

PROCEEDINGS

A meeting of the Lancaster City Council was held in the Town Hall, Morecambe, at 2.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 2 February 2011, when the following Members were present:-

Tony Wade (Mayor)	Evelyn Archer
June Ashworth	Jon Barry
Eileen Blamire	Susan Bray
Ken Brown	Abbott Bryning
Keith Budden	Shirley Burns
Anne Chapman	Susie Charles
Tina Clifford	Chris Coates
John Day	Roger Dennison
Sarah Fishwick	Melanie Forrest
Rebekah Gerrard	John Gilbert
Charles Grattan	Mike Greenall
Janice Hanson	John Harrison
Emily Heath	Val Histed
Tony Johnson	Andrew Kay
David Kerr	Janie Kirkman
Geoff Knight	Stuart Langhorn
Karen Leytham	Roger Mace
Geoff Marsland	Ian McCulloch
Roger Plumb	Joyce Pritchard
Robert Redfern	Peter Robinson
Bob Roe	Sylvia Rogerson
Ron Sands	Elizabeth Scott
Roger Sherlock	Keith Sowden
Malcolm Thomas	Jude Towers
Morgwn Trolinger	Geoff Walker
Maia Whitelegg	John Whitelegg
Peter Williamson	Paul Woodruff

93 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jean Dent, Sheila Denwood, Keran Farrow, Jane Fletcher, Helen Helme and Joyce Taylor.

94 MINUTES

The minutes of the two meetings held on 15 December 2010 were signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

95 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Mayor reminded Council of the position in relation to Members' allowances and it was agreed to record a personal interest on behalf of all those present in relation to Members' allowances (Minute No. 97 refers.)

Members advised further of the following interests at this stage:

Councillor Fishwick reported that she would declare a personal interest should there be any reference to the County Council's functions during the meeting in view of her role as a County Councillor.

Councillor Harrison declared a personal interest in relation to the Housing Revenue Account – Council Housing (Minute No. 99 refers.)

96 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 11

The Mayor advised that no questions had been received from members of the public in accordance with the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 11.

97 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME - REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

(It was noted that all Councillors present had declared a personal interest in the following item.)

Members considered the report and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel which were presented by the Chairman of the Panel, Professor Steve Leach.

Professor Leach informed Members that the Panel had researched Members rates of allowances at comparative Councils and found the rates paid at Lancaster City Council to be relatively low for the basic allowance and for the special responsibility allowances for the Council Leader and Cabinet Members. It was noted that the Lancaster Guardian had incorrectly reported that Councillors were being offered a £79,500 increase in their allowances.

The report set out a number of options and Professor Leach responded to Members' questions on the options.

It was moved by Councillor Williamson and seconded by Councillor Bray:

“That Councillor remuneration for 2011/12 remain at the same level as for 2010/11 without any inflation adjustment.”

By way of amendment, Councillor John Whitelegg, seconded by Councillor Trolinger, proposed:

“That Option 2C, as set out in the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, be approved.”

A lengthy debate followed, after which a vote was taken on the amendment. 34 Members voted for the amendment, 16 against and 4 abstained whereupon the Mayor declared the amendment clearly carried.

A vote was then taken on the substantive motion as amended, which the Mayor declared clearly carried.

Resolved:

That Option 2C, as set out in the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel and appended to these minutes, be approved.

98 LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader presented his report on the proceedings of Cabinet held on 17 December 2010 and 18 January 2011. He updated Council on various issues and answered a number of questions from Councillors.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

99 BUDGET & POLICY FRAMEWORK UPDATE 2011/12

(It was noted that Councillor Harrison had declared a personal interest in the section of the following report relating to the Housing Revenue Budget – Council Housing.)

Councillor Langhorn presented the report and recommendations of Cabinet on the Budget and Policy Framework for 2010/11 in three parts.

Firstly, the Leader presented the strategic context and the policy framework sections of the report and responded to Member's questions on the updated Corporate Priorities drafted by Cabinet.

In respect of the Corporate Priorities Councillor Langhorn moved, and Councillor Kerr seconded, that recommendation 1 as set out in the report, be approved.

By way of amendment, Councillor Robinson proposed, seconded by Councillor Sowden:

“That Housing Regeneration be added to the priorities.”

At the conclusion of a short debate a vote was taken on the amendment. 29 Members voted for the amendment, 13 against and 8 abstained whereupon the Mayor declared the

amendment carried.

A vote was then taken on the substantive motion as amended when many voted for and few against, whereupon the Mayor declared the motion clearly carried.

Councillor Langhorn then went on to present the second part of the report relating to the General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme. Councillor Langhorn and Councillor Blamire responded to questions from Councillors.

In respect of the General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Councillor Langhorn proposed that recommendations 2-4, as set out in the report, be approved. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Kerr.

Debate followed, after which a vote was taken and, with many voting for and few against, the motion was clearly carried.

(The meeting adjourned at 4.30pm in line with procedure rule 10.1, reconvening at 4.40pm.)

Councillor Langhorn then went on to present the final part of the report relating to the Housing Revenue Budget and Capital Programme. Councillor Langhorn and Councillor Kerr responded to questions from Councillors.

