

MINUTES OF COUNCIL

MEETING DATE **Wednesday, 25 September 2019**

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, James Flannery, Derek Forrest, Paul Foster, Mary Green, Michael Green, Jon Hesketh, Mick Higgins, David Howarth, Cliff Hughes, Susan Jones, Chris Lomax, Jim Marsh, Keith Martin, Christine Melia, Caroline Moon, Jacqui Mort, Peter Mullineaux, Alan Ogilvie, Colin Sharples, Margaret Smith, Phil Smith, David Suthers, Stephen Thurlbourn, Michael Titherington, Caleb Tomlinson, Matthew Tomlinson, Matthew Trafford, Angela Turner, Karen Walton, Ian Watkinson, P Wharton-Hardman and Barrie Yates

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

PUBLIC: 12

34 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ken Jones, David Shaw and Carol Wooldridge.

35 Minutes of the last Council meeting, 24 July 2019

RESOLVED (Unanimously):

That subject to the following amendments,

Minute 27, paragraph six: (*amended wording*)

In response to a question raised by Councillor Angela Turner concerning Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, the Leader, with the consent of Councillor Carol Wooldridge read out a confidential email, *the link to which* had been published on social media by Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman, following a request made under the FOI Act, concerning Councillor's emails. The email originally sent by the Leader to members of the Labour Group was extremely sensitive and the Leader considered that it should not have been placed on social media.

Minute 27, paragraph 7: *(amended wording)*

The Leader made a plea for this type of behaviour to stop and asked the Conservative Group to investigate Councillor Wharton-Hardman's actions as a matter of urgency. Councillor Caroline Moon, Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group provided assurances *that the specifics of what had been released in an email thread had been duly noted*. Councillor Moon did however query what information had to be disclosed upon request.

the minutes of the Council meeting held on 24 July 2019, be confirmed as a correct record for signing by the Mayor.

36 Declarations of Interest

Dave Whelan, Interim Monitoring Officer, declared a Personal Interest in Item 17.

Jane Blundell, Interim Section 151 Officer declared a Personal Interest in Item 18.

Councillor Michael Green declared a Personal Interest in Item 20 in his role as a Cabinet Member for Lancashire County Council.

Councillors Jim Marsh, David Howarth, Matthew Tomlinson and Barrie Yates all declared a Personal Interest in Item 20 as Elected Members for Lancashire County Council.

Councillor Matthew Campbell declared a Personal Interest in Item 20 as an employee of Lancashire County Council.

37 Mayoral Announcements

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

38 Cabinet

Members considered a general report of the meeting of Cabinet held on 11 September 2019.

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

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

39 Scrutiny Committee

Members considered a general report of the Scrutiny Committee that had taken place on 2 September and the Scrutiny Budget and Performance Panel that had been held on 9 September 2019.

The Chair of Scrutiny, Councillor David Howarth commended the work that had been undertaken to date from both sides of the Chamber on helping to develop a robust Work Programme for the Committee.

It was moved by Councillor David Howarth, seconded by Councillor Colin Coulton and subsequently

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

40 Appointment to Outside Body: Moss Side Community Forum Executive Committee

Council considered a report of the Assistant Director of Scrutiny and Democratic Services that made an outside body appointment to the Moss Side Community Forum Executive.

The Council had received a request from Moss Side Community Forum to appoint Councillor Colin Sharples to their Executive Committee.

The Leader of the Council explained that the community group had been having some problems regarding safeguarding and other issues and Councillor Sharples had assisted them in putting procedures in place to alleviate concerns. Following his involvement, the group had asked the Council to make a formal appointment.

It was moved by Councillor Paul Foster, seconded by Councillor Mick Titherington to appoint Councillor Colin Sharples to the Executive Committee of the Moss Side Community Forum.

Councillor Margaret Smith proposed an amendment to the motion, to allow for Councillor Michael Green to also be appointed to the Executive Committee of the Moss Side Community Forum as he was a Ward Councillor of Moss Side and had actively been involved with the group for several years. The amendment was seconded by Councillor Caroline Moon.

Upon being put to the vote, the amendment was lost (Yes: 21, No: 25).

