

Minutes of	Council
Meeting date	Wednesday, 22 November 2023
Committee members present:	Councillors Chris Lomax (Mayor), Peter Mullineaux (Deputy Mayor), Will Adams, Jacky Alty, Hilary Bedford, Damian Bretherton, Aniela Bylinski Gelder, Matt Campbell, Colin Coulton, Matthew Farnworth, Mathew Forshaw, Paul Foster, Peter Gabbott, Jasmine Gleave, James Gleeson, Mary Green, Michael Green, Harry Hancock, Jo Hindle-Taylor, David Howarth, Clare Hunter, Lou Jackson, Will King, James Lillis, Keith Martin, Nicky Peet, Lesley Pritchard, John Rainsbury, George Rear, Wesley Roberts, Colin Sharples, David Shaw, Margaret Smith, Phil Smith, Emma Stevens, Elaine Stringfellow, Caleb Tomlinson, Matthew Tomlinson, Angela Turner, Karen Walton, Ian Watkinson, Connor Watson, Kath Unsworth and Haydn Williams
Committee members attended virtually (non-voting):	Councillors Jane Bell, James Flannery, Pete Pillinger and Paul Wharton-Hardman
Officers present:	Chris Sinnott (Chief Executive) and Chris Moister (Director of Governance) and Coral Astbury (Democratic and Member Services Officer)
Public:	2

A video recording of the public session of this meeting is available to view on [YouTube here](#)

46 Minutes Silence

The Mayor invited Members to observe a minutes silence in memory of former Mayor and Councillor, Fred Cooper.

Councillors Peter Mullineaux, Paul Foster, David Howarth and Phil Smith paid tribute and sent their condolences to family.

47 Presentation of long service award

The Mayor presented former Councillor Carol Wooldridge with her long service award.

48 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Deborah Ashton, Jane Bell, Julie Buttery, James Flannery, Pete Pillinger and Paul Wharton-Hardman.

49 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Michael Green declared a non-pecuniary interest in items 12 and 18 and indicated he would remain in the meeting for item 12 but leave the meeting for item 18.

Councillor David Howarth and Councillor Matthew Tomlinson both declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 18 and indicated they would participate in the debate and vote for that item.

50 Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 20 September 2023 of Council

Councillor Karen Walton advised there had been a typing error under item 37 and referred to the voting record on page 9 and advised her vote had not been recorded.

The Mayor advised Councillor Walton that voting records would be checked by Officers and the minutes updated accordingly.

Resolved: (

That the minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a correct record for signing by the Mayor.

51 Mayors Announcements

The Mayor gave an update on his recent duties, including his quiz night, Remembrance Sunday and A Taste of Leyland.

The Mayor also mentioned some upcoming events such as his Christmas Banquet and the Extraordinary meeting of the full Council on 6 December 2023.

52 Urgent Decisions

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Foster, outlined the report and explained that only two urgent decisions had been taken since the last Council meeting.

It was proposed by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Foster and seconded by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member (Property, Assets, Commercial Services and Major Developments) Councillor Aniela Bylinski Gelder and subsequently,

Resolved:

Report was noted.

53 Cabinet

Members received a general report of the Cabinet meeting held on 11 October and 15 November.

It was proposed by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Foster, seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Aniela Bylinski Gelder and subsequently,

Resolved:

Report was noted.

54 Governance Committee

Members received a general report of the Governance Committee meeting held on 26 September.

It was proposed by the Chair of Governance Committee, Councillor Colin Sharples, seconded by the Vice-Chair of Governance Committee, Councillor Wesley Roberts and subsequently,

Resolved:

Report was noted.

55 Scrutiny Committee

Members received a general report of the Corporate, Performance and Budget Scrutiny Committee held on 8 November.

It was proposed by the Chair of the Corporate, Performance and Budget Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Will Adams and seconded by the Vice-Chair, Councillor Michael Green and subsequently,

Resolved:

Report was noted.

56 South Ribble - Corporate Strategy Refresh 23/24

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Foster, presented a report of the Chief Executive.

The report sought approval for the refresh of the corporate strategy 2023/24 – 2024/25 and provided an overview of performance in 2022-23 and changes proposed for 2023-24. The corporate priorities had been refreshed in response to the challenges faced by residents and businesses and performance measures were being reviewed and updated.

