

Community Focus Scrutiny Committee

Date:	Thursday, 4 October 2012
Venue:	Town Hall, St Annes
Committee members:	Councillor Kiran Mulholland (Chairman) Councillor Christine Akeroyd (Vice-Chairman) Councillors Tim Armit, Susanne Cunningham, Fabian Craig- Wilson, Tony Ford JP, Gail Goodman JP, Nigel Goodrich, Kathleen Harper, Paul Hodgson, Linda Nulty, Dawn Prestwich, John Singleton JP, Vivienne Miller-Willder
Officers:	Paul Walker, Lyndsey Lacey, Phil Dent, Darren Bell, Andrew Dickson, Stephen Ball
Other members:	Susan Fazackerley (Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture) Councillor Elizabeth Oades
Other Representatives:	Clare Nolan-Barnes (Fylde Peninsular Water Management Group) Steve Molyneux, Rachel Haigh (Environment Agency) Rob Tidswell (United Utilities) Rick Hayton (Lancashire County Council) Anne Heslop (Fylde Beach Care)
Members of the public:	One member of the public was present.

1. Declarations of interest

Members were reminded that any disclosable pecuniary interests should be declared as required by the Localism Act 2011 and that any other interests should be declared as required by the Council's Code of Conduct. There were no declarations of interest.

2. Confirmation of minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Community Focus Scrutiny Committee held on 6 September 2012 as a correct record for signature by the Chairman subject to Councillor Craig-Wilson's name be added to the list of members in attendance.

3. Substitute members

The following substitution was reported under council procedure rule 22.3:

Councillor Fabian Craig-Wilson for Councillor Barbara Nash

4. Fylde Coast Bathing Waters

Paul Walker (Director of Development Services) introduced the report and in doing so, provided the committee with an overview and purpose of the report.

Members were advised that the Scrutiny Management Board (SMB) considered a request at its meeting in June for a scrutiny review to be undertaken on Fylde coast bathing waters.

Mr Walker indicated that in response to the above, representatives from each of the main partner organisations involved were invited to attend the meeting to give an overview of their work and take questions.

The report circulated provided an overview of the work underway to improve the quality of the bathing waters in light of the revised Bathing Water Directive (rBWD). Members were advised that the report also supplemented the recent bathing waters 'turning tides' summit (at which all members of the Community Focus Scrutiny Committee were invited) on 17 September.

The Chairman invited Councillor Elizabeth Oades to the table as originator of the request for scrutiny to ask questions on the subject.

Councillor Oades asked the following questions:

St Paul's Road (Fairhaven) Pumping Station - Does the station operate at low tide? During periods of heavy rain is rainwater pumped out irrespective of the position of the tide? Is raw sewage being pumped out at the same time?

The spartina grass is spreading and it harbours mud and bacteria. Does this have an impact on water quality?

Why are no members appointed to the Fylde Peninsular Water Management Group? What has this group done about St Annes since it was formed? United Utilities seem to be trying to diversify and deflect criticism from them towards birds, farmers and dogs.

How many discharges of raw sewage have there been onto the beach from the Fairhaven overflow in the last 12 months and further, over the last 2 - 3 years.

How long did each discharge take place when they happened and what volume of sewage went into the beach? Do you have reliable information and if not, why not?

What percentage of the pollution is from overflows?

The Chairman indicated that it was intended to address some of the questions Councillor Oades had raised during the course of the debate but in any event, a request for full response would be referred to the appropriate organisations.

The Chairman then invited Clare Nolan-Barnes (Head of Capital Projects and Regeneration) at Blackpool Council and representative the Fylde Peninsular Water Management Group to address the committee.

Ms Nolan-Barnes commenced the presentation by clarifying the makeup and Vision of the Fylde Peninsular Water Management Group. She explained that the Group was set up in 2011 as a partnership between the Environment Agency, United Utilities, Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre councils, Lancashire County Council and Keep Britain Tidy to look at key aspects of water management. She added that the Partnership provided the opportunity to utilise a collective resource, share expertise, skills and resources, avoid duplication and deliver more efficiently. Additionally, it helped deliver the priorities of individual organisations while, at the same time, speaking as one voice.

