



MINUTES

Environment, Health and Housing Committee

Date:	Tuesday, 5 June 2018
Venue:	Town Hall, St Annes.
Committee Members Present:	Councillor Ben Aitken (Chairman) Councillor Viv Willder (Vice-Chairman) Councillors Christine Akeroyd, Peter Anthony, Sue Fazackerley, Peter Hardy, Roger Lloyd, Sally Nash, Graeme Neale, Sandra Pitman
Officers Present:	Tracy Morrison, Paul Walker, Kirstine Riding, Janice Moore, Simon Stott, Stephen Reed, Sharon Wadsworth and Katharine McDonnell
Other Attendees:	Councillor Karen Buckley, Councillor Angela Jacques and Councillor Mark Bamforth (via video link); Katie Jones and Colin Parker, NW Regional Strategic Migration Partnership; and two members of the public were present

A minute's silence

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, a minute's silence was held in memory of former Councillor David Eaves, who had sadly passed away on Sunday 3 June 2018.

Public Platform

There were no speakers on this occasion.

1. Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that any disclosable pecuniary interests should be declared as required by the Localism Act 2011 and any personal or prejudicial interests should be declared as required by the Council's Code of Conduct for Members.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Environment, Health and Housing Committee meeting held on 13 March 2018 as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

3. Substitute Members

The following substitutions were reported under Council procedure rule 22(c):

Councillor Sally Nash substituting for Councillor Gail Goodman

Councillor Christine Akeroyd substituting for Councillor Angela Jacques

Councillor Sandra Pitman substituting for Councillor John Kirkham

Councillor Sue Fazackerley substituting for Councillor Frank Andrews

4. Lytham Park Cemetery – Windbreak Canopy

Paul Walker, Director of Development Services, presented a report concerning the delivery of a new canopy on the exit to Lytham Park Cemetery chapel.

He explained that the long running project had been developed by a working group of councillors, to resolve the issue of a cold and uninviting exit to the crematorium chapel. Mr Walker provided details of the proposed options, including the working group's preferred option. He spoke about the roof treatment and proposed dementia friendly paving.

Mr Walker spoke about the timetable of the programme and the immediate start to the programme subject to the approvals of the committee and the Finance and Democracy Committee.

In response to questions the Chairman advised that there was no seating proposed within the new canopy, and Mr Walker advised that work was programmed for the summer to enable longer working days and to enable the crematorium to move to a one hour schedule for services instead of the usual half hour schedule.

Following a brief discussion, where councillors expressed their support for the scheme, it was RESOLVED;

1. (a) To approve the letting of the contract for construction of the canopy as per Appendix 2 in the sum of £59,365 to the lowest tenderer Handspring Designs;
- (b) To approve remaining expenditure on the project as detailed in figure 2 of the report; and
2. To recommend to Finance and Democracy Committee a funded budget increase of £50,000 to the Lytham Park Cemetery – Windbreak Canopy capital project within the Council's 2018/19 capital programme fully funded from the capital investment reserve.

5. Home Office Widening Dispersal Asylum Seeker Programme 2018

Kirstine Riding, Housing Services Manager, presented a report providing information regarding the widening dispersal of asylum seekers across Lancashire, and the government request for local authorities to consider increasing the pledge of number of properties to procure to house asylum seekers.

Ms Riding advised that asylum dispersal was being undertaken across 31 Lancastrian local authorities. She advised that in 2015 local authorities had pledged certain numbers of properties to be procured, in order to receive asylum seekers. As these figures were now being reached, the Home Office and Serco were now seeking a further pledge to widen the dispersal of asylum seekers.

Ms Riding advised that Serco were seeking a pledge of 30, but it was recommended that the pledge be increased to 15.

In response to questions regarding the low numbers of properties secured, it was advised that there were some financial constraints within which Serco were contractually bound to act within, but the strength of the private rental sector was also an issue.

It was RESOLVED to;

1. Note the contents of the report regarding Government's Widening Dispersal Asylum Seeker programme and working with the Home Office and Serco to increase the pledge of numbers of properties Serco can procure within Fylde for asylum seeker accommodation, from 5 to 30;
2. Consider the request alongside other competing Government priorities, namely the Homeless Reduction Act and the Lancashire Syrian Refugee Families and Vulnerable Children and their Families Programme; and

3. Recommend Fylde Council agree to a further pledge of 15 properties for Serco to try to procure. This figure to be revisited when Serco are close to reaching that number.

