

## Policy Development Scrutiny Committee



|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Date              | 3 February 2011   |
| Venue             | Town Hall, St Annes   |
| Committee members | Councillor Fabian Craig-Wilson (Chairman)<br>Councillor Kiran Mulholland (Vice-Chairman)<br><br>Ben Aitken, Frank Andrews, Christine Akeroyd,<br>David Chedd, Maxine Chew, John Davies, Leonard<br>Davies, Patricia Fieldhouse, Karen Henshaw JP,<br>Elizabeth Oades, Heather Speak |
| Other Councillors | Cheryl Little   |
| Officers          | Clare Platt, Tracy Scholes, David Gillet, Mike<br>Walker, Gary Sams, 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 6 January 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 Christine Akeroyd for Councillor Brenda Ackers

Councillor Maxine Chew for Councillor Elaine Silverwood

#### 4. National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

Mr Mike Walker, Head of Public Protection, explained that support was being sought from members for Fylde Borough Council to introduce the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme to be run in partnership with the Food Standards Agency (FSA). He said that there would be no undue pressure on council resources as a result of implementing the scheme.

He explained that the scheme was designed to provide consumers with information about hygiene standards of food premises, determined from the most recent food hygiene inspection. The rating would reflect the level of compliance with legal requirements.

The rating would be available to view on the FSA website. Once premises had been scored they would be provided with a sticker to display and a certificate, enabling customers to make an informed choice about where they choose to eat or shop for food.

Safeguards were incorporated to ensure fairness to businesses. These included an appeals procedure; a 'right to reply' to publication of the hygiene rating and a mechanism for requesting a re-inspection for a re-rating.

In response to queries from members, Mr Walker clarified that there would be publicity through the media, and including at our own One Stop Shop and through the website; he also confirmed that owners were not obliged to display the stickers, but he doubted that they would want to raise a query in customers' minds by not doing so. He also explained the appeals mechanism, and the three elements that would be used to arrive at an overall rating. The ratings for all premises would be available on the FSA website, but for those consumers without a computer, they could call in to the One Stop Shop if they had a query about a specific trader.

The committee resolved:

1. To recommend that the introduction of the National Food Hygiene Scheme be endorsed
2. To recommend that the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme policy be adopted

*There was no recorded vote as the Chairman decided that the matter was not controversial, and the resolution was carried by show of hands.*

#### 5. Partnership Working Annual Report

At the December meeting of the Committee, members considered the annual report on partnership working and concluded that in terms of those appointments to outside partnerships involving elected members, work was required to update the list of outside bodies as the continued operation of some was questioned. Tracy Scholes, Director of Governance and Partnerships introduced the report and provided an updated list for members.

Members of the committee's concerns centred around the dissemination of information which was obtained by members at the meetings they attended as a representative of the council. They felt that there should be a mechanism for those representatives to report back to councillors and to officers.

After the debate the committee resolved:

1. To recommend to Cabinet that future appointments to outside bodies should require those members who are appointed to report back either six monthly or annually depending on the significance of the partnership. And that a record should be kept of the number of meetings each year and whether the nominated member attended.
2. To recommend that where the appointment is to a specific post holder (i.e. Mayor, Leader, or Portfolio Holder) that the appointment should nominate the post holder rather than a named individual.
3. That the performance and role of Age Concern in the Fylde should be reviewed both at budget setting and at the occasion of their annual report presentation to committee.

*There was no recorded vote as the Chairman decided that the matter was not controversial, and the resolution was carried by show of hands.*

#### .6. Operation of Mayoralty

This report was also presented by Tracy Scholes. She explained that the Council had a written policy encompassing procedure notes for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and the Mayoral Team to follow in each mayoral year. This policy is kept under review. A copy of the policy was attached with some amended wording to consider at paragraph nine.

The amended wording suggested limiting the number of mayoral events attended to an average number based on recent years in order that the mayoral budget can be managed effectively.

During the discussion that followed, members agreed that a cap on the number of events was reasonable. Other issues raised were the type of engagements which were suitable and whether a geographic limit to the range of appointments should also be considered.

The current Mayor, Councillor Elizabeth Oades, expressed the opinion that in years when a draw needed to be made, that it should be done well in advance of the subsequent appointment so that the incoming mayor would have plenty of time to prepare.

It was pointed out that the policy makes reference to the twin town of Verne, and it should be made clear that this is not the twin town of the Borough, but of St Annes.

A query was also brought up relating to members who achieved seniority but deferred their appointment or declined to take part in a draw where it was necessary, and members asked the policy should be applied properly in such cases.

