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# COUNCIL

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**Thursday, 30th June, 2022**

**Present:** Councillor Terry Hurn (Deputy Mayor in the Chair), Councillors Judith Addison, Dominik Allen, Josh Allen, Mohammad Ayub, Noordad Aziz, Scott Brerton, Peter Britcliffe, Andrew Clegg, Jodi Clements, Loraine Cox, Paul Cox, Bernard Dawson, Peter Edwards, Melissa Fisher, June Harrison, Marlene Haworth, Susan Hayes, Carole Haythornthwaite, Eamonn Higgins, Zak Khan, Sajid Mahmood, Patrick McGinley, Caroline Montague, Miles Parkinson OBE, Joyce Plummer, Kath Pratt, Paddy Short, Steven Smithson, Kate Walsh and Kimberley Whitehead

**Apologies:** Councillors Abdul Khan (Mayor), Danny Cassidy, Munsif Dad BEM JP and Abdul Khan

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## **41 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Abdul Khan (Mayor), Danny Cassidy and Munsif Dad BEM JP

## **42 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations notified.

Councillor Miles Parkinson OBE, Leader of the Council, read out a statement on behalf of Councillor Joyce Plummer, which clarified why she had been unable to respond publicly to various comments made about her in the media and posted on social media. The statement confirmed that Councillor Plummer had been suspended by the Hyndburn Labour Party and that she had received a formal letter from the Labour Party on 22 June 2022 in connection with an internal party matter. The matter was still at the investigation stage. The letter had confirmed that an investigation was not an indication of wrongdoing and operated on a confidential basis to protect all concerned and to comply with data protection rules. The individuals involved were advised to keep the matter private and not to share information with the media or on social media. Failure to observe those rules could potentially lead to disciplinary action. An individual subject to investigation remained a member of the Labour Party and had to abide by the decisions of the political group.

Subsequently, Councillor Plummer had received information from other sections within the Labour Party organisation which had caused her some confusion. Councillor Plummer had now been informed that she would have to be classed as an independent councillor on Hyndburn Council. She reiterated that she was still a member of the national Labour Party and remained loyal. She had also expressed disappointment about a lack of support from the Labour Party regional office last year when she had raised concerns about the content of an e-mail received from a party member during a period of bereavement after the loss of her husband of 62 years. At that time she had relied heavily upon the support of her family.

The current discussion in the public domain had caused Councillor Plummer considerable distress. In response to the comments posted, she reiterated that she had not chosen to become an Independent councillor. She confirmed that she had not joined a coalition by

serving on the Cabinet, as no coalition existed. Nor was Councillor Plummer motivated to serve on the Cabinet for financial reward. She considered that she was the victim of bullying behaviour and would consider taking legal advice.

Councillor Walsh clarified that Councillor Plummer remained a member of the national Labour Party, but not the local Labour Party. This was as a result of an alleged breach of the national rules, but it was not possible to say more at this time for reasons of confidentiality.

Councillor Walsh reported that an Independent Member had challenged Labour Party members outside of the meeting this evening in a way which she considered was not appropriate. This action might be referred to the Standards regime. She asked that any future discussions be conducted in a manner which was more respectful.

## **43 Announcements**

The Deputy Mayor made the following announcements:

### 1) Mayor's Engagements

The reason for the Mayor's absence this evening was that he was taking part in a four day visit with other Civic dignitaries to Sheffield Memorial Park, near Serre-les Puisieux, in northern France. This was the site of the First World War Accrington Pals Memorial and several other memorials commemorating Pals battalions from the North of England.

The visit, which had been postponed for 2 years due to COVID, was to celebrate the upgrading and reopening of the track from the village to the site to make the memorials more accessible. The Council had contributed £5,000 to these works, along with contributions from other local authorities and their French counterparts.

Over the four days, the Mayor would be taking part in a number of services of remembrance and civic events and would be visiting other cemeteries, memorials and monuments in the area. Given that tomorrow marked the anniversary of the Battle of the Somme, the Mayor was very proud to have been asked support this event.

