

Council Meeting

Date	27 February 2006
Venue	Lowther Pavilion, Lytham
Councillors	<p>Mayor (Councillor Ron Wilson)</p> <p>Deputy Mayor (Councillor Peter Hardy)</p> <p>Christine Akeroyd, Tim Ashton, Eric Bamber, John Bennett, Harold Butler, George Caldwell, Stephen Carpenter, Maxine Chew, Elizabeth Clarkson, Peter Collins, John Coombes, John Dolan, Kevin Eastham, Susan Fazackerley, Dr Trevor Fiddler, Patricia Fieldhouse, Richard Fulford- Brown, Paul Hayhurst, Howard Henshaw ADK (MALAYSIA), Karen Henshaw JP, Keith Hyde, Alfred Jealous NP, Derek Lancaster, Stephen Mason, Kiran Mulholland, Raymond Norsworthy, Linda Nulty, Elizabeth Oades, Janine Owen, Barbara Pagett, Albert Pounder, Dawn Prestwich, John Prestwich, Simon Renwick, Louis Rigby, Paul Rigby, Roger Small, Heather Speak, Martin Taylor, William Thompson, Thomas Threlfall, Stephen Wall, Colin Walton, Fabian Wilson, Hilda Wilson, Keith Wright</p>
Officers	<p>William Taylor, Philip Woodward, Dave Joy, Ian Curtis, Paul Norris, Tracy Scholes, Brian White, Alan Blundell, Tony Donnelly, Lyndsey Lacey</p>

91. Declarations of interest

Members were reminded that any personal/prejudicial interests should be declared as required by the Council's Code of Conduct adopted in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000.

Councillor Linda Nulty declared a personal interest in item 13 on the agenda relating to Citizens' Advice Bureau, St Annes, in so far as she is a borough council representative on that body.

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Councillor Barbara Pagett declared a personal interest in item 13 on the agenda relating to Citizens' Advice Bureau, St Annes, in so far as she is a borough council representative on that body.

92. Confirmation of minutes

RESOLVED: To confirm as a correct record for signature by the Mayor, the minutes of the council meeting held on 30 January 2006 and the Special Council meeting held on 13 February 2006.

93. Mayor's announcements

1. Member's Choice Debate - The Mayor announced that there would be no member's choice debate at the meeting. Councillor Karen Henshaw, who was selected at random at the last council meeting to lead the debate at this meeting, requested that her debate be held over until the next ordinary council meeting on March 27 so that speakers she has asked to be present would be available.
2. Petition - The Mayor reported receipt of a petition containing more than 1600 signatures, urging the council to maintain the existing level of funding for the Citizens' Advice Bureau at St Annes. The petition organiser also included a copy of a letter from Michael Jack MP, in which Mr Jack expressed concern. The Mayor indicated that although there was no specific item about the CAB on the agenda, the petition would be relevant in the context of item 13, the budget report.
3. Mayoral Ball - The Mayor thanked members and officers for their support for the Mayoral Ball held at the Clifton Arms Hotel on 24 February.
4. Events Brochure - The Mayor indicated that a copy of the mayoral Events Brochure had been circulated round the Chamber. He sought support for the various charity events listed.
5. The Ultrafit 10 Miler race run - The Mayor sought support from members/officers to sponsor Michael Wilson (the Mayor's youngest son) in a ten mile race which was being held in aid of the Mayor's charities. A sponsorship form was circulated at the meeting.

94. Interim Chief Executive's communications

Mr Taylor indicated that he would provide members with an update on local government reorganisation at the next meeting.

95. Questions from members of the council

The following question was received from Councillor Raymond Norsworthy

"Most local authority services cannot operate without staff to run them & therefore one of the biggest expenses faced by local councils is their staffing bill.

In view of later items on tonight's agenda I would like to ask the Leader of the Council if he knows how the staffing numbers at Fylde BC, and the costs

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associated with their employment, compare with other similar local authorities”.

The Leader of the Council (John Coombes) responded as follows:

“ When the Conservatives were elected to power in 2003 the Council had 310 full-time employees. Over the next two years we streamlined the Council’s staffing structures to make them more efficient and in January 2005 we had 301 full-time employees. During the same period the number of management posts was reduced from 18 to 12 with ongoing cost savings of £ 140,000 per year.

