

Council

Meeting held at 6.00pm on Wednesday, 22nd January, 2014 in Shield Room, Civic Centre, West Paddock, Leyland, PR25 1DH

Present:-

Councillor Mrs D Gardner (in the chair)

Councillor Mrs Ball, Mrs Beattie, Ms Bell, S Bennett, W Bennett, Bradley, Coulton, Crook, Evans, Forrest, Foster, M Gardner, Mrs Mary Green, Michael Green, Hamman, Hanson, Hesketh, Heyworth, Higgins, Mrs Hothersall, Hughes, K Jones, Mrs S Jones, Kelly, Marsh, Martin, Mrs Moon, Mrs Mort, Mullineaux, Nelson, Mrs Noblet, Ogilvie, Otter, Patten, Pimblett, Ms Prynne, Rainsbury, S Robinson, Mrs M Smith, P Smith, Stettner, Suthers, Titherington, C Tomlinson, M Tomlinson, Miss Walker, Mr J G Walton, Mr D J Watts, Mrs L R Woollard, Mr B Yates

In Attendance:-

The Chief Executive (Mike Nuttall), the Director of Corporate Governance (Maureen Wood), the Legal Services Manager (for the item relating to the Pay Policy) and the Democratic Services Officer (Carol Eddleston)

Public Attendance:-

10

Other Officers:-

84

Minute No.	Description/Resolution
61	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Clark, Harrison, Howarth and O'Hare.</p>
62	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Members of the Senior Management Team present declared a personal interest in Item 3 of the Cabinet report relating to the Pay Policy as this matter impacted on their terms and conditions of employment and indicated that they would leave the meeting during any discussion and voting on this item.</p> <p>Councillor Evans declared a prejudicial interest in the Lancashire Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing Enterprise Zone (Samlesbury) Local Development Order No 2 (2013) as an employee of BAE Systems and indicated that he would leave the meeting for the duration of that item. Councillors S Bennett, Mrs Hothersall, Marsh and Nelson declared personal interests in this item as members of the BAE Systems pension scheme but, under the Code of Conduct for Elected Members, would be entitled to remain in the meeting and participate in any discussion and voting on the item.</p> <p>Councillor Martin declared a personal interest as an employee of Lancashire County Council, in the Report of the Cabinet, the Report of the Scrutiny Committee, the Lancashire</p>

	<p>Advanced Engineering & Manufacturing Enterprise Zone (Samblesbury) Local Development Order No 2 (2013), Questions to the Leader and Questions to Members of the Cabinet.</p> <p>Councillor Prynne declared a personal interest in the Questions to the Leader item as a county councillor.</p>
63	<p>Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 November 2013</p> <p>RESOLVED :</p> <p>That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2013 be approved, subject to the addition of the following to the end of minute no 59: 'Councillor Ogilvie confirmed that there was no conflict in the aims between the Lancashire Covenant and our own South Ribble Covenant and as a result there were no additional commitments on this Council'.</p>
64	<p>Report of the Cabinet</p> <p>The Leader commended the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 8 January 2014. The report was seconded.</p> <p>In relation to the nomination of the Deputy Mayor Elect for 2014/15, Councillor Foster observed that Councillor Mrs Green would be the 9th consecutive Conservative Deputy Mayor. He considered this to be grossly unfair and one more example of a lack of respect for this Council.</p> <p>Senior officers present declared personal interests in the Pay Policy item and left the meeting for the duration of this item. The Chief Executive remained to facilitate the meeting.</p> <p>Councillor Foster referred to recommendation 3 under the Pay Policy item for a report to be prepared on the implications of adopting a Living Wage for Council employees and suggested that this did not need to be a boxed item as members could ask officers to prepare reports at any time. It was agreed that this recommendation did not need to be subject to a vote.</p> <p>The Leader introduced the item relating to the Pay Policy and explained that, following a request by Unison, she and Councillor Robinson had met with trade union representatives earlier in the week. The trade union representatives had raised concerns about the proposed changes to the policy and enquired whether there would be a large number of redundancies. The Leader explained that it was an opportune time to review the policy bearing in mind that a lot of other authorities had already reduced their payments and the county council was doing the same. It did not mean that there were wholesale redundancies around the corner in this authority. In the last three years there had been 20 redundancies and every effort had been made to redeploy wherever possible. This Council, like all authorities, was facing a very difficult financial situation but she stressed that neither she nor the Cabinet had a hidden agenda.</p> <p>Councillor Robinson said that this Council's success over the last six years had been built on a number of factors but he highlighted two in particular: its staff and the willingness to take difficult decisions when necessary. The people who worked for this Council had responded to every challenge that had been set and this was reflected in the high satisfaction levels in residents' surveys year after year. He stressed that this administration and its members really appreciated the efforts made by all staff.</p> <p>The administration had examined the redundancy policy thoroughly and was now proposing an alteration which would bring this Council into line with all but three other councils in the</p>

