

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Minutes of | Council |
| Meeting Date | Tuesday, 28 September 2021 |
| Members present: | Councillor Steve Holgate (Mayor), Councillor Julia Berry (Deputy Mayor) and Councillors Sarah Ainsworth, Aaron Beaver, Martin Boardman, Alistair Bradley, Sam Chapman, Mark Clifford, Alan Cullens, Magda Cullens, John Dalton, Karen Derbyshire, Gordon France, Margaret France, Peter Gabbott, Harold Heaton, Alex Hilton, Terry Howarth, Keith Iddon, Hasina Khan, Samir Khan, Roy Lees, Adrian Lowe, June Molyneaux, Alistair Morwood, Beverley Murray, James Nevett, Alan Platt, Debra Platt, Aidy Riggott, Kim Snape, William Simmance, Christine Turner, John Walker, Jenny Whiffen, Alan Whittaker and Peter Wilson |
| Officers: | Gary Hall (Chief Executive), Asim Khan (Director of Customer and Digital), Mark Lester (Director of Commercial), Louise Mattinson (Director of Finance), Chris Moister (Director of Governance), Jennifer Mullin (Director of Communities), Jonathan Noad (Director of Planning and Development) and Ruth Rimmington (Democratic Services Team Leader) |
| Apologies: | Councillors Danny Gee, Tom Gray, Zara Khan, Matthew Lynch and Jean Sherwood |

21.C.66 Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 20 July 2021 of Council

Decision (unanimous) that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 20 July 2021 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Mayor.

As a point of information, the Executive Leader, Councillor Alistair Bradley explained that a fire had occurred at the Tatton Gardens site. It was believed that the cause had been children, but there will be no costs to the council as a result of the incident and there is not expected to be any impact on the delivery date. The contractor is responsible for safety on the site and additional measures have been put in place since the incident.

It was noted that some of the information requested by Councillor Aidy Riggott at the previous meeting relating to Buckshaw Parkway and empty properties had not yet been provided. This would be chased up following the meeting.

21.C.67 Declarations of Any Interests

There were no declarations of interests received.

21.C.68 Mayoral Announcements

The Mayor thanked all those who had attended his Civic Dinner and Civic Sunday.

The Mayor expressed his pride in welcoming the G7 Speakers Conference guests to Chorley.

21.C.69 Public Questions

There were no public questions for consideration.

21.C.70 Executive Cabinet

Members considered a general report of the meeting of Executive Cabinet held on 16 September 2021.

Councillor Harold Heaton queried the figures for the performance relating to 'Processing of major planning applications'. The target is 80% and the performance is 56%. This is due to a staffing shortage and support required for the recent planning inquiries. The actual number of applications was low, which had the impact of skewing the figure slightly. It was noted that Councillor Bradley had presented the report at Executive Cabinet, rather than Councillor Wilson, as stated in the report.

The Executive Leader, Councillor Alistair Bradley proposed and the Deputy Leader, Councillor Peter Wilson seconded the **Decision that the report be noted.**

21.C.71 Capital Budget Monitoring Report 1

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Peter Wilson, presented the report of the Chief Finance Officer which sets out the overall financial position of the Council in respect of the capital programme as at 31 July 2021, highlighting key issues and explaining key variances over the first four months of the year, and provides an overview of various elements of the Council's Balance Sheet as at 31 July 2021.

In response to a query Councillor Peter Wilson advised that the debt position of the council, as at 31 July 2021 compared with 31 July 2020 is:

| | | |
|----------------------|----------|----------|
| Short term borrowing | £1.904m | £1.875m |
| Long term borrowing | £59.758m | £61.662m |
| Total Borrowing | £61.662m | £63.537m |

It was noted that this is the maximum amount that may be required. There are times when the council can utilise its own reserves rather than borrowing.

Councillor Sam Chapman queried the debt position currently from when the Labour administration took control. It was noted that times have changed, in terms of different funding streams from the government having reduced. There is a need for the council to generate income for itself and a desire to invest in improvements to the town centre and to create jobs.

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Martin Boardman, noted the outstanding amount with the Public Works Board was at the figure noted as the total figure of £61,000m.

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Peter Wilson proposed and the Executive Leader, Councillor Alistair Bradley seconded the (by majority) **Decision To approve the following variation to the programme (which has been included in Appendix B) £150,000 budget to be funded from reserves for capital works to upgrade and unify the network to include access points for improved Wi-Fi coverage.**

21.C.72 Governance Committee

Members considered a general report of the meeting of the Governance Committee held on 28 July 2021.

