

Minutes of Council

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 11 July 2023, starting at 6.30 pm
Present: Councillor M Hindle (Chair)

Councillors:

S Hirst	M Robinson
T Austin	J Rogerson
J Alcock	G Scott
S Atkinson	N Stubbs
S Bibby	K Barnsley
D Birtwhistle	D Brocklehurst
I Brown	R Corney
S Brunskill	S Cowman
L Edge	R Ray
R Elms	L Jameson
S Farmer	R Walsh
S Fletcher	C McFall
M French	J Atherton
J Hill	G McCrum
S Hore	M Peplow
K Horkin	K Spencer
R Newmark	M Graveston
D O'Rourke	G Hibbert
S O'Rourke	L Street

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Resources & Deputy Chief Executive and Solicitor

167 PRAYERS

The Mayor's chaplain, Canon Carolyn Woodcock opened the meeting with prayers.

168 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillor A Wilkins-Odudu.

169 DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY, OTHER REGISTRABLE AND NON REGISTRABLE INTERESTS

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary, other registrable or non-registrable interests.

170 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

There was no public participation.

171 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING ON 25 APRIL 2023 AND THE ANNUAL MEETING ON 23 MAY 2023

The Chief Executive referred to Minute No 6 Page 34 which should have shown Councillor Birtwhistle had abstained. The minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2023 and the minutes of the Annual meeting held on 23 May 2023 as amended were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

172 MAYORAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor reported on a wide range of events that he had attended since the last meeting, and introduced the newly appointed Mayor's Attendant to the Council.

173 LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader began by updating the Council in regards to the letter that he had delivered to the Secretary of State Michael Gove on 20 March 2023, which detailed the challenges that the Council faced in delivering a balanced budget over the coming years. He was pleased to report that a response had been received and the Leader asked that Officers work with the Local Government Finance team under the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) with the aim of delivering a sustainable financial settlement.

The Leader had attended the LGA Conference in Bournemouth along with the Chief Executive, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Labour Group, and reported that the event had been beneficial. He expressed his support of Lancashire's Devolution bid which did not involve local government reorganisation. Lancashire's 15 local authorities were working to prepare a devolution deal. He explained there was the possibility of creating a combined County Authority model comprising Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, and Blackpool Council. Districts would not have a vote but were working on an arrangement to be involved in an advisory capacity.

The Leader was pleased to report that in addition to the £1.97 million the Ribble Valley would receive through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, a further £433,680 would be received from the Rural England Prosperity Fund.

The Leader noted that the Council were distributing the Household Support Fund allocation of £240,000 from LCC Household Support Fund, and the assistance eligible recipients would receive.

The Leader welcomed the new Director of Community Services and noted the challenges that the Community Committee will be facing over the coming months.

The Leader noted that with only 10 staff vacancies, the Council's capacity had increased, which would be needed to deliver capital projects going forward.

Confirmation was awaited from the Secretary of State as to whether the HARP application would be called in. The Leader expressed his concern that in the meantime Council Officers were under criticism by members of the Community, and should be supported, noting that decisions are made by Councillors not Officers.

The Leader reported that he and a number of Councillors had attended the Ribble Valley Climate Action Network (RVCAN), and the launch of the Greatest Days Selfie Trail and screening of the Greatest Days film.

Finally, the Leader thanked Councillors D O'Rourke, and K Spencer for providing first aid in a recent tragic event.

174

LEADER'S QUESTION TIME

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Stewart Fletcher asked the Leader what the Conservatives three priorities were for the Council in the coming term?

The Leader thanked Councillor Fletcher for his question and remarked that the priorities over the next civic year were;

- Sound Finance
- To keep the Ribble Valley independent
- To deliver significant investments in the Borough through the UK Shared Prosperity fund

In a supplementary question, Councillor Fletcher noted that although it was difficult to narrow down to three priorities, he was surprised that Climate Change was not addressed and that the Council had not declared a Climate emergency. He asked, if we were to achieve the objective to reach net zero by 2030 should we not declare this? The Leader responded noting that he thought it important that this be considered by the Climate Change Working Group and brought back to Economic Development Committee. The Leader noted that he felt it important as a Council to deliver what we say we can deliver, and that he was aware that the first Council to declare a Climate emergency was a long way off achieving their objectives by 2030.

