

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 25 JANUARY 2017

Present:

Councillor G Coleman (in the Chair)

Councillors

Benson	Cox	Hutton	Ryan
Blackburn	Critchley	Jackson	Scott
Cain	Cross	Kirkland	Smith
Callow	Elmes	Matthews	Stansfield
Mrs Callow JP	Galley	Mitchell	I Taylor
Campbell	Mrs Henderson MBE	O'Hara	L Taylor
Clapham	Hobson	Owen	L Williams
D Coleman	Humphreys	Robertson BEM	T Williams
I Coleman	Hunter	Roberts	Mrs Wright

In Attendance:

Neil Jack, Chief Executive

Delyth Curtis, Deputy Chief Executive / Director of People

John Blackledge, Director of Community and Environmental Services

Alan Cavill, Director of Place

Dr Arif Rajpura, Director of Public Health

Karen Smith, Director of Adult Services

Steve Thompson, Director of Resources

Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships/Monitoring Officer

Lorraine Hurst, Head of Democratic Governance

Yvonne Burnett, Democratic Governance Senior Adviser

Adam Ogden, Media Manager

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 23 NOVEMBER 2016

Resolved: That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 23 November 2016, be signed by the Deputy Mayor as a correct record.

3 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Deputy Mayor advised that following a Council decision to award the Freedom of Entry to the Duke of Lancaster Regiment, a special Council meeting and Civic reception had been arranged for 19 July 2017 to formally award the Regiment the honour.

On behalf of the Council, the Deputy Mayor offered sincere condolences to the family of L/Cpl Scott Hetherington, serving with 2nd Battalion Duke of Lancaster's Regiment who was killed at a military base in Taji, north of Baghdad on Monday 2 January 2017.

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 25 JANUARY 2017

4 DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE/ DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Council expressed its appreciation to the Director of People/Deputy Chief Executive, Mrs Delyth Curtis, for her dedicated service to the authority as she was due to leave the Council at the end of the month. Councillors Cain and Clapham paid tribute to Mrs Curtis' service and the Council wished her well for the future.

5 EXECUTIVE REPORTS

The Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Secretary presented reports to the Council on work undertaken in their own portfolio area and those portfolios under their responsibility. The reports covered corporate, strategic and policy issues, together with work being undertaken in transforming services and with partners.

Questions, comments and debate were invited from all councillors on each of the report areas.

Notes:

- (1) Councillor Campbell agreed to provide a written response to:
 - Councillor T Williams on whether the first 19 fines for littering offences had been paid and whether collection had proved difficult
 - Councillor T Williams on details of the Esmee Fairbairn Effectives which had recently awarded Cultural Services £97,000 following a successful bid
 - Councillor Scott on further details and reasons for the incomplete installations of boilers by British Gas Scheme following an approach to target 9,000 residents in receipt of relevant benefits.
- (2) The Cabinet Secretary, on behalf of the Council, asked that a letter be sent to Alderman Henry Mitchell who had recently been in hospital, to wish him a speedy recovery.

6 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

Members considered the recommendations from the Executive meeting on 15 December 2016 in relation to the approval of a Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme. The Leader of the Council explained that the proposals were to continue with the current Scheme with minor amendments and with a reduction from 27.11% to 13.56% for certain vulnerable households.

Motion: Councillor Blackburn proposed (and Councillor Campbell seconded):

- '1. To agree that the Council continues to operate a Discretionary Discount Policy to be awarded in cases of exceptional hardship.

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 25 JANUARY 2017

2. To agree that the reduction applied to Working Age claimants remains at 27.11% for the 2017/18 scheme and that the main elements and method of calculating awards previously agreed by Council on 20 January 2016, will be the same with the exception of:
 - minor amendments to continue to align the scheme to Housing Benefit
 - the provision of additional support for vulnerable groups of claimants by amending the percentage applied to their award from 27.11% to 13.56%.
3. To agree the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/2018.'

Motion carried: The motion was submitted to the Council and carried.

7 APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL EXTERNAL AUDITOR

Members were informed that the transitional arrangements for the appointment of external auditors and the setting of audit fees for all local authorities, as established by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, had been extended by one year to include the audit of accounts for 2017/18.

The Council noted that the current external auditor, KPMG, had been appointed under a contract that had been originally determined by the Audit Commission, although when the transitional arrangements would come to an end on 31 March 2018, the Council would be able to move to a local appointment of its auditor.

