

**COUNCIL BUSINESS  
COMMITTEE**

**6.00 P.M.**

**12TH SEPTEMBER 2013**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Paul Aitchison (Chairman), Roger Mace (Vice-Chairman),  
Melanie Forrest, Janet Hall, Billy Hill and Geoff Knight

Apologies for Absence  
Councillor Vikki Price

Officers in attendance:  
Deborah Chambers                      Democratic Services Manager  
Peter Baines                                Senior Democratic Support Officer

**14        MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record.

**15        ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE CHAIRMAN**

*Prior to discussion, Councillor Hall declared an interest in this item, as she was a governor at the school and a councillor for Skerton East ward.*

*Councillor Aitchison also declared an interest, the nature of it being that he had undertaken work experience at the school.*

The Chairman authorised an item of urgent business on Lancashire County Council's consultation on the possible closure of Skerton Community High School (SCHS), Owen Road, Lancaster. The consultation had been received after the publication of the agenda, and a response was required before the next meeting of the Committee.

In the course of discussion, members agreed that the Council should submit a response to the consultation, citing the fact that many pupils had special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), which SCHS was particularly adept at catering for. Concern was expressed that children with SEND may struggle in other, larger, schools and that whilst SCHS proved more expensive per child than other schools in the area, the extra expense was justified by the level of pastoral care and specialist provision.

Members were also concerned about the effect on the local community of closing the school, particularly in light of Skerton Primary School's closure in 2010. In addition, councillors were concerned about future provision as there was a significant amount of housing development taking place in the area. It was suggested that the number of houses being built in the area be incorporated into the Council's response.

Councillor Hall, seconded by Councillor Knight, proposed that the Council use the following statement as the basis of a response to the consultation:

*The Committee recommends that Lancaster City Council (LCC) submit a formal response to the consultation to include the following points:*

*LCC has made a considerable investment in Skerton in recent years. Following receipt*

*of a grant in recognition of Skerton being a deprived area, a project called Connecting Communities was launched in 2010, facilitated by LCC's Community Engagement service. This involve a substantial amount of officer time and amongst other outcomes resulted in the formation of The Friends of Ryelands Park. During the same period Lancashire County Council have closed Skerton Primary School and the Luneside Resource Centre. The closure of yet another public building in such close proximity would send out a very conflicting message about the future of Skerton as a community.*

*As the planning authority, LCC is very aware of the shortage of housing in the district and how many hundreds of homes could be built over the next few years. Additional homes are currently being built on Pinfold Lane and Ashbourne Road in Skerton., The children who live in these houses will need schools. When considered alongside the current shortage in primary school places, it is a concern to LCC that the decision to close Skerton High School would be a very short term one.*

*As the local authority, LCC assumes a responsibility for health and wellbeing in the district. LCC expresses concern about the future education and wellbeing of the children who currently attend Skerton High, given the unique environment the school provides, and asks how the needs of those children will be met elsewhere in the district. In view of the very high proportion of vulnerable children and children with very particular needs (52.9%) who attend Skerton High, this is a worrying concern and has not clearly been addressed in the consultation documents.*

*In view of the above considerations, LCC does not support the proposed closure of Skerton Community High School.*

On being put to the vote, the proposal was agreed unanimously.

**Resolved:**

That a response be submitted to the consultation. The response would be written by officers in consultation with the Chairman, and submitted with copies sent to the Committee members for information.

The response would be based on comments expressed at the meeting and Councillor Hall's statement, as set out above.

**16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no further declarations of interest.

**17 LANCASHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE EMERGENCY COVER REVIEW 2013 - CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

The Democratic Services Manager introduced a suggested consultation response to Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service's Emergency Cover Review 2013.

The consultation proposed to remove one of two whole time fire engines from Lancaster fire station in 2017/18, and explore the option of replacing it with a fire engine crewed by retained duty system firefighters, dependent on the recruitment of sufficient staff.

The Council's draft response, prepared by the Chief Officer (Environment), did not

support the proposal to remove one of the two fire engines, but stated that the option of keeping a second engine with retained firefighters would seem a reasonable one.

***Resolved:***

That the suggested response be approved and submitted to Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service.

**18 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – TIMES AND VENUES FOR MEETINGS**

The Committee considered a request from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to change the start time of that committee from 6pm to 7pm, and a request from other members to alternate the venue between Lancaster and Morecambe during the remainder of 2013 / 14.

During discussion, members agreed that in the interests of avoiding confusion, the venue should not alternate. With regard to the start time, councillors were concerned that meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee were often lengthy, and did not feel that a start time of 7pm was appropriate for that reason.

***Resolved:***

That there be no change to the time or venue of Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings.

**19 COUNCILLOR COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**

The Democratic Services Manager introduced a report about a proposed conference on community leadership, to be held in June 2014.

The conference would be held to give members a chance to talk to councillors from neighbouring authorities about how they engage with their communities and interact within their wards.

