

**MINUTES OF COUNCIL**

**MEETING DATE** Wednesday, 29 January 2020

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councillors Harry Hancock (Mayor), Jane Bell (Deputy Mayor), John Rainsbury, Carol Chisholm, Will Adams, Jacky Alty, Renee Blow, Damian Bretherton, Aniela Bylinski Gelder, Matt Campbell, Colin Clark, Colin Coulton, Malcolm Donoghue, Bill Evans, Derek Forrest, Paul Foster, Mary Green, Michael Green, Jon Hesketh, Mick Higgins, David Howarth, Cliff Hughes, Chris Lomax, Jim Marsh, Keith Martin, Christine Melia, Caroline Moon, Jacqui Mort, Peter Mullineaux, Alan Ogilvie, Colin Sharples, David Shaw, Margaret Smith, Phil Smith, David Suthers, Stephen Thurlbourn, Michael Titherington, Caleb Tomlinson, Matthew Tomlinson, Matthew Trafford, Angela Turner, Karen Walton, Ian Watkinson, Gareth Watson, P Wharton-Hardman, Carol Wooldridge and Barrie Yates

**OFFICERS:** Gary Hall (Interim Chief Executive), Paul Hussey (Director of Customer and Digital), Jennifer Mullin (Director of Neighbourhoods and Development), Jonathan Noad (Director of Planning and Property), Jane Blundell (Interim Section 151 Officer), Dave Whelan (Shared Services Lead - Legal & Deputy Monitoring Officer) and Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Team Leader)

**PUBLIC:** 7

**79 Thank you and Birthday Wishes**

The Mayor on behalf of the Council wished the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Jane Bell a happy 75<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The Mayor also thanked Dianne Scambler, the Democratic and Member Services Team Leader who was attending her last meeting of the Council and wished her all the best in her new job.

**80 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Councillor James Flannery.

The Leader of the Council also submitted apologies on behalf of Councillors Ken and Susan Jones. Councillor Ken Jones was gravely ill, and Council extended their thoughts and prayers to the family.

**81 Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Michael Green, Jim Marsh and Barrie Yates declared a personal interest as Lancashire County Councillors on item 19 – Future of City Deal.

## **82 Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 27 November 2019 of Council**

In response to Councillor Alan Ogilvie, the Leader of the Council committed to circulating a copy of the borough wide tree planting maps to all Members.

RESOLVED (Unanimously):

That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 27 November 2019 be held as a correct record for signing by the Mayor.

## **83 Mayoral Announcements**

The Mayor provided an update on the events he had recently attended and his forthcoming engagements.

## **84 Cabinet**

Members considered the general report of the Cabinet meeting held on 22 January 2020.

The Leader of the Council reported that the Cabinet had accepted all of the recommendations of the cross party Working Group on the Community Involvement Review. He gave thanks to Councillor Stephen Thurlbourn, the Vice Chair of the Climate Emergency Task Group for his support to the Chair, Councillor Ken Jones and requested Members familiarise themselves with the Lancashire XX Care Strategy to help give them a better understanding of the need for the development of Extra Care schemes across the Borough.

The Leader also accepted that the 5% criteria weighting placed against Environmental Impact when procuring tenders was too low, especially considering the Council's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030 and made a commitment to review this.

In response to a question from Councillor Trafford, the Leader explained that the other party (Leyland St Mary's) of the dual use agreement at the Penwortham Leisure Centre, had confirmed their commitment to pay for those elements that they were responsible for.

The Leader of the Council also explained that a recent audit had identified that an annual amount of £5-6K had been paid since 2013, for a facility at Leyland St Marys that wasn't there, and the Council would be seeking to recover this money.

Councillor Stephen Thurlbourn asked if the Council would consider moving their carbon neutrality target to 2050 following his attendance at a Climate Emergency conference. However, the Leader reiterated that it was still the aspiration of the administration to aim for 2030 and that every available resource would be given, to try.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

**85 Governance Committee**

Members considered a general report of the Governance Committee meeting held on 27 November 2019.

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor Ian Watkinson reported that five internal audit reviews were at draft report stage awaiting finalisation, a further four had commenced and two had been completed. The completed reviews were on performance management information with a limited assurance rating and review of the Improvement Reference Group / annual governance statement without an assurance rating. In order to ensure the audit plan is completed an additional auditor had been appointed.

The Chair also reported that the Committee had received a report on why the performance management information had a limited assurance rating at its meeting the night before, however as the governance report related to business that had been considered at its November meeting and the minutes for the Committee meeting held on 28 January had not yet been done, it was considered inappropriate by Council to deliberate these items further.

