

## MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2020

### Present:

Councillor Cross (in the Chair)

### Councillors

Baker	Collett	Kirkland	Smith
Benson	Cox	Matthews	Stansfield
Blackburn	Critchley	Mitchell	Taylor
Brookes	Farrell	O'Hara	Walsh
Burdess	Galley	Owen	L Williams
Cain	Hobson	Robertson BEM	T Williams
Campbell	Hugo	Roberts	Wilshaw
Clapham	Hunter	D Scott	Wing
D Coleman	Hutton	Mrs Scott	
G Coleman	Jackson	R Scott	

### In Attendance:

Neil Jack, Chief Executive

Dr Arif Rajpura, Director of Public Health

Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships / Monitoring Officer

Lorraine Hurst, Head of Democratic Governance

Yvonne Burnett, Democratic Governance Senior Adviser

### 1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2020

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 30 September 2020 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record, subject to the insertion of the word 'Deputy' in minute number 3 prior to the word 'Mayor'.

### 3 RESOLUTION OF CONDOLENCE AND MINUTE'S SILENCE

The Council noted the sad news of the deaths of former Councillor and Mayor Philip Dunne, former Councillor Craig Matthews and former Mayoress Mrs June Preston

The following resolution of condolence was then moved:

"The Council sends its deepest sympathy to the families and friends of former Councillor Philip Dunne, former Councillor Craig Matthews and former Mayoress June Preston for their loss and places on record its recognition of the dedication to office of these former civic office holders."

## **MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2020**

**Motion carried:** The motion on being submitted to the Council was carried unanimously.

Following the passing of the resolution, Council held a minute's silence as a mark of respect.

### **4 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements from the Mayor.

### **5 DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE REGARDING THE PANDEMIC**

Dr Arif Rajpura, Director of Public Health was invited to address members of the Council in respect of the Covid-19 pandemic.

He outlined the prevalence of cases in Blackpool compared to county and national levels as well as the measures that had been put in place to protect vulnerable citizens and to support schools and businesses. Members also noted the developments in relation to the production of a vaccine and ongoing testing.

### **6 EXECUTIVE REPORTS, COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY REPORTS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE SCRUTINY LEADERSHIP BOARD REPORT**

The Executive Lead Members for the meeting presented reports to the Council on work undertaken in the Corporate, Place and People portfolio areas. The reports covered corporate, strategic and policy issues, together with work being undertaken in transforming services and with partners.

Members also received a report from representatives of the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority in relation to the work being undertaken by the authority. Councillor Galley, on behalf of the Chair of the Scrutiny Leadership Board, also presented a report on scrutiny activities in recent months.

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

Notes:

1. In response to Councillor Galley regarding Fibre Blackpool, Councillor L Williams offered to provide an update on the work of the Digital Working Group.
2. Councillor L Williams also agreed to provide details for Councillor Burdess on whether any service had been disproportionately affected by employees who had been required to register for settled status due to the exit from the European Union and if so, the measures needed to address the potential impact.
3. Councillor Benson agreed to provide a written response to Councillor Burdess on the anticipated date when the Lotus Free School would be operating at full capacity and details of alternative provision.
4. Following a question from Councillor R Scott on whether a joint survey with Wyre Borough Council and Fylde Borough Council could be arranged to establish the

## MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2020

feasibility of installing CCTV in the Arboretum following recent acts of vandalism, Councillor Hobson agreed to provide a written response.

5. Councillor T Williams offered to circulate an incident report from the Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service relating to Bonfire Night, in response to the query from Councillor R Scott as to whether there had been an increase or decrease in the number of incidents of arson due to the pandemic.
6. Councillor Cain left the meeting following the Executive report on the Place portfolio.
7. Councillor Cox joined the meeting during the consideration of the report from the Council-appointed Combined Fire Authority representatives.
8. The Mayor agreed to write a letter of congratulations to Jane Cole, Managing Director of Blackpool Transport on her forthcoming appointment as the first female President of the Confederation of Passenger Transport, the national body for bus and coach operators across the UK for 2021.

### 7 AUDIT COMMITTEE INDEPENDENT MEMBER

Following on from the previous meeting of the Council where Members had agreed the recruitment process for an independent member of the Audit Committee, the Council considered the recommendation from the interview panel on the appointment to the current vacancy, as well as proposals to appoint a second independent member of the Committee.

