

SOUTH RIBBLE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Council

Meeting held at 6.00pm on Wednesday, 27 April 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, Clark, Coulton, Evans, Forrest, Foster, Michael Green, Miss Hamilton, Hancock, Hesketh, Howarth, Hughes, K Jones, Mrs S Jones, Marsh, Martin, Ms Mawson, Mrs Moon, Mullineaux, Mrs B Nathan, M Nathan, Nelson, Mrs Noblet, Ogilvie, Rainsbury, Mrs M R Smith, P Smith, Mrs Snape, Suthers, Titherington, C Tomlinson, M Tomlinson, G Walton, Mrs K Walton, Watkinson, Watts, Wharton, Wooldridge, Woollard and Yates

Honorary Freeman: Mr Breakell

In Attendance:-

The Chief Executive (Mike Nuttall), Director of Corporate Governance and Business Transformation (and Monitoring Officer) (Ian Parker) and Senior Democratic Services Officer (Andy Houlker)

Public Attendance:- 18

Other Officers:- 13 officers and 9 media

Minute No.	Description/Resolution
95	Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Higgins, Mrs Mort, Patten and Woodcock.
96	Declarations of Interest Councillor Clark declared a pecuniary interest in Item 3 as an Associate Manager with Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust and left the meeting during its consideration taking no part in the discussion or voting thereon. Councillor K Jones declared a pecuniary interest in Item 3 as an elected Governor of the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, made a personal statement and left the meeting during its consideration taking no part in the discussion or voting thereon (subsequently clarified as a prejudicial interest). Councillors Mrs Mary Green and Michael Green declared personal interests in Item 3 as members of the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and voting thereon.
97	Mayor's Announcements The Mayor provided an update on the events she had recently attended and her forthcoming engagements.
98	Briefing and Discussion on the Planned Closure of the A&E Department of Chorley & South Ribble District General Hospital The Leader of the Council (Councillor Mrs M Smith) informed the meeting that Seema Kennedy (MP for South Ribble) was unfortunately unable to attend due to important business in the House of Commons. The MP had had regular meetings with health organisations but the issues leading to the closure of the A&E Department at Chorley Hospital had only been announced five days in advance with no time for public consultation. She had made

representation for full service to resume at the department as soon as possible. There had been a meeting with the chairman and Chief Executive of the Trust to ascertain how the closure had arose, which appeared to be a shortage of doctors and recruitment problems. Whilst a national advertisement had been placed, this was not straightaway. Similarly, it was felt the cap on agency staff spending should have been lifted sooner. It was unclear why this particular NHS Trust had such problems. The Trust had stated that this closure was temporary and pressure needed to continue to be applied to ensure that the Trust was held to it and that services were restored as soon as possible.

Councillor Michael Green (Cabinet member for Housing & Healthy Communities) expressed his concerns about the closure of the A&E Department commenting that many present would have previously used and/or received treatment there. The decision to close the facility with such little notice was deplorable, adding that the staffing issues (recruitment/retention of middle grade (emergency) doctors) had been around for some time. It had got to the point where it was no longer possible for the Trust to operate the hospital's A&E Department safely for either staff or patients. Looking to the future, the MP for South Ribble had had an assurance that this was only temporary and pressure needed to continue. It was understood the Trust was still trying to fill the staff shortfall which included the use of agency staff, reviewing staffing models and the possibility of locums. The Trust needed to ensure the service was fit and proper. The interim arrangement of an Urgent Care Centre at the hospital (0800-2000) appeared to be working as a safe replacement but this was not a full replacement.

Councillor Green then referred to the following notice of motion, expressing deep concern, the shortage of doctors and acute problems faced by the Chorley & South Ribble Hospital. The A&E Department needed to be re-opened urgently and then remain open. He had discussed the motion with Councillors Ms Bell and Foster and hoped that it would receive unanimous support sending a clear message to the Trust.