The following members participated in the debate: Councillors Paul Foster (Leader of the Council), David Howarth (Leader of the Liberal Democrats) and Will King.

Members discussed the corporate strategy and the proposed targets in the report.

An amendment was proposed by Councillor Will King on behalf of the Conservative Group and seconded by Councillor Michael Green, that sought to amend the recommendation within the report to the following:

“The Corporate Strategy 2023-24 and 2024-25 be approved but the target remain at 80% for the indicator for customers being satisfied with the service that they receive from the council”.

Councillor Foster did not accept the amendment and spoke against it.

Councillor Foster proposed moving to a vote on the amendment, seconded by Councillor Bylinski Gelder and subsequently.

Resolved: (For: 25, Against: 18) that the meeting move to the vote on the amendment.

For: Councillors Adams, Alty, Bedford, Bylinski Gelder, Farnworth, Foster, Gabbott, Gleeson, Hindle-Taylor, Hunter, Jackson, Lomax, Martin, Peet, Pritchard, Roberts, Sharples, Shaw, Stringfellow, Stevens, C Tomlinson, M Tomlinson, Unsworth, Watkinson and Williams.

Against: Councillors Bretherton, Campbell, Coulton, Forshaw, Gleave, Mary Green, Michael Green, Hancock, Howarth, Lillis, Mullineaux, Rainsbury, Rear, P Smith, M Smith, Turner, Watson and Walton.

A vote was undertaken on the proposed amendment and subsequently.

Resolved: (For: 16, Against: 21) that the amendment be lost.

For: Councillors Bretherton, Campbell, Coulton, Forshaw, Hancock, Howarth, King, Lillis, Rainsbury, Rear, Shaw, P Smith, M Smith, Turner, Watson and Walton.

Against: Councillors Adams, Alty, Bedford, Bylinski Gelder, Farnworth, Foster, Gleeson, Hindle-Taylor, Hunter, Jackson, Martin, Pritchard, Roberts, Sharples, Stringfellow, Stevens, C Tomlinson, M Tomlinson, Unsworth, Watkinson and Williams.

A vote was undertaken on the substantive motion.

It was proposed by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Foster, seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Aniela Bylinski Gelder and subsequently

Resolved: (For: 24, Abstain: 18) that:

1. The Corporate Strategy 2023/24 – 2024/25 be approved.

For: Councillors Adams, Alty, Bedford, Bylinski Gelder, Farnworth, Foster, Gabbott, Gleeson, Hindle-Taylor, Hunter, Jackson, Martin, Mullineaux, Peet, Pritchard, Roberts, Sharples, Shaw, Stringfellow, Stevens, C Tomlinson, Unsworth, Watkinson and Williams.

Abstain: Councillors Bretherton, Campbell, Coulton, Forshaw, Gleave, Mary Green, Michael Green, Hancock, Howarth, Lillis, Mullineaux, Rainsbury, Rear, P Smith, M Smith, Turner, Watson and Walton.

57 Statement of Community Involvement

The Cabinet Member (Planning, Business Support and Economic Development), Councillor James Flannery, introduced a report that presented members with the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in relation to the consultation procedures to be undertaken by the Council for planning policy and development management functions. The report also sought agreement to consult on the draft statement.

Councillor Mary Green spoke on the item and advised the report had been considered by Planning Committee who felt that a six week consultation period had been appropriate. Councillor Green had now reconsidered the report and wanted to propose an amendment to the report to increase the consultation period to eight weeks due to the upcoming Christmas period. The amendment was seconded by Councillor Phil Smith.

The Leader of the Council advised that the Council was working to strict deadlines regarding production of the Local Plan and an extension of consultation period could impact future stages.

An amendment was proposed by Councillor David Howarth and seconded by Councillor David Shaw to increase the consultation period within the report to six weeks, in line with the recommendations from Planning Committee.

Councillor Flannery explained the consultation process would commence following the Christmas period, but he was happy to accept the amendment that the period of consultation should run for a period of six weeks. Councillor Foster confirmed they would accept the amendment.

Councillor Mary Green withdrew her amendment.

