

SOUTH RIBBLE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Council

Meeting held at 6.00pm on Wednesday, 5 March 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, Clark, Coulton, Crook, Evans, Forrest, Foster, M Gardner, Mrs Mary Green, Michael Green, Hamman, Hanson, Harrison, Hesketh, Heyworth, Higgins, Howarth, Hughes, Marsh, Martin, Mrs Moon, Mullineaux, Nelson, Ogilvie, O'Hare, Otter, Patten, Pimblett, Ms Prynne, Rainsbury, S Robinson, Mrs M Smith, P Smith, Suthers, Titherington, C Tomlinson, M Tomlinson, Miss Walker, Mr J G Walton, Mr D J Watts, Mrs L R Woollard, Mr B Yates

Honorary Freeman Breakell

In Attendance:-

The Chief Executive (Mike Nuttall), the Director of Corporate Governance (Maureen Wood) and the Senior Democratic Services Officer (Andy Houlker)

Public Attendance:- 6 and a member of the press

Other Officers:- 9

| Minute No. | Description/Resolution |
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| 72 | <p>Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Hothersall, K Jones, Mrs S Jones, Kelly, Mrs Mort, Mrs Noblet and Stettner.</p> |
| 73 | <p>Declarations of Interest The Chief Executive reported that in respect of Item 6 of the Cabinet report those members of the Senior Management Team present whose terms and conditions of employment were affected declared personal interests and indicated that they would leave the meeting during any discussion and voting on this item.</p> <p>Councillor Martin declared a personal interest in Items 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, & 11 as an employee of Lancashire County Council.</p> <p>Councillor Bradley declared a personal interest in Item 9 as until 30 September 2013 he had been an employee of Lancashire County Council's Pension Service.</p> |
| 74 | <p>Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 January 2014 RESOLVED : That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2014 be approved.</p> <p>The Leader took this opportunity to respond to an earlier enquiry from Councillor Titherington and reported that between April 2011 and August 2013, eight members of staff had been re-deployed with an overall reduction in salary costs of £15,294.</p> |
| 75 | <p>Report of the Scrutiny Committee Councillor Titherington commended the report of the meeting held on 10 December. The report was seconded.</p> <p>Councillor Titherington commented that the committee had been keen for the vacant post of Director of Development & Planning to be resolved as soon as possible, which it had been but not as expected. He also referred to the NHS Healthcheck: Joint Scrutiny Review with</p> |

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| | <p>the county council whose findings had recently been launched and that this council had gained kudos for the part it had played in the review.</p> |
| 76 | <p>Report of the Governance Committee Councillor W Bennett commended the report of the meeting held on 27 November. The report was seconded.</p> <p>Councillor Bennett commented that the committee welcomed the external auditor's certification report which gave reassurance that there were no underlying process deficiencies. Whilst there was ongoing uncertainty about the impact of the Business Rates Retention Scheme he looked forward to central government publishing technical details.</p> |
| 77 | <p>Report of the Cabinet The Leader commended the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 12 February 2014. The report was seconded.</p> <p><i>Waste Management Cost Sharing Agreement</i> There were comments around the criticism of Lancashire County Council, its approach to dealing with and, the potential adverse financial impact on this and other district councils if the county council stopped recycling credits.</p> <p><i>Long Term Empty Properties</i> Councillor Hughes (Cabinet member for Strategic Planning & Housing) whilst promoting that the council endorse this item, requested an amendment to recommendation (6) which would give the council greater flexibility. In that the word '<i>affordable</i>' be removed prior to and the word '<i>issues</i>' be inserted after 'housing'. Following an enquiry, Councillor Hughes agreed to look at why residents living in 'sheltered' accommodation were not included.</p> <p><i>Supplement for Lower Graded Posts</i> Whilst welcomed, some members were surprised at the council's decision to now become a Living Wage employer. Members were reminded that this was a serious matter affecting our staff's lives/incomes and to have respect for the position they might be in.</p> <p><i>Senior Management Team – Restructure</i> There was a discussion regarding the proposed restructure of the council's senior management team. Whilst it was accepted as appropriate to review the structure when two senior managers left, there were concerns on the proposed. Those comments were understood. It was confirmed this had been discussed long and hard and was felt opportune to restructure as proposed. In addition, it was not simply to save money, it enabled additional capacity in areas where needed and certain matters were not moving as quickly as anticipated. The council would closely monitor how the new structure worked.</p> <p>RESOLVED that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the report of the Cabinet be noted, with the exception of item 7(b) (<i>Financial Strategy, Budget and Council Tax 2014/15</i>), to be considered as part of the next item (min. no.78 below refers); 2) My Neighbourhood Plans [unanimously] That the 2014-2015 My Neighbourhood Plans be approved; 3) Waste Management Cost Sharing Agreement [unanimously] <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) that the revised Cost Sharing Agreement be accepted; and (b) that the Director of Neighbourhoods, in consultation with the Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Streetscene, be given delegated authority to agree the final terms and conditions of the revised Cost Sharing Agreement. 4) Long Term Empty Properties [unanimously] That with effect from 1 April 2014, the council:- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. maintained the Empty dwellings under-going major repair (Former Class A) at 100% Discount for 12 months; |

