

COUNCILLOR PETER STEEN MAYOR

MINUTES OF: THE COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF ROSSENDALE

Date of Meeting: 28th February 2007

**PRESENT: The Mayor Councillor P Steen (in the Chair)
Councillors L Barnes, Challinor, Cheetham, Dickinson,
Driver, Entwistle, Essex, Farquharson, Graham,
Hancock, Haworth, Lamb, Lynskey, Morris, Neal,
Ormerod, J Pawson, S Pawson, Robertson, Ruddick,
Sandiford, Starkey, H Steen, Thorne and Unsworth.**

**IN ATTENDANCE: Ms C Wilkins, Chief Executive
Ms H Lockwood, Deputy Chief Executive
Mr G Graham, Executive Director of Resources
Mr P Seddon, Head of Financial Services
Mr W Lawley, Interim Legal and Democratic Services
Manager
Mr J Joinson, Democratic Services Manager
Mrs H Moore, Committee Services Manager**

**ALSO PRESENT: County Councillor S Serridge
Councillor R Pickup, Whitworth Town Council
4 Members of the Public
2 Representatives of the Press**

**APOLOGIES: Councillors A Barnes, D Barnes, Crosta, Eaton, C Gill,
P Gill, Smith and Swain.**

BUSINESS MATTERS

1. MINUTES

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 31st January 2007 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Challinor and Robertson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item G1 'Strategic Review of Leisure Provision', in the light of their appointment to Rossendale Leisure Trust. Councillor Graham declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item G1, in the light of employment by the Trust of a close family member.

3. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE DEPUTY MAYOR, THE LEADER, OR HEAD OF THE PAID SERVICE

The Mayor apologised for his conduct at the Council meeting on 30th November, at which it had been alleged that he had not acted impartially in his role as the Chair of the meeting. The Mayor expressed regret that his actions might have given the appearance of devaluing the office of the Mayor. He was happy to rectify this in public.

The Mayor indicated that he had recently met Colonel Steven Davies MBE of the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment. Because the Regiment was currently on active duty in the Middle East, it was unable to take up the offer of a Freedom of the Borough march this year. However, the Regiment sent its regards. The Mayor had asked Colonel Davies to communicate the Council's best wishes to the soldiers and their families.

Members were reminded that the Mayor's Ball would take place on 31st March 2007 and that the proceeds would be divided between the Hospice and other local charities. Tickets were available from the Civic Services Officer/Leader's Personal Assistant.

The Mayor congratulated Jason Foster and Andrew Buckle on their recent appointments with the Council.

There were no communications from the Leader or Chief Executive.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Councillor Ron Pickup of Whitworth Town Council raised the matter of a derelict property in Market Street in Whitworth, which had been made secure with scaffolding. He pointed out that the building was unsightly and asked when a more permanent solution would be found.

In addition, Councillor Pickup referred to the Brookville site, Rawstron Street, Whitworth, which was also derelict. He reminded Members that the Council had been asked several years ago to participate in a scheme of quality care on the site, but that nothing had come to fruition. He asked when the future of the site would be resolved.

The Leader indicated that he would provide a written response within the next few days.

MEMBERS QUESTION TIME

5. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS TO THE LEADER

Councillor Essex asked the following question:-

Can the Leader comment on the article in the Lancashire Telegraph headlined 'Blunder has cost Council £26,000'?

The Leader responded that he had seen the article on Saturday, but that it had not reflected the reality of the situation. There had been a lot of interest expressed in the matter of the disabled access to Hardmans Mill. However, the allegation that the

Council had suddenly discovered the need for a disabled ramp was simply not true. There was no blunder and the ramp had not cost the Council £26,000 as reported in the press.

The Council took its disability duties seriously and had provided a substantial and attractive entrance to the new Council Chamber.