A vote was undertaken on the proposed amendment and subsequently,

Resolved: Unanimously

1. Council agrees that the draft Statement of Community Involvement, contained at Appendix 1, be the subject of public consultation, for a period of six weeks.

58 Healthy Weight Collaboration

The Cabinet Member (Communities, Leisure and Wellbeing) Councillor Clare Hunter, presented a report that provided details of the proposed collaboration agreement with Lancashire County Council (LCC) to deliver Healthy Weight Services in South Ribble.

The report also sought approval to receive associated funding for a period of five years with a possible extension of three years.

Members noted the risk of illness due to weight was higher in Lancashire against a national average and addressing these issues were complex. The programme would follow a holistic approach and demonstrate the value a district council could add when trying to address weight issues.

It was proposed by the Cabinet Member (Communities, Leisure and Wellbeing), Councillor Clare Hunter and seconded by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Foster and subsequently,

Resolved: (Unanimously)

1. To receive the funding amount of £69,015 per year, a total of £345,075 over five years and £552,120 over eight years and to establish an expenditure budget to administer the funding which has been allocated to South Ribble.
2. Delegate authority to Director of Communities and Leisure in consultation with the Cabinet Member (Communities, Leisure and Wellbeing) to agree, accept and implement the final delivery plan with Lancashire County Council.

59 Constitution - Planning

The Chair of Governance Committee, Councillor Colin Sharples presented a report that asked member's to consider possible changes to the constitution in relation to the work of Planning Committee.

Councillor Sharples advised that the Constitution Task Group had taken a look at the workings of Planning Committee following a notice of motion submitted by Councillor Turner. The committee had considered evidence from a number of persons and best practice at other authorities. The task group had met twice before the May 2023 election and one meeting after, with a new membership.

Councillor Sharples thanked all members for their input into the task group.

An amendment was proposed by the Deputy Leader, Councillor Bylinski Gelder on behalf of Councillor Flannery and seconded by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Foster that the report be,

“referred back to Governance Committee for further consideration. During the period when the review of the Constitution relating to Planning Committee took place there was a substantial change in the membership of Governance Committee. It is therefore considered that the report should be referred back to Governance Committee to allow more time for a greater consideration of these issues, with the further review to take place at an appropriate time in the schedule of work for the Committee.”

Members debated the amendment included Councillors Margaret Smith, Phil Smith, Karen Walton, Damian Bretherton, Michael Green, Wesley Roberts and James Flannery.

A vote was taken on the amendment and subsequently,

Resolved: (For: 24, Against: 20)

1. That the report be referred back to Governance Committee for further consideration.

For: Councillors Adams, Alty, Bedford, Bylinski Gelder, Farnworth, Foster, Gabbott, Gleeson, Hindle-Taylor, Hunter, Jackson, Lomax, Martin, Peet, Pritchard, Roberts, Sharples, Stevens, Stringfellow, C Tomlinson, M Tomlinson, Unsworth, Watkinson and Williams.

Against: Councillors Bretherton, Campbell, Coulton, Forshaw, Gleave, Mary Green, Michael Green, Hancock, Howarth, King, Lillis, Mullineaux, Rainsbury, Rear, Shaw, M Smith, P Smith, Turner, Walton and Watson.

60 Notice of Motion

Councillor Ange Turner proposed a notice of motion, seconded by Councillor David Howarth that raised concern at the level of raw sewage spills in South Ribble.

Councillor Turner explained that water companies, such as United Utilities, were continuing to release raw sewage into public waterways and it needed to be stopped with mandatory targets and timescales for the spills to be stopped.

Councillor Matthew Tomlinson proposed an amendment to the motion, seconded by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Foster that sought to make the following amendments;

“After ‘Strengthen Ofwat’s powers to hold water companies accountable.’

Insert the following; “and implement the Labour Party Proposal to place the water industry under ‘special measures’

- a) Ensuring that water bosses will face personal criminal liability for extreme and persistent lawbreaking.*
- b) Introducing severe & automatic fines for illegal discharges that water companies cannot ignore*
- c) Forcing all water companies to monitor every single water outlet*
- d) Banning the payment of bonuses to water bosses who are found to pump significant levels of raw sewage into our rivers, lakes and seas.*

And

Change the wording of the closing statement from “Council resolves to write to the government” to ‘Council asks the Leader to write to the government.’

