

MINUTES OF: THE CABINET

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 28th November 2012

**Present: Councillor A Barnes (in the Chair)
Councillors Jackson, Lamb, MacNae, Marriott and
Serridge**

**In Attendance: Mrs H Lockwood, Chief Executive
Mr S Sugarman, Director of Business
Ms F Meechan, Director of Customers and Communities
Mr P Seddon, Head of Finance and Property Services
Mr S Jackson, Head of Health, Housing and Regeneration
Mrs J Cook, Committee Officer**

**Also Present: Councillors Ashworth Cheetham, Creaser, Evans,
Farrington, Knowles, McInnes, Milling, Morris, Oakes,
Pilling, Procter, Robertson, D Smith and M Smith**

**3 members of the public
1 member of the press**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 All Cabinet members were present.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17th October 2012 be approved as a correct record subject to amending a word in paragraph 10.2 of the minutes from 'majority' to 'minority'.

Minutes of the meeting held on 26th June 2012

Councillor MacNae noted that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 26th June 2012 may have given the impression to members of the public that a project was moving ahead with regard to Myholme House. It was noted that Cabinet had given approval for officers to move forward with exploring options for Waterfoot and not a particular scheme. The Leader of the Council announced that the Chief Executive would conduct a review into the project and report back in due course.

3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

3.1 There were no urgent items of business.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

4.1 Councillor Marriott declared an interest in Item 13, Contract Review – Whitaker Park Museum, stating that a close family member was a member of the Friends of the Museum.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- 5.1 The Leader of the Council stated that public questions could only be asked at this point in the meeting.
- 5.2 Mr Peter Wood of the Civic Trust raised concerns regarding consultation around the Green Belt Review which was currently being carried out by Forward Planning. He stated that some residents were not aware of the proposals being consulted on and were unhappy with this. The Leader of the Council noted his concerns and stated that this was a 3 tranche process of consultation, expected to take around 18 months. The Director of Business noted that the council had gone above and beyond its statutory duty to consult and outlined the differences between consulting for planning permission and for general consultation. It was also noted that consultation had taken place with roadshows, adverts in the Free Press, via the Neighbourhood Forums and previous commenters had been contacted. The Leader of the Council agreed to pick this matter up with Forward Planning and asked Mr Wood to encourage residents to become involved in the consultation. The Portfolio Holder for Operational Services and Development Control noted that she would discuss this in her meeting with Forward Planning on 29th November 2012.
- 5.3 Mr Entwistle noted that the minutes of meetings needed to be checked for grammatical errors.
- 5.4 Mr Entwistle also raised concerns regarding the clean air report and the negative impact that traffic lights at the bottom of Union Road had on this matter.
- 5.5 Mr Entwistle commented regarding the proposal to move the One Stop Shop service to Futures Park, Bacup and enquired whether the council expected to have less visitors and use of partners. The Director of Customers and Communities stated that consultation with partners was ongoing and that it was anticipated that the changes to council tax benefit may result in a short term increase in visits, but may drop off in the longer term. Mr Entwistle stated the he would submit further questions in writing.

6. LOCALISATION OF COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT

- 6.1 The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources introduced the report which provided members with an update on the results of the public consultation which ended on 26th October 2012 in relation to a Local Scheme for Council Tax Support. The report recommended Option A and the Portfolio Holder noted that following Policy Overview and Scrutiny on 26th November 2012, an additional recommendation had been made as follows:-
- *That the committee recommend to Cabinet that further consideration is given to the impact of the Transitional Grant Scheme and that this be clarified in time for Full Council.*

- 6.2 The Leader of the Council noted that the Council had consulted with the Citizen's Advice Bureau 3 times and that their comments had been taken on board. The Council's response to the Citizen's Advice Bureau would be circulated to members in due course.
- 6.3 Members were invited to comment on the report and the following comments were made:-
- The legislation was complicated, confusing and some members considered it politically motivated.
 - Councillors expressed concerns regarding the impact on workers on lower wages.
 - It was noted that some members of the public may not be fully aware of the implications and deadlines of this scheme and it was noted that provision of more detailed information could be looked at. The Leader of the Council noted that transitional relief, hardship funds and signposting to the Citizen's Advice Bureau and Credit Unions would be examined.
 - It was noted that Option B may have been a better choice. It was clarified that this option had compounding factors which may have resulted in one group suffering more than another and it was noted that 87% of those consulted had expressed support for Option A.

Resolved:

1. That Council are recommended to accept Option A (the initial council tax support is calculated according to existing arrangements and then subject to a 20% reduction) in order to calculate the final council tax support entitlement.
2. That further consideration is given to the impact of the transitional grant scheme and that this be clarified in time for Full Council.

