



# Penrith Town Council

Unit 1, Church House, 19-24 Friargate, Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 7XR

Tel: 01768 899 773 Email: [office@penrithtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:office@penrithtowncouncil.gov.uk)

Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Meeting of Penrith Town Council held on Wednesday 18 October 2023, at 6.00pm at Unit 2, Church House, Friargate, Penrith CA11 7XR.

## **FULL COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP**

Cllr. Donald  
Cllr. Holden  
Cllr. Jackson

North Ward  
Carleton Ward  
North Ward

Cllr. Knaggs  
Cllr. Lawson  
Cllr. Smith

East Ward  
Carleton Ward  
South Ward

Acting Town Clerk

# **MINUTES FOR THE EXTRA ORDINARY MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL 18 OCTOBER 2023**

## **PTC23/64 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bowen, Burgin, B. Jayson, D. Jayson, Kenyon, Rudhall, Shepherd, Snell, Thomson.

## **PTC23/65 Declaration of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

Members were invited to provide declarations of interests in respect of items on this agenda and apply for a dispensation to remain, speak and/or vote during consideration of that item. The following declarations were made:

- i. Councillor Smith declared a registrable interest in item 5 Expansion of Places at Beaconside CE Primary School Consultation as he is a resident on the Carleton Estate.
- ii. Councillors Donald, Holden, Smith, Jackson and Lawson declared a registrable interest in item 5 Expansion of Places at Beaconside CE Primary School Consultation as the consultation affects their wards.

## **PTC23/66 Public Participation**

### **a) Public Representations**

Members noted that no questions or representations had been received from members of the public.

### **b) Reports from Westmorland and Furness Councillors**

Members noted that no questions or representations had been received from Westmorland and Furness Councillors.

## **PTC23/67 Excluded Item: Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960**

Members noted that there were no items to be considered without the press and public.

## **PTC23/68 Expansion of Places at Beaconside CE Primary School Consultation**

Members considered the Westmorland and Furness Council Consultation Proposal on the Expansion of Places at Beaconside CE Primary School.

### **RESOLVED THAT:**

A corporate response to the Expansion of Places at Beaconside CE Primary School consultation be prepared and circulated to Councillors for additional comments to be then signed by the Chair and submitted to Westmorland and Furness Council.

### **PTC23/69 Statement of Licensing Policy 2024-2029**

Members noted that Westmorland and Furness Council are undertaking a 12-week consultation on its draft statement of Licensing Policy 2024-2029 and considered a corporate response.

#### **RESOLVED THAT:**

A response of no recommended amendments to the Statement of Licensing Policy 2024-29 be submitted to Westmorland and Furness Council but they be asked to clarify if Hackney Fees are going to be consistent throughout the Westmorland and Furness area.

### **PTC23/70 Statement of Gambling Policy 2024-2027**

Members noted that Westmorland and Furness Council are undertaking a 12-week consultation on its draft statement of Gambling Policy 2024-2027 and considered a corporate response.

#### **RESOLVED THAT:**

A response of no recommended amendments to the Statement of Gambling Policy 2024-2027 be submitted to Westmorland and Furness Council.

### **PTC23/71 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)**

Members were requested to reconfirm support for the Penrith Core Walking Zone identified in the Penrith Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

#### **RESOLVED THAT:**

- i. The Council reconfirmed its support for the Penrith Core Walking Zone identified in the Penrith Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.
- ii. Delegated authority be given to the Economic Development Officer and the Deputy Town Clerk to work with Westmorland and Furness Council to support future LCWIP scheme development.

### **PTC23/72 Next Meeting**

Members noted the next meeting of Council was scheduled for Monday 20 November 2023 at 6.00pm, Unit 2, Church House, Friargate, Penrith.

## **PART II – PRIVATE SECTION**

There were no items in this part of the agenda.

**FOR THE ATTENTION OF ALL  
MEMBERS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL**

**Access to Information**

Copies of the agenda are available for members of the public to inspect prior to the meeting. Agenda and Part I reports are available on the Town Council website: <https://www.penrithtowncouncil.gov.uk/>

**Background Papers**

Requests for the background papers to the Part I reports, excluding those papers that contain exempt information, can be made between the hours of 9.00am and 3.00pm, Monday to Wednesday via [office@penrithtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:office@penrithtowncouncil.gov.uk)

**CHAIR:**

**DATE:**



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Mary Oghani  
Assistant Development Management Officer  
Westmorland and Furness Council

BY EMAIL: [school.organisation@cumbria.gov.uk](mailto:school.organisation@cumbria.gov.uk)

25 October 2023

Dear Mary,

The Council considered the Expansion of Places at Beaconside CE Primary School consultation at its meeting of Full Council on the 18 October 2023.

