

SOUTH RIBBLE BOROUGH COUNCIL**Council**

Meeting held at 6.00pm on Wednesday, 30th March, 2016 in Shield Room, Civic Centre, West Paddock, Leyland, PR25 1DH

Present:-

Councillor Mrs Mary Green (Mayor)

Councillors Mrs Ball, Ms Bell, Bennett, Bird, Mrs Blow, Coulton, Evans, Forrest, Foster, Michael Green, Miss Hamilton, Hancock, Hesketh, Higgins, Howarth, Hughes, Jones, Mrs S Jones, Marsh, Martin, Ms Mawson, Mrs Moon, Mrs Mort, Mullineaux, Mrs B Nathan, M Nathan, Nelson, Mrs Noblet, Ogilvie, Patten, Rainsbury, Mrs M R Smith, P Smith, Mrs Snape, Suthers, Titherington, C Tomlinson, M Tomlinson, G Walton, Mrs K Walton, Watkinson, Watts, Wharton, Woodcock, Wooldridge and Yates

In Attendance:-

The Chief Executive (Mike Nuttall), the Legal Services Manager (David Whelan) and Democratic Services Officer (Carol Eddleston)

Public Attendance:-

15

Other Officers:-

5

Minute No.	Description/Resolution
81	<p>Apologies for Absence</p> <p>Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Clark and Mrs Woollard.</p>
82	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Councillor Titherington declared a personal interest in the section of the Report of the Cabinet relating to the Housing Framework as a private landlord. Under the provisions of the Code of Conduct for Elected Members he was allowed to remain in the meeting during the discussion and participate in the voting on this item.</p> <p>The Chief Executive declared a personal interest in the section of the Report of the Cabinet relating to Changes to Statutory Dismissal Procedure for Protected Officers and indicated that he would leave the meeting during the discussion and voting on this item.</p> <p>The Chief Executive declared a personal interest on behalf of all the Senior Officers present in the section of the Report of the Cabinet relating to the Pay Policy and indicated that they would remain in the meeting during the discussion and voting on this item.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs Ball declared a prejudicial interest in the Momentum Business Centre item as her husband owned one of the units at the site. She indicated that she would leave the meeting during the discussion and voting on this item.</p>

83	<p>Minutes of the Last Meeting</p> <p>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 March be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor subject to the last two sentences of the first paragraph of page 43 (minute no. 50) being amended to read:</p> <p>‘Councillor Matthew Tomlinson expressed his disappointment that Councillor Bennett continued to criticise the county council regarding the decision not to renew the cost share agreement for the disposal of household waste. He understood that it would never have been a good time but knew it would have to end sometime.’</p>
84	<p>Mayor's Announcements</p> <p>The Mayor provided an update on the events she had recently attended and her forthcoming engagements.</p>
85	<p>Report of the Cabinet</p> <p>The Chief Executive declared a personal interest on behalf of all the Senior Officers present in the section of the Report of the Cabinet relating to the Pay Policy and indicated that they would remain in the meeting during the discussion and voting on this item.</p> <p>The Leader, Councillor Mrs M Smith, presented the report of the Cabinet meeting held on 10 February. The report was seconded.</p> <p>In relation to the Housing Framework, Councillor Titherington declared a personal interest as a private landlord. Under the provisions of the Code of Conduct for Elected Members he was allowed to remain in the meeting during the discussion and participate in the voting on this item.</p> <p>Councillor Ms Bell said she was pleased to see a review of housing but expressed disappointment that this was a framework and not a strategy. The framework referred to vulnerable people and working with partners but she pointed out that this would prove to be very difficult as funding for supported people was ending imminently. She would prefer to see the term domestic ‘violence’ should be replaced by domestic ‘abuse’.</p> <p>Councillor Foster expressed disappointment with the content of the document and suggested that the assumptions in the capital programme were not achievable. He expressed his hope that the Housing and Planning Bill would be rejected. If not, means testing would be introduced and property developers would be helped to increase their profits. Removing the obligation to build affordable housing made no sense. He said that local councillors should not hide behind bureaucracy and said that he could never support a housing bill that destroyed communities. The Labour Group would closely monitor any changes to future policies.</p> <p>Councillor Titherington pointed out that the Local Government Association had made major representations in relation to starter homes. The current government had pledged that almost 300,000 affordable homes would be built by 2020. Very few people would be able to afford the deposit to buy a house and there would always be a need for social renting and affordable rent. The framework could not be delivered without fundamental changes to the Housing and Planning Bill.</p> <p>Councillor Michael Green explained that a ‘framework’ provided more flexibility moving forward than a ‘strategy’. He agreed that the term ‘domestic abuse’ was more appropriate and that the documentation would be amended to reflect this. He pointed out that the county council had ended funding to supported people and he had made his own representation directly about that. The situation would have to be monitored moving forward. This Council</p>