'That South Ribble Borough Council expresses its very deep concern at the decision taken by Lancashire Teaching Hospitals Trust to temporarily close the Accident & Emergency Department at Chorley & South Ribble Hospital. The Council recognises the importance of the A&E service in Chorley and is deeply concerned about the impact its closure will have on our residents. The Council recognises the national shortage of middle grade doctors, but is deeply concerned that the problem at Chorley & South Ribble Hospital appears to be more acute than elsewhere. The Council therefore asks the Trust for a clear action plan and regular updates as to what will be done to re-open the A&E Department and of how they intend to avoid any future further closures of the A&E Department. Given the concerns about treatment and quality of care for our residents, we ask that the A&E Department at Chorley & South Ribble Hospital is re-opened as a matter of urgency and that thereafter this will be provided on a long-term, sustainable basis.'

The motion was seconded by Councillor Ms Bell. She added that the remaining staff at the hospital continued to work diligently and this situation with the A&E Department had to be monitored.

Councillor K Jones declared that he was a public governor of the Trust, elected by its members. He referred to its constitution that had previously included governor representation from the four local authorities it served. However, due to poor attendances the Trust withdrew those governor positions. Subsequently following a complaint to the Trust's regulator (Monitor) the Trust was advised to reverse the decision. The Trust did and this was implemented in November 2015. However, although three of the local authorities re-appointed governors, no response was received from South Ribble despite subsequent reminders. Indeed South Ribble was absent from yesterday's full meeting of the Trust's Council of Governors with no communication on the subject. He left it for members to draw their own conclusion as to the diligence the administration was tending to the health interests of its

citizens. Councillor K Jones then withdrew from the meeting.

The Leader recalled the Trust's decision to withdraw the council's governor position, previously held by Councillor Rainsbury. However, she had not received any subsequent communication from the Trust for this council to appoint a governor. Councillor Mrs Smith was surprised by the comments and would look into the matter and report back. The Leader had been invited by the Trust to a meeting last Friday which she attended as she was concerned as anyone about the health and wellbeing of the borough's residents.

Councillor Titherington supported Councillor Jones' statement based on information from the Trust, this was concerning and felt it warranted investigation/explanation. He also supplemented Councillor Green in that the closure of A&E was a bombshell and the Trust needed to be held to account for its lack of consultation before the decision was made. As the Chairmen of the Scrutiny Committee, on hearing the Trust's announcement he had asked for a meeting with its Chairman and Chief Executive. Like the Leader, he was also invited to and attended the meeting last Friday. He subsequently became aware of the circumstances leading to the Trust's decision. The primary goal now was to get A&E re-opened. It appeared that some of the Trust's problems were systematic, it would be difficult to keep the facility/service open. Problems included a shortage of particular doctors, lack of trainees, and a cap on agency staff spending. The use of locums had been mentioned but those appointees only needed to give 24 hour notice if they received a better offer. A department could not be run under those conditions and this needed to be addressed nationally. Apparently of the 98% filling of emergency medical doctor posts, 50% dropped-out in four years. This is was national problem that needed to be addressed. He hoped that South Ribble and others would continue to keep pressure on the Trust and that A&E would be opened and kept open as soon as possible. Also, this was a message to the government that the system was not working.

Councillor Foster was surprised the Leader was unaware of the Trust's invitation for the council to appoint a governor. Following on from Councillor Titherington's comments, Councillor Foster felt the NHS was in crisis being systematically destroyed. He commented on the detailed information from the Trust and looked forward to the Trust resolving the issue as soon as possible.

In respect of the Trust, Councillor P Smith referred to the Health and Wellbeing Partnership. Previously the Trust had indicated it had not seen documentation, yet it had been a consultee to it.

Councillor Ogilvie felt all were unanimous on the lack of consultation and the need to get the A&E Department open as soon as possible. However he was concerned about its sustainability. In the future what would be the trigger to again close the facility, clarity was lacking from the Trust.

Councillor Mullineaux was delighted to see the notice of motion. The decision to close the A&E Department had not been accepted and led to this debate, the sooner the department was re-opened the better.

