

MINUTES OF: THE CABINET

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 8th July 2015

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

**In Attendance: Mr S Sugarman, Chief Executive
Miss M Hargreaves, Committee and Member Services Officer**

**Also Present: Councillors Essex, Evans, Haworth, Kempson, D Smith and M
Smith
4 members of the public
0 member of the press**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 There were no apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4th March, 2015 be approved as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

3.1 There were no urgent items of business.

3.2 The Leader of the Council noted that Item G2 – Development Site was added to the agenda prior to publication. The item was a general exception decision because it could not wait until the next publication of the forward plan or the next meeting of the Cabinet.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

4.1 Councillor Ashworth declared an interest on agenda item C2 as she was a member of Bacup Pride and Seniors Together and also on item G1 as she was Chair of the Capita Strategic Governance Board.

4.2 Councillor A Barnes declared an interest on agenda item C2 as she is a Vice Chair of the Community Association in Crawshawbooth and also item G2 as she is a member of RTB Partnership.

4.3 The Chief Executive declared an interest on agenda item G2 as he is a member of RTB Partnership.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- 5.1 Mr Atherton raised concern in relation to the number of applicants on the housing register being around 1500, but roughly only 500 applicants were making bids for properties. The Leader of the Council informed Mr Atherton that there had been some concerns with the Be with Us website. In terms of bidding, some people were more suited to the bidding process and it was a process the authority could not force people to undertake.
- 5.2 Mr Woods asked why agenda item G2 was a confidential item and if the relevant risk management had taken place in terms of the delivery of the project. The Leader of the Council clarified that the item had some commercial sensitivity within the report which was the reason it was confidential. With regard to risk, this was dealt with in the same way that everything else was at the Council.
- 5.3 Mr Woods asked when the information in the report would be made available to the public. The Leader of the Council stated it would be made available in due course.
- 5.4 Mr Entwistle referred to the minutes of the last meeting on the 4th March, 2015 in that he made an offer to acquire the property in the Valley Centre. The Chief Executive informed Mr Entwistle that a letter had been sent informing him that the Council would not be taking up the proposed offer.
- 5.5 Mr Entwistle asked about constituents that were in arrears for 8/9 week, did the benefit get paid direct to the tenant or GVH. The Leader of the Council stated that Universal Credit Scheme was now in place and the payment was made directly to the tenant unless they were in arrears.
- 5.6 Councillor Essex congratulated the Leader of the Council and wished the Cabinet well. A question was asked in relation to an item discussed at budget Council in February, 2015, a fund of £1.5 million had been established to alleviate transport/highway issues across the Valley, it was noted that this was 5 months ago, was there any further detail on this proposal. The Leader of the Council responded stating that some of this work would take time to deliver as there were several possible elements to it, including infrastructure, transport, commuter link. Developing the case for the commuter link would be a long and costly process. It was noted that talks were taking place with Chamber in North Manchester to help build the case for the commuter link. There was also a need to look at local business growth as there were some businesses that wanted to expand, the funding could also support this too, however there were no schemes at presenting stage as of yet.

6. BUSINESS RATES RETENTION SCHEME WITH LANCASHIRE

- 6.1 The Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance introduced the report which sought members' approval to join a Lancashire-based business rates pooling arrangement for 2016/17 and beyond.

- 6.2 It was noted that it was agreed to carry out a piece of work to analyse the business rate retention position across Lancashire to ascertain any likely financial benefit of forming a business rate pool.
- 6.3 Members needed to be aware that being as part of a pool, local authorities would no longer be eligible for a safety net payment, however based on the current trends over the last two years and forecasts for 2015/16, Officers did not anticipate Rossendale to be in a safety net position over the medium term.
- 6.4 Members were invited to comment on the report:
- Good news story for Rossendale, demonstrated Lancashire family of councils are working together well.
 - Sensible scheme – possible addition of a break out clause or review option. The Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance clarified after a year the Council could opt out of the scheme.
 - Joining fees – flat rate or pro rata. The Leader of the Council stated that the amount LCC could retain was a percentage of what the individual Council put in.

Resolved:

1. That members approved joining a Lancashire-based business rates pooling arrangement for 2016/17 and beyond.
2. That the final details would be delegated to the Head of Finance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance.