A vote on the substantive motion was then taken and was

RESOLVED (Yes: 24, Abstained: 22) that the recommendation to appoint Councillor Colin Sharples to the Executive Committee of the Moss Side Community Forum be approved.

41 Draft Refreshed Corporate Council Plan 2019-23

Council considered a report of the Interim Chief Executive that sought approval of the revision of the Council's Corporate Plan for 2019-23. The report detailed a revision of the Corporate Priorities which have been redefined as Outcomes. Each Outcome has between three and four priorities which defined how the Council's Outcomes would be achieved.

The new revised Outcomes are as follows:

- Excellent, Investment, Financial Sustainability
- Health, Wellbeing and Safety
- Place, Homes and Environment; and
- Our People and Communities.

In summary, the changes made included an update vision for the Council, the inclusion of 13 new activities, along with 32 existing ones having been reviewed and refocused. The revised plan has a greater emphasis on the environment and climate change, tackling health inequalities and engagement with communities and development of active democracy and participation.

The Leader gave thanks to their Liberal Democrat colleagues who held a shared vision for the Council and also commended the bio-diversity work being undertaken by Councillors Bretherton and Campbell which had been incorporated as a new project in the revised Plan.

The Leader commented that the Council was committed to being open and transparent, continuing to develop the digital strategy and changing lifestyles by tackling the air quality issues of the borough. The Council also aimed to be carbon neutral by 2030. The review of the Neighbourhood Forums was about residents shaping their communities and they were looking forward to working with partners across the Borough, sharing skills and resources.

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Margaret Smith commented that she was happy to see that a lot of projects that had been identified by the previous administration had remained in the revised Plan and welcomed the biodiversity work that was being undertaken by her colleagues.

Councillor Caroline Moon requested that the wording “bring back to life our parks” was amended to say “continue to be developed”, as this would send out the wrong message to staff. The Leader agreed to this being amended throughout the report.

Although queried by Councillor Alan Ogilvie, the Leader reiterated that there was a commitment by the Council, that the Borough would be carbon neutral by 2030, not just the Council.

Councillor Karen Walton reiterated that the residents of Farrington East, West and Lostock Hall had not been consulted on the recent Neighbourhood Forum changes and that there were concerns as to how funds would be spent in their areas. The Leader responded by saying that a number of residents and parish councillors had come forward to support the new arrangements but that the review on community engagement had not yet reached its conclusion so there was still time to get involved.

In response to a question regarding the proposals for a Youth Council, the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement, Social Justice and Wealth Building declined to comment further until the review on Community Involvement was complete.

In response to questions around the planting of 110,000 trees across the Borough, the Cabinet Member for the Environment explained that a list of all the sites identified, along with the suppliers was available for information.

Councillor Matthew Tomlinson, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Assets summed up by thanking staff for their hard work in updating the Corporate Plan in

line with the Cabinet wishes. The new Plan reflected the promises that had been made by the Group in their Election manifesto and they were looking forward to its delivery.

It was moved by Councillor Paul Foster, seconded by Councillor Matthew Tomlinson and

RESOLVED (Unanimously):

That Council approves the Corporate Plan for 2019-23 attached at Appendix 1 of the report.

42 New Leisure Centre for South Ribble

Council considered a joint report of the Interim Chief Executive and the Assistant Director of Projects and Development that updated Members on the development of a new Leisure Campus in South Ribble.

The report provided the history of the Leisure Campus project to date, the context of understanding the current state of the Leisure Stock within the borough, the options available for potential next steps and a brief summary of the current operations management of South Ribble's Leisure Centres.

It was reported that a conditions survey had long since highlighted the need for significant investment in our leisure centres and the current contract with South Ribble, Community Leisure Ltd and SERCO Leisure Operating Ltd ends on 31 March 2021.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Foster explained the background to the report. During 2018, a joint working group of Members had pulled together a brief for a Campus style Leisure Centre on the West Paddock site that would replace the existing Leyland Leisure Centre. The brief culminated in a Cabinet report being considered in June 2018 which agreed to the appointment of a client Project Director to act on behalf of the Council to manage the project. A further report to Cabinet later in that year also saw an agreement to appoint consultants Faith and Gould, procured by the PAGABO framework on a fixed contract fee of £1.8m to support the Council through the design, procurement and building of the proposed new Campus style Leisure Centre. It was also agreed that any expenditure in £100k tranches would be reported back to Members, however, this would appear to have never been done, causing concern about the approach that was adopted in relation to the current spend to date.

