

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 2015

Present:

Councillor Callow (in the Chair)

Councillors

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

In Attendance:

Neil Jack, Chief Executive
John Blackledge, Director of Community and Environmental Services
Alan Cavill, Director of Place
Gani Martins, Interim Director Children's Services
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

Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors who was on official Council business.

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Blackburn and Campbell declared prejudicial interests in agenda item 11a 'Notice of Motion: Homeless Organisations in Blackpool' as both were employed by Bay Housing Association.

Councillors Critchley, Hutton and L Taylor declared personal interests in agenda item 11b 'Notice of Motion: Blackpool Tenants Right to Buy' as Council appointed non-Executive Directors of Blackpool Coastal Housing Ltd.

Councillor G Coleman declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 'Executive Member Report from the Leader of the Council' as he was a licensed taxi driver.

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2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2015

Resolved: That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 16 September 2015 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

3 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor informed the Council that agenda item 11b 'Notice of Motion: Blackpool Tenants Right to Buy' would be considered prior to agenda item 11a. There were no other announcements on this occasion.

4 EXECUTIVE REPORTS TO COUNCIL

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 Stansfield joined the meeting following consideration of the report from the Leader of the Council.
- (2) During debate on the report from the Deputy Leader of the Council, the Council agreed to extend the time limit for speeches by an additional three minutes.
- (3) In response to questions from members, Councillor Campbell agreed to provide a response for:
 - Councillor Clapham on the monetary value of contracts awarded to suppliers from both within and outside of the Borough
 - Councillor Galley on whether the team enforcing the Public Space Protection Orders would also enforce Fixed Penalty Notices for littering
 - Councillor Mrs Callow on whether the proposed introduction of a motorhome parking area at the top of Princes Way (Anchorsholme) would negatively affect bathing water quality
 - Councillor Clapham to clarify the criterion and the number of high value properties that may be required for sale under proposals set out in the Housing and Planning Bill
 - Councillor T Williams on the number of responses that had been received following the recent consultation on library opening hours

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- Councillor Mrs Callow on the sale price for the Westgate House site and to Councillor T Williams on details of the purchase and whether the site would provide employment opportunities for Blackpool residents
- Councillor Mrs Callow on the age groups of those residents that had been identified as struggling with literacy and to Councillor T Williams on how they had been identified.

5 STATEMENT OF POLICY AND PRINCIPLES UNDER THE GAMBLING ACT 2005

Members considered the recommendations from the Executive in relation to proposals for the revised Statement of Licensing Policy under the Gambling Act 2005. It was reported that a period of consultation had been undertaken and that the revised policy would be published as required, before it came into effect on 31 January 2016.

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

‘To approve the revised Statement of Policy and Principles under the Gambling Act 2005, as recommended by the Executive.’

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

6 COUNCIL PLAN 2015/ 2020

Members considered the recommendations from the Executive relating to the proposed Council Plan for 2015-2020, which set out the strategic direction for the Council and how it would improve the lives of local people as well as measuring progress.

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

‘To approve the Council Plan 2015/ 2020, as recommended by the Executive.’

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

7 GOVERNANCE REVIEW - COMBINED AUTHORITY

The Council received a report on the governance review that had been undertaken to explore ways to develop collaborative working across Lancashire Councils on economic related matters.

It was noted that the review contained a number of ambitions for Lancashire relating to investment in the area and co-ordinated infrastructure planning and housing provision. Members also noted that a number of governance options had been considered and that the Lancashire Leaders, at their meeting on 1 September 2015, had considered the principle of a Combined Authority as the preferred vehicle for collaborative working.

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Members were aware that a Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill was currently going through the parliamentary process which aimed to broaden the scope of functions and powers that it was possible to confer on a Combined Authority.

Members noted that a six week consultation period with key stakeholders was proposed to take place in January / February 2016 and that a further meeting of the Lancashire Leaders would also take place, following which those authorities that wished to form part of the Combined Authority would submit a proposal to the Secretary of State for consideration. The Leader of the Council commented that the same report and recommendations were being considered by the other local authorities in Lancashire during November/December.

