

MINUTES OF COUNCIL

MEETING DATE Tuesday, 24 November 2015

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Marion Lowe (Mayor), Councillor Doreen Dickinson (Deputy Mayor) and Councillors Eric Bell, Julia Berry, Martin Boardman, Alistair Bradley, Charlie Bromilow, Terry Brown, Henry Counce, Paul Clark, Jean Cronshaw, Alan Cullens, John Dalton, David Dickinson, Graham Dunn, Robert Finnamore, Christopher France, Gordon France, Margaret France, Anthony Gee, Danny Gee, Tom Gray, Mark Jarnell, Hasina Khan, Paul Leadbetter, Margaret Lees, Roy Lees, Adrian Lowe, Matthew Lynch, June Molyneaux, Greg Morgan, Alistair Morwood, Mick Muncaster, Steve Murfitt, Mark Perks, Debra Platt, Joyce Snape, Kim Snape, Ralph Snape, Richard Toon, John Walker, Paul Walmsley, Alan Whittaker and Peter Wilson

OFFICERS: Gary Hall (Chief Executive), Lesley-Ann Fenton (Director of Customer and Advice Services), Jamie Carson (Director of Public Protection, Streetscene and Community), Chris Moister (Head of Governance and Property Services) and Carol Russell (Democratic Services Manager)

APOLOGIES: Councillors Aaron Beaver, Keith Iddon and Beverley Murray

The Mayor welcomed Councillor Tommy Gray to the Council meeting as the newly elected member for Euxton North and also welcomed Councillor Mark Perks back after a period of absence due to ill health.

15.C.282 Minutes of the meeting Tuesday, 22 September 2015 of Council

Councillor Paul Leadbetter raised an issue on the resolution on minute 15.C.280 and queried why work to create a car park on land on the corner of High St and Cleveland St had commenced when as yet, no pre-let agreements for the Market Walk extension had been signed. Councillor Alistair Bradley, Leader of the Council responded that it had been funded from the town centre budget to create more car parking before Christmas.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the last meeting of the Council held on 22 September 2015 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Mayor.

15.C.283 Declarations of Any Interests

There were no declarations of interest received.

15.C.284 Results of the Euxton North By - Election

The Mayor reported formally that Councillor Tommy Gray had been elected to serve Euxton North ward at the recent by-election on 29 October 2015.

15.C.285 Mayoral Announcements

The Mayor thanked everyone who had attended the Remembrance Sunday services at St Laurence Church and the Cenotaph and also gave an update on her forthcoming fundraising events which included Christmas by Candlelight at Astley Hall on 11 December; a Christmas Soul Night on 18 December; a Charity Burns Supper on 23 January; and her Charity Ball on 5 February.

She thanked those who had supported her fundraising to date, particularly Councillor Khan for her sponsored fast during Ramadan.

15.C.286 Public Questions

There were no public questions for consideration.

15.C.287 Corporate Strategy 2015/16 to 2017/18

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources presented the proposed Corporate Strategy for the Council for 2015/16 to 2017/18.

The report provided a summary of the performance of the Strategy in 2014/15 which had been strong, with the progression of a number of major projects. This was backed up by the results of a residents' satisfaction survey.

The Corporate Strategy in its current form had been in place for 3 years and a refresh had been undertaken to ensure it remained relevant, particularly in terms of public services reform and working in partnership with local communities and other public service providers. The refreshed strategy had 16 projects with a focus on delivering some large scale ambitious schemes.

Councillor Alistair Bradley referred to the number of projects delivered over the last 3 years, particularly in the light of cuts in local government funding.

Alternative Corporate Strategy

Councillor Paul Leadbetter then presented the Conservative Group's proposed Corporate Strategy alongside background information about how the vision, priorities and objectives had been developed. The Strategy would be delivered through a series of projects. The Corporate Strategy overview was contained in an Appendix to the report along with the more detailed project overviews.

Members debated both sets of proposals.

Councillor Paul Leadbetter proposed and Councillor Greg Morgan seconded the Alternative Corporate Strategy. On being put to the vote, it was **LOST**.

