

PROCEEDINGS

A meeting of the Lancaster City Council was held in the Town Hall, Morecambe, at 6.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 15 December 2021, when the following Members were present:-

Mike Greenall (Mayor)

Tony Anderson

Mandy Bannon

Keith Budden

Gina Dowding

Kevin Frea

Tim Hamilton-Cox

Colin Hartley

Jack Lenox

Cary Matthews

Oliver Robinson

Anne Whitehead

Jason Wood

Geoff Knight (Deputy Mayor)

Fabiha Askari

Gerry Blaikie

Roger Cleet

Adrian De La Mare

Andrew Gardiner

Janice Hanson

Caroline Jackson

Erica Lewis

Joyce Pritchard

David Whitaker

John Wild

Peter Yates

83 WELCOMING NEWLY ELECTED COUNCILLORS

Before starting the meeting the Mayor welcomed four newly-elected Councillors to their first council meeting following recent by-elections.

Councillor Fabiha Askari (University and Scotforth Rural Ward); Councillor Luke Taylor (Carnforth and Millhead Ward); Councillor Gerry Blaikie (Bare Ward) and Councillor Ross Hunter (Upper Lune Valley Ward) were all welcomed to the City Council. (Councillor Taylor was not present, and Councillor Hunter was observing, rather than participating, due to the political balance restrictions on the reduced numbers attending.)

84 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that the Council had agreed to meet on reduced numbers due to the spread of the new variant of COVID.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Paul Anderton, Richard Austen-Baker, Alan Biddulph, Phillip Black, Vicky Boyd-Power, Dave Brookes, Abbott Bryning, Darren Clifford, Tim Dant, Roger Dennison, Merv Evans, Jason Firth, Jake Goodwin, June Greenwell, Mel Guilding, Tricia Heath, Joan Jackson, Debbie Jenkins, Mandy King, Sarah Knight, Abi Mills, Stuart Morris, Jean Parr, Faye Penny, Robert Redfern, Alistair Sinclair, Paul Stubbins, Luke Taylor, Malcolm Thomas, Sandra Thornberry, Katie Whearty, David Whitworth and Joanna Young.

85 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th November 2021 were signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

86 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

87 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported the sad passing of Honorary Freeman Cedric Robinson MBE who died peacefully at home on 19th November 2021. Cedric had lost his dear wife, Olive, just three months earlier, in August. Cedric stepped down as the Queens Guide of Morecambe Bay after 57 years in 2019.

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

88 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.

89 PETITIONS AND ADDRESSES

The Mayor informed Members that no petitions or requests to address Council had been

received from members of the public.

90 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.

91 PLAN 2030: PRIORITIES AND OUTCOMES

The Leader presented a report recommending that Council adopt the 'Core' Plan 2030 as the basis of further development of its Policy Framework including budget decisions for 2022-23 and future years.

There were no questions.

Councillor Caroline Jackson, seconded by Councillor Dowding, proposed:

"That the recommendation, as set out in the report, be approved."

There was a short debate before a vote was then taken on the proposition, which was clearly carried.

Resolved:

- (1) That the 'Core' Plan 2030, appended to the report, be adopted as the basis of further development of its Policy Framework including budget decisions for 2022-23 and future years.

92 LOCALISED COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME (2022/23)

Councillor Whitehead, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources presented a report of Cabinet seeking a decision from Council on retaining the existing Localised Council Tax Support (LCTS) scheme in its present format for application in 2022/23.

Members asked a number of questions, which Councillor Whitehead responded to.

Councillor Whitehead, seconded by Councillor Hamilton-Cox proposed:

- "(1) That option (1) as set out in the report, to retain the Council's existing LCTS scheme for 2022/23, subject to minor consequential amendments to match changes in Housing Benefit rules, be approved.
- (2) That the S151 Officer be authorised to finalise and publish the Council's approved scheme for 2022/23 and make all other necessary arrangements for its implementation in the next financial year."

A short debate followed, after which a vote was taken on the proposition, which was clearly carried.

Resolved:

- (1) That option (1) as set out in the report, to retain the Council's existing LCTS scheme for 2022/23, subject to minor consequential amendments to match changes in Housing Benefit rules, be approved.
- (2) That the S151 Officer be authorised to finalise and publish the Council's approved scheme for 2022/23 and make all other necessary arrangements for its implementation in the next financial year.

93 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 21/22 - 25/26

Councillor Whitehead presented the Medium Term Financial Strategy report (MTFS) 2021/22-2025/26.

There were no questions. The report was for noting.

Resolved:

- (1) That the report be noted.

94 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID TERM REVIEW 2021/22

(The Mayor changed the order of the agenda slightly to take the next item (item 13) before item 12.)

Councillor Whitehead presented a report of the Chief Finance Officer asking for Council's consideration of various matters in connection with the Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2021/22.

There were no questions. The report was for noting.

Resolved:

- (1) That the report be noted.

95 ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO POLITICAL GROUPS

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report with a revised calculation of political balance on the Council's Committees following changes to the political composition of the Council. The changes were due to a member leaving the Independent Group to become non-aligned, and the results of four recent by-elections.

The report set out that, on the overall grouping of committees, the Labour Group would gain three seats and the Liberal Democrat Group would gain two seats. Those five seats would come from the Conservative Group (two seats) the Independent Group (two seats) and the Eco-Socialist Independent Group (one seat).

