

COUNCILLOR TREVOR UNSWORTH, MAYOR

MINUTES OF: THE COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF ROSSENDALE

Date of Meeting: 23rd February 2011

PRESENT: The Mayor Councillor Unsworth (in the Chair)
Councillors Aldred, A. Barnes, L. Barnes, Challinor,
Cheetham, Crawforth, Driver, Eaton, Essex, Evans,
Farrington, Gill, Gledhill, Graham, Jackson, Kenyon, Lamb,
May, Milling, Morris, Neal, Nuttall, Oakes, C. Pilling, J.
Pilling, Robertson, Sandiford, Serridge, Smith, Stansfield,
H. Steen, P. Steen, Swain and Thorne.

IN ATTENDANCE: Helen Lockwood, Chief Executive
Stuart Sugarman, Director of Business
Fiona Meechan, Director of Customers and Communities
Phil Seddon, Head of Finance and Property Services
Carolyn Sharples, Committee and Member Services
Manager
Jenni Cook, Committee Officer
Michael Tipper, Mayor's Attendant
Mike Riley, Communities Manager
Tracy Brzozowski, Public Protection Manager
Danny Dobson, Public Protection Officer

ALSO PRESENT: 2 representatives of the press
35 members of the public

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed those in attendance that as there were people present to speak on the Taxi Licensing Policies these items would be taken after public question time.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor McInnes. It was also noted that Councillor J.Pilling would be arriving late.

2. MINUTES

Resolved:

- That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 15th December 2010 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made:

Councillor Essex declared an interest in item 10 as his wife had a lease with the Council for an allotment on Free Lane, Helmshore.

Councillor Kenyon declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 7a and 7b as she was a member of the Taxi Trade.

Councillor Robertson declared an interest in item 10 as she was a director of the Credit Union and a Trustee of the Citizen Advice Bureau (CAB).

Other declarations were made during the proceedings of the meeting and these have been recorded at the points at which the declarations were made.

5. OUTSTANDING ITEMS OF BUSINESS FROM THE LAST MEETING

There were no outstanding actions to report.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The following issues were raised by members of the public and were answered by the Leader or designated person:

No	Issue	Questioner	Answered by (and action)
1.	A written question had been received in relation to retaining skeletal staff at the ski slope after March and potential degradation of the ski lifts and equipment.	Mr B. Hill (not present)	Councillor Gledhill responded and agreed to write to Mr Hill to ensure he received a response.
2.	The power and authority to ignore law and contradictions in the reports.	Mr D. Lawrie	Councillor Swain
3.	Guarantee the Rossendale Test costs will be stood by garages and not the taxi trade.	Mr G. Bulcock	Councillor Swain

NB. Councillor Kenyon left the room before the following 2 items (Minute 7a and 7b) were considered.

Councillor Driver declared a personal and prejudicial interest on items 10 and 11 appendix 3 in relation to the Rossendale Markets.

7. RECOMENDATIONS FROM CABINET AND OTHER COMMITTEES

7a. Recommendation of the Licensing and Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committees: Policy for the Licensing of Hackney Carriage Vehicles and Drivers and Private Hire Operators.

The Council considered the recommendations of the Licensing and Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committees in respect of the Policy for the Licensing of Hackney Carriage Vehicles and Drivers and Private Hire Operators.

An amendment was moved and seconded to defer the item to enable a more mutually agreed policy to be developed.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services confirmed that there had been a series of meetings since July 2009 and meetings with officers and members. This included the consultation which started in September 2010, Policy Overview and Scrutiny on 18th January 2011 and Licensing Committee on 24th January 2011.

In considering the amendment and report members commented on the following:

- The effectiveness of the Taxi Liaison Group.
- Ensuring the test does not incur costs.
- Tests being undertaken by garages.
- Concerns regarding booking appointments within the required timescales.
- More discussion before adoption.
- Extensive lobbying.
- Not all political groups were lobbied.
- Policy did not have the agreement of all members.
- Chair and Vice-chair of Licensing had not been asked to attend any Taxi Liaison meetings.
- Safety of passengers using the service.
- Review and amend if problems identified.
- Time frame for amendments in future.
- Policy aims to protect taxi drivers and passengers.
- Issues not taken on board even though it had been 18 month process.
- Taxi Trade desperate for involvement.