Reason for Decision

The Council is required to implement a Local Scheme for Council Tax support.

Alternative Options Considered

Options B, C and D as outlined in the committee report.

7. ADOPTION OF 2008 MODEL STANDARDS FOR PARK HOME SITES

- 7.1 The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Environmental Health introduced the report which considered the Department of Communities and Local Government 'Model Standards 2008 for Caravan Sites in England' for new residential caravan sites and those existing sites which would require substantial redevelopment within the area. The Portfolio Holder noted that there were two sites within the borough and that the Council would be working with site owners in a spirit of partnership.
- 7.2 Members were invited to comment on the report however no comments were made.

Resolved:

1. That the Department of Communities and Local Government 'Model Standards 2008 for Caravan Sites in England' be adopted for new residential caravan sites and those existing sites that require substantial redevelopment within the area.

2. That the proposed 'Rossendale Borough Council Standard Conditions for Mobile Home Park' be adopted, reflecting the improvements within the 2008 Model Standards.
3. That the Council will consult with operators and owners on amending current Site Licence Conditions for the two permanent residential mobile caravan sites (Mobile/Park Homes) in the borough to reflect any improvements that the 2008 Model Standards Offer.
4. That all future minor amendments to the 'Rossendale Borough Council Standard Conditions for Mobile Home Parks' be delegated to the Health and Housing Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Reason for Decision

To adopt the correct standards as good practice.

Alternative Options Considered

None.

8. DECLARATION OF AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREAS

- 8.1 The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Health and Housing introduced the report which sought Cabinet approval to declare two Air Quality Management Areas within Rossendale, being Rawtenstall and Haslingden, and to approve the making of Orders designating the two areas.
- 8.2 The Portfolio Holder noted the previous comments made by Mr Entwistle during public question time, and stated that further assessments would be carried out to define necessary improvements and to define contamination. Following this an Air Quality Action Plan would be devised.
- 8.3 Members were invited to comment on the report and the following comments were made:-
 - Concerns were expressed regarding air quality and the danger to human health. The Head of Health, Housing and Regeneration stated that in the long term there was little danger and that the figures were based on national standards, with the two areas identified being slightly above the standards. It was noted that it was important to ensure the public were aware of these assurances.
 - Concerns were expressed regarding congestion on the A56 when road works were taking place. The Head of Health, Housing and Regeneration stated that roads like the A56 contained bankings and scrubland to mitigate this issue and were constructed in more open spaces.
 - It was noted that areas of concern could be looked at over a number of years.

Resolved:

1. That the statutory requirement to declare air quality management areas within Rossendale be endorsed.
2. That the Orders designating the chosen boundaries as detailed at Appendices 1 and 2 of the committee report be approved.
3. That a Steering Group will be set up to establish a corporate approach to the development and implementation of the Air Quality Action Plan.

Reason for Decision

To fulfil a statutory requirement.

Alternative Options Considered

None

9. RELOCATION OF ONE STOP SHOP

9.1 The Portfolio Holder for Customers, Legal and Licensing introduced the report which asked members to consider the relocation of the current Rawtenstall based One Stop Shop to the Business Centre, Futures Park, Bacup. The Portfolio Holder noted that a Task and Finish Group had been established to look at this matter and that following Policy Overview and Scrutiny on 26th November 2012, amendments had been made to the recommendations as follows:-

- Recommendation 1 would be amended to add '*.....with additional use of STAN to the west of the Borough*'.
- Recommendation 2 would remain the same.
- Recommendation 3 would be added which stated '*That a further report be presented to Cabinet in due course on the long term future of STAN the van and consideration be given to services west of the Borough.*'

9.2 Members were invited to comment on the report and the following comments were made:-

- Enquiries were made regarding timescales and it was noted that, subject to Full Council approval, Planning and Licensing staff were expected to move up in the New Year with the One Stop Shop staff moving in the Summer of 2013.
- It was noted that the initial £160k costs to move the service to Futures Park would save £50k per annum over 3 years and that it would cost £400k to refurbish the current One Stop Shop.
- It was noted that this move would bring key departments together to enable them to work together more efficiently.
- It was noted that it was important to consider outreach to the west of the Borough and the long term future of STAN. Concerns were expressed regarding whether a presence could remain in Rawtenstall and whether this could be cost-shared with other agencies.
- Demolition costs and other capital spend matters were noted.
- It was noted that the success of the One Stop Shop was, in part, due to the skills of the workforce and that face-to-face contact was important.
- It was noted that the premises had not yet been marketed.

Resolved:

1. That the capital investment of £160,000 and the relocation of the One Stop Shop from Rawtenstall to the Business Centre, Futures Park, Bacup be agreed with additional use of STAN to the west of the Borough.
2. That the immediate marketing of the One Stop Shop be agreed in order to seek and secure a tenant. Should that not be successful members agree to the demolition of the current One Stop Shop once all services and staff have vacated. Timing details and contract matters would be delegated to the

Director of Business in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources.

