

Minutes of Meeting of the Council

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 6 March 2012 starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor S Hore (Chairman)

Councillors:

P Ainsworth	S Knox
J E Alcock	G Mirfin
R Bennett	R Moores
S Bibby	R Newmark
I Brown (left at 7.24pm)	E M H Ranson
S Brunskill	L Rimmer
S Carefoot	M Robinson
P Dowson	J Rogerson
R J Elms	I Sayers
J B Hill	G Scott
T Hill	R E Sherras
B Hilton	D Taylor
K Hind	M Thomas
S A Hirst	R J Thompson
J Holgate	N C Walsh
K Horkin	J White
A M Knox	

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Community Services, Director of Resources, Head of HR, Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

747 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors R Hargreaves, C Ross, D T Smith and A Yearling.

748 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

749 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chief Executive confirmed that there were two items of public participation: firstly the submission of a petition from Clitheroe Residents Action Group (CRAG) and then contributions from two members of the public.

The Mayor invited a representative of CRAG, Mr Steve Rush to present the petition. Mr Rush presented a petition of 1095 signatures. The subject of the petition was that the residents requested that 'the Core Strategy on housing reflect the location and distribution of the borough of Ribble Valley population as it currently is. Whilst we recognise the need for future housing in the borough of Ribble Valley, we request that the housing needs of the borough should represent the same proportion as population distribution. Therefore, as the town

of Clitheroe currently constitutes 25% of the total borough of Ribble Valley population, the proposed new developments within this town should also equate to 25% of the total requirement, thus ensuring the fair and equitable approach to future housing needs’.

The Deputy Leader, Councillor S Hirst, thanked Mr Rush and members of the public for the petition. He outlined the consultation process that had taken place on the Core Strategy to date and confirmed that the Leader continued to lobby at the highest levels for changes to the government’s policy. Councillor Hirst proposed that Council ask the Planning and Development Committee to consider the proposal put forward in the petition when forming the Council’s Preferred Option consultation document. The proposal was seconded by Councillor EMH Ranson.

Members discussed the matter.

The Leader of the opposition, Councillor A Knox, proposed an amendment to the original proposal ie that the words ‘to provide a fair distribution of housing boroughwide’ be added to the end of the proposal.

The amendment was then debated and a vote taken. The amendment was lost. Members then voted on the original recommendation.

RESOLVED: That the Council support the ongoing work of the Planning and Development Committee in developing the Council’s Core Strategy and ask that the Planning and Development Committee consider the proposal put forward in the petition submitted by Clitheroe Residents Action Group when forming the Council’s Preferred Option consultation document.

Moving to the next item of public participation the Mayor invited Mr Paul Wasdell to submit his question. Mr Wasdell asked for clarification on the government’s requirements in respect of the Core Strategy. The Leader of the Council, Councillor EMH Ranson, thanked Mr Wasdell for his question and confirmed that the Council was required to produce a Core Strategy that proposed a number of houses to be built in the borough over the next 20 years, and that could be justified to the Planning Inspectorate. He also reassured Mr Wasdell that the Council took very seriously the views of residents and would continue to formulate a proposal that retained the best features of the borough but supported the housing needs of future generations.

Next, the Mayor invited Mr Graham Claydon of Clitheroe Civic Society, to present his question. Mr Claydon highlighted a range of factors to be considered in relation to the Core Strategy document, and specifically asked how many houses would be built on the Primrose Village site and would they count against the total number being proposed. In addition, Mr Claydon also asked how many houses that had already been built or were in the process of being built, would also count against the total number. The Leader of the Council, Councillor EMH Ranson, thanked Mr Claydon for his question and confirmed that many of the issues raised would be considered as the Council finalised the Core Strategy. In relation to the specific question relating to the Primrose Village site, he could confirm that the site had net planning approval for 162 dwellings and a further 8

on the Primrose Lodge site. All those would count against the housing requirements. Any houses in the borough with a valid planning permission since 1 April 2008 would also be included, including those under construction, those that had been built, and those completed from permissions from before 1 April 2008 that were still considered 'live' would also be included. He reported that the most recent monitoring report in October had identified a total of 694 buildings that had planning permission or were under construction. In addition, from 1 April 2008, 300 dwellings had been counted as complete. That gave a total of 994 dwellings. In addition, planning applications that were subject to a formal legal agreement that had not been signed, were not included, as they did not have formal planning permission. The Council monitored such applications to ensure that their potential contribution to supply was identified. The number in that category currently stood at 347.

