



Council Minutes

Minutes of the Council meeting of the Wyre Borough Council meeting held at the Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde on Thursday 29 November 2012.

Councillors present:

The Mayor, (Councillor Lawrenson).
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Perkin).

Councillor Amos	Councillor M Gandhi	Councillor Pimbley
Councillor Anderson	Councillor R Gandhi	Councillor Robinson
Councillor E Anderton	Councillor Gibson	Councillor Rogers
Councillor M Anderton	Councillor Greenhough	Councillor Shewan
Councillor Lady Atkins	Councillor J Grunshaw	Councillor Smith
Councillor Balmain	Councillor Hargreaves	Councillor Swift
Councillor Bannister	Councillor Henderson	Councillor T Taylor
Councillor Beavers	Councillor Hodgkinson	Councillor Treece-Birch
Councillor Berry	Councillor Kay	Councillor Turner
Councillor Bridge	Councillor Lees	Councillor A Vincent
Councillor Bowen	Councillor Martin	Councillor M Vincent
Councillor Brooks	Councillor MacNaughton	Councillor Walmsley
Councillor Catterall	Councillor McCann	Councillor Williams
Councillor Cocker	Councillor McKay	Councillor Wilson
Councillor Collinson	Councillor Murphy	
Councillor I Duffy	Councillor Newsham	
Councillor R Duffy	Councillor Ormrod	

Apologies: Councillors Birch, C Grunshaw, Hewitt, Moon and V. Taylor.

Officers present:

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

Also present: Alderman Irish, two Members of Fleetwood Town Council (Councillors Marsh and Leadbetter) and one member of the public.

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Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 18 October 2012 be confirmed as a correct record.

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Declarations of Interests

None

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Announcements

The Mayor (Councillor Lawrenson) made six announcements, as follows:

- (1) He congratulated Councillor Clive Grunshaw on his recent election as the first Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire
- (2) He also congratulated Councillor Penny Martin on her appointment as Leader of the Labour Group and, Councillor Paul Treece-Birch, on his appointment as Deputy Leader of the Labour Group, following the resignation of Councillors Clive Grunshaw and Lorraine Beavers from those positions.
- (3) He said that he was pleased to report that the festival of remembrance, held on 6 November 2012, had been very successful and had raised in excess of £1,000 for the Mayor's charities and the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.
- (4) The Mayor said that the next Mayor's charity event would be the "Christmas by Candlelight" evening, which would take place on Wednesday 12 December 2012 at Rossall School Chapel. Tickets were on sale for £5 each.
- (5) He reminded Members that the iPad raffle in aid of the Mayor's charities was still on-going. The draw would take place at Rossall School Chapel on 12 December 2012.
- (6) The Mayor gave early notice to Members that the Mayor's Ball would be held on Friday 15 March 2013, at the Marine Hall.

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Presentation

None

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Public Questions, Statements and Petitions

None

Questions “On Notice” from Councillors

- (1) Question from Councillor M Anderton to the Leader of the Council: Bid for shaping your neighbourhood funding for a skatepark in Fleetwood.

"Would the Leader of the Council confirm his recent statement to the Fleetwood Lead for Shaping your Neighbourhood, Cllr Treece-Birch, that he, the Leader will NOT be supporting the Fleetwood bid under the Shaping your Neighbourhood scheme for a Fleetwood based skatepark.

The bid was excellently put together, covered all the required criteria and scored 9/10 on the councils own scoring matrix.

It has the unanimous backing of all the town's councillors, the wholehearted support of the entire community including local schools, local doctors and the police.

If the Leader does confirm his opposition to this bid would he explain his rationale for this extraordinary decision so that the councillors, the towns people but most importantly the children of Fleetwood can understand why they are once again losing out."

The Leader (Councillor Gibson) said, in response, that a decision on the Shaping Your Neighbourhood bids would be taken by the Cabinet at its meeting on 5 December. He confirmed, however, that his own view was that the bid for a Fleetwood based skatepark should not be approved. He said the Council was investing a significant amount of money in its leisure centres in order to improve facilities, increase income and reduce the subsidy for those centres. The proposed skatepark scheme would be in direct competition to new, additional facilities to be provided at the Thornton Leisure Centre.