The Leader of the Council informed that he had offered to meet with the Taxi Trade 2 weeks ago but that the offer had not been taken up, so why defer the policy. He would gladly meet with the Taxi Trade at any time.

A recorded vote was requested by Councillors A.Barnes, Lamb and Serridge.

Voting on the amendment took place the results of which were as follows:

Name	For	Against	Abstain
Cllr Aldred	√		
Cllr A Barnes	√		
Cllr L Barnes		√	

Cllr Challinor		√	
Cllr Cheetham		√	
Cllr Crawforth	√		
Cllr Driver		√	
Cllr Eaton		√	
Cllr Essex		√	
Cllr Evans		√	
Cllr Farrington	√		
Cllr C Gill	√		
Cllr Gledhill		√	
Cllr Graham		√	
Cllr Jackson	√		
Cllr Lamb	√		
Cllr May		√	
Cllr Milling		√	
Cllr Morris		√	
Cllr Neal	√		
Cllr Nuttall	√		
Cllr Oakes	√		
Cllr C Pilling	√		
Cllr Robertson	√		
Cllr Sandiford		√	
Cllr Serridge	√		
Cllr Smith		√	
Cllr Stansfield		√	
Cllr H Steen		√	
Cllr P Steen		√	
Cllr Swain		√	
Cllr Thorne		√	
Cllr Unsworth	√		
Totals	14	19	0

The amendment was lost and members voted on the original recommendation.

Resolved:

1. That Council adopt the policy for the licensing of hackney carriage drivers and vehicles and private hire operators, drivers and vehicles and the Rossendale Test proposals.
2. That Council delegate any future changes to the policy for the licensing of hackney carriage drivers and vehicles and private hire operators, drivers and vehicles and the Rossendale Test to the Licensing Committee.

7b. Recommendation of the Licensing and Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committees: Enforcement Policy: Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers.

The Council considered the recommendations of the Enforcement Policy: Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers.

Resolved:

1. That Council adopt the Enforcement Policy for hackney carriage and private hire drivers and vehicles and private hire operators.
2. That Council delegates any future changes to the enforcement policy for hackney carriage and private hire drivers and vehicles and private hire operators to the Licensing Committee.

N.B Councillor Kenyon rejoined the meeting for the remaining items.

8. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR, THE LEADER OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

The Mayor had no communications to report.

The Leader of the Council had no communications to report.

The Chief Executive had no communications to report.

9. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

The following issues were raised by Councillors and answered by the Leader or designated person:

No	Issue	Questioner	Answered by (and action)
1.	Confirm the recommendation of Policy O&S Committee regarding the Communication Strategy and ceasing the Rossendale Alive newsletter.	Councillor H.Steen	Councillor Swain
2.	Update on Public Realm discussions with Lancashire County Council and advertising valley of stone on the roundabouts.	Councillor Cheetham	Councillor P. Steen – agreed to take forward the idea on the roundabouts.
3.	Confirm whether the Council charges on Debit and Credit cards and if a profit is made.	Councillor Cheetham	Councillor Essex
4.	Update on the purpose of the British Olympic Mountain Biking squad visit to Lee Quarry and facilities such as Bed and Breakfasts.	Councillor Driver	Councillor Swain

5.	News regarding the new leisure facilities and when work will commence.	Councillor Milling	Councillor Gledhill
6.	Leisure Trust's financial situation now Bacup Leisure Hall was no longer under their operation.	Councillor Stansfield	Councillor Gledhill
7.	Cost savings made from recent changes to the Council's mobile phone contract.	Councillor Thorne	Councillor Smith
8.	Position of Rossendale Council Tax in relation to other Boroughs in Lancashire and the North West, and assurances for future Council Tax demands.	Councillor Evans	Councillor Essex
9.	Actions regarding the collapsed culvert on Hall Carr Road.	Councillor Graham	Councillor Essex
10.	Planning update on the Old Health Centre on Todmorden Road in Bacup.	Councillor Eaton	Councillor Challinor

In response to question 7 the Portfolio Holder for Customer Services congratulated the IT Team for the work done transferring the mobile phone contract.

