



Council Minutes

Minutes of the Council meeting held at the Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde on Thursday 21 January 2016

Councillors present:

The Mayor, Councillor Balmain, and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Greenhough.

Councillor I Amos	Councillor Fail	Councillor Reeves
Councillor R Amos	Councillor Gibson	Councillor Robinson
Councillor E Anderton	Councillor Henderson	Councillor Shewan
Councillor M Anderton	Councillor Hodgkinson	Councillor B Stephenson
Councillor Lady Atkins	Councillor Ibison	Councillor E Stephenson
Councillor Ballard	Councillor Ingham	Councillor T Taylor
Councillor Barrowclough	Councillor Jones	Councillor V Taylor
Councillor Beavers	Councillor Kay	Councillor A Turner
Councillor Berry	Councillor Lees	Councillor S Turner
Councillor Bowen	Councillor Moon	Councillor A Vincent
Councillor Catterall	Councillor Murphy	Councillor Matthew Vincent
Councillor I Duffy	Councillor Pimbley	Councillor Michael Vincent
Councillor R Duffy	Councillor Orme	Councillor Walmsley
Councillor Bridge	Councillor Ormrod	Councillor Wilson

Apologies: Councillors B Birch, C Birch, Collinson, Holden, McKay and Smith (Councillor Lees apologised for arriving late).

Officers present:

Garry Payne (Chief Executive)
Michael Ryan (Corporate Director, People and Places)
Philippa Davies (Corporate Director, Resources)
Mark Billington (Head of Operations)
Mark Broadhurst (Head of Housing Services)
Marianne Hesketh (Head of Transformation)
Roy Saunders (Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager)
Duncan Jowitt (Democratic Services Officer)

Also present: Aldermen Bannister and McCann, Will Burrell (Youth Mayor), Mr R Matthews and Mrs M Collins (Independent Remuneration Panel members) and one member of the public.

COU. **Confirmation of Minutes**
85

The Leader of the Labour Group (Councillor R Duffy) and Councillor Fail referred to minute 73 concerning the confirmation of the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2015 and once again wished to express concern that the minutes of the December meeting were not a correct record because they did not sufficiently reflect comments and questions made by members of the opposition.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 3 December 2015 be confirmed as a correct record (31 in favour, 11 against and 1 abstention).

COU. **Declarations of Interest**
86

Councillor Jones declared an interest in Agenda Item 8(a) (Leader's Executive Report) because her husband was a shareholder of the company involved in the proposed River Wyre barrage project, referred to in paragraph 3.1 of the report.

COU. **Announcements**
87

1. The Mayor (Councillor Balmain) announced that regrettably he had cancelled the Mayor's Ball for 2016 because of the lack of sufficient ticket sales, but he said there would instead be a Spring Dinner, details of which would be circulated soon.
2. The Mayor (Councillor Balmain) announced that the Mayor Elect for 2016/17 was Councillor Terry Lees and that the Deputy Mayor would be Councillor Emma Anderton.

COU. **Public Questions and Statements**
88

None.

COU. **Questions "On Notice" from Councillors**
89

The Mayor said that one question had been received from Councillor R Duffy addressed to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Gibson) under Procedural Rule 11.1, as follows.

"Following the Conservative Government's decision to totally ignore local public opinion and to give permission for Halite to store up to 900 million cubic metres of gas under the River Wyre, could the Leader of the Council give his opinion on whether or not the value of local residents homes are likely to plummet once Halite move into the area. If he does think this is likely, would he advise that residents sell up now, before Halite move onto the site or that they wait until after the Halite HGVs start rumbling past their homes."

Councillor Gibson said in response that the Labour group had not been

involved with the initial fight on this issue or travelled to Brussels as Councillor V Taylor had done. He suggested, that the question might be regarded by some as “a political stunt”. He said that his main concern was about the risks which would arise from a possible gas leak and for the health of local residents. He said he did not know how many lorries would visit the proposed site or when such traffic movements might start.