Councillor Robertson raised the following question on behalf of Councillor A Barnes:-

I am hearing that there a number of concerns being voiced by the CAB / Janet Anderson MP and Green Vale Homes about the way in which our benefits work is being delivered by Capita. Could the Leader please outline what the issues are and report on how RBC feel that the contract is being delivered?"

Councillor Robertson added that she had been contacted by a concerned constituent on Monday who had received a letter from Green Vale homes about possible eviction proceedings. However, the matter had now been resolved by the Portfolio Holder.

The Leader replied that the Service Assurance Team were only made aware of the CAB's concerns last week and had been in touch with that organisation to establish the nature of their concerns. In fact, only one specific case could be identified and because that case was proceeding to appeal the timescale was outside of the Council's and Capita's control. The Council and its partners strived to resolve cases as quickly as possible. A question about the performance of the contract appeared elsewhere on the Agenda.

The Leader also reported that he had received a letter from Janet Anderson MP expressing concern about the Council's approach to recovering Council Tax arrears. He expressed disappointment that the MP had referred this matter to the press before receiving the Council's reply. The Leader was satisfied that the two cases cited by the MP had been considered properly and that the appropriate action had been taken. Both cases had involved a default of payment. The partnership between the Council and Capita was working efficiently and was helping to reduce bad debt. The Council recovered 93.68% of its Council Tax. The collection procedures were consistent with those in place before the new arrangements.

Councillor Hancock raised the following question on behalf of Councillor A Barnes:-

Brighter Business Solutions have been engaged to deliver a range of tourism / activity for RBC following the closure of the tourist information centre. Why was the contract for this work not signed at the end of November; who has been monitoring the contract; how are we going to satisfy ourselves that the work represents good value for money; and how is this working going to be taken forward?

The Leader indicated that the contract with Brighter Business Solutions had been signed in November 2006 and was monitored by the Head of Community and Partnerships. Weekly briefings were received from Brighter Business Solutions and monthly progress reports were produced. The contract had been assessed for value for money at the interview stage of the selection process. A report would be submitted to the Cabinet in March 2007 setting out progress as to the contract and would explain how the work was being taken forward.

He added that Lancashire County Council was following Rossendale's example by looking at the way it delivered tourism services in a number of towns across the county.

Councillor Neal raised the following questions:-

He referred to a letter he had received from constituents living at the Meadows, Whitworth which faced the Brookville site. The residents had raised concerns about the derelict premises and the blight to the area. Councillor Neal indicated that Lancashire County Council had previously written to the Borough Council about the future of the site, but had not received a reply.

The Leader indicated that he would answer this question in conjunction with that raised by Councillor Pickup.

Councillor Neal asked if the Leader believed that Hurstwoods should finance the disabled ramp at Hardmans Mill. The Leader indicated that Hardmans Mill was not previously used as a public building and that it was proper for the Council to fund the installation of the ramp for its use as a public meeting venue. A full report would be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on this matter.

Councillor Neal enquired about a decision of a Panel of the Standards Committee on 19th December 2006 and asked if the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny could consider this matter in the light of recent publicity. The Leader confirmed that he was aware of the local determination made by the Standards Committee. He was not aware of any publicity surrounding the decision and did not believe that it was relevant to involve Overview and Scrutiny. He agreed to look into the matter.

Councillor Neal raised the matter of Peel Terrace, Shawforth, He indicated that it had now been determined that the Council was responsible for the land. He pointed out that the road appeared to be in a poor state and asked when it would be repaired. The Leader indicated that he was not aware of the details in respect of Peel Terrace, but would consult the Head of Legal and Democratic Services on this matter and take the appropriate action.

Councillor Haworth indicated that presentations on the budget had been delivered by the officers and that the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Risk Management appeared to have had little to say on the matter.

The Leader responded that the budget had been discussed at each Area Forum, the Lancashire Local and Overview and Scrutiny meetings. The Portfolio Holder, Councillor Ormerod, had presented the report at the Bacup Area Forum, Lancashire Local and Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Other Members of the Cabinet had delivered presentations at the remaining Area Forums.