would work with developers and would encourage the construction of more bungalows.

Councillor Michael Green went on to say that the previous Labour government had failed residents locally and across the county in terms of housing and the current government was trying to make property more affordable and help people to get on the property ladder. There were indeed challenges ahead but this Council was 'up for the challenge' and would always support the need for affordable rented accommodation when opportunities presented themselves.

In relation to the Progress Housing Group Limited – Changes to Constitution item, Councillor Mrs Blow enquired whether there were any plans for a Learning Hour on the changes at Progress Housing Group. Councillor Michael Green confirmed that the group's priorities had changed and there would be an annual report presented to Council but he believed that a Learning Hour would be useful. He took the opportunity to thank members of this Council who had served on the governing body over the years, most recently Councillor Yates.

Mike Nuttall, the Council's Chief Executive, declared a personal interest in the item relating to Changes to Statutory Dismissal Procedure for Protected Officers and left the meeting during the discussion and voting on this item.

Councillor Ogilvie, as chairman of the Governance Committee, rose to say that this item had given him and the rest of the Governance Committee a great deal of concern and they were hugely disappointed at Cabinet's decision to overturn the committee's recommendations. The recommendations had been arrived at after lengthy debate at full committee and at a special task group meeting. The consensus after much discussion had been that the Disciplinary Panel should be comprised of two independent persons and one elected member. He was, however, mindful that the Constitution gave Cabinet the right to accept or to reject recommendations from the Governance Committee and that, ultimately, it was for full Council to decide. He indicated that he would be voting in favour of Cabinet's recommendations, otherwise he believed he would essentially be voting against the Constitution.

Councillor Foster, as vice-chairman of the Governance Committee, expressed his concern on a point of principle. The Governance Committee was a very senior and apolitical committee within this Council and its members took their role very seriously. The item concerned had been debated long and hard. Cabinet's decision to reject the committee's recommendation set, he believed, a very dangerous precedent and should not be allowed to happen. He suggested that the Leader could write to the chairman to ask him to review the committee's decision. He indicated that he would be proposing an amendment which was that the original recommendations of the Governance Committee should stand. He was sorry that Councillor Clark was recovering from surgery and unable to attend as he had been strongly in favour of having elected member representation on the panel. Councillor Foster urged all members of the Council to support his amendment, given that the Governance Committee was the guardian of the Constitution.

Councillor Wooldridge seconded the amendment and urged Council to vote for it for the sake of the credibility and integrity of the Governance Committee.

Councillor Howarth indicated his support for the amendment and said it was a point of principle and trust and he pondered why members would agree to sit on a committee if its work could be overturned.

Councillor Titherington stressed the need for the executive to acknowledge and respect the Governance Committee and its independence. He did not believe the matter in hand was a fundamental policy decision and could not understand why such a stance was being taken on a very small part of the Constitution.

Councillor P Smith assured the meeting that Cabinet upheld the Constitution and respected

the Governance Committee. He asserted that Cabinet's recommendation served to strengthen that of the Governance Committee.

Councillor Michael Green pointed out that Council would sometimes take a different line in view of recommendations from another committee and stressed that Cabinet was not casting a shadow on the integrity of the Governance Committee nor of its chairman. He firmly believed that if the situation ever arose where an investigation was required it was better for the panel to be completely independent.

The Leader explained that members of the Cabinet had also debated the issue long and hard and had concluded that they needed to give themselves as much flexibility as possible. On this particular occasion she felt it appropriate to thank the Governance Committee for its hard work but to say that this particular recommendation was not one that the Cabinet could take forward.