A member of the public stated that residents in Leyland were very concerned about the closure of the A&E Department and urged the Trust re-open the facility as soon as possible.

Councillor Michael Green welcomed the unanimous support for the motion. However, he was surprised by Councillor K Jones' comments. Councillor Green had been the relevant portfolio holder since May 2015 and he had not heard about being able to appoint a governor to the Trust but would look into the matter. He was surprised based on Councillor K Jones' declaration that he had made a contribution. Councillor Green re-iterated the desire for the A&E Department at Chorley & South Ribble Hospital to be re-opened as soon as possible on a safe basis.

County Councillor Prynne had submitted the following written question to the Council/Leader in advance of the meeting.

‘1) Please could you give the amount of the capped salaries (per hour/per shift) offered to the locum doctors which were refused or where no locum doctors took up the Trust's offer. Please also give the average national payment for locum doctors working in A&, if available.

2). Please give the percentage difference in salaries between locum doctors and agency nursing support staff and nurses who work unsociable hours i.e. split shifts or night shifts in A&E.

3) Please indicate how you are going to put pressure on the government to address the current recruitment and retention crisis of doctors and other Allied professionals within the NHS, leading to such issues as the closure of Chorley A & E.’

The Leader responded that the previous evening she had spoken with County Councillor Prynne who had understood that this council would not be able to answer those type of questions, and she would endeavour for her to receive a written answer.

The motion was then put to the vote and unanimously carried.

RESOLVED (unanimously) that:

South Ribble Borough Council expresses its very deep concern at the decision taken by Lancashire Teaching Hospitals Trust to temporarily close the Accident & Emergency Department at Chorley & South Ribble Hospital. The Council recognises the importance of the A&E service in Chorley and is deeply concerned about the impact its closure will have on our residents. The Council recognises the national shortage of middle grade doctors, but is deeply concerned that the problem at Chorley & South Ribble Hospital appears to be more acute than elsewhere. The Council therefore asks the Trust for a clear action plan and regular updates as to what will be done to re-open the A&E Department and of how they intend to avoid any future further closures of the A&E Department. Given the concerns about treatment and quality of care for our residents, we ask that the A&E Department at Chorley & South Ribble Hospital is re-opened as a matter of urgency and that thereafter this will be provided on a long-term, sustainable basis.

[At this point, the Mayor adjourned the meeting to enable the media present to set-up and film the following debate.

Also the Director of Corporate Governance and Business Transformation (and Monitoring Officer) took this opportunity to clarify Councillor K Jones' declaration of interest. In that he apologised that Councillor K Jones' interest had been incorrectly reported and he had a prejudicial not a pecuniary interest, and as such was entitled to make a personal statement before withdrawing from the meeting.]

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Exclusion of Press and Public

In accordance with the Council's Standing Order No.17, the Council was required to consider whether to exclude the public if a question arose at a meeting of the Council concerning the conduct of any person employed by the Council. It was necessary for the Council to decide whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

RESOLVED (unanimously): that the press and public be allowed to remain present.

100

Briefing and Discussion on the Current Issues Surrounding the Licensing Function of The Authority, Including Ongoing Independent Investigations Into The Council's Failure To Ensure Statutory Compliance

At the request of the Mayor, the Director of Corporate Governance and Business Transformation (and Monitoring Officer) referred members to the advice in front of them which advised on speaking on this item. Similarly, members of the public were also advised that when speaking they should avoid making any comment about individual officers involved in the licensing service and/or specific licensing cases. They should keep their comments to general issues.

The Leader welcomed the opportunity to brief members on the current issues surrounding the licensing service and the ongoing independent investigations and the importance to set the context for how we have got to this stage. On 10 November 2015, the Cabinet became aware of issues relating to the licensing service, in particular, record keeping and administrative procedures within taxi licensing. An external and independent review was initiated and an independent team of solicitors carried out an initial review of licensing operations and provided interim findings on 22 December 2015.

