

COUNCILLOR BRIAN ESSEX, MAYOR

MINUTES OF: THE COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF ROSSENDALE

Date of Meeting: 27th February 2013

**PRESENT: The Mayor Councillor Essex (in the Chair)
Councillors Aldred, Ashworth, Barnes, Bleakley, Cheetham,
Crawforth, Creaser, De Souza, Eaton, Evans, Farrington,
Fletcher, Gill, Hughes, Jackson, Kenyon, Knowles, Lamb,
McInnes, MacNae, Marriott, Milling, Morris, Neal, Oakes, Procter,
Roberts, Robertson, Serridge, Shipley, D.Smith, M.Smith and
Wilkinson.**

**IN ATTENDANCE: Helen Lockwood, Chief Executive
Stuart Sugarman, Director of Business
Phil Seddon, Head of Finance and Property Services
Carolyn Sharples, Committee and Member Services Manager
George Taylor, Mayor's Attendant**

**ALSO PRESENT: 3 representative of the press
9 members of the public**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies for absence from Councillors Pilling and Sandiford.

2. MINUTES

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 12th December 2012 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest raised at this point in the meeting, however Councillors Cheetham and Knowles declared that they were non-executive Directors of the bus company during minute number 14.

5. OUTSTANDING ITEMS OF BUSINESS FROM THE LAST MEETING

There were no outstanding items to report.

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.	Decision regarding losing 12 ½ acres of land in Haslingden and the consultation process.	J.Glanfield	Councillor Barnes gave information regarding the Urban Boundary and Greenbelt Review and informed that the consultation was an 18 month process and there was still time to submit consultation responses. Councillor Barnes agreed to provide a response regarding who had made the decision on where the consultation was to be held.
2.	Lancashire County Council proposal to increase funding for Police Community Safety Officers (PCSOs).	County Councillor Steen	Councillor Barnes informed that Rossendale Council was committed to neighbourhood policing and was glad to announce continued support in Rossendale.
3.	Previous minutes and more detailed responses to questions.	Mrs Freeman	Minutes were not verbatim but could put summary responses for future meetings.

7. 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.	Lack LCC of consultation over the closure of Oakenhead Day Centre.	Councillor McInnes	Councillor Barnes discussed the lack of communication with Lancashire County Council (LCC) and the need to go outside the borough or to neighbouring towns.
2.	Action being taken with LCC over pot holes or poor road surfaces.	Councillor Oakes	Councillor Barnes informed there was a need to focus on a proper resurfacing programme.
3.	Bacup THI bid and what can be done to help move the bid forward.	Councillor Hughes	Councillor MacNae informed that progress so far was owing to community support and positive

			meetings with the county council. Anyone wanting to be involved should contact Rachel Fletcher.
4.	The new people power energy scheme and how it can benefit local residents?	Councillor Gill	Councillor Barnes discussed the energy buying scheme and urged people to register by 8 th April. Details would be circulated to members and the press.
5.	Preparations for the change to Council Tax Support.	Councillor Ashworth	Councillor Marriot informed that the bureaucracy had been transferred to local authorities and the poorest and most vulnerable would be affected.
6.	Steps being taken to reassure parents regarding school meals and horse meat detections.	Councillor Knowles	Councillor Barnes referred to information on LCC website and that primary schools were the main ones affected. They had now stopped using mince products.
7.	20mph signs in inappropriate areas and officers in Preston making decisions on locations when they do not know the area.	Councillor Lamb	Councillor Barnes indicated that money could have been used on the roads rather than this scheme. There should have been a meeting with district councillors to go through the scheme and locations.
8.	Access problems and opening attachments on the new smartphones. Problems were not just in Whitworth and were mainly at the weekend.	Councillor Neal	Councillor Serridge informed that he had asked the Head of ICT to contact Councillor Neal on Monday, which he had done. Councillors needed to speak to the relevant officers directly to resolve issues.
9.	Natural woodland funerals and availability within Rossendale.	Councillor Morris	Councillor Barnes informed that they had identified an area at the top of Haslingden Cemetery, but owing to resources they were not in a position to put this in place.
10.	The cuts in April and possible increase in rough sleepers and the Helping Rough Sleepers scheme.	Councillor Roberts	Councillor Jackson informed that the Council would do its best to uphold the policy of not having any rough sleepers, but there would be a need to analyse results next year.

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

There were no communications to report.

POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK ITEMS

9. 2013/14 CORPORATE PRIORITIES, BUDGET, COUNCIL TAX AND THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Leader of the Council introduced the 2013/14 Corporate Priorities, Budget, Council Tax and the Medium Term Financial Strategy report. All those involved in putting together, and having input into the budget and medium term financial strategy were thanked. There would Council tax freeze at 0% despite these being difficult times. PCSO funding would be retained and small grants to community and voluntary organisations to cover NNDR payments. Next year savings required would impact on services directly.