He also questioned the priority awarded to the scheme, which he said had changed following a special meeting of the Labour Group held shortly before the deadline for the submission of bids. The Labour member who had been the Lead Member for Shaping Your Neighbourhood in Fleetwood had also resigned from that position.

Councillor Gibson questioned Councillor Anderton's assertion that the bid had been "excellently put together". He said that, for bids to be supported financially, in addition to meeting the criteria specified in the scoring matrix, it was necessary to demonstrate that the proposed scheme was deliverable. He said that, for the proposed skatepark scheme, an agreed location had not been confirmed, planning approval had not been obtained nor had an application been submitted. There was no detailed breakdown of costs, no additional funding sources had been identified to meet the shortfall assuming the Wyre bid and the Fleetwood Town Council bids were approved and, no assessment had been made of the potential impact on the Thornton Leisure Centre, or the on-going costs.

Councillor Gibson pointed out, that the bids submitted for Shaping Your Neighbourhood funding for the Fleetwood area totalled £575,000, which was in excess of the £479,000 allocated for the Locality Plans throughout the whole of the Borough.

He suggested that the bid had simply been submitted as a “political stunt” in the realisation that it would not be approved but, in order to gain political benefit.

Councillor Anderton said that the Leader was being “paranoid” and, as a supplementary question asked him to accept that the Fleetwood Councillors had consulted community groups in the neighbourhood as intended under the shaping your neighbourhood strategy and the skatepark had been clearly identified as the facility that was most wanted by the local people.

Councillor Gibson in response reiterated his view that the Labour Members were indulging in political “grand standing”.

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Executive Reports

(a) Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council, (Councillor Gibson) submitted a report. He said that since the report had been written he had met with the new Police and Crime Commissioner on two occasions. They had both been positive meetings, which he hoped would be the start of good working relationship.

Cllr T. Rogers confirmed that the commitment to the Rossall Sea Defences was £100,000 from Fleetwood Town Council and not the £110,000 mentioned in para 2.5 of the Leader’s report.

Councillor Gibson said, in response to a question from Councillor Greenhough, that he hoped Councillor Martin, in her new role as Leader of the Labour Group, would adopt a more positive approach to neighbourhood engagement, having previously declined to participate in the shaping your neighbourhood initiative.

In response to a question from Councillor Bridge, Councillor Gibson listed the projects and services currently being delivered in Fleetwood, at a total cost of approximately £1.7million per annum. He pointed out that the total council tax bill for all the residents of Fleetwood was £1.4 million per annum.

Councillor Gibson reiterated in response to a question from Councillor MacNaughton, his hope that the new Labour leadership would engage more positively with the shaping your neighbourhood approach.

Councillor Rogers pointed out that he and other Labour Councillors had spoken to the Chief Executive, well before the establishment of the shaping your neighbourhood strategy, about the possibility of providing a skatepark in Fleetwood.

Councillor Martin endorsed the congratulations to Councillor Clive Grunshaw on his election as Police and Crime Commissioner and thanked the staff involved in the election process and at the count for their hard work. She also thanked Councillor Grunshaw for his efforts as Leader of the Labour Group and especially, thanked Councillor Lorraine Beavers for her contribution as Deputy Leader of the Labour Group.

Councillor E Anderton pointed out that, the strategic risk register included the deliverability of the proposals for the development of leisure centres as a potential risk. She asked the Leader of the Council how he intended to respond to that risk. She also asked, in the light of that situation, whether he would reconsider his decision to reject the Fleetwood skatepark bid.

Councillor Gibson said he did not think the risk identified was significant. The development of the Council's leisure centres was a key priority and would be implemented. He said that he would be recommending the Cabinet to reject the current skate park bid. He said, however, that he had agreed to a request to meet with Councillor Marsh, the Chairman of Fleetwood Town Council, to discuss alternative ideas.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(b) Resources Portfolio Holder

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

Councillor Rogers asked about the outcome of discussions with Fleetwood Sea Cadets on the renewal of the lease for its premises. He assumed that an agreement had been reached, because a bid for shaping your neighbourhood funding appeared to have been successful.