COU. **Executive Reports**
90

(a) **Leader of the Council**

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

Councillor Gibson suggested when introducing his report that it might be useful to invite Mr Bob Long from Natural Energy Wyre to make a presentation to councillors about the River Wyre Barrage proposals referred to in paragraph 3.1 of his report, possibly at the briefing session before the next Council meeting.

Councillor R Duffy referred to a letter from Councillor Gibson which had been published in the Blackpool Gazette on 24 December in which he had attacked Lancashire County Council for spending on consultants and had stated that it appeared to be incapable of making decisions. She said that Lancashire County Council was spending 0.8% of its net budget on consultants, hopefully as a one-off investment which would generate future savings. She commented that Wyre Council spent on average 2% of its net budget on consultants fees, more in percentage terms than the County Council. She asked if this meant that he, as Leader, was incapable of running the Council.

Councillor Gibson said that the County Council had spent £6.6m on consultants and that 0.8% of a £700m budget was very different from the spending levels of a small district council. He said that Wyre appointed planning consultants to undertake technical work on the Local Plan, and to assist with determining planning applications, because the required specialist resources were not available in-house. He said that was a very different situation from appointing consultants to advise on how to save money.

Councillor Shewan said that the consultants being used by the County Council had previously been employed successfully by a number of councils in the south of the country and were being tasked with achieving savings of at least £34m or they would not get paid.

Councillor Gibson said that the £6.6m used for consultants could have been better spent supporting services such as the local libraries, the Fleetwood to Knott End ferry, Fleetwood Museum and bus services throughout Wyre, all of which were threatened with cuts.

Councillor Beavers said that the blame for the funding cuts clearly rested on the Conservative government and the impact on County Councils was disastrous.

Councillor Gibson said in response that Lancashire County Council should have been funding priority local services instead of accruing reserves of £328m.

Councillor Gibson agreed with comments made by Councillor Michael Vincent congratulating the railway enthusiasts involved in purchasing a classic railway engine, which would hopefully enable the track from Poulton to Thornton to be reopened in due course. He said that the funding which County Councillor Jim Lawrenson had allocated to the project was a welcome contribution.

Councillor Fail said that he had recently received an information pack from the Trustees of the Teanlowe Community Centre. Apparently, a Business Plan had been sent to the Council on 1 October 2015 but they had not had a reply. He understood that a letter had also been sent to the Chief Executive last week with no reply yet received. Councillor Fail said that the Trustees plans should be given serious consideration, not only with regard to the Centre, but also the two unused adjoining rooms with at least one business interested in renting out the other room. He said that at the September Council meeting when he had asked about the Community Centre, he had been told by Cllr Vincent that "the Council would continue to try to find a solution which was acceptable to all concerned". Given Cllr Vincent's suggested willingness to find a solution, he asked if the Business Plan had been assessed, and if not when would it be. Also, when could they expect a formal response?

The Chief Executive said that the most recent letter from the trustees of the Teanlowe Centre had been replied to. He also said that the Council's Estates department had informed the Trustees before Christmas that the documents they had submitted previously were being evaluated.

Councillor Gibson said in response to the comments made by Councillor Fail that the document submitted by the Trustees was not a proper business plan. He also said that a leaflet being circulated in the area was disingenuous and misleading with incorrect figures being stated. The Council subsidised their energy bills and the Trustees currently paid no rent for the facility. He also said that using war heroes to make a political case was despicable.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

(b) Resources Portfolio Holder

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

Councillor A Vincent said in response to a question from Councillor B Stephenson that he thought it very unlikely that Wyre Council would get into a situation where it would hold a referendum under the Localism Act to seek approval to increase the Council Tax by more than 2%, the limit which had been set by the Secretary of State for 2016/17. He said that Councils in other parts of the country which had held a referendum had not usually obtained the necessary public support and such exercises had largely proved to be costly and futile.

Councillor Beavers asked whether, in view of the loss of government funding referred to in paragraph 2.2 of the report, Wyre Council would be using reserves to plug the gap in funding. Councillor A Vincent said that the loss of funding was clearly disappointing. The Council would have to look for savings. He said that the financial situation could not be ignored and that innovative approaches were required.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

(c) Street Scene Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio Holder

The Street Scene Parks and Open spaces Portfolio Holder (Councillor Henderson) submitted a report.

