

PROCEEDINGS

A meeting of the Lancaster City Council was held in the Town Hall, Morecambe, at 6.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 14 December 2016, when the following Members were present:-

Robert Redfern (Mayor)	Carla Brayshaw (Deputy Mayor)
Jon Barry	Sam Armstrong
June Ashworth	Lucy Atkinson
Alan Biddulph	Eileen Blamire
Dave Brookes	Tracy Brown
Susie Charles	Darren Clifford
Ian Clift	Brett Cooper
Claire Cozler	Sheila Denwood
Rob Devey	Charlie Edwards
Andrew Gardiner	Nigel Goodrich
Mel Guilding	Janet Hall
Tim Hamilton-Cox	Janice Hanson
Colin Hartley	Helen Helme
Brendan Hughes	Caroline Jackson
Joan Jackson	Andrew Kay
Ronnie Kershaw	Geoff Knight
James Leyshon	Karen Leytham
Roger Mace	Terrie Metcalfe
Jane Parkinson	Margaret Pattison
John Reynolds	Ron Sands
Elizabeth Scott	Roger Sherlock
Malcolm Thomas	Oscar Thynne
Andrew Warriner	David Whitaker
Anne Whitehead	John Wild
Nicholas Wilkinson	Paul Woodruff
Peter Yates	

67 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Stuart Bateson, Abbott Bryning, Abi Mills, Rebecca Novell, Sylvia Rogerson, Susan Sykes, Peter Williamson and Phillippa Williamson.

68 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2016 were signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

69 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members advised of the following interests at this stage:

Councillors Cozler, Guilding and Scott declared prejudicial interests in Item 11 – Localised Council Tax Support Scheme and would leave the room for that item. (Minute 75 refers).

70 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor welcomed Councillor Nathan Burns to his first Council meeting since being elected to represent the University & Scotforth Rural Ward in the by-election held on 8th December 2016.

The Mayor thanked those, especially Councillors and staff of the Royal Lancaster Infirmary, who had donated to or attended the Christmas Bash which had raised almost £1600 for the Mayor's charity.

The Mayor advised that he intended to re-order the agenda with item 9, the motion on the Bus Services Bill being moved to the end of the agenda.

71 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.

72 PETITIONS AND ADDRESSES

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

73 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.

74 DRAFT STRATEGIC POLICIES & LAND ALLOCATIONS AND REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENTS [LOCAL PLAN FOR LANCASTER DISTRICT]

The Chief Officer (Regeneration & Planning) submitted a report which sought a resolution from Council to undertake public consultation on the Strategic Policies and Land Allocations Development Plan Document and Review of the Development Management Development Plan Document. This would enable progress to be made on the preparation of a Local Plan for Lancaster District.

The Chief Officer (Regeneration & Planning) and the Planning and Housing Policy Manager responded to a number of questions.

Councillor Hanson proposed, Councillor Brayshaw seconded:

“That the recommendations, as set out in the report, be approved.”

After a short debate a vote was taken on the proposition which was carried unanimously.

Resolved:

- (1) That public consultation be undertaken on the Strategic Policies & Land Allocations Development Plan Document and Review of the Development Management Development Plan Document.
- (2) That background evidence and supporting material be published, including the consultants' interim reports on the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment.
- (3) That the authority to make minor changes to improve the clarity and internal consistency of the Draft Documents, prior to the intended period of public consultation, provisionally from Friday 27th January to Friday 24th March 2017, be delegated to the Chief Officer (Regeneration and Planning).

75 LOCALISED COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2017/18

Councillors Cozler, Guilding and Scott having previously declared a personal interest in the following item left the meeting at this point.

The Chief Officer (Resources) submitted a report which sought a decision from Council on the Localised Council Tax Support (LCTS) scheme for 2017/18. Members asked questions and the Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility for Finance and Revenues & Benefits and the Chief Officer (Resources) responded.

It was proposed by Councillor Whitehead and seconded by Councillor Metcalfe:

- (1) That Council amends its Localised Council Tax Support Scheme for 2017/18 for minor changes to entitlement by:
 - removing the Work Related Activity Component; and
 - removing the Severe Disability Entitlementbut with the scheme retaining the provisions for allowing claimants to be absent from Great Britain for a period of 13 weeks, and not restricting the number of dependent children to 2.
- (2) That the Chief Officer (Resources) be authorised to finalise and publish the

Council's approved Scheme for 2017/18 in line with (1) above and make all other necessary arrangements for its implementation in next financial year.

After a short debate 33 Members voted in favour of the proposition, 13 against and 2 abstained, whereupon the Mayor declared the proposition to be carried.

Councillors Cozler, Guilding and Scott returned to the meeting at this point.

76 COMMUNITY POOLS UPDATE

The Chief Officer (Health & Housing) submitted a report to update Members on progress with the potential asset transfer of the community pools, and responded to several questions from Members.

