

COUNCILLOR COLIN CRAWFORTH, MAYOR

MINUTES OF: THE COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF ROSSENDALE

Date of Meeting: 12th July 2017

PRESENT: The Mayor Councillor Crawford (in the Chair)
Councillors Ashworth, A. Barnes, Bromley, Cheetham, James Eaton, Essex, Graham, Haworth, Hughes, Johnson, Kempson, Kenyon, Lamb, Lythgoe, MacNae, McMahon, Morris, Oakes, Procter, Robertson, Serridge, Shipley, Smallridge, Smith, Steen and Walmsley.

IN ATTENDANCE: Stuart Sugarman, Chief Executive
Clare Birtwistle, Legal Services Manager (Monitoring Officer)
Carolyn Sharples, Committee and Member Services Manager
George Taylor, Mayor's Attendant

ALSO PRESENT: 11 members of the public
1 press

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received for Councillors Aldred, L.Barnes, Janet Eaton, Farrington, Fletcher, Marriott, Neal, Roberts and Stansfield.

2. Minutes

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12th May 2017 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

No declarations of interest were made.

5. Communications from the Mayor, the Leader or Head of Paid Service

The Mayor informed that alongside his wife, Mrs Denise Crawford, his daughter Mrs Nicola Walsh, would also be supporting him as his Mayoress during his term of office.

The Leader of the Council updated members in relation to an event that she had attended at the Horse and Bamboo put on by Tor View School. It was a fantastic show and she encouraged members to show their support and attend.

ORDINARY BUSINESS

6. Discretionary NNDR Relief

The Council considered the Discretionary NNDR Relief report, which recommended formally adopting changes in the criteria for the award of National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR / Business Rates) relief.

In considering the report members discussed the following:

- Applying it retrospectively to the beginning of the financial year.
- There had been a delay in implementation, as there were delays to the technical hardware required for processing.
- There had not been time for the required primary legislation and organisations had been asked to put this through their system.

Resolved:

1. Members approve the application of relief (discounts) to Non-Domestic Properties (small businesses & pubs) in line with the criteria outlined by Central Government (appendix A) for all cases in which relief awards will be fully funded by Government grant.
2. Members delegate the final determination of additional discretionary NDR awards, where these are wholly funded from the 2017 Spring Budget, to the Head of Finance and Property Services and the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Customer Services.

Reason for Decision

To formally adopt changes in the criteria for the award of NNDR relief.

Alternative Options Considered

None

7. Urgent Decisions

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

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET AND OTHER COMMITTEES

8. Constitution Review

The Council considered the recommendation of the Governance Working Group regarding the Constitution Review. The report was introduced by Councillor Lamb, Portfolio Holder for Regulatory Services who noted the proposed changes to the Constitution in relation to member champions, the Terms of Reference of the Council in relation to elections and electoral registration matters, and car mileage allowances.

In considering the report members discussed the following:

- Losing two key champion roles of Tourism and Young People.
- Tourism was being picked up by the Portfolio Holder.
- All councillors could and should engage with young people as part of their roles as a councillor.
- Work was still ongoing with the Children's Trust.
- Still engaging with young people across Lancashire and there was a session with Haslingden High School on Friday.
- Work would still continue with young people.
- Councillor Robertson would feed back from the Children's Partnership Board regarding the Youth Council.
- The borough had a high percentage of children in its schools because of the quality of education.
- There had been no changes to car mileage rates or claiming for journeys outside the borough.

Resolved:

Council agree the changes to the Constitution as follows:

- Article 2 - 2.07 Member Champions – detailed at Appendix A
- Terms of Reference of the Council – elections and electoral registration matters – detailed at Appendix B
- Car Mileage Allowances – detailed at Appendix C

Reason for Decision

The Council is required by law to implement a Constitution and it is in the interests of the Council to regularly review and update the document.