Councillor Sandiford highlighted a quote in the press from Councillor Hancock about the Government's concern about local services. She mentioned the hospital closures, down-grading of health facilities, poor dental provision, closure of maternity services and threat to local post offices and asked whether this demonstrated the Government's concern. The Leader responded that the Government appeared to be unconcerned and that services were being cut.

Councillor Hancock asked if the Leader recognised the level of Government support received by the Council over the last few years. The Leader confirmed that Rossendale had benefited from that support to such an extent that the Improvement Board had adopted a lighter touch approach. He indicated that this appeared to be in contrast to the support provided to the NHS and Post Offices.

Councillor Robertson asked whether it was necessary to send out customer satisfaction and equalities monitoring forms to applicants when the Mayor attended a local function. The Leader agreed to look into this matter.

6. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Councillor Hancock had submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Risk Management:-

Could he tell me in relation to the recently agreed 25% increase in Member allowances. The comparisons required are those of Members after the proposed increase and the level of allowances paid in May 2004.

- What is the overall cost to the taxpayer of Member allowances after the increase to those paid in May 2004.
- How many Members of the Council benefit from responsibility allowance ie additional to basic allowance - and can I have a list of which Members this included and what their role is in relation to this.
- What was the number of Members benefiting from responsibility allowance in May 2004, and how many benefit now.
- What was the cost of the Executive when first set up in early 2004, what was the cost in May 2004 and what is the cost now after the increase in allowances. All costs in this question relate to the allowances claimed.
- What is the increase in Councillor expenses since May 2004?

Councillor Ormerod responded that the Government's Modernisation Agenda had recognised the need for a locally developed Scheme of Members Allowances, which provided sufficient financial and other incentives to attract skilled elected Members from all walks of life to enter public service.

In Rossendale's scheme the amount of Basic Allowances paid to Members was calculated by use of a formula which was based upon the National Minimum Wage and which also took into account the average number of hours worked by Councillors. Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) were paid to some Members who held certain offices, such as Political Group Leaders, Cabinet Members and Committee Chairs, and were a simple multiple of the Basic Allowance.

The changes in the total allowances from May 2004 to the proposed 2007/08 allowance were as follows:-

Basic Minimum Wage	Basic Allowance	Total cost of Basic and SRAs
£4.50	£1,728	£107k
£5.35	£2,568	£175k

The increase over three years, from 2004 to 2007, was therefore £68k (or 64%).

The overall increase took into account a 19% increase in the National Minimum Wage over the period in question. It also took into account a 25% increase in the average number of hours worked by Members on Council business. The method of calculating SRAs produced a multiplier effect which accounted for the total rise. The Independent Remuneration Panel had considered all these factors and had agreed to recommend the new scheme, which would be phased in over two years. Rossendale's Basic Allowance remained less than the average Basic Allowance for other non-unitary authorities in Lancashire, which a survey for 2006/07 indicated was around £3,400.

Notwithstanding the increase in Members Allowances, over the period 2003/04 – 2007/08, the level of Council Tax for a Band D property had risen by only 15.8%, which compared favourably to the estimated National Average of 18.5%.

18 members of the Council currently received a Special Responsibility Allowance. Details were available at the meeting.

The number of Members receiving Special Responsibility Allowance in May 2004 had been 13. The number had risen to 18 in 2007/08 as a result of the payment of an allowance to certain Vice-Chairs, which had been recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel in October 2006.

Details of the total cost of Special Responsibility Allowance to which Members of the Executive/Cabinet had been entitled, for the three time periods requested, were available at the meeting. All Members had claimed or were claiming their full entitlement.

The amount of Members' expenses for travel and subsistence paid in 2004/05 had been £5,088. In 2005/06 this figure had been £6,128. Full year figures were not yet available for 2006/07, but the figure to date was £3,514.

