

Organising Ourselves to Deliver Our Priorities

If we are to deliver the important projects outlined elsewhere in this plan then we need to organise ourselves and manage our business effectively.

On a political level, the Council is organised as set out in the diagram below.

Diagram

This structure comprises a number of strands:

- The Full Council which sets the policy framework and makes major decisions such as setting the levels of Council Tax
- The Cabinet which makes most of the decisions about the day-to-day operation of services. It comprises the leader of the Council and five other members called portfolio holders each of which is responsible for a range of services aligned with the Council's main priorities called 'Corporate Priorities'.
- Community Engagement bodies. These bodies allow the Council to engage with people locally as part of a two-way dialogue
- Regulatory bodies which control activities such as the development of land in the borough, the licensing of taxis and the sale of alcohol. However, there are a range of internal regulatory functions concerned with standards of conduct and the Council's accounts.
- Overview and Scrutiny bodies. These bodies review proposals for new Council policies along with the Council's performance. They also make proposals for how to improve the working of the Cabinet.
- Other bodies are set up by the Council and other Councils from time-to-time in order to oversee joint projects.

All of these bodies meet in public, unless they are discussing matters which are confidential (for example staffing issues). Meetings are held in the evening and with the exception of Area Forums are usually held at Hardman's Mill in Rawtenstall. Details of the time, venue and agenda for all meetings are published on the Council's website <http://www.rossendale.gov.uk/meetings>

It would not be practical for Councillors to directly manage all our services and for that reason the Council employs staff and contractors to deliver the various services for which we are responsible. We organise these staff under the leadership of the Chief Executive as shown below.

Diagram

Council staff are responsible for advising councillors on policy issues and the decisions that are necessary to implement the Council's policies. In order to ensure that the Council's business can be carried out as efficiently as possible, the vast majority of day-to-day decisions are taken by council officers, including the issuing of licences and the vast majority of planning applications in circumstances which are not controversial. The Council's constitution (its internal rule book) sets out who is able to make particular decisions within the Council. The Constitution can be viewed on the Council's website.

Some of the Council's staff such as the Head of Financial Services and Head of Legal and Democratic Services have specific legal duties to ensure that the Council takes decisions in a properly informed way and is fully aware of the implications of any decisions which it takes. Councillors have to listen carefully to the advice given by their officers and properly consider it before making decisions.

Each of the various service areas within the Council produces an annual business plan which demonstrates how it is going to contribute to delivering the Council's priorities for the coming year. These plans are all available on the Council's website.