Firstly, the Council wishes to state on record how it values the contribution the school makes to the local community and compliments all the teaching and non-teaching staff at Beaconside School for their tireless work educating and supporting local children.

In respect of the consultation the Council resolved that it is **not in favour of the proposal** as set out in the consultation document. Council believed the information as presented, setting out just the one proposal read more like a process than a consultation.

When the housing development at Carleton was progressed, the clear indication was that there would be a new primary school on the estate. The proposed school appeared on a plan of the housing development and in documentation provided to new homeowners. This consultation proposal abandons this scheme proposal instead to increase the classroom places at Beaconside School.

Council considers this inappropriate given the current and proposed expansion of residential properties in Penrith. The Council are aware that several planning approvals for the development of new homes around Carleton have been approved including provision for 894 new homes, with a current live application for a proposed 105 dwellings yet to be determined. There are also further approvals in the north end of town providing a further 499 dwellings. It is fully anticipated that these properties will be occupied by families with young children. Irrespective of who forms future governments, all political parties are pledging substantial increases in housing stock, particularly affordable homes. Penrith's further future expansion is highly probable and clearly there will be a need for school places.

The distance that some families will have to travel to enable their children to get to school is significant, without there being available public transport, and as such the result could be an increase in pupils travelling to school by motor vehicle on roads and junctions that are already considered to be congested. This proposal will exacerbate further the traffic congestion and parking issues, increasing harmful pollutants from vehicles, that can be particularly detrimental to young children. While schools always try to encourage sensible behaviour, school-related traffic can be a significant problem. With plans for 119 more pupils, there will potentially be up to 119 more parents dropping them, off at school.

As such, a primary school situated near the area experiencing the most expansion would allow children a shorter walk to school from their homes. This fosters a sense of community with a shared focus on their local school.

With 480 pupils Beaconside is classed by Ofsted as larger than average for a primary school and this proposal aims to increase this even further, rising to 599 pupils.

While accommodating 119 more pupils in additional classrooms may be feasible, we would request that consideration be given to evaluate the overall infrastructure of the school to determine whether these are sufficient to meet the proposed increase in school size for instance, toilets, outdoor green space and recreational facilities, indoor space for lunch, sport and assembly; all of which contributes to the whole school experience and which provides holistic provision which is vital for a school's long-term success. As well there needs to be consideration for the additional parking requirements for staff.

It is felt that continuing to add capacity to existing schools is not sustainable. The result being oversized, overcrowded schools. This short-term solution is not sustainable in the long term. Overcrowding can lead to negative long-term consequences. Therefore, the establishment of a new primary school is imperative to ensure the education provision remains viable in the years to come.

Council believed smaller schools often excel in nurturing close-knit, supportive communities among students, parents, and teachers. This, in turn, promotes an inclusive and nurturing environment for children's growth and learning.

A new school could provide scope to keep children of the same family at the same school whilst also creating more spaces to provide stable and longer-term places for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) pupils. It is noted however, that current SEND provision for complex needs is split between North Lakes School and Beaconside School resulting in pupils having to move to schools midway through primary. Also, it is considered that for parents of SEND pupils travelling further distances to school is impractical, uncomfortable and may often require use of the car to transport children to school. For many children, steps to make the school experience more comfortable by proximity to homes is more inclusive. It was felt that SEND pupils were being used as a focus in this consultation as opposed to the wider number of children in the area.

It is unknown whether other primary schools in and around Penrith have had an opportunity to review the consultation. It is likely that in some way this proposal will have an impact on them and their school admissions in the future. It is known that many Penrith children enrol at rural primary schools and whilst there

may be many reasons for this, it should be taken into consideration in the school place numbers should, for any reason, the rural settlements themselves increase in size in the future reducing the intake from out of catchment.

Council was concerned that this consultation was not comprehensive. It was felt that the timescale was too tight, and the consultation document lacked detail. It was felt that the very fact that the consultation cover sheet presented children in a uniform not recognisable as being Beaconside would potentially not attract local people to the consultation. Beaconside, to their credit, sent emails to all parents and children to keep them up to date.

The Council consider that residents and stakeholders should be given a comprehensive explanation of the circumstances that have led to this proposal, including reference to the provisions in the Section 106 agreements associated with approved housing developments.

The stringent timeframes for this process and failure to present any other options for consideration does not provide the public with the opportunity to understand the alternative solutions which could or already may have been explored. It is therefore disheartening to find ourselves in a position where we are being asked to endorse a single proposed option without the opportunity for a comprehensive and meaningful consultation.

It is crucial to consider these concerns comprehensively as we move forward with the expansion of school places. It is the duty of Westmorland & Furness Council to ensure that this expansion aligns with the best interests of the community, particularly its children and their families, and that we fully explore all viable options before proceeding.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'DL' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

Doug Lawson, Chair of Council