### 2) Battle of the Somme and Re-Dedication of Cenotaph

On a similar theme, the Deputy Mayor confirmed that he would be attending the Battle of the Somme commemoration tomorrow at 10am, in Church Street Gardens and later, at 2.30pm, he would be at the centenary event for the Cenotaph in Oak Hill Park.

### 3) Other Engagements

Earlier this month the Deputy had been proud to attend an event organised by Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service, which supported The Prince's Trust. The event was to recognise the achievements of the latest cohort of young adults completing The Prince's Trust programme, for those not in education, employment or training.

This Saturday the Deputy Mayor would be attending Rishton Festival in celebration of the Queens Jubilee. The day would begin with a parade through Rishton's terrace streets before arriving at the festival ground at Hyndburn Academy, including stalls and musical and dance acts.

#### 4) Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

On 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2022, two local winners of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service had been announced. The two groups had been included in the list of 244 charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups to receive the prestigious award this year, 6 of which had come from Lancashire. This year's Hyndburn winners included:

- Friends of Rhyddings Park, Hyndburn - For playing a key role in reviving the park and transforming its cafe to provide a base for community activities such as gardening, walks, craft, well-being sessions.
- Church & Oswaldtwistle Rotary - For improving life for the whole community through an impressive range of environmental, social and youth projects, which went far beyond simple fundraising.

Each of the groups would receive a certificate signed by HM The Queen and an exclusive commemorative crystal, presented by the Lord-Lieutenant of Lancashire, The Lord Shuttleworth KG KCVO, at an award ceremony which would be held on Monday 11 July at County Hall in Preston. The Council added its congratulations to these two outstanding groups.

#### 5) Queen's Birthday Honours 2022

The Council also placed on record its congratulations to the following individuals who had been named in the Queen's Birthday Honours list on 1 June 2022 and who all had strong links to Hyndburn:

- Miranda Rosemary Barker, Chief Executive Officer, East Lancashire Chamber of Commerce who had been awarded an OBE for services to business and to the community in Lancashire.
- Deborah Patricia Clark, Founder and (former) Chief Executive Officer, Community Solutions North West Limited, who had received the MBE for services to the community in Lancashire.
- Lieutenant Stephen Hutchinson RNR, Chair, Accrington and District Unit, Sea Cadets, who had received the BEM for voluntary service to young people in Lancashire.

#### 6) Support for Batten Disease

Finally, the Deputy Mayor announced that he was wearing a tangerine coloured tie this evening to raise awareness of Batten disease and to show support for the charities that worked with people with this inherited condition and their families.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Miles Parkinson OBE, made the following announcements:

#### 7) Update on Future Developments

Summer was fast approaching and the next meeting of Council would not be until September 2022. There would be only one further meeting of the Cabinet in July 2022. Accordingly, it would be useful to provide an update on future developments in Hyndburn.

The Town Centre Partnership Board and Stakeholder Group had produced a foreword to the funding bid which explained their ambition for Accrington to be a vibrant, bustling market town, underpinned by its existing strengths, new investment and the town's architectural heritage. The plans would tap into the visitor economy, which would open up opportunities for local people too. There was a strong architectural base in the town centre encompassing the Town Hall, Market Hall, Burtons Chambers and the Town Square. The plans would also restructure some green spaces to create activities for all the family and to make Accrington a destination again.

The Council had worked with the community to understand the town and had consulted residents and visitors through both meetings and polling. Three projects had been selected for investment which included the Market Hall; Burtons Chambers, proposed as a flexible office space; and Market Chambers, which would include renovations to the shop fronts with a view to future use of the building as an arts and cultural space. The bid would be signed off by David Sanderson MBE DL, Sara Britcliffe MP, the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council. The MP and Partnership Board had played a crucial role in compiling this bid.

