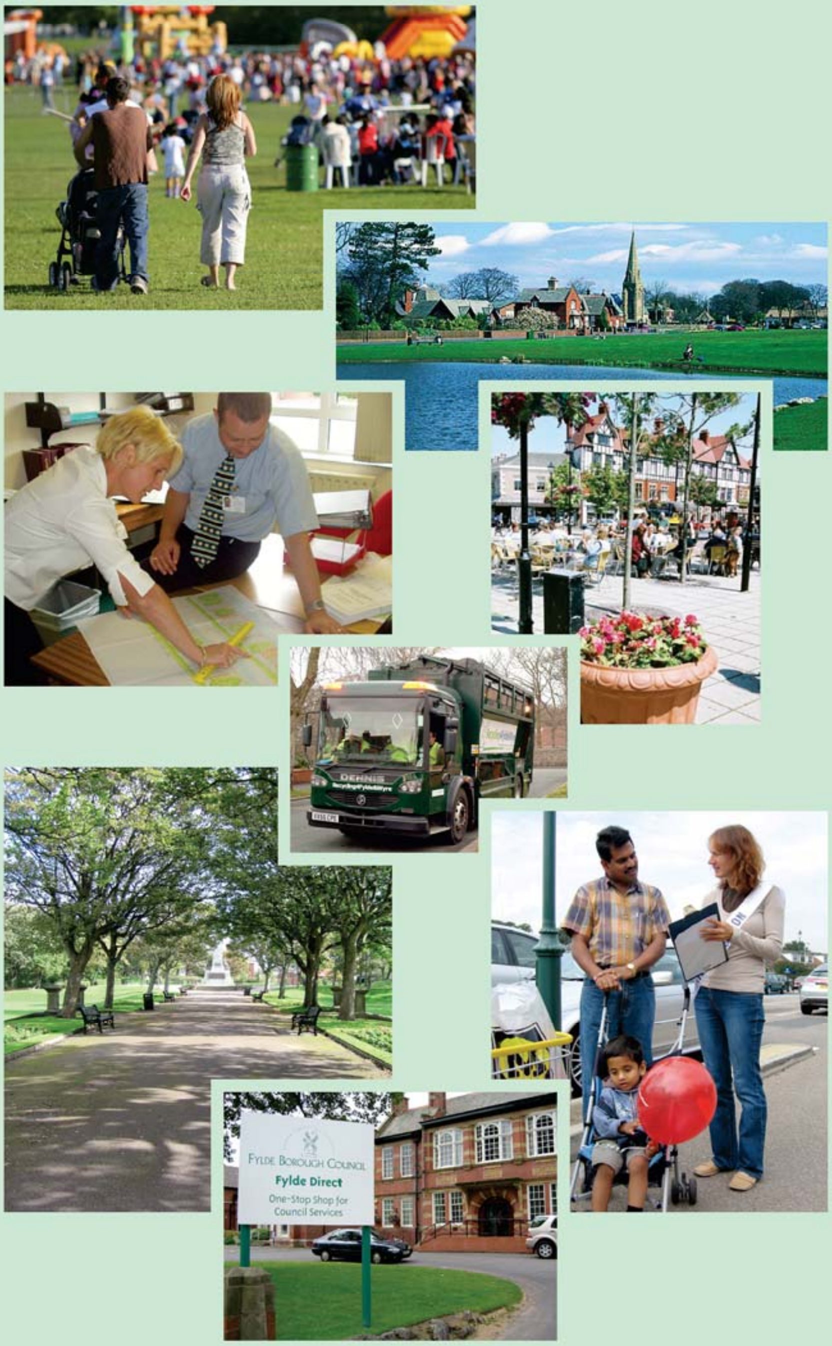

FYLDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

working together for excellence

Meeting Agenda

Policy Development Scrutiny Committee, Town Hall, Lytham St. Annes Thursday 14 July 2011, 6:15pm

The main doors to the Town Hall will be open to the public at 6:00pm

The maximum capacity for this meeting room is 60 persons – once this limit is reached no other person can be admitted.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

CHAIRMAN	Fabian Craig-Wilson
VICE-CHAIRMAN	Leonard Davies

Councillors

Ben Aitken	Frank Andrews
Susan Ashton	Julie Brickles
David Chedd	Simon Cox
John Davies	David Donaldson
Charlie Duffy	Karen Henshaw JP
Edward Nash	Richard Redcliffe
Elizabeth Oades	Elaine Silverwood

Contact: Annie Womack, St. Annes (01253) 658423
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FYLDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

working together for excellence

Our Vision

Fylde Borough Council will work with partners to provide and maintain a welcoming, inclusive place with flourishing communities.

Our Corporate Objectives

• To Promote the Enhancement of the Natural & Built Environment

• To Promote Cohesive Communities

• To Promote a Thriving Economy

• To meet the Expectations of our Customers

The Principles we will adopt in delivering our objectives are:

• To ensure our services provide value for money

• To work in partnership and develop joint working

A G E N D A

PUBLIC PLATFORM

To hear representations from members of the public in accordance with Committee procedure rules

Personal interests

8.—(1) You have a personal interest in any business of your authority where either—

(a) it relates to or is likely to affect—

(i) any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by your authority;

(ii) any body—

(aa) exercising functions of a public nature;
(bb) directed to charitable purposes; or
(cc) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union),

of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management;

(i) any employment or business carried on by you;
(ii) any person or body who employs or has appointed you;
(iii) any person or body, other than a relevant authority, who has made a payment to you in respect of your election or any expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties;
(iv) any person or body who has a place of business or land in your authority's area, and in whom you have a beneficial interest in a class of securities of that person or body that exceeds the nominal value of £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital (whichever is the lower);
(v) any contract for goods, services or works made between your authority and you or a firm in which you are a partner, a company of which you are a remunerated director, or a person or body of the description specified in paragraph (vi);
(vi) the interests of any person from whom you have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25;
(vii) any land in your authority's area in which you have a beneficial interest;
(viii) any land where the landlord is your authority and you are, or a firm in which you are a partner, a company of which you are a remunerated director, or a person or body of the description specified in paragraph (vi) is, the tenant;
(xi) any land in the authority's area for which you have a licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy for 28 days or longer; or

(b) a decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well-being or financial position or the well-being or financial position of a relevant person to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward, as the case may be, affected by the decision;

(2) In sub-paragraph (1)(b), a relevant person is—

(a) a member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association; or
(b) any person or body who employs or has appointed such persons, any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are directors;
(c) any person or body in whom such persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or
(d) any body of a type described in sub-paragraph (1)(a)(i) or (ii).

Disclosure of personal interests

9.—(1) Subject to sub-paragraphs (2) to (7), where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority and you attend a meeting of your authority at which the business is considered, you must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent.
(2) Where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority which relates to or is likely to affect a person described in paragraph 8(1)(a)(i) or 8(1)(a)(ii)(aa), you need only disclose to the meeting the existence and nature of that interest when you address the meeting on that business.
(3) Where you have a personal interest in any business of the authority of the type mentioned in paragraph 8(1)(a)(viii), you need not disclose the nature or existence of that interest to the meeting if the interest was registered more than three years before the date of the meeting.
(4) Sub-paragraph (1) only applies where you are aware or ought reasonably to be aware of the existence of the personal interest.

(5) Where you have a personal interest but, by virtue of paragraph 14, sensitive information relating to it is not registered in your authority's register of members' interests, you must indicate to the meeting that you have a personal interest, but need not disclose the sensitive information to the meeting.

(6) Subject to paragraph 12(1)(b), where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority and you have made an executive decision in relation to that business, you must ensure that any written statement of that decision records the existence and nature of that interest.

(7) In this paragraph, "executive decision" is to be construed in accordance with any regulations made by the Secretary of State under section 22 of the Local Government Act 2000(**d**).

Prejudicial interest generally

10.—(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority you also have a prejudicial interest in that business where the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.

(2) You do not have a prejudicial interest in any business of the authority where that business—

(a) does not affect your financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in paragraph 8;

(b) does not relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or any person or body described in paragraph 8; or

(c) relates to the functions of your authority in respect of—

(i) housing, where you are a tenant of your authority provided that those functions do not relate particularly to your tenancy or lease;

(ii) school meals or school transport and travelling expenses, where you are a parent or guardian of a child in full time education, or are a parent governor of a school, unless it relates particularly to the school which the child attends;

(iii) statutory sick pay under Part XI of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, where you are in receipt of, or are entitled to the receipt of, such pay;

(iv) an allowance, payment or indemnity given to members;

(v) any ceremonial honour given to members; and

(vi) setting council tax or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Prejudicial interests arising in relation to overview and scrutiny committees

11.— You also have a prejudicial interest in any business before an overview and scrutiny committee of your authority (or of a sub-committee of such a committee) where—

(a) that business relates to a decision made (whether implemented or not) or action taken by your authority's executive or another of your authority's committees, sub-committees, joint committees or joint sub-committees; and

(b) at the time the decision was made or action was taken, you were a member of the executive, committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee mentioned in paragraph (a) and you were present when that decision was made or action was taken.

Effect of prejudicial interests on participation

12.—(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), where you have a prejudicial interest in any business of your authority—

(a) you must withdraw from the room or chamber where a meeting considering the business is being held—

(i) in a case where sub-paragraph (2) applies, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence;

(ii) in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at that meeting;

unless you have obtained a dispensation from your authority's standards committee;

(b) you must not exercise executive functions in relation to that business; and

(c) you must not seek improperly to influence a decision about that business.

(2) Where you have a prejudicial interest in any business of your authority, you may attend a meeting (including a meeting of the overview and scrutiny committee of your authority or of a sub-committee of such a committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the business, provided that the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose, whether under a statutory right or otherwise.

REPORT

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
CUSTOMER & OPERATIONAL SERVICES	SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	14 JULY 2011	4

MODERNISATION OF THE WASTE SERVICE – FROM BOXES TO BINS

Public item

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

Summary

The report provides details of a number of options available to bring about an improvement to the waste collection service while at the same time achieving service delivery efficiencies.

Recommendations

1. That the Committee scrutinise the proposed waste service delivery improvement options and provide any relevant feedback to the officers and Portfolio Holder as part of the consultation process.

Portfolio Holder

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Customer & Operational Services is Councillor Albert Pounder.

The Service Background

1. The current waste collection arrangements in place at Fylde were established in 2004. At that time Fylde was one of the first collection authorities to introduce a three stream waste collection service. This essentially involved weekly collections of different waste materials with waste for disposal collected one week followed by waste for recycling the other week.

2. The changes meant that residents still receive a weekly collection of waste but are required to sort the waste. By sorting the waste into recycling and disposable waste the Council benefits from the cost sharing agreement with the disposal

Continued....

Authority which is Lancashire County Council. The cost sharing agreement is currently £18.10p per household per annum which results in a total of £656,215.50p per annum for Fylde. In order to qualify for the cost sharing agreement payment a household must participate in the three waste stream collection arrangements. These arrangements make a significant contribution to the service and are a key reason why the current cost of the service equates to £1.16p per week per household.

3. The cost sharing arrangements have been driven by the need to reduce the amount of waste being sent to landfill which is subject to penalty payments through the per tonnage charge, this is currently £88 per tonne. The other factor in this is the need to recycle more in order to reduce current and future waste as well as contribution to environmental benefits.

4. If Fylde had not introduced the three stream waste collection service the projected cost of the service with the landfill tax for disposal currently at £88 per tonne would be approximately £1.50 per week per household or just over an additional £640,000.

5. Over the 7 years of the three stream waste collection service the residents of Fylde have been supportive with excellent participation rates with many requests for more containers to recycle more waste that have not abated to this day. The opportunity and the benefits of recycling have been embraced by the majority of the community in Fylde.

6. As the Collection Authority, Fylde is required to put in place collection arrangements that are compatible with the Disposal Authority infrastructure. In 2004 there was a requirement for a number of recyclable materials to be sorted at the point of collection. This meant that residents required a green bin for green waste and cardboard, a green box for plastics, tins / cans and glass and a blue bag for paper. Residents were required to sort the materials into the different containers however the Disposal Authority required the plastics, tins / cans and glass to also be sorted.

7. It was unacceptable and impractical to expect the residents to sort these as well. Collection arrangements were put in place that enabled the crew to sort the plastic, tins / cans and glass at the roadside. This required the use of side loading, as opposed to rear loading, vehicles called Kerbsiders.

The Service Changes

8. Over the last seven years and in particular over the last 18 months the Disposal Authority has made significant changes to their infrastructure that has led to changes to the collection service. The new multi million pound PFI facilities at Leyland and Thornton are a key part of the new infrastructure along with the move away from landfill sites. Also during this time the recycling industry has become more sophisticated and the requirement to sort different materials has changed. The key changes are listed below:

    - The requirement to separate cardboard from green waste leading to the introduction of the white paper/cardboard sack at Fylde

- The ability to co-mingle (collect as mixed) plastics, tins / cans and glass removing the need for roadside sorting and removing any benefit the Kerbsider vehicle had and in fact making side loading a disadvantage

- The option to place food waste in either the grey or green bin – meaning that the majority of the waste that would lead to odour and / or vermin problems can be disposed of each and every week

9. The Collection Authority (Fylde) has had to respond to the changing requirements of the Disposal Authority and the changes in the wider waste market in order to continue to benefit from the cost sharing arrangement. However, this is not always an easy task because the main equipment required for the collection service, the vehicles and the containers, are expensive. The majority of vehicles and containers are purchased over the life of the asset and typically paid for over a five or seven year period. This means there is typically a time lag between the required changes made by the Disposal Authority and the most efficient means of collection. Heavy duty vehicles and thousands of containers cannot simply be procured, delivered and distributed without appropriate finances and proper planning.

The Service Challenges

10. The current service at Fylde is facing several challenges as a result of the need to make collection arrangements appropriate to the finances and other resources available at the time. This has led to a service where the green bin can no longer be used for cardboard. A white sack has been introduced for cardboard and paper and inadequate green boxes are used to collect plastics, tins / cans and glass using vehicles designed for road side sorting.

11. Residents in Fylde are more than happy to recycle and take a great deal of pride in doing so. However, a significant number of complaints are received about the containers and the collection arrangements. The number one reason for contacting the Council is to request additional or replacement green boxes for recycling. A single 55 litre green box is insufficient for most household recycling requirements with many households requiring three or four. The problem of limited capacity will become a bigger problem with the potential introduction on new dry recyclables such as yoghurt cartons, tetra pack and other materials that in future may also be co-mingled with the plastics, tins /cans and glass.

12. The annual cost of replacing green boxes is approximately £10,000. Some investigation has been carried out into why this is the case and the findings showed that a larger majority of residents simply recycle more but the green box is also very versatile. Officers and members have reported seeing them as flower boxes, storage containers and after a cut or two the seat of a go kart. Replacing the green box is a challenge that we have been looking to address, something with more capacity and with less alternative uses are key criterion.

13. The other aspect of the service that receives a large number of enquiries is the white sack used for cardboard and paper collections. The white sacks were introduced as a best value option at a time when the Council had several key financial targets to achieve. A large number of the white sacks get lost or as with the green box alternative uses are found for them and there is a considerable

number replaced each week. The sack has been relatively unpopular as a means of storing cardboard and paper, although the actual number of residents that have complained is low in comparison to the 36,255 households that have a sack we have carried out customer research to obtain additional feedback. The nature of the local environment with strong coastal winds and the capacity of the sacks have been particular issues. Providing an alternative to the white sack is a challenge that we have been looking to address, something with more capacity and more substance are key criteria.

14. The side loading Kerbsider vehicles are due for replacement in two years time. With the developments in collection and sorting of recyclable material the demand for Kerbsider vehicles has decreased. The majority of authorities that have moved to alternate weekly collections over the last few years have been able to co-mingle the dry recyclables making the use of a larger bin far more economical than the boxes. The vehicles required to support bin collection schemes are rear loading and as such the availability of Kerbsiders has decreased and the price has increased. Procuring Kerbsider vehicles for the same cost in a less mature market is a challenge that will need to be addressed.

15. Visual conformation of the challenges with both the green box and the white sack can be experienced by viewing any street on collection day. The combination of the green bin, a white sack or sacks, one or more green boxes and some of the older blue bags are untidy in appearance before and after collection. The dedication of many residents to recycle often means that multiple sacks, bags and boxes are placed out for collection.

The Blue Bin Pilot Scheme

16. In November 2010 the Council was successful in securing a grant from the County Council to pilot a project that involved replacing the 55 litre green box (or boxes) with a blue 240 litre wheeled bin for the storage and collection of co-mingled recyclables. Research that supported the bid for funding indicated that a significant number of residents would recycle more waste if they had a larger container. It was found that once the 55 litre green box was full many residents would 'feel that' they had fulfilled their recycling requirement and put recyclables into the grey bin until the box or boxes were empty again.

17. The other findings from the research in support of the pilot scheme included the untidy appearance of multiple boxes, the challenges with and without lids, the side loading vehicles now that sorting is not required at the point of collection and the constant demand for replacement boxes. The pilot scheme took place in Staining because of the geography of the village in terms of its location in the borough and the suitability with the collection rounds.

18. Results from the pilot scheme were encouraging and included:

- Over 20% increase in the weight of glass, cans and plastic bottles recycled

- An average decrease of over 500kg per collection in the amount of waste sent for disposal

- An estimated annual decrease of 13 tonnes in the amount of waste sent for disposal

- Participation has increased from on average of 80% to consistently over 90% per collection.

- If the success of the blue bin scheme in Staining was replicated across the borough, conservative estimates indicate that the amount of waste sent for disposal would fall by 188 tonnes and the amount of glass, cans and plastic bottles recycled would increase by over 370 tonnes per year.

- A reduction in operating costs as a result of the containers and the use of a traditional rear loading vehicle – savings realised in time, fuel and labour

- An increase in customer satisfaction and positive feedback from residents comment post scheme satisfaction surveys are due to start on 4/7/11 and finish on 20/7/11 – this will provide evidence of satisfaction rates

- A reduction in the number of complaints about the collections in the area including missed collections

- No requests for additional or replacement containers and a very small number of damaged bins

19. It should be stated that when the bins were originally delivered to the 900 plus households in the pilot area two residents objected to having a bin as opposed to a box. Residents were given the option of keeping the boxes for one of the many functions they could be put to use or leaving them out to be returned. The majority of residents retained the 'storage' boxes and put them to good use.

20. The pilot scheme was deemed a success and officers were tasked with investigating the possibility of extending the scheme to other areas of the borough and the cost implications of this.

The Service Delivery Options

21. The Modernisation of the waste service over the last 18 months has produced a number of financial and operational benefits. The improvement achieved as a result of the Modernisation work along with a stable budget position and the longer term certainty of collection requirements created as a result of the PFI facility has presented an ideal opportunity to review the service delivery arrangements. Officers have been working on options that can address the current challenges experienced with the service whilst at the same time deliver financial savings and improve operational efficiency. A number of key objectives were set which included:

    - To improve and future proof the collection arrangements for dry recyclables

    - To introduce collection arrangements that are appropriate to the disposal requirements and offer long term stability

- To increase the levels of customer satisfaction with the collection service
- To increase the level of recycling across the borough
- To improve the operational efficiency of the service
- To achieve the improvements within existing service budgets

22. The requirement to achieve financial savings was not one of the objectives set. However, the three options under consultation all provide financial savings when compared to the current operational budgets for the service. If the success of the blue bin scheme could be replicated across the borough there are clear operational and financial efficiencies to be realised.

23. The team led by the former Assistant Director of Operational Services carried out a full and detailed analysis of all the operational costs and procurement implications of vehicles and containers. Three options have been proposed that can offer a part or whole solution to the current challenges experienced by the service and at the same time offer savings.

24. The existing collection service requires different vehicles to collect different dry recyclable materials. This means that two vehicles each with a driver and at least one crew member are required to collect dry recyclable materials adding significantly to the cost of the service.

25. Three alternatives have been detailed below to provide options to replace green boxes and white sacks with wheeled bins for the collection of co-mingled dry recyclate (plastic bottles, cans, glass bottles and jars) and paper / cardboard respectively. Table 1 provides details of the current cost of the collection service together with the proposed costs of the three options while Table 2 includes the indicative savings to be achieved for each of the options against the current service.

Option One - 240L W/B to replace Box (free of charge)

26. Option One is to build on the success of the blue bin pilot project in Staining and to provide a 240 litre blue bin to every household in the borough free of charge. The blue bin would be used to collect the dry recyclable material that is currently placed in the green box. Residents will have the option to retain the existing box, or in most cases boxes they have, and put them to one of the many multiple uses already identified. This option will require the Kerbsider vehicles to be replaced by Twin Pack vehicles that are capable of collecting all the dry recyclable material at once removing the need for two vehicles resulting in operational service efficiencies.

Option Two - 240L W/B to replace Box (free of charge) & 240L W/B to replace White Sack (chargeable)

27. Making changes to collection services requires a great deal of time and resource particularly in planning and communicating the changes. The white sacks, in fact any bag or sack used to collect cardboard and paper has proven to be unpractical

and unsightly. The weather often gives rise to problems with sacks or bags and residents have required several to accommodate all the material. Option 2 is the same as Option 1 but with residents having the option to purchase a brown bin to replace the white sack / blue bag for paper and cardboard.

Option Three - 240L W/B to replace Box & 240L W/B to replace White Sack (free of charge)

28. The Council may face a challenge for charging separately for a brown bin and it could create a two tier service delivery system that discriminates against the less wealthy members of the local community. Option 3 seeks to address this by proposing that all residents are offered a brown bin for the collection the cardboard and paper free of charge. Even with both bins being provided free of charge there is a saving to be made from the service changes.

29. These options aims to provide a cost effective option for the future of recycling collections that will improve recycling rates and customer satisfaction whilst also improving operational arrangements and reducing operational costs. Not considering these options and remaining with the existing arrangements (55L Green Box and white sack) will not provide the potential service delivery benefits and savings identified below.

Table 1: Comparison of Costs

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Ongoing
Current Service	**£717,033**	**£717,033**	**£717,033**	**£717,033**
Option 1	**£622,554**	**£613,054**	**£551,170**	**£551,170**
Option 2	**£619,054**	**£609,554**	**£547,670**	**£547,670**
Option 3	**£708,742**	**£699,242**	**£637,357**	**£637,357**

Table 2: Comparison of Savings

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 1-3 Savings	Ongoing
Current Service	**£ -**	**£ -**	**£ -**	**£ -**	**£ -**
Option 1	**£94,479**	**£103,979**	**£165,864**	**£364,321**	**£165,864**
Option 2	**£97,979**	**£107,479**	**£169,364**	**£374,821**	**£169,364**
Option 3	**£8,291**	**£17,791**	**£79,676**	**£105,759**	**£79,676**

All figures except for the current service costs are estimates based on the current price of vehicles, labour and containers.

30. All the estimated costs for each option are based on using the existing procedures and processes to procure the containers and vehicles and the extensive knowledge and experience of the officers responsible for the service. There could be further savings through the financing of the containers and vehicles but this would be determined by lending rates at the time of purchase. The calculations have taken consideration of none productive staff time and a 5% allowance for sickness absence. All the savings are conservative estimates.

31. The three options presented in this report achieve savings primarily because of the changes made to the operation of the service. These savings are achieved by the changes form the Kerbsider vehicles to a Twin Pack vehicles reducing both the number of vehicles and employees to deliver the service. Any reduction in the number of employees will be managed through the reduced use of agency employees and the scheduled end dates of employees on fixed term contracts.

32. The fact that every option would achieve a saving compared to the existing service and the need to change the collection arrangements when the Kerbsiders need to be replaced are sound reasons for this modernisation of the service. The feedback received from residents as part of the day to day survey work carried out and the analysis on customer contact including complaints support the lack of popularity for the boxes, white sacks and blue bags. The reduced number of requests for replacement boxes and sacks would also create additional capacity to deal with further service improvement.

Advantages of Wheeled Bin Recycling Service

33. A number of key advantages have been identified in connection with the delivery of a wheeled bin recycling service including:

- Increased storage capacity makes it easier for residents to recycle
- Increased recycling rates and decreased waste sent to landfill
- Improved waste containment and less spillage
- Improved street cleanliness and customer satisfaction
- Reduced manual handling risks for crews and residents
- Reduce replacement costs for lost boxes / white sacks

Risks and Mitigating Measures

34. Various risks have been associated with the transition from a kerbside box to a wheeled bin. These are detailed below with mitigating measures:

Risk	Mitigating Action
A percentage of residents will not want	Comprehensive consultation with residents and ‘selling’ of the benefits realised from the pilot project

additional bins	Effective promotion and communication of the changes, road shows, press coverage and focus on the health and cleanliness benefits and safety, strength and capacity of bins. Obtain buy in from key stakeholders and alternative of smaller size bin will be possible for properties with a accommodation issues. A simultaneous campaign to review the need for the green wheeled bin in properties where there is no garden will lead to the reduction of a bin in some properties and further operational savings.
Failure to deliver the operational efficiencies	Operational staff will be involved with the planning and delivery of the service change. Routesmart software will be utilised to model the collection rounds to optimise vehicle routing and allocation of resources. Existing fixed term contracts and agency use will allow for reduction of the staffing levels. Existing data on bin replacement rates compared to boxes and sacks support estimates of savings on resources and cost. Bartec in cab technology will monitor numbers and collections.
The Disposal Authority change arrangements	The cost of the PFI facilities has led to longer term reassurances, plans and commitments from the Disposal Authority. Lancashire wide waste group must be consulted on future changes and almost all the authorities have changed collection arrangements for the long term.
Additional contacts during the roll out period	The successful model used for the initial introduction of wheeled bins will be applied with a dedicated number and staff for the launch. All media will be used to communicate the changes – press, leaflets, social media and web.

35. The proposals are consistent with the Modernisation Strategy that has supported the transformation work in Operational Services and the changes will deliver the following outcomes:

- Improve existing collections & future proof the collection arrangements
- Address the two biggest sources of complaints about the service
- Meet customer expectations for better containers
- Increase overall customer satisfaction
- Increase recycling levels – generating more income

- Reduce waste for disposal – saving on cost
- Create a tidier borough – less spillage and not as unsightly
- Create capacity and reduce waste through less contacts
- Deliver service operational savings

36. Members of the scrutiny committee are an important part of the consultation process and as such are asked to provide any relevant feedback on the proposals.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	The financial implications are outlined in the main body of the report. Further reality checking of the financial data is currently being carried out to confirm the estimates produced by the operational service team.
Legal	There are no direct legal implications arising from the report.
Community Safety	There are no direct community safety implications.
Human Rights and Equalities	There may be some indirect impact if any of the containers were offered through optional charging. The potential adverse impact on those residents with lower incomes would need to be part of an equality impact assessment.
Sustainability	The change to alternative containers for dry recyclable material will support additional recycling volumes and reduced waste for disposal.
Health & Safety and Risk Management	There are no direct health and safety or risk management implications arising from the report.

Report Author	Tel	Date	Doc ID
ALLAN OLDFIELD	**(01253) 658576**	**JUNE 20TH 2011**	

List of Background Papers		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection

List of appendices

None

REPORT

FYLDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM
DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES	**POLICY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**	**14TH JULY 2011**	**5**

FYLDE COAST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Public Item

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

Summary

The Cabinet considered a report at its meeting in June with regard to a draft Fylde Coast Economic Development Strategy. Cabinet has asked that the Scrutiny Committee consider the strategy in the light of the Council's strategic approach to economic development.

Recommendation

1. That members consider the attached draft Fylde Coast Economic Development Strategy together with the Fylde Borough Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan (2008 – 2021), receives a verbal update from officers and makes comments to Cabinet.

2. That the Committee consider the merits of establishing a time-limited and focussed task and finish group to draw together comments and recommendations on this matter.

Reasons for recommendation

To seek the comments of the scrutiny committee in order to inform the council's strategic approach to economic development.

Alternative options considered and rejected

The request is made direct from Cabinet and no other option/approach is considered.

Cabinet Portfolio

The item falls within the following Cabinet portfolio:-
Planning & Development: Councillor Trevor Fiddler

Report

1. Cabinet considered a report at its meeting in June with regard to a draft Fylde Coast Economic Development Strategy. Cabinet resolved 'that the Council's policy and strategic approach to economic development be referred for further consideration and comment to the appropriate scrutiny committee and that the comments of that committee be reported back to Cabinet at the earliest opportunity'. The report and draft strategy are attached at Appendix A.
2. The draft Fylde coast strategy has been drawn together in recent months on behalf of the four councils operating on the Fylde coast and in consultation with representatives of private sector businesses in the area. It is a reflection of the current sub-regional approach by the Coalition Government to economic regeneration following the abolition of the Regional Development Agencies.
3. Prior to this (in October 2008) Fylde Borough Council adopted an Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan covering the period 2008 to 2021 (attached at Appendix B). It was recognised at the time that the challenge ahead was to continue to secure further inward investment thorough engagement with strategic funding bodies at a regional and sub regional level so that the Borough Council would be able to continue its improvement and regeneration agenda.
4. However, the change in government in 2010 and the dramatic reduction in regional funding that was previously available for economic regeneration projects has meant that local authorities are now required to adopt a more collective and partnership approach to such issues through the recently established Local Enterprise Partnerships, which, in Lancashire, is based on the County Council footprint. It is clear that any bids for the substantially reduced inward investment resources that will be available in future now need to be developed on a sub-regional, collaborative basis.
5. Scrutiny members are asked to consider whether the actions contained in Fylde Borough's Economic Development Strategy for the period 2008 to 2012 remain relevant and whether these are reflected sufficiently in the draft Fylde Coast Economic Development Strategy. Members may also wish to consider any emerging actions they consider should be included in the next phase of the Fylde Borough Strategy.
6. At the meeting officers will give a verbal update as to progress against the Fylde Borough strategy and will comment on the linkages to the draft Fylde Coast Strategy under consideration. An up to date overview of economic development initiatives and structures from a national, regional, sub-regional and local perspective will also be given at the meeting

7. Scrutiny members are asked to consider the draft Fylde Coast Economic Development Strategy and comment whether they think it reflects the needs and ambitions of Fylde Borough moving forward.

