

PROCEEDINGS

A meeting of the Lancaster City Council was held in the Town Hall, Morecambe, at 6.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 18 March 2020, when the following Members were present:-

David Whitaker (Mayor)

Keith Budden

June Greenwell

Tim Hamilton-Cox

Tricia Heath

Debbie Jenkins

Cary Matthews

Oliver Robinson

Alistair Sinclair

Peter Yates

Victoria Boyd-Power

Jason Firth

Mel Guilding

Colin Hartley

Caroline Jackson

Erica Lewis

John Reynolds

Stewart Scothern

Jason Wood

Joanna Young

144 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the risk to health of large gatherings, it had been arranged in advance to keep the attendance at the meeting to a minimum. Therefore, there were a large number of apologies given (see below), which would not be calculated in the attendance statistics for Councillors:-

Councillors Anderson, Anderton, Austen-Baker, Bannon, Barber, Biddulph, Black, Brookes, Bryning, Carrington, Clifford, Cleet, Dant, Dennison, Dowding, Duggan, Evans, Frea, Gardiner, Goodwin, Greenall, Hanson, Jackson (Joan), King, Knight (Geoff), Knight (Sarah), Mills, Mumford, O'Dwyer-Henry, Parr, Penny, Pritchard, Redfern, Stubbins, Thomas, Thornberry, Whearty, Whitehead, Whitworth and Wild had submitted apologies.

The Mayor informed Councillors that because so few were present and able to participate, he would only be taking the Leader's Report and any items which required a decision to be made that night. He would take items 1-9 on the agenda and defer all other business.

The Mayor asked Members to note that the report for consideration regarding Councillor Mumford's non-attendance had an incorrect date in the recommendation. The date of 19 August 2020 should have been 25 September 2020. The report was to enable Council to consider approving Councillor Mumford's absence at Council meetings for a further six months, due to continuing ill-health.

In relation to the report regarding Councillor Mumford, Councillor Lewis proposed:

"That Councillor Mumford's non-attendance at meetings of the authority due to ill health for a six-month period up to 25 September 2020 pursuant to Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, be approved."

Councillor Greenall seconded the proposal.

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

Resolved unanimously:

That Councillor Mumford's non-attendance at meetings of the authority due to ill health for a six-month period up to 25 September 2020 pursuant to Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, be approved.

145 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2020 were signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

146 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

A number of declarations of interest were made in relation to the item of urgent business, COVID-19 Emergency Budget.

Councillor Young declared an interest as Chair of Trustees of the Morecambe Bay Foodbank.

Councillor Health declared an interest as a local business owner and possibly vulnerable resident.

Councillor Hamilton-Cox declared an interest as the Chair of Morecambe Bay Credit Union.

Councillor Boyd-Power declared an interest as a local businessperson.

Councillor Hartley declared an interest as a member of the Board of the CFA.

The Monitoring Officer advised that the interests declared would not necessitate leaving the Chamber. The Councillors in question could contribute to the debate and vote if they wished to do so.

147 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

The Mayor informed Councillors that he had agreed to accept an item of urgent business. This was a report which had been circulated at the start of the meeting requesting that funding be allocated to the COVID-19 emergency.

148 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported the sad death of Honorary Alderman John Gilbert.

John was elected to the City Council in 1986. He was Mayor of the district in 2003/4 and stood down from the Council in 2011. John was a Cabinet Member and later became Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He would be greatly missed by his wife Pam, his family and friends.

Members stood in a minute's silence in his memory.

In a further announcement, the Mayor thanked everyone working in public services, volunteers and the community including NHS staff and City Council employees, for all the hard work and support that had been going on, and was continuing, in the fight against coronavirus in the district.

149 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 11

No questions had been received.

150 PETITIONS AND ADDRESSES

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

151 LEADER'S REPORT

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

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

152 COVID-19 EMERGENCY BUDGET

Councillor Lewis presented an urgent business report to allocate funding for the COVID-19 emergency. The reason for urgency was the increasing risk to health and economic wellbeing in the district, due to the effects of the pandemic.

Councillor Lewis answered a number of questions from Councillors before proposing:

“That the Council allocates £2,000,000 from its reserves to help mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 emergency to residents and businesses in the district.”

Councillor Reynolds seconded the proposal.

During debate, Councillor Hamilton-Cox requested that the following be considered as a friendly amendment:

“That the Chief Executive be requested by Council to write to the Secretary of State for the Department of Work and Pensions to ask to waive the five-week waiting period before Universal Credit is paid, in order to help people as far as possible.”

Councillor Young seconded his request which was accepted as a friendly amendment by the proposer and seconder of the motion.

The Mayor called for a vote, which was clearly carried with only one abstention and no votes against.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Council allocates £2,000,000 from its reserves to help mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 emergency to residents and businesses in the district.
- (2) That the Chief Executive be requested by Council to write to the Secretary of State for the Department of Work and Pensions to ask to waive the five-week waiting period before Universal Credit is paid, to help people as far as possible.

153 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2020/21

Councillor Robinson, Chair of the Personnel Committee, presented the Committee's report recommending a draft Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21 for approval.

Councillor Robinson proposed that the draft statement be approved, seconded by Councillor Wood. Councillor Hamilton Cox asked if the words 'Real Living Wage' could be termed 'Foundation Living Wage' in the Policy. Councillor Robinson and his seconder accepted this as a friendly amendment.

There was no debate and the draft statement, subject to the amendment above, was unanimously approved, when put to the vote.

Resolved:

That, subject to amending the phrase 'real living wage' to 'foundation living wage', the draft Pay Policy Statement 2020/21 be approved.

154 COUNCILLOR JOHN WILD

Item deferred.

155 ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO POLITICAL GROUPS

Item deferred.

156 APPOINTMENT TO AN OUTSIDE BODY

Item deferred.

157 APPOINTMENTS AND CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Item deferred.

158 QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12

Before drawing the meeting to a close, the Mayor informed Councillors that the three questions on notice which had been received from Councillor Barber would be answered in writing and circulated to all Members by Democratic Services via email.

159 MINUTES OF CABINET

Item deferred.

Mayor

(The meeting finished at 6.55 p.m.)

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