

COUNCILLOR JOYCE PAWSON, MAYOR

MINUTES OF: THE COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF ROSSENDALE

Date of Meeting: 26th March 2008

**PRESENT: The Mayor Councillor J. Pawson (in the Chair)
Councillors Aldred, A. Barnes, Challinor, Cheetham,
Crawforth, Driver, Essex, Farrington, Forshaw, Gill,
Graham, Haworth, Hewlett, Lamb, Lynskey, Morris,
Neal, Nuttall, Pilling, Robertson, Sandiford, Smith,
Steen, Swain, Thorne, Unsworth and Wilson**

**IN ATTENDANCE: Carolyn Wilkins, Chief Executive
George Graham, Executive Director of Resources
Heather Moore, Committee and Member Services Manager
Andrew Neville, Chair of the Standards Committee
Tom Keena, Audit Commission**

ALSO PRESENT: 2 Members of the Public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor L. Barnes, Dickinson, Durkin, Eaton, S. Pawson and Tickner.

2. MINUTES

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 27th February 2008 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

4. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

The Mayor reported that there were no urgent items of business.

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

The Mayor reported that David Hancock had tendered his resignation from the Council. She asked Members of the Council to join her in thanking David for his hard work and the diligent way in which he had carried out his duties.

The Leader of the Council referred to those Members which were not standing for re-election in the May 2008 Elections and he asked the Council to join him in thanking Joyce Pawson, Duncan Ruddick and Alison Tickner for their hard work and the diligent way in which they had carried out their duties.

The Leader of the Council reported the receipt of a letter from the Boundary Commission in respect of the Council's request for them to consider the inclusion of 'Haslingden' in the name of the Parliamentary Constituency of Hyndburn in order to reflect the number of Haslingden residents now forming part of that Constituency. He reported that no changes could be made to Parliamentary Constituency name at the present time but this could be considered at the next review. He agreed to find out the timescales for the next review and inform all Members. He further agreed to circulate a copy of the Boundary Commission's letter to all Members.

The Chief Executive reported that the Council was 'Commended' in the 'Most Improved Council' category of the Local Government Chronicle Awards 2008. The Council was one of six councils nationally that was short listed for the award.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

1. Mr Joe Taylor asked questions relating to a planning permission in Whitworth which had been granted by the Council.

The Leader reported that he would refer the matter to the Executive Director of Regulatory Services.

2. Mr Leonard Entwistle asked a question about the state of the drainage at Rawtenstall Cemetery.

The Leader reported that the matter would be investigated.

7. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

The Leader of the Council and the relevant Portfolio Holders answered questions raised by Councillors on the following issues:-

No.	Issue	Questioner	Answered by (and action)
1.	Road traffic accidents in the Whitworth area	Councillor Neal	The Leader (a meeting with Lancashire County Council to be arranged)

No.	Issue	Questioner	Answered by (and action)
2.	Dog Fouling and enforcement action	Councillor Neal	The Leader (item to be put forward for consideration in 2008/09 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme)
3.	Future use of land at Knott Hill Playing Field	Councillor Aldred	Councillor Essex
4.	Master Planning in Bacup and Rawtenstall including:- Cost of producing reports Capacity to deliver plans	Councillor A. Barnes	Councillor Challinor
5.	Retiring Members and cost of By Elections	Councillor A. Barnes	The Leader
6.	Waterfoot Redevelopment including: Consultation arrangements	Councillor Nuttall	The Leader (full details of response to be circulated to all Members)
7.	Post Office Closures	Councillor Steen	The Leader
8.	Update on plans for Civic Accommodation	Councillor Pilling	The Leader (report to be submitted to a future meeting)
9.	Waste Transfer Station Consultants Report	Councillor Lamb	The Leader (report to be circulated to all Members)
10.	Debt collection arrangements	Councillor Haworth	The Leader (matter to be referred to the Head of Customer Services and ICT)
11.	Enforcement action relating to a planning application	Councillor Neal	The Leader (matter to be referred to the Executive Director of Regulatory Services)

8. ANNUAL AUDIT AND INSPECTION LETTER

The Council considered the report of the Executive Director of Resources which detailed the Audit Commission's Annual Audit and Inspection Letter.

The Council welcomed Tom Keena from the Audit Commission who presented the key findings of the report as set out below:

- Partnership working is beginning to show real community benefits
- The Council has actively engaged in sub-regional partnerships aimed at the regeneration of Pennine Lancashire and improved working with the County Council
- Good progress made in priority areas such as recycling, benefits and planning
- The need to maintain focus on service improvement as plans for neighbourhoods are developed
- Ensure effective arrangements are in place to meet the requirements of the new performance assessment framework under the Comprehensive Area Assessment
- Ensure the Council can demonstrate compliance against the revisions to the Use of Resources key lines of enquiry

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted and the Audit Commission be thanked for their comments.
2. That the letter be referred to the Audit Scrutiny Committee for detailed consideration.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET

9a. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2008-2018

The Council considered the recommendations of the Cabinet in respect of the Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2018.

