

MINUTES OF: THE CABINET

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 14th September 2016

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

**In Attendance: Mr S Sugarman, Chief Executive
Ms S Davies, Director for Business
Ms N Hopkins, Planning Manager
Mr P Seddon, Head of Finance and Property Services
Mrs J Cook, Committee Officer
Miss G Ashton, Committee Officer**

**Also Present: Councillors Cheetham, Essex, Haworth, Morris
7 members of the public**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 There were no apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

3.1 There were no urgent items.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

4.1 Councillor Marriott declared an interest in item 7 as he was a Director of Rossendale Transport Ltd. Councillor Oakes also declared an interest in the same item as she was the Chair of Rossendale Transport Ltd.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

5.1 Mr John Atherton asked when the consultation was due to start on the 'Validation Criteria for Applications submitted to the Local Planning Authority' checklist as it seemed to be a short period if the consultation needed to be ready for the Development Control meeting in November. He also asked if members had seen the proposed changes to the policy and why they hadn't been published. The Leader advised that members had seen the draft checklist and a copy had been made available on the website today. If agreed tonight, the document would go out for consultation for 6 weeks. Timings would be dependent on the responses received and could be deferred to a later Development Control meeting if necessary.

It was noted that a Mineral Survey was not included in the draft document as this came under the remit of Lancashire County Council.

- 5.2 Ms Kathy Fishwick asked if the 'Validation Criteria for Applications Submitted to the Local Planning Authority' checklist would have a clear aim and would be used for speeding up the development process. The Leader confirmed that it would be a living document which would form part of the application process. She thanked Ms Hopkins, Planning Manager, for her work in bringing the document up to date.
- 5.3 Mr Peter Wood referred to item 5.8 of the Quarter 1 Financial Monitoring Report 2016/17 and asked if the Council were wrong to support the Scout Moor Wind Farm. The Leader advised that the figures were the Medium Term Financial Strategy and were a best estimate. Once the annual Government grant ceased the Council would need to generate its own income and it was hoped that this would do that.
- 5.4 Councillor Essex asked how much of our re-cycling was refused at the depot. The Leader said she would make enquiries.
- 5.5 Councillor Essex commented on the overspend on vehicle hire costs and asked why some vehicles were inappropriate and had to be replaced. Councillor Lamb advised that some of the caretakers' vans had to be replaced as the floors had corroded due to moisture from the waste collected. A pavement sweeper had also been removed from use as it was costly to repair. She advised that electric vans were being considered however replacement batteries were expensive.

The Leader asked that her appreciation be passed on to the new Head of Operations as the PRIDE groups were outstanding in keeping the borough clean. Councillor Cheetham also thanked the local resident associations for the work they undertook in litter picking.

- 5.6 The Leader had requested information on market activity to see if there were ways of making improvements.

6. VALIDATION CRITERIA FOR APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED TO THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY

- 6.1 The Portfolio Holder for Operational Services and Development Control introduced the report which sought approval to undertake public consultation on the Council's draft 'Validation Criteria for Applications submitted to the Local Planning Authority' checklist document.
- 6.2 The consultation would be sent to a selection of agents/developers who were active within Rossendale, all elected Members, Town Councils, the local community and would be available to view on the Council's website.
- 6.3 Members were invited to comment on the report:
- The Planning Department needed a larger workforce to speed up the planning process.

Resolved:

1. That a 6 week public consultation take place regarding the draft 'Validation Criteria for Applications submitted to the Local Planning Authority' checklist document.
2. All future minor amendments following the 6 week consultation period to the document be delegated to the Planning Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holder with the final version being taken to the Development Control Committee for information.
3. Any major changes following the consultation would be brought back to Cabinet before being taken to the Development Committee.

Reason for Decision

To update and consolidate two existing policies in line with local and national planning policy and guidance.

Alternative Options Considered:

None

7. TREASURY MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The Portfolio Holder for Resources & Performance introduced the report which sought approval in using the Council's cash reserves to support more efficiently and effectively two of the Council's key partners (Rossendale Transport Limited and Rossendale Leisure Trust).
- 7.2 Members were invited to comment on the report:
 - There were advantages for tax payers plus Rossendale Leisure Trust and Rossendale Transport Limited were getting a better rate.
 - The security of re-mortgaging was raised and the possibility of re-financing the Council's current loans was also suggested. It was requested that the full details of the mortgage security be noted in the recommendations.

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet recommend to Full Council to re-mortgage the Rossendale Transport Limited's Haslingden Depot at a rate equivalent to PWLB's 15 year fixed rate plus 1% secured on the company's assets as noted in 5.1(f).
2. That Cabinet recommend to Full Council to repay the outstanding finance lease with Alliance Leisure on behalf of Rossendale Leisure Trust.
3. Cabinet to recommend to Full Council the transfer of Rossendale Transport Limited's Local Government Pension fund to Council, subject to the Head of Finance confirming the final values, the financial advantages to Rossendale Transport and maintaining a neutral position for Council. The final decision being delegated to the Head of Finance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance.

Reason for Decision

The Council would be using its own resources to mitigate the cost of liabilities for which it is guarantor or to mitigate costs of its subsidiary backed by security of

assets. The debt restructuring as noted in the report would significantly add to the financial sustainability of both organisations over the medium to long term.

Alternative Options Considered:

None

8. Q1 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT 2016/17

8.1 The Portfolio Holder for Resources & Performance outlined the report which updated members on the first Financial Monitoring Report for 2016/17 as at the end of June 2016.

8.2 For the first time in regular reporting to Members, an adverse variance for the full year of £476k was forecast.

8.3 Members were invited to comment on the report:-

- Concerns were raised about the first quarter deficit and the Empty Homes Scheme.
- The Leader advised that over the next 3 to 4 months, all properties would be managed by a local provider. Negotiations were underway with local partners to contribute to the scheme. A sum of money had been set aside and members would be advised of the exact figures in due course.

Resolved:

1. That the report is noted.

Reason for Decision

To ensure robust monitoring of the Council's finances.

Alternative Options Considered:

None

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 7.15pm

_____ CHAIR _____ DATE