

MINUTES OF: THE CABINET

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 14th October 2009

**Present: Councillor Swain (in the Chair)
Councillors Challinor, Essex, Gledhill, Graham, Smith and P. Steen**

**In Attendance: Mrs H Lockwood, Chief Executive
Mr S Sugarman, Director of Business
Mrs L Murphy, Head of People and Policy
Mr P Seddon, Head of Finance
Mr A Buckle, Head of Customer Services & ICT
Mr M Riley, Communities Manager
Mr A Smith, Principal Planner – Forward Planning
Mrs J Cook, Committee and Member Services Officer**

Also Present: Councillors A. Barnes, Driver, Lamb, Nuttall, C. Pilling, J. Pilling, Robertson and Sandiford

5 members of the public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 2nd September 2009 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEM OF BUSINESS

The Leader of the Council reported that there were no urgent items of business.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A member of the public raised questions and points to which the Leader of the Council responded. The issues raised are summarised below:

- Use of acronyms in committee reports.

- Rossendale Borough Council's input into Pennine Lancashire Local Authority Joint Committee.
- Planning application number 2009/0457. The Leader agreed to look into the issues raised and respond directly.
- Selling of assets and buildings.

6. PENNINE LANCASHIRE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED AND PENNINE LANCASHIRE LOCAL AUTHORITY JOINT COMMITTEE

These items were taken as a joint item. The Leader outlined details of the reports which outlined the history and remit of the Pennine Lancashire Development Company, which was to draw together existing economic development and regeneration activity across Pennine Lancashire, to deliver elements of regional strategies. It was noted that the Leader intended to nominate the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration to take Rossendale's seat.

The Leader of the Council outlined the report which sought Member approval for Rossendale Borough Council to become a member of the PLACE Committee. The PLACE Committee is an established body that has overseen the development of major regional strategies.

The report requested approval for the establishment of the Pennine Lancashire Development Company (PLDC).

Members discussed the report in detail and the following comments were made:

- Ensuring Rossendale had an equal vote.
- Minimal financial outlay.
- Appointment of a Chief Executive for PLDC.
- Greater access to funding opportunities.
- Ensuring Councillors were kept up to date on decisions made within PLDC and PLACE.

The Chief Executive provided clarification on matters raised and noted that the papers for PLACE would be subject to the Access to Information Rules and published on the Council's website. The first meeting of PLACE would take place in Rossendale on 26th November 2009.

Decision Made:

PLDC

The Cabinet recommended that Council:-

1. Agree to the formation and membership of the company.
2. Authorise the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive to take seats or make nominations at the Governing Body/Board.
3. Agree the final document; Members Agreement, Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association.

PLACE

1. That Council be recommended to agree and sign the Constitution.
2. That Council be recommended to approve the Leader of the Council to join the PLACE Joint Committee.
3. That Council be recommended to amend the Council's Constitution to give effect to the new body.

Reasons for Decision:

The formation of PLDC will provide a framework for increased collaboration, reduce duplication and pool expertise and capacity across Pennine Lancashire.

The new Joint Committee will present a new mechanism for channelling funds to the Pennine Lancashire sub-region as well as facilitating joint working and co-ordinated strategy.

7. CORPORATE PLANNING

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources presented the report which sought the following:-

- Member approval to revise the Priority Setting and Corporate Planning arrangements.
- Confirmation of the Annual Report as the mechanism for reporting against the Corporate Plan, the priorities and any changes to the Corporate Risk Register.
- Agreement of a new strapline vision.

Members discussed the report and the following comments were made:

- Importance of aligning priority setting with the budget process.
- Relevance of a strapline and alternative suggestions.
- Involvement of schools in choosing a new strapline.

The Head of People and Policy provided clarification on matters raised. It was noted that the intention of a strapline was to articulate the vision of an organisation.

Decisions Made:

That the following recommendations be made to Council:-

- 1) That the Corporate Plan and Corporate Priorities be set and reviewed on a three-year basis, subject to any change in guidance to Local Authorities.
- 2) That the Annual Report would be the mechanism for reporting against the Corporate Plan, the priorities and any changes to the Corporate Risk Register.

3) That there would be no strapline.

Reason for Decision:

To enable the Council to formulate and facilitate its long term plans and strategies and to consider an appropriate strapline.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

Straplines as detailed in the committee report.

8. PARTIAL REVIEW OF THE REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration outlined the report which provided information to Members and sought views on the proposed Regional Spatial Strategy Policies for Gypsies and Travellers, Travelling Showpeople and Parking Standards.

Members discussed the report and the following comments were made:

- Clarification of the 'electronic calculator' as electronic parking signs.
- Concerns were expressed about the evidence upon which the proposed strategy policies had been based.
- Relevance of the proposed strategy policies on the Sub-Regional Housing Strategy.
- Effect of proposed sites upon individual applications.

The Principal Planner – Forward Planning clarified how 4NW had arrived at the figures contained within the proposed Regional Spatial Strategy Policies.

