

PROCEEDINGS

A meeting of the Lancaster City Council was held in the Town Hall, Morecambe, at 6.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 8 November 2023, when the following Members were present:-

Roger Dennison (Mayor)	Martin Bottoms (Deputy Mayor)
Suhir Abuhajar	Joanne Ainscough
Catherine Armistead	Mandy Bannon
Matthew Black	Phillip Black
Paul Newton	Louise Belcher
Gerry Blaikie	Phil Bradley
Dave Brookes	Keith Budden
Roger Cleet	Ruth Colbridge
Brett Cooper	Gina Dowding
Tom Fish	Andrew Gardiner
Martin Gawith	Alan Greenwell
Erin Hall	Tim Hamilton-Cox
Chris Hanna	Prof Chris Harris
Paul Hart	Colin Hartley
Ross Hunter	Kate Knight
John Livermore	Sally Maddocks
Sophie Maddocks	Sarah McGowan
Abi Mills	Hamish Mills
Jean Parr	Margaret Pattison
Sue Penney	Catherine Potter
Joyce Pritchard	Sarah Punshon
Sam Riches	Grace Russell
James Sommerville	Paul Stubbins
Sandra Thornberry	Sue Tyldesley
Paul Tynan	David Whitaker
John Wild	Nick Wilkinson
Jason Wood	

67 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Claire Cozler, Paul Gardner, John Hanson, Caroline Jackson, Peter Jackson, Jack Lenox, Sheila McGregor, and Robert Redfern.

68 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2023 were signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

69 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

70 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor made two announcements.

He reminded Councillors that Remembrance Services would be taking place over the weekend, with short services at both Morecambe Cenotaph and the Memorial Gardens at 10.50am on Saturday 11th November. On Sunday 12th there would be full Remembrance Services at Lancaster, Morecambe and Carnforth commencing from 10.30am.

The Mayor advised that tickets were on sale for his Christmas Carol Concert to be held on Friday 15th December at 7pm. The St John's Hospice choir would be performing to raise funds for the Hospice. Tickets were priced at £10, available from the Mayor or the Mayor's office.

The Mayor informed Councillors of his intention to move items 9 and 10 to the end of the agenda because there was a recommendation to exclude press and public for the item on the White Lund Depot Improvements. Moving the item would avoid any need to exclude and then re-admit the public and reset the livestream.

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 Councillors that there would be two addresses from the public. Copies of both speeches had been circulated before the meeting.

The first speaker, Ms Sue Saunders, addressed Council about the future of The Platform entertainment venue and the closure of the two Visitor Information Centres.

The Cabinet Member for the Visitor Economy, Community Wealth Building and Culture thanked Ms Saunders for speaking to Councillors and responded to the points raised..

Ms Paula Baker then spoke to Council about 5G & 6G installation in the Morecambe and Surrounding Area. Councillor Parr, the Cabinet Member for Planning and Placemaking

responded to Ms Baker and thanked her for speaking to Councillors.

The Mayor thanked both public speakers for attending the Council meeting.

73 LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader presented his report updating Members on various issues since his last report to Council. He then responded to a number of questions from Councillors.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

74 COMMITTEE TIMETABLE (Pages 7 - 8)

Councillor Whitaker, Chair of Council Business Committee, introduced the Committee's report seeking agreement for a timetable of meetings for the municipal year 2024/25 including venues and start times.

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

Councillor Whitaker, seconded by Councillor Wood, proposed:

“(1) That Council approves the proposed timetable of meetings for the municipal year 2024/25 attached to the report.

(2) That the start time of ordinary meetings of Council remains 6pm.”

Councillor Wood proposed a friendly amendment, in the form of an addendum, which Councillor Whitaker accepted:

“(3) That the start time of Budget and Performance Panel, Standards Committee and People and Organisational Development Committee be changed from 6.10pm to 6pm.

(4) That it be noted that Cabinet meetings will be held at Morecambe Town Hall in 2024/25 in order to be livestreamed.”

After debate, a vote was taken on the proposition, which was clearly carried.

Resolved:

(1) That Council approves the proposed timetable of meetings for the municipal year 2024/25 attached to the report.

(2) That the start time of ordinary meetings of Council remains 6pm.

(3) That the start time of Budget and Performance Panel, Standards Committee and People and Organisational Development Committee be changed from 6.10pm to 6pm.

(4) That it be noted that Cabinet meetings will be held at Morecambe Town Hall in 2024/25 in order to be livestreamed.

The approved timetable, venues and start times are appended to these minutes.

75 REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2023

The Chief Executive, in his role as Returning Officer, presented a report to enable Council to determine the outcome of the review of polling districts and polling places in the Parliamentary Constituencies of Morecambe and Lunesdale and Lancaster and Fleetwood (to become Morecambe and Lunesdale and Lancaster and Wyre from the next UK Parliamentary General Election).

