

## COUNCILLOR MICHELLE SMITH, MAYOR

**MINUTES OF:** THE COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF ROSSENDALE

**DATE OF MEETING:** 16<sup>th</sup> July 2025

**PRESENT:** The Mayor Councillor M. Smith (in the Chair)  
Councillors Adshead, Ashworth, A. Barnes, S. Barnes, Bauld, Belli, Cheetham, Driver, Eaton, Hancock, Holland, Looker, Lythgoe, McMahon, Neal, Norton, Payne, Procter, Ritson, S. Smith, Walmsley and Woods.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Rob Huntington, Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service  
Clare Birtwistle, Head of Legal Services / Monitoring Officer  
Phillip Veevers, Mayor's Attendant

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** 17 public  
David Smurthwaite, Director of Economic Development  
Chris Warren, Director of Resources/S151 Officer

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A short silence was held as a mark of respect for Eli Testa.

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### **SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING ITEMS**

#### **1. Honorary Aldermen**

In accordance with Section 249(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council considered nominations to receive the title of Honorary Alderman in recognition of eminent service to the Borough.

Councillor Andrew Walmsley proposed Barbara Ashworth, seconded by Councillor Alyson Barnes.

#### **Resolved:**

That in accordance with Section 249(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, the title of Honorary Alderman be conferred on the following individuals in recognition of their service and dedication to the local community as a councillor for the borough of Rossendale:

- Barbara Ashworth

### **COUNCIL MEETING ITEMS**

#### **2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received for Councillors Bleakley, Gill, Harris, Harrison, Hodgkiss, Kenyon and McInnes.

#### **3. Minutes**

#### **Resolved:**

That the minutes of the meetings held on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2025 and 4<sup>th</sup> June 2025 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

#### **4. Declarations of Interest**

The following declarations were made:

- Councillor S. Smith was a Leisure Trust Board Member (D3. minute 9) and former member of the Bacup 2040 board (D1. minute 7).
- Councillor Walmsley was a member of the Bacup 2040 board (D1. minute 7).
- Councillor Lythgoe was a Leisure Trust Board Member (D3. minute 9).
- Councillor Ashworth was a member of the Bacup 2040 board (D1. minute 7).
- Councillor Driver was a member of the Bacup 2040 board (D1. minute 7).
- Councillor Eaton was a member of the Bacup 2040 board (D1. minute 7).
- Councillor M. Smith was a member of the Bacup 2040 board (D1. minute 7).

## 5. Urgent Items of Business

There were no urgent items of business.

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

There were no communications from the Mayor.

The Head of Paid Service informed that Councillor Mackenzie Ritson had been elected at the by-election on 26<sup>th</sup> June and welcomed him to the meeting. Committee membership details had been updated on the Council website.

The Leader of the Council provided the following updates:

- The year end accounts were published on the website in advance of the statutory deadline. The accounts reflected a strong financial position which resulted in a budget surplus for the year. The accounts were open to public consultation and were now available on the Council website.
- The Rossendale Girls Task Force was a working group established under the Rossendale Physical Activity and Sport Strategy. It was working to expand opportunities for girls to engage in sport and physical activity. An overview was given of the current activity of the group.

## ORDINARY BUSINESS

### 7. Support for the redevelopment of the former Bingo Hall, Bacup

The Council considered the report on support for the redevelopment of the former Bingo Hall, Bacup.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- It was part of the Bacup 2040 Vision remit going forward, and that group had asked for something to be done with this site.
- Enforcement powers would not have brought the building back into use.
- Funding was already committed and earmarked from Levelling Up and some of the funding had been diverted to address some of these long-standing issues.
- S215s don't always bring buildings back into use.
- Clawbacks were detailed in the report.
- Short term retentions on sales and profiteering was detailed in the report.

### Resolved:

1. That the Council enters into an agreement with Brother Investments to provide a maximum grant of £535,000 for the purposes to demolish the former Bingo Hall and Snooker Club in Bacup and construct high quality business units. The sum to be earmarked from the original proposed £1.8m match fund to be provided by the Council to the Levelling Up Fund as approved in the Execution Plan at Council 28th June 2023.
2. To delegate authority to the Head of Legal, Director of Resources and Director of Economic Development in consultation with the Lead Member for Economic Development and Resources to procure any consultants necessary and enter into any agreements related to this project.

### **Reason for Decision**

The Bingo Hall has been a derelict building for a number of years. Providing a viability grant will unlock the key gateway site and transform this area into a vibrant place for enterprise.

### **Alternative Options Considered**

None.

## **8. Extension of burial plots**

The Council considered the extension of burial plots report.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- The Capital Programme moved and changed during the year.
- Public Works Loan Board funding was a working assumption, but this would be considered alongside internal borrowing under the delegation of the report.
- The extension wouldn't take up the whole field, it would be the area to the left.
- Part of the field wasn't suitable for burials owing to the water table being too high.
- There would be some planting and places for ashes caskets in the first phase.
- The second phase would develop the second site for the vaults and there would be more planting around the perimeter.
- There would be a phased programme for vaults.

The Council was grateful for the support of the Muslim faith leaders. Thanks was also given to the Friends of Haslingden Cemetery for all their hard work and also to officers.

### **Resolved:**

1. To add the development of new burial plots at Haslingden Cemetery to the Council's Capital Programme.
2. To delegate to the Head of Environmental Services in conjunction with the Lead Member for Environment and Corporate Services, The Monitoring Officer and the Director of Resources the responsibility to procure all necessary consultants and contractors to deliver the project.

