

Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee



Date	12 October 2006
Venue	Town Hall, Lytham St Annes
Committee members	Councillor Kevin Eastham (Chairman) Councillor Colin Walton (Vice-Chairman) John Bennett, George Caldwell, Dr Trevor Fiddler, Raymond Norsworthy, Janine Owen, Heather Speak
Other Councillors	Maxine Chew, Barbara Pagett, Roger Small
Officers	Philip Woodward, Ian Curtis, Paul Walker, John Cottam, Julie Glaister, Lyndsey Lacey, Mark Sims, Carolyn Whewell

1. 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.

2. Confirmation of minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 25 July 2006 as a correct record for signature by the chairman.

3. Substitute members

The following substitution was reported under council procedure rule 25.3:

Councillor Janine Owen for the Mayor, Councillor Harold Butler.

4. M55 to Norcross Link Road

Mark Sims (Principal Planning Officer) introduced a report on a public consultation exercise that Lancashire County Council was currently undertaking in respect of alternative routes for the M55 to Norcross Link Road.

Mr Sims explained that for many years the road links between the M55 (junction 3) and Norcross had been subject to severe congestion at peak times.

The background to the process of identifying solutions to the problem which began in the 1980's was set out in the report.

Mr Sims explained that Fylde Borough Council supported the Red Route option at the time and the route was included in successive reviews of the Fylde Borough Local Plan. However, in the Trunk Road Review in 1994, the Department for Transport withdrew its proposal for the scheme. Lancashire County Council continued to safeguard the route for many years but had now resolved to relinquish this.

It was further reported that in response to the problems of congestion which had increased over recent years, a study was carried out in 2004/05 to re-assess the options for reducing the congestion in the A585 corridor. The Fylde Coast sub regional transport study was commissioned by Lancashire County Council, Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde Councils, the Highways Agency and the North West Regional Assembly. A number of route options were developed out of the study and these were currently the subject of a public consultation exercise. A plan showing the alternative route options and a summary of the transport study had been previously circulated.

The Portfolio Holder (Roger Small) attended the meeting and addressed the committee on the five route options.

Mr Sims indicated that a mail shot to 40,000 households throughout the Fylde peninsular about the route options was in the process of being carried out. In addition, a series of exhibitions would be carried out during the autumn period at various locations.

Clarification was sought about the port authority's view on the matter particularly in view of the proposal to construct a link road between Heysham and the M6. It was suggested that the route option could be influenced by the dock and that an alternative route might become superfluous.

Members enquired about the status of the red route and whether this had been relinquished or safeguarded in the County Structure Plan. Mr Sims addressed this point.

It was commented that the Borough Council felt frustrated about the non delivery of the relief road because despite the build up of traffic and population within the Fylde coastal area as a whole, no progress had been made or seemed likely to be made in dealing with traffic to and from Fleetwood and the motorway. In terms of overall beneficial use the Red Route was preferred. The local community had known of its protection in Local Development Plan since the early 1980's

It was further suggested that it would make a significant difference in reducing the time taken for ambulances and emergency traffic to reach the Fylde's only hospital Blackpool Victoria.

The ward councillor for Singleton commented that Singleton had paid a heavy price for the delay in implementing the link road and the Council was willing to support whichever road helped quickly to address the problem and provide a satisfactory solution. She mentioned that this was the forth of such evaluation exercises and it was hoped that this evaluation did not just go through the motions.

After a full discussion the Committee RESOLVED to recommend to the Portfolio Holder that based on the information presented it was minded to support the Red Route with the second option being the Blue Route.

5. Economic Impact Study - Blackpool International Airport

Julie Glaister (Principal Planning Policy Officer) presented a comprehensive report on the findings of the Blackpool International Airport Economic Impact Study

It was reported that York Aviation was appointed by Lancashire Economic Partnership to undertake a study into the economic impact of Blackpool International Airport in May 2006. The study was funded by various bodies (including £2,000 by Fylde Borough Council) and York Aviation was assisted throughout the study by a Steering Group of the same bodies:

Julie Glaister explained that the aim of the study was to improve the understanding of the airport's role in the local area and the sub region and its ability to act as a driver for economic development. In particular, the study would be used to inform a variety of processes and these together with the main findings of the study were detailed in the report.

Members were advised that the study identified the possible types of intervention which could be undertaken by the public sector to support the expansion of commercial airport operations. In terms of this Council's involvement in support and intervention as a local planning authority, both airport infrastructure and surface access improvements would be relevant. In particular, whilst much of the operational development proposed at the airport would fall within permitted development provisions, some development would require planning permission. She added that the Airport together with this Council and other partners were currently progressing work on a surface access strategy.

The Committee expressed its disappointment about the lack of reference to Fylde borough in such an important strategic document. It was felt that the document could be provided as a valuable tool for promoting the borough.

Clarification was sought on various references in the document including "city region" and "EU Guidelines". Both these matters were addressed. Members also enquired why there was no reference in the document to railway infrastructure. It was explained that this would be undertaken as part of a study on surface access improvements.

Following detailed discussions the Committee RESOLVED to note the report and on receipt of the final master plan to request a series of public meetings with the representatives of the Airport and the local community

6. Local Development Framework - Joint Working with Blackpool and Wyre

Paul Walker (Unit Business Manager for Strategic Planning and Development) sought the committee's views on whether the borough council should seek to engage in a full joint working arrangement with Blackpool and Wyre Councils on elements of the Local Development Framework. The existing situation and matters for consideration were set out in the report.

Following discussion it was RESOLVED to recommend that the council work informally at officer level when it was mutually desirable to do so.

7. Housing Land Position: April 2006

Mark Sims (Planning Policy Officer) presented a position statement on the housing requirement and supply situation as at April 2006. This related to the housing figures contained in the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan and submitted draft of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West of England.

Mr Sims explained that the Fordham study which was carried out in 2002 was now out of date. Members commented that the previous survey was too vague and not site specific.

John Cottam (Housing Policy Officer) explained that the new survey would need to be robust to meet government guidelines would also need to withstand scrutiny. Ideally, the council should review its housing needs and conditions at 5 yearly intervals to inform the housing strategy.

Members enquired about the costs associated with the production of the survey and whether the council could influence its remit. Mr Cottam confirmed that there was now greater flexibility to set the remit and in terms of costings, the housing need aspect could be funded from the planning delivery grant whilst the condition survey would have to be funded from other sources.

Following detailed discussions the committee RESOLVED:

1. To recommend to the Portfolio Holders that a new in depth housing needs survey be commissioned within the next 3 months and that this be divided into the distinct areas of Lytham, St Annes, Kirkham and Wesham, Freckleton and Warton and that the remaining rural areas be surveyed on an appropriate parish by parish basis.
2. To recommend that the framework for the survey be brought back to committee at a later date.

8. Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Development Framework

Julie Glaister (Planning Policy Officer) reported on the statutory requirement to undertake a sustainability appraisal of the Local Development Framework throughout the preparation process.

Ms Glaister indicated that Hyder Consulting UK had been commissioned jointly by a number of Lancashire councils including Fylde to prepare a sustainability appraisal scoping report.

The Committee was advised that the purpose of the appraisal was to promote sustainable development through the integration of social, environmental and economic considerations into the preparation of revisions to regional spatial strategies and all new Local Development Documents. Details of the various stages of the process and the key aspects of the scoping report were set out in the report.

A summary of the scoping report was set out on the agenda.

The committee RESOLVED to recommend to Council that the draft sustainability appraisal scoping report be agreed for the purposes of consultation.