Finally, Councillor EMH Ranson confirmed that he was due to meet with Nigel Evans MP and the Secretary for Local Government, Eric Pickles, in the forthcoming week to discuss issues around the Core Strategy for the borough.

In a supplementary question, Mr Claydon asked how many Councillors there were on Planning and Development Committee and how many represented Clitheroe. The Leader responded that there were 14 Councillors on Planning and Development Committee and that all Members represented all areas of the borough.

At the end of public participation, the Mayor thanked the members of the public for their contribution and invited them to stay for the remainder of the meeting. A short 5 minutes recess was taken whilst members of the public left the Gallery.

Councillor Brown left the meeting at 7.24pm.

750 COUNCIL MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 20 December 2011 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

751 MAYORAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor reported on his engagements since the Christmas period. He had visited a number of commercial operations in the last period including new businesses that had set up within the borough. He had also attended the annual dinner at Clitheroe Chamber of Trade. Earlier in the month, he had helped launch the Sport Relief Mile to co-host with Sainsburys, a fun run at Clitheroe Castle on 25 March 2012. The Mayor had also attended one of the Council's healthy walks at Stocks Reservoir and Gisburn Forest and encouraged Members to participate and see the work that was done with residents. In February, he had launched the Warmer Homes Healthy People project, which had been very successful. The Mayor had also attended a number of church services and had met the Bishop of Blackburn and the Bishop of Bradford. Finally, the Mayor highlighted once again the talent amongst young people in the Ribble Valley and reported on his attendance at the finals of the GRAB contest for schools in the borough that had taken place at The Grand.

752 BUDGET CONSULTATION WITH NON-DOMESTIC RATEPAYERS

Consideration was given to the written report of the Director of Resources referring to a meeting which had taken place with representatives of non-domestic ratepayers on the Council's budget proposals. The meeting had been attended by Mr Atherton of Whalley Chamber of Trade and Mr Ian Lloyd of Clitheroe Chamber of Trade. Members received the report.

753 REVENUE BUDGET 2012/2013

Consideration was given to the written report of the Director of Resources concerning the budget for 2012/2013 and the setting of the different amounts of Council Tax for different parts of the Council's area where special items applied (Parish Precepts).

Enclosed with the report was the budget summary for the financial year 2012/2013 which contained details of revenue and capital requirements. Approval of the budget proposals was contained in the report and were proposed by Councillor EMH Ranson and seconded by Councillor S Hirst.

Councillor Ranson explained how savings of £645,000 had been found. This was mainly from restructuring the way the Council delivered its services. He thanked the Budget Working Group and the staff involved in preparing the budget, which was probably one of the most difficult for many years.

He was pleased to report that the Council would freeze its Council Tax for the third year in succession.

Members then briefly discussed the budget proposals.

RESOLVED: That the Council

1. approve the following submitted by the Policy and Finance committee and included in the summary budget book:
 - a) the revised revenue estimates for 2011/2012 and the revenue estimates for 2012/2013;
 - b) the revised capital programme for 2011/2012 and the capital programme for 2012/2015.
2. approve the prudential indicators, borrowing limits and MRP policy statement as set out in Annex 1 of the report;
3. note that under delegated powers in accordance with Section 84 of the Local Government Finance Act 2003, the Council had determined the following amounts for 2012/2013, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended), as its Council Tax base for the year.

- a) 22,434 being the amount of its Council Tax base for the whole district [item T in the formula in Section 31(B) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the 'Act')]; and
- b)

Parish Area	Tax base
Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley	432
Balderstone	205
Bashall Eaves, Great Mitton & Little Mitton	197
Billington & Langho	2,167
Bolton by Bowland, Gisburn Forest & Sawley	484
Bowland Forest (High)	61
Bowland Forest (Low)	77
Bowland with Leagram	82
Chatburn	398
Chipping	491
Clayton le Dale	523
Clitheroe	5,158
Dinckley	41
Downham	55
Dutton	104
Gisburn	207
Grindleton	364
Horton	43
Hothersall	71
Longridge	2,756
Mearley	7
Mellor	1,030
Newsholme	20
Newton	144
Osbaldeston	105
Paythorne	43
Pendleton	107
Ramsgreave	280
Read	565
Ribchester	668
Rimington & Middop	223
Sabden	514

Parish Area	Tax base
Salesbury	176
Simonstone	499
Slaidburn & Easington	152
Thornley with Wheatley	160
Twiston	36
Waddington	453
West Bradford	361
Whalley	1,471
Wilpshire	997
Wiswell	464
Worston	43
	22,434

being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 6 of the regulations, as the amounts of its council tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

4. Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2012/13 (excluding Parish precepts) is £3,156,239.
5. Calculate the following amounts for 2012/13, in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
 - (a) £25,976,258 Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
 - (b) £22,448,204 Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
 - (c) £3,528,054 Being the amount by which the aggregate at 5(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 5(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
 - (d) £157.26 Being the amount at 5(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T 3(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).