Councillor Henderson provided an update on the on-line consultation about green waste, referred to in paragraph 3.3 of his report, which had ended on 12 January 2016. He said that 593 responses had been received, either submitted on-line or via the contact centre. Its purpose had been to understand better how people currently recycled green waste, what their views on charging would be and how they might use such a service. The findings had reflected the experience of other councils which had introduced charges for green waste collection, where the take-up had typically been between 20% and 40%. 19 responders had said that they would “fly tip”, which was obviously a concern, although the experience of other councils which had introduced charging was that fly tipping had not been a problem. On the basis of the comments received during the consultation process and the withdrawal of cost sharing funding by LCC his conclusion was that the Council must proceed with the subscription service for green waste collection on the basis proposed. He said that a full analysis of the consultation responses would be published on the Council’s website.

Councillor B Stephenson made comments on problems of dog

fouling in Victoria Street, Fleetwood and asked what could be done to improve the situation. Councillor Henderson advised Councillor Stephenson that he should report the instances of dog fouling to the Council's contact centre so that action could be taken.

Councillor E Anderton referred to recent publicity for a pilot scheme being carried out by Barking and Dagenham Council to use DNA testing to identify irresponsible dog owners. She asked whether the feasibility of such a scheme in Wyre could be considered. Councillor Henderson said that he would speak to the Head of Operations to find out more about the Barking and Dagenham scheme. He said however, that there would be cost implications and it was unlikely that the effectiveness of such an approach would be clear at this stage.

Councillor Pimbley said that there seemed to be more and more instances of fly tipping in the rural areas which she said were generally dealt with quickly and efficiently by the Council. She was aware that such instances of fly tipping were investigated but asked whether any prosecutions had been made. Councillor Henderson said in response that the Council always tried to identify perpetrators where fly tipping took place on public land and said that there had been 3 prosecutions recently.

Councillor Reeves said that prompt action had been taken by Street Scene officers to deal with instances of dog fouling which she had reported. Councillor Henderson said that he would pass on her thanks to the staff concerned.

(d) Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder (Councillor Murphy) submitted a report.

Councillor R Duffy expressed concerns about the recent meeting of the Planning committee at which the application for beach bungalows adjacent to the Marine Hall at Fleetwood had been considered. She said that incorrect information had been provided by the Chief Planning Officer at the meeting and that the format of the meeting had been changed at short notice. She also said that the Council, as the applicant, was ignoring conditions which had been attached to the planning permission and suggested that this did not set a good example. She asked whether it was appropriate for the Council to make decisions on its own applications and whether such applications could be dealt with by another council. Councillor Murphy said in response that a further report on the beach huts was to be submitted to the next meeting of the Planning Committee. He said the only works taking place currently were the removal of an existing wall at the Marine Hall, which was not part of the construction of the new beach huts. He said that Wyre Council was the planning authority for the area and had a legal

responsibility to consider all applications within that area. It was not possible to transfer that responsibility to another council.

Councillor Lady Atkins asked for a progress report on the Local Plan and whether the Council was currently on target to adopt a plan in 2017. Councillor Murphy said that a report on the draft Local Plan was to be submitted to the Cabinet in April, following which there would be a further consultation period between June and August 2016. So, although it had taken longer than expected to take account of the 880 observations that had been submitted during the consultation process on the issues and options document, the Council was on target to make a submission to the Secretary of State by mid-2017.

Councillor M Anderton asked Councillor Murphy whether, given his responsibility for Member Development, he was concerned about what she considered to be a crisis in the quality of chairmanship of committees. She referred to recent meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Licensing Committee and the Planning Committee where she said that the Chairmen of those committees had failed to follow procedures correctly. She asked whether training could be urgently arranged for chairmen of committees. Councillor Murphy said that he did not agree with the comments made by Councillor Anderton and said that although he was chairman of the Member Development Committee, that was not part of his responsibilities as Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder.