Councillor Lamb had submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Street Scene and Liveability:-

Is side waste currently picked up by the waste wagon as a normal part of the service? Will this continue to be the case and if not what are the alternative arrangements for people with excess waste? Is it proposed to place a charge onto this waste? She also indicate that her concerns related to large families, peak periods such as Christmas and when redecoration works were taking place. Those residents who had no car would be unable to take additional waste to the Household Waste Recycling Centres.

Councillor Driver replied that side waste was picked up by the refuse vehicles. However in most cases if people recycled there was no need to put out extra bags of waste on their general collection day. A family of five or more people could apply for two bins. The Council had government targets of 38% recycling which had to be met by 2010 and 58% by 2015. Clearly this would only happen if people separated their waste and used the recycling collections that the Council provided.

The Council's NEAT Officers carried out waste audits and, as part of this year's StreetScene and Liveability Business Plan, the Service intended to have a high profile educational campaign to promote recycling and help the Borough to achieve its targets. The Council had absolutely no plans to charge for refuse collection, however

if the government were to introduce charging the Council would be obliged to follow that instruction. The Council did all it could by offering collections for glass, cans, plastics, paper and cardboard. What was needed was for the public to take advantage of these collections and recycle more, thereby reducing the amount of waste that was tipped into landfill sites.

Councillor Robertson had submitted the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Customer Services:-

Can I ask the Portfolio Holder for Customer Services whether services to the rate payers of Rossendale have been improved by the transfer of the Council's Revenues and Benefits function to its new strategic partner Capita

Councillor Farquharson provided the following information. The contract with Capita represented a £12.6m investment over the next ten years. It would provide considerable improvements for Revenue and Benefit customers of these services and for the Council in terms of modernising its business processes and introducing new technology which the Council wouldn't have been able to afford on its own. The following services had been already been improved in the short time following the introduction of the Capita contract.

Contact Centre

Rossendale now had a dedicated contact centre that was designed to help people with enquiries about Council Tax, Housing Benefits, Council Tax Benefits and Business Rates. The new 0845 900 0500 helpline took callers straight through to staff who were fully trained to deal with a wide range of enquiries about Council Tax, Benefits and Business Rates. Callers using the new number had received a better, faster, more efficient service and the lines would be open until 7pm Monday to Friday.

The extended opening hours would mean that customers were able to do their business with the Council after they got home from work, thereby making the service more flexible to the needs of customers. Calls made to the helpline would only cost the same as a local call. Since opening the contact centre had answered a total of 13,434 calls.

Through working with Capita and introducing new technology and new ways of working, Rossendale Council would speed up the time taken to process and amend Housing and Council Tax Benefit claims, deal with Council Tax Bill enquires more quickly and increase the amount of Council Tax and Business Rates that were collected.

One Stop Shop

Since Capita had taken over the One Stop Shop a comprehensive training programme had been developed to ensure that staff were skilled and up to date in handling the full range of customer enquiries at the first point of contact. Additional services were going to be put through the OSS. The staff were already trained in the recovery of Council Tax and Business Rates which would provide more income coming in to the Council. Since its opening on 15th December 2005, the One Stop Shop had now been visited by over 34,000 customers. The top five reasons for customer visits were:

- Housing & Council Tax Benefits - 29.9%
- Council Tax Billing & Recovery - 15.6%
- Housing (Greenvale Homes) - 15.4%
- Development Control - 9.0%
- Bus Passes - 6.1%

To complement the OSS, a new Customer Relations management system was going to be implemented during 2007, which would be the back bone for managing all Rossendale customer queries. It was intended to also offer this service over the internet so that greater flexibility and choice could be provided to customers.

Mystery Shopping

To ensure that the Council monitored its services and maintained its customer service levels, mystery shopping was going to be carried out during 2007. At present, the OSS and contact centre was already monitored and measured. This process would continue.