The belief at that time, based on schemes elsewhere, was that the cost of the project would be in the region of 15m and this was allowed for in the Capital programme of the Council. Towards the end of 2018 there was recognition by the Project Manager, that the project would considerably exceed the £15m budgeted for, however this information was not communicated formally to all Members. A report had reportedly been written but this was never submitted to Cabinet.

Members of the Shadow Cabinet admitted that there was a backlog of maintenance costs but this was one of the main reasons why the development of a new centre was being explored in the first place. There was a real need to build something that was fit for residents of the borough in the future. They also disputed that they had

had sight of the updated costings at the beginning of the year. Councillor Margaret Smith commented that the 16m figure which was identified as the cost for development of the Leisure Pool was always mentioned in reports, but none of the other associated costs were ever mentioned. The Conservative Group were happy to support the recommendations in the report but did not necessarily consider the current site as the best option.

In February/March of this year the project brief was properly costed that resulted in a significantly raised figure of £27m to deliver the agreed brief, which after the undertaking of a cost engineering process was reduced to £23.7m, subject to a detailed design and procurement process.

A second option has also been put forward with additional income generation facilities, with a cost back up to around £26.5m. Both costings, take account of buildings inflation and all fees and preliminaries. The briefing and costings were appended to the report and all Members were invited to a detailed briefing session ahead of this meeting.

In response to Members concerns, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Leisure stated that further considerations could be given to the location of the development.

Councillor Caroline Moon sought clarity on the £600k for associated costs listed within the report as a potential loss for the Council. The Interim Chief Executive explained that this was money that had been spent on fees in relation to the scheme that if not brought to fruition would be written off, some of the money however, could be used if the decision was taken to relocate the development.

The Deputy Leader stated that in future all Members of Council will be informed of all the facts before any decision is taken. There are a number of factors to be taken into consideration and he welcomed involvement from Members through the establishment of a cross party working group to consider all the options before being brought back to full Council for a decision.

It was moved by Councillor Mick Titherington, seconded by Councillor Paul Foster, and

RESOLVED (Unanimously):

1. That Council grants authority to officers to prepare a Master Plan for the future of Leisure Services and Leisure facilities in South Ribble to be considered by a newly set up cross party working group before bringing back to full Council for decision;
2. That Council grants authority to officers to explore the financial solution to take forward a Leisure Campus project;
3. That Council grants authority to officers to draw up a costed investment plan for the Council's remaining Leisure Centres that is affordable and reduces the on-going revenue subsidy at those sites over the next five years;
4. That Council grants authority to officers to consider future management options for the Council's Leisure Centres. To bring back recommendations as to the way forward which included the possibility of continuing work with our current operator in the short and long-term against alternative options

available including a potential in-house operation and a Trust operation with a view to reducing the on-going Leisure subsidy; and

5. That Council grants authority for a budget of £50,000 in order to seek necessary, legal, financial, HR and Leisure advice and support, to develop viable future Leisure Centre management options.
6. That Internal Audit investigate the approach adopted in relation to the current spend on the Leisure Centre proposals.

43 B2: Village Development Supplementary Planning Document

Council considered a report of the Director of Planning and Property that sought adoption of the B2 – Village Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

The proposed SPD would become part of a suite of Central Lancashire SPDs that have already been adopted in accordance with the Local Planning Regulations and the National Planning Policy Framework conforming and responding to all relevant local and national policies, and based upon a robust and up-to-date evidence base.

There was agreement that the Council should undertake their own housing needs survey in relation to village development.

It was moved by Councillor Bill Evans, seconded by Councillor Mick Titherington, and

RESOLVED (Unanimously):

1. That the Council adopts the B2 – Village Development Supplementary Planning Document.
2. That the Council grants delegated authority to the Director of Planning and Property in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration and City Deal, to make any minor text, layout and formatting changes on the publication of the document.

