



Meeting Agenda

**Policy Development Scrutiny Committee,
Town Hall, Lytham St. Annes
Thursday 12 January 2012, 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 |

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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



AGENDA

PUBLIC PLATFORM

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

| ITEM | PAGE |
|--|---------------|
| 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: If a member requires advice on Declarations of Interest he/she is advised to contact the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting. (For the assistance of Members an extract from the Councils Code of Conduct is attached). | 4 |
| 2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES: To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee held on 8 December 2011. As attached at the end of the agenda. | 4 |
| 3. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS: Details of any substitute members notified in accordance with council procedure rule 26.3. | 4 |
| 4. FYLDE COAST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY REVIEW: TOWN CENTRES | 7 - 36 |

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 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|---------|
| REGENERATION AND TOURISM (SDS) | POLICY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE | 12 JANUARY 2012 | 4 |

FYLDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY REVIEW: TOWN CENTRES

Public Item

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

Summary

In July 2011, Cabinet requested that the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee undertake a review of the Council's adopted Economic Development Strategy (EDS), which was approved in 2008. In turn, the Committee appointed a Task and Finish Group (TFG) to take an in depth review of the strategy. The TFG is in the process of a comprehensive analysis of the role of the Council within the broader area of economic development. However, the TFG has decided to initially present its findings on the town centre element of the strategy for early discussion as they are complete and as a potentially major element of the revised EDS, this specific issue is considered worthy of discussion in its own right. It is likely to form a key element of the revised strategy as well as potentially having consequences for future budget setting processes, including the financial year 2012/13.

The paper attached to this report takes a comprehensive review of town centre policy at both the national and local level. It includes a review of policy and practice within the Borough, a summary of the public engagement exercise with the business community as an important part of the review and is followed by concluding remarks and a series of recommendations.

Committee is asked to consider these recommendations as set out in the accompanying paper and to subsequently make its final recommendations to Cabinet. If adopted by Cabinet, the policy and practices of the Council in relation to town centre policy will form an integral part of the revised Fylde Economic Development Strategy.

Recommendation

1. That Committee consider the recommendations numbered 1 – 17, in the accompanying paper, and in doing so make specific recommendations to Cabinet having taken account of them.

Reasons for recommendation

The recommendations are based on an in depth analysis and review undertaken by the Task and Finish Group and detailed consideration by Scrutiny Committee. The recommendations should give a clear direction to Cabinet in its consideration of the Council's future approach to Town Centre policy and related issues. A decision by Cabinet in this regard would form the basis of future strategy and actions in relation to its future role in town centre regeneration activity and management. The decision of Cabinet in this regard would inform the revised Economic Development Strategy, identifying corporate priorities and the future role of the Council in this regard.

Alternative options considered and rejected

The report is specifically aimed addressing a part of the review of Economic Development Strategy as requested by Cabinet

Cabinet Portfolio

The item falls within the following Cabinet portfolio:

Planning and Development Councillor Dr. T. Fiddler

Report

On 20th July, 2011 the Council's Cabinet considered a report of the Chief Executive relating to the Fylde Coast Economic Development Strategy. The item was deferred pending a broader review of the Borough Council's own EDS. It was considered an opportune time to review the strategy in view of significant changes to the way in which economic development matters were to be handled in the future, since the coalition formed the new government. This review was passed to the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee for its consideration, which has since appointed a task and finish sub group to review the issue in greater detail and with a clear focus.

This broader review of the EDS is on going and is detailed in its analysis, which has involved widespread engagement with both the public and private sectors. The objective of this engagement is one of assessing how economic development support can best be delivered in the future and what the priorities of the Council's more limited resources might

be. The recommendations relating to this broader review will be reported to Committee in early spring and subsequently to Cabinet.

A major element of the Council's economic activity over several years has been in the area of town centre regeneration and; 'revitalising town centres' has been a major 'strand' of the EDS. For this reason, the first part of the review of the EDS has been aimed at reappraising the Council's role in town centre regeneration, policy and management.

The paper attached to this report presents a detailed review of the Council role in town centre regeneration and supporting activity. It identifies the Councils' on going involvement, its policies and practices set within the national policy framework. The report is also timely since the publication of the 'Portas review'. Mary Portas, a successful retail specialist, was commissioned by the Prime Minister earlier in the year to review the state of the nation's high streets.

She states the aim of her review is to "put the heart back into the centre of our High Streets, re-imagined as destinations for socialising, culture, health, wellbeing, creativity and learning". The review goes on to detail 28 specific recommendations. These are to be considered by government but, some of the ideas are likely to become part of mainstream policy and could help shape any subsequent policy that the Borough Council adopts and how it engages the local community and other stakeholders. The summary of the report and recommendations is attached as an appendix.

The review of the Task and Finish Group has included specific engagement with key town centre interests to gauge what the present issues are and how town centres might become more successful in the future. The Council's policies have traditionally been engaged in providing capital support in the form of public realm improvements to encourage private sector investment. It has also been engaged in town centre management, an issue that could be developed further, it is suggested.

Committee will note the conclusions of the attached paper and the 17 recommendations cover a broad spectrum of initiatives, ideas and opportunities as well as issues for debate. Committee is asked to consider these recommendations and amend them or add to them as it sees fit.

It is anticipated that a summary of these recommendations and the implications of them will be presented to Cabinet in the New Year, with the endorsement of Committee. The resolutions of Cabinet will then shape the future activities and interventions of the Council. It will be noted that a major strand of the report relates to partnership working of which the Council has had success in the past and this would form a major element of its involvement. It would be seen as a partner and not a leader as such, beyond the initial work involved in setting up partnership arrangements and creating business plans and implementation strategies/action plans.

A review of the Council's former partnership working arrangement would be accompanied by the inclusion of key stakeholders to identify and refine key issues. Best practice in town centre management (including considering the Portas Review) would enable business plans - and their content - to be prepared and subsequently developed, based on a realistic action plan. The result is aimed at developing a town centre strategy for each location with ownership being shared and responsibilities understood with the overall aim of creating sustainable, attractive and prosperous centres for the local community and as important visitor destinations.

Risk Assessment

There are some minor risks associated with the actions referred to in this report. Appropriate amendments have been made to the directorate operational risk register to accommodate these risks where necessary.