county. The proposal had been to pay redundancy per the statutory scheme, i.e. one or one and a half times weekly pay rather than use a multiple of 2.2 for each week's pay. Councillor Robinson explained that there was, however, no proposal to cap the weekly amount, unlike the Labour led county council. The change was being proposed not because there were plans for redundancy but because, as always, the administration was looking to the future.

As the Leader had said, a meeting had taken place with Unison where both sides had put their case. Union representatives had asked for a phased approach to the change to the policy. Councillor Robinson said that the administration was always prepared to listen and thanked union representatives for their measured approach to the meetings. Having listened to the representatives, he was now proposing an amendment to the second recommendation in the Report of the Cabinet which was in line with county council policy but more generous in that the county council would cap redundancy pay at £450 per week's pay from 2016 whereas this council would not.

The proposed amendment was: 'The enhanced discretionary multiplier of 2.2 weeks redundancy pay be amended to a multiplier of 1.6 weeks, for a period of 12 months from 23 February 2014. It would be further amended to the statutory redundancy scheme for the calculation of redundancy pay from 23 February 2015.'

Councillor M Tomlinson said that he had to recognise this movement and to congratulate Unison in getting involved. However, his group was not entirely happy with the proposals and deplored the reasons for being here. The Council generally treated its staff well but his group felt that the rush to amend the policy was unseemly.

Councillor Foster enquired why it was considered to be an opportune time to amend the policy. He was 'fed up' of hearing about what other authorities were doing and wanted to understand the rush to implement the change a month after this meeting. Councillor Forrest queried if members were 'a bunch of sheep following what everyone else' was doing.

Councillor Martin said he was upset to be discussing proposals to remove the redundancy multiplier altogether. Officers were expected to work late in the night for basic pay and had had overtime stopped in favour of time off in lieu which they could not take due to workload. Their reward now was a package which would reduce some redundancy payments (voluntary or compulsory) by about half. The administration was then trying to make this 'okay' by talking of a living wage, something which the administration had rejected on several occasions. Councillor Martin considered that to use the reasoning that other councils had done the same made this Council appear to be a follower and not a leader. Redundancy packages should go some way to giving employees a buffer to enable them to maintain their commitments until they were 'back on their feet'. Cutting this would no doubt put additional pressures on people who had been forced from their job through no fault of their own.

Councillor Titherington said he had long given up trying to understand the Conservative logic or philosophy and their 'pathological dislike' of anything to do with the public sector and public sector workers. He said that if they were not cutting their wages and salaries, attacking their pensions or pressing them to do more for less, they were sacking them and then shedding 'crocodile tears' and saying how good they had been and how hard they had worked. Councillor Titherington considered the proposal was a 'despicable decision' by an administration who often claimed they had a conscience and were on the side of workers although their actions displayed a 'callous disregard for their interests' He urged the conservative group to draw back and 'do something decent'.

Councillor Robinson questioned some of Councillor Titherington's assertions relating to

employee pay and conditions and asked him to provide some evidence.

Councillor Hanson noted that the motto of the Civic crest was 'Progress with Humanity' and commented that the proposals showed very little progress and no humanity.

Councillor Bell urged members to remember that whilst savings had to be made, every decision that this Council made impacted on the borough's residents.

Councillor Pimblett stressed that employees needed all the help they could get and he had always thought that there was an agreement to consult with them. There did not appear to have been any consultation with them before Cabinet.

The Leader confirmed that this authority always complied with its statutory duty to consult and consultation had commenced in December. Discussions had taken place with Unison before the Cabinet meeting. In no way would she want to say that there would be wholesale redundancies in this Council and, of the 20 redundancies referred to earlier, the vast majority had been voluntary. It had taken a good deal of hard work from employees and members to identify efficiencies and this was appreciated. The Council reviewed its policies regularly and, having seen what other authorities had done with their redundancy policy, it was considered timely to amend our own.

Councillor Heyworth had experienced redundancy personally and he was aware that a redundancy payment did not last long and the person's life was changed completely. He had a lot of sympathy for this authority's staff and felt they deserved better.

