

**POLICY COUNCIL**  
**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017**

**PRESENT** – *The Mayor Councillor Rigby C (in the Chair), Councillors; Akhtar P; Ali; Bateson; Brookfield; Casey; Connor; Daley; Davies; Desai; Entwistle; Fazal; Foster D; Foster K; Gee; Groves; Gibson; Gunn; Harling; Humphrys; Hussain F; Hussain S; Jan-Virmani; Kay; Khan M; Khan Z; Khonat; Lee; Liddle; Mahmood A; Mahmood Q; Marrow; McFall; McGurk; Mulla; Murray; Nuttall; Oates; Patel; Pearson; Perkins; Riley; Shorrocks; Sidat; Slater Jo; Slater Ju; Slater N; Smith D, Smith J; Surve; Talbot; Taylor; Vali; Whittle and Wright.*

**RESOLUTIONS**

**28 Notice Convening Meeting**

The Chief Executive read the notice convening the meeting.

**29 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Akhtar H, Hardman, Hollings, Hussain I, Johnson, Maxfield, Rigby J, Slater Ja and Tapp.

**30 Minutes of the Council Forum Meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

**RESOLVED** – That the Minutes of the Council Forum meeting held on the 5<sup>th</sup> October 2017 be agreed as a correct record.

**31 Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were submitted.

**32 Mayoral Communications**

The Mayor thanked the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Pat McFall, for covering a number of engagements for him whilst he was ill and presented her with flowers to mark his gratitude.

The Mayor also made reference to the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the Council of the Chief Executive, Harry Catherall, and referred to some of the achievements during this period, and the Chief Executive expressed his thanks for the acknowledgement.

### **33 Motions submitted under Procedure Rule 12**

The Chief Executive announced that one Notice of Motion had been submitted under Procedure Rule 12 as follows:

*This Council is concerned and disappointed by the Home Secretary's rejection on the 31st October, 2016 of an Inquiry into the policing of events at Orgreave.*

*This Council observes that the Independent Police Commission said in their redacted report released in June 2015 "that there was evidence of excessive violence by police officers, and a false narrative from police exaggerating violence by miners, perjury by officers giving evidence to prosecute the arrested men, and an apparent cover-up of that perjury by senior officers".*

*This Council believes in the light of such statements that the Home Secretary needs to review her decision and ensure that there is a full public inquiry into the events at the Orgreave coking plant on 18th June 1984.*

*This Council notes that 95 miners were arrested and charged with offences, but were all later acquitted amid claims that police at the time had fabricated evidence.*

*The Council will write to the Home Secretary and ask the two MPs representing both of our towns to do the same; to ask that she takes into account the opinion of this Council and accepts that there is widespread public concern about events at Orgreave and calls for her to order an inquiry into them.*

Moved by Councillor Julie Gunn  
Seconded by Councillor Dave Harling

Following debate on the Motion, there then followed a Vote on the Motion.

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

*At this point of the meeting, the Chief Executive advised that in line with the Constitution, the Policy Council would now be held in Committee.*

### **34 Corporate Plan and Priorities to 2020**

A report was submitted which updated Members on the six corporate priorities, the key strategies in place to achieve these priorities and the future policy direction for the Council. The Leader of the Council introduced the report and the Chief Executive presented a video which contained highlights and achievements from the last 12 months.

Policy Council 2015 adopted the current Corporate Plan which set out the Council's aims and ambitions up to 2019. As part of this, Policy Council 2016 agreed the continuation of the six corporate priorities to 2020:

1. Creating more **jobs** and supporting business growth.
2. Improving **housing** quality and building more houses.
3. Improving **health and well-being**.
4. Improving outcomes for our **young people**.
5. Safeguarding the most **vulnerable people**.
6. **Making your money go further**.

Further to this, Policy Council in 2016 also adopted the implementation of four development themes that underpin all the work the local authority undertakes and these were:

- Image and marketing of the Borough.
- Fairness / Equality / Cohesion.
- Partnership working:
  - With businesses and other public sector organisations (to maximise impact of BwD spend)
  - With residents - empowering communities through volunteering and asset based working (more effective use of all our assets, people and places)
  - Other key stakeholders
- Digital First.

As per previous years, robust performance management arrangements continued to be in place to monitor and ensure the delivery of the Corporate Plan.

The performance framework continued to see performance discussed and challenged with Directors and also included a direct challenge from the Leader of the Council to the Executive Members on a six monthly basis.