After the discussion the committee resolved:

1. To recommend that, where there is more than one member eligible for selection in any year, the draw to resolve the issue should be made well in advance
2. In future, to ensure that the part of the policy which permits any member to decline appointment for one year, for one instance only, is enforced. And that declining the appointment again in the subsequent year will result in the member losing seniority and being moved to the bottom of the list.  
*(The seniority list is attached to these minutes)*
3. That a cap should be imposed on the number of mayoral engagements to be undertaken, the cap to be set at the annual average worked out over the three years from 2007/08.
4. That where practicable, events should be limited to those that focus on the Fylde and its near environs as opposed to attending engagements wider afield.

*There was no recorded vote as the Chairman decided that the matter was not controversial, and the resolution was carried by show of hands.*

## 7. Fylde Coast Choice-Based Lettings

This report was introduced by David Gillett, Head of Housing Services. He explained that Choice Based Letting (CBL) was a framework for allocating social rented properties owned by housing associations and councils to potential tenants in housing need.

There was a new Allocation Scheme for the Council which would set out who will get priority in the letting of affordable housing in the Borough. The Allocation Scheme comprised a borough-specific Area Lettings Plan and a Fylde Coast Consistent Assessment Policy.

The report also outlined a process to establish a Partnership Agreement that would set out the responsibilities of the nine partners in establishing and operating a proposed new Fylde Coast CBL system.

Project costs were included and the report sought approval to enter into a contract with an IT provider for the new CBL system that would be operated by the principal social housing providers across Fylde, Blackpool and Wyre.

Mr Gillett reminded members that CBL had been the subject of a report to Cabinet in 2009 and had been out to wide consultation.

He told the committee that currently anyone seeking to find accommodation would have to fill in 14 application forms with 14 providers. CBL would prevent that, the process would be standardised, would be less stressful and less bureaucratic.

Members raised several issues, among them a concern that persons without a verifiable connection to the Fylde would be able to access Fylde accommodation. Mr Gillett drew members' attention to the Lettings Plan which demonstrated the need for applicants to show a local connection in order for them to achieve a high priority, as the system is designed to show preference to those with a local connection. Properties in the rural parishes would only be let to those with a strong connection to that village.

He also confirmed that homeless people from Blackpool and Wyre would not have to be housed in Fylde.

It was queried whether costs would escalate, but Mr Gillett said that the costs overall were considerably less and gave considerable gain and were not expected to escalate.

After an in-depth debate of the various issues raised, and following a recorded vote, the committee RESOLVED:

1. To recommend approval of a new Allocation Scheme for the Council which will set out who will get priority in the letting of affordable housing in the Borough. The Allocation Scheme to comprise a borough-specific Area Lettings Plan and a Fylde Coast Consistent Assessment Policy.
2. To recommend approval of the process to establish a Partnership Agreement that sets out the responsibilities of the nine partners in establishing and operating a proposed new Fylde Coast CBL system.
- 3 To recommend that project costs should be approved and that the council should enter into a contract with an IT provider for the new CBL system that will be operated by the principal social housing providers across Fylde, Blackpool and Wyre.

**Votes for the recommendations (9)** Cllrs Akeroyd, Aitken, Andrews, Fieldhouse, L Davies, Chedd, Speak, Mulholland, Craig-Wilson

**Votes against the recommendations (5)** Cllrs Oades and K Henshaw

**Abstentions (2)** Cllrs Chew and J Davies

## 8. Review of Assets

At its meeting on 9 December the Committee considered a report on the management of leisure assets and resolved that officers should review the letting of leisure assets where subsidies are provided. Cabinet subsequently asked for this recommendation to be extended to all assets.

Gary Sams, Principal Estates Surveyor, introduced the report which set out the work that has been done to date to identify the extent to which Council properties are occupied on a subsidised basis, and the additional work which needs to be undertaken to provide the Committee with a full picture of the subsidies provided to occupiers of Council land and buildings.

Mr Sams advised members that a number of assets had been identified which had previously been let by the Council at less than full rental value. Further work was required to confirm the list and to undertake a valuation of each property to assess its open market rental value, which would reveal the financial impact of these concessionary lettings.

He said that it was difficult to look at rents in isolation as some occupiers received additional support from the Council including grants and the payment of costs such as repairs, heating and lighting and rates. Others, such as bowling clubs, also received funding towards grounds maintenance. A full assessment of the total cost of this support would require the input of staff from the Technical Services, Parks and Leisure and Community Services sections of the Council.

It was suggested, given the depth of information that needed to be prepared and considered for each asset, that a small member task and finish group be formed to undertake this task during late February/early March. The group would then make observations to the next scheduled Policy Development Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> March prior to recommendations being made to Cabinet.