In respect of the General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Councillor Langhorn proposed that the recommendations as set out in the report and numbered 5-7 be approved. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Kerr.

After a lengthy debate, Councillor Clifford proposed that the vote be taken individually on recommendations 5-7, as set out in the report. With the consent of the meeting, the Mayor agreed to the request to take each one in turn.

A vote was taken on the proposal to approve recommendation 5 as set out in the report. 19 Members voted for the motion, 22 against and 3 abstained whereupon the Mayor declared the motion lost.

A vote was then taken on the proposal to approve recommendation 6 as set out in the report. With many voting for and few against the Mayor declared the motion clearly carried.

The proposal to approve recommendation 7 as set out in the report, was voted upon and, with many voting for and few against, the Mayor declared the motion clearly carried.

Resolved:

(1) That the following priorities be used to develop the policy framework for the three year period from 2011 to 2014:

- Economic Regeneration – Energy Coast, Visitor Economy and Housing Regeneration.
- Climate Change – prioritising reducing the Council's energy costs and increasing income
- Statutory responsibilities – fulfilling at least our minimum statutory duties - focus on keeping the streets clean and safe
- Partnership working and Community Leadership – working with partners to reduce costs, make efficiencies and create resilience within the district;

and that the intention to protect the most vulnerable in our society should also be a thread that runs through all the above priorities.

- (2) That the 2010/11 Revised Budget of £23.616M be approved, with the net underspending of £1.124M being transferred into Balances.
- (3) That City Council Tax rates be frozen for 2011/12, subject to Government confirming Council Tax Freeze Grant entitlement (equivalent to a 2.5% tax increase).
- (4) That Council notes the supporting draft budget information and proposals to date, as set out in the report.
- (5) That the minimum level of HRA Balances be retained at £350K from 01 April 2011, and that the Statement on Reserves and Balances (as set out at Appendix E of the report) be noted.
- (6) That the Capital Programme as set out at Appendix F of the report be approved.

100 NOTICE OF MOTION - REDUCTION IN NUMBER OF COUNCILLORS

In view of the time at this point, Councillor John Whitelegg proposed that motion relating to the reduction in the number of Councillors be deferred until the next Council meeting.

The Mayor put this proposition to those present and gained the consent of the meeting to defer the item.

Resolved:

That the motion regarding the reduction in the number of Councillors be deferred to the next meeting of Council.

101 ELECTION OF CABINET MEMBER

Council was reminded of the resignation of Councillor Jane Fletcher from Cabinet and advised that since there was currently a PR Cabinet in place it was for the Green Group to nominate a replacement.

The Group put forward Councillor John Whitelegg as their nomination to fill the vacancy.

The nomination was formally moved by Councillor Forrest and seconded by Councillor Coates. On being put to the vote the Mayor declared Councillor John Whitelegg elected to the Cabinet for the remainder of the 2010/11 Municipal Year.

Resolved:

- (1) That the resignation of Councillor Jane Fletcher from Cabinet be noted.
- (2) That Councillor John Whitelegg be elected to fill the resultant vacancy on Cabinet for the remainder of the 2010/11 Municipal Year.

102 QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12.2

One question had been received from a Member by the Chief Executive in accordance with Council procedure rules. However the Member had asked for the question to be deferred.

103 MINUTES OF CABINET

Council considered the Cabinet minutes of the meetings held on 7 December 2010 and 18 January 2011. The Leader and Cabinet Members responded to Members' questions.

Resolved:

That the minutes be noted.

Mayor

(The meeting finished at 6.00 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these minutes,
please contact Debbie Chambers, Democratic Services - telephone (01524) 582057 or email
dchambers@lancaster.gov.uk**

Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel - Option 2C

An allowance package which makes some minor adjustments to the existing scheme but maintains the current and basic leadership allowances but reduces the overall cost of the budget.

1. All recommendations set out under 'general recommendations' (below) should apply.
2. The resources generated from the changes proposed under the general recommendations should be reallocated to change the following :-
 - a. Deputy Leader (£1,000 more than Cabinet Member) £6,530
 - b. Leader(s) of Opposition Group £5,530 (in total)
3. Basic Allowance remains unchanged @ £3300
4. Leader of the Council remains unchanged @ £11060
5. Cabinet Members @ £5530

Option 2C would result in a reduction in the overall cost of the allowances scheme of 5.38%

General recommendations:-

- (1) The payment of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) to all group leaders should cease.
- (2) The payment of SRAs to group administrators should cease.
- (3) An SRA equal to half that of the Council Leaders allowance (currently £11,060) should be allocated to leaders of opposition groups (i.e. groups who are not represented on the cabinet), in proportion to their respective sizes (if more than one such group).
- (4) The minimum 'group size' qualifying for these SRAs should be 4.
- (5) That an SRA of £1,400 per annum be introduced for the Chairman of the Council Business Committee
- (6) That the SRAs paid to the Chairmen of the Licensing Act Committee, Licensing Act Hearings Sub-Committees and the Appeals Committee be reduced by half.