

COUNCILLOR GLADYS SANDIFORD, MAYOR

MINUTES OF: THE COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF ROSSENDALE

Date of Meeting: 8th November 2011

PRESENT: The Mayor Councillor Sandiford (in the Chair)
Councillors Aldred, A. Barnes, Cheetham, Driver, Eaton, Essex,
Evans, Farrington, Gill, Gledhill, Graham, Jackson, Kenyon,
Lamb, McInnes, MacNae, Marriott, Milling, Morris, Neal, Nuttall,
Oakes, Roberts, Robertson, Serridge, D. Smith, Stansfield and
Steen.

IN ATTENDANCE: Helen Lockwood, Chief Executive
Stuart Sugarman, Director of Business
Fiona Meechan, Director of Customers and Communities
Carolyn Sharples, Committee and Member Services Manager
George Taylor, Mayor's Attendant
Bernard Gwyn, Mayor's Attendant

ALSO PRESENT: 5 members of the public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were submitted from Councillors L.Barnes, Crawforth, Jackson, May, Pilling, Shipley, M. Smith and Wilkinson.

2. MINUTES

Councillor Essex moved an amendment to page 14 of the minutes which was seconded by Councillor D.Smith, that the sentence "At this point Cllr Essex had stated that it was a Labour Council." The Mayor asked for clarification that it was just this sentence that would be removed and not the whole paragraph. Councillor Essex confirmed it was just the sentence quoted.

Members voted on the amendment. The amendment was lost.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the council meeting held on 28th September be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

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

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

5. OUTSTANDING ITEMS OF BUSINESS FROM THE LAST MEETING

There was one item of business that required follow up from the last meeting regarding who was in charge of the council when it was the worst in the country. The Mayor invited the Director of Business to provide clarification.

The Director of Business confirmed the findings which had also been emailed to Councillors Aldred, A. Barnes, Essex and the Mayor on the 4th October. Details were available within the Audit Report of September 2002 and the findings related to events pre-2002. The report detailed who was in charge of the council during various periods of administration. The report was a public document and available on the council's web site.

Councillor Essex made a personal statement and read an extract of the speech to clarify what was said. He also raised the following points:

- The Council meeting in September was 5 hours long, a record for this council.
- At the time, he was summing up on an amendment.
- He was reading a pre-prepared speech and it may have been misheard what was said.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor A.Barnes, informed that the statement had implied that it was a Labour council and that if there had been a problem with the wording of the minutes, Councillor Essex should have met with her prior to the meeting to agree the wording and resolve the issue.

The Mayor confirmed that if there was any further follow up required it would be resolved outside the meeting. The Director of Business agreed to follow up any further clarification requested, so that the issue could be resolved between the two group leaders.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The following issues were raised by members of the public and were answered by the Leader or designated person:

No	Issue	Questioner	Answered by (and action)
1.	Number of formal applications or expressions of interest for the Valley Centre and was there a hotel chain committed in the valley?	Ms Freeman	Councillor A.Barnes
2.	Historic study undertaken and request for more consultation on the Core Strategy in relation to Rossendale General Hospital site.	Mr Swingewood	Councillor A.Barnes
3.	The Valley Centre redevelopment and whether the incorporation of the bus station was still planned?	Mr Lawrie	Councillor A.Barnes

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

There were no additional communications to report from Mayor, Leader of the Council or the Chief Executive.

8. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

The following issues were raised by Councillors and answered by the Leader or designated person:

No	Issue	Questioner	Answered by (and action)
1.	Would the council be accepting no increase Council Tax in 2012?	Councillor Essex	Councillor Marriott
2.	When was the council notified of the £777,000 VAT refund?	Councillor D.Smith	Councillor Marriott
3.	Would VAT refunds, totalling over £1,000,000, be used to ensure the long-term future of Haslingden Pool? Olympic torch route could have promoted valley better if there had been a new pool?	Councillor Evans	Councillor A.Barnes
4.	Did the Leader or Cabinet members see a valuation before the Valley Centre sale price was agreed at £2,100,000? Confirmation of the range of the valuations?	Councillor Gledhill	Councillor A.Barnes agreed that she would provide a written response to Councillor Gledhill regarding the range of valuations as this was commercially sensitive information.
5.	Is £2,100,000 the sale price of the Valley Centre and will there be no further charges? Had any contracts been signed on any planned work?	Councillor Morris	Councillor A.Barnes
6.	Progress on the Vocation Centre for young people at Stubbylee? Education being provided solely by Accrington and Rossendale College, or other providers?	Councillor Driver	Councillor MacNae
7.	Update on the renovation of the youth homelessness centre at Clare House? Importance of providing these services as the festive season approaches.	Councillor Cheetham	Councillor MacNae
8.	Replacement of felled trees with	Councillor	Councillor MacNae

