

MINUTES OF: THE CABINET

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 19th March 2025

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

Rob Huntington, Chief Executive
David Smurthwaite, Director of Economic Development
Chris Warren, Director of Resources, s151 Officer
Clare Birtwistle, Head of Legal, Monitoring Officer
Clare Law, Head of People and Policy
Kimberly Haworth, Head of Financial Services
Ian Walker, Service Assurance Team Leader

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th February 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor A Barnes declared an interest in item 8 as she was employed by Homewise.

Councillor McInnes declared an interest in item 8 as she is a member on the Health and Wellbeing Board representing East Lancashire.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No written questions had been received.

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

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee had not met since the last meeting.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Lead Member for Resources outlined the report which asked Cabinet to approve the strategy and to delegate minor amendments to the Director of Resources in conjunction with the Chair of the Audit & Accounts Committee. They were also asked to approve annual refresher Risk Management training for officers and members and that existing training incorporates Risk Management.

Cabinet was invited to comment on the report:

- Training for officers and members was welcomed and officers were thanked for their work on the strategy.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet approved the updated Risk Management Strategy for adoption.
2. Cabinet delegated to the Director of Resources in conjunction with the Chair of the Audit and Accounts Committee the ability to amend the documents to finalise the presentation and any minor amendments as necessary.
3. Cabinet approved annual refresher Risk Management training for officers and members and that existing training incorporated Risk Management.

Reason for Decision:

Strong Risk Management is a key pillar of appropriate Corporate Governance and follows CIPFA/IFAC International Framework: Good Governance in the Public Sector having a robust and up to date strategy is a feature in embedding risk management with a well-managed organisation.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

Councillors Barnes and McInnes left the meeting

8. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT UNDERSPEND AND UPDATE

The Lead Member for Resources outlined the report which asked Cabinet to approve amendments to the policy and to approve the proposed investment plan. Cabinet were asked to delegate authority to the relevant Director and Lead Member to allocate underspent funds to projects that would benefit the wider community.

An amendment to recommendation one was outlined, to include the Director of Resources in the delegation and to clarify that the relevant Lead Member would be the Lead Member for Resources.

Cabinet was invited to comment on the report:

- The recommendations would ensure maximum benefits for more people in town centres and had long term benefits.

Resolved:

1. Once approval for relevant projects had been obtained from the Health and Wellbeing Board, Cabinet delegated authority to the Director of Economic Development and Director of Resources in conjunction with the Lead Member for Resources to allocate unspent Disabled Facilities Grant funds to support Social Care Capital projects that provided wider community benefits.
2. Approved an amendment to the Housing Assistance Policy to formally include Social Care Capital Projects.
3. Approved the proposed Disabled Facilities Grant investment plan.

Reason for Decision:

Approving the Council's strategy to reallocate underspent Disabled Facilities Grant funds would improve accessibility and support integrated community projects in Rossendale.

To amend the Housing Assistance Policy to align with the approvals herein.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

9. VALLEY PLAN UPDATE REPORT 2025/26

The Lead member for Environment and Corporate Services outlined the report which asked Cabinet to consider the plan and propose amendments prior to formal approval and adoption by Full Council.

The following comments were made and updates provided:

- Officers were thanked for their work.
- The Plan recognised the achievements that the Council delivers which was generally appreciated by residents.
- An illustrator had been commissioned to deliver a roadmap so some of the graphics in the Plan may change.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet discussed the Council's proposed Valley Plan 2025-29.
2. Cabinet recommended the Valley Plan 2025-29 for formal approval and adoption by Full Council.

Reason for Decision:

By approving the proposed Valley Plan, Cabinet are outlining the Council's priorities for the next four years to address any issues and opportunities to make Rossendale a better place to live, work, and invest.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

10. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT QUARTER 3 2024/25

The Lead member for Resources outlined the report which asked Cabinet to note the contents of the report.

The following comments were made and updates provided:

- Officers were thanked for their work at a challenging time of year alongside budget setting.
- An update was provided on the purchase of properties for temporary accommodation.
- An update was provided on the sale of public conveniences.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet noted the content of the Quarter 3 financial monitoring report.

Reason for Decision:

To note the report.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

11. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT QUARTER 3 2024/25

The Lead member for Environment and Corporate Services outlined the report which asked Cabinet to consider and note the Council's performance during Quarter 3 of 2024/25.

The following comments were made and clarifications provided:

- Officers and members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were thanked.
- Work was taking place in relation to sickness absence.
- The new Risk Matrix will be utilised for 2025/26.
- The appointment of a Technical Support Officer would assist the red RAG rating in relation to Disabled Facilities Grants.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet considered and noted the Council's performance during Quarter 3 of 2024-25 as detailed in the report and appendix.

Reason for Decision:

Monitoring the Council's performance will enable Cabinet to identify and consider any service actions, projects, performance measures, or corporate risks requiring further action.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

10. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Resolved:

That public and press be excluded from the following item of business under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 since the item involved the likely disclosure of exempt information under Part 1 Paragraph 3 and 5 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

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

The Lead Member for Resources outlined the report.

Cabinet commented on the report.

Resolved:

1. Cabinet approved the recommendations in the report.

Reason for Decision:

It is prudent practice to clear any debts from the ledgers which are now deemed to be irrecoverable.

Alternative Options Considered:

None.

The meeting concluded at 7.08pm

_____ CHAIR _____ DATE