New Technology

The Capita contract had enabled new technology to be implemented for Rossendale for example Electronic Document Records Management System (EDRMS). This technology had enabled all revenue and benefits documentation to be scanned and attached to the individual customer record. This in turn speeded up the process for dealing with new benefit claims, change in benefit circumstances, etc. As a result, if a customer telephoned the contact centre, Blackburn or even went into the One Stop Shop the customer adviser would see straight away all the relevant documentation for the customer. It would also improve the ability of staff to resolve questions and queries at first point of contact.

Also, the contract had seen significant investment in the areas of disaster recovery (DR). For the first time Rossendale had a DR site for both the Revenue and Benefits system and also the Anite document management system. There was also a DR site for the contact centre so if there was a problem all of the Rossendale calls could be transferred to another contact centre. As a result if any unforeseen disaster occurred to the main system, Rossendale had a full system back up, which meant the customer would experience very little interruption. This was particularly important for Benefits customers.

Investment In Software

The investment in new technology had also been matched with new software being provided for the Revenue and Benefits system, Document Management. They had also taken over all the software license costs which equated to approximately £80,000 per annum saving that the Council would have over the contract life. This amounted to approximately £800,000, which was a significant sum.

BVPI Performance

Even though the contract was in its early stages Rossendale had seen improvement in a number of BVPI's for example:- BVPI 9 Council Tax collection, BVPI 78a speed of

processing new benefit claims and BVPI 78b speed of processing benefit change in circumstances. All of these were direct improvements that had been achieved in the first six months. The targets were currently being set for the next year and some of them would place Rossendale in the top quartile of performing District Councils.

STATE OF THE BOROUGH AND POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK ITEMS

With the agreement of the Council the following items were taken together:- E1 'State of the Borough', E2 'CPA Self Assessment', F1 'Corporate Priorities', F2 'Update to Medium Term Financial Strategy', F3 'Revenue Budget' and F4 'Capital Programme 2007/08'.

7. THE STATE OF THE BOROUGH

The Leader of the Council delivered his third annual State of the Borough address. (A full copy of the speech is available with the Council Summons on the Council's website.) The speech was accompanied by a slide show which illustrated the Council's achievements and aspirations. The Leader also thanked the officers and Members for their hard work throughout the year. In particular, the Leader drew attention to the significant improvements in the performance of the Council which both Members and officers had the opportunity to demonstrate to inspectors during the forthcoming CPA process. He also welcomed the opportunity to propose a budget which coupled a range of service improvements with a below inflation increase in the Borough Council's portion of the Council Tax.

The Leader of the Council then **MOVED** the Recommendations at Items E1, E2, F1, F2, F3 and F4 and these were **SECONDED** by Councillor Ormerod.

Councillor Hancock indicated that he recognised the improvements made and that these had started some five years ago, following the Corporate Governance Inspection. At that time it had been necessary to take some difficult decisions in order to change the culture of the organisation. He believed that the Government did support local services, which had been demonstrated by its willingness to give people the Council services they wanted. Councillor Hancock thanked officers past and present for their work on the improvement journey and in particular George Graham and Phil Seddon for their work on the Budget. He indicated his party's support for the five Corporate Priorities, but reserved the right to challenge individual issues as appropriate.

Councillor Neal thanked the staff for their hard work. He also indicated his thanks to the Council for its support of the new Whitworth Civic Hall and hoped that further support would see the improvement of its security lighting. He made a number of other suggestions as follows:- the use of Area Forum budgets to fund the creation of new Town Councils; the purchase of a gas powered limousine for the Mayor; and measures to improve attendance at Member development sessions.

Councillor Sandiford indicated that the Council had acted with prudence in relation to the matter of Members Allowances, by phasing in the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel concerning hours worked and by not paying an allowance to the Vice-Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees.

Resolved:

To note the Leader's State of the Borough address.