Reason for Decision

To assist the Council in achieving its Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Alternative Options Considered:

None

7. ROSSENDALE COMMUNITY FUND – GUIDELINES, CRITERIA AND APPLICATION PROCESS

- 7.1 The Leader of the Council introduced the report which requested approval of the guidelines, criteria and application process for the allocation of grants through the Rossendale Community Fund, which would be administered by the Community Foundation for Lancashire.
- 7.2 It was noted that the funds would be used within Rossendale focussing on educational needs for young people.
- 7.3 Members were invited to comment on the report and the following comments were made:-
- Good positive fund
 - If any other funds were likely to add to this. The Leader of the Council clarified there would not be any more funds to add to this.
 - Cross party working was good
 - Benefits to Rossendale would be seen

Resolved:

1. That the guidelines, criteria and application process for the allocation of grants through the Rossendale Community Fund, administered by the Community Foundation for Lancashire be approved.
2. That the decision-making on individual applications for the Rossendale Community Fund would be delegated to the Grants Advisory Group in conjunction with the Community Foundation for Lancashire.
3. That all future minor amendments to the Rossendale Community Fund process be delegated to the Head of Health, Housing and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Reason for Decision

To provide a clear process for applications to the Rossendale Community Fund.

Alternative Options Considered

None

8. REPORT OF THE GREEN VALE HOMES TASK AND FINISH GROUP

- 8.1 The Leader of the Council introduced the report which outlined the findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Green Vale Homes Task and Finish Group.
- 8.2 The Leader thanked the Task and Finish Group for their hard work on this piece of work, it was recognised that members from various organisations had been asked to assist on the group.
- 8.3 It was noted that Green Vale Homes would be asked to attend Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis in order to ensure issues raised in the report were actioned.
- 8.4 Members were invited to comment on the report and the following comments were made:-
 - Interesting read, need to ensure GVH resolves the issues raised within the report
 - The Leader of the Council noted that she had asked for existing board members to be transferred onto the panel
 - It was requested a member of the Conservative Party be part of the board
 - Credit to the Chair of the Task and Finish Group

Resolved:

1. That the Cabinet, in consultation with the Leader/Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Leisure and other relevant officers would provide a written response to the recommendations within two months.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that the Task and Finish Group receive a response to their recommendations.

Alternative Options Considered

None

9. DRAFT OUT-TURN 2014/15 AND FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

- 9.1 The Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance outlined the report which detailed the covering changes identified during October.
- 9.2 It was noted the Draft Out-turn was now predicting that there would be a net favourable variance of £450k, a £195k favourable change during quarter 4. Further details on this quarter could be found in the full Financial Monitoring Report.
- 9.3 The Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance informed that the reduction in staff and the number of vacant post during the year had contributed to cash savings of £216k. It was also noted that by the end of the year the level of capital receipts from asset sales had increased to £547k. Property sales accounted for £245k of this. Also, during quarter 4 the obsolete refuse vehicle fleet was sold at auction which successfully achieved an income of £302k.
- 9.4 Members were invited to comment on the report, no comments were made.

Resolved:

1. That the report is noted.
2. That members recommend to Full Council an amendment to the Treasury Management Strategy to include the potential to invest in Money Market Funds.

Reason for Decision

To ensure robust monitoring of the Council's finances.

Alternative Options Considered

None

10. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Resolved:

That the public and press be excluded from the remainder of the meeting under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 since the next two items of business involve the likely disclosure of exempt information under Part 1 Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

11. REVENUES, BENEFITS, ONE STOP SHOP AND CONTACT CENTRE CONTRACT OPTIONS FOR POST-1ST OCTOBER 2016

- 11.1 The Portfolio Holder for Customer Services and Health introduced the report which discussed the options for the Revenues and Benefits and One Stop Shop Service and the Contact Centre contract options post-1st October 2015.
- 11.2 Members were invited to comment on the report and comments were made.

Resolved:

The recommendations in the report were approved.

Reason for Decision:

To ensure continuation of service delivery.

Alternative Options Considered:

As outlined in the report.

12. DEVELOPMENT SITE

12.1 The Leader of the Council introduced the report which sought Members' approval for the costs of acquiring a development site.

12.2 Members were invited to comment on the report and comments were made.

Resolved:

The recommendations in the report were approved.

Reason for Decision:

To enable the RTB Partnership to manage development.

Alternative Options Considered:

None

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 7.30pm

_____ CHAIR _____ DATE