There were no questions on the report. Councillor Lewis proposed:

- 1) That in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act, 1989 and Part 4 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations, 1990, the City Council approves the calculations and allocation of seats set out in the report, including the adjustments set out in the table in 2.2 and paragraph 4.1 of the report.

The proposition was seconded by Councillor Wood.

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

Resolved:

- 1) That in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act, 1989 and Part 4 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations, 1990, the City Council approves the calculations and allocation of seats set out in the report, including the adjustments set out in the table in 2.2 and paragraph 4.1 of the report.

96 APPOINTMENTS AND CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Group administrators for the Liberal Democrat and Labour groups reported various appointments as a result of the changes in seat allocations (minute number 95 refers). The Head of Democratic Services also reported the changes which she was aware of.

The changes were as follows:-

Councillor Pritchard to take Councillor Anderson's seat on the Appeals committee.

Councillor Hunter to take Councillor Sinclair's seat on the Budget and Performance Panel, with Councillor Greenwell as substitute.

Councillor Blaikie to take Councillor Greenwell's seat on the Licensing Committee.

Councillor Greenwell to take Councillor Pritchard's seat on Planning with Councillor Pritchard as substitute.

Councillor Hunter to take Councillor Young's seat on the Chief Executive's Recruitment Committee.

Councillor Wood to become a substitute member on the Budget and Performance Panel instead of Councillor Hartley.

Councillor Taylor to take Councillor Jenkin's seat on the Budget and Performance Panel.

Councillor Jenkins to take Councillor Evans' seat on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Askari to take Councillor Thomas' seat on the Standards Committee.

Councillor Frea to take up the Eco-Socialist Independent Group seat on the Chief Executive Recruitment Committee.

Councillor Budden to give up his seat on the appeals Appeals Committee which becomes a Labour vacancy, as no appointment was made.

All the changes were noted.

97 QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12

Councillor Whitaker had submitted two questions for Councillor Brookes, portfolio holder for Environmental Services, regarding fly-tipping. Councillor Brookes was not in attendance at the meeting due to the COVID measures. He had prepared answers to Councillor Whitaker's questions, which Councillor Dowding read out on his behalf.

The first question was:

- 1) *Fly-tipping in certain back streets in the West End of Morecambe is getting worse in and residents are getting frustrated and angry, especially in repetitive hot spots. What can the Council do realistically to address this ongoing blight on our community?*

Councillor Brookes' reply was:-

The recent data for incidents in Harbour Ward doesn't appear to support the view that fly-tipping is getting worse, certainly when comparing this year to last year:

Quarter 1 (Apr-Jun) 2020: 226 cases
2021: 75

Quarter 2 (Jul-Sep) 2020: 141
2021: 83

Having said that, all incidences of fly-tipping are unacceptable, and the Council is continuing to work on prevention, as well as providing a dedicated removal service, and taking enforcement action where there is sufficient evidence to do so.

Fly-tipping happens for a number of reasons, from confusion or carelessness about when and where to present domestic waste at one end of the scale, to cynical organised crime by rogue waste carriers at the other end. As such there is no one-size-fits-all solution and a variety of tactics need to be employed to tackle it.

Officers have developed a ward-specific plan for Harbour Ward with a large number of actions, some of which have been implemented, with others to follow over the short to medium term. Some examples:

Seagull bags have been delivered to households with bagged collections, including door-knocking to check that residents were aware of their bin day and where to present waste (many were not).

Increased capacity communal recycling facilities have been provided (albeit much later than planned due to slow delivery from suppliers) to reduce problems with side waste at collection points.

In the last couple of months Will Griffith and I met with local and national Freegle representatives to discuss proven ways of encouraging re-use of unwanted items, and we hope to be able to trial live swapping events next year. Panels promoting the Freegle app will soon be appearing on some of our bin wagons.

We also attended a Keep Britain Tidy webinar on fly-tipping, highlighting a programme of evidence-based interventions KBT developed and tested in the London Borough of Newham. KBT is offering to deliver this programme with a limited number of other councils around the country, and we are pursuing bringing this to Lancaster district, with a focus on hotspots in Morecambe. In the meantime we have joined the Keep Britain Tidy Network which gives us access to resources, learning events, best practice guidance etc.

Councillor Whitaker asked for his thanks to be recorded to officers who were dealing with fly tipping for their hard work. He commented that partnership work with landlords might be useful in the fight against fly tipping to help educate tenants.

Councillor Whitaker's second question was:

What is an acceptable time scale for the removal of fly-tipping when a member of the public reports it?

Councillor Brookes' reply was:-

The Council's corporate Service Level Agreement for removal of fly-tipping is 5 working

days. This is the timescale that the budgeted level of resource is designed to achieve in normal circumstances. We don't have any verified data on response times, but officers assure me that a high percentage of fly-tips are collected same-day as we have dedicated crews in Morecambe and Lancaster solely assigned to fly-tipping.

I'm sure that there will be isolated occasions where items do get missed. Residents can help prevent this by being as specific as possible about the location and type of material when reporting a fly-tip.

I'm also aware that there are a very small number of incidents where specialist access equipment is required to safely remove fly-tipped material, and these can take some time to resolve.

Mayor

(The meeting finished at 7.25 p.m.)

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