

Minutes of Meeting of the Council

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 21 October 2008 starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor J Hill (Chairman)

Councillors:

P Ainsworth	E M H Ranson
J E Alcock	I Sayers
S Brunskill	R E Sherras
R M Croasdale	D T Smith
S Farnsworth	J S Sutcliffe
G Geldard	M E Sutcliffe
R Hargreaves	D Taylor
T Hill	J S Taylor
B Hilton	R J Thompson
K Hind	J Waddington
J Holgate	N C Walsh
S Hore	J White
B Jones	A Yearling
A M Knox	

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Community Services, Director of Development Services, Director of Resources, HR Manager, Legal Services Manager

514 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Barrett, Berryman, Eccleston, Hirst, Punchard, Rimmer, Robinson and Rogerson.

515 PRAYERS

The Mayor's Chaplain, the Reverend Dr Sowerbutts, opened the meeting with prayers.

516 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

517 PRESENTATION TO THE MAYOR

Mrs Andrea Cottom, County Commissioner for the Girl Guides, made a presentation to the Mayor in honour of him becoming the first Ambassador for Girl Guiding in Lancashire East. Mrs Cottom was also accompanied by Denise Brindell – District Commissioner.

The Mayor made a short acceptance speech.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Miss Gillian Smith of Simonstone, raised the issue of mass fluoridation of water supplies, and asked if the Chairman of Community Committee could give assurances that:

- (a) the Council would remain opposed to any form of fluoridation of water supplies in the Ribble Valley and across the north west;
- (b) if water in the Ribble Valley were to be fluoridated, then there should be a comprehensive training programme for all GP's in order to equip them with the skills to diagnose and identify fluoride related illnesses;
- (c) that if water were to be fluoridated, the affected population would be carefully and independently monitored in order to spot any fluoride related health problems at an early stage and therefore generate prompt action to safeguard health.

The Leader, Councillor E M H Ranson, thanked Miss Smith for her question and confirmed that the Council had considered the issue of fluoridation of mains water on several occasions and had unanimously agreed in May 2004 "not to support fluoridation of the mains water supply in Ribble Valley." This remains the Council's current position. The Council also believes that the issue of children's dental care had to be addressed by a fundamental change in diet, by reduced consumption of sugar and carbonated drinks, through enhanced public health promotion, particularly in schools, improved availability and access to National Health Dentists and increased resources and that a combined multi agency approach should be targeted to that end.

With regard to the matter of training GPs and ongoing health surveillance, the Leader noted that it was unfortunately outside the control of the Council to give any assurances, but that he would expect the Primary Care Trust to deal with both of the issues raised by Miss Smith.

Miss Smith asked a further question of the Chairman of Health and Housing Committee in relation to the waste collection service. She asked if the Chairman could explain the reasoning behind the Council's decision to refuse to provide additional wheeled bins for garden waste for residents and especially to those with large gardens. The Chairman of Community Committee, Councillor R J Thompson, thanked Miss Smith for her question and reported that after extensive debate on three separate occasions the Council's Community Committee had concluded that the overriding obligation on the Council in terms of Waste Management had been to reduce the amount of waste produced and presented for collection. Before the Council had offered any green waste collection service, it had supported the County Council's Free Composter initiative and had continued to do so, because only onsite composting eliminated the environmental and financial costs associated with the transportation and offsite treatment of green waste.

The debate had also raised the question as to whether the Council should offer a green waste service at all but Committee had recognised the value of a limited capacity service, and had intended to help households deal with green waste left over after home composting (eg waste such as Christmas trees and other conifers, that it was difficult to compost in a domestic compost bin). In the end, Committee had decided that it was essential to limit the capacity of collection offered, if householders were to be encouraged to compost at home.

Councillor R J Thompson confirmed that the Council's officers would gladly pass on contact details for the free composter scheme so that those with large gardens could compost the majority of their garden waste (and other vegetable matter) without it having to enter the waste stream.

519

NOTICE OF MOTION

The Mayor proposed that Agenda Item 13 concerning a Notice of Motion in the name of Councillor R E Sherras, be brought forward on the Agenda in order to accord with an item of public participation from Mr Phil Mileham, Managing Partner from The Castle Medical Group in Clitheroe. A vote was taken and this action was approved.