It was proposed by the Chair of Governance Committee, Councillor Ian Watkinson, seconded by Councillor Christine Melia, and subsequently

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

**86 Scrutiny Committee**

Members considered a general report of the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 23 January 2020.

The Chair, Councillor David Howarth highlighted key findings within the report that related to the South Ribble Partnership and Worden Hall project.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

**87 Standards Committee**

Members considered a general report of the Standards Committee meeting held on 21 January 2020.

The Chair, Councillor Carol Wooldridge highlighted key findings within the Annual Standards report and thanked the Independent Persons who regularly provided support and advice to the Committee.

RESOLVED That the report be noted

**88 Approval of the Council Tax Support Scheme to be adopted for 2020/21**

Council considered a report of the Director of Customer and Digital that updated on the outcome of the consultation exercise carried out with preceptors and residents in relation to proposed changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme (CTSS). The consultation exercise had informed the proposals for introducing an amended scheme for 2020/21.

The new administration is proposing the removal of the minimum £3.50 charge for passported claimants as part of their commitment to protect the most vulnerable applicants.

Councillor Caroline Moon, expressed her disappointment of the amended scheme, believing that the Council could have been more radical by empowering people to help themselves as opposed to taking them back to a state of dependency. This was not a view shared by many Members across the Chamber who wholeheartedly supported the amended scheme and Councillors David Howarth, Paul Foster, Mick Titherington, Matthew Tomlinson, Matthew Trafford, Will Adams and David Forrest spoke in favour of the proposals.

Councillor Michael Green argued that this decision was a wholly ideological one from the Labour Group and that it could make the current situation more difficult, it could also have a detrimental impact on County budgets, and he warned the Council to be aware of unintentional consequences.

It was proposed by Councillor Aniela Bylinski Gelder, seconded by Councillor Derek Forrest and subsequently

RESOLVED (Yes 24: No 23):

1. That the outcome of the report be noted.
2. That Council approves the amended scheme to reflect the removal of the minimum (£3.50 charge for passported claimants).
3. That Council notes the further work being undertaken in relation to the second homes and empty homes premium.
4. That Council notes the budget implications.

## **89 Contract Procedure Rules**

Council considered a report of the Shared Services Lead – Legal, that sought authority to amend the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules as they are part of the Council’s Constitution.

It was noted that the appendices attached to the report were in the wrong order.

Councillor Colin Clark congratulated the work of the Constitution Task Group on this piece of work.

RESOLVED (Unanimously):

That the updated provisions of the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules be approved.

## **90 Nomination of Mayor Elect and Deputy Mayor Elect 2020/21**

Council considered a report of the Assistant Director of Scrutiny and Democratic Services that sought approval of the nominations for the Mayor Elect and Deputy Mayor Elect for 2020/21.

It was proposed by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Foster, seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Mick Titherington and subsequently

RESOLVED (Unanimously):

1. That Councillor Jane Bell be elected as the Mayor Elect for 2020/21.
2. That Councillor David Howarth be elected as the Deputy Mayor Elect for 2020/21.

Councillor Jane Bell took the opportunity to thank everyone for their birthday wishes and for voting to elect her as Mayor next year. Councillor Bell said that being Mayor would be a great privilege and honour and that she hoped that she could be of some value to the lives of the residents.

## 91 Amendments to Committee Appointments

The Council considered a report of the Assistant Director of Scrutiny and Democratic Services that sought approval to make appointments to the Council's Committee's and Working Groups.

The Leader of the Council explained that it was only down to the circumstances surrounding Councillor Ken Jone's illness, that he was having to make these changes and asked for the Leader of the Opposition not to take this opportunity to try to seek an amendment to the political composition of the Committee's.

It was proposed by Councillor Paul Foster, seconded by Councillor Mick Titherington that

1. Councillor James Flannery replace Councillor Ken Jones on the Licensing and Public Safety Committee;
2. Councillor James Flannery be appointed the Chair of the Licensing and Public Safety Committee;
3. Councillor Colin Sharples replace Councillor Ken Jones on the Governance Committee;
4. Councillor Colin Sharples be appointed the Vice Chair of Governance Committee;
5. Councillor Keith Martin replaces Councillor Ken Jones as the Chair of the Climate Emergency Task Group

Whilst the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Margaret Smith had every sympathy with Councillor Jones's situation, she felt that the report before her had to be dealt with and said that she did intend to propose an amendment.

