

**MINUTES OF: THE CABINET**

**Date of Meeting: Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2009**

**PRESENT: Councillor Swain (in the Chair)  
Councillors Challinor, Essex, Gledhill, Smith and P Steen**

**IN ATTENDANCE: Linda Fisher, Executive Director – Business  
Phil Seddon, Head of Finance  
Liz Murphy, Head of People and Policy  
Mike Riley, Communities Manager  
Heather Moore, Committee and Member Services Manager  
Jenni Cook, Committee Officer  
Lynn Hurrell, Greenvale Homes  
Peter Sweetmore, Community Voluntary Sector  
Inspector G Brown, Lancashire Constabulary**

**ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Aldred, A Barnes, Cheetham, Crawforth,  
Dickinson, Evans, Farrington, Lamb, Morris, Nuttall, C  
Pilling, J Pilling, Robertson and Sandiford  
6 members of the public and press**

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**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Graham.

**2. MINUTES**

**Resolved:**

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 18th March 2009 be agreed and 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**

Members of the Committee were asked to consider whether they had an interest in any matters to be discussed at the meeting.

No declarations of interest were received.

## 5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Members of the public raised questions and points to which the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Leisure responded:

- Likelihood of 7/7 trading within Rossendale markets.
- Progress on the Leisure Review and Option H.

## 6. NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS – PUTTING COMMUNITIES FIRST

The Leader of the Council outlined the proposed framework for delivery of Neighbourhood Management and delivery of the Neighbourhood Plans throughout Rossendale. The Leader invited comments from Inspector G Brown of Lancashire Constabulary, Mrs L Hurrell of Greenvale Homes and Mr P Sweetmore representing the Community Voluntary Sector. The views of the Members of the Cabinet were invited.

In considering the report, the following matters were discussed:

- Concerns regarding the size of forums and assurances that smaller communities would be captured within the review.
- Review of any new arrangements after 12 months.
- Role of Lancashire County Council in the new framework
- Governance arrangements

### Decision Made:

1. That Council be recommended to approve Option 1 as follows:-

#### **Option 1 (no change)**

1. **Haslingden with Edenfield Neighbourhood Forum:** Wards: Eden – Greenfield – Helmshore and Worsley, 11 Rossendale Elected Members and 1 County Councillor.
2. **Rawtenstall Neighbourhood Forum:** Wards: Cribden – Goodshaw – Hareholme – Longholme – Whitewell, 13 Rossendale Elected Members and 1 County Councillor.
3. **Bacup Neighbourhood Forum:** Wards: Greensclough – Irwell – Stacksteads, 8 Rossendale Elected Members and 1 County Councillor.
4. **Whitworth Neighbourhood Forum:** Wards: Facit and Shawforth – Healey and Whitworth, 4 Rossendale Elected Members and 1 County Councillor.

2. That membership of the refreshed Neighbourhood Forums is extended as outlined in Section 5.8 of the report and that it meets four times a year as a business group to develop and oversee the delivery of Neighbourhood Plans.
3. That two community meetings are held per year allowing all members of the public to attend to discuss any emerging policies and what their priorities are for the area.
4. That Cabinet supports a recommendation to Council to amend the Council's Constitution to reflect the new arrangements that will be developed in consultation with the Governance Working Group and Standards Committee before being presented to Council.
5. That any amendments to the Neighbourhood Forum arrangements be reviewed after 12 months to allow them to be developed or even revert back to their present arrangements.

**Reason for Decision:**

To support elected members in their role as place shapers and civic leaders. To reaffirm Rossendale Partnership's commitment to empowering residents to work with elected members and partners to ensure that local services are effectively focussed on local need.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

Options 2 and 3 as detailed within the Committee Report.

**7. REVITALISING ROSSENDALE MARKETS**

The Leader of the Council outlined details of the proposed new policy for allocation of stalls and revitalisation of Rossendale Markets. It was noted that staff should be congratulated for their hard work on this policy.

In considering the report the following matters were discussed:-

- Likelihood of appointing a Market Superintendent.
- Public consultation of market customers.
- Allocation of stalls and competitiveness.
- Success of Ramsbottom Market and it was suggested that staff visit the site.
- Long term sustainability and need for diversification.

**Decision Made:**

1. That the Market Management Policy be approved and implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2009.

**Reason for Decision:**

To revitalise Rossendale Markets and to put in place clear policies regarding management of the markets and to maximise the use of stalls and income.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

**8. HOUSING MARKET RENEWAL PROGRAMME 2009-2010**

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration outlined the report which sought delegated authority for the Head of Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration to approve the Housing Market Renewal Programme 2009-2010, once the precise level of the allocation to Rossendale is known. It was noted that the Regeneration Team should be commended for their efforts and work on the Elevate Programme.

In considering the report, the following matters were discussed:

- The success of the work carried out in Stacksteads and Bacup with funding obtained from Elevate.
- That the Portfolio Holder would discuss the Programme with Ward Members prior to its approval.

**Decision Made:**

That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration to approve the Housing Market Renewal Programme for 2009-10, once the precise level of the allocation to Rossendale is known.

**Reason for Decision:**

To facilitate successful delivery of the Housing Market Renewal Programme 2009-10 to further improve the quality of life for local residents.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

**9. EQUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

The Portfolio Holder for Customer Services outlined the report which briefed the Cabinet on the new Equality Framework for Local Government.

**Decisions Made:**

1. That the content of the report and the changes in criteria and requirements be noted.
2. That a self assessment process and peer review model based around the new Framework criteria with the Lancashire Equality Group be pursued, once the final Framework is published by the Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government.

**Reason for Decision:**

To enable the Council to demonstrate its continuing commitment to equality.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

**10. DOG FOULING TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services submitted a report to the Cabinet detailing the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group.