Consideration was given to a Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor R E Sherras, which read as follows:

“This Council responds to the Consultation Paper to the White Paper – Pharmacy in England: Building on Strengths – Delivering the Future – as follows:

Chapter 4 Question 25

The Council’s preference is for Option 1 – No Change.

Reason for Preference:

Ribble Valley Borough Council have grave concerns that should other options be chosen regarding Dispensing by Doctors the result could lead to the closure of the Clitheroe Health Centre dispensing service in its current form. This service is efficient and effective and is vital to the equitable delivery of dispensing services to 7,000 patients living in rural settlements in the Borough who have no pharmacy services locally. It also provides a free delivery service to some 300 patients who cannot visit the Health Centre, have “end of life” needs, etc. The adoption of Option 3 or 4 (Practice to Pharmacy Distance) would, as worded, result in closure as the Health Centre is located in the key service centre – Clitheroe – which has pharmacies but the rural settlements are several miles away, often with no public transport facilities. Option 2 (Dispensing for All) would be difficult to provide, result in unfair competition to Clitheroe pharmacies and in the White Papers words be more expensive for the NHS.”

Mr Phil Mileham of The Castle Medical Group spoke in support of the motion. He outlined some of the key issues surrounding the proposals in the White Paper

and in particular in relation to the rural context of the Borough. He urged that there should be no change to the current dispensing arrangements. The Motion was then debated.

RESOLVED: That the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor R E Sherras be accepted:

“This Council responds to the Consultation Paper to the White Paper – Pharmacy in England: Building on Strengths – Delivering the Future – as follows:

Chapter 4 Question 25

The Council’s preference is for Option 1 – No Change.

Reason for Preference:

Ribble Valley Borough Council have grave concerns that should other options be chosen regarding Dispensing by Doctors the result could lead to the closure of the Clitheroe Health Centre dispensing service in its current form. This service is efficient and effective and is vital to the equitable delivery of dispensing services to 7,000 patients living in rural settlements in the Borough who have no pharmacy services locally. It also provides a free delivery service to some 300 patients who cannot visit the Health Centre, have “end of life” needs, etc. The adoption of Option 3 or 4 (Practice to Pharmacy Distance) would, as worded, result in closure as the Health Centre is located in the key service centre – Clitheroe – which has pharmacies but the rural settlements are several miles away, often with no public transport facilities. Option 2 (Dispensing for All) would be difficult to provide, result in unfair competition to Clitheroe pharmacies and in the White Papers words be more expensive for the NHS.”

520 COUNCIL MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 2 September 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

521 MAYORAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayoral communications were received and noted.

522 APPOINTMENT OF NEW MEMBERS TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Consideration was given to the report of the Legal Services Manager, asking Members to approve the appointment of two additional Parish Council representatives to the Standards Committee.

RESOLVED: That Mr D Moon and Mr E Law-Riding be appointed as Parish Council Members of the Standards Committee subject to receipt of satisfactory references from each applicant’s nominated Parish Council referee.

523 REQUEST FROM CHIPPING PARISH COUNCIL AND CHIPPING LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY TO USE THE BOROUGH COUNCIL COAT OF ARMS

The Chief Executive informed Council that a request to use the Ribble Valley Borough Council Coat of Arms had been submitted by Chipping Parish Council and Chipping Local History Society. However, approval for the request was not straightforward and therefore the Chief Executive confirmed that he would bring a more detailed report to a future meeting for consideration, and that a response to Chipping Parish Council and Chipping Local History Society be deferred.

RESOLVED: That the request to use the Borough Council Coat of Arms by Chipping Parish Council and Chipping Local History Society be deferred until a full and more detailed report had been considered by Policy and Finance Committee at a future meeting.

524 LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader, Councillor E M H Ranson, began by congratulating the Mayor on his appointment as Ambassador to the Girl Guides of East Lancashire.

