

Minutes of Meeting of the Council

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 16 July 2013, starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor R Sherras (Chairman)

Councillors:

P Ainsworth	R Newmark
S Bibby	E M H Ranson
I Brown	L Rimmer
S Brunskill	M Robinson
S Carefoot	J Rogerson
P Dowson	C Ross
R J Elms	I Sayers
J B Hill	G Scott
T Hill	D T Smith
B Hilton	R Swarbrick
K Hind	D Taylor
S A Hirst	M Thomas
J Holgate	R J Thompson
S Hore	N C Walsh
K Horkin	J White
G Mirfin	A Yearing

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

160 PRAYERS

The Mayor's Chaplain, the Reverend David Isaacs, opened the meeting with prayers.

161 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of J E Alcock, R Hargreaves, A M Knox and S Knox.

162 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

163 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chief Executive, confirmed that there were two items of public participation – one from Mr R Hailwood and one from Mr Duckworth on behalf of Mr Poulson, both of Clitheroe.

The Mayor invited Mr Hailwood to speak. Mr Hailwood asked a question about the process that had been used to reach the decision not to contest the appeal

by the developers, of the land off Waddington Road and Kirkmoor Road in Clitheroe against the Council's decision to refuse planning consent.

The Leader, Councillor S Hirst, thanked Mr Hailwood for his question and summarised the events that had taken place regarding the matter. He confirmed that an application for 345 houses and a 50 place crèche had been considered by Planning and Development Committee in February 2013. Officers had recommended refusal on three grounds:

1. highways;
2. prematurity; and
3. visual amenity.

Shortly prior to the meeting of the Planning and Development Committee, the County Council had withdrawn its objection on highway grounds thereby nullifying that ground for objection. Committee had proceeded to refuse the application on the remaining 2 grounds. The applicant had then appealed to the Secretary of State and a planning inquiry had been due to commence in August. Due to the changing interpretations of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework against which the appeal case would be judged, consideration was given to whether the reasons for refusal could not be defended at the Inquiry.

The Chief Executive had then called a meeting of the Emergency Committee to review the position, at which it was agreed that the Committee ask the Chief Executive to advise the Appellant and the Inspectorate that the Council withdraws from the Waddington Road appeal.

Next Mr Duckworth asked a question on behalf of a Mr Poulson. He asked if, in the current situation whereby the Council no longer had any objection to the Wadow View development, could the Council advise on how future applications in open countryside (Policies G5 and ENV3) would be dealt with.

The Chairman of Planning and Development Committee, Councillor T Hill, thanked Mr Duckworth for his question and confirmed that it was difficult to advise on the suitability of any piece of land for development and that the correct procedure was for any landowner to submit a formal pre-application proposal to the Council in which full and proper consideration of all relevant matters would be considered. In relation to the relevance of Policies G5 and ENV3 which dealt with development proposals outside settlement boundaries, it had now been accepted that the current settlement boundaries were out of date and more weight should be placed on the emerging Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Councillor Hill confirmed that when considering any proposal regard had to be given to the planning balance and it would be necessary to assess the benefits of any scheme against any harmful elements and then consider whether or not the harmful elements of any scheme "significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits". To do this it was necessary to evaluate each scheme on its merits as there may be some unique characteristics associated with a particular site and a particular proposal.

164 COUNCIL MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 23 April 2013, and of the Annual Council held on 14 May 2013, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

165 MAYORAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor reported on events that he had attended since the last meeting. He reported that he had attended over 40 events during that time which had included a range of activities including 9 church services, 5 concerts and 5 award ceremonies for academic and sporting achievements. He had attended the Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace with the Mayoress.

The Mayor went on to highlight two particular events during the period. The first of which was the signing of the Armed Forces Community Covenant on the 24 June. The Covenant committed the Borough to ensuring that members of the armed forces were not disadvantaged by serving their country and it was also very relevant to one of the Mayor's charities the SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors and Air Force Families Association).

The Mayor also highlighted his upcoming charity tandem parachute jump on the 29 July and the Clitheroe Food Festival that was due to take place on 10 August.

166 LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader began by reminding Members of two key priorities for the Council for the forthcoming year, namely finance and planning. He then went on to present an update on matters relating to both those priorities.