Report Author	Tel	Date	Doc ID
Paul Walker	(01253) 658431	30th June 2011	

List of Background Papers		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection

Attached documents

Appendix A - Report to Cabinet 28th June 2011 containing the draft Fylde Coast Economic Development Strategy

Appendix B - Fylde Borough Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2008 - 2021

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	None arising directly from the report.
Legal	None arising directly from the report.
Community Safety	None arising directly from the report.
Human Rights and Equalities	None arising directly from the report.
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None arising directly from the report.
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None arising directly from the report.

REPORT

FYLDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM
STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT	CABINET	28TH JUNE 2011	9

FYLDE COAST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Public Item

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

Summary

The Council is a shareholder in the Fylde Coast Economic Development Company. This body provides the recognised route for liaison for the Councils on the Fylde coast with the Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership.

The EDC has developed an Economic Strategy for the Fylde Coast to guide future dialogue with the LEP and future priorities for targeting inward investment. This report presents a final draft of the Economic Strategy for the Cabinet to consider and endorse.

Recommendation

1. That the Cabinet endorses the Fylde Coast Economic Development Strategy.

Reasons for recommendation

To seek endorsement of a strategic and co-ordinated approach to economic development issues across the Fylde coast in order to access new sources of inward investment.

Alternative options considered and rejected

The Cabinet could choose not to endorse the strategy. However, this is not recommended as it is likely to place the Fylde coast generally and the Borough specifically at a disadvantage in securing external investment.

Cabinet Portfolio

The item falls within the following Cabinet portfolio:-
Planning & Development : Councillor Trevor Fiddler

Report

Background and Current Position

1. The Council adopted an Economic Development Strategy in 2008 after analysis and consideration of the relevant issues by the Scrutiny Committee.
2. This has been used as part of the evidence base from which to develop the Local Development Framework. It has been further refined in relation to coastal areas of the Borough by the production of the Lytham St Annes 2020 Regeneration Vision during 2010.
3. Throughout this time the Council has been collaborating with other councils on the Fylde coast (Blackpool, Wyre and LCC), through the MAA and the Fylde Coast Economic Development Company (EDC), to adopt a co-ordinated approach to promote the economic wellbeing of the local sub-region on the basis that many of the drivers of economic prosperity are not constrained by the artificial boundaries of individual councils.
4. On the basis of this ongoing collaboration the Fylde Coast EDC has developed an Economic Strategy for the sub-region, which is based on the individual strategies of the component council's. A copy of the final draft of the Strategy is attached at Appendix A.
5. Officers of all Fylde coast councils have been involved with the drafting of the Strategy. Its main purpose is to provide the underlying rationale and references to substantiate future bids for inward investment from the Regional Growth Fund.

Conclusion

6. Since the announcement was made in 2010 to abolish Regional Development Agencies and the significant funding streams at their disposal it is more important than ever that a sub-regional strategic context is in place for the promotion of economic development on the Fylde Coast. The draft attachment at Appendix A is intended to provide this context.

Report Author	Tel	Date	Doc ID
P Walker	(01253) 658431	June 2011	

List of Background Papers

Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Attached at Appendix A	June 2011	Town Hall

Attached documents

Appendix A - Draft Fylde Coast Economic Strategy

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	None arising directly from the report.
Legal	None arising directly from the report.
Community Safety	None arising directly from the report.
Human Rights and Equalities	None arising directly from the report.
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None arising directly from the report.
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None arising directly from the report.

AN ECONOMIC STRATEGY FOR THE FYLDE COAST.

CONTENTS

Vision and Principles

The Fylde Coast has a unique history dominated by a once booming tourist trade and the subsequent re-structuring of the visitor economy. Whilst this legacy has shaped the present, Fylde Coast partners are committed, through this strategy, to fashioning a prosperous future.

Vision

By 2030, the Fylde Coast will have a dynamic and diversified economy with opportunities for everyone. Visitors will come from every walk of life to enjoy both the classic seaside and the excitement of a city on the beach, as well as family attractions and new cultural offerings. It will be a creative and fantastic place to live, invest and do business.

The principles of this strategy

- Fylde Coast will be known as resurgent destination, bringing people from every sphere of life to enjoy a wide-ranging offer.

- But Fylde Coast will not just be known for tourism, there will be new jobs in a wide range of expanding industries.

- We will ensure that these opportunities are open to all, in order that the Fylde Coast becomes a desirable, healthier, safer, sustainable and prosperous place to live.

- This is an added value strategy. We will do those things that it makes sense to do at the level of the Fylde Coast. We recognise that this area is part of a wider Lancashire and Northwest and that we will work together to make a more prosperous whole.

Blackpool and the Fylde Coast today

Many more people know Blackpool than the neighbouring boroughs of Fylde and Wyre. They were brought as children to marvel at the Illuminations or enjoy a traditional seaside holiday. But there is much more to this part of the world, and the coastal zone, which stretches from Fleetwood in the north to Lytham in the south, has something to offer everyone.

The urban strip from the Wyre estuary in the north to the Fylde estuary in the south is almost continuous and represents a contained and functional economic area with contiguous housing markets and tight travel to work catchments. The rural area between the coast and central Lancashire is largely agricultural with market towns and villages throughout.

Blackpool was once the seaside holiday of choice for millions of northern workers and the sea airs were welcome relief from the cities of Manchester, Liverpool and mills of East Lancashire. When the trains eventually came to Blackpool, the town's development hit full tilt. Season after season new attractions opened to thrill and amuse the daily hordes of cotton workers arriving at the station on their annual wakes weeks.

The other resorts also grew, with Lytham gaining a more gentile reputation alongside the brashness of Blackpool and the port of Fleetwood growing around its established fishing industry.

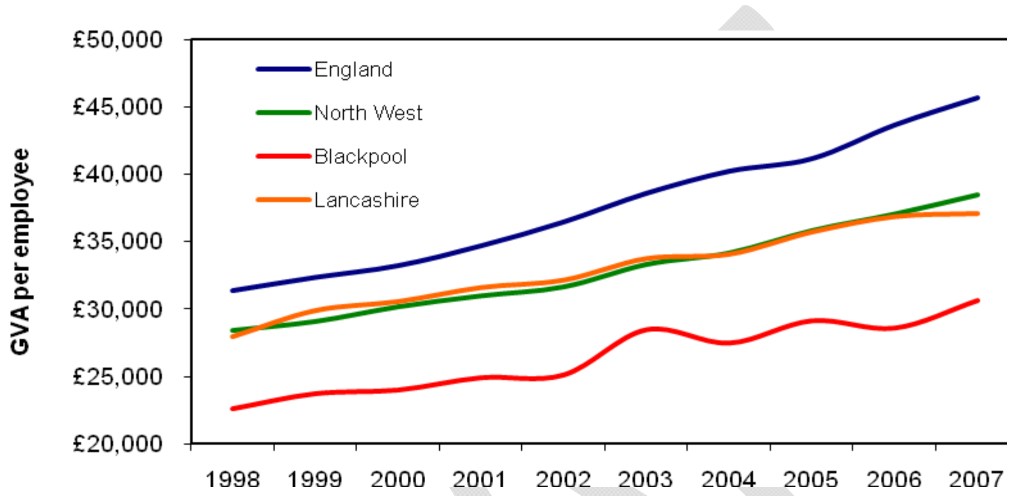
Up until the 1950s the coast went through a peak in its popularity, checked only by the interruptions of war. The decline in the cotton industry and the Lancashire mills with their wakes weeks combined with the new possibilities offered by European travel and the opening of the M55 linking the coast to the M6 all signalled a decline in visitor numbers staying for longer periods in the resorts as they became more accessible for day visits.

Today, the total population of the Fylde Coast today is just under 330,000[1] and has been relatively stable since the start of the 1990s. Growth through immigration has masked the changing demographic of the coast – a falling birth rate and an ageing population, as it became a desirable place to retire.

The inner areas of the urban strand bear a striking similarity to the inner areas of some of the larger cities, with entrenched deprivation and widespread reliance on worklessness benefits, as well as poor health and morbidity outcomes. Blackpool has four of the 50 most deprived lower Super Output Areas in England.[2]

[1] Population estimate at 2008
[2] Taken from the 2007 Indicies of Multiple Deprivation, there are 32,482 LSOAs in England

The size of the Fylde Coast economy is around £4.8bn – some 2% of the North West economy. Productivity per employee remains stubbornly low, an indication of the strong leisure and tourism focus and a lack of a real knowledge economy base. Skills levels are also low and reflect the nature of the work on offer. Level 3 and 4 skills are in short supply and, whilst the area out performs the rest of the UK on level 1 and 2 skills, this masks a need to improve the performance of the Fylde Coast across the board, but more specifically in Science, Technology, English and Maths (STEM) subjects.



Why is the Fylde Coast such an important geography?

Fundamentally the economy of the whole area is compact and functional. The coastal urban zone has a single housing market and a self-contained labour pool but ultimately the different towns on the coastal strip are bounded by a similar legacy with similar challenges, which it makes sense to seek to resolve at a level above the administrative boundaries of the partner districts.

The Fylde Coast, with an estimated GVA of £4.8bn is neither a huge economy nor, outside of the strong aerospace presence at BAe in Warton and nuclear supply chain at Toshiba Westinghouse at Springfields, a centre for knowledge intensive industries and science and technology. It is in essence a coastal city with a rural hinterland which has the potential to defy the legacy of its past and begin the long process of restructuring its economy – with a higher value tourism at the centre but new jobs in established sectors giving opportunity to those deprived communities in the urban cores.

This is a blueprint for 20 years of development, but it is authored in today's national and global economic conditions. Today, 2011, is a time of unprecedented reduction in the size of the public sector and low confidence in the private sector following 2 years of recession. This places further imperative on working at the right economic geography and achieving every possible efficiency in delivering growth.

A new partnership of Fylde Coast Local Authorities (Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre) together with Lancashire County Council and the private sector has been forged, and this economic strategy that they have jointly developed is vital in achieving these goals not simply because it is the right economic model nor the most cost effective but simply put, if the Fylde Coast is to regain control over its destiny it needs a single aim **- A New, Restructured Economy**.

The objectives of this strategy

"Bringing Blackpool back" has to be a key objective. The town is the focus of the tourist draw, and it lies at the centre of the transport and economic infrastructure on the coast. Blackpool is also the draw for the vast numbers of visitors that form the economic backbone of the Fylde Coast. Over recent years much has been done to develop the visitor economy infrastructure – a new seafront, redevelopment of the Tower and Winter Gardens as well as new investment into the Pleasure Beach and Sandcastle.

However, whilst the visitor economy will always be at the heart of the Blackpool economy, successful modern UK resorts need year round employment and other private industry to maintain prosperity. As there is currently little infrastructure to provide to diversify Blackpool's business base it is essential that the town centre provides the accommodation to meet the needs of office based jobs.

One of the key issues is the need to **retain retail spend within Fylde**. Analysis shows that spend leakage of around 23% - largely to Preston has a depreciating effect on the town centres on Blackpool, Fleetwood and Poulton.

Talbot Gateway provides part of the answer to this issue. It will create a new central business district in the town centre, new office accommodation and more importantly, with the arrival of an electrified line to Preston and the potential for direct trains to London, a gateway to the Fylde Coast.

The second objective is to **up-shift the value in the visitor economy** and, as part of achieving this, arrest some of the drivers of imported deprivation to Blackpool. These are inherently linked. One of the legacies of the Fylde Coast heyday is the sheer volume of bed-spaces in hotels and guesthouses. Whilst the urban myth that Blackpool has a greater number of bed-spaces than the whole of Portugal may not be true, the reality is that, as the visitor market changes, over supply is causing the properties that do remain trading to compete on price rather than quality. When combined with the inherent incentives afforded by the current housing benefit system, guest houses that fail are often converted quickly into socially rented Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) as this provides landlords with profitable returns on very modest investments in low quality accomodation. It is estimated that there are around 2,400 HMOs in Blackpool alone. The accessibility of accommodation in the fairly liberal environment of a holiday town is attractive to many already accustomed to a dependency lifestyle elsewhere.

The third objective is the **continued growth in those sectors, other than the visitor economy, that already have a strong foothold on the Fylde Coast**. The main diversification of the Fylde Coast from the visitor economy, in common with many coastal towns is the wide provision of Public Sector employment across the area. Whilst the sector at a national level is not inherently productive in itself the companies which serve it and the local spend from public workers is important to the economy on the Fylde. However, with 37% of the working aged population engaged in working for the public sector and 20% involved in the visitor economy this represents a fundamental lack of resilience. Between 6,000 and 9,000 jobs are expected to be lost in this sector on the Fylde and the private sector is not yet geared up to take on many of these workers. Our priority has to be developing those key areas where there are strengths e.g food processing, environmental technologies, chemicals, aerospace, nuclear and some corporate back office service functions. Above all we need to persuade existing businesses in these areas to grow, provide the right conditions for other firms to invest and work with Lancashire colleagues to support and benefit from the Pan-Lancashire companies, such as BAe, that have a presence on the Fylde Coast.

In order to achieve these objectives a number of strategic priorities have been identified, which, if pursued across the wide reach of the public and private sector partners will help make the ambitions of this strategy a reality.

Strategic Priority 1: A productive visitor economy for the future

The Fylde Coast, with Blackpool at its core, has traditionally provided a varied and vibrant visitor experience supplemented by top quality attractions and plentiful accommodation. Despite best efforts to retain the appeal of the original mass-market holiday, Blackpool in particular has struggled to adapt to changing customer expectations in terms of the leisure experience, and that has generally fed a self-sustaining cycle of decline, only recently stemmed by potentially transformational investment in its key leisure assets.

The Fylde Coast will develop a new, more productive, coastal visitor economy offer accessible and attractive to a wider demographic.

Examples of successful diversification and improvement of the visitor offer are there to be seen across the Fylde Coast from new attractions and holiday park experiences to an improved and varied accommodation offer. These offer choice, variety and, in many cases, provide a glimpse of how to bridge the quality gap.

Rationale

As visitor numbers to the coast have declined, traditional Fylde Coast visitor economy businesses have found it difficult to invest in the quality of their offer at risk. As businesses have closed the overall effect has been to reduce the visual and aesthetic of the main resorts and deter further investment.

The once buoyant market for guest houses, and considerable oversupply has led many now to compete on price rather than quality. This encourages budget thrill seekers rather than higher spending families and inevitably leads many guest houses falling out of profit. Failed guest houses have previously been turned into low quality social and private rented accommodation that in turn attract transience and its subsequent impact on the main holiday areas has been dramatic.

Much is being done to tackle what is a huge issue for the inner urban areas of the coast. These challenges are recognised in Blackpool’s emerging spatial planning policy, where proposals to consolidate resort areas will be pursued, but it is clear that additional help is required to encourage re-investment in existing stock and to create opportunities to replace old for new in order to bring about a sea change in perceptions.

At the higher end, hotels like the Hilton, ’Big Blue’ and the award winning “Number 1 South Beach” prove that quality can thrive. Recent investment includes three new Travelodge premises (two new build and one refurbishment), which help to supplement and change the offer in Blackpool. Across the Fylde, evidence of

The Winter Gardens

Blackpool Council purchased the Grade II listed building along with in March 2010 and stage one of the renovation of the landmark has cost £1.25m.

The first phase of the restoration of Blackpool's Winter Gardens has already been completed and included the Floral Hall, Church Street entrance and Rotunda being refurbished, returning the building to its former glory.

In recent times it has not had the investment it needed, meaning many parts of the building had started to fall into disrepair. Wonderful architectural features of the building have been restored with the overall aim of attracting more visitors.

The buildings themselves are to be secured for the future, but more than this, the Winter Gardens will play a vital new role through the proposed hotel and convention complex in bringing back conferences and business tourism to Blackpool. The new and upgraded performance spaces will in turn attract different and wider audiences and the public space and café's in the Floral Hall will offer new, higher quality experiences for shoppers and visitors. All this translate into higher visitor spending patterns and a more sustainable year round economy.

reinvestment is relevant and should be encouraged, particularly in the lead up to the Open Golf Championship in 2012.

What is happening now?

Visitor numbers have stabilised and are even back on the up. It has already been widely recognised that the offer has improved, and visitor numbers have once again started to climb with the Coast attracting new and higher spending visitors. The events strategy over recent years has re-introduced new people to Blackpool, with spectacular events like the 'Showzam' festival, beach volleyball events and the highlight of the BBC's 'Strictly come dancing' season in the tower ballroom.

The acquisition of Blackpool Tower and the Winter Gardens by Blackpool Council Brings these 2 vital assets back into public ownership and this will act as a catalyst for a substantial injection of private sector capital. Major new operators such Merlin, who operate many major UK and worldwide attractions, have been brought in to run elements of the attractions and bring vital expertise and access to new markets. The new Nickleodeon land investments at the Pleasure Beach expand the offer to a new generation of children which, allied with other investments helps make the case for family visits and longer stays.

What do we need to do?

Despite the recent stabilisation and success, visitor spend remains stubbornly low. Estimates of £23 per day of average visitor spend in Blackpool reflect the need for transformational change in the offer to keep people longer, attract a new and higher spending visitor base and make **more appeal to families** with higher disposable income.

Growth in the business visitor and conference market will also be vital, in particular to sustain jobs, higher quality accommodation and year round operations. In recent years political party conferences have tended to take advantage of new convention centres and growing accommodation offers in cities like Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool at the expense of the traditional seaside venues. Whilst conventions such as the National Homing Pigeon event still attract thousands to Blackpool each year, there is a growing need to provide 21st century conferencing facilities and accommodation such as that proposed at the Winter Gardens to help attract business visitors with growing expectations.

Opportunities to attract further investment that will bring new, lapsed and repeat visitors to the Coast cannot be ignored. Breadth and quality of offer in mainstream attractions is very important to create a sense of wonder and anticipation and to encourage visitors to spend whilst in the area.

The Fylde Coast is blessed with a wide variety of other assets, including open countryside, coastline and beaches, ecological and heritage sites and some of the country's finest, and most challenging, golf courses. The area has a rich association with entertainment and the arts and regularly hosts national and international dance events. The opportunity to build around these strengths should be explored and new ideas nurtured to complement a year round Fylde Coast activity and events schedule.

The first action required is **a change of culture from chasing raw numbers of visitors to widening the demographic** and increasing the value of the Visitor Economy. Value rather than numbers should be the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for all we do.

We will **improve and restructure the accommodation offer, particularly in Blackpool** by raising standards and basic skills of businesses and pursue radical new policies that encourage stock reduction, more boutique hotels and contemporary accommodation.

We will tell the UK and the world that the Fylde Coast is changing through **a Brand Building process** on the back of existing initiatives such as the 'City on the Beach' in Blackpool. This might include direct marketing to investors, bringing back conferences and conventions, and shared approaches with attractions and the tourism board.

Crucially we will continue to **diversify the attractions** to encourage a wider demographic with greater spending power. New opportunities and sites such as Central Station should be looked at with this in mind. A greater focus on cultural tourism and high quality events could provide a change in perception.

It is also essential that the coast re-engages with the conference and business travel market. The refurbishment and redevelopment of the Winter Gardens will make a transformational change to the conference offer, but the coast's significant assets such as Marine Hall in Fleetwood and smaller conference venues also have their role to play.

We will do more to capitalise **on existing high value visitors to the Fylde Coast** and potentially use the hotel infrastructure to position Blackpool as a centre for touring the other visitor attractions – the Lake District, Forest of Bowland and further North. The Coast is currently known to millions as the home, every four years, to Open Golf and the success of 'Strictly Come Dancing' has rejuvenated Blackpool's Ballroom dancing reputation. Rural areas also have a role – diversification of agricultural businesses can provide a wider family experience across the coast.

Ultimately we will do everything we can to ensure that the overall experience is right. Today's visitors, and higher spending visitors have high expectations on quality and experience. Families in particular, will only bring children into safe, clean and appropriate environments. To achieve this, these hygiene factors must be in place if we are to encourage the return of those higher spending families – and in reality it is Blackpool and Fleetwood where this challenge is greatest. Over recent years great strides have been made in clamping down on businesses trading illegally as well as enforcement against HMOs. Much has been done to improve the town centre retail offer, cleanliness, visual appearance, the sea front, zoning nightlife and tram system with yet more on the cards. However some key issues remain such as the need to tackle signage, presentation, town centre management, car parking and building enforcement to ensure the visitor experience is.

Strategic Priority 2: Provide the physical infrastructure for a mixed economy

Alongside a more productive visitor economy, the Fylde Coast economy needs to diversify. The three threats of public sector cuts, the medium term disestablishment of Nimrod and Harrier programmes at BAe Warton and a declining visitor economy create clear risks for an area so dependent on the public sector, tourism and defence contractors. Diversification will not occur overnight – the conditions need to be in place to encourage new firms as well as growth and innovation in existing ones.

We need to enable and support the private sector to grow by the provision of key sites, infrastructure and the right economic conditions to deliver a wider diversified and competitive economy able to draw maximum benefit from targeted sectoral strengths, including those outside the Fylde Coast.

Rationale

To date, the Fylde Coast has had enough of the right kinds of infrastructure to meet its needs – the railways brings in tourists, the M55 provides quick links to Preston and the motorway network and across the area there is an adequate supply of sites to house public sector workers. Large industrial units like ICI Hillhouse and BAe Warton were largely self sufficient in infrastructure needs. Today, the landscape has changed and the need to diversify has become paramount.

Whilst the Fylde Coast can boast some significant infrastructure advantages including the airport, M55 link, tram links and Port of Fleetwood, there are significant challenges in providing the right conditions for diversification. There is:

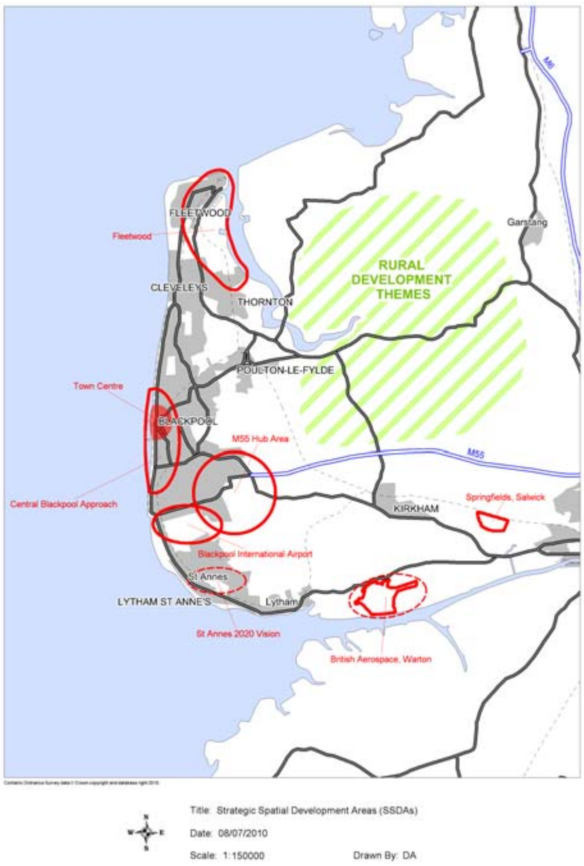
- No Central Business District within Blackpool Town Centre or adequate supply of office accommodation.
- A deficiency in the supply of land and quality buildings to support the requirements for indigenous business growth and inward investment in targeted sectors.
- Poor provision of broadband/ telecommunications capacity, drainage and availability of electrical power.
- A distance to travel to the rail/motorway backbones and no regular direct train service to London.

Many of the existing industrial and commercial locations have the potential for significant improvement, but suffer from lack of presentation, management and focused promotion. Lower than average rentals and poor market perception of investment returns restrict the ability to generate the required investment to deliver a step change in quality.

There is a clear need to provide a functional central business district for Blackpool town centre. There is currently little office activity and space available with much of this dispersed to locations around the town.

But there is significant potential. The area can also boast an international airport with an economic impact that was estimated in 2006 as 700 direct and indirect FTEs and £20 million to local economy. More recently, the usage levels have dropped and direct jobs at the airport sustained at around 85, possibly due to competition and the downturn as well as constraints in runway length and apron availability. The airport is now adopting long terms recovery plans that will allow it to consolidate in the short term and will include a new masterplan of the area which might release new development land on the site.

The picture for broadband speeds in the Fylde Coast is mixed. The major urban centres, including Fleetwood, Thornton, Poulton le Fylde, St Annes and Lytham, have good download speeds of over 6.5 mbps. Outside these centres speeds are generally much lower. In rural areas of the Fylde Coast they can be below 5.0 mbps or even 2.5 mbps, which is inadequate for many businesses.



What is happening now?

It has already been agreed by the partners that activity will be focused upon a select number of locations that have the greatest existing potential for improvement. We have identified seven Strategic Sites:

- Blackpool Town Centre
- Fleetwood/Hillhouse
- Airport Corridor
- Blackpool Approaches
- M55 Hub
- BAe Warton
- Toshiba/Westinghouse/Salwick

These sites represent the most strategic opportunities in terms of available land, infrastructure and accessibility. Work is ongoing at all of these sites to progress development opportunities and promote investment.

Hillhouse

The Hillhouse Business Park offers a prime strategic location for industrial, commercial and residential development. This combined with community and service facilities, provides major opportunities for investment in the Fylde Coast.

Wyre Borough Council and NPL Estates, the site owner, has an active working partnership and the integration of the area is being co-ordinated through a development framework.

Residential, commercial and industrial aspirations for the Business Park include:

- leisure
- recreational and healthy living developments
- country parks and waterside features
- energy and waste technology parks
- energy conservation and renewable resourcing

Office developments are scheduled for the first phase of an office park, with space for the inclusion of technological research and development facilities. The Business Park is already home to Victrex Plc, Asahi Glass Company Ltd., and Vinnolit, chemical and plastics manufacturers, and SLP Precast, manufacturers of the coastal sea defence wall, along with recently completed successful major investments.

What do we need to do?

Provision of new town centre business accommodation through The Blackpool Central Business District (Talbot Gateway) has to be the priority action for the Fylde Coast.

Provision of new high quality office space in the centre of Blackpool within walking distance of Blackpool North Station – the Talbot Gateway proposals - will provide a serious opportunity for investment and help revitalise the town centre. When government plans to electrify the Preston-Blackpool line materialise, the Blackpool CBD will a crucial economic driver at the gateway o the Fylde Coast.

There is **a clear need to resolve a number of critical rail issues** including a link to Fleetwood Port and the heavy industrial sites at Thornton. There is clearly good news on the horizon with electrification of the Preston – Blackpool line, but to take full advantage we need to upgrade the rail link to Lytham, link the tram system to the rail and secure a fast, reliable direct service to London.

I**mprovements on the roads are required,** such as the link from the M55 to Fleetwood and relieving traffic going north to south in Blackpool. In the medium term, the vital Yeadon Way link from the M55 to Blackpool will need vital maintenance and upgrade.

Blackpool International Airport is an asset, but has declining usage. Between 2000 and 2005 Blackpool was the fastest growing regional airport but passenger numbers declined from 558,000 in 2007 to 276,000 in 2009. We will investigate potential ways of arresting the decline, including more apron space for airplane overnight stops.

We will develop quality new sites for investment. There are a number of sites adjacent to existing facilities including Fleetwood Port and Blackpool Airport, as well as those in less central locations such as Hillhouse and the Whitehills Hub. The SSDAs listed above cover all the major areas of opportunity and potential economic activity in the area and offer a sound basis for future growth.

Investors today, particularly those in knowledge-based sectors worry less about transporting goods but more about connectivity, speeds and reliability of data transfer. We will work with Lancashire County and private sector **partners to improve broadband speeds in the Fylde Coast.** This will make it make it attractive for more knowledge-based companies and create more jobs outside the traditional sectors.

We need to consider spatial or thematic approached to emerging government policy on **Enterprise Development Zones**. Learning the lessons of previous similar approaches we need to use these initiatives as well as all the means at our disposal and new tools like Tax Increment Financing to encourage development and investment in our strategic sites.

Strategic Priority 3: A vibrant private sector with confidence to invest

Outside of the Visitor Economy and the public sector, the Fylde Coast is reliant on a small number of large firms to provide skilled employment. The vast majority of firms in the area have less than 50 employees within fairly low skilled areas of work. Over the next 20 years jobs, in manufacturing and the public sector are set to shrink. Moderate growth in business and financial services is expected.

Table X. Sectoral composition of the Fylde Coast business base.