2. maintained the Empty and unfurnished dwellings (Former Class C) at 100% Discount for 6 months;
 3. removed the Long Term Empty Property Discount for properties which have been empty (No one's sole or main residence) for a period greater than 6 months and providing the property is not subject to a prescribed class of exemption. (Therefore a property which has been empty for a period longer than six months would pay 100% of the charge levied on an occupied dwelling);
 4. levied a premium of 50% upon Long Term Empty Properties where a period of 2 years has elapsed since the property was last occupied unless exempted as detailed in this report. (Therefore a property which has been empty for a period longer than two years would pay 150% of the charge levied on an occupied dwelling);
 5. noted that recommendations 3 & 4 support and will assist with South Ribble Borough Council's "Empty Homes Policy" and encourage owners to work with the Council to bring these properties back into use; and
 6. ring fenced all the additional income to this Council from the Council Collection Fund generated by this policy, and seek the agreement of all Precepting Authorities for all additional income to be retained by South Ribble Borough Council for the provision of housing issues.
- 5) **Supplement for Lower Graded Posts** [unanimously]
1. that with effect from 1 April 2014, the council adopts a supplement for lower graded posts as set out in the report and that any re-calculation of the supplement be implemented annually on the 1st April, following any review of the £7.65 (as used by the Living Wage) in the previous November; and
 2. that the Council's Pay Policy for 2014/15 be amended accordingly.
- 6) **Business Rate Discretionary Retail Relief Policy** [unanimously]
1. that the policy as set out in Appendix A be approved with effect from 1st April 2014 and to expire on the 31st March 2016; and
 2. that delegated authority be given for the Revenues + Manager or responsible officer to decide upon any application for this relief made under this policy taking into account the contents of this policy, the Council's priorities and policies and in addition the Advice provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government's "Retail Relief - Guidance" booklet.
- 7) **Senior Management Team – Restructure** (Yes-26, Abstain-20, No-0)
1. that the revised senior management structure, as detailed at Appendix B to the report to take effect from 1 April 2014, be approved;
 2. that the Director of Governance & Business Transformation be designated as the Council's Monitoring Officer with effect from 1 April 2014;
 3. that the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and Chairman of the Governance Committee be authorised to make any necessary changes to the Council's Constitution as a result of the new structure; and
 4. that the Council's Pay Policy for 2014/15 be amended accordingly.
- 8) **Corporate Plan and Corporate Risk Register 2014/2015** [unanimously]
- That as amended, the Corporate Plan as set out in Appendix 1 to the report and Corporate Risk Register 2014/2015 as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be agreed.
- 9) **Treasury Strategy 2014/15 to 2015/16** [Yes-47, Abstain-1]
- 1) the council approved :-
 - a) the Prudential Indicators for 2014/15 to 2016/17;
 - b) the Treasury Management Strategy and Treasury Prudential Indicators for 2014/15;
 - c) the Annual Investment Strategy 2014/15; and
 - d) the Annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement 2014/15; and
 - 2) that in accordance with the Business Improvement Plan for Shared Financial Services, a renewal or extension process for the treasury management services contract, taking into account procurement policies and an assessment of the specialist market be undertaken.