- (e) £371,815 Being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
- (f) £140.69 Being the amount at 5(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 5(e) above by Item T (3(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.
- (g) Aggregate of the basic amount of council tax for Ribble Valley Borough Council and Parish precept for Band D properties:

Parts of the Council's area	£
Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley	151.69
Balderstone	147.03
Bashall Eaves, Great Mitton & Little Mitton	146.27
Billington & Langho	148.28
Bolton by Bowland, Gisburn Forest & Sawley	167.55
Bowland Forest Higher	176.36
Bowland Forest Lower	156.27
Bowland with Leagram	148.01
Chatburn	166.03
Chipping	155.96
Clayton le Dale	144.51
Clitheroe	159.76
Dutton	145.50
Gisburn	160.01
Grindleton	161.29
Hothersall	151.25
Longridge	162.59
Mellor	155.25
Newton	158.05
Osbaldeston	147.83
Pendleton	154.71
Ramsgreave	146.76
Read	154.85
Ribchester	152.28
Rimington & Middop	158.63

Parts of the Council's area	£
Sabden	169.09
Salesbury	167.96
Simonstone	155.52
Slaidburn & Easington	152.20
Thornley with Wheatley	150.07
Waddington	167.18
West Bradford	157.03
Whalley	162.16
Wilpshire	154.73
Wiswell	152.54
All other parts of the Council's area	140.69

Being the amount given by adding to the amount at 5(f) above to the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount contained in 3(b), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

- (h) Aggregate of the basic amount of council tax for Ribbles Valley Borough Council and Parish precept for Band D properties by valuation band:

	VALUATION BANDS							
	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley	101.12	117.99	134.84	151.69	185.39	219.11	252.81	303.38
Balderstone	98.02	114.36	130.70	147.03	179.70	212.38	245.05	294.06
Bashall Eaves, Great Mitton & Little Mitton	97.51	113.77	130.02	146.27	178.77	211.28	243.78	292.54
Billington & Langho	98.85	115.33	131.81	148.28	181.23	214.18	247.13	296.56
Bolton by Bowland, Gisburn Forest & Sawley	111.70	130.32	148.94	167.55	204.78	242.02	279.25	335.10
Bowland Forest Higher	117.57	137.17	156.77	176.36	215.55	254.74	293.93	352.72
Bowland Forest Lower	104.18	121.55	138.91	156.27	190.99	225.72	260.45	312.54
Bowland with Leagram	98.67	115.12	131.57	148.01	180.90	213.79	246.68	296.02
Chatburn	110.68	129.14	147.58	166.03	202.92	239.82	276.71	332.06
Chipping	103.97	121.31	138.63	155.96	190.61	225.28	259.93	311.92
Clayton le Dale	96.34	112.40	128.46	144.51	176.62	208.74	240.85	289.02
Clitheroe	106.50	124.26	142.01	159.76	195.26	230.77	266.26	319.52
Dutton	97.00	113.17	129.34	145.50	177.83	210.17	242.50	291.00