	Blackpool%	**Fylde%**	**Wyre%**	**NW%**	**UK%**
Manufacturing	7.4	31.6	9.9	11.6	10.2
Construction	3	3.5	6.9	5.2	4.8
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	31.4	19.2	27.8	23.5	23.4
Transport/comms	3	2.4	3.6	5.8	5.8
Finance/IT/Business	10.2	17.9	9.2	19.7	22
Public and health	37.3	20.7	35.3	28.2	27
Other services	7.4	3.7	4.8	4.9	5.3
Tourism related	16.4	9.1	9.9	8.2	8.2

In general the Fylde coast has low business density but there are some clear positives - The total number of businesses in Fylde Coast has grown at faster rate (17%) over the last 10 years than the North West as a whole but growth is unequal between the districts. Fylde has seen a 30% increase, Wyre 21% and Blackpool has risen only slightly. Business churn figures, which are particularly low in Blackpool, suggest however that whilst recent programmes like the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) has helped develop the SME business base in Blackpool, significantly more needs to be done to drive an enterprise culture capable to delivering the diversity of employment that the area requires.

Rationale

If the economy is to diversify it is clear that we need to grow or attract more medium sized firms to provide a variety of skilled employment across the area. The Fylde coast already has some sectoral strength which include:

- Chemicals
- Energy and environmental technology
- Marine
- Aviation and aeronautics
- Food processing
- Business services and back office
- Visitor Economy - Leisure and hospitality

Without encouraging more businesses to invest here or start up and grow – particularly in these priority sectors, the likelihood of weaning ourselves away from a reliance on the public sector and visitor economy is small, and the Fylde Coast is left clearly vulnerable to macroeconomic factors and shifts in government policy which affect both the public sector and individual large employers reliant on defence contracts.

What are we doing now?

Activity is already underway through regional programmes to help business start-ups and we are already seeing over 100 new businesses supported through this process each year. European Rural Development Programmes are similarly working with land based businesses in rural parts of the Fylde coast. Work is also underway to help develop the creative sector in Blackpool – through initiatives such as the FYC centre in Blackpool Town centre and the future creative hub attached to the Winter Gardens

Following the success of the Blackpool Local Economic Growth Initiative (LEGI) which finished in 2011, new schemes have been in place locally to provide grants, venture capital and mentoring to local firms, and wherever possible public sector procurement looks to local firms to provide services.

More recently, the private sector has come together to play its part in delivering on this, through business networking, engagement and mentoring initiatives such as Wyred up and the Blackpool Business Leadership group.

Business on the Fylde

Wyred Up started in 2008 to encourage local companies to trade with each other and take advantage of significant inward investment opportunities. It provides local businesses with the opportunity to network, share services, link into agencies and other support. Wyred up also supports businesses to find local suppliers and access the local labour market.

The **Blackpool Business Leadership Group** is a private sector led organisation, comprising of a range of businesses with representation from tourism, manufacturing, construction, retail, finance and other business services. It meets six times a year and one of its key objectives is to drive up business confidence in Blackpool. It also acts as a ‘champion’ for the business community, providing lobbying, feedback and consultation on a range of national and local government activities

What do we need to do?

It is clear that it is going to be **increasingly important to help new businesses – especially those outside the visitor economy - grow and thrive**. We will do whatever we can to provide the advice, mentoring, skills, finance and leadership to nascent and growing firms

We will sell the Fylde Coast as a place to invest. The Fylde coast is an attractive place to live and an excellent place to invest, but we need to be better at getting this message to the rest of the UK and the global marketplace. The offer has to be clear and compelling and resonate with potential investors.

We will be more focussed in working with sectors and firms in those sectors identified earlier where the Fylde has a competitive advantage. We need to continue to be pragmatic about those sectors that will thrive here. The Fylde coast does not have the infrastructure for a science and research base for example, but there are many areas where the Fylde leads the way, and other areas such as the creative sector where the quality of life and environment provide real potential for future development in this area.

We will help the private sector play its part in leading change. Fylde business groups are already taking the lead in addressing many of the issues that face the area. However, we need to do more to ensure that the private sector is at both the heart of decision making on the economy and able to take a greater stake in working with the public sector to grow the economy through mentoring small firms, highlighting barriers and investing collectively for the common good.

Strategic Priority 4: A skilled workforce for the future – making sure our youngest have the best possible start

Given the strong interrelationship between a strong sustainable economy and large concentrations of locational deprivation at the urban cores of Blackpool and Fleetwood it is clear that transforming the economy of the Fylde Coast, is a generational challenge. The people who are going to be at the heart of that new economy are, many of them, not even born yet.

All the evidence points clearly the fact that children growing up in non-working families are more likely to do less well at school and as a result their aspirations mobility and life chances are often fundamentally impaired. It is equally clear however that this does not have to be the case, and that it is possible, where opportunity and input is provided at the earliest stages of a child's life, to break the cycle of generational dependency.

Rationale

Why should we concentrate on the youngest?

The benefit bill for Blackpool alone is estimated to be over £1 Billion per year. The cost of health inequalities and wider social costs linked to deprived neighbourhoods will add to this significantly. But it is not just the cost of meeting this bill that creates a national and local imperative, moreover the fact that the locational nature of many of the deprived areas makes any desired growth in the resorts core visitor economy very difficult. This cycles back into low wages, seasonal employment and poor living conditions making change in these areas virtually impossible.

You don't solve this problem until you break the cycle.

Physical interventions can only go so far, what everyone recognises is the need to work with communities to provide opportunity and aspiration and breaking the generational cycle of unemployment is at the heart of this.

It is widely accepted that the experiences and care in the first five years of life have a wide-ranging impact on the outcomes for a child in later life. In short, every pound spent investing in the quality of care, education, health and well being of our pre-school children is paid back multiple times as that child and their peer group perform better in school, cause less damage on society through crime and anti social behaviour and reduce dependency on the state and health systems. This a colossal drain on resources with £230k per year being the cost of a 16 year old locked up in a secure unit for want of a few hundreds of pounds of help developing parenting skills some 16 years earlier.

Some examples such as the randomised control trial in the Elmira study in New York demonstrated that mother which went through the “Nurse Family Partnership” were less likely to abuse or neglect their children, less likely to abuse alcohol/drugs and more likely to come off welfare support and maintain stable employment.

What does this mean in Blackpool? The child poverty strategy indicates that over 9000 children live in poverty in Blackpool equivalent to 29.3% of all children. This is concentrated at the heart of the resort with the wards of Bloomfield, Claremont, Park, Brunswick, Talbot and Clifton each having at least 40% of all children living in poverty, which is equivalent to at least 500 children in each ward. Around 2/3 of all children lining in poverty in Blackpool do so in single parent homes.

Currently, statutory intervention begins in as the child starts school. In areas where children are growing up in poverty and more chaotic families, teachers are often left to restore some balance, and in many cases this is an uphill challenge.

What are we doing now?

The health visiting service works with families of pre-school age children and has undertaken a programme of in depth training for staff to help them support mothers to breast feed longer and 96% of clients responded positively to the help and support provided and Chlamydia screening is being provided to all mothers at the 3 month post natal review.

Even before birth the Family Nurse Partnership offers a programme of intensive home visits by family nurses to young women pregnant with their first baby. 61% of this cohort initiated breast-feeding compared to the overall 50% in Blackpool and 35% of mums reduced smoking as part of the programme.

Across the Fylde coast there is a comprehensive network of Children’s centres offering:

- Free groups and activities for mums,dads, carers and children 0-5
- Adult learning and short training courses in parenting, first aid, confidence building and pamper courses as well as some free child care support.
- Advice on early education and speech and language development
- Parent support groups for mums and dads, Childcare advice and help finding a child minder

- Advice on money and benefits, finding employment and gaining skills such as interview skills and help writing an application

What do we need to do?

It is clear that across the coast and in Blackpool in particular, progress has been made but in Blackpool maternal and neonatal health indicators are still stubbornly negative and performance at secondary schools poor. We need to prioritise the need to intervene earlier and engage families with the system so that we can offer the support that is needed when it is needed.

- **Our youngest need to be placed at the heart of the 'family unit' approach** to tackling deprivation. Where we are providing better outcomes for families in need or with chaotic lifestyles, we should be prioritising the outcomes for any pre-school children as a matter of course.

- Agencies need to develop **a 'single offer' for all children born on the Fylde Coast** that will foster and encourage new levels of engagement between parents and services. This might include advice on nutrition, supporting parenting, developing core skills in reading and writing as well as ensuring that all relevant benefits are being taken up.

- **Maternal health** is a key causal factor in producing healthy birth weights and an indicator of future outcomes. Blackpool has one of the worst statistics for smoking in pregnancy in the UK. We need to do whatever we can to ensure that mothers are given the best possible advice and support during their pregnancy and beyond for their own well being and that of their children

Strategic Priority 5: A skilled workforce for today – jobs and skills for a new economy

Education and skills are the lifeblood of any modern economy, as they tend to encourage higher levels of investment and more productive economic activity in general. Improving residents' skills levels not only fosters aspiration but expand the opportunities available to all.

The skills of workers on the Fylde Coast today tend to follow the economic geography, with highest levels of educational attainment tending to relate to the rural areas. The Fylde borough is home to many of the Level 3 (A level equivalent) and 4 (degree equivalent) residents. This may be related to the older retired population and the presence of BAe at Warton.

Blackpool, with its tight urban boundary, has a different profile with high levels of residents with no qualifications and much greater Level 1 (basic) or 2 skills (GCSE equivalent) levels than Fylde. Wyre tends to be similar in profile to Blackpool with fewer individuals with no qualifications.

This low level nature of skills in the inner areas is closely associated with worklessness and low pay. Worklessness/unemployment is often hidden in the statistics by the seasonal nature of much of the available low skilled work on the Fylde Coast. However, it remains an intractable problem, particularly in the inner areas.

On the demand side of the economy, many of the employers in the low wage service sector associated with the visitor economy are not looking for skilled residents and many report few gaps in skills. There are many examples of employers that see no advantage in supporting their employees to gain even basic skills. The larger employers on the Fylde Coast, such as BAe and Toshiba Westinghouse are exceptions and are looking for higher and more specialist skills and their employees are often prepared to travel from elsewhere. These firms are more likely to offer apprenticeships and fund improvement. The other large employers in wider sectors, such as insurance, financial and manufacturing, tend to report the largest skills gaps.

The primary objectives of this strategy – **to diversify the wider Fylde Coast economy with a more productive visitor economy at its core** – rely on a workforce capable of stepping up to the challenge.

Not only do we need the workless to re-engage with employment and training but we also need those in work with low-level skills to prepare for jobs outside the service sector. More office and call centre based jobs, given the right conditions could thrive here and there are opportunities for more manufacturing jobs particularly in the environmental technologies sector.

Rationale

Most areas of the Fylde Coast do not (yet) need a steady stream of experienced graduates to fill jobs in the knowledge or high tech industries. We need to grow these people for the future. What it does need right now, are more people both ready for work and with the flexibility to meet new challenges in the work place.

The area's traditional reliance on the visitor economy and the public sector is under pressure. If current trends continue, and the expected shocks to the local economy from the rationalisation of the public sector and a reduced presence of BAe systems at Warton site, then, in the medium term there will be serious implications for the Coast more widely.

What are we doing now?

The skills infrastructure on the Fylde Coast is a strong one. There are a number of excellent 6th Form and FE colleges providing skills for post 16 and adult learners. More recently too, Blackpool and The Fylde College opened the £10m 'University Centre' or 'Hub'. The new development has allowed the college to:

- Widen participation and the curriculum offer in higher education, in an area of the country where attendance levels are historically low, but latent demand exists.
- Act as the catalyst for a step-change in the level of academic engagement between the College and Lancaster University, enabling elements of their provision to be brought together, establishing a high profile for Higher Education with greater levels of support for students and employers in Blackpool and the Fylde.
- Provide a new vocational HE curriculum (at level 4 & 5) with a clear focus on innovative ways to directly engage employers in the design and development of HE provision.
- Provide a higher number of graduates with the skills necessary to take the local economy forward and widen participation from those currently under-represented in HE.

At the heart of the rural economy Myerscough College is a national and internationally renowned land-based Higher and Further Education college. In 2010 there were around 6000 students – 2000 full time and just over 1000 studying Higher Education in a variety of land based courses

Despite what is an enviable network of colleges, the challenge remains to keep the young people in the area when they are qualified and engage more with the adults with low skills.

Blackpool Build Up is a four year £1.8 million joint project run by Blackpool Council and Blackpool & the Fylde College aimed at addressing the shortage of skills in the construction industry. People registered unemployed or in receipt of incapacity benefit can receive up to 10 weeks training and two weeks work experience with assistance to find employment. All learners on construction programmes obtain a CSCS card, abrasive wheels and manual lifting and handling certification. In 2010, the College won a National Training Award, one of the UK's most prestigious awards for vocational education and training for the Blackpool Build Up project.

There is also currently a strong focus on provisions of skills and training to the workless and NEET (not in Employment Education or Training) cohorts. A number of these schemes such as the Build Up programme have been successful at returning low skilled adults to the classroom to learn applied basic skills for progression to employment.

Private firms in the area are also stepping up to the plate - BAe Systems at Warton already have a strong link up with Blackpool College to develop project management skills and are continuing to drive a link between education and industry. They are also closely involved with a local schools partnership programme to encourage school children to think about science and technology as a long-term career choice.

What do we need to do?

Too often our skilled youngsters leave the Fylde Coast in search of employment elsewhere – so clearly this priority goes hand in hand with the need to create more jobs.

We will ensure that our workforce is better equipped with **basic skills and literacy** and increase the numbers in our workforce with **Level 1 and 2 skills**. We need to do more to ensure that employers, with our help, invest in providing this training.

More emphasis must be placed on **increasing the numbers of children taking STEM subjects in school**. Greater proficiency in maths and literacy will vastly improve life chances and improve the potential for the Fylde coast to attract and grow knowledge based companies

We will **encourage more companies to take on apprentices** and use the apprentice model to grow their own work force and drive levels of practical and occupational skills.

We will take a focussed approach in the deprived wards to ensure that we take **a holistic approach to tackling health, housing, aspirations and behaviour** as part of a multi-agency neighbourhood approach.

We will improve **access to employment opportunities** for those most distant from the labour market.

Strategic Priority 6: A housing market that drives change

In common with the development of many Victorian resorts, the urban areas of the Fylde Coast have plenty of hotels, guesthouses and ex-guesthouse stock. This has led to some unique conditions in the urban core of Blackpool in particular, which have in turn driven deprivation and transience. The abundance of large houses converted, in many cases, to poor quality single accommodation has driven less well off families out to the suburbs and put pressure on the availability of affordable family stock. Today, depending on the definition, it is estimated that there are between 2,400 and 3,500 HMOs in Blackpool alone.

In common with many cities there are social housing estates with poor quality buildings and low diversification of tenure. The rural areas in contrast, particularly in Wyre and Fylde, offer prosperous suburban housing in quality locations.

Housing has to underpin what we are trying to achieve with the economy. This is particularly important here, where the economic growth has a unique relationship with the housing stock. Currently the poor quality urban stock in key areas deters investment and cycles deprivation and transience. To some extent this is driven by the low risk profile associated with running HMOs with tenants on housing benefit. This needs to be re-balanced.

The Fylde Coast also needs quality housing of diverse and affordable tenure to make our communities sustainable and attractive in order to promote investment and bring new talent and families to the area. Much of the affordability issues play out in the attractive rural villages and towns in Fylde and Wyre.

The Fylde Coast will have a diverse and accessible housing stock – driving the economy by attracting and encouraging families to live here. The larger ex-guest house stock in the urban areas will be at the heart of more stable and prosperous communities.

Rationale

The quality, type and tenure of the available housing define an area. The desirability of housing and other factors such as quality of nearby schools and quality of place tend to coincide with strong, sustainable neighbourhoods.

The Fylde Coast Housing Strategy has already set out the reasons we need to change the housing stock and how we should go about it. In some parts, particularly the inner urban areas, a legacy of guesthouse and hotel adaptations and their subsequent conversion to low quality social rented accommodation is now dragging back the economy and impacting on the viability of the visitor economy.

What are we doing now?

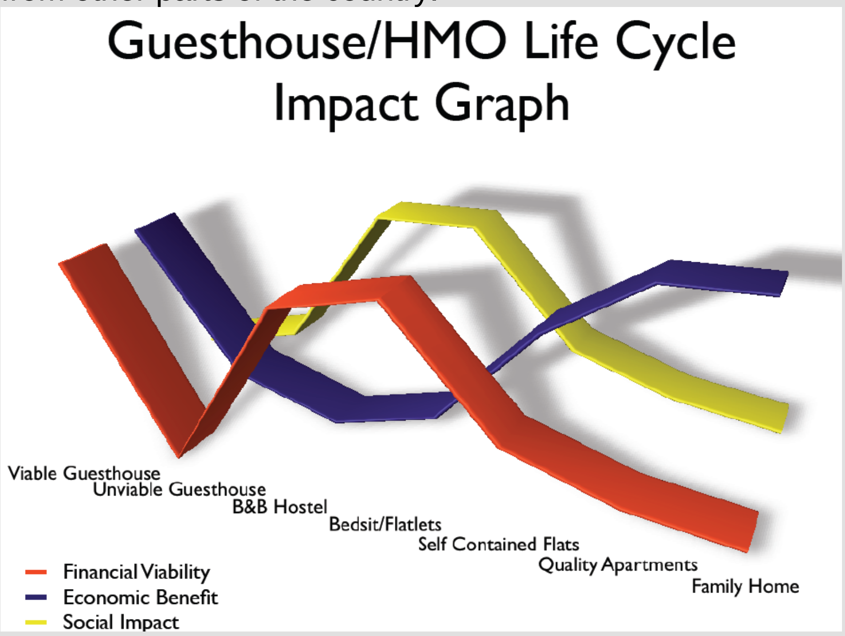
A Fylde Coast Housing Strategy has been put in place and a Local Investment Plan (LIP) agreed amongst the three authorities, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) which will shape the approach to improvement of the wider housing issues over the coming years.

Initially six priority project areas have been ear marked for intervention, including the South Beach area in Blackpool, Birch Grove in Wyre, Shadowlands in Blackpool, Laidleys Walk in Wyre and Grange Park in Blackpool.

Within Blackpool, work is also underway in key guesthouse and HMO areas to either embed or strengthen individual roads as specifically for hotel/guesthouse use, or where guesthouses are starting to fail the removal of sun lounges and roof uplifts to facilitate easy conversion to family dwellings. The strategic importance of transitioning accommodation from guesthouse stock to family residential is unquestioned. The main barrier however is the investment required to achieve this change for early investors – hence the need to intervene in the market. Action is also being taken to enforce basic quality standards in HMOs where they have become established in planning terms. Designated holiday accommodation areas have also been reduced in size allowing a managed transition to family housing in areas outside these zones.

The Guesthouse HMO lifecycle

The significant issue that is particular to coastal towns, and especially to Blackpool, is the domination of inner areas by former guest houses that have become Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and small flats rented to people reliant on Housing Benefit. A typical guest house has a high social and economic benefit when there is strong demand for holiday accommodation, but as demand has weakened for traditional guest house accommodation, many owners have become financially hard pressed. The easiest way to maintain an income is to start to let rooms to permanent guests, and eventually convert properties to use as HMOs. The financial incentives to make this change are further strengthened by high Housing Benefit rates and strong demand from single people attracted to Blackpool from other parts of the country.



What do we need to do?

The Fylde Coast Housing Strategy sets out the main actions, but clearly there is a need to prioritise focus on some of the intractable issues.

We will continue to **arrest the process of large houses being converted to HMOs** both through enforcement as well as area-based interventions. We want to create and environment for a genuinely independent retail market on the Fylde Coast and to do this we should work with government to independently assessed market for the inner area of Blackpool. In this area we would need the ability to reset Housing Benefit levels for single room and 1-bed flats to more accurately reflect real values.

We will **attract more wage earning families back to the inner areas** – either by supply of new products or by making a concerted effort to establish new neighbourhoods of choice in those areas with particular issues.

We will ensure that **there is enough housing that is affordable and available** to incentivise young professionals to set up home here and encourage our young graduates to stay.

We will make **the most of the seafront as an asset to encourage some high quality residential** development that will, in turn, improve the shore-side neighbourhoods.

Strategic Priority 7: Opportunity for all – tackling the most deprived neighbourhoods

There are several pockets of highly concentrated deprivation within the Fylde Coast. The main areas are to be found in older neighbourhoods close to the historic town centres such as South Beach in Blackpool, Fleetwood and confined areas of St Annes in Fylde. These are typified by very transient populations, with low skills, poor health and high levels of worklessness, crime and benefit dependency.

Similar issues are also prevalent in several of the areas post 1950s municipal estates, including Grange Park and Queens Park in Blackpool but these have relatively stable populations with generational deprivation issues.

The total benefit burden of Blackpool has been estimated at around £1bn to the national economy and the local social and health related impacts are immense. Blackpool has the lowest male life expectancy in the UK and mortality rates associated with smoking, alcohol and cancer are well higher than the UK average. Mental health is also amongst the worst in the UK with prescriptions of anti-depressants higher than nearly all others areas. Much of this in the north, central and south Beach areas of Blackpool is related to the transient nature of the population.

Besides the high social, crime and health costs associated with these areas the direct and indirect economic consequences of such concentrations of deprivation are pervasive. Low wages and seasonal income has stripped the local business base of real viability and the private sector has largely voted with its feet. The co-existence of a dysfunctional housing market and a transient low wage population alongside the resort's principle assets has and is having a negative impact on economic potential of the resort, and those resorts in Fylde and Wyre which depend on the success of Blackpool.

Rational

Doing nothing is not an option. If nothing else the cost of maintaining the status quo is unaffordable, but above all, we need to radically improve the life chances of the people who live in these areas to provide equal opportunities to become productive members of the economy and the community.

These need to become neighbourhoods of choice than places of last resort.

What is happening now?

There are a number of focused multi agency programmes such as Reassurance Plus in key Blackpool neighborhoods (Central, South and Grange Park) with a focus on extending the scheme to the town centre bringing together a multi-agency team to enforce standards, tackle anti-social behaviour and enhance safety

The effort on improving the quality of housing continues in many of these areas as well as enforcement on HMOs.

Positive steps

Blackpool Council's employment team, Positive Steps into Work, recently celebrated helping their 500th unemployed resident into work. The outreach team has built a reputation of delivering quality advice and guidance from a variety of community venues to longer term unemployed Blackpool residents, helping them prepare for work and connecting them with local job opportunities.

Natalie had gained good qualifications at school and a qualification in hairdressing at College, but had been unemployed for 6 months before accessing another Council run scheme called the Future Jobs Fund. The scheme offered unemployed young people a temporary job with training and Natalie worked with the Council's Pupil Welfare Team to address such issues as non-attendance at school. With support from a Positive Steps adviser, Natalie has subsequently secured a job as a Teaching Assistant at Claremont Primary School.

The reality is that there is not nearly enough resource in the public sector to continue with short term programmes and initiatives. The answer is in reforming the way that mainstream services engage with the people and the place to drive the maximum impact for the neighbourhoods. This begins with mapping how the costs associated with a place like South Beach fall squarely to a number of individual agencies and how if agencies can work together, these costs can be saved and real cashable savings can be achieved in other areas of mainstream delivery.

Colleagues in Salford are leading on this work and have costed the impact of a specific chaotic family to be around 160k per year with a number of services being used intensively. This ground breaking work costing the impact of a single HMO for instance could provide the clear rational for reforming the way we deliver our public services.

What do we need to do?

We need a focussed, multi agency approach to tackle some of the underlying causes of deprivation.

We need to **cost out clearly the impact of an area or an individual HMO** to determine the extent to which our services are being disproportionately directed to individuals and areas and provide a burning platform which can be used to drive real reform in the mainstream delivery cycle.

A multi agency approach is being developed in South beach, Blackpool which brings together commissioners from the police, NHS, local authorities and the voluntary and private sectors to under take a housing led-reform of local delivery to achieve a better standard of living for these neighbourhoods

We need **to continue to get people back ready for work** and help them access local employment opportunities supporting the efforts of the main government provided services – the work programme – in achieving this.

Collective work with health services is required to address the strong correlation between health and life chances. What more can we do to work with GPs and health professionals to reduce health related dependency.

Strategic Priority 8: A competitive rural economy

The peninsular of the Fylde bounded by the Ribble in the South and the Lune in the North is not just the urban strip on the coast; it is also a diverse and attractive rural landscape with attractive towns and villages like Garstang, Poulton, Kirkham and Freckleton.

As with most of rural Lancashire, the inner area of the Fylde is based around a dispersed number of settlements, service areas and smaller towns and villages. The quality of the environmental offer and its potential to attract tourists with its distinct offer from the coastal strip has been identified as a key objective for the area.

The population in the rural areas is around 98,000 with higher than average numbers of retired inhabitants but good levels of skills and employment.

As with many rural areas the common issues of connectivity and transport, affordable housing and the need to support and diversify land based enterprise hold true for Fylde. Unlike other areas, motorway connectivity is good the M6 and M55 are easily accessible to much of the rural area which makes many parts attractive to commuters to Preston, Lancaster, East Lancashire and the Manchester/ Liverpool belt

Rural Fylde will play a strong role in making the whole of the Fylde Coast a more attractive place to live, visit and do business. The rural centres will have strong and diversified land based economies with thriving micro enterprises providing local employment. Rural Fylde will play its part too in providing visitor attractions aimed at bringing visitors with greater spending power to the whole of the Fylde coast.

Rationale

If one of the overall objectives of the strategy is to raise productivity in the visitor economy, then we cannot ignore the role that the rural areas of Fylde can play. The higher spending visitors that we need to attract in greater numbers are as demanding about quality as they are about variety of attraction. Today's families that are seduced by beach based package deals to the Spanish Costa's will be just as concerned that there are villages and scenery to visit nearby as they will by the quality of the resort. More should be done to ensure that natural resources and attractive settlements of the Fylde can be harnessed to complement the appeal of the coastal resorts.

What are we doing now?

The main source of support to rural areas comes through the Rural Development Programme for Europe (RDPE) and the Fylde is part of the North Lancashire Local Action Group area. This strategy which is already in place recognises the importance of “Maximising the economic impact of rural environmental assets”.

LCDL the Lancashire County Council development vehicle has also supported rural projects including, loans, building support schemes and

Supporting Rural tourism

The Rural Tourism Undergraduate scheme places students with tourism organisations so that they can put their skills into practice. The initiative is open to students who are studying for degrees in tourism, business studies, management, marketing, PR or events. In the last three years 26 students have been taken on for the scheme during which they were placed with tourism organisations throughout Lancashire after the second year of their degrees.

For the first three months the students are placed with large organisations where it is intended they develop their marketing skills and build contacts within the tourism industry. After the three months they then work for a smaller rural organisation where they put their skills, talent and experience into practice for nine months.

The placements are great opportunities for smaller tourism businesses to develop marketing activity that they do not have the resources for. The students are employed and paid for by LCDL but a contribution is asked for from the company where the student is placed.

What do we need to do?

If we are to ensure that our rural businesses can survive and prosper we need to do everything we can to ensure that rural Fylde is well catered for in terms of **high-speed broadband connectivity**

We will ensure that **new and existing micro enterprises have enough support to enable them to grow and thrive**, helping diversify the rural economy and provide high quality visitor amenity.

We will **prioritise in rural areas the development of high quality visitor attractions** that do not compromise the attractive villages and landscape but complement the offer in our key resorts with a specific focus on providing attractive and alternative accommodation and products which bring in higher spending visitors.

It is imperative that we make the most of our **rural and biodiversity assets to help provide sustainable sources of energy and waste management**. In part this will help relieve rural fuel poverty where it exists but also help develop a key strength for the Fylde coast in renewable energy technology.

Strategic Priority 9: A green, sustainable Fylde Coast

In common with most coastal areas it is the sea that has been at the heart of the economy, providing fishing, sea transport and the seaside holidays and Victorian retreats that have formed the basis of the visitor economy over the last 150 years.

Today, the threat of climate change is in sharpest relief for coastal towns as fears of sea level rises and changes in weather systems cause real concerns.

Places like the Fylde Coast not only have much to lose from a changing climate, they have also much to contribute, not least returning to the sea and wind to help provide sustainable energy but also tidal ranges in the estuaries, anaerobic digestion and other environmental technologies.

The Fylde Coast will be a green and sustainable economy, focussed on a responsible attitude to energy use and a new drive to sue its natural resources to generate sustainable energy.

Rationale

The Stern Review pointed out the economic impact of doing nothing of the situation – especially the case for action to reduce the likelihood of critical CO_2 levels causing dangerous climate change.

The most immediate threat to the Fylde Coast is rising sea levels and coastal erosion – in part mitigated by the £80m investment in sea defences along the coast at Blackpool and the Sea Change programme further up the coast in Wyre.

But mitigation on the seafront is not enough, the Fylde Coast needs to play its part in tackling the causes of a changing climate and it also needs to adapt its economy to benefit from the shift from a carbon centric growth model to a decoupled, more sustainable economy.

What are we doing now?

We are already investing in high quality environmental infrastructure not least places like Rossall Point in Wyre and Fairhaven Lake in Fylde to provide both recreational and ecological habitat

Blackpool Solaris Centre provides educational facilities to help teach the next generation about importance of behavioural change and carbon use

The Fylde coast is already home to high tech facilities to recycle Lancashire's waste including firms specialising in anaerobic digestion technology.

Sustainable Fylde coast
An £835,000 grant has been awarded to Fleetwood and Cleveleys to kick start the creation of Wyre's cultural coast. The project comes courtesy of a cash injection from the Government's Sea Change programme, recognising schemes with the potential to regenerate seaside towns through cultural and environmental enhancements. Match funding comes through contributions from Wyre Borough Council and the generous support of the Lofthouse family, makers of the world famous Fisherman's Friend manufactured in Fleetwood, giving a total funding pot of £1,670,000.

