

Policy Development Scrutiny Committee



Date	14 July 2011
Venue	Town Hall, St Annes
Committee members	Councillor Fabian Craig-Wilson (Chairman) Councillor Leonard Davies (Vice-Chairman) Ben Aitken, Frank Andrews, Maxine Chew, David Chedd, Peter Collins, Simon Cox, Susanne Cunningham, John Davies, David Donaldson, Charlie Duffy, Nigel Goodrich, Edward Nash, Elizabeth Oades, Elaine Silverwood
Other Councillors	Trevor Fiddler; Susan Fazackerley; Cheryl Little; Albert Pounder
Officers	Clare Platt, Allan Oldfield, Paul Walker, Paul Drinnan, Kathy Winstanley, Darren Bell, Stephen Ball, 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 9 June 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 Nigel Goodrich for Councillor Richard Redcliffe
Councillor Peter Collins for Councillor Karen Henshaw
Councillor Susanne Cunningham for Councillor Susan Ashton
Councillor Maxine Chew for Councillor Julie Brickles

4. Modernisation of the Waste Service - from Boxes to Bins

This report was introduced by Allan Oldfield, Director of Customer and Operational Services. The report provided a number of options available to bring about an improvement to the waste collection service while at the same time achieving service delivery efficiencies.

Mr Oldfield provided a background and described the recent changes in the collection service and the drivers behind them.

He told members about the challenges arising as a result of the need to make collection arrangements commensurate with the finances and other resources available. Residents in Fylde do recycle using the current white sack and green box arrangements, but there are a significant number of complaints about the containers and collection arrangements. An additional factor is the annual cost of replacing green boxes which is in the region of £10k per annum. White sacks are regularly lost and are not popular with residents.

Members were told about the blue bin pilot scheme which had been undertaken successfully in Staining, and that officers had been tasked with investigating the possibility of extending the scheme.

Mr Oldfield then went over the options and the comparison of costs, and talked about the advantages of a wheeled bin system over a box system, at the same time addressing the potential risks and mitigating factors. It was stressed that the proposals are consistent with the modernisation strategy that has supported the transformation work in Operational Services, and would bring desirable outcomes such as increased customer satisfaction, increased recycling levels, more income and less cost.

Members had a number of queries and comments about operational and cost issues which Mr Oldfield answered. He undertook to provide a more detailed cost analysis for members of the committee.

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 recommend support for Option 3 of the report - for a 240L wheeled bin to replace the green box, and for a further 240L wheeled bin to replace the white sack, both bins to be provided free of charge.

There was no recorded vote as the Chairman decided that the matter was not controversial.

5. Fylde Coast Economic Development Strategy

Paul Walker, Director of Strategic Development, and Paul Drinnan, Head of Regeneration and Tourism, presented this item to the committee. Mr Walker reported that Cabinet had considered the topic in June and had asked that the Scrutiny Committee consider the strategy in the light of the council's strategic approach to economic development.

He explained that the draft Fylde coast strategy had been drawn together in recent months, on behalf of the four councils operating on the Fylde coast and in consultation with private sector businesses in the area.

The change in government in 2010 and the reduction in regional funding that had previously been available for economic regeneration had meant that councils were obliged to adopt more of a partnership approach and that bids for investment needed to be developed on a sub-regional collaborative basis.

The report provided an update on the progress made against the Fylde Borough Economic Development Strategy, and the linkages to the Fylde Coast strategy under consideration, and included information relating to economic development initiatives and structures from the national, regional, sub-regional and local perspective.

Paul Drinnan provided further handouts for the committee members covering the Economic Development Roles and Responsibilities in Fylde; Areas of Collaborative Working on the Fylde Coast; and a Review of the Fylde Borough Action Plan.

Members felt that the topic was too great to be covered in a single committee meeting and it was proposed that there should be a task and finish group appointed to review the issues in greater detail, and to report back to committee within a 2 - 3 month period.

After the debate the committee RESOLVED:

1. To appoint a time-limited Task and Finish Group to look at the matter in more detail, and to report back to a later committee and to Cabinet.
2. To appoint to the Task and Finish Group the following members:
Cllrs Fabian Craig-Wilson; Elaine Silverwood; Elizabeth Oades;
Ben Aitken; Edward Nash and David Donaldson.

6. Policy on the Reimbursement of Fees and Charges

This report also was presented to members by Paul Walker. The topic related to the reimbursement of planning fees to Town / Parish Councils / Village Hall Committees.

Mr Walker explained that these fees cannot be waived, but the council could, on request, provide a grant which in effect reimbursed the community group for the cost of fees relating to a community project. In the past the council has granted such requests.

When considering the latest request in 2010, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources asked that a policy should be drawn up for consideration, which would require future planning fees to be collected. This policy was now before members. Mr Walker drew to members' attention the main issues to be considered.

Some members expressed reservations about the policy and felt that it impacted adversely on rural areas. It was pointed out that such applications were few in number and relatively inexpensive to fund, particularly when weighed against the benefits that such projects, such as the building or repair of village halls and community centres, could bring to those areas.

Following the debate, members RESOLVED:

1. To recommend to Cabinet the creation of a budget head of £3000, specifically to reimburse Town and Parish Community Projects planning application fees.
2. The above to be with the proviso that any successful funding requests to external agencies such as lottery funding would result in the grant being returned to the Council.
3. The budget to be "topped up" to £3000 at the start of each financial year.

There was no recorded vote as the Chairman decided that the matter was not controversial.

7. The Coastal Strip and Fairhaven Master Plan

This update report was introduced by Darren Bell. He reminded members that Cabinet had approved the Master Plan in January 2010 for the regeneration of Fairhaven Lake and the coastal frontage. The report detailed the survey findings, the consultation process, the options for change and the funding implications.

In taking the Masterplanning study forward, a multi-disciplinary in-house team had been established which aimed to consider the landscape, heritage and recreational provision of the Lytham St Annes coastal frontage with emphasis on Fairhaven Lake and Promenade Gardens. The report stressed that the quality and vitality of the facilities and of the natural environment was

fundamental to the growth of the visitor economy, and the use of those facilities by local residents as well, will contribute to the wellbeing of the Borough.

The engineering and public realm implications of the sea defence reconstruction have also been addressed.

Following a tendering process Bertram Hyde Ltd was commissioned to undertake the master planning exercise, and Julia Holberry Associates undertook the consultation element.

Both Julia Holberry and Albert Bertram were on hand to deliver presentations and to answer questions. The presentations covered a number of areas including the consultation methodology and findings, such as the activities and events that consultees would like to see and the key audiences who should be engaged by the regeneration. There was also detail about the survey findings, taking account of local history and heritage, the current disrepair of the infrastructure, and conservation management planning including the coastal defence.

Members were told about the condition of the sea wall, and the need to secure funding from the Environment Agency to rebuild it; however, this would be unlikely to meet the whole cost and FBC may have to meet some of the financial requirements.

Mr Bell summarised the report and presentations and advised members that the findings of the study would be used to form part of a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund and other potential funding partners. He said that it was envisaged that a further report could come to committee in with the proposal for the Lottery bid, and that if approval was gained the first stage bid could be made by February 2012.

Members debated the various aspects of the project, in particular the costs and matched funding that might be required both by the Environment Agency and the Heritage Lottery fund. It was accepted that this report was for information and that more detail would be provided in the December report.

Accordingly, the committee RESOLVED:

To support the recommendations below *in principle*, on the understanding that a further report would be presented to committee, identifying in particular the funding strategy for the project.

1. To endorse 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.
2. To recommend an early review of the activities currently undertaken on the lake, in line with the identified options for change.