

COUNCILLOR CHRISTINE GILL, MAYOR

MINUTES OF: THE COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF ROSSENDALE

Date of Meeting: 24 September 2008

PRESENT: The Mayor Councillor C. Gill (in the Chair)
Councillors Aldred, Challinor, Cheetham, Dickinson,
Driver, Eaton, Essex, Evans, Farrington, Gledhill,
Haworth, Lamb, Lynskey, May, Morris, Nuttall,
Pawson, C Pilling, J Pilling, Robertson, Sandiford,
H.Steen, P.Steen, Swain, Thorne, and Wilson.

IN ATTENDANCE: Carolyn Wilkins, Chief Executive
Helen Lockwood, Deputy Chief Executive
Linda Fisher, Executive Director – Business
Heather Moore, Committee and Member Services Manager
Carolyn Sharples, Committee and Member Services Officer

ALSO PRESENT: Sir Howard Bernstein, Manchester City Council
Sara Tomkins, Connectpoint
County Councillor Janice Hanson
County Councillor Sean Serridge
Stuart Wrigley, Lancashire County Council
Brian Cook, Lancashire County Council
Daniel Herbert, Lancashire County Council
Approximately 30 Members of the Public
2 Press

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors A.Barnes, L.Barnes, Crawforth, Forshaw, Graham, Neal, Smith, Stansfield and Unsworth.

2. MINUTES

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 25 June 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. TOPIC FOR DEBATE – HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION IN ROSSENDALE

5.a Welcome and introductions

The Mayor invited the Leader of the Council to introduce the guests present at the meeting and to outline the purpose of the debate. The Leader informed the meeting that there would first be a presentation by Sir Howard Bernstein and Sara Tomkins on the Transport Innovation Fund, followed by a presentation by Stuart Wrigley from Lancashire County Council on Highways and Transportation in Rossendale.

5.b Presentation by Sir Howard Bernstein, Chief Executive, Manchester City Council

Sir Howard Bernstein delivered a presentation on the Transport Innovation Fund. The proposals were part of a three part plan:

1. To promote institutional reform.

There was a plethora of public transport in some areas and none in others. There was a need to focus on the needs of the community and also the needs of business. The new Local Transport Bill would have new powers to secure greater levels of influence on service delivery. They would work with all bus operators to create an improved bus network inside and outside Greater Manchester.

2. To invest in public transport.

There would be an investment of 3 billion over 5 years to improve public transport, which would be needed in order to grow the economic base. There would also be potential to extend the East Lancashire Railway and the opportunity to work in partnership to secure funding from regional and national sources and improve public transport.

3. To tackle congestion.

Road pricing would not be introduced before 2013. Charges would only apply to trips made directly into/out of the city centre between 7.00am - 9.30am and 4.00pm - 6.30pm. Less than 2% of people from the Rawtenstall area travel onto the M60 during peak hours, which means that no more than 400 people would be affected.

Sir Howard asked those present at the meeting to consider the economic impact of taking no action at all, compared with consulting with those who live or work in Manchester, promoting institutional reform and taking action to tackle congestion and improve the transport infrastructure.

Sara Tomkins outlined how the public consultation would be conducted and the range of methods that would be used to obtain people's views. She informed the meeting that there had been 78,000 responses to date, the deadline for responses was the 10th October 2008 and there would be a referendum for Greater Manchester at the end of October.

5.c Community Views

The Mayor invited members of the public to share their views and ask questions. Members of the public raised the following views to which Sir Howard Bernstein and Sara Tomkins responded:

- Those on the periphery
- East Lancashire Railway
- Bus service improvements, new connections and services
- How money will be spent
- Bus lanes
- Smartcard introduction
- Access to hospitals through Manchester, and charges for people on low incomes
- How members of the public living outside Greater Manchester that would be affected could have their say

5.d Questions by Elected Members

The Mayor invited Elected Members to share their views and ask questions. Members raised the following views to which Sir Howard Bernstein and Sara Tomkins responded:

