

MINUTE NUMBERS

Minutes of Meeting of the Council

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 10 December 2013, starting at 6.30pm
Present: Councillor R Sherras (Chairman)

Councillors:

P Ainsworth	R Moores
J E Alcock	R Newmark
R Bennett	E M H Ranson
S Bibby	M Robinson
I Brown	J Rogerson
S Carefoot	C Ross
P Dowson	I Sayers
R Hargreaves	G Scott
J B Hill	J Shervey
T Hill	D T Smith
K Hind	R Swarbrick
S A Hirst	D Taylor
J Holgate	M Thomas
S Hore	R J Thompson
K Horkin	N C Walsh
A M Knox	J White
S Knox	A Yearling
G Mirfin	

In attendance: Chief Executive, Director of Community Services, Director of Resources, Head of HR, Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

Councillors observed a minutes silence in remembrance of John Travis, a former Councillor and Mayor, who had recently died.

474 PRAYERS

The Mayor's Chaplain, the Reverend D Isaacs, opened the meeting with prayers.

475 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors S Brunskill, B Hilton and L Rimmer.

476 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor K Horkin declared a potential interest in respect of property and businesses that he owned within Clitheroe.

477 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no items of public participation.

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478 COUNCIL MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 1 October 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

479 MAYORAL COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor reported on some 56 engagements that he and the Mayoress had attended since the last meeting. These included a range of civic events, award ceremonies, openings, concerts, fund raising events and remembrance services.

He also reported that he had attended the recent funeral of former Mayor, John Travis. In addition he had attended a visit of HRH Duke of Kent at Fort Vale to open a new research and development suite and had attended the consecration of the new Bishop of Blackburn at York Minster.

The Mayor thanked all those who had attended the Mayor's Ball and who had helped organise a successful event.

480 LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader began by confirming that, with the agreement of Members, the flag would fly at half-mast on Wednesday, 11 December as a mark of respect for Nelson Mandela, Members supported the proposal.

The Leader went on to focus on the two priorities that he had highlighted at the beginning of the municipal year, namely Planning and Finance.

He reported that the Core Strategy was now officially at the examination stage. The Leader confirmed that the objective therefore in 2014 was to move swiftly on from the inspection to the allocation stage and then to full adoption in order to give the Council the ability to control over-development in the borough. The Leader expressed his thanks to all officers and staff for their hard work in a difficult and turbulent time and gave particular thanks to Councillor Terry Hill for his continuing leadership and efforts as Chair of Planning Committee and his Vice Chair, Councillor Sue Bibby.

Next the Leader turned to financial objectives and confirmed that the budget process continued to move forward and that the Government grant settlement figure was due soon. He believed there would be challenges ahead, as Government funding continued to be reduced, but noted that the Council's prudent housekeeping over many years had provided a degree of resilience to the Council, and as such he remained confident that the Council would be able to balance its books with no reduction in service levels.

Finally the Leader thanked all Members for their work throughout the year and wished everyone a happy and peaceful Christmas.

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481 LEADER'S QUESTION TIME

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor A Knox, asked if the Leader could confirm how many residents had been affected by the so-called "bedroom tax" and of those how many had received discretionary housing payments and for what period of time.

The Leader thanked Councillor Knox for his question and confirmed that on 1 April 2013, a 137 residents who were claiming housing benefit were affected by the Social Sector Size Criteria (SSSC) Regulations, referred to as the "bedroom tax". The current figure was now 122.

The Leader also confirmed that in respect of those affected since the 1 April change, the Council had granted 77 Discretionary Housing Payments and the length of time varied depending upon the circumstances of the applicant but generally most were granted for 26 weeks, with the exception of cases where a property had undergone disabled adaptations, in which case it would be granted for 52 weeks.

482 COMMITTEE MINUTES

(i) Planning and Development Committee – 26 September 2013

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

(ii) Planning and Development Committee – 10 October 2013.

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

(iii) Community Committee – 22 October 2013

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

Minute 385 – Councillor White asked Members to inform him of any activities/events that were to be held in Members wards to commemorate The Great War in 2014.

(iv) Personnel Committee – 23 October 2013

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

(v) Health and Housing Committee – 31 October 2013

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

(vi) Planning and Development Committee – 7 November 2013

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

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(vii) Policy and Finance Committee – 12 December 2013

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the above meeting be received with the exception of Minute numbers 443, 446 and 450.

Minute 443 – Localisation of Council Tax Support

Members were asked to approve the local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2014/15.

RESOLVED: That the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2014/15 be approved.

Minute 446 – Financial Regulations

The Leader, Councillor S Hirst, asked Members to approve the revised Financial Regulations.

RESOLVED: That the revised Financial Regulations be accepted.

Minute 450 – Council Tax Base 2014/15

Members were asked to approve that the discount of 50% on long-term empty properties was removed with effect from 1 April 2013 and that an empty homes premium of 50% was to be charged for properties that are empty for more than 2 years.

RESOLVED: That

- i) the discount of 50% on long-term empty properties be removed from 1 April 2013; and
- ii) an empty homes premium of 50% be charged for properties that are empty for 2 years or more.

(viii) Parish Council Liaison Committee – 14 November 2013

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

The meeting closed at 7.10pm.

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact Marshal Scott (414400).