In the course of discussion, some members expressed the view that the conference could be seen as patronising by long-standing councillors, and it was suggested that the conference be held after the next local elections for the benefit of new councillors. The alternative view was that the conference could be beneficial in June 2014, for the opportunity to discuss community leadership with councillors from other local authorities.

Councillor Hall, seconded by Councillor Knight, proposed that the conference be held in June 2014. On being put to the vote, the motion was passed with four votes in favour and two abstentions.

***Resolved:***

- (1) That a conference be held on community leadership in June 2014.
- (2) That a report be brought to a future meeting with detailed proposals for the conference.

**20 CONSTITUTION - PETITIONS AND ADDRESSES (Pages 5 - 10)**

The Democratic Services Manager introduced a report on amendments to the constitution which would clarify the notice periods required when presenting a petition.

***Resolved:***

That the amendments to clarify the notice period in the Council's petition scheme, and the amendments to council procedure rules 14 and 15, be approved as shown in the appendix.

**21 APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP**

There were no appointments to committees or changes to membership.

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Chairman

(The meeting ended at 7.00pm)

**Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact  
Peter Baines, Democratic Services - 01524 582074 or email [pbaines@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:pbaines@lancaster.gov.uk)**

*Extract from the previous Petition Scheme in the Constitution*

## **PART 10**

### **Petition Scheme**

#### **Introduction**

The Council welcomes petitions and recognises that petitions are one way in which people can let us know their concerns. All petitions sent or presented to the Council will receive an acknowledgement from the Council within 10 working days of receipt.

This acknowledgement will set out what we plan to do with the petition. We will treat something as a petition if it is identified as being a petition, or if it seems to us that it is intended to be a petition.

Generally, a petition must be signed by at least 10 people, and any persons who sign should live, work or study in the Council's area.

Paper petitions can be sent to the Head of Governance, Town Hall, Lancaster LA1 1PJ

Petitions may also be created, signed and submitted online by following this link [www.lancaster.gov.uk/petitions](http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/petitions)

Petitions can also be presented to a meeting of the Council. Dates of these meetings may be found on the Council's website [www.lancaster.gov.uk](http://www.lancaster.gov.uk)

If you would like to present your petition to the Council, or would like your councillor or someone else to present it on your behalf, please contact Democratic Services on 01524 582065 or email [democracy@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@lancaster.gov.uk) and they will talk you through the process. If you wish to make an address to Council when presenting your petition, you must give notice that you wish to speak no later than midday three days before the Council meeting, providing a copy of your speech. This is in accordance with the rules in the Council's Constitution about public speaking at Council meetings. A leaflet explaining the procedure is available on the Council's website or from Democratic Services.

If your petition has received 1500 signatures or more (or 200 where it relates to a local matter which affects no more than two wards), it will also be scheduled for a Council debate, and if this is the case we will let you know whether this will happen.

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Petitions can also be presented to a meeting of the Council provided you give us 7 working days notice that you wish to present your petition. Dates of Council meetings may be found on the Council's website [www.lancaster.gov.uk](http://www.lancaster.gov.uk)

**If you would like to present your petition to the Council or to present your petition and make a speech to accompany it, you must let us know no later than seven working days before the Council meeting, providing a copy of your speech if you want to speak.** Please contact Democratic Services on 01524 582065 or email [democracy@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@lancaster.gov.uk) and we will talk you through the process, including what to do if you would prefer your Ward Councillor or someone else to present the petition on your behalf.

Councillors are able to present petitions at Council meetings, too. The same requirement to give seven working days notice applies to Councillors, who should give notice, and a copy of their speech if they wish to make one, to the Chief Executive.

Any petition with 1500 signatures or more (or 200 where it relates to a local matter which affects no more than two wards) will also be scheduled for a Council debate. If this is the case with your petition we will let you know whether this will happen.

*Previous version of Council Procedure Rule 15*

**15. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS AND HEARING OF ADDRESSES BY MEMBERS**

- 15.1 At a meeting of the Council any member of the Council may present a petition or address which is relevant to some matter in relation to which the Authority has functions, or which affects the area of the Authority, or part of it, or the inhabitants of that area, or some of them.
- 15.2 The provision outlined in 15.1 above does not extend to applications for or objectors to:-
- planning permission;
  - any licence, notice or order issued, served or made by the Council.
- 15.3 At least seven days before the meeting at which the petition or address is to be presented, the person wishing to present it shall give notice of his or her intention to do so to the Chief Executive, in writing or by electronic mail, and shall show the petition or address to him or her and he or she shall not accept the notice unless he or she is satisfied that the petition or address is proper to be presented.
- 15.4 In presenting a petition or address, the person may speak for not more than five minutes. These remarks shall relate to the matter indicated when the request was made and shall not constitute a personal attack upon any person. The person or persons speaking to the petition or address shall be heard in silence.
- 15.5 Petitions and addresses shall be presented, in order in which notice of them is received by the Chief Executive.
- 15.6 Where the subject matter of an address received is within the terms of reference of the Cabinet or relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it shall be referred to the next convenient meeting of the Cabinet or relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee within whose terms of reference it falls. If any question arises as to the Cabinet or Overview and Scrutiny Committee to which the subject matter is to be referred, it shall be determined by the person presiding.
- 15.7 Where an address is referred to a meeting of the Cabinet or Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet or Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall either report upon the subject matter to the next meeting of the Council or committee, or include their views upon the subject matter in their next report to the Council or committee.
- 15.8 When a petition is received it shall be referred to Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider and carry out any inquiry work as appropriate before reporting back to Cabinet or the relevant decision-making body.

