

MINUTES OF: THE CABINET

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 19th March 2014

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

**In Attendance: Mr S Sugarman, Director of Business
Mr S Jackson, Head of Health, Housing and Regeneration
Mr D Heyes, Accounts Manager – Financial Services
Mrs J Cook, Committee Officer**

**Also Present: Councillors Aldred, Cheetham, Creaser, Essex, Farrington,
McInnes, Morris, Pilling, D. Smith and Whitworth Town
Councillor Mellor**

3 members of the public

0 members of the press

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1.1 All Cabinet members were present. Apologies were noted from the Chief Executive, Helen Lockwood and the Head of Finance, Phil Seddon.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12th February 2014 be approved as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

- 3.1 The Leader noted that there was one urgent item of business which had been added to the agenda:-

- 3.2 **Rawstron Street, Football Ground Lease** – this had been added on the grounds that the club required a lease in place to enable them to join the Lancashire Football League. The Leader of the Council noted that this item was present on the most recently published version of the forward plan and publication obligations had been satisfied.

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

- The football ground and the Whitworth Sports Council made an important contribution to sports, health and wellbeing activities in Rossendale.
- The lease demonstrated a commitment to leisure and the improvement of the leisure base in Rossendale.
- The lease could enable to the club to bring in additional resources and grant funding.

Resolved:-

1. That a 25 year lease be granted on Rawstron Street Football Ground.
2. That the detail of the lease be delegated to the Director of Business and the Head of Finance.

Reason for Decision

To support the provision of sports facilities within the Borough.

Alternative Options Considered:

None

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 4.1 There were no declarations of interest.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- 5.1 No questions were asked.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT POLICY

- 6.1 The Leader of the Council introduced the report which sought approval of the Council's Environmental Enforcement Policy. The Policy set out clearly how enquiries to the Council regarding environmental matters will be dealt with and would recognise prioritising the workload with reduced resources.
- 6.2 Members were invited to comment on the report and the following comments were made:-
- Concerns were raised regarding the ability of officers to bring about prosecutions with reduced resources. The Leader of the Council stated that she did not think this would be the case and that good quality services would continue to be provided.

Resolved:

1. That the Rossendale Borough Council Environmental Enforcement Policy be approved for implementation.
2. That all future minor amendments to the Policy be delegated to the Head of Health, Housing and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that a robust policy is in place.

Alternative Options Considered

None

7. DEVELOPMENT OF ALLOTMENT SITES IN ROSSENDALE

- 7.1 The Leader of the Council introduced the report which outlined the proposed creation of two new allotment sites on land in Stacksteads and Loveclough, and which also provided detail on the proposed self-management of Free Lane Allotments.
- 7.2 Members were invited to comment on the report and the following comments were made:-
- There was a long waiting list for allotment sites and it was good to see two new sites coming forward.
 - The benefits of self-management and allotment sites within the Borough were immeasurable and it was noted that the Free Lane Allotment Society would be happy to advise other allotments on self-management.

Resolved:

1. That Free Lane Allotments be self-managed by Free Lane Community Allotment Society on a 25-year lease at as Appendix 1 of the committee report at an annual rent of £250, reviewed after 5 years, inflation linked.
2. That the Cabinet approves the creation of two new allotment sites on Rossendale Borough Council land in Stacksteads and Loveclough and for these sites to be leased on a self-managed basis to the appropriate community association on a 25-year lease, initially at a peppercorn rent, to be reviewed after 5 years, inflation linked.
3. That £5,000 from the 2013/14 Communities Team budget be allocated between Free Lane, Stacksteads and Limey Valley allotment societies as a one-off grant to work with a suitable organisation to develop plans and submit external grant funding applications.
4. That the new arrangements detailed within the committee report replace the current Allotments Policy approved by the Cabinet in 2009.
5. That all future minor amendments to the Council's Allotments Policy be delegated to the Director of Business in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Reason for Decision

To provide clear arrangements for the provision of allotment sites in Rossendale.

Alternative Options Considered

None

8. ALLOCATION OF ROSSENDALE BOROUGH GRANTS 2014-15

- 8.1 The Leader of the Council introduced the report which proposed the allocation of Council grants for 2014/15 to those services which supported financial inclusion services.
- 8.2 Members were invited to comment on the report and the following comments were made:-

- It was noted that the Financial Inclusion Group (now renamed the Rossendale Action Partnership) would this year be focussing on the infrastructure of not-for-profit organisations.
- The important of credit unions was noted.
- Clarification was given regarding funding for services which sported victims of domestic violence and it was noted that the Council had contributed £6,000 to a Lancashire County Council-led initiative which would give access to a wider framework of support.

