

MINUTES OF: THE CABINET

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 13th September 2017

**Present: Councillor A Barnes (Chair)
Councillors Ashworth, Lamb, MacNae, Oakes and Walmsley**

**In Attendance: Mr S Sugarman, Chief Executive
Mrs S Plum, Director of Communities
Mrs C Birtwistle, Monitoring Officer
Mrs J Crawford, Finance Manager
Miss G Ashton, Committee and Member Services Officer**

**Also Present: Councillors Bromley, Essex, Haworth, Serridge, Smallridge
1 member of the press
2 members of the public**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 There were no apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Councillor Ashworth asked that the minutes be amended to remove Rosso from her Declarations of Interest.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6th July 2017 were agreed as a correct record subject to the change.

3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

3.1 There were no urgent items.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

4.1 Councillor Ashworth declared an interest in Bacup THI and Stubbylee Masterplan.

4.2 Councillor Lamb declared an interest in Bacup THI, Lantern Parade and Stubbylee Masterplan.

4.3 Councillor MacNae declared an interest in Bacup THI and the RTB joint venture partnership.

4.4 Councillor Oakes declared an interest in Bacup THI, the Waterfoot Centre and Rosso.

4.5 Councillor Walmsley declared an interest in Bacup THI and Rosso.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- 5.1 Mr Atherton asked when members had found out that the target for building on Brownfield sites had changed from 65% to 20%. The Leader advised that members had recently attended a Local Plan presentation where the policy was discussed. It was noted that some sites were not viable for development. A Brownfield register had been published and would be updated by the end of December 2017.
- 5.2 Referring to page 2 item 5.1 of the minutes of the last meeting, Councillor Essex asked if the Portfolio Holder and Shadow Portfolio job descriptions had been circulated. The Leader thought these had already been circulated but would arrange for them to be distributed again.
- 5.3 Councillor Essex noted that full Council had proposed the formation of a cross party working group to discuss financial issues but had heard nothing further. The Leader of the Council confirmed this meeting would take place.

6. CONSIDERATION OF REPORT BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN

- 6.1 The Portfolio Holder for Regulatory Services outlined the report which asked members to consider the Local Government Ombudsman report and decide whether to accept the recommendations made.
- 6.2 Cabinet Members were invited to comment on the report:
- The Ombudsman recommendations had been made on an incorrect legal point.
 - In comparison with other Local Authorities, this Council processed applications more quickly and many drivers applied to this Council because of that.
- 6.3 Other Elected Members were invited to comment on the report:
- The licensing of drivers was a balancing act between the needs of drivers and public safety. Processing applications more quickly would hinder public safety.

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet did not accept the recommendations detailed in the Local Government Ombudsman report.

Reason for Decision

The reasoning used by the Local Government Ombudsman was based on an inaccurate legal position. Members felt that the application had been processed in an appropriate timescale having regard to public safety.

7. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY REVIEW 2017 - 2018

- 7.1 The Portfolio Holder for Health and Housing outlined the report which asked members to note the content of the strategy review and ratify the document in advance of publication. Also to delegate future minor amendments to the strategy to the Housing Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

- 7.2 Cabinet Members were invited to comment on the report:
- The review was well written and Officers should be thanked.
 - The focus on early intervention was good.
 - The recent Homelessness member briefing was very good.
 - The team worked hard to find solutions for homeless people and it was suggested formally sending the Cabinet's thanks.
 - Homelessness issues were not about rough sleeping.
 - The issues in Rossendale should be recognised.
- 7.3 Other Elected Members were invited to comment on the report:
- The latest Homelessness Strategy covered the period 2007 – 2012.
 - Officers and the Portfolio Holder should be congratulated on the strategy review document.
 - The Queen Street facility had not been mentioned in the report.
 - The red, amber, green progress on page 12 and 13 showed no red flags.
 - When developing a new strategy, could a standard be attached to “as quickly as possible” in relation to providing accommodation, so that monitoring could take place (page 10 of review document).

The Leader of the Council advised that work on homelessness had continued despite the dates on the strategy. A new policy would be drafted following legislative changes in 2018. This would be presented to Overview and Scrutiny.

