

PROCEEDINGS

A meeting of the Lancaster City Council was held in the Town Hall, Morecambe, at 6.00 p.m. on Wednesday, 24 July 2024, when the following Members were present:-

Hamish Mills (Deputy Mayor)	Suhir Abuhajar
Joanne Ainscough	Mandy Bannon
Louise Belcher	Gerry Blaikie
Martin Bottoms	Keith Budden
Ruth Colbridge	Brett Cooper
Claire Cozler	Maria Deery
Gina Dowding	Martin Gawith
Alan Greenwell	John Hanson
Chris Hanna	Prof Chris Harris
Paul Hart	Colin Hartley
Ross Hunter	Caroline Jackson
Peter Jackson	Jack Lenox
John Livermore	Sally Maddocks
Sarah McGowan	Paul Newton
Jean Parr	Margaret Pattison
Sue Penney	Catherine Potter
Joyce Pritchard	Robert Redfern
James Sommerville	Paul Stubbins
Jackson Stubbs	Sandra Thornberry
Sue Tyldesley	David Whitaker
John Wild	Nick Wilkinson
Jason Wood	

COUNCILLOR MARIA DEERY

Before starting the meeting the Deputy Mayor welcomed new Councillor Maria Deery to her first Council meeting since being elected to represent University Ward in the by-election held on 4th July 2024.

15 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Catherine Armistead, Matt Black, Phil Black, Phil Bradley, Dave Brookes, Roger Cleet, Roger Dennison, Tom Fish, Andrew Gardiner, Tim Hamilton-Cox, Sophie Maddocks, Izzie Metcalf-Riener, Abi Mills, Sarah Punshon and Paul Tynan.

16 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 10 and 13 May 2024 were signed by the Deputy Mayor as a correct record.

17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

18 ANNOUNCEMENT - HONORARY ALDERMAN JOHN DAY

The Deputy Mayor reported the sad death of Honorary Alderman John Day MBE in May. John was the Mayor of Lancaster in 2004/05 and stood down from the Council in 2011 when he was made an Honorary Alderman.

John's funeral was held on 7 June 2024.

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

19 ANNOUNCEMENT - NET ZERO AWARD

The Deputy Mayor's second announcement was to celebrate the Planning and Climate Change team's success at the recent Local Government Chronicle Awards where the Council picked up the top award in the Net Zero category for the work on the Climate Emergency Local Plan Review. The Deputy Mayor noted that this was also referenced in the Leader's report.

20 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.

21 PETITIONS AND ADDRESSES

Mrs Gwen Abbott addressed Council and presented a petition in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 13 and 27.

The wording of the petition was:-

"We, the undersigned, residents of Leachfield Close, Galgate, request Lancaster City Council to:

- 1) Enable the residents to enjoy their homes once more without fear or anxiety by using their powers to restore peace and order back to the close by:
 - Installing security systems and door chains to appropriate bungalows
 - Working closely with the Police to ensure that information is shared promptly and acted in swiftly in order to build an evidence base
 - Keep in touch regularly with us, the residents to provide reassurance and a visible presence
 - Listen to us when we tell you things are getting worse and we have had enough
- 2) Follow the principles in the Housing Anti-Social Policy anti-social behaviour policy that states :

“(2.1) The needs of the victim and the witnesses will not be outweighed by the needs of the person who is causing the ASB, the focus will remain on the harm that is being caused to the victims and the wider community”.

“(2.2) Our aim is to take a stand together against anti-social behaviour, and to move away from situations where communities tolerate problems, to one where everyone works together to tackle the problems and improve the quality of life for all”

“(3.2.) To respond to reports of ASB in a timely manner, based on risk and take all reports seriously.”
- 3) Work towards a sustainable solution in partnership with the police and our local councillor Sally Maddocks, who we trust, and who we empower to speak on our behalf if necessary.”

The petition contained fewer than the 500 signatures required to debate the matter, therefore Councillor Caroline Jackson, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with particular responsibility for Housing and Homelessness, responded to Mrs Abbott.