	VALUATION BANDS							
	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
Gisburn	106.67	124.46	142.23	160.01	195.56	231.13	266.68	320.02
Grindleton	107.52	125.45	143.37	161.29	197.13	232.98	268.81	322.58
Hothersall	100.83	117.64	134.45	151.25	184.86	218.47	252.08	302.50
Longridge	108.39	126.46	144.53	162.59	198.72	234.85	270.98	325.18
Mellor	103.50	120.75	138.00	155.25	189.75	224.25	258.75	310.50
Newton	105.36	122.93	140.49	158.05	193.17	228.30	263.41	316.10
Osbaldeston	98.55	114.98	131.41	147.83	180.68	213.53	246.38	295.66
Pendleton	103.14	120.33	137.52	154.71	189.09	223.47	257.85	309.42
Ramsgreave	97.84	114.15	130.46	146.76	179.37	211.99	244.60	293.52
Read	103.23	120.44	137.65	154.85	189.26	223.67	258.08	309.70
Ribchester	101.52	118.44	135.36	152.28	186.12	219.96	253.80	304.56
Rimington & Middop	105.75	123.38	141.01	158.63	193.88	229.13	264.38	317.26
Sabden	112.72	131.52	150.30	169.09	206.66	244.24	281.81	338.18
Salesbury	111.97	130.64	149.30	167.96	205.28	242.61	279.93	335.92
Simonstone	103.68	120.96	138.24	155.52	190.08	224.64	259.20	311.04
Slaidburn & Easington	101.46	118.38	135.29	152.20	186.02	219.85	253.66	304.40
Thornley with Wheatley	100.04	116.73	133.40	150.07	183.41	216.77	250.11	300.14
Waddington	111.45	130.03	148.61	167.18	204.33	241.48	278.63	334.36
West Bradford	104.68	122.14	139.58	157.03	191.92	226.82	261.71	314.06
Whalley	108.10	126.13	144.14	162.16	198.19	234.23	270.26	324.32
Wilpshire	103.15	120.35	137.54	154.73	189.11	223.50	257.88	309.46
Wiswell	101.69	118.65	135.59	152.54	186.43	220.34	254.23	305.08
All other parts of the Council's area	93.79	109.43	125.06	140.69	171.95	203.22	234.48	281.38

being the amounts given by multiplying (as appropriate) the amounts at 5(f) or 5(g) by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

- Note, that for 2012/13 Lancashire County Council has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below.

Valuation Bands							
A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
738.87	862.01	985.16	1,108.30	1,354.59	1,600.88	1,847.17	2,216.60

7. Note, that for 2012/13 Lancashire Police Authority has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below.

Valuation Bands							
A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
99.95	116.61	133.27	149.93	183.25	216.57	249.88	299.86

8. Note, that for 2012/13 Lancashire Combined Fire Authority has stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below.

Valuation Bands							
A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
42.43	49.51	56.58	63.65	77.79	91.94	106.08	127.30

9. Having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 5(h), 6, 7 and 8 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Act, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of council tax for 2012/13 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

	VALUATION BANDS							
	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley	982.37	1,146.12	1,309.85	1,473.57	1,801.02	2,128.50	2,455.94	2,947.14
Balderstone	979.27	1,142.49	1,305.71	1,468.91	1,795.33	2,121.77	2,448.18	2,937.82
Bashall Eaves, Great Mitton & Little Mitton	978.76	1,141.90	1,305.03	1,468.15	1,794.40	2,120.67	2,446.91	2,936.30
Billington & Langho	980.10	1,143.46	1,306.82	1,470.16	1,796.86	2,123.57	2,450.26	2,940.32
Bolton by Bowland, Gisburn Forest & Sawley	992.95	1,158.45	1,323.95	1,489.43	1,820.41	2,151.41	2,482.38	2,978.86
Bowland Forest (High)	998.82	1,165.30	1,331.78	1,498.24	1,831.18	2,164.13	2,497.06	2,996.48
Bowland Forest (Low)	985.43	1,149.68	1,313.92	1,478.15	1,806.62	2,135.11	2,463.58	2,956.30
Bowland with Leagram	979.92	1,143.25	1,306.58	1,469.89	1,796.53	2,123.18	2,449.81	2,939.78