Councillor Matthew Tomlinson pointed out that every councillor in the room had the right to vote as s/he saw fit. He said he thought that Cabinet had made a mistake and in doing so was calling into question the Governance Committee's independence.

Councillor Foster repeated that the decision was ultimately for Council to make and asked Councillor Ogilvie to outline why the Governance Committee had felt that its recommendations were appropriate.

Picking up on Councillor Titherington's point, Councillor Mrs Moon said that she did not consider it to be a tiny part of the Constitution nor 'not a fundamental policy decision'. As a Cabinet member she considered recommendations put before her and thought it entirely appropriate for them to be debated by Cabinet.

Councillor Ogilvie explained that a wide range of views had been aired at the Task Group about the composition of the Disciplinary Panel, from one that was fully independent to one that was composed entirely of elected members. Following much debate, members of the task group and Governance Committee thought that they had reached a fair compromise.

As a former chairman of the Governance Committee, Councillor Bennett said that the issue was not around the integrity of the committee or of 'overturning' a committee decision. It was in no way a slight on the Governance Committee but a question of Cabinet not accepting a recommendation from the committee. The legislation around dismissal procedures for protected officers was very 'woolly' and to make a disciplinary case against protected officers would be extremely difficult. It was therefore important to get the procedure right from the beginning and he stressed the importance of the word 'qualified' in the third recommendation. He suggested that the Governance Committee had come up with a compromise decision because its members could not all agree.

Councillor Mullineaux said he appreciated the hard work of the Governance Committee and acknowledged that it had been a hard decision but stressed that Cabinet was clear on why it did not accept the committee's recommendation.

Councillor Foster pointed out that the Governance Committee vote had been unanimous. He informed Council that Councillor Clark had challenged the Leader at the Cabinet meeting. Councillor Foster reiterated that the Governance Committee was apolitical and the guardian of the Constitution and had debated the matter for hours before agreeing a solution that it considered to be in the best interests of the Council. Cabinet's decision not to accept the recommendation was unprecedented.

The Mayor invited Council to vote on the amendment to recommendation 3 which read 'A Disciplinary Panel comprised of the Chairman of the council's Standards Committee, the council's Independent Person for Standards and a further Independent Person to be selected

in advance of the Disciplinary Hearing’.

The motion was lost. (YES - 20, ABSTENTION – 1, NO – 26). The meeting then proceeded to vote on the recommendation as presented in the Report of the Cabinet.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) The report of the Cabinet be noted (unanimously),
- 2) Housing Framework (unanimously)
 - i. The draft Housing Framework 2016-2019 be approved,
 - ii. The capital programme in support of the Framework be approved,
 - iii. A four week consultation of the Framework be agreed, and
 - iv. The Director for Development, Enterprise and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Healthy Communities, be authorised to make adjustments to the Framework following the outcome of the consultation and to finalise the document.
- 3) Progress Housing Group Limited – Changes to Constitution (unanimously)
 - I. A share in Progress Housing Group Limited be retained, and
 - II. The offer by Progress Housing Group to present an annual report and consider other means to maintain working relationships to the benefit of our residents be accepted.
- 4) Review of Constitution
 - 4.1 (unanimously)
 - i. Contract Procedure Rules and The 2015 Public Contracts Regulations Subject to an amendment of the wording of Contract Procedure Rule 39.4 relating to the development of an e-form, Council adopt the changes to the Contract Procedure Rules as illustrated in the Appendix to the Governance Committee Report,
 - ii. Revised Guidance for Audit/Governance Committees
The Terms of Reference for Governance Committee be replaced by the revised Terms of Reference set out in Appendix 2 to the report to the Governance Committee,
 - iii. Procedures for Call-in by the Scrutiny Committee
The Scrutiny Procedure Rules 4F of the Constitution be amended as follows:

 ’15 Call-in

 In the first paragraph by the addition of the words ‘the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee or’ after the word ‘where’ and before the words ‘a minimum’.