The Deputy Mayor thanked Mrs Abbott for her petition and for attending the Council meeting to speak to Members.

22 LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader, having given apologies for the meeting, was not present to introduce his report. The report updated Members on various issues since his last report to Council. No questions were raised on Leader's report.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

23 CHANGE TO THE CONSTITUTION; ROLE OF ASSISTANT DEPUTY MAYOR

Councillor Wood, Cabinet Member with particular responsibility for Corporate Services,

introduced a report asking Council to consider a change to the Constitution to create a new role of Assistant Deputy Mayor.

The report set out that the role would not carry any remuneration. It would only be necessary should a Mayor be unavailable for a substantial period during their Mayoral year. The reasoning for creating the new role was that, whilst a Deputy Mayor would be able to perform some duties, depending on their personal circumstances, they may have to turn events down. This would likely disappoint organisations who have asked for the Mayor or Deputy to be in attendance. An Assistant Deputy Mayor would be able to cover those events. That would be the extent of the role, it would not be to Chair Council in the event of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor being absent from a meeting.

Councillor Wood suggested that the role could be monitored and kept under review before proposing:

“(1) That the Constitution be changed to create a role of Assistant Deputy Mayor, as set out in the report.”

Councillor Hanson seconded the proposal. There was a short debate before the Deputy Mayor called for a vote and the motion was clearly carried.

Councillor Wood then proposed, seconded by Councillor Cooper:

(2) That Councillor Riches be appointed to the role of Assistant Deputy Mayor for the remainder of the 2024/25 Municipal Year.”

There was no debate, a vote was taken in favour of the proposition and the Deputy Mayor declared Councillor Riches appointed.

(1) That the Constitution be changed to create a role of Assistant Deputy Mayor, as set out in the report.

(2) That Councillor Riches be appointed to the role of Assistant Deputy Mayor for the remainder of the 2024/25 Municipal Year.

24 TEMPORARY CHANGE TO THE EXECUTIVE SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Council considered a report of the Senior Manager Democratic Support and Elections setting out a temporary change, made by the Leader, to the membership of his Cabinet.

It was noted that Councillor Dowding would be temporarily replaced by Councillor Stubbins to take over her portfolio area of Climate Action from 1 August to 30 November 2024.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

25 APPOINTMENT OF A COMMITTEE CHAIR

Following on from Minute 24, it was noted in a report from the Senior Manager Democratic Support and Elections, that Councillor Stubbins, shortly to take on temporary responsibilities as a Cabinet Member, was currently the Chair of Audit. The Constitution did not permit the Chair of Audit to be a Member of Cabinet, therefore he had stepped down from his position as Chair.

With the position of Chair of Audit vacant, the Deputy Mayor asked for nominations to the role.

Councillor Gawith, seconded by Councillor Stubbins, nominated Councillor Hartley.

There were no further nominations. The Deputy Mayor declared Councillor Hartley appointed to the role of Chair of the Audit Committee.

Resolved:

That Councillor Hartley be appointed Chair of the Audit Committee.

26 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL MEMBERS

The Senior Manager Democratic Support and Elections had submitted a report recommending that two new Panel Members be appointed to the Independent Remuneration Panel. Councillor Wood, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services presented the report, which would give a pool of five Panel Members, making it much easier to convene meetings, since the requirement for quoracy was a minimum of three members.

Councillor Wood, seconded by Councillor Dowding, proposed:

“That Mr George Krawiec and Miss Monica Law be appointed to the Council’s Independent Remuneration Panel.”

The proposition was carried unanimously when put to the vote.

Resolved unanimously:

That Mr George Krawiec and Miss Monica Law be appointed to the Council’s Independent Remuneration Panel.

27 ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO POLITICAL GROUPS

The Senior Manager, Democratic Support and Elections had submitted a report to advise Council of the calculations relating to the allocation of seats in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. This was following a by-election for the University Ward held on 4 July 2024.

Councillor Wood proposed “That the recommendation, as set out in the report, be approved.” The proposition was seconded by Councillor Peter Jackson.

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

Resolved unanimously:

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 paragraph 3.4 of the report.