The council moved quickly to act upon the matters brought to its attention, including the suspension of two officers, subject to disciplinary procedures. Key issues were identified and addressed, rather than waiting for the report. However, due to the format, sensitive and confidential nature of the contents of the report, it was inappropriate to share it to the wider council. Although the interim report was leaked, the Leader was happy to update council on the progress being made towards implementing its recommendations.

The Leader wanted to reassure residents of South Ribble that nothing mattered more to this council than their safety, in particular that of children and young people. As soon as the issues were known, the council acted as swiftly as possible and was determined to learn any lessons the report highlighted. It was committed to being open and transparent. When the council received the final independent report it would be published in full. That has always been the clear intention – any suggestion otherwise was completely false and without foundation.

This council was not afraid to open itself up to external challenge, to accept where improvements could be made, and to ensure they were implemented. It was important the borough's residents were given the assurances they rightly expected. Councillor Mrs M Smith indicated she would shortly refer to the proposed role of the council's Scrutiny Committee. She added that the version of the report leaked to the media was only ever an interim report. It was certainly not suitable to be shared as widely as it was because of such matters of it containing individual's names and information that could jeopardise ongoing disciplinary procedures concerning members of staff. The principles of due process could not be abandoned because an incomplete report found its way into the public domain.

Whilst the Leader was unable to comment on some aspects of the interim report, she stated it had set out a number of recommendations for making sure the council's licensing service worked effectively in the future. All recommendations had been accepted and taken forward. Those included a comprehensive exercise to ensure all taxi licence applications had the right documentation in place, and steps to reinforce council staff's understanding of their role in protecting the public. Also over the next few months there would be a refreshed programme of mandatory safeguarding training for all staff – not just those with licensing responsibilities. In addition additional resources were in place, extra checks on taxi licences, reformed procedures and investment in extra technology to improve the service. The council had given the safeguarding board and the county council assurances about the swift action taken and its commitment to continued working with them and keeping them fully informed.

It was recognised that this had been a difficult week and that was why the council was asked to agree for the Scrutiny Committee to examine its processes. The committee would also review the publication of the final report, and identify any further issues for consideration. The

committee's comments and recommendations would then be brought back to full council. Councillor Mrs M Smith knew there was a shared commitment to public safety across the council. For that reason it was important to work together across-parties to ensure the improvements that might be required to the licensing service were carried out. The council was absolutely determined to protect the public and it would make sure that its licensing functions were completely spot on.

The Leader then moved that council agree that the Chairman of the council's Scrutiny Committee be asked to establish arrangements to receive and review the final report along with any recommendations. She also asked that the Scrutiny Committee considered the overall review process and identified any areas for improvement, prior to consideration by the council.

This was seconded by Councillor Bennett.

Councillor Titherington welcomed the Leader's statement and the referral to scrutiny. He would have preferred this sooner but felt it was an appropriate way forward. Unfortunately there had been a lack of openness and transparency which led to mistrust and rumour. Speaking to members across the chamber, Councillor Titherington stated that they could no longer blindly accept what they were told by Cabinet members without forensic challenge. Indeed that applied to all members of this council and if not accepted then they would be guilty of retracting our duty to those that had elected us. He thanked Councillor Foster who despite derision had continually argued the case of openness and transparency. The council should commend him for his principled stand. It was a lack of said transparency that had led to the council's current position. It was a disgrace for elected members to first hear of the allegations of child protection and other licensing issues from the press.

Councillor Titherington believed that this was the most serious situation in the history of the council and in the context of child protection was a sickening experience. The cases reported in the media whilst both alarming and distressing were compounded by the fact that when revealed on 18 April 2016, it was the first members knew of it. That despite two council officers being suspended. He was amazed at the lack of information released to members. The lack of information simply made the serious situation worse. He was keen to know how the media had obtained a copy of the interim report when members were not aware it had been commissioned. Why was an interim report issued and, what were the investigators' terms of reference, the council needed to know the whole picture. The council needed to see evidence that the organisation was fit for purpose to deliver services residents had a right to expect. Above all the council needed to restore its good name/reputation and reassure residents that it had their safety and welfare as the number one priority which would never be compromised.

