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COUNCIL

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

**At the Meeting of the Council of the Borough of Kirklees held at
The Town Hall, Huddersfield on Wednesday 14 January 2015**

PRESENT

The Mayor (Councillor Ken Smith) in the Chair

COUNCILLORS

M AHMED
M AKHTAR
K ALLISON
S ALVY
B ARMER
R BARRACLOUGH
D K BELLAMY
J BLANCHARD
M BOLT
C BURKE
J CALVERT
A V COOPER
W J DODDS
D FIRTH
E FIRTH
C GREAVES
D HALL
S HALL
D HARDCASTLE
M HEMINGWAY
E HILL
L J HOLMES
E HOLROYD-DOVETON
J HUGHES
C M IREDALE
P KANE
V KENDRICK
J C LAWSON
V LEES-HAMILTON
T LYONS

R LIGHT
P McBRIDE
A C G MARCHINGTON
N MATHER
H MAYET
D O'DONOVAN
P O'NEILL
S PANDOR
A PATEL
S PATEL
N PATRICK
A C PINNOCK
K M PINNOCK
H S RICHARDS
D RIDGWAY
K ROWLING
M SARWAR
C SCOTT
P SCOTT
K SIMS
D SHEARD
E SMAJE
M S SOKHAL
J STEWART TURNER
A STUBLEY
K TAYLOR
N TURNER
G TURNER
M WALTON
L M WILKINSON

78 Announcements by the Mayor and Chief Executive

The Mayor displayed a certificate of Fair Trade Status, advising that Kirklees had been re-accredited with Fair Trade Borough status.

The Chief Executive announced the appointment of Mr Richard Parry as Director for Commissioning, Public Health and Adult Social Care, effective from 26 January 2015.

The Chief Executive advised that, in relation to Agenda Item 9, two petitions had been received regarding libraries, markets, children's centres and Oakwell Hall, Birstall, which had been omitted from the submitted report, but which would be included within the budget consultation exercise.

The Chief Executive read out a position statement following the recent decision by Tesco not to proceed with development at Old Leeds Road, Huddersfield.

79 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Brice, Harris, Hussain, Khan, Lowe, Palfreeman, Preest and Ward.

80 Minutes of Previous Meeting

It was moved by The Mayor (Councillor Smith), seconded by the Deputy Mayor (Councillor Kane) and

RESOLVED - That the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2014 be approved as a correct record.

81 Declaration of Interests

Councillor Smaje declared a Disclosable Pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 14 on the grounds that she is a Member of West Yorkshire Combined Authority Transport Committee.

Councillor Walton declared an 'other' interest in Agenda Item 7 on the grounds that she has a relative who is employed for the Troubled Families Project.

82 Constitution - Revised Scheme of Delegation

It was moved by Councillor Richards, seconded by Councillor Hardcastle and,

RESOLVED –

(i) That Sections B and F of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution be amended to reflect that in order to streamline the initial application and Regulatory Panel process, additional delegated authority is granted to the Director of Place to refuse, revoke or suspend an application for a grant or renewal of a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Vehicle Drivers Licence where there are concerns regarding the safety and well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

(ii) That, pursuant to (1) above, authority be delegated to the Assistant Director – Legal, Governance and Monitoring to make the necessary amendments to the Constitution.

(iii) That a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Licensing and Safety Committee to clarify the amended Terms of Reference of the Panel and to undertake consultation with the Committee with regards to future decision making processes.

(iv) That a further report be submitted to the appropriate Committee after a 12 month period to review the changes in process following implementation.

83 Revised Licensing Policy Statement

It was moved by Councillor S Hall, seconded by Councillor Sokhal, and

RESOLVED - That the revised Licensing Policy be adopted as the Kirklees Licensing Policy 2015-2020.

84 Revenue Support Grant and Autumn Statement

It was moved by Councillor G Turner, and seconded by Councillor Sheard, and

RESOLVED - That Kirklees Council welcomes the opportunity to comment upon the provisional 2015/16 settlement as below;

Local Welfare Provision

The decision, following the legal challenge to the Government over the summer, to separately identify an amount within the settlement funding assessment to indicate to local authorities what the government thinks they should continue to spend on local welfare provision, is puzzling to say the least. No additional funding has been provided to cover this sum, nor has it impacted at all on the distribution of funding to individual local authorities. The ability therefore of individual local authorities to meet the problem varies enormously Wokingham for example would be able to fund their amount at a cost of £1.45 a household whereas for Kirklees the cost is £5.51 a household. Any distribution made, if any, has not been made in regard to need as in previous years. We believe this is wrong and blatantly directs money from poor areas to affluent area, we thus suggest a needs based allocation.

Comparative position of authorities

Analysis by the National Audit Office indicates that the Government continues to remove proportionately more funding from the more deprived authorities. Ministers have argued that this is simply a local reward for growth, but it is in fact a reward for rich authorities growing richer – as both the decision to freeze the resource equalisation mechanism in the basic grant system and the New Homes Bonus ensure that additional reward is given to authorities who build more expensive properties in more expensive areas of the country. In the Ministerial telephone conference Leeds highlighted the contrast between their spending power and Wokingham's, Plymouth picked Devon's, we would compare our position to any of the districts and counties who received an increase in their funding.

Many of us feel that the ending of resource and needs equalisation has resulted in a fundamentally unfair distribution system. The only areas which needs appears to continue to be recognised, is in the additional support given to rural areas. A properly assessed rural sparsity indicator has its place in a needs based system in which all elements are regular reviewed. But this system should include assessment of need in all areas not just those favoured by the Secretary of State, the methods and calculations should be independently audited.