- Time spent on the M66
- The need for improved railway links through the East Lancashire Railway to be introduced prior to commuter charge being introduced and a desire to see this within the consultation document
- Enhanced bus services across Rossendale
- The need for Park and Ride
- School children and travel plans
- Ensuring the referendum is listened to
- Limited service in some areas
- More communication and joined up thinking
- Support for Smartcard
- Integrated health service
- A query was raised on the figure for Rossendale out commuters

5.e Presentation by Lancashire County Council

Mr Stuart Wrigley, Acting Executive Director of Environment from Lancashire County Council delivered a presentation on Highways and Transport in Rossendale. He outlined the broad objectives and transport objectives for delivering a quality service for which the budget for 2008/2009 was 2.7 million, which was a significant increase on previous years.

Mr Wrigley informed the meeting of the Local Transport Plan, Highways Services, Highways and Transport Working Group in Rossendale, current network statistics and outlined some of the recent improvements including St James' Square in Bacup, the roundabout and crossing in Waterfoot and improvements to the bus infrastructure. Phase 2 of the bus infrastructure improvements was about to begin with the 464 Service from Bacup to Whitworth. The issues on development of the Rawtenstall Bus Station would be resolved once additional land had been purchased and planning

permission gained.

In addition to specific Rossendale issues there were County-wide programmes including road safety education, safety schemes, cycling and pedestrian schemes, Rights of Way improvements, a Safer Travel Unit and all schools would have School Travel Plans by 2010.

County Councillor Hanson informed the meeting of the primary contact number for highways enquiries, and distributed contact cards for member of the public.

5.f Community Views

The Mayor invited members of the public to share their views and ask questions. Members of the public raised the following views to which Lancashire County Council Officers and County Councillor Hanson responded:

- Making Grane Road safe and focusing on pedestrians in addition to drivers
- Road condition outside the school in Edenfield
- Unadopted roads in the Borough
- Stubbins Vale Road
- Energy saving and dimming street lights at night
- Blocked drain at Fishrake Lane
- Bus Station plans

5.g Questions by Elected Members

The Mayor invited Elected Members to share their views and ask questions. Members raised the following views to which Lancashire County Council (LCC) Officers and County Councillor Hanson responded:

- Tighter controls over work when using contractors
- New planning applications and LCC comments regarding impact on roads (S278 Agreements)
- Customer care, highway response times and levels of success as there were several concerns raised and previous examples given
- Outstanding queries at Irwell Vale and Lumb villages – 2 bridges
- Signage on Grane Road
- Investment after elections
- Signage for Panoptican – Halo in Haslingden
- Plans and planning permission for the extra land at the Bus Station

5.h Council Debate

The Mayor invited any further items for debate on Highways and Transport in Rossendale from Elected Members and thanked the guest speakers for their contributions and attendance at the meeting.

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

The Leader of the Council informed Members about partnership arrangements with Datong, China and the success of recent exchange visits with All Saints Catholic

Language College. He informed Members that Bury already had a partnership arrangement with Datong and that the Council was looking to form a joint partnership arrangement with Bury to form a Bury and Rossendale Friendship Association.

7. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions raised by members of the public.

8. 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.	The situation with regard to Knott Hill Playing Field, Shawforth.	Councillor Aldred	Councillor Steen agreed to look into reviewing the use of the land.
2.	Correct figure for the renovation of the chapels and grounds at Whitworth Cemetery in the 2007/2008 financial year.	Councillor Aldred	The Leader agreed to meet with Councillor Aldred to discuss the figures.
3.	The 100 th anniversary of the forming of the Territorial Army.	Councillor P Steen	The Leader agreed to write to Lt. Colonel Charles Hillock, Chairman of the Board offering congratulations.
4.	Support for the Campaign for Ghurkhas Rights.	Councillor P Steen	The Leader agreed to send a supportive letter to Reading Borough Council.
5.	The current economic climate.	Councillor Evans	The Leader.
6.	Impact of rises in fuel prices and commitment to concessionary bus travel for older people.	Councillor Evans	The Leader.
7.	The benefits of forming the Pennine Lancashire Economic Development Company.	Councillor Evans	The Leader.
8.	The opening of the Leisure and Fitness facility at Haslingden Sports Centre.	Councillor Evans	The Leader.
9.	Rossendale Borough Council's financial situation compared with another neighbouring Council.	Councillor Sandiford	Councillor Essex
10.	Rossendale Leisure Trust and General Practitioner referrals.	Councillor H Steen	Councillor Challinor
11.	Rossendale Leisure Trust,	Councillor H Steen	Councillor Challinor

