

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2022

Present:

Councillor Cross (in the Chair)

Councillors

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

In Attendance:

Neil Jack, Chief Executive

Mark Towers, Director of Governance and Partnerships / Monitoring Officer

Lorraine Hurst, Head of Democratic Governance

Jenni Cook, Democratic Governance Senior Adviser

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Brookes and Robertson declared personal interests in agenda item 6 Proposed Rent Review 2022/23' as Council-appointed non-executive directors of Blackpool Coastal Housing Ltd.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 24 NOVEMBER 2021

Resolved: That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 24 November 2021 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

3 RESOLUTION OF CONDOLENCE AND MINUTE'S SILENCE

Members noted the sad news of the death of Mr Derek Wardman, former Chief Executive of the Council from 1985 to 1993.

The Mayor, on behalf of the Council, paid tribute to Mr Wardman and the following resolution of condolence was then moved:

'The Council sends its deepest sympathy to the family and friends of Mr Derek Wardman for their loss and places on record its recognition of his dedication to office'.

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.

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4 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor, on behalf of the Council, offered congratulations to Wendy Casson, former Headteacher of Educational Diversity, who had been awarded an MBE in the new year's honours list for services to education.

5 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

The Council considered the recommendations from the Executive meeting on 6 December 2021 regarding the approval of a local Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Attention was drawn in the report to the Scheme's impact upon Council Tax collection rates which had dropped since the Scheme's introduction and the impact of the pandemic and inability to take court action was also highlighted.

It was proposed that the percentage reduction should be held at the same level as the previous year.

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

1. To note the impact of the Scheme to date as set out in paragraphs 6.7 and 6.8 of the Executive report.
2. To agree the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2022/23 as set out in Appendix 2c to the Executive report of 6 December 2021.
3. To agree the reduction applied to working age claimants remains the same as the 2021/22 Scheme agreed by Council on 27 January 2021 and that the main elements and method of calculating awards will be the same.
4. To agree to continue to operate a Discretionary Discount Policy to be awarded in cases of exceptional hardship as set out at Appendix 2a to the Executive report of 6 December 2021'.

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

6 PROPOSED RENT REVIEW 2022/23

Members considered the recommendations from the Executive meeting on 24 January 2022 on the level of rents and service charges to be charged in connection with Housing Revenue Account dwellings during 2022/23.

Discussion took place on the rent levels and a range of views was expressed on the proposed percentage increase.

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

1. To agree that rents for all Housing Revenue account properties are increased by 4.1% in 2022/23.

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2. To agree that the minimum level of Housing Revenue Account balances remain protected at £1 million, as in previous years.
3. To agree the charges as outlined for the Housing Revenue Account service (as detailed in Appendix 2b to the Executive report) and other General Fund services (as detailed in Appendix 2c to the Executive report)'.

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

7 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022/2023

The Council considered the recommendation from the Chief Officer's Employment Committee in relation to the Pay Policy Statement for the 2022/2023 financial year, which 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.

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

'To approve the Proposed Pay Policy Statement, as attached at Appendix 3(a) to the Chief Officers Employment Committee agenda of 24 January 2022'.

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

8 MEMBER ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

Members were reminded that legislation set out that where a Council member failed throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of their last attendance at a Council related meeting then subject to certain provisions, they would cease to be a member, unless the failure was due to some reason approved before the expiry of that period.

It was noted that in view of the pandemic, a general dispensation for all councillors which had previously been agreed by the Council, had expired on 30 September 2021, with a new six month period commencing on 1 October 2021. Members were informed of proposals to seek a further six month dispensation for Councillor Wing as he had a health condition and had been advised against attending physically present meetings although it was noted that his ward work and attendance at virtual meetings had continued.

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

- '1. To approve a dispensation in relation to the non-attendance of Councillor Wing at formal Council related meetings and agree the extension to the six month period of non-attendance up until 30 September 2022.
2. To note that the reason for the extension is due to Councillor Wing's current illness'.

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

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

9 LANCASHIRE COUNTY DEVOLUTION DEAL

A report was provided to Council members on the work undertaken towards strengthened joint working, a long term strategic plan and a County Deal for the Lancashire area.

The Leader of the Council reported that since the production of the Council agenda, the Government's levelling up White Paper had been published and went on to outline the impact upon the proposals that were currently being considered across the Lancashire local authorities. In particular, the government's intention to have devolution deals for every area across the country was highlighted and that deals would only be agreed with upper tier authorities covering the whole area.

Members also noted that three levels of devolution were possible, each of which would attract different levels of power and resources and that the likelihood for a requirement to establish a combined authority meant that the proposed principles of governance would need to be reviewed.

Discussion took place on the report with the general view being expressed that collaborative working was important for the county and for Blackpool.

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

1. To support the outline "Our New Deal for a Greater Lancashire" at Appendix 9(a) to the report as the initial draft basis for further discussion and development of a possible County Deal for the Lancashire area.
2. To agree the principles of governance as set out in Appendix 9(b) for any future deal.
3. To agree that the Leader of the Council continues to work with Lancashire Leaders in line with the principles agreed above and to note that any formal proposals will require approval by Full Council at the appropriate time'.

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

10 MAYOR ELECT FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022/23

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

'That Councillor Kath Benson be invited to offer herself for the election of Mayor at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 18 May 2022 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.

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Mayor

(The meeting ended at 6.44 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:

Lorraine Hurst, Head of Democratic Governance

Tel: 01253 477127

E-mail: lorraine.hurst@blackpool.gov.uk