Appendix One tracked the progress of performance against the Council's strategic objectives for the April 2017 to September 2017 period.

Appendix Two provided exception reports for priorities which are considered to be off track.

There were 108 measures within the Corporate Plan linked to the Council's priority objectives.

Of the 108 measures information for the period was as follows:

- 3% (3 actual) had been forecast as "red" where performance was, or was likely to be off track

- 23% (25 actual) had been forecast “amber” where delivery was on track and currently being managed
- 72% (78 actual) had been forecast “green” or on track
- 2% (2 actual) of the measures a RAG rating was not available

The report also highlighted some of the achievements over the past 12 months, which the Chief Executive had referred to in his presentation/video.

The Council had made significant budget savings since 2010 and whilst the Council was now in a relatively stable period due to strong financial planning, there were still challenges ahead as demand for services continued to increase.

The next 12 months would see all out elections as a result of the new ward boundaries and a reduction in the number of Councillors and Wards. New ward profiles were being developed which would provide Councillors with data sets and intelligence for their own ward areas which could be used to help shape and inform future policy.

In April 2018 it would be the 20th anniversary of Blackburn with Darwen Council becoming a unitary authority. The Council would be taking the opportunity to reflect on achievements and celebrate the various milestones and focus on the highlights from the past two decades. A celebration event in 2018 was being organised and would showcase a variety of projects and events which had made a real difference to communities over the past 20 years.

The report also highlighted the key activity which would take place over the next 12 months.

Environmental and sustainability considerations were fundamental concerns for a number of key service areas and were big policy challenges for both central government and local government. A commitment for 2018 was to develop a new climate change / environmental policy / strategy.

In line with the Council’s previous practice it was suggested the Policy Council agree to the lifting of the `Local Living Wage` from £7.85 per hour to £8.45 per hour, i.e. the Living Wage Foundation rate from 2016/17. It was suggested that Policy Council adopt the previous year’s Living Wage Foundation rates on a recurring basis to reflect the local economy and the Council’s continued intention to support lower paid employees. It was also proposed that the Policy Council commend its approach to supporting a local living wage to all the schools in the Borough whom it is hoped would positively support as they had done in previous years.

**RESOLVED** - That Policy Council:

- Note the content of the report;

- Re-affirm the Council's six corporate priorities and four themes up to 2020;
- Note the overall performance against the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives as illustrated in appendix one;
- Note the remedial action to improve delivery against those priorities which are giving cause for concern, as outlined in appendix two;
- Adopt the Climate Change / Environmental policy statement – with a commitment to develop a policy / strategy in 2018; and
- Agree to increase the Local Living Wage for Council employees from £7.85 to £8.45 per hour from April 2018, commending adoption also by schools and to agree the pattern for future increases as set out in the report.

*At this point of the meeting, the Chief Executive advised that in line with the Constitution, Policy Council would move out of Committee.*

### **35 Governance – Council May 2018**

A report was submitted which asked the Council to determine and approve corporate governance arrangements for the Council to take effect from May 2018.

As a consequence of the Boundary Review and the changes to wards, the numbers of Councillors would be reducing from 64 to 51 in May 2018 and the wards would be reducing from 23 to 17. All 51 `new` Councillors would be elected with all current terms of office ceasing in May 2018.

The structure of the Council would therefore be changing and the new arrangements need to be reflected in the Council's constitution.

To facilitate the timely drafting of the revised constitution the Council was asked to determine, within legislative parameters its plans for the future structure and governance arrangements of the Council post these changes to the size of the decision-making and scrutiny bodies of the Council.

The report presented recommendations for consideration which if adopted required the Council's Constitution to be updated and re-published in May 2018.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- 1 That Council note that the election of a reduced number of 51 Councillors compared to the current 64 councillors, requires a review of the corporate governance structure of the Council and to also notes that the final recommendations on the electoral changes are currently subject to Parliamentary approval;

