

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 29 SEPTEMBER 2021

Present:

Councillor Burdess (in the Chair)

Councillors

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

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

Jenni Cook, Democratic Governance Senior Adviser

Sarah Chadwick, Democratic Governance Senior Adviser

Apologies:

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

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following councillors declared personal interests in agenda item 6a 'Executive Member Report – Corporate Portfolios' and indicated that should discussion take place on the financial position of the company, their interests would become prejudicial and they would therefore leave the meeting:

- Councillors Burdess, Galley and Matthews – as Council-appointed non-executive directors of Blackpool Transport Services Ltd
- Councillors Campbell, Farrell and Roberts - as Council-appointed non-executive directors of Blackpool Airport Operations Ltd.

Councillor Benson also declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the agenda item as her spouse was employee of Blackpool Transport Services Ltd and indicated that she would also leave the meeting if the financial affairs of the company were discussed.

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2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 24 MAY 2021

Resolved: That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 24 May 2021 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 Honorary Alderman, former councillor and Mayor, Mrs Sylvia Taylor and former Councillor Sheilagh Dyson (nee Baugh), former Deputy Mayor.

Councillors L Williams, Clapham, G Coleman, Benson, Jackson and Blackburn paid tribute to Mrs Taylor. Councillors Taylor spoke in respect of Mrs Dyson.

The following resolution of condolence was then moved:

'The Council sends its deepest sympathy to the families and friends of Honorary Alderman and former Mayor Sylvia Taylor and former Councillor Sheilagh Dyson for their loss and places on record its recognition of the dedication to office of these civic office holders'.

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

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

4 ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcement 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 on the trends of cases and testing levels in Blackpool compared to other areas and factors affecting the numbers of positive cases. Members were also advised of a number of initiatives that had taken place across Blackpool in order to improve vaccination rates and the importance of refreshed communication messages was noted along with continuing mitigations against Covid and other winter-borne diseases.

6 EXECUTIVE REPORTS AND COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY REPORTS

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.

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The Council 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 R Scott in relation to the Talbot Gateway Phase 3 development and how the 2,000 new jobs being created would align with the Council's aims in relation to zero carbon emissions, due to the environmental impact of workers travelling into the area from around the region
 - Councillor T Williams to confirm any details of the Government's intention to fund up to 75% of uncollected Council Tax
 - Councillor T Williams and Councillor Blackburn on details of recent legislation in relation to the sale of 'zombie knives' as well as clarification on whether the recent fatality had occurred before the legislation had been passed and whether the Trading Standards service had visited the retailer that had sold the weapon.
2. Councillor Hugo agreed to provide a written response to Councillor Walsh on the cost of replacement of trees that had been recently been damaged or stolen, how the cost would be met and whether any progress had been made in terms of action in relation to the perpetrators.
3. Councillor Cox left the meeting during the above item.
4. Following consideration of the item, the Council agreed a short adjournment.

7 CODE OF GOVERNANCE

It was reported that the Audit Committee in April 2021 had considered a draft local Code of Governance in line with good practice and had recommended its approval to the Council.

Members were also advised that as part of the annual review of the Council's Governance Statement, supporting evidence in relation to the governance framework and Code of Governance would also be considered and updated by the Audit Committee.

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

1. To adopt the attached Code of Governance and agree that it forms part of the Council's Constitution.
2. To agree that the Audit Committee be authorised to update the 'Blackpool Governance Framework' section at the end of the Code (specifically the supporting evidence for each of the thematic strands) each year when it produces the Annual Governance Statement, but that any changes to the content of the Code be referred to full Council (not including changes in legislation or decisions made from time to

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time by or on behalf of the authority)'.

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

8 AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The Chair of the Council's Audit Committee presented his report to members on the work of the Committee over the last municipal year, in particular highlighting the focus on the Strategic Risk Register, work on improved governance processes, risk reporting and Audit Academy training programme. Members acknowledged the work of the Audit Committee in assisting the Council in ensuring that it remained a sustainable and resilient organisation.

9 SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

The Chair of the Scrutiny Leadership Board presented a report to members on the work of the scrutiny committees during 2020/21 and in doing so highlighted the importance of scrutiny in reviewing Council services. Members acknowledged the work of the scrutiny committees and the number of scrutiny reviews undertaken during the year.

Members noted that there were currently two parent governor vacancies on the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee and the Chair expressed her wish that volunteers were sought to fill these vacancies.

(Note: Following consideration of the item, Councillor D Coleman left the meeting).

