

COUNCIL

HELD: Wednesday, 13 December 2023

Start: 7.30 pm

Finish: 8.15 pm

PRESENT:

Councillors:

T Aldridge	M Anderson
R Bailey	A Blundell
P Burnside	C Coughlan
V Cummins	T Devine
G Dowling	I Eccles
J Fillis	A Fowler
T De Freitas	N Furey
Y Gagen	J Gordon
N Hennessy (In the Chair)	P Hennessy
P Hesketh	P Hogan
J Howard	K Juckes
S Lawton	K Lloyd
Mrs J Marshall	R Molloy
G Owen	M Parlour
S Patel	E Pope
Marsh-Pritchard	J Rear
I Rigby	N Pryce-Roberts
Webster	D West
D Westley	D Whittington
J Witter	A Yates

Officers:

Jacqui Sinnott-Lacey, Chief Operating Officer
Chris Twomey, Corporate Director of Housing, Transformation & Resources
James Pierce, Head of Finance, Procurement and Commercial Services Section 151 Officer
Kathryn Sephton, Head of Environmental Services
Paul Charlson, Head of Planning & Regulatory Services
Alan Leicester, Head of Housing Services
Kay Lovelady, Head of Legal & Democratic Services
Jacky Denning, Democratic Services Manager
Thomas Lynan, Electoral Services Manager

In the absence of the Mayor & Deputy Mayor, Councillor Nikki Hennessy was appointed Chairman for the meeting.

49 **PRAYERS**

The Mayor's Chaplain for the evening, Father Godric, led Members and officers in prayer.

50 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Daniels, Fennell, Finch, Nixon and Mrs Westley.

51 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following declarations were received:

1. Councillors Blundell, de Freitas, Gordon, Howard, Mrs Marshall, Gaynar Owen, Pope, Webster, Whittington and Witter declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to item 10 ' Revised Capital Programme' in view of their membership of a Parish Council.
2. Councillors Aldridge, Bailey, Fillis, Pope, N Hennessy, Rear and D Westley declared a non pecuniary interest in relation to item 10 ' Revised Capital Programme', as Members of Lancashire County Council, as did Councillors Coughlan, Cummins and Gagen as an employee of Lancashire County Council.

52 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Alderman and Ordinary Council meetings held on 18 October 2023 be received as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

53 **ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE MAYOR AND/OR THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER**

The Mayor announced that agenda item 15(c) 'WASPI Motion' had been withdrawn.

54 **TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.2**

The following Question had been received and circulated prior to the meeting:

**All Member Briefing – New Political Governance Arrangements
Question from Councillor David Whittington**

“At October Council it was agreed that an all member briefing would be arranged on the new political governance arrangements agreed at that Council meeting, with the briefing being led by a suitable independent person. Can the Leader please confirm when this briefing will take place & the name of the person who will present the briefing?”

The Member was advised that the response would be provided following the meeting.

55 **MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the undermentioned meetings of the Committees shown.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the undermentioned meetings and any

recommendations contained in them, be approved:

- A. Polling Districts and Polling Places Review Committee -
Wednesday, 11 October and Tuesday, 14 November 2023
- B. Audit & Governance Committee - Tuesday, 24 October 2023
- C. Planning Committee - Thursday 23 November 2023

56 **PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH EMPLOYMENT RELATED APPEALS
AGAINST DISMISSAL OR DEMOTION IN ALL APPLICABLE POLICIES**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing & Resources, as contained on pages 23 to 40 of the Book of Reports, which sought approval of a revision to the appeal arrangements for employment-related appeals matters.

RESOLVED: That the revised appeal process as detailed in the attached Appendix (i) be approved, published on the Council's website, and amended in the Constitution.

57 **Q2 GRA REVENUE MONITORING**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Finance, Procurement & Commercial Services, as contained on pages 41 to 48 of the Book of Reports, which provided a summary of the General Revenue Account (GRA) position for the 2023/24 financial year at quarter 2.

Members were advised that the minutes of Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet had been circulated.

RESOLVED: That the 2023/24 GRA position be noted.

58 **Q2 GRA CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Finance, Procurement & Commercial Services, as contained on pages 49 to 70 of the Book of Reports, which sought to agree a Revised General Revenue Account (GRA) Capital Programme for 2023/24 and provided an update on progress of capital schemes.

Members were advised that the Minutes of Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet had been circulated.