Councillors asked questions which the Returning Officer responded to.

Councillor Wood proposed, seconded by Councillor Gardiner:

“(1) That Council approves the amendments to polling districts and polling places for the parliamentary constituencies in the Lancaster City Council area as outlined in appendix A of the report.

(2) That Council authorises the publication of the prescribed statutory information about the outcome of the review.”

The proposition was carried unanimously when put to the vote.

Resolved unanimously:

(1) That Council approves the amendments to polling districts and polling places for the parliamentary constituencies in the Lancaster City Council area as outlined in appendix A of the report.

(2) That Council authorises the publication of the prescribed statutory information about the outcome of the review.

76 APPOINTMENTS AND CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

No changes were reported.

77 QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12 (Pages 9 - 10)

Councillor Cleet asked a number of questions about The Platform entertainment venue which are set out in an appendix to these minutes with the answers.

78 MINUTES OF CABINET

Council considered the Cabinet minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2023.

Resolved:

That the minutes be noted.

79 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Mayor reminded Council that it had been recommended to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the following item on the grounds that it could involve the possible disclosure of exempt information.

Councillor Gardiner moved, seconded by Councillor Wood:

“That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the grounds that it could involve the possible disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of that Act.”

A vote was taken and the motion was carried unanimously.

Resolved unanimously:

That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the grounds that it could involve the possible disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of that Act.

Members of the press and public left the Council Chamber at this point. Council adjourned for a comfort break at 7.15pm, reconvening at 7.25pm.

80 WHITE LUND DEPOT IMPROVEMENTS (Page 11)

The Chief Officer, Housing and Property submitted a report providing feedback on improvements required at the White Lund Depot to address building problems on the site and to seek instruction on next steps to be completed. The report was exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

The full minute and resolution are set out in a minute exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Mayor

(The meeting finished at 8.00 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these minutes,
please contact Debbie Chambers, Senior Manager, Democratic Support & Elections/Deputy
Monitoring Officer - email dchambers@lancaster.gov.uk**

**START TIMES, VENUES AND NUMBER OF MEETINGS AGREED BY COUNCIL
8 NOVEMBER 2023**

Meeting	Venue	Start Time	Number of Meetings
Annual Council (Ceremonial)	Ashton Hall	12 noon	1
Annual Council (Business)	MTH	6:00pm	1
Council	MTH	6:00pm	9
Council Business Committee	MTH	6:00pm	3
Cabinet	MTH	6:00pm	9
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	MTH	6:00pm	9
Budget and Performance Panel	LTH	6.00pm	5
Licensing Committee	MTH	1:00pm	8
Planning Regulatory Committee	MTH	10:30am	13
People and Organisational Development Committee	LTH	6:00pm	3
JCC	REMOTE	Flexible	2
Audit Committee	MTH	6:00pm	4
Standards Committee	LTH	6:00pm	2

