



## Council Minutes

Minutes of the Council meeting held at the Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde on Thursday 5 June, 2014.

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### Councillors present:

The Mayor, Councillor Shewan  
The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Rogers

Councillor Amos	Councillor I Duffy	Councillor McKay
Councillor Anderson	Councillor R Duffy	Councillor Moon
Councillor E Anderton	Councillor M Gandhi	Councillor Murphy
Councillor M Anderton	Councillor R Gandhi	Councillor Ormrod
Councillor Lady Atkins	Councillor Gibson	Councillor Robinson
Councillor Balmain	Councillor Greenhough	Councillor B Stephenson
Councillor Bannister	Councillor Henderson	Councillor E Stephenson
Councillor Berry	Councillor Hewitt	Councillor Swift
Councillor B Birch	Councillor Hodgkinson	Councillor T Taylor
Councillor C Birch	Councillor Jones	Councillor V Taylor
Councillor Bowen	Councillor Lawrenson	Councillor A Vincent
Councillor Bridge	Councillor Lees	Councillor M Vincent
Councillor Brooks	Councillor MacNaughton	Councillor Walmsley
Councillor Catterall	Councillor Martin	Councillor Williams
Councillor Collinson	Councillor McCann	Councillor Wilson

**Apologies:** Councillors Beavers, Hargreaves, Kay, Newsham, Pimbley, Smith, Treece-Birch and Turner.

### Officers present:

Garry Payne (Chief Executive)  
Philippa Davies (Corporate Director, Resources)  
Michael Ryan (Corporate Director, People and Places)  
Stephanie Collinson (Communications Officer)  
Roy Saunders (Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager)  
Peter Foulsham (Democratic Services Officer)

**Also present:** 1 representative of the press and 5 members of the public.

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#### **COU.11 Confirmation of Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Council meetings held on 10 April and 8 May, 2014 be confirmed as a correct record, subject to Councillor Ormrod being included in the list of those present on 10 April.

#### **COU.12 Declarations of Interest**

1. Councillor Lady Atkins declared a non-pecuniary personal interest in Agenda Item 9(b) (Resources Portfolio Holder) because paragraph 5 of that report referred to the possible disposal of the Garstang Business Centre and she was a member of a working party set up by Garstang Town Council to consider the preparation of a bid to acquire those premises.
2. Councillors Williams and Balmain also declared personal, non-pecuniary interests in the same item as members of Garstang Town Council.
3. Councillor A Vincent declared a personal, non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 11 (Shaping your Neighbourhood: Fleetwood Performance Report) because it referred to the 'Cook and Eat Project' which shared premises with the Fleetwood Food Bank, of which he was the Chairman of the Management Committee.

#### **COU.13 Announcements**

1. The Mayor reminded Members that Civic Sunday was on 29 June 2014.
2. The Leisure and Cultural Portfolio Holder (Councillor Bowen) announced that the Visit Garstang Centre had been highly commended at the recent Visit England Awards. She said that was a significant achievement for such a small organisation competing against other larger authorities. She congratulated all the staff involved.

#### **COU.14 Youth Mayor 2014/15**

The Mayor reported that elections for a Youth Mayor for 2014/15 had been due to be held during the week commencing 26 May but, they had been postponed because of the involvement of potential candidates in exams. Ellie Bradley, the Youth Mayor for 2013/14, would therefore continue in that role until July 2014, when the election would now be held. The new and outgoing Youth Mayor would now be invited to the Council meeting on 4 September.

**RESOLVED** that the position be noted.

## **COU.15 Presentation**

The Mayor said that the presentation on the Wyre Waters Catchment Area referred to on the agenda had taken place, in an informal interactive workshop format, immediately prior to this meeting. There was therefore no formal presentation.

## **COU.16 Public Questions Statement and Petitions**

1. Question from Alderman Keith Riley to the Street Scene Portfolio Holder:

*“(This question relates to The Lagoon and Sea Wall opposite Fairway in Rossall, but could apply to anywhere in Wyre.)*

*Irresponsible dog owners are blatantly ignoring WBC signs stating, all dogs must be kept on a lead and you must pick up any dog dirt.*

*When is Wyre Council going to take this matter seriously, and do something about it?”*

The Street Scene Portfolio Holder (Councillor V Taylor) said, in response, that controls were targeted to areas on the basis of complaints received. The particular area referred to by Alderman Riley was regularly patrolled, a significant number of bins were provided and fines could be imposed.