The Chair of the Governance Committee, Councillor Debra Platt proposed and the Vice-Chair, Councillor Hasina Khan seconded the **Decision that the report be noted.**

21.C.73 Update on Temporary Civic Square Proposals

The Executive Leader, Councillor Alistair Bradley, presented the report of the Director of Commercial which sets out an overview of the temporary civic square proposals. This issue had been discussed at a recent working group at which this update report had been requested to enable a wider debate.

Buzz Bingo had surrendered their lease to the council due to the impact Covid had on their business in July 2020. As work had begun on site clearance in October 2020 the civic square development was progressed through the Future High Street Fund bidding process but the bid was not successful. Chorley was put in tier 2 for the Levelling Up fund and that round of funding has yet to be released.

Of the options considered the use of the site as a temporary car park is considered the best, until government funding is forthcoming for further development.

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Martin Boardman, queried the temporary nature of the car park and expressed a desire to see the site in use as a car park for at least a year. It was acknowledged it is not possible to give any guarantees on when the site may be developed. Future consideration of the car parking strategy for Chorley was suggested.

Councillor Bradley undertook to share the 'levelling up' bid from the council to the government with Councillor Aidy Riggott at an appropriate time and noted it has not yet been submitted. There is a desire to work across Lancashire, but there is no certainty at the current time.

The Executive Leader, Councillor Alistair Bradley proposed and the Deputy Leader, Councillor Peter Wilson seconded the **Decision that the report be noted.**

21.C.74 Questions Asked under Council Procedure Rule 8

A question was received from the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Martin Boardman for Councillor Peter Wilson (Executive Member Resources).

“On behalf of the Conservation Group of Councillors we would like to thank our MP and Speaker Sir Lindsay Hoyle for hosting the G7 Speakers Conference here in Chorley.

It was a pleasure to see speakers and guests from the wider international community enjoying many of the sights, experiences, products and people that our diverse Lancashire town has to offer.

The event appeared to be a great success showcasing the very best of Chorley and Lancashire.

We would however like to ask Cllr Wilson to clarify if any costs and expenses were borne by Chorley Council; what these costs are and if the Speakers Office is to reimburse the council for these in due course?”

Councillor Wilson explained that as he works for the MP the Executive Leader, Councillor Bradley, had taken the decisions in relation to this matter.

The final costs are not yet known, but related to Streetscene and Astley Hall staff overtime (£5,000), signage which are reusable (£3,500) and compensation for businesses not able to trade (£10,000).

Councillor Wilson noted the excellent local, national and international press coverage during the event and the positive impact this will have. There is also ‘A Taste of Parliament’ exhibition ongoing at the Coach House which can only be seen at Parliament usually. He expressed his view that the benefits of the event outweighed the costs. The final costs will be shared when available.

Councillor Boardman requested that a tourism guide be published as soon as possible to capitalise on the positive publicity. Councillor Bradley advised that a town guide is in production, and an extended guide in conjunction with town centre traders. Other events to raise Chorley’s profile are planned for later in the year, including a business and a climate event.

21.C.75 To consider the Notices of Motion given in accordance with Council procedure Rule 10

No Notices of Motion were submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.

21.C.76 Exclusion of the Public and Press

The Executive Leader, Councillor Alistair Bradley proposed and the Deputy Leader, Councillor Peter Wilson seconded the (unanimous) **Decision that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 3 of Part 1 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act.**

21.C.77Refugee Resettlement Programme

The Executive Member (Resources) presented the confidential report of the Director of Commercial. The report seeks approval for the resources required to progress with further acquisitions for the Refugee Resettlement Programme and ongoing tenancy management and approval to sign the UK Resettlement Scheme grant agreements developed by Lancashire County Council (LCC).

Following a request from the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Martin Boardman, Councillor Wilson undertook to provide a briefing note to members regarding Housing Revenue Account.

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Peter Wilson proposed, the Executive Member (Homes and Housing, Councillor Peter Gabbott seconded, the (unanimous) **Decision**

- 1. To approve the following resources required to progress with further acquisitions for the Refugee Resettlement Programme and ongoing tenancy management:**
 - a. Increase the capital programme by £2.2m for 11 properties to be funded through prudential borrowing**
 - b. Increase the revenue budget by £35,000 for increased property maintenance and staffing**
- 2. To approve the signing of the Grant Agreements with (LCC) for:**
 - a. Single repatriation**
 - b. 10 refugee families**

Mayor

Date