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Council Tax Setting 2014/15

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources (Councillor Robinson), in presenting the report, stated that following the elections in 2007 and again in 2011 this administration declared its intention to manage the council's finances and services for the benefit of the borough's residents, taking decisions in the long not short term. Looking to the future, Councillor Robinson said he spoke with optimism not doom and gloom. The administration was conscious of and managed and planned accordingly as the years of Labour spending and debt could only be repaired by cutting costs. This meant that government spending would be cut and the public sector would bear a large part of that burden. However, recovery also needed investment and growth which was now happening and the country was now recovering and growth was back.

It was with this backdrop that the Cabinet member presented the council's 2014/15 budget, revenue estimates and proposed investment in the Borough. Whilst the original 2013/14 budget anticipated a £607,000 contribution from the General Reserve, there was now an underspend of £651,000 (£390,000 recurring savings and £261,000 one-off efficiencies). He thanked council staff for the impressive result. In respect of 2014/15 whilst there was a forecast shortfall of £742,000 (£410,000 was identified as a realistic savings target, £200,000 reduced contribution to earmarked reserves and a £132,000 contribution from the General Reserve). This was currently the best forecast, but the financial picture was still unclear regarding Business Rates Retention.

The council constantly re-assessed its working practices/procedure to ensure it was working as efficiently as possible and because of this it had been able to identify such significant savings for 2014/15.

Despite over five years the council's government grant reducing by about 57%, Councillor Robinson recommended that this council's share of council tax was frozen for a fourth time in five years. However, it was unfortunate that residents' bills would show an increase because both Lancashire County Council and the Police & Crime Commissioner had announced increasing their shares by 1.99%. Particularly bitter was that in the current year, the commissioner's budget was underspent and despite the 1.99% increase there would not be any extra police officers.

Again, in view of the management of the council, the Cabinet member was able to announce further significant investment in the borough, such as £400,000 over four years in parks and open spaces with an extra £200,000 this year. The council aimed to retain all current Green Flags and for other parks to achieve that status. Also £40,000 to master plan key sites and £40,000 on street furniture. Car parking charges would be again frozen (fifth successive year) to help local businesses and continued commitment to community safety through funding four PCSOs, CCTV and domestic violence support services. The good news in the next item on the agenda would not have been possible without the council's constant attention to financial control and management.

This borough was one of the UK's most exciting development areas. The City Deal (with the county council and Preston City Council) would drive growth, jobs and infrastructure with an estimated £400m to the local economy over the next 10 years. The Cuerden development area would produce major investment (especially employment) and, the Enterprise Zone (base at BAe in Samlesbury) would promote world class engineering and employment.

Councillor Robinson indicated that the council had had to address some problems caused by external factors, such as the reduced contributions (£54,000 pa) to the waste management services. There was a prospect that in four years, the council could lose £1m pa funding. In respect of the Council Tax Support Scheme, whilst the council had had no intention to increase the current charge (£2.95). However, it was very unfortunate that because both Lancashire County Council and the Police & Crime Commissioner would increase their elements of council tax, the Council Tax Support Scheme charge would now increase to £3.50. Despite such disappointments the council would continue to provide its

residents the best services it could at the most economic price possible.

The Cabinet member thanked members of staff in the council's financial and revenues services for their appreciated efforts. This had been a testing year with the introduction of a new system of Council Tax Support Scheme and the area of Business Rates Retention. The council's collection rate had exceeded all the gloomy forecasts and dealing with a system of rates that was even causing problems for the government. The council's glowing reference from its external auditors was testament to the work on the financial controls and system of governance.