Conclusion

The review of Town Centre policy and practice has been extensive and the recommendations made are based on the analysis of practice to date and its effectiveness. The recommendations put to committee for its deliberation will subsequently be conveyed to Cabinet, which can determine how it intends to pursue the issue of town centres within its broader economic development strategy and as part of its priorities for the Council.

| Report Author | Tel | Date | Doc ID |
|---------------|----------------|----------|--------|
| Paul Drinnan | (01253) 658434 | 19.12.11 | |

| List of Background Papers | | |
|---------------------------|------|-----------------------------------|
| Name of document | Date | Where available for inspection |
| Document name | | Council office or website address |

Attached documents

1. Town Centres Review Paper – December 2011
2. Summary and recommendations of the Portas Review – December 2011

| IMPLICATIONS | |
|---|---|
| Finance | None directly |
| Legal | None |
| Community Safety | None |
| Human Rights and Equalities | None |
| Sustainability and Environmental Impact | Review aimed at sustaining and enhancing the role of centres within Fylde Borough |
| Health & Safety and Risk Management | None |

FYLDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

TOWN CENTRES REVIEW ELEMENT

REPORT OF THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP : DECEMBER 2011

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Economic Development Strategy
3. Town Centre Policy
 - National Policy
 - Local Policy
4. Brief of the Task and Finish Group
5. History of Town Centre Policy and Practice in Fylde
6. Review of Town Centre activity to date
 - St Annes
 - Lytham
 - Kirkham
 - District Centre's
7. Town Centre Management
8. Participation, Engagement and Field Work
9. Conclusions
10. Recommendations

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Fylde Economic Development Strategy (FEDS) was adopted by the Borough Council in 2008. It contained a number of policies and an action plan that was intended to direct Council activity through to 2021. Since that time, the Council has been a partner to the Fylde Coast Economic Development Company (EDC), which seeks to promote the economy of the locality, particularly on strategic matters, that are considered to extend beyond the boundaries of the constituent local authorities. The Action Plan, which accompanies the FEDS strategy, sets out a plan of detailed interventions within a number of 'strands'. One of these relates to promoting 'strong and vibrant town centres'.
- 1.2 The Council's Cabinet considered the draft Fylde Coast Economic Development Strategy on 20th July 2011. This item was deferred pending further consideration and it was resolved that it would be an appropriate time to reappraise the existing FEDS. This matter was referred to Policy Development Scrutiny Committee, which in turn appointed a Task and Finish Group (TFG) which was asked to review the matter in some detail. The work of the TFG has been essentially in two parts, firstly reviewing the Strategy as far as it relates to town centres and to follow, a broader review of economic development issues to subsequently advise the Council on how the FEDS might be updated. The two 'parts' will ultimately feature in the revised FEDS.
- 1.3 This report presents the findings of the TFG as far as the town centre element of the strategy is concerned. It contains a review of the planning policy context of the town centres, assesses the methods employed by the TFG and includes an update of town centre 'activity' to date. Broad conclusions are drawn and then a series of recommendations made. It is anticipated that in due course the findings of the TFG - and following due consideration by the parent scrutiny committee - will recommend that the Council adopt a composite town centre strategy document complete with an action/implementation plan.

2. Economic Development Strategy

- 2.1 The Fylde Borough Economic Development Strategy, adopted in 2008, contains a broad range of issues that were seen as being relevant to enhancing the future economic prosperity of the Borough. The principal strands of the strategy were set within a broad understanding of how the Borough sat within the larger regional economy and that of the Fylde Coast. It highlighted the strengths of the area and the virtues of its large companies, buoyant tourism industry and its potential for growth. It also referred to potential challenges, such as the over-reliance on a small number of large companies. The Town centres are identified as a 'key driver' for the local economy and a focus for the local community and visitors.
- 2.2 The FEDS highlights how further investment in town centres should be a major part of the on going remit of the Council as a primer for private sector investment. It identifies that the delivering of a renaissance and regeneration of the town centres is 'a major challenge' as it can only be actioned through a

coordinated approach by the public sector, business community and the voluntary sector. Since 2008, the macro economy of the national and international community has deteriorated and the austerity programme of government has had the effect of severely limiting the potential for grant funding. Up and until this time, the Council had been successful in attracting external grant aid. The retail sector has been a victim of the down turn and smaller towns, in particular, have been under sustained pressure from the larger towns. Out of town retailing and the growth of the internet based shopping has also had a negative impact. Taking these factors into account, it is an appropriate time to consider the 'town centre' issue as an important part of a revised FEDS.

- 2.3 For the purposes of this town centre review, the conclusions and recommendations drawn out at the end of the report are based on research, engagement and an appraisal of the Council's approach, to date, on regeneration in working with its partners. The recommendations are general in nature rather than too specific at this stage.

3. Town Centre Policy

- 3.1 There are a number of ways in which the Council is able to influence the vitality and viability of town centres. Ultimately, however, it will be the private sector that will make investment decisions as to whether a particular locality offers the appropriate trading conditions such that they are likely to meet commercial objectives.
- 3.2 The Council, as planning authority, promotes town centre viability and vitality through its planning policies, public realm enhancements, town centre management initiatives, marketing and mainstream activity such as grounds maintenance and cleansing. Some of these objectives may best be dealt with by taking a leading role where in other situations; it may act as a partner to work in cooperation with the local community, including businesses. In general terms, to date, the Borough Council has sought to promote the vitality and viability of its town centres through public realm improvements, including building refurbishment, in the belief that this will create an enhanced trading environment in which the private sector is more likely to invest. It has also used its powers through planning policy to protect the primary retail function of town centres and its 'development management' powers to protect and enhance the local environment. Local planning policy seeks to promote the vitality of its centre's and has to take account of national planning policy.
- 3.3 The three main town centres of the Borough are major employment hubs and together have a combined retail 'turnover' of some £131.4m. They are also major visitor destinations (particularly on the coast but also potentially within Kirkham as a market town) and this factor presents opportunities to enhance their economic prosperity if the offer is attractive. The major events programme, being developed by the Borough Council and other partners, is presenting major economic benefits to the local business community.

National Policy

- 3.4 The Government has set out its approach to planning for town centres within Planning Policy Statement 4. This document largely considers planning at the macro scale and offers advice on how to incorporate town centre policy within the Local Development Plan Framework. It also offers advice on handling specific proposals for retail development of various scales in town and potentially out of town scenarios. It identifies the difference between quantitative need (requirement for floor space) and qualitative need (relating to choice and the distribution of retail). These considerations, as far as Fylde Borough is concerned, will be dealt with through the emerging LDF and in consideration of particular planning applications. In determining proposals the Council would need to take account of the need to strengthen and protect existing centres.
- 3.5 PPS4 advises local authorities on the need to develop strategies for town centres, concentrating on the need to promote viability and vitality, identifying primary retail areas and areas or zones for complimentary uses. It advises that centres should promote a strong retail mix and their character should be protected or enhanced. The evening economy should be promoted as appropriate and mixed uses can add to viability and vitality. PPS4 points to specific publications that can advise on an assessment of vitality and viability as a baseline measure from which to develop strategies. As outlined, the key planning strategies for the town centres will be developed through the LDF and the outcome of this review is more specific and detailed in scope.