Councillor Smith explained that Councillor Damian Bretherton was appointed to the Governance Committee in May and had since become an active member, attending every meeting and attending various conferences. The Local Government Association's best practice guidance was for the Vice Chair of the Committee to be a member of the opposition, as was evidenced at Chorley Council.

An amendment to the motion was proposed by Councillor Margaret Smith, seconded by Councillor Phil Smith, to appoint Councillor Damian Bretherton to Vice Chair of Governance Committee.

Upon being put to the vote, the amendment to the motion was lost (Yes: 23, No: 24).

A vote on the substantive motion was then taken and was subsequently  
RESOLVED (Yes: 24:, No: 23) that the recommendations be approved.

## **92 Member Development Update**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Foster updated Members on the work of the Member Development Steering group and gave an appraisal of the training and development opportunities that have recently been delivered.

Several Member Briefings had taken place on policy development and compulsory training on GDPR and Safeguarding had been well attended. The Leader thanked the Democratic Services team for the delivery of the 'Lights, Camera, Action' session that had taken place prior to Council, in response to members' requests.

Councillor Moon asked if a scheme for transferrable skills could be explored for those members able to evidence attendance on external training courses with other organisations on topics such as safeguarding. The Leader agreed to this, if the session covered all relevant aspects as it was recognised that there could be differences across different sectors.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

## **93 Questions to the Leader of the Council**

No questions were received.

## **94 Questions to Members of the Cabinet**

Questions to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member (Health, Wellbeing and Leisure).

Councillor Alan Ogilvie asked the Cabinet Member if he could provide an update on the safe and secure parking arrangements for the Leyland Festival.

In response, the Cabinet Member assured the ward member that he had due regard to residents when considering any proposals relating to car parking in his role on the Leyland Festival Committee and that he hoped to have a detailed proposition soon that he will be able to share with the local councillors.

A member of the public asked the Cabinet Member what view the Council would be taking at the Lancashire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee meeting on 4 February at County Hall on the Our Health Our Care proposal for a complete closure of a viable A&E department at Chorley and South Ribble hospital.

The Cabinet Member responded to say that he was not the Council's representative on the Lancashire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee so was unable at this stage to share the Council's view, however, he added that he was deeply concerned about the proposals and urged all Members to fully consider the implications of such a decision.

Questions to the Cabinet Member (Community Engagement, Social Justice and Wealth Building).

Councillor Karen Walton asked the Cabinet Member, that when she writes out to the Chairs of the Neighbourhood Forums, if they replied to request a change to the boundaries, would this go to Council for approval?

The Cabinet Member responded to say that the changes to the boundaries of the Neighbourhood Forums had already been determined at the first Council meeting of the 2019/20 municipal year and the Deputy Monitoring Officer confirmed that this had been the case. Any subsequent amendments to the delivery of the Forums would be considered by Governance Committee and then taken to Council for approval.

Councillor Karen Walton also asked the Cabinet Member how many Neighbourhood Forums and Parish Councils the Community Involvement Task Group had attended and consulted upon.

The Cabinet Member commented that Councillor Walton was a member of the cross-party working group so already knew this information and that the officers who supported the meetings had the full details.

Councillor Michael Green asked the Cabinet Member how she intended to change the standing orders of the Parish Councils to allow members of the Neighbourhood Forums to participate in their meetings as they were quite stringent. Councillor Green also asked the Cabinet Member if she was aware that the Western Parishes had four parish councils in its neighbourhood area, so any changes to standing orders or terms of references would be a formidable task.

The Cabinet Member responded to say that it was the intention of the Working Group to write to all the Chairs of the Neighbourhood Forums to ask for their ideas on how the Forums and Parish Councils could better work together for the benefit of the communities they serve and that the administration was prepared to work with the Forums for a trial 12 month period before any permanent changes were worked through and constitutionally changed.

All the Parish Councils had been invited to a meeting and two representatives had attended from most, a mixture of Chairs and Clerks. The meeting had been well received and feedback had indicated that the relationship between the borough and the parishes could be greatly improved upon.

Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman asked the Cabinet Member if she knew the differences between the many parish councils and whether the Group had consulted LALC.

The Cabinet Member committed to providing a written response.

Councillor John Rainsbury asked the Cabinet Member if every parish council was represented at the meeting held between the Cabinet Member and the Parish Councils, as part of the Community Involvement Review. It was his understanding, that the Clerk had attended on behalf of Hoole Parish Council but had no mandate to speak on the subject, as it had not been discussed at the Hoole Parish Council

meeting. He was also under the impression that most of the people in attendance were Parish Clerks and not Councillors.