Members went on to consider a range of options open to the Council in relation to the process for the appointment of a new external auditor.

Motion: Councillor Blackburn proposed (and Councillor Campbell seconded):

'To opt-in to the Local Government Association (LGA)-endorsed sector-led body appointed by the Secretary of State, namely Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA), by the due deadline of 9 March 2017 for them to undertake the Council's local auditor appointment process.'

Motion carried: The motion was submitted to the Council and carried.

8 CONSTITUTIONAL AND PROPER OFFICER CHANGES

The Council received a report in relation to proposed changes to the Council's constitution, following a review as a result of the recent appointment of the Head of Legal and personnel changes in the Cumbria and Lancashire Public Health England Centre health protection team.

Members were also informed that it was necessary to agree arrangements for appointment to the statutory position of Director of Children's Services, following Mrs Delyth Curtis' departure from the Council at the end of month. The Council noted that under guidance from the Department of Education, the Council's Chief Executive could make an interim designation where the Council was undertaking a recruitment process.

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 25 JANUARY 2017

Motion: Councillor Blackburn proposed (and Councillor Campbell seconded):

- ‘1. To confirm that the Chief Executive be authorised make an appointment for an interim statutory Director of Children’s Services in accordance with Section 18 of the Children’s Act 2004 and also then re-assign that responsibility to the successful candidate for the permanent position should they commence employment with the Council before the next ordinary Council meeting.
2. To confirm that the duties in the Constitution currently assigned to the Chief Corporate Solicitor be reassigned to the Head of Legal, with the exception of those listed in paragraph 5.6 of the report and to reinstate that the Deputy Head of Legal be the formal officer for the purposes of those duties, to act on behalf of or in the absence of the Head of Legal.
3. To agree that the duties listed in paragraph 5.6 of the report be assigned to the Director of Governance and Partnerships.
4. To confirm the Proper Officer designations and appointments to certain positions in the health sector relating to Lancashire and Cumbria as set out in paragraphs 5.8 and 5.9 of the report.’

Motion carried: The motion was submitted to the Council and carried.

9 MOTIONS AT COUNCIL

Members were informed that since submitting due notice, Councillor Owen had indicated that with the meeting’s consent, he wished to accept the alteration proposed by Councillor T Williams, which added the following words to the published motion:

‘The Council also requests that the Government persists with its full review of the whole NHS system to include an improved GP appointments service, a scrutiny of Accident and Emergency referrals from the 111 and walk in centres, unnecessary repeat Accident and Emergency visits together with a full re-structure of post hospital care and facilities.’

Council agreed: To accept the altered motion.

Motion: Councillor Owen then proposed (and Councillor Ryan seconded):

‘National and local media have been reporting on the increasing pressure NHS services are facing.

In the Autumn Statement, the Chancellor failed to significantly intervene in directly relieving the pressure on NHS services, nor did he provide any new financial assistance to deal with the social care crisis, which considerably contributes to bed-blocking, contributing to the state of our A and E departments which are now on the brink of collapse.

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 25 JANUARY 2017

Notwithstanding the decision of the Health Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 14 December to receive a detailed progress report on health and social care integration, principally focusing on the Sustainability and Transformation Plan in early 2017, Council expresses its serious misgivings on the implications for health and social care for Blackpool by the acceptance and implementation of the Lancashire and South Cumbria plan, in its current form. A plan to reorganise services and make them more efficient is only likely to be able to contribute to a solution and the kinds of savings being demanded by Government are very likely to be unrealistic.

This Council therefore requests the Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to call upon the Government to invest urgently in social care and NHS services.

The Council also requests that the Government persists with its full review of the whole NHS system to include an improved GP appointments service, a scrutiny of Accident and Emergency referrals from the 111 and walk in centres, unnecessary repeat Accident and Emergency visits together with a full re-structure of post hospital care and facilities.'

Members then went on to debate the motion.

Motion carried: The motion was submitted to the Council and carried.

Note: Councillor Cox left the meeting following consideration of the above item.

10 MAYOR ELECT 2017/ 2018

Motion: Councillor Blackburn proposed (and Councillor Campbell seconded):

'That Councillor Ian Coleman be invited to offer himself for the election of Mayor at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 15 May 2017 and agree that the meeting commences at 2.00pm, as it has in previous years.'

Motion carried: The motion was submitted to the Council and carried.

Mayor

(The meeting ended at 7.40 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:
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