The Portas Review

- 3.6 In early summer 2011, Mary Portas was commissioned by the Prime Minister to undertake a review of the state of the nations 'high streets' and make a series of recommendations. Her report was published in early December and the recommendations will be considered by Government with a response expected in spring 2012. The report is timely in view of this review and many of the ideas presented could be used to inform the Council future support for town centre management. Importantly, it could transpire that in response, the Government will make policy changes, review legislation and create financial incentives in an attempt to help revive the high street. Some of the main conclusions are as follows:-
- The report charts the trends in respect of retailing noting that only 50% of retailing takes place within high streets – an increasing trend and notes the power of out of town retailing, 'e' and 'm' commerce. Average vacancy rates are approaching 16% vacancy. She refers to some town centres of being at 'crisis point'. 97% of grocery trading takes place in supermarkets.
 - Town centres need to be seen as 'destinations, with mixed uses offering a unique experience differentiating themselves for pure 'retail experiences' of service and specialism.

- Collaboration of key stakeholders is essential
- The creation of Town Teams are suggested that will create a strong clear vision and offer leadership and operational planning comprise of the business community, local councils, building owners, the community itself creating a neighbourhood planning approach to future development and management.
- The creation of more effective Business Improvement Districts.
- Financial incentives in town centres to assist business start ups, business rate relief and disincentives for leaving properties vacant or in a poor state of repair. Potential new ways of conducting leasing arrangements. The creation of a public register of landlords.
- Development of a 'market culture' to encourage entrepreneurship.
- Parking and accessibility issues, parking discounts/loyalty schemes to encourage frequent usage and patronage within town centres.
- Removal of regulation.
- Business support from established retailers to support fledgling businesses.
- More creative uses to encourage the arts, community uses and start ups. The holding of 'markets' to encourage new ventures.
- A more 'even playing field operating within the planning system' with a strong government policy of 'town centres first'.

Some of these ideas can be considered in the event of Forums being established within the town centres.

Local Policy

- 3.7 The adopted Borough wide Local Plan, Chapter 8, contains policies for the protection and enhancement of the town centres within the Borough. When written, the policies generally reflected national policy and to a large extent, town centre policies remain now as they have been for a number of years. The policies seek to enhance the role of centres as defined and the local plan contains specific proposals maps for the three main centres. These identify primary retail frontages, secondary frontages, zones for restaurants/cafes - in the case of St. Annes. The policies also seek to protect centres by seeking to resist out of town development that could significantly adversely impact the vitality and viability of centres. These policies have been fundamental to protecting the retail core of the centre's as well as encouraging mixed uses, including residential conversions above ground floor level. It is likely that these

policies will be reassessed in the light of the emerging LDF although the same objectives will apply.

- 3.8 In line with the advice of PPS4, a study was commissioned by the three Fylde Coast local authorities, in November 2010, in order to provide retail evidence for the development of the LDF Core Strategy. This evidence will form the basis of developing policy for retail as well as providing an underpinning overview of each of the main town centres. A large part of the analysis addresses both qualitative and quantitative need over the Fylde Coast footprint for the likely plan period. It also identifies the more immediate need of the three main town centres and these findings will be considered within the section that deals with individual centres, later in the report. The Retail Report was noted by the Councils LDF Steering Group although it asked that Ansdell be considered as a 'fourth centre', presently considered to be a large 'district centre'.
- 3.9 The general conclusions of the Retail Study could be described as 'seeking to enhance the vitality and viability of the town centres and to attract a broader retail offer'. It also promotes the protection of primary frontage and suggests that any out of centre development proposals should be resisted where they would undermine the prosperity of a nearby centre. The report does not address more detailed strategy actions for the town centre but forms a basis form which these can be developed.

4. Brief of the Task and Finish Group

- 4.1 As outlined in the introduction, the Task and Finish Group was requested, by Policy Development Scrutiny Committee to re-evaluate the role of the Council in seeking to protect and enhance the town centres of the Borough. This review was not specifically aimed at assessing planning policy, although this has had a bearing on the relative position and health of the town centres. The TFG has been asked to consider how the centres are adapting to the economic challenges given the macro economic situation and in doing this, visit them and seek the views of business interests. This would hopefully help define where the Council can best assist in achieving its goal of promoting vital and vibrant centres in addition to its general remit through the development of planning policy.
- 4.2 The TFG were accompanied by officers on the tour of the centres and discussions were held with business organisations and individual companies, so that their views could be taken into account. In the case of St. Annes, reference to the recent 'Town Plan', commissioned by the Town Council, has been a useful since it contains the views of residents and others about the town centre and the issues facing it. It is intended that the report of the TFG will be reported Policy Development Scrutiny Committee in due course and to the Council's Cabinet at a later date.

5. The History of Town Centre Policy in Fylde

- 5.1 Planning for town centres has been an important element of policy since the advent of the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act and in the case of Fylde, there have been a number of reports produced over that time. In the case of St. Annes and Lytham an economic analysis was produced by London consultancy Gerald Eve in 1965 to be followed by an 'interim report for St. Annes', undertaken by Lancashire County Council in October 1966. The proposals included the pedestrianisation of 'The Square', a number of sites suggested for redevelopment and a new multi storey car park. In 1973, a report and plan was commissioned by the St. Annes on the Sea Land and Building Company. The report by Chapman Taylor Partners, in January 1974, suggested certain radical proposals, again including the pedestrianisation of 'The Square', traffic management proposals and other environmental improvements. Fylde Borough Council adopted the St. Annes Town Centre Action Area Local Plan in June 1989 which identified more small scale proposals including traffic management and environmental improvements of a modest scale. The St. Annes Land and Building Company prepared some radical proposals in the late 1980's, which included proposals to build within The Square itself. The Regeneration Programme for St. Annes was launched in 1999 and is described in the following section. The Borough wide Local Plan, adopted in 2005, contained town centre policies for both Lytham and St. Annes. A major proposal for an out of town superstore at Queensway was rejected by the Secretary of State in the early 1980's in view of its potential impact on St. Annes Town Centre.
- 5.2 The Borough Council adopted a local plan for Kirkham in December 1987, which related to the whole town. However, it contained policies that directly related to the centre including the provision of a new car park to the rear of Poulton Street, new retail floor space, a defined primary retail frontage and environmental improvement policies. Some of these proposals were implemented in the late 1990's when the town centre experienced some radical changes including the new Safeway store (now Morrison's), a car park and new community centre. Kirkham has been the subject of the 'Market Town Initiative'. An Action Plan was adopted in 2004 which contained a number of proposals aimed at revitalising the town and in particular, its commercial core.
- 5.3 In addition to the adoption of policy, there have been a number of specific initiatives that have taken place to enhance the town centres of the Borough. These have ranged from specific development proposals, including those at Kirkham and St. Annes (The Safeway and Burlington Centre development of the mid 1980's) through to environmental enhancement schemes of various scales in the town centre's and in the village centre of Freckleton.
- 5.4 In more recent times there have been a number of regeneration plans prepared for St. Annes and, to lesser degree, Kirkham. The initiatives within the three main centres are considered in Section 6.
- 5.5 In September 2010 the Council adopted a 'Regeneration Framework' for the Borough and this aims to draw together a full list of potential schemes aimed at enhancing particular town centres and other localities. This would help

prioritise investment by the Council itself but also seek to identify locations that could benefit from commuted payments through planning obligations (Section 106 payments) where they relate to specific development proposals.