At the same time, the Borough had benefited from the support of Councillor Peter Britcliffe, as Chair of the County Council, and the Lancashire Leader, County Councillor Phillippa Williamson. East Lancashire had been the birth-place of the industrial revolution. The County Council's Levelling Up Fund bid would support the fine townscapes and natural beauty of the area. It was acknowledged that the economic base of the area had declined and fallen behind other regions over the years. Some aspects of economic growth had been very slow and there were associated health issues and deprivation. The Council aimed to tackle both economic and social inequalities. The plan would address these issues up to 2050, working with relevant Government departments. There was a collaborative, place-based leadership approach to improvement, which would focus on transportation; regeneration of the town centre and cultural investment. Members were invited to support this approach.

A meeting on Monday had revealed some windfall funding which had demonstrated the benefit of tiers of local government working closely together. A new fund had been created for major infrastructure schemes which would complement the Levelling Up funding. £5M was available across Lancashire for match funding with Levelling Up Fund 2 bids. This would help to accelerate high impact projects. Some criteria had been set and the County Council would match fund up to 50% of each scheme up to a maximum project size of £1M. A bid had been submitted on Monday and the Council had been allocated £1M under this process. This was as much as the Council's total annual capital programme in recent years. The funding would top up the Levelling Up Fund monies to around £23M.

LCC's own Levelling Up Fund bid for East Lancashire was around £50M, which would include monies for:

- Liveable Neighbourhoods;
- Active Travel Project;
- Public Transport - Bus Project; and
- Public Transport – Rail Project.

Levelling up was expected to:

- Boost productivity;
- Increase accessibility to jobs;
- Tackle health inequalities;
- Instil a sense of local pride and community; and
- Empower local leaders.

Hyndburn could potentially expect to receive some £18M-£19M on top of the Levelling Up monies from other sources.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund would provide some £2.943M and had been allocated to the following schemes:-

- Growth Hub (Boost) - £ 260k;
- Economic Development Function - £150k;
- International Trade Support - £40k;
- Tourism Attractions/Marketing - £20k;
- Business Support for Net Zero and Transition & Decarbonisation - £140K;
- New Low Carbon Technology - £110K;
- Support for the Arndale Masterplan - £150k;
- Support for the Arts, Culture and Heritage package - £1.25M;
- Support for the proposals to 'Green' the town centre and improve the Accrington Pals Memorial Garden - £560k; and
- Offer £75k each to the Market Hall and Burtons Chambers as first-year incentive/promotion packages in advance of the buildings opening - £150k.

The Council had also recently purchased, at auction, land known as Bury Meadows, off Nook Lane, Oswaldtwistle. This land comprised some 87 acres, which would become a country park and could include sculptures. A group based in Stanhill and other local residents were currently engaged with this project and the land would provide an investment for generations to come.

Townships including Oswaldtwistle, Clayton-le-Moors and Church would all see investment over the coming years. It was noted too that Hyndburn Leisure had particularly strong ties with Church.

This update tonight was seen as important, as there was no Council meeting planned during the summer recess.

Councillor McGinley thanked the Leader for this information which heralded a huge investment in the Borough. He asked if all councillors could have a copy of the announcement to enable them to respond to residents' queries. He also asked when information would be circulated about the funding available to enable councillors to apply for monies for their areas. The Leader confirmed that he would provide the relevant information in due course.

There were no announcements from the Chief Executive, Mr David Welsby, on this occasion.

#### **44 Confirmation of Minutes**

The Minutes of the Council meetings held on 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> May 2022 were provided. The following points relate to the Minutes of 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022 only.

The Leader reported that at Minute 4 - Declaration of Interest and Dispensations, Councillor June Harrison had clarified at the meeting that she had not supported the appointment of Councillor Munsif Dad as the Labour Group Leader, and would wish for this statement to be recorded in the minute.

At Minute 5 - Announcements, Section (c) – Annual Review and Future Plans, the Leader was due to attend the opening ceremony of Clayton Civic Centre to see the investment delivered by the Leisure Trust. The Leisure Transformation Programme was being rolled out across the Borough. It was acknowledged that there were some on-going issues around leisure facilities in Great Harwood. A review of leisure facilities had been commenced in 2019 by the Leisure Trust. The organisation had gone to great lengths to look at what facilities were needed. A series of reports had been provided to the Council and Cabinet since then. The Lead Member during this period, Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP, had been supportive of the progress being made.