In considering the report presented Members identified the following issues to which the Leader of the Council responded:

- The inclusion of Haslingden Town Centre Renaissance Plan within the transformational projects section of the Sustainable Community Strategy
- How issues raised at Neighbourhood Forums can be fed into the Council's decision making processes
- Rail links from Rawtenstall to Manchester
- Tourism and the Council's role as planning authority
- Promoting positive aspects such as Quality Bus Routes, moorland and open space

Resolved:

1. That subject to the inclusion of the Haslingden Town Centre Renaissance Plan within Section 7 of the Strategy, the sign off and adoption of the Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2018 be endorsed .
2. That minor changes may be made to the Strategy following the confirmation of the final 35 local area agreements and that this be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

9b. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Council considered the recommendation of the Cabinet in respect of the redesignation of the Chief Officer posts.

Resolved:

That the redesignation of the following Chief Officer posts be approved:

Current title	Proposed title
Executive Director, Regulatory Services	Executive Director - Business
Deputy Chief Executive	Executive Director – Place

10. POLITICAL MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Council considered the report of the Chief Executive which detailed changes to the Council's political management arrangements.

In considering the report members identified the following issues to which the Leader of the Council responded.

- Overview and Scrutiny and the various consultations undertaken by the Management Committee
- Introduction of Members' Question Time on the Cabinet agenda
- Allowances for non-elected independent Chairs and Vice Chairs
- Members' workloads

The Chair of both the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and Performance Scrutiny Committee thanked all members and officers for their contribution in the scrutiny process.

Resolved:

1. That the following changes to the Overview and Scrutiny arrangements be approved and take effect from the commencement of the next municipal year:
 - a) The disestablishment of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.
 - b) The renaming of the Audit Scrutiny Committee as the Audit Committee with a reporting line directly to the Council.
 - c) The institution of a prohibition on members of the Audit Committee serving on

- either the Performance, or Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- d) The renaming of the Performance and Policy Scrutiny Committees as the Performance and Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committees with a reporting line directly to the Council.
 - e) Agree to the institution of arrangements for dealing with call in and councillor calls for action based on consideration by a 5 member panel drawn from the membership of the two Overview and Scrutiny Committees and chaired by the Chair of Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee (for call ins) and of the Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee (for calls for action).
 - f) Agree to adopt working practices whereby no more than two Task and Finish Groups are in operation at any one time and the terms of reference and project plan for such groups are agreed by the parent Overview and Scrutiny Committee before they commence work.
 - g) Agree that the work of the two Overview and Scrutiny Committees be coordinated through regular meetings of the two Chairs and two opposition members, with the detailed arrangements to be confirmed with the various political groups following the elections. The papers for such meetings to be made available to all councillors through the intranet.
2. That the following changes in relation to other committees be approved:
 - a) To set the membership of the Development Control Committee usually at 7 members with a maximum of 9 members
 - b) To set the membership of the Licensing Committee usually at 7 members with a maximum of 9 members
 - c) To set the size of the pool of members for the Appointments and Appeals Committee at 9 members (including the Leader of the Council and Leader of the Opposition) with the panels drawn from the pool being either 3 members for employment and other types of appeal and 5 members for appointments.
 - d) To agree to write in to the Constitution a requirement that no member may sit as a member, or substitute on the Appointments and Appeals, Development Control, Licensing, or Standards Committees without first having undergone appropriate training.
 - e) To agree that arrangements be put in place for an agreed programme of debates on major issues to be held at meetings of the Full Council and that officers be asked to present proposals for such a programme to the first ordinary meeting of the Council following the elections.
 - f) To agree to add a Members Question Time to the agenda of the Cabinet to provide an additional opportunity to hold the executive to account.
 - g) To agree a composition of the Standards Committee of 7 Councillors and 3 independent members and 2 parish council representatives with the Chair and Vice Chair held by Independent members.
 3. That the Chief Executive be instructed to include any amendments necessary to give effect to these changes in the Constitution to be adopted at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

11. CIVIC PROTOCOL

The Council considered the report of the Executive Director of Resources which outlined proposals to introduce a Civic Protocol.

In considering the report members identified the following issues to which the Leader of

the Council and the Portfolio Holder for a Well Managed Council responded.

- Circulation of Mayor's diary so that Members can support the Mayor on particular functions
- Importance of strengthening twinning links with Bocholt
- Taking the Chains of Office overseas to mainland Europe (subject to insurance arrangements being acceptable an amendment to Section 10.6 of the Protocol be made)
- Honorary Aldermen

Resolved:

That the Civic Protocol be approved and subsequent amendments to the Protocol be delegated to the Civic Matters Working Group.

12. STANDARDS COMMITTEE 2007/08 UPDATE

The Council considered the report of Mr Andrew Neville, Chair of the Standards Committee which outlined the work of the Committee during 2007/08.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

13. URGENT DECISIONS

The Mayor reported that no urgent key decisions had been taken by the Cabinet during the period January to March 2008.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

(The meeting started at 7.00pm and concluded at 8.35pm)

CHAIR