 In paragraph (b) by the addition at the end of the paragraph of the words ‘The Chief Executive (or other designated officer) shall inform all members of the Council of the arrangements made for the Special meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to consider the call-in’

 In paragraph (c) by the addition at the end of the paragraph of the words ‘The reasons for the call-in and the name or names of the Councillors who requested the call-in shall be set out in the agenda for the meeting’.
 - 4.2 (YES – 28, ABSTENTION – 0, NO – 19)
 - I. Changes to Statutory Dismissal Procedure for Protected Officers
An Investigation Panel be convened to consider the seriousness of any complaint or allegation received, if there is a case to answer and whether an investigation is required.

	<p>The Panel to be comprised of: Leader, Head of HR, Monitoring Officer – for an allegation against the Chief Executive.</p> <p>Leader, Head of HR, Chief Executive – for an allegation against the Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>II. Commissioning of an Independent Investigation An appropriate body be contacted to assist in identifying a suitably experienced investigator.</p> <p>III. A Disciplinary Panel comprised of three suitably qualified independent persons be recruited at the appropriate time.</p> <p>5) Timetable of Meetings 2016/17 (unanimously) The Timetable of Meetings 2016/17 as circulated be approved.</p> <p>6) Pay Policy 2016 (unanimously) The Pay Policy for 2016/17 be approved.</p> <p>7) Mayor and Deputy Mayor 2016/17 (unanimously) Councillor Mrs Woollard be confirmed as Mayor Elect for 2016/17 and Councillor Mick Titherington be nominated as Deputy Mayor Elect for 2016/17.</p>
86	<p>Report of the Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Councillor Titherington presented the report of the meetings of the Scrutiny Committee held on 26 January, 4 February and 8 March. The report was seconded.</p>
87	<p>Report of the Governance Committee</p> <p>Councillor Ogilvie presented the report of the meeting of the Governance Committee held on 27 January. The report was seconded.</p>
88	<p>Lancashire Combined Authority Proposals</p> <p>Councillor Mrs Smith explained that most of the local authorities in the county were in the process of deciding whether to continue along the route of a Combined Authority. This council had been in discussions on the matter for approximately 18 months and she had tried to keep members abreast of what was going on. The original recommendations circulated with the agenda had been compiled following discussions at the Lancashire Leaders' Group and the Leader explained that, on balance, her group believed that some of them did not reflect the way that this Council would like to see a Combined Authority going forward. Consequently a set of revised recommendations had been prepared and put before members this evening. The devolution 'ask' was still being worked out and she believed that the amended recommendations would allow members to satisfy themselves that they could go along with the proposals. She would be happy to take the revised recommendations to the next Lancashire Leaders' meeting. The report was seconded.</p> <p>Councillor Foster expressed his frustration that members were 'constantly' being fed last minute changes. He said that this item included a fundamentally important decision and being given further changes just prior to the meeting starting was not good enough. Many</p>

authorities had already voted on the original recommendations and he indicated that he would be proposing an amendment to revert to the original recommendations circulated with the agenda.

Councillor Matthew Tomlinson pointed out that when the papers were circulated with the agenda there was no indication that there would be any changes and he therefore concluded that there must have been some 'infighting'. He suggested that if there were concerns on such an important item, it should have been pulled from the agenda and deferred. He had no doubt that the Council would ultimately enter into a Combined Authority as the only alternative was to be left behind. However, he would not be supporting the amended recommendations due to the way in which they had been presented.

Councillor Bennett said that there was no 'infighting' in his group but they had considered at length whether the item should have been pulled and deferred. They too were supportive of a Combined Authority but would not sign up to 'any old thing'. He pointed out that Chorley Borough Council was also amending its recommendations. We had been working closely with its Leader, Councillor Alistair Bradley, and had stressed that the 'ask' was not there and as such we did not want to put forward something that was not good for the rest of Lancashire.

Councillor Wharton said that he was fully supportive of the principle of a Combined Authority in Lancashire but, like many other members, had concerns that the report had been put together too quickly. He considered that the amended recommendations offered this Council some protection if it subsequently turned out that the offer was not right for us.

Councillor Mrs Moon said that she could and would not vote for the original recommendations as she did not think that Lancashire was currently sufficiently organised to vote on them as originally presented. This authority had been working with the key players to find out what would be the best thing for Lancashire and as yet there was no detail with regards to funding and what 'ask' would be available to us, nor did the original recommendations guarantee any devolution.