Alternative Options Considered

None

9. Overview and Scrutiny: Annual Report 2016/17 and Work Programme 2017/18

The Council considered the recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2016/17 and Work Programme 2017/18. The report was introduced by Councillor Lamb, Portfolio Holder for Regulatory Services, who highlighted the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the task and finish groups. The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny had been inviting Cabinet members to the committee to provide an update on their role and portfolio area. These updates had been well received. There was also excellent work through the North West Ambulance Service Task and Finish Group and as a result of their recommendations a Community Paramedic had been appointed at the Primary Care Centre. They would be coming back in September to provide an update to the committee.

In considering the report members discussed the following:

- Lancashire Police come once a year; it would be a good idea to invite them twice a year.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner would be willing to come to the authority.
- A lot came out of the task and finish groups.
- Chair showing good leadership.

- The work done was non-political.
- The work of the Council was about doing the best for the residents.
- The model of having a Chair and Deputy Chair from different political parties should be replicated to other committees.
- Ensuring the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) does what it says it can and provide continuity for the Council.
- Glad to see Welfare Reforms on the work programme as members need to have an awareness of the massive impact of Universal Credit by August 2018.
- A lot of work had been done by the task and finish groups, which were focussed meetings looking at areas of concern.
- Appreciate the work of the cross party Performance Management Group, who would continue to work on an ongoing basis regarding the development of a performance framework.
- Suggestions would be looked at regarding the MTFS.

Resolved:

1. That Council approves the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/2016 (Appendix 1).
2. That Council notes the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2016/2017 (Appendix 2).

Reason for Decision

The Annual Report summarises the work carried out by Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Task and Finish Groups during 2016/17. A commitment to the Work Programme will ensure that the Scrutiny process continues to improve its way of working.

Alternative Options Considered

None

10. Corporate Strategy 2017-2021

The Council considered the recommendation of the Cabinet regarding the Corporate Strategy 2017-2021.

In considering the report members discussed the following:

- The Corporate Strategy could not be created in isolation and business plans would detail the delivery, which would be monitored vigorously throughout the year.
- The Performance Group and Overview and Scrutiny would look at the strategy and look to ensure measures were in place to ensure it is achieved during the life of the strategy.
- Ensuring measures of success are properly quantifiable and measurable with the right capacity and resources.
- It promotes continuity.
- Residents know what they want.
- Would like to see a report every year to Cabinet.
- Connectivity and transport were the key to success.
- Push for a tram to the East part of the borough.

- The 'customers matter' value at 5.6 and clarification on how we are listening to the community.
- Review members' questions.
- Allocating resources and finances.
- It is important to identify what activities are and what are not corporate priorities as per the S151 Officer comments.
- It is an exciting digital document.

In response to questions from members the Leader of the Council confirmed she was happy to accept an annual report to Cabinet. The Performance Group would look at how targets would be measured and also ensuring the correct targets were in place. Governance Working Group would be asked to look at members' question time again.

Resolved:

1. That Council approves the Council's Corporate Strategy 2017-2021.
2. All future minor amendments to the strategy and framework to be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder (s).

Reason for Decision

The Council's Corporate Strategy would be delivered through its annual business planning process and reported through the Quarterly Performance Report.

Alternative Options Considered

None

NOTICES OF MOTION

11. Councillor Jackie Oakes moved the following motion which was seconded by Councillor Alyson Barnes:

Council is concerned to learn that the future of the front desk at Rossendale Police Station is uncertain as Lancashire Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner struggle to maintain basic police services; a direct result of the £75million cut to Lancashire Police by the government.

Policing and community safety are not issues that we should be cutting corners on, and while we understand the appalling pressure Lancashire Police are under, we are totally against this proposal.

Council therefore asks the Leader to write to the Police and Crime Commissioner expressing our deep concern and opposition to this proposal. Council also asks the Leader to write to the Home Secretary asking her to urgently review the current funding that goes to Lancashire Police and asking her to reverse these government cuts which are now resulting in police forces across the country struggling to provide the basic and community policing which is so important and valued.

In considering the motion members discussed the following:

- Experience of the 101 number and having to go to Burnley to report an incident.
- Reassurance of having a Police presence and being able to speak to someone.

