

**MINUTES OF: THE CABINET**

**Date of Meeting: Wednesday, 19<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**PRESENT: Councillor Swain (in the Chair)  
Councillors Challinor, Driver, Essex and Graham**

**IN ATTENDANCE: Carolyn Wilkins, Chief Executive  
Helen Lockwood, Deputy Chief Executive  
George Graham, Executive Director of Resources  
Andrew Buckle, Head of Customer Services and ICT  
Bill Lawley, Interim Legal and Democratic Services Manager  
Heather Moore, Committee and Member Services Manager  
Steve Jackson, Housing Market Renewal Manager  
Jon Cook, Independent Housing and Homelessness Consultant  
Liz Murphy, Head of People and Organisational Development  
Sarah Duckworth, Human Resources Manager**

**ALSO PRESENT: Councillors A. Barnes, Cheetham, Hewlett, Lamb, Neal,  
Nuttall, Pilling, Robertson and Sandiford  
County Councillor Serridge  
2 members of the public**

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**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were submitted.

**2. MINUTES**

**Resolved:**

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2008 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

**3. URGENT ITEM OF BUSINESS**

The Leader of the Council reported that there were no urgent items of business.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

## **5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No questions were raised under this item.

## **6. POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR BEREAVEMENT SERVICES**

Councillor Driver, Portfolio Holder for a Clean and Green Rossendale presented the report of the Head of Street Scene and Neighbourhood Services which set out a revised draft policy for cemetery rules and regulations which reflected current practices.

The Portfolio Holder outlined the main changes to the original policy for the consideration of the Cabinet and referred to a consultation meeting which would take place at 2.30pm on Monday, 31<sup>st</sup> March. She indicated that all Elected Members were invited to attend the meeting and details had also been circulated to all Funeral Directors and Monumental Masons in the area.

In considering the report a member raised an issue relating to the insurance for memorial stones, to which the Portfolio Holder responded.

### **Decision Made:**

1. That the proposed draft policy regulations be approved and any amendments as a result of the consultation be delegated to the Head of Street Scene and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for a Clean and Green Rossendale.
2. That Cabinet approve the proposed changes, where there are clear health and safety implications, to the use of grave sites that have had memorials erected without authorisation.
3. That a review of charges be undertaken annually.

### **Reason for Decision:**

The changes to the Policy reflect current practices and changes in legislation and will represent best practice in this service area.

### **Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

## **7. FALLBARN CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL**

The Leader of the Council presented the report of the Executive Director of Regulatory Services which detailed the Fallbarn Conservation Area Appraisal together with proposed methods and policies for the management of the area in order to preserve its future.

In considering the report members asked about the designation of other areas as conservation areas, specifically Crawshawbooth to which the Leader of the Council responded.

**Decision Made:**

That the Fallbarn Conservation Area Appraisal be approved and published.

**Reason for Decision:**

It is the responsibility of the Local Authority to publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

**8. HOUSING MARKET RENEWAL PROGRAMME 2008/09**

Councillor Challinor, Portfolio Holder for Regenerating and Promoting Rossendale presented the report of the Head of Regeneration which detailed the proposed Housing Market Renewal (HMR) Programme for 2008/2009.

The Portfolio Holder reported that the outline programme for 2008/09 was based around refurbishment and retention and had been developed in consultation with Ward Members.

The Housing Market Renewal Manager reported an indicative allocation of £2.59 million per year for a three year period for Rossendale's Housing Market Renewal Programme.

**Decision Made:**

1. That the Housing Market Renewal Programme for 2008/2009 be approved.
2. That delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director of Regulatory Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regenerating and Promoting Rossendale to sign the contract agreements (form of commencement agreements) for the housing improvement works.
3. That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regenerating and Promoting Rossendale to agree any amendments to the proposed programme should they be required following the final level of HMR resources being announced.

**Reason for Decision:**

The Programme provides a real opportunity to improve the quality of life for local residents.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

**9. PENNINE LANCASHIRE CHOICE BASED LETTINGS – MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

Councillor Challinor, Portfolio Holder for Regenerating and Promoting Rossendale, presented the report of the Head of Regeneration which outlined the development of the Pennine Lancashire Choice Based Lettings Scheme.