Councillor Robinson moved the statutory resolution, which included all the elements of Council Tax and also moved the items deferred from the previous item (Report of the Cabinet, min. no.77 refers). He added that the budget illustrated the administration's faith in the future of South Ribble Borough Council and looked forward to a new era of opportunity and prosperity.

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Mrs M Smith) was pleased to second Councillor Robinson and thanked him for his work and the efficiencies the council had achieved. She commented that things were achieved by working collectively and the budget was optimistic for investment in the borough and local business in South Ribble. The council was well run, going places and provided high quality services to its residents.

Councillor Foster (Shadow Finance and Resources) commented that Councillor Robinson had yet again given a very eloquent speech but the budget was striking by its woeful lack of substance and anything new. He commented that there was an error in the report of the Cabinet, in that this was the fourth not fifth time council tax had been frozen. The administration had no short, medium or long term strategic plan to deal with the real issues. We should not forget that there had yet to be a balanced budget nor accurate forecast. Whilst there was an apparent underspend of £651,000 for 2013/14 there had been cuts to service provision and staffing. This represented a forecast error of £1.122m on a gross budget of £13m.

The report presented mentioned two specific areas the council would continue to fund, namely community safety and domestic violence, areas which members would not stop supporting. There was reference to the City Deal but no detail. This year (2013/14) had seen the cessation of Commercial Services and cuts to Health & Safety, Housing, Neighbourhood Services, Planning and Shared Services. The proposed budget contained further cuts to Administrative Support, Building Control, Democratic & Legal Services, Housing ICT, Neighbourhood Services, and Planning. There was also a proposed cut to a base budget review, whatever that was. The Senior Management Restructure followed the retirement of some outstanding officers. Councillor Foster commented that the administration would let us believe this generated substantial savings. However, the budget contained a provision of £100,000 pa for four years towards a skills gap, and led to us to raise questions about the senior management review.

Councillor Foster added that the budget contained provision for further cuts of £500,000. This was in addition to those already mentioned but without detail on how they would be delivered. The subsequent year had further cuts of £1m but no strategy/plan identified to achieve this. This would not be permitted in private business so why should residents of South Ribble accept it. In referring to the report of the Cabinet, Councillor Foster then commented that despite the aforementioned cuts, there was still a forecast budget shortfall of £702,000 for 2014/15. This rose to £1.78m in 2015/16 and then £2.32m in 2016/17. The council would cease to exist if not addressed, where was the plan to deal with this? There was nothing new, except short termism, no new incentives or affordable housing schemes, opportunities were limited and often delivered by partners. The council was heading for a financial crash which this proposed budget did nothing to address.

There was 12 months to save the council and Councillor Foster along with the Labour Group

was working on strategic plans. These would be announce in future months and take the council forward again, deliver real transformation in the borough, new development, affordable housing, jobs and opportunities for all our residents.

Councillor Clark suggested reality. He was sure the borough's taxpayer appreciated the council's budget which carried South Ribble forward and protected front line services. He praised the Lancashire Fire Authority for not increasing its portion of council tax but not the county council nor police for each increasing their share by 1.99%. Those bodies had shown no empathy to the hard working people of Lancashire especially in these hard times.

Councillor Michael Green congratulated Councillor Robinson for his work and that of the administration since 2007, which was in control of the council's affairs, managed the budget, kept council tax bills down and at the same time council maintained services. It recognised the elements of growth such as shops, businesses and communities and the increased employment opportunities for residents (Cuerden site and the Enterprise Zone). The borough could be the envy of Lancashire. The administration understood business and took credence of issues faced by its residents, and had frozen council tax for the fourth time in five years. He felt that under a Labour administration this council's share of council tax would have increased by 1.99% and not be as secure.