3. That a further report be presented to Cabinet in due course on the long term future of STAN and services to the west of the Borough.

Reason for Decision

To review and rationalise operational assets.

Alternative Options Considered

None

10. WASTE MANAGEMENT COST SHARING AGREEMENT

- 10.1 The Portfolio Holder for Operational Services and Development Control introduced the report which informed Cabinet of the revised cost sharing agreement proposed by Lancashire County Council and requested Cabinet approval for the agreement. It was noted that this was a 10 year scheme which had been ended 1 year early by Lancashire County Council. This scheme had generated an income of £586,931 for Rossendale Borough Council in this financial year.
- 10.2 The Portfolio Holder noted that a new 5 year deal was proposed which was no longer index linked. The offer was based on a fixed level of support which would equate to a reduction in income received from Lancashire County Council of £612,155 over the 5 years of the contract. Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 10.2 of the committee report in which it was noted that Lancashire County Council had stated that there was no room for negotiation.
- 10.3 Members were invited to comment on the report and the following comments were made:-
 - Concerns were expressed regarding Rossendale's 'voice' within Lancashire.
 - It was noted that Lancashire County Council had ended the existing agreement 1 year early and concerns were expressed that the new agreement could be ended early.
 - The financial position of Lancashire County Council was noted.

Resolved:

1. That the 5-year extension of financial support through the revised cost-sharing agreement be accepted and the report be approved.
2. That the financial model which best suits the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy be adopted.

Reason for Decision

To maintain a waste management cost sharing agreement.

Alternative Options Considered

None

11. ROSSENDALE LEISURE TRUST – EFFICIENCIES UPDATE

- 11.1 The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Tourism and Leisure introduced the report which updated Members on the work done to date in identifying efficiencies within the Rossendale Leisure Trust. It was noted that the Council had been working with Rossendale Leisure Trust to identify £100-200k of potential savings and efficiencies.
- 11.2 It was noted that Haslingden Pool had been identified by the Leisure Trust as a principle area of concern and that a 7 stage process of options appraisal had been carried out. From this, 5 options had been identified for the pool:-
1. For the pool to continue as is
 2. Reduce costs, increase revenue and identify capital programme
 3. Build an alternative pool
 4. To close the pool and consider the site disposal options
 5. Transfer responsibility for the pool to another organisation
- 11.3 A Pool Panel had been established, comprising of user groups to enable the Council to act as a consultation body, and to understand the implications of the options, in order to assess which options are viable for public consultation. Councillor MacNae noted the pool panel had confirmed when originally formed in June, that it did not want to determine preferred options. A separate Assessment Group was formed which comprised of Rossendale Leisure Trust Officers, a Board Member, Council Officers and Members. The Group considered the evidence reviewed and considered by the Pool Panel, the assessment criteria, the Medium Term Financial Strategy, risks and equality impact assessments.
- 11.4 The Portfolio Holder drew Members' attention to paragraph 6.11 of the committee report which outlined the summary results of the quantitative methodology regarding the decision making process. It was noted that 2 options had presented themselves for full consultation during this process, being options 4 and 5.
- 11.5 Members were invited to comment on the report and the following comments were made:-
- It was noted that this report had also been discussed at Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26th November 2012.
 - Discussion took place on potential revenue streams from Lancashire County Council as part of the public health duty and possible revenue streams from the Clinical Commissioning Group (PCT). The Chief Executive noted that no response had been received from Lancashire County Council. The Chief Executive also stated that the Clinical Commissioning Group had responded to the Council and had stated that Haslingden swimming baths was not seen as a Clinical Commissioning Group priority at the moment.
 - Discussion took place on the decision to purchase the Valley Centre and the funding of this. Concerns were expressed regarding the future of the pool and the methodology used to reach the conclusions.
 - It was noted that the Pool Panel had wanted Option 2 to be brought forward for consultation. However the Rossendale Leisure Trust had made it clear that this option was not deliverable or sustainable.

Resolved:

1. That the progress made to date on work to identifying savings and efficiencies in relation to Rossendale Leisure Trust is noted.
2. That a 12-week consultation period is agreed and commences in relation to the options identified in paragraph 6.12 of the report which will be presented to a future Cabinet meeting and Full Council in due course.

Reason for Decision

To identify savings within the Leisure Trust.

Alternative Options Considered

Options as outlined within the committee report.