She said that the Council recognised the public’s concern. When complaints were received, investigations were carried out, dog dirt was removed and, where necessary, patrols were made. Letters were also distributed in areas where complaints were received. She said that the Council was committed to taking enforcement action where possible but, that could only be undertaken where full details were obtained and usually a written statement provided. She also referred to other actions being taken, including the provision over 900 dual litter/dog bins across the borough, which had replaced a number of previous dog bins and free electronic chipping of dogs at various community events.

Councillor Taylor also said, in response to a supplementary question from Alderman Riley about the numbers of complaints and patrols, that the figures for Rossall Ward in 2013/14 were 26 complaints and 55 patrols. So far, there had been no complaints received in 2014/15 from Rossall Ward and three patrols had been carried out in that area.

## COU.17 Executive Reports

### (a) Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Gibson) submitted a report.

Councillor Gibson said that a Big Lottery bid for aging better partnership development funding, referred to in paragraph 2.2 of his report, had now been submitted. Any response received would be reported to Council in due course.

Councillor Gibson also reported that a proposal to centralise disabled facilities grants across Lancashire had not been supported by Lancashire County Council.

Councillor Gibson said that he had received an email on 12 May from Councillors Ian and Ruth Duffy asking whether it would be possible for Council meetings to start at 6.00pm, rather than 7.00pm. He said that he was not against this suggestion in principle, but the Conservative Group, when it had considered the suggestion, had been anxious not to disenfranchise any Councillors who would not be able to arrive by 6.00pm or to disrupt the very useful pre-council briefing sessions often currently held at 6.00pm, so had been unable to support the idea.

Councillor Gibson reiterated, in response to comments by Councillor Martin, that the County Council's proposal to cease the waste cost sharing agreement had come as a complete surprise to all the district councils. At the last Lancashire Leaders meeting all the district council leaders, including the Labour leaders, had been incensed by the County Council's lack of consultation. He said that the County Council had now agreed to fund a review of the waste collection arrangements but, had rejected a proposal to also include waste disposal activities.

Councillor Gibson said, in response to a question from Councillor Lawrenson, that although progress was being made on the rural growth plan referred to in paragraph 3.3 of this report, it was slower than he had hoped because some of the LEP members wanted to concentrate on initiatives in urban areas. He said, however, that he would continue to press strongly for the completion of the rural growth plan.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

### (b) Resources Portfolio Holder

The Resources Portfolio Holder (Councillor A Vincent) submitted a report.

Councillor Brooks said that there had been much talk recently of the 600,000 houses empty across the country and a national task force had been set up to reduce that number. He asked what the Council was doing about empty homes in Wyre.

Councillor Vincent said that discounts for council tax on empty houses had been cut to encourage home owners to let empty properties. He said that there had been 701 empty properties in Wyre in October 2011 and the current figure had been reduced to 398. He stressed that as were removed there was no reason for owners to notify the Council of empty properties and that the 398 were currently recorded on the system as empty. The Council had also written to owners of empty properties in association with various housing agencies including Regenda and the YMCA to encourage them to take steps to return empty properties to use.

Councillor Vincent welcomed comments made by Councillor MacNaughton on the council tax and national non domestic rates collection rates referred to in paragraph 2.3 of his report and confirmed that Wyre's performance was extremely good. He said it was clearly important in the current financial climate, that all monies due were collected, so that the maximum amount was available to spend. He said that Councillor MacNaughton would need to ask Blackpool Council about their collection rates, but he confirmed that Conservative controlled councils consistently achieved higher collection rates than Labour controlled councils in Lancashire.

Councillor Martin said that it would always be harder to collect taxes in less affluent areas. She also thanked Council staff for their commitment in achieving the reduced sickness absence rates referred to in paragraph 3.1 of the report.

Councillor Martin referred to the further savings target of £788,000 referred to in paragraph 2.1 of the report. She asked about the impact of the unexpected additional costs recently reported arising from the judicial review relating to a planning matter and the redevelopment of Cleveleys Bus Station and what steps had been taken to avoid similar costs in the future. Councillor Vincent said that estimating the cost of major capital projects was always difficult and unforeseen events sometimes happened. Obviously, additional costs were not welcome, but the Council had good staff who rarely made such mistakes and the Council had always been able to find the money to meet these costs, because of the generally efficient financial stewardship in place.