Councillor Michael Green pointed out that devolution could not be decoupled from the Combined Authority and he expressed concern that members of the opposition did not appear to have read the relevant documents.

Councillor Forrest said that he realised that a great deal of thought had gone into this and said he would appreciate a recess to allow the Labour group time to consider the amended recommendations.

Councillor Titherington expressed confusion at the fact that nearly every member of the Cabinet had spoken against the original recommendations and he questioned why the original report had come to Council this evening if it was so unacceptable. He pointed out that the Labour group had received a set of amended recommendations at 6.00pm yesterday and had entered the chamber tonight to find a further amended set in front of them. He took exception to the accusation of not reading relevant documents.

The Leader explained that the recommendations tabled this evening contained only two words which were different to the revised recommendations which had been placed in member pigeon holes the night before. She would very much like to report to the next meeting of the Lancashire Leaders Group that Council was fully supportive and would therefore be happy to have a short recess to allow members of the opposition to discuss the revised recommendations.

Councillor Yates confirmed that he had abstained on the vote at the previous week's meeting of Lancashire County Council and had explained why he had done so. He did not believe that the paper was fit for purpose and he went on to say that he would have abstained this evening if the original recommendations had been left unchanged.

Councillor Mullineaux said South Ribble was in a very good position and was looked on very favourably by other authorities in the county. It was not appropriate for us to simply 'hope for the best' without 'more meat on the bone' going forward.

Councillor Wooldridge said that if the opposition had received the amended recommendations earlier it might have felt able to support them. He suggested that there should have been discussions between group leaders in advance and, if considered appropriate, even a special Council meeting called. He would be voting in favour of Councillor Foster's proposal to revert to the original recommendations.

Councillor Howarth said that he found the amended recommendations agreeable but did not understand why they were not circulated with the original report and wondered what had happened in the intervening week. He pointed out that his group had not seen any revised recommendations before this evening.

Councillor Mrs Snape assured the meeting that her group had had no special privileges but she considered that the amended recommendations strengthened the argument for a Combined Authority. Councillor Hughes offered apologies to anybody who was disturbed by receiving the amended recommendations late but urged members to believe that there was nothing secret or intended to trap them.

Councillor Foster queried who had authorised the paper to be issued in the first instance and asked where all the papers were which substantiated the report, as there was nothing in the 'background papers' other than what had been circulated with the papers for tonight's meeting and for the meeting held on 18 November 2015. He said that Cabinet should start respecting members of the opposition if it wanted their support. He moved the amendment. The amendment was seconded.

The Mayor invited Council to vote on the amendment which proposed that the recommendations should revert to those circulated with the agenda:

- '1. The contents of the report be noted, along with the appended response to the public consultation on the Combined Authority proposals.
 2. The Council agree to become a constituent member of a Lancashire Combined Authority and submit proposals to do so to the Secretary of State.
 3. In the interim period, the Council agree to form a shadow Lancashire Combined Authority
 4. Any future proposals for a devolution deal with the Government be brought back to Council for consideration and agreement.'

The motion was lost. (YES – 20, ABSTENTION – 0, NO – 27). The meeting then proceeded to vote on the amended recommendations as circulated.

RESOLVED (YES – 27, ABSTENTION – 0, NO – 20):

1. The contents of this report be noted, along with the appended response to the public consultation on the Combined Authority proposals;
2. The council consider that the principal reason for forming a combined authority is to provide a basis to receive additional, powers and responsibilities from Government through a devolution deal;
3. The council be very concerned that the decision to form a Lancashire Combined Authority has not been aligned with detail of Lancashire's proposals for devolution.
4. In light of 2 and 3 above, the Council agree to become a constituent member of a Lancashire Combined Authority and submit proposals to do so to the Secretary of State subject to the Council being satisfied with the greater detail on the proposed devolution deal;
5. In the interim period, the council agree to form a shadow Lancashire Combined