Also recorded under this Minute was information about the membership of the Cabinet, which had led to the situation described previously concerning Councillor Plummer. Newspapers had incorrectly described the administration as a coalition, which was not the case. The arrangements in place within Hyndburn's Cabinet were no different from the cooperation taking place between elected Leaders of various parties across all Lancashire authorities. The Leader expressed gratitude to Councillor Plummer for her work to manage the Council's finances, which built upon the work of her predecessor, former councillor, Gareth Molineux. Good financial management explained why the Council was now able to afford to fund its ambitious plans.

In respect of Minute 8 – Appointment of Committees, etc. at Paragraph 4, Councillor Parkinson responded to Councillor Dad's comment that nominations had been 'imposed by the Leader of the Council'. He refuted the assertion that nominations had been imposed and advised that all appointments had been voted upon by the Council. The proposals had been circulated in sufficient time in advance of the meeting for alternative nominations to be made.

In relation to Minute 7 – Declaration of the Returning Officer, Councillor Noordad Aziz asked whether the Chief Executive had any knowledge of an arrest made by the Police in connection with an electoral matter and what progress had been made. Mr Welsby confirmed that he had no knowledge of any arrest and was unable to provide any further information on this allegation.

A brief exchange of views took place between Councillors Melissa Fisher, Miles Parkinson and Joyce Plummer about the suspension issue raised previously. It was recognised that the situation had caused distress to a number of individuals. The Chief Executive confirmed that the Council had acted in accordance with the written instructions of the Deputy Leader of the Labour Group, the outcome of which had been explained to Councillor Plummer. A number of councillors spoke about the negative impact of personal comments made recently on social media. Councillors Zak Khan and Kate Walsh both called for personal issues not to be played out in the Council Chamber and for Members to focus on the business on the Agenda.

**Resolved**

- **That, subject to the insertion of the following words at the end of Paragraph 5 at Minute 4 of the minutes of 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022:**

**“Councillor Harrison responded that she had not in fact supported the appointment of Councillor Dad as Leader of the Labour Group.”**

**the Minutes of the Council meetings held on 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> May 2022 be approved as correct records.**

#### **45 Question Time**

Five questions had been submitted under Council Procedure 2.2(vi) as detailed below. The Deputy Mayor read out each question and a response was provided as indicated:

##### 1) Islamophobia

*To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Miles Parkinson OBE)*

“On Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2019, Hyndburn Borough Council adopted the Definition of Islamophobia agreed by the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims

Does the Council and the Council Leader agree that all incidents of Islamophobia are abhorrent and have no place in Hyndburn?

What steps has the council taken to train staff and councillors on Islamophobia?

What Council policy and procedure documents now includes reference to the Islamophobia definition

What engagement has the Council had with Hyndburn Muslim community to address incidents of Islamophobia related to Council?”

*Submitted by Councillor Mohamad Ayub*

The Leader responded that the authority had adopted the policy as originally put to the Council.

##### 2) Indices of Multiple Deprivation

*To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Miles Parkinson OBE) and Deputy Leader of the Council (Councillor Marlene Haworth)*

“The Indices of Multiple Deprivation under the leadership of the current coalition over 23 years has moved the Borough from 54<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> most deprived. Do the two leaders accept responsibility for the official figures and what are the leadership going to do to change this?”

*Submitted by Councillor Kate Walsh*

The Leader indicated that deprivation levels had increased across Lancashire in general during successive Labour and Conservative Governments, including throughout the terms of office of former MPs Greg Pope and Graham Jones. Some Labour councillors had previously held out Burnley as an example of good practice, but that authority was further down the table than Hyndburn. All councillors were invited to come together to work for the

good of the Borough. There was now an opportunity for all to join the decision-making process to make things better for everyone.

3) Debate and Fresh Ideas is a Great Thing for Democracy

*To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Miles Parkinson OBE)*

“Prior to Covid, there was no limit to the number of motions any councillor could submit?”