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources proposed, Alistair Bradley, Leader of the Council seconded and it was **RESOLVED - That the Corporate Strategy 2015/16 to 2017/18 as submitted by the Executive Member for Resources, be approved.**

15.C.288 Future Governance Models: Final Report

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Leader of the Council presented the final report resulting from extensive work undertaken into Future Governance models for the Council and public services in Chorley.

The Future Governance Viability Working Group had met regularly over the last 12 months tasked with considering and developing the evidence base and options for alternative ways of working with other partners and under different governance models. The Group had overseen the development of the Final Report which was appended to the covering report.

In summary, the Final Report set out the challenges facing Chorley in the coming years, including

- an increasing and ageing population
- pockets of deprivation in the borough
- the economic footprint of the borough spanning different administrative areas
- a changing legislative and policy context

The Final Report put forward the following “purpose” for the Council:

“Chorley Council will provide leadership and services which protect vulnerable people and are focussed on preventing the need for a reliance on more expensive service provision. The Council will:

- ***deliver high quality services that meet the needs of its residents and communities***
- ***work with its partners to integrate services regardless of existing organisational boundaries***
- ***focus on preventative services, and services which support communities and individuals to remain independent and self-sufficient***
- ***promote Chorley as a great place to live, work and do business”***

Following the compilation of a detailed evidence base, including the financial viability of a unitary authority; the Commission on the Future of Public Services in Chorley; and the Chorley Conversation; the Working Group considered five high level governance options:

- Status quo
- Traditional unitary authority
- Integrated district council
- Integrated district council across wider geography; and
- Integrated public services.

The conclusion was that the integrated public services model was the most likely governance model to achieve the objectives and vision of the Council in public service reform. In terms of deliverability however, at this stage it was proposed that the integrated district model should be adopted - whilst still retaining the longer term vision of fully integrated public services.

The report further proposed service design principles the Council should adopt across all services it provides or commissions. The next steps towards a new governance model included the development of a transformation strategy for the organisation which would be considered by Executive Cabinet in January. This would look at organisational change to meet the challenges ahead, including different roles for both staff and councillors, working to new organisation and business models and making greater use of technology and information management.

In debate, there was general support for the recommendations presented by the Leader of the Council. Members discussed how local government would be forced to undergo radical change in the future and that there was a need to work together to be ahead of that change.

Questions were raised regarding the partners who were willing to work with the Council and how this fit with the work of the Public Services Reform Board. Work was underway with a number of health partners, the fire service and the voluntary sector. The police and LCC were focussing on managing major funding cuts to their services at this stage. There was further discussion about the vision for education services. The Leader considered that elements may sit most appropriately at a countywide level, different services working most effectively at different levels of public services.

Councillor Mark Perks spoke against the proposed changes, confirming that he was speaking as an individual rather than as a member of his political group. In particular, he opposed the Council's involvement in the provision of a community wellbeing service.

Councillor Paul Leadbetter as the Leader of the Opposition indicated that his group was very supportive of the general direction of the proposals but would consider further proposals as they were developed in the future.

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Leader of the Council proposed, Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources seconded and it was RESOLVED -

- 1. That the Council adopts the clear statement of purpose set out in a *italics above (paragraph 18 of the report).***
- 2. That the Council states a clear ambition to achieve the integrated public services governance model for Chorley, using the integrated district model as a foundation for change.**
- 3. That the Council should adopt the principles set out in paragraph 24 of the report in reshaping the organisation and the development of new services and governance models.**

4. That approval is given to the development of an integrated community wellbeing service for Chorley, as described in the outline business case.
5. That, subject to final Council approval, and once a detailed scheme and service model for the integrated community wellbeing service is developed, the Council agrees:
 - a. To establish a special purpose vehicle jointly between Chorley Council and LCFT to manage and deliver an integrated community wellbeing service;
 - b. To transfer the management and delivery of identified services to the special purpose vehicle;
 - c. To adopt joint management and oversight arrangements for the new service;
 - d. To contract with the new special purpose vehicle for the resourcing, delivery and performance management of services.
6. That work is undertaken to engage with neighbouring areas to explore the development of opportunities for radical public service reform.
7. That the Council should work with partners, including schools, to create a vision for education in the borough.
8. That the Chief Executive be asked to make arrangements for the resourcing of the required work, making use of up to £70,000.