However, staffing levels now have increased to 381 as a direct consequence of taking over the waste collection & street cleaning services of Wyre.

Clearly, if you increase your staffing structure by 80 you’re obviously going to increase your staffing budget by several hundred thousand pounds. But expanding this service has proven so cost effective for the Council that it’s the efficiencies we’ve gained through spreading our overheads across this contract that will help us to balance the budget and in future. It should be noted that the balanced budget is not due to a handout from the government to fund concessionary travel, which is what has been suggested recently in the local press by one of the opposition councillors.

It should also be noted that pay inflation increased by 10.5% during this period as a result of nationally negotiated agreements and that we’ve had to take on increased legal responsibilities like liquor licensing, parking enforcement and emergency planning.

In the face of all this we’ve still managed to keep our total staffing numbers at a relatively low level. Comparative statistics provided by Audit Commission on the corporate management costs of councils puts Fylde in the bottom quartile nationally - indicating that we are one of the most cost efficient in the country”.

SUPPORTING DATA

Council	Population	Staff Numbers (2005 - F/T)
South Hams (Devon)	81,000	441
Caradon (Cornwall)	79,000	416
South Holland (Lincs)	79,000	340
Tamworth (Staffs)	75,000	373
Bolsover (Derbys)	71,000	433
Daventry (Warwicks)	73,000	288
Rosendale	66,000	353
Wyre	109,000	498
Fylde	75,000	301

Local Government Pay Inflation

2003	-	3%
2004	-	4.5%
2005	-	2.95%

96. Questions from members of the public

The Mayor indicated that he was in receipt of a question from a member of the public. He explained that the question as submitted was in fact 7 questions and he intended to deal with the first four of the questions at the meeting. The other 3 questions would be deferred until the next meeting.

Question from Mr Moore:

Can the council leader confirm or deny the following:

"a) That the Council meeting of 28 July 2005 received a financial report showing that approximately £512,000 had been taken from the Council's 'General Reserve' to meet a revenue expenditure shortfall from the 2004/05 financial year.

b) That, the same report indicated a sum totaling approximately £1.1 million had been paid into the Council's 'Earmarked Reserves' in respect of the same period.

c) That several of those 'Earmarked Reserves' were newly created in that financial year, and that, at 31 March 05, the total stood at approximately £1.9 million

d) That the attached breakdown of those 'Earmarked Reserves' is a reasonably accurate statement of the total monies paid into and out of each of those 'Earmarked Reserves' during the relevant period."

Councillor Paul Rigby (Portfolio holder for Finance and Efficiency) responded as follows:

"The question is asking for some specific factual financial information. In my role as the briefholder for Finance and Efficiency, I have liaised with the section 151 finance officer to provide a clear, factual answer, which is not party political.

The report presented to Council on the 28 July last year noted a deficit of £512,000 on the 04/05 budget, which had to be taken from general fund balances. However the Council had previously budgeted to use £648,680 from its general fund balances in 04/05 and this illustrates the key problem that we are now trying to address - that the Council was spending more than it was earning on an annual basis and having to rely on its savings built up over the years to balance its books. This approach is not sustainable because when those savings run out we will be faced with having to make massive cuts in services to balance the books.

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It is correct that the Council holds a number of earmarked reserves. And that's just what they are ringfenced monies largely from the government or developers, which are set aside in specific reserves for a specific use. In 2004/05 just under £1.1m were paid into newly created reserves in the following areas:

£625,000 received from developers in lieu of on-site affordable housing provision. This is set aside pending agreement on its use.

£200,000 is set aside as funding to support a different method of housing benefit payments.

£152,000 was received from the government in planning delivery grant, which is being committed to improve performance in the planning service.

£50,000 was set aside for the invest to save fund as agreed by Council

16,000 was set aside to help spread the cost of borough elections

These earmarked reserves were indeed created during 2004/05 as part of the Council's prudential approach to hold funds earmarked for a specific purpose in those stated areas.

All these details are openly recorded and listed in the Council's published statement of accounts, which was approved by the Council on 28 July 2005 and I can confirm that the breakdown referred to is an accurate summary.

The medium term financial plan approved by the Council is to balance the budget without the use of general fund balances as the Council has to learn to live within its means just as we all have to do in our everyday lives."

