Member, it was agreed that the terms of the lease include reference to using the facility as a polling station for elections.

Decisions Made:

That the proposed lease terms as set out in paragraph 4.3 of the report be approved.

Reasons for Decisions:

Use of the Council's assets will support the securing of investment to improve facilities.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 9.10pm)