Councillor Vincent said, in reply, that he understood that discussions were on-going and he was not aware of any final decision having yet been reached. Clearly, any approval of a shaping your neighbourhood bid would have to be conditional on continued occupation by the Sea Cadets group of its current premises.

Councillor Beavers asked whether, following the success of the recent Christmas lights switch on event at Fleetwood, it would be possible to make the Marine Hall available free of charge for the event in 2013, because a larger venue was clearly needed.

Councillor Vincent said that the issue would be discussed at the next meeting of the Management Board.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(c) Street Scene Portfolio Holder

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

Councillor Brooks said that, following cutting of hedges by farmers in Winmarleigh and Cabus and the work of John Bettle and his rural operations team, the area was looking particularly clean and tidy, which made an excellent impression on local people.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(d) Economy Portfolio Holder

The Economy Portfolio Holder (Councillor McCann) submitted a report.

Councillor McCann said, in response to a question from Councillor Rogers, that his recent meeting with Blackpool and Wyre Build-up had gone well. He said that a considerable amount of work was being done in that forum and at Wyre Together to improve the outlook for unemployed people in Wyre, particularly through the Wyred Up Scheme.

Councillor McCann said in response to comments made by Councillor Martin about disruption caused by road works in Cleveleys, that the works, when completed, would enable people to gain much better access to the shops in the town. He also said, in response to a further question from Councillor Martin, that he understood that the bus station would open within the next week. He said that he did not know what the cost of the remedial works at the bus station would be but, he would arrange for a written reply, containing that information to be sent to Councillor Martin.

Councillor Shewan asked which would arrive first in Fleetwood, the re-opened rail link to Poulton or a fish and food park. Councillor McCann said, in response, that initially the intention was to re-open the rail link to Thornton. He stressed the importance of starting work on that project to ensure that the line was not removed completely.

Councillor McCann said, in response to a question from Councillor Pimbley about notification of road closures, that she should contact either Sim Lane-Dixon the liaison officer for the Wyre area at Lancashire County Council, or our County Councillor (Councillor Vivien Taylor).

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(e) Neighbourhood Services Portfolio Holder

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

Councillor Berry said that the Chief Executive had recently led a delegation to the Environment Agency in support of the bid for funding for the Rossall sea defence works. The points made by the delegation appeared to have been well received. A number of further questions have been posed by the Environment Agency which would be responded to within the next few days. Further news was expected on the outcome of the bid in January or February.

Councillor Berry said that he was pleased to report that the Council had received funding of £97,000 for the Warm Homes Healthy People project referred to in paragraph 2.4 to 2.9 of his report.

Councillor Rogers welcomed the proposed “taking pride” event for the Pharos Ward in Fleetwood. However, he expressed concern that much of the improvement made by such events was often ruined because of problems with fly tipping on private land. He referred, in particular to problems caused by tipping on private land adjacent to Fleetwood market.

Councillor Berry urged Councillor Rogers to report all such instances the Environmental Health Team or to a Member of the Cabinet so that enforcement action could be taken.

Councillor Berry stated, in response to a further question from Councillor Martin, that if the dumping of rubbish was causing a public health hazard, he understood that action could be taken to get it removed, even if it was on private land

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(f) Leisure & Culture Portfolio Holder

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

Councillor Beavers asked why the Paddling Pool Action Group had not been consulted on the proposals recently announced by the Leader to provide a water based play area in Fleetwood.

Councillor Bowen said, in response, that she was awaiting a report from the consultants looking into this issue and when she had received that report she would contact the Paddling Pool Action Group.

Councillor Bowen confirmed, in response to a further question from Councillor Smith, that the Council would be opening the paddling pool in the summer of 2013.

