

COUNCILLOR THOMAS ALDRED, MAYOR

MINUTES OF: THE COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF ROSSENDALE

Date of Meeting: 18th March 2015

PRESENT: The Mayor Councillor Aldred (in the Chair)
Councillors Ashworth, Barnes, Bleakley, Cheetham, De Souza, Essex, Evans, Fletcher, Gill, Haworth, Hughes, Jackson, Kempson, Kenyon, Knowles, Lamb, MacNae, Marriott, McMahon, Morris, Neal, Oakes, Procter, Robertson, Sandiford, Serridge, Shipley, D.Smith, M.Smith and Wilkinson.

IN ATTENDANCE: Stuart Sugarman, Interim Chief Executive
Carolyn Sharples, Committee and Member Services Manager
Steve Ibbotson, Mayor's Attendant

ALSO PRESENT: 1 representative of the press
17 members of the public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received for Councillors Crawforth and Eaton.

2. MINUTES

Councillor Essex raised a Point of Order about a newspaper article and made reference to question 2 on page 3 of the minutes. The Mayor informed that this was not a valid Point of Order.

Councillor Marriot moved and Councillor Serridge seconded that the vote be put, which was carried.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 25th February 2015 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

Councillors Essex, Cheetham, Knowles, Marriott and Wilkinson declared a personal interest in minute number 9 as they were directors of the Bus Company.

5. OUTSTANDING ITEMS OF BUSINESS FROM THE LAST MEETING

There were no outstanding items 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.	Phase 1 development of the bus station: size, consultation, current bus station use, docking fees, tendering procedure, value for money, cost details and confirmation of X43 situation.	Mr Clive Balchin	Councillor Barnes informed that the report sought to approve disposal of land to the RTB Partnership by means of a long lease to redevelop the site. The bus station and funding would kick start a £20 million project and the X43 would use the new bus station.
2.	Purchase of the Valley Centre, demolition and landscaping costs, recent valuations and sharing a cost value reconciliation/ analysis.	Mr Peter Wood	Councillor Barnes informed that cost benefit work is happening on an ongoing basis and information would be brought before Council in due course.
3.	Experience of talking to people involved in similar developments (in relation to minute 9), shelving the report and not taking the decision.	Mr Leonard Entwistle	Councillor Barnes and Councillor MacNae informed that it was intended to develop the site and this was a milestone on that route. It was important not to make similar mistakes to other developers.
4.	Monitoring of the 31 conditions at Crook Hill wind farm.	Ms Michelle Harding	Councillor Barnes was aware of residents' concerns from Councillor Neal and these concerns had been passed to the Planning Team, LCC Highways and the contractors.
5.	Statistical analysis and consultation with various population groups (in relation to minute 9), notice of the second consultation and feedback from English Heritage.	Mr Tim Nuttall	Councillor Barnes and Councillor MacNae confirmed that there had been consultation in March and October and as a result plans had changed. The Council had also used other consultation methods. English Heritage would be making their comments about the proposal in due course.

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

The Leader placed on record her thanks to those members not seeking re-election for their service given to the Council.

The Mayor and Head of Paid Service had no communications to report.

8. 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.	Responsibility for bins that go missing from collection points. Could it be looked into again as things had changed since the 2007 policy.	Councillor Sandiford	Councillor Lamb confirmed that the policy approved by Cabinet in June 2007 informed that the owner had responsibility, and measures to deter theft could be used such as numbering. Second hand bins were £10. Policies would be revisited as part of the business plan.
2.	Monitoring of the planning conditions on the Crook Hill windfarm access route. Issues with land drains, fire hydrants and flooding.	Councillor Neal	Councillor Barnes confirmed that issues had been taken up with the Enforcement Team, Highways and the contractor.
3.	Committing further funding from reserves for the regeneration of Haslingden.	Councillor Morris	Councillor Barnes informed that it was hoped the current work would bring in additional resources.
4.	TV licence fee and ensuring everyone in the country had access to the same free channels without having to pay extra.	Councillor Wilkinson	Councillor Barnes confirmed that this would be investigated.
5.	Acknowledging the good work of the Fearn's pupils with rubbish collection and bulb planting.	Councillor Lamb	Councillor Barnes confirmed that she would write to them.
6.	Had 4 of the new bin wagons broken down and were we using the old ones to replace them?	Councillor Kempson	Councillor Barnes was not aware of this but would look into it.
7.	Would the Leader attend an event at Higher Mill Museum a week on Saturday? All members were welcome to attend.	Councillor Essex	Councillor Barnes was delighted to be asked and would endeavour to make herself available.
8.	Cost of the redevelopment of the Valley Centre and how much the development partners would be putting in.	Councillor Morris	Councillors Barnes and MacNae confirmed that financial information would come forward as and when it was available and that the equity partners would put in equal amounts. The Council's contribution was the land.