6. Review of Town Centre Activity to Date

- 6.1 This section comprises a short review of more recent town centre 'activity' and is set out on a town by town basis.

St. Annes

- 6.2 As outlined in the preceding text, the issue of enhancing, improving and regenerating St. Annes is not something new, with quite radical plans dating back to the 1960's. Many of these proposals never came to fruition although, the most radical redevelopment that did take place being the demolition of the former St. Annes Hotel, railway station and car park and a redevelopment by a Safeway store (now Sainsbury's), the NCP car park and the Burlington Centre. This development was aimed at extending the retail offer of the town and consolidating its position as a key shopping area for the Borough. Whilst the development had undoubtedly a positive impact, the town centre declined significantly, notably throughout the 1990's and by the end of the decade, the town centre economy was causing serious concern. The Square had alarming vacancy rates and some of the peripheral streets had rates of over 50% at ground floor level and totally abandoned floor space at the upper levels. Economic surveys undertaken highlighted very low confidence amongst the business community about the future prospects of the town centre.
- 6.3 In 1998, The Council and the Lytham St. Annes Civic Society commissioned the Association of Town Centre Management to carry out a brief review of the town centre. To follow, a transportation study and a retail appraisal were undertaken. The Council launched the Regeneration Strategy for St. Annes in 1999 and created a small dedicated team to take the initiative forward. A town centre partnership was formed (known as the St. Annes on Sea Development Partnership), which prepared an action plan and the 'St. Annes Councillors' decided to use its share of the 'Blue Bus Monies' to undertake a phase 1 regeneration scheme in St. Annes Square.
- 6.4 From that point, the Council secured, through successful bids (as part of the partnership), the engagement of English Heritage, the Northwest Development Agency, The Tourist Board, Lancashire County Council and the private sector, in undertaking an extensive and some would say ambitious - if not controversial - regeneration programme for the town centre. To date, some £3.2m of public sector match funding has been attracted with the Council contributing around £1.2m. Private sector match has amounted to around £17m.
- 6.5 The principal approach of the Council as the lead organisation has been one of helping to create a 'climate for investment' where public realm improvements, including building refurbishment, has sought to create an environment

conducive to attracting investment and raising business confidence. The original partnership approach was also successful in that it identified key actions and interventions that various bodies agreed to undertake, in addition to those of the Council. The original partnership was wound up in 2010 as its original remit had been achieved to a large extent. However, in the case of St. Annes, there is still some way to go and through the preparation of the 2012 Open Golf Action Plan - and the engagement of other partners, including the Local Strategic Partnership and the Town Council - there is scope to re-establish a forum that would establish how the various partners can work together to promote the future success of the town centre.

- 6.6 The protection and further enhancement of St. Annes Town Centre should continue with the objective of elevating the whole of the commercial area and opportunities should be taken to attract funding where this is achievable. In line with other town centres the Regeneration Framework and the potential for planning contributions (CIL) should form an integral part of the Council's future planning strategy.
- 6.7 The proposals for enhancing the Wood street area for 2012 will be welcomed by the local business community and will implement the proposals set out in the Council's 2020 Vision document and is incorporated within the action plan for 2012.
- 6.8 Whilst trading conditions are not at their best, in view of the broader economy, St. Annes is well positioned with relatively low vacancy rates and high footfall. It does, however, require a broader mix of retail, including a higher proportion of comparison outlets. Pro active management of the centre could help to identify gaps in the market and seek to engage non represented retailers. The Fylde Coast Retail Study (2011) concludes that St. Annes is a 'well maintained and vibrant centre' with a vacancy rate below the national average but, points to the number of charity shops and the need for some further building refurbishment works. The need to maintain the physical regeneration initiative remains as well as broader marketing and town centre management. The role of the town as a visitor destination helps maintain vibrancy and its continued improvement and attractiveness is, therefore, all the more important.
- 6.9 St. Annes now has an active Town Council that works with the Council and other organisations on various initiatives. It is hoped that this will extend to other activities in the future, particularly in terms of organising events. The In Bloom Group for St. Annes is now actively promoting environmental projects and the Chamber of Trade seeks to draws together business interests and promotes the town. It would seem appropriate that these groups seek to pool their energies and, whilst promoting their own area of interest, nonetheless work together in a coordinated way. (See also Section 7 below)

Lytham

- 6.10 Lytham town centre was, in fact, one of the first of the centres to benefit from 'environmental improvements', which included Lytham Station and its

associated car park. Potential improvements to pavements and greater pedestrian priority around Dicconson Terrace was under consideration in the late 1970's/early 1980's. The proposals emerged in more detail in the early 1980's and some of these ideas, including Lytham Station, were implemented. In addition, the early 1990s witnessed the creation of the pedestrianised Lytham Square, new street lighting and improved pavements along Clifton Street in a joint initiative between Fylde Borough Council and Lancashire County Council. The Lytham St. Annes Civic Society was a partner in a project aimed at reinstating some of the traditional verandahs along Clifton Street, re paving of forecourts and the planting of new street trees. The Council produced a shop front design guide at this time. The Pleasant Street Car Park was extended in the mid 1990's. More recently, the Market Square has been refurbished, supported by the very successful Lytham In Bloom Group, which also decorates the town centre with floral displays and has won various awards for its excellent work.

- 6.11 The Fylde Coast Retail Study (2011) considers Lytham to be a 'notably vital and viable centre' with a good representation of independent traders. This is a main virtue of the town. The focus should be on maintaining its 'high level of health' as it continues to serve the needs of residents and visitors. It was noted from the visit to Lytham that there are areas of the town centre that would benefit from refurbishment, although these are relatively modest in the context of St. Annes and Kirkham. Areas around Pleasant Street, Market Square and repairs to forecourt areas along Clifton Street were highlighted.
- 6.12 The recently completed Booth's supermarket development at Station Road has had the effect of focusing a major retail use at the easterly end of the town centre. In an attempt to draw footfall from the supermarket, to the easterly end of Clifton Street, a planning agreement was reached with E.H. Booth to fund an upgrade of Station Road to encourage linked trips to the town centre. The scheme was fully delivered and has enhanced the trading position of this part of the town centre, in an area that was experiencing quite high vacancy rates. The 2020 Vision for Lytham St. Annes suggests that a 'master plan' be prepared for Lytham Town Centre, which would in effect be a conservation area management plan, where small scale improvements would be suggested to enhance the historic qualities of the town centre. This would be produced in consultation with business groups, the community and the Lytham St. Annes Civic Society.
- 6.13 As with St. Annes, the visitor economy is important to the local economy and the proposals for Lytham Hall and the potential visitor attraction at the windmill should be further considered as helping promote the town and improve its economy. The idea contained within the 2020 Vision to link the Hall with The Green, along Ballam Road, Park Street and Dicconson Terrace should form part of the master plan process and potential funding could be attracted from the redevelopment of the former Aegon site at Ballam Road. A first phase of this scheme, around the station, is due for completion in March 2012 in anticipation of the Open. This scheme has been funded by the Borough Council, Local Strategic Partnership and County Council with the design as now proposed being the subject of community design workshops.