The fund itself is providing for the redevelopment of the Marine Hall including a space for outdoor performance, a new marine garden and a programme of cultural events. Funding is also available for the development of trains and environmental works at Rossall point reserve as well as a public art programme and a narrative around the Mythic Coast.

What do we need to do?:

Identify **strengths on the Fylde Coast in environmental technologies** and encourage the establishment of appropriate clusters of businesses which build on our existing business stock.

Ensure that as much of **our domestic housing and commercial building stock is fully updated or retrofitted with energy saving insulation and double-glazing,** as well as starting new programmes to encourage residents to become more energy efficient.

Where we can in harmony with the existing natural landscape, we need to exploit the Fylde Coast's **wind, wave and tidal resources** in the generation of new forms of sustainable energy.

Strategic Priority 10: A new view – better places and stronger perceptions of the Fylde Coast

The quality of life in the Fylde Coast is one of the key strengths of the area. The rural hinterland and attractive market towns, as well as the coast, dunes and resorts attract many to work and live here. However we have some big challenges. We need to retain our youngsters within the economy and we need investors to appreciate the overall offer bringing jobs and new development.

The Fylde Coast finds it difficult to hang on to graduates and attract young families both to live or return.

There are many factors which influence the decisions made by this demographic. Employment opportunities, housing price/availability culture and quality of life as well as family ties all have role to play.

Perceptions are also important. As much as places like Poulton and Lytham have a strong reputation for quality and price, perceptions from outside the area of the Blackpool and Fleetwood part of the coast have deteriorated over the last few decades.

This strategy is rightly focused on increasing our economic potential and we need to do a number of things in tandem. Creating jobs and attractive places need to go side by side.

We want the Fylde Coast to have a true 'sense of place' – a quality of distinctiveness and authenticity. The Fylde Coast will be a successful and sustainable destination with a positive image which engenders pride.

Rationale

Quality of place is important, not just in terms of improving the quality of life and destination resorts, but also for encouraging private sector investment.

The Fylde Coast has a wide scope of attractions when the rural hinterland, coast, classic resort at Lytham and traditional Blackpool experience are considered. However, there are fundamental issues around the area's image and perceptions amongst potential residents and visitors – in particular Blackpool.

The ageing nature of the Fylde Coast population will ultimately impact on the wider economy, both in terms of a reduction in the working age population as well as the infrastructure, housing etc required to meet the needs of an ageing population. It is essential that we do more to **retain graduates and attract working families**. Quality of life and place on the Fylde Coast alongside new jobs in new sectors is key to achieving that.

What are we doing now?

No one activity can change perceptions overnight, but a combination of good news and positive stories from the area all contribute to a much more positive external image. These include the events strategy; The Open Golf 2012, Illuminations and switch on, spectacular family events like ‘Showzam’ as well as the success of Cleveleys seafront and open golf and summer events in Lytham.

The somewhat surprise promotion of **Blackpool FC** to the Premier League in May 2010 has had a major impact, not only the Club but the town, providing significant positive publicity.

The Club stand to generate receipts of £90m from just one season in this league and it has encouraged the Club to improve the ground, with investment in a new 5000 capacity stand and improvements to the external facia. A large element of the windfall comes via TV rights, which mean the Club and wider town are broadcast across the world almost daily.

The Open Golf at Lytham

The hosting of the **Open Golf Championship** in 2012 presents a strategic opportunity to market the region to a global audience. The town centre of St Annes has, since 2001, been the subject of the St Annes-on-Sea Town Centre Regeneration Programme, which resulted in a total investment by the public sector of approximately £4m. The outcome of this expenditure has been the refurbishment of over 50 properties and the leveraging of over £20m of private investment. This investment has created a unique sense of place with a high quality, bespoke finish and feel to the public realm.

The Open Golf Championships in 2012 are a ‘Global Giant’ event, which gives the opportunity to influence global opinion about the region and improve the perception and sense of place. Future activity will centre on building upon the opportunities that this event presents, primarily ensuring that the public realm, which provides the backdrop to the whole visitor experience, meets or exceeds the expectations of visitors to the event and the global television audience. On a local level the issues of decline and market failure are well known across Blackpool, this project seeks to improve the evolving visitor economy of the Fylde Coast.

What do we need to do?

Perceptions of Blackpool have a major influence on perceptions of the whole coast**.** As such the priority has to be the **Revitalisation of Blackpool Town Centre,** building on the ‘City on the Beach’ concept and the development of a strong plan to grow higher quality retail and an ancillary commercial and business sector. Talbot Gateway will be a fundamental part of this. We need to consider the potential for a town centre management company to be responsible for the management of core town centre services and direction of the strategy for the town core.

To improve Fleetwood and create a sustainable and distinctive seafront with a mix of facilities, good quality of life and connectivity, enhanced Marine Hall and the open setting as well as the seafront, town centre and docks.

Drive further quality into the opportunities from the 2012 Open Golf by ensuring that economic value is substantial (visitor spend, advertising and media exposure) and that future events are secured. The Open Golf provides the opportunity to showcase not only the sporting facilities and resort of Lytham, but also to leave spectators and visitors that stay in Blackpool and the area with a real impression that the area is changing and moving forward.

Maximise the economic benefit of improvements to coastal defences, Promenades and headlands along the coast. Building on the already successful work to Blackpool Promenade, Cleveleys Seawall and works at Fleetwood, this will help the development of a year round economy by providing a new focal point on the sea front for events and provide the stimulus for adjacent development in strategic sites across the front.

Develop the “Attack brand” of Blackpool with other areas of the Fylde coast as “Slipstream brands” to both maximise and coordinate effort in attracting visitors and investment to the Fylde Coast. Brands influence perceptions, and can change a person/organisations view about a place to live, visit or do business. A consistent approach to branding with some clear messaging – e.g. Blackpool is changing or there is more to Blackpool than you thought.

Delivering the vision

This strategy is not for any one organisation to deliver – it requires action from all. A strong sustainable economy should be at the heart of everything we do; in turn it will drive healthier, safer and greener places and communities.

It is essential that all agencies and the private sector are involved, not only in delivering the strategy and putting it at the core of their operations, but also in steering the direction and delivery.

The recently established Lancashire Local Enterprise Partnership will lead the way in setting the economic direction for Lancashire and it is vital that the adoption of this strategy sets out the vision for the Fylde Coast within the LEP structure.

The principles we need to follow in putting this vision into action are clear.

- That the strategy is owned by all the principle actors on the Fylde Coast and supported by the Lancashire LEP, Lancashire County Council and wider, national agencies.
- That the private sector is fundamentally involved with delivering and steering the strategy.
- That this strategy sets the context as the economic vision for public and private sector intervention on the Fylde Coast. As such it should encourage new levels of partnership working in pursuit of a common aim.
- That the strategy should be the agreed narrative upon which funding proposals should be based.

Governance

Ultimately the strategy is owned by all Fylde Coast partners with a stake in a stronger economy, and the EDC board will drive the strategy with individual accountability held by key officers and leaders across the coast. EDC board will have to involve the private sector and, at a delivery/commissioning level, bring in bodies like HCA, NHS, police, housing associations, colleges as they are required to deliver on various aspects of the strategy. The EDC board should ultimately report on the delivery of the strategy to the Fylde coast leaders and the LEP.

Delivery

As is clear, this strategy is not for one organisation to deliver, nor is any one individual accountable for its success. We are all responsible.

A successful economy is built by acknowledging the interdependencies across the public and private sector and acting together in pursuit of common goals.

Following the adoption of the strategy, a series of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) will be developed as well as a series of action plans for each of the priorities in the strategy. Senior officers from the 3 Authorities and other agencies will be identified with responsibility for driving the action plans and reporting to the Economic strategy leadership group each of the priorities.

Annex A – The evidence

The Fylde Coast population

The total population of the Fylde Coast is just under 330,000 (at 2008) and has remained relatively stable (+ 1.3%) since 1991. This increase is lower than the Lancashire average but this conceals a 5% decrease in Blackpool offset by similar increase in Fylde and an 8% increase in Wyre.

Growth has been the net result of a combination of negative natural change and positive inward migration, particularly in Fylde and Wyre.

Population density in Blackpool is very high at over 4000 per sq. kilometre, reflecting tightly drawn boundaries and lack of open space, with much lower densities in Fylde and Wyre closer to the Lancashire average.

	2011	**2021**	**2031**
Blackpool	145.7	154.1	162.9
Fylde	78.4	84.8	91.1
Wyre	115.9	127.2	137.3
TOTAL	**340**	**366.1**	**391.3**

ONS population forecasts (in thousands) 2011-2031.

The population in all three districts is estimated to increase over the period 2006-2031 with Blackpool +14%, Fylde 20%, and Wyre 24%, all significantly higher than the Lancashire and North West average. The age structure of the three districts is similar and distinct from regional and national averages although with variations between the three. All have significantly higher concentrations of 65+ and lower than average numbers in 0-14 age group.

Whilst the projected workforce estimates show a relatively constant level of available workforce between 2010 and 2015, a significant part of the population growth identified through to 2031 is anticipated to be in the 65+ age group.

The labour market

There are some variations in employment rate levels between the authorities of the Fylde Coast.

Economic activity rates for Blackpool and Fylde are above the regional average and close to the UK average, but levels in Wyre are significantly lower and below the regional average. In the period December 2007 to March 2009, the rate of employment in Blackpool rose by 5%, bucking the Fylde Coast, regional and national trends, which all showed a decline.

	Economically Active %	% In employment	% Employees	% Self employed	Economically Inactive %
Blackpool	78.4	71.5	63.5	7	21.6
Fylde	78.5	76.3	62.3	14	21.5
Wyre	73.5	69.7	57.4	12.3	26.5
NW	76.8	70.3	62	7.9	23.2
UK	78.9	72.9	63.4	9.1	21.1

Employment rates – current (2009). (Source: ONS annual population survey)

Fylde and Wyre have high levels of self employment, but Wyre also has much higher level of economic inactivity.

The economic geography

The Fylde Coast is relatively self contained as a labour market, with significant movements, particularly into Blackpool from Fylde and Wyre.

Area of residence	Area of Workplace		
	Blackpool	**Fylde**	**Wyre**
Blackpool	71%	12%	8%
Fylde	14%	64%	4%
Wyre	22%	7%	55%

Source: Census 2001

Travel to work in to the Fylde Coast

Deprivation

There are significant levels of deprivation in the inner areas of Blackpool and Fleetwood. The tight urban boundary of Blackpool and the relatively affluent rural hinterland in Fylde and Wyre go some way to explaining the the variance.

	IMD Rank 2004 (out of 354 LAs)	IMD Rank 2007 (out of 354 LAs)
Blackpool	24	12
Fylde	240	251
Wyre	161	170

Deprivation – IMD 2007 (Note: lower number depicts more deprived places)

The data shows that 41 of the 94 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Blackpool are in the 20% most deprived in England. Around 61,550 people live in these 41 areas (at 43%, just less than half of the Blackpool population).

Some of these areas are particularly challenging – 12 of the 41 deprived areas are in the 1% most deprived in England. 17,712 people (12% of the borough population) live in these very deprived areas.

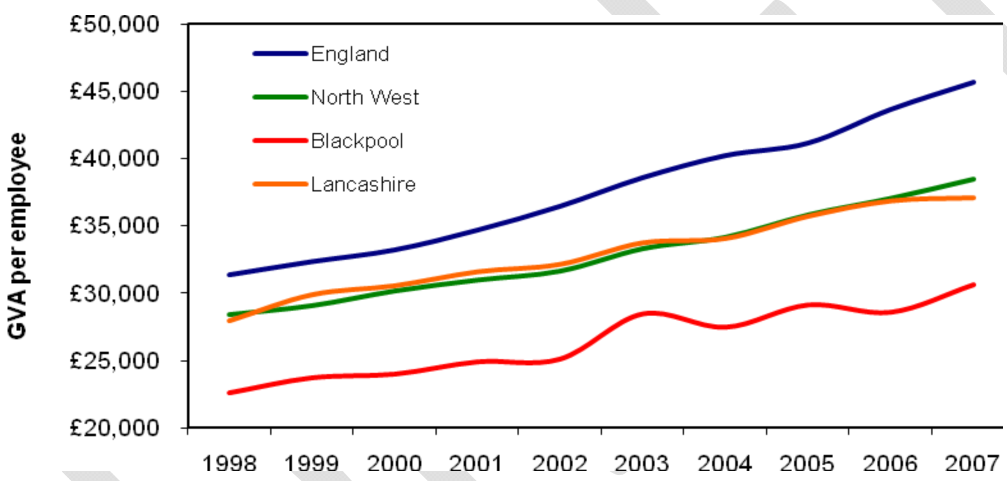
Blackpool had four of the 50 most deprived Lower Super Output Areas in England out of 32,482.

These figures are reflected in the analysis of benefits claimants on the Fylde Coast, with Blackpool levels almost double the England average. Almost 1/3 of children live in households dependent on workless benefits.

Economy, business and skills

There is no overall figure available for the size of the Fylde Coast economy but Blackpool at £1.765million is a little under 2% of North West economy, with Lancashire at 16%.

Productivity in Blackpool (measured by GVA per employee) has risen in line with Lancashire and North West average, but is still lagging behind both and is well below national average.



Historic GVA per employee 1998-2007

Fylde Coast GVA is forecast to grow by 1.6% pa from 2007-30, compared to the NW (1.7%pa) and UK (2%pa). Performance is anticipated to be stronger in Blackpool and Fylde, but weaker in Wyre.

Workforce structure

The Fylde Coast shows some variance distorted to some degree by large sites for Advanced Manufacturing and Nuclear Supply Chain in Fylde (Warton and Springfield).

	Blackpool	Fylde	Wyre	NW	UK
Managers/senior officials	12.2	25.3	10.2	14.9	15.7
Professionals	7.7	15.7	8.2	12.2	13.4
Assoc prof/tech	11.3	14.3	13.7	13.7	14.8
Admin/secretarial	15	10.9	15.8	11.8	11.2
Skilled trades	10.7	7.2	16.6	10.3	10.4
Personal services	11.9	8	10	8.8	8.5
Sales/customer service	9.4	7.7	9.5	8.5	7.5
Process operatives	6.7	5	6.3	7.9	6.8
Elementary occupations	14.7	5.9	9.8	11.4	11.3

Employee jobs by occupation, 2009 (Source: ONS annual population survey)

Notes:numbers and % are for those of 16+
% is a proportion of all persons in employment

The Fylde Coast workforce is over represented in low-level service and elementary occupations. This is further backed up by analysis of the sectoral composition of the economy.

Sectoral composition

It is clear from the sectoral composition based on workforce, that the Fylde Coast is reliant on the public sector (37%) and visitor economy related services. Only Fylde tends to diversify outside these to any degree with lower public sector and some Finance/IT/ Business sectors doing well (BAe Warton and Toshiba Westinghouse at Springfield distort the figures).

Enterprise

The total number of businesses in Fylde Coast has grown at faster rate (17%) over the last 10 years than the North West as a whole but growth is unequal between the districts. Fylde has seen a 30% increase, Wyre 21% and Blackpool has risen only slightly.

Business density, measured by the number of businesses per 10,000 working age population (WAP), is also significantly higher in Fylde (775), well above regional (603) and national (677) averages. The Fylde Coast as a whole is also well above the regional average. The figure for Blackpool is lower, at 577 businesses per 10,000 WAP. Levels of business registration for all three districts are well below the England average

Overall 12% of businesses in Fylde Coast were Knowledge Intensive Businesses in 2008, up from 9% in 1998. With Fylde it is largely as you would expect with the BAe supply chain being the main factor.

Earnings

In common with the previous analysis the Fylde Coast shows some disparity when looking at wage rates. Blackpool significantly under performs on weekly wage rates, whilst Fylde outperforms the UK average. Wage rates in Fleetwood are masked by the wider Wyre prosperity. At £436 per week, overall resident-based weekly gross earnings in the Fylde Coast are below the regional and national averages (£460 and £496 respectively). The figure for Blackpool of £373 reflects the low wages in the visitor economy.

Skills

Consistent with the wider economic data, the majority of the working age population of the Fylde Coast is relatively low skilled. There is a lower proportion of Working Age Population with NVQ3 and NVQ4 compared with regional and national averages, with Blackpool and Wyre being particularly weak.

There have been pockets of poor educational attainment in schools but, through to 2010, there have been significant performance improvements. Regardless of this there is much to do, with Blackpool still 14 places from the bottom in school performance (five A-C at GCSE).

Housing

All strategic market assessment thus far has confirmed idea of an overall single housing market, with distinct sub-markets, which need to be addressed at Fylde Coast level.

	Detached	**Semi-detached**	**Terraced**	**Flat/maisonette**
Blackpool	5,352	24,467	19,834	13,807
Fylde	8,869	10,913	5,726	6,245
Wyre	12,442	19,457	8,226	4,382
Fylde SHMA	**26,663**	**54,837**	**33,786**	**24,434**
NW	506,324	1,052,959	880,421	360,506

Dwelling type by number across Fylde Coast

There are notable differences across the Fylde Coast, with Fylde and Wyre having higher than average levels of detached housing (around 27%). Blackpool and Fylde have larger proportions of flats/maisonettes (around 19%).

Figures disguise differences in character of dwellings and, in particular, the marked difference in quality of flats in Fylde and Blackpool (conversion of former guest houses/hotels).

More than three quarters of properties are owner occupied (all authorities above regional average).

Social rented stock is at 5%, lower than the North West average of 7%. There are significantly higher rates of private rented stock at 14%, against a North West rate of 9%.

There was significant rise in house prices 2000-2009 in all three areas, with the value of property doubling in line with regional increases. This reflected healthy demand but there were problems of affordability in both urban and rural areas.

The average price in Blackpool was £113k, Fylde 192k and Wyre £168k (North West £160).

Average annual completions between 2001-2007 were Blackpool 209, Fylde 219, and Wyre 339. There is a current RSS requirement of 956 p.a., half of estimated demand but reflects what is seen to be deliverable.

There are considerable numbers of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). It has been identified that HMOs undermine social conditions in the inner areas of Blackpool and Fleetwood, encouraging transience and discouraging investment. Depending on the definition of an HMO (from high quality rented accommodation for two people to the undesirable end of the market accommodating many social tenants) the figure can vary. The total of 4478 is almost certainly an underestimate. Of the 2,800+ in Blackpool, more than half are in four central wards.

Property market and employment sites

Blackpool is seen as a secondary location; less development in progress than in similarly sized towns around the North West and specifically within a Lancashire context.

Blackpool's town centre retail floor space is estimated at 1.37million sq ft which ranks the town 42nd of 200 retail centres by Promsis' retail analysis.

Blackpool has a relatively large catchment population for a town of its size, ranked 80th by Promis on this measure but ranked 174th out of 200 on Promis' Catchment Affluence Index, reflecting its demographic profile and lack of affluence.

Office availability shows a concentration of sub 2,000 sq ft units in locations around Blackpool and its suburbs, with rentals around £8-£10 psf, indicating low quality accommodation.

Low take-up of employment land in recent years: 2001-2005 Blackpool 6 hectares, Fylde 2ha, Wyre 7ha. This compares to Preston 19ha and Lancaster 18ha.

Fylde Borough Council

Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan

2008 - 2021

www.gvagrimley.co.uk

CONTENTS

1. PREFACE

1.1 The Fylde Economic Development Strategy (FEDS) is predated by the Fylde Employment Land Study (ELS). Preparation of this strategy has involved consideration of this earlier study and stakeholder consultations to validate the previous work and explore the range of options available to Fylde Borough Council (FBC) in promoting economic development.

1.2 The strategy will cover the period 2008 to 2021. The associated action plan covers the initial period of 2008-2012.

2. INTRODUCTION

Context

2.1 Fylde Borough is one of fourteen Local Authority areas within Lancashire, and is located on the Fylde peninsula. It adjoins five other authorities: Wyre Borough to the north, South Ribble Borough and West Lancashire District to the south (separated by the River Ribble), Preston Borough to the east, and Blackpool Borough to the west.

2.2 A total of 75,700 people are resident in Fylde (2006, ONS), representing the third smallest population in Lancashire (Ribble Valley and Rossendale local authority areas being smaller).

2.3 The borough is distinguished by its quality of life and the diversity of environments on offer. The landscape is defined by estuarine, coastal and rural inland environments. The main settlements are St Annes, Lytham, Kirkham, Wesham, Freckleton, and Warton. In addition, rural Fylde is characterised by attractive villages and major employers such as British Aerospace and BNFL.

2.4 There are four major highways serving the borough. The M55 runs from Preston and the M6 in the east to the outskirts of Blackpool in the west. The A584 runs from the A583 near Clifton in the east along the south coast of the peninsula through Freckleton, Warton, Lytham and St Annes and up the Blackpool coastline. The A585 (T) runs from Kirkham in a northerly direction to Fleetwood. A series of B and classified roads link the numerous towns and rural villages.

2.5 Fylde is a **very important part of the Central Lancashire economy** – it contains regionally significant business sectors, namely the Aerospace facility at Warton and the nuclear processing plant at Springfield. The presence of these sectors means that the borough is at the heart of high value manufacturing at a regional level. Indeed manufacturing makes up over 30% of total employment, which is significantly above the national average (15%).

2.6 The prevalence of manufacturing activity within the economy presents both a challenge and an opportunity for Fylde. Given national and regional trends towards decline in this sector it is imperative that the transition away from traditional to emerging employment activity across the borough is managed effectively, including employment land and property, and labour market considerations. There is the potential through the presence of dynamic and major employers such as BAe and BNFL, and the existing strengths within the labour market, to promote higher value manufacturing and business activities. This is important both in a local sense and also in terms of the future well being of the sub-regional Lancashire economy[1].

2.7 However, the borough's economic development potential and contribution to the sub-region is associated with more than just its industrial components. Fylde also contains a healthy element of growth orientated sectors such as computer and business services alongside its traditionally strong sectors of tourism and the visitor economy. The importance of these sectors is that they are and can be relatively high value components of the economy, providing high value jobs and leading to enhanced levels of prosperity.

2.8 Attractive coastlines and estuary environments and resorts such as St Annes and Lytham are important to the borough's tourism and visitor economy. Proximity to Blackpool (and the planned investment in the resort core and inner neighbourhoods) also provides a positive context for the economic development of Fylde. The borough has the potential to position itself in this wider context and to develop a complementary visitor accommodation and attractions.

2.9 Fylde is a borough which has benefited from the strength of existing industries (including some that have seen decline at a wider level) whilst also demonstrating signs of diversification into national growth sectors and leisure sectors including tourism.

2.10 The borough comprises an important component of the Central Lancashire City Region. Indeed its economy makes a significant contribution to the wider City Region economy, and that of the North West more generally, including the previously identified high employment in the strategically importance of aerospace and nuclear fuels industries.

2.11 The borough's productivity (as measured by GVA levels) and employment base are expected to grow at a rate that will outperform other areas in the City Region and the North West. It will be a key driver of the wider Lancashire economy. This strategy seeks to prioritise actions which will help the borough to continue playing its important role in the region while also improving the opportunities for local people to find employment and maximise their potential.

[1] The Lancashire Economic Strategy (LES) promotes the growth of knowledge intensive businesses and knowledge-based manufacturing within the sub-region

3. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Overview

3.1 The Employment Land Study prepared in 2006 contains a full account of the policies, guidance, strategies and plans which form a strategic context for this strategy. The purpose of this section of the strategy is to establish the context in relation to the following documents:

- The Sub-National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration;
- The Regional Economic Strategy;
- The Lancashire Economic Strategy; and
- The Fylde Community Plan.

Sub-National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR)

Background

3.2 The Government has identified its overall economic objective as being raising the rate of sustainable growth alongside achieving a better quality of life, with economic and employment opportunities for all.

3.3 The framework for raising growth and prosperity across the UK is based on three pillars, as defined within the SNR[2]:

- Maintaining macroeconomic stability to enable businesses and individuals to plan with certainty for the long term;
- Implementing microeconomic reforms aimed at addressing market failures in the underlying drivers of growth – competition, enterprise, innovation, skills, investment and employment; and
- Devolving decision-making to the regional and local levels as far as possible to ensure strategy and delivery are responsive to local economic conditions.

3.4 This framework for growth is evidenced to have delivered macroeconomic stability and enhancement of the economic performance of the regions and localities across England.

However, even given this, there remain significant variations at the regional level (within and between regions) which need to be rectified.

3.5 The Comprehensive Spending Review (2007) announced a Government review of sub-national economic development and regeneration in England. Consultation is now out on how to implement SNR.

3.6 As stated within the SNR, the review builds on progress made since 1997 to devolve decision-making to regional and local levels and is focused on two Government objectives which aim to improve economic growth in all parts of the country: namely, to reduce disparities in economic performance, and to tackle spatial concentrations of deprivation.

3.7 The framework recognises that economic growth at the national and regional level is dependent on growth in employment, growth in labour productivity, and continuing technological change and innovation.

3.8 Market failures can arise at all spatial levels including those related to product, labour, and capital markets, affecting specifically the extent to which economic performance at the regional level has converged. The SNR states that through tackling these failures at the appropriate spatial level it will be possible to improve economic efficiency and increase growth

Proposed New Statutory Responsibility for Economic Development

3.9 In response to the economic development challenges identified in the SNR a number of objectives for reform are established.

Objectives for reform

3.10 The overall objective for reform, as stated in the SNR, is to support the achievement of more effective economic development, regeneration and neighbourhood renewal. In this context, it is stated that the reform needs to ensure that:

- Regions and places are able to respond flexibly and quickly to changing economic circumstances within a clear and stable sub-national framework;
- Interventions are prioritised effectively and are focused on tackling market failures, including enabling people in deprived areas to link in to economic opportunities;
- Resources are deployed efficiently, with effective co-ordination between policies; and

[2] More detail provided in *Devolving decision making 2 – Meeting the regional economic challenge; Increasing regional and local flexibility*, HM Treasury, ODPM and DTI, March 2004, and *Productivity in the UK 6: Progress*

- Measures are based on evidence, properly appraised and evaluated, and lessons learned are reflected in future interventions and resource allocation.

Principles to underpin reforms

Managing policy at the right levels

- There should be a devolved approach, giving regions and local authorities the powers to respond to local challenges and improve economic outcomes;
- Responsibilities should be allocated in line with economic impacts, based on a bottom-up approach to collaboration between areas;

Ensuring clarity of roles

- Objectives need to be clear, with a strong focus on economic development measures and opportunities for sustainable growth;
- Decision-making should be as streamlined as possible and bureaucracy must be minimised;
- Strategies, policies and funding streams must be rationalised and coordinated effectively;

Enabling places to reach their potential

- Clear accountability and public scrutiny arrangements must be in place to allow for devolution of powers and responsibilities, including through an inclusive approach to development of regional strategies;
- Places must have incentives to promote economic growth and tackle the problems of deprived neighbourhoods; and
- The public sector must have the capacity to work effectively with the private sector.

3.11 Alongside reforms to strengthen the delivery of economic development at the regional level through the statutory process, and reforming central government’s relations with regions and localities, the SNR recognises the importance of empowering local authorities to promote economic development and neighbourhood renewal, and supporting local governments to work together at the sub-regional level.

3.12 The relevant components of these headline reforms in the context of the FEDS are summarised in turn below.

Empower all local authorities to promote economic development and neighbourhood renewal

3.13 The SNR recognises the important role of local authorities (LA's) in delivering economic development and neighbourhood renewal at the local level through reforms to the LA planning framework (discussed in the next sub-section) .

3.14 Another opportunity identified in the SNR includes the potential for LA's to consider options for supplementary business rates, working business and other stakeholders.

3.15 There is a clear identified need to ensure close working between the LA's and RDA's including the delegation of responsibility of funding to the local and sub-regional level where appropriate (unless there is a lack of capacity at the local level), a clear opportunity for Fylde in delivering economic development benefits in the future. Importantly the SNR also recognises the need to improve the capacity of LA's to deliver their new enhanced economic development roles.

3.16 The SNR states the importance of ensuring the proposed new homes agency supports the LA role of ensuring housing, housing related interventions, and regeneration in deprived areas, are clearly linked to the economic fortune and potential of locations.

3.17 In addition, the SNR recognises and cites the movement of funding for 14 to 19 year olds education and skills to LA's, a clear opportunity for Fylde to work with the County Council and others to ensure a quality labour force in the future, improve access to employment for school leavers, and partially address issues of NEET within the workforce, as identified in the ELS and through the Central Ward LSP Project.

Supporting local authorities to work together at the sub-regional level

3.18 The SNR recognises the economic development function that is required at the sub-regional level where markets are evidenced to operate at this level, as with the Fylde Coast.

3.19 Through the SNR, sub-regions will be able to strengthen their statutory management powers including greater certainty of longer-term funding for transport where suitable governance arrangements are in place, through the Local Transport Bill, developing proposals for Multi-Area Agreements (MAA's) to allow groups of LA's to agree collective targets for economic development, and establishing statutory sub-regional arrangements including the potential pooling of responsibilities on a permanent basis for economic development issues beyond transport.

Reformation of Local Authority Performance Framework

3.20 Under the reforms detailed in the SNR, all LA's will be required to prepare a Sustainable Community Strategy which will set the strategic vision for the area. All upper tier or UA authorities will be required in consultation with partners, to prepare a delivery plan for the strategy.