- People on bail have to report in regularly at agreed times.
- Burnley is not easy to get to on public transport and can be costly.
- If they don't report in they would be arrested and sent to prison.
- It wouldn't be doing much good if it filled the prisons up.
- The Free Press had reported about a consultation through the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Lancashire about reductions to front desks, but couldn't find anything.
- There were 10 desks at risk across Lancashire with an average of 3-10 visits a day and for Rossendale it was an average of 3½.
- The budget for 2016/17 showed an underspend in one area, but a back office overspend for the PCC.
- It was an operational decision to close the desk if there was only an average of 3½ using Waterfoot.
- The grant this year was £190 million, which was a £2 million reduction, but the budget had increased.
- Council Tax base had increased.
- There had been a fall in youth and adult employment.

Councillor Essex moved an amendment which was seconded by Councillor Cheetham as follows:

Council is concerned to learn that the future of the front desk at Rossendale Police Station is uncertain as Lancashire Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner struggle to maintain basic police services; a direct result of the £75million cut to Lancashire Police by the government.

Policing and community safety are not issues that we should be cutting corners on, and while we understand the appalling pressure Lancashire Police are under, we are totally against this proposal.

Council therefore asks the Leader to write to the Police and Crime Commissioner to suggest an alternative front desk be provided in the new bus station development and expressing our deep concern and opposition to this proposal. Council also asks the Leader to write to the Home Secretary asking her to urgently review the current funding that goes to Lancashire Police and asking her to reverse these government cuts which are now resulting in police forces across the country struggling to provide the basic and community policing which is so important and valued.

In considering the amendment members discussed the following:

- The cost of doing this could come out of the £4million underspend.
- No one would keep an office open for 3½ people to turn up.
- The desk was in the wrong place at Waterfoot.
- PCC had opened a hub for victims of crime in Accrington.
- Suggest putting the front desk in one of the 4 units in the bus station.
- The consultation came up when googled, and the details would be forwarded on to the councillor.
- Concerned to hear about losing another public utility asset.
- The desk in Rossendale needed to be where public can get access to it.
- People of the borough pay a precept towards it.

- There was still a Police presence at the Civic Hall in Whitworth.
- It would be nice to have something in the centre of Rawtenstall.
- There was no bus shelter or public conveniences near the desk in Waterfoot.
- There was a perception of less Police on the streets and a perception of increased crime.
- Lancashire had lost 700 officers between 2010 and 2017.

In relation to the comments made, the Free Press representative confirmed that the average of 3½ people was in relation to those reporting a serious crime.

In considering the amendment members continued to discuss the following:

- If the amendment was accepted it could be conveyed to Lancashire County Council as an urgent request to be considered at Overview and Scrutiny.
- It would cost more money for the Police to be in the bus station and would reduce officers further.
- Police officers do not man the desks.

Councillors Essex, Steen and Morris requested a named vote.

Councillor Robertson moved a further amendment to add to the previous amendment to request that the front desk remained open until the bus station development was ready. Councillor Essex seconded this and agreed to add it to the amendment.

Voting on the amendment took place as follows:

Name	Vote
Cllr Ashworth	Against
Cllr Alyson Barnes	Against
Cllr Bromley	Against
Cllr Cheetham	For
Cllr Crawforth	Against
Cllr James Eaton	For
Cllr Essex	For
Cllr Graham	For
Cllr Haworth	For
Cllr Hughes	Against
Cllr Johnson	Against
Cllr Kempson	For
Cllr Kenyon	Against
Cllr Lamb	Against
Cllr Lythgoe	Against
Cllr MacNae	Against
Cllr McMahon	Against
Cllr Morris	For
Cllr Oakes	Against
Cllr Procter	Against
Cllr Robertson	Against
Cllr Serridge	Against

Cllr Shipley	For
Cllr Smallridge	Against
Cllr Smith	Against
Cllr Steen	For
Cllr Walmsley	Against
Total For	9
Total Against	18
Total Abstentions	0

The amendment was lost and members returned to the original motion.

Councillor Serridge moved an amendment which was seconded by Councillor Essex as follows:

Council is concerned to learn that the future of the front desk at Rossendale Police Station is uncertain as Lancashire Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner struggle to maintain basic police services; a direct result of the £75million cut to Lancashire Police by the government.