The following members participated in the debate on the amendment: Councillors Paul Foster, Will King, Phil Smith, Matthew Farnworth, Damian Bretherton, Karen Walton, Jacky Alty, David Howarth, Matthew Tomlinson

Councillor Matthew Tomlinson highlighted during the debate that he thought the letter would be stronger if it came from the Leader of the Council and the notice of motion was written by himself.

Councillor Howarth indicated that the amendment was accepted by his group as proposers of the motion.

A vote was taken on the substantive motion which had adopted and included the amended wording and was subsequently,

Resolved: (For: 31, Against: 10 and Abstain: 3)

1. The Leader of the Council will write to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs calling on the government to:
 - i) Set meaningful targets and deadlines for water companies to end sewage discharges.
 - ii) Introduce a sewage tax on water company profits to fund the clean up of waterways.
 - iii) Reduce the number of licences given to water companies permitting them to discharge sewage into rivers.
 - iv) Strengthen Ofwat's powers to hold companies accountable and implement the Labour Party proposal to place the water industry under 'special measures':
 - A) Ensuring that water bosses will face personal criminal liability for extreme and persistent lawbreaking.
 - B) Introducing severe & automatic fines for illegal discharges that water companies cannot ignore
 - C) Forcing all water companies to monitor every single water outlet
 - D) Banning the payment of bonuses to water bosses who are found to pump significant levels of raw sewage into our rivers, lakes and seas."
 - v) Cease making cuts to Environmental Agency funding and ensure that it has enough staff to significantly improve its monitoring of the threats of inadequate storm-water infrastructure and pollution from sewage and agricultural nitrates.
 - vi) Work with local authorities to ensure water companies protect our rivers by a requirement to invest upfront in sewerage infrastructure to reflect environmental objectives in local plans and planning applications.

For: Councillors Adams, Alty, Bedford, Bylinski Gelder, Campbell, Farnworth, Foster, Gabbott, Gleeson, Hancock, Hindle-Taylor, Howarth, Hunter, Jackson, Lillis, Lomax, Martin, Mullineaux, Peet, Pritchard, Roberts, Sharples, Shaw, Stevens, Stringfellow, C Tomlinson, M Tomlinson, Turner, Unsworth, Watkinson and Williams.

Against: Councillors Bretherton, Coulton, Mary Green, Michael Green, Rainsbury, Rear, M Smith, P Smith, Walton and Watson.

Abstain: Councillors Forshaw, Gleave and King.

61 Questions to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Shaw asked the Leader if Council would be able to see the report from the AEA review into the electoral processes following the election in May 2023. The Leader explained the report did not find any failings within the authority; however, a report would be brought back to the appropriate committee.

Councillor Williams referred to the recent government decision on Pickering's Farm and asked the Leader if he thought the level of existing congestion on Leyland Road was unacceptable. The Leader agreed and responded to say that he would be contacting the MP to discuss the issue further.

Councillor David Howarth asked the Leader if the Council operated in a transparent manner where council tax expenditure was subject to checks. In response the Leader explained that every decision was made appropriately in line with strict governance arrangements.

A written question was received in advance of the meeting from a member of the public and asked the Leader the following:

"In my email of the 26/10 I invited you to distance the Council from the sponsorship by Royal Flush Vapes of the lights on ceremony in Leyland.

I therefore have to ask you to justify the decision to associate SRBC and a vaping company in sponsoring what is the quintessential children's event ; the turning on of the Christmas lights?

Is the Council falling into the same trap as the Sports world when it succumbed to the tobacco industry?"

My daughter and many other teachers have had vaping problems within their schools and we are constantly hearing of children becoming addicted to and suffering ill health because of vaping."

In response, the Leader explained the light switch on event was organised by the Leyland Town Team and not the Council. The Council only provide support for the advertising and stewarding of the event. The Leader had spoken to the Chair of Leyland Town Team to express concern over the sponsorship of the event.

A second written question was received in advance of the meeting from a member of the public and asked the Leader the following:

"In November 2021 the council passed a motion to write to the Minister of State for Crime & Policing, and the Home Secretary calling for Misogyny to be made a hate crime. On the 9th March 2023 BBC News reported that Broadcaster Pat Sharp has left his Greatest Hits Radio show after reportedly making an inappropriate comment to a woman at an event.