The Leader then went on to discuss issues around the current economic climate and the effect that it had and would continue to have on Local Government. He was pleased to report that the Council did not have any investments in Icelandic banks, and confirmed that the Council's deposits had always been placed with UK institutions and Government organisations. He confirmed that the Council had excellent prudential financial management systems in operation and controlled risks by not having more than £1.5m invested in any one institution. He assured Members that the Council would continue to be vigilant in all financial matters and noted that Councils which were well managed financially were in a better position to weather financial pressures in times of economic downturns, and that the Council's action to date and careful budgeting meant that it was in a position to ensure that it could provide the people of Ribble Valley with the services they were entitled to in good times as well as bad.

The Leader noted that income from a variety of sources was likely to be severely impacted due to the financial climate over the next twelve months, and therefore the Council would have to find further economies in the budget. He was pleased to report that in the current Service Plan rounds of discussions Service Managers had responded very positively to this situation.

The Leader commented that during the current financial difficulties the Council should seek to use local businesses as much as possible. He hoped that officers would encourage local businesses to sign on to a preferred suppliers list. He also urged Ribble Valley Homes to ensure that Ribble Valley Homes wherever possible used local tradesman.

He also reported on national pay negotiations and that matters had been forwarded to arbitration but that an interim payment based on the employer's

original offer of 2.45% would be paid with effect from 1 April 2008 pending completion of the arbitration process.

Finally, the Leader was pleased to end with some very positive items:

- (a) He was delighted to confirm that the building work at the Clitheroe Castle Museum was still on budget and on target. Exterior work would be completed by the end of October, a month ahead of schedule.
- (b) He also reported that collection of council tax had, once again, been outstanding at 99.2% up from 98.9%. This was the highest in the North West and the eighth highest in the country.
- (c) Pride Award – the Leader reported that the Council had been short listed for two prestigious public relations awards. The Council's 2007 Annual report had been short listed in the Best Publication section of the National Pride Awards, and the Ribble Valley Food Trail had been short listed in the Best Low Budget Campaign section.

The Pride Awards which were run by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations, the 'Oscars' of the PR industry and the only opportunity for Local Government communications to compete with the private sector, including top city agencies.

Ribble Valley Borough Council was one of only three Councils (the other two being Stockport Metropolitan and Allerdale Borough) to be nominated for the Awards, which featured 95 nominees in 24 categories, among them the Royal Bank of Scotland, The Tate Liverpool, Manchester Airport and McCann Ericksson.

The Pride Awards recognised the most successful public relations projects in the UK and being short listed meant that the Council's communications and campaign work had already been judged amongst the best.

The Leader felt that this demonstrated how, once again, Ribble Valley Borough Council had shown that despite limited resources, it was capable of outstanding work. He noted that the Awards were to be presented at a dinner in Manchester on 19 November.

The Leader closed by confirming that the Council was in good shape to meet the various challenges ahead, thanks to a strong and robust financial position supported by a professional and dedicated workforce.

525

LEADER'S QUESTION TIME

The Shadow Leader, Councillor A M Knox, acknowledged the present difficulties regarding the financial markets as the Leader had outlined. Whilst the Council did not have any investment in Icelandic banks, in order to ensure resilience of the Council's resources, and to confirm confidence amongst the public and

Councillors, he asked that the Leader request that a report on the Council's strategy to deal with fluctuations in the financial markets and banking systems be presented to the next meeting of Policy and Finance Committee. The Leader promised to provide a further update to the next Policy and Finance Committee but reassured the Council and residents that the Council did take very seriously the investment of Council monies and he was as confident as he could be that the Council had taken appropriate steps to safeguard its investments when financial markets were as unstable as they were at present.

Next Councillor A M Knox asked the Leader what information on renewable energy was provided to the public in the Council's Energy Saving Guide. The Leader reported that the Council's Energy Saving Guide could be found on the Council's website. The main point of the Guide was to help people to find ways to cut back on their energy consumption, and its associated costs at a domestic level. This meant that the emphasis was mainly on effective insulation.

In relation to renewable energy the Leader quoted from the Guide which said "*If we are to protect this planet we must make greater use of renewable energy derived from sources which are inexhaustible. These include the sun, the wind, flowing water, the heat of the earth and replenishable fuels such as plants and waste products. Grants are available (subject to conditions) on new builds and alterations for solar hot water systems and solar electricity. Ground source heat pumps take advantage of underground warmth*".

