

COUNCIL FORUM

Thursday 27th January 2022

PRESENT – *The Mayor Councillor Derek Hardman, Councillors, Akhtar H, Akhtar P, Baldwin, Bateson, Browne, Casey, Desai M, Desai S, Fazal, Fielding, Floyd, Gee, Gunn, Harling, Humphrys, Hussain M, Hussain S, Irfan, Jan-Virmani, Khan M, Khan Z, Khonat, Liddle, Mahmood, Marrow, McFall, McGurk, Oates, Patel Ab, Patel Alt, Rawat, Rigby, Riley, Russell, Salton, Shorrock, Slater Jacq, Slater Jo, Slater Ju, Slater N, Smith D, Smith J, Talbot, and Whittle.*

RESOLUTIONS

41 Welcome and Apologies

The Chief Executive read out the notice convening the meeting.

There then followed Prayers by the Mayor's Chaplain.

Apologies were received from Councillors Brookfield, Connor, Hussain I, Sidat and Walker.

42 Minutes Of The Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the Policy Council meeting held on 2nd December 2021 be agreed as a correct record

43 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Katrina Fielding declared an interest in Agenda Item No. 11 (Item relating to Our Community, Our Future Grants – the community group, West Pennine Slings, run by Cllr Fielding received one of the grants.)

44 Mayoral Communications

The Mayor highlighted some recent events and engagements, advising that he had attended a large number of engagements since the last meeting, including pantomimes, the 10k road race at Blackburn Rovers, Carol Services and Hospital and Hospice visits.

The Mayor paid tribute to Sayyed Osman MBE, who was attending his last Council Forum meeting before commencing a new post at Oldham MBC, and also encouraged Members to purchase tickets for the Mayor's Ball on 11th March 2022.

45 Council Forum

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Procedure Rule 12.

46 Motions

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

MOTION 1

When an opposition party holds a quarter of the Council Member seats, then the Chairs of the, Place scrutiny committee and the People's scrutiny committee are to be held by the opposition party.

We believe this change to the Council's Constitution will give further confidence in the Council's scrutiny process.

Proposed by Councillor Paul Marrow
Seconded by Councillor John Slater

Following debate the Council moved to the vote.

RESOLVED – That the Motion be lost.

MOTION 2

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council recognises the importance of ensuring that elections are fair and accessible for all voters.

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council notes that the Elections Bill is set to bring in major changes to national elections, including the introduction of compulsory photographic ID to vote.

There is no evidence basis to justify the introduction of photographic ID. Out of over 40 million votes cast at the last General Election there were only a handful of incidents of confirmed voter impersonation.

This Council believes that the change will act as a barrier to people voting and increase inequality in the electoral process.

Council notes with concern that currently 3.5 million people in the UK do not have any form of photographic ID, in the form considered acceptable under these proposals – namely a passport or driving licence – both of which are costly to obtain.

Council notes that these changes are estimated to cost the taxpayer £180

million in administration and will create unnecessary bureaucracy to Councils.

Council believes that at a time when voter turnout is declining, we should be doing all we can to make it easier not harder for people to vote.

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council does not wish to see people being turned away at the ballot box because of these changes and resolves to support the #HandsOffOurVote campaign by asking the Chief Executive to write to :

1. Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities;
2. Both local MPs asking them to raise these concerns in Parliament.

Proposed by: Damian Talbot

Seconded by: Dave Smith

Following debate, the Council moved to the vote.

RESOLVED - That the Motion be carried.

47 Our New Deal for a Greater Lancashire

A report was submitted To provide Council Forum with an update on work undertaken towards development of strengthened joint working, a long term strategic plan and a County Deal for the Lancashire area and seek agreement to progress this work.

The report was being considered by the Full Council of each of the fifteen local authorities in Lancashire, that is, the county council, two unitary authorities and each of the 12 district councils.

The report set out the general principles and high level priorities of a long term strategic plan and County Deal. As progress was made, more details about specific asks would be developed, and there would be opportunities for all of the partner authorities to contribute to and influence that, including identifying specific schemes and activities.

Council Forum was asked to consider the report and the recommendations.

RESOLVED –

That Council Forum:

1. Support the outline "Our New Deal for a Greater Lancashire" at Appendix 1 as the initial draft basis for further discussion and

development of a possible County Deal for the Lancashire area.

2. Agree the principles of governance as set out in Appendix 2 for any future deal.
3. Agree that the Leader of the Council continues to work with Lancashire Leaders in line with the principles agreed in recommendations 1 & 2 above, and note that any formal proposals will require approval by Full Council at the appropriate time.

48 Gambling Policy 2022-25

Members were asked to approve the revised Statement of Licensing Policy for the Gambling Act 2005.

The Policy had to be reviewed every three years, with the last policy published in January 2019.

RESOLVED –

That the Council approves the revised Statement of Licensing Policy for the Gambling Act 2005.

49 Reports of the Standards Committee

Council Forum received an update from the Standards Committee, containing recommendations relating to a Local Guide for Personal Safety for Councillors, which supplemented the Local Government Association (LGA) Guide on the same topic, and relating to the use of social media by Councillors.

RESOLVED –

- 1). The Council formally endorses the Local Guide: 'Personal Safety for Elected Members';
- 2) All Members consider the Code of Conduct and the LGA Guidance on Councillors and social media; and
- 3) That the Member Training Programme continues to include guidance on the use of social media.

50 Reports of the Executive Members with Portfolios

The Leader and Executive Members presented their reports, providing updates as appropriate.

In particular, the Leader referred to the recent incident in Texas carried out by an ex Blackburn resident, noting this was not reflective of Blackburn at all, noting the community cohesion and the unity of the Borough. The

Leader condemned any Hate Crime, violence or extremism and referenced the Holocaust Memorial Day event earlier in the day, which highlighted the focus on peace and standing together against hate and persecution.

The Leader, and several Members, highlighted the excellent work of Sayyed Osman, who had been awarded the MBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours, and wished him well for the future in his new role at Oldham MBC.

Several Members also passed thanks to various teams throughout the Council for their excellent contributions and successes over the past months.

RESOLVED - That the reports of the Leader and Executive Members be noted.

51

Questions from Members

No questions from Members had been received under Procedure Rule 11.

52

Year Planner 2022/23

Further to the draft version of the Year Planner submitted to the Policy Council meeting, the final version for 2022/23 was submitted.

RESOLVED -

That the Year Planner for 2022/23 be approved.

Signed at a meeting of the Finance Council

On 28th February 2022

(being the ensuing meeting on the Council) by

MAYOR