Councillor O'Hare was surprised by Councillor Foster's comments, which talked down both South Ribble and the borough as a whole. By all means disagree with our politics but don't undermine the borough. This was a good news budget despite the nation's current financial climate. Council tax was frozen and services maintained (which had a good reputation). Despite a reduction by about a third in the level of public sector funding, the council still proposed investment, such as £40,000 towards the feasibility of a concept for a Central Park (Bamber Bridge, Lostock Hall, south Penwortham and Walton-le-Dale). This had been pursued by Councillor Hughes for a number of years and if successful could rival some of the great parks in Lancashire. An amount of £40,000 had been included in the budget for small local improvements through the My Neighbourhood Forums. Here small amounts (ie £500) for such as benches, street lighting, fencing and, signs etc in an area made a difference to street and residents. Councillor O'Hare was disappointed with the opposition which he thought might have supported whilst not entirely agreeing with it. As previously stated council tax was frozen which would help residents with the cost of living crisis. Whilst disappointed with the county council's decision he was glad the coalition government had capped the level of council tax increase. He considered the council's budget to be well thought out producing a long term approach of financial measures.

Councillor P Smith simply thought that the Labour members had not understood the proposed budget, which was well run, managed and controlled. He explained that savings were not cuts. As the Cabinet member for Regeneration, Leisure & Healthy Communities he was pleased to see the level of funding for leisure services and the physical regeneration projects in 2014 with more funding next year. Economic regeneration was include in the budget, the council visited/support a lot of small and large businesses in the borough, who recognised the good work it did for them.

Councillor Mullineaux (Deputy Leader and Neighbourhoods and Street Scene) accepted Councillor Foster's comment about the error in the report of the Cabinet. Councillor Mullineaux stated he had been referring to the county council (not South Ribble) and it would have been the fifth time this year if it had not announced an increase.

Councillor Pimblet expressed disappointment that the budget was not balanced, the use of reserves was for emergencies. It was suggested that this council's part of council had simply not increased because the council had accepted the government's offer of £70,000 not to increase it.

Councillor Howarth commented that despite concerns with the budget he would support it. He was pleased to see items in the budget such as the regeneration of the Penwortham

District Centre. He also felt that the council could congratulate itself for not increasing council tax whilst being appalled that the county council had. Councillor Howarth wondered if last year the county council should have frozen rather than reduce council tax.

Councillor Ms Prynn commented that during the references to the county council and police and crime commissioner there had not been any mention of their crisis fund/team which assisted people on low incomes affected by the government.

Councillor M Tomlinson (Leader of the Labour Group) commented that Labour took no lectures and that the Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer had increased Income Tax from 17.5% to 20%. He added that the previous Labour government had not been bankrupt and this had since been conceded by the current coalition government, and the comparison with Greece had been ridiculous. Politics was about alternatives. Councillor M Tomlinson did not feel everything was wrong in the budget but his group had real concern about the long term future particularly in 3 to 4 years. He added that at present residents in his ward did not feel they were coming out of the recession. Councillor M Tomlinson hoped members would move on from bashing the county council (no longer Conservative controlled). There had been a lot of good items mentioned such as the City Deal, Cuerden site, Enterprise Zone but these were not just South Ribble but this council working in partnership, and a lot of the time this was with the county council.

Councillor Hamman (Shared Services and Corporate Support) offered to clarify to Councillor Ms Prynn the reason the charge under the Council Tax Support Scheme had reduced last year and increased this year for those residents of working age in receipt of benefit. In that this simply reflected the decrease (last year) and increase (this year) in the level of council tax charged by the county council. Councillor Mrs M Smith added that the county council had had an emergency fund for the last 12 months but when she had last looked it had only been used by a very few.

Councillor W Bennett commented that the council had received re-assurances from its external auditors that its reserves were well used and that it took a long term view. Decisions were well thought through and used to reduce on-going costs to residents. The level of council tax had been frozen since the election of the current government and this was probably one of the highest expenditures residents had. The restructure of the council's senior management was not simply to save money but to invest and to be fit for purpose in the future. He looked forward to seeing the Labour long term plan. In respect of the challenge that this council had not looked at the long term, he referred to the meeting of the Governance Committee in September 2013 commenting that this council was in the strongest financial position of the 16 local authorities it was benchmarked with. The council through its business transformation agenda continually re-examined services (what, how and why) and identified future savings. The earlier negative comments dragged the borough down and were not helpful.

