

**MINUTES OF: THE CABINET**

**Date of Meeting: Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

**Present: Councillor A Barnes (in the Chair)  
Councillors Ashworth, Lamb, Marriott and Serridge**

**In Attendance: Mr S Sugarman, Chief Executive  
Mr P Seddon, Head of Finance and Property Services  
Mrs J Cook, Committee Officer**

**Also Present: Councillors Cheetham, Essex, Haworth, Neal, Procter,  
Sandiford, Smallridge and D. Smith  
4 members of the public  
1 member of the press**

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**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1.1 There were no apologies for absence; all Cabinet members were present.

**2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

**Resolved:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2015 be approved as a correct record.

**3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

3.1 There were no urgent items of business.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

4.1 There were no declarations of interest.

**5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

5.1 Mr Entwistle asked a question regarding the financial accounts of Rossendale Leisure Trust and his difficulties in obtaining information. The Head of Finance and Property Services stated that the Leisure Trust had not yet filed their 2013/14 accounts due to a requirement to add a pensions valuation; this had delayed matters. In respect of the 2014/15 accounts, it was stated that the audit on these accounts was about to commence. The Head of Finance and Property Services and the Leader of the Council confirmed that the Council was satisfied with the level of information provided by the Leisure Trust and that Mr Entwistle should approach the Leisure Trust directly for information.

5.2 Mr Woods asked a question regarding the Financial Monitoring Report and a reported £1.9m slippage with regards to the Capita Programme. The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources stated that this was due to major projects

crossing over in the next financial year, such as the Ski Slope, and energy efficiency in Whitworth. It was noted that this was common in large organisations.

## **6. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR MEMBERS**

6.1 The Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance introduced the report which outlined a policy for elected members when using social media. It was noted that a separate policy was required due to the differing roles of Officers and Members and that the Policy had been to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

6.2 Members were invited to comment on the report; no comments were made.

### **Resolved:**

1. That the Social Media Policy for Members be approved.
2. That all future minor amendments to the policy are delegated to the Corporate Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

### **Reason for Decision**

To provide guidance to members whilst using social media.

### **Alternative Options Considered:**

None

## **7. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT 2015/16 AS AT END OF JULY 2015**

7.1 The Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance outlined the report which provided the first financial update for the 2015/16 financial year.

7.2 The budget for 2015/16 had been set at £8.9m and a favourable variance of £631k to the end of the year was projected. Officers would recommend that this should be moved to the transitional reserve at year end.

7.3 The Portfolio Holder outlined the Business Rates Retention Reserve and noted that the rating of health centres had complicated the business rates collection process.

7.4 It was confirmed that at the end of July 8 FTE posts were vacant, the treasury management was in line with predictions and reiterated the Council's position with regards to slippage of the Capita Programme.

7.5 The Portfolio Holder acknowledged the impact of the Empty Homes Scheme, being a forecast cost of £609k.

7.6 Members were invited to comment on the report:-

- It was noted that discussion of the Empty Homes Scheme in detail could jeopardise internal and external investigations, however factual financial information was reiterated. The Portfolio Holder for Finance noted that he had a complete breakdown of costs which he was happy to circulate to Members. It was noted that the makeup of the £609k for the Empty Homes Scheme was made up of general repairs, external repairs, gas certificates, council tax and the

cost of appointing staff. It was noted that the Council took its responsibilities towards the tenants seriously.

- It was noted that the £321 with respect to Haslingden Grip and go should read £321k.
- Some Members expressed concern regarding the cost of for leisure services in respect of an extra £53.3k for Rossendale Leisure Trust restructuring and an additional £50k for the HAPPI initiative. It was noted that support was required for projects such as the Whitaker and HAPPI and that in respect of leisure, the long-term goal was to ensure that they were in a zero grant funding position.
- The fuel underspend was discussed and clarified – it was noted that officers predicted prices at the start of the financial year, however the current fall in fuel prices could not be predicted.
- The Leader of the Council noted that Members regularly met with Finance Officers and could raise any concerns at these meetings.
- Partnership working was discussed in respect of the Planning Service with Hyndburn, the Dog Warden Service and other areas. The Leader of the Council clarified that a report had been to Cabinet and that scrutiny did play an important role in monitoring this role. The Chief Executive clarified the reasons for the partnership working with Hyndburn coming to an end for the most part.
- It was clarified that Rossendale Borough Council took the lead in Tree Preservation Order issues within the Borough and the Member was invited to speak to the Portfolio Holder for Operational Services and Development Control after the meeting.

**Resolved:**

1. That the report is noted.

**Reason for Decision**

To ensure robust monitoring of the Council's finances.

**Alternative Options Considered**

None

**8. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**Resolved:**

That the public and press be excluded from the remainder of the meeting under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 since the next item of business involve the likely disclosure of exempt information under Part 1 Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

**9. USE OF CPO POWERS IN ORDER TO FACILITATE THE DELIVERY OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE AT SUNNYSIDE WORKS/ALBERT MILL, WHITWORTH**

- 9.1 The Chief Executive introduced the report which outlined the proposed use of CPO powers with regards to the site at Sunnyside Works/Albert Mill, Whitworth.
- 9.2 Members were invited to comment on the report and comments were made.

**Resolved:**

That the recommendations outlined in the report are approved and recommended to Full Council.

**Reason for Decision:**

To assist in the economic regeneration of the area for the specific benefit of residents within the locality.

**Alternative Options Considered:**

None

**The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 7.20pm**

\_\_\_\_\_ CHAIR \_\_\_\_\_ DATE