New Homes Bonus top-slice

We welcome any reduction in the top-slice for New Homes Bonus but call for a broader review of the New Homes Bonus mechanism. To ensure that it ceases to be a mechanism to shift money from poorer areas to more affluent areas as the current system was obviously designed to do.

For the longer term, the Council strongly supports a fundamental review of the system of Local Government Finance.

85 Localised Council Tax Support (CRS) and Tax Base

It was moved by Councillor G Turner, seconded by Councillor Sheard, and

RESOLVED - That the current Localised Council Tax Support Scheme be amended from 29% to 20%, providing additional support for low income working age Council Tax payers at neutral cost on the taxbase.

86 Findings from the Public Budget Consultation

It was moved by Councillor G Turner, seconded by Councillor Sheard, and

RESOLVED - That the findings of the Public Budget Consultation be received and noted.

87 Written Questions to Committee Chairs and Nominated Spokespersons of Joint Committees/External Bodies

No questions were submitted.

88 Holding the Executive to Account

(A) Report of (i) the Leader of the Council and (ii) the Cabinet Member for Resources

Council received the above verbal updated.

(B) Oral Questions / Comments to Cabinet Members

(i) Children's Services Portfolio

No questions were asked.

(ii) Health, Wellbeing and Communities Portfolio

- (a) Councillor Bolt made reference to the Able 2 Project and asked for an update on the scheme and the benefits it would bring to the wider community.

The Leader of the Council replied thereto.

- (b) Councillor Lawson referred to cross party talks regarding the future of Spenborough Pool when it had been advised that to move the facilities from Whitcliffe Mount to the pool would be a bad idea because it would be empty during the day, and asked the Cabinet Member to comment.

The Cabinet Member (Councillor O'Neill) replied thereto.

(iii) Place Portfolio

- (a) Councillor N Turner referred to a lack of gritting on higher grounds since the Christmas period, the procedures for gritting and the impact upon the local area.

The Cabinet Member (Councillor S Hall) replied thereto.

- (b) Councillor Ridgway asked when a Licensing and Safety Committee would be scheduled to debate the referral back that was considered during November 2014.

The Cabinet Member (Councillor S Hall) replied thereto.

- (c) Councillor Marchington commented on gritting in the Golcar Ward over the Christmas period and differential gritting processes across the borough.
- (d) Councillor Smaje commented on gritting matters and asked if comparisons of procedures and materials could be made with those of other local authorities.

The Cabinet Member (Councillor S Hall) replied thereto.

- (e) Councillor S Patel commented upon the positive service he had received in dealing with constituent issues during the winter weather and asked that thanks be conveyed to the service.
- (f) Councillor Walton commented on the Kirklees gritting process and asked if the Council can improve its publicity in terms of the measures which it carries out.
- (g) Councillor Armer commented on gritting problems in the Shelley area and asked if provisions could be extended to estates which are built on hillsides

The Cabinet Member (Councillor S Hall) replied thereto.

- (h) Councillor O'Neill asked the Cabinet Member if he would agree that it would be good to recommend to all motorists to fit winter tyres to their vehicles, to have a winter health check and to carry snow chains or shoes throughout winter.

The Cabinet Member (Councillor S Hall) replied thereto.

(iv) Resources Portfolio

(a) Councillor Smaje made reference to Councillor G Turner's response to an earlier deputation whereby he had advised that he was discussing innovative ideas regarding libraries and asked Councillor Turner to expand on what innovative ideas he had for libraries.

The Cabinet Member (Councillor G Turner) replied thereto.

(b) Councillor Sims asked if it was true that job advertisements were being placed in the Guardian newspaper for Officers to deal with asset disposals and, if so, what types of contract were being advertised.

The Cabinet Member (Councillor G Turner) replied thereto.

89 Oral Questions to Committee Chairs and Nominated Spokespersons of Joint Committees/External Bodies

(a) Question by Councillor N Turner to the Chair of Batley and Spen District Committee (Councillor Alvy)

'What contribution have made personally towards devolution to your District Committee and where have you got to?'

Councillor Alvy replied thereto.

(b) Question by Councillor N Turner to the Chair of Dewsbury and Mirfield District Committee (Councillor O'Donovan)

'What contribution have you made personally towards devolution to your District Committee and where have you got to?'

Councillor O'Donovan replied thereto.

(c) Question by Councillor Ridgway to the Chair of Dewsbury and Mirfield District Committee (Councillor O'Donovan)

'You have in your District Committee a Parish/Town Council what progress have you made in your discussions with your Parish/Town Council as to how you are going to run your District Committee?'

Councillor O'Donovan replied thereto.

(d) Question by Councillor N Turner to the Chair of Huddersfield District Committee (Councillor Mather)

'Given that devolution is different for different areas, in what way do you anticipate your area differing from the Batley and Spen and Dewsbury areas? How is Huddersfield going to be different and what contribution have you made?'

Councillor Mather replied thereto.

(e) Question by Councillor P Scott to the Chair of Huddersfield District Committee (Councillor Mather)

'Could Councillor Mather please tell us how she is going to engage with Parish Councils that cross borders with the other District Councils, such as Almondbury?'

Councillor Mather replied thereto.

- (f) Question by Councillor Ridgway to the Chair of Huddersfield District Committee (Councillor Mather)

'I was interested in a comment you made about a model of devolution. Is this model a working model or it is a made up model that has been produced specifically for Huddersfield?'

Councillor Mather replied thereto.

- (g) Comment by Councillor Walton to the Chair of Huddersfield District Committee (Councillor Mather)

Councillor Walton made reference to the need for the Committee to seek alternative ways of bringing financial benefits to the area and alluded to a recent scheme for Beaumont Park which had been supported by National Lottery Funding.

(Due to time constraints, the meeting was concluded during this Agenda Item)