Councillor Nuttall requested that Members Question Time be extended as recommended by Governance Working Group to use time up from Public Question Time.

In response to a request from the Mayor, the Leader of the Council agreed to respond to any submitted written questions that had not been answered during the meeting.

A motion was moved and seconded to suspend the Standing Orders.

In discussing the motion members commented on the following:

- Important issues on the agenda still to be discussed.
- Opportunity to ask questions and democracy.
- Serving the people of Rossendale.
- All have same opportunity to submit questions.
- Not always possible to submit questions in advance.
- 36 Councillors and 30 minutes for questions.

A recorded vote was requested by Councillors Serridge, Lamb and Robertson.

Voting on the motion took place the results of which were as follows:

Name	For	Against	Abstain
Cllr Aldred	√		

Cllr A Barnes	√		
Cllr L Barnes		√	
Cllr Challinor		√	
Cllr Cheetham		√	
Cllr Crawforth	√		
Cllr Driver		√	
Cllr Eaton		√	
Cllr Essex		√	
Cllr Evans		√	
Cllr Farrington	√		
Cllr C Gill	√		
Cllr Gledhill		√	
Cllr Graham		√	
Cllr Jackson	√		
Cllr Kenyon	√		
Cllr Lamb	√		
Cllr May		√	
Cllr Milling		√	
Cllr Morris		√	
Cllr Neal	√		
Cllr Nuttall	√		
Cllr Oakes	√		
Cllr C Pilling	√		
Cllr Robertson	√		
Cllr Sandiford		√	
Cllr Serridge	√		
Cllr Smith		√	
Cllr Stansfield		√	
Cllr H Steen		√	
Cllr P Steen		√	
Cllr Swain		√	
Cllr Thorne		√	
Cllr Unsworth	√		
Totals	15	19	0

The motion was lost and the meeting continued with the next item of business.

POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK ITEMS

10. REVENUE BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX SETTING, AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2011/2012

The Council considered the Revenue Budget and Council Tax setting and medium Term Financial Strategy for 2011/12. Before moving the recommendation the

Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources noted that the figure to be confirmed in Appendix 5, page 2, table 2.1 was £24,064,495.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that the Communities Manager was continuing consultations regarding Bacup Flea Market. It was hopeful that a financial contract would be agreed by 31st March otherwise it would cease to operate.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources outlined the report and noted that the financial spending plan and settlements for the next 3 years would be difficult. He detailed the savings required over the next 3 years and the need for doing things in a more cost effective way, whilst maintaining frontline services. This would be achieved in a range of ways including re-negotiating contracts, bringing services in house or sharing services with neighbouring partners/authorities. He informed of the base budget and the decrease in net expenditure of 11%, as well as the transitional reserve of £585,000 over the next 3 years. The reserves would allow the Council to move forward to work with partners and neighbouring councils in order to achieve the required efficiencies. Council Tax would be frozen for the second year running.

NB. Councillor J.Pilling joined the meeting.

In considering the report members discussed the following:

- Update on the Ski Slope.
- Community safety funded projects that Lancashire County Council has funded in the past.
- Prime Minister criticising Councils that cut grants and detracting from the Big Society.
- 15.2% cuts to our grants 2011/2012.
- Challenging budget, Stubblelee Park and re-homing of pets.
- Impact on groups such as STAR, and statutory duty to provide domestic violence service.
- Details of joint partnership working.
- Improving parks and enhancing facilities, such as ecological classrooms for natural wildlife.
- Meetings with all members on reductions in funding.
- National deficit and the role of the banks.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services informed that in his role as a County Councillor he had taken the concerns of STAR to scrutiny at County and they had written to the Chancellor.

Councillor A.Barnes informed she was moving an amendment and discussed the following:

- Economic situation and politics.
- Representing the people of Rossendale.
- Budget cuts.
- Deep cuts on local councils and financial settlements.
- Not cutting frontline services and more for local groups.

- County Council and centres/libraries closing.
- Support for older people.
- Respite care and effects.
- 16-18 year old grants and training.
- Petrol rising and increase in VAT and fuel duty.
- Reducing debt and deficit – long term process.
- Cuts to services at a time when most needed.
- Welfare rights, debt counselling and lending.
- Localism agenda.

