

PROCEEDINGS

A meeting of the Lancaster City Council was held in the Town Hall, Morecambe, at 6.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 16 March 2022, when the following Members were present:-

Mike Greenall (Mayor)

Tony Anderson

Fabiha Askari

Mandy Bannon

Gerry Blaikie

Abbott Bryning

Roger Cleet

Tim Dant

Adrian De La Mare

Kevin Frea

June Greenwell

Tim Hamilton-Cox

Colin Hartley

Caroline Jackson

Debbie Jenkins

Jack Lenox

Cary Matthews

Stuart Morris

Joyce Pritchard

Oliver Robinson

Luke Taylor

Sandra Thornberry

Anne Whitehead

Jason Wood

Geoff Knight (Deputy Mayor)

Paul Anderton

Richard Austen-Baker

Phillip Black

Alan Biddulph

Keith Budden

Darren Clifford

Roger Dennison

Jason Firth

Andrew Gardiner

Mel Guilding

Janice Hanson

Ross Hunter

Joan Jackson

Sarah Knight

Erica Lewis

Abi Mills

Jean Parr

Robert Redfern

Paul Stubbins

Malcolm Thomas

David Whitaker

John Wild

Joanna Young

133 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Vicky Boyd-Power, Dave Brookes, Gina Dowding, Merv Evans, Jake Goodwin, Tricia Heath, Mandy King, Faye Penny, Alistair Sinclair, Katie Whearty and Peter Yates.

134 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2022 were signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

135 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

136 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillors were reminded of the plight of the victims of the war in Ukraine. The Mayor noted that he was in touch regularly with the Mayor of Lublin Council, Lancaster's twin town in Poland. Lublin was situated 70 miles from the border with the Ukraine, the first Polish city over the border, and had been receiving many refugees fleeing from the fighting.

The Mayor then reported the recent sad death of Honorary Alderman Shirley Burns.

Shirley had been elected to the Council in September 1978 and was Mayor in 1995/96. Shirley stood down from the Council in 2015, when she became an Honorary Alderman.

Members stood in a minute's silence reflecting on the conflict in Ukraine and in memory of Honorary Alderman Shirley Burns.

Councillors were informed that Councillor Bryning would shortly celebrate his 90th birthday. The Mayor said he had been told that Councillor Bryning was born in the same year that Morecambe Town Hall had been built. Councillor Lewis spoke to confirm this fact and to acknowledge Councillor Bryning's long service.

137 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.

138 PETITIONS AND ADDRESSES

The Mayor informed Members that no petitions or requests to address Council had been received from members of the public.

139 LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader presented her report updating Members on various issues since her last report to Council. She then responded to a number of questions from Councillors.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

140 APPOINTMENT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The chair of the Chief Executive Recruitment Committee (CERC), Councillor Hamilton-Cox, presented a report of the Committee seeking approval for appointment of a recommended candidate to the post of Chief Executive, in order that a formal offer of employment could be made.

Councillor Hamilton-Cox informed Councillors that the CERC's recommended candidate was Mark Davies, currently the Council's Director of Communities and Environment. He explained the reasons why Mark had been chosen by the CERC and he recommended him to Council for appointment.

On behalf of the CERC Councillor Hamilton-Cox thanked consultants Tile Hill, Technical Assessor Karen Satterford, Head of HR Arshaluse Gougazian and her staff in HR for their support during the recruitment process. He also thanked the other members of the CERC for working so constructively on the cross-party ad hoc committee.

There were no questions from Members.

Councillor Hamilton-Cox proposed:

"That the appointment of Mark Davies as Chief Executive be approved, to allow a formal offer of employment to be made."

Councillor Lewis seconded the proposition and spoke in favour.

There was no debate.

A vote was then taken on the proposition, which was carried unanimously.

Resolved unanimously:

That the appointment of Mark Davies as Chief Executive be approved, to allow a formal offer of employment to be made.

141 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022/23

Councillor Anderton, chair of the Personnel Committee introduced the Committee's report regarding the Pay Policy Statement 2022/23. The report explained that an annual Pay Policy Statement was required to be published, in compliance with the Localism Act 2011.