RESOLVED: A. That the revised Capital Programme, including budget adjustments and re-profiling contained within Appendix A and B to the report, be approved, subject to the Portfolio Holder for Finance considering further the removal from re-profiling 'Litter Bin Policy £17,000'.

- B. That progress against the Revised Capital Programme at the mid-year point be noted.

59 **Q2 TREASURY MANAGEMENT**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Finance, Procurement & Commercial Services, as contained on pages 71 to 82 of the Book of Reports, which detailed the Treasury Management operations for the first half of 2023/24 and reported on the Prudential Indicators, where available.

Members were advised that the Minutes of Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet had been circulated.

- RESOLVED:
- A. That the Treasury Management activity and Prudential Indicator performance for the first quarter of 2023/24 be noted.
 - B. That the changes to the Prudential Indicators highlighted in section 9.3 of the report, be approved.

60 **Q2 HRA REVENUE & CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Finance, Procurement & Commercial Services, as contained on pages 83 to 96 of the Book of Reports, which provided a summary of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Housing capital programme positions for the 2023/24 financial year.

Members were advised that the Minutes of Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) and Cabinet had been circulated.

- RESOLVED:
- A. That the 2023/24 HRA and Housing capital programme positions be noted.
 - B. That the virements set out in tables 5.3 and 7.1 of the report, be approved.
 - C. That expenditure and funding slippage in table 7.1 of the report, be approved.

61 **TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS 2024/25**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing & Resources, as contained on pages 97 to 100 of the Book of Reports, which sought approval of the timetable of meetings for the Municipal Year 2024/25.

RESOLVED: That the timetable of the meetings for the 2024/25 Municipal Year, attached as an appendix to the report, be approved.

62 **EXECUTIVE DECISIONS - SPECIAL URGENCY**

Consideration was given to the report of the Corporate Director of Transformation, Housing & Resources, as contained on pages 101 to 102 of the Book of Reports, which advised that, for the period 1 December 2022 to 30 November 2023, there were no decisions taken under Access to Information Procedure Rule 16 (Special Urgency).

RESOLVED: That it be noted that Access to Information Rule 16 (Special Urgency) was not exercised during the period 1 December 2022 to 30 November 2023.

63 **MOTIONS**

The following Motions were considered at the request of the Members indicated:

64 **DIVERSE COUNCILS DECLARATION - MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR GARETH DOWLING ON BEHALF OF THE LABOUR GROUP**

The following Motion included on the agenda by Councillor Gareth Dowling, was moved and seconded:

"This Council commits to being a Diverse Council. We agree to:

1. Provide a clear public commitment to improving diversity in democracy.
2. Demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all, promoting the highest standards of behaviour and conduct.
3. Set out a local Diverse Council Action Plan ahead of the next local elections.
Including:

- Appoint Diversity Ambassadors for each political group on the council to work with each other and local party associations to encourage recruitment of candidates from under-represented groups.
 - Encourage and enable people from under-represented groups to stand for office through the provision of activities such as mentoring and shadowing programmes and information and learning events for people interested in standing as official candidates.
 - Proactive engagement and involvement with local community groups and partner organisations supporting and representing under-represented groups
 - Ensure that all members and candidates complete a candidates' and councillors' survey distributed at election time.
 - Set ambitious targets for candidates from under-represented groups at the next local elections
4. Work towards the standards for member support and development as set out in the LGA Councillor Development Charter and/or Charter Plus.
 5. Demonstrate a commitment to a duty of care for councillors by:
 - providing access to counselling services for all councillors having regard for the safety and wellbeing of councillors whenever they are performing their

- role as councillors.
- taking a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment of members including through social networks.
6. Provide flexibility in council business by:
- regularly reviewing and staggering meeting times
 - encouraging and supporting remote attendance at meetings
 - agreeing recess periods to support councillors with caring or work commitments.
7. Ensure that all members take up the allowances and salaries to which they are entitled, particularly any reimbursement for costs of care, so that all members receive fair remuneration for their work and that the role of member is not limited to those who can afford it.
8. Ensure that the council adopts a parental leave policy setting out members' entitlement to maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave and relevant allowances.
9. Ensure that councillors from under-represented groups are represented whenever possible in high profile, high influence roles.

During the debate the Mover and Seconder of the Motion incorporated the following words in paragraph 7 "Ensure that all members **feel they are able to** take up the allowances and salaries to which they are entitled," with the agreement of the meeting and advised that the Motion would be considered by the Member Development Commission.

