

**COUNCIL FORUM MEETING**  
**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

**PRESENT** –*The Mayor Councillor S. Mulla (in the Chair), Councillors Akhtar, Bateson, Brookfield, Browne, Connor, Cottam, Daley, Davies, Desai, Entwistle, Evans, Foster D., Foster K., Gee, Groves, Hardman, Hollern, Hollings, Humphrys, Hussain I., Jan-Virmani, Johnson, Kay, Khan M., Khan Z., Khonat H., Khonat S., Lee, Liddle, Maxfield, McFall, Nuttall, Oldfield, Patel, Pearson D., Pearson J., Rehman, Rigby J., Riley, Shorrocks, Sidat, Slater Jacqueline, Slater John, Smith D., Smith J., Surve, Talbot, Taylor, Thayne, Walsh D., Whalley and Wright.*

**RESOLUTIONS**

**38. Notice Convening Meeting**

The Chief Executive read the notice convening the meeting.

**39. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Harling, Hirst, Hussain S., Hussain F., Mahmood., O’Keeffe, Rigby C., Slater Julie., Solkar, Tapp and Walsh C.

**40. Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2013**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Council Forum meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2013 be approved as a correct record.

**41. Declarations of interest**

No Declarations of Interest were received.

**42. Mayoral Communications**

The Mayor updated Council Forum on a number of engagements he had attended since the last meeting, advising that he and the Mayoresses had attended a number of school assemblies and been welcomed by staff and students at the schools in addition to attending Graduation Ceremonies for Blackburn College. He explained that he had hosted a visit by a member of the Pakistan Government and a reception for retiring Chief Superintendent Bob Eastwood, to whom best wishes of the Council were conveyed.

Council were advised that the Mayor had had the pleasure of visiting York Minster for the Inauguration of the new Bishop of Blackburn and then attended the service in the Cathedral to welcome him to the Diocese of Blackburn.

In conclusion that Mayor reminded Members and officers that there were a number of Remembrance services taking place over the upcoming weekend and asked that as many of as possible attend.

**43. Council Forum**

The Chief Executive advised that no questions from members of the public under Procedure Rule 10 had been received.

**44. To consider motions submitted under Procedure Rule 12**

The Chief Executive advised that one Notice of Motion had been submitted under Procedure Rule 12.

*Blackburn with Darwen Council has the 6th worst male life expectancy and the 11th worst female life expectancy in the country and a major factor in these unacceptable statistics is the excessive consumption of alcohol. It has been calculated that the annual cost to the Borough of excessive consumption is £68million in terms of violent crime, anti-social behaviour and ill health, including 4475 hospital stays last year for alcohol related harm.*

*There is clear evidence that the amount of alcohol consumed is directly related to how easily accessible it is to customers and it is widely accepted that the most effective way to reduce the harm from alcohol is the introduction of a Minimum Unit Price which would only impact on those outlets that sell alcohol products at excessively cheap prices. In doing this, it would support communities and businesses, including local public houses, who are negatively impacted by sales of excessively cheap alcohol.*

*Therefore, this Council resolves that Blackburn with Darwen Council will work with other councils and our partners in the health sector to lobby MPs across Lancashire and the government to introduce a Minimum Unit Price of alcohol set immediately at a level of 50pence per unit, This would have a positive impact on public health in the borough and would assist in reducing the burden on our overstretched NHS and related public services whilst not affecting the vast majority of people who drink sensibly*

Proposed by Councillor Brian Taylor

Seconded by Councillor Phil Riley

Councillor John Pearson moved an amendment to the Motion which was seconded by Councillor Michael Lee.

*Delete the words in the second paragraph commencing "and it is widely accepted.....excessively cheap alcohol"*

*Replace with the words "and therefore a return to controlled drinking hours in all on & off sale retail establishments rather than current all day availability would reduce troublesome alcohol consumption"*

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*Delete the words in the third paragraph "to introduce a Minimum,,,,,,at a level of 50 pence per unit"*

*Replace these words with "to re-introduce controlled drinking hours in all on & off sale retail establishments"*

*Reduced drinking hours by means of reducing consumption at present prices would also assist people on low incomes to still have a moderate intake of alcohol within their existing personal budgets as well as reduce harmful levels of consumption.*

Following some debate a vote was taken on the amendment, and the vote was lost.

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

Speaking on the original motion there followed further debate by Members, after which a vote was taken and the Motion was carried.

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

**45. Site allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (Local Plan Part 2 ) Publication draft**

A report was submitted that recommended that Council approval be given to the publication of the draft Local Plan, to the undertaking of consultations, and to the submission of the Plan to the Secretary of State for public examination.

Having an up-to-date plan in place put the Council in the strongest position to attract and shape high quality development, and to resist development which was of poor quality or not in line with its objectives or favoured locations.

The requirement for an up-to-date plan to be in place was also linked to the Government's wider agenda about housing growth: planning for new house building was seen as a means of promoting prosperity. In line with this agenda, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) required Councils to be able to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing land and a requirements to provide evidence that the first five years' worth of the 15-year target would be delivered to meet identified needs.

Without the new sites identified in the Local Plan, the Borough did not have a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. It would not be considered to have an up to date Development Plan for determining relevant planning applications.