Councillor Margaret Smith asked the Cabinet Member if she was aware of what takes place currently between the Western Parishes Neighbourhood Forum and the four parish councils, stating that the Borough and Parish Councillors are in regular attendance at both meetings.

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Assets interjected to say that he thought that there was a general misunderstanding by members of the opposition on what the cross-party working group were trying to achieve and asked Members to engage with the proposals around the Neighbourhood Forums, as this was an opportunity to do things differently and make much needed improvements.

Councillor David Howarth also spoke in support of the proposals adding that not every Town and Parish Council worked in the same way and that there was an urgent need to review the current format of Neighbourhood Forums.

The Cabinet Member finished by explaining that whilst she accepted that she was not the most knowledgeable Councillor on the subject of parish councils, she did realise that there are conflicts and just wants to explore different and better ways of working over the next 12 months for the benefits of residents.

Questions to the Cabinet Member (Finance, Property and Assets).

Councillor Colin Clark submitted a written question to the Cabinet Member as follows:

The Conference and Business Centre project was designed in 2 phases. Phase 1 was designed to modernise and improve the existing facilities in the Council Chamber and address the need for an additional meeting room to replace the Oaks Room.

The proposals for Phase 2 were formulated with the intention of creating a traded and commercial service, encompassing the existing kitchen and Coppice restaurant, and including a new secured access at the rear of the building.

The delivery of Phase 1 was scheduled for April to May 2019 with Phase 2 following on later during 2019/20.

Whilst Phase 1 has now been completed, Phase 2 has yet to be implemented.

What is the current position on this project?

During the interim period the refurbishment of offices on the south side of the Centre has taken place, with additional fixtures and fittings being provided, but this work did not feature in either of the 2 phases.

How was this work approved and how was it financed?

Were the new fixtures and fitting justified and what were their costs?

What was the total cost of this additional work?

The Cabinet Member gave the following response:

Considerable work has now been completed as part of the planned phased 1 work to the Civic centre. This has included

- a. The revamping of the civic rooms including the council chamber
- b. The purchase and installation of new Audio and visual systems including new tables to the conference and business centre to support and enhance our Civic meetings but also to enhance our offer to commercial hirers
- c. The revamping and improvements to the reception area of the building making a much more pleasant environment for our residents
- d. Introduction of new Screens at reception to direct people through to the Conference and Business facilities
- e. Refurbishment of toilets Facilities across the civic centre
- f. Introduction of new shower facilities to the building for the benefit of all staff in the building

Work is now taking place on refurbishing the South Wing of the building. The cost is £47,000 and this is been funded out of existing repair and maintenance budgets which were underspent. The work is long overdue with some areas having had no redecoration for 25 years plus. The work is been welcomed by staff who will have a much more pleasant work environment.

From an environmental point of view, we are also committing funds to improve the efficiency of the building notably through the introduction of Solar Panels and LED lighting with a view to reducing our energy costs. This has been funded through capital funds and approved through the delegated decision process as the amounts involved are less than £100,000

On the question of phase 2 there was no actual final Cabinet decision to carry out the remodelling of the Canteen and Kitchen and to introduce a second entrance to the Business and Conference part of the Civic Centre. However, this work has now been reactivated and a proposed sum of Capital money has been put in the draft Capital programme for 20/21. A report will be brought to Cabinet on this scheme soon.

Finally, it is worth noting that external income for the Civic Centre this financial year has risen by 40%. This is partly down to the number of elections held but also an increase in external bookings. Through existing resources, we have also restructured the Facilities team to provide more resilience and support to the Civic centre and provide more capacity to properly market and promote our Conference and business facilities to South Ribble and beyond.

Questions to the Cabinet Member (Environment).

Councillor Alan Ogilvie asked the Cabinet Member what actions she would be implementing to improve the parking issues on the Worden estate around Runshaw College. Although aware of the recent focus campaign by the Council, the situation had not improved. Councillor Ogilvie also enquired if the parking enforcement officers could assist in this issue and why the overflow car park was open at the weekend but closed in the week when the college was open.

The Leader of the Council responded to say that parking was a top priority for the Cabinet Member and that she intended to work with Councillors Ogilvie and Moon on the issues on the Worden Estate and that they were also looking to develop a Car Parking Strategy for the Borough.