The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny presented the report of Overview and Scrutiny and urged the Cabinet to accept the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group.

In considering the report, the following matters were discussed:

- Training of Officers to give out 'on the spot' fines.
- Enforcement during unsocial hours.
- Effectiveness of the 'Caught Doing Right' scheme.

**Decision Made:**

That the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Neighbourhood, in consultation with the Communities Manager, provides a response to the recommendations outlined by the Dog Fouling Task and Finish Group, detailed as follows:

1. That the Council produces a Dog Fouling Policy.
2. That the Communities Team undertake a full review of the Dog Warden Services (this would not include the out of hours service as this has already been tendered).
3. That once the Officers have received the Enforcement training a press release be produced informing the public of the need to clean up after their dog or they could face a fixed penalty notice.

4. That the Communities Manager gives consideration to maintaining the 'Caught Doing Right' reward scheme to see if the budget for this can be maintained over a longer term.
5. That both the Councillors and Town Centre Caretakers be provided with 'Caught Doing Right' postcards to hand out to those members of the public that they see cleaning up after their dog.

**Reason for Decision:**

To maintain the environment and to prevent the occurrence of dog fouling.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

**11. GRASS CUTTING TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services submitted a report to the Cabinet detailing the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group.

The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny presented the report and urged the Cabinet to accept the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group. She referred to a pilot scheme in South Ribble and asked Cabinet to consider looking at this as part of their response.

In considering the report, the following matters were discussed:

- A pilot study being carried out by South Ribble Council. The Leader of the Council reported that the outcome of the pilot would be discussed at a forthcoming Leader's meeting.
- Vandalism of grass in areas of Rossendale.
- Cost of machinery.
- Responsible Authority for verge maintenance
- Pride in Rossendale work

**Decision Made:**

That the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services in consultation with the Operations Manager provide a response to the following recommendations of the Grass Cutting Task and Finish Group:

1. That consideration be given to purchasing a side-arm flail to enable the cutting of steep bankings, at a cost of £42,370 capital one-off cost and £17,000 annual revenue from within its services budget.
2. That the Operations Manager consider increasing the number of cuts by both Lancashire County Council and Rossendale Borough Council, which would

- give a considerable reduction in grass cuttings. Increase in cuts and costings need to be agreed by both organizations.
3. That in order to have a co-ordinated approach to grass cutting between all organizations, a 'lead officer' be nominated within the Operations Department to ensure that maintenance schedules are adhered to. LCC, the Highways Agency and Greenvale Homes should share their grass cutting information with this person and keep them up to date with any problems that may cause the schedule to slip.
  4. That the Council and Highways Agency work together to look into sponsorship to improve the Rising Bridge roundabout.
  5. That the Council look further into how sponsorship money is collected, allocated and utilised for all roundabouts throughout the Borough.
  6. That consideration be given to looking at new ways of working to provide flexibility of working practices.

**Reason for Decision:**

To ensure that standards of quality in respect of grass cutting are met and to work to ensure that the Council continues to promote 'Pride in Rossendale'.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

**12. FINANCIAL MONITORING FOR 2008/09**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources provided an update on the General Fund estimates monitoring for 2008/09, the Capital Programme and Treasury matters.

In considering the report, the following matters were discussed:

- The Accommodation Strategy.

**Decision Made:**

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the use of the Change Management Reserve be approved as noted in the Committee Report at 4.4.2 as follows:-

*Change Management Reserve* - £60k relating to delayed restructure costs within the Regeneration Service implemented earlier in the financial year.

**Reason for Decision:**

To ensure that the General Fund revenue forecast remains within the Council's net revenue budget and includes provision for the Council's current risk areas.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

**13. ROSSENDALE INTERIM ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY**

The Leader of the Council outlined the Interim Road Safety Strategy for Rossendale which had been produced as part of the Community Safety Partnership Plan for 2009/10.

It was noted that the responsibility for meeting road safety targets, as set by the Department for Transport, fell largely within the remit of Lancashire County Council.

In considering the report, the following matters were discussed:

- Possibility of Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutinising Road Safety in conjunction with the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP).
- Disparity of figures between the Traffic Police and Local Officers.
- Use of Metric and Imperial measurements.

**Decision Made:**

1. That the Cabinet agrees to continue to work to the Lancashire Road Safety Strategy until the review in 2010.
2. That the Cabinet adopts the attached Interim Rossendale Road Safety Strategy and it forms part of the Community Safety Partnership Plan for 2009/10.
3. That a report is presented to Cabinet following the introduction of new Government targets.

**Reason for Decision:**

An interim strategy is required prior to the introduction of new Government targets in 2010.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

**14. DISCRETIONARY RELIEF FROM COUNCIL TAX AND NON-DOMESTIC RATES**

The Portfolio Holder for Customer Services outlined the report which informed the Cabinet of the Council's defined guidelines and procedures for the various types of

discretionary relief available in respect of Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates.

In considering the report the following matters were discussed:-

- Assurance that the new guidelines would not be applied retrospectively. It was confirmed that this would only apply to new claims.

**Decision Made:**

That the Discretionary Relief from Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates Policy be approved.

**Reason for Decision:**

A robust policy is required in order to ensure sound decision making with regard to discretionary relief.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:**

None.

**15. 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 the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) under Part 1 Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and information which is subject to any obligation of confidentiality as defined in Part 1 Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

**16. DISPOSAL OF VACANT LAND IN LOVECLOUGH**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources outlined the report of the Head of Finance.

**Decision Made**

That disposal of the property be delayed for 3 months and the report be considered by Cabinet in July 2009.

**Reason for Decision**

To allow the condition of the property market to be assessed.

**Alternative Options Considered and Rejected**

To dispose of the property by auction immediately.

**The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 8.25pm**

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CHAIR