- 6.14 The Lytham Partnership is an organisation that seeks to enhance the economic prosperity of the town and has been engaged in the process of re evaluating the approach to town centre policy. This is discussed within section 8 of the report; suffice to say that this organisation, along with others within the town, should be engaged in the process of preparing a business plan/action plan for the centre.

Kirkham

- 6.15 As outlined, Kirkham is *the* market town of the Borough. A local plan was produced for the town in 1987, which included policies relating to the town centre. To follow, similar policies were included within the Borough wide local plan of 2005. In 2003, the Borough Council was successful in obtaining modest funding to complete a 'Health check' under the Countryside Commission's Market Town Initiative. At the time, the work was undertaken under the auspices of the Kirkham and Rural Fylde Partnership. The study concluded by defining a number of key projects, totaling 41 in all that were considered to be important in enhancing the economic, social and environmental well being of the town and surrounding area. Of interest, some 18 projects were directly related to the town centre ranging from better use of car parks to building refurbishment works and environmental improvements.
- 6.16 The completion of the Safeway scheme, car park and community centre along with pedestrian links to Poulton Street has helped to sustain the centre. However, there remain issues of enhancing linkages around the centre encouraging footfall between the two 'hubs' at Town End and the Market Square. The Fylde Coast Retail Study notes that Kirkham has a relatively strong convenience sector whereas the comparison sector is less well represented. There is a concern that vacancy levels have risen since 2008 and there is a need for the diversification of the retail offer with some retail units no longer fit for purpose in terms of their layout.
- 6.16 Kirkham has seen some smaller scale public realm improvements over the years including street lighting and improvements to the entrance to the Mill street area/Morrison's car park, Memorial Gardens, Town End and Market Square. As in the case of Lytham, the In Bloom Group is very active in providing floral displays and other environmental improvements which is to be commended.
- 6.17 Following the publication of the Kirkham and Rural Fylde Partnership Action Plan, preliminary work took place about bringing together a Master plan for the town centre/conservation area. As a historic town with potential, preliminary discussions with the Heritage Lottery have been held about the potential for a Townscape Heritage Initiative project (THI), which would be a community based initiative aimed at restoring the historic quality the town centre. A forerunner to this approach has been through the Business Enterprise Premises Improvement Scheme (BEPIS) and more recently the Kirkham Renaissance Project that has been funded by the Borough Council and Lancashire County Developments Limited, match funded by the private sector. These demonstration projects have been well received and through imaginative

thinking by the businesses themselves not only have shop frontages been improved but, new floor space has been created helping them to expand.

- 6.18 This type of initiative has sought to deal with issues of providing fit for purpose premises, a finding made in the Fylde Coast Retail Study (2011).
- 6.19 The Kirkham and Wesham Business Group have been very active in seeking to revitalise the town centre. It has fully participated in the Renaissance scheme, where it has worked with the Council on prioritising investment and also in achieving smaller albeit important projects, such as the boundary signing scheme and tourist information panels in the town centre. It is also seeking to promote the town through events and has produced a town centre guide. The Town Council also plays an important role.
- 6.20 The analysis of the TFG has identified that physical regeneration, as in the case of St. Annes, could be a model to follow in Kirkham as evidenced by the Kirkham Renaissance Scheme, where buildings that had been disfigured in some cases over the years and now present an attractive frontage within the street scene. If this were to be continued the results could be dramatic. In addition, the historic structure and conservation area of the town are inherently attractive but are compromised by the poor quality of pavements and forecourts, which if enhanced could form an attractive setting for the town centre. This would undoubtedly help enhance the local economy and sustain its future as the market town of the Borough. There is potential scope to extend the conservation area that would be required for a potential THI.
- 6.21 The marketing and promotion of the town should continue and the experience of all of the towns might best be shared through an informal forum. A master plan approach for the town should be completed as soon as practicable.

Other Centres

- 6.22 Within the adopted local plan there are a number of defined 'district' centres which include Ansdell, Warton, Freckleton and St. Albans Road, St. Annes, in addition to a number of neighbourhood centres. In many cases there is scope for improvements and these localities are referenced in the Regeneration Framework. In some cases Parish Plans have been produced which propose environmental improvements to 'village or town centres' the latter in the case of Wesham and probably in Warton as the plan emerges. It is suggested that as opportunities arise the locations contained within the Regeneration Framework could adopt detailed plans, prepared in conjunction with local communities including the parish councils. Opportunities may arise through Section 106 contributions, or other sources, to undertake improvements. In any event, these localities should be contained within the LDF/CIL process, which is under progress.
- 6.23 The Councils Local Development Framework Steering Group asked that Ansdell form part of the review of the TFG and that it could potentially be designated

as a 'town centre' as part of the LDF process. To this end, the TFG visited Ansdell although it did not specifically engage with the business community. Ansdell is a specialist shopping locality that serves the surrounding catchment area. To date it has not been the subject of any particular regeneration or environmental improvement strategy although it is envisaged that some improvement works will take place around the station platform for the 2012 Open, as this will be a major arrival point. There have been requests to consider Ansdell for conservation area status and this would form part of a review of conservation area designations, work of which could start shortly as part of the preparation of the LDF evidence base. The centre of Ansdell would benefit from street improvements and some smaller scale building refurbishment works and it is contained within the Council Regeneration Framework.