The Council had shared enforcement powers with Lancashire County Council and the Cabinet Member was currently looking into how this could be better managed, the Leader urged Members to lobby their fellow County Councillors regarding this matter.

The overflow car park at Worden Park had been severely damaged by students of Runshaw College at a cost of £120k. Once fully repaired the Council would be looking to reassess its future use.

Questions to the Cabinet Member (Planning, Regeneration and City Deal).

Councillor Phil Smith asked the Cabinet Member to provide an update on the Leyland Town Deal, particularly in relation to the Leyland Town Board.

The Cabinet Member reported that the Board had held its first meeting at the British Commercial Vehicle Museum in Leyland on 28 January. The makeup of the Board was prescribed by government and was business focused. The meeting was very well attended with many local businesses represented and following discussions, they had chosen to concentrate on improvements around the Market area of the town. The next step would be appointing a Chair form within the group, in the meantime the Council would continue to provide support and advice.

## **95 Questions to Chairs of Committees and My Neighbourhood Areas**

Questions to the Chairs of Committee's

No questions received.

Questions to the Chairs of My Neighbourhood Areas

Councillor David Howarth asked the Chair of the Western Parishes Neighbourhood Forum, if he would agree that the Forum could undertake more joint meetings with the four parish councils in their area to promote better working relations.

The Chair of the Neighbourhood Forum, Councillor Colin Coulton responded, yes.

## **96 Questions to Member Champions and Representatives on Outside Bodies**

Questions to Member Champions

Councillor Stephen Thurlbourn asked the Armed Forces Member Champion if he had managed to progress a request to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE day with the Kings Royal Hussar's.

The Armed Forces Member Champion responded to say that he was having some difficulty contacting the unit but was hopeful that they would be able to organise an event sometime in May.

Questions to representatives of Outside Bodies.

No questions were received.

## **97 Exclusion of Press and Public**

RESOLVED (Unanimously):

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business as it involved the discussion defined as exempt from publication under paragraphs 3 and 5 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 'Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings' and in which public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing it.

Councillors Michael Green, Jim Marsh and Barrie Yates left the meeting.

## **98 Future of City Deal**

Council considered a confidential report of the Director of Planning and Property that advised on progress made with discussions regarding the City Deal since its meeting on 25 September 2019. The report also provided Members with the opportunity to support a bid for external funding which would aid the City Deal.

The report was debated at length with Members on both sides of the Chamber having significant concerns around the City Deal finance model whereby costs, particularly for the major highway infrastructure have risen substantially. There is a realisation by all Councillors that the Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal is at a critical point in shaping its future and it is felt that if it was to continue, new arrangements will need to be agreed between the partners.

The Leader of the Council advised Council that a joint letter from the Leaders of all the City Deal Partners had been sent to Central Government to request what action they intended to take to fulfil their responsibilities under the current Heads of Terms.

The emerging revised Heads of Terms will place a significant continued financial risk on the Council. However, there are a number of current external funding bids under development or consideration for City Deal projects, which if successful will assist significantly in meeting the financial funding gap and reducing the risk to South Ribble Borough Council.

One such example is the Homes England Small Sites Fund which could add additional income into the City Deal model but is contingent on further housing coming forward in both South Ribble and Preston over a longer time period.

If the Council did not support the Homes England SSF bid, it would clearly put at risk the potential to draw in significant funding in to the City Deal and may also put at risk other funding bids which are being used to match such finance and the Interim Chief Executive advised, that if the Council did not support this recommendation, it would pose a significant financial risk to the Council and that is of the utmost importance.

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Margaret Smith asked for a short adjournment to allow the Conservative Group to discuss the amended recommendations further considering the debate and the advice of the Interim Chief Executive. The Mayor agreed to adjourn the meeting at 9.25pm for a five-minute period.

Upon the return of the Conservative Group to the Chamber at 9.30pm, an amendment to the motion, to include 'subject to final Council approval at the end of the first recommendation, was proposed by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Foster, seconded by Councillor Mick Titherington and subsequently

RESOVED (Unanimously):

1. That Council supports the bid from the City Deal partners in to the Homes England Small Sites Fund (SSF) and agree to contribute an additional 3,900 homes on appropriate sites from South Ribble in to the SSF Bid, subject to final Council approval.
2. That Council agree to the allocated Safeguarded Land and a Garden Village concept being modelled in principle, only as contributors to the 3,900 homes on the understanding that this does not prejudice the outcome of the Local Plan or any future planning applications.
3. That a further report come to full Council following discussions on a revised City Deal.

Chair

Date