28 APPOINTMENTS AND CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Deputy Mayor informed Councillors of the following changes to committees which had taken place since the last meeting of Council:

The Labour Group had filled the place on the Licensing Committee left vacant by former Councillor Eric Hall, with Councillor Hanson.

To effect the changes necessary as a result of the recalculation of political balance, the Labour and Conservative groups had given up the following seats to the Green Group:

- Councillor Stubbs seat (Labour) on the Standards Committee; and
- Councillor Newton's seat (Conservative) on the People and Organisational Development Committee.

The Green Group would inform Democratic Support of the members who would take up those seats following the meeting.

29 QUESTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12 (Page 8)

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

- (1) Councillor McGowan to Councillor Parr regarding the Castle Car Park.
- (2) Councillor Cleet to Councillor Ainscough regarding management of weed growth.

Details of the questions and the answers given at the meeting are appended to the minutes.

It was noted that Councillor Cleet, having given apologies for the meeting, was not present to ask his question. Councillor Ainscough had agreed to email her written answer to all Councillors.

30 MINUTES OF CABINET

Council considered the Cabinet minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2024.

Resolved:

That the minutes be noted.

Mayor

(The meeting finished at 6.45 p.m.)

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

Question from Councillor Sarah McGowan to Councillor Jean Parr, Cabinet Member for Planning and Place:

In his report, the leader talks about the consultation on the draft Car-parking Strategy for Lancaster City Centre, the three workshops with The Grand, BID and the Chamber of Commerce and the many issues arising from the consultation. Also, the setting up of the Project Board.

A contributing factor to the perceived lack of parking spaces in the city is due to the closure of the Castle multi-storey in June 2023 because of structural problems.

Can Councillor Parr please update us on the magnitude of the work needed to bring the car park back into use and any timeframe for the work?

Councillor Parr responded:

The Castle Car Park has been closed for some time now due to defects rendering the car park unsafe for continued use. The Council leases the car park from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), who ultimately have responsibility for the structure. The DWP undertook some initial assessment of the condition of the car park and have now engaged technical engineering experts to investigate the works needed to enable the car park being brought back into use. This work will also provide a cost. The Council is in continued dialogue with the DWP regarding the works and we are keen to see the car park back in use as early as possible once it is safe to do so. We are due to hear back from the DWP in the next few weeks with regard to a programme of the works required.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor McGowan asked why a new multi-storey car park was being considered at the north end of the gyratory system when it would seem better for the environment to repair what already exists instead of turning our attention to something new.

Councillor Parr responded that the Car Parking Strategy was still a work in progress. It would attempt to balance the needs of all users. Public transport, particularly to villages and rural areas, was not readily available, especially in the evenings. Castle Car park, despite having a capacity of 287 spaces, was very under-used. Even at the Christmas shopping peak it was only ever 46% full, so was not in the most popular location.

Question from Councillor Roger Cleet to Councillor Joanne Ainscough, Cabinet member for Environmental Services:

At the Lancaster City Council meeting held on 24th April 2024 I asked a question after you gave the Cabinet Annual Report on the Environment Services “where do Lancaster District Councillors report issues with weed management in their wards?” – Your reply was to report these on the Lancashire County Council web site Love Clean Streets.

I emailed you on 12th June 2024 that on the Love Clean Streets there are sections for reporting grass verge cutting, hedge pruning, tree maintenance and tree removal but no section to report weed management.

You replied that you would follow it up with Lancashire County Council and get an official response on how district councillors can report weed management issues in the wards as in my own ward of Heysham North some weeds are several feet high, look unsightly and residents are voicing their concerns.

Councillor Cleet’s supplementary question:

There are large areas overgrowth and weeds in Morecambe especially around car parks in central Morecambe especially the one opposite the railway station, promenade areas and around Alexandra Park / More Music which are the responsibility of Lancaster City Council. Can you let me know how the City Council plan to tackle these issues and when.

Councillor Cleet was not present to ask the question, having given apologies for the meeting. Councillor Ainscough said she would provide a written response via email to all Councillors, following the meeting.