Mark Hodges, Secretary of the South Ribble Unison Branch, said that the strength of feeling among officers was shown by the high number attending this meeting. He said that the majority of Unison's questions had been addressed in the course of the evening and he welcomed what was being proposed in the amendment. However, if the proposed changes to the redundancy policy came into effect, they would affect anybody who was made redundant, their families and the wider local community, and he asked for the 2.2 multiplier to be maintained.

An officer of the Council observed that introducing a 1.6 multiplier for 12 months only was a very short space of time and he enquired whether it could be maintained for two to three years.

The Leader said she had not initially been minded to agree to the request from the union to phase in the change to the policy, however, she had discussed it with her group whose members had willingly agreed to the suggestion to phase it in.

An officer who had worked for the Council for 21 years expressed her hope that the fact that there had been very few redundancies to date would continue in the future but said that she still failed to understand what would be achieved by penalising what would be a minority of colleagues.

RESOLVED: that

1) The report of the Cabinet be noted;

2) Council Tax Support (unanimous)

(i) The Council's Council Tax Support Scheme be updated in accordance with the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013,

(ii) the Council's scheme be amended to uprate the allowances and premiums in accordance with Revised HB Circular A24/2013 issued by the DWP,

	<p>(iii) any changes required by amendments to the Local Government Finance Act 1992 or the Local Government Finance Act 2012 (if required) be carried out,</p> <p>(iv) the updated scheme be published in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 2012 and</p> <p>(v) the level of the deduction to Working Age recipients of Council Tax Support apply from 1st April 2014, finalised and agreed in accordance with South Ribble's Scheme and as part of the Council's Budget and Council Tax Setting at the Council meeting on 5th March 2014;</p> <p>2) Timetable of Meetings 2014/15 (unanimous) the timetable of meetings for 2014/15 be recommended for approval;</p> <p>3) Mayor and Deputy Mayor 2014/15 (unanimous) Councillor G Walton be confirmed as Mayor elect for 2014/15 and Councillor Mrs Mary Green be nominated as Deputy Mayor elect for 2014/15;</p> <p>4) Pay Policy (YES – 30, NO – 21)</p> <p>(i) The Pay Policy for 2014/15 be approved,</p> <p>(ii) the alteration to the Redundancy Policy be approved as follows: The enhanced discretionary multiplier of 2.2 weeks redundancy pay be amended to a multiplier of 1.6 weeks for a period of 12 months from 23 February 2014. It will be further amended to the statutory redundancy scheme for the calculation of redundancy pay from 23 February 2015.</p> <p>YES - Councillor Mrs Ball, Mrs Beattie, W Bennett, Coulton, Mrs D Gardner, M Gardner, Mrs Mary Green, Michael Green, Hamman, Hesketh, Mrs Hothersall, Hughes, Marsh, Mrs Moon, Mrs Mort, Mullineaux, Nelson, Mrs Noblet, Ogilvie, Otter, Rainsbury, S Robinson, Mrs M Smith, P Smith, Stettner, Suthers, Miss Walker, Mr J G Walton, Mrs L R Woollard, Mr B Yates</p> <p>NO - Ms Bell, S Bennett, Bradley, Crook, Evans, Forrest, Foster, Hanson, Heyworth, Higgins, K Jones, Mrs S Jones, Kelly, Martin, Patten, Pimblett, Ms Prynn, Titherington, C Tomlinson, M Tomlinson, Mr D J Watts.</p>
65	<p>Report of the Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Councillor Titherington commended the report of the meeting held on 10 December. The report was seconded.</p> <p>Councillor Titherington was pleased to report that the recommendations of the Health Inequalities Task Group had been passed on to partners and had met with a positive response.</p>
66	<p>Report of the Governance Committee</p> <p>Councillor W Bennett commended the report of the meeting held on 27 November. The report was seconded.</p> <p>Councillor W Bennett wondered whether the fall in unemployment figures published earlier in the day might lead in due course to an increase in interest rates and, if so, this in turn might warrant changes to the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.</p> <p>He also highlighted the authority's infrequent use of its investigatory powers which, he believed, showed how open and transparent the authority's activities were.</p>