In considering the report members discussed the following:

- Thanks to officers for budget work.
- Savings in the leisure budget at point 5.4.
- 2% police precept.
- County Council 2% reduction.
- Member allowances scheme and possible reductions in special responsibilities.
- No need for a one off payment for Licensing and Development Control vice-chairs.
- Make up of panel and balance.
- Decision on travel expenses at last year's budget setting.
- Reduce basic allowance as well as special responsibilities.
- Loss of PCSO in Worsley Ward.
- Housing benefit and bedroom tax.
- Grants to voluntary sectors.
- Localism Act consideration and more involvement from members.
- Focus on growth.
- Loss of government grants to the bus company.
- Need to see where cuts will come from.
- Savings proposed in community and operational services.
- When would there be regeneration in Haslingden?

In response to questions from members, the Leader of the Council agreed it would be beneficial for the Remuneration Panel to be balanced and that steps were being taken to achieve savings with the Changes to Democratic Processes report. The Remuneration Panel would be revisiting member allowances in the coming year and the election cycle would also be reviewed. The Council had lost 44% of its government funding which in real terms was 51% and by 2016/2017 it could lose up to 70%, therefore no reassurances could be given with regard to where savings would come from.

In response to a question regarding travel costs changes agreed at last year's budget setting, Mr Sugarman confirmed that the recommendation went to the Remuneration Panel, who had agreed to the changes before they were introduced.

Resolved:

1. That Council approves the following Corporate Priorities:

- **Regenerating Rossendale:** This priority focuses on regeneration in its broadest sense, so it means supporting communities that get on well together, attracting sustainable investment, promoting Rossendale, as well as working as an enabler to promote the physical regeneration of Rossendale.
 - **Responsive Value for Money Services:** This priority is about the Council working collaboratively, being a provider, procurer and a commissioner of services that are efficient and that meet the needs of local people.
 - **Clean Green Rossendale:** This priority focuses on clean streets and town centres and well managed open spaces, whilst recognising that the Council has to work with communities and as a partner to deliver this ambition.
2. Members approve a net revenue budget for 2013/14 of £9,330,923.
 3. Members approve a 0% increase in Council Tax and that the Band D equivalent for 2013/14 remains at £253.40.
 4. Members approve the technical resolution at Appendix 1.
 5. Members approve the changes to Fees and Charges as noted in Appendix 2 and that any further changes to pest control fees and charges required as part of contract negotiations be delegated to the Director of Customers and Communities in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources.
 6. Members approve the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel and the revised Members' Allowances Scheme for 2013/14 (Appendix 3).

10. CAPITAL RESOURCES 2013-2016 AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2013/14

The Council considered the Capital Resources 2013-2016 and Capital Programme 2013/14 report.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources noted the capital investment in assets and the stock condition survey and informed of the investment to maintain assets.

Resolved:

1. That Members consider the potential resources for 2013/14 and the medium term.
2. Members approve the affordable capital programme for 2013/14 as set out in Appendix 1.
3. Members to consider additional capital programme requirements, especially the results of the recent Stock Condition Survey in order to determine a priority list for further investment should additional resources materialise during 2013/14.
4. Members delegate the allocation of any additional resources, up to £400k, during 2013/14 to the Head of Finance and the Portfolio Holder, having regard to the Stock Condition Survey, the desired programme (as per Appendix 1) and Capital receipts available. Any additional allocations to be reported to Members via the Council's regular financial reporting framework.

11. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (UPDATES FOR 2013/2014)

The Council considered the Treasury Management Strategy and Treasury Management Practices (Updates for 2013/2014) report.

In considering the report members discussed the following:

- The AAA rating and how the loss will effect the Management Strategy.

Resolved:

That members approve the Treasury Management Strategy Statement Treasury Management Practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET AND OTHER COMMITTEES

12. Recommendation of the Cabinet, Governance Working Group, Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Civic Matters Working Group: Changes to the Democratic Process and the Mayoral Review

The Council considered the Changes to the Democratic Process and the Mayoral Review report and the revised recommendation at 1.5 which was before members.

In considering the recommendation members discussed the following:

- The need to reduce the number of councillors.
- Leaving ward boundaries as they were.
- Disruption of moving elections.
- Licensing Committee was in excess of 5 hours, so need to have more not less.
- Sub committees will undermine effectiveness of committee.
- Scheduling meetings to avoid clashes with Whitworth.

The Portfolio Holder for Customers, Legal and Licensing clarified that a boundary review would involve looking at the electorate in each ward and ward boundaries, to ensure that electorate allocated to each councillor was not disproportionate and a full review would be required. In relation to Licensing, the clash with a Whitworth meeting had been unavoidable owing to the need for an additional meeting being required.