### **Reason for Decision**

The decision is to add the development of Haslingden Cemetery to the capital programme and allocate a budget of £600,000 for this purpose. This will mean that burials for the Muslim Community in Rossendale are supported for the next decade. This will address an issue for residents whilst continuing to provide a source of income for the Council.

### **Alternative Options Considered**

None.

## **9. Procurement of energy contract via framework**

The Council considered the report on procurement of energy contract via framework.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- Working via the framework would provide some of the due diligence.

### **Resolved:**

1. That Council authorises the procurement of Gas and Electricity fixing for a 2-year period via a suitable framework.
2. That Council delegates the acceptance of framework pricing to the Director of Resources in conjunction with the Monitoring Officer and Lead Members for Resources and Environment, and Corporate Services.

### **Reason for Decision**

To obtain best value for gas and electricity supplies and to minimise the risk of price fluctuation in the current volatile economy.

### **Alternative Options Considered**

None.

## **10. Local Government Reorganisation**

The Council considered the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) report.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- Members had been working on LGR for some time.
- We needed to have a voice going forward.
- This was the formation of three new unitary authorities and not a merger.
- Full consultation would take place after the November deadline.

Thanks was given to the Chief Executive and Leader for keeping the group leaders updated at their meetings.

Councillors Neal, Driver and Walmsley requested a named vote.

Members voted as follows:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Vote</b>
Cllr Adshead	For
Cllr Ashworth	For
Cllr Alyson Barnes	For
Cllr Samara Barnes	For
Cllr Bauld	For
Cllr Belli	For
Cllr Cheetham	For
Cllr Driver	For
Cllr Eaton	For
Cllr Hancock	For
Cllr Holland	For
Cllr Looker	For
Cllr Lythgoe	For
Cllr McMahon	For
Cllr Neal	For
Cllr Norton	For
Cllr Payne	For
Cllr Procter	For
Cllr Ritson	Abstain
Cllr Michelle Smith	For
Cllr Scott Smith	For
Cllr Walmsley	For
Cllr Woods	For
<b>For:</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Against:</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Abstentions:</b>	<b>1</b>

**Resolved:**

1. That Full Council note the process and timetable for the development of proposals for local government reorganisation in Lancashire.
2. That Full Council support in principle the three unitary model, including a Pennine Lancashire unitary council covering Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley, Rossendale, Hyndburn, Pendle and Ribble Valley.
3. That Full Council delegate to the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Chief Executive, the authority to agree the council's position in the development of proposals to be submitted to government on November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

**Reason for Decision**

Agreeing a position for Rossendale in the discussions on local government reorganisation will ensure that Rossendale's position will be stronger than if no position is adopted.

**Alternative Options Considered**

None.

**11. Urgent decisions**

There were no urgent decisions taken since the last meeting.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET AND OTHER COMMITTEES****12. Recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Council considered the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report and Work Programme.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- Consideration of the Vice Chair position would be looked into.

Thanks was given to all the officers presenting reports to the committee for making the process easier and to members of the committee for their hard work.

**Resolved:**

That Council approve the Annual Report 2024/25 and Work Programme 2025/26.

**Reason for Decision**

To note the work carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during 2024/25 and work to be carried out during 2025/26.

**Alternative Options Considered**

None.

**NOTICES OF MOTION****13. Notice of Motion**

Councillor Julie Adshead moved the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Bob Bauld:

***This Council recognises that:***

- *The corporate plan commits us to playing a 'positive local role leading by example' in making changes that can mitigate climate catastrophe and help preserve the vitality of our planet for future generations.*
- *Increasing awareness of the environmental impact of dietary choices can allow individuals to make more informed and sustainable choices and that, as leaders in the Borough, we have an important role to play in modelling these choices.*

- *Our farmers make huge contributions to the local economy and its rural communities and that there is a need for farmers to be appropriately supported to deal with the challenges of farming in an increasingly unstable climate.*

**This Council Notes:**

*That the food system accounts for a third of all greenhouse gas emissions [1].*

*The broad agreement across expert bodies, including the Climate Change Commission [2] and EAT-Lancet Commission [3], that the UK must reduce consumption of meat and dairy in order to achieve its climate goals.*

*The Government commissioned National Food Strategy, which recommends that food provided in the public sector should be plant based by default.*

**This Council resolves to:**

*Ensure that food provided at all council catered events and meetings is predominantly plant-based, in line with the recommendations above, using ingredients sourced from local growers and suppliers as far as is practical.*

*Reach out to community groups to actively influence and inform on climate change, food choice, and the positive impact they can have on the environment, their health, and animal welfare through their food choices.*

*Inspire, promote and support initiatives surrounding climate change and in particular food growing, preparation and waste avoidance, especially as part of community projects.*

*[1] Crippa, M., et al. (2021), "Food systems are responsible for a third of global anthropogenic emissions," Nature Food 2, 198-209.*

*[2] <https://www.theccc.org.uk/2022/06/13/governments-food-strategy-a-missed-opportunity-for-the-climate/>*

*[3] <https://eatforum.org/eat-lancet-commission/the-planetary-health-diet-and-you/>*

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- The benefit from the motion was limited in the context of the number of council catered events as there were few in number.
- The motion was more pertinent to a larger Council delivering school meals for example.
- It was best to work with the Communities Team to create a wider impact.
- The Notice of Motion could be brought back once there had been further consideration on how a difference could be made.
- A plant-based choice was already offered at the one catered event a year, so the motion did not change what the Council already offered.

**Resolved:**

The motion was not carried.

**Reason for Decision**

To reject the motion.

**Alternative Options Considered**

None.

**(The meeting commenced at 6.51pm and concluded at 8.36pm)**

Signed.....  
(Chair)

Date .....