67	<p>The Lancashire Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing Enterprise Zone (Samlesbury) Local Development Order No.2 (2013)</p> <p>Councillor Hughes presented the report which updated members on progress in facilitating development on the Samlesbury Enterprise Zone site.</p> <p>Councillor Martin said that he had raised concerns at Planning Committee about the blanket planning proposal at the site and had had contact with some residents about this aspect and also about access to the A677. He acknowledged that SRBC would have 28 days to look at specific development proposals and raise any concerns that it might have.</p> <p>Councillor Hughes pointed out that planning policies for Enterprise Zones were essentially dealt with at a national, rather than a local, level but he was hopeful that this Council's strong relationship with the parties involved would ensure that any sensible concerns that SRBC members might have would be listened to and respected.</p> <p>RESOLVED (unanimously) that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Council endorse the Local Development Order No. 2 (2013) for submission to the Secretary of State; 2) (in the event that the Secretary of State determines that he will not intervene) Council adopt the said LDO.
68	<p>Questions to the Leader</p> <p>In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Mary Green, the Leader confirmed that work on the ticket office at Leyland train station was due to be completed in February and she was pleased to report that she had received a letter from the sponsor of the Department of Transport Access for All programme confirming that Leyland had been nominated for consideration for the next tranche of funding. There was no guarantee that Leyland would be successful but it would certainly be considered.</p> <p>Councillor Bell expressed her hope that proposed new legislation relating to the forced closure of takeaways where grooming was known to be taking place would be taken seriously and asked for the Leader's help in ensuring every effort was made to stop grooming occurring wherever possible. The Leader said she abhorred the practice of grooming and was sure that the Children's Trust and the Council would do their utmost in this regard.</p> <p>In response to a question from Councillor Titherington, the Leader agreed to look into the number of staff whose salaries had decreased under the current administration.</p> <p>The Leader agreed with Councillor Martin that charity could come in all guises and she welcomed all charity work.</p> <p>In response to Councillor Watts, the Leader apologised for an unfortunate error in the Year Book which had recently been circulated to members.</p> <p>A member of the public asked the Leader and Council to lobby the county council about its proposals to withdraw subsidies for rural bus services. Removing evening and Sunday services would impact on all sectors of the community including the elderly and people who were employed in the retail and catering sectors. He said that county council members should hang their heads in shame if the decision to withdraw subsidies went ahead.</p> <p>Another member of the public who would be affected by the proposals pointed out that the</p>

	<p>transport system was run by private enterprise and it was therefore the bus companies themselves which were saying they could not run the services at a profit. He urged the authority to put forward a 'radical' view to the county council that it should ask the transport companies to keep the services running for rural people whilst accepting a reduced profit level.</p> <p>Councillor W Bennett reflected on the recent success of the Scrutiny Committee influencing the outcome of the county's Fire and Rescue Service proposed reforms and suggested that the committee should be asked to consider and respond to the proposals relating to the bus services as a matter of urgency. Councillor Titherington, as chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, said that he would be happy to take this forward.</p> <p>Councillor M Tomlinson said that whilst in the South Ribble Council chamber he was acting as a borough councillor, not a county councillor but he acknowledged that with £300m of funding cuts from central government, the county council had to address some difficult questions.</p> <p>The Leader was sympathetic to the needs of those affected and welcomed Councillor Titherington's offer to take the matter forward to the Scrutiny Committee. She was sure that the county council would do everything in its power to negotiate with the bus service operators.</p> <p>In response to a suggestion that the Council should consider addressing female Mayors as 'Madam Mayor' in future, the Leader explained that the address of 'Mr Mayor' was a traditional reflection of the office of the mayoralty rather than the person. She hoped this tradition would be maintained.</p>
69	<p>Questions to Members of the Cabinet</p> <p><i>Strategic Planning and Housing</i></p> <p>Councillor Evans had submitted a question in advance asking about the policy on the naming of streets in South Ribble, when it was last amended and why. He explained that his main reason for asking was that he would like a new development to be named after a deceased ex mayor and had been told that this was not allowed. He and other members quoted a number of streets in the borough which were named after people.</p> <p>Councillor Hughes said that he had looked into the matter and had identified that the authority's street naming and numbering guidance allowed individuals and developers to suggest names and included a comprehensive checklist of what could and could not be done. Unfortunately he had not been able to identify when the council's policy was updated.</p> <p><i>Shared Services and Corporate Support</i></p> <p>Councillor Prynne had submitted a question earlier in the day about the number of residents claiming discretionary housing payments, the % increase over the last five years and the proportion of residents claiming who were social housing tenants and those in the private sector. Given that these payments were paid only for a limited time, she wondered what plans were in place to support residents when the payments were no longer issued, particularly in the case of private sector residents who could not count on support from housing associations.</p> <p>Councillor Hamman replied that this Council spent £9,280 on Discretionary Housing Payments in 2010/11; in 2011/12 this figure fell by 20% to £7,313; in 2012/13 a further</p>

decrease of around 30% reduced the payments to £4,910. In 2013/14 there was a 600% increase, taking Discretionary Housing Payments to just under £30,000 (to date).