The Portfolio Holder reported that the Scheme would span the Pennine Lancashire Local Authority Boundaries and would ensure that social housing tenants had more choice and control over where they lived.

In considering the report, Members identified the following issues to which the Portfolio Holder and the Housing Market Renewal Manager responded.

- Performance monitoring arrangements
- Increased choice for customers

**Decision Made:**

1. That progress on the development of the Pennine Lancashire Choice Based Lettings Scheme be noted.
2. That delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director of Regulatory Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regenerating and Promoting Rossendale to sign a memorandum of understanding between the relevant parties.

**Reason for Decision:**

The Council is required by the Department for Communities and Local Government to have introduced a Choice Based Lettings System by 2010.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

**10. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

Councillor Driver, Portfolio Holder for a Clean and Green Rossendale, presented the report of the Head of Street Scene and Neighbourhood Services which detailed the result of further consultation on the Council's Environmental Policy following its approval by Cabinet on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2007.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee reported that the Policy Scrutiny Committee had considered the Policy and were recommending its approval. She further reported that the Performance Scrutiny Committee had considered the Environmental Strategy and Action Plan which supported the implementation of the Environmental Policy and this would be further reviewed by the Committee in 12 months.

**Decision Made:**

That the Environmental Policy be adopted.

**Reason for Decision:**

The Policy sets out the Council's commitment to supporting and promoting the protection and improvement of the environment in Rossendale.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

**11. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

Councillor Swain, Leader of the Council presented the report of the Deputy Chief Executive which detailed the Rossendale Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2018.

The Leader of the Council reported that the Strategy had been developed around People, Places and Prosperity and would support the Council's work with partners in addressing the issues that really concern local people.

In considering the report, Members identified the following issues to which the Leader of the Council and the Deputy Chief Executive responded.

- Advantages of partnership working
- Membership of the Theme Groups
- Performance management and monitoring through the Scrutiny process

**Decision Made:**

1. That Full Council be recommended to receive the report and endorse the sign off and the adoption of the Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2018.
2. That Full Council be recommended to agree that minor changes may be made to the Strategy following the confirmation of the final 35 local area agreement indicators and that this be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

**Reason for Decision:**

The Strategy supports the Council and its partners commitment to community engagement and development, community cohesion and reducing inequalities.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

**12. ROSSENDALE SUPPORTED HOUSING STRATEGY**

Councillor Challinor, Portfolio Holder for Regenerating and Promoting Rossendale presented the report of the Head of Regeneration which detailed the Rossendale Supported Housing Strategy which would ensure that vulnerable people received the support they needed to live independently or in supported accommodation.

The Chair of the Policy Scrutiny Committee reported that the Committee had considered the Strategy and were recommending its approval. The Committee asked that consideration be given to the provision of a women's refuge in Rossendale.

In considering the report, Members identified the following issues to which the Portfolio Holder and the Housing Market Renewal Manager responded.

- The provision of a directory of services for vulnerable people
- Uptake campaign to promote the Telecare services
- Training day for members on the subject of preventing homelessness which was scheduled to be held in the summer

**Decision Made:**

That the Rossendale Support Housing Strategy be approved and adopted.

**Reason for Decision:**

The Supported Housing Strategy will help to ensure that the Council is able to influence and enable a co-ordinated multi-agency response to meet the needs of Rossendale's most needy citizens. It also improves the Council's opportunity to access funding as it becomes available through the County Council's Supporting People Programme.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

N.B. The Housing Market Renewal Manager and the Independent Housing and Homelessness Consultant vacated the meeting after the above item of business.

### **13. LOCAL TAXATION DEBT MANAGEMENT POLICY**

The Leader of the Council presented the report of the Head of Customer Services and ICT which outlined proposals to introduce a Debt Management Policy for Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates (Business Rates).

#### **Decision Made:**

1. That the Local Taxation Debt Management Policy be approved.
2. That any future revision of the small balance/write off thresholds included in the Policy be delegated to the Head of Financial Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for a Well Managed Council.

#### **Reason for Decision:**

The Policy follows best practice and further strengthens both the Council's financial management and customer service delivery.

#### **Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

### **14. DOG WARDEN SERVICE**

Councillor Driver, Portfolio Holder for a Clean and Green Rossendale, presented the report of the Head of Street Scene and Neighbourhood Services which outlined changes to the legislation for dealing with the provision of kennelling stray dogs out of hours together with a Policy and Procedure for dealing with stray dogs, dog fouling and education.

