

PROCEEDINGS

A meeting of the Lancaster City Council was held remotely, at 6.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 27 January 2021, when the following Members were present:-

Malcolm Thomas (Mayor)

Paul Anderton

Mandy Bannon

Phillip Black

Victoria Boyd-Power

Abbott Bryning

Roger Cleet

Roger Dennison

Adrian Duggan

Kevin Frea

Jake Goodwin

June Greenwell

Tim Hamilton-Cox

Colin Hartley

Caroline Jackson

Mandy King

Sarah Knight

Cary Matthews

Jack O'Dwyer-Henry

Faye Penny

Robert Redfern

Oliver Robinson

Alistair Sinclair

Sandra Thornberry

David Whitaker

John Wild

Peter Yates

Joan Jackson (Deputy Mayor)

Richard Austen-Baker

Stephie Barber

Alan Biddulph

Dave Brookes

Keith Budden

Tim Dant

Gina Dowding

Merv Evans

Andrew Gardiner

Mike Greenall

Mel Guilding

Janice Hanson

Tricia Heath

Debbie Jenkins

Geoff Knight

Erica Lewis

Abi Mills

Jean Parr

Joyce Pritchard

John Reynolds

Stewart Scothern

Paul Stubbins

Katie Whearty

Anne Whitehead

Jason Wood

Joanna Young

91 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tony Anderson, Darren Clifford and David Whitworth.

It was noted that Councillor Carrington was on parental leave.

92 MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Guilding, seconded by Councillor Redfern and agreed unanimously that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2020 be accepted as a correct record.

It was noted that the minutes would be signed by the Mayor when the minute book was available.

93 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Gardiner reported that he had a pecuniary interest in Item 15, the question on notice to Councillor Caroline Jackson from Councillor Jenkins. This was not an item for debate.

94 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor made three announcements. He reported that today was Holocaust Memorial day, 27th of January and a time to remember those who lost their lives in the Holocaust.

He asked Members to reflect on the number of deaths due to the pandemic, the UK having reached the tragic milestone of 100,000 lives lost to Coronavirus.

The Mayor then reported the sad passing of Mr Bill Pearson, the City Council's Town Clerk and Chief Executive from 1979 to 1996.

Bill was awarded the Honorary Freedom of the City in 1995.

Members observed a minute's silence in memory of lives lost.

95 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.

96 PETITIONS AND ADDRESSES

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

97 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.

98 BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK UPDATE 2021/22-2024/25

The Mayor informed Councillors that, whilst the agenda showed two separate items, with the Budget and Policy Framework as Item 9 and Council Tax 2021/22 as Item 10, both items had been drafted in one report and would be dealt with together. Councillor Whitehead, portfolio holder for Finance and Resources, presented the report of Cabinet.

Councillor Whitehead responded to a number of questions from Members before proposing:-

"That Council approves a City Council Tax increase of £5 to the Band D Council Tax (from £231.95 to £236.95) for 2021/22, together with a year on year target of the maximum allowable under the Government's local referendum thresholds for future years."

Councillor Hamilton-Cox seconded the proposition.

Debate was followed by a roll call vote, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 19.7 which required a recorded vote to be taken on any decision relating to the making of a council tax calculation.

The votes were recorded as follows:

For the proposition: Councillors Anderton, Bannon, Biddulph, Black, Boyd-Power, Brookes, Bryning, Cleet, Dant, Dowding, Evans, Frea, Goodwin, Greenwell, Hamilton-Cox, Hanson, Hartley, Jackson (Caroline), Jenkins, King, Lewis, Matthews, Mills, O'Dwyer-Henry, Parr, Penny, Pritchard, Redfern, Reynolds, Sinclair, Stubbins, Thornberry, Whearty, Whitaker, Whitehead, Wood and Young (37).

Against the proposition: Councillor Wild (1).

Abstentions: Councillors Austen-Baker, Barber, Budden, Dennison, Duggan, Gardiner, Greenall, Guiding, Heath, Jackson (Joan), Knight (Geoff), Knight (Sarah), Scothern, Thomas and Yates (15).

(It was noted that Councillor Robinson was unable to cast his vote due to connection issues at the time of voting)

Resolved:-

That Council approves a City Council Tax increase of £5 to the Band D Council Tax (from £231.95 to £236.95) for 2021/22, together with a year on year target of the maximum allowable under the Government's local referendum thresholds for future years.

99 MOTION - TO SUPPORT THE ICAN CITIES APPEAL, TO ENCOURAGE THE UK GOVERNMENT TO RATIFY THE TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Councillor Bannon had submitted a motion on notice to the Chief Executive in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15. The motion, which is shown below, had been included with the agenda papers, accompanied by a briefing note from officers.

"Lancaster City Council is deeply concerned about the grave threat that nuclear weapons

pose to communities throughout the world. We firmly believe that our residents have the right to live in a world free from this threat. Any use of nuclear weapons, whether deliberate or accidental, would have catastrophic, far-reaching and long-lasting consequences for people and the environment.

Lancaster City Council therefore resolves to:

- Warmly welcome the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by the United Nations in 2017
- Call on our national government to ratify the treaty

Action

That the Chief Executive:

- Writes to the UK government – Secretaries of State for 1) Defence and 2) Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy - to inform them that Lancaster City Council has endorsed the ICAN Cities Appeal to call for our Government to sign the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.
- Informs our residents and media about our support of the ICAN Cities Appeal, and informs ICAN by emailing them at info@icanw.org
- Takes steps to ensure that funds administered by Lancaster City Council are not invested in companies that produce nuclear weapons. See www.dontbankonthebomb.com."