Councillor Titherington stated that the council needed to know the sequence of events, which included what had triggered the investigation, what action taken and why, who was in overall charge of the investigation, why members were not kept informed and, what immediate steps were taken to rectify any failings. Why had it had to take the Labour Group to call a special meeting? The time for complacency and the assumption that everything was ok was over. Scrutiny was not an irritant and Cabinet had to accept being scrutinised, openness and transparency applied to all and officers had to realise they did not dictate questions asked of them but they and us all had to be accountable. Whilst not wanting to prejudice any investigation, something had apparently gone wrong and this was the council's wake-up call which needed a response. He concurred for the need of an intense and extensive investigation/review of this whole matter to ensure the council was fit to fulfil its desire to properly and correctly serve and protect all residents of the borough and restore the council's reputation. That was why he believed the Leader was right to refer the matter to scrutiny. He concluded that any review would be impartial and open minded without preconceptions but with determination to uncover the truth and unravel events, reporting to council a factual and evidenced based account in line with best practice.

Councillor M Tomlinson stated he echoed Cllr Titherington's comments. There was an irony that a special meeting of council had been convened which the Leader was happy to attend. He saw no openness or transparency as members had still not seen the leaked interim report. As an elected member of this council, Councillor M Tomlinson had been asked what had gone wrong to lead it to be featured in the national press. He had had to reply that he genuinely had not known, because no one had taken the trouble to tell me. He had also been asked if he could assure people that this council had acted appropriately when those alleged concerns came to light. Again, he had had to reply that he had no idea, because no one had taken the trouble to tell him. Councillor M Tomlinson had also been asked if he could assure people that this council had now taken necessary actions to put right any possible failings and he had no idea, because no one had bothered to tell him. He wondered how this position had happened, that the vast majority of elected members tasked to ensure that this council carried out its duties could be kept completely in the dark. Knowing nothing for so long and, to be rung by a national journalist, able to read from a report which my council had commissioned, and not even knowing of its existence was surely every councillors' nightmare.

He stated that the issue of Child Safeguarding ought to be right at the top of this, and every other council's agenda. One of the greatest weapons in that agenda was ensuring that members were trained to recognise CSE and know how to act when it was suspected it might be happening. How could we know we are fulfilling our duties to our residents when someone, somewhere treated us in such a cavalier fashion. In his many years on this council, Councillor M Tomlinson could not recall any other instance of withholding of such vital information for such a prolonged period of time. Whoever had taken the decision to hide this information, which he had still not had the privilege of seeing, was guilty of a most severe error of judgement.

Councillor M Tomlinson was saddened that the council's reputation had been seriously damaged in the national press and all forms of local media. He felt that the Leader must now decide what action to take but action there had to be. He added that all should be aware that effective Safeguarding was only possible when partners shared information and to this end he asked the following questions. When, exactly, had this council informed the LSCB of possible failings in its licensing function and, what form had that communication taken and what response was there? When, exactly, had this council informed the county council of possible failings in its licensing function and, what form had that communication taken and what response was there? When, exactly, had this council informed Lancashire Constabulary of possible failings in its licensing function and, what form had that communication taken and what response was there? Councillor M Tomlinson wondered when he would be able to reassure his residents that he was confident that this council's licensing function was fit for purpose and that all our residents, of whatever age, were safe when they got into a South Ribble licensed taxi.

Councillor Howarth welcomed the Leader's statement but wished it had been sooner, before the articles in the national press. In particular, before this council's comparison with other local authorities and being described as not being fit for purpose for safeguarding on which there had been no denial just a small press statement. He had asked for but been told he could not have a copy of the interim report. Councillor Howarth commented that they were the council, not the Cabinet or individual officers, and they had a right to know what was happening. He complimented the Labour Group for calling this special meeting of the council. The information subsequently released is a bit too little too late. The council needed to be reassuring residents and that it was putting its house in order and taking appropriate actions. He looked forward to a resolution and scrutiny examining it.