10 STANDARDS COMMITTEE REFERRAL

The Council received a referral from the Standards Committee following a hearing held in relation to the Council's Code of Conduct involving Councillor Simon Blackburn.

The Chair of the Standards Committee at the time of the hearing advised that the Committee had recommended censure of Councillor Blackburn and that an apology had been received. He also advised that the Committee had recommended that all councillors remained vigilant in their responsibilities in accepting and registering gifts and hospitality.

Motion: Councillor Taylor proposed (and Councillor Benson seconded):

1. To accept the referral from the Standards Committee and the accompanying censure and endorse the finding of the committee into Councillor Blackburn's failure to register the gifts he received, details of which are in the published decision notice.
2. To note that the Code of Conduct for Members is being reviewed as a result of the LGA model code of conduct.
3. To affirm the view of the Standards Committee about councillors and the importance of being open and transparent in their dealings in accepting and registering such items and not to leave their conduct open to question'.

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

(Note: Following consideration of the item, Councillor Blackburn left the meeting).

11 STATUTORY APPOINTMENTS

Members considered a report on proposed statutory appointments following the departure of the postholder of Director of Children's Services and that of the Deputy Chief Finance Officer. In relation to the former position, it was noted that the Chief Officers' Employment Committee had agreed the offer of appointment to Ms Vicky Gent in March 2021 and that the Chief Executive had made an interim statutory appointment under the Children's Act 2004.

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

- '1. To confirm the appointment of Ms Vicky Gent as the Council's new statutory Director of Children's Services in accordance with Section 18 of the Children's Act 2004, making permanent the decision of the Chief Executive.
2. To confirm the appointment of Mark Golden as Deputy Chief Finance Officer in accordance with Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 with immediate effect.
3. To request that the Director of Governance and Partnerships makes the necessary amendments to the Council's Constitution'.

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

12 REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE AND APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES

The Council considered a review of the political balance of its committees and membership, following notification received from Councillor Blackburn in July 2021 that he no longer wished to be treated as a member of the Labour Group.

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

- '1. To re-appoint the following Council committees, with powers and duties as previously agreed:
 - Scrutiny Leadership Board
 - Adult Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee
 - Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee
 - Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee
 - Audit Committee
 - Appeals Committee
 - Planning Committee
 - Standards Committee
 - Chief Officers Employment Committee.

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2. To re-appoint a Scrutiny Leadership Board, with a political balance membership of three Labour, four Conservative (to be made up of the Chairs, Vice Chairs of the three Scrutiny Committees and the Chair of the Audit Committee) and Cllr Mrs Callow, the non-aligned Independent Member, as Chair of the Committee.
3. To agree the political balance attached at Appendix 12(a) to the Council report and appointments to the above committees at Appendix 12(b).
4. To re-appoint the Licensing Committee with the powers and duties as set out in the Constitution (membership of thirteen and a composition of seven Labour, five Conservative and one Blackpool Independent).
5. To request the Licensing Committee to re-appoint the Public Protection Sub-Committee, including the appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair.
6. To agree that any membership changes to committees or sub-committees during the course of the Municipal Year continue to be reported to the Director of Governance and Partnerships by the relevant Group Leader for implementation.
7. To agree to the memberships of the committees of the Council and their Chairs and Vice Chairs as set out in Appendix 12(b) to the Council report and that delegated authority is continued to be given to the committees themselves to determine changes to Chairs and Vice Chairs, in line with the principles set out in this report, should the need arise for change during the municipal year.
8. To note that the membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board are not affected.
9. To agree that the Director of Governance and Partnerships be authorised to amend the Constitution accordingly'.

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

13 REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

Members received the report from the Independent Remuneration Panel in relation to a number of special responsibility allowances that had been scheduled for review in 2021. The review had included a joint meeting with the Fylde Independent Remuneration Panel regarding allowances for independent persons.

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

'That the recommendations in the report from the Independent Remuneration Panel are approved'.

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

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14 BLACKPOOL MEDAL

Members considered proposals for the award of the Blackpool Medal posthumously to Brian London, the former British and Commonwealth boxing heavyweight champion who had sadly died in June. The proposal was following discussions between the Group Leaders who had considered it appropriate to honour Brian for his service to Blackpool and to mark his sporting achievements.

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

- ‘1. To agree that Brian London (Brian Sidney Harper) be posthumously awarded the Blackpool Medal in recognition of his eminent service to the Borough.
2. To request the Director of Governance and Partnerships to organise a Special Meeting of Council, for the award of this medal.
3. To note that the Group Leaders are due to meet to look at the nomination process for awards and honours’.

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

Mayor

(The meeting ended at 8.56pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:
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