

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2020

Present:

Councillor Cross (in the Chair)

Councillors

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

In Attendance:

Neil Jack, Chief Executive
John Blackledge, Director of Community and Environmental Services
Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services
Alan Cavill, Director of Communications and Regeneration
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
Lorraine Hurst, Head of Democratic Governance
Yvonne Burnett, Democratic Governance Senior Adviser

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Hobson, Robertson and L Williams declared personal interests in agenda item 7 'Rent Review' as Council-appointed non-executive directors of Blackpool Coastal Housing Ltd.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 25 SEPTEMBER 2019

Resolved: That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 25 September 2019, be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

3 ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements on this occasion.

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2020

4 PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS

Ms Eaglestone addressed the Council on the #BlackpoolBeatingBullying campaign and the anti-bullying Charter Mark intended to be rolled out across schools in Blackpool.

Cllr Benson, Cabinet Member for Schools, Education and Aspiration responded to Ms Eaglestone.

Mr Crowther addressed members on the work of Empowerment, an advocacy charity working within the Blackpool area.

Cllr Blackburn, Leader of the Council responded to Mr Crowther.

5 EXECUTIVE REPORTS, COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

The Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader (Tourism and Place) and Deputy Leader (Children) 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. The Chairman of the Audit Committee also presented his annual report and Members of the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority reported on the meeting held in December 2019.

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

Notes:

1. In response to a question from Councillor T Williams regarding the payment of £14,000 per month to APCO car parks, Councillor Blackburn offered to confirm in writing to all councillors whether the parking spaces were those located at Wilkinsons and the reason for the spaces being reserved.
2. The Council agreed for a two minute extension to the time limit for debate on the report from the Deputy Leader of the Council (Place and Tourism).
3. Councillor Campbell agreed to provide a written response to Councillor M Scott on how the Council ensured that the suppliers to which it awarded contracts met their obligations in terms of social value responsibility as well as the monitoring and reporting arrangements.

6 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2020 / 2021

Members considered the recommendations from the Executive meeting on 20 January 2020 in relation to the approval of a local Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2020

Members noted that the percentage reduction was proposed to be at the same level as the previous year, with the exception of those that fell into the vulnerable or low income categories and as such no additional costs had been forecast.

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

1. To agree the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2020 / 2021, as submitted with the Executive report on 20 January 2019.
2. To agree that the reduction applied to working age claimants remains the same as the 2019/ 2020 Scheme agreed by Council on 30 January 2019 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 20 January 2020'.

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

7 RENT REVIEW

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.

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

'To approve the recommendations of the Executive from its meeting held on 20 January 2020 namely:

1. To agree that rents for all Housing Revenue account properties are increased by 2.7% in 2020/ 2021, following rent reductions over the last four years.
2. To agree that the 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 report to the Executive) and that other General Fund service charges (as detailed in Appendix C to the report to the Executive) are charged as outlined'.

Prior to voting, five members of the Council requested that the vote on the motion should be recorded. The voting was as follows:

For the motion: Councillors Benson, Blackburn, Brookes, Burdess, Campbell, Critchley, Cross, Farrell, Hobson, Hugo, Hunter, Hutton, Jackson, Kirkland, Matthews, O'Hara, Owen, Smith, Taylor, L Williams – **total 20**.

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2020

Against the motion: Councillors Baker, Mrs Callow, Callow, Clapham, D Coleman, G Coleman, Cox, Galley, Roberts, Robertson, D Scott, Mrs Scott, R Scott, Stansfield, Walsh, T Williams, Wing - **total 17**.

Abstentions: None

Motion carried: The motion was therefore carried.

8 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2020/ 2021

The Council considered the recommendation from the Chief Officer's Employment Committee in relation to the Pay Policy Statement, which was required to be approved 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. Members also noted the guidance from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in terms of other areas the policy statement was expected to cover.

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.

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

'To approve the Pay Policy Statement, as submitted to the Chief Officers Employment Committee and attached as an appendix to the Council report'.

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

9 POLLING STATION REVIEW

The Council considered the review of polling districts and polling places that had commenced in Autumn 2019 and noted that no formal representations had been received in response to the consultation that had been carried out as part of that process.

Members noted that the recent snap Parliamentary election had since highlighted issues associated with the use of temporary mobile polling stations and that alternative options were currently being pursued.

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

1. To endorse the polling districts and polling places as set out in the appendices to this report.
2. To note that alternative options to replace temporary (mobile) polling stations are currently being pursued and to agree that delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive to determine these following appropriate consultation'.

