

Minutes of Meeting of the Special Council

Meeting Date: 30 January 2004 starting at 6.00pm
Present: Councillor A Yearling (Chairman)

Councillors:

P Ainsworth	A M Knox
J E Alcock	J McGowan
D M Bailey	A G Pye
C A Bartrop	J S Reese
D A Berryman	M Robinson
K M Butler	J Rogerson
B M Collis	C E Ross
R M Croasdale	R E Sherras
H G Douglas	D T Smith
F E Dyson	G H Sowter
D C Eccleston	M E Sutcliffe
M Fielding	J S Sutcliffe
J N Flitcroft	D Taylor
J B Hill	J S Taylor
S A Hirst	R J Thompson
J Holgate	N C Walsh
C J Holtom	C Warkman
B Jones	

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Legal Services, Legal and Administration Manager.

707 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors I F Brown, E M H Ranson and C Sterry.

708 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

The Leader of the Council, Councillor C Holtom proposed that Standing Orders 11(10) and 11(11) be suspended for the duration of the meeting to enable Councillors to speak more than once and for more than five minutes. This was seconded by Councillor F Dyson. There was a unanimous vote in favour of the proposal and Standing Orders 11(10) and 11(11) were suspended for the duration of the meeting.

709 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Alan Schofield of Clayton-le-Dale submitted a plan for a modified option '3' of the Boundary Committee's recommendation which proposed that Ribble Valley join with Pendle and Burnley as a Unitary Authority. He also strongly advocated the retention of Ribble Valley as one complete area within those proposals. The Mayor thanked Mr Schofield for his contribution.

DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BOUNDARY COMMITTEE

The Director of Legal Services presented a report of the Working Group which had been established to consider the draft recommendations of the Boundary Committee for Unitary Local Government in Lancashire and to formulate a response to those recommendations. The Working Group had met on the 13 January 2004 and 19 January 2004 to discuss the recommendations and to consider the position of other authorities within Lancashire.

The Director of Legal Services drew attention to section 2 of his report which outlined the background to the Boundary Committee's review of Local Government in Lancashire, and reminded Members that the closing date for submissions to the Boundary Committee was 23 February 2004. He directed Members to Appendices 1 and 2 of his report, which detailed supporting evidence relating to the report and Appendix 4 which documented the meetings of the Special Working Groups which had been convened to formulate Ribble Valley's response. The Director of Legal Services also reminded Members of the legislative issues highlighted under section 6 of his report. He concluded his report by advising Members to submit realistic options.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW – MEETINGS OF EAST LANCASHIRE LEADERS

The Chief Executive reported on discussions which had taken place between Leaders and Chief Executives from the East Lancashire local authorities regarding proposals for Unitary Local Government which had focused on the East Lancashire area. The report outlined a range of possible options for Ribble Valley and a summary of the Leaders' preferred options for East Lancashire Authorities. The Chief Executive noted that in some cases those options still had to be confirmed by the full Councils of the respective authorities.

The Leader, Councillor C Holtom thanked the Working Group and the Chief Executive and Director of Legal Services for their work on the issue. Councillor Holtom then proposed a resolution that:

1.

1.1 This Council wishes to place it on record, on behalf of the Community, that we strongly support the existing arrangements for Local Government in the Ribble Valley.

2

2.1 The Council supports the Boundary Committee's approach of avoiding unnecessary divisions of existing Council areas. We urge that this approach is maintained during Stage 4 of the review.

2.2 The Council opposes any proposals for Unitary Local Government which will result in the division of the existing Ribble Valley Borough Council's area. The whole of the Borough must be included with any new Unitary Authority.

2.3 The Council is particularly concerned that the Boundary Committee should not support any proposals for the expansion of Blackburn with Darwen but would 'cherry pick' Parishes within the Ribble Valley.

3

3.1 The Council do not support any of the three options detailed in the Boundary Committee's recommendations for Unitary Local Government in Lancashire.

3.2 Option 1 – The Unitary County is too large and does not best reflect local community interest and identities. Option 2 – East Lancashire Unitary is too large and is not supported by any of the East Lancashire Councils. Option 3 – which includes the proposed Blackburn with Darwen, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley Unitary Council will not in any way reflect the needs of the rural communities and market towns within the Ribble Valley who will be severely disadvantaged.

3.3 All three options bring about a serious reduction in the level of the democratic representation in the communities we serve.