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet confirms that allocation of Rossendale Council Grants of £48,000 to Rossendale Citizens Advice Bureau and £12,000 to Rossendale Credit Unions to support financial inclusion services in 2014-15.
2. That all future minor amendments to the grants process be delegated to the Director of Business in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that the Council supports financial inclusion services in Rossendale in 2014/15.

Alternative Options Considered

None

9. REGENERATION PROJECTS UPDATE

- 9.1 The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Tourism and Leisure introduced the report which provided members with an update on the projects being undertaken by the Regeneration Team and also sought approval of the Year 2 Work Programme for the RTB Partnership.
- 9.2 The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Tourism and Leisure noted the various projects being undertaken by the Regeneration Team:-
 - Empty Homes Programme – the target of 120 homes being brought back into use was on track.
 - Rossendale Rogue Landlords Scheme – this had brought £79k of funding into the Borough.
 - Bacup THI – this had brought £2m into the townscape heritage initiative fund into Bacup and work would begin in April once the Project Officer had started.
 - Haslingden Task Force – a £100k regeneration fund had been created and the first meeting had taken place which was largely positive and had recognised the assets within Haslingden.
- 9.3 The RTB Year 2 Work Programme was discussed and summarised as follows:-
 - Rawtenstall Town Centre remained the principle project and consultation had taken place around the masterplan.
 - Work was ongoing around New Hall Hey and Myholme House.
 - Work would be ongoing to support the Bacup THI programme and had brought forward opportunities for Waterside Mill and the land next to the Bacup Hub.

- 9.4 Members were invited to comment on the report and the following comments were made:
- It was noted that contributions to the Rawtenstall Town Centre Masterplan consultation would still be made via email.

Resolved:

1. That the contents of the report are noted.
2. That the outline Year 2 Work Programme for the Rossendale Together Barnfield Partnership be approved.
3. That all future amendments to the strategy and programme be delegated to the Head of Health, Housing and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Reason for Decision

To enable the Council to achieve regeneration ambitions for the Borough and to deliver projects and initiatives for Rossendale.

Alternative Options Considered

None

10. IRRECOVERABLE DEBT REPORT

- 10.1 The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources introduced the report which sought member approval to write off £224,404 in respect of irrecoverable debts. It was noted the Council were taking an active stance against council tax avoidance tactics.
- 10.2 Members were invited to comment on the report and the following comments were made:-
- It was noted that the Rating Team and Regeneration Team did undertake work with failing businesses or businesses who were struggling to pay, and it should be noted that rate relief scheme were available.

Resolved:

That the write-off of £224,404 in respect of irrecoverable non-domestic rate debts be approved.

Reason for Decision

To enable the Council to make prudent financial decisions before the financial year end.

Alternative Options Considered

None

11. REPORT OF THE PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY TASK AND FINISH GROUP

- 11.1 The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Tourism and Leisure introduced the report which put forward recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Public Right of Way Task and Finish Group. The Group had examined the public rights of

way within Rossendale and had provided recommendations for both Rossendale Borough Council and Lancashire County Council.

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

- It was noted that some work had already taken place, such as the use of MARIO maps on the website and the addition of cycling representatives as consultees.
- The Leader of the Council noted that issues surrounding the Dog Warden would need to be reviewed, given the current economic position.
- It was noted that the response from Lancashire County Council would be given via the Three-Tier Forum.
- The report was worthwhile and valuable and had attracted a very good response to its open consultation.
- It was noted that it was the responsibility of a developer to identify public rights of way with regard to planning applications.

Resolved:

1. That the recommendations of the Public Right of Way Task and Finish Group are noted.
2. That the Cabinet, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Tourism and Leisure and other relevant Officers, provide a written response to the recommendations.

Reason for Decision

To enable to Council to comply with the Council's Constitution and the Local Government and Public Health Involvement in Health Act 2007.

Alternative Options Considered

None

12. FINANCIAL MONITORING 2013/14 UPDATE – END FEBRUARY 2014

11.1 The Portfolio Holder for Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources introduced the report which provided members with an update on the final financial monitoring period of 2013/14 since the last report.

11.2 It was noted that a full year favourable variance of £82k continued to be forecast, progress continued on the Stacksteads Cycleway Project, Approved grants for DFG were now 83% of the total programme and that the Community Covenant Partnership on Haslingden was almost complete. The Portfolio Holder noted that here had been a reduction on short-term interest rates and that the tenders for the bulky waste contract had been received, resulting in revised fees as detailed in the committee report.

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

- The work of the Finance Team was noted.

Resolved:

That the contents of the report are noted.

Reason for Decision

To continue robust monitoring of the council's finances.

Alternative Options Considered

None

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 7.15pm

_____ CHAIR _____ DATE