

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 10 FEBRUARY 2021

Present:

Councillor Cross (in the Chair)

Councillors

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

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

Councillors Campbell, Hobson and Robertson declared personal interests in agenda item 10 'Proposed Rent Review 2021/22' as Council-appointed non-executive directors of Blackpool Coastal Housing Ltd.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2020

Resolved: That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 25 November 2020 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

3 RESOLUTION OF CONDOLENCE AND MINUTE'S SILENCE

The Council noted the sad news of the deaths of Councillor Peter Callow, Councillor Lily Henderson MBE and former Mayoress, Mrs Barbara Hardy. The Leader of the Council paid tribute to the office holders and asked Council to note that following consultation with the Group Leaders, it would be asked to award the Blackpool Medal to former councillors Peter Callow and Lily Henderson MBE at a future Council meeting.

Councillors T Williams, G Coleman and Blackburn paid tribute to Councillor Peter Callow and Councillor Mrs Callow responded to the tributes made by the Council.

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Councillors Taylor, Clapham and G Coleman spoke in respect of both Councillor Mrs Henderson MBE and Mrs Barbara Hardy. Councillor Hunter also spoke in respect of Councillor Mrs Henderson MBE.

The following resolution of condolence was then moved:

‘The Council sends its deepest sympathy to the families and friends of Councillor Peter Callow, Councillor Mrs Lily Henderson MBE and former Mayoress Mrs Barbara Hardy for their loss and places on record its recognition of the dedication to office of these civic office holders’.

Council then held a minute’s silence as a mark of respect.

Note: Councillor Blackburn left the meeting following the item.

4 ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements made.

5 DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE REGARDING THE PANDEMIC

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

Dr Rajpura reported upon the number of identified cases, testing figures, deaths attributable to Covid-19 and the vaccination programme and he responded to questions from members on his presentation.

6 EXECUTIVE REPORTS AND COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY 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.

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

Notes:

1. The Leader of the Council agreed to provide a written response to:
 - Councillor Galley with further details on the Council’s participation in the consultation on the Subsidy Control Rules
 - Councillor G Coleman on the reasons for using an external contractor to undertake the Citizens Assembly engagement on Climate Emergency rather than using Council officers

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- Councillor Mrs Callow on how much commission had been paid in the last 12 months to the Audit and Overpayments Recovery Service
 - Councillor M Scott to clarify whether the costs for the Medical Advisor to the Adoption Panel outlined in the report were the overall costs or were reflective of Blackpool's proportion and if the latter, which services would be provided.
2. Councillor Kirkland agreed to provide a written response to Councillor Galley on whether all volunteers for the Corona Kindness campaign had been contacted and allocated tasks, and the post-COVID plans to engage with those people who had volunteered.
 3. In response to Councillor Mrs Callow, Councillor Hobson agreed to confirm when the trams on Talbot Road extension would be operational.
 4. Councillor Smith agreed to provide a written response to Councillor Galley as to whether there was a strategy to identify a tenant for the Houndshill (Debenhams) site.
 5. Councillor D Coleman left the meeting prior to consideration of the report from the Combined Fire Authority representatives.

7 PROPER OFFICER DESIGNATIONS AND CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

Members considered a report on proper officer changes in relation to the impending retirement of the current Director of Children's Services and the proposal to appoint an interim statutory Director of Children's services.

A number of constitutional changes were also proposed in relation to the Council's budget meeting, the annual Council meeting and continuation of the current Mayor's term of office.

Motion: Councillor L Williams proposed (and Councillor Taylor seconded):

- '1. To confirm the appointment of the current Assistant Director of Children's Services to the interim statutory Director of Children's Services position in accordance with Section 18 of the Children's Act 2004 and to authorise the Chief Executive to assign that responsibility to the successful candidate for the permanent position should they commence employment with the Council in between ordinary Council meetings.
2. To agree to amend Procedural Standing Order 3.3 in Part 4a of the Procedural Standing Orders for Council and Committees, to allow Council to consider any decision making reports referred to it by a committee, the Executive, Council itself, or a Statutory Chief Officer at the annual Budget council meeting which cannot wait until the next ordinary Council meeting.
3. To move the date of the Annual Council meeting from 17 May until 24 May 2021, to take account of the possibility of by elections being held in early May 2021 and for the meeting to be held at 6pm.