Councillor Vincent said, in response to a question from Councillor B Stephenson, that an annual figure for empty properties was published in the Council's Business Plan. He said that the figure was based on the number of applications for tax relief on empty properties, which gave a reasonable indication of the number of

empty properties, but there might be some others which the Council was not aware of. He pointed out, however, that approximately 1.1% of properties in Wyre were empty which was the lowest in Lancashire. He suggested, in response to Councillor Stephenson's question, that if any members wanted more current or regular information on the number of empty properties, they should contact the relevant officers direct.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

(c) **Street Scene Portfolio Holder**

The Street Scene Portfolio Holder (Councillor V Taylor) submitted a report.

Councillor Taylor said, in response to a question from Councillor R Duffy, that portable CCTV cameras would be allocated to monitor the fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour problems she had recently reported at a location in her ward, as soon as they became available.

Councillor Taylor also welcomed comments from Councillor R Duffy about the location of waste bins on the Promenade at Rossall and the need for them to be more evenly spaced.

Councillor Taylor said that she would speak to Councillor T Taylor after the meeting about possible patrols on a section of the Promenade where a Dog Control Order was in place and in which he reported that dogs were not being kept on leads, as required.

Cllr Murphy confirmed, in response to a question from Councillor Lees, that dogs had to be kept on leads where Dog Control Orders were in place, but that there were areas where dogs could be let off a lead.

Councillor Taylor welcomed comments from Councillor B Birch applauding the efforts of the Rossall Beach Residents' Association for their activities in cleaning up the beach area and their recent award. He said that the local environment could be significantly improved if residents in other areas adopted the same approach.

Councillor Taylor thanked Councillor Lawrenson for comments welcoming the appointment of a new Memorial Park Development Officer referred to in paragraph 5.1 of the report. She said that the recent open day had been successful and that these were exciting and positive times for the Memorial Park.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

(d) Economy Portfolio Holder

The Economy Portfolio Holder, (Councillor Murphy) submitted a report.

Councillor Murphy said that he hoped that Members would find the performance monitoring figures and economic update statistics, which had been added to the previous report format, useful.

Councillor Murphy welcomed comments from Councillor Bridge pointing out that unemployment rates in Wyre were currently 5.3% which was lower than the national figure of 7.5% and the figure for the North West of 8%. Levels of self-employment were also high and he agreed with Councillor Bridge that all employment was equally valuable in developing the economy and encouraging job creation.

Councillor Murphy agreed to arrange for a written response to be sent to Councillor Martin about the number of vacant shops in Wyre, including the number of charity shops, the number of people who were 'under employed', (that is, in part-time work but wanting full-time work) and the number of workers on zero hours contracts.

Councillor Brooks said that it was encouraging that the vacancy rates for town centre retail units in Garstang were as low as 1.52%. Although the figures for some of the other areas in Wyre were higher, the figures compared well with other areas.

Councillor Murphy said that the average occupancy rate for town centres in Wyre was 9.3%, the figure for the North West was 17% and the national figures was 19.9%. He said that Wyre was doing well, but the Council needed to continue to do as much as possible to attract business to the area.

Councillor Murphy noted comments made by Councillor B Stephenson about a new training tower at the Fleetwood Nautical College which he considered to be 'eyesore'. Councillor Murphy said that he assumed that the normal process had been followed and that neighbours had been consulted and planning permission had been granted, prior to the erection of the structure.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

(e) Neighbourhood Services Portfolio Holder

The Neighbourhood Services Portfolio Holder (Councillor Berry) submitted a report.

Councillor Henderson commended Police Constable Dave Key who had recently retired after 20 years as a community beat officer in Poulton, ten of which had been as community beat manager. He

said that that left just one police constable in Poulton for a period of 28 hours per week supported by one PCSO, although extra officers were allocated to Poulton at weekends.

Councillor Berry said it was disappointing that PC Key was not to be directly replaced and he had already made representations to the Police on policing levels in Poulton. The responsibility for deciding the numbers of officers and the deployment of them was managed by the Chief Constable, in liaison with the Police Commissioner. He said that the strategies for policing in Poulton had changed slightly following the closure of Bispham Police Station, with a move to more responsive policing rather than neighbourhood policing. Police support would continue to be allocated to Poulton, but it was more likely to be officers in cars responding to calls, than police officers on the beat.