The committee resolved:

To appoint a Task and Finish Group to assist in the work required to undertake the review of assets. Appointed were Councillors Craig-Wilson, Mulholland and Speak.

*There was no recorded vote as the Chairman decided that the matter was not controversial, and the resolution was carried by show of hands.*

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# FYLDE BOROUGH COUNCIL MAYORALTY

## SENIORITY LIST – JANUARY 2011

|    | COUNCILLOR  | DATE ELECTED                       |
|----|---|------------------------------------|
| 1  | LIZ OADES - <b>Mayor 2010-2011</b>  | 1991                               |
| 2  | LOUIS RIGBY (has already been Mayor in 91/92)   | 1976                               |
| 3  | HOWARD HENSHAW – <b>Mayor 2011-12</b>   | 1995                               |
| 3  | TOM THRELFALL – <b>Mayor 2012-13</b>  | 1995                               |
| 5  | GEORGE CALDWELL<br>(has already been Mayor in 1995/96)                                | 1973<br>(broken service 1979-1983) |
| 6  | TIM ASHTON (excluded himself from draw with Liz Oades in 2010) – <b>Mayor 2013-14</b> | 1991                               |
| 7  | ROGER SMALL – <b>Mayor 2014-15</b>  | 1997                               |
| 8  | DAWN PRESTWICH<br>(has already been Mayor in 1997/98)                                 | 1977                               |
| 9  | JANINE OWEN   | 1999                               |
| 9  | LINDA NULTY   | 1999                               |
| 9  | HEATHER SPEAK   | 1999                               |
| 9  | PETER HARDY   | 1999                               |
| 9  | JOHN L. COOMBES   | 1999                               |
| 9  | BARBARA PAGETT  | 1999                               |
| 9  | KEVIN EASTHAM   | 1999                               |
| 9  | SIMON RENWICK   | 1999                               |
| 17 | PAUL HAYHURST<br>(has already been Mayor in 2000\1)                                   | 1979                               |
| 18 | PATRICIA FIELDHOUSE<br>(has already been Mayor in 2001\2)                             | 1979                               |
| 19 | CHRISTINE AKEROYD   | 2002                               |
| 20 | MAXINE CHEW   | 2003                               |
| 20 | ELIZABETH CLARKSON  | 2003                               |
| 20 | PETER COLLINS   | 2003                               |
| 20 | RICHARD FULFORD-BROWN   | 2003                               |
| 20 | KEITH HYDE  | 2003                               |
| 20 | ALBERT POUNDER  | 2003                               |

|    |   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 26 | TREVOR J. FIDDLER<br>(has already been Mayor in 2004\5) | 1979<br>(broken service 1995-99)  |
| 27 | KEITH BECKETT   | 1983<br>(broken service 1986-2007)  |
| 28 | KAREN HENSHAW   | 2003<br>(broken service 2007-2010)  |
| 29 | BRENDA ACKERS   | 2007  |
| 29 | BEN AITKEN  | 2007  |
| 29 | KAREN BUCKLEY   | 2007  |
| 29 | DAVID CHEDD   | 2007  |
| 29 | MICHAEL CORNAH  | 2007  |
| 29 | JOHN DAVIES   | 2007  |
| 29 | BARBARA DOUGLAS   | 2007  |
| 29 | DAVID EAVES   | 2007  |
| 29 | TONY FORD   | 2007  |
| 29 | CRAIG HALEWOOD  | 2007  |
| 29 | KATHLEEN HARPER   | 2007  |
| 29 | KEN HOPWOOD   | 2007  |
| 29 | ANGELA JACQUES  | 2007  |
| 29 | CHERYL LITTLE   | 2007  |
| 29 | ELAINE SILVERWOOD                                       | 2007  |
| 29 | JOHN R. SINGLETON                                       | 2007  |
| 45 | SUSAN FAZACKERLEY<br>(has already been Mayor 2008/9)    | 1987  |
| 46 | LEONARD DAVIES  | 2009  |
| 47 | FRANK ANDREWS   | 2010  |
| 48 | PAUL RIGBY (has already been Mayor 2009/10)             | 1987  |
| 49 | JOHN BENNETT  | 1976<br>Does not wish to be<br>considered for Mayoralty<br>(Declared December 1994) |
| 50 | KIRAN MULHOLLAND  | 1991<br>Does not wish to be<br>considered for Mayoralty<br>(Declared August 2009)   |
| 51 | FABIAN C. WILSON  | 2003<br>Does not wish to be<br>considered for Mayoralty<br>(Declared January 2011)  |