The Leader reported that the Government's spending round that had been announced last month had confirmed that there would be a 10% cut to Council funding in 2015/16. This was on top of the 33% reduction that had been experienced since 2010. The 10% cut compared with overall cuts of 5.6% across all other unprotected Government departmental budgets; although the Government had announced that it would provide further support to freeze Council Tax at the equivalent of a 1% increase.

The Leader was pleased to report that it was fortunate that the Council's financial position was significantly better than many of its neighbours. The budget outturn for the last financial year had been better than forecast and it had enabled an increase in balances of £90,000. The Leader praised the work of staff and the Budget Working Group in achieving a healthy budget position.

In respect of planning, the Leader expressed concern about the Planning Inspectorate's interpretation of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly in relation to rural authorities. The Leader stated that it was anticipated that the examination of the Core Strategy would commence in early September. He also confirmed that the Council would continue to lobby

ministers both directly and with the support of the borough's Member of Parliament for a greater appreciation of the impact of National Planning Policy on the Ribble Valley. He had also sought a meeting with both the new Leader of Lancashire County Council and the relevant portfolio holder, to raise concerns about the quality and extent of consultation on planning and particularly highways matters. He had also asked Corporate Management Team to look at the Council's own procedures for the monitoring view of on-going appeals processes, to ensure the close involvement of Planning and Development Committee.

The Leader concluded by mentioning two other initiatives: firstly he congratulated Councillor Jim White on the highly successful signing of the Military Covenant. This was an important recognition by the Council of its duty to ex-service men and women. It also built on a long and growing association with the local Duke of Lancaster's regiment.

The Leader also announced that the Council would be launching its Year of Health and Wellbeing on 31 July and he thanked Councillor Bridget Hilton for her leadership on this important initiative.

The Leader ended by highlighting that Clitheroe Food Festival would be taking place in the town on 10 August and encouraged Members to support the event.

167 LEADER'S QUESTION TIME

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Councillor A Yearling, asked if the Leader could confirm how much the Council had in reserves and balances.

The Leader thanked Councillor Yearling for his question and confirmed that as at 31 March 2013, the General Fund balances stood at £1.7m and earmarked reserves stood at £4.6m. Earmarked reserves were sums set aside for specific purposes.

Next Councillor Yearling asked if the Leader could confirm how much had been spent on planning appeals since May 2011.

The Leader reported that planning appeals had cost the Council £218,000 since April 2011. This figure did not include the cost of internal staff working on appeals which was also significant. In addition, costs were on-going as Barristers, expert witnesses and Council's own officers continued to work on current appeals.

168 COMMITTEE MINUTES

(i) Emergency Committee – 23 April 2013

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

(ii) Community Committee – 21 May 2013

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

(iii) Planning and Development Committee – 23 May 2013

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

(iv) Health and Housing Committee – 30 May 2013

Councillor R Elms asked if the Chairman was aware that the Health Centre at Slaidburn had recently received notification of a severe cut in the funding it was allocated and that there was a strong possibility that it may lead to closure of the practice unless other funding was found. She asked if the Chairman could ensure that Members and officers would provide help, advice and support in the fight to retain such a vital and necessary facility in Slaidburn.

The Chairman, Councillor B Hilton, thanked Councillor Elms for her question. She confirmed that she was aware that the Government were proposing to cut funding for rural doctors and the impact that would have on the Slaidburn Health Centre. The matter had been discussed at the Parish Council Liaison Committee and the Chief Executive had been asked to write in support of the campaign. The Chief Executive had duly written to a number of organisations and to the borough's Member of Parliament setting out the concerns of the community. In response, the Member of Parliament had sent a letter to the Secretary of State for Health explaining the importance of the Slaidburn Practice to the local community.

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

(v) Personnel Committee – 5 June 2013

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

(vi) Policy and Finance Committee – 11 June 2013

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

(vii) Planning and Development Committee – 13 June 2013

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

(viii) Licensing Committee – 18 June 2013

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

(ix) Parish Council Liaison Committee – 20 June 2013

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

(x) Special Planning and Development Committee – 25 June 2013

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

(xi) Accounts and Audit Committee – 26 June 2013

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

The meeting closed at 8.00pm.

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