The Portfolio Holder informed the Cabinet that the responsibility to deal with dog kennelling out of hours would transfer from the Police Service to the Council on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 and she asked the Cabinet to consider the options set out in the report.

In considering the report Members identified the following issues to which the Portfolio Holder and Interim Legal and Democratic Services Manager responded:

- Proactive enforcement approach to dealing with dog fouling
- Clarification on who can issue fixed penalty notices
- The legal position of issuing fixed penalty notices for dog fouling offences on land owned by Greenvale Homes.
- The erection of dog fouling offence signs and the timescales relating to this work
- Promotion of the "Doing the Right Thing" award for responsible dog owners

**Decision Made:**

1. That the changes in the legislation be noted and the Policy and Procedures be agreed.
2. That a day time service that operates between 9am and 5pm be provided.
3. That the Council work with the East Lancashire e-Partnership to jointly procure a service to cover the requirements of the legislation in providing a place to which secured strays can be taken out of hours.
4. That delegated authority be given to the Head of Street Scene and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for a Clean and Green Rossendale and the Head of Financial Services to negotiate with other partners in Lancashire to procure a service within the hours agreed.

**Reason for Decision:**

The Council has a duty to deal with stray dogs from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

1. Provide 24 hour service to collect stray dogs and transport to a kennel provider.
2. Provide access for the public or other agencies to a facility open 24 hours a day that will accept dogs transported to the site.

**15. COURT COSTS**

The Leader of the Council presented the report of the Head of Customer Services and ICT which outlined proposals to increase the current court costs for the non payment of Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR).

The Leader of the Council reported that the proposed charge for both Council Tax and National Non domestic Rates was £75 for 2008/09, with a £10 increase in 2009/10 plus Retail Price Index (RPI) increase to ensure that Rossendale recovered all of its costs associated with the Recovery process.

**Decision Made:**

1. That the proposed increase in court costs be accepted and implemented for the start of the 2008/09 financial year followed by successive increases to cover inflation costs.
2. That delegated authority be given to the Head of Customer Services and ICT in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Quality Services to Customers to increase the court costs appropriately in future years.



**Reason for Decision:**

It is important that the charges reflect all of the costs involved in delivering the process.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

**16. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT**

Councillor Essex, Portfolio Holder for a Well Managed Council, presented the report of the Head of Financial Services which provided an update on General Fund estimates for 2007/08, the Capital Programme and Treasury matters.

Overall the General Fund revenue forecast was showing to be in line with the Council's net revenue budget.

**Decision Made:**

That the report be noted.

**Reason for Decision:**

Strong financial management ensures the effective management of the Council's resources which enables the provision of value for money services.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

**17. EXTRACTS OF THE POLICY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2008**

The Cabinet considered the extracts of the Minutes of the Policy Scrutiny Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> March where the following items were considered:

- Homelessness Strategy Update
- Support Housing Strategy
- Environmental Policy

**Decision Made:**

That the Minutes be noted.

**Reason for Decision:**

It is important for the Cabinet to consider the recommendations of the Policy Scrutiny Committee.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

**18. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**Decision Made and Reason for Decision:**

That the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve disclosure of exempt information relating to both an individual and to the financial or business affairs of any particular person as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

N.B. The Head of Customer Services and ICT, the Committee and Member Services Manager vacated the meeting prior to consideration of the following items of business.

**19. JOB EVALUATION**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Head of People and Organisational Development which provided an update on the current position in respect of job evaluation.

**Decision Made:**

That the recommendations as set out in the report be agreed.

**Reason for Decision:**

The decision contributes to the Council's priority of being a well managed council.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

N.B. The Deputy Chief Executive, the Executive Director of Resources and the Head of People and Organisational Development vacated the meeting prior to consideration of the following item of business.

**20. AN ORGANISATION THAT FOCUSES RESOURCES ON PRIORITIES**

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Executive which outlined proposed changes to the organisational structure of the Council.

**Decision Made:**

That the recommendations as set out in the report be agreed.

**Reason for Decision:**

The decision contributes to the Council's priority of being a well managed council.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

**The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 8.45pm**

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CHAIR