44 Mobile Homes Fee Policy

The Council considered a report of the Head of Licensing that sought to review the existing fees policy and extend the current structure relating to fees for a further three years.

The three year fees policy would allow the Council to aggregate the costs over a longer period to give a fairer and more stable structure. Consultation had taken place with the licensed site operators within the Borough and the proposed revised fees policy published on the Council's website.

The Licensing and Public Safety Committee had considered the report and were recommending Council approval.

It was moved by Councillor Susan Jones, seconded by Aniela Bylinski Gelder and

RESOLVED (Unanimously):

1. That Council approves the extension of the current fee structure for a further three years.

45 Questions to the Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Margaret Smith, circulated a social media thread that had been published by Councillor Wharton Hardman. Councillor Smith stated, that following the last Council meeting where Councillor Foster had accused Councillor Wharton Hardman of publishing inappropriate material on social media, she and her Deputy, Councillor Caroline Moon had met with the Leader of the Council to clarify the actions undertaken by Councillor Wharton Hardman, to try to ascertain why Councillor Foster had publicly attacked him and stated that he was owed an apology.

The Leader of the Council responded to say that he was disappointed by this action, he had met with Councillors Margaret Smith and Caroline Moon and had agreed to a change of wording to be reflected in the minutes, which had been undertaken at the start of the meeting. However, he did not accept that Councillor Paul Wharton Hardman had done no wrong.

Councillor Margaret Smith stated that she would not be asking Councillor Wharton Hardman to apologise because in her opinion he had done no wrong and that he had the support of the Conservative Group in this matter.

Councillor Caroline Moon asked the Leader of the Council if he would provide assurances that sensitive medical information would not be sent via email in future. The Leader responded by asking Councillor Moon to write to him separately about this issue.

A member of the public, Mr Darbyshire made a public apology to the Council for a letter that had been published in the local paper that had been misconstrued and stated that his retraction had been published that day. The Leader of the Council accepted his apology.

Mr Darbyshire also asked why the Extending of Shared Services and City Deal Update was being considered by Council in private session. The Leader explained that although he had asked for the two reports to be made public, it had not been possible at this stage, he promised to publish a public statement as soon as was practically possible with regards to both items.

46 Questions to Members of the Cabinet

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

Councillor Karen Walton asked the Cabinet Member what he thought about the latest news that Chorley and South Ribble District Hospital's Accident and Emergency unit faces closure as part of a series of options to be presented by the *Our Health Our Care* team.

The Cabinet Member, Councillor Mick Titherington stated that there was an expectation that a motion would be brought to the next Council meeting that will be properly debated upon.

A member of the public who spoke on behalf of the Chorley and South Ribble Hospital Campaign explained that they were trying to meet with all the authorities that were affected by the proposals before submitting their views to the consultation and thanked South Ribble Borough Council for its quick response.

Councillor Mick Titherington affirmed his confirmation of the meeting.

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

Councillor Ange Turner submitted a written question as follows:

Is the Cabinet Member aware that we have residents in the Borough who without any financial recompense are providing food and shelter to refugees awaiting a Home Office decision on their asylum appeal, in support of the Refugees at Home national charity.

Would the Cabinet Member agree with me that residents who have shown compassion to others should not find themselves in a situation whereby they lose their single tax discount and are financially penalised as a result.

Would the Cabinet Member consider amending the policy of this council to allow the single person discount from the council tax to remain in place under such circumstances?

The Cabinet Member, Councillor Matthew Tomlinson, responded as follows:

The changing of the Council Tax discounts and exemptions applicable would need to be changed via central Government legislation. However there is a provision within the Council tax recovery policy which will allow the Council to write off additional financial burden (difference in the Council tax bill) by using the 'social factors' criteria in the recovery policy.

Councillor Ange Turner added that Norwich City Council have amended their policy for people in this situation and Councillor Matthew Tomlinson said that he was happy to look at how other Councils had approached this issue.

Councillor Alan Ogilvie ask the Cabinet Member when they could expect to see the responses to the Worden Hall consultation now that it had ended.

