

MINUTES OF: THE CABINET

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 4th March 2020

**Present: Councillor A Barnes (Chair)
Councillors Hughes, Lythgoe, Oakes, Serridge and Walmsley**

**In Attendance: Mr N Shaw, Chief Executive
Mrs C Burns, Director of Economic Development
Ms C Birtwistle, Monitoring Officer
Mr K Masser, Interim Chief Finance Officer
Mr M Coogan, Strategic Housing Manager
Miss G Ashton, Committee and Member Services Officer**

**Also Present: Councillors Cheetham, Haworth, Neal, Pendlebury and Steen
3 members of the public**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12th February 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Walmsley declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item C3 Bacup Market Square (minute 8) as he part-owned a building in Bacup.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No written questions had been submitted.

In response to questions raised it was noted that:

- The establishment of a Lancashire Combined Authority had previously been agreed by full Council. Cabinet were being asked to re-affirm acceptance in principle. A further report would be taken to Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet before final approval at full Council.
- The monies spent on Spinning Point Phase 2 had no implications on the Bacup Market Square project.
- Public engagement for the Bacup 2040 vision and Haslingden 2040 vision had been extensive but as a small authority only so much engagement could take place.
- The Free Press had not asked the Council to comment on the Bacup Market Square project. However it was agreed that the images could have been better.

6. ADOPTION OF A REVISED COMMON ALLOCATIONS POLICY

The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Customers outlined the report which asked members to approve the amendments to the revised Common Allocations Policy and to delegate all future minor amendments to the Policy to the relevant Director in consultation with

the Portfolio Holder. It was noted that Rossendale were part of a Lancashire wide Steering Group and not all the comments/suggestions put forward were accepted by the group.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- Overview and Scrutiny had voiced some concerns regarding the changes agreed by the Steering Group.
- The Strategic Housing Manager was thanked for his support on the project.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet approved the amendments to the revised Common Allocations Policy.
2. All future minor amendments to the Common Allocations Policy were delegated to the relevant Director in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Reason for Decision:

The amended policy identifies how the Council will fulfil its duty to have a scheme which prioritises the allocation of social housing, and ensures the Council has a legally robust approach complying with all legislation, case law, statutory guidance and good practice.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

7. COUNCIL TAX, NON-DOMESTIC RATE & HOUSING BENEFIT OVERPAYMENT WRITE-OFFS

The Portfolio Holder for Resources outlined the report which asked members to approve the write-off of irrecoverable debts; £11951.40 Non-Domestic Rates (NNDRs), £12,445.35 Council Tax and £41,830.55 Housing Benefit Overpayments.

In response to questions raised it was noted that:

- Debtor names could not be published unless they were a limited company.
- All necessary sanctions were used to collect debt including referral to external agencies.
- LCC were not involved in debt recovery action as Rossendale were the collection authority.

Resolved:

1. Members approved the write-off of £11,951.40 in respect of irrecoverable Non-Domestic Rate debt (NNDR). Direct cost to Rossendale BC £4,780.56.
2. Members approved the write-off of £12,445.35 in respect of irrecoverable Council Tax debt. Direct cost to Rossendale BC £1,804.57.
3. Members approved the write-off of £41,830.55 in respect of irrecoverable Housing Benefit Overpayments. Direct cost to Rossendale BC £nil.

Reason for Decision:

The write-offs are within the provisions available and recommendation to write-off is made within the grounds of prudence before the financial year end.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

8. BACUP MARKET SQUARE - UPDATE

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economic Development outlined the report which asked members to consider the report and RIBA stage 2 progress on the Bacup Market Square development. Provide feedback and approval of the RIBA stage 2 design and

authorise the production of the RIBA 3 design.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- A considerable amount of work was ongoing including parking and demand strategies.
- Funding was available to improve high streets but it was a competitive bidding process.
- Bacup benefitted from being close to train links.
- The public were encouraged to support the project.
- Recognition of the work undertaken so far, including Bacup THI, should be acknowledged.
- Various grants were available to Councils and each had a different criteria. It was necessary to review the criteria and decide which area of the borough would be most appropriate.

In response to questions raised it was noted that:

- The Economic Development Team would be asked to collect the completed questionnaires from Market Traders.
- Derelict buildings and the surrounding Bacup area were being considered as part of the project.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet considered the report and RIBA stage 2 progress on the Bacup Market Square development.
2. Cabinet provided feedback, approved the RIBA stage 2 design and authorised the production of the RIBA 3 design.

