

**POLICY COUNCIL**  
**Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020**

**PRESENT** – *The Mayor Councillor Iftakhar Hussain, Councillors Afzal, Akhtar P, Batan, Bateson, Brookfield, Browne, Casey, Connor, Daley, Davies, Desai, Floyd, Gee, Gunn, Hardman, Harling, Hussain M, Hussain S, Jan- Virmani, Kay, Khan M, Khan Z, Khonat, Liddle, Mahmood, McFall, McGurk, Oates, Patel, Rawat, Rigby C, Rigby J, Riley, Salton, Sidat, Shorrocks, Slater Jacq, Slater Jo, Smith D, Smith J, Talbot, Taylor and Whittle.*

**RESOLUTIONS**

**33 Welcome and Apologies**

The Chief Executive read out the notice convening the meeting and the Mayor advised how the remote meeting would operate.

Apologies were received from Councillors N Slater, Ju Slater, Akhtar H, Fazal and Marrow.

**34 Minutes Of The Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the Council Forum meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

The Chair of the Standards Committee, Councillor Saima Afzal, reported that further to the update on appointment of Independent Persons at the last meeting (Minute No.30), following recent interviews Alan Eastwood had been reappointed as an Independent Person, and that the other Independent Person appointed was Miranda Carruthers Watt, and asked the Policy Council to note the appointments, which were for a four year term, effective from 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020.

**35 Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were received.

**36 Motions under Procedure 12**

The Chief Executive reported that one Motion had been received as follows:

***Save Union Learning***

*On Tuesday 6 October 2020, the TUC received a letter from the Department for Education saying that ministers have decided to end the Union Learning Fund from March 2021.*

*The Union Learning Fund (ULF) was set up in 1998 to support trade unions to widen access to learning and training in workplaces for both union members and non-members. The fund supports workplace projects across England, and is coordinated by the TUC.*

*Each year around 200,000 workers are supported into learning or training with union support through the ULF and the TUC. These learners undertake all sorts of job-relevant learning and training, including basic literacy and numeracy, ICT skills, apprenticeships and traineeships, vocational training, continuing professional development and many other informal and formal courses.*

*In 2019–20, the ULF was worth £12m. If upheld this decision will effectively end union-brokered skills training, and will undermine key government skills and retraining priorities at a crucial moment for our economy.*

***This Council understands that:***

- 1. Union learning reaches people that other DfE programmes do not reach.*
- 2. There is an independent evaluation of the Union Learning Fund every two years. It was most recently evaluated by the University of Exeter in 2018. They spoke to 2,459 learners, and found a number of key benefits and outcomes from the Learning Fund, in terms of skills, qualifications and also benefits to both the employer and employee.*
- 3. The 2018 independent evaluation found that union learning provided excellent value for money in terms of return in investment for both the employer and employee, contribution to the economy, return to the exchequer and leverage of additional funding.*
- 4. The Government has said it will put reskilling workers at the heart of its economic recovery plans after the pandemic. In September 2020, the Government announced a new fully funded entitlement to achieve a first level 3 qualification, delivered through the National Skills Fund. Union learning is ideally placed to support this aspiration.*
- 5. Successive governments of all parties have valued this role – and have supported the Union Learning Fund. As government funding, it is paid as a contract and is subject to stringent monitoring requirements. Union Learning Fund money can only be spent on the direct costs of getting working people into learning and skills training, and the associated costs of delivering this programme.*
- 6. ULF projects adapted quickly to delivering online learning and training for workers during the pandemic and have actually surpassed the number of outcomes expected by Government since the beginning of April.*

***This Council resolves to:***

- 1. Express its public support for the continuation of the Union Learning Fund; and*
- 2. Raise this issue with Kate Hollern MP and Jake Berry MP and encourage them to call on the Government to reverse its decision.*

***Moved by: Councillor Brian Taylor***

***Seconded by: Councillor Julie Gunn***

Councillor John Slater requested advice from the Monitoring Officer about a potential conflict of interest for one of the Members supporting the Motion. The Monitoring Officer advised that the motion related to the withdrawal of a national scheme funding learners across the country, and the Members expressed in the motion their concern about its withdrawal and impact on the local community. The Monitoring Officer indicated that there has been no declaration of interest submitted and equally no evidence provided of any personal, financial or other personal benefit to the Councillors who promoted the Motion.

Following debate, Members voted on the Motion. Councillors John Slater, Jacqueline Slater, Denise Gee and Jean Rigby voted against 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.*

### **37 2020 Local and National Reflection: 2021 – Future Priorities**

A report was submitted, and presentation delivered, by the Leader and Chief Executive, which outlined the key national and local policy challenges and proposals in relation to Local Government, reflected on the Council's performance over the last 12 months, and looked ahead to the next 12 months.

In terms of national reflection, Covid-19 had dominated national policy throughout 2020 and the response to it had been the Council's main focus, and the Leader was very sad to note the 186 deaths from Covid-19 in the Borough.

There were a number of other key policy areas of national interest, which included the Budget 2020, the exit from the European Union, and the impact of Covid-19 in terms of health and productivity in the Northern Powerhouse.

Locally, the existing Corporate Plan priorities still stood – People, Place, Economy and Council, and the report reflected on activity over the last 12 months, whilst recognising the impact of Covid-19 on council services and the budget.