	VALUATION BANDS							
	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
Chatburn	991.93	1,157.27	1,322.59	1,487.91	1,818.55	2,149.21	2,479.84	2,975.82
Chipping	985.22	1,149.44	1,313.64	1,477.84	1,806.24	2,134.67	2,463.06	2,955.68
Clayton le Dale	977.59	1,140.53	1,303.47	1,466.39	1,792.25	2,118.13	2,443.98	2,932.78
Clitheroe	987.75	1,152.39	1,317.02	1,481.64	1,810.89	2,140.16	2,469.39	2,963.28
Dutton	978.25	1,141.30	1,304.35	1,467.38	1,793.46	2,119.56	2,445.63	2,934.76
Gisburn	987.92	1,152.59	1,317.24	1,481.89	1,811.19	2,140.52	2,469.81	2,963.78
Grindleton	988.77	1,153.58	1,318.38	1,483.17	1,812.76	2,142.37	2,471.94	2,966.34
Hothersall	982.08	1,145.77	1,309.46	1,473.13	1,800.49	2,127.86	2,455.21	2,946.26
Longridge	989.64	1,154.59	1,319.54	1,484.47	1,814.35	2,144.24	2,474.11	2,968.94
Mellor	984.75	1,148.88	1,313.01	1,477.13	1,805.38	2,133.64	2,461.88	2,954.26
Newton	986.61	1,151.06	1,315.50	1,479.93	1,808.80	2,137.69	2,466.54	2,959.86
Osbaldeston	979.80	1,143.11	1,306.42	1,469.71	1,796.31	2,122.92	2,449.51	2,939.42
Pendleton	984.39	1,148.46	1,312.53	1,476.59	1,804.72	2,132.86	2,460.98	2,953.18
Ramsgreave	979.09	1,142.28	1,305.47	1,468.64	1,795.00	2,121.38	2,447.73	2,937.28
Read	984.48	1,148.57	1,312.66	1,476.73	1,804.89	2,133.06	2,461.21	2,953.46
Ribchester	982.77	1,146.57	1,310.37	1,474.16	1,801.75	2,129.35	2,456.93	2,948.32
Rimington & Middop	987.00	1,151.51	1,316.02	1,480.51	1,809.51	2,138.52	2,467.51	2,961.02
Sabden	993.97	1,159.65	1,325.31	1,490.97	1,822.29	2,153.63	2,484.94	2,981.94
Salesbury	993.22	1,158.77	1,324.31	1,489.84	1,820.91	2,152.00	2,483.06	2,979.68
Simonstone	984.93	1,149.09	1,313.25	1,477.40	1,805.71	2,134.03	2,462.33	2,954.80
Slaidburn & Easington	982.71	1,146.51	1,310.30	1,474.08	1,801.65	2,129.24	2,456.79	2,948.16
Thornley with Wheatley	981.29	1,144.86	1,308.41	1,471.95	1,799.04	2,126.16	2,453.24	2,943.90
Waddington	992.70	1,158.16	1,323.62	1,489.06	1,819.96	2,150.87	2,481.76	2,978.12
West Bradford	985.93	1,150.27	1,314.59	1,478.91	1,807.55	2,136.21	2,464.84	2,957.82
Whalley	989.35	1,154.26	1,319.15	1,484.04	1,813.82	2,143.62	2,473.39	2,968.08
Wilpshire	984.40	1,148.48	1,312.55	1,476.61	1,804.74	2,132.89	2,461.01	2,953.22
Wiswell	982.94	1,146.78	1,310.60	1,474.42	1,802.06	2,129.73	2,457.36	2,948.84
All Other Parts of the Council's Area	975.04	1,137.56	1,300.07	1,462.57	1,787.58	2,112.61	2,437.61	2,925.14

754

PAY POLICY STATEMENT

Consideration was given to the written report of the Head of HR asking Council to approve a Pay Policy Statement in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011, and following the recommendation of a special meeting of Personnel Committee on 1 March 2012.

RESOLVED: That the Pay Policy Statement for 2012/2013 be approved and published on the Council's website.

LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader began by saying that Members should be proud of the fiscal management of the Council over many years but that it must not be complacent and as such the Council would continue to review service performance and take hard decisions as required. However, he noted that this did not prevent further development of Council services and increasing the Council's capacity. He confirmed that money had been set aside to invest in land for industrial development so as to build and diversify the industrial base across the borough.

The Leader then went on to highlight some recent positive initiatives, eg over 600 people had signed up for the 'Warm Homes Healthy People' scheme which had been launched with £108,000 from the Department of Health. Trained volunteers had delivered warm home packs along with advice about energy efficiency measures for the home, including free loft and cavity wall insulation.

Another initiative to help residents was the availability of a modest grant to assist people to install renewable energy systems in their homes.

The Leader noted that the economic situation remained difficult and some local firms had had to make redundancies. He confirmed that the Council had worked with the companies, Job Centre Plus and other agencies to offer advice and help for those people affected.

Finally, the Leader was pleased to report on the recent announcement of a new £60m Rural Economy scheme. The scheme was aimed at rural entrepreneurs. Rural businesses could apply for individual grants that could range from £25,000 to £1m each with the objective being to support businesses in increasing competitiveness. Successful applicants could receive up to 40% of the cost of projects and areas where the scheme was expected to offer support including farm competitiveness, agri-food, tourism, forestry and micro enterprises, such as digital and media technology. The Leader was hopeful that budding entrepreneurs and existing businesses across the borough would grasp the opportunity to develop and expand their enterprises as a result of the funding.