Next, Councillor Fletcher stated that they welcomed the Council's decision in extending the household support fund until March 2024, and asked, could the Leader update us on the progress of the dispersal of these funds?

The Leader reported that the Council went live with applications on Monday 3rd July and to date 33 applications had been received. The Council were to write directly to care leavers, unpaid carers and people who had received disability facilities grants to invite them to apply for a voucher. The Director of Economic Development and Planning had met with Childrens Social Care and had requested details of care leavers in the Borough to ensure they were all contacted. The Council were currently advertising for a Debt Advisor position to provide assistance to all applicants and residents within the Borough.

In a supplementary question, Councillor noted that the link to the Food Voucher Scheme form was difficult to find and asked how this could be streamlined and promoted. The Leader responded that he would pick this up with Officers.

Finally, Councillor Fletcher stated that colleagues in the Labour Party had highlighted the work of The Living Wage Foundation who encouraged employers to play their part in tackling in-work poverty and provided a decent standard of living by paying the real Living Wage, which was currently set at £10.90. He asked, could the leader confirm that all council employees were earning this figure or above?

The Leader replied that the lowest paid Council employees in substantive posts were paid £10.60 per hour. The current years pay offer to the Unions if accepted would increase this by 9.4% to £11.60 per hour backdated to 1st April 2023. The Council also had 2 modern apprentices on temporary training contracts who were paid the National Living Wage for their age. The Living Wage Foundation recognised that

apprentices were not required to be paid the Real Living Wage as much of their wage was often training.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Fletcher asked if the Leader was able to confirm if the same applied to Contractors that conducted work for the Council and those in the supply chain. The Leader responded that he would need to refer to the Council's procurement policy in order to confirm.

175

CHANGES TO COMMITTEE ARRANGEMENTS 2023/24

The Chief Executive submitted a report for Council to consider changes to the Committee Arrangements for 2023/24.

The Council had approved membership of its Committees at the Annual Meeting on 23 May 2023 and it was necessary to make a number of changes to the membership.

The proposed changes were listed in the report along with the full proposed revised Committee Membership for 2023/24.

RESOLVED:

That the Council approve the changes to the membership of Committees with the Committee Membership now as follows:

MEMBERSHIP ON COMMITTEES 2023/24 COMMUNITY SERVICES (15)

CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	LABOUR	INDEPENDENT GROUP	GREEN	INDEPENDENT
Jan Alcock	Stewart Fletcher	Karl Barnsley	John Atherton	Malcolm Peplow	
Stephen Atkinson	Mary Robinson	Lee Jameson	Lee Street		
Stella Brunskill	Simon O'Rourke				
Sophie Cowman					
Rosie Elms					
Ricky Newmark					
Gary Scott					

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT (15)

CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	LABOUR	INDEPENDENT GROUP	GREEN	INDEPENDENT
Tony Austin	Mark French	Lee Jameson	Jim Rogerson		Ian Brown
Sue Bibby	Simon O'Rourke	Kieren Spencer			
Derek Brocklehurst	Stewart Fletcher	Nick Stubbs			
Stella Brunskill					
Louise Edge					
Simon Hore					
Kevin Horkin					

HEALTH AND HOUSING (15)

CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	LABOUR	INDEPENDENT GROUP	GREEN	INDEPENDENT
Jan Alcock	Donna O'Rourke	Rachael Ray	John Atherton		Ian Brown
Stephen Atkinson	Mary Robinson	Aaron Wilkins-Odudu			
Tony Austin	Gaynor Hibbert	Nick Stubbs			
Rosie Elms					
Steve Farmer					
Stuart Hirst					
Charles McFall					

PERSONNEL (9)

CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	LABOUR	INDEPENDENT GROUP	GREEN	INDEPENDENT
Sue Bibby	Donna O'Rourke	Karl Barnsley	David Birtwhistle		
Rosie Elms	Ryan Corney	Lee Jameson			
Steve Farmer					
Simon Hore					

LICENSING (15)

CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	LABOUR	INDEPENDENT GROUP	GREEN	INDEPENDENT
Derek Brocklehurst	Simon O'Rourke	Kieren Spencer	Jim Rogerson	Malcolm Peplow	Ian Brown
Stella Brunskill	Donna O'Rourke	Michael Graveston	Lee Street		
Steve Farmer	Gaynor Hibbert				
Ricky Newmark					
Gary Scott					
Robin Walsh					