Appended to the report were the performance measures for the period April to September 2020, and an exception report for measures that were considered to be under performing.

An Equality Impact Assessment had been undertaken to capture the impact of the pandemic on residents and staff and the actions undertaken to mitigate the impacts where possible.

The report and presentation also looked at the next 12 months for the Council across the four Corporate Plan priorities, as well in terms of the continued response to Covid-19 and the financial position of the Council.

Members thanked the Council's workforce for their outstanding efforts

across an unprecedented year, and also the efforts of the Borough's young people were noted in continuing their studies in difficult circumstances, and still achieving great results, including the Borough's Looked after Children. Members also commented on the need for the whole community to ensure they adhered to guidance to assist in the helping the Borough move out of its current Tier 3 status.

**RESOLVED –** That Policy Council:

- 1) Note the content of the report and presentation;
- 2) Note the overall performance of the Borough against its outcome measures; and
- 3) Note the overall performance of the Council against its own strategic objectives.

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

### **38 Community Governance Review – Parish of Livesey**

Members received a report which set out the requirements and procedure should the Council agree to undertake a community governance review in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the 2007 Act) and associated government guidance.

Following the boundary review by LGBCE (which came into effect from May 2018) the ward boundaries in the Borough changed. This was followed by a polling district review in October – December 2018. Due to the LGBCE review and the ward boundary changes, the boundary for the Livesey with Pleasington ward no longer aligned exactly with the boundary of the parish of Livesey, and thereby created an anomaly on the polling district map. This necessitated a separate polling district to be created (LP 6), which currently consisted of 69 properties (mostly new builds) and 88 electors – shown in Appendix 2 (polling district map for Livesey with Pleasington). To remove the anomaly mainly for electoral administration purposes, it would be beneficial to merge the polling district LP6 with LP5, which also formed part of the parish of Livesey. As the merger of the two polling districts would result in changes to the boundary of LP5 (and therefore the parish boundary), a Community Governance Review would need to be undertaken.

Subject to approval of the recommendations in the report, a further report to Council would be presented to Council Forum for consideration in January 2021 to report on the outcome of the consultation and any recommendations. Subject to any recommendations being approved in January, the Council would make and publish a Community Governance Order. The Order would take effect from 1 February 2020, which was also the revised date for the publication of the new electoral register.

**RESOLVED –**

That Council:

1. Exercises its power under Section 82 of the 2007 Act and conduct a

Community Governance Review of the parish of Livesey in accordance with the requirements of 2007 Act, and associated government guidance as described in this report.

2. That the terms of reference in respect of the Community Governance Review including the proposed timetable, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report, be approved and published; and
3. Authorises the Chief Executive to conduct the Community Governance Review on the Council's behalf and to take all necessary action to comply with the Council's statutory obligations in that regard.

### **39 Audit & Governance Committee Annual Report 2019/20**

Members received the Annual Report of the Audit & Governance Committee for 2019/20, which was submitted to the meeting of that Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020. As outlined in the Constitution, the Annual Report and Minutes for the relevant year are submitted to Council, and were now submitted for the Policy Council to note.

**RESOLVED** – That the Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report 2019/20 be noted.

### **40 Council Organisational and Departmental Structure**

Policy Council received a report outlining recommendations from the Chief Executive, the statutory Head of Paid Service, for a realignment and consolidation of the Council's organisational structure to reduce the number of separate and distinct Departments, to coordinate complementary services with clear synergies, to enable effective delivery of the Council's key priorities as well as the continuing response to, and planning for recovery from, the Covid-19 pandemic.

This process would be coupled with a corresponding realignment of responsibilities of the current Chief Officer team within a revised Senior Leadership structure which ensured resilience and maintained senior level capacity to support elected members, and to lead and deliver key strategic priorities, against the backdrop of the Covid pandemic, in the short and medium to longer term.

The report together with independent HR and employment legal advice had been considered by the Chief Officer Employment Committee who were responsible for Chief Officer appointments.

**RESOLVED** – That Council:

- a) Approves the organisational and departmental structure recommended by the Chief Executive/Head of Paid Services as outlined in the report (Appendix B refers);
- b) Notes that there is no increase in senior leadership posts or overall

- management costs;
- c) Approves the revised, consolidated Chief Officer grades and posts as outlined in the report; and
  - d) Agrees that the Chief Officer Employment Committee confirm appointments to the Strategic Director and Director posts.

**41 Year Planner 2020/21 and 2021/22**

Members were asked to agree a change to the 2020/21 Year Planner – that Finance Council move from Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 to Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

Also Members received the draft Year Planner for 2021/22, and were asked to agree changing the dates agreed at Finance Council for Annual Council and Civic Sunday in May 2021, with the new dates being Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021 for Annual Council and Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2021 for Civic Sunday.

**RESOLVED –**

- 1) That the amended Year Planner for 2020/21 be agreed;
- 2 ) That the changes to the dates for Annual Council and Civic Sunday 2021 be agreed; and
- 3) That the final Year Planner for 2021/22 be submitted to Council Forum in January 2021 for approval.

*The Leader thanked the Mayor for his Chairing of the meeting, and also advised that he had recently appointed Councillor Quesir Mahmood as his second Deputy Leader, a position which had been vacant since the Council Appointments list had been circulated in May 2020.*

Signed at a meeting of the Council Forum  
on Thursday, 28th January 2021

(being the ensuing meeting of the Council) by

MAYOR