Sharp made a comment about a woman in attendance in front of around 400 people while hosting the event.

"For the day and age we live in, it was completely unacceptable," said one guest in the room. "It was inappropriate and disgusting... it was the talk of the evening and completely ruined the atmosphere."

A spokesman for Greatest Hits Radio said this issue has now been brought to our attention, we have agreed with Pat Sharp that he will not return to the station immediately." Please could you explain how the council can hire Pat Sharp to front "Music in the Park?"

The Leader explained that Pat Sharp had not been found guilty of any hate crime or misogyny and had made an error of judgement, Pat Sharp had apologised and things had moved on.

62 Questions to Cabinet Members

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member (Property, Assets, Commercial Services and Major Developments)

A written question had been submitted in advance by Councillor David Howarth that asked the following:

"Could the Deputy Leader therefore explain how a sum of £15,000 of South Ribble Borough Council tax payers' money can be paid into a third-party bank account without the recipient's knowledge, for a grant they didn't apply for, to pay an invoice for work they didn't order?"

Which further leads me to the questions - how does the award of £15,000 from the Boost Fund Plus to a Community Hub which is ineligible, meet with the requirements of the Local Code of Corporate Governance?"

How does this attempt to circumvent financial regulations sit with public perception and the ethical standards set out in the Nolan Principles especially as the scheme was prominent in political literature during the recent local elections?"

In response, Councillor Bylinski Gelder explained that she was no longer responsible for this area of the authority however the Monitoring Officer had already had discussions with Councillor Howarth on this issue. Penwortham Community Hub had proposed the project to allocate £15,000 of money to Penwortham Town Council

(PTC) with the support of the Leader and Cabinet under the Boost Fund Programme. This was rejected as it would have emptied the fund, however a bid came from PTC through boost fund plus. They met the criteria as they are a not for profit organisation and a constituted community group.

Councillor Bylinski Gelder explained she had a signed grant agreement with PTC signed by the Town Council's Democratic Services Officer. The Community Hub Chair at the time, Councillor Turner, was listed as the recipient and project manager. The grant funding was paid into PTC bank account following receipt of the signed grant agreement. There were no governance issues from the Council.

Councillor David Howarth asked why he had not been given the outcome of the investigation. The Mayor responded to explain that paperwork would be made available to Councillor Howarth.

Councillor Karen Walton explained that a number of businesses surrounding Hope Terrace Car Park had not yet received a consultation letter and asked when this would be sent. In response, Councillor Bylinski Gelder explained the car parking scheme was under review to January and a letter was only sent to the businesses who had contacted the Council.

Councillor Bretherton asked if any efficiency reports on commercial buildings, including investment properties, had been undertaken in preparation for the Council's Carbon Neutral target of 2030. Councillor Bylinski Gelder advised she could only comment on the building condition survey and the question may be better asked of the Cabinet Member (Neighbourhood and Waste), however she was happy to respond to further questions in writing.

Cabinet Member (Finance and Public Protection)

Councillor Turner asked if the Council had submitted a grant form to government showing the COVID grants as fully spent. Councillor Tomlinson agreed to provide a written response.

Councillor Adams referred to the unsuccessful levelling up bid for the Penwortham Masterplan and asked if there was a solution to the funding challenge. Councillor Tomlinson explained that £2million had already been identified and the authority was committed to delivering the plan. The budget would be presented in February and would expand on the future capital programme. Members were working with officers to find a solution.

63 Exclusion of Press and Public

Resolved: (Unanimously)

That the press and public be excluded for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

64 City Deal

Councillor Michael Green had previously declared an interest for this item of business and the left the meeting for the duration.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Foster, presented a report that provided members with options around the City Deal and explained the ongoing situation and concerns.

The following members participated in the debate: Councillors Peter Mullineaux, Margaret Smith, Mary Green, David Shaw and Phil Smith.

It was proposed by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Foster and seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Aniela Bylinski Gelder and subsequently,

Resolved: (Unanimously)

1. Council resolves to implement the five year run on as detailed in paragraph 9 of the Heads of Terms dated 12 September 2014.

Chair

Date