

COUNCILLOR LIZ MCINNES, MAYOR

**MINUTES OF: THE COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF ROSSENDALE AND
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

DATE OF MEETING: 8th July 2026

PRESENT: The Mayor Councillor McInnes (in the Chair)
Councillors Adshead, Ashworth (in part), A.Barnes, S.Barnes,
Bauld, Bleakley, Cheetham, Diamond, Driver, Eaton, Gill,
Harris, Kenyon, Looker, Lythgoe, McMahon, Neal, Payne,
Procter, Ritson, M.Smith, S.Smith, Walmsley and Woods.

IN ATTENDANCE: Rob Huntington, Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service
Clare Birtwistle, Head of Legal Services / Monitoring Officer
David Smurthwaite, Director of Economic Development
Darren Kershaw, Mayor's Attendant

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: 5 public

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received for Councillors Hancock, Harrison, Hodgkiss, Holland and Norton.

2. Minutes

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd May 2026 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Urgent Items of Business

There was one urgent item of business which had been added to the agenda and would be taken as item D2 (minute 8).

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

There were no communications from the Mayor, Head of Paid Service or Leader.

SPECIAL MEETING ITEMS

6. 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 Alyson Barnes proposed Janice Johnson, seconded by Councillor Samara Barnes.

Councillor Scott Smith proposed Brian Essex, seconded by Councillor Alan Woods.

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:

- Janice Johnson
- Brian Essex

ORDINARY BUSINESS

7. Designation of new Conservation Area and Adoption of the Waterfoot Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP)

The Council considered the Waterfoot CAAMP report.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that:

- There was a need to ensure this and other Conservation Areas were protected throughout Local Government Reorganisation.
- This needed to go hand in hand with strong enforcement so we didn't lose any more historic detail on buildings. It was confirmed that Enforcement Officers were working on this.
- The will to do the work at pace in Helmshore was expressed.

Resolved:

That Council:

1. Notes the responses received during the public consultations on the Draft Waterfoot Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.
2. Approves the area highlighted in the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan to be designated as a Conservation Area.
3. Approves the formal adoption of the Waterfoot Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan to be used as guidance and be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
4. Delegates minor changes and updates to the Waterfoot CAAMP to the Head of Planning in consultation with the Lead Member.

Reason for Decision

Conservation Areas were first introduced by the Civic Amenities Act 1967. The Act has now been incorporated and expanded into the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (referred to as the 'Act') which provides the statutory basis for planning control within Conservation Areas. This Act imposes a duty on the local planning authority to designate Conservation Areas (defined as areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance) where appropriate, and to bring forward policies and proposals for the preservation and enhancement of such areas.

Alternative Options Considered

None.

8. Director of Operations

The Council considered the redesignation of the Head of Environmental Services post and potholder to Director of Operations following the outcome of a job evaluation exercise.

Resolved:

That the post of Head of Environmental Services, and current postholder Andrew Taylor, is redesignated as the Director of Operations with effect of 1st April 2026.

Reason for Decision

The Senior Management Review ensures the leadership structure is fit for purpose, both for current service delivery and for the demands of Local Government Reorganisation ahead of Vesting Day.

Alternative Options Considered

None.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET AND OTHER COMMITTEES

9. Recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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

Resolved:

That Council approve the Annual Report 2025/26 and Work Programme 2026/27.

Reason for Decision

To note the work carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during 2025/26 and work to be carried out during 2026/27.

Alternative Options Considered

None.

NOTICES OF MOTION

10. Notice of Motion

Councillor Alyson Barnes moved the following motion with amended wording at point 4, which was seconded by Councillor Andrew Walmsley:

Council notes:

- *The Lancashire Combined County Authority's (LCCA) draft Local Transport Plan Implementation Plan 2026–2030 and accompanying Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA), and welcomes their ambition—particularly the focus on rail, public transport, active travel and reducing transport-related social exclusion.*
- *That Rossendale Borough Council has developed the **City Valley Rail Link (CVRL)**—a proposal to restore passenger rail services between Rawtenstall and Manchester Victoria via Ramsbottom, Bury and Heywood—using the existing East Lancashire Railway infrastructure.*
- *The scheme progressed to a Strategic Outline Business Case in 2022, supported by Department for Transport funding and Lancashire County Council, with:*
 - *86% public support,*
 - *Indicative capital cost of around £80 million,*
 - *Journey times of 56 minutes (Phase 1) and 44 minutes (Phase 2).*
- *That Rossendale remains the only borough in Lancashire without a passenger rail station, and is identified within the ISA as a priority area for transport-related social exclusion, including Bacup as a key intervention cluster.*
- *That the ISA highlights “Restoring Your Railways schemes” as among the strongest contributors to delivering transport, economic and environmental outcomes, but does not make clear whether CVRL is included within this category.*
- *That the LCCA's scheme register shows many included schemes are at earlier stages or without funding, whereas CVRL has a co-funded business case and is more advanced than several schemes currently listed.*
- *The significantly improved strategic context since 2022, including:*
 - *The Greater Manchester Bee Network integration (from December 2026),*
 - *The LCCA's £640 million transport settlement and new powers,*
 - *Opportunities for cross-boundary working with Greater Manchester,*
 - *The need to address Rossendale's lack of rail connectivity ahead of Local Government Reorganisation.*

Council believes:

- *The City Valley Rail Link represents a transformational opportunity to tackle transport inequality, improve access to jobs and services, support economic growth, and reduce carbon emissions.*

- *That failure to explicitly include or address CVRL within the Implementation Plan risks undermining both the credibility of the Plan and its stated objectives on social inclusion and connectivity.*
- *That, at minimum, transparency is required regarding whether CVRL is included within the “Restoring Your Railways schemes” referenced in the ISA.*

Council resolves to:

1. **Formally support** the inclusion of the City Valley Rail Link within the Lancashire Local Transport Plan Implementation Plan 2026–2030.
2. **Call on the LCCA to clarify and confirm:**
 - *Whether CVRL is included in the Implementation Plan and within the ISA’s “Restoring Your Railways schemes”;*
 - *And, if not, to provide the basis for that decision, including the relevant assessment.*
3. **Request that the LCCA:**
 - *Includes Phase 1 (Rawtenstall – Bury) as a named scheme with funded development activity within the 2026–2030 period;*
 - *Includes Phase 2 (Bury – Manchester Victoria via Heywood) as a medium-term feasibility priority within the “Connecting Lancashire” workstream, with joint working with Greater Manchester partners;*
 - *Names the scheme as a priority within the forthcoming Rail Strategy;*
 - *Recognises CVRL as a key intervention to address transport-related social exclusion in Rossendale.*
4. **Authorise the Leader and Chief Executive** to continue engagement with the LCCA, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, and Government partners to progress the City Valley Rail Link and to call on both of Rossendale’s Members of Parliament to advocate in the strongest possible terms for the City Valley Rail Link, and to lobby ministers to ensure funding is available for its development and delivery.

In response to questions it was confirmed that:

- There was a need to improve public transport generally.
- There was need for an integrated public transport offer and equality with our neighbours.
- The Council’s ambition needed to feature in the transport plans, or funding would not be secured.

Resolved:

Council resolves to:

1. Formally support the inclusion of the City Valley Rail Link within the Lancashire Local Transport Plan Implementation Plan 2026–2030.
2. Call on the LCCA to clarify and confirm:
 - Whether CVRL is included in the Implementation Plan and within the ISA’s “Restoring Your Railways schemes”;
 - And, if not, to provide the basis for that decision, including the relevant assessment.
3. Request that the LCCA:
 - Includes Phase 1 (Rawtenstall – Bury) as a named scheme with funded development activity within the 2026–2030 period;
 - Includes Phase 2 (Bury – Manchester Victoria via Heywood) as a medium-term feasibility priority within the “Connecting Lancashire” workstream, with joint working with Greater Manchester partners;
 - Names the scheme as a priority within the forthcoming Rail Strategy;

- Recognises CVRL as a key intervention to address transport-related social exclusion in Rossendale.
- 4. Authorise the Leader and Chief Executive to continue engagement with the LCCA, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, and Government partners to progress the City Valley Rail Link and to call on both of Rossendale's Members of Parliament to advocate in the strongest possible terms for the City Valley Rail Link, and to lobby ministers to ensure funding is available for its development and delivery.

Reason for Decision

To support the amended motion.

Alternative Options Considered

Original motion.

(The meeting commenced at 7.22pm and concluded at 8.23pm)

Signed.....

(Chair)

Date