

Minutes of	Council
Meeting date	Wednesday, 1 March 2023
Members present:	Councillors David Howarth (Mayor), Chris Lomax (Deputy Mayor), Will Adams, Jane Bell, Damian Bretherton, Julie Butterly, Aniela Bylinski Gelder, Matt Campbell, Carol Chisholm, Mal Donoghue, James Flannery, Derek Forrest, Paul Foster, Mary Green, Michael Green, Harry Hancock, Jon Hesketh, Clare Hunter, Susan Jones, Jim Marsh, Keith Martin, Caroline Moon, Peter Mullineaux, Alan Ogilvie, Colin Sharples, David Shaw, Margaret Smith, Phil Smith, Mick Titherington, Caleb Tomlinson, Matthew Tomlinson, Matthew Trafford, Angela Turner, Kath Unsworth, Karen Walton, Ian Watkinson, Gareth Watson, Paul Wharton-Hardman and Carol Wooldridge
Officers:	Chris Sinnott (Chief Executive), Chris Moister (Director of Governance), Asim Khan (Director of Customer and Digital), Louise Mattinson (Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer) and Darren Cranshaw (Head of Democratic Services)
Members joining via Microsoft Teams:	Councillors Colin Coulton and David Suthers
Public:	11

95 Minute's silence

The Mayor invited Members to observe a minute's silence in memory of former Mayor and Councillor Dorothy Gardner who sadly passed away on Monday, 20 February 2023.

Group Leaders and other Members paid tribute and sent condolences to the family.

96 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Jacky Alty, Renee Blow, Michael Higgins, Cliff Hughes, Lou Jackson, Jackie Mort, John Rainsbury, Stephen Thurlbourn and Yates.

Councillors Colin Coulton and David Suthers attended the meeting via Microsoft Teams and were not able to participate in voting.

97 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

98 Minutes of the last meeting

Resolved: (unanimously) That the minutes of the Council meeting held on Wednesday, 25 January 2023 be approved as a correct record.

99 Mayors Announcements

The Mayor gave an update on the engagements he had carried out across the Borough since the last meeting and referred to his recent successful charity spring banquet.

100 Cabinet

Members received a general report of the Cabinet meeting held on 22 February 2023.

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) that the report be noted.

101 Urgent Decisions

This item was withdrawn.

102 Scrutiny Committee

Members received a general report of the Scrutiny Committee held on 20 February 2023.

It was proposed by the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Angela Turner, seconded by Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Michael Green and subsequently

Resolved (unanimously) that the report be noted.

103 Revenue Budget 2023/24, Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programme 2023-2026

The Executive Member (Finance, Property and Assets), Councillor Matthew Tomlinson, presented the Cabinet's Budget Strategy and proposals for the Revenue Budget 2023/24, together with the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Capital Programme for 2023-2026.

Councillor Tomlinson presented the whole budget in one speech and suggested a vote would be taken on all the recommendations.

Councillor Tomlinson thanked the Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups and the Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and officers for their work on the proposed budget.

Councillor Tomlinson reflected on the achievements of the administration over the past four years.

The proposals included the third consecutive freeze of council tax, no external borrowing and predicting reserves of over £17M, with the Council having the third largest levels of reserve of any council in Lancashire.

In outlining the external pressures facing the Council an inflationary risk reserve was proposed. The budget included investments in a social prescribing model to support families and individuals in need and also funding for community groups across the Borough.

Plans also included establishing a family wellbeing centre and funding to refurbish playgrounds. Funding was also included for an extra care facility and improvements to the Bamber Bridge, Leyland and Penwortham leisure centres. Business support and delivering the Leyland Town Deal were also featured in the proposals.