7. *Town Centre Management*

- 7.1 Town Centre Management is, in effect, a process of actively promoting and maximising the quality and economic success of town centres. Government Policy (PPS4) suggests that town centres should be actively managed. Organisations, such as the National Retail Planning Forum and the Association of Town Centre Management suggest that the relative performance of town centres should be measured by way of 'health checks' to assess their vitality and viability. This should form the basis on which specific actions can be put in place to provide for a managed approach. In other words, town centres should be positively planned and the key to this is successful partnership working.
- 7.2 The established methods or measures of town centre vitality and viability include; vacancy rates, the composition of retail units such as convenience or comparison traders, footfall or pedestrian flows, investor confidence, business survival rates and property market issues - such as rental levels or investment yields. Following this assessment a baseline position can be adopted that will further be 'refined' through consumer surveys, building condition surveys and a general anecdotal view about the condition of a centre. Taken together, these factors can lead to a view being taken about the appropriate actions that need to be put in place to deal with particular problems or indeed opportunities.
- 7.3 Town centre management seeks to enhance the attractions, accessibility and amenities of town centres and there are a number of initiatives that action plans can contain. These include :
- Forming a partnership of like minded individuals that shares a common goal (Town Team - Portas Review)
 - Undertaking public realm improvements
 - Addressing property maintenance issues with landlords/tenants
 - Providing better accessibility including car parking
 - Creating a welcoming impression
 - Managing Events
 - Providing information and basic facilities

- Enhancing the look of a place through landscaping or floral displays
- Marketing an area and web site development
- Promoting the history of an area
- Promoting cleanliness and removing litter
- Loyalty Schemes

7.4 There are many facets to town centre management and it often transpires that organisations are not necessarily working together in a structured way. It would seem appropriate, therefore, that the activities of those involved in town centre management, in its broadest sense, should fully engage in the development of a strategy and action plan that is based on common goals and agreed actions. In discussions with the business groups during the TFG process this seemed to be a recognised weakness, but an idea that should be pursued as it would lead to far more productive outcomes.

7.5 During the course of this work the potential for the creation of Business Improvement District(s) (BID) was discussed with the Lancashire Chamber of Commerce, which has worked with the business community in Preston to create a BID for the city centre. A BID is not something that is imposed on a location by a council, rather it is an initiative that is generated by the business community itself - with its approval - and is aimed at attracting more business to a centre through various initiatives contained within a business plan. In effect, the BID raises funding through a supplementary rate charge and is used to raise revenue to create *additional* activity to what is already in place. In Preston the additional revenue, generated by traders, is used for promotion, additional cleaning regimes, environmental improvements, marketing and other initiatives. In the context of any town centre forum the potential for A BID could be considered.

7.6 Notwithstanding the potential for BID's it is apparent that there is significant revenue investment taking place in the town centres of the Borough. This ranges from footway maintenance, marketing, cleansing, private sector property maintenance, promotion and events by the public and voluntary sectors. It is appropriate to question how successfully this activity is 'joined up' to best effect and whether there are opportunities for more cooperative working. Through a forum based approach and the preparation of a business plan model, town centre initiatives could be more powerful in their effectiveness. One idea that could emerge is the establishment of a *core fund* for each centre whereby all the available funding and resources is identified and 'pooled' as appropriate and used in part to help deliver revenue based projects as set out in the business plan of the Forum. This could have the benefit of making better use of resources, helping target resources more effectively and importantly, set out clearly, the roles, responsibilities and expectations of the business community. This idea could be developed further.

7.7 It will be appreciated, of course, that the Council is already a major player in managing the quality of the environment within town centres; for example, grounds maintenance, cleansing, waste management, public realm improvements, marketing and providing free car parking in Lytham and St.

Annes in the run up to Christmas. Town Councils are also playing a role along with the private and voluntary sectors.

8. Participation, Engagement and Fieldwork.

8.1 As part of its research the TFG visited Kirkham, Lytham and St. Annes on Tuesday 13 September. The visits included a guided tour of each of the town centres aimed at highlighting particular issues, problems or opportunities. Following each 'tour' the Group held discussions with business organisations and other interested parties to learn of the issues considered important by the representatives. A separate tour was made to Ansdell on 30th September, although there were no discussions held with the business community.

8.2 At the first meeting of the TFG, members were reminded of the town centre strategy work to date in each of the town centres and general issues were discussed namely:

- The demand and need for further physical improvements to the town centre's
- Better town centre management and partnership working
- Coordinated marketing and promotion
- Poor commercial and statistical intelligence/benchmarking
- The potential use of Business Improvement Districts
- The need to consider town centre's as important elements of the Community Infrastructure Levy planning work as areas for investment and the continued use of Section 106 to help facilitate public realm improvements
- A potential town centre strategy for all the relevant locations
- Events and tourism initiatives

8.3 The Group proceeded to tour Kirkham town centre, Lytham and St. Annes and discussions were held with business community representatives. Some of the findings included:

Kirkham

- The success of some of the Kirkham Renaissance work including new shop fronts and the creation of new floor space. It was noted how this could be a model for further regeneration activity and the potential for Townscape Heritage Lottery funding could be a possibility.
- The problem with vacant buildings such as the George Hotel
- The pavements and forecourt areas were of poor visual quality and detracted from the character and appearance of the town centre and in some ways could be seen as dissuading visitors to the town.
- Need for improved landscaping
- The potential for a specialist market and other events that were based on the market town theme

- The need to work closer with business/property owners to improve premises.
- Better signage and information
- Linking of the two 'ends' of the centre

Lytham

- The potential for a business 'hub'
- The creation of a web site for more effective marketing to benefit local business and visitors
- The better planning of coach parking
- Enhancing the links with Lytham Hall and building on the economic benefits of the restoration plans
- Consider the issues of rate relief especially on empty premises
- Better signage and information in general
- 2 hour parking
- Environmental improvements and repairs to pavements and forecourt areas
- Protect the essential historic character of the town centre
- Create a partnership or forum for joint working and to agree actions/marketing/events/improvements
- A master plan for the town centre for design improvements
- The potential for linking the experience and expertise of all of the towns to share ideas
- Joined up town centre management

St Annes

- The setting up of a business forum covering all of the relevant interests/sectors to produce a business plan clearly setting out actions and responsibilities
- A calendar of events
- Better business support for events
- Creation of a St Annes festival
- A continuation of public realm improvements to none improved areas to bring all areas up to a high standard
- The potential for the creation of a Business Improvement District
- Better signage and information
- A review of car parking policy
- Development of the Classic Resort initiative

* St Annes on the Sea Town Council has produced a Town Plan and this has been the subject of widespread public engagement. Many of the points raised were noted in the general comments above but others included concern about too many charity shops, maintenance of planting in the town centre, high rentals and business rates, support needed for business expansion and better organisation of traders.

Ansdell

The Task and Finish Group visited Ansdell and noted that Woodlands Road had the character of an 'urban village' and contained an interesting mix of convenience and specialist retail outlets as well as a supermarket and has its own railway station and other community facilities. It noted that some of the infrastructure was 'dated' and many of the pavements and forecourts are in a poor state of repair. Many of the buildings had some architectural interest and it was explained by officers that the location had the potential to be designated as a conservation area. It was noted that Woodlands Road would benefit from public realm improvements that would help to promote its vibrancy and vitality and that some building refurbishment would also be appropriate. It was further noted that Ansdell would become a gateway for rail travelers to the coast and Fairhaven and that the Woodlands Road Bridge was programmed for reconstruction at a date in the future.