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4. To agree that the current Mayor and Deputy Mayor be put forward to the Annual Meeting to continue in office for the 2021/2022 municipal year, as set out in paragraphs 5.7 and 5.8 of this report.
5. To authorise the Director of Governance and Partnerships to make the necessary changes to the Constitution and proceed with arrangements for the Annual Meeting’.

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

8 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2021/2022

Members considered the recommendation from the Chief Officer’s Employment Committee in relation to the Pay Policy Statement for the 2020/2021 financial year. The Statement set out policy on Chief Officer Remuneration, remuneration of its lowest paid employees including the definition used for this group, as well as the relationship between the chief officer remuneration and that of other staff.

The report highlighted the duty to report on the gender pay gap and Members noted that the Council fared favourably in terms of annual earnings of female employees.

Members also considered proposals for the Chief Executive in the role of Returning Officer to vary fees of staff employed at elections.

Motion: Councillor L Williams proposed (and Councillor Taylor seconded):

- ‘1. To approve the Pay Policy Statement, as submitted to the Chief Officers Employment Committee and attached as an appendix to the Council report.
2. To delegate to the Chief Executive in his role of Returning Officer, the revision of election fees to staff as set out in the report’.

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

9 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2021/2022

Members considered the recommendations from the Executive meeting on 7 December 2020 in relation to the approval of a local Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

It was proposed that the percentage reduction should be held at the same level as the previous year, with the exception of those that fell into the vulnerable or low income categories.

Motion: Councillor Brookes proposed (and Councillor L Williams seconded):

- ‘1. To agree the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2021/2022, as submitted with the Executive report on 7 December 2020.

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2. To agree that the reduction applied to working age claimants remains the same as the 2020/2021 Scheme agreed by Council on 12 February 2020 and that the main elements and method of calculating awards will be the same.
3. To agree that the Council continue to operate a Discretionary Discount Policy to be awarded in cases of exceptional hardship, as submitted with the Executive report on 7 December 2020'.

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

10 PROPOSED RENT REVIEW 2021/2022

Members considered the recommendations of the Executive from its meeting on 25 January 2021 in relation to the levels of rents and service charges for Housing Revenue Account dwellings proposed to be applied to the forthcoming financial year, as well as new charges for Housing Revenue Account Services and related Non-Housing Revenue Account properties.

Following debate on the proposals the following was proposed.

Motion: Councillor Brookes proposed (and Councillor L Williams seconded):

'To approve the recommendations of the Executive from its meeting held on 25 January 2021 namely:

1. To agree that rents for all Housing Revenue account properties are increased by 1.5% in 2021/2022, following rent reductions in the four years to 2019/20.
2. That the minimum level of Housing Revenue Account balances remain protected at £1 million, as previously agreed.
3. To agree that Housing Revenue Account service charges (as detailed in Appendix B to the Executive report) and that other General Fund service charges (as detailed in Appendix 2d to the Executive report) are charged as outlined'.

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

11 REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY AND CUMULATIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Council considered the recommendations from the Executive meeting of 25 January 2021 in relation to the Licensing Policy and associated cumulative impact assessment following prior consideration by the Licensing Committee.

The Council considered the recommendations of the Executive from its meeting on 20 January 2020 regarding the levels of rents and service charges for Housing Revenue Account dwellings proposed to be applied to the 2020/2021 financial year, as well as new charges for Housing Revenue Account Services and related Non-Housing Revenue Account properties.