Motions submitted and passed from this Council have shaped policy and discussion at County Hall and Parliament. You only have to look at the documents that are presented for the case for Skipton to Colne Rail Link. They now begin the journey from Accrington to Yorkshire.

When is the limit going to be removed for the number motions as we are now in a post Covid era?”

*Submitted by Councillor Noordad Aziz*

The Leader responded that this matter was due to be considered at Agenda Item 6 – Constitution Update. The limit had been 1 motion per Group when this question had been submitted. The proposal above to relax this restriction was supported. He thanked Councillor Aziz for his question.

4) Clayton Triangle

*To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Miles Parkinson OBE)*

“Is Clayton Triangle still progressing?”

*Submitted by Mr Tim O’Kane (address supplied)*

The Leader indicated that the Council was in receipt of a planning application at the moment, which would need to follow due process.

5) Swimming Facilities in Great Harwood

*To the Deputy Leader of the Council (Councillor Marlene Haworth)*

“During the recent local election in Great Harwood, both Labour and Conservative candidates campaigned for swimming facilities to remain in Great Harwood, as did local MP Sara Britcliffe. Will the Conservative Group continue to commit to retaining swimming facilities in Great Harwood?”

*Submitted by Councillor Scott Brerton*

Councillor Marlene Haworth, Deputy Leader of the Council, responded ‘Yes’ to the question.

## Resolved

- **That the Council notes the questions received and responses provided in connection with the matters set out above.**

## 46 Constitution Update

Members considered a report of Councillor Joyce Plummer, Portfolio Holder for Resources, proposing a number of further updates to the Council's written constitution.

The Council was required by law to have a written constitution. The Council's written constitution was reviewed regularly and a copy of the constitution was available on the Council's website. A further review of the constitution had recently taken place to:

- ensure the constitution took account of the Council's new political management arrangements; and
- determine whether the current restrictions on motions were still appropriate given the relaxation of Covid restrictions;

and, following consultation with the Leader's Policy Development Board, a number of amendments to the constitution were proposed for approval as follows:

### Motions

It was proposed that the current limit on the number of motions (to one per group) was removed, but to facilitate the conclusion of meetings by 10.00pm, it was proposed that:

- Debate was limited to a maximum of 20 minutes per motion; and
- A maximum of 1.5 hours was allowed for motions at each Council meeting (with the suspension of standing orders being required as previously to permit a meeting to go on beyond 10.00pm); and
- Any motions not debated by the end of a Council meeting would require resubmission in order to be included on the agenda at the next Council meeting, rather than being automatically carried over to the next agenda.

### Leaders Policy Development Board

Membership of this body currently comprised: Leader of Council, Deputy Leader of Council, 1 Cabinet member, Leader and Deputy of the main opposition group and Leaders of any minority political groups. The current wording could cause an issue if the leader of the largest political group wasn't Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council.

It was therefore proposed to close the potential loophole by revising potential membership to include:

- Leader of Council
- Deputy Leader of Council
- 1 Cabinet member,
- Leader and Deputy of the main opposition group
- Leaders of any other political groups.

### Scheme of Delegation

When determining exceptions to our Flying The Flag policy the Chief Executive was currently required to consult with the Mayor and political group leaders, which would exclude the Leader of the Council.

It was proposed to change this to the Mayor, Leader of the Council and group leaders.

### Council Procedure Rules

Currently urgent Committee / Sub-Committee decisions could be taken by the Chief Executive following consultation with:

Chair and Vice Chair if they were from different political groups; or

Chair and Vice Chair, plus main opposition group spokesperson for the Committee / Sub-Committee.

This has ensured that the authority's urgency process involved consultation with the political groups. However, this did not take account of Independent Chairs and Vice Chairs, did not allow for the possible formation of new groups and it did not allow for situations where the Council might have, say, a Labour Chair and an Independent Vice Chair, as at least one political group would not be consulted.

It was therefore proposed that the Council Procedure Rules were amended to require consultation as follows:

Chair and Vice Chair, plus the main spokesperson for each other political group represented on the Committee / Sub-Committee.