Councillor Berry agreed with comments made by Councillor M Gandhi about the success of the recent Wyre Together Presentation Evening and the incredibly valuable work done by the volunteers. He mentioned, for example, the work done by volunteers connected with the Rossall Beach Residents' Association and the CCTV monitoring. The Mayor said that he had attended the presentation evening and confirmed that it had been a wonderful event attended by a lovely group of people.

Councillor Berry said that he did not agree with comments made by Councillor E Stephenson about the discontinuation in 1999 of the CCTV service which had been in operation at that time. He said that the required communication links had not then been in place and the cost of making the equipment fit for purpose would have been unsustainable. He said that the current system was very good and was much envied by many other councils. He said that there were plans to invest in the continuation of the system, including the replacement of some of the cameras in Cleveleys.

Councillor Hodgkinson referred to a recent statement by the Lancashire Police Commissioner on the proposed recruitment of 500 special constables. He asked whether any of them would be allocated to Poulton. Councillor Berry said, in response, that he was not aware of any plans for a special constable to be allocated to Poulton, although he said that he thought that it would be useful. He also mentioned plans for the establishment of a quick response team in Lancashire, at a cost of £3 million, but that team was to be based in the larger urban areas of the County, rather than in Wyre.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

(f) Leisure and Culture Portfolio Holder

The Leisure and Culture Portfolio Holder (Councillor Bowen) submitted a report.

Councillor Bowen said that she would pass on to the relevant members of staff complimentary comments made by Councillor E Anderton about the 'Dizzy Heights' family festival held in Fleetwood over the Bank Holiday, which she said had been very successful despite the weather.

Councillor Bowen agreed with Councillor Lady Atkins that the Garstang Tourist Information Centre provided an excellent service and echoed her congratulations for their 'highly commended' award from Visit England.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**COU. Shaping Your Neighbourhood: Cleveleys Performance Report**

**18**

The Neighbourhood Leader Member for Cleveleys (Councillor Kay) and the Corporate Director of Resources submitted a report showing progress on the priorities and issues in the locality plan, including progress on funded projects. In the absence of Councillor Kay, the report was introduced by Councillor Ormrod.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**COU. Shaping Your Neighbourhood: Fleetwood Performance Report**

**19**

The Neighbourhood Leader Member for Fleetwood (Councillor Treece-Birch) and the Corporate Director of Resources submitted a report showing progress on the priorities and issues in the locality plan, including progress on funded projects.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**COU. Shaping Your Neighbourhood: Poulton Performance Report**

**20**

The Leader Member for Poulton (Councillor McKay) and the Corporate Director of Resources submitted a report showing progress on the priorities and issues in the locality plan, including progress on funded projects.

Councillor McKay said, in response to a question from Councillor Martin, that she did not know why United Utilities had withdrawn funding from the United Futures Fund for playground improvements as Farnham Way, but she said that alternative funding sources for that project were being pursued.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**COU. 21 Shaping Your Neighbourhood: Rural East Performance Report**

The Neighbourhood Leader Member for Rural East (Councillor Lady Atkins) and the Corporate Director of Resources submitted a report showing progress on the priorities and issues in the locality plan, including progress on funded projects.

Councillor Lady Atkins said that she was pleased to be able to report that the refurbishment of Barnacre Memorial Hall was nearing completion, with the official opening scheduled for 29 June. Work on the East Bank Project (formerly the Garstang and Scorton Link Way) was now progressing, if only slowly.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**COU. 22 Shaping Your Neighbourhood: Rural West Performance Report**

The Neighbourhood Leader Member for Rural West (Councillor Robinson) and the Corporate Director of Resources submitted a report showing progress on the priorities and issues in the locality plan, including progress on funded projects.

Councillor Robinson said that refurbishment work at the Great Eccleston Village Centre was progressing well, with an opening day scheduled from 10am to 4pm on 25 June.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**COU. 23 Shaping Your Neighbourhood: Thornton Performance Report**

The Leader Member for Thornton (Councillor MacNaughton) and the Corporate Director of Resources submitted a report showing progress on the priorities and issues in the locality plan, including progress on funded projects.

Councillor MacNaughton said that the new play facilities at Stanah Country Park had been completed and were excellent.

Councillor Lees welcomed the contribution made to upgrade the youth shelter in Burn Naze.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

**COU. 24 Notices of Motion**

None.

The meeting started at 7.00pm and the meeting finished at 8.25pm