

Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee



Date	11 April 2007
Venue	Lowther Pavilion, Lytham
Committee members	Councillor Kevin Eastham (Chairman) Councillor Colin Walton (Vice-Chairman) John Bennett, Maxine Chew, Raymond Norsworthy,
Other Councillors	Karen Henshaw JP
Officers	Ian Curtis, Paul Walker, John Cottam, Mark Evans, Chris Hambly, Tony Donnelly, Lyndsey Lacey, Carolyn Whewell

1. Declarations of interest

Members were reminded that any personal/prejudicial interests should be declared as required by the Council's Code of Conduct adopted in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000.

2. Confirmation of minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 8 February 2007 as a correct record for signature by the chairman.

3. Substitute members

The following substitution was reported under council procedure rule 22.3:

Councillor Maxine Chew for the Mayor, Councillor Harold Butler

4. Static Caravans: Various Issues

Tony Donnelly, Head of Planning (Policy) introduced a report on various issues around the use of 'holiday' static caravans as permanent living accommodation.

Mr Donnelly explained that the subject had been a challenge for the council for many years and had last been considered as recently as 2003 although no formal outcome on the matter had been obtained. There continued to be

general concern that a significant number of holiday caravans were probably being used for residential purposes. He added that when the Council became aware of such cases, e.g. when occupants paid Council Tax or applied for Housing Benefit it had no formal policies in place to determine an appropriate course of action i.e whether or not to take enforcement action.

Mr Donnelly further reported that whilst the council had records in respect of which caravan sites contained holiday caravans, there were no comprehensive monitoring arrangements in place with either licensing or planning to ensure that all holiday sites actually close for the prescribed period. This was due to lack of staff resources.

In brief, the report provided an overview of the background to the matter and highlighted the current position; the number of caravan sites in the borough; enforcement issues; the council tax/ housing benefit position; health and social wellbeing and homelessness issues; the situation with housing improvement grants and tourism related matters.

Members were asked to consider the content of the report and identify to the Portfolio Holders what the main concerns were; what outcomes were to be achieved; how these were to be addressed and delivered and whether additional resources were to be made available.

An addendum report, requested by the chairman at the briefing meeting, was circulated at the meeting which outlined five suggested work streams, if resources could be identified.

Ian Curtis (Head of Legal Services) advised that data protection and human rights issues would need to be taken into account in developing any new policy.

Councillor Nowsworthy suggested that the committee should concentrate on introducing a new set of rules / policy to assist with enforcement. Mr Donnelly suggested that members should only commission such work if the proper resources could be made available and there was a firm political will to progress such work to an effective conclusion.

Councillor Walton enquired about the new valuation system which was likely to come in force and its implications on static holiday caravans.

It was acknowledged that enforcement in relation to caravan issues could involve both the planning and licensing powers. As such, clarification was sought in respect of the purpose of the Caravan Sites and Control and Development Act 1960. Mr Hambly addressed this point. He stated that the purpose of the licence was primarily to address public health and safety issues rather than control occupancy of caravans. This was a matter for planning to control.

After a full discussion the Committee RESOLVED:

1. To recommend to the Portfolio Holders that a review of the policy on the use of static caravans be undertaken and that if possible, this be jointly carried out by Fylde, Wyre and Blackpool.
2. To present the draft policy document to a future meeting of the Planning Policy Scrutiny and Public Protection Committees.

5. Update on Outstanding PPS committee issues

Tony Donnelly Head of Planning (Policy) provided the committee with an update on outstanding issues which at March 2007 were still live and outstanding. In particular the committee concentrated on the enlargement and replacement of rural dwellings; Blackpool Airport master plan; M55 Norcross Link Road, St Annes to M55 Link road and the Housing Needs Survey Update.

A matrix detailing all the outstanding matters was circulated with the agenda.

It was RESOLVED to note the report.

6. M55 to Norcross Link

Tony Donnelly Head of Planning (Policy) reported on the position on the M55 to Norcross link Road.

Mr Donnelly stated that having completed the public consultation exercise, formal consultation had been received from Lancashire County Council in relation to alternative routes for the M55 to Norcross Link Road.

Full details of the public consultation exercise were circulated with the agenda. In summary, the yellow route received widespread support and emerged as the most popular route. In terms of the two options at Mains lane, the southern option was more strongly favoured.

The Pink and Purple Routes did not perform as well in the technical appraisal or the public consultation and thus LCC wished to focus attention on the Yellow, Red and Blue Routes in future stages. A short comparison of these three routes was provided in the report.

Following discussion it was RESOLVED:

1. To recommend to the Portfolio Holder that the Chief Executive approach Lancashire County Council, Blackpool and Wyre Councils with a view to ascertaining whether a single route could be agreed;
2. To have regard to the Committee's previous decision on the matter.
3. To report to the next meeting of the committee indicating the outcome of the initiative and the views of the Minister on the Blue route junction.

7. Exclusion of the public

After due consideration it was RESOLVED to not to exclude the public from the meeting for consideration of item 8 in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

8. Blackpool Airport: Possible Article 4 Direction

Ian Curtis (Head of Legal Services) reported on the possibility of the council making a direction Article 4 to cover certain possible developments at Blackpool Airport. The report set out the detailed arrangements.

An addendum note was circulated at the meeting at the request of the chairman at the briefing meeting which outlined some relevant planning issues.

Following discussion it was RESOLVED to ask the Portfolio Holder to pursue an Article 4 Direction in relation to Blackpool Airport.

(Councillor John Bennett requested that his name be recorded as having voted against this decision)
