

MINUTES OF: THE CABINET

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 22nd October 2014

**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
Mr P Seddon, Head of Finance
Mrs J Cook, Committee Officer**

**Also Present: Councillors Cheetham, Essex, Farrington, Haworth,
Sandiford and Shipley
3 members of the public
0 member of the press**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 No apologies for absence had been received; all Cabinet members were present.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17th September 2014 be approved as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

3.1 The Chair introduced one urgent item, being notification of a Special Urgency Decision which had been taken. The decision was that the Council had agreed to act as a registered provider to purchase a property via the Mortgage Rescue Scheme at a cost of £56,315, which will be match funded with £49,940 Social Housing Grant from the Homes and Communities Agency, in connection with the final mortgage rescue application. This matter would be reported at the next Full Council meeting.

Resolved:

This matter was noted.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

4.1 There were no declarations of interest.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

5.1 Mr Atherton asked a question regarding the New Homes Bonus monies and when the Council would consult with local communities regarding spend. The Leader of

the Council noted that his point had been taken on board and the Council would look to include this matter as a part of the annual budget setting.

- 5.2 Mrs Freeman asked a question regarding the initial pricings for the biomass boiler/solar panels at Whitworth Leisure Centre and Marl Pits. The Leader of the Council noted that the report requested agreement in principle and that the costings would be looked at again once the tenders had been received.
- 5.3 Mr Entwistle asked a question regarding the Cabinet papers and the Leader of the Council agreed to meet with him outside of the meeting.

6. RENEWABLE ENERGY INVESTMENT – LEISURE FACILITIES

- 6.1 The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources introduced the report which asked for agreement in principle to approve the investment in a biomass energy boiler at Whitworth Leisure Centre and investment in solar energy at Marl Pits and Whitworth Leisure Centre. It was noted that the biomass boiler was expected to generate a £30k saving after a payback period of 39 months and the solar panels were expected to create an income after the payback period.
- 6.2 The Leader of the Council noted that this was a way in which the Council had helped an organisation reduce their ongoing costs by doing something differently.
- 6.3 Members were invited to comment on the report and the following comments were made:-
- This was an opportunity to invest in the Council's assets to develop quality and sustainable services.
 - Discussion took place regarding investment in Haslingden Pool and it was noted that the Council was working with the HAPPI Group under the Community Right to Bid process.
 - Discussion took place regarding previous Governments' green grants.

Resolved:

1. That Members approved the investment of c. £107,000 (subject to tender) in a biomass energy boiler at Whitworth Leisure Hall.
2. That Members approved the investment of c. £146,000 (subject to tender) in solar energy at Marl Pits and Whitworth Leisure Hall and Pool.

Reason for Decision

To provide a financially viable alternative to traditional energy sources which supports renewable energy objectives.

Alternative Options Considered

None

7. APPROVAL TO RE-CONSULT ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE GREEN BELT BOUNDARY

- 7.1 The Portfolio Holder for Operational Services and Development Control introduced the report which informed Members of the consultation and assessment work to date regarding the green belt boundaries. The report also informed members of the intention to re-consult to look at changes that have been considered that affect the green belt.
- 7.2 The Portfolio Holder outlined that the consultation process would commence mid-November and would end on 22nd December 2014. The consultation would be advertised via the Rossendale Free Press, site notices, emails/letters to stakeholders and consultees on the Local Plan Consultation database. In addition, properties which adjoin significant proposals would be leafleted.
- 7.3 Members were invited to comment on the report and the following comments were made:-
- It was requested that the LDF Group should have sight of the S106 monies.

Resolved:

The report was noted and approval was given for the re-consultation on proposed changes to the Green Belt Boundary, to commence mid-November 2014.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that the Council is not at risk of legal challenge.

Alternative Options Considered:

None

8. UPDATE ON PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

- 7.1 The Portfolio Holder for Operational Services and Development Control introduced the report which updated members on the level of contributions that the Council has received and where the contributions had been spent. It was noted that it could take some time from planning approval until a S106 was actioned and that this report provided a summary of where the monies had been spent so far.
- 7.2 The Portfolio Holder highlighted examples regarding Orama Mill, the former hospital site and Myholme House and drew members attention to the table on page 6 of the committee report, which provided details on the spent contributions to date.
- 7.3 It was noted that Officers regularly met with the LDF Steering Group to receive reports on progress and that formal consultation would take place with elected local members as appropriate. The Portfolio Holder urged Members to attend a training session on 12th November 2014 regarding S106 matters and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- 7.3 Members were invited to comment on the report and the following comments were made:-
- This was a useful document and it would be a good idea to publish this information on the Council's website.

- Members would be involved at an early stage which is a positive improvement.
- The report made it clear where S106 agreements were aligning with the Council's strategic aims.

Resolved:

1. That the report was noted, in particular the contributions received, where these contributions are being spent and changes to the system of seeking contributions that will be implemented in April 2015.

Reason for Decision

To inform members of the level of contributions received and on the changes to be implemented in April 2015.

Alternative Options Considered

None

9. REPORT OF THE ROGUE LANDLORDS TASK AND FINISH GROUP

- 8.1 The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Environmental Health introduced the report which contained recommendations of the Phase 1 Report of the Rogue Landlords Task and Finish Group. The Task and Finish Group was running alongside the Rogue Landlords Project.
- 8.2 The Portfolio Holder noted that this was an important report and highlighted that there were examples of good and very bad practice within the Borough and urged Members to accept the report.
- 8.3 Members were invited to comment on the report and the following comments were made:-
 - Cabinet would respond to the report.

Resolved:

1. That the report is noted.
2. That the Cabinet, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Environmental Health and other relevant officers would provide a written response to the recommendations within two months.

Reason for Decision

To inform Cabinet of the recommendations of the Rogue Landlords Task and Finish Group.

Alternative Options Considered

None

10. FINANCIAL MONITORING 2014/15 UPDATE

- 10.1 The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources introduced the report which updated Members on the current financial position of the Council.

- 10.2 It was noted that there was currently a 1% favourable variance. Interest rates had fallen and Officers were moving to counter-act this. The Council was administering the Homes and Communities (HCA) grant for East Lancashire and to date 368 properties had been brought back into use, with 78 (21%) of these in Rossendale.
- 10.3 It was noted that the pavilion at Marl Pits was complete, the tender for the refuse fleet had been returned, with the fleet expected to be in use by Christmas and the Disabled Facilities Grant was 41% completed. In addition it was noted that staffing levels had fallen with 5 posts vacant as at the end of September.
- 10.4 Council tax collection rates were marginally down on last year, however business rates collection was slightly ahead. Both were predicting a year-end surplus, however.
- 10.4 Members were invited to comment on the report and the following comments were made:-
- Spend on projects like Mount Pleasant were important and necessary to protect the Valley's most vulnerable residents. It was noted that these costs would eventually be re-charged.
 - Discussion took place regarding the national economy.

Resolved:

1. That the report is 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 7.05pm

_____ CHAIR _____ DATE