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

- ‘1. To note the contents of this report.
2. To note the contents of the Lancashire Governance Review and recommendation therein.
3. To note the contents of the draft Scheme for a Combined Authority.
4. To agree to take part in the public consultation in January/ February 2016, which will seek views on the formation of a Combined Authority for Lancashire.
5. To agree to consider the feedback from the public consultation and note that following this, those authorities who wish to form a Lancashire Combined Authority will submit a proposal to the Secretary of State for consideration.
6. To agree that delegated authority be given to the Executive to give due consideration to the public consultation and the authority to agree in principle should it wish to, that Blackpool Council becomes a constituent member of a Lancashire Combined Authority (subject to ratification by the Council).
7. That at the Council’s meeting on 9 March 2016 final consideration to be given to becoming a constituent member of a Lancashire Combined Authority.’

Amendment: Councillor Mrs Callow then proposed (and Councillor Williams seconded) the following amendment:

‘That the matter be deferred to allow for debate to take place at a members’ briefing’.

Following debate on the amendment and prior to voting, five members of the Council requested that the vote on the amendment be recorded. The voting was as follows:

Recorded vote on the amendment

For the amendment: Councillors Brown, Mrs Callow, Clapham, Cox, Galley, Maycock, Roberts, Robertson, Scott, Stansfield, T Williams - **total 11.**

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Against the amendment: Councillors Benson, Blackburn, Cain, Campbell, D Coleman, G Coleman, Collett, Critchley, Cross, Humphreys, Hunter, Hutton, Jackson, Jones, Kirkland, Matthews, Mitchell, O'Hara, Owen, Ryan, Singleton, Smith, I Taylor, L Taylor, L Williams, Wright - **total 26.**

Abstentions: Councillor Callow - **total 1.**

Amendment lost: The amendment was therefore lost.

Debate then took place on the original motion and prior to voting, five members of the Council requested that the vote on the original motion be recorded. The voting was as follows:

Recorded vote on the original motion

For the original motion: Councillors Benson, Blackburn, Cain, Campbell, D Coleman, G Coleman, Collett, Critchley, Cross, Humphreys, Hunter, Hutton, Jackson, Jones, Kirkland, Matthews, Mitchell, O'Hara, Owen, Ryan, Singleton, Smith, I Taylor, L Taylor, L Williams, Wright - **total 26.**

Against the original motion: Councillors Brown, Mrs Callow, Clapham, Cox, Galley, Maycock, Roberts, Robertson, Scott, Stansfield, T Williams - **total 11.**

Abstentions: Councillor Callow - **total 1.**

Motion carried: The original motion was therefore carried.

8 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL AND STANDARDS INDEPENDENT PERSONS APPOINTMENTS

The Council considered proposals for the appointment of two persons to the Independent Remuneration Panel and noted that interviews had been held with applicants, following which consultation had also been undertaken the political Group Leaders.

Members also noted that the terms of office of the three Independent Persons appointed under the Localism Act 2011 in relation to the standards regime, were due to end on 31 January 2016. It was reported that although there was no requirement to advertise the positions, it was proposed that in line with good practice, these appointments be re-advertised and that the current Independent Persons continue until 1 June 2016 unless the recruitment process was concluded in the meantime.

The Council went on to consider proposals in relation payment of non-executive directors and noted that although the principle of paying non-executive directors of wholly owned companies had been agreed by Council, the Transport Act 1985 precluded Blackpool Transport Services Limited from paying councillors direct for acting as a Director. It was proposed therefore for the payment to be agreed as an additional member allowance to

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those councillors that held the position in order to bring parity with other Council owned companies.

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

1. To agree to appoint Mr H Evans and Mrs H Hockenhull as additional Independent Remuneration Panel members.
2. To agree to extend the term of office for Mr A Mozley, Mr B Horrocks and Mr R Ellwood as statutory independent persons pursuant to Section 28 (7) of the Localism Act 2011 until 1 June 2016 or a lesser period (agreed by Council), subject to the successful conclusion of the recruitment process and to note that any new appointees and re-appointments will be subject to Council approval.
3. To agree that the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme be amended to bring effect to the decision of Council on 8 July 2015 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 HONORARY ALDERMEN

Members received proposals for the title of Honorary Alderman to be conferred on persons who had rendered eminent services to the borough. It was recommended that the criteria for the title would be a minimum 15 years' service as a councillor and would only apply to those persons who had stood down from the Council, unless exceptional circumstances prevailed as detailed in the report.