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

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2020

10 BEAT THE BULLYING CAMPAIGN

Motion: Having submitted notice and with the agreement of the Council at the meeting to alter the motion, Councillor T Williams proposed (and Councillor Clapham seconded):

‘That this Council

Recognises that bullying in its many and diverse forms is never acceptable especially when young children are the victims

- Requests that the Chief Executive write to every school head teacher in the borough regardless of whether they are an academy, maintained, diocesan or free school encouraging the schools to pledge to support the ‘Beat the Bullying Campaign’ led by the Headstart Resilience Revolution and get involved in achieving the charter mark for that campaign. The charter mark being the first of its kind developed by young people in the country. The letter to also encourage schools to access anti bullying training, which is available.
- The Council has been using the free anti bullying programme which has been initiated by MADD (Making A Direct Difference) About Bullying and this is sponsored by individual businesses and local residents together with a generous donation from Fleetwood Town Football Club. There are also other programmes available such as Stop Speak Support etc’.

Members went on to debate the motion.

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

11 SPRINKLER SYSTEM

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

‘There are on average 37,000 house fires per year in the United Kingdom. Last year, including 72 fatalities from Grenfell, 334 lives were lost in residential fires. In general, fewer people are dying from fire related incidents, but figures do fluctuate. In all these 37,000 fires only 25% were fitted with smoke alarms, that’s just 9,000.

The highest cause of fire deaths is smoke inhalation usually started by cooking and electrical appliances left unattended.

In all these fires almost, every life could have been saved if the premises had been fitted with sprinklers systems but so far only a limited type of buildings are forced by legislation to require sprinklers to be deployed.

That is upwards of 300 deaths that could have been avoided. Sprinkler systems are relatively cheap to install at the construction stage and target only the heat source of a specific fire, ensuring that the fire does not spread through the building. The water also removes larger smoke particles greatly reducing asphyxiation from smoke and fumes, it also cools the smoke making it less harmful.

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2020

Sprinkler systems:

- Reduce death and injury from fire
- Reduce the risks to fire fighters
- Protect property and heritage
- Reduce the effects of arson
- Reduce the impact of fire on the environment
- Reduce fire costs and the disruption to the community and business
- Permit design freedoms and encourage innovative, inclusive and sustainable architecture
- Protect mental health and wellbeing
- Promote and support business continuity

Sprinklers reduce injuries by at least 80 per cent, reduce property damage by 90 per cent and substantially reduce damage to the environment from fire.

Fire sprinklers are widely recognised as the single most effective method for fighting the spread of fires in their early stages.

The installation of fire sprinklers could virtually eliminate fire deaths.

Blackpool Council is instigating a major housing development project and as a council the future safety of all Blackpool residents must be ensured.

By passing this motion, the Council will at the forefront of fire safety in the home and the Council's actions of lobbying the Minister could lead the way for other authorities to follow suit and help save many lives.

This Council therefore calls on the Chief Executive to write to the Minister of Housing, Communities and Local Government to consider making it mandatory in building regulations that house builders install Fire Authority approved sprinkler systems on all new residential buildings. These sprinkler systems to be at an adequate level for each particular design of house as agreed with the National Fire Authority'.

Members went on to debate the motion.

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

12 ADOPTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE ALLIANCE (IHRA) WORKING DEFINITION OF ANTISEMITISM

Motion: Having submitted notice, Councillor Blackburn proposed (and Councillor Campbell seconded):

'This Council expresses alarm at the rise in antisemitism in recent years across the UK. This includes incidents when criticism of Israel has been expressed using antisemitic tropes. Criticism of Israel can be legitimate, but not if it employs the tropes and imagery of antisemitism.

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2020

The Council therefore welcomes the UK Government's announcement on 11 December 2016 that it will sign up to the internationally recognised International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) guidelines on antisemitism, which define antisemitism thus:

"Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."

The guidelines highlight manifestations of antisemitism as including:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel".

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2020

This Council welcomes the cross-party support within the Council for combating antisemitism in all its manifestations.

This Council hereby adopts the above definition of antisemitism as set out by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and pledges to combat this pernicious form of racism’.

Members went on to debate the motion.

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

13 MAYOR ELECT 2020 / 2021

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

’That Councillor Christian Cox be invited to offer himself for the election of Mayor at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 11 May 2020 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.

Mayor

(The meeting ended at 8.27pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:
Lorraine Hurst, Head of Democratic Governance
Tel: 01253 477127
E-mail: lorraine.hurst@blackpool.gov.uk