6. Housing Services Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy v.2

Kirstine Riding, Housing Services Manager, presented a revised policy regarding the scope of services provided by Housing Services to home owners and private tenants. This included the provision of information, advice and action to assist home owners and tenants requiring disabled adaptations, energy efficiency advice and assistance, and other support relating to their home.

Ms Riding advised that increased funding for Disabled Facilities Grants meant that the council was able to employ a more flexible approach to the use of that funding, and in doing so was able to meet the requirements of the Better Care Fund, which were principally to reduce the numbers of delayed transfers of care; avoid undue or unnecessarily long hospital stays, and facilitate early discharges.

In order to facilitate increased flexibility, it was proposed to remove from the policy the means tested or 'test of resources' requirement for a facility, but with the safeguard of requiring an occupational therapist referral or medical referral. Additionally funding for certain adaptations, such as stairlifts, ramps or within certain spending thresholds would also be approved without the need to test for resources.

It was also proposed to allow the Housing Services Manager to exercise discretion in additional spending, up to £20,000, where costed adaptations exceeded the maximum threshold.

Ms Riding provided details of other suggested changes including working with Registered Providers and promotion of the service through health partners to widen the referral path.

In response to questions, Ms Riding advised that the projects were monitored by the Housing Services team to ensure that the project was conducted to a suitable standard. She also advised that the increased number of Disabled Facilities Grant projects were managed within the existing staffing resource. In questions relating to the performance of the service, Ms Riding referred the committee to the Information Item regarding the Disabled Facility Grant Programme Performance later on in the agenda.

It was RESOLVED

1. To approve the recommendations stated in the report and the draft Housing Assistance Policy;
2. To continue the flexible use of its Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) budget during 2018-19. To facilitate the delivery of adaptations which will address Better Care Fund (BCF) priorities more effectively. To include the removal of the 'test of resources' for single adaptations under £6,000 and where two adaptations are required under £10,000;
3. To remove the 'test of resources' process from adaptations where equipment requested from an Occupational Therapist and procured by Lancashire County Council are involved;
4. To support the recommendation for the Council to authorise a grant award of up to £20,000 in excess of the DFG mandatory maximum of £30,000, to carry out DFG eligible work as recommended by an Occupational Therapist;
5. That a targeted promotion of DFG's be undertaken through a defined social care capital project with Wyre Council to increase referrals from medical professionals; and
6. To undertake capital projects with Registered Providers to improve the housing on offer within the boroughs sheltered housing schemes.

7. My Home Choice Fylde Coast Revised Consistent Assessment Policy

Kirstine Riding, Housing Services Manager, presented the revised My Home Choice Fylde Coast Revised Consistent Assessment Policy.

In presenting the report Ms Riding provided background to MyHomeChoice, explaining what it was, how the assessment policy worked and the reasons for the consultation.

She provided a detailed overview of the consultation responses, the proposed changes and the implications of these changes. She advised that the main driver for the consultation was the long re-let times experienced by registered providers and the local connection criteria which did not reflect applicants who had long standing local connections but needed to move within the Fylde Coast.

It was RESOLVED to

1. Note the contents of the report on the review of the MyHomeChoice Consistent Assessment Policy, the information provided to the Working Group and the outcome of the consultation process regarding proposed changes to the Consistent Assessment Policy;
2. Approved the proposed changes to the Consistent Assessment Policy and recommend the policy be updated and implemented by Fylde Coast Housing Providers; and
3. A further update on the working of the Consistent Assessment Policy of MyHomeChoice within Fylde be provided to this committee in 1 years' time that refreshes information provided in Appendices 1, 3, 4 and 5.

Information Items

The following information items were received by the committee.

8. Fylde Coast Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer

The committee were provided with information regarding the Trailblazer project.

9. Disabled Facility Grant Performance (Update)

The committee received information regarding Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) performance, with comparisons provided with the previous year's figures.

10. Annual Overview – Fylde Community Safety Partnership 2017/18

The committee received the Annual Overview from the Fylde Community Safety Partnership for 2017/18.

11. Age UK Lancashire – Annual Report

As part of its Service Level Agreement, Age UK had provided an annual update summarising their performance over the previous year.

12. Year-End Performance 2017/18

The committee received information pertinent to the performance indicators within the remit of the committee.

13. Capital Programme Monitoring Report 2017/18 – Outturn position 31 March 2018

The committee were provided with the Capital Programme Monitoring Report in regards to the outturn position as at 31st March 2018.

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