	children into sport and the community cricket coach.		
NB. Councillor Swain left the room owing to a personal and prejudicial interest on the following four questions which had been submitted in advance of the meeting.			
12.	The current position regarding New Hall Hey.	Councillor Wilson	Councillor Challinor
13.	Guarantees to ensure work on site is completed, New Hall Hey.	Councillor Wilson	Councillor Challinor
14.	The Hollymount site and the proposed hotel on the old Rossendale College site.	Councillor Wilson	Councillor Driver
15.	Sites affected across the Borough.	Councillor Wilson	Councillor Driver
NB. Councillor Swain returned to the meeting.			
16.	Trial scheme in Bacup and plans to provide public conveniences.	Councillor Lamb	Councillor P Steen
17.	Policy on recycling cardboard and the bulk collection service.	Councillor Lamb	Councillor P Steen agreed to take concerns forward to the Annual General Meeting of the Waste Management Steering Group.
18.	Financial reserves, investment and protection from risks.	Councillor Morris	Councillor Essex

9. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET

9a. Strengthening our Neighbourhoods: Area Based Grant

The Council considered the recommendation of the Cabinet in respect of Strengthening our Neighbourhoods: Area Based Grant Report.

The Leader of the Council informed the meeting that this was the first stage of a four year funding plan to focus on creating strengthened and cohesive communities.

Resolved:

That the allocation of the Area Based Grant as set out in Section 4 of the report be approved.

9b. Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2008 - 2009

The Council considered the recommendation of the Cabinet in respect of the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2008 - 2009.

The Leader of the Council reported that the Plan would change the way that members of the public rated and chose eating establishments, and that the financial details of the Score on the Doors Scheme would be submitted to a future meeting of the Cabinet.

Resolved:

That the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan be approved as attached at Appendix 1, including the introduction of a 'Scores on the Doors' published grading system following the Food Standard Agency's announcement of a national scheme.

10. NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor C Pilling requested that the Notice of Motion concerning a Tourist Information Centre be deferred to a future meeting to allow for debate. This was seconded by Councillor J Pilling.

Resolved:

That the Notice of Motion be deferred to the next meet of Full Council.

11. NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor C Pilling requested that the Notice of Motion concerning forming a partnership and the status of an area of outstanding natural beauty be deferred to a future meeting to allow for debate. This was seconded by Councillor J Pilling.

Resolved:

That the Notice of Motion be deferred to the next meet of Full Council.

12. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION

The Council considered the report of the Executive Director – Business on the Annual Review of the Constitution.

In considering the report, Members commented on the following:

- Delegation arrangements on page 10
- Forum funding for Christmas lights
- Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on page 6

Resolved:

That the Constitution be adopted, as amended by the Governance Working Group.

13. LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN – ANNUAL LETTER

The Council considered the report of the Executive Director – Business on the Local Government Ombudsman – Annual Letter for the year ended 31st March 2008 together with the Council's Annual Complaints Review.

Resolved:

That the contents of the Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Letter be noted for the period 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008, and to place on record the Council's thanks to the Local Government Ombudsman's Office for their support and guidance over the past year.

14. URGENT DECISIONS

The Mayor reported that there had been two urgent decisions taken during the period July to September 2008.

14a. Urgent Decision 1

The first urgent decision related to an amendment to the boundaries in the Plans of the Interim Housing Policy Statement.

Resolved:

That the urgent decision be noted.

14b. Urgent Decision 2

The second urgent decision related to the development of a community based management plan for Rossendale woodlands between the area of Hareholme and Waterfoot.

Resolved:

That the urgent decision be noted.

(The meeting started at 7.00pm and concluded at 9.50pm)

Signed.....

(Chair)

Date