Reason for Decision:

The project which has the power to transform Bacup town centre for the next generation. The Bacup Market Square development aims to deliver a modern vibrant offer to visitors, businesses and residents. The proposal has progressed to RIBA stage 2. Further detailed work will take place on the proposal over the coming weeks. The report enables members to provide feedback and approval of the project proposal at this stage. It will be further refined and come back for consideration by Full Council before submission to Government in June 2020.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

9. TOGETHER AN ACTIVE FUTURE PROJECT

The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Customers outlined the report which asked members to agree to receive funding from Blackburn with Darwen Council for the Together an Active Future Project subject to the funding agreement to be provided. Approve the recommended funding approach and delegate future minor amendments to the funding arrangements to the Chief Executive/Directors in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- It was a good project which was welcomed and supported.
- The Leisure Trust had put a lot of work into the project.
- Some heart disease and diabetes was not linked to a lack of exercise.

In response to questions raised it was noted that:

- Various venues across the borough held dance classes. The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Customers agreed to speak to the Communities Team to see if more classes could be arranged.

- LCC Public Health had a seat on the Primary Care Network Community Board in Rossendale.

Resolved:

1. Members agreed to receive funding from Blackburn with Darwen Council for the Together an Active Future Project subject to the funding agreement to be provided in the coming weeks.
2. Members approved the recommended funding approach outlined in 3.4 of the report.
3. Members delegated future minor amendments to the funding arrangements in the report to the Chief Executive/Directors in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Reason for Decision:

It is recommended that RBC support the project by receipting funding (subject to satisfactory funding agreement) and allow RLT to draw down funds on a quarterly basis.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

10. LANCASHIRE COMBINED AUTHORITY

The Leader of the Council outlined the report which asked members to approve, in principle, the establishment of a Lancashire Combined Authority and that Cabinet receives a further report on the detailed Combined Authority proposal later in 2020/21 to attain Rossendale Borough Council's consent to the establishment of the Lancashire Combined Authority.

Cabinet members were invited to comment on the report:

- A Combined Authority would benefit Lancashire in relation to transport, housing and adult education.

In response to questions raised it was noted that:

- The re-allocation of districts to Local Authority areas would not be considered as part of the Combined Authority and there would not be a referendum on it.
- The Combined Authority would have prescribed conditions which would be communicated to residents.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet approved, in principle, the establishment of a Lancashire Combined Authority.
2. That Cabinet receives a further report on the detailed Combined Authority proposal later in 2020/21 to attain Rossendale Borough Council's consent to the establishment of the Lancashire Combined Authority.

Reason for Decision:

There are significant benefits for Lancashire in establishing a combined authority. Additional resources and powers will become available for the benefit of local people and it will allow more decisions to be made within Lancashire which affect Lancashire. Any decision to establish a combined authority requires the consent of all the local authorities covered by the combined authority. The council is not seeking this consent at this stage. Further detailed work will be undertaken to examine the nature, governance structure and operation of a combined authority that works most effectively in the Lancashire context. Any financial implications for Rossendale Borough Council will be considered once the proposal has been developed. However, at this stage all the local authorities across the county are seeking an agreement in principle to demonstrate collective commitment to the concept.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

11. WHITWORTH LEISURE CENTRE

The Portfolio Holder for Resources outlined the report which asked members to approve a budget of up to £110k to be allocated from capital resources for the replacement of the boilers and air handling unit at Whitworth Leisure Centre. Members were also asked to delegate implementation of the scheme to the S151 Officer and a Director in consultation with the Portfolio Holder up to a maximum of £110k.

In response to a question raised it was noted that:

- £110k had been received in relation to the Landgate sale regarding Coronation Power.

Resolved:

1. Members approved that up to £110k of the funds from the 2012 Landgate sale re Coronation Power earmarked for Whitworth be utilised from capital resources to replace the boilers and air handling unit at Whitworth Leisure Centre.
2. Members delegated implementation of the scheme at the Leisure Centre to the S151 Officer and a Director in consultation with the Portfolio Holder up to a maximum value of £110k.

Reason for Decision:

For the boilers and air handling unit to be replaced at Whitworth Leisure Centre.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 7.40pm

_____ CHAIR _____ DATE