9. Conclusions

- 9.1 The work of the TFG has been extensive and has included an analysis of each of the three town centres - and the district centre of Ansdell. It has included a visit to each of the centres to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses including regeneration works that have been carried out to date, as well as inspecting some of the successes of the building refurbishment programme, the latest example being in Kirkham.
- 9.2 Importantly, discussions have taken place with business groups and selected individuals that are seen as important in the context of future planning of the town centres. These discussions have revealed some interesting and informative opinions about issues and priorities and the potential of joined up partnership working came to the fore. The business community can offer expertise in commerce, marketing and by undertaking positive investment decisions. The Portas Review suggests a 'Town Team' approach or 'Forum' and the conclusions of this review would indicate that the business community and voluntary sector would endorse that approach. Many of the ideas in this review could be considered in the formation of a strategy plan for each centre.
- 9.3 The report outlines how a major part of the planning for the town centres will be by way of the Local Plan (LDF), in particular, protecting town centres from unjustified competition but also seeking to promote the retain function of the centres and their attractiveness. The Fylde Coast Retail Study forms a major part of the evidence base for future planning of retail provision and the town centres and within this report reference is made to the relative health of the three centres within Fylde. In seeking to create a greater mix of retail the Council is not in a position to proactively work with letting agents and approach non represented retailers about the potential benefits of town centres and this is a situation worthy of consideration. What is apparent is that retailers are attracted to high quality locations where the physical environment creates an air of prosperity and that the town has a clear direction of where it is heading and has high ambitions. The latter point is

equally important in terms of investment decisions being taken by existing in town businesses.

- 9.4 The proactive policies and actions of the Borough Council and its partners - both local and regional - have been fundamental to regeneration activity but it is noted, following a review of each of the town centre's that there is 'work still to be done' to achieve a high level of vitality and viability. Each of the town centres is quite different and to a greater or lesser extent, when taken as a whole they require continuing investment. Physical regeneration is seen as a key model in seeking to provide the Borough with exemplary town centres and for each of them to realise their full potential. Seeking funding from various sources and taking forward the enhancement of town centre's as a fundamental part of the Core Strategy/ LDF work is essential. In this regard, the development of the Community Infrastructure Levy should identify investment in centres as one of its priorities. It will also be appropriate in the meantime to seek contributions through Section 106 agreements wherever possible. The Council should consider its own scope for further investment in future years.
- 9.5 The strategies for the town centres as a whole is somewhat patchy and it would be appropriate to complete this work as soon as possible working in partnership with interested parties. The technical 'health check' methodology is not well developed.
- 9.6 Town centre management is growing within the Borough but this is sometimes disjointed through no fault of any individual or organisation. Town centre management strategies would be a way of bringing together this effort by agreeing priorities in the short and longer term, based on a business/action plan model. The Council would be one partner in this process helping to deliver those elements that it might be best placed to do so. Many towns employ a Town Centre Manager, sometimes funded through a BID or by other means. Whilst it might not be possible to travel this route, more effective joined up working would go a long way to achieving far better management.
- 9.7 The study of the TFG has revealed that in the case of the three town centres they are fairing quite well in comparison with national trends. However, the same trends point to ever increasing threats and pressure. In addition for the need for additional environmental improvements to create a strong and attractive physical product and as a catalyst for private sector investment the issue of broader town centre management, utilizing the influence and expertise of key stakeholders and the community is essential.
- 9.8 In summary, three general themes have emerged from the study work, namely:
- *Public Realm* The enhancement and physical setting of the town centre's to help create the conditions for investment and business confidence, enhance civic pride and provide an attractive heart to the each of the towns.

- *Partnership* To work towards a coordinated vision for each of the centre's by engaging stakeholders from each of the sectors bringing together ideas, initiatives and identifying priorities and possibilities.
- *Management* Drawing together a strategy and an action plan/business plan for delivering the vision based on short, medium and longer term projects and actions.

9.9 Fylde Borough Council - and in particular the TFG - would like to thank all the interested parties who have helped with its analysis and assisted in enabling the Group to reach its conclusions and recommendations.

10. Recommendations (R)

10.1 These are draft recommendations that will be the subject of discussion and refinement prior to presentation to the parent Policy Development Scrutiny Committee. These recommendations and the priority attached to them would need to take account of resources, priorities and opportunity. However, it is believed that engagement of the business community and the research undertaken as part of this evaluation has justified these recommendations.

R1 That the Council supports the principle of holding a forum with key stakeholders to discuss the outcome of the work of the TFG and the ideas and recommendations within it. It would also be appropriate to consider the findings of the Portas report and the potential response of Government will be available in the spring.

R2 That the Council endorses the continued support for the regeneration/improvement/enhancement of its town centres as a major strand of its remit

R3 That the Council considers drawing together a single strategy that would relate to town centres. This would include master plans for each of the areas identifying key projects that would be delivered over time. Each location would have a vision and plan and a series of short, medium and longer term priorities and actions based on a realistic assessment of issues and a realistic assessment of delivery. These plans would include community engagement. The town centres could be themed e.g.: Kirkham Market Town; St. Annes, Classic Resort; Lytham, Victorian Town on the Coast

R4 That the Council identifies priorities for the completion of each of the town centre master plan areas in order (although much of the 'planning' work relating to St. Annes is complete).

R5 That the Council continues to support capital investment within its town centres and in doing so identifies the level of funding and its priorities for funding interventions.

- R6 That officers identify opportunities external funding sources to support regeneration activity and advise the Council accordingly.
- R7 That the issue of town centre funding be fully embraced into the development of the LDF/CIL process and that these locations be identifies as key locations for investment
- R8 That where appropriate, officers continue to negotiate Section 106 agreements to benefit town centre/neighbourhood centre improvements. In this regard the Regeneration Framework should be completed in detail.
- R9 That the Council supports local communities where possible to bring about improvements to neighbourhood/local centres.
- R10 That the Council seeks to improve its 'intelligence base' relating to information about the relative health of the town centre's so as to help prioritise actions.
- R11 That the Council supports partnership working and facilitates the establishment of a Forum for each of the major town centres where the community deems that this is appropriate. This would include major stakeholders from the various sectors. The establishment of a potential BID(s) could be considered as part of the town centre management/ business planning process. In any event the Council, with its partners explores the potential of the 'Core Fund' principle to support revenue expenditure within the centres as appropriate.
- R12 That the Council supports the establishment of Management /Business Plans for the town centres which would identify an action plan. The Council would not 'front' these forums but would be a partner. The work of the St. Annes Development Partnership could be a model to follow as well as that suggested by the Association of Town Centre Management. The Council would help to deliver plans, as a partner, where possible. . Issues for potential inclusion within the strategies/business/action plans could address topics such as design, management, potential BIDS, events, marketing, landlord and tenant issues, parking and accessibility.
- R13 That the Council takes a joined up approach to its management role within town centres in terms of its own service delivery and activity and identifies its role and responsibilities within the management plan. It would be for other organisations to do likewise.
- R14 That the Council continues to protect and enhance town centres in its consideration of planning applications and proposals.
- R15 That the Council pursues design excellence, through the planning process, with regard to planning proposals and in relation to its own initiatives. Conservation Area appraisals/management plans and design codes/ specifications should be applied to town centre's/conservation areas.

