

MINUTES OF: THE CABINET

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, 14th November 2007

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

**IN ATTENDANCE: Carolyn Wilkins, Chief Executive
Helen Lockwood, Deputy Chief Executive
George Graham, Executive Director of Resources
Phil Seddon, Head of Finance
Bill Lawley, Interim Legal and Democratic Services Manager
Heather Moore, Committee and Member Services Manager
Tracy Brzozowski, Licensing Manager
Philip Mepham, Interim Environmental Health Manager
Caroline Ridge, Assistant Planner, Forward Planning
Lorna Rouke, Principal Environmental Health Officer
Rick Smales, Temporary Partnership Project Manager**

**ALSO PRESENT: Councillors A Barnes, Farrington, Lamb, Nuttall, Robertson
and Sandiford
12 members of the public
2 Representatives from the Press**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Tickner.

2. MINUTES

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 17th October 2007 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEM OF BUSINESS

The Leader of the Council informed the meeting that the report on Public Conveniences had been withdrawn from the Agenda to enable it to be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

He further reported that there were no urgent items.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Essex declared a personal interest in respect of Minute Number 9 (Biodiversity Statement) by virtue of his membership of the Free Lane Allotment Society.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No questions were raised under this item.

6. HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE ANNUAL DRIVERS LICENCE FEES

Councillor Essex, Portfolio Holder for a Well Managed Council, presented the report of the Executive Director of Regulatory Services which outlined proposals to introduce an annual licence and application fee for hackney carriage and private hire drivers licences.

A number of questions were raised by members of the public who indicated their support for the annual licence and the measures to improve safety, however, raised concerns about the increased costs to drivers.

Decision Made:

1. That an annual licence and application fee of £120 for new applications and £85 for renewals of applications be agreed and that they both be reviewed annually by the Executive Director of Regulatory Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for a Well Managed Council.
2. That an Annual Statutory Declaration be introduced.

Reason for Decision:

The annual licence and statutory declaration are in the best interest of public safety and welfare and the proposed increase in fees will more accurately reflect the cost of the Council's service provision.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

7. A WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR ROSSENDALE

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of Street Scene and Neighbourhood Services, which outlined proposals to develop a Waste Management Strategy for Rossendale.

The Leader of the Council recommended that Overview and Scrutiny be invited to consider the options and wider issues surrounding the development of the Strategy.

Decision Made:

That Overview and Scrutiny be invited to consider the options on the development of the Waste Management Strategy and that they submit their recommendations to the Cabinet for consideration.

Reason for Decision:

It is essential that the Council has a Strategy in place for managing and controlling resources for sustainable waste management for the next 20 years

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

8. EMPLOYMENT LAND STUDY

Councillor Challinor, Portfolio Holder for Regenerating and Promoting Rossendale, presented the report of the Executive Director of Regulatory Services which detailed the findings of the Employment Land Study which formed part of the evidence base for the Rossendale Local Development Framework.

Decision Made:

1. That the Employment Land Study forms part of the evidence base and informs the preparation of the Allocations Development Plan Document and aid in the implementation of the plan, monitor and manage approach to the Council's spatial development.
2. That the findings of the report be endorsed. In particular that the report provides the evidence for the need to mitigate against the loss of employment land, whereby planning permission would be subject to adequate "compensation", enabling the Council to seek employment benefits to meet the needs of the local community, and delegates the drafting of a later interim policy to deal with the issue.
3. That the document be used as a material consideration for the purposes of Development Control.
4. That key activities from the action plan part of the study be taken forward and incorporated within the Borough Councils Economic Strategy which is currently in development.

Reason for Decision:

The Employment Land Study is a key component in demonstrating the soundness of the emerging Core Strategy and other development plan documents being prepared by the Council.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

9. BIODIVERSITY POLICY STATEMENT

Councillor Driver, Portfolio Holder for a Clean and Green Rossendale, presented the report of the Executive Director of Resources which outlined a proposed policy statement in response to the biodiversity duty set out in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

A question was raised by Councillor Sandiford in respect of allotments and the Head of Finance agreed to circulate a response to all Elected Members.

Decision Made:

That the biodiversity policy statement be approved.

Reason for Decision:

Biodiversity, its promotion and safeguarding, are important elements of the Council's responsibility for the stewardship of place. The policy statement ensures that there is a process in place to fully analyse biodiversity on key decisions which are taken.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

10. REVIEW OF THE PURCHASE LEASE RENTAL SCHEME

Councillor Essex, Portfolio Holder for a Well Managed Council, presented the report of the Executive Director of Resources acting as Corporate Property Officer which outlined proposed amendments by which members of the public could apply to purchase, lease or rent land from the Council together with details of revised scale fees.

It was noted that that there would be no change to the arrangement whereby Ward Councillors were consulted on applications received to purchase, lease or rent land from the Council.

Decision Made:

1. That the revised Purchase Lease Rental Scheme set out in the report in the table at paragraph 4.5 be approved.
2. That the revised Purchase Lease Rental Scheme fees in Appendix B be approved with effect from 1st January 2008.
3. That the Executive Director of Resources, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for a Well Managed Council, be authorised to approve any future changes to the scale fees.

4. That the revised scale of general fees applicable to the Property Services and Legal charges be amended under delegated powers in due course.

Reason for Decision:

The changes to the existing Purchase Lease Rental Scheme provide clarity over the way in which the Council will deal with applications to purchase lease or rent land and are necessary to protect the Council's longer term interests in property assets. It will also ensure that the charges made under the scheme more accurately reflect those incurred by the Council.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

11. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH – NOISE POLICY

Councillor Driver, Portfolio Holder for a Clean and Green Rossendale, presented the report of the Head of Street Scene and Neighbourhood Services which outlined proposals for consultation on the draft Environmental Health Noise Policy.

Decision Made:

That the draft policy be approved for the purpose of encouraging consultation.

Reason for Decision:

Consultation is required to ensure that the emphasis of action is directed at areas of greatest need. The Policy will clarify the action that would be taken to control noise in order to minimise nuisance and thereby protect the health and well being of residents in Rossendale.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

12. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

Councillor Essex, Portfolio Holder for a Well Managed Council, presented the report of the Head of Finance which provided an update on the General Fund estimates for 2007/08, the Capital Programme and Treasury matters.

Councillor Essex reported that a capital receipt of £144k, insurance for the repair works at Haslingden Sports Centre had been received together with the receipt of £700k from Green Vale Homes.

Councillor Essex further reported that officers were currently estimating the cost of repair work to the Rochdale Road, Bacup car park which had recently suffered the collapse of a retaining wall and he highlighted that additional capital resources may be required to make good the damage caused.

Councillor Essex reported that capital expenditure would be kept under review as some slippage was likely.

In respect of Revenue Expenditure, Councillor Essex reported that there was a net favourable variance of £48k.

The Cabinet discussed options to work in partnership with other agencies to achieve economies of scale in purchasing fuel. It was noted that fuel prices would be factored into budgetary analysis over the coming months.

Councillor Essex reported that the 2007/08 pay award had been agreed at 2.4% and the Council had budgeted for 2.95%. The surplus generated would be added to the Single Status Reserve.

In respect of Treasury Management, Councillor Essex reported that there was a current favourable variance on capital financing of £153k.

Decision Made:

That the report be noted.

Reason for Decision:

Strong financial management ensures the effective management of the Council's resources which enables the provision of value for money services.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 7.50pm