- 2 The proposed changes to the election cycle as set out in this report be agreed and the Chief Executive authorised to formally request the Secretary of State's approval to defer the elections due in May 2019 and amend the future election cycle;
- 3 The continuation of the Executive arrangements - Leader and Executive Board model as the form of corporate governance (Article 7 – Constitution) be agreed;
- 4 It be recommended that in view of the electoral changes and subject to 3 above, to adopt a reduction in the total number of Executive Board Members from Leader plus 9 to Leader plus 8 Executive Board Members as set out in this report. (The Council notes that a Leader for the Council will be elected at the Annual meeting of the Council in May 2018 who will then confirm the composition and the Executive Member appointments to the Executive Board);
- 5 It be recommended to the Leader that subject to 3 and 4 above, that there should be 7 Executive Members with portfolios, with details to be confirmed at the Annual meeting of the Council in May 2018;
- 6 That from May 2018 there will be 3 Overview and Scrutiny Committees, each Committee as now with 11 members, plus the Call-In Committee as now with 9 members, with the frequency of meetings to be considered at a subsequent meeting of the Council;
- 7 That the current arrangements for the Mayoralty for 2018/19 i.e. the current Deputy Mayor to become Mayor (subject to her re-election) be agreed and request the Annual Council in May 2018 determine the rotation arrangements for 2019/20 onwards;
- 8 It be agreed that reflecting the overall reduction in Council members, to reduce the numbers of members on the Planning & Highways Committee from 15 to 13, Licensing Committee from 13 to 11, Standards Committee to remain at 9 and the Audit & Governance Committee to remain at 6, (noting that proportionality will be reviewed as usual following the elections in May 2018);
- 9 It be noted that there are no proposals to change the arrangements from those currently set out in the Constitution for 'Other Committees of the Council';
- 10 That the changes to Advisory and Consultative Groups as set out in the report be agreed;

- 11 That a report reviewing Council representation on Outside Bodies be prepared and presented to Council Forum for consideration in the New Year;
- 12 That it be recommended from 2018/19 the nomination of 4 councillors to the Health & Wellbeing Board be as follows, Leader (or Deputy Leader) of the Council, Leader (or Deputy Leader) of the main opposition party, Executive member with portfolio responsibility for Adult Social Services & Executive Member with portfolio responsibility for Children's Services – noting that subject to 3 above the Executive Leader will formally confirm the nominations at Annual Council in May 2018;
- 13 Note that decisions relating to the numbers of Councillors and roles within the revised governance will be reported to the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) for consideration;
- 14 That the Chief Executive be delegated powers to make any minor changes to the polling districts affected by the Ward Boundary Review and whenever such needs arise; and
- 15 Subject to 1-14 above authorise the Director of HR, Legal & Corporate Services update the Council Constitution to reflect the new Council governance arrangements to take effect in May 2018 following the election of 51 Councillors on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2018.

### **36 Parliamentary Boundary Review 2018**

Members received an update the on the 2018 Parliamentary Boundary Review being undertaken by the Boundary Commission for the Blackburn Borough Constituency area. On 17<sup>th</sup> October 2017 the Boundary Commission for England (BCE) published proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries as it opened its third and final consultation.

Following a decision by Parliament to reduce the number of constituencies in the UK to 600 from 650, and to ensure that the number of electors in each constituency is within 5% either side of the electoral quota, the BCE had been asked to make independent recommendations about where the boundaries of English Constituencies should be.

The final consultation ended in December with citizens having until 11 December 2017 to have their say. Following this third and final consultation, the Boundary Commissioners would consider all the evidence submitted throughout the process. They would then decide on their final recommendations before submitting them to Parliament in September 2018. The Council was asked to consider expressing its view on the final proposals

noting that if agreed by Parliament, the new constituencies would be in use at the next scheduled General Election in 2022.

**RESOLVED -**

1. That the Boundary Commission for England proposals for Parliamentary boundaries for the Blackburn Borough Constituency Area be noted;
2. Note that the third and final consultation had been running from 17<sup>th</sup> October 2017 and would conclude on 11 December 2017; and
3. That support for the current proposal be confirmed, which remained unchanged from the initial proposal and, that the Chief Executive be authorised to write to the Commission accordingly expressing the Council's view.

**37 Report of the Standards Committee**

Members were advised that in September 2017, the Government published a consultation on updating the Disqualification criteria for Councillors and Mayors. The consultation paper set out the Government's proposals for updating the criteria disqualifying individuals from standing for, or holding office, as a local authority member, directly-elected mayor or member of the London Assembly.

The Government was inviting everyone to comment but particularly had sought the views of prospective and current Councillors amongst others.

The Standards Committee initially considered this consultation at their meeting in October and Members had since advised on their further views.

The Standards Committee's response was set out in the Appendix to the report, with consultation closing on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2017.

**RESOLVED -** That the report be noted.

Signed at a meeting of the Council  
on the                      day of  
(being the next ensuing meeting of the Council) by

MAYOR