### **Resolved**

#### **- That Council:**

- (1) Agrees to amend the Council Procedure Rules to remove the current limit on motions of one per Group at each Council meeting; and**
- (2) Approves an amendment to the Council Procedure Rules to add the revised restrictions on motions proposed in paragraph 3.2 of the report; and**
- (3) Agrees to amend the composition of the Leaders Policy Development Board as set out in paragraph 3.3 of the report; and**
- (4) Agrees to amend the Scheme of Delegation to Officers as set out in paragraph 3.4 of the report in respect of the Flying The Flag Policy; and**
- (5) Agrees to amend the Council Procedure Rules as set out in paragraph 3.5 of the report in**

**respect of those to be consulted when decisions are taken under emergency powers.**

## **47 Minutes of Cabinet**

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022 were submitted.

In respect of Minute 295 – Town Centre Investment Plan and Levelling Up Funding Bid Submission, the Leader reminded members of the three key projects within the submission:

- Redevelopment to an area within the Indoor Market Hall and outdoor pavilions along Peel Street.
- Improvements and redevelopment to the properties of 43-59 Blackburn Road / 2-4 Church Street.
- Improvements and redevelopment to the block 61-69 Blackburn Road, commonly known as Burtons Chambers.

Councillor Peter Britcliffe congratulated the Leader for working cross-party with the local MP to develop the Levelling Up proposals and to support progress. This illustrated the benefits of like-minded people working together.

In connection with Minute 296 – Hyndburn Local Plan, the Leader reported that the plan had now been approved for consultation, which would commence in late summer or early September. The Local Plan would identify employment and housing land up to 2037. The document was ambitious and provided a step change, which would support strong financial growth within the Borough. Councillor Britcliffe reiterated his concern about Blackburn with Darwen's Local Plan and the impact on Green Belt land on the outskirts of Belthorn. He asked that any response from the authority be made in the strongest possible terms to prevent further loss of Green Belt land.

Regarding Minute 298 – Capital Report – Outturn 2020/21, the Leader reminded Members that Councillor Plummer's report had highlighted that this was the fifteenth year that all capital projects had been funded from internal reserves or external grant, rather than from borrowing. He outlined a number of the capital schemes supported within the programme. The report had demonstrated strong financial management. This was a good example of the political parties working collaboratively.

Minute 299 – Museum Accreditation, had demonstrated on-going support for the Haworth Art Gallery.

In respect of Minute 300 – Financial Position Report January 2022, the Leader noted Councillor Plummer's forecast of a positive variance for the year ending 2022. Since that report, the variance was anticipated to improve further to give a final underspends figure of around £600k. This would put the authority in a very strong position and would give the current administration some additional resources from which to consider other programmes. The Leader hoped to be able to say more about this at the September Council meeting. Councillor Paul Cox requested that some money be allocated to improving the grass cutting provision, as complaints had been received recently from residents in Milnshaw that the grass was too tall. The Leader acknowledged that grass cutting was important and agreed to raise this matter with the contractor. Part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation was to 'green up' the town. Councillor Parkinson referred to his predecessor who had launched the floral market town initiative, which was well liked, but had been scaled back due to

financial constraints. Individual councillors often still supported green initiatives within their own wards. However, the Council wanted to see more colour brought back and had ambitious plans over the next 15 years. Councillor Britcliffe thanked Councillor Plummer for her strong financial control and indicated that the position might lead to a zero percentage increase in Council Tax for next year.

In connection with Minute 301 – Former Lyndon Playing Fields Land Transfer, the Leader highlighted the money due from Keepmoat Homes. Councillor Aziz commented that additional resources had been promised previously for Great Harwood as part of this development, but as yet no additional play areas had been provided. He asked when these would be available, as this should be a priority matter. The Leader confirmed that there would be additional funding available for Great Harwood and that a new playground would be developed when the Keepmoat site had been completed. Other investment, such as proposals in relation to Bank Mill House, would flow from the anticipated Leisure Transformation recommendations. The Chair of the Leisure Trust was a local former Labour councillor and county councillor. The Trust’s recommendations were awaited and would be considered carefully, as well as other options which had been put forward for consideration.