3.21 The delivery plan, a Local Area Agreement (LAA), will set out the single set of priorities for local partners, including targets. The LAA's will, it is proposed, form the key vehicle for the delivery of national and local outcomes at the local level, forming the basis of a single LA performance management framework. LSPs will form an integral part of delivering the LAA alongside the LA's.

3.22 Central delivery agreements between central government, LA's, and local partners will be outcome-focused agreements based on the 'streamlined targets' within the LAA's. There will be a 'duty to cooperate' which will help to ensure that other public bodies operating at the local level such as LSP's and Jobcentre Plus work more effectively with LA's.

3.23 Through the LAA's all LA's will be given a clearer role on economic development, putting it on an equal footing with service delivery, and in delivering neighbourhood renewal in the most deprived neighbourhoods.

Northwest Regional Economic Strategy (RES)

3.24 The RES is a 20-year strategy charged with directing the future economic trajectory of the region and is prepared by the NWDA. Although it is likely the RES will be replaced by an overall regional strategy containing the RES and RSS.

3.25 The RES states the current position of the North West economy as being strong, with a value of £98 billion, encompassing 230,000 businesses (and a resident population of circa 6.8 million). It also evidences strong growth against national comparator benchmarks including GVA, business formation, and numbers of employees / employment rates.

3.26 However, even given the strong growth evidenced the North West economy remains 12% below the national average GVA output. In financial terms this equates to a £13billion productivity gap. £3 billion of this gap is attributable to nature of the workforce (its relative size and capability), with £10 billion a result of productivity of the economy.

3.27 To ensure a *"dynamic, sustainable international economy which competes on the basis of knowledge, advanced technology and an excellent quality of life for all"* the RES focuses on addressing this gap through improving productivity and growing the market, and growing the size and capability of the workforce, both of which are underpinned by ensuring conditions for sustainable growth.

3.28 The RES highlights a number of locations as being of strategic importance, specifically:

- The prioritisation of Manchester and Liverpool, along with Preston, as key facilitators of city-regional growth;
- The economic regeneration areas of East Lancashire, Blackpool, Barrow and West Cumbria; and
- Opportunities for growth around Crewe, Chester, Warrington, Lancaster and Carlisle.

3.29 It is also recognised that there is a need to remove concentrations of low employment generally across the region, and ensure sustainable development (in location terms) including consideration of strategic transport hubs and networks.

Lancashire Economic Strategy and Action Plan

3.30 The LES represents an important vision for the future of the sub-region. It has been adopted by the Lancashire Economic Partnership (LEP), the strategic body established to promote economic growth and prosperity throughout Lancashire.

3.31 The LES is informed by a full labour market and economic analysis. It identifies several important points for the borough:

- Fylde Borough is functionally linked with its immediate neighbours comprising Blackpool and Wyre (“the Fylde Coast” authorities). This interconnectivity is demonstrated in patterns of travel to work and labour exchange;
- Fylde Borough also has labour force links to Preston;
- There are distinct clusters of knowledge based services and manufacturing associated with the smaller towns within Fylde Borough; and
- The presence of aerospace and nuclear industries within the borough is extremely important to Lancashire and the region, both in terms of employment and productivity.

3.32 It is therefore apparent that Fylde Borough is important to the performance of the immediate Fylde Coast area and wider Lancashire economy. Its importance to the wider area is an attribute that should help to inform the type of economic development activity that is undertaken – both internally and in partnership with Blackpool Council, Wyre Borough Council and the LEP

3.33 The LES advocates the need for a co-ordinated approach to the development of the sub-regional economy as a whole, identifying those programmes and projects that are of at least sub-regional significance and hence form the agreed LEP priorities.

3.34 The LES established six strategic headline economic priorities for the sub-region, three 'spatial' and three 'thematic':

- Blackpool World Class Resort Destination
- Preston City Vision
- Pennine Lancashire Transformational Agenda
- Aerospace and other Advanced Manufacturing
- Skills
- Tourism and Rural Development

3.35 The FEDS must consider wider linkages to the promotion of Blackpool as a World Class Resort Destination, in addition to the thematic priorities identified. Of particular relevance are the sector based priorities in relation to tourism, aerospace and advanced manufacturing. Each of these priorities is examined below:

Spatial Priorities

Blackpool: World Class Resort Destination

3.36 The LES refers specifically to the unique opportunity to create a modern world-class resort using new gaming legislation as a driver to delivering the regeneration of Blackpool's economy.

3.37 Since the selection of Manchester as the preferred location for a 'super' Regional Casino, Gordon Brown has revoked the creation of such a facility anywhere across the country, instead supporting 16 smaller (non-regional) casinos. He sees these facilities as directly supporting regeneration, being "a better way of meeting [the] economic and social needs of deprived areas than a 'Las Vegas-style Casino'"[3].

[3] Source: The Guardian, July 17th, 2007

3.38 As a result of this decision a significant opportunity remains for Blackpool to continue to promote its resort masterplan. The scaling back of intentions for a regional casino, to a facility with a much smaller casino, provision clearly impacts upon the potential for Blackpool to pursue with a casino and conference centre led regeneration scheme. However, this is not to say that the regeneration of Blackpool will not include a smaller casino offer.

3.39 Indeed, irrelevant to the presence of a casino in Blackpool, the LES states that the Northwest Development Agency (NWDA) and Central Government have already demonstrated their clear support for the proposed changes to Blackpool with the establishment of the Urban Regeneration Company, Re-Blackpool.

3.40 The promotion of the economic regeneration of Blackpool as a sub-regional priority has both direct and indirect positive implications for Fylde which must be maximised through the FEDS including building on existing travel to work relationships (linked to an increased diversity of occupations across Blackpool), business benefits linked to the expansion of the airport, and tourism-related opportunities across the Fylde (and indeed along the Fylde Coast in general).

3.41 The ELS identified significant travel to work patterns identified between Fylde and Blackpool (they relate clearly to the Fylde Coast in general) linked in the ELS to relative proximity, ease of commuting (if dependent largely on the use of cars), and wage incentives. The travel to work patterns evidenced add a further dimension to the question of dependency within the Fylde economy on aerospace and nuclear reprocessing.

3.42 Consultation with British Aerospace (BAe) and BNFL suggest significant staff commuting from both the Fylde Coast and Central Lancashire.

3.43 This trend also brings into question the susceptibility of the Fylde economy to wider economic shifts in the sub-region.

3.44 The likely creation of a more diverse employment offer in Blackpool will be linked to employment opportunities for those residents in Fylde. The FEDS recognises the sub-regional employment benefits of regeneration within Blackpool. Indeed it should be a priority to ensure sustainable methods of transport linking residents in Fylde to emerging employment opportunities.

Preston City Vision

3.45 The transformation of Preston City Centre is identified within the LES as being the number one priority across the dynamic growth area of Preston, South Ribble, and Chorley (the Central Lancashire City Region).

3.46 This will include the planned investment at Tithebarn, but also goes much further in defining a central Commercial Quarter, as a place to do business, alongside a new “Residential and Civic Quarter”.

3.47 In addition, the LES recognises the strategic importance of “Riverworks” a significant development project north and south of the river, for residential, leisure, tourism and employment uses.

Pennine Lancashire Transformational Agenda

3.48 The LES states the strategic importance of implementing the “Transformational Agenda” to regenerate the economy and housing market across East Lancashire. In addition to the delivery of the Housing Market Renewal programme through Elevate East Lancashire, the LES recognises the importance of improving economic prosperity across the sub-region.

3.49 Specifically the LES cites the need to enhance the economic contribution of the manufacturing sector and the development of embryonic sectors which bring higher value added activity together with increasing the availability and take-up of high education in the area,

3.50 A number of key projects within this spatial priority area are included in the LES including the delivery of the Pennine Lancashire Gateway Strategic Employment Site and town centre investment in Blackburn and Burnley.

3.51 The LES also recognises the need to enhance the quality of place and image of East Lancashire to aid development of the economy including its promotion as a quality visitor destination to further transform the area.

Thematic Priorities

3.52 Clearly the thematic priorities identified in the LES have specific relevance to the economic development of Fylde Borough, and the wider Fylde Coast.

Aerospace and other Advanced Manufacturing

3.53 The two key sub-sectors identified within the Fylde economy are aerospace and nuclear processing.

3.54 At the time of commissioning the ELS (2007) (which precedes and underpins this strategy) there were concerns muted regarding the stability of the aerospace and nuclear activities within the Fylde economy, and therefore vulnerability of the area to wider economic changes and decisions.

3.55 The ELS concludes that the aerospace activities are relatively stable (albeit not afforded the same priority as Salmesbury in the regional sense), and nuclear activities at Springfield are not due to cease within the next 20 years. As a result Fylde should look to maximise any additional benefits that these activities can bring to the local economy.

3.56 Both sectors illustrate linkages with small-scale consultancy activity (including self-employment and homeworking). In addition the ELS reports a degree of demand for spin-off activities from Warton which could be accommodated on adjacent developments (including the potential development at Marconi).

3.57 One of the prominent conclusions of the ELS (2007) is that the Fylde Coast must build on these specialisms, on the back of a positive outlook for aerospace regionally.

Skills

3.58 The previously identified key sectors links into skills as a thematic priority with the ELS – with Fylde, similarly to many other restructuring economies, requiring a shift in local skills sets in addition to an acknowledgement of skills requirements across the board (including service sector occupations associated with tourism as a growth sector).

3.59 The ELS identifies a distinction between higher end and lower end skills needs across the economy. Work is ongoing in Fylde to bridge the gap between worklessness and skills deficiencies in some sectors, including that as part of the Central Ward project. At the other end of the scale however there is a need to ensure sufficient skills levels in the local economy to drive on managerial / self employment / entrepreneurial skills and activities.

3.60 The LEP recognise within the LES the need to address the existing and potential future skills gaps across the sub-regional economy, specifically the need for a strategic approach to delivering the skills required to maximise the economic impact of key growth opportunities.

3.61 Through the LES, and their wider commitments, there is a structure in place for LEP along with their partners including the LLSC and the LSET for delivering a skills strategy across the whole of Lancashire, targeted at reducing gaps evidenced.

3.62 FBC can support training and skills activities at this upper end of the occupation scale, encourage and support SME activities / self employment and encourage private sector investment in training initiatives / bridging the skills gaps. This links in with the LSC priorities for 2007 to 2010, including:

- Supporting adults to progress beyond Level 2 and to attain skills and qualifications at Level 3 and above, with a focus on key sectors;
- Stimulate employers to invest more in workforce development which meets business needs including innovation, management, leadership and intermediate and higher level technical and professional skills;
- Stimulate demand for, and investment in entrepreneurial, intermediate and higher level skills from individuals; and
- Support providers to respond to the needs of individuals and employees through delivery of high quality provision.

Tourism and the Rural Economy

3.63 LEP recognise the strategic importance of tourism and the rural economy across the sub-region. Specifically the LES states the extensive coastline and the nationally important seaside destination of Blackpool, high quality estuary landscapes, outstanding upland areas and a range of key service centres and rural hamlets as key tourism and rural economy attributes.

3.64 Indeed, across Lancashire, tourism is a key employer, supporting almost 55,000 jobs, emphasising its strategic importance and justifying its inclusion as a key theme within the LES.

3.65 This is no less evident within Fylde, where tourism is an integral component of the local, and wider Fylde Coast economy. Indeed, Fylde is recognised to have a distinctive offer linked to its traditional centres (specifically Lytham and St Annes), historical and heritage quality within the built environment, and its international golf courses. This offer is recognised to be complementary to the visitor offer being promoted within Blackpool.

3.66 Generally the rural economy within Fylde is characterised by a robust set of labour market characteristics, a business base integrated with the urban economy, and growing opportunities for exploiting ITC.

3.67 The location of BAe and BNFL within rural locations, and high employment levels in agriculture do suggest that there is an element of economic exposure to a small number of business sectors. However, as noted in the Employment Land Study (2006), the medium term outlook for aerospace and nuclear fuels is relatively stable. Employment in traditional agricultural activities is forecast to decline, in line with national and regional trends.

3.68 The ELS highlights the need to develop the climate and opportunities for new business formation and growth in rural areas. This shows a strong alignment with the LES.

3.69 There are a number of ways in which a climate for new business formation and growth in rural areas can be encouraged. These include future potential policies for:

- Home-working; operating a small business from home does not require planning permission providing that the main use remains that of a dwelling and there are no harmful effects on the neighbourhood. However, the Council could encourage home-working by other means e.g. through publicity.

- conversions of rural premises: a less restrictive and more pragmatic approach could be adopted which sought to facilitate broader rural diversification rather than farm diversification.

- the promotion of start-up / flexible small business spaces in rural villages.

Fylde Sustainable Communities Strategy

3.70 *The Vision for a Better Fylde 2003 – 2018* was developed by the Local Strategic Partnership, outlining the key actions and outcomes that people of the community want to see implemented to 2013. This document is currently being reviewed with the new Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) to be published in 2008.

3.71 The SCS has a vision of ‘Nulli Secundus’ (Second to None). The vision is that for the next 10 years up to 2018 Fylde will build on the good work that has already taken place. Fylde will be a welcoming place with energetic, high-skilled, healthy people in flourishing communities. There will be diverse and prosperous culture and an economy that encourages everyone to contribute.

3.72 Key Themes Throughout the Strategy

- - Community Cohesion
- - Equality & Diversity (gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, race and religion)
- - Improving Quality of Life for Residents

3.73 Theme three of the SCS is in relation to Economic Prosperity. The vision is to create a supportive environment for business and develop a vibrant and varied economy that is reflected in our coastal and market town centres, through the rural economy and within the broader business environment of the Borough. To achieve this vision the theme establishes 7 ambitions:

- Ambition No 1 An increase to the visitor economy to the Fylde
- Ambition No 2 To fully develop the Classic Resort Concept within St Annes on Sea
- Ambition 3 Help formulate and develop the Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park
- Ambition No 4 Maximize opportunities arising from the Golf Championships.
- Ambition 5 To assist in the delivery of Neighbourhood Renewal
- Ambition No 6 Kirkham Market Town Initiative
- Ambition 7 To create a supportive environment for businesses large and small

Summary

There is a strong regional and sub-regional policy framework in place for realising the economic development potential of Fylde borough. The challenge in developing and winning support for the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan is forming strong links to sub-regional and regional agencies and closely aligning proposals to their respective funding priorities.

While this process has been started through development of the strategy, momentum will need to be maintained with key players in the sub-region such as LEP.

4. NEED AND OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

4.1 The purpose of this section is to briefly review the economic challenges faced and opportunities to maximise economic growth in the future. The information informing this review was gathered during the preparation of the ELS and through stakeholder consultations.

4.2 Consultation was undertaken during the period January to March 2007 and included interviews with representatives from:

- Fylde Borough Council (FBC)
- The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)
- Business Link
- Lancashire Economic Partnership (LEP)
- Major landowners
- BAe (agents acting on behalf of)

Economic Challenges

4.3 A summary of the major challenges which have been identified through consultations and economic analysis is provided below:

Skills and Workforce Challenges

- There is an identified skills gap at the lower end of the occupation scale, exacerbated in part by the relatively strong labour market across Fylde[4]. This is linked with the continued pressures within the housing market across the borough, specifically the high average house prices evidenced making it difficult for those working in lower paid employment to live within Fylde. This refers specifically to the ability of people on lower incomes to buy houses within Fylde and therefore enter the housing market. Consultation undertaken as part of the ELS and the FEDS illustrates a propensity to employ economic migrants in these lower-grade occupations, and indeed an identified reliance on this pool of labour to fill low salary / skill and seasonal employment opportunities.

[4] nearly full employment with an employment rate of 77% and high skills levels with 56% of the workforce demonstrating Level 3 or above NVQs or equivalent, as evidenced in the ELS

- Whilst it is recognised that more people commute into Fylde for employment than commute out there is an issue with the out-migration of the more skilled workforce to employment opportunities located further afield (notably in Preston).

Economic Diversity Challenges

- High level of dependency within the local economy – significantly on aerospace and nuclear processing – within a large proportion of employment within the borough concentrated within these two sub-sectors. There is a need to diversify the business base and limit exposure to one or two key employers.
- Particular need to diversify the rural economy across the borough which is predicated upon the aerospace, nuclear fuels and agricultural industries.
- Sectors which demonstrate above average concentrations of the labour force are found to be losing the most jobs; including ‘manufacture of transport equipment’, ‘metal manufacturing’, alongside other notable declines in ‘insurance’, ‘public administration’, ‘food and beverages’ and ‘recreational, cultural and sporting activities’ sectors.

Business Premises Challenges

- Fylde does not currently benefit from a modern portfolio of business premises. The borough predominantly contains industrial and office accommodation dating from the 1970s and 1980s.
- A number of locally important employment sites have been lost in recent years to residential development.
- The supply of employment land is constrained with no margin for expansion in demand over current levels. The borough faces the challenge of identifying suitable employment land to cater for future business demand.

Regeneration Challenges

- There are concentrations of deprivation specifically within the Central Ward and parts of Kirkham / Wesham key service centre. Pockets of deprivation are also found across rural communities. Engaging communities, improving skills and qualification levels and access to employment opportunities are all critical challenges to this strategy.

Connectivity Challenges

- Whilst Fylde is considered to have relatively strong East-West transport linkages, including road and rail provision linking it to Blackpool to the north and Central Lancashire to the east, north-south connectivity, linking the main settlements and opportunities to the M55 motorway, is poor.

- The Fylde South railway line is considered to be an under-utilised asset that could be invested in to promote sustainable journeys to work within the Fylde Coast area.

Resources to Deliver

- Fylde Borough does not currently have an Economic Development team in place to work with businesses. It is highly dependent on bringing in resources and linking into programmes operating outside its boundaries.

Opportunities

4.4 At a sub-regional (Lancashire) level, it is currently performing a very important role both in terms of productivity and employment levels. Additionally it contains a cluster of high-value and "knowledge intensive" businesses. These characteristics provide a platform from which to grow and diversify the economy.

- Employment forecasts for the borough[5] demonstrate that the economy is due to experience diversification including the growth of emerging sectors such as **computer and business services, the tourism economy and the visitor market.** The computer and business services sectors can be high value components of the local economy and are therefore important to the overall strategy. Through delivering employment in these sectors there is a real opportunity to experience economic growth across Fylde. There are a number of ways that employment can be delivered within these sectors. Specifically growth sectors can be linked to skills and training initiatives. This type of approach is ongoing through the LSP relating specifically to tourism and the visitor market.
- Fylde is home to a relatively skilled and mobile workforce. These attributes are attractive to businesses and provide the borough with a real opportunity to market itself and to secure new businesses within the area.
- The opportunity for partnership working with the Fylde Coast authorities is particularly important in the context of the borough's economic development. The functional links between the three Fylde Coast authorities (to be formalised through the proposed MAA) suggest that economic development and labour force initiatives in one location will have an impact upon other areas, hence it is important to ensure a co-ordinated and strategic approach to economic development to allow for synergy and mutual benefit.

[5] Cambridge Econometrics (2005) – commissioned to support the development of the Employment Land Study

- In addition the proposed MAA, further opportunities for Fylde are identified in the SNR, including increased capacity for delivering economic development at the local level, potential to promote economic growth through the Local Area Business Growth Incentive (LABGI), allowing LA's to utilise a proportion of increases on local business rate revenues to spend on their own priorities, improved ability for LA's to borrow to support economic development through the Prudential Borrowing regime, and potential for partnership working with the private sector and local business community through Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) which allows unique area improvement plans to emerge to benefit localities such as town centres,
- Regeneration of Blackpool (both in terms of visitor economy and housing market) is likely to create direct and in-direct employment, and lead to increased levels of visitor spend within the economy. Fylde has an opportunity to provide a complementary tourism offer to Blackpool, focusing on high value tourism and the image of settlements such as Lytham and St Annes as traditional Victorian resorts.
- The development of Blackpool International Airport is of strategic importance to Lancashire and local importance to the borough's economy, offering an opportunity to diversify employment and providing a catalyst to business land development.
- The development of the M55 to Heyhouses Link Road, will not only enhance access to the Whitehills employment site but will also better link Fylde to economic development and investments being made in the wider Lancashire area..
- The recognition of rural Fylde as a key driver of growth including the opportunity to develop existing ICT and business sector strengths and harness the visitor and tourism economy. Links to the development of SME's, homeworking, and conversion of agricultural buildings for business use should be promoted here.
- The opportunity to address concentrated socio-economic deprivation in the Central Ward through a programme of employment and training opportunities for local residents.

4.5 In summary, there are many challenges, however relative to other localities in Lancashire (for example the seaside resorts of Blackpool and Morecambe and the East Lancashire towns), the borough is a relatively prosperous, well connected and attractive place to live. Coupled with a dynamic and significant business base, Fylde has strong economic drivers to build upon. These drivers are considered in greater depth in the next chapter.

5. KEY DRIVERS AND SPATIAL FRAMEWORK

Key drivers

5.1 The key drivers of the Fylde Coast economy are considered in relation to those operating at Fylde Coast level (inclusive of Blackpool and Wyre local authority areas) and a local level (within the borough).

5.2 The Fylde Coast drivers are considered to include the following.

Blackpool Regeneration

5.3 An Action Plan has been developed for the sustainable development of the town of Blackpool by the Blackpool Task Force. This document responds to the regeneration need of the town in the light of the failure to secure a regional casino development.

5.4 It is suggested that the Action Plan could lever in almost £2billion of private sector investment to 2017, create 11,000 net additional jobs, provide 2,000 new homes, and foster the talents of 2,500 new local Higher Education students[6].

5.5 Many of the Actions included within the Task Force report will require Government support but do not require funding. These include Blackpool's bid for World Heritage Site Status, the designation of Blackpool as an exemplar sustainable tourist resort, the awarding of full Assisted Area or special enterprise zone status for Blackpool and support for a Fylde Coast-wide Multi Area Agreement (MAA), of clear significance to the FEDS.

5.6 Key projects proposed, through which the *New Blackpool* will be regenerated, include:

- Strong educational provision – from pre-school to Higher Education – giving its people the skills and aspirations to succeed.
- Improvements to the housing market offering a mix of aspirational and affordable housing within attractive neighbourhoods, with access to quality local services.
- Proposals for a Conference and Leisure Quarter for which land assembly has already begun, allowing the town to seize upon opportunities in the market.
- Re-establishment of Blackpool's status as the sub-regional centre for the Fylde Coast with development including the Houndshill Shopping Centre to strengthen the retail offer.

[6] *Source*: http://www.nwda.co.uk/news--events/press-releases/200701/task-force-report-proposes-a-n.aspx

- Development of Blackpool as a world model of an environmentally sustainable resort potentially aligned with the Government's Eco-towns initiative.

5.7 Clearly the scale and nature of investment planned within Blackpool town will act as a catalyst for wider regeneration across the Fylde Coast. Indeed the regeneration of Blackpool is recognised within the RES as being a transformational tourism project,

Blackpool Airport

5.8 The investment planned at Blackpool Airport will enhance its economic contribution and employment potential. The RES states the importance of connecting transport infrastructure with appropriate employment and housing sites to ensure sustainable economic growth. Using the presence of the airport as a sub-regional economic driver and effectively providing business space to support its functions is a challenge addressed in this strategy.

5.9 The air links within the North West are recognised to offer opportunities for growing inbound tourism and improving business competitiveness. The expansion of the Airport facilities through the existing masterplan will support the regeneration of Blackpool, and will result in the increased demand for land for business development.

5.10 Airports are recognised to be drivers of wider economic activity as they provide key transport infrastructure for a variety of activities. Indeed proximity to markets via transport hubs are often cited as essential requirements for companies making location decisions. The efficiency and productivity of businesses are enhanced by airports due to the ease of access to their suppliers and customers, particularly those operating over medium to long distances.

5.11 The FEDS recognises the potential to develop high-value manufacturing activity at the Airport, linking into and supporting the maintenance function, developing supply-chain linkages, and further strengthening the value added base of the local economy (ensuring less reliance on key occupiers).

St Annes Classic Resort

5.12 St Annes is a focus for business, retailing and tourism activity within the borough. As the primary key service centre within Fylde, is a key node within the borough and wider Fylde Coast. It has an important civic, community, and service centre function for the local community and visitors alike.

5.13 The investment that has been undertaken and is planned within this important key service centre is focused on enhancing the built environment and improving the retail and leisure offer (including food establishments) to serve the resident and visitor population.

5.14 Currently St Annes is distinguished by the quality of its environment and its differentiated visitor experience from other resorts on the Fylde coast. Maintaining the quality of St Annes town centre through active management and providing opportunities for businesses to establish and successfully trade is a key part of this strategy.

5.15 Additionally, providing the right environment to attract and retain high value tourism related businesses is a key area of challenge in ensuring that St Annes fulfils its economic potential.

Local drivers

5.16 In addition to the key (strategic) drivers identified across Fylde a number of local drivers are identified. Whilst these are recognised as being significant in the context of local economic development they are not as regionally important (and therefore are not included within the RES or LES).

Key service centre Centres

5.17 The FEDS recognises the importance of the other key service centre centres, building on the success of St Annes as a model for regeneration. Through investment in the built environment and business premises within these local centres, including Wesham, Kirkham, Freckleton, Warton, and Lytham, it will be possible to enhance prospects for economic development and regeneration.

5.18 The creation of quality and thriving local centres as foci of investment and activity across Fylde will ensure clear hubs of economic development and regeneration opportunity, including the upgrading of local services and amenities for the existing population across the borough.

5.19 Extending this beyond the borough area, the importance of future investment in Fleetwood / Cleveleys has an important bearing on the wider regeneration of the Fylde Coast. Importantly this will also place potentially significant pressure on the already congested A585 a key feeder road to the M55 motorway.

Existing Employment Hubs

5.20 .A number of key employment hubs exist across Fylde that currently contribute, or have the potential to contribute significantly to the economic fortunes of the borough and wider sub-region. These include those that currently house high value activities, or those that present an opportunity to shift economic function on the site up the value added ladder.

5.21 The key employment hubs are Whitehills Park which is directly on the M55 motorway on the borough's western boundary with Blackpool; Blackpool Airport, the British Aerospace complex at Warton; and BNFL Springfields near Clifton on the boundary with Preston in the east of the borough. Within these locations there is potential to promote higher value, quality (and clean), occupiers alongside the existing businesses.

5.22 There has been a surge of business and industrial development at Whitehills Park over the last three years and there is significant potential to release additional land which would serve both the needs of Fylde and Blackpool.

5.23 It is recognised that there is long term development potential associated with the BNFL Springfields site. However, given the current Government position on nuclear activity the medium term outlook for the current activity appears to be secure.

5.24 The British Aerospace complex at Warton may provide some land for general business and industrial purposes if reorganisation of the aerospace activities takes place. Alternatively, there is potential greenfield land

5.25 Other important business and industrial land resources include (although not exclusive):

- Dock Road / Boundary Road / Preston Road, Lytham.
- The Land Registry and Aegon sites at Lytham.
- The Government Offices site at Heyhouses.
- St Georges Park, Kirkham.

It will be important to retain existing business and employment land in that use where there is a market for it and where redevelopment/ refurbishment can be undertaken on an economically viable basis. Where sites are no longer considered to be economically viable by way of market testing, efforts should be made to provide employment generating uses as part of a mixed use approach to development and thereby retain the economic vitality of the borough overall. This is particularly important in Lytham St Annes where there is significant pressure from developers to redevelop sites exclusively for housing. Loss of further business and employment land in the borough's main town would lead to a much less sustainable community.

Strategic infrastructure links

5.26 The local transport network is sufficient to meet existing levels of demand. However, at a more strategic level there are key transport infrastructure spines that must be maximised to support economic development of the borough.

5.27 These are considered within the spatial framework as being strategic road connections, and strategic rail connections.

Strategic Road Connections

5.28 One of the most important spatial priorities relates to the need to deliver the M55 to Heyhouses Link Road.

5.29 The M55 is recognised to be a key route linking Blackpool and Fylde within the wider strategic motorway network and the Preston city-region as one of the drivers of regional growth. Capacity on this key east-west route remain sufficient to deliver additional economic growth across the Fylde Coast.

5.30 Importantly however, a major constraint of economic development across the Fylde is the inadequacies of north-south road linkages. Whilst the wider development agenda is geared towards sustainable regeneration and locations for economic provision there is a clear need to enhance connectivity between the M55 and the settlements to the south of Fylde.

5.31 Proximity to this key east-west route in terms of travel time is an important locational factor for inward investment decisions. Investment that can enhance links to the national motorway network, including the M55 to Heyhouses Link Road are important to the borough's economic development.