8. CPA SELF-ASSESSMENT

Members considered a draft of the CPA Self-Assessment document against the CPA Corporate Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs). The Leader of the Council commended the draft. Councillor Hancock highlighted the importance of the Council being self aware. In response to a question by Councillor Hancock, the Leader indicated that all Members would receive a paper copy of the full CPA submission.

Resolved:

To note the contents of the CPA Self-Assessment report.

9. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Members considered the recommendations of the Cabinet of 21st February 2007 in respect of the revised corporate priorities, which were as follows:-

- 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*)

Resolved:

To approve the new corporate priorities set out above.

10. UPDATE TO MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Members considered a report to the Cabinet on 21st February 2007, concerning an update to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) reflecting the Cabinet's policy proposals.

Councillor Hancock enquired about whether the Council's reserves should only be used as a backup or in an emergency situation. He asked if the increase in Members' allowances was being funded through reserves, as it was not apparent in the Budget papers.

The Executive Director of Resources responded that General Reserves should only be used to deal with unexpected incidents, eg flooding. The question of Members' allowances was dealt with at Appendix 4 to the Budget report and the increase would not impact upon Reserves.

Resolved:

To approve the update to the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

11. REVENUE BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX FOR 2007/08

Councillor Ormerod presented his third and final Budget to Members of the Council. He reminded Members that the process started with input from councillors, which was followed by the detailed work of the officers to produce the final output. Members and officers worked closely throughout this process to produce the Budget. Consultations had taken place on the Budget at various public meetings. Some key themes which had shaped the budget included the following:- buildings; parks; street scene; cracking place to live; economic regeneration; services to the public; development of the website; Area Forums; partnerships with Capita and Green Vale Homes; health; and climate change. He indicated that the Reserves remained in a healthy state and that the Budget reflected a below inflation increase in the Borough Council's portion of the Council Tax for the second year running.

Councillor Neal indicated that Council Tax had risen a lot over the years, but that this was not the fault of the Borough Council. He pointed out that large Council Tax increases would affect the most vulnerable members of society such as those on low incomes, pensioners, single income households, large families and those already in debt.

Councillor Hancock indicated his general support for the Budget. He pointed out that government grants for planning delivery and health issues were welcomed and compared this to the levels of Government investment ten years ago. He highlighted the matter of Members' allowances which he believed would impact on reserves in future years, causing Council Tax to rise or service cuts.

Councillor Hancock **MOVED** the following **AMENDMENT** which was **SECONDED** by Councillor Robertson:-

"That the £20k allocated to Area Forums instead be designated as Community Money and allocated to individual councillors to distribute on a ward basis."

Members debated the amendment and in particular the possible uneven allocation of resources at ward level if the £20k was distributed equally between each Area Forum. The Leader accepted the potential for inequality and indicated that the detailed procedure for the allocation of the resources could be discussed further by the Cabinet.

With the agreement of the meeting Councillors Hancock and Robertson **WITHDREW** the **AMENDMENT**.

Councillor Haworth **MOVED** the following **AMENDMENT** which was **SECONDED** by Councillor Hancock:-

“That the detailed Budget be reconsidered in order to secure the necessary £5k funding required to maintain five subsidised bus routes, to be funded by a reduction in the number of editions of the Rossendale Alive newspaper from 4 to 3.”

The Leader indicated that the cost of these services was being transferred to Lancashire County Council, which was the responsible body. It was able to subsidise uneconomic bus routes and selected eligible routes by means of a formula. Councillor Ormerod indicated that the County Council would receive an additional £300k precept from Rossendale due to the removal of the Council Tax discount for empty properties. Members discussed the impact of the possible loss of these services on the community.

On being **PUT** the **AMENDMENT** was **LOST** and the substantive **MOTION** was then **PUT**.