- R16 That the Council through partnership seeks to provide business support in town centres to help and sustain business formation, survival and sustainability.
- R17 That the Council continues to support the events programme in support of town centre's and continues to work closely with partners in respect of marketing, promotion and management.

PD December 2011

Policy Development Scrutiny Committee

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Date | 08 Dec 2011 |
| Venue | Town Hall, St Annes |
| Committee members | Councillor Fabian Craig-Wilson (Chairman) Councillor Leonard Davies (Vice-Chairman) Ben Aitken, Frank Andrews, Susan Ashton, Julie Brickles, Peter Collins, Simon Cox, David Donaldson, Charlie Duffy, Nigel Goodrich, Kath Harper, Kiran Mulholland, Edward Nash, Elizabeth Oades, Elaine Silverwood |
| Other Councillors | Sue Fazackerley; Karen Buckley |
| Officers | Allan Oldfield, Clare Platt, Paul Walker, Tracy Scholes, Joanna Scott, Ian Curtis, Paul Swindells, Darren Bell, Annie Womack |
| Others | Members of the public; Tim Lince (Acting Chair of Lowther Gardens Trust); Isabelle Leclercq. |

Public Platform

A request to speak on Item 9 of the agenda had been received from Mr Tony Wedge representing Lytham Amateur Operatic Society. The Chairman invited Mr Wedge to address the committee. Mr Wedge raised concerns relating to the new conditions, booking arrangements and charges being introduced by the Trust, and how they impacted upon local amateur groups. The Chairman assured him that members would take his comments into account when debating the item.

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. There were no declarations.

Cllr Simon Cox declared a prejudicial interest in Item 9 as his company was providing accountancy services to the Lowther Gardens Trust.

Cllr Elaine Silverwood declared a personal interest in Item 9 because her brother runs the café at Lowther Pavilion.

2. Confirmation of minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 3 November 2011 as a correct record for signature by the chairman.

3. Substitute members

Cllr Kiran Mulholland for Cllr David Chedd

Cllr Kath Harper for Cllr John Davies

Cllr Peter Collins for Cllr Karen Henshaw

Cllr Nigel Goodrich for Cllr Richard Redcliffe

4. Capital Programme 2011/12 to 2015/16 - 2nd Quarter Update to 20/09/11

This report was introduced by Joanna Scott, Assistant Director of Finance. This was the first time that the committee had received a report on the Capital Programme, and so Ms Scott gave an overview of each of the sections contained within the report.

In response to a member's question she gave a brief explanation of the meaning of high, medium and low level risks in the section relating to Ongoing Financial Risks and advised where a full definition could be obtained.

Members had several questions relating to the cost of borrowing, where the council borrowed from and why was it necessary to borrow, all of which queries Ms Scott addressed.

There was also a query about the advantages and disadvantages of purchasing or leasing of vehicles for Operational Services. Ms Scott advised that it would be likely that borrowing to purchase would be a cheaper option, and a financial business case was being prepared.

In response to a question about the estimated liability remaining after the capital receipt from the sale of Clifton (Lytham) Housing Association Ltd, Ms Scott said that she would provide updated information to members of the committee as soon as possible.

After the debate the committee RESOLVED:

- 1 To thank Ms Scott for her report and to note the Capital Programme position as detailed within the report.

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

5. General Fund Budget Monitoring Report 2011/12 - Position as at Quarter Ended 30th Sept 2011

Mr Allan Oldfield, Director of Customer and Operational Services, introduced the report which outlined certain budget areas for further attention. He referred members to Appendix A (the “hotspots”). Only one item, Building Control, showed a potentially adverse variance and an explanation for that variance was given within the body of the report. Appendix B showed savings targets, which all showed an anticipated Favourable outturn again with the exception of Building Control and an explanation was provided in the Director’s Update.

It was queried whether it was ever an option to transfer capital into revenue accounts and Mr Oldfield advised that this was not possible.

Following the debate, the committee RESOLVED:

1. To note the current position and the comments outlined in the report.

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

6. Mid Year Performance Exception Report 2011/12

This report examined areas of over and under performance for the Authority based on the indicator set for 2011/12 which was devised to capture current levels of performance in each service area.

Mr Darius Ward, Corporate Performance and Projects Manager, went through this report for members of the committee. He addressed each directorate’s performance in turn and invited comments and queries from members.

Benefits targets were an issue in Governance and Partnerships, but it was explained that new systems implementation had been a factor, as was a 25% higher caseload.

In Community Services, members queried the indicator relating to the percentage of households in mortgage difficulties approaching the LA for assistance. Clare Platt, Director of Community Services explained that the Authority is normally advised by lenders and that the council then approaches the borrower in a proactive way. However, she said that not all those in difficulty are willing to engage with the process until it is too late.

There was also a query about why the determination of major planning applications had fallen below target, as the department was now fully staffed. Mr Walker, Director of Strategic Development Services, advised that two major applications had been exceedingly complex and this had brought the average time to determine above the target.

Mr Ward advised members that there had been a delay in preparing the Value For Money assessment, and that the work was ongoing across the other 11 District Councils of Lancashire, and LCC.

The committee RESOLVED:

1. To note the report
2. To request that the Value for Money assessment be brought to committee after the financial year end.

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

7. Fylde Coast Economic Development Strategy - Task & Finish Group Interim Report

This report was introduced by the Chairman of the committee, who is also the Chairman of this Task & Finish Group. The Task & Finish Group had been appointed at a previous Policy Development Scrutiny Committee meeting on 27 July 2011 to look into the issues around a review of the Economic Development Strategy.

Committee members were advised of the Group's meetings and activities so far, and the work which yet remains to be done in order to complete the review and formulate recommendations for the committee to consider.

The committee RESOLVED:

1. To note the report

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

8. Exclusion of the Public - Lowther Gardens Trust

Members were invited to consider passing a resolution concerning the exclusion of the public from the meeting in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the business to be discussed is exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

The committee RESOLVED:

1. To exclude the public

Before the committee debated the following item, Cllr Cox left the room, as he had declared a prejudicial interest in the matter.

9. Lowther Gardens Trust

This report was introduced by Clare Platt, Director of Community Services, and Tim Lince, the Acting Chairman of the Lowther Gardens Trust, made a presentation to committee members.

It concerned the five year business plan requested by the Council and developed by the Trustees of the Lowther Gardens Trust for the operation and management of Lowther Pavilion. The matter had been referred to Scrutiny by Cabinet for consideration of the identified deficit as a subsidy to the Trust.

The matters under consideration were debated at length by members and they RESOLVED:

1. To appoint a working group to review the issues and to report back to committee.

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

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