Resolved:

1. To request the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to undertake a review on the number of councillors, wards and ward boundaries, and that Council consider (during the review period in 2014) moving to one election every four years.
2. To reduce to three Licensing Committees per year and to deal with Taxi Licence applications through sub-committees.
3. To change to two overview and scrutiny committees: one to deal with policy and performance (Corporate Scrutiny) and one to deal with the scrutiny of partner organisations (Partner Scrutiny) and to retain these as evening meetings.
4. To merge Member Development Working Group with Governance Working Group (4 meetings a year) and keep Civic Matters Working Group as it is (to meet as and when required).
5. That the changes to committees detailed at 1.3 and 1.4 commence from May 2013 and the changes detailed at 1.2 commence with immediate effect.
6. That the Council delegates any further changes to the Mayoralty to the Civic Matters Working Group, and that the terms of reference for the Civic Matters Working Group be amended to reflect this change.
7. To update the Council's Constitution with the agreed changes.

ORDINARY BUSINESS

13. URGENT DECISIONS

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

14. RAWTENSTALL BUS STATION

The Council considered the Rawtenstall Bus Station report.

In considering the report members discussed the following:

- 3.5 million funding from LCC for the bus station.
- Considering a portion of land within the Valley Centre site for the location.
- The land valuation at 5.8 and jeopardising investment.
- Urge members to vote to proceed.
- Police station site, finances mean we would not be likely to gain this site.
- Other authorities freeing up land for new bus stations.
- It was an investment opportunity.
- Proposed site was not at the extreme southern end as quoted.
- Development would be better through more collaborative partnership working.
- Highway impact and safety regarding the mini roundabouts.
- Cost of the mini roundabouts compared with costs of the bus station.
- Cost to Rossendale Transport in departure charges and whether they would be able to afford to stop there.
- Approaching Transdev for the X43 to use the interchange.
- Consultation and impact on people who use the service.
- Refurbish the old bus station and improve what currently works.
- Not giving away £2 million of tax payers money.
- Need facilities where you are not cold, wet and has no toilet.
- Use it or lose it.
- Commitment to transport for residents.
- More over 50's in the borough that rely on public transport.
- Has air quality been looked into?
- Car parking and the impact on town centre car parks.
- Chance to get it right.

An amendment was moved by Councillor Serridge and seconded by Councillor Barnes:

- *That members welcome the promised investment of £3.5 million in relation to the new bus station in Rawtenstall, and agree in principle to the use of council land to enable the building of a new facility.*
- *As a council, we are keen to ensure that local residents, local businesses, bus users and our local transport providers are involved in this process. We therefore commit to working closely with the county council and the borough's preferred development partner, to ensure we identify the best option to meet local needs, and to get value for money for our residents from this £3.5m investment.*

- *We further commit to ensuring that these options will be explored, and a proper consultation held, within the timescales outlined in the report so will not result in any delay.*

In considering the amendment members discussed the following:

- Agree with need for a bus station.
- Using the Town Hall site.

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Tourism and Leisure informed that the value of the land had been confirmed by Lambert Smith Hampton and it would be remiss if the maximum value was not achieved. Lancashire County Council had not shared other options considered. No figures had been given on the cost of the bus station/min roundabouts. Charges agreed had not been put to Rossendale Transport. No one wanted a delay but the best location needed to be considered. Highways issues, safety, value for money and town centre car parking needed to be assessed. There was a need to work in partnership with Lancashire County Council and the developers within timescales to achieve this to benefit residents, businesses and tax payers. There was a possibility of budgeting £2.5 million and seeing if the additional money saved could be spend elsewhere within Rossendale.

Councillor Smith asked if time could be given to confer with his group on the amendment before a decision was made.

The Mayor agreed to a 5 minute break.

The meeting resumed and Councillor Barnes welcomed the proposal and informed of the need for an integrated plan and achieving what was best for Rossendale.

Members voted on the amendment, which was carried and became the substantive motion. Members voted on the amended recommendation which was unanimously carried.

Resolved:

- That members welcome the promised investment of £3.5 million in relation to the new bus station in Rawtenstall, and agree in principle to the use of council land to enable the building of a new facility.
- As a council, we are keen to ensure that local residents, local businesses, bus users and our local transport providers are involved in this process. We therefore commit to working closely with the county council and the borough’s preferred development partner, to ensure we identify the best option to meet local needs, and to get value for money for our residents from this £3.5m investment.
- We further commit to ensuring that these options will be explored, and a proper consultation held, within the timescales outlined in the report so will not result in any delay.

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and concluded at 8.30pm)

Signed.....
(Chair)

Date