Policing and community safety are not issues that we should be cutting corners on, and while we understand the appalling pressure Lancashire Police are under, we are totally against this proposal.

Council therefore asks the Leader to write to the Police and Crime Commissioner expressing our deep concern and opposition to this proposal, and request he meets with us urgently to discuss a replacement. Council also asks the Leader to write to the Home Secretary asking her to urgently review the current funding that goes to Lancashire Police and asking her to reverse these government cuts which are now resulting in police forces across the country struggling to provide the basic and community policing which is so important and valued.

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

Resolved:

That the Leader would write to the Police and Crime Commissioner expressing our deep concern and opposition to this proposal, and request he meets with us urgently to discuss a replacement. The Leader would also write a letter to the Home Secretary asking her to urgently review the current funding that goes to Lancashire Police and asking her to reverse these government cuts which are now resulting in police forces across the country struggling to provide the basic and community policing which is so important and valued.

Reason for Decision

To support the notice of motion.

Alternative Options Considered

The amendments detailed above.

12. Councillor Steve Hughes moved the following motion which was seconded by Councillor Sean Serridge:

On the 27th June, the Prime Minister announced a confidence and supply deal with the DUP in order to remain in Downing Street. The cost of this 2 years deal is an extra £1bn for Northern Ireland, already the best funded part of the UK, and relaxed spending rules on a further £500m previously committed by the government.

Council notes with concern that despite repeated pleas for fair funding for local services here in Lancashire, our police, local councils, fire and rescue service, NHS and now even our schools are facing unfair and damaging cuts meaning even very basic services are under threat.

Council asks the Leader to write to the Prime Minister asking why £1bn can be found immediately to send to Northern Ireland, and our services here in Lancashire continue to be slashed and face the ongoing threat of closure.

In considering the motion members discussed the following:

- Historically there had been unions with Northern Ireland (NI).
- This was a national issue.
- Not fallen behind with investing in the NHS and there was a balance between medication and technology.
- Education had been kept in line with investment.
- There was a rising population and it was about getting the balance right.
- Disagree with the motion.
- Should be about issues pertaining to Rossendale Borough Council (RBC) functions.
- Same question raised in Prime Ministers Question Time and was being replicated across the country.
- The election proposal had been supported by Jeremy Corbyn.
- A majority government had to found and the DUP was the only option which would allow business to continue.
- There would be £2billion now and another £1½billion over the next 5 years.
- Money went to NI in the form of City Deals.
- Rossendale had benefitted from City Deal projects.
- It is to do with Rossendale because of the cuts of £685 million from LCC, £75million Police, £17 million Fire and Rescue, £15 million from RBC.
- A simple majority was required to revoke parliament.
- 30 years of Conservative government.

Councillor Serridge moved and Councillor Hughes seconded a motion to move to the vote now.

Members voted on moving to the vote now, which was carried.

Councillors Serridge, Barnes and Hughes requested a named vote.

N.B. Councillors Cheetham, Eaton, Essex, Graham, Haworth, Kempson, Morris, Shipley and Steen left the meeting.

Voting on the motion took place as follows:

Name	Vote
Cllr Ashworth	For
Cllr Alyson Barnes	For
Cllr Bromley	For
Cllr Crawforth	For
Cllr Hughes	For
Cllr Johnson	For
Cllr Kenyon	For
Cllr Lamb	For
Cllr Lythgoe	For
Cllr MacNae	For
Cllr McMahon	For
Cllr Oakes	For
Cllr Procter	For
Cllr Robertson	For
Cllr Serridge	For
Cllr Smallridge	For
Cllr Smith	For
Cllr Walmsley	For
Total For	18
Total Against	0
Total Abstentions	0

Resolved:

That the Leader would write to the Prime Minister.

Reason for Decision

To support the notice of motion.

Alternative Options Considered

None

The Mayor informed members he was having a meal to raise funds for charity at Anacapri on 26th July 2017 at 7.00pm and everyone was welcome to purchase tickets.

(The meeting commenced at 7.20pm and concluded at 8.50pm)

Signed.....
(Chair)

Date