

**COUNCIL FORUM**  
**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2008**

**PRESENT** – *The Mayor Councillor Maureen McGarvey (in the Chair), Councillors Akhtar H, Akhtar P, Ali, Barrett, Barry, Bateson, Blackburn, Browne, Cottam, Davies, Doherty, Entwistle, Foster D, Foster K, Gordon, Hardman, Harling, Hirst, Hollern, Hollings, Huggill, Humphrys, Hussain F, Hussain I, Jan-Virmani, Johnson, Michael, Johnson Mike, Kay, Khan M., Lee, Lorgat, Mahmood, Maxfield, McFall, Melia, Milburn, Mulla, Oldfield, Patel A, Patel M, Pearson, Rehman, Rigby C, Rigby J, Shorrocks, Sidat, Slater Jacqueline, Slater John, Slater Julie, Smith D, Smith J., Surve, Talbot, Tapp, Thayne, Waghat, Walsh, Williams J S, Williams S J and Wright.*

**RESOLUTIONS**

**84    Notice Convening the Meeting**

The Chief Executive read the notice convening the meeting.

**85    Apologies for Absence**

The Chief Executive noted apologies for absence from Councillors Kevin Conner, Zamir Khan and Michael Law-Riding.

**86    Minutes of the Last Meetings**

**RESOLVED –**

1. That the minutes of the Meeting of the Council Forum held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2008 be approved.
2. That the minutes of Finance Council held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2008 be approved.

**87    Declarations Of Interest**

A note from the Director of Legal Services/ Monitoring Officer was submitted in relation to declarations of interests. The Director of Legal Services gave responses to the different matters raised.

Councillors Bateson, Hollings, Lee, Maxfield, McFall, Mulla, Oldfield and Waghat declared a prejudicial interest in the Motion on Pay and Reward (Minute 92 below refers).

Councillor Harling declared a personal interest in the report of the Executive Member for Regeneration (Minute 91 below refers).

Councillors Hirst, Khan and Williams declared a personal interest in the nomination of Deputy Mayor (Minute 95 below refers).

**88 Mayoral Communications**

The Mayor thanked all members and officers who attended the Mayor's Ball. The evening was very enjoyable and over £2000 was raised for the Mayor's Charity.

Since the last meeting the Mayor had the pleasure of attending a presentation at Blackburn Fire Station to pay tribute to the bravery of members of the fire service. The Mayor invited members to join her in praising not only the fire service but the dedication and work of all the emergency services.

The Mayor had received visits from a group of young people visiting from Pakistan and students on an exchange visit from Germany

The Mayor thanked all members for their support and asked that members conducted themselves accordingly during the meeting.

Finally the Mayor thanked all members who would not be returning to the Council after the May election and wished them well for the future.

At this point in the meeting the Mayor invited Councillor Hollern and Councillor Rigby to make presentations to Councillor Jim Blackburn and Councillor Hussain Akhtar in recognition of their dedication and service to the Council and the people of Blackburn and Darwen.

**89 Public Questions**

The Chief Executive reported that there were no public questions at this meeting.

**90 Report of the Chair Policy and Review Committee**

The Chair of the Policy and Review Committee reported on the work of that Committee since the last meeting of Council Forum.

At Council Forum in January 2008 a report seeking authority to undertake a consultation for a Designated Public Places Order to give powers to the Police to regulate drinking in public space across the Borough under the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 was considered. The Council resolved to refer the matter to Overview and Scrutiny for more detailed consideration. The proposal had been considered by the Policy and Resources Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2008. The outcome of the meeting was to agree with the original request seeking authority to undertake a consultation for a Designated Public Places Order to give powers to the Police to regulate drinking in public space across the Borough under the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 and to report the decision back to Council Forum.

**RESOLVED** – That the report and the outcome of the Policy and Resources Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> February be noted.

**91 Reports of Executive Members**

The Executive Members submitted reports on work within their portfolios since the last meeting of the Council Forum. These were considered as follows:

- Leader of the Council
- Leisure and Culture
- Housing and Neighbourhood Services
- Citizens and Consumer Rights
- Children's Services
- Adult Social Care
- Resources
- Regeneration

At the conclusion of the Leaders report several members referred to the dedication and professionalism of George Campling and requested that the Council record its appreciation for his services to the Borough.

**RESOLVED –**

That the reports from the Leader, Executive Members for Leisure and Culture, Housing and Neighbourhood Services, Citizens and Consumer Rights, Children's Services Adult Social Care, Resources and Regeneration be received.