There were no questions from Councillors. Councillor Anderton proposed:

"That the Pay Policy Statement 2022/23, as appended to the report, be approved."

Councillor Wood seconded the proposition.

There was no debate. The proposition was carried unanimously when put to the vote.

Resolved unanimously:

That the Pay Policy Statement 2022/23, as appended to the report, be approved.

142 HONORARY RECORDER

The Chief Executive had submitted a report regarding the Honorary Recorder. The report set out that, since the retirement of His Honour Judge Phillip Sycamore, the role had been vacant. Council was asked to consider appointing His Honour Judge John (known as Robert) Altham to the role at the Annual Council meeting.

Councillor Dennison proposed, seconded by Councillor Caroline Jackson:

“That His Honour Judge Robert Altham be appointed Honorary Recorder of Lancaster at the Annual Meeting of the City Council”

There was no debate and a vote was taken on the proposition, which was carried unanimously.

Resolved unanimously:

That His Honour Judge Robert Altham be appointed Honorary Recorder of Lancaster at the Annual Meeting of the City Council.

143 APPOINTMENTS AND CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

No changes were reported.

144 QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12 (Pages 6 - 8)

The Mayor advised that three questions had been received by the Chief Executive in accordance with Council Procedure Rules as follows:

- (1) Councillor Dant to Councillor Matthews regarding grant funding for insulation and other works to housing.
- (2) Councillor Dant to Councillor Hamilton-Cox regarding Canal Corridor.
- (3) Councillor Dant to Councillor Brookes regarding sand on the promenade in Morecambe following storms.

Details of the questions and answers together with any supplementary questions and responses are appended to the minutes.

145 MINUTES OF CABINET

Council considered the Cabinet minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2022. There were no questions for the Leader.

Resolved:

That the minutes be noted.

Mayor

(The meeting finished at 6.50 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these minutes,
please contact Debbie Chambers, Democratic Services - email dchambers@lancaster.gov.uk**

Questions on notice under Rule 12**From Councillor Dant to Councillor Cary Matthews:**

I notice that the Council's project for accessing government funds through the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme only scored 'amber' on the Q3 project monitoring presented to Cabinet on the 1st March 2022. Could the portfolio holder please explain why we are not making the most of this source of funding to improve the insulation and air tightness of Lancaster's housing stock?

Councillor Matthews thanked Councillor Dant for his question. She replied:

As reported in the project monitoring highlight report, there have been some delays with this project, this is specifically as a result of the availability of Trustmark accredited and suitably skilled / available contractors locally and across Lancashire. In order to address this a breakfast and an evening event has been arranged by the Housing Advisory Group, in partnership with Lancaster and Morecambe College. This event will be in April and will promote free training and green skills initiatives available locally. The advertisement for this event is in the process of being sent to local contractors and other relevant stakeholders to try and encourage more to get involved in this work from within the District.

Lancaster City Council's funding was best secured by joining a pan-Lancashire consortium led by Blackpool Council, this was successful and funding was secured through a bid for LAD1b, with additional funding secured directly as part of LAD2. The amber rating has resulted due to the Contractors being organised locality by locality by the central programme. In the District work to properties had only started in Q3, as stated in the report, delivery is now being progressed throughout Q4 to maximise the amount of properties receiving specific qualifying measures. Additionally the City Council will continue to seek opportunities to bring in additional funding to increase and improve the energy efficiency of properties where possible.

Councillor Dant thanked Councillor Matthews for the answer, which he acknowledged had covered the supplementary question he had in mind, which would have been "Can the portfolio holder tell us how the Council is contributing to the building up of retrofit skills within Lancaster District?"

From Councillor Dant to Councillor Hamilton Cox:

Perhaps the most eagerly awaited and long overdue project that Lancaster Council is involved with is the redevelopment of the Canal Quarter, where the Council owns a substantial amount of land. However, I notice that in the Q3 project monitoring presented to Cabinet on the 1st March 2022, the Canal Quarter is 'on hold', still awaiting a 'detailed business case' – the project has not yet started! Could the portfolio holder please give us a timetable of when we can see some actual development?