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Motion: Councillor Hobson proposed (and Councillor Hutton seconded):

1. To approve the proposed Statement of Licensing Policy, as submitted to the Licensing Committee and the Executive for the five years to 10 February 2026.
2. To approve the approve Cumulative Impact Assessment as submitted to the Licensing Committee and the Executive, for the three years to 10 February 2024'.

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

12 BLACKPOOL LOCAL PLAN PART 2

Members considered a report from the Executive from its meeting on 25 January 2021 in relation to the adoption of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Publication Version (Proposed Submission) January 2021.

Motion: Councillor Smith proposed (and Councillor Hobson seconded):

'To approve the recommendations of the Executive from its meeting held on 25 January 2021, namely:

1. To approve the Publication Version of the Blackpool Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies document (the Proposed Submission document) (as set out in Appendix A on the Executive report) and accompanying evidence base documentation; Publication Policies Map (as set out in Appendix B on the Executive report); Consultation Statement including the responses to the representations received to the Informal Consultation Paper (January 2019) (as set out in Appendix C on the Executive report); Sustainability Appraisal (as set out in Appendix D on the Executive report) and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening (as set out in Appendix E on the Executive report) and supporting documentation and give authority for its publication and subsequent submission to the Secretary of State.
2. That should the person appointed to carry out the examination consider that the circumstances are as described in s20(7B) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, to formally request that s/he recommend any necessary modifications to the Plan to make the Plan satisfy the appropriate requirements and soundness, pursuant to section 20 (7C) of the 2004 Act.
3. That the Head of Planning Strategy, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Job Creation, be given delegated authority to propose minor amendments to improve the clarity of the documentation referred to under recommendation (1) and which do not alter the substance of the document when submitting the Plan to the Secretary of State (these amendments will be highlighted) and during the Examination process.

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4. To approve the draft Duty to Cooperate Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) (as set out in Appendix F on the Executive report), for consultation alongside publication of the Publication Version of the Local Plan Part 2; that the Head of Planning Strategy, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Job Creation, be given delegated authority to make any amendments to the Statement of Common Ground where necessary in response to representations received; and to publish the final version as an evidence base document to the Blackpool Local Plan Part 2'.

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

13 STANDARDS INDEPENDENT PERSONS AND INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL MEMBER

Members considered proposals for an appointment to the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel and an appointment as an independent person for standards purposes and noted that a recruitment exercise had recently been undertaken in respect of those vacancies.

Motion: Councillor L Williams proposed (and Councillor Benson seconded):

- '1. Pursuant to Section 28 (7) of the Localism Act 2011:
 - To appoint Mr Peter Clements to the role of Independent Person for a period of three years until 29 February 2024.
 - To extend the appointment of Mr Brian Horrocks and Mrs Helen Broughton as Independent Persons until 29 February 2024.
2. To appoint Mr Nigel Kilgallon to the Independent Remuneration Panel'.

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

14 TOURISM VAT OF 5% TO BE EXTENDED BEYOND 31 MARCH 2021

Motion: Having submitted notice, Councillor Smith proposed (and Councillor Clapham seconded):

'The Government introduced the temporary reduced rate of 5% on sales of services and products made between 15 July 2020 and 31 March 2021 for VAT registered businesses in the following sectors:

- hospitality
- hotel and holiday accommodation
- admissions to certain attractions

The following statement was also published on the HMRC website. "These changes are being brought in as an urgent response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic to support businesses severely affected by forced closures and social distancing measures."

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With many businesses still currently closed and struggling financially, when they are eventually allowed to open and being able to trade, more likely will be under some restrictions with limited trading are going to need some financial support going forward.

All the business sectors listed above in Blackpool and nationally see the reduction in VAT to 5% as being one of the best ways to support their business during these struggling times.

The Chief Executive is therefore requested to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak MP to request the extension of the current reduction in VAT of 5% beyond 31 March 2021.

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

Mayor

(The meeting ended at 9.50 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:
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