In the absence of a demonstrable five-year housing land supply or an up to date Plan, the NPPF presumed in favour of sustainable development as set

out in Paragraph 14 of the NPPF. This meant the Council risk not being able to influence the location, housing mix or design of new housing developments.

In view of these issues, the only realistic option was to progress the Plan to submission and adoption.

Councillor David Foster moved an amendment which was seconded by Councillor Davies, that:

*At the end of Paragraph (i) add "but remove housing site 16/16."*

Council were advised that this was not a legitimate amendment; as the report was about to enter into a six week consultation.

### **RESOLVED –**

That Council Forum

- i. Approve the publication of and six week consultation on the draft Local Plan Part 2 as required under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (the Regulations);
- ii. That subject to that consultation not raising any new major issues, approval be given to the submission of the draft Plan to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for public examination as required under Regulation 22 of the Regulations; and
- iii. The Director of Regeneration be authorised, in consultation with the Executive Member for Regeneration, to make deletions, and / or minor amendments to the Plan which correct errors or improve the clarity of the document and which do not alter the substance of the Plan, prior to the public consultation or submission.

#### **46. Treasury Management Annual Report 2012 13 and Mid Year Review for 2013-14.**

Members were advised of Treasury Management performance for 2012-13 and the position to date in 2013- 14.

The Council Forum was reminded that the CIPFA Treasury Management code required the Council to approve a Treasury Management Strategy (including various Treasury Management indicators) before the start of each financial year and to consider both the outturn after each year end, and the mid-year position in each current year. The Council had determined to combine the outturn and mid-year review into a single report.

**RESOLVED** – That Council note the Outturn position for 2012-13 and confirm that the current Treasury Management Strategy for 21013-14 remain unchanged.

**47. Policy and Corporate Resources Committee**

The Chair of the Policy and Corporate Resources Committee presented an update report on the work of the Committee and made specific reference to the 30 foot display boards at the back of the Council Chamber which represented the work recently undertaken by the VOICE group.

**RESOLVED** – That the report of the Policy and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

**48. Reports of Executive Members with Portfolios**

Council Forum received and considered reports of the Leader and Executive Members with portfolios. These were considered as follows: The Leader, Resources, Schools and Education, Health and Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Environment, Leisure Culture and Young People, Neighbourhoods Housing and Customer Services and Regeneration,

Members debated Your Call, Road Safety, Foodbank distribution, Overseas Aid, and the Darwen Nightsafe project.

Addressing the Executive Member for Resources report Members raised Duke Street and positive staff impact on change of surroundings and the upgrades to the ICT systems.

In the absence of the Executive Member for Schools and Education Members commented on Darwen Vale Academy plans, the Good Ofsted result for St Thomas Primary School, better scrutiny of schools and the School Staff retirement event.

The Executive Member for Children's Services Commended the VOICE group for the artwork display at the back of the Council Chamber and thanked them for the Power Point presentation called "Fitting In – Improving the lives of Looked After Children": that had been shown in the Dining Room before the Council Forum meeting. He commended that fact that young people from a range of settings across the Borough had come together to express their thoughts and feelings on their experiences of social care to date, as well as their aspirations for the future. He also agreed to circulate the presentation via e-mail to all Members and Chief Officers.

**RESOLVED** –

- 1) That the reports from the Leader and the Executive Members for Resources, Schools and Education, Health and Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Environment, Leisure Culture and Young People,

Neighbourhoods Housing and Customer Services, and Regeneration, be noted, and:

- 2) That the VOICE group presentation "Fitting In – Improving the lives of Looked After Children" be e-mailed to all Members and Chief Officers.

**49. Draft Year Planner**

Members were asked to note the draft year planner for 2014-15 ahead of submission to Policy Council on the 5<sup>th</sup> December.

**RESOLVED –**

That the Year Planner be noted and submitted to Policy Council on the 5<sup>th</sup> December for final ratification.

**50. To consider any questions received from Members under Procedure Rule 11**

The Chief Executive announced that 5 questions had been received from a Member under Procedure Rule 11 as follows:

- 1) From Councillor David Foster to the Executive Member for Regeneration:

*Can the Executive Member inform Members of what written advice, both internal and external she has received concerning 20 mph speed limits?*

- 2) From Councillor David Foster to the Executive Member for Resources:

*Can the Executive Member explain why residential ground rent bills are still being sent out in contravention of the Executive Board decision or January 2013?*

- 3) From Councillor David Foster to the Executive Member for Health and Adult Social Care:

*Will the Executive Member provide Members with a financial breakdown of the £525,000 budget savings agreed at Finance Council in March which were to be brought about through the integration of public health functions with other council functions?*

- 4) From Councillor David Foster to the Executive Member for Regeneration:

*Will there be a further review of road safety measure following the release of the annual road accident report by the Department of Transport, which shows Blackburn with Darwen lagging behind most other areas of the country?*

5) From Councillor Roy Davies to the Executive Member for Resources:

*Why is the Council using an expensive 0845 number for benefit advice?*

A response to the questions and the supplementary questions arising were provided by the Executive Members for the respective portfolios.

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

MAYOR

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