LEADER'S QUESTION TIME

The Leader of the opposition, Councillor A Knox, asked how many Ribble Valley residents would be hit by the proposed changes in housing benefit regulations once they were fully implemented in April 2013.

The Leader thanked Councillor Knox for his question and confirmed that there were two major changes on the horizon for housing benefit. The first would be the introduction of a Universal Credit that would see a move away from several different benefits to one unified system and the other major change involved Council Tax benefits which would not form part of Universal Credit but instead would be administered locally by local authorities. The Leader confirmed that the Council still awaited more detail of how the new Council Tax benefit scheme would work before it could begin to design a new scheme. However, he understood the need for the elderly and other vulnerable groups to be protected at their current levels of benefit.

Next Councillor Knox asked if the Council's alcohol licensing policies and procedures were to be amended in respect of the new powers afforded to the Council by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act.

The Leader thanked Councillor Knox for his question and confirmed that at its meeting on 29 November 2011 the Licensing Committee had started to look at how changes made by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 could be used to benefit local residents. A meeting had already been held with representatives of the local pub watch scheme to talk about matters such as the introduction of a late night levy and early morning restriction orders. The Regulations and guidance documents in relation to many of the powers contained within the legislation were not yet available. He confirmed that a further report would be submitted to the Licensing Committee once the way in which the powers were to be implemented had been finalised.

Finally, Councillor Knox asked what plans the Council had in place in case the Schmallenberg virus were to spread to the borough.

The Leader thanked Councillor Knox for his question and noted that the Schmallenberg virus was a similar infection to Blue Tongue. It was an infection spread by biting midges etc and was of significant commercial importance to sheep farmers. However, he confirmed that the Council had no direct responsibility for on farm animal disease and associated control, as such any infection arising in the Ribble Valley would be dealt with by the State Veterinary Service and Trading Standards Animal Welfare Service.

In a supplementary question Councillor Knox referred to the Council's previous proactive approach during the foot and mouth crisis and believed it may be useful to remind people of the work that the Council can do to support communities in such circumstances. Councillor EMH Ranson agreed and suggested that officers update Members on relevant Committees on what actions/plans were in place to put in force preventative action should the virus spread nationally.

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QUESTIONS SUBMITTED UNDER STANDING ORDER 9.1

Councillor R Sherras asked if the Mayor would join him in congratulating the management and players of Rimington Football Club on their tremendous performance in reaching the semi final of the West Yorkshire Football Association Challenge Cup. The Mayor was pleased to add the Council's congratulations to the management and players of Rimington Football Club.

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COMMITTEE MINUTES

(i) Community Committee – 10 January 2011

Councillor JB Hill asked a question under Standing Order 9.1 regarding his concern regarding the government's cuts in support for domestic renewable energy installations and whether the cuts had had an impact on any Council initiatives involving green energy projects.

The Chairman of Community Committee Councillor R Thompson thanked Councillor Hill for his question and confirmed that feeding tariffs had been reduced before the conclusion of a consultation exercise. Councillor Thompson confirmed that the Council remained committed to improving the Council's performance on renewable energy and efficiency despite the cuts.

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

(ii) Planning and Development Committee – 12 January 2012

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

(iii) Personnel Committee – 18 January 2012

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

(iv) Health and Housing Committee – 19 January 2012

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

(v) Policy and Finance Committee – 24 January 2012

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received with the exception of minute 676.

MINUTE 676 AMENDMENTS TO PARTS OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROCEDURE RULES

Members were asked to approve amendments proposed by the Member Working Group who had reviewed reports on amendments to parts of the Council's Constitution and Access to Information Procedure rules submitted by the Council's solicitors.

RESOLVED: That the Council approve the changes outlined in the report to Policy and Finance Committee on 24 January 2012 relating to the constitution, access to information rules and standing orders, together with the amended version of the terms of reference and protocol for the Emergency Committee.

(vi) Parish Council Liaison Committee – 26 January 2012

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

(vii) Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 31 January 2012

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

(viii) Standards Committee – 1 February 2012

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

(ix) Special Planning and Development Committee – 2 February 2012

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

ix) Special Policy and Finance Committee – 7 February 2012

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

xi) Planning and Development Committee – 9 February 2012

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

The meeting closed at 8.31pm.

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