Councillor Bridge stated as a personal explanation under Procedure Rule 16.13, that he took exception to the comments made about his chairmanship of the Licensing Committee. He said that the procedures that he had followed at the meeting she referred to had not been incorrect. He said that he had been involved in the licensing process for 25 years and objected to the slur on his competence.

Councillor Emma Anderton referred to a letter she had received from the Monitoring Officer about a standards issue in which it had been stated that some members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee might have felt uncomfortable discussing a call-in request in the presence of the Portfolio Holder. She asked, in view of that situation, whether Councillor Murphy would reconsider his habit of attending every meeting of the Planning Committee. Councillor Murphy said and that he did not believe that he exerted any influence or pressure on the members of the Planning Committee. He said with regard to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that he had been asked to attend the meeting because of the call-in of one of his decisions.

Councillor Barrowclough said that it was good news that funding of £50,000 had been obtained for the renovation of the Marine Hall

dome. He asked if any under spending on that project could be spent on the Five for Fleetwood project. Councillor Murphy said that it was already clear that there would not be any underspending on the Fleetwood dome works.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

(e) Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder

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

Councillors Berry and R Duffy both commented on the valuable role performed by the Volunteer CCTV operators and thanked them for their contribution, particularly over the Christmas period.

Councillor Beavers said that Lancashire County Council had very reluctantly made the cuts to the Supporting People funding referred to in paragraph 3.2 and 3.3 of the report and asked whether Councillor Berry would write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer pointing out the impact of central government funding cuts on local services such as these. Councillor Berry said that he would not write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The decision to make these cuts had been made by Lancashire County Council and was short sighted. It should have regarded the Supporting People funding as a priority. He said that the Council's Head of Housing Services had sent a robust and compelling response to the County Council pointing out the drastic implications of these cuts for some local residents and also pointing out that they would lead to an increase in overall spending by the County Council because of the additional demand for social care services which would inevitably result.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

(f) Leisure and Cultural Portfolio Holder

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

Councillor Bowen said in response to a question from Councillor E. Anderton that weeds had been removed from the model yacht and boating lake at Fleetwood.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(g) Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder

The Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder (Councillor V Taylor) submitted a report.

Councillor Taylor said that she would provide a written response to a question from Councillor Beavers about public health events she had attended, what her responsibilities were and what decisions she had taken in her role as Health and Community Engagement Portfolio Holder.

Councillor Fail asked whether, given the current issues with the Teanlowe Community Centre, Councillor Taylor could confirm if she had visited the centre. Councillor Taylor said that she had visited the centre in the past, but she had no immediate plans for a further visit.

(h) Comments and Questions from Cabinet Members

Councillor Murphy said, in response to a question from Councillor Gibson about comments made to the press whilst a Code of Conduct complaint was being considered, that he would be happy, in his role as Chairman of the Councillors Development Group, to support the provision of training for members on Standard's issues.

COU. Floods in East Wyre
91

The Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder (Councillor Berry) and the Corporate Director of People and Places submitted a report providing information on the impact of the recent flooding in parts of Wyre and the actions taken by the Council.

Councillor Berry welcomed comments made by various councillors commending the Wyre employees who had been involved in the response to the recent floods in St Michaels, Churchtown and parts of Garstang. He said that he would ensure that the Council's thanks were passed on to those employees. He also recorded his thanks to the emergency services, other agencies involved and the licensee of the Grapes Public House for their actions in responding to the floods, as referred to in his report.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

COU. Lead Member Report: Young People
92

The Lead Member for Young People (Councillor Kay) submitted a report providing an update on the Council's involvement in the provision of activities and services for children and young people over the last year.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

COU. Members Allowances Scheme
93

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Gibson) introduced a report submitted by the Corporate Director of Resources on matters considered by the Independent Remuneration Panel in relation to the Council's scheme for Members Allowances. Councillor Gibson thanked Mr Ron Matthews and Mr

Michael Collins for the contributions they had made to the review and asked that the Council's thanks also be passed on to Mr David Blight.