Councillor Perks left the meeting at this point.

15.C.289 Management Structure Review

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources presented a report on the scope and principles of a review of the Council's management structure, prior to informal consultation with staff.

The review was the start of the implementation process for the new governance model for Chorley, ensuring that the Council had a management structure that could accommodate future public services reform.

The review would seek to reduce management costs and create a flatter management structure; promote the adoption of the new service design principles; target resources to priority areas; and group functions with similar characteristics.

Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources proposed, Alistair Bradley, Leader of the Council seconded and it was **RESOLVED - That the commencement of a review of the Council's management structure be approved with the timescales as set out in the report.**

15.C.290 Development of a Combined Authority for Lancashire

The Leader of the Council submitted a report on the development of a Combined Authority for Lancashire, following the findings of a governance review which had been undertaken to establish the effectiveness of current working and the potential benefits of more formalised joint working.

A Combined Authority is a formal legal agreement for collaboration and co-ordination between a number of authorities on transport, regeneration and economic growth as well as skills, housing and employment. These functions were likely to be broadened under new legislation being considered by the Government. Each Council would remain a separate authority, but the Combined Authority would be a formal mechanism to work in partnership more effectively.

In the last 12 months, authorities in Lancashire – the County Council, two unitary councils and the district councils, have been working to consider the best way forward and had completed a governance review which was appended to the report and which included a number of ambitions for Lancashire as follows:

- *Prosperous Lancashire – a Lancashire that is recognised as a destination of choice, to invest in, do business in, live or visit;*
- *Connected Lancashire – digital and transport connectivity to promote inclusive growth;*
- *Skilled Lancashire – a skilled workforce to meet the demands of employers and future business growth;*
- *Better Homes for Lancashire – better living standards for residents with good quality homes and a wide housing offer;*
- *Public services working together for Lancashire – integrated public services at the heart of local communities given everyone the opportunity for a healthier life.*

The conclusion of the governance review, agreed by Lancashire Leaders in September 2015, was that a Combined Authority would offer the strongest governance model to attract freedoms and flexibilities from the Government and would enable a more cohesive approach across Lancashire. Councillor Bradley was currently chairing a Working Group of Lancashire Leaders to progress their work towards the development of a shadow authority. The draft scheme for the establishment of the Combined Authority included details of membership; voting arrangements; decision making processes; scrutiny; finance and the potential powers and functions the body would have.

The report also referred to the devolution deal which some Combined Authorities had negotiated to gain additional and greater powers and devolved funding for their area. A devolution deal would need the agreement of the constituent authorities.

The Leader reported that during December and January, all Lancashire authorities would be considering a similar report on a proposed Combined Authority for Lancashire, at their Council meetings and if there was general support as expected, a public consultation exercise would take place in January/February with stakeholders, residents, businesses and community groups to seek their views. The outcome of the consultation would then see those authorities in support of a Combined Authority

submitting a joint proposal to the Secretary of State for consideration. This may also include devolution proposals.

In debating this item, there was full, cross party support from Members for the Council's participation in a Combined Authority for Lancashire.

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Leader of the Council proposed, Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources seconded and it was RESOLVED - that

- 1. The contents of the report be noted.**
- 2. The contents of the Lancashire Governance Review and recommendations therein be noted.**
- 3. The contents of the draft Scheme for a Combined Authority be noted.**
- 4. The Council agrees to take part in the public consultation in January/February which will seek views on the formation of a Combined Authority for Lancashire.**
- 5. The Council agrees to consider the feedback from the public consultation and note that following this, those authorities who wish to form a Lancashire Combined Authority will submit a proposal to the Secretary of State for consideration.**
- 6. The Council agrees in principle to becoming a constituent member of the Combined Authority for Lancashire.**
- 7. Delegated authority be given to Executive Cabinet to give due consideration to the public consultation and commit the Council to becoming a constituent member of a Lancashire Combined Authority, subject to the final sign-off of full Council.**