Decision Made:

That the following response to 4NW be agreed:-

1. Objection to Policy L6 on the basis that there is no evidence to support the allocation of 10 permanent and 5 transit plots.
2. Accept Policy L7 – dealing with Travelling Showpeople.
3. Accept Policy T2 and Table 8.1 while making observations on the Residential Home Standards, lack of guidance on hospitals and the value of an electronic calculator.

Reason for Decision:

It is essential that the Council provides a response to the Regional Spatial Strategy Policies for Gypsies and Travellers, Travelling Showpeople and Parking Standards.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

10. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT 2009/10: MONTH 5 – END AUGUST 2009

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources presented the report which updated members on the General Fund budget monitoring for 2009/10, the Capital Programme and Treasury Matters. It was noted that the Head of Finance had obtained a £26,500 payment from United Utilities for disruption to Council services following the gas explosion in December 2008.

Members discussed the report and the following issues were raised:

- Importance of local businesses submitting their compensation claims to United Utilities.
- Continuing underspend across the service areas.

The Head of Finance acknowledged the risks which had been identified for future budget planning.

Members expressed their congratulations to the Finance Team.

Decision Made:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the £26,500 previously mentioned in the report be added to the Single Status reserve.

Reason for Decision:

To facilitate the continued management of the Council's finances.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

11. INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE REPORT: QUARTER 1 (APRIL TO JUNE 2009)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources updated Members on the Integrated Performance Report for Quarter 1. The report outlined financial monitoring, those indicators not achieving their targeted levels of performance, together with the actions being taken to get performance back on target and the progress being made in implementing the actions contained in the Council's Corporate Plan for Quarter 1.

Members discussed the report and the following comments were made:

- Targets at risk and actions being taken to mitigate risks.
- Concerns that long-term sickness presents an unfair picture of sickness levels.

The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny confirmed that Overview and Scrutiny Committee would continue to scrutinise the full quarterly Performance Reports and act accordingly, and the Cabinet would receive a 'snapshot' report.

Decision Made:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That future reports would be scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and areas requiring attention would be highlighted to the Cabinet as required.

Reason for Decision:

Monitoring of performance enables the Council to ensure that actions and project details in the Business Plans are completed, and enables scrutiny of those items which are at risk of not being achieved.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

12. CAPITA MONITORING AND PERFORMANCE

The Portfolio Holder for Customer Services gave a brief overview of the Capita contract and performance for the current financial year to date.

The Service Assurance Team continuously monitors performance for Revenues, Benefits, Fraud and Customer Services by measuring service delivery against agreed targets based on local and National Indicators. The Committee received detailed information on the Performance targets and it was noted that the current rate of collection of council tax was one of the highest rates in East Lancashire.

In relation to Housing and Council Tax Benefits 3 year caseload, Rossendale had increased 10.18% since 2007 (6171 in May 2007 to 6799 in May 2009).

The Head of Customer Services and ICT outlined some of the future plans for Customer Services and discussion took place on proposals to increase the opening hours on the One Stop Shop. Consultation would shortly take place on this matter. It was noted that an independent customer satisfaction report received that day had indicated that overall satisfaction was up by 74%.

Members discussed the report and the following issues were raised:

- Clarification of the Capita financial reward.
- Successful council tax collection rates.
- Out-of-Hours contacts.

Members asked that their thanks to the Service Assurance Team and Capita staff be placed on record.

Decision Made:

- 1) That the content of the report be noted.
- 2) That the improvement in performance of Capita and the Service Assurance Team be endorsed.

Reason for Decision:

Continuing to monitor the Capita contract and the Service Assurance Team ensures delivery of service contract requirements.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

13. PRIDE IN ROSSENDALE: ONE YEAR ON

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services outlined the report which updated Members on the Pride in Rossendale initiative and detailed future ideas to further enhance the Pride project. Members were updated on the work programme, the achievements therein and asked to approve the Work Programme and to approve the transfer of £20,000 from the general revenue account to support the Pride in Rossendale initiative.

Members discussed the report and the following issues were raised:

- Concerns were expressed regarding Haslingden's inclusion in the Pride initiative.
- Success of the Pride initiative and involvement of local groups.
- Wild flower meadows – it was noted that these would be strimmed back and re-seeded as part of ongoing maintenance.
- Success of the 2009-10 Visitor Guide and it's distribution across and outside of Rossendale.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services expressed this thanks to all organisations that had been involved in the Pride in Rossendale initiative.

Members asked that their thanks be placed on record to the Communities Team and all those officers who had been involved in implementing the Pride in Rossendale initiative.

Decision Made:

- 1) That the Work Programme as detailed in the committee report be noted and approved.

- 2) That the transfer of £20,000 of the funding profile from Capital to Revenue be approved.

Reason for Decision:

To enhance the Pride in Rossendale project.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 8.20pm

CHAIR