Councillor Foster commented that whilst he was briefed in December 2015, he was warned that the matter was sub-judice. Since then he had written to both the council's Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer. Any and all failings of the council's statutory licensing function was wholly unacceptable, safeguarding and public protection was one of the primary functions, personally it was number one. A collective obligation of Cabinet for which there could be no

excuse or toleration with elected members having a responsibility to ensure the Cabinet (Executive) was held to account. As mentioned earlier Councillor Foster commented that he had been personally ridiculed when scrutinising decisions of Cabinet, a role expected democratically and as an effective opposition. Whilst suggested by some that political gain was sought from the council's situation, Councillor Foster assured members that his group took safeguarding and protection of the public very seriously. To that end they would not be bullied or ridiculed to do anything other than diligently carry out their duties as elected members. The group publically acknowledged and supported the independence of the Monitoring Officer and statutory obligation to make appropriate interventions.

The media headlines concerning this council were not pleasant reading or viewing - a council in disarray and of serious safeguarding failings. Those headlines were based on a leaked interim report published late last year which members were not privy to. A report Councillor Foster suggested had been sat on, unchallenged by the Deputy Leader (Councillor Bennett) along with Councillors Michael Green and Mrs Moon. An apparent decision by Cabinet was that the Chief Executive, Leader and Cabinet member responsible for licensing be excluded from the ongoing investigations. This then shortly followed with the exclusion of the other members of the Cabinet. How was this justified? No information was disclosed to members of the Licensing Committee or the council. He added that there was no democratic decision to appoint those three Cabinet members, no deliberations or disclosure to council with governance and scrutiny arrangements bypassed. Neither committee chairman was briefed on the ongoing issues. Their dealing with the issues had no constitutional approval. There was no disclosure to the chairman or members of the Licensing Committee who would be fundamental to a review. Whilst an independent investigator was then brought in, no mention was made to the council's partners such as Safeguarding Lancashire, nor was support sought from the LGA or other national agencies. Neither had anyone spoken to statutory partners such as the county council or neighbouring authorities.

Councillor Foster stated that when he was briefed last year he made it clear to the Monitoring Officer that as a matter of urgency there must be full and frank disclosure to the council. This was thwarted by the said three Cabinet members. Subsequently members were informed that un-named officers had been suspended but that there would be no discussion on the matter. Also the internal audit report on licensing was removed from the Governance Committee agenda, a lack of transparency. He was amazed that at this stage elected councillors had still not been issued with the interim report, yet national and local media appeared to have seen a copy. Councillor Foster urged the council to deal with the allegations appropriately, quickly and diligently, and was pleased that the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee would be asked to lead the review.

Councillor Foster then referred to the scrutinising/challenging of Cabinet and its members, Councillor Bennett's decision not to attend a scrutiny meeting, complaints by conservative backbenchers of being bullied/intimidated to support Cabinet, Cabinet unprecedentedly forcing through changes to governance recommendations on the protocol for the dismissal of senior officers and, Cabinet pushing through significant capital investments without appropriate due diligence despite significant objections. The council needed to address the issues at hand which included a significant change in the Cabinet (Executive) with those responsible held to account and removed. He was concerned that there appeared to have been a systematic cover up, breakdown of governance arrangements and a stitch up. The failings within the council's licensing function were still unclear, and could be worse than or not as bad as reported, it was not known. The publication of the final report appeared to be delayed and he wondered whether the independent author was considering the political influence over recent months might lead to the accuracy/independence of the report being challenged.

Councillor Foster apologised to the families of those affected by the failings of the council with an assurance it would now be dealt with.

Councillor Mrs Moon acknowledged that she had been identified but that it was very unfortunate as due process had not yet finished, she was not in a position answer points raised. She thanked Councillor Titherington for his comments that he would lead an impartial investigation and looked forward to being able to in due course to discuss the matter fully. Some of the comments made by Councillor Foster were inaccurate/untrue accusations against her but as indicated she was unable to answer/respond tonight in case it prejudiced the investigation. She would return to them in due course.