RESOLVED: (by 31 votes to 13)

- (1) That the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) paid to the Chairman of the Licensing Committee, currently 1 x Basic Allowance, be continued.
- (2) That no changes be made to any other Special Responsibility Allowances but, that the SRA's paid to the Leader of the Council and the other members of the Cabinet be kept under review.
- (3) That no SRA be paid to the Shaping Your Neighbourhood Lead members.
- (4) That the comments made by the IRP be noted and that the revisions to the scheme be publicised in accordance with the Regulations.
- (5) That the members of the Independent Remuneration Panel be thanked for their work.

COU.
94 **Licensing Policy 2016 – 2021**

The Chairman of the Licensing Committee (Councillor Bridge) and the Corporate Director of People and Places submitted a report on a proposed licensing policy for the period 2016 – 2021, in accordance with the requirements of the Licensing Act 2003.

RESOLVED: (unanimously) that the Statement of the Licensing Policy 2016 – 2021 attached as Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

COU.
95 **Council Tax Discounts/Exemptions**

The Resources Portfolio Holder (Councillor A Vincent) and the Corporate Director of Resources submitted a report on proposed changes to the level of discounts and exemptions currently awarded in advance of the tax setting process for 2016/17.

RESOLVED: (unanimously) that the proposed changes for the levels of discounts and exemptions set out in Appendix 1 of the report be introduced from 1 April 2016.

COU.
96 **Planning Committee Membership**

The Mayor said that there was no written report for this item but the proposed change to the membership of the Planning Committee was set out on the third page of the agenda. He said that he had been advised that as, the statutory political balance rules had to be applied to all committee appointments, this vacancy on the Planning Committee (arising from the

resignation from the committee of Councillor B Birch) had to be filled by a nominee of the Conservative Group.

Councillor Gibson thanked Councillor B Birch for his contribution to the work of the Planning Committee and proposed that Councillor Jones be appointed to the committee in his place.

RESOLVED: that Councillor Jones be appointed to the Planning Committee in place of Councillor B Birch until the next Annual Council meeting on 12 May 2016.

COU. **Lancashire Electoral Review**
97

The Resources Portfolio Holder (Councillor A Vincent) and the Corporate Director of Resources submitted a report informing Council of the submission made on its behalf in response to the consultation on the review of the electoral divisions for Lancashire County Council.

RESOLVED: that the submissions made to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England attached as Appendices 1 and 2 of the report be noted.

COU. **Notice of Motion: Lancashire County Council Budget Cuts**
98

Councillors Michael Vincent, Moon, Jones and Hodgkinson submitted the following Motion under paragraph 14 of the Council Procedural Rules. (The Motion was formerly proposed by Councillor Michael Vincent and seconded by Councillor Moon).

“This Council calls on Lancashire County Council to urgently re-think their proposed cuts, as, if implemented in their current form, they would have a devastating effect on the citizens of Wyre.

Lancashire County Council hold substantial reserves and we call upon them to make use of these funds rather than devastate this borough and the lives of many of its residents.”

During the ensuing debate four members of Council requested a recorded vote in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 19.4 of the Council Procedure Rules.

The following members voted in support of the Motion: Councillors I Amos, R Amos, Lady Atkins, Ballard, Balmain, Berry, Bowen, Bridge, Catterall, Gibson, Greenhough, Henderson, Hodgkinson, Ibison, Ingham, Jones, Kay, Moon, Murphy, Orme, Ormrod, Pimbley, Robinson, V Taylor, A Turner, S Turner, A Vincent, Mathew Vincent, Michael Vincent, Walmsley and Wilson.

The following members voted against the Motion: Councillors E Anderton, M Anderton, Barrowclough, Beavers, I Duffy, R Duffy, Fail, Lees, Reeves, Shewan, B Stephenson, E Stephenson and T Taylor.

The proposal was therefore carried by 31 votes to 13 and it was RESOLVED that the Motion be approved.

The meeting started at 7pm and finished at 9.15pm

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