The Cabinet Member, explained that a report would be going to the next Cabinet meeting on 16 October 2019 that would contain all the comments that had been received by the Council. The consultation period had been extended and over 500 responses had been submitted.

Councillor Colin Clark commented that he was pleased to see completion of phase one of the Business and Conference Centre, and asked if bookings had increased and if there were plans for taking forward phase two of the project. The Cabinet Member responded to say that there had been an increase in bookings and that he was currently working with officers to progress additional plans for the Centre that would include maximising the accommodation on the two floors above and improved

kitchen facilities. Councillor Tomlinson acknowledged that this was the continuation of a vision that had been expressed by the previous administration.

A member of the public, Mr Darbyshire asked the Cabinet Member how much the new Mayoral Car had cost the Council. The Cabinet Member explained that the Council had purchased a top of the range hybrid car, that had a list price of £40,000 for a reduced cost of around £32,000. The member of the public acknowledged that this was good value for money.

Questions to the Cabinet Member (Environment).

Councillor Renee Blow submitted a written question as follows:

At the September meeting of the council in 2017, I asked the then Cabinet Member as to what had happened to the consultation on car parking, and I was advised that the consultation was complete and discussions were taking place with Lancashire County Council.

Could the Cabinet Member advise as to whether after two years those discussions have been completed, what if anything was the outcome, and can assurance be given that a meaningful review of car parking in the Borough will now be considered and recommendations brought forward?

The Cabinet Member, Councillor Susan Jones responded by explaining that it is the intention of this administration to carry out a review of car parking across the borough and that consideration is currently being given to involving Scrutiny in the review.

Councillor Colin Clark asked that in relation to air quality measures, which parameters are being measured, how and what are the results. Councillor Susan Jones reported that the Climate Emergency Task Group would look into this issue more fully but would appreciate Councillor Clark submitting a written question in order to understand his concerns.

In response to a question from Councillor Stephen Thurlbourn, the Cabinet Member agreed that educating people to use reusable containers would be part of the campaign to support South Ribble being carbon neutral by 2030.

Councillor Alan Ogilvie asked when the completion date for works to the overflow car park at Worden Park would be, although he acknowledged they had not yet started. The Cabinet Member explained that there had been some difficulties that had resulted in the start of the works being delayed but that once more was known she would update Members. Councillor Jones added that they were working closely with the local residents on this issue.

Councillor Caroline Moon thanked the Cabinet Member for the installation of a new footpath from the Swiss lodge but asked if there was still resources' available for resurfacing, following drainage problems. Councillor Susan Jones indicated that she was happy to meet with Councillor Moon outside of the meeting to discuss a way forward.

A member of the public, Mr Darbyshire asked the Cabinet Member if residents would be made to change their central heating and petrol cars to electric. He also asked if the Council would look to using their tablets to view council papers, as opposed to printing paper copies of agendas. The Cabinet Member responded by saying that the Council would lead by example with regards to using electric vehicles for its fleet or using renewable energy in its buildings with an emphasis on encouraging residents not enforcing. The Cabinet Member did however agreed with Mr Darbyshire on the use of tablets for viewing council agendas and minutes and would be speaking with the Leaders to encourage members of their groups.

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

Councillor David Howarth submitted a written question as follows:

In February of this year I asked the then Cabinet Member if he would give an undertaking to investigate and report back on the feasibility of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) of the former government buildings site at number 1 Cop Lane, Penwortham to avoid more decades of dereliction adding to the open eyesore at the gateway to both the Town and the Borough.

An assurance was given that options would be considered to ensure that the site comes forward for development as speedily as possible.

Given that since that time the proposal for a CPO has received cross party support, could the Cabinet Member advise as to what work has been done to bring forward the purchase of the site, and provide an update on when a feasibility report will be presented?

The Cabinet Member, Councillor Bill Evans agreed that this is a priority site for improving Penwortham Centre but explained that use of a Compulsory Purchase Order would only be used as a last resort, as it was a costly option and would take a couple of years to complete. It is understood that Tesco are currently reviewing their options for the site and officers are in touch with them on a weekly basis, with a decision expected imminently.

Councillor Colin Clark asked the Cabinet Member when the last Housing Needs Survey was carried out and under the Affordable Housing Policy of the Council, how many bungalows had been built as there was a large demand for this type of housing across the Borough, which was not currently being met.