Strategic Rail Connections

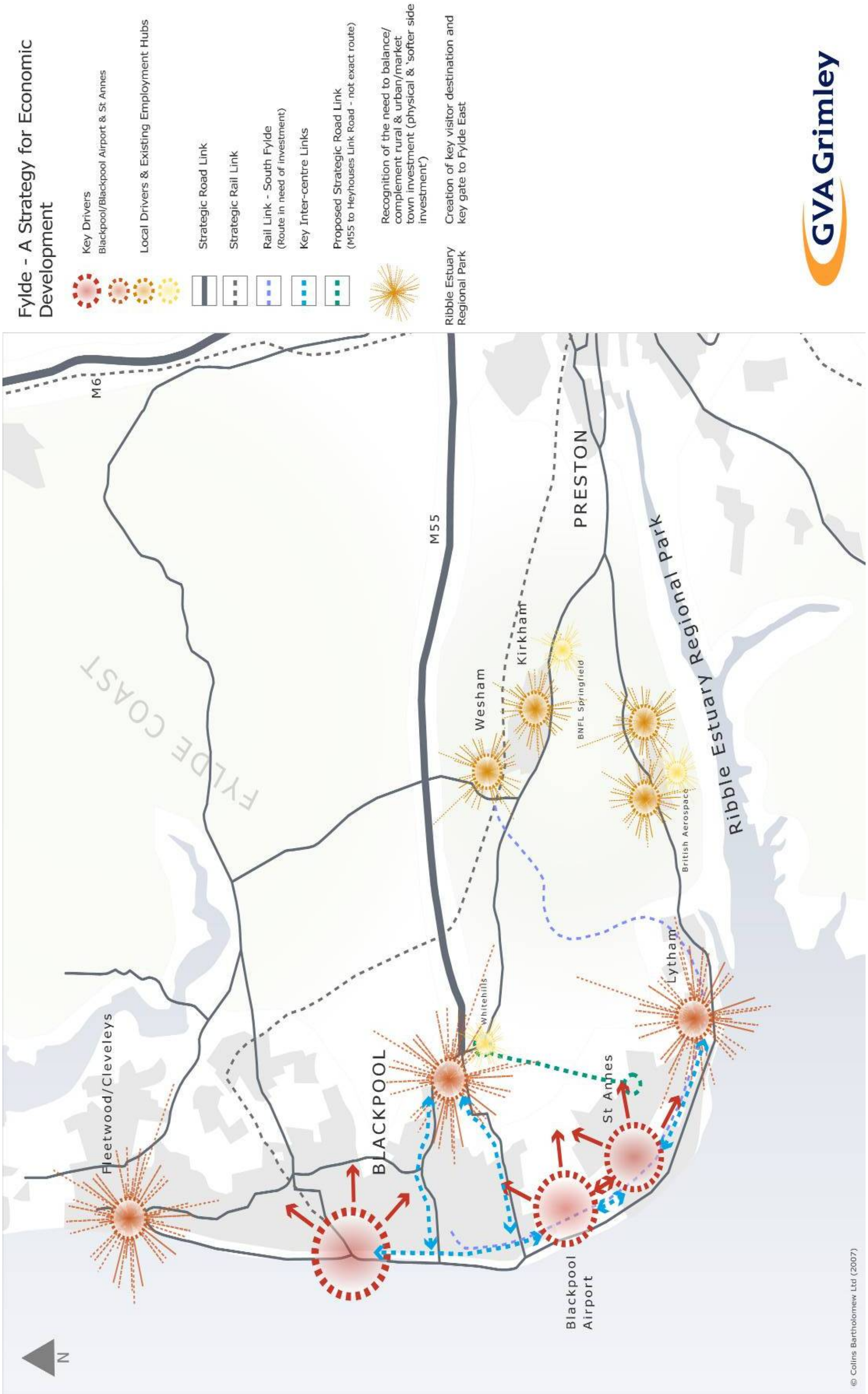
5.32 The South Fylde rail link is currently an underutilised asset. The line, linking Blackpool to Colne, is constrained by a lack of passing loops, which limits the capacity to operate services.

5.33 The frequency of services operating on the line is limited to one train an hour as a result of these constraints. This limits the potential of the line to act as a key service route linking residents of sub region with employment opportunities in the wider area.

5.34 In addition, the line links the wider sub-region to the planned expansion of Blackpool Airport, a project of sub-regional importance. Investment in the line needs to be considered alongside the expansion of the airport to ensure that it is an accessible resource by public transport.

The Spatial Plan

5.35 The key drivers of the Fylde Coast and local economies are shown on the spatial plan overleaf.


Fylde - A Strategy for Economic Development
Key Drivers
Blackpool/Blackpool Airport & St Annes
Local Drivers & Existing Employment Hubs
Strategic Road Link
Strategic Rail Link
Rail Link - South Fylde
(Route in need of investment)
Key Inter-centre Links
Proposed Strategic Road Link
(M55 to Heyhouses Link Road - not exact route)
Recognition of the need to balance/complement rural & urban/market town investment (physical & 'softer side investment')
Ribble Estuary Regional Park
Creation of key visitor destination and key gate to Fylde East
GVA Grimley
M6
M55
PRESTON
FYLDE COAST
Kirkham
Wesham
BNFL Springfield
British Aerospace
Ribble Estuary Regional Park
Lytham
Whitehills
BLACKPOOL
St Annes
Fleetwood/Cleveleys
Blackpool Airport
N
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6. THE STRATEGY

6.1 Economic analysis and stakeholder consultations have confirmed that a dynamic, diverse, high value economy is emerging across Fylde borough. With targeted action and investment the borough will address its constraints and realise value from its economic drivers.

6.2 In this section a strategy for delivering economic growth and diversification of the economy is presented. This is accompanied by an Action Plan for the first years (2008-2012). This initial action plan period corresponds with the date of the Golf Open in 2012. This will be a key milestone in the borough's economic development.

6.3 The following strands to the strategy have been developed in response to the economic constraints and opportunities identified. They are:

- Strand 1: Strong and Vibrant Town Centres
- Strand 2: Room to Grow – the Business Portfolio
- Strand 3: High Value Tourism
- Strand 4: Knowledge Intensive Industry
- Strand 5: Connected for Business
- Strand 6: Skills for Business

6.4 Each of the strands are examined below.

Strand 1: Strong and Vibrant Town Centres

6.5 Fylde's town centres are the 'front door' to the borough, but more than this they have an important civic, community and service centre function for the local community and visitors.

6.6 They should provide opportunities for local businesses to invest and flourish within high quality environments, alongside a mix of uses including retail, housing, leisure and recreation. The town centres should be invested in and promoted as a network of economic drivers in their own right.

6.7 There is evidence of clustering of knowledge based sectors within urban centres. There is indeed a degree of correlation at the regional level, evidenced in the North West Operational Programme (2006 to 2009), and sub-regional, within the LES, between key service centres and SME formation and development.

6.8 Developing a range of modern and refurbished premises for business is an important part of the strategy for Fylde's town centres.

6.9 To deliver this aspiration it is imperative that the centres across Fylde are invested in – focusing on the provision of quality built environments as the settings for economic development and regeneration. Town Centre management initiatives are also encouraged in order to ensure that the standard of maintenance and regulation is upheld.

6.10 Continuing to promote and invest in the town centres will contribute to the wider tourism agenda across the Fylde Coast. The provision of quality urban centres will create appropriate settings for investment linked to the development of the knowledge economy. This also links into one of the strategic objectives of the NWDA *Strategy for Tourism in England's Northwest* (2003 – 2010), which relates to a sense of place, specifically: improving public realm, and the built and natural environment.

6.11 The FEDS recognises the aspiration to enhance the visitor offer and experience in St Annes in line with the 'Classic Resort' concept, as well as the regeneration of the town centre targeted at the physical and built environment. In addition, the ongoing investment in the Central Ward project through the LSP is targeting socio-economic and physical deprivation as evidenced through the index of multiple deprivation.

6.12 There is evidence of an upturn within St Annes, including enhanced retail provision alongside lower end provision through the potential development of a further food-retail outlet.

6.13 The Strategy looks to build on these strengths, as building blocks for regeneration, ensuring investment in the major town centres across the borough.

6.14 Delivering renaissance and regeneration in the town centres across Fylde is a major challenge as it can only be actioned through a co-ordinated approach by the public sector, business community, and private sector.

6.15 The FEDS recognises that investment is being focused on St Annes as the major key service centre centre. It is recommended that this investment is treated as a 'pilot' with the potential to follow a similar approach in other towns across Fylde. This programme of investment, which should be prioritised across the other key service centres, should include investment in the key gateways, public realm and commercial façade treatments, and general upgrading to the environment. The focus should be on creating quality and thriving key service centre environments across Fylde.

Strand 2: Room to Grow – The Business Portfolio

6.16 The supply of employment land and business premises is key to the borough realising its economic development potential. However, given the strong economic and workforce links within the Fylde Coast area, the supply of business sites and premises should be considered and planned for at this functional market level.

6.17 The Fylde Employment Land Study identified a ‘tight’ employment land position across the borough. At headline level the study identified a sufficient volume of employment land to absorb forecast future demand. However the supply of sites across the Borough is identified as being constrained with no margin for expansion in business demand over and above that forecast.

6.18 A qualitative review of employment land supply suggests the stock of sites and premises lacks commercial appeal to the target growth sectors and exhibits a range of environmental disincentives to investment. Specifically the Employment Land Study (ELS) notes the prevalence of dated general business / industrial premises and land across Fylde, and constraints related to accessibility, environmental quality, and maintenance levels. This strategy focuses on key locations in which a modern business premises offer can be delivered. These are locations that have been promoted for consideration as part of the ELS, and those that have emerged from key stakeholder consultation. They include:

‘Whitehills Phase 3’

6.19 The existing (Phase 1 and 2) Whitehills Business Park, located adjacent to Junction 4 of the M55 is Fylde’s largest, prime, multi-use development and employment site. It is recognised as being of importance to the sub-regional economy as an employment location. Indeed the RES promotes the expansion of activity at Whitehills as being important in supporting the sub-regional driver of Blackpool. These sites are referenced in the Spatial Framework as presented in the previous section.

6.20 Development of Whitehills has included office (B1), industrial (B8), retail warehousing (A1), and Sui Generis (car showroom development). Phases 1 and 2 are now developed out, with take-up found to be strong, establishing it as one of the prime employment locations in the context of the Fylde Coast.

6.21 There is additional land availability at Whitehills (‘Phase 3’) totalling circa 20 hectares. The land is already provided for by infrastructure and utilities, through the previous phases of development. In addition, the land is well connected strategically, located immediately south-west of Junction 4 of the M55 motorway.

6.22 Given the strength of Whitehills as an employment location, serving both Fylde and Blackpool Borough's, **the FEDS advocates the protection of 'Whitehills Phase 3' for uses to include predominantly employment related development**. It is envisaged the development of the additional land at Whitehills can assist in the delivery of a link road between the M55 and Heyhouses.

6.23 Promoting and planning for the additional land at Whitehills as a primarily employment location will have significant benefits in terms of increasing its profile as a key employment location within the Fylde Coast; ensuring a strategic approach to locating companies and directing inward investment; and supporting the case for investment in infrastructure.

6.24 The allocated land at Whitehills should be promoted as being one of the primary employment locations across Fylde. Indeed the FEDS proposes that a degree of economic development activity be focused on this location (with it deemed appropriate to resist other uses on the land at and adjacent to Whitehills) to ensure a concentration of employment activity. **The balance between employment floorspace and other land uses as part of a wider mix should be determined through future feasibility and site masterplanning work.** The importance of ensuring employment floorspace provision is true also of land at or adjacent to Blackpool International Airport, Warton, and ensuring the promotion of rural employment creation (including home working and rural conversions where considered appropriate on a scheme by scheme basis).

Blackpool International Airport

6.25 Whilst the expansion plans for Blackpool International Airport will have an undisputed positive impact on the visitor economy across Fylde one of the most important associated opportunities for Fylde and the wider Fylde Coast economy will be that associated with the increased demand for land for business development.

6.26 Airports are drivers of economic activity as they provide transport infrastructure for a wide range of economic activities. Access to markets and transport links are usually cited as essential requirements for companies making location decisions. Business efficiency and productivity are enhanced by airports as they provide easy access to suppliers and customers, particularly over medium to long distances.

6.27 Airports with available land are increasingly developing business parks to capitalise on the attractiveness of air transport services. The identified focus on aerospace as a key sector in the Fylde Coast, and wider Lancashire and North West economies illustrates a direct driver of this type of development at Blackpool International Airport. However, there is also potential to develop the available land relating to the development of Business, Professional and Financial Services (BPFS) and Information, Communication and Technology services (ICT) across Fylde.

6.28 There is the potential to develop high-value manufacturing at the Airport, linking into and supporting the maintenance function, developing supply-chain linkages, and importantly embedding the impact of the airport in the local economy.

6.29 However, opportunities to attract higher value activity at the airport have not been taken up in the past, as evidenced by the predominance of warehousing activity. Higher value uses should be targeted for this location, with the land at Blackpool Business Park and that covered by the Blackpool International Airport expansion masterplan protected for this type of use.

6.30 There is a role for the public sector in ensuring this takes place, along with the potential to develop the ICT sector, linking into wider strategic LES objectives.

6.31 The land available at the Airport (being that at Blackpool Business Park and that covered by the expansion plans) is owned by a single owner (making it a more deliverable site), and is subject to a masterplan prepared by MAR Properties.

6.32 The Airport and adjacent Business Park and industrial estate should be promoted alongside the expansion of the Airport as the primary business locations across the Borough. Given the increased prominence of the Airport as a business location the sites should be promoted for higher value uses, rather than general industrial development.

6.33 Development of this land should be considered as being of strategic importance to the delivery of wider economic growth across the Fylde Coast.

6.34 It is noted that some of this land is in existing use. The FEDS recommends that the site be signposted as being appropriate for business uses.

6.35 Land adjacent to the Airport, particularly that at Squires Gate is also considered to be an important part of the business portfolio given its prominence and links to the strategic highway network. Other sites, including for example the existing Pontins site, should be considered in the context of the ‘health’ / strength of the commercial market at the Airport and Squires Gate. At the current time the Pontins site specifically would not be considered to have strong strategic links (bar its relative proximity to the Airport).

6.36 Indeed the Pontins site would not be recognised at the current time as being a primary employment location due to its contribution to existing leisure provision and existing structures on site. It is important however that the site be considered in this context at the time its future use is brought into question.

Warton Aerodrome

6.37 The full land coverage of Warton Aerodrome, the runway, and associated land holdings acquired by British Aerospace, totals approximately 243 hectares. As part of the ELS undertaken prior to this Strategy an area of 7.7 hectares covering the former Marconi Adhesives Factory has been considered in terms of its appropriateness for provision of employment floorspace over the emerging plan period. The factory and ancillary uses adjoins the operational area of the aerodrome but has never included an associated use. The factory has been vacant and derelict for a number of years.

6.38 The site faces a number of constraints including its accessibility. Whilst it is located along a key route existing traffic levels along the route would be increased significantly through any development of the site, resulting in the need for an infrastructure solution. This significantly raises the cost of developing the site.

6.39 In the current commercial market context the nature and potential scale of costs associated with this site would most likely prohibit its development for purely business and industrial use. An appropriate mix of uses on site, including some which would generate higher values, would make development more viable.

6.40 Through consultation undertaken with the consultants developing a scheme for the site it is understood there is an aspiration for a mixed use site including retail uses and a hotel to ‘balance out’ the lower values likely to be achieved on the industrial / hybrid floorspace included within the scheme. This mix of uses reduces the risk associated with the development for the private sector, making the scheme more viable and therefore deliverable.

6.41 The FEDS advocates the development of the majority of the site for employment use. It acknowledges that due to associated costs there may be a need to deliver some retail provision on the site, potentially including food and non-food retail although at no larger scale than neighbourhood scale.

6.42 Specifically, the development of the site could provide an opportunity for spin-off business activity associated with the aerospace industry. The forecast growth in this sector indicates that delivering hybrid general industrial / workspace and office provision would facilitate this type of growth. The proximity of this site to the BAe operations highlights its potential role in this process.

Strand 3: High Value Tourism

6.43 Investing in a high value tourism and leisure offer is key to realising the economic potential of the borough and distinguishing it from other resorts within Lancashire. It contains the raw ingredients that would sustain high value businesses and services, including factors such as a relatively affluent catchment area, good transport links and a base of visitor attractions.

6.44 **Tourism in Fylde must be built on a number of identified 'pillars' including the investment at Blackpool International Airport, the wider regeneration of Blackpool as a tourist destination, Ribble Estuary Regional Park, Classic Resorts / Town Renaissance across Fylde and the leisure offer.** These programmes and initiatives are referred to in more detail below.

6.45 This co-ordinated approach across the Fylde Coast must also recognise the contribution that rural villages and key service centres within Fylde borough can make to the overall visitor experience. The rural recreational offer coupled with attractive historic environments are attributes which can be capitalised upon.

Classic Resorts / Town Renaissance

6.46 The concept of St Annes as a Classic Resort was set out in the 2003 Classic Resorts Strategy. The Strategy recognised the need to regenerate the town centre due to low business confidence, an ageing building stock, and the legacy of a lack of public realm investment for a number of years. It was acknowledged within the Strategy that a focus on individual resorts can promote the wider region as a tourism product.

6.47 St Annes is a 'Classic Resort' and a 'Regional Gem' as designated by the NWDA. Whilst Southport has been classified as a Classic Resort from 2008, it has no accreditation scheme in place (and therefore no checklist with which to measure impact of investment). There is identified potential to pioneer this approach in St Annes – promoting its inclusion as a classic resort in the RES (through recognition by LEP). Indeed a main strategic issue relating to this is that St Annes as a classic resort is not identified as a project in the RES.

6.48 Any accreditation scheme (and therefore recording of outputs) should look beyond traditional jobs created, including instead 'softer' measures including hotel accreditation, skills and training, standards in food and catering, retail occupancy and rental levels, and footfall. These are all components of economic development, linking back to the growing importance of the visitor economy including enhanced visitor spend.

Blackpool Regeneration

6.49 It is recognised within the FEDS that one of the transformational tourism projects across the region (recognised in RES) is Blackpool. It is important that the tourism offer in Fylde relates to this but also positions itself in its own context. The Classic Resort investment in St Annes (and potential to roll this approach out) allows the creation of an alternative type of offer complementing the regeneration of the wider Fylde Coast.

Ribble Estuary Regional Park

6.50 A further tier to the Classic Resorts concept, and a major focus of planned investment, is the Ribble Estuary Park (comprising the Ribble Coastal Wetlands). A Business Plan has been prepared for the Estuary Park. This document describes the initiative as follows:

"The Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park presents the region with a significant economic opportunity. The area, which incorporates the Ribble Estuary and an inland area which takes in the Martin Mere and Mere Sands Wood nature reserves, is home to internationally significant wetland habitats and is nestled alongside three centres of population."

6.51 The Business Plan identifies the focus of the Partnership. Of significance to Fylde borough is the identification of the St Annes Gateway Development as a key project of the Partnership. It is significant that the Business Plan fully recognises St Annes as integral to the Ribble Estuary visitor experience and accordingly supports key projects such as the Visitor Economy Pilot and the Resort Action Plan among other actions and investments.

6.52 The programmed spend associated with the investment in the Park totals £15 million, creating a significant new visitor destination of regional significance. It is imperative that the Fylde coast markets its relationship to the Park to its full potential – the coverage of the Park makes it a key visitor gateway into Lytham St Annes.

6.53 The Ribble Estuary Park Business Plan supports further work around the Visitor Economy Pilot (specifically action planning), design work to the seafront area and securing funding for the promenade gardens. The Business Plan also is supportive of partnership working with the private sector to explore the potential for the Pleasure Island/ Salters Wharf site.

Leisure and Tourism

6.54 It is also important to note the significance of the Royal Lytham and St Annes Golf Club being named as the venue for the Open Golf Championships in 2012. The level of associated investment, visitor and development potential raises the profile of St Annes (and the Fylde Coast) and should be maximised and promoted within the RES and with the LEP and NWDA. Fylde Borough Council should look to opportunities for partnership working on the back of the Championships including working with England's Golf Coast. FBC is working with Sefton Council to make a strong case for future Championships to be located in the North West.

6.55 Whilst the Open Golf Championships are recognised to be 'one-off' event with the FEDS the economic value and legacy of the event is considered to be unprecedented in the local economy. The event offers the potential to market Fylde to the world, with associated levels of visitors and therefore spend in the local economy; there is a clear opportunity here to attract regional funding streams to the area given the right project.

6.56 Lytham St Annes has secured the status of 'visitor economy pilot' for Lancashire which confers help and assistance in identifying opportunities for greater tourism growth. Key stakeholders (both public and private) will be drawing up an action plan for enhancing the quality of the resort offer which would bring about economic benefits. It could result in projects to enhance the public realm, improve access, culture and heritage.

6.57 Specific measures to ensure the provision of a high quality and appropriate service sector should include the promotion of a quality assurance scheme, in addition to the continuation of work through the LSP relating to increasing the standard of service and skills within the service sector (through partnership with the private sector), and the wider promotion of tourism provision.

6.58 Central to this is the recognition that there are 'behind the scenes' aspects to the development of the tourism sector including skills and training, career development, and destination management.

6.59 One area of potential 'weakness' in the context of the tourism offer relates to that identified across rural Fylde. Indeed there are very few formal 'visitor attractions' within the rural area, with no interpretation centres, farm attractions, and very few formal rural walks. As with the wider economic growth of Fylde **there is a need to integrate tourism activity which is ongoing in urban Fylde with that across rural Fylde (promoting a balanced provision)**. Flexibility in the conversion of buildings and use of land for tourism and leisure purposes in the countryside is also important to stimulating the visitor economy.

6.60 Linked into this is the need to attract the type of visitors to the resort of St Annes and the wider area with higher spend – those on middle and higher incomes. In order to ensure this shift in visitor profile it is important that the attractions of St Annes are augmented with those within the rural area. The 2012 Open Golf Championship provides an opportunity to effectively and coherently market both the urban and rural visitor attractions in the borough.

6.61 The action plan accompanying this strategy recommends undertaking joint marketing and promotion activities with the Lancashire and Blackpool Tourist Board. This approach should build on the golf offer across the Fylde Coast, heritage offer at village level, conservation and walks across the rural hinterland of Fylde (and the Ribble Estuary Park specifically), and investment within the town / urban areas creating the feel of a network of vibrant key service centre destinations. The Open Golf Championships are considered as an integral component of this – a key 'reason' that people will be visiting Fylde in the future. Marketing the Fylde Coast appropriately and adequately is essential to promoting economic development across the sub-region.

Strand 4: Knowledge Intensive Industry

6.62 The two key sub-sectors within the current employment base across Fylde are aerospace and nuclear processing. Evidence collected as part of the Employment Land Study (2006) demonstrated supply chain linkages associated with these sectors including precision instruments and chemicals activities.

6.63 Both aerospace and nuclear processing are identified as significant growth sectors at the regional level and therefore should be promoted at sub-regional and local level.

6.64 The spin-off potential of these sectors including business and professional service sectors and specialist sub-sector activity should be encouraged.

6.65 Fylde needs to link into sub-regional programmes to support and develop these industries. Developing strong links to the University of Central Lancashire and its programmes supporting businesses in the nuclear sector, is an important action to be pursued.

6.66 In terms of the aerospace sector it is acknowledged that Salmesbury has been identified as the key North West location for aerospace activity (the Regional Aerospace Business Park). The focus at Warton will continue to be manufacturing activities, but linkages between the two should be promoted and protected. This may, for example, include the outsourcing of activities from Salmesbury.

6.67 Regular dialogue with BNFL and BAe should be maintained to ensure that the operational requirements of both businesses are met within the borough at their respective sites.

Promoting the development of other Knowledge Intensive Sectors

6.68 Fylde's Employment Land Study highlighted that the borough has the potential to attract and develop more knowledge based businesses in sectors as diverse as business and professional services and ICT. In order to realise this potential, **the portfolio of business premises needs to offer business occupiers the type of environment, tenure options and services that they demand.**

6.69 Strand 2 of the strategy deals with securing a sufficient supply of sites for business. However in order to create the right conditions for enterprise formation it is necessary to consider the supply of small business space that is suitable for SMEs in knowledge based sectors. Currently, Fylde borough lacks a modern managed workspace facility and this may serve to discourage or displace SMEs to other locations outside the borough.

6.70 The accompanying action plan proposes working in partnership with Lancashire County Developments Ltd to develop a managed workspace facility that will provide accessible accommodation for business start-ups.

Strand 5: Connected for Business

6.71 The future economic growth prospects of Fylde are associated with how well connected the borough and key sites within it are to the national transport network (both road and rail). At localised level the transport network is found to be sufficient to support economic development in the future. However, in order to maximise economic development there is a need to focus investment and promotion of a number of strategic connections. These are identified as:

- Blackpool International Airport
- East-West Train Linkages (South Fylde Train Link)
- M55 to Heyhouses Link Road

Blackpool International Airport

6.72 Future investment at the Airport is of strategic importance to Lancashire. A site masterplan has been prepared and includes measures for expansion in the airport's operations and development of an aviation centre (as an annex to the Blackpool and Fylde College). Lancashire Economic Partnership commissioned an economic impact assessment of the proposed airport expansion and this has served to illustrate direct and indirect employment creation as well as increased visitor expenditure associated with the proposal.

6.73 There is an allocation of £3million included within the Lancashire Strategic Investment Programme (SIP) to support the development of Blackpool International Airport. This includes a focus on infrastructure provision including the expansion of the terminal, car parks, and access roads.

6.74 This strategy recommends the formation of a strong partnership with the owners of the airport and LEP to ensure that business and employment opportunities are maximised through the expansion proposals. In particular, the potential to link new employment opportunities to people in the Central Ward is considered to be a priority action.

South Fylde Train Link

6.75 The South Fylde train line is an under-utilised strategic transport link. The South Fylde line provides an important public transport link to Blackpool, Preston, Manchester and Leeds (via Burnley and Hebden Bridge). The South line which runs to Colne is currently constrained by a lack of passing loops on the line, restricting its operational capacity. Currently there is only one train an hour on the south line, with Sunday services impacted significantly due to ongoing maintenance work.

6.76 The north and the south lines respectively are seen to have importance in terms of encouraging sustainable travel to work and enabling access to the borough.

6.77 The strategy and action plan calls for LEP, Fylde and Blackpool to lobby for investment in the South Fylde line, its stations and visitor reception facilities.

6.78 The Community Rail Partnership has an important role to play alongside public sector partners in identifying local priorities for investment as well as promoting greater use of the line.

M55 to Heyhouses Link Road

6.79 There are existing deficiencies within the north-south road linkages across Fylde, impacting specifically on the wider benefit of the M55 motorway to settlements located in the southerly half of the borough. A study has recently been commissioned to review the economic need for a St Annes to M55 Link road.

6.80 Ensuring linkages with this key route will ensure wider connectivity to Blackpool to the west (spreading the regeneration and employment benefit across the Fylde Coast) and Central

Lancashire and beyond to the east. Indeed proximity to this key route for the Fylde Coast is considered a key locational factor for inward investment decisions.

6.81 The potential for the development of a link road between Heyhouses and the M55 is considered to be one of the most important spatial priorities within the FEDS

Strand 6: Skills for Business

Skills and Lifelong Learning

6.82 The resident labour force within Fylde is identified as being characterised by almost full employment, high levels of skills, and relatively good income levels. However, there are two emerging dichotomies within the local economy which need to be addressed.

6.83 A large proportion of these employed and generally high-earning residents are accessing employment opportunities outside of borough. At the same time a number of companies recognise the shortage of labour available to fill ‘lower-paid’ occupations. The promotion of service sector employment as part of the growth of tourism and the visitor economy will continue to exacerbate this issue and lead to increasing reliance on in-commuting workforce.

6.84 While the borough is at near full employment, there remain pockets of skills deprivation and unemployment in the Central Ward. **The strategy recommends prioritising resources to the Central ward and working with a range of training and workforce development providers to boost skills levels and economic activity.**

6.85 The action plan that accompanies this strategy promotes a range of initiatives including:

- Foundation apprenticeships;
- Collaborative and targeted working with Connexions;
- Tapping into the Lancashire LAA Worklessness Project; and
- Continuing to deliver the LSP’s programmes in relation to service sector employment

7. THE ACTION PLAN

7.1 An Action Plan for the initial years of the strategy (2008-2012) has been prepared. The Action Plan has been designed to:

- Identify key actions and projects which can be implemented to deliver each strand of the strategy;
- Identify suitable delivery partners;
- Propose delivery timescales; and
- Distinguish between corporate (Fylde Borough Council) and non-corporate actions.

7.2 Given the current lack of a dedicated economic development function within the borough it is important that the Action Plan seeks to deliver using private sector initiatives and resources, through partnership with local, sub-regional and regional agencies and by effective linkage and alignment with existing programmes.

7.3 It is the recommendation of this Action Plan that the Council considers appointing a dedicated economic development resource to manage this function effectively. It is also important to realise the opportunities to work collaboratively with Blackpool BC and Wyre BC on economic development initiatives under the provisions of the Fylde Coast MAA. There may be potential for a shared staff resource in order to deliver projects of Fylde Coast significance.

7.4 It is also recommended that the Council review its partnership activity in light of the Action Plan recommendations with a view to focusing on those partnership arrangements which will yield the greatest economic benefits for the borough.