The following amendment was moved and seconded:

That the organisations outlined in 3.2 (Appendix 5 Grant Funding 26 January 2011), should not be more than 10% worse off having gone through the new grant allocation process in 2011/2012.

This will give those organisations time to adjust to the new financial climate, without decimating services that Rossendale residents heavily rely on. The funding to cover this is within the budget available.

At this point in the meeting Councillor Essex declared an interest as he was a Trustee of the CAB and in response to the amendment responded with the following:

- Special treatment for some will mean other organisations will lose out.
- Those with 3 year funding agreements protected for the first 3 months.
- Stopping frontline services being eroded.
- Enhanced grants through forums.
- Run on the banks.
- Suggestions on helping the CAB with accommodation.
- Supporting STAR centre with cash flow.
- Getting the best for Rossendale.
- Lobbying government.

In considering the amendment members discussed the following:

- Communities sector wide ranging.
- Impact on families in Rossendale and organisations to support them.
- Protection until additional funding can be found.
- Need time to bring more funding from outside.
- Front loading necessary.
- Lowering debt.
- CAB not the only organisation in this field.
- Council efficiencies and built reserves.
- Time given to help finding grant funding and using the Council grant finder to help get grants and informing community groups.
- Voluntary groups important.
- Cuts in adult social care: cuts already impinging so need services.
- Cuts discussed by all members.

- STAR assisted as their grant was not forthcoming from elsewhere.
- Clear and transparent process.
- Guarantee to protect frontline services.
- Budget gives stability for the next 3 years.
- All try to help those who need it.
- Grant funding was being reviewed last year and groups were aware.
- Protecting those with no support.

Councillor A. Barnes informed that the amendment acknowledged that a cut may be needed, but wanted to ensure groups were not more than 10% worse off.

In response the Leader of the Council confirmed that written in to the 3 year funding agreement was that the funding would be reviewed and signed off on a year by year basis and that the amount was agreed in principle and it was clear that there were no guarantees. Subsequent years funding would always be dependent on the grant budget and be part of the review of the annual budget process.

Members voted on the amendment to the motion, but the amendment was lost.

Members returned to the original recommendation.

A recorded vote was requested by Councillors Essex, Swain and L. Barnes.

Voting on the original motion took place the results of which were as follows:

Name	For	Against	Abstain
Cllr Aldred			√
Cllr A Barnes		√	
Cllr L Barnes	√		
Cllr Challinor	√		
Cllr Cheetham	√		
Cllr Crawforth			√
Cllr Driver	√		
Cllr Eaton	√		
Cllr Essex	√		
Cllr Evans	√		
Cllr Farrington			√
Cllr C Gill		√	
Cllr Gledhill	√		
Cllr Graham	√		
Cllr Jackson		√	
Cllr Kenyon			√
Cllr Lamb		√	
Cllr May	√		
Cllr Milling	√		
Cllr Morris	√		
Cllr Neal		√	

Cllr Nuttall	√		
Cllr Oakes		√	
Cllr C Pilling	√		
Cllr J Pilling	√		
Cllr Robertson		√	
Cllr Sandiford	√		
Cllr Serridge		√	
Cllr Smith	√		
Cllr Stansfield	√		
Cllr H Steen	√		
Cllr P Steen	√		
Cllr Swain	√		
Cllr Thorne	√		
Cllr Unsworth		√	
Totals	22	9	4

Resolved:

1. That Members approve the revised priorities as per paragraph 2.3.
2. That Members approve the 2011/12 budget and a 0% increase in Council Tax as per the technical resolution at Appendix 5.
3. That Members approve the creation of a Transitional Fund as noted in paragraph 4.16 in order to achieve sustainable services over the medium term.
4. That Members approve Option 2 for Bacup Flea Market following consideration of the full financial breakdown of this option, and that Council support the creation of a social enterprise for Haslingden Market.
5. That Members approve the fees and charges schedule as per Appendix 4.
6. That Members note the implications for the Councils Medium Term Financial Strategy and that a further update to the Medium Term Financial Strategy is considered by Cabinet during 2011/12.
7. That Members approve recommendations made by Cabinet at its meeting of 26th January 2011 as follows:
 - That Members confirm a nil % rise in Member Allowances for 2011/12.

11. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (UPDATE FOR 2011/2012).

The Council considered the Treasury Management Strategy and Treasury Management Practices update for 2011/2012.

Resolved:

1. That Council approve the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Treasury Management Practices Updates.
2. That Council agrees that the maximum investment to be placed with any one institution should be 50% of available funds or £5m (whichever is the greater).

12. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2011/2012 TO 2013/2014.

The Council considered the Capital Programme 2011/2012 to 2013/2014.

In considering the report members discussed the following:

- Consequences of cuts and not yet knowing about some of this.
- Money will not be available again.
- Funding for parks and green spaces.

At this point in the meeting Councillor Robertson declared an interest as she was a member of a community group for Edgeside Park, and asked if playground money included parks.

In response to the question on playgrounds and parks, the Leader of the Council confirmed he would respond to all members.

Councillor Neal thanked the teams within the Council for their time, effort and commitment to identifying cost savings.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources informed of the commitment to the new leisure facilities and other ventures/programmes across the valley.

Resolved:

1. That Full Council approve, subject to confirmation of the central government allocation for Disabled Facilities Grants shown in Appendix 1, the capital programme for 2011/12 at £1,239k, and the Head of Financial Services be authorised to amend the programme in the light of final grant allocations.

Capital projects requiring approval for 2011/12		£000
Playgrounds (5 years from 06/07)		50
Cemeteries (5 yrs from 06/07)		30
Pathways (5 yrs from 07/08)		30
Wheeled Bin		40
Sports playing Fields (5 yrs from 07/08)		45
Car Park upgrading (5yrs from 06/07)		30
Building Maintenance 08/09 579k		200
War Memorials		5
Emergency Works		75
Leisure Facilities		0
Disabled Facilities Grants		617
Decent Homes Assistance		87
Homecare Agency	12	30
		1,239

2. Full Council agree that 2010/11 capital programme, not incurred by the 31st March 2011, be carried forward to 2011/12, along with any related grants received. The cost of these ongoing projects is currently estimated to be £5.18m.
3. That progress on Capital Receipts and Expenditure continues to be included in the monthly financial monitoring reports submitted to Cabinet.

13. COMMITTEE SCHEDULE 2011/2012

The Council considered the Committee Schedule for 2011/2012. The Leader of the Council thanked the Committee and Member Services Team for their work on the schedule and enabling members to start planning their diaries for the coming year.

Resolved:

1. That the Committee Schedule for 2011/12 be agreed.
2. That authority for any further changes/amendments to the schedule and meetings be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

14. ROSSENDALE FORUM – CHANGES AND TRANSITION FOR THE LOCAL PARTNERSHIP

The Council considered the Rossendale Forum – Changes and Transition for the Local Partnership.

In considering the report members commented on the following:

- Amalgamated role for community groups.
- Funding for the Bacup Neighbourhood Forum and changes to grant amounts.
- Possibilities for groups to apply for funding.
- Larger funding amounts for projects arising from the forums.

The Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration confirmed that a report would be going to Cabinet regarding allocation of grants through the Neighbourhood Forums.

Resolved:

1. That Council note the content of the report and endorse the development of the Rossendale Forum.
2. That all future minor amendments to the Rossendale Forum partnership arrangements be delegated to the Communities Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

15. MINUTES OF PLACE JOINT COMMITTEE ON 19th JANUARY 2011

The Council considered the minutes of the PLACE Joint Committee Meeting on 19th January 2011.

In considering the minutes members discussed the following:

- Rural transport in Rossendale.
- Having more rural highways than other boroughs.
- Importance of the Manchester rail link.
- Keeping up to date on the Pennine Lancashire Cultural Plan.
- Documents for the meeting would be useful.
- Keeping informed of the all age careers service.
- Inviting Margaret Lishman to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Meeting.

Resolved:

- That members note the minutes.

16. URGENT DECISIONS

The Mayor reported that the Cabinet had not taken any urgent decisions since the last meeting.

The Mayor thanked the Committee and Member Services Team, Civic Officer, Council Members, neighbouring borough Civics, members of the public and companies of Rossendale for supporting the Mayor’s Charity Ball.

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and concluded at 9.25pm)

Signed.....

(Chair)

Date