12. FINANCIAL CUTS – CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

- 12.1 The Leader of the Council introduced the report which updated members on progress made on consultation and engagement around financial cuts to date.
- 12.2 Members' attention was drawn to the 'Making Ends Meet Survey' which had been carried out using the Citizen's Panel. This comprised 768 residents who had completed a survey and the results of this survey were outlined at paragraph 5.2.5 of the committee report.
- 12.3 The Leader of the Council noted that savings were proposed regarding the clinical waste service and that all 195 users had been contacted. Following this it had emerged that 44 customers no longer needed the service which had resulted in an immediate saving. The remaining users responses were being analysed and they would continue to be consulted with.
- 12.4 The Leader of the Council thanked those who had been involved in the consultations to date.
- 12.5 Members were invited to comment on the report and the following comments were made:-
- It was noted that this was a phenomenal piece of work considering the reduction in the Council's resources and it was felt that more people were becoming aware of the Council's financial position.
 - Concerns were expressed regarding whether the consultees' views would be listened to and examples were given with regard to Haslingden Pool, Green Belt proposals and Waterfoot Forward. The Leader of the Council noted that no decision had been made regarding the pool and that she was optimistic of a way forward, citing Ski Rossendale as an example. It was noted that the Green Belt proposals were part of a long-term consultation and that a review of the Waterfoot project had been announced earlier in the meeting.

Resolved:

That the progress made on consultation and engagement around financial cuts and feedback to date is noted.

Reason for Decision

To update members on feedback and consultation.

Alternative Options Considered

None

13. CONTRACT REVIEW – ROSSENDALE MUSEUM, WHITAKER PARK

- 13.1 The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Tourism and Leisure introduced the report which updated members on the progress of discussions to explore options for the management and operation of the Rossendale Museum. It was noted that currently the Council pays £106k per annum to Lancashire County Council to manage the service and the museum was currently open 17.5 hours per week.
- 13.2 The Portfolio Holder noted that a group had been convened which had concluded that there was great potential for the site to be run and operated in a less expensive way and achieve more for the Borough. It was confirmed that notice had been served on Lancashire County Council to end the current management agreement which would allow the Councils to enter into negotiations for flexible discussions and arrangements.
- 13.3 Members were invited to comment on the report and the following comments were made:-
- It was noted that Helmshore Textile Museum was owned and operated by Lancashire County Council.
 - It was noted that there was precedent for other operators to take over running of the museum, and Carlisle Museum was cited as an example of this.
 - The expertise of the Lancashire Museum Service was recognised.
 - Councillor Smith offered to speak to County Council colleagues in his capacity as a County Councillor.
 - It was noted that the museum was a remarkable feature of Rossendale and often used in publicity when promoting the Borough. Tribute was paid to the work that had been done alongside other groups such as East Lancs Railway to promote tourism within the Borough.

Resolved

That the contents of the report are noted.

Reason for decision

To continue to review operational costs to achieve savings to contribute to the requirements of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Alternative Options Considered

None

14. 2013/14 BUDGET, CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

- 14.1 The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources introduced the report and noted that the report contents echoed a Member training session that had taken place the previous evening. It was noted that the report contained assumptions which had been made to inform the budget setting process.
- 14.2 Members attention was drawn to page 5 of the report where assumptions had been made to 2016/17.
- 14.3 Members were invited to comment on the report and the following comments were made:-
- Comments were made about the Council's financial position, cuts to the grant and the fact that revenue was unable to be raised through increasing council tax.

Resolved

1. That the contents of the report be noted and that the wider public consultation on the implications for the 2013/14 budget and the medium term financial strategy continue.
2. That a further report would be prepared on which members will make their 2013/14 budget and council tax recommendations to Council.
3. That the preparation and submission of NNDR1 be delegated to the Head of Finance and Property Services.

Reason for Decision

To enable to council to remain focussed on identifying savings in line with the council's medium term financial strategy.

Alternative Options Considered

None

15. FINANCIAL MONITORING 2012/13

- 15.1 The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources introduced the report which updated members on the financial monitoring position for 2012/13 as at the end of October 2012 and noted that the headline figure showed a favourable variance of £368k.
- 15.2 Members were invited to comment on the report and the following comments were made:-
- It was clarified that the £131k noted for the demolition of the Valley Centre was a partial figure as the figure had gone across 2 financial years. The final figure was confirmed as £170k.
 - Clarification was sought as to what 'Planning – Transfer Planning Applications Income to Volatility Provision' meant and it was noted that this meant that provision had been made for a volatile market in terms of planning application income and that provision had been made for this. It was noted that this was an example of good management of the Council's budget.

Resolved:

That the report is noted.

Reason for Decision

To continue robust monitoring of the council's finances.

Alternative Options Considered

None

16. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 16.1 The Leader of the Council reminded all present about the forthcoming Artisan Market and Clogs on't Cobbles event.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 8.10pm

_____ CHAIR _____ DATE