Ms Nolan-Barnes then went on to further address the committee on the following areas:

- Partnership Priorities and challenges
- Current and revised Bathing Waters Directive
- Beach designations/issues to be tackled
- Flooding- Lead Flood Authority Duties: investment/planned schemes
- Coast Defence issues/ investment
- Surface Water management/ sustainable Urban Drainage Systems
- Possible joint (Fylde and Blackpool) Scrutiny Review
- Future Actions (including top 10 actions re bathing waters)

The Chairman then went on to invite Steve Molyneux and Rachel Haigh (representatives of the Environment Agency) to address the committee.

In summary, the presentation covered the Environment Agency's (EA) role under the current and revised EU Directive and the associated implications for Fylde. It also provided an overview of what is considered to be causing the bathing waters problem, sources of pollution and what the EA considered needed to be done.

It was suggested that the possible causes of the pollution related to: agricultural and urban run-off, treated sewage, storm sewage, dogs, birds, horse, donkeys and the fact that it had been the second wettest summer on record in England which had contributed to saturated ground and draining and treatment systems being overwhelmed.

In terms of the key challenges for Fylde, Ms Haigh advised that under the revised Directive, 'sufficient' classification must be achieved by 2015 and that poor sites must advise against bathing. She further advised that where bathing waters have been designated poor over 5 consecutive years, appropriate notices would need to be erected advising against bathing or prohibiting bathing. Some examples of signage were made available at the meeting.

Mr Rob Tidswell (Wastewater Catchment Manager for United Utilities) was then invited to address the committee. In doing so, he provided a detailed explanation of United Utilities role in helping to improve the quality of bathing waters including all the actions undertaken since the original Bathing Water legislation came into being in 1976 including:

(1990- 95) AMP1: Privatisation of Water Industry and Sea Change Programme

(1995-2000) AMP2: Further investigations and Bathing Waters 2 Programme

(2000- 2005) AMP3: Bathing Water performance and overflow alleviation

Recent years work and current programme AMP4 / 5: Future Bathing Water Investment

Finally, Rick Hayton (representative of Lancashire County Council) then addressed the committee.

Mr Hayton advised the committee that Lancashire County Council is designated as one of the lead local flood authorities responsible for the delivery of new duties (under Flood and Water Management Act). He added that this was based on effective partnership between lead local flood authorities and other risk management authorities including the EA and UU.

Mr Hayton explained that the new duties require the lead local flood authorities to develop, maintain, apply, monitor and consult on a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for its area, such risk includes surface runoff, groundwater/quality of water on highway gulleys, and ordinary watercourses. In addition, the lead local flood authority will act as a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) Approval Body, to work in tandem with the planning system/authorities. In this capacity, the lead local flood authority will have to approve or otherwise sustainable drainage proposals associated with any construction work for buildings, or any structure that covers land and will affect water absorption.

During the course of the presentations, a variety of questions were raised with the key organisations about matters associated with the quality of bathing waters and these related to: the makeup and remit of the various bathing water groups; clarity on the 10 actions proposed to address the bathing water quality; education/promotion/awareness of the Directives' requirements; commercial/business community input; enforcement/prosecution arrangements; infrastructure requirements; wording for the proposed signage; number of overflows/discharges of sewage; monitoring arrangements; DNA tracking technique; storm overflows capacity and implications of future housing developments.

Following detailed discussion it was RESOLVED:

1. To note the work underway to improve Fylde bathing waters and to recommend to Cabinet that a further report on the matter be presented to the next meeting of the committee detailing the following:

- Formal response to the questions raised by Councillor Oades
- Clarity on the 10 actions proposed to address the quality of bathing waters
- Clarity on the undertaking of the bathing water regulations and dates signs may be required.
- Clarity on what has been done on the DNA tracking on Fylde coast bathing waters
- As assessment on the appropriateness of undertaking a joint scrutiny review with Blackpool Council on the matter.

2. To thank the representatives of the various bodes for their attendance and input at the meeting.

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