ORDINARY BUSINESS

9. DEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER VALLEY CENTRE, OLD TOWN HALL AND FORMER ONE STOP SHOP SITES

The Council considered the report on the Development of the former Valley Centre, Old Town Hall and former One Stop Shop sites. The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Tourism and Leisure, Councillor MacNae, informed that the report set out the principles for the approach to Phase 1. In delivering the report Councillor MacNae brought members attention to the following:

- Factually correct at the time of writing.
- Project moving quickly and complex.
- Time critical.
- Creating parking.
- Extensive consultation.
- Negotiations and value for Police Station.
- Joint venture done by pre-procurement process.
- Must get best value for every project.
- Income for bus company.
- Removing liability for upkeep of vacant buildings and keeping them safe and secure.
- Council would put in land on a long lease and the partners had money to invest.
- Equity investments in land would be matched by cash contributions.
- Created increased confidence in Rawtenstall.
- Job creation and investment.
- Bus station had enabling role and would be pivotal for the town centre space.
- Energising the retail area.
- Likelihood of business.
- Involvement with Chamber of Commerce.
- The Council had no additional cash to find going forward for this phase.

In considering the report members discussed the following:

- Not against redevelopment of Rawtenstall.
- Disposing of land for less than best value.
- Duty of care to tax payers.
- Valuations for Town Hall less than for average terraced house.
- Competitive tendering.
- Cost burden on the bus company.
- LCC land acquisition costs not included.
- Car park charging?
- Town Hall façade part of Rossendale's heritage.
- Refurbish and use for office space.
- Scale down size and cost of bus station.
- Traditional design in keeping with a mill town.
- Support acquisition of Police site.
- Long term effect on valley.

- Voting individually on recommendations.
- Get the design right.
- Different proposition to surrounding and properties in the area.
- Recognising social history.
- Tourism and 1-2 places for coaches.
- Site of current Town Hall in Bacup.
- Summer activities on the Town Square.
- Public toilets and traveller facilities.
- Low valuation for Town Hall.
- Had the market been tested?
- Site was within the Conservation area.
- Sense of space with removal of Police Station.
- Testing figures more fully.
- Heritage extremely important in Ramsbottom.
- Small amount of people from Helmshore shop in Rawtenstall.
- Regional reputation of Bank Street.
- Businesses had put Rawtenstall on the map.
- Stone buildings cannot be replaced; keep the façade.
- Wonderful architecture in Rawtenstall.
- Scale down design of bus station.
- Demolition of Valley Centre and opening up space.
- Continue with long term plan to improve Rawtenstall.
- Consultation led to changed plans.
- Picture House still empty.
- Ramsbottom flattened land for supermarkets.
- Accessing transport at one point without walking across town.
- LCC came up with designs for bus station without proper consultation.
- Report from English Heritage.
- Value for money services.
- Using a tender process throughout.
- This was not the planning application, it was setting the first stage.
- Existing bus station was inappropriate for use.
- Concentrate on connectivity.
- Valuations were only any good if selling it.
- Joint venture scheme would bring £20 million investment into the Borough.
- Valley Centre valued at £5 million but paid £2.1 million.
- Town Hall building unwanted and unsafe.
- Might be able to get more money but development could be inappropriate for the site.
- Valuations done by Lambert Smith Hampton.
- Town Hall would cost approx. £2 million to bring back into use.
- If nothing done the cost would become a liability.
- Rawtenstall based around vibrant niche businesses.
- Valuations done with advice of Audit Commission with scrutiny throughout.
- New bus station had potential to increase passengers.
- There was provision of toilets in the bus station.
- People want a decent bus station and vibrant town centre.

Resolved:

1. Members approve the process for disposal of the Council's land and assets described in this report to the RTB Partnership to further the re-development of the site(s) on the basis of a long lease as detailed in s5.16 of the report.
2. Members approve funding of £151,500 for the acquisition of the former Police Station, Rawtenstall and to then include this in the redevelopment phase.
3. All future negotiations and minor amendments to the scheme and programme be delegated to the Director of Business in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Reason for Decision

Redevelopment of the site of the former Valley Centre is a key priority of the Council and has taken many years to reach the current stage with realistic development proposals being put forward.

Alternative Options Considered

None

10. URGENT DECISIONS

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

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET AND OTHER COMMITTEES

11. Recommendation of the Development Control Committee and Governance Working Group: Constitution Review

The Council considered the Constitution Review report.

Resolved:

That Council agrees to amend the Constitution as follows:

- Amend the voting procedure for Development Control (with effect from May 2015 onwards).
- Include the voting procedure in the information available to members of the public attending Development Control Committee, which is available in the Council's Constitution (Article 3 Citizens and the Council).

Reason for Decision

The Council is required by law to implement a Constitution and it is in the interests of the Council to regularly review and update the document.

Alternative Options Considered

None

N.B. Mr Stuart Sugarman left the Council Chamber during consideration of Item 12.

12. Recommendation of the Appointments and Appeal Committee: Appointment of the Chief Executive of the Council

The Council considered the Appointment and Appeal Committee's recommendation on the appointment of the Chief Executive of the Council.

In considering the recommendation members discussed the following:

- Thanks to the panel and all involved in the selection process.
- Fair and balanced.
- Would serve people and the authority well.

Resolved:

That Mr Stuart Sugarman be appointed as Chief Executive of the Council.

Reason for Decision

To agree the appointment of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service.

Alternative Options Considered

None

N.B. Mr Stuart Sugarman returned to the Chamber.

Councillor Barnes and Councillor D Smith congratulated Mr Sugarman on his appointment and wished him well in his new role.

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and concluded at 8.50pm)

Signed.....

(Chair)

Date