

Minutes of Council

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 17 August 2021, starting at 6.30 pm
Present: Councillor T Austin (Chair)

Councillors:

J Alcock	J Hill
S Atkinson	M Hindle
R Bennett	S Hirst
D Berryman	S Hore
S Bibby	K Horkin
D Birtwhistle	G Mirfin
A Brown	R Newmark
I Brown	D O'Rourke
S Brunskill	S O'Rourke
B Buller	D Peat
S Carefoot	M Robinson
J Clark	J Rogerson
L Edge	J Schumann
S Farmer	R Sherras
S Fletcher	R Thompson
M French	R Walsh

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Community Services, Director of Economic Development and Planning, Director of Resources and Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Not in attendance: Councillor B Holden

186 PRAYERS

The Mayor's Chaplain, Reverend Swindells opened the meeting with prayers.

187 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors R Elms, A Humphreys, S Rainford and G Scott.

188 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillor Mirfin declared an interest in respect of his role as a Lancashire County Councillor.

Councillor K Horkin declared an interest in respect of ownership of properties and businesses in the Ribble Valley.

189 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

There was no public participation.

190 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND THE ANNUAL MEETING

The minutes of the Council meeting held 27 April 2021 and the Annual Council held on 18 May 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MAYORAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor reported on events that he had attended since he took office in May; these included events in Veterans' Week, the Ribble Valley Business Awards, the Royal Lancashire Show and the Last Night of the Proms concert held in the Castle Grounds.

LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader began by welcoming Councillor Fletcher to his first meeting as Leader of the Opposition. He then went on to update Members on work that had been undertaken since the last meeting. He reported that the Council had submitted a response to the Boundary Commission proposals for the Ribble Valley Parliamentary seat. The response had thanked the Commission for keeping the Ribble Valley Parliamentary seat in place and had asked that 3 wards be returned to the Ribble Valley Constituency.

The Council had also delivered Ribble Valley's bid to the Levelling Up Fund for regeneration in the centre of Longridge and continued, through a designated Working Group, to review and look to improve the Longridge assets.

The Leader then noted that Council's collaborative relationship with the County Council would become very important in the coming months and that following the publication of the Levelling Up White Paper later in the year, decisions may have to be taken as to how Lancashire might achieve devolution. He reported that he had met with the Lancashire County Council Leader and Deputy on two occasions and had also hosted the re-start of quarterly meetings with the County Councillors for the Ribble Valley.

He was pleased to report that the first project that the County Council would consider at its September Cabinet Meeting was a reinstating of the jointly funded scheme with Ribble Valley to renew the paving stones on Castle Street.

Next the Leader reminded Members that one of the Council's immediate priorities was to achieve a full staff establishment to improve the Council's operating capacity. He was pleased to report that a number of vacancies had now been filled and that the Pay Structure Working Group that had been established, was now looking at strategic changes that would hopefully address recruitment and retention difficulties. The Working Group would report back to the Personnel Committee in due course.

Next the Leader confirmed that a review of the Core Strategy was currently underway and that would also include consideration of residential amenity for the borough's growing population.

The Leader noted that one of the biggest changes the Council would have to deliver would be the mandated changes from Government regarding recycling of the waste that was collected. Initial indications were that this would lead to more segregated waste streams that would have to be collected and the frequency of collections may also be mandated from Central Government.

Finally, the Leader stated that the Council was concerned about the spending review in the Autumn and how that would affect Local Government finance, particularly in relation to the Fair Funding Review, Business Rate retention and New Homes Bonus. He was pleased to report that the Council had been successful in meeting the criteria to receive the final tranche of Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) of £567,047. This would be discussed by the Budget Working Group who would then make recommendations to Policy and Finance Committee.

LEADER'S QUESTION TIME

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor S Fletcher, asked what percentage of housing development applications in Clitheroe were currently approved, and if the Leader expected that figure to rise or fall as a result of Central Government's proposed planning changes.

The Leader thanked Councillor Fletcher for his question and confirmed in respect of the current plan period that had started in April 2008 and went forward to 2028, the situation for Clitheroe was as follows:

Total completions	1,337
Current permissions	1,334
Total completions and extant permissions	2,671

In terms of the distribution of development in the Core Strategy, the distribution model agreed by Members apportioned development based on the size of the settlements. Planning approvals consequently reflected the relevant status Clitheroe as the largest settlement in the borough. He then provided a breakdown of the approved development as at 31 March 2021 for all main settlements.

Core Strategy Models	Approved Development as at 31.3.21 for all Main Settlements
Clitheroe 58%	59%
Longridge 29%	28%
Whalley 13%	13%

The Leader reported that the Local Plan was currently in the process of review where overall housing requirements and patterns of development would be considered.

Next Councillor Fletcher asked how many of Ribble Valley's letting agents were signed up to the Council's Tenancy Protection Scheme.

The Leader confirmed that no letting agents in the borough would accept the Tenancy Protection Scheme. The Council had regularly sought to encourage agents to use the scheme, but this had not been taken up. Councillor Fletcher asked if the Leader would consider creating a Task and Finish Group to increase participation in the scheme. The Leader confirmed that he would support that proposal.

Finally, Councillor Fletcher noted that public sector workers across the valley were to be rewarded for their efforts during the pandemic with either a pay freeze or a pay rise below the expected rate of inflation and as such he wondered if public sector workers were 'picking up the bill' for the pandemic.

The Leader acknowledged that public sector workers had done a fantastic job of responding to the Coronavirus pandemic and in particular paid tribute to the Council's own staff for their dedication, hard work and commitment throughout the last 18 months.

He reported that in respect of Local Government pay, national negotiations on the employers' side had recently increased the pay offer to most local government staff to 1.75% for the current year.

COMMITTEE MINUTES

1. Emergency committee – 27 April 2021
2. Community Services committee – 25 May 2021
3. Planning and Development committee – 27 May 2021
4. Personnel committee – 9 June 2021
5. Health and Housing committee – 10 June 2021
6. Licensing committee – 15 June 2021
7. Economic Development committee – 17 June 2021
8. Emergency committee – 18 June 2021
9. Policy & Finance committee – 22 June 2021
10. Parish Councils Liaison committee – 24 June 2021
11. Planning and Development committee – 1 July 2021
12. Licensing sub-committee – 9 July 2021

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the above committees be received except for Minute number 100.
Minute 100 – Review of Financial Regulations and Revised Contract Procedure Rules

RESOLVED:

That the review of financial regulations and revised contract procedure rules be approved.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The meeting closed at 7.40 pm

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact the committee clerk,
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