POLICY AND FINANCE (15)

CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	LABOUR	INDEPENDENT GROUP	GREEN	INDEPENDENT
Stephen Atkinson	Mark French	Aaron Wilkins-Odudu	David Birtwhistle	Gaye McCrum	
Sue Bibby	Stewart Fletcher	Lee Jameson	Jim Rogerson		
Louise Edge	Jonathan Hill				
Stuart Hirst					
Simon Hore					
Kevin Horkin					
Ricky Newmark					

ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT (11)

CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	LABOUR	INDEPENDENT GROUP	GREEN	INDEPENDENT
Tony Austin	Stewart Fletcher	Karl Barnsley	Lee Street	Gaye McCrum	
Stuart Hirst	Jonathan Hill	Michael Graveston			
Charles McFall					
Ricky Newmark					
Robin Walsh					

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (15)

CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	LABOUR	INDEPENDENT GROUP	GREEN	INDEPENDENT
Jan Alcock	Stewart Fletcher	Rachael Ray	David Birtwhistle	Gaye McCrum	
Stephen Atkinson	Jonathan Hill	Michael Graveston			
Sophie Cowman	Ryan Corney	Aaron Wilkins-Odudu			
Louise Edge					
Rosie Elms					
Stuart Hirst					
Robin Walsh					

PARISH COUNCIL LIAISON (13)

CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	LABOUR	INDEPENDENT GROUP	GREEN	INDEPENDENT
Derek Brocklehurst	Mary Robinson	Karl Barnsley	David Birtwhistle	Malcolm Peplow	
Sophie Cowman	Simon O'Rourke	Nick Stubbs			
Kevin Horkin	Gaynor Hibbert				
Charles McFall					
Gary Scott					
Robin Walsh					

EMERGENCY (4)

CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	LABOUR	INDEPENDENT GROUP	GREEN	INDEPENDENT
Stephen Atkinson	Stewart Fletcher	Lee Jameson			
Simon Hore					

MEMBERS ALLOWANCE SCHEME

The Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report for Council to consider the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Members' Allowances following the review of the current scheme and recommendations made by Policy and Finance Committee at their meeting on 20 June 2023.

The Council was required to agree and publicise its members' allowance scheme each year and undertake an independent review at least every 4 years.

The independent panel had conducted interviews with seven Councillors, and reviewed details of members allowances schemes from 11 other Lancashire District Councils. The full report of the panel was included with the report which set out their findings and full recommendations. The panel had concluded that overall the existing Members' Allowance Scheme was a fair reflection of Councillor duties and responsibilities however, proposed that the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) be amended to include an allowance for the leader of each political group where the group had a minimum of 5 members or more. The Council's budget for 2023/24 was £262,350 and the proposed recommendations would result in an additional SRA of £6,180 to group leaders.

Policy and Finance Committee at their meeting on 20 June 2023 had accepted all the recommendations of the panel. Once the Council had approved the Scheme it would make arrangements for its publication as set out in the report.

RESOLVED:

That Council agree the Members' Allowance Scheme, recommended by the Independent Panel and Policy and Finance Committee, with the new scheme to take effect from the date on the Annual meeting - 23 May 2023.

COMMITTEE MINUTES

1. Council – 25 April 2023
2. Licensing Sub Committee – 28 April 2023
3. Annual Council – 23 May 2023
4. Community Committee – 30 May 2023
5. Planning and Development Committee – 1 June 2023
6. Personnel Committee – 7 June 2023
7. Health and Housing Committee – 8 June 2023
8. Licensing Committee – 13 June 2023
9. Economic Development Committee – 15 June 2023
10. Policy and Finance Committee – 20 June 2023
11. Parish Councils Liaison – 22 June 2023
12. Accounts and Audit Committee – 28 June 2023

13. Planning and Development Committee – 29 June 2023

14. Licensing Sub Committee – 30 June 2023

15. Licensing Sub Committee – 30 June 2023

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the above committees be received with the exception of Minute number 106, which has been covered in agenda item 10.

178

NOTICE OF MOTION

The Notice of Motion was withdrawn in advance of the meeting.

179

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items under this heading.

The meeting closed at 7.21 pm

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact the committee clerk, Rebecca Tait rebecca.tait@ribblevalley.gov.uk.