15.C.291 Council Appointments

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Leader of the Council moved and Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources seconded and it was **RESOLVED – That Councillor Gray be appointed to General Purposes Committee; and also to the Licensing and Public Safety Committee to replace Councillor Margaret Lees.**

15.C.292 Electoral Review of Lancashire

Members considered a report on the draft recommendations issued by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) on new electoral arrangements for Lancashire County Council. The recommendations were subject to consultation, with a closing date of 11 January 2016.

At a meeting in July 2015, Chorley Council had agreed to put forward a submission evidencing the need for 8 County Electoral divisions for Chorley, based on the population growth forecast for Chorley and the number of divisions which were already currently outside the 10% variance in electorate. Two potential proposals for the revised configuration of the 8 divisions had been agreed, both of which had received the support of all political parties on the Council.

The draft recommendations from the LGBCE under consideration, proposed 8 County Electoral Divisions for Chorley and were in line with one of the divisional configurations put forward by the Council, with the exception of a boundary change in Chorley Central and Chorley South which affected around 600 voters.

Councillor Paul Leadbetter indicated that his group has some concerns about the draft recommendations but would put forward their views separately.

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Executive Leader proposed and Councillor Peter Wilson seconded and it was **RESOLVED – that the Council supports the draft recommendation of the LGBCE, as set out in their submission issued 17 November 2015.**

15.C.293 Review of Members Allowances Scheme 2015/16

Members considered a report of the Independent Remuneration Panel which, in line with the requirements of the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, required the Members Allowances scheme to be reviewed at least every 4 years.

The Panel had met to undertake the review and had considered comparative information from other local authorities in Lancashire; the results of a survey of Chorley Councillors regarding the current scheme; and an update on previous issues relating to travel which had been considered by the Panel.

The Panel Members were of the view that no changes were needed to the current scheme as it continued to compare favourably with other schemes in Lancashire and Members generally were satisfied with the level of allowances paid.

Councillor Paul Leadbetter proposed and Councillor Greg Morgan seconded an amendment to the recommendations which excluded the proposal to give Members the option of submitting either paper forms or using the electronic claims system.

On being put to the vote the amendment was **LOST**

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Executive Leader proposed and Councillor Peter Wilson seconded and it was **RESOLVED**

That the Member Allowances Scheme continue in its current form, to include the following administrative changes:

- **Any applications for additional travel allowances as a result of a complex illness or disability be determined by the Chief Executive of the Council; and**
- **Councillors to have the option to claim travel expenses either using the paper based option or the electronic system used by staff.**

15.C.294 Notice of Motion given in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10

Councillor Graham Dunn submitted the following motion, seconded by Councillor Paul Walmsley.

“There is a growing demand and insufficient provision of social housing for rent in the Chorley Borough area, and the ‘Right to Buy’ scheme as proposed by the government in its current format presents difficulties to Chorley Borough Council in its efforts to see an increase in the supply of new appropriate housing on a replacement basis when a dwelling is sold. Therefore Chorley Council proposes the following:

- *That the government follows the leadership of the Scottish Government in reversing the Right to Buy scheme for council houses.*
- *That the proposal to extend the Right to Buy scheme to housing associations be abolished*
- *That the proposal to manage welfare spending by controlling social rents be abolished as this goes against the move in 2012 to relinquish central government control and to allow councils and other local housing providers more freedom to manage their housing portfolios.*
- *That the Chief Executive of Chorley Council sends this resolution to the Secretary and Shadow Secretary of state for DCLG and the Housing and Shadow Housing Minister, the 2 MP’s whose constituencies cover our Borough, and the various Housing Associations which operate within our Borough boundary. “*

Following debate, it was **RESOLVED – that the motion be supported.**

15.C.295 Fleet Street Extra Care Scheme

The Mayor advised Members of the Council that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

Mayor

Date