	mature trees around the Haslingden Leisure Centre.	Stansfield (on behalf of Councillor Shipley)	Councillor A.Barnes requested that a written response be provided for Councillor Shipley
9.	Update on New Hall Hey retail park.	Councillor Milling	Councillor MacNae
10.	Providing the Group Leaders and Director of Business with a newspaper article from 2003 regarding item 5 of the minutes.	Councillor Neal	The Director of Business agreed a copy of the article would be useful.
11.	Had the Leader seen the publication from the Rossendale and Darwen MP on the campaign to save rural bins?	Councillor Nuttall	Councillor A.Barnes
12.	PACT meetings in Whitewell were moving to every 3 month, was this happening in every ward?	Councillor Robertson	Councillor A.Barnes agreed to look into and circulate information to members. (Other members clarified there had been no changes in their wards).
13.	Would those re-housed in Bacup from Clare House be going back once it re-opens.	Councillor Driver	Councillor A.Barnes
14.	Clare House was an intermittent place to help young homeless disadvantaged people with no where else to go. Some need more help than others.	Councillor Cheetham	Councillor A.Barnes

ORDINARY BUSINESS

10. ADOPTION OF THE CORE STRATEGY

The Council considered the adoption of the Core Strategy.

Councillor Essex moved an amendment which was seconded by Councillor D.Smith, that policy 5 on page 75 be withdrawn.

The Director of Business advised members that the Inspectors report was binding, it would make the Core Strategy unsound to remove the policy, and that it would delay the council's aspirations and plans. The strategy had taken many years to get to this stage and the council had spent much time and money on it. Not adopting it would mean that the council was open to legal challenge.

Councillor Essex referred members to page 8 paragraph 23 of the Inspectors Report and that the previous Cabinet had informed that if Rossendale was not big enough to have its own hospital, court, etc., it was not big enough for provision of gypsy/traveller sites. There would be ramifications for Haslingden, Bacup, Stacksteads and Waterfoot

if policy 5 remained in the strategy and that there had been no consultation on the location of the sites. The inspectors report referred to national guidance, but it was only guidance.

The Director of Business confirmed that council would need to show a strong case for choosing not to follow national guidance. Typing errors and factual inaccuracies could be amended, and once the strategy was adopted individual elements could be reviewed. Councillors were strongly advised that national guidance be followed.

In considering the amendment members discussed the following:

- No up to date district plan since 2001.
- Taken years to get the document in place.
- Time and effort should have no bearing on adoption.
- There is more adequate provision available outside the borough for gypsies/travellers.
- Council tax payers have funded the development of the Core Strategy.
- Value for money.
- It is in line with national guidance and decisions will to have to be made by councillors before any individual project is adopted.
- Amendment could be interpreted as being inconsistent with commitment to equalities.
- Page 76 provides reasons why provision of pitches are needed.
- Some travellers were regular to the valley and created no problems, but some had no association with the valley and did not want to contribute.
- Should not be permanent sites without contribution to Council Tax, as travellers should travel.
- Current national debates on new legislation regarding traveller sites.
- Statutory obligation to provide a site.
- It is a coherent strategy against which planning decisions can be made, without it contentious issues would be allowed as the decision is taken out of our hands.
- Gives us the tools to protect Rossendale.
- It refers to permanent pitches but they don't need to be on one site. We already have at least one, which was approved through Development Control Committee.
- Will the pitches we already have be included in the five referred to?
- Would provision assist with the legal proceedings of moving people on?
- Illegal sites cause the problems not the legal sites.
- Tax payers do not want policy 5, there should be equality for tax payers.
- Sites don't have to cost tax payers anything, some people have bought land and created a pitch.
- No mention of other areas, just Haslingden, Bacup, Stacksteads and Waterfoot.
- Implications of permanent sites, should have rest sites like Southern Ireland.
- Impression that it would be one site not five.
- It refers to five pitches not five sites e.g. this means five caravans.
- They don't turn up in fives.
- It states up to five permanent pitches and three transit.
- There are secret pitches used by some groups.
- Not got the type of sites travellers want.