Regarding Minute 305 – Arthur Wilson Centre, Councillor Melissa Fisher noted that the reports had been taken in the private part of the Cabinet meeting, but asked why Clayton-le-Moors ward Members had not been kept informed of the developments. She requested that she and Councillor Edwards be kept informed as to any progress. The Leader responded that from time to time confidential reports were presented to the Cabinet as appropriate, but that relevant ward Members were entitled to view the reports and recommendations.

The Leader thanked Councillor Britcliffe for his comments and for his hard work as Cabinet member and county councillor. Local politicians had worked well together during COVID, although some people had been critical of cross-party cooperation. The Leader thanked the MP for her on-going support for the Council’s funding bids to Government.

**Resolved - That the Minutes be received and noted.**

**48 Minutes of Committees**

The Minutes of the following meetings were submitted:

<b>Meeting (Municipal Year 2021/22)</b>	<b>Date</b>
Audit Committee	7 <sup>th</sup> March 2022
Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee	17 <sup>th</sup> March 2022
Licensing Sub-Committee	22 <sup>nd</sup> March 2022
Planning Committee	23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2022

**Resolved - That the Minutes be received and noted.**

**49 Motion(s) submitted on Notice**

**1) Live Streaming Council Meetings**

The following **motion** was proposed by Councillor Josh Allen and seconded by Councillor Dominik Allen under Council Procedure Rule A9:-

“That this Council requests the Cabinet to investigate the feasibility of Live Streaming Council Meetings.

As we're all aware, during COVID the Council moved its meetings online via Teams. Although this was a necessity at the time, the return to in person meetings now means residents don't have the ability to view Council meetings from their own homes.

As we move forward in an age of connectivity and instant access, I think it right that the Council now begin to move into the 21st century and follow what many other councils are already doing, by implementing live streamed meetings.

Not only will this mean residents get to view what goes on during these meetings, something which many did tune in for during COVID, but most importantly, it will bring transparency and help to build trust in what "goes on behind closed doors" at the Council.

We as a Council need to be more accessible and be seen to be working for the residents of this Borough.”

Councillor Josh Allen provided a brief introduction to the motion. As an aside, he mentioned the threat to personal freedom posed by the recent US Supreme Court decision, which had removed the constitutional right for women to seek an abortion in the US.

In Hyndburn, livestreaming of Council meetings using MS Teams had been introduced temporarily during the pandemic, although this had proved a little difficult at first. Live streaming was becoming more of a necessity now, as people wanted to see how the Council operated. Other local public bodies such as Burnley Borough Council and Lancashire County Council, as well as Members of Parliament, already participated in live streaming of meetings. Access via the internet was crucial for some individuals who were without transport, or who had other mobility issues. Live streaming would ensure greater transparency and improve public confidence around decision-making.

Councillor Dominik Allen reiterated the need for live streaming, which presented a great opportunity for the Council. Space in the public gallery was limited and the risks posed by COVID had not disappeared. Hyndburn was a forward thinking authority and should embrace this opportunity.

Councillors Noordad Aziz, Bernard Dawson, Kate Walsh, Melissa Fisher and Paul Cox all spoke in favour of the motion and raised various issues, including the following:

- The improvements sought would better reflect the digital age;
- The recording of live streamed meetings could also be useful;
- Consideration would need to be given to what content should be included;
- Live streaming meetings could help to reduce journeys and traffic;
- Improved access could support those with learning difficulties or disabilities;
- Live streaming could help to showcase the Council's planned investment programmes; and
- Live streaming should be one of the Council's priorities.

The Leader summarised by stating that the Cabinet would be happy to accept the proposal and to look into the issues. Given that the technology would have moved on considerably, since this was last looked at, now would be an appropriate time to reconsider live streaming.

**Resolved**

- **That this Council requests the Cabinet to investigate the feasibility of live streaming Council meetings.**

Signed:.....

Date: .....

Chair of the meeting  
at which the minutes were confirmed