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Karen Walton presented an amendment to the budget proposals on behalf of the Conservative Group, which had been costed in consultation with the Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer):

“1. The Conservative Group propose to repurpose £380k from the Green Infrastructure Capital Programme and increase the Capital Programme by £120k from the Inflation Risk Reserve to achieve a budget of £500k for the revitalisation of the Central Park Project, the biggest new park in the North West, created in 2014 to celebrate 40 years of South Ribble Borough Council, bringing together green spaces across the Borough allowing a natural break, separation and green lungs from the expanding built up areas surrounding the Park. Many areas included in the original project have been neglected and are in need of improvement or have not even commenced. To celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Borough the budget would be used to improve the walking and cycling links, disabled access, natural play areas, recreation, ecology and bio-diversity from St Catherine’s Park in the south to the River Ribble in the north of the Borough linking up to the new Tram Bridge project funded from the Government's levelling up bid.

2. The Conservative Group propose to repurpose £100k from the Inflation Risk Reserve to help residents access the Government's First Homes Scheme. This scheme is designed to offer first time buyers a step onto the property ladder by offering a discount of 30% to 50% less than market value and homes should become available on construction sites as developers and Local Authorities incorporate the scheme into new planning policies. The budget allocation would be used to initially employ a planning specialist to work with developers, the Government and residents, who qualify for the scheme, to benefit from such a generous scheme and support first time buyers during the cost of living crisis.

3. The Conservative Group propose to repurpose £150k from the Inflation Risk Reserve to monitor and help to reduce speeding traffic by providing 2 speeding indicator devices (SPIDs) in every ward of the Borough. Working with Parish Councils, Community Hubs, the Police and Crime Commissioner and LCC to identify speeding hotspots in the Borough so that the SPID's can be permanently installed to discourage speeding traffic.

4. The Conservative Group propose to repurpose £200k from the Inflation Risk reserve to increase the budget for Environmental Improvements to £400k. This increase would be utilised to generally improve the appearance of the street scene in all areas of the Borough with projects such as replacing many of the old, worn out bus stops, new and replacement litter and dog bins in areas where residents have requested them especially on all the new housing developments, new benches, notice boards and improving the street scene generally in the village centres or retail areas to encourage residents into these areas and shop locally.”

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

Councillor Tomlinson proposed moving to a vote on the amendment, seconded by Councillor Titherington and subsequently

Resolved that on a show of hands the meeting move to the vote.

The amendment proposed by Councillor Walton, seconded by Councillor Phil Smith and subsequently

Resolved (For 15, Against 24) that the amendment be lost.

In accordance with Rule 16.5 in Part 4 of the Constitution, the voting was recorded and the Members of the Council present at the time voted as follows:

For: Councillors Bretherton, Buttery, Campbell, Chisholm, Mary Green, Michael Green, Hesketh, Marsh, Moon, Mullineaux, Ogilvie, Margaret Smith, Phil Smith, Walton, Watson.

Against: Councillors Adams, Bell, Bylinski Gelder, Donoghue, Flannery, Forrest, Foster, Hancock, Howarth, Hunter, Jones, Lomax, Martin, Sharples, Shaw, Titherington, Caleb Tomlinson, Matthew Tomlinson, Trafford, Turner, Unsworth, Watkinson, Wharton-Hardman, Wooldridge.

The debate on the budget itself was opened up with Councillor Turner outlining the Liberal Democrat group's support of the proposals.

It was proposed by Councillor Phil Smith to move to the vote, seconded by Councillor Walton and subsequently

Resolved that on a show of hands the proposal to move to the vote be lost.

The debate on the budget continued with Councillors Bylinski Gelder, Jones and Foster speaking in support.

It was proposed by the Cabinet Member (Finance, Property and Assets), Councillor Matthew Tomlinson, seconded by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Paul Foster, and subsequently

Resolved (For 24, Against 0, Abstain 15) to:

- a) Approve the budget and proposals set out in this report, including the level of Council Tax as set out in the Formal Council Tax Resolution, including Parish Precepts 2023/24, at *Appendix A*;
- b) Note the advice of the Chief Finance Officer in relation to the robustness of the estimates within the overall budget, including the risks contained within it and the adequacy of the proposed level of financial reserves, as set out in the Statutory Report at *Appendices B1 – B3*;
- c) Approve the council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) at Appendix C;
- d) Note the council's forecast Cumulative Budget Deficit and Budget Strategy 2023-24 to 2025-26 at *Appendix D*;
- e) Note the analysis of the movement in the 2023/24 Budget from the position approved by Council in February 2022 at *Appendix E*;
- f) Approve the capital programme for 2023/24 to 2025/26 (*Appendices F1, F2 & F3*);
- g) Approve the Capital Strategy at *Appendix G*;
- h) Approve the Treasury Management Strategy at *Appendix H* and note the advice of the treasury management consultants at *Appendix H1*;
- i) Approve the council's Pay Policy at *Appendix I* for publication on the council's website from April 2023 (including Appendix I (i) – the pay scales for South Ribble Council and Appendix I (ii) – the pay scales for Shared Services);
- j) Note the budget consultation 2023/24 Report at *Appendix J*;
- k) Note the Assessing the Impact of Budget Proposals 2023/24 Report at *Appendix K*.

In accordance with Rule 16.5 in Part 4 of the Constitution, the voting was recorded and the Members of the Council present at the time voted as follows:

For: Councillors Adams, Bell, Bylinski Gelder, Donoghue, Flannery, Forrest, Foster, Hancock, Howarth, Hunter, Jones, Lomax, Martin, Sharples, Shaw, Titherington, Caleb Tomlinson, Matthew Tomlinson, Trafford, Turner, Unsworth, Watkinson, Wharton-Hardman, Wooldridge.

Abstain: Councillors Bretherton, Butterly, Campbell, Chisholm, Mary Green, Michael Green, Hesketh, Marsh, Moon, Mullineaux, Ogilvie, Margaret Smith, Phil Smith, Walton, Watson.

104 Questions to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Bell asked the Leader if he agreed that the community groups across South Ribble were doing a sterling job and highlighted one of her residents who had

worked in her ward of Seven Stars for over 30 years, Joan Musker, who has been awarded a BEM in the new years honours.

The Leader responded to agree with the comments and congratulated Joan Musker on her award. The Leader also congratulated Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman on his award of a BEM.

105 Questions to Cabinet Members

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member (Health and Wellbeing) - Councillor Mick Titherington

Councillor Watson asked about energy supply and heat pumps at the leisure centres and increased running costs and whether these are reflected in the budget. Reference was also made to microwave boilers and the feasibility of installing them.

Councillor Titherington confirmed that we are on target with the leisure centre decarbonisation programme and that he would ask officers to respond to him the microwave boiler query.

Cabinet Member (Finance, Property and Assets) – Councillor Matthew Tomlinson

Councillor Bretherton asked about the new houses being built as part of the Leyland Town Deal and how the costs compared with those at the McKenzie Arms site and what the predicted end value would be.

Councillor Tomlinson responded that whilst the Council is the accountable body for the Leyland Town Deal the programme is being delivered by the Leyland Town Deal Board and the question was for them. The programme had been agreed by the Planning Committee and as the houses were part of the financial model all the necessary due diligence had been undertaken.

Councillor Paul-Wharton Hardman asked if the Leyland Town Deal houses were included within the 7,000 houses allegedly approved to be built.

Councillor Tomlinson could not answer the question as he was unaware of where the 7,000 figure had come from.

Cabinet Member Business Support, Planning and Regeneration – Councillor James Flannery

Councillor Turner asked about progressing the Penwortham Masterplan and the information given in November that a further report on the phasing and next steps would be presented in the first quarter of this year.

Councillor Flannery provided reassurance that the Council was committed to the Penwortham Masterplan and discussions were continuing. The report would be provided as planned in the first quarter of the financial year from April to June 2023. Reference was also made the levelling up funding bid that would have provided the finances to deliver the plan, which had been unsuccessful. Councillor Flannery offered to meet with any Members to discuss the plan further.

Councillor Mullineaux asked that with the importance of the Central Lancashire Local Plan what plans were in place to replace planning officers who have left or are leaving the Council.

Councillor Flannery responded that it was up the Chief Executive to deal with this issue as it was a staffing matter, but interim arrangements had been in place and had ensured a consistent service.

Councillor Flannery reiterated his offer to meet with Members and the public to discuss any Local Plan and planning issues, thanking members of the Planning Committee and officers for their work.

Mayor

Date