**92 Report of the Standards Committee**

Members received a report on the work undertaken by the Standards Committee since the last meeting of the Council Forum.

**RESOLVED –** That the report be received.

**93 Questions received from Members under Procedure Rule 11**

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Procedure Rule 11.

**92 Motions submitted under Procedure Rule 12**

The Chief Executive reported that three motions had been received

**Partnerships**

The motion received was as follows:

*The Labour Group on the council are committed to open government one in which local residents can ensure full openness and accountability from their local representatives and the partnerships in which the council have a key role.*

*We believe that the public are entitled to full access to the decisions that are being taken on their behalf and we feel that how these partnerships spend public money and the criteria on how they decide to spend that money should be as open and accountable as possible.*

*We therefore deplore the decision of the Coalition and the Primary Care Trust (PCT) to hold the Health Partnership meetings in secret.*

*To hold these meetings in public was a fundamental part of the agreement between both the PCT and the Council and the first and most important step in all our partnerships becoming more open and accountable. It also ensured the public had an opportunity to question either or both organisation on matters relating to the health and care of local residents.*

*We therefore move that:-*

*All partnerships that the Council is a member of, and all future partnerships in which the Council becomes a partner, should operate in an open and accountable way and that the public and press should have access to all meetings.*

*The Council recommends that the Constitution of those partnerships it is already involved with, be re-examined and amended to reflect this openness and accountability. We would also recommend that the public where possible be allowed an opportunity to influence and question these relevant bodies.*

*We also recommend the operation of a two part agenda system similar to that which operates within the Council with regard to those items that would be exempt because of their confidential nature.*

*In addition the Council and all its relevant partners should include in part one of a two part agenda a generalised report of any part two item excluding any exempt information.*

*We further recommend that all public meetings are held at a time and in a place that is easily accessible for the public. The times, venues and agendas for meetings will be advertised in a wide range of public places and offices and the local press.*

Moved by:- Cllr Maureen Bateson  
Seconded by:- Cllr. Dave Hollings

An amendment was made as follows:

*In the first paragraph delete "The Labour Group on the Council are" and substitute "This Council is"*

*In the third Paragraph delete "We therefore... and delete in the fourth "To hold these meetings..."*

*Delete all the paragraphs after "We therefore move that:-" and substitute*

*"The Policy and Review Committee be asked to carry out an investigation into the current constitutions of Partnership Bodies and ,make recommendations on:*

- a) How best the public can be involved in the decision making process?*
- b) Should the Partnership Bodies meet in public?*
- c) How the Partnership Bodies can ensure that all their decision making is accountable and transparent*

Moved by Councillor D Foster  
Seconded by Councillor Lee

29 members voted for the amendment and 30 against. One member abstained. The amendment was lost.

**RESOLVED** – That the motion be carried.

### **Pay and Reward**

The motion received was as follows:

*This Labour Group recognises that the current Pay and Reward policy is having a serious negative impact on Trade Union relationships with Council Management. The acceptance of this policy by Council resulted in letters being sent to all staff outlining their individual position. A sign-up campaign with our staff has resulted in a majority signing to accept the proposals, however reluctantly by some.*

*Many staff have worked for the Council serving the residents of our Borough for many years, going above and beyond their job descriptions and roles to provide as good a service as they could. Staff morale is now at an all time low, even amongst staff who are not classed as losers.*

## **Agenda Item 8**

*Previously, this Council, has always valued the contributions and efforts made by staff throughout the whole Council.*

*This Labour Group reluctantly accepts that changes to the pay line are not going to happen at this very late stage as there are too many difficulties to overcome. We welcome all efforts to mitigate the impact of the proposals on those staff who are facing a cut in their salary, but we remain concerned that too many low paid staff are suffering significant reductions in their pay. We re-emphasise our criticism of the lack of action by the Coalitions executive to tackle the obvious problems caused by their decision.*

*However, we do not accept that the door is closed to improving the offer to staff who are having their pay cut. We call upon the ruling Coalition to accept our proposal to extend pay protection to those staff who are affected badly.*

*As well as the continuing efforts to mitigate the impact of the proposals, this Council agrees to add extended tapered protection to the current Pay & Reward policy, to be spread over a 4 year period starting in 2008/09 (100%, 75%, 50%, 25% of current salary).*

Moved by: Cllr Dave Harling

Seconded by: Cllr Kate Hollern

Following a debate a named vote was requested.