He went on to say that 190 applications for discretionary housing payments had been received this year, of which 105 had been awarded. 84 of those were to residents of registered social landlords, and 21 to the private sector. 80 of the 105 applications were due to under-occupancy payments.

Councillor Hamman acknowledged that these payments were intended to be short term in nature but residents could continue to apply. He would look into this further outside of the meeting but understood that if residents continued to fit the criteria, they may be awarded the payment.

Deputy Leader, Neighbourhoods and Street Scene

Councillor Ms Bell referred to the recent work carried out outside the Worden Park Arts Centre to replace the cobbles with tarmac and was concerned that there had been no consultation with local councillors. 'Worden Park improvements' was one of the projects on the Leyland My Neighbourhood Area Plan and she would therefore have expected local members to be consulted. Councillor M Tomlinson acknowledged that something had needed to be done about the state of the cobbles but it would have been helpful to know in advance so that members could appropriately advise / respond to residents' queries and concerns.

Councillor Mullineaux explained that the decision to carry out the work had been taken for safety reasons as the cobbles had become uneven and slippery. He accepted the members' comments about the need to keep local members informed and said that this could be done in future. He went on to say that any of the cobbles which were still fit for purpose would be re-used if an appropriate need was identified.

Councillor Forrest reported that the Environment Agency had devised a website which could show where there was a propensity for flooding – quite a large part of Leyland was at risk – and he enquired if the Cabinet Member was aware of this site and whether he would be prepared to encourage residents to access the site and see what advice there was on how they might reduce the risk of flooding to their properties.

Councillor Mullineaux had not yet seen this website but would be happy to promote it if it was useful.

Councillor Heyworth enquired whether there was any scope to increase the amount of 'permanent' parking space on Worden Park, perhaps by surfacing over some of the area which was currently used as an overflow car park when weather conditions permitted. He suggested that so doing might reduce the problem of irresponsible parking on Parkgate Drive as raised at previous Council meetings. Councillor Hamman said that this might also alleviate parking problems at the Worden Park side of the estate.

Councillor Mullineaux assured members that attempts were still being made to resolve this issue. He suggested that Leyland My Neighbourhood forum might consider a project to extend parking provision in the park. He said that in the past the council had approached the county council and asked if they would consider implementing a residents' only permit scheme on Parkgate Drive but this had been rejected as all the properties had a drive and therefore did not need to park on the roadside themselves.

	<p><i>Regeneration, Leisure and Healthy Communities</i></p> <p>Councillor Martin wondered if the Cabinet Member agreed with him that the new Scrap Metals Act created a 'minefield' when it came to enforcement. He said that site and collector's licences would be issued to a person/company/partnership and licensing authorities did not need to record any details of the vehicles being used in the business. Even if a registration plate were captured in a photograph the authority would not necessarily be able to link it to a licence. Likewise, the fact that a vehicle was being driven in the borough with scrap metal on board did not necessarily mean they needed a South Ribble licence as they could have collected the metal in a neighbouring borough or be trading under a site licence that would allow them to collect here in the course of their business by prior appointment. Where concerns were raised about a particular vehicle, the police would have to be asked to disclose the name of the registered keeper, assuming there was a record of the registration plate. This authority could then check its records, but could not determine if there were any offences without knowing where the scrap had come from. He wondered if it was worth petitioning anyone in higher authority.</p> <p>Councillor P Smith said that this was primary legislation that the Council could not change. However, a collector would need a separate licence in each borough to collect.</p> <p>Councillor Martin said he had been astonished recently to find that Norma the Fire Engine could not actually be seen due to condensation on the glass of the casing. He was concerned that the moisture was from concrete used to secure the integrity of the ramp and would cause Norma to corrode. He enquired whether Norma would be removed until the condensation was cleared.</p> <p>Councillor P Smith confirmed there was no intention to remove Norma and suggested that the current weather conditions had led to the glass casing steaming up. Under the Agreement in place, the hotel was responsible for cleaning the outside of the unit and the Commercial Vehicle for looking after the inside and the engine itself.</p>
70	<p>Questions to Chairmen of Committees and My Neighbourhood Areas</p> <p>There were no questions.</p>
71	<p>Questions to Representatives on Outside Bodies</p> <p>There were no questions.</p>

The meeting finished at 7.55pm.

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