Councillor Cooper proposed, seconded by Councillor Mace:

"That if the schools are committed to taking on the pools but need more time to finalise arrangements, the Council will support the continuation of operation of the pools beyond April 2017, for a limited period, and Cabinet is requested to incorporate this into the budget proposals for 2017/2018."

By way of an amendment, which was accepted as a friendly amendment by Councillors Cooper and Mace, Councillor Clifford proposed that the words 'and there is a potential viable business case', be inserted after 'taking on the pools'.

There was no debate and on being put to the vote Members voted unanimously in favour of the proposition, as amended.

Resolved:

- (1) That if the schools are committed to taking on the pools and there is a potential viable business case, but need more time to finalise arrangements, the Council will support the continuation of operation of the pools beyond April 2017, for a limited period, and Cabinet is requested to incorporate this into the budget proposals for 2017/2018.

77 APPOINTMENT OF MAYOR ELECT

The Chief Executive advised that she had contacted Councillor Geoff Knight, being the most senior Member of the Council in accordance with the Constitution. He had indicated to her that he did not feel able to accept an invitation to be Mayor due to other commitments. That being the case, she had then contacted Councillor Roger Mace, the next most senior Member who had indicated that he would be happy to accept the office of Mayor if offered, by the Council.

It was then moved by Councillor Thomas and seconded by Councillor Leytham:

"That Councillor Roger Mace be invited to hold the office of Mayor of the City of Lancaster for the Municipal Year 2017/18."

A vote was taken on the motion which was carried unanimously.

Resolved:

- (1) That Councillor Roger Mace be invited to hold the office of Mayor of the City of

Lancaster for the Municipal Year 2017/18.

78 QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12 (Pages 8 - 10)

The Mayor advised that 4 questions had been received by the Chief Executive in accordance with Council Procedure Rules as follows:

- (1) Councillor Hamilton-Cox to Councillor Blamire regarding devolution and the Lancashire combined authority
- (2) Councillor Hamilton-Cox to Councillor Whitehead regarding 'community wealth building'
- (3) Councillor Caroline Jackson to Councillor Hanson regarding empty stores on Market Square
- (4) Councillor Caroline Jackson to Councillor Clifford regarding Quay Meadows

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

The meeting adjourned at 8.35pm and reconvened at 8.45pm.

79 MINUTES OF CABINET

Council considered the Cabinet minutes of the meeting held on 2nd November 2016. The Leader and Chief Officer (Resources) responded to Members' questions.

Resolved:

- (1) That the minutes be noted.

80 MOTION ON NOTICE - BUS SERVICES BILL

The following motion of which notice had been given to the Chief Executive in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15 was moved by Councillor Kershaw and seconded by Councillor Reynolds:

This council notes:

1. That the Bus Services Bill currently passing through Parliament includes Clause 21 that will effectively "prohibit a local authority from forming a company for the purposes of providing a local bus service".
2. That the Localism Act (2011) provides general powers of competence to local authorities.
3. That municipal bus companies like Reading and Nottingham provide some of the best bus services in the country and have a successful track record of increasing bus passenger numbers and providing high quality bus services.
4. That polling by We Own It found that a majority of the public (57%) oppose clause 21, whilst just 22% support it. The opposition to Clause 21 is consistent across voters from all political parties.

This council believes:

1. Clause 21 contradicts the general powers of competence and the spirit of the Localism Act 2011.
2. If there is a need and a demand from their public, then Councils should be able to

- provide their own bus services.
3. Should they wish, Councils should be legally able to follow the model developed by Reading and Nottingham.
 4. Consequently Clause 21 should be omitted from the Bus Services Bill.

This council resolves:

1. To write to Lord Ahmad and to call on the Department for Transport to omit Clause 21 from the final legislation.
2. To write to local MPs Cat Smith and David Morris to ask them to oppose clause 21 when the Bus Services Bill reaches the House of Commons and ask them to write to Lord Ahmad and the Department of Transport to raise concerns about Clause 21.
3. To work with any organisations such as We Own It to publicise our opposition to clause 21 in local media.

An officer briefing note was provided with the agenda to assist Councillors.

After a short debate Members voted on the motion. 34 Members voted in favour and 11 abstained, whereupon the Mayor declared the motion to be carried.

Resolved:

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2. To write to local MPs Cat Smith and David Morris to ask them to oppose clause 21 when the Bus Services Bill reaches the House of Commons and ask them to write to Lord Ahmad and the Department of Transport to raise concerns about Clause 21.

3. To work with any organisations such as We Own It to publicise our opposition to clause 21 in local media.

Mayor

(The meeting finished at 9.00 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes,
please contact Liz Bateson, Democratic Services - telephone (01524) 582047 or email
ebateson@lancaster.gov.uk**

AGENDA ITEM 14 – QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL**1. Question from Councillor Tim Hamilton-Cox to Councillor Eileen Blamire**

Can the leader set out the advantages of the model of devolution which comes with need to elect a mayor or lead the Lancashire combined authority?