### **Those in favour of the motion**

Councillors H. Akhtar, P. Akhtar, M. Barrett, J. Blackburn, M. Doherty, E. Entwistle, D. Harling, K. Hollern, A. Humphrys, F. Hussain, I. Hussain, Y. Jan-Virmani, Mike Johnson, A. Kay, M. Khan, A. Mahmood, J. Milburn, A. Patel, J. Shorrocks, D. Smith, J. Smith, N. Surve, D. Talbot, D. Walsh, J. Wright.

### **Those against the proposal**

Councillors S Ali, A. Barry, P. Browne, A. Cottam, R Davies, D. Foster, K. Foster, B. Gordon, D. Hardman, J. Hirst, S. Huggill, Michael Johnson, S. Lorgat, A. Melia, M. Patel, D. Pearson, A. Rehman, C. Rigby, J. Rigby, Jacqueline Slater, John Slater, Julie Slater, K. Tapp, C. Thayne, J. Williams, S. Williams and the Mayor.

**RESOLVED** – That the motion be lost.

**Sunnyhurst Post Office**

The motion received was as follows

*This Council deplores the decision of Post Office Limited to close Sunnyhurst Post Office. We request the relevant officers to investigate the feasibility of the Council providing post office services from Sunnyhurst Post Office.*

Proposed: Cllr Dave Smith

Seconded: Cllr Eileen Entwistle

An amendment was made as follows:

*Add the following:*

*The Council also condemns the decision of local MPS to vote for the closure of local post offices*

*Moved by Councillor D Foster*

*Seconded by Councillor Lee*

30 members voted for the amendment and the remainder abstained. The amendment was accepted.

**RESOLVED** – That the motion as amended be carried.

**93 Questions regarding Lancashire Police Authority**

The Chief Executive reported that two questions had been received regarding the Lancashire Police Authority from Councillor Julie Slater.

The questions were as follows

*The Lancashire Police Authorities Annual Report 2006-7 reports on two main objectives.*

*Objective 1 sought to reassure the public, particularly those who are vulnerable by providing high quality, flexible and responsive policing services which gave emphasis to a number of key areas including Anti-Social Behaviour (including alcohol-related)*

*The first question is*

*As Labour has blocked the extra powers, requested by the Police, to confiscate alcohol off youths in the street, what measures are the Police Authority putting in place to tackle youth's anti-social behaviour influenced by alcohol.*

## Agenda Item 8

*Objective 2 sought to reduce and investigate crime, particularly those offences that are of concern to the public again by providing high quality, flexible and responsive policing services which gave emphasis to additional several key areas including Counter-terrorism*

*The second question is*

*Approximately 2 years ago, the Government via the Association of Chief Police Officers (Terrorist and Allied Matters) required all Police Forces to have in place standard tactical deployment options (Operation Rainbow) to counter the terrorist threat. How far has the Lancashire Constabulary gone to develop these options?*

### **Response**

Cllr Doherty the Council's representative on the Police Authority set out the legislative framework concerning the powers available to deal to tackle youth's anti-social behaviour influenced by alcohol.

He also confirmed that all necessary arrangements had been made in accordance with the request made via the Association of Chief Police Officers.

### **94 Change to Council Appointments**

**RESOLVED** – That Councillor Maxfield replace Councillor Johnson as a Lead Member for Leisure and Culture for the remainder of the Municipal Year

### **95 The Mayoralty 2008/09**

The Chief Executive submitted a report inviting Council to make nominations for the Office of Mayor and Deputy Mayor for 2008/09

#### **RESOLVED –**

1. That in line with the usual practice of the Deputy Mayor in the current year serving as Mayor in the following year, Councillor Mohammed Khan be nominated to serve as Mayor in 2008/09.

2. That in line with the rotation of the nomination to the office of the Mayor between the political groups based on proportionality of the Council, the Conservative Group nominates Councillor James Hirst to serve as Deputy Mayor for the year 2008/09.

3. That during the next municipal year the Chief Executive convenes a meeting of Group Leaders to consider future arrangements for the nomination of Mayor on the basis of the existing method.

**96 Provisional Schedule of Meetings 2008/09**

The Chief Executive submitted a report inviting Council to consider a provisional schedule of meetings for 2008/09.

**RESOLVED –**

That consideration of the provisional schedule of meetings for 2008/09 be deferred to a meeting of the Group Leaders and Deputy Leaders

-----

Signed at a meeting of the Council

on the                      day of

(being the next ensuing meeting of the Council by)

MAYOR