Strand			Action	Description	Delivery Partners	Indicative Timing
	General		Resources	Consider appointing a dedicated economic development resource to manage this function effectively.	FBC	2009
			Partnerships	Realise the opportunities to work collaboratively with Blackpool BC and Wyre BC on economic development initiatives under the provisions of the Fylde Coast MAA. There may be potential for a shared staff resource in order to deliver projects of Fylde Coast significance.	Blackpool and Wyre Councils	2008-2010
			Partnerships	Review partnership activity in light of the Action Plan recommendations with a view to focusing on those partnership arrangements which will yield the greatest economic benefits for the borough.	All partners	2009
1	**Strong and Vibrant Town Centres**	1.1	Resort Partnership	Establish a multi-sector Lytham St Annes resort partnership to agree priorities for investment and development, to advise on commercial matters in relation to town centre policy development and to oversee town centre management issues	FBC/ NWDA/ LEP/ Hoteliers and Guest House Representatives/ Chamber of Trade	2008
		1.2	Rural Service Centre Action Plan	Devise action plans to cover Kirkham Key service centre. The action plans should focus on townscape and heritage, landscape design, business (including retail) premises and public open space provision among other considerations.	FBC	2008

Strand			Action	Description	Delivery Partners	Indicative Timing
2	**Room to Grow - the Business Portfolio**	2.1	Whitehills Phase 3 Planning Framework	To work collaboratively with LCC and private interests in the Whitehills Phase 3 area to produce a planning framework that supports the sustainable development of the site and the provision of infrastructure related to development	FBC/LCC/Private	2008-09
		2.2	Warton Aerodrome	Secure employment uses as part of a mixed use development of the former Warton Aerodrome site. Subject to development feasibilities secure provision of modern office and hybrid "office-workshop" units on site	Private	2008-12
		2.3	Managed Workspace Initiative	Work in partnership with LCDL/ NWDA to identify a suitable site for a new Managed Workspace facility to accommodate new start up businesses	FBC/ LCDL/ LEP	2008-2012
		2.4	Boosting Business Awareness Project	Work collaboratively with Lancashire Economic Partnership and Fylde Coast Authorities to develop an up-to-date online resource detailing availability of business land and premises in Fylde. Web resource to include up-to-date information about the Fylde labour force and other key economic data	FBC/ Blackpool Council/ WBC/ LEP	2008-2012
3	**High Value Tourism**	3.1	Visitor Economy Strategy	Design and market an annual programme of events centred on the cultural and leisure offer of Lytham St Annes. Build on the potential of the existing "continental market" events and the 2012 British Golf Open. Capitalise on unrealised potential of the borough's rural areas to attract visitors, including a focus on promotional activities.	LBTB/ FBC	2008-ongoing
		3.2	Marketing Programme	Design a programme of marketing to raise awareness of Fylde's tourism and cultural assets working collaboratively with the Lancashire and Blackpool Tourism Board.	LBTC/FBC	2008-ongoing

Strand			Action	Description	Delivery Partners	Indicative Timing
		3.3	Classic Resorts Plus	Design a business support programme targeted at tourism and leisure businesses located in St Annes which is designed to help firms move their activities up the value chain.	FBC/ LBTB/ NWDA	2008-2012
		3.4	Ribble Coast and Wetland Park	Contribute to the development of the Regional Park for West Lancashire by providing a supportive policy framework and a range of leisure and tourism related developments.	FBC/ LEP/ NWDA	2008-2012
		3.5	2012 Working Group	Establish a working group to oversee plans to maximise visitor spending before, during and after the British Golf Open in 2012.	LBTB/ LEP/ NWDA	2008-2012
4	**Knowledge Intensive Industry**	4.1	Creative Industries Business Support	Engage Creative Lancashire to effectively target business support activities to the creative industries sector. Creative Lancashire to roll out programme of support in relation to: market research consultancy; innovation/ product development; financial management advice; HR management advice and e-commerce development	Creative Lancashire/ FBC	2008-ongoing
		4.2	Targeted use of Rosebud fund	Engage LCDL to identify "target growth sectors" and to boost take-up of Rosebud products for business expansion in target sectors	LCDL/ FBC	2008-ongoing
		4.3	UCLan Tyndel Centre for Nuclear Research	Engage UCLan to target training, business development and knowledge transfer to businesses wishing to capitalise on the nuclear industry within Fylde.	UCLan/ FBC	2008-ongoing
		4.4	Micro Enterprise in Rural Areas	Promote appropriate business start ups and diversification in rural areas through LEP's rural programme and grant assistance available from the sub regional partnership.	LEP/ FBC	2008-2012

Strand			Action	Description	Delivery Partners	Indicative Timing
		4.5	Economic Development Resource	Consider development of a jointly funded Economic Development team serving Fylde Coast authorities as part of the MAA process	FBC/ BC/ WBC	2008-ongoing
		4.6	Partnership Dialogue	Establish regular (quarterly) meetings with Lancashire Economic Partnership to discuss economic development requirements of the borough and delivery potential in the context of the Lancashire Economic Strategy.	FBC/ LEP	2008-2012
5	**Connected for Business**	5.1	Airport Sub Regional Gateway Project	Invest in high quality public realm and gateway features along Squires Gate in order to raise the profile and setting of the airport.	Private/ NWDA/ LEP/ Re:Blackpool/ LCC/ FBC	Phased subject to funding available
		5.2	South Fylde Train Link Improvements	Lobby for improved service frequency, station reception facilities and promotion of the South Fylde service as a convenient alternative to the car	Community Rail Partnership/ LEP/ FBC	2008-2012
		5.3	M55 to Heyhouses Site Link Road	Development of a link road from the M55 to facilitate better connections for business	LCC/ Highways Agency/ Private	Funding contributions linked to development of Whitehills Phase 3

Strand			Action	Description	Delivery Partners	Indicative Timing
		5.4	Blackpool South Tram Link	Work with Blackpool Council to secure the necessary funding for the extension of the tram to serve the airport, with a long term ambition of extending the tram proposals to connect to Kirkham.	FBC/ BC	2008-ongoing
6	**Skills for Business**[7]	6.1	People into Service Sector Employment Initiative	Continued delivery of initiative within the Central Ward providing basic business and employability skills. Developing stronger partnerships with Blackpool Airport and the Chamber to promote use of local labour	LSP/ Blackpool Airport/ Chamber of Commerce	2008-ongoing
		6.2	Foundation Apprenticeships	Work with LCDL to identify and target foundation apprenticeships to areas of labour market weakness such as the Central ward and parts of Kirkham and Wesham.	LCDL	2008-ongoing
		6.3	Connexions Service	Engage Connexions to identify priority areas for advice/ guidance to young people aged 13-19.	Connexions Lancashire	2008-ongoing

7.5 The contribution of each project to the strands of the strategy is shown on the next page. This clearly demonstrates that many of the projects have multiple benefits in enabling the borough to perform to its economic development potential.

[7] Note: All actions proposed in this strand of the Action Plan should be periodically reviewed in order to ensure that they align with and support the emerging MAA Worklessness Strand.

	Action	Strong and Vibrant Town Centres	Room to Grow - the Business Portfolio	High Value Tourism	Knowledge Intensive Industry	Connected for Business	Skills for Business
1.1	Resort Partnership	◆	◆	◆	◆	□	□
1.2	Rural Service Centre Action Plan	◆	◆	◆	◆	□	□
2.1	Whitehills Phase 3 Planning Framework	□	◆	□	◆	□	□
2.2	Warton Aerodrome	□	◆	□	◆	□	□
2.3	Managed Workspace Initiative	□	◆	□	◆	□	□
2.4	Boosting Business Awareness Project	□	□	□	◆	□	□
3.1	Visitor Economy Strategy	□	□	◆	□	□	□
3.2	Marketing Programme	◆	□	◆	□	□	□
3.3	Classic Resorts Plus	◆	□	◆	◆	□	□
3.4	Ribble Coast and Wetland Park	□	□	◆	□	□	□
3.5	2012 Working Group	◆	□	◆	□	□	□
4.1	Creative Industries Business Support	□	□	□	◆	□	□
4.2	Targeted use of Rosebud fund	□	□	□	◆	□	□

	Action	Strong and Vibrant Town Centres	Room to Grow - the Business Portfolio	High Value Tourism	Knowledge Intensive Industry	Connected for Business	Skills for Business
4.3	UCLan Tyndel Centre for Nuclear Research	□	□	□	◆	□	□
4.4	Micro Enterprise in Rural Areas	□	□	◆	◆	□	◆
4.5	Economic Development Resource	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
4.6	Partnership Dialogue	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
5.1	Airport Sub Regional Gateway Project	□	□	□	□	◆	□
5.2	South Fylde Train Link Improvements	□	□	□	□	◆	□
5.3	M55 to Heyhouses Site Link Road	□	◆	□	◆	◆	□
5.4	Blackpool South Tram Link	□	□	◆	◆	◆	□
6.1	People into Service Sector Employment Initiative	□	□	◆	□	□	◆
6.2	Foundation Apprenticeships	□	□	□	□	□	◆
6.3	Connexions Service	□	□	□	□	□	◆

GLOSSARY

British Aerospace (BAe)

Blackpool Council (BC)

British Nuclear Fuels Limited (BNFL)

Business, Professional and Financial Services (BPFS)

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)

Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR)

Employment Land Survey (ELS)

Fylde Borough Council (FBC)

Fylde Economic Development Strategy (FEDS)

Gross Value Added (GVA)

Information, Communication Technology (ICT)

Lancashire County Council (LCC)

Lancashire Economic Partnership (LEP)

Lancashire Economic Strategy (LES)

Lancashire Strategic Investment Programme (SIP)

Lancashire and Blackpool Tourism Board (LBTB)

Lancashire County Developments Limited (LCDL)

Local Area Agreement (LAA)

Local Area Agreements (LAA's)

Local Authorities (LA's)

Local Area Business Growth Incentive (LABGI)

Local Development Framework (LDF)

Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

Lancashire Skills, Education and Training group (LSET)

Lancashire Learning and Skills Council (LLSC)

Multi Area Agreement (MAA)

Multi-Area Agreements (MAA's)

Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET)

Northwest Development Agency (NWDA)

Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Regional Development Agency (RDA)

Regional Economic Strategy (RES)

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)

Small to Medium sized Enterprise (SME)

Sub-National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration (SNR)

Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS)

Wyre Borough Council (WBC)

Unitary Authority (UA)

University of Central Lancashire (UCLan)

APPENDIX 1: Local Plan Policy SP5

FYLDE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN (AS ALTERED) OCTOBER 2005

Policy SP5

In the countryside areas and green belts, the re-use, adaptation or conversion of agricultural or other rural buildings to new commercial, industrial, or recreational uses will be permitted, providing all the following criteria can be met:-

1. In the case of a use which includes holiday or other visitor accommodation, the building must be substantially built in brick or stone;
2. The proposal does not lead to dispersal of activity on such a scale as to prejudice town or village vitality;
3. The nature and extent of the proposal would not prejudice the character and appearance of the countryside having regard to the development as a whole, including the formation of a new curtilage or change to an existing curtilage, any requirements for outbuildings or for access or other highway improvements;
4. The building must be structurally sound such that the conversion could take place without substantial reconstruction or major alteration. Any demolition and rebuilding work must be of a minor nature and agreed by the council as part of the planning application process;
5. In the case of a brick or stone building of traditional or special character, the building must be capable of conversion or re-use without major extension and without undue detriment to its character or loss of important features.
6. The proposal would not promote the need for additional or replacement buildings or extensions to existing buildings which would have a detrimental effect on the landscape or the character of the countryside;
7. The proposed use would not promote conflict with adjacent or nearby buildings, uses or operations and could be carried out without adverse effect upon the amenities enjoyed by nearby residents;
8. The site must have, or be capable of being provided with safe and adequate vehicular access, satisfactory foul and surface water drainage arrangements and other essential services without involving unnecessary expenditure by public authorities and utilities;
9. The building and associated curtilage is adequate to provide for the parking, loading and manoeuvring of service vehicles without detriment to the character of the area.
10. The proposal can be adequately served by the local road network.

Policy SP6

In the countryside areas and green belts, the conversion of agricultural or other buildings to residential use will not be permitted except where:-

- It is necessary for purposes of agriculture, horticulture or forestry; or
- Where it would form a necessary subordinate part of a scheme for business re-use, which would significantly benefit the rural economy; or
- It would result in the preservation of a building of architectural or historic interest, or which makes a special contribution to the rural landscape and the applicant has previously made every reasonable attempt to secure suitable business re-use.

Additionally conversion proposals will only be permitted where all of the following criteria can be met:-

1. The building must be of a permanent and substantial construction in brick or stone, have a form, bulk and general design in keeping with its surroundings and be structurally sound;
2. The building must be capable of conversion or re-use without substantial reconstruction or major demolition and without major extension;
3. The conversion or re-use, including any additional or replacement buildings, extensions to existing buildings and the creation of any residential curtilage, must be achievable without having harmful effect on the character of the building, its setting in the landscape and the surrounding countryside;
4. There would be no conflict with any adjacent or nearby buildings, uses or operations;
5. The site has, or must be capable of being provided with, safe and adequate vehicular access, satisfactory foul and surface water drainage disposal arrangements and other essential services without involving unnecessary expenditure by public authorities and utilities.

REPORT

FYLDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES	POLICY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	14TH JULY 2011	6

POLICY ON THE REIMBURSEMENT OF FEES AND CHARGES

Public Item

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting

Summary

The report presents a policy for consideration on requests for the reimbursement of fees and charges.

Recommendation

That Scrutiny Committee considers the report and makes recommendations to Cabinet on the policy of reimbursement of planning and other fees/charges.

Alternative options considered and rejected

An alternative would be to propose a policy for dispensations for Town/Parish Councils and community organisations to have fees and charges refunded or grants awarded to cover such costs. This is not recommended as it is considered unaffordable.

Cabinet Portfolio

The item falls within the following Cabinet portfolios:

Planning and Development - Councillor Dr Trevor Fiddler
Finance and Resources - Councillor Karen Buckley

Continued....

Report

1. The council has in the past considered requests for reimbursement of fees to Town/Parish Councils/Village Hall Committees. These have tended to be on an individual basis and in most cases approved.

2. All local planning authorities are bound by regulations that set the category of development and level of planning application fees. These cannot be changed or waived by the local planning authority; however there are emerging proposals from the Government which if implemented will allow local authorities to set their own planning fees based on the principle of full service cost recovery.

3. Although the Council cannot refund a planning application fee, it can provide a grant to a Town or Parish Council or Village Hall Committee or other community group to cover the cost of fees relating to a community project.

4. In the past five years two grant requests have been received and considered by Members:

    - In 2006 from Singleton Village Hall Committee for £1,590 for planning application fees incurred for a new village hall which was granted.
    - In 2010 from Singleton Village Hall Committee for £355 for planning application fees incurred for the renewal of wall cladding and windows at Singleton Village Hall which was granted.

5. When the latter request was considered in 2010 the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources agreed:
    1. To the specific request for refund of planning fees (set out in the report)
    2. That a policy is drafted for consideration requiring that in future fees will be collected for parish work.

6. This report proposes formalising the above resolution into policy. However there are a number of issues to be noted/for consideration:

    a. There is no budget for the payment of grants for planning application fees. The payments referred to in section 4 were at the time made from the virement of funds from other budgets.

    b. In most parishes the local village hall is controlled by a management committee which is a charitable entity separate from the parish or town council.

    c. A Town/Parish Council can raise funds for local projects through its precept which means costs would be met by those directly benefitting in the locality.

    d. The cost of preparing a scheme including design and any necessary permission such as planning/building control should usually be included in the overall project budget/funding strategy. These can usually be recouped as legitimate costs if grants have been awarded through a Lottery or other similar grant sources.

e. The Council has not received applications from other community groups in recent years for the refund of planning or building control application fees (e.g. Park View 4U).

f. Details of Government proposals for the local setting of planning fees mentioned earlier have not yet been published. This could allow local authorities to set charges/dispensations for certain categories of development although it would probably be on the basis of full service cost recovery overall. This would mean that one category would be in effect subsidising another. As a result if charges were lower in one area they would need to be higher in another. When further details are published a report will be brought for Members to consider.

g. A request has recently been received from Weeton Village Hall Committee requesting the repayment of £1,172 of planning fees for the erection of a new village hall.

7. It is recommended that based on the previous resolution of the Portfolio Holder that the policy be confirmed *that regulatory fees are charged in accordance with the appropriate Government set fee or Council agreed fee and that requests for individual grants to cover the cost of such fees are declined. This does not however preclude the submission of a request for general support for a project considered to have borough wide strategic importance* (e.g. Lytham Hall).

8. If the above policy is confirmed it is recommended that the request from Weeton Village Hall Committee is declined.

Risk/Conclusion

9. The receipt of income from planning and other fees helps the Council balance its budget. Should income from this area be eroded through the award of a grant to cover the fee there will be either a disproportionate charge made to other users of the service or a corresponding upward pressure on the level of Council Tax required to balance the budget. If the Council cannot raise the Council Tax as required then available budgets for service provision are threatened.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	Contained in the body of the report.
Legal	There are no legal implications
Community Safety	There are no legal implications
Human Rights and Equalities	The policy as proposed would ensure the cost of fees of local projects is either recovered through local Town/Parish precepts or through external grants.
Sustainability	There are no implications
Health & Safety and Risk Management	There are no implications

Report Author	Tel	Date	Doc ID
Paul Walker	(01253) 658431	24th June 2011	

List of Background Papers		
Name of document	Date	Location
The Town and Country Planning (fees for applications and deemed applications) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2008	2008	HTTP://WWW.PLANNING-APPLICATIONS.CO.UK/TOWN%20AND%20COUNTRY%20PLANNING%20REGULATIONS.PDF
Cabinet Member decision on a request for reimbursement of planning fees	2010	HTTP://WWW.FYLDE.GOV.UK/COMMITTEES/CABINET-MEMBER-DECISIONS/2010/4TH-JANUARY-2010-REQUEST-REIMBURSEMENT-PLANNING-FE/

REPORT

FYLDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

working together for excellence

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES	POLICY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	14 JULY 2011	7

THE COASTAL STRIP AND FAIRHAVEN LAKE MASTER PLAN

Public Item

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

Summary

The report concerns the development of a master plan for The Coastal Strip and Fairhaven Lake and Gardens.

This report updates the Scrutiny Committee on the development of the master plan, sets out the master planning process and requests endorsement prior to final public consultation and completion of the master plan.

Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. Provides feedback on the master planning process and the consultation findings to date

2. Endorses progression of the project in line with the timetable identified in the report, including the investigation of funding opportunities for the restoration of Fairhaven Lake and Gardens and the wider coastal strip

3. Recommends an early review of the activities currently undertaken on the lake, in line with the identified options for change

Reasons for recommendation

To progress the consideration and approval of the Coastal Strip and Fairhaven Masterplan.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Not to progress the development of the Coastal Strip and Fairhaven masterplan – rejected because the current infrastructure requires investment and the master planning process provides the potential for capital funding support.

Cabinet Portfolio

The item falls within the following Cabinet portfolio:

Leisure and Culture: Councillor Susan Fazackerley

<u>Report</u>

1. Background

1.1 Cabinet approved the development of the master plan on the 20 January 2010. The cabinet report noted that ‘Fairhaven has needed significant investment for some time and as a result there have been proposals to commission a regeneration Master plan so as to identify how the Lake should be restored and regenerated. Indeed this ambition is contained within the Lytham St Anne’s 2020 Vision document.’

1.2 Cabinet also approved The 2020 Regeneration Vision and 2012 Open Golf Action Plan on the 23 March 2011, supporting the development of key initiatives such as the 2012 Open Golf Championship, and the redevelopment of Fairhaven Lake, Lytham Hall, and the Ribble Coast and Wetland Park. The report identified the restoration of Fairhaven Lake and Promenade Gardens as a key issue.

1.3 The 2020 Vision presented six strategic key projects to be delivered by 2020 by the public and private sector. It had a clear focus of positioning Lytham St Anne’s as the jewel of the North West coast. As well as maintaining and enhancing the environmental quality of the Lytham St. Anne’s coastal frontage for residents, there are opportunities to grow the visitor economy by enhancing the offer, commensurate with the aspirations for Lytham St. Anne’s. A study into the potential development of the Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park highlights how growth in new visitor segments, related to the offer of the estuary could increase visitor numbers and spend by a considerable margin, supporting the local economy. Appropriate development of Fairhaven and the coastal frontage will start to highlight how this potential can be realised.

1.4 The Cabinet report of the 20 January 2010 also noted that The Environment Agency (EA) has identified that the sea defences in the Promenade/Fairhaven Lake/Granny’s Bay area are in need of future investment to maintain their integrity. The EA has earmarked potential financial resources in its medium term budgets necessary to deliver the project, which are estimated in the region of £9m. Officers have started discussions with the EA over the processes involved to identify and assess the risk of flooding and how the coastal defences best protect land and property assets. It is important that the outcome of the Coastal Strip and Fairhaven Lake Master plan informs the engineering solution agreed for flood defence purposes so as to maximise the regeneration opportunities for enhanced public realm. This is part of a wider project bid to secure funding from the EA to reconstruct the sea defences along the coastal strip.

2. The Current Position of the Master Plan

2.1. The Council has embarked on the master planning study which aims to consider the landscape, heritage and recreational provision of the Lytham and St Anne's coastal frontage, with particular emphasis on Fairhaven Lake and Promenade Gardens.

2.1. The focus of the study is to understand how to manage these areas to ensure that the best is made of their landscape quality and recreational use over the next 20 years, and to address the engineering and public realm implications of the sea defence reconstruction.

2.2. The future success of the recreational facilities along the sea front is important to their continued enjoyment by residents and visitors alike. The quality and vitality of the facilities and natural environment is fundamental to the local tourist economy and the use of the facilities by local residents and by visitors plays a significant part in the continued wellbeing of the Borough.

2.3. Following a tendering process, Bertram Hyde Ltd was commissioned to undertake the master planning exercise. Their team includes a range of expertise covering landscape heritage, engineering and architecture. The consultation element is lead by Julia Holberry Associates, who is gathering information from the public, the Council and those involved with the sites. Information about what people want from the coastal strip will inform the Master Plan development.

2.4. Information is also being sought on funding opportunities, the wider leisure industry and the viability of such activities at Fairhaven and the Coastal Strip

2.5. The aim of the master plan is to:

- Restore the historic buildings and landscapes
- Increase usage
- Maintain the investment in the long term
- Consider the future of the coastal strip, the lake and its environs in the context of the proposed sea defense works and its role within the Regional Park

2.6. Below is a summary of the work commissioned:

Stages	**Studies and Survey Work**
a) Preparation of conservation management plan	The purpose of the plan is to establish and describe the historic importance of the site; to analyse the effects of changes in the landscape and to put forward proposals for the conservation, repair and restoration of its historic character and features.
b) Architecture	The buildings form an important element of the landscape at Fairhaven Lake. It is important to engage a conservation architect to look at the lake's historic buildings and comment on their condition, suitability and current and potential future use.
c) Detailed cost plan	In order to take the project forward it is important to develop an outline cost plan. This will be prepared by a quantity surveyor and will influence the funding strategy and the physical make up of the project structure.
d) Activity Plan	This is the most important area of work at Fairhaven and includes an

	activity plan and a business plan. It is important to identify the target audience for Fairhaven in order to steer the development of the site at existing and potential future users. The outline business plan will underpin the future potential of the site to be operated commercially. The activity plan also contains elements such as audience development, community participation, learning, training, and volunteering.
e) Surveys	A number of physical surveys are required. It would be useful to engage a specialist to survey the lake. A topographical and a services survey would also be required at an early stage. Detailed engineering surveys may be required at the detailed design stage.
f) Management and Maintenance Plan	A 10 year management, maintenance and development plan would be required to ensure the investment is maintained in the long term.

3. Materplan Survey Findings

3.1 The survey looked at the coastal strip in overview and Fairhaven in more detail to enable the masterplan to be set in the wider context.

3.2 The natural landscape assets of the coastal strip are outstanding. A superb amenity beach is flanked by 80 hectares of sand dunes which are important remnants of a once extensive system on the Lancashire coast. At Fairhaven Lake the dunes begin to give way to the mudflats and wetlands of the Ribble Estuary, which is one of the most important habitats in Europe as it supports internationally significant populations of birds.

3.3 Local people appreciate and enjoy the landscape character and scenery of the coast but the amenity beach is under-utilised and the importance of the dune system and the Ribble Estuary are not realised by many residents and visitors.

3.4 Despite dilapidation and poor facilities at key locations – St. Annes Pier, Pleasure Island and Fairhaven Lake and Gardens – the “traditional resort” appeal of Lytham St. Anne’s continues to be valued by visitors and residents alike. Buildings, features and parks and gardens of heritage interest are appreciated but their former quality, visual splendour and significance to the heritage are not properly understood or realised.

3.5 Over time, a fragmented and piecemeal approach to redevelopment, maintenance of the public realm and repair of the built fabric and infrastructure has eroded the quality of the built heritage to the extent that a co-ordinated approach to restoration, conservation and redevelopment is required if the heritage and history of Lytham St Anne’s is to continue to reinforce it’s identity and sense of place.

3.6 The planned implementation of the proposed coastal defence strategy, which adopts a “hold the line” approach through a combination of the repair and rebuilding of man-made defences and management of the “soft” dune defences, will require a corresponding coordinated approach to conserving and improving the amenities and attractions of the coastal strip.

3.7 At Fairhaven a new sea wall is under consideration which could necessitate the reconstruction of the Outer Promenade. It is essential that the consequences of this proposal and opportunities arising from it are understood and inform the preparation of the masterplan. Conversely, those master plan proposals which relate to the restoration of the lake and respond to the survey findings should influence the design of the sea defences. The main findings of the survey of Fairhaven Lake and Gardens are detailed below.

3.8. The masterplan survey findings (indicated in more detail in Appendix 1) reveal that Fairhaven Lake and Gardens is of considerable heritage value and is potentially of national significance as an example of the work of Thomas Mawson, an eminent landscape architect of international repute, whose practice was based in Lancaster.

3.9 The site is now nearly 100 years old and requires infrastructure repairs. Inspection of the lake has revealed significant lengths of damage and erosion around the lake and island edges; the sluice mechanism requires replacement to control water quality and prevent silt accumulation.

3.10 All the buildings have been surveyed. The old boat house and the café building are the most historically important buildings. The cottage and boat repair building are of lesser historical significance. They are in varying states of repair with investment required which in some cases may outweigh the cost of replacement.

3.11 The footpath network and road access is in need of repair and improvement and the pedestrian entrance to Fairhaven Lake and Gardens is not easily accessible.

3.12. The tennis and bowls facilities offer a limited opportunity for use and would benefit from investment to increase usage.

3.13 Substantial investment is required in the near future if the site is to continue to be an amenity for local people and the refurbishment or renewal of much of the site's infrastructure is a necessity in any restoration project

3.14 The aging fleet of motor boats is limiting opportunity and depriving Fairhaven Lake of the animation and vibrancy brought to it by the traditional sail boats. The boat fleet and storage and maintenance facilities are in need of renewal and now may be an appropriate time to consider a review of the scope of service and potential for broadening the opportunities to sail and learning to sail.

4. The Consultation Process

4.1 There have been three strands to the consultation process:

- Stakeholders and decision-makers, which have included members and officers from Fylde Borough Council and officers from Lancashire County Council.
- Public consultation through an online public survey that had 222 respondents, two group discussions with the Friends of Fairhaven Lake and Gardens and with a local older persons group and 18 interviews with people representing the voluntary and education sectors in Fylde
- Consultation with existing service providers and organisations based on site and also with potential operators.

4.2 From the all public consultation, one single theme recurred – people value the tranquil space offered by Fairhaven Lake and it is that traditional offer by the Lake and Fylde coastal strip that distinguishes it from neighbouring resorts. For Fairhaven Lake and Gardens, respondents wanted all activities to fit within that tranquil and traditional theme. Sailing and learning to sail was a high priority, as was the healthy living agenda with cycling, walking and other sports. Most saw a strong and sustained events programme being key to the success of the site and people wanted to learn more about the history the Lake, the Promenade Gardens and the coastal strip. The views of stakeholders were remarkably similar to that of the general public. Some of the more detailed public responses can be found in the consultation findings summary at Appendix 2 of this report.

4.4 Fairhaven Lake and Gardens is a much valued amenity by both local residents and day visitors who live with a 60 minute drive time. A strong baseline offer with a vibrant events programme would ensure increased usage by tourists and residents alike. The learning agenda will be important at Fairhaven Lake, building upon the work done by the RSPB with schools, but expanding it to embrace learning for leisure, such as learning to sail or more general environmental studies around the Lake.

4.5 The support encountered for Fairhaven Lake and the drive to improve it means there is a body of local people in the immediate vicinity of the Lake who will engage with its regeneration and volunteer to help.

4.6 Having established a baseline ‘theme’ for the site of tranquillity, nine organisations that currently / may potentially provide services on site were interviewed. A group of very skilled and dedicated people are operating the facilities and services on site at the moment, with some of them undoubtedly hampered by the deterioration of the infrastructure and declining use of Fairhaven Lake and Gardens. There is also a wide range of highly experienced and skilled operators and service providers who could be brought in to add value to the offer at Fairhaven. These range from individual operators to organisations that could manage the whole site responsibly on behalf of the Council.

4.7 A public exhibition will follow during the second half of 2011 to further gather comments and feedback on the draft masterplan which will evolve from the findings of the consultation.

4.8 What has emerged from the study so far is the value of the lake as a tranquil attractive coastal location with great opportunities for appropriate recreation activities which will enhance the ambience of the lake. The historical significance of the lake will increase the opportunities for conservation – led restoration.

5. Options for Change

5.1 The amenities and activities of the coastal strip have developed in response to the opportunities afforded by the natural and built landscape and the townscape of the planned resort. The range and distribution of facilities and activities is broadly compatible with their landscape and townscape context but there is definitely a need for an overarching vision which integrates compatible development with the conservation and enhancement of the natural and designed landscape and the built environment. The vision also needs to articulate design and quality standards and determine a coordinated approach to pedestrian and cycle routes and signage.