Councillor Hamilton-Cox responded:

This is an edited version. Many recent and current elements of work being undertaken at the Canal Quarter have been well publicised. Most recently the planning portfolio holder Councillor Dowding was quoted on the appointment of Masterplan consultants PRP in December to undertake the masterplanning stage.

The council's Canal Quarter webpages have also recently been updated, to reflect the adoption into the City Council's Local Plan, of the Canal Quarter Strategic Regeneration Framework (CQSRF) as a Supplementary Planning Document and that also summarises next

steps. There was a technical glitch on project monitoring for Quarter 3. It seems as though reporting was not requested for Q3 but regular reporting will be reinstated on Q4 and that will reflect "Phase 2 – Preparation of the Masterplan" as this was the next stage agreed by Cabinet last year.

Further stakeholder/community consultation stage will be initiated following Cabinet member engagement and approval of the overall direction of the proposals. Member engagement is planned to take place in April/May.

It is also important to note that the speed of development delivery has many external influences. Inflationary pressures in the wider economy being the most notable and these are impacting on construction and labour costs across the board making projections of development viability difficult and that is reflected in the next paragraphs.

So last spring, some members were involved in the pre-application discussion for the privately owned former Mitchells brewery site. My understanding is that there are ongoing discussions with the Council over that scheme's viability. Also last year the Council looked at the viability of combining privately owned and Council owned property to bring forward a discrete development scheme. Progress on that is also subject to discussion over viability. At the end of last year, Council commissioned Masterplanners PRP to produce a discrete piece of work; this is for a block design a residential scheme for a site in Canal Quarter, which is wholly owned by the City Council and that is currently in the process of being assessed for viability.

Last week, I was approached by a developer looking to develop a site adjacent to the Canal Quarter. And I said "you're not coming forward with another student accommodation scheme are you..?" The developer said "actually, that's what I do." I said "have you not looked at the residential element of that scheme?" They said "okay, I will look at it. But I'm almost certain that values in Lancaster do not make private residential viable at the moment." You can see, I hope, that there is no lack of aspiration to deliver.

Councillor Dant thanked Councillor Hamilton-Cox for his response, saying that the information he had supplied had been very useful. He was glad to hear that things were going much better than the project monitoring had suggested in March.

By way of his supplementary question, Councillor Dant asked:

The Canal Quarter abuts what we might call the student corridor, with accommodation for a large number of young people. Can the portfolio holder assure us that accommodation developed on Council-owned land will not focus on young people, but will instead include a variety of accommodation for older people, including extra-care facility, so that they can enjoy walking to the facilities in the city. We need to see older people in the bars, shops, restaurants, cinemas and clubs, of Lancaster as well as young people.

Councillor Hamilton-Cox replied:

Yes, my recollection is that there is an extra care facility identified in the Strategic Regeneration Framework, I'll have to see what PRP, the Masterplanning consultants make of that idea.

From Councillor Dant to Councillor Dave Brookes:

During the series of storms in February – Dudley, Eunice and Franklin – much of the sand on Morecambe beach was swept onto the promenade. I understand that Council officers worked to remove the sand, but instead of returning it to the beach, they had to dispose of it. If this is correct, where did the sand go?

(Supplementary question) *How much did the operation to replace cost?*

(Councillor Brookes, having given his apologies for the meeting had supplied the written answer set out below in advance):

It's not entirely correct. Where sand isn't contaminated - which it usually isn't when blown onto the promenade - we have agreement from the Environment Agency to return it to the beach.

Where sand is blown further into town, which some was during the recent storms, it will be contaminated and is taken away for reprocessing by a waste contractor. This basically makes it a recycled aggregate which can be reused for other purposes. So far this year approximately 75 tonnes has been removed and disposed for reprocessing.

The beach doesn't get topped up in response to specific events, but every five years or so a view is taken on whether more sand is needed, and this funded by budgets help by the City Council's Engineering team.