The Cabinet Member, explained that the Council would be undertaking a number of Housing Needs Surveys shortly that would focus upon different areas. Penwortham Town Council had recently completed their Neighbourhood Plan and have included a need for bungalows within it. The Cabinet Member urged other areas to do the same. The Cabinet Member also met regularly with other cross party councillors to discuss the Local Plan and would add Bungalow Need to the agenda for further discussion.

The Cabinet Member (Finance, Property and Assets) added that the new South Ribble building programme would focus on providing homes for the greatest need and that bungalows would be built to fill this gap.

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

Councillor Michael Green reiterated his earlier question by asking the Cabinet Member what actions would be taken to avoid duplication of the proposed Youth Council with that of the one already ran by Lancashire County Council.

The Cabinet Member, Councillor Aniela Bylinski Gelder responded by saying that she had been working with three primary schools and one high school regarding the introduction of Debate Clubs.

47 Questions to Chairs of Committees and My Neighbourhood Areas

Questions to the Chairs of Committees.

None.

Questions to the Chairs of My Neighbourhood Areas.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Foster asked Councillor Jane Bell, Chair of the Leyland Central Neighbourhood Forum to give an overview on the work of the group to date.

Councillor Jane Bell explained that bringing together Leyland with Farington East and Farington West had not been without its difficulties. However, a number of planning meetings had now taken place with projects in all three areas having been discussed and agreed upon. Farington Councillors have been attending regularly and been actively involved and she was confident that the Forum would work effectively for all its residents.

48 Questions to Member Champions and Representatives on Outside Bodies

Questions to the Member Champion (Youth)

In response to a question from Councillor Keith Martin, Councillor Matthew Trafford explained how he had been engaging with young people across the Borough and discovered that a lot of young people are disillusioned with politics as a whole. Councillor Trafford had also met with the existing Youth Council who are angry with the cuts that have been made to the service. He would continue to work closely with them to make improvements and promote better engagement with young people across the Borough.

Questions to Representatives on Outside Bodies.

None.

49 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 of information defined as exempt from publication under paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, 'Information relating to an individual' and '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.

The meeting was adjourned for a short comfort break.

50 Extended Shared Services

Dave Whelan, Interim Monitoring Officer left the meeting.

Council considered a report of the Interim Chief Executive that presented proposals to extend shared services as developed by C.Co who are independent consultants who had been commissioned on behalf of the Shared Services Joint Committee.

A detailed session with Members had recently taken place on the proposals and there was a general acceptance across the Chamber that the new arrangements would provide greater resilience across both Councils. The new structure had slightly changed from what was originally agreed in 2017, incorporating more corporate services areas and to establish governance arrangements and an internal implementation team to further investigate opportunities for sharing in the future.

Although in favour, the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Margaret Smith voiced her concerns about the timing of the proposals, preferring to wait until matters with the Chief Executive have been resolved. The Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Foster responded by saying that he was comfortable with the new arrangements as the Chief Executive position was still in the new structure, available at both Councils.

It was moved by Councillor Paul Foster, seconded by Councillor Mick Titherington, and

RESOLVED (Unanimously):

1. That Phase 1 of the proposals to extend shared services which includes establishing seven shared senior post be approved.
2. That the governance model and implementation timescales as set out in the report be approved.
3. That the establishment of a project team and creation of an implementation budget to progress the implementation and transformation of Phase 1, the development of a joint digital strategy and shared board, and the development of a business case for Phase 2 be approved.
4. That the review and refresh of the Shared Services Agreement based on the principles set out in the report be approved.

51 Review of Management Accountancy Services

Dave Whelan, Interim Monitoring Officer returned to the meeting.

Jane Blundell, Interim Section 151 Officer left the meeting.

Council considered a report of the Director of Policy and Governance (Chorley Council) that briefed Members on a review, and amendments to, the existing shared services for finance between South Ribble Borough Council and Chorley Borough Council.

With the ambition to expand the scope of shared services between Chorley and South Ribble Councils, there is an excellent opportunity to move forward and review the current management accountancy functions with a view to aligning the services more closely.