- Issues on Haslingden football pitch.
- Disruption at illegal sites and to surrounding properties.
- Need to take into account site selection, no mention of Rawtenstall.
- Page 213 and national guidance on provisions required e.g. living space and storage space (for business purposes) and access to local services.
- Page 215 access to open spaces and space for livestock.
- Only 3 Core Strategies adopted in Lancashire.
- Meeting of the Local Government Association and more time for local plans.

In response to questions from members the Planning Manager confirmed that it was five pitches, this could mean one site with five pitches or five sites with one pitch and this would be for members to decide. The locations of the pitches would also be for members to decide. There was a need for different types of sites to accommodate the different types of gypsies/travellers. The areas mentioned in the strategy were as a result of the survey work. The Director of Business confirmed that if we can show we have made some provisions in the borough we have a better case for moving people on and tackling illegal pitches.

A recorded vote was requested by Councillors Eaton, Essex and Smith.

Voting took place on the amendment, the results of which were as follows:

Cllr Aldred	Against
Cllr A Barnes	Against
Cllr Cheetham	For
Cllr Driver	For
Cllr Eaton	For
Cllr Essex	For
Cllr Evans	For
Cllr Farrington	Against
Cllr Gill	Against
Cllr Gledhill	For
Cllr Graham	For
Cllr Kenyon	Against
Cllr Lamb	Against
Cllr McInnes	Against
Cllr MacNae	Against
Cllr Marriott	Against
Cllr Milling	For
Cllr Morris	For
Cllr Neal	Against
Cllr Nuttall	Against
Cllr Oakes	Against
Cllr Roberts	Against

Cllr Robertson	Against
Cllr Sandiford	For
Cllr Serridge	Against
Cllr D Smith	For
Cllr Stansfield	For
Cllr Steen	For
For	13
Against	15
Abstentions	0

The amendment was lost.

A named vote on the original recommendation was requested by Councillors Eaton, Driver and Serridge.

Members returned to the original recommendation and discussed the following:

- Commend the work, time and effort of the Forward Planning Team and former members of the working group.
- Members had opportunity to make comments to the sub group and through the consultation events that had taken place.
- Importance of Policy 18 in relation to biodiversity and Policy 20 regarding wind energy. This would have been useful previously and will be useful for future in protecting Rossendale.
- Climate control measures agreed in 2002 and electricity generation and wind turbines.
- Opportunity to give feedback on the Inspectors Report?
- Some historical comments made in relation to leisure are no longer relevant.
- References to the X44 are also out of date.
- Persevering with the commuter rail link.
- Policy 15 and overnight accommodation in Rossendale.
- Preservation of the Greenbelt.
- Protection of Brownfield employment sites.
- IT connectivity needs improving, cables will not be laid until 2027/2028 this needs escalating.
- In the document Helmshore has become part of Edenfield.
- No mention of the textile museum in the document.
- Valuable in protecting the Greenbelt.
- It will be a living document which will amend and change and give greater control to our area.

Thanks was given to Planning, Forward Planning, past and current members for the Core Strategy Working Group for all their work throughout the development of the document.

Members returned to the request for a named vote, and voted on the original recommendation as follows:

Cllr Aldred	For
Cllr A Barnes	For
Cllr Cheetham	Against
Cllr Driver	Against
Cllr Eaton	Against
Cllr Essex	Against
Cllr Evans	Against
Cllr Farrington	For
Cllr Gill	For
Cllr Gledhill	Against
Cllr Graham	Against
Cllr Kenyon	For
Cllr Lamb	For
Cllr McInnes	For
Cllr MacNae	For
Cllr Marriott	For
Cllr Milling	Against
Cllr Morris	Against
Cllr Neal	For
Cllr Nuttall	For
Cllr Oakes	For
Cllr Roberts	For
Cllr Robertson	For
Cllr Sandiford	Against
Cllr Serridge	For
Cllr D Smith	Against
Cllr Stansfield	Against
Cllr Steen	Against
For	15
Against	13
Abstentions	0

Resolved:

That the Council formally agrees to adopt the Rossendale Core Strategy Development Plan Document, which will form part of the statutory development plan for Rossendale, in accordance with the Council's approved Local Development Scheme.

11. URGENT DECISIONS

The Mayor reported that the Cabinet had not taken any urgent decisions since the last meeting.

N.B. Councillor Marriott notified the Mayor that he was leaving the room.

12. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Resolved:

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves disclosure of exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) under Part 1 Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

13. COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER

The Council considered the Compulsory Purchase Order report.

Resolved:

- That recommendation be approved.

N.B. Councillor Marriott returned to the meeting.

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and concluded at 8.50pm)

Signed.....

(Chair)

Date