

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING - WEDNESDAY, 31 JANUARY 2024

Present:

Councillor Campbell (in the Chair)

Councillors

Baker	Ellison	Jackson	M Smith
Bamborough	Farrell	Jones	S Smith
Benson	Fenlon	Marshall	Taylor
N Brookes	Flanagan	B Mitchell	Thomas
P Brookes	Galley	C Mitchell	Walsh
S Brookes	Hobson	D Mitchell	Webb
Burdess	Hoyle	Roberts	Williams
Cartmell	Hugo	Roe	Wilshaw
Cooper	Humphreys	Mrs Scott	
Critchley	Hunter	Sloman	

In Attendance:

Neil Jack, Chief Executive

Alan Cavill, Director of Communications and Regeneration

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

Jenny Bollington, Media Manager

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Burdess, Critchley, Fenlon and Humphreys declared personal interests in agenda item 6 'Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2024/25' as they were in receipt of reductions under the scheme.

Councillors S Smith and Webb declared personal interests in agenda item 8 'Councils Policy in Respect of Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Pay' as they were due to start a period of maternity absence from their council paid positions.

Councillor Benson declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 'Executive Report – Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Tourism, Arts and Culture' as a Council appointed trustee of the Blackpool Heritage and Museum Trust (aka Showtown).

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETINGS HELD ON 29 NOVEMBER 2023 AND 11 JANUARY 2024

Resolved: That the minutes of the Council meetings held on 29 November 2023 and 11 January 2024 be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

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3 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor announced that her mayoral ball would be held on Friday 26 April 2024 in the Spanish Hall at the Winder Gardens venue and invited all Council members to attend.

4 PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS

Mr Tim Allan addressed the Council in respect of the 'Be Who You Want To Be' project, which involved key partners and aimed at supporting equality, inclusion and celebrating diversity in the town.

It was noted that there was a long established LGBTQ+ community and history in Blackpool and that a focus group had been established which had recently conducted a consultation exercise and subsequently developed an action plan across a number of thematic areas including arts, heritage and culture, young people, health and wellbeing, business, marketing and governance. Mr Allan highlighted that a launch event for the action plan was being held on 8 February 2024 and welcomed all councillors to take part.

Councillor Jo Farrell, Cabinet Member for Levelling Up - People responded to Mr Allan and outlined the valuable work of the project.

5 EXECUTIVE REPORTS AND COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY REPORT

The Council received reports from the Executive Members on areas within their portfolio as well as 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. Councillor Lynn Williams, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Tourism, Arts and Culture agreed to provide a written response to Councillor Galley on the Council's short term borrowing interest level and when the loans would need to be repaid. The Leader also agreed to raise the issues experienced with the developer at the Warren Drive site with Planning Enforcement officers.
2. Councillor Jane Hugo, Cabinet Member for Climate Change agreed to clarify the position for Councillor Galley in respect of purchasing play equipment and the funding contribution arrangements between the Council and Friends Groups.
3. In response to queries raised on revised bus routes, Councillor Mark Smith agreed to raise the matter with the Chair of the Blackpool Transport Services Ltd Board.
4. Councillor Neal Brookes agreed to provide clarification for Councillor Cooper on the application of a levy for unoccupied rooms in respect of supported living tenancies and what options were being explored to address rooms being unoccupied. He also agreed to address the issue of Vitaline devices being left at Blackpool Victoria Hospital and ensuring that these were returned to the service.
5. Councillor Burdess, Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Street Scene and Neighbourhoods agreed to provide a written response to Councillor M Scott on the

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number of tested premises failing the underage sales test for vapes, the proportion of failures in relation to the number of vape retailers and work to address the issue.

6 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2024/25

Members considered the recommendations of the Executive from its meeting on 11 December 2023 in relation to proposals for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2024/25 and in doing so noted that the value of the percentage reduction was reviewed annually to ensure it remained fit for purpose, taking account of ongoing changes in legislation, caseload and financial requirements.

The report outlined proposals for the percentage reduction to be held at the same level as the previous year along with the calculation methods and to continue to operate a Discretionary Discount Policy.

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

1. To note the impact of the Scheme to date as set out in paragraphs 6.7 and 6.8 of the report.
2. To agree the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 6c to the report.
3. To agree that the reduction applied to working age claimants remains the same as the 2023/24 Scheme agreed by Council on 1 February 2023 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 6a to the report'.

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

7 BLACKPOOL YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE ANNUAL PLAN 2023/24

The Council considered the recommendation from the Executive at its meeting on 11 December 2023 to approve the Youth Justice Service Annual Plan with effect until 31 December 2024.

The report outlined that the Youth Justice Partnership plan set out the strategic vision for providing exceptional support to children and families involved in the youth justice system through five key priority areas namely: an effective Executive Board; prevention and diversion so that children received support at the earliest opportunity; access to appropriate development opportunities and resources to reduce risk of re-offending; ensuring educational needs were understood with access to high quality education and training; and a reduction in the number of children in custody.

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

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'To approve, as one of the key partners, the Youth Justice Annual Plan 2023/24 with effect until 31 December 2024'.

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

8 COUNCIL'S POLICY IN RESPECT OF MATERNITY, PATERNITY AND ADOPTION PAY

Members considered proposals for dispensation in respect of Councillors S Smith and Webb from the requirement to attend meetings within a six month period as they were to embark on parental leave. Members noted that under the Council's agreed policy, the special responsibility allowances would continue during their leave of absence.

The Council went on to consider a replacement Chair of Levelling Up Scrutiny Committee during the period.

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

1. To note that both Councillor Portia Webb and Councillor Sarah Smith will be going on maternity absence and under the Council's Policy in respect of maternity, paternity and adoption pay, will have their special responsibility allowances protected for a six month period as set out in the report.
2. To approve the dispensation from the requirement to attend meetings under Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in doing so extend the period of non-attendance at formal Council/committee meetings to 31 October 2024.
3. To delegate to the Monitoring Officer the authority to agree mechanisms as to how ward enquiries are allocated and councillor funding is applied for whilst on maternity leave in line with paragraph 6.5 of this report and to agree the extension of the protected special responsibility allowances beyond the six months in line with the policy.
4. That following the completion of the maternity leave of absence the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the two members, reviews the Council's Policy in respect of maternity, paternity and adoption pay and reports back to Council accordingly.
5. To appoint Councillor Matthew Thomas as Chair of the Levelling Up Scrutiny Committee'.

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

9 STANDARDS INDEPENDENT PERSONS

The Council considered a report in relation to the term of office of the Independent Persons who had been appointed by the Council to support the standards framework. An extension to their term of office had been proposed.

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

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'Pursuant to Section 28 (7) of the Localism Act 2011, to extend the appointment of Mrs Helen Broughton, Mr Peter Clements and Mr Brian Horrocks as Independent Persons until 28 February 2027'.

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

10 MAYOR ELECT AND DATE OF SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

The Council considered proposals for the Mayor Elect, the nomination for which was based on length of service and those councillors who had not previously served in the role.

Members also considered a request to change the date of the special Council meeting in March as the date clashed with another Council event.

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

1. That Councillor Peter Hunter be invited to offer himself for the election of Mayor at the Annual Meeting of the Council on 15 May 2024.
2. To agree that the special Council meeting takes place on Wednesday 13 March 2024 at 6pm'.

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

Mayor

(The meeting ended at 8.30 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:

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