

Minutes of Meeting of the Council

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 15 December 2009 starting at 6pm
Present: Councillor B Jones (Chairman)

Councillors:

P Ainsworth	E M H Ranson
J E Alcock	J Rogerson
R M Croasdale	I Sayers
D C Eccleston	G Scott
S Farnsworth	R E Sherras
A Gridley	D T Smith
R Hargreaves	J S Sutcliffe
J B Hill	M E Sutcliffe
T Hill	D Taylor
K Hind	M Thomas
S A Hirst	R J Thompson
J Holgate	N C Walsh
S Hore	J White
A M Knox	A Yearling
C Punchard	

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Commercial Services, Director of Development Services, Director of Resources, HR Manager, and Legal Services Manager.

647 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors D A Berryman, M Fielding, L Rimmer, M Robinson and C Ross.

648 PRAYERS

The Mayor's Chaplain, the Reverend Tim Thorpe, opened the meeting with prayers.

649 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

650 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no items of public participation.

651 COUNCIL MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 20 October 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

652

MAYORAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayoral communications were received and noted. The Mayor reported that she had attended 62 engagements since the last meeting, including a wide range of community, education and social events.

653

LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader began by thanking the Town Hall Keeper for her support for Council meetings and events throughout the year.

The Leader then drew attention to the Annual Report which had been circulated at the meeting, and congratulated the Principal Communications Officer on an excellent publication.

The Leader reported that the Council's Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) had been received and that the Council had scored 2 for all aspects of its services. The Leader felt that this did not adequately reflect the excellent service provided by the Council for the efforts of staff.

The Leader went on to report that the Council had begun a process of consultation with the public regarding the Clitheroe Master Plan and that it had been encouraging that the Council had received 200 responses to the consultation exercise. Many responses had been concerned with parking provision and the Leader confirmed that this was an aspect of town centre development that would need to be looked at on an ongoing basis.

The Leader announced that the Council had been informed that its housing allocation for 2010 from the Government would almost certainly be slashed from £347,000 to £129,000. The money was used to provide disabled grants and landlord repair grants, the latter provided a vital avenue to increase the Council's rental stock, while the disabled grants facility had been extensively used to help disabled people adapt their homes so that their quality of life was improved.

Looking to the future the Leader acknowledged that it was likely there would be cuts by the Government in all areas of the public sector and that Ribble Valley would not be immune from such cuts. He reported that officers were working hard to look at all parts of the Council to restructure so that it could continue to provide the level of service that residents expected, despite budget reductions. He wished to dispel rumours that the Council planned to close the swimming pool, the Platform Gallery and the Castle. However, he noted that the Council would need to manage all of its facilities as efficiently as possible in the future.

Finally, the Leader looked forward with confidence and hope for the future and encouraged all Councillors to take the opportunity at this time of year to look afresh at their commitments to families, friends and communities and to ensure that they continued to work together to enhance and develop the communities for which they were responsible and therefore improve the lives of the people of Ribble Valley.

LEADER'S QUESTION TIME

The Shadow Leader, Councillor Alan Knox, asked if the Leader intended to change the way the Council received and dealt with petitions. The Leader thanked Councillor Knox for his question and confirmed that the Council's Principal Policy and Performance Officer was currently drafting a new petition scheme in response to the Government's 'Duty to Respond to Petitions' Bill which had recently received Royal Assent. The Council had received draft statutory guidance on the Duty together with a model scheme; it was proposed that a draft petition scheme would be presented to Policy and Finance Committee in March 2010. The scheme would also include specific consideration/advice in respect of "E-Petitions". In a supplementary question Councillor Knox made reference to the consultation document which was attached as to the draft guidance and asked if the Council intended to respond to this consultation. The Leader confirmed that the Council would be responding.

Councillor Jim White asked if the Leader could confirm if he would be instructing the Chief Executive to arrange a special Council meeting as soon as practicable in accordance with the Local Government Act 1950 to discuss and decide whether the Council would grant the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment the Freedom of the Borough, following a recent visit by members to the Regimental Headquarters. The Leader thanked Councillor White for his question and wished to record the Council's thanks to Colonel Amlot and the Regiment for receiving the visit from the Council in November. He confirmed that he had discussed the matter with the Chief Executive and had agreed that a report would go to the next Policy and Finance Committee recommending that the Council did indeed grant the Freedom of the Borough to the Duke of Lancaster Regiment. Council would then consider Policy and Finance Committee's recommendation in March 2010. He reported that if the Council agreed to the recommendation arrangements would be made with the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment for the Freedom to be granted, this would depend on the Regiment's overseas commitments.

Councillor John Hill thanked the Leader for his contribution following concerns that he had expressed at the first meeting of the joint Committee of Pennine Lancashire regarding the continuing uncertainty which surrounded the prospect of whether a super racecourse was to be built in Read and Simonstone. Councillor Hill confirmed that he would be making representations to the Government to call for a change in the law to protect residents from the damage that speculative development could cause and hoped that the Council would lend its support where possible. The Leader thanked Councillor Hill for his comments and noted that such speculative development could indeed cause a non statutory blight on people's property in the area affected. However, he observed it was difficult to see how legislation could reasonably prevent the effects of such speculation. He agreed that the Council would look closely at any proposals that were brought forward and consider its position in the light of such proposals.

(i) Community Committee – 3 November 2009

Councillor John Hill asked if the Chairman of Committee could clarify whether there were circumstances where recyclable waste was placed with non recyclable domestic waste in a refuse collection vehicle that was destined for a landfill site. The Chairman, Councillor Robert Thompson, thanked Councillor Hill for his question and confirmed that there were two occasions which might arise when material from blue recycling bins would be mixed with non recyclable waste in the back of a refuse collection vehicle. The first was where an operative had assessed that the contents of recycling were contaminated with non recyclable waste. Under those conditions, the standing instruction to staff was to consider the contents of such a bin to be non recyclable.

The second was where the recycle compartment in a collection vehicle was full, but the residual waste compartment was not. In this case, if the residual waste of the vehicle was nearly full a decision may be taken to empty the load before returning to the round. However, if the residual waste compartment was only part full, a decision may be taken to continue to collect waste until the vehicle had a full load. Any such decision would taken into account the operational and environmental implications of the alternatives available.

In addition, Councillor Thompson noted that a third situation may arise if a temporary vehicle had been acquired to be used in the event of a breakdown of one of the Council's vehicles. In such circumstances it was unlikely that the Council would be able to source a split bodied vehicle at short notice and so in those circumstances up to a day's work may be collected in a single compartment vehicle.

Councillor Thompson took the opportunity to remind Council that its recycling performance was currently around 40% and improving.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

(ii) Planning and Development Committee – 5 November 2009

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

(iii) Personnel Committee – 11 November 2009

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

(iv) Health and Housing Committee – 12 November 2009

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

(v) Licensing Committee – 17 November 2009

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

(vi) Parish Council Liaison Committee – 19 November 2009

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

(vii) Policy and Finance Committee – 25 November 2009

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

(viii) Accounts and Audit Committee – 25 November 2009

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

(ix) Planning and Development Committee – 26 November 2009

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

(x) Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 5 December 2009

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

The meeting closed at 6.40pm.

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact Marshal Scott (414400).

151209
MS/JS