A vote was taken, the Motion was CARRIED.

RESOLVED: That this Council commits to being a Diverse Council. We agree to:

- A. Provide a clear public commitment to improving diversity in democracy.
- B. Demonstrate an open and welcoming culture to all, promoting the highest standards of behaviour and conduct.
- C. Set out a local Diverse Council Action Plan ahead of the next local elections. Including:
 - (i) Appoint Diversity Ambassadors for each political group on the council to work with each other and local party associations to encourage recruitment of candidates from under-represented groups.
 - (ii) Encourage and enable people from under-represented groups to stand for office through the provision of activities such as mentoring and shadowing programmes and information and learning events for people interested in standing as official candidates.
 - (iii) Proactive engagement and involvement with local community groups and partner organisations supporting and representing under-represented groups
 - (iv) Ensure that all members and candidates complete a

- candidates' and councillors' survey distributed at election time.
- (v) Set ambitious targets for candidates from under-represented groups at the next local elections
- D. Work towards the standards for member support and development as set out in the LGA Councillor Development Charter and/or Charter Plus.
 - E. Demonstrate a commitment to a duty of care for councillors by:
 - (i) providing access to counselling services for all councillors having regard for the safety and wellbeing of councillors whenever they are performing their role as councillors.
 - (ii) taking a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment of members including through social networks.
 - F. Provide flexibility in council business by:
 - (i) regularly reviewing and staggering meeting times
 - (ii) encouraging and supporting remote attendance at meetings
 - (iii) agreeing recess periods to support councillors with caring or work commitments.
 - G. Ensure that all members feel they are able to take up the allowances and salaries to which they are entitled, particularly any reimbursement for costs of care, so that all members receive fair remuneration for their work and that the role of member is not limited to those who can afford it.
 - H. Ensure that the council adopts a parental leave policy setting out members' entitlement to maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave and relevant allowances.
 - I. Ensure that councillors from under-represented groups are represented whenever possible in high profile, high influence roles.

65

ADOPT THE CHARTER FOR FAMILIES BEREAVED THROUGH PUBLIC TRAGEDY - MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR ANN FENNEL ON BEHALF OF THE LABOUR GROUP

The following Motion included on the agenda by Councillor Ann Fennell, was moved and seconded:

"The Charter for Families Bereaved through Public Tragedy was written by the former Bishop of Liverpool to ensure the suffering endured by families bereaved following the 1989 Hillsborough disaster is not repeated after future disastrous events.

Liverpool City is one of our great neighbours, we have had many families directly and indirectly affected by the Hillsborough Tragedy itself. I believe West Lancashire Borough Council should stand shoulder to shoulder with all bereaved families who have suffered loss and that we ensure that West Lancashire Borough Council do not

make the same mistakes in the aftermath of any future disasters.

West Lancashire Borough council therefore resolves to

Adopt The Charter for Families Bereaved Through Public Tragedy

In adopting this charter, West Lancashire Borough Council commit to ensuring that West Lancashire Borough Council learns the lessons of the Hillsborough disaster and its aftermath, so that the perspective of the bereaved families is not lost. We commit to West Lancashire Borough Council becoming an organisation which strives to:

1. In the event of a public tragedy, activate its emergency plan and deploy its resources to rescue victims, to support the bereaved and to protect the vulnerable.
2. Place the public interest above our own reputation.
3. Approach forms of public scrutiny – including public inquiries and inquests – with candour, in an open, honest and transparent way, making full disclosure of relevant documents, material and facts. Our objective is to assist the search for the truth. We accept that we should learn from the findings of external scrutiny and from past mistakes.
4. Avoid seeking to defend the indefensible or to dismiss or disparage those who may have suffered where we have fallen short.
5. Ensure all members of staff treat members of the public and each other with mutual respect and with courtesy. Where we fall short, we should apologise straightforwardly and genuinely.
6. Recognise that we are accountable and open to challenge. We will ensure that processes are in place to allow the public to hold us to account for the work we do and for the way in which we do it. We do not knowingly mislead the public or the media."

A vote was taken, the Motion was CARRIED.

RESOLVED: That West Lancashire Borough Council adopts 'The Charter for Families Bereaved Through Public Tragedy' as set out above.

66

WASPI (WOMEN AGAINST STATE PENSION INEQUALITY) - MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR MELISSA PARLOUR ON BEHALF OF THE LABOUR GROUP

This item was withdrawn.

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THE MAYOR