

MINUTES OF: THE CABINET

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 12th February 2025

Present: Councillor A Barnes (Chair)
Councillors Harris, Lythgoe, McInnes and Walmsley

Rob Huntington, Chief Executive
Chris Warren, Director of Resources, s151 Officer
Clare Birtwistle, Head of Legal, Monitoring Officer
Clare Law, Head of People and Policy
Andy Taylor, Head of Environmental Services
Kimberly Haworth, Head of Financial Services
Anne Storah, Principal Planner - Forward Planning

Also present Councillor A Woods

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th January 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from the public.

6. UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

An update was provided from the 13th January and 10th February Committee meetings.

7. RESIDENTS' SURVEY 2024

The Lead Member for Environment and Corporate Services outlined the report which asked Cabinet to note the findings of the report, approve the themes for improvement and use the results to guide the review of the Council's Valley Plan 2021-25.

Cabinet was invited to comment on the report:

- Visuals had been helpful and contributed to engagement.
- 37% of residents were unaware of what the Council was doing.
- Engagement in the survey was high so it was suggested using the same channels to disseminate updates from the Council.
- It was noted that two local schools had recently conducted their own public surveys; one on people's views of living in Rossendale and the other about perfume making. It was

encouraging that schools were conducting their own surveys and the results would be interesting to know. It was also an avenue to engage younger residents.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet acknowledged the findings of the 2024 Residents' Survey and approved the themes for improvement as identified within the survey report.
2. Cabinet agreed the use of survey results to guide the review of the current Valley Plan 2021-25, ensuring residents' views were reflected in setting priorities and actions for continuous performance improvement.

Reason for Decision:

The Council should be an organisation that listens to its residents, helping to make informed decisions about how it is run, the services it provides, whether it offers value for money, and how well-informed residents feel.

The Council's annual residents' survey offers an opportunity to gather valuable feedback on how local people feel about Rossendale and the services provided. An annual Residents' Survey allows the Council to monitor its performance against the Valley Plan and compare benchmark against other local authorities and national standards.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

8. INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT

The Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Planning outlined the report which asked Cabinet to note the contents of the 2023/24 funding statement and the Brownfield Land Register 2024. To also note that Infrastructure Funding Statement contains charges which would be reported to Council.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet noted the contents of the Infrastructure Funding Statement 2023/24 and the Brownfield Land Register 2024.
2. Cabinet noted that the Infrastructure Funding Statement contained charges for recording and monitoring s106 obligations which would be reported to Council as part of the 2024/25 Fees and Charges Schedule.

Reason for Decision:

To note the contents of the report.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

9. CORPORATE PRIORITIES, BUDGET, COUNCIL TAX AND THE MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Lead member for Resources outlined the report which asked Cabinet to recommend that Council approves a revenue budget, a Council Tax increase, use of reserves to support the revenue budget and the proposed fees and charges.

Cabinet was invited to comment on the report:

- The Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Finance Team were thanked for their hard work.
- Rossendale's position was similar to other authorities in Lancashire.

- The ongoing cost of temporary accommodation for homeless residents was acknowledged. The Homelessness Team were thanked for their hard work.
- Lancashire County Council would be asked to consider a 2-year Medium Term Financial Strategy in view of the forthcoming Local Government Reorganisation.

The following clarifications were provided to Councillor Woods:

- The £179k savings had been part of the original budgeting process and had not arisen following the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Planning fees had not increased as they were set nationally.

Resolved:

Cabinet recommended that Council approves:

1. A revenue budget for 2025/26 of £11.535m, as detailed in the report.
2. A Council Tax increase of 2.99%, increasing the Council Tax rate for a Band D property from £308.44 to £317.66, an increase of £9.22 pa.
3. Use of £574k from the reserves to support the 2025/26 revenue budget.
4. The proposed fees and charges attached at Appendix 1.

Reason for Decision:

For Cabinet to recommend to Council the proposed revenue budget and level of Council Tax for 2025/26, together with implications for the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

10. CAPITAL STRATEGY AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Lead member for Resources outlined the report which asked Cabinet to recommend that Council approves the capital programme, associated capital expenditure and the capital strategy.

Cabinet was invited to comment on the report:

- Rossendale was a low borrowing Council.
- It was good to see a large Capital Programme which would see investment in the borough.
- The Finance Team were thanked for their ongoing work.

Resolved:

Cabinet recommended that Council approves:

1. The capital programme for 2025/26 and associated capital expenditure of £24.272m. And further capital expenditure of £11,928m for the period between 2026/27 and 2028/29.
2. The Capital Strategy 2025/26 as attached at Appendix A.

Reason for Decision:

For Cabinet to recommend to Council the proposed capital expenditure programme for 2025/26 and the medium term, including new capital projects approved during 2024/25 subject to further due diligence and legal contracts. To recommend that Council approves the 2025/26 Capital Strategy.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

11. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

The Lead member for Resources outlined the report which asked Cabinet to recommend that Council approves the Treasury Management Strategy, including the borrowing strategy, the Investment Strategy, including Investment Indicators, the Minimum Revenue Provision statement and to delegate minor amendments to the relevant Director and Lead Member.

Resolved:

Cabinet recommended that Council approves:

1. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement, including the borrowing strategy.
2. The Investment Strategy, including Investment Indicators.
3. The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement.
4. The delegation of any further minor amendments to the Director of Resources (s.151) in consultation with the Lead Member for Resources.

Reason for Decision:

For Cabinet to recommend to Council the approval of the updated Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) and Treasury Management Policy and Practices (TMP).

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

The meeting concluded at 7.09pm

_____ CHAIR _____ DATE