5.2 The concept of a “coastal country park” has the potential to forge a unique identity, based upon traditional themes, for the whole of the coastal strip within the borough of Fylde. Within the boundaries of the park the following options indicate how facilities might be improved.

5.3 To the north of St Annes Pier beach sports and windsports could continue to be developed in a manner which respects the integrity of the adjacent dune system and takes account of shoreline wildlife.

5.4 From St Anne’s Pier to Fairhaven sand dunes the focus could be on family activities with beach events, water park activities, “visitor village” amenities, and indoor and outdoor activities to suit family members of all ages set against the backdrop of the fully restored Promenade Gardens.

5.5 Fairhaven Dunes present an opportunity to raise awareness of the unique value of the dune system and the conservation of it’s habitats by bringing them to the attention to visitors to the St Anne’s seaside and Fairhaven Lake.

5.6 The lake and gardens at Fairhaven are a natural focus for “tranquil activities” such as walking, sailing, recreational cycling and outdoor leisure activities (possibly with some indoor provision). The stretch of coastline from Fairhaven to Lytham Green presents one of the best opportunities along the estuary to view coastal bird populations, making Fairhaven an obvious choice for a gateway to the Ribble Coast and Wetlands Regional Park.

5.7 From Lytham Green to Freckleton Moss the emphasis could focus on the provision of a network of footpath and cycle routes to link the coastal park to Lytham Hall and Lytham and improve this section of the Lancashire Coastal Way.

5.8 With regard to Fairhaven Lake and Gardens, the consultation findings indicate a strong preference for a restoration scheme which respects and enhances traditional tranquil themes and activities and leads to a better understanding and appreciation of the site’s historical context.

5.9 As the existing facilities are part of the Mawson Landscape their future use and development must be considered. Initial discussions have taken place with the existing occupants of the site regarding both current and future usage and requirements in order to properly evaluate options for development. The options that can be explored are discussed below.

5.10 Expanded and enhanced facilities for the RSPB Discovery Centre on the reconstructed Outer Promenade with enhancement of terrestrial bird habitats within the restored Mawson Landscape and coastal birdlife interpretation trails with links to adjacent dunelands.

5.11 Demolition of the existing boathouse and workshop and the provision of new facilities for boating including sail boats, rowing boats, canoes and the best of the existing fleet of motor boats (fully restored), together with provision for model yacht and model boat sailing.

5.12 Improvements to tennis and bowls, possibly including shared indoor facilities in the context of a wider provision of appropriate outdoor leisure activities

5.13 These options for change are considered in the context of the guiding principles and key themes outlined at Appendix 3.

5.14 Once the current consultation process has been completed, the results of the survey and options appraisal will inform the masterplan proposals. There are no firm proposals for Fairhaven and the coastal strip at this present time as these will be developed once the consultation and on line survey information has been further analysed.

5.15 The appropriate restoration and development of this site, as part of the overall coastline, will form an important part of the Council's approach to heritage, leisure, regeneration tourism and the visitor economy.

5.16 It is already clear that any upgrading of existing facilities or introduction of new activities will require some reconfiguration of parts of the existing site layout. This would be carefully and sensitively handled to ensure that the historical integrity of the site was respected. The replacement of some buildings (notably the boathouse and workshop) has to be considered and a new construction may possibly contain shared facilities if dictated by operational and physical constraints.

6. Funding Implications

6.1 The cost of restoring the lake and its infrastructure could be substantial and it is the intention to use the findings of this study to form part of a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, and other potential funding partners. It will also be appropriate, in this regard, to set the proposals for Fairhaven within a broader, more strategic framework of the coastline as a whole.

6.2 Preliminary discussions with the Heritage Lottery Fund have indicated that a master plan approach to the restoration of Fairhaven Lake and Gardens could provide the basis for funding support and further discussions are to take place when a draft master plan has been prepared.

6.3 The model to deliver the restoration of historic parks and gardens across the UK has been developed by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Ashton Gardens project was worked up by the parks team and was awarded £1,436,000 by the Heritage Lottery Fund towards a total project cost of £1,935,000, for the restoration of the historic buildings and landscapes.

6.4 It is envisaged that, as a result of the Fairhaven master planning process, a first stage bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund could be made in February 2012. This bid could focus on the improvement and restoration of the parks landscape and built heritage. Further bids for funders may be possible depending on the outcome of the masterplan and consultation process.

6.5 If a bid was made to the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Council would need to provide match funding, estimated at 5% of the total project value. This would require an unfunded increase to the capital programme, and would require the specific agreement of Members at that stage.

7. Timescale

7.1 The following timetable describes the further development of the masterplan:

Process	Estimated Completion Date
Report to the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee updating the development of the master plan.	14^{th} July 2011
Scrutiny recommendations to Cabinet updating the development of the master plan.	20^{th} July 2011
Workshops and consultation with Members and stakeholders	August/ September 2011
Discussions with the Heritage Lottery Fund on funding for the development of the heritage aspects of the master plan.	August 2011
Exhibitions and consultation on the draft master plan	October 2011
Report to the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee updating the development of the master plan.	8^{th} December 2011
Report to Cabinet recommending approval of the master plan.	14^{th} December 2011
Submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund for grant aid to develop the heritage aspects of the masterplan	February 2012
Heritage Lottery Fund decision on support to develop the heritage aspects of the masterplan	June 2012

8. Conclusion

8.1 The coastal strip is one of Fylde's most important natural assets. Its landscape character and diversity is regionally significant from the amenity beach in St Anne's to the internationally important designated wildlife site on the edge of the Ribble estuary.

8.2 Fairhaven Lake and Promenade Gardens are important historic landscape features which are positioned strategically along the coastal strip.

8.3 The master planning process presents the Council with the opportunity to develop a vision for the development and regeneration of the coastal strip. This will support the positioning of Lytham St Anne's as a family friendly tourism destination and high quality place to live and work, whilst continuing to provide a quality environment with a range of high quality appropriate recreational facilities.

8.4 The study is only part way undertaken however a number of key themes have been discussed:

- People value the tranquil space offered by Fairhaven Lake and Fylde Coastal Strip which distinguishes it from neighbouring resorts.
- The importance of the landscape character and diversity.
- The historic importance of Fairhaven Lake and Promenade Gardens has been established, and makes it eligible for Heritage Lottery Fund funding.

- The economic benefits of enhancing the asset and marketing its potential as identified in the Ribble Coast and Wetlands business plan.
- The possibility of creating a unique identity potentially marketed as "Lytham St Anne's Coastal Parkway "
- The revival of the coast and coastal resorts as holiday destinations
- The opportunity to restore the lakes vibrancy by looking at the boating offer.

8.5 The outcome of the process will be the identification of the most appropriate ways to restore and enhance the unique environmental assets of the coast.

9. Risk Assessment

9.1 The master planning process is low risk as the work consists of consultation, physical survey work and desktop study. The project is low financial risk as the advisory team has been appointed on a fixed fee basis. A full risk summary will be produced when the project has been developed further.

Report Author	Tel	Date	Doc ID
Clare Platt	(01253) 658602	28.04.103	20.07.11 s106 Open Space

List of Background Papers		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Cabinet Agenda &Minutes	20January2010	www.fylde.gov.uk
Policy Development Scrutiny Committee	15 July 2010	www.fylde.gov.uk
The 2020 Regeneration Vision and 2012 Open Golf Action Plan	23 March 2011	www.fylde.gov.uk

Attached documents

Appendix 1 – Masterplan Survey Findings - Summary
Appendix 2 – Consultation Findings - Summary
Appendix 3 – Options For Change - Summary

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	Financial implications are discussed in the main body of the report. A bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund would require match funding, estimated at 5% of the total project value. This would require an unfunded increase to the capital programme, and would require the specific agreement of Members at that stage.
Legal	None arising from the report.
Community Safety	None arising from the report.
Human Rights and Equalities	None arising from the report.
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	The provision of a robust regeneration Masterplan for Fairhaven Lake will ensure the site is protected and managed appropriately for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations.
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None arising from this report.

Appendix 1

Masterplan Survey Findings – Summary

The baseline findings are summarised under the following headings:

- Heritage and Conservation
- Site Fabric, Condition, Facilities and Activities

Heritage and Conservation

Archive research, supported and substantiated by photographic and other evidence provided by local interest groups has conclusively established that Fairhaven Lake and Gardens, as currently existing, were constructed and laid out to designs prepared by Thomas Mawson and Sons which formed part of a grand vision (never fully realised) for the development of the whole of the coastal frontage from St Annes Pier to Granny's Bay.
Thomas Mawson was a Landscape Architect of international repute and the first president of the Institute of Landscape Architects. His practice prepared the designs for Stanley Park in Blackpool and the southern section of the Promenade Gardens. Rockwork in the Promenade Gardens and Ashton Gardens was constructed by James Pulham and Sons, landscape contractors of national repute responsible for rock and water features in many of the most important and prestigious parks and gardens in England.
Mawson collaborated extensively with James Pulham and it is likely that Mawson's now buried 'Japanese' Rock and Water Garden at Fairhaven was also constructed by Pulham.
The restoration of Fairhaven Lake and Gardens to their former grandeur, in accordance with Mawson's designs, is potentially of national heritage significance and the possibility of funding support from the Heritage Lottery Fund for a comprehensive restoration scheme is being investigated.

Site Fabric, Condition, Facilities and Activities

Geology

The 1:50,000 scale British Geological Survey map (Southport Sheet 74, Solid and Drift Edition) indicates the site to be immediately underlain by made ground associated with the construction of Fairhaven Lake. Storm beach gravels and blown sand deposits may also occur locally. These, together with the Made Ground, are probably underlain by varying thickness of marine alluvium, which in turn is likely to be underlain by glacial till. These deposits are shown to be around 17m thick in the general area.

The drift deposits are underlain by solid strata comprising the Singleton Mudstone of the Mercia Mudstone Group.

Groundwater

There are no groundwater source protection zones within influencing distance of the site.
Superficial deposits are designated 'Secondary A' as is the bedrock. These layers are capable of supporting water supplies at a local rather than strategic scale, and in some cases form an important source of base flow to rivers. These are aquifers formerly classified as minor aquifers. However, the proximity of the site to the sea would suggest that groundwater is likely to be saline in this area and is therefore of low importance in terms of abstraction.

Pollution

In view of the site's past and current use, significant ground contamination is not envisaged. However, localised ground spillages/leakages around the fuel store areas and sub-station cannot be wholly discounted. In addition, the nature of imported made ground at the site is not known at this stage although it is thought unlikely to be significantly contaminated.

Landfill

There are no active or historic landfills within influencing distance of the site. Notwithstanding this, although considered unlikely, the possibility materials with the potential to generate hazardous ground gas and leachate cannot be wholly discounted.
In addition, possible ground contamination associated with the pumping station immediately to the west of the site could have the potential to migrate onto the site, although a significant risk is considered highly unlikely.

Rivers

There are no river quality details for the site.

Bathing Water Quality

Bathing water quality for a specified area of the beach at St Anne's has won quality awards since 2005. In 2010 the water quality was officially analysed 20 times, resulting in an excellent quality designation on 12 occasions, satisfactory quality on 6 occasions and poor quality 2 occasions when it did not meet the required standards of Bathing Water Directive (76/1160/EEC).

Ecology

Current ecological quality in the estuary of the River Ribble is recorded by the EA as good. Current chemical quality in the estuary is recorded as good.

Flooding

The EA flood risk map indicates the lake to be within a zone of 'flooding from rivers or sea without defences'. However the area benefits from flood defences which are indicated on the seaward side of the lake. Based on the EA flood risk assessment, which uses ground levels, predicted flood levels, information on flood defences and EA local knowledge, the likelihood of flooding is assessed as moderate. The chance of flooding each year is 1.3% (1 in 75) or less, but greater than 0.5% (1 in 200). This takes into account the flood defences in the area, which the EA say reduce, but do not completely remove, the likelihood of flooding and can be overtopped or fail in extreme weather conditions.

Lake

The water depths are consistent at between 1100 and 1300mm with approximately 1:4 gradients to the lake edges.

The water quality is reasonable from the limited samples taken, but it is not bathing quality standard.

Silt depths were difficult to determine but were a minimum of 200mm in depth. The quality of the silt was not a cause for concern and the contamination levels were such that the material could potentially be used a landscape fill.

The inlet/outlet structure would greatly benefit from renewal to provide variable level sluices that were easier to access and easier to operate. This would assist in more regular water change and improve the water quality. From discussions with operators of other marine lakes, this is the key to maintaining water quality and reducing silt inflow.

The lake and island edges are in various states of repair, but are generally poor. Failure has occurred at a number of locations and this is leading to significant erosion; the islands are worst affected. The extent and design of the remedial treatment will be determined as part of the Masterplan proposals.

Building Condition and Use of Facilities

The pagoda and cafe are the most historically significant buildings on the site. Both are worthy of retention and repair / enhancement adopting a conservation-led approach. They are well-used but the pagoda has limited capacity for its present role as the RSPB Ribble Discovery Centre, and the catering offer that the café is able to provide is restricted by the internal arrangement and changes of level relative to the original building and its subsequent extensions. Opportunities are further limited by the relatively constricted open spaces around the building which limit the possibility for external seating.

The present boathouse and adjacent workshop are buildings of lesser quality and poorer construction. Internal rationalisation and de-cluttering would improve the viability of their existing uses (base for sea scouts and boat storage/maintenance respectively) in the short term, but they have little architectural merit and their suitability for future long term use is in question due to the deterioration of the steel structural framework. Additionally, along with adjacent smaller buildings and features, they create a barrier between the central land area of the site and the lake. They also constrict the useable area of this part of the lake edge causing congestion at peak times.

The central area of the site contains bowling greens, tennis courts, a skate park with adjacent play and crazy golf facilities. The bowling greens are well used but are not in good condition. The bowls pavilion is well sited and, other than a lack of toilet provision adequately meets current needs. Its condition is generally sound but re-roofing and an upgrade of internal facilities would be required to secure its long term future. The tennis facilities are considered to have the potential to become a centre of excellence (the open space strategy and action plan recommends that the Council look to expand the partnership with Fairhaven Tennis Club and the Lawn Tennis Association) but the existing pavilion, which is of no architectural value, has a limited lifespan and this compromises future opportunities. The skateboard park appears to be well used and in demand in this locality, particularly in the evenings, although demand may now be on the decline. Future expansion is limited by site and situation constraints and the demands on management and supervision are in excess of those for the remainder of the site.

The remaining buildings are of variable merit and their future should be determined in the light of further exploration of the sites possibilities. They should not be considered to be determining features.

Further Investigations

Further ground investigations are not anticipated to be extensive if the site is to remain in its current form. However, some localised investigations of existing structural foundations would be prudent, particularly where signs of slight structural damage have been noted in the initial structural inspection report. This would most likely take the form of hand-excavated trial pits at selected locations to determine the nature and condition of existing foundations and underlying bearing strata.

In addition it is considered prudent to undertake localised investigations around the fuel stores and sub-station to establish whether any ground contamination has resulted in these areas.

Should new structures be planned, site investigation will be required to provide geotechnical parameters for foundation design. For a standard two storey construction proposal, this would consist of boreholes taken down to competent bearing strata, which may occur at depths of around 17m below ground level.

Appendix 2

Consultation Findings – Summary

Between April and June 2011, primary consultation was under taken with local residents and people representing target audiences for use of site as it develops. It was felt that traditional focus groups where participants are paid for their time was inappropriate against the current financial climate. The consultation methodology therefore comprised of:

- One to one consultations face to face or by telephone with 18 individuals representing the public and voluntary and education sectors
- A group discussion with the Friends of Fairhaven Lake and Gardens
- A group discussion with a local older persons group
- An online public survey which was also available in hard copy and was filled in by 222 participants

The headline findings and points of consensus that came out of the primary community consultation were:

- There is strong support and attachment to the area by local residents
- There is widespread agreement that the current facilities and upkeep are not up to scratch and require upgrading and augmenting in some cases (e.g. toilets, accessibility, shelter for school children eating lunches, cleaning bird and dog waste etc)
- There appears to be strong support and a lot of potential for engaging local schools and colleges with a wide range of curriculum related subjects that the area provides from tourism to history, geography to PE, art to creative writing
- The distinctive quality of the area appears to be its intrinsic nostalgia and traditional feel and it is felt that this sets it apart from neighbouring resorts
- Linked to the above is a clear appetitive for learning more about the history of the area through heritage related activities
- The fact that most of the activities are free or relatively low cost for a family day out is a big attraction for families
- The provision of low cost/free activities for older people was also viewed positively
- There is strong potential to use the area to promote a healthy living agenda particularly around walking and cycling but also in activities, such as dance or ‘boxercise’
- It was felt that the site had great potential to host an ongoing events programme that would provide reasons for people to visit more often, but it was felt that these events should be in keeping with the overarching offer and could present a real opportunity to bring the community together. A strong events programme would also help mitigate the biggest barrier to using the site more often which was feeling that you’d “already been and seen it all”
- Developing strong links with local groups through going out to them and their meetings was felt to be an effective way to develop audiences
- There is strong support for developing the sailing offer, but the majority felt that noisy or high speed water sports were not appropriate to the site with more traditional sailing and rowing cited as acceptable
- Integrating digital communications into the learning and promotional offer going forward, in for example a dedicated website and online events calendar and an

email bulletin tailored for schools, groups and the public (families, hobbyists etc), will be a critical success factor

- Feeling “safe and welcome” was rated the highest importance in the survey which will play an important role in developing the brand and marketing messages for the site. The social benefits of coming to the site are also a key call to action
- It was felt there was a market for a broader range of catering offers if the existing café building was improved and other opportunities were considered.
- It was felt that whilst the site could provide a great deal for young people under 11 years, there was very little that would credibly attract teenagers outside of a planned school visit or group activity, eg as part of a cycling group

Appendix 3

Options for Change – Summary

Whilst the masterplan content will be informed by consideration of consultation responses, the following guiding principles and key themes have been identified from consideration of the strategy and policy context and feedback from stakeholders and existing user groups.

1. There is an overriding need for a co-ordinated approach to the management and maintenance of the lake, landscape, visitor facilities and activities.

2. The restoration and regeneration of Fairhaven Lake and Gardens cannot be considered in isolation and should be taken forward in the context of an overarching vision for the whole of the coastal strip from Starr Gate to Freckleton Moss.

3. On the Fairhaven site the facilities and activities should be compatible with each other, be mutually supportive and respect the heritage, tranquillity and ambience of the lake and landscape.

4. Fairhaven Lake and Gardens is first and foremost a valued public amenity which should embrace 'tranquil activity' in accordance with the following key themes: -

   a) Conserve and enhance the designed landscape;

   b) Restore and conserve those key historic buildings which contribute to the designed landscape and sense of place;

   c) Provide non discriminatory access-for-all opportunities throughout the site;

   d) Ensure that those activities which are an intrinsic part if the attraction of Fairhaven Lake and Gardens – walking, sailing, informal recreation and appreciation of the coast and estuary – continue to be integral components of the Masterplan vision for the future;

   e) Ensure that the Masterplan proposals are underpinned by the wider consideration of the coastal natural and built heritage; the 'classic resort' of St Annes; the historic identity of Lytham Hall and Lytham Village and the 'Golf Coast'.

5. A phased approach to the delivery of the Masterplan restoration scheme will be necessary in order to take account of the timescales for the renewal of the Outer Promenade coastal defences and the implementation of an on-going programme of landscape rejuvenation whilst permitting uninterrupted public use of the site.

6. The success of the project will rely as much upon appropriately considered activities as physical restoration and it is recommended that trials of sailing and boating activities, which re-introduce traditional sailing boats and model yachts, are initiated over the remainder of this summer season in order to evaluate the potential for enhanced sailing and boating for the 2012 season as an adjunct to the Open Golf Championship.

Policy Development Scrutiny Committee

FYLDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Date	09 June 2011
Venue	Town Hall, St Annes
Committee members	Councillor Fabian Craig-Wilson (Chairman) Councillor Leonard Davies (Vice-Chairman) Ben Aitken, Susan Ashton, Julie Brickles, Maxine Chew, Peter Collins, Simon Cox, John Davies, David Donaldson, Charlie Duffy, Tony Ford, Edward Nash, Richard Redcliffe, Elaine Silverwood
Other Councillors	Cheryl Little
Officers	Clare Platt, Allan Oldfield, Tracy Scholes, David Gillett, Bryan Ward, Martin Brownlow, Sarah Wilson, Annie Womack
Others	-

Public Platform

There were no members of the public wishing to speak

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 Policy Development Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 24 March 2011 as a correct record for signature by the chairman.

3. Substitute members

The following substitutions were reported under council procedure rule 22.3:

Councillor Maxine Chew for Councillor Elizabeth Oades
Councillor Peter Collins for Councillor David Chedd
Councillor Tony Ford for Councillor Karen Henshaw

4. Waste Enforcement

This report was introduced by Allan Oldfield, Director of Customer and Operational Services and Sarah Wilson, Senior Waste Prevention and Enforcement Officer. The report provided details of the approach to waste enforcement, the current activity and the planned future changes. He explained that the term waste enforcement covers dog related, litter and refuse related enforcement.

Mr Oldfield provided a background to and recent history of the waste enforcement service to give some context, and to explain why the Dog Welfare post had been changed to Dog Enforcement Warden.

He advised committee members about other changes intended to achieve maximum impact on dog fouling issues. These changes included the co-ordination of all the employees that have authorised powers to issue penalty notices to people that allow their dogs to foul and fail to clear up after them, such as Beach Patrol Officers and Play Equipment Inspectors.

Further measures already in place included closer working through PACT groups and their representatives, and the co-ordination and sharing of reports, complaints and feedback through the Senior Waste Prevention and Enforcement Officer. The regular monitoring of incidents and feedback from PACT meetings and PCSO's as well as data from employee activity would determine the impact of these measures. Mr Oldfield assured members that the service will be flexible and responsive to changing demands.

He spoke about other aspects of waste management enforcement around refuse and litter. The restructure in 2009 had created two Enforcement Officer posts in the waste prevention team who had authorised powers to issue penalty notices for illegally deposited waste, littering and failure to produce documentation for commercial waste arrangements.

Since then, they had been involved in a number of projects in specific locations to tackle refuse and litter related problems. They had also completed education work across the borough. To date the team had issued over 2,000 warnings to offenders and 13 penalty notices that have generated £300 (£1,600 pending) income.

Members had a number of queries and comments. They included:

- That grass cutting on the A585 is inadequate and causes problems for the litter pickers – can we apply pressure on Enterprise (the contractor) or the Highways Agency to improve this? Mr Oldfield responded that it might be appropriate for the committee to request that a representative comes to scrutiny. It was agreed to take this suggestion to the next Scrutiny Management Board meeting.

- Whether there was any data available to show if there had been an increase in fly-tipping since the closure of HWRC on Snowdon Road.

Ms Wilson replied that it was still too early to have a definitive picture, but that monitoring was ongoing.

- What was the council doing in terms of publicity? Mr Oldfield indicated that there would be a press release later this month and also suggested articles be published in parish news letters, as Cllr Chew had earlier indicated that she had noticed a good local response from that initiative.

- Overflowing dog litter bins were perceived as a problem in Kirkham, and there were too few ordinary litter bins in the town centre. Mr Oldfield undertook to check that emptying schedules were correct and to review the number of bins.

- Were there any plans to update or replace signage about dog fouling? Again Mr Oldfield said that he would look into the issue.

Additionally, Mr Oldfield said that he would do some action planning, informed by the committee's feedback, and would report back to committee in due course.

The committee RESOLVED:

1. To support the allocation of resources to enforcement and the change in focus of the dog service away from welfare and education.

2. To agree to a performance report on the impact of the new measures in respect of dog fouling enforcement when they have had the opportunity to be fully implemented (8 to 12 months).

3. To champion the reporting of waste enforcement offences in their local community to support the limited resources available to address a borough wide issue.

There was no recorded vote as the Chairman decided that the matter was not controversial.

5. Scrutiny Review of Monitored CCTV

Tracy Scholes, Director of Governance and Partnerships, presented this report to the committee. She reminded members that the Community Focus Scrutiny Committee had recently appointed a task and finish group to undertake a review of monitored CCTV within the borough.

The group were tasked with evaluating the effectiveness and value of the monitored CCTV systems (which are installed in Kirkham and St Annes) together with consideration of its suitability for other areas including cost implications. The group examined the benefits, costs and processes involved in providing the service. To fully appreciate the effectiveness, consultation was undertaken with key stakeholders.

Mrs Scholes outlined for members the activities of the T&F group which included considering the key issues, interviews, site visits and a review of pertinent documents and data.

Their key findings were that the monitored CCTV system is considered to be valuable within the community and provided good value for money. It is seen as both a deterrent and a preventative tool in reducing crime and disorder and increasing community safety. It is regularly utilised by the Police to provide evidence when incidents occur.

The group noted that in addition to the monitored CCTV, the Police still make use of private CCTV systems to address community safety/ crime and disorder issues particularly within the Kirkham area. It was suggested that the success of crime and disorder matters was as a result of joined up working using a mixture of private and public technology, neighbourhood policing presence and pro activity amongst traders.

Members expressed concerns that there were plans in Blackpool Council, (through whom the funding is directed to procure the service) to reduce or cease monitoring CCTV and wanted assurance that the monitoring service which Fylde was contractually entitled to receive would not be diminished. They were assured that we have an SLA and the police are committed to fulfilling their contractual obligations. They provide monthly returns and data.

Mrs Scholes also confirmed that the CCTV were monitored at peak times but that outside these hours the cameras were still operational and would record any incidents for later retrieval.

In response to queries about mobile CCTV (which fell outside the remit of the T&F Group) she confirmed that the service had improved and that there was a borough-wide usage of the facility.

Although Fylde Borough Council, Safer Lancashire Board and Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) had all contributed to capital costs of the monitored CCTV scheme, only LSP and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership had been contributing to revenue costs. From 2013/14 the revenue funding from those partners will cease, and members wanted to know how Fylde would meet the revenue costs from that date. Mrs Scholes advised that the sum required had already been accounted for in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. She also confirmed that £5000 per annum was put aside for replacements, should they be needed. It was for the committee to give a view as to whether they were minded to recommend future ongoing funding.

After the debate the committee RESOLVED:

1. To recommended that the Council continues with its commitment to the provision of CCTV monitoring.

2. To recommend that CCTV be extended to other appropriate areas subject to appropriate funding being realised.

3. To seek improved arrangements of the processes and procedures used by the Police (within the Kirkham area) in capturing images from the existing CCTV system as opposed to private CCTV systems.

There was no recorded vote as the Chairman decided that the matter was not controversial.

6. Empty Residential Property Position Statement

This report was a follow up to a report to Community Focus Committee in October 2010, advising members of actions resulting from the recommendations from that Committee, advising of the current position in relation to empty residential properties and proposals to deal with the issues involved. It was presented to members by David Gillett, Housing Manager.

In the previous report to the community focus scrutiny committee a number of specific issues were discussed and identified in relation to the Council developing an Empty property strategy for residential properties in the borough, namely:

- Formal Guidance from government anticipated in December 2010
- Funding opportunities to deal with Empty properties
- Research/desk top work to provide more detailed information on the current position.

These activities had been concluded and were detailed for the committee in respect of each issue.

Mr Gillet told members that an updated position on the numbers of empty homes had been obtained, the primary source being records maintained by the Council Tax section. This showed that there are now 750 dwellings in the category that have been empty for at least 6 months, compared with the previous figure of 528.

He said that the increase may be due in part to the flat housing market. However, the information available through the Council Tax records was of limited value as it is designed for council tax purposes, not for housing services. The system draws no distinction between those houses which are for sale, but are just proving difficult to sell, those like sheltered housing which fail to be occupied, and those few which genuinely fall into a category where the Council's enforcement powers could potentially have an impact.

Under new government guidance for the use of empty dwelling management orders, these would be properties that have been empty for at least 2 years and which are causing 'blight' to the local community. Mr Gillett advised that there are very few of them in Fylde, that intervention can be costly and that there are no funds in the housing budget to meet those costs, although the preliminary stages of intervention action from the council can in some cases persuade homeowners to at least make some improvements to the appearance of the property.

In respect of any potential reward through the government's proposed empty homes bonus, Mr Gillett said that it was not possible to confirm the detail and any assumption of additional income through that route would be premature at this time.

Members had some queries, in response to which Mr Gillett advised that the service had some success in working with a Housing Association to bring homes back into use. Currently, Housing was working with 3 or 4 owners to bring homes back into use.

He also explained why the enforcement route was expensive, costing around £7k in officer time in order to get a case to Tribunal; the option of compulsory purchase required the council to have the available funds to purchase before selling on.

A question was asked about commercial properties and since that issue was not included in this position statement, members agreed that it would be appropriate to have SMB consider the topic as a potential item for scrutiny.

An undertaking was made to deliver an update report on Empty Residential Properties an annual basis, and additionally to advise committee of any significant changes should they occur, at the time they occurred.

Mr Gillett also advised the committee about proposed next steps which were:

- Develop/complete the empty property matrix in terms of known blight properties
- Agree data collection and analysis requirements with Council Tax section.
- Undertake the empty property questionnaire
- Update the Councils website in terms of an empty property statement as outlined in this report

Following the debate, members RESOLVED:

1. To note the report and the information contained in this position statement

There was no recorded vote as the Chairman decided that the matter was not controversial.