Resolved:

1 – Budget Requirement

- 1.1. That the savings identified for 2007-08 in the sum of £208,630 as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report be approved.
- 1.2. That investments in the sum of £969,180 as detailed in Appendix 3 of the report be approved.
- 1.3. That the additional investments and savings in the net sum of £17,000 (net investment) as detailed in Appendix 4 of the report.
- 1.4. That an amount of:
 - 1.4.1. £78,430 be transferred from the Change Management Reserve,
 - 1.4.2. £130,000 from the Planning Delivery Grant
 - 1.4.3. £231,850 from LABGIS
 - 1.4.4. £131,790 from Department of Health Grant
 - 1.4.5. £63,805 from the Collection Fund to a Contract Performance Reserve
- 1.5. That consequent upon resolutions 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 above, and the Head of Finance opinion on the robustness of the 2007-08 Estimates and the level of balances, the Council's Budget for 2007-08, as amended, be approved in the sum of £11,263,218.

2 – 2007-08 Precepts

- 2.1 That the receipt, or anticipated receipt, of the following precepts for 2007-08 be noted:

	£
Lancashire Police Authority (General Expenses)	2,678,959
Lancashire County Council (General Expenses)	22,252,671
Lancashire Fire Authority (General Expenses)	1,221,749
Rosendale Borough Council (General Expenses)	5,090,438
Whitworth Parish Council (Special Expenses)	48,031

3 – Council Tax Base

- 3.1 That it is noted that by Scheme of Delegation, dated 1st February 2007, The Head of Financial Services in consultation with The Leader of the Council calculated the following amounts for the year 2007-08 in accordance with Section 33 (1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by Section 84 Local Government Act 2003 For the whole area of the Borough 21,270 “D” Band equivalent units being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its Council Tax base for the year end.
- 3.2 For that part of the Council’s area being Whitworth Parish, the amount of 2,318 “D” Band equivalent units, being the amounts calculated by the Council in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in that part of its area to which the Special Items relate.

4 – Budget impact on Council Tax

- 4.1 That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2007-08 in accordance with Section 32 to 36 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992:-
- (a) £32,368,458 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2)(a) to (e) of the Act.
 - (b) £21,105,240 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3)(a) to (c) of the Act.
 - (c) £11,263,218 being the amount by which the aggregate at 4.1(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 4.1(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year.
 - (d) £6,108,975 being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund in respect of redistributed Non-Domestic Rates, Revenue Support Grant, (increased by the amount of the sums which the Council estimates will be

transferred in the year from its Collection Fund to its General Fund in accordance with Section 97(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (Council Tax Surplus) or (reduced by the amount of the sums which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year from its General Fund to its Collection Fund in accordance with Section 97(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988) (Council Tax Deficit)

- (e) £63,805 being a transfer from the Collection Fund Surplus to General Fund (see 1.4.5 above)
- (f) £239.32 being the amount at 4.1(c) above less the amount at 4.1(d) and 4.1(e) above, all divided by the amount at 3.1 above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.
- (g) £48,031 being the aggregate amounts of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
- (h) £20.72 being the amount at 4.1(g) above all divided by the amount of 3.2 above, calculated by Council and applicable to the Parish of Whitworth area only for the Special items.

VALUATION BANDS								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Special Items Only, Parish of Whitworth	13.82	16.11	18.42	20.72	25.32	29.93	34.54	41.44

- (i) £260.04 for part of the Council's area, Parish of Whitworth, being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 4.1(e) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 3.2 above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.
- (j) Being the amounts shown below that are given by multiplying the amounts at 4.1(e) and 4.1(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

VALUATION BANDS								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Parish of Whitworth	173.36	202.25	231.14	260.04	317.83	375.61	433.40	520.08
All other parts of the Borough	159.54	186.14	212.72	239.32	292.51	345.68	398.86	478.64

- (k) That it be noted that for the year 2007-08 the Lancashire County Council have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the Categories of dwellings shown below:-

VALUATION BANDS								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Lancashire County Council	697.47	813.71	929.96	1046.20	1278.69	1511.18	1743.67	2092.40