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

1. To agree to adopt the award of Honorary Alderman of the Borough under section 249(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 and agree the process and criteria as set out in section 5 of the report.
2. That invitations be extended to former Councillors Henry Mitchell, Val Haynes, Sylvia Taylor, Peter Evans, Joyce Delves and Brian Doherty to attend a special meeting of the Council in May 2016 to be awarded the title of Honorary Alderman.
3. That the Director of Governance and Regulatory Services be requested to arrange a Special meeting of Council in May 2016.'

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

10 CHIEF OFFICERS

Members considered the recommendations from the Chief Officers' Employment Committee meeting held on 16 November 2015 and in doing so noted that the Committee

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had agreed an updated senior management structure following a review from the Hay group but that a number of recommendations required Council approval, in line with the Pay Policy Statement and constitutional requirements.

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

1. That the current grade range of the Chief Executive, agreed by Council in July 2011, be reduced by three spinal column points as set out in paragraph 5.3 of the report.
2. To note that the remuneration package for the Director of Public Health has not changed since the transfer to the Council on 1 April 2013.
3. To ratify the remuneration package for the new post of Director of People, as set out in paragraph 5.5 of the report and in line with the Council's Pay Policy Statement.
4. To confirm that Delyth Curtis be designated as statutory Director of Children's Services and Karen Smith statutory Director of Adult Services on a permanent basis.'

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

Note: Prior to consideration of the item, Neil Jack, Chief Executive, left the meeting.

11 BLACKPOOL TENANTS' RIGHT TO BUY

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

'It is reported this week that over 1000 housing association tenants are signing up each week to buy their homes.

A website dedicated to those who wish to buy has had 5000 individuals sign up in the first month.

Social housing tenants share the same hopes and dreams as everyone else. They live in same towns their children go to the same schools they have the same ambitions for themselves and their families. They should be given the same opportunities if they aspire to own their own homes.

The Government is soon to launch a ground breaking scheme giving all 1.3 million families in rented housing association accommodation properties the right to buy, offering discounts of up to 70% with terms and conditions on re-sales. The cost of the discount will be funded by Central Government.

The scheme will also be supported by a generous home owning ISA savings scheme where the Government will put in £50 for every £200 saved.

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The Council is therefore asked to place on record its support for the families living in Blackpool Coastal Housing properties who wish to purchase their own home to actively support this Government scheme and to request Blackpool Coastal Housing to notify each tenant of the website, provide details of the scheme in the Association's newsletters and on the Council's website and that Blackpool Coastal Housing customer service staff are also trained to understand how the scheme works and provide full assistance to those who wish to partake.'

Discussion then took place on the proposed motion.

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

Note: Prior to the item being considered, Councillor Stansfield declared a personal interest as a Council appointed non-executive director of Blackpool Coastal Housing Limited.

12 HOMELESS ORGANISATIONS IN BLACKPOOL

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

'Homeless organisations in Blackpool depend entirely on charity funding and Housing Benefit. No evidence is currently provided as to the ultimate results in terms of long-term re-homing or social integration.

Whilst it is agreed, they provide a most valuable service they should in fact, if successful in their outcomes, be self liquidating.

Since 2012, this Council has administered over £39 million pounds in Housing Benefit to Housing Associations, Registered Social Landlords and identifiable Landlords. Whilst a large proportion of this public money may be attributed to the Council's own Blackpool Coastal Housing Association, it must be considered that other separate Homeless organisations are claiming a significant amount on an annual basis.

This Council therefore recommends that the Resilient Communities Scrutiny Committee, sets up a full and thorough scrutiny of the effectiveness of homeless shelters and organisations in Blackpool to ensure that their objectives are being met and that those who need their refuge are being successfully guided into a contributing social environment.

The exercise will also provide additional opportunity for the Council to confirm its commitment in regard to its position in deploying a most responsible position in the distribution of Housing Benefit to these sectors.'

Members then went on to debate the motion.

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

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Note: Having declared prejudicial interests, Councillor Blackburn and Campbell left the meeting prior to discussion on the item.

Mayor

(The meeting ended at 7.42 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:
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