Councillor A M Knox asked a further supplementary question and asked what the Council was doing specifically to encourage a greater use of wind power. The Leader reported that little had been done in relation to the development of wind power and preferred rather to look in more detail at ground source heat.

Finally, Councillor A M Knox asked the Leader to confirm how many affordable homes for rent had come on stream since 3 May 2007. The Leader reported that since 3 May 2007 46 affordable homes for rent had been built. Councillor A M Knox further asked the Leader to encourage developers of any affordable homes in the future to make those homes for rent. The Leader confirmed that the Council would continue to work to provide affordable housing taking account of all such issues.

526

PENNINE LANCASHIRE MULTI AREA AGREEMENT

Consideration was given to the written report of the Director of Development Services asking the Council to authorise its continued participation with the Pennine Lancashire Multi Area Agreement.

The report outlined the development of Multi Area Agreements, which had been introduced by the Local Government White Paper 2006, and which in effect operated as cross boundary Local Area Agreements. The actions of the Multi Area Agreement would be delivered by a number of organisations including local authorities and the Pennine Lancashire Development Company.

The report went on to highlight discussions and work which had taken place to date to draft a Multi Area Agreement for Pennine Lancashire (Pennine Lancashire comprises Rossendale, Ribble Valley, Pendle, Hyndburn, Burnley, Blackburn with Darwen Councils), in partnership with Lancashire County Council and the importance of the initiative in respect of the future for Ribble Valley and its residents.

RESOLVED: That Council support the development of the Pennine Lancashire Multi Area Agreement to date and approve this Council's continued involvement with the initiative.

527 DEBATE ON COMMUNITIES IN CONTROL

The report outlined the background to the White Paper – “Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power” – which is concerned with passing power into the hands of local communities and sets out a range of policies to achieve this. It seeks to address issues related to participation in voting and local influence in decision making. Members were presented with a series of responses on consultation questions which had been reviewed by a working group of Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Councillor R E Sherras summarised the details of the full consultation document and noted that as the SPARSE Group were already considering the document, that Council wait to see what their responses were and revisit the matter at a later date. After a brief debate it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council review consultation resulting from the SPARSE Group's consideration of the Local Government's White Paper – “Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power” and make further recommendations as appropriate.

528 COMMITTEE MINUTES

(i) Community Committee – 9 September 2008

Councillor R Hargreaves submitted a written question under Standing Order 9 and asked if, further to a report prepared by Officers to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group, the Chairman could confirm his support for the necessary work to be undertaken to enter the Clitheroe Castle grounds for the Green Flag award scheme and that achievement of any such award should coincide with the opening of the new facilities at the Clitheroe Castle Museum planned for Spring 2009.

The Chairman of Community Committee, Councillor R J Thompson, confirmed that the resolution of Committee had been to give consideration to the issue at a future meeting. This reflected concerns expressed at the meeting about the challenges the Council faced in delivering improvement services with reduced resources. Committee had decided that it would be premature to determine that the pursuit of the Green Flag award be resourced until it knew what the implications of that were. He confirmed that if the award was achievable within available resources then he would be delighted to secure the Green Flag award for the Clitheroe Castle grounds and he had asked Officers to investigate

that possibility. Councillor Hargreaves went on to note that applications had to be submitted by the end of January 2009 and asked if the matter could be discussed at the next meeting of Community Committee in November.

Councillor R J Thompson confirmed that this would be the case.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

(ii) Planning and Development Committee – 11 September 2009

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

(iii) Accounts and Audit Committee – 17 September 2008

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

(iv) Health and Housing Committee – 18 September 2008

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

(v) Policy and Finance Committee – 23 September 2008

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

(vi) Personnel Committee – 24 September 2008

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

(vii) Parish Council Liaison Committee – 25 September 2008

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

(viii) Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 30 September 2008

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

(ix) Planning and Development Committee – 7 October 2008

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

(x) Standards Committee – 8 October 2008

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact David Morris (414400).