

MINUTES OF: THE CABINET

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 9th March 2016

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

**In Attendance: Mr S Sugarman, Chief Executive
Ms Clare Birtwistle, Monitoring Officer
Mr P Seddon, Head of Finance and Property Services
Mrs J Cook, Committee Officer
Mr A McGhee, Fraud and Compliance Officer
Ms B Frost, Conservation Officer**

**Also Present: Councillors Cheetham, Crawforth, Eaton, Essex, Haworth,
Kempson, Sandiford and D. Smith
9 members of the public
1 member of the press**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 The Leader noted that Councillor Serridge would be late due to problems with traffic.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10th February 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

3.1 The Leader noted that there was one urgent item of business which would be taken as a confidential item at the end of the agenda. This was a non-key item entitled 'Insurance'.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

4.1 There were no declarations of interest.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

5.1 Mr Cuan Hoare asked a question regarding comments made by the Leader of the Council on Facebook regarding the bus station funding. The Leader of the Council stated that she understood that the funding had come through the Pennine Reach Scheme; however she was more than happy to check this.

5.2 Mr Michael Pickup asked a question regarding funding of the Whitaker Museum. The Leader of the Council explained why the Council provided funding and worked with a partner to retain the museum. The Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance clarified that under Lancashire County Council the museum had cost

£117k plus utilities and capital spend. The Borough Council now provided a £60k core grant with utility costs and capital spend.

- 5.3 Ms Kathy Fishwick asked a question regarding the Conservation Strategy and asked that a clear programme of works and events be drawn up. The Leader of the Council stated that this was the intention, as resources allowed.

Note: Councillor Serridge entered the meeting.

- 5.4 Mr Frank Rogers asked a question regarding public question time at Cabinet and Council. The Leader of the Council noted that future Cabinet agendas would clarify this and the Monitoring Officer would pick up the issues regarding public question time at Full Council outside of the meeting.
- 5.5 Mr Leonard Entwistle asked to meet with the Leader to discuss capital expenditure. The Leader agreed to meet with him and noted that she was happy to meet with residents to discuss issues.

6. CONSERVATION STRATEGY 2016-2021

- 6.1 The Portfolio Holder for Operational Services and Development Control introduced the report which outlined the Conservation Strategy 2016-2021 and outlined the proposed work to be carried out.
- 6.2 The Strategy outlined the work to be carried out by one Conservation Officer and it was noted that the Strategy had been to Overview and Scrutiny and the Council's Heritage Lead had been consulted.
- 6.3 Members were invited to comment on the report:
- Issues regarding wheelchair users should be considered such as cobbles and setts.

Resolved:

1. That the Conservation Strategy 2016-2021 is approved.
2. That all future minor amendments to the Conservation Strategy 2016-2021 are delegated to the Planning Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that the Strategy focusses on key beneficial areas of work to have the most benefit for the borough.

Alternative Options Considered:

None

7. BACUP TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY REVIEW TO INCLUDE WATERSIDE MILL

- 7.1 The Portfolio Holder for Operational Services and Development Control introduced the report which sought authorisation for the adoption, as a material planning

consideration, the proposed boundary amendment of Bacup Town Centre to include Waterside Mill. Inclusion of Waterside Mill would enable the Council to explore funding options with Historic England.

7.2 It was noted that 9 responses had been received over a 6-week consultation period. The comments made had been noted for future consideration as resources allowed.

7.3 Members were invited to comment on the report:

- Waterside Mill was in a sad state and hopefully work could be carried out to bring it back into some sort of use.

Resolved:

1. That the Bacup Town Centre Conservation Area Boundary amendment to include Waterside Mill is adopted.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that Waterside Mill is included within the Bacup Town Centre Conservation Area Boundary.

Alternative Options Considered:

None

8. COUNCIL TAX AND COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT PENALTY AND PROSECUTION POLICY

8.1 The Portfolio Holder for Customer Services and Health introduced the report which sought members' approval to implement the Council Tax Support Penalty and Prosecution Policy. The Policy had been to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and was necessary to deal with matters of fraud and would give the Council the right to impose penalties on those committing fraud.