Resolved:

1. That the content of the Homelessness Strategy Review 2017 – 2018 was noted and ratified.
2. That all future minor amendments to the strategy be delegated to the Housing Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that the Council's Homelessness Strategy Review document 2017 – 2018 be approved and updated.

8. REGENERATION PROGRESS UPDATE REPORT

- 8.1 The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Leisure and Tourism asked the committee to note the content of the Regeneration Progress Update Report. He outlined a number of key issues from the report.
- 8.2 Cabinet Members were invited to comment on the report:
- It was disappointing that the Bacup THI plans had not been adopted.
 - The work on the refurbishment of buildings in Bacup had been well received and the refurbishment of the NatWest and Barclays buildings was positive.
 - Each building refurbishment had defined deadlines.
 - Businesses outside the area had expressed an interest in investing in Bacup.
 - The 60s Festival had been successful and it was suggested writing to the organisers and the Whitaker museum to thank them.

- The development of many Brownfield sites were constrained by various issues. It was suggested writing to the MP to highlight the challenges faced and suggest possible solutions.
- The countryside in the borough lent itself well to activities for the Rossendale Adrenaline Valley Strategy.
- The Northern Grip Festival had committed to returning to the borough due to the support received from Officers. Thanks were expressed to the Officers concerned.

8.3 Other Elected Members were invited to comment on the report:

- Was there an update in relation to Haslingden Baths.
- Could a list of developable Brownfield sites be drawn up and circulated to Councillors and MPs.

The Leader of the Council advised that an announcement would be made shortly regarding Haslingden Baths. A Brownfield register had already been drawn up and could be circulated.

Resolved:

1. That the contents of the report were noted.

Reason for Decision

To ensure all members were kept updated.

9. COUNCIL TAX AND NNDR WRITE OFFS

9.1 The Portfolio Holder for Resources and Customer Services outlined the report which recommended members approve the write off of £100,709.13 in respect of irrecoverable Non-Domestic Rate debts and £6,413.46 in respect of irrecoverable Council Tax debts.

9.2 Cabinet Members were invited to comment on the report:

- The Council did not have to shoulder the full cost of the debts.

9.3 There were no comments from other Elected Members.

Resolved:

1. That members approved the write off of £100,709.13 in respect of irrecoverable Non-Domestic Rate debts.
2. That members approved the write off of £6,413.46 in respect of irrecoverable Council Tax debts.

Reason for Decision

To clear any debts from the ledgers which were deemed irrecoverable.

10. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT 2017/18

10.1 The Portfolio Holder for Resources and Customer Service Services outlined the report which asked members to note the contents of the report and approve the

write-off of the East Lancs into Employment debts and the subsequent additional £20k contribution to the doubtful debts reserve.

10.2 Cabinet Members were invited to comment on the report:

- There was a large amount of unspent money in the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Fund. How could improvements be made to allocate grants to those who needed it.
- It was important to share knowledge and publicise DFG monies.
- An Older People's Celebration Day was taking place where the allocation of DFG monies could be publicised.

10.3 There were no comments from other Elected Members.

The Leader of the Council advised that she would discuss the allocation of DFG monies with the Portfolio Holder and Housing Renewal Manager as she had a number of suggestions to make. She asked the press to publicise the Older People's Celebration Day.

Resolved:

1. That the contents of the report were noted.
2. That members approved the write-off of the East Lancs into Employment debts and the subsequent additional £20k contribution to the doubtful debts reserve.

Reason for Decision

To ensure robust monitoring of the Council's finances.

11. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Resolved:

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

12. RE-HOUSING REPORT

12.1 The Portfolio Holder for Health and Housing outlined the report and members were asked to consider the recommendations therein.

12.2 Members commented on the report.

Resolved:

The recommendations in the report were agreed.

Reason for Decision

To agree re-housing.

13. LOAN AGREEMENT

- 13.1 The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Leisure and Tourism outlined the report and members were asked to consider the recommendations therein.
- 13.2 Members commented on the report.

Resolved:

The recommendations in the report were agreed.

Reason for Decision

To agree a loan.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and closed at 7.40pm

_____ CHAIR _____ DATE