4

4.1 The Council, therefore urges the Boundary Committee to put the following two options forward as their final recommendations:

- i) The Council restate their support for an enhanced Ribble Valley, creating a rural/semi-rural Unitary Local Authority.
- ii) To create a new Unitary Local Authority of Ribble Valley, Pendle, Burnley and Rossendale and a new Unitary Local Authority of Blackburn with Darwen and Hyndburn within East Lancashire.

5

5.1 The Council confirms the decision of the Working Group to contribute to the cost of employing consultants to formulate a case for a Ribble Valley, Pendle, Burnley and Rossendale Unitary Council.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor J B Hill.

Councillor S Sutcliffe proposed the following amendment to the resolution:

1.

1.1 This Council wishes to place it on record, on behalf of the Community, that we strongly support the existing arrangements for Local Government in the Ribble Valley.

2

- 2.1 The Council supports the Boundary Committee's approach of avoiding unnecessary divisions of existing Council areas. We urge that this approach is maintained during Stage 4 of the review.
- 2.2 The Council opposes any proposals for Unitary Local Government which will result in the division of the existing Ribble Valley Borough Council's area. The whole of the Borough must be included with any new Unitary Authority.
- 2.3 The Council is particularly concerned that the Boundary Committee should not support any proposals for the expansion of Blackburn with Darwen but would 'cherry pick' Parishes within the Ribble Valley.

3

- 3.1 The Council, therefore urges the Boundary Committee to put the following two options forward as their final recommendations:
 - i) To create a Unitary County Authority covering the whole of Lancashire.
 - ii) To create a new Unitary Local Authority of Ribble Valley, Pendle, Burnley and Rossendale and a new Unitary Local Authority of Blackburn with Darwen and Hyndburn within East Lancashire.

4

- 4.1 The Council confirms the decision of the Working Group to contribute to the cost of employing consultants to formulate a case for a Ribble Valley, Pendle, Burnley and Rossendale Unitary Council.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor G Sowter. The amendment was debated at length by those present. There were some concerns raised that the original resolution included a proposal which had been previously discounted by the Boundary Committee ie an enhanced Ribble Valley option. There was also much debate on the feasibility of a Unitary County Authority. Members were also mindful of their responsibility to reflect the views of the residents of Ribble Valley in any recommendations. At the end of the debate on the amendment, a vote was taken and the amendment was lost by 23 votes to 8.

The meeting then voted on the original resolution. A vote was taken and the motion was carried by 22 votes to 9.

RESOLVED: That

1.

- 1.1 This Council wishes to place it on record, on behalf of the Community, that we strongly support the existing arrangements for Local Government in the Ribble Valley.

2

- 2.1 The Council supports the Boundary Committee's approach of avoiding unnecessary divisions of existing Council areas. We urge that this approach is maintained during Stage 4 of the review.
- 2.2 The Council opposes any proposals for unitary Local Government which will result in the division of the existing Ribble Valley Borough Council's area. The whole of the Borough must be included with any new Unitary Authority.
- 2.3 The Council is particularly concerned that the Boundary Committee should not support any proposals for the expansion of Blackburn with Darwen but would 'cherry pick' Parishes within the Ribble Valley.

3

- 3.1 The Council do not support any of the three options detailed in the Boundary Committee's recommendations for unitary Local Government in Lancashire.
- 3.2 Option 1 – The Unitary County is too large and does not best reflect local community interest and identities. Option 2 – East Lancashire Unitary is too large and is not supported by any of the East Lancashire Councils. Option 3 – which includes the proposed Blackburn with Darwen, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley Unitary Council will not in any way reflect the needs of the rural communities and market towns within the Ribble Valley who will be severely disadvantaged.
- 3.3 All three options bring about a serious reduction in the level of the democratic representation in the communities we serve.

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- 4.1 The Council, therefore urges the Boundary Committee to put the following two options forward as their final recommendations:
 - i) The Council restate their support for an enhanced Ribble Valley, creating a rural/semi-rural Unitary Local Authority.
 - ii) To create a new Unitary Local Authority of Ribble Valley, Pendle, Burnley and Rossendale and a new Unitary Local Authority of Blackburn with Darwen and Hyndburn within East Lancashire.

5

- 5.1 The Council confirms the decision of the Working Group to contribute to the cost of employing consultants to formulate a case for a Ribble Valley, Pendle, Burnley and Rossendale Unitary Council.

The meeting closed at 7.19pm.

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact David Morris (414400).
MS/EL 300104