A member of the public commended the council for another budget that had not increased the level of council tax.

Councillor Robinson summed up that the council tried to forecast (up to 4 years) but this could only be done with the information available, which currently to 2015 and there was another Comprehensive Spending Review next year. Since 2007 the administration had increased the level of reserves, produced savings and under spending, and was not showing signs of an authority going to crash. Whilst the use of reserves had been covered, he commented these were built up for a rainy day and it was foolish not to build in provision for the future. In respect of gaps, that was based on now and took no account of future growth, attention had to be to look forward. As yet, there was no detail regarding City Deal (physically located in Central Lancashire) but in constant communication with partners such as the county council. He commended the 2014/15 budget to the council.

RESOLVED: (Yes-30, No-18)

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| | <p>Yes – Councillors Mrs Ball, Mrs Beattie, W Bennett, Clark, Coulton, Mrs D Gardner, M Gardner, Mrs Mary Green, Michael Green, Hamman, Hesketh, Howarth, Hughes, Marsh, Mrs Moon, Mullineaux, Nelson, Ogilvie, O'Hare, Otter, Pimblett, Rainsbury, Robinson, Mrs M Smith, P Smith, Suthers, Miss F A Walker, Walton, Mrs Woollard and Yates.</p> <p>No – Ms Bell, S Bennett, Bradley, Crook, Evans, Forrest, Foster, Hanson, Harrison, Heyworth, Higgins, Martin, Patten, Ms Prynne, Titherington, C Tomlinson, M Tomlinson and Watts.</p> <p>1) That, with regard to the financial strategy, budget and council tax 2014/15 item deferred from the report of the Cabinet under min. no.77 above:-</p> <p>Revenue Estimates</p> <p>i. the council's revised estimates for 2013/14, the original estimate for 2014/15 and indicative original estimates for 2015/16 through to 2017/18, summarised at Appendix A to the report be approved;</p> <p>ii. the assessment on the level of reserves and thus the proposed one-off transfer of funds in 2013/14 from the General Reserve to Earmarked Reserves as set out in Section C in the report be endorsed;</p> <p>iii. Appendix E of the report and the proposals designed to further improve efficiency/increase income and reduce the forecast budget deficit be approved;</p> <p>iv. the forecast residual revenue funding deficit in 2014/15 (£0.132 million) be addressed through making appropriate contributions from the General Fund Reserve;</p> <p>v. a Borough Council Net Expenditure requirement for 2014/15 (including parish/town council precepts) adequate to support the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Strategy be approved;</p> <p>vi. the Chief Executive be authorised to deal with all staffing issues arising from the report within the agreed budget and in accordance with the council's human resources policies. This to be in consultation with the Leader and, in her absence, the Deputy Leader and the Cabinet member with responsibility for Finance and Resources and, as appropriate, other relevant Cabinet Members.</p> <p>Council Tax</p> <p>vii. the Borough Council's Band D equivalent Council Tax for 2014/15, remain at the same level as for 2013/14 being £208.38. This will entitle the Council to receive an estimated Council Tax Freezing Grant in the sum of £70,000. This amount to be received in 2014/15 and 2015/16 with a total receipt of £140,000 over the two years only;</p> <p>viii. the reduction in Council Tax support applicable to working age claimants be £3.50 with effect from 1 April 2014; and</p> <p>Capital Programme and Budget</p> <p>ix. the Capital Programme, as set out at Appendix F and its proposed funding be approved; and</p> <p>2) The formal Council Tax resolution Appended to these minutes and the revised budget for 2013/14 and proposed council budget for 2014/15 be approved.</p> |
| 79 | <p>Pension Fund Contributions 2014/15 to 2016/17</p> <p>Councillor Robinson presented the report which identified major changes in the way employers paid into the Pension Fund. Over the next three years the council would pay £1.933m. However, the council was currently cash-rich and had asked if it could pay upfront and what was the amount of discount. At this stage, it appeared the council's payment would be discounted to 1.8m, which after the deduction of a loss of interest indicated a net budgetary saving in the region of £0.118m over the three year period to 2016/17. Councillor Robinson recommended that the council delegate to Cabinet the decision whether or not to pay the contribution in one payment.</p> <p>In response to Councillor Foster, Councillor Robinson confirmed that the potential savings to</p> |

