

EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, 22 February 2011

Present: Councillor Ken Ball (Mayor), Councillor Pat Case (Deputy Mayor), Councillors Eric Bell, Julia Berry, Alistair Bradley, Terry Brown, Henry Caunce, Alan Cullens, Magda Cullens, Mike Devaney, David Dickinson, Doreen Dickinson, Dennis Edgerley, Christopher France, Anthony Gee, Peter Goldsworthy, Marie Gray, Alison Hansford, Pat Haughton, Harold Heaton, Keith Iddon, Kevin Joyce, Hasina Khan, Roy Lees, Adrian Lowe, Marion Lowe, Peter Malpas, June Molyneaux, Greg Morgan, Simon Moulton, Mick Muncaster, Beverley Murray, Mark Perks, Alan Platt, Debra Platt, Geoffrey Russell, Rosie Russell, Edward Smith, Joyce Snape, Ralph Snape, John Walker, Stella Walsh and Peter Wilson

11.C.156 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Nora Ball, Judith Boothman, Marie Gray and Laura Lennox.

11.C.157 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest by any Members in relation to matters under consideration at the meeting.

11.C.158 IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULE 1.7 (C) A REQUEST WAS RECEIVED FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

The Mayor read out the request that had been received from five Members of the Labour Group to hold an extraordinary meeting to consider the following:

“that we the undersigned request that in light of a recent announcement regarding the decision to freeze Chorley BC Council Tax, a Special Meeting of the Full Council be convened at the earliest possible opportunity.

This to allow all relevant information to be supplied to all councillors, about how this is to be achieved, in particular with regard to the ongoing established and formal budget setting process.”

Councillor Alistair Bradley, Leader of the Labour Group requested an explanation from the Leader of the Council on his announcement to the press that there would be no increase in Council tax, prior to a debate and a decision on the matter at the Special Council meeting on 1 March 2011. He further requested that the Leader of the Council explain why he had not undertaken proper consultation with Members on the budget and therefore had not, in his opinion, adhered to the Constitution.

Councillor Peter Goldsworthy, Leader of the Council responded that the Conservative Group had not until recently been in a position to clarify the budget position, including for example, support for PCSO's. The Group had worked to meet the budget principles that had been the basis of the consultation which had started in December 2010. These included keeping Council tax low and safeguarding frontline services. The Conservative Group had concluded that they would deliver a budget based on those principles and would join the 150 Councils nationally and freeze Council tax. This was the intention at the meeting on 1 March 2011. Budget information had now been issued and the debate on those issues would take place at that meeting. This, in his opinion, fully complied with the requirements of the Council's Constitution.

During the debate, Councillors questioned the lateness of consultation on the budget, the lack of opportunity to ask questions and the lack of detail around the numbers of PCSOs and the reduction in the Mayoral budget. There was a request for a full breakdown of the scope and costs of the Mayoralty.

Issues were raised about the limitations of the Executive Cabinet system in keeping Members informed and feeling involved and able to represent the public's views. In response to allegations about the potential breach of the Council's Constitution in the budget setting process, the Mayor advised that a Standards complaint remained the appropriate route for any such concerns.

The full debate on the Council's budget for 2011/2012 would take place on Tuesday, 1 March 2011.

Mayor