	<p>Authority;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. At the earliest opportunity the Lancashire Combined Authority set a clear timetable for introducing a system of inclusive voting for all constituent councils on transport related matters; 7. Any future proposals for a devolution deal with the Government be brought back to council for consideration and agreement; 8. The Council reserve the right to withdraw from the Lancashire Combined Authority if its benefits and financial commitment, along with those of the devolution deal, are not clearly demonstrated to be in the best interests of South Ribble residents, and 9. That the membership and governance for the Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal continue in its current form and remain separate from the governance for a Lancashire Combined Authority.
89	<p>Questions to the Leader</p> <p>In response to a question from Councillor Watts about an incident that had occurred after a committee meeting earlier in the year and security of members and officers, the Leader indicated that it would not be appropriate for her to comment at this stage as the matter was not yet fully resolved.</p>
90	<p>Questions to Members of the Cabinet</p> <p><i>Finance & Resources</i></p> <p>Councillor Howarth explained that he had been unable to attend the last meeting but thought that the budget had contained some interesting projections, especially in relation to Business Rates. Councillor Bennett said he thought this Council was in a great position with a clear idea of what it wanted to do. The situation moving forward was challenging but he doubted that the government's announcement on Business Rates would affect this authority.</p> <p><i>Housing & Healthy Communities</i></p> <p>Councillor Mrs S Jones said that she had written to Councillor Michael Green after the last meeting about the omission from the Corporate Plan of the proposal for South Ribble to become a Dementia Friendly Borough but had yet to receive a reply. Councillor Michael Green confirmed that the Cabinet was committed to becoming a Dementia Friendly Borough and he was sorry if a reply had not got to Councillor Mrs Jones. He referred to an event being held with the Alzheimers Society on 29 April and Councillor Mrs Jones confirmed that she was planning to attend.</p> <p><i>Neighbourhoods & Street Scene</i></p> <p>In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Walton about any effect on traffic following the proposed change of use of Farington Waste Site, Councillor Mullineaux said that the county council had estimated that the number of vehicles would reduce by around 50%. Communications and education programmes would cease and a significant proportion of the workforce would be made redundant. Recycling by residents would continue but would be distributed differently.</p> <p>Councillor Matthew Tomlinson explained that projections indicated that the amount of recycling would not reduce but he believed that the changes had been communicated really badly in the press. He asked if the Cabinet Member would arrange for some publicity about the changes, in as far as we would not be able to collect garden & food waste together in the brown bin, or food waste separately. Councillor Mullineaux said that he was sure this council could do something even though the changes were being implemented following a decision by the county council.</p>

A member of the public pointed out that the number of bin waggons and tipper trucks that used the link road would not reduce. Councillor Mullineaux explained that the number of vehicles was bound to reduce as they would be coming from within South Ribble and Chorley Boroughs only in future.

In response to a question from Councillor Martin about the menace of hogweed, Councillor Mullineaux confirmed that action would be taken to eradicate the problem whenever it was reported. He had had no communications from Penwortham Town or Preston City Council but was sure that the three authorities would be willing to help each other if appropriate.

Councillor Forrest said that the sight of beautiful spring flowers was being blighted by cans and takeaway containers often discarded by the occupants of moving vehicles. He observed that legislation was coming in to make vehicle owners responsible for litter ejected from their vehicles and enquired whether this council had any particular plans to tackle the issue. Councillor Mullineaux confirmed that this council took littering very seriously and worked hard on initiatives to try and reduce incidences. He would read with interest the information that Councillor Forrest had sent to him.

Strategic Planning & Housing

Councillor Evans congratulated Councillor Hughes on the progress of development of a number of sites in the borough. He enquired how many affordable homes were likely to be brought forward on site W and where they would be built. Councillor Hughes said he did not have the specifics to hand but agreed to provide further details outside of the meeting.

In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Noblet about the derelict Maltings Site, Councillor Hughes confirmed that the council had been in regular contact with Places for People about the site but the situation had now changed. The site had now been purchased by the Homes and Communities Agency and we had started discussions with them about their proposals for the site. The HCA envisaged the site being used to develop a new style of starter homes for sale to first time buyers under the age of 40, at about 20% under the market value.

Councillor Titherington expressed concern that these houses might be allowed to be sold at market value after only five years and asked if any pressure could be brought to bear to ensure that they remained as starter homes in perpetuity.

Councillor Martin said he was deeply concerned about the decision by Places for People to sell the site to the HCA and encouraged Councillor Hughes to ensure that local ward members were kept up to date on developments and had an opportunity to have their say.