**Motion:** Councillor Galley proposed (and Councillor L Williams seconded):

‘To appoint Stuart Green and Gill Brown as independent co-opted members on the Audit Committee for a three year term of office, starting from 1 December 2020’.

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

### 8 FIREWORKS

**Motion:** Having submitted notice, Councillor Hobson proposed (and Councillor T Williams seconded):

‘Fireworks are used by people throughout the year to mark different events. While they can bring much enjoyment to some people, they can cause significant problems and fear for other people and animals. They can be a source of fear and distress for many animals (including pet animals, farm livestock and wildlife). Animals affected not only suffer psychological distress but can also cause themselves injuries – sometimes very serious ones – as they attempt to run away or hide from the noise.

The unpredictable, loud and high intensity noises that many fireworks make can cause fear. For example, studies have found fireworks to be the most common cause for fear responses in dogs, and it is estimated that 45 percent of dogs show signs of fear when they hear fireworks. A New Zealand survey recorded 79 percent of horses as either anxious or very anxious around fireworks or over the Guy Fawkes Day period.

## MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2020

Although there is limited direct evidence, it is also likely that fireworks and their debris will cause disturbance to wildlife and are likely to cause suffering or distress, depending on the distance from the explosive and the noise level.

The RSPCA believes that a licensing system would help with better enforcement of the law by allowing enforcement bodies to know where licensed events are being held so they can focus on locations and incidents elsewhere.

The RSPCA also believes that there is a real need to raise awareness amongst owners of animals about fireworks phobia. This phobia can be treated (in dogs at least) in the long term but owners need to prepare themselves and their pets sooner, rather than just before the fireworks are let off. There is a need to raise awareness about the impact of fireworks on animals to the wider public to encourage them to be more considerate of those with pets, horses and livestock as well as local wildlife.

The RSPCA believes the law is failing as it does not prevent or sufficiently reduce the risk of fireworks causing distress, injury or anxiety to people, as well as death, injury or distress to animals.

The RSPCA also believe that further research is needed to properly understand the impact of noise on animals and a number of things can be done to improve the situation for animals and people by:

- introducing a limit on the public use of fireworks on or close to specific dates and times
- tightening restrictions on the sale of fireworks in the run up to Bonfire night
- reducing the maximum noise level of fireworks sold to the public, ensuring they are labelled accurately
- licensing all public firework displays – and ensuring displays are better advertised to the public

Therefore, this Council resolves:

1. That the Chief Executive be requested to write to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy urging him to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays.

2. That the Director of Community and Environmental Services be requested to:

- look at ways to encourage and promote all public firework displays within the local authority boundary to be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people;
- to develop and promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks; and

## MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2020

- to look at ways to encourage local suppliers of fireworks to stock 'quieter' fireworks for public display'.

Members then went on to debate the motion.

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

### 9 SUPPORTING A HEALTHIER MEAL OPTION FOR OUR OLDER COMMUNITIES THROUGH MEALS ON WHEELS

**Motion:** Having submitted notice and following the Council's agreement to the alteration of the motion, Councillor T Williams proposed (and Councillor Clapham seconded):

'Even before the pandemic, more than an estimated 1.3 million people over the age of 65 were thought to be malnourished. Malnutrition makes people more susceptible to physical and mental ill-health, extends hospital stays and makes re-admission more likely – malnutrition accounts for nearly £20bn of health and social care spending in England.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it difficult for many people to access good food daily, not least, older people and disabled people, who were already at high risk of malnutrition. During the crisis, many older people and disabled people struggled to access good food every day and indeed this issue predated the crisis.

Whilst there are a number of ways to support people – like investing in lunch clubs or good care-home and hospital food – having a robust Meals on Wheels service locally is a cornerstone to tackling the issue. Meals on Wheels services provide a lifeline to people struggling to feed themselves in their own homes, ensure that older and disabled people at risk of malnutrition or social isolation can access regular social contact every day and at least one nutritious meal every day, and are cost-saving in the long-term to local authorities and NHS trusts.

Now more than ever the Council must support older and disabled people to be able to stay healthy, safe and nourished in their own homes.

This Council resolves:

To request the Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee to review the accredited Meals on Wheels local supplier scheme in Chorley and explore the benefits and challenges of adopting the same approach in Blackpool and recommend the Executive accordingly'.

Members then went on to debate the motion.

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

**Mayor**

## **MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2020**

(The meeting ended at 8.40 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:

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