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| | <p>the council were subject to any change in interest rates but were based on what the council knew now and it would obtain as much requisite information as possible before making a final decision.</p> <p>Councillor W Bennett commented that the council currently had an issue about where it could deposit/invest cash, and felt this was a very effective use of the council's funds. He added that of the 16 local authorities this council was benchmarked with, not one could consider such a proposal.</p> <p>RESOLVED (unanimously): That the contents of the report be noted and, that the final decision be delegated to the Cabinet as to whether the council pays the Pension Fund Deficit Recovery Contribution, for the period 2014/15 – 2016/17 in one payment in April 2014.</p> |
| 80 | <p>Questions to the Leader</p> <p>Whilst the county council was responsible for health in the community, the Leader confirmed to Councillor Forrest that although she was not aware of any requests for support from food banks, the council would consider and decide any such requests on their individual merits.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs M Smith responding to Councillor Crook confirmed that she took a very dim view of retrospective planning applications.</p> |
| 81 | <p>Questions to Members of the Cabinet</p> <p><i>Deputy Leader, Neighbourhoods and Street Scene</i></p> <p>Councillor Mullineaux replying to Councillor Crook, commented that he also took a dim view of retrospective planning applications. However, as previously mentioned action was taken in Worden Park on health and safety grounds and the subsequent planning application had not been solely for this but other matters in the park. Whilst regrettable this was what happened. The health and safety works were carried out as a preventative measure not due to any claims against the council.</p> <p><i>Regeneration, Leisure and Healthy Communities</i></p> <p>In response to Councillor Martin's enquiry Councillor P Smith understood he was referring to the floodlighting columns over the Penwortham Holme playing pitch. These had been rusty at the bottom, not been used for a number of years and it was unlikely they would be replaced with new columns but maybe something else.</p> <p>Councillor Howarth enquired why there was no formal record of members' attendance at meetings of the My Neighbourhood Forums (MNFs) yet these were listed in the council's diary of meetings and scrutiny had recommended a more formal approach. Councillor P Smith commented that the arrangements for meetings of the MNFs had been a decision of the council (he personally felt such attendance should be recorded). However, he thought some members would find their level of attendance embarrassing. Those members were not getting engaged, working in the community or giving their best for residents. Councillor P Smith added that he would be looking at the scrutiny recommendations with the MNF Chairmen.</p> <p><i>Shared Services and Corporate Support</i></p> <p>Councillor Hamman in answer to Councillor Martin's enquiry on the use of the council's new tablets and website indicated that the only feedback he had received was that the tablets were much more useable than the previous laptops and he was not aware of any complaints regarding the website. Councillor Martin then commented that members' no longer had access to Councillor Connect, diary, officer contacts, agenda, health & safety issues or standards. In view of the number of topics, Councillor Hamman commented that advance notice would have been better. He would now raise these with the council's Information Services.</p> |

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| | <p><i>Strategic Planning and Housing</i></p> <p>Whilst there was currently no news regarding The Maltings, Councillor Hughes replying to Councillor Patten indicated that he would shortly meet Places for People again and keep him updated.</p> |
| 82 | <p>Questions to Chairmen of Committees and My Neighbourhood Areas</p> <p>Referring to the Eastern My Neighbourhood Forum, there was a discussion around the behaviour and attitude between members of this forum at a recent meeting. There was a subsequent request to the Mayor and Leader of the Council that this matter be looked at.</p> |
| 83 | <p>Questions to Representatives on Outside Bodies</p> <p>There were no questions.</p> |

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The meeting finished at 8.34pm