Councillor Hughes confirmed that information was limited at the moment but more would become clear as discussions progressed. A planning application would come forward in due course and it would be determined on the basis of agreed planning rules and reasons.

A member of the public who lived just off Wheelton Lane observed that at certain times of day the centre of Leyland was already gridlocked. Looking ahead to when proposed future development had come forward, he wondered where all the additional vehicles would go, where they would park and what impact development would have on people who already lived in the borough. He stressed the need for modern up-to-date surveys to be used as the basis for planning future development rather than data which was years out of date.

Another member of the public pointed out that an area could change very quickly and she also stressed the importance of using recent information for planning purposes.

Another member of the public observed that developers were encouraged to build new amenities but questioned what the council would do if the required amenities were not built

	<p>and current amenities reached breaking point.</p> <p>Another member of the public queried what arrangements were in place to ensure that the planning approval process was conducted democratically.</p> <p>In response to the questions from members of the public, Councillor Hughes explained that this authority was charged by government to build a specific number of houses over a specific period of time. If we did not provide sites, developers would 'cherry pick' sites for themselves. Works were ongoing across the borough as part of the City Deal to provide infrastructure upfront. We had plans in place to provide new homes over a 10-15 year period, with a single site bringing forward approximately 30 houses each year. The local plan which we started to develop over six years ago included provision for required amenities such as schools and medical centres. The planning process was a judicial process and the Planning Committee was to some degree at arm's length.</p> <p>Councillor Hughes said that he would be more than happy to meet with the members of the public present outside of the meeting to explain the planning process in more detail and to discuss any specific issues that they wished to raise.</p> <p>Councillor Matthew Tomlinson made the point that the county council could not refuse a planning application on the basis of school places and that it was obliged to provide school places. He confirmed that in reality there were a number of schools in Leyland that had empty places.</p>
91	<p>Questions to Chairmen of Committees and My Neighbourhood Areas</p> <p>In response to a question from Councillor Michael Green, Councillor Hesketh as chairman of the Planning Committee, took the opportunity to clarify his position in relation to a matter which occurred following a Planning Committee on 13 January when Councillor Howarth submitted a complaint which alleged that Councillor Hesketh should not have taken part in the discussion and voting on an item in which he had declared a personal interest. He explained that Councillor Howarth had subsequently referred to the matter in a leaflet he had distributed in the Penwortham area and that he had also elicited the support of the Lancashire Evening Post.</p> <p>Councillor Hesketh said that he thought Councillor Howarth had 'jumped the gun' in airing his complaint in the public domain before due process had been completed within the council. He had met with the council's Legal department in relation to the complaint and had also taken external legal advice and had been advised that he had not committed any 'offence'. He concluded that he now expected Councillor Howarth to apologise and to publicly retract his comments and state that Councillor Hesketh had done nothing wrong.</p> <p>Councillor Howarth said that he was still awaiting a reply to the complaint he had submitted to the Monitoring Officer and therefore did not feel it appropriate to comment.</p> <p>The Mayor brought the discussion to a close by saying that the Monitoring Officer should be given a chance to reply to Councillor Howarth.</p>
92	<p>Questions to Member Champions and Representatives on Outside Bodies</p> <p>There were no questions.</p>
93	<p>Exclusion of Press and Public</p> <p>RESOLVED (unanimously):</p> <p>That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the</p>

	<p>following item of business as it involved the discussion of information defined as exempt from publication under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, 'Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) ' and in which the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing it.</p>
94	<p>Momentum Business Centre</p> <p>Councillor Mrs Ball declared a prejudicial interest in the Momentum Business Centre item as her husband owned one of the units at the site. She left the meeting during the discussion and voting on this item.</p> <p>Councillor Bennett, the Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources, introduced this report which concerned the acquisition of industrial units to facilitate employment opportunities, regeneration and income generation. The report was seconded.</p> <p>Members discussed the timing of the report and the anticipated benefits to the council and the borough.</p> <p>RESOLVED (YES – 26, ABSTENTION – 0, NO – 19): That the acquisition of industrial units at Momentum Business Centre be approved in accordance with the terms set out below.</p>

The meeting ended at 9.38pm.

..... Mayor