However, earlier in the day, Councillor Bannon had, with the agreement of her seconder, requested to alter her motion slightly. The alteration was in the form of adding words to the last bullet point of the motion, as follows (change italicised):-

- "Takes *reasonable* steps to ensure that *when investments are made or reviewed*, funds administered by Lancaster City Council are not invested in companies that produce nuclear weapons."

The Mayor asked Councillors if they would agree to allow Councillor Bannon to alter her motion. There were no indications that any Councillor would vote against this, therefore agreement of the meeting was signified without discussion, in line with Council Procedure Rule 17.7 (a).

Councillor Bannon then moved her altered motion, seconded by Councillor Wood.

There were a number of questions from Councillors which Councillor Bannon responded to. Officers pointed out that further information would be required on the extent of bullet point (3) to estimate the work required, as this could be extensive.

A lengthy debate about the motion followed, with many Councillors speaking both for and against. Councillor Whitehead proposed an amendment to revise the wording of bullet point (3) to allow further work by officers to estimate the effect on resources and asked if this would be accepted as a friendly amendment. Councillor Bannon said she would be willing to discard bullet point three altogether if this were permissible. In view of this, Councillor Whitehead put forward an amendment to discard bullet point three from the motion. Councillor Bannon and her seconder accepted this as a friendly amendment.

At the conclusion of the debate a roll call vote was taken. With 28 Councillors voting for, 13 against and 11 abstentions, the motion was carried.

Resolved:-

That Lancaster City Council:

- (1) Warmly welcomes the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by the United Nations in 2017.
- (2) Calls on our national government to ratify the treaty; and

That the Chief Executive:

- (3) Writes to the UK government – Secretaries of State for a) Defence and b) Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy - to inform them that Lancaster City Council has endorsed the ICAN Cities Appeal to call for our Government to sign the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.
- (4) Informs our residents and media about our support of the ICAN Cities Appeal, and informs ICAN by emailing them at info@icanw.org

100 EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS

The Director of Corporate Services presented a report informing Council of a change to the Executive Arrangements, with Deputy Leader Councillor Hanson replacing the former Deputy Leader, Councillor Frea, on the Lancaster and South Cumbria Joint Committee.

The report was simply for noting.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

101 APPOINTMENT OF MAYOR ELECT

The Chief Executive advised that he had contacted Councillor Greenall, being the most senior Member of the City Council, and he had indicated that he would be happy to accept the office of Mayor if offered by the Council.

It was then moved by Councillor Heath and seconded by Councillor Budden:

“That Councillor Greenall be invited to hold the office of Mayor of the City of Lancaster for the Municipal Year 2021/22.”

With no one indicating that they wished to speak or vote against the motion, the Mayor declared the motion clearly carried.

Resolved:-

That Councillor Greenall be invited to hold the office of Mayor of the City of Lancaster for the Municipal Year 2021/22.

102 APPOINTMENTS AND CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Mayor reported that, since the last Council meeting, there had been two changes to the Budget and Performance Panel. Councillor Joan Jackson had replaced Councillor

Whitworth for the Conservative Group and Councillor Bannon had been named as a substitute member for the Green Group.

103 QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12

The Mayor advised that one question had been received from Councillor Jenkins to Councillor Caroline Jackson.

Councillor Jenkins asked:

We have been alerted to a serious situation where residents in the Poulton and West End areas of Morecambe have received eviction notices from a property company.

We believe that this property company have also purchased 40+ properties (in excess of 160 beds) in the area to create houses of multiple occupancy (HMO) for ex-offenders and others with a wide range of needs who are not from this area.

Please can I request further information and reassurances from the Council that residents will be fully supported with this issue?

Councillor Caroline Jackson responded, saying:

Before Christmas Council Officers became aware that Dawson Housing a for-profit Social Landlord had bought around 40 properties in Poulton and West End in Morecambe. Many of these include self-contained flats and therefore we understand the occupancy levels of these properties could be in the region of 140 flats (not all of which are currently tenanted). We had been advised that where tenants were still in situ eviction notices had been served with many of the residents being vulnerable and elderly. Council Officers sought immediate confirmation from Dawson Housing that these notices would be rescinded and secured verbal confirmation (subsequently followed up in writing) that this was the case for those living at Anderton Court.

An initial engagement meeting was held before Christmas and a further meeting with wider Council Officers, the Police and Dawson Housing was held in early January. During the meeting concerns about their approach in purchasing properties against earlier advice from the Council was raised, as were our concerns around the current management approach of the properties and advice was provided around what they should do to reassure themselves that they are working within the appropriate realms of planning regulations. Officers from the Council have visited all residents we believe have been affected to offer advice and support and on-going conversations with Dawson Housing continue. We are awaiting confirmation that other residents served an eviction notice will also have their notices rescinded.

Dawson Housing has advised that they are looking to provide temporary supported accommodation for a range of individuals who are homeless, and whilst this will undoubtedly include ex-offenders and others with a wide range of needs, Officers are seeking to ensure that no placements are made into the vacant units without prior approval from the Council to ensure the suitability of residents and help reduce potential issues of ASB. This model has been developed in Preston and therefore there is no reason it cannot be replicated in this District.

Whilst Officers are disappointed that Dawson Housing went against our previous advice in buying up these properties, we are also mindful that there is nothing illegal in this either. However, a complaint has been logged with the Regulator of Social Housing with regards

to their behaviour which is being investigated. Nevertheless Officers' main priority is in ensuring residents currently in this accommodation are supported suitably and that they and the wider community have confidence to raise issues in the management of the properties if these occur, and in doing so we will seek to take the appropriate action available to us.

104 MINUTES OF CABINET

Council considered the Cabinet minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2020.

Resolved:

That the minutes be noted.

Mayor

(The meeting finished at 7.50 p.m.)

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