Councillor Rogers said that he was aware that a number of long term users of the Marine Hall were not renewing their bookings, because of the increased charges imposed by the Council. He referred, in particular, to a dance group which had been using the premises for 26 years and whose charges had been increased from £1700 to £2500. As a result they had moved to Fleetwood High School at a significantly reduced cost.

Councillor Bowen said that not all of the organisations referred to by Councillor Rogers were leaving and she was aware that some of those groups were very satisfied with the service they received. She said, however, that the Council was seeking to making the operation of the Marine Hall more efficient and to reduce the subsidy paid by the Council and that it was, therefore, necessary to increase charges.

Councillor Bowen endorsed comments made by Councillor Greenhough on the benefits to the community deriving from the work of volunteers. He had referred in particular to the work of the Marsh Mill Steering Group and the successful recent Lancashire Night event.

The Chief Executive explained that the information about the sea change legacy was included in paragraph 2.10 of the report of the Leisure & Culture Portfolio Holder because, although the original sea change funding had been an Economy Portfolio Holder responsibility, the legacy funding related to arts projects which were the responsibility of the Leisure & Culture Portfolio Holder.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

COU. **Audit Committee: Periodic Report**
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The Chairman of the Audit Committee (Councillor Balmain) submitted a report on issues recently dealt with the by the Audit Committee.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

COU. **Lead Member Report: Young People**
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The Lead Member for Young People (Councillor Kay) submitted a report.

Councillor Kay said that there had originally been 109 families being supported under the Working Together with Families project in Wyre but, that number had now increased to 236.

Councillor Kay also made a short presentation on activities taking place at “The Zone – Wyre”, based at Milton Street in Fleetwood.

Councillor Kay said, in response to a question from Councillor E Anderton, that she had been surprised when she had been told that the shaping your neighbourhood bid for a skateboard park at Fleetwood was not to be supported, because she had not been previously aware of that decision. Her personal view was that a small skatepark at Fleetwood was needed but, the overriding need was for a high quality indoor facility to provide a safe environment for young people, which was to be provided at Thornton Leisure Centre.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

COU.
71 **Localisation of Council Tax Support**

The Resources Portfolio Holder (Councillor A Vincent) and the Corporate Director of Resources submitted a report on a proposed localised Council Tax support scheme to replace Council Tax Benefit from 1 April 2013.

Councillor Martin said that, although the Labour Group acknowledged that the proposed scheme was better than the scheme previously envisaged, they would be abstaining from the vote because they had concerns about cost of non-collection, the provision of crisis loans and the impact of the “bedroom tax”.

RESOLVED that the Localised Council Tax Support Scheme be agreed, with the additional maximum percentage contribution from working age claimants, being no more than 8.5%, subject to notification of the Council Tax Support funding being in line with assumptions used to calculate the financial impact.

COU.
72 **Council Tax: Discounts and 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 Government’s technical reforms of Council Tax, which would take effect on 1 April 2013.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the proposed changes to the levels of discounts and exemptions, as set out in Appendix 1, be introduced from 1 April 2013.
- (2) That the Scheme of Delegation to Officers (in Part 7 of the Council’s Constitution) and, in particular, the delegation to the Corporate Director of Resources (Chief Financial Officer) concerning the calculation of the council tax base, be amended to include a reference to the completion of the NNDR1 form in addition in anticipation of the business rates retention scheme being implemented from 1 April 2013.

COU. Calendar Meetings 2013/14
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The Leader of the Council (Councillor Gibson) and the Corporate Director of Resources submitted a report on a proposed programme of meetings for 2013/14.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the Calendar of Meetings for 2013, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
- (2) That the Director of Resources be requested to arrange for an easy to read calendar of meetings to be published on the Council's website.
- (3) That the possibility be considered of changing the date of the Licensing Committee scheduled for 2 May 2013 (included in the 2012/13 programme of meetings) to avoid a clash with the Lancashire County Council elections taking place on that day.

COU. Notices of Motion
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None.

The meeting started at 7.00pm and finished at 8.24pm.

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