The paper outlined the need for change within the service to equalise the level of resources available to each council, address differences in approaches to work across the two sites, prepare for succession planning and manage the likely increase and change in workload the services will undoubtedly experience in the coming years.

It was moved by Councillor Matthew Tomlinson, seconded by Councillor Aniela Bylinski Gelder, and

RESOLVED (Unanimously):

1. That the proposed changes to management accountancy teams outlined in paragraph 22 of the report be approved.
2. That formal consultation commence after approval with both Council's Cabinet in November 2019.
3. That a one-off budget of £50K for staff training and development funded through the savings identified be approved.

52 Review of Financial Systems and Exchequer Services

Jane Blundell, Interim Section 151 Officer returned to the meeting.

Council considered a report of the Director of Policy and Governance (Chorley Council) that briefed Members on the review of, and amendments to, financial systems and exchequer services as part of the existing shared services for finance between South Ribble Borough Council and Chorley Borough Council.

It was proposed by Councillor Matthew Tomlinson, seconded by Councillor Aniela Bylinski Gelder, and

RESOLVED (Unanimously):

That the changes to the Financial Systems and Exchequer Services outlined in paragraph 13 of the report be approved.

53 City Deal - Update, Mid-term Review and Future

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

Council considered a report of the Director of Planning and Property that updated Members on the current position of the Preston, South Ribble and Lancashire City Deal and sought a view on the future of the City Deal.

It was reported that the City Deal is at a critical point in shaping its future. There are significant concerns around the City Deal finance model whereby costs particularly for highway infrastructure, have risen substantially. Furthermore income in to the City Deal model has not come forward as quickly as planned in the delivery of new homes and key sites such as Cuerden had been slower than forecasted. Furthermore, Central Government have changed key inputs such as the amount received on New Homes Bonus and there is ongoing uncertainty over the format of business rates.

The Leader of the Council wanted to make it clear that the current situation was not as a result of the previous administration. Councillor Margaret Smith, Leader of the Opposition acknowledged this and explained that she had been trying to get an update on the current position of the City Deal for some a considerable time. All members were strongly of the opinion that an independent external audit of all spend to date and in the future should be carried out as soon as possible.

Despite repeatedly asking for an update report from Lancashire County Council, one had not been forthcoming so one of the Council's own Finance Officers had pulled together the detailed report that was now before members and which identified a funding gap of £141m.

If the City Deal was to continue, new arrangements needed to be agreed between the partners. The emerging revised Heads of Terms, would place significant financial risk on South Ribble Borough Council that all Members deemed unacceptable.

There were however, a number of current external funding bids under development for consideration for City Deal projects that if successful, could assist significantly in meeting the financial gap. One such example is the Homes England Small Sites Fund, which could add an additional £60m in to the City Deal model but was contingent on further housing coming forward in both South Ribble and Preston over a longer time period. There was however a strong feeling amongst Members that this money should stop within South Ribble has all the identifiable sites left, fell inside the borough.

Members were presented with three options to consider within the report that centred on the way forward. Whether to continue, withdraw or seek a revised deal. Key considerations were identified against each of the options and a revised set of recommendations were read out at the meeting.

It was moved by Councillor Paul Foster, seconded by Councillor Bill Evans and

RESOLVED (Unanimously):

1. That Council expresses its strong commitment to provide positive support to enable the City Deal to continue;
2. That Council expresses its deep concern at the current projected funding gap;
3. That Council agrees in principle to support the bid to Homes England Small Site Fund which could generate £60m income to the City Deal;
4. That Council accepts that the City Deal, as it currently stands, cannot commit to any further capital projects;
5. That Council requests an independent external audit of all spend to date, committed spend and future forecasts;

6. That Council does not accept the revised Heads of Terms for the City Deal as currently presented, and in particular will not commit to the transfer of risk;
7. That Council requests that the Chief Executive Officer and Leader of the Council continue negotiations with Preston City Council, Lancashire County Council, Homes England and the City Deal Executive with a view to exploring alternative arrangements in respect to the continuation of the City Deal; and
8. That a further update report be brought back to full Council on 27 November 2019.

Chair

Date