Councillor Michael Green echoed Councillor Mrs Moon that now was not the time for this discussion but the time would come. He suggested that Councillor Foster had been fully briefed within 24 hours of the Cabinet last November. He looked forward in the future to being able to speak and appearing before the Scrutiny committee as he had nothing to hide.

Councillor Bennett echoed Councillors Mrs Moon and Michael Green and looked forward to the opportunity to go to scrutiny. He refused to be drawn on the comments made and stated that the reasons would become apparent. The interim report was not released as it was a working document with the final report always going to be submitted to council. He thanked Councillor Green for reminding him when Cabinet had been briefed of concerns and Councillor Foster had been informed within 24 hours and was fully supportive. He looked forward to the day Councillor Foster would have to apologise. In respect of his non-attendance at scrutiny, this had been because he had felt it inappropriate. This matter at hand was separate and he warmly looked forward to attending scrutiny and would be happy to give chapter and verse.

The whole Cabinet had agreed the approach taken. He regretted not including briefing Councillor Howarth. The interim report should never have been leaked and it was out of date by December with measures already identified. Tonight was not the appropriate time to discuss this but those across the chamber have said things they will come to regret.

Councillor Foster confirmed he had received a briefing and shown the report in November but told he could not speak about it. He refused to be blamed for the administration's inadequacies. He had not received any further information because of sub-judice.

Councillors Hughes (Cabinet member for Strategic Planning) and Mullineaux (Cabinet member for Neighbourhoods & Streetscene) confirmed they had met with the three named Cabinet members. Councillor Mullineaux expressed regret that the Labour Group had made those accusations, he was aware of the sense of the situation and actions had been taken for the right reasons.

A member of the public expressed concern as a grandparent. He sought reassurance that no pressure had been brought on officers because of race which had been an issue in the cases in other local authorities. The Leader assured the member of the public that that had not been the case in this matter.

Councillor Mrs M Smith commented that County Councillor Pryn had submitted the following written question in advance of the meeting.

'1) Please state why there was no response from officers to myself in my role as a member (LCC CCIr rep) of the Chorley & South Ribble Community Safety Partnership:

The Chorley and South Ribble Community Safety Partnership plan 2015/2016, outlines in the CSE section, how it will review lessons learnt from recent CSE national reviews and develop a plan of action to implement the recommended approaches to licensing.

In particular, the safeguarding of passengers and drivers and also the review of sharing of information between departments e.g. licensing (EH) and community safety partners. A CSE task group would identify suitable packages of training to be offered to all

licensed services to ensure those organisations and individuals providing licensed services are aware of vetting procedures and duties of care. This would also obviously include how to ensure the meeting of requirements for taxis adapted for disabled passengers.

Bearing the above in mind, please can the leader explain why, when, as a Member of the Community Safety Partnership (Chorley & South Ribble), I attempted to establish the current safeguarding issues and how to be confident that the matter was in hand, seeking assurances that there was full adherence to the 2015/2016 plan, that I received no reply to my email what so ever from the senior officer in question. Only a wall of silence.'

Councillor Mrs M Smith indicated that when she had spoken to County Councillor Prynne regarding the A&E Department she had also discussed and would pass on Councillor Prynne's concerns to the Community Safety Partnership.

The Leader commented that the council was where it was and looking forward it had work to do. Sadly the council's reputation had been tarnished and need to be rectified vigorously. She hoped that all members would vote for the motion that scrutiny investigate and report to council.

The Leader's proposition was put to the vote and unanimously carried.

RESOLVED (unanimously) that:

1. the chairman of the scrutiny committee be asked to establish arrangements to receive and review the final report along with any recommendations;
2. the scrutiny committee consider the overall review process and identify any areas for improvement, prior to consideration by the council.

..... Mayor

The meeting finished at 8.03pm