8.2 It was noted that the Policy would not impact on NNDR collections, as the legislation did not allow this and it was essential to publicise the Policy to ensure that those who may not be aware that they have to update their information, know that they have to do so.

8.3 Members were invited to comment on the report:-

- The CAB could be a source of support to residents.
- The Policy had stages of penalties that would assist those who may have illness, mental health issues, or age-related difficulties.
- The new regulations had been in place since 2013 and the Fraud and Compliance Officer who had been in post 8 months had worked hard on the proposed policy.
- The Fraud and Compliance Officer outlined the joint working that was currently being undertaken with Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council.

Resolved:

1. That the Council Tax and Council Tax Support Penalty and Prosecution Policy be approved.

2. That all future minor amendments to the Policy be delegated to the Head of Customer Services and ICT in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Reason for Decision

To assist in deterring fraudulent or incorrectly claimed council tax support.

Alternative Options Considered:

None

9. NNDR WRITE OFFS

- 9.1 The Portfolio Holder for Customer Services and Health introduced the report which sought members' approval to write off £14,087.26 in respect of irrecoverable non-domestic rate debt. The debt was from a limited company that had declared bankruptcy. It was noted that the actual cost to the Council would be £2,817.
- 9.2 Members were invited to comment on the report:-
 - The company was not yet showing as dissolved on the Companies House website and the debt could continue to be chased until this point.

Resolved:

1. That the write-off of £14,087.26 in respect of irrecoverable non-domestic rate debt is approved.

Reason for Decision

To write off on the grounds of prudence before the financial year end.

Alternative Options Considered

None

10. REGENERATION PROJECTS UPDATE

- 10.1 The Leader of the Council introduced the report which updated members on important key developments for Rossendale. The Leader provided a brief summary of some of the points in the report:-

Efforts across the valley to regenerate old buildings: a relationship was being built with the Building Preservation Trust to bring old buildings, such as Waterside Mill back into use.

Sport and Leisure: the Grip and Go climbing facility at Haslingden Sports Centre was being well used, with a subsequent increase in use of the other facilities.

Stubbylee Park: £400k of planned investment was planned for the next few years via funding opportunities and grants.

Property Level Flood Resilience Grant: grants were available to owner-occupiers and businesses; however take-up was not as high as it could be. Work would be undertaken to improve the take-up level.

Brownfield Register Pilot: a grant of £10k had been applied for in respect of this matter and this was intended to ensure that future development first took place on brownfield sites. The register would be published by the end of June 2016.

10.2 Members were invited to comment on the report:-

- The hard work and success of the Haslingden Task Force and the 'Love Haslingden' Group was noted.
- The Council had not been successful in obtaining £100k from the Police Commissioner's Proceeds of Crime Fund for CCTV replacement in Bacup. However the Portfolio Holder for Operational Services and Development Control was in talks with, and would be visiting Blackburn Council regarding their CCTV hub which was funded via the DCLG.
- The Leader of the Council clarified again the bus station funding.
- Concerns were raised regarding the Horncliffe Mansion site.
- Councillors were urged to contact Forward Planning regarding older industrial sites in the middle of green belt.
- It was noted that the shops at the bottom of Burnley Road in Bacup were in need of works, however this was not within the THI area. These concerns were noted.
- It was noted that trees had been cut down at Moorlands Park and although the works had been well received by the Friends of the Park, nearby residents had complained about people climbing onto the tree stumps to look into and access their gardens and property. It was agreed that removal of the stumps would be investigated.

Resolved:

That the report is noted.

Reason for Decision

To update members on progress made on regeneration in Rossendale.

Alternative Options considered

None

11. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Resolved:

That the public and press be excluded from the following item of business under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 since the report involves likely disclosure of exempt information under Part 1 Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

12. INSURANCE

12.1 The Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance introduced the report and outlined the options within.

12.2 Members commented on the report.

Resolved:

That the tender process is started and a report taken to Full Council.

Reason for Decision

In the interests of financial prudence.

Alternative Options Considered

As stated within the report.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 7.45pm

_____ CHAIR _____ DATE