ANSWER

Two reports regarding the details of the Combined Authority (CA) have been submitted to Council, on 16 December 2015 and 13 April 2016. The Council meeting on 13 April 2016 resolved that

“the City Council agrees to become a constituent member of a Lancashire Combined Authority”

The Shadow Lancashire CA, which includes local authority Leaders and Chief Executives, has met regularly to discuss its role in taking advantage of the benefits in effectiveness and efficiency to be gained through pursuing the CA model. There are five themes under the CA:

- better homes for Lancashire
- skilled Lancashire
- connected Lancashire
- prosperous Lancashire
- public services working together

Lancashire is on track for laying an order for CA on 1 April 2017 and implementing the ‘Devo Lite’ CA based on the scheme for governance already voted on by Councils. This does not include an elected regional mayor. Lancashire is taking a phased approach to devolution.

A key outcome of the Lancashire Combined Authority (LCA) is to provide a single, united voice to represent the region’s interests with government and drive economic growth. It will open up significant opportunities with government, given that forming a CA demonstrates a track record of stability and collaboration.

Following the establishment of a CA, Lancashire can move towards devolution, however this is another stage in the process.

The Shadow CA has noted that the experience of other regions pursuing devolution suggests a number of additional advantages can be accessed only through pursuing the ‘Devo Max’ model, which would require the election of a regional mayor.

Government has indicated that there are fiscal advantages available to those CAs committed to an elected regional mayoralty, for example:

- annual fund to support major growth and renewal priorities
- multi-year transport settlement

- skills & employment support funding

Supplementary : Councillor Hamilton-Cox asked the Leader to comment regarding suggestions of an elected mayor by 2018.

Councillor Blamire replied that electing a mayor had to be a decision of every authority in Lancashire (except Wyre). This would be at the point of devolution and agreeing a deal. A mayor was working in some areas but not in others. The fact that Lancashire was working together would help when going for deals and funding.

2. **Question from Councillor Tim Hamilton-Cox to Councillor Anne Whitehead**

Can the portfolio holder detail any work that has been undertaken by the city council to assess and reproduce Preston city council's initiative to encourage what it calls 'community wealth building' – including increasing the value of procurement by public sector institutions within the Lancaster district from local businesses?

ANSWER

There has been no recent work on this sort of initiative.

EU legislation created complexities around aspects of this issue - and with Brexit it's not really clear what, if any, existing EU procurement requirements will be retained albeit in a different form in some way, and when we might know.

Putting those complexities aside, in any event procurement capacity has been (and continues to be) tied up on supporting actual procurement activity, rather than developing strategy. Arrangements are in hand to consider capacity needs for addressing this, through the budget process.

Supplementary: Can Cllr Whitehead contact Preston CC to talk about the advantages of what they've done?

Councillor Whitehead replied that she would look into this.

3. **Question from Councillor Caroline Jackson to Councillor Janice Hanson**

Do we have any information regarding the future occupancy of the empty BHS store and the Morrisons Convenience store on Market Square and have we any strategies for mitigating the depressing effect these large empty windows have on the area?

ANSWER

Part of the problem lies with the premises being in the hands of the receivers. We are advised that future tenancies cannot be negotiated until the receivers have finished their work in winding up the affairs of the original tenants. We are working with the Lancaster BID to investigate whether temporary displays can put into the windows until new tenants come forward.

Supplementary : are there any imaginative strategies which can make Council owned empty shops less depressing like showing local crafts etc.

Councillor Hanson replied that it would be a great idea if people came forward with suggestions to make the empty shops less depressing.

4. Question from Councillor Caroline Jackson to Councillor Darren Clifford

After the successful and far reaching dig for Roman remains on Quay Meadow in the summer, the area is still looking unfinished and in need of attention. Do we have any information as to how this will be looked after and made good especially in view of possible further excavation work?

ANSWER

Whilst the dig was successful in terms of archaeology, the soil from the trench was infected throughout with Japanese Knotweed.

Further exploration of the trench is likely to take place in summer 2017. Therefore temporarily filling the trench would have been at a cost to the Council and would have likely resulted in a further invasion of Japanese knotweed and the associated cost of then treating it.

Therefore the option that was considered the most sensible was -

Leave trench empty, board and make safe until summer 2017. Once the dig has been completed, we will refill the trench and make the ground good with seed. (The infected soil has been kept on site (different location), covered and is being treated accordingly. Once the soil is free of Japanese Knotweed, it will be removed from site by a contractor). The boarding and fencing of the trench has completed in house and will incur the one off cost for filling with clean soil following the summer 2017 dig. The site is currently visited weekly to ensure the fencing and boarding is safe.

We did send a briefing note to ward councillors to inform them of this at the time.

Supplementary: Can you tell us more about the dig in 2017.

Councillor Clifford replied that he could not go into too much detail but they were working closely with the Beyond the Castle team and a report from Aitken, Prince and Pearce would be considered in the new year.