

## PROCEEDINGS

An extraordinary meeting of the Lancaster City Council was held in the Town Hall, Morecambe, at 6.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 16 January 2013, when the following Members were present:-

Sheila Denwood (Mayor)	Robert Redfern (Deputy Mayor)
Paul Aitchison	Tony Anderson
Josh Bancroft	Jon Barry
Mark Bevan	Eileen Blamire
Dave Brookes	Abbott Bryning
Keith Budden	Shirley Burns
Chris Coates	Roger Dennison
Jonathan Dixon	Melanie Forrest
Paul Gardner	Mike Greenall
Janet Hall	Tim Hamilton-Cox
Janice Hanson	Val Histed
Joan Jackson	Andrew Kay
Tracey Kennedy	Karen Leytham
Roger Mace	Geoff Marsland
Terrie Metcalfe	Ceri Mumford
Richard Newman-Thompson	Jane Parkinson
Ian Pattison	Margaret Pattison
Pam Pickles	Vikki Price
Sylvia Rogerson	Ron Sands
Elizabeth Scott	Roger Sherlock
David Smith	Emma Smith
Susan Sykes	Joyce Taylor
Malcolm Thomas	David Whitaker
Peter Williamson	

**101 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors June Ashworth, Susie Charles, Kathleen Graham, John Harrison, Helen Helme, Billy Hill, Alycia James, David Kerr, Tony Johnson, Geoff Knight, Richard Rollins, Keith Sowden and Paul Woodruff.

**102 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members advised of the following interests at this stage in relation to the Localised Council Tax Support Scheme for 2013/14:

Councillor Gardner declared an interest as a Member of Carnforth Town Council.

Councillors Metcalfe, Whitaker, Burns and Dennison each declared an interest as Members of Morecambe Town Council.

Councillor Hanson declared an interest as a Member of both Lancashire County Council and Morecambe Town Council.

Councillor Jackson declared an interest as a Member of both Lancashire County Council and Caton Parish Council.

Councillor Coates declared an interest as a Member of Lancashire County Council.

Councillor Anderson declared an interest as a Member of Morecambe Town Council.

Councillor Budden declared an interest as a Member of Bolton-le-Sands Parish Council.

Councillor Parkinson declared an interest as a Member of Caton Parish Council.

Councillor Taylor declared an interest in relation to a family member in receipt of benefits.

Councillor Pattison declared an interest as a Member of Morecambe Town Council.

Councillor Kay and Councillor Whitaker each declared an interest as employees of Lancashire County Council.

(Minute 103 refers.)

**103 WELFARE REFORMS: LOCALISED COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME FOR 2013/14**

*(Councillor Taylor, having previously declared an interest, left the meeting before consideration of the following item.)*

Council considered a report detailing imminent welfare reform changes with regard to council tax benefit.

The report informed Council of provisions in the Welfare Reform Act 2012 to abolish the current national Council Tax Benefit (CTB) scheme to pave the way for new Localised Council Tax Support Schemes. The report presented three options for a Localised Council Tax Support Scheme for 2013/14 and requested that Council adopt a scheme before 31 January 2013, in line with the duty imposed by the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended.

The Head of Resources and Head of Revenues and Benefits responded to a number of questions from Members.

Councillor Bryning proposed, seconded by Councillor Hamilton-Cox:

“Fundamentally, Council is concerned about Government’s decision to reduce funding for providing council tax support and the impact that would have if those reductions are passed on to low income households. Council is also concerned about the difficulties in

ensuring acceptable collection performance.

Whilst the Council recognises the severe Government funding reductions facing local government services from 2014/15 onwards, it also recognises that in the next financial year, 2013/14, the City Council's finances are manageable.

Furthermore, the decisions already taken to increase council tax income from second and empty homes give all tiers of local government more flexibility to manage their budget pressures and to help protect essential services, subject to annual review and depending on collection performance.

The Council has time during the course of next year, therefore, to learn from the experiences of other councils who introduce reductions to council tax support levels. This will inform the Scheme design for 2014/15 onwards, with the expectation that reductions in council tax support will be implemented from 01 April 2014.

Accordingly, it is proposed that for one year only:

- (1) Council adopts a Localised Council Tax Support Scheme that retains existing levels of council tax support for the year commencing 01 April 2013, based on Option 2 in the report despite the reduced grant from Government.
- (2) That the adopted scheme be based also on the summary principles set out in Appendix A, as amended to reflect (1) above, but noting any Hardship Fund need only be based on existing provisions.
- (3) That the 2013/14 Revenue Budget be updated to provide one-off funding for Parish and Town Councils in accordance with Council's adopted Scheme, with amounts to be paid in one instalment at the same time as precepts.
- (4) That the Head of Resources be authorised to publish the Council's adopted full Scheme and make all other necessary arrangements for its implementation for next financial year, and to communicate this decision and its rationale to relevant stakeholders.
- (5) That the operation and financial implications of the Council's adopted Scheme be monitored closely (for all tiers of local government, including parishes) and it be subject to formal review in a year's time, alongside other alternatives."

Following a lengthy debate a recorded vote on the proposition was requested in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 20.4. The votes were recorded as follows:-

For the motion:

Councillors Aitchison, Anderson, Bancroft, Barry, Bevan, Blamire, Brookes, Bryning, Coates, Denwood, Dixon, Forrest, Gardner, Hall, Hamilton-Cox, Hanson, Kay, Kennedy, Leytham, Marsland, Metcalfe, Mumford, Newman-Thompson, Ian Pattison, Margaret Pattison, Pickles, Price, Redfern, Sands, Scott, Sherlock, David Smith and Whitaker (33).

Against the motion:

Councillors Budden, Burns, Dennison, Greenall, Histed, Jackson, Mace, Parkinson, Rogerson, Emma Smith, Sykes, Thomas and Williamson (13).

The Mayor declared the motion clearly carried.

**Resolved:**

Fundamentally, Council is concerned about Government's decision to reduce funding for providing council tax support and the impact that would have if those reductions are passed on to low income households. Council is also concerned about the difficulties in ensuring acceptable collection performance.

Whilst the Council recognises the severe Government funding reductions facing local government services from 2014/15 onwards, it also recognises that in the next financial year, 2013/14, the City Council's finances are manageable.

Furthermore, the decisions already taken to increase council tax income from second and empty homes give all tiers of local government more flexibility to manage their budget pressures and to help protect essential services, subject to annual review and depending on collection performance.

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- (5) That the operation and financial implications of the Council's adopted Scheme be monitored closely (for all tiers of local government, including parishes) and it be subject to formal review in a year's time, alongside other alternatives.

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Mayor

(The meeting finished at 6.50 p.m.)

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