97. Committee minutes

RESOLVED - To receive the minutes of the following committee meetings:

Committee	Held on
Public Protection	31 January 2006
Performance Improvement Community Forum	1 February 2006
Community Outlook Forum	6 February 2006
Standards	9 February 2006
Development Control	15 February 2006
Cabinet	15 February 2006

98. Notice of Motion

The Mayor reported that in accordance with rule 11.1.1 he had received a Notice of Motion, which was detailed on the agenda. The Notice of Motion sought to rescind the decision by the council on 19 December 2005 to adopt a Leader and Cabinet model of executive governance.

After the motion had been proposed and seconded the Mayor indicated that he would apply council procedure 11.1.4.1 and allow the motion to be considered at the meeting.

Upon the vote being taken the Motion was LOST.

99. Invitation to accept appointment as Deputy Mayor 2006/2007

It was moved by Councillor Harold Butler and seconded by Councillor Dr. Trevor Fiddler and:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY - That Councillor Alfred Jealous NP be invited to accept election by the Council at the 2006 Annual Meeting as Deputy Mayor of the Borough of Fylde for the ensuing municipal year.

100. Forward Plan - financial threshold

Members of the Council were asked to consider a report of Ian Curtis (Unit Business Manager for Legal and Democratic Services) on proposals for a Forward Plan. It was reported that with the council move to an executive system of governance, the council was required to consider what was the appropriate financial threshold for the identification of key decisions to be included in the council's Forward Plan.

Following discussion it was RESOLVED to approve a sum of £100,000 as the appropriate financial threshold for key decisions for publication in the forward plan.

101. Statement of Community involvement

Councilor Roger Small (Portfolio holder for Development and Regeneration) reported on the requirement for local planning authorities to prepare a Statement of Community involvement as part of the new planning system of Local Development Frameworks. Full details were set out in the report.

It was RESOLVED to agree to the draft Statement of Community Involvement for the purposes of Regulation 26 consultation and public participation.

102. Proposals for closer collaboration between Fylde and Wyre Councils

Mr. William Taylor (Interim Chief Executive) reported on proposals for closer collaboration between Fylde and Wyre Councils. He explained that he was seeking approval to establish a joint committee to oversee the future development of common services and closer working between Management Teams on the joint delivery /procurement of services. An extract of the relevant Constitutions on joint arrangements together with a copy of a draft protocol and terms of reference were attached to the report.

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Following discussion it was RESOLVED:

1. To agree in principle to operate a Joint Committee with Wyre and Fylde on the basis as set out in the report.
2. To nominate 3 representatives to serve on the Joint Committee.
3. To encourage the 'linked' executive management team approach.
4. To request the Joint Committee to commission an officer report outlining options for further joint delivery/ procurement of services.

103. Revenue and Capital Budget 2006/2007

Councillor John Coombes (Leader of the Council) presented his budget speech to council. In doing so, he made reference to the revenue and capital budgets for 2006/07 and beyond which were detailed on the agenda. He also made reference to the suggested council tax increase for 2006/2007

After a lengthy and detailed debate it was RESOLVED:

1. To approve the net budget requirement of £9,758,380 in 2006/07 including the fees and charges as set out in the report.
2. To approve a Council Tax increase of 4.95% in 2006/07 giving the Borough band D council tax level of £153.39
3. To approve a 5-year capital programme as outlined in the report, which will be reviewed and rolled forward on an annual basis. All those schemes in section B of the report (ranked B and C) will only be undertaken if sufficient capital receipts arise from the accommodation review. In the immediate short term the Council approves a capital programme in 2006/2007 as defined in Section A of the report.

(Councillor Stephen Mason requested that his name be recorded as having voted against the above decision)

104. Council Tax 2006/2007

Councillor John Coombes (Leader of the Council) presented a comprehensive report on the setting of the Council Tax rate for each property band for the whole of the Borough Council's area, including the Council Tax rate for each property band as set by the County Council, the Lancashire Police Authority and the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority.

The Council RESOLVED that pursuant to powers conferred on the Council as the charging authority for the district by section 2 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992, the Borough Council set the following amounts of council tax for the year 2006/07 for each category of dwelling shown below:

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