**Council Procedure Rule 15, as amended at Council Business Committee,  
12<sup>th</sup> September 2013**

**15. HEARING OF ADDRESSES BY MEMBERS**

- 15.1 At a meeting of the Council any member of the Council may present an address which is relevant to some matter in relation to which the Authority has functions, or which affects the area of the Authority, or part of it, or the inhabitants of that area, or some of them.
- 15.2 The provision outlined in 15.1 above does not extend to applications for or objectors to:-
- planning permission;
  - any licence, notice or order issued, served or made by the Council.
- 15.3 At least seven days before the meeting at which the address is to be presented, the Member wishing to present it shall give notice of his or her intention to do so to the Chief Executive, in writing or by electronic mail, and shall show the address to him or her and he or she shall not accept the notice unless he or she is satisfied that the petition or address is proper to be presented.
- 15.4 In presenting an address, the Member may speak for not more than five minutes. These remarks shall relate to the matter indicated when the request was made and shall not constitute a personal attack upon any person. The Member making the address shall be heard in silence.
- 15.5 Addresses shall be presented in order in which notice of them is received by the Chief Executive.
- 15.6 Where the subject matter of an address received is within the terms of reference of the Cabinet or relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it shall be referred to the next convenient meeting of the Cabinet or relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee within whose terms of reference it falls. If any question arises as to the Cabinet or Overview and Scrutiny Committee to which the subject matter is to be referred, it shall be determined by the person presiding.
- 15.7 Where an address is referred to a meeting of the Cabinet or Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet or Overview and Scrutiny Committee shall either report upon the subject matter to the next meeting of the Council or committee, or include their views upon the subject matter in their next report to the Council or committee.
- 15.8 Members of Council may present petitions to Council in accordance with the rules set out in the Petition Scheme in Part 10 of this Constitution.



***Council Procedure Rule 14, with revision shown at 14.8,  
as agreed at Council Business Committee, 12<sup>th</sup> September 2013***

**14 PUBLIC SPEAKING**

- 14.1 At a meeting of the Council a Local Government Elector or Council Tax Payer for the area of the Authority may address Council on any item on the agenda for the meeting, or on any matter in relation to which the Council has functions, or which affects the area of the Council or part of it, or the inhabitants of that area, or some of them.
- 14.2 The provision outlined in 14.1 does not extend to applications for or objectors to:-
- planning permission (see the Council's arrangements for public participation in Planning and Highways Regulatory Committee meetings as outlined in the leaflet available from Democratic Services);
  - any licence, notice or order issued, served or made by the Council.
- 14.3 An address may only be presented at Council if notice has been given by delivering it in writing or by electronic mail to the Chief Executive no later than midday 3 days before the day of the meeting and the notice includes the wording of the address. The Chief Executive shall not accept the notice unless he or she is satisfied that the address is proper to be presented. Late requests to address Council will not be considered.
- 14.4 In presenting an address, the person may speak for not more than five minutes. The speech shall reflect the wording referred to in Rule 14.3 above, and shall not constitute a personal attack upon any person. The person or persons making the address shall be heard in silence. Following the presentation of an address, the appropriate Cabinet Member or Committee Chairman will be given the opportunity to respond to the submission for not more than five minutes.
- 14.5 Addresses shall be presented in order in which notice of them is received by the Chief Executive. There will be a maximum of ten speakers allowed per Council meeting on a first come, first served basis. Groups of persons with similar views should elect a spokesperson to speak on their behalf to avoid undue repetition of similar points. Spokespersons should identify in writing on whose behalf they are speaking as part of the registration process. The Head of Governance to be authorised to ask speakers to consolidate their views if there are more than three speakers in the group.
- 14.6 Where the subject matter of an address received is within the terms of reference of Council, it shall be referred to the next convenient meeting of the relevant Council body within whose terms of reference it falls.
- 14.7 Where an address is referred to a meeting of a Council body, that meeting shall either report upon the subject matter to the next meeting of the Council or committee, or include their views upon the subject matter in their next report to the Council or committee.

- 14.8 Members of the public may present petitions to Council in accordance with the rules set out in the Petition Scheme in Part 10 of this Constitution.