COMMITTEE TIMETABLE 2024/25 AGREED AT COUNCIL 8 NOVEMBER 2023

	May 2024	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January 2025	February	March	April	May	
Mon			1											Mon
Tue			2			1						1		Tue
Wed	1		3 JCC Overview & Scrutiny			2			1			2		Wed
Thu	2 PCC ELECTIONS and possible others		4 Standards	1		3 Licensing			2			3	1 ELECTIONS?	Thu
Fri	3		5	2		4	1		3			4	2	Fri
Sat	4	1	6	3		5	2		4	1	1	5	3	Sat
Sun	5	2	7	4	1	6	3	1	5	2	2	6	4	Sun
Mon	6 Bank Holiday	3	8	5	2 Planning	7	4	2	6	3	3	7 Planning	5 Bank Holiday	Mon
Tue	7	4 Cabinet	9 Cabinet	6	3	8	5	3 Cabinet	7	4	4	8	6	Tue
Wed	8	5	10	7	4 Overview & Scrutiny	9	6 JCC	4 Overview & Scrutiny	8 Overview & Scrutiny	5 Overview & Scrutiny	5	9 Overview & Scrutiny	7overi	Wed
Thu	9	6 Licensing	11 P&OD	8	5 Licensing	10	7	5	9 Licensing	6 Licensing	6 P&OD	10	8	Thu
Fri	10 Annual council	7	12	9	6	11	8	6	10	7	7	11	9 Annual Council	Fri
Sat	11	8	13	10	7	12	9	7	11	8	8	12	10	Sat
Sun	12	9	14	11	8	13	10	8	12	9	9	13	11	Sun
Mon	13 Business Council	10	15	12	9	14	11	9	13 Planning	10 Planning	10 Planning	14	12 Business Council	Mon
Tue	14	11	16	13	10 Cabinet	15	12	10	14 Cabinet	11 Cabinet	11	15 Cabinet	13	Tue
Wed	15	12 Overview & Scrutiny	17	14	11	16 Overview & Scrutiny	13 Council	11 Council	15	12	12 Council	16	14	Wed
Thu	16	13	18	15	12	17	14	12	16 Standards	13	13 Licensing Budget & Perf.	17	15	Thu
Fri	17	14	19	16	13	18	15	13	17	14	14	18	16	Fri
Sat	18	15	20	17	14	19	16	14	18	15	15	19	17	Sat
Sun	19	16	21	18	15	20	17	15	19	16	16	20	18	Sun
Mon	20	17	22	19	16	21	18	16 Planning	20	17	17	21	19	Mon
Tue	21	18	23	20	17	22 Cabinet	19	17	21	18	18	22	20	Tue
Wed	22 Audit	19 Council	24 Council	21	18 Budget & Perf	23	20 Overview & Scrutiny	18	22 Council	19 Budget & Performance	19 Audit	23 Council	21	Wed
Thu	23	20	25	22	19	24 Business Committee	21 Licensing	19	23	20	20	24	22	Thu
Fri	24	21	26	23	20	25	22	20	24	21	21	25	23	Fri
Sat	25	22	27	24	21	26	23	21	25	22	22	26	24	Sat
Sun	26	23	28	25	22	27	24	22	26	23	23	27	25	Sun
Mon	27 Bank Holiday	24 Planning	29 Planning	26 Bank Holiday	23	28 Planning	25 Planning	23	27	24	24	28 Planning	26 Bank Holiday	Mon
Tue	28 Planning	25	30 Audit	27	24	29	26	24	28	25	25	29	27	Tue
Wed	29 Overview & Scrutiny	26	21	28	25 Council	30	27 Audit	25 Christmas Day	29 Budget & Performance	26 BUDGET COUNCIL	26	30	28	Wed
Thu	30 Business Committee	27 Licensing		29	26	31	28 P&OD	26 Boxing Day	30	27 Business Committee	27		29	Thu
Fri	31	28		30	27		29	27	31	28	28		30	Fri
Sat		29		31	28		30	28			29		31	Sat
Sun		30			29			29			30			Sun
Mon					30 Planning			30			31			Mon
Tue								31						Tue
	May 2024	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January 2025	February	March	April	May	

1. Councillor Cleet asked Councillor Hamilton-Cox

Last year budget savings of £2.3 million had to be made to balance the books, at this budget meeting held on 22nd February 2023 councillors believed at the time that it was only the Tourist Information Centre which would be mothballed - which would make a saving of £150,000 - but actually it was the whole venue what was proposed to be mothballed. One of the biggest questions asked by voters in Heysham North during the local elections in May '23 was the massive 231.6% Frontierland Tax Levy imposed by Morecambe Town Council which apparently Lancaster City Council can do nothing about and the closure of the Platform as an entertainment venue. It now comes to light that the part of the building where the Tourist Information Centre was located isn't owned by Lancaster City Council

Could you tell me what proportion of the £150,000 is attributed towards the rent of the area where the Tourist Information Centre was located?

Councillor Hamilton-Cox responded:

Councillor Hamilton-Cox was unsure where the figure of £150k came from and it was not the intention to 'mothball' The Platform, it was to find an alternative provider by the end of September however funding had been secured until April 2024 now to allow more time to find an alternative operator. As part of the savings proposal to close Morecambe VIC the rent of £26,800pa (base) plus inflation was stripped out of the budget as the Council assumed it would either surrender the lease or transfer to a third party as part of a new operating model for the Platform.

Councillor Cleet asked the following supplementary question:

Could you tell me who owns that part of the building?

Councillor Hamilton-Cox replied:

A company called Polystar.

2. Councillor Cleet asked Councillor Hamilton-Cox

When was the lease negotiated?

Councillor Hamilton-Cox answered:

The lease was originally agreed in 1997 on a 25 year basis.

3. Councillor Cleet asked Councillor Hamilton-Cox

Are there any other third parties who have a stake in the Platform?

Councillor Hamilton-Cox responded:

There are no other third parties who have a legal stake in the Platform.

Councillor Cleet asked the following supplementary question which Councillor Hamilton-Cox passed to Councillor Potter to respond to as the appropriate portfolio holder:

As the Platform is due to be mothballed at the end of March, with the last concert on March 27th could you tell me what Lancaster City Council propose to do with operating this entertainment venue in the light that the Eden Project has had a set back on its opening - which could potentially be used as an alternative entertainment venue?

Councillor Potter replied:

The mothballing of the Platform is not an option the Council wishes to see. All efforts are currently being focused on a new operating model for the Platform and Officers are progressing detailed work on a number of options. One such option is seeking a third party who would lease the building and operate it and to this end we have already been out to expressions of interest. Three have been received and one is more attractive than the other two. We are also speaking to staff.

Whilst the budget savings must be met the intention is that the Platform will continue to be an entertainment, cultural and community venue for many years to come.

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