- (l) That it be noted that for the year 2007-08 the Lancashire Police Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

VALUATION BANDS								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Lancashire Police Authority	83.97	97.96	111.96	125.95	153.94	181.93	209.92	251.90

- (m) That it be noted that for the year 2007-08 the Lancashire Fire Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

VALUATION BANDS								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Lancashire Fire Authority	38.29	44.68	51.06	57.44	70.20	82.97	95.73	114.88

- (n) That, being calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 4.1(i) above and 4.1(i), (j) and (k) above, the Council, in accordance

with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2007-08 for each of the categories of dwellings show below:-

VALIDATION BANDS								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Parish of Whitworth	993.09	1158.60	1324.12	1489.63	1820.66	2151.69	2482.72	2979.26
All other parts of the Borough	979.27	1142.49	1305.70	1468.91	1795.34	2121.76	2448.18	2937.82

5 – Furnished and Unfurnished Property

- 5.1 The discretionary discounts on empty unfurnished and furnished property be reduced to the statutory minimum as from 1st April 2007.
- 5.2 The policy on empty unfurnished and furnished property previously approved by Cabinet be approved.

6 – Council Tax Collection

- 6.1 That the Head of Customer Services and e-Government, officers and partners be authorised to take all necessary steps to ensure collection and recovery of the Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR).

12. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2007/08

Members considered the recommendations of the Cabinet on 21st February 2007 in respect of the 2007/08 Capital Programme.

Resolved:

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

13. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

Members considered the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel and the report of the Cabinet on 21st February 2007 in connection with the adoption of a new Scheme of Members' Allowances. The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Risk Management outlined the reasons for the proposed changes which would help to attract a diverse range of people to stand for public office. He indicated that the Council intended to increase allowances in the forthcoming year by only 50% of the amount recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel. The Leader stated that the Council would reconsider this matter during next year's Budget process.

Resolved:

1. 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. 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. 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

Cabinet – 21st February 2007

14. STRATEGIC REVIEW OF LEISURE PROVISION

Members considered a report and a White Paper on the future of leisure facility provision in the Borough. Members were informed that the White Paper had been approved by the Cabinet for the purposes of consultation, subject to officers incorporating any changes to the consultation questions recommended by the Policy Scrutiny Committee. That Committee had agreed to note the Strategy set out in the White Paper and to endorse the wording of the three key questions.

Councillor Neal raised concerns about the level of resources which might be required to fund the future provision of swimming pool facilities.

Resolved:

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.

NOTE:- Councillors Challinor, Graham and Robertson left the meeting for the duration of the above item and took no part in the debate or decision.

15. CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES

Members considered a report on a revision to the Council's Contract Standing Orders and considered the inclusion of the revised Contract Procedure Rules within the Council's Constitution.

Councillor Haworth commented that the document clarified a number of issues and would improve the Council's business efficiency. He thanked the Interim Legal and Democratic Services Manager and Members of the Constitution Working Group for their work on developing the new Procedure Rules.

Resolved:

1. To adopt the Contract Procedure Rules.
2. To 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.

16. ROSSENDALE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

Members considered a report concerning the revised Local Development Scheme for Rosendale covering the period 2007 to 2010, which would be submitted to Government Office North West.

Councillor Challinor highlighted the list of works which would allow the Authority to complete the Local Development Framework. The report set out a timetable for the delivery of the various documents required. Rossendale was leading the way in the introduction of the new planning system thanks to the hard work of its officers, present and past.

Resolved:

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.

OTHER BUSINESS

17. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Members considered the appointment of a Member to the Green Vale Homes Council Nominated Board.

Resolved:

To approve to appointment of Councillor Ruddick to the Green Vale Homes Council Nominated Board.

The Mayor then declared the meeting closed.

(The meeting started at 7.00 pm and concluded at 9.30 pm)