

Policy Development Scrutiny Committee



Date	9 December 2010
Venue	Town Hall, St Annes
Committee members	Councillor Fabian Craig-Wilson (Chairman) Councillor Kiran Mulholland (Vice-Chairman) Brenda Ackers, Ben Aitken, Frank Andrews, Maxine Chew, John Davies, Leonard Davies, Karen Henshaw JP
Other Councillors	Cheryl Little
Officers	Paul Walker, Gary Sams, Darius Ward, Annie Womack
Others	-

Public Platform

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

1. Declarations of interest

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

2. Confirmation of minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 21 October 2010 as a correct record for signature by the chairman.

3. Substitute members

The following substitutions were reported under council procedure rule 22.3:

Councillor Maxine Chew for Councillor David Chedd

4. Partnership Working Annual Report

This report was presented by Mr Darius Ward, the council's Corporate Performance and Efficiency Officer. Each year the relevant scrutiny committee reviews the council's partnership working.

He explained that the schedule attached to the report had been broken down into formal and informal partnerships, and that the assessment for this year included the funding committed (relevant to 11 of the partnerships), and a commentary on how the partnerships had contributed to the council's strategic objectives.

Mr Ward invited members to comment on or question the effectiveness of the partnerships. Any requests for more detailed information could be brought back to a later meeting.

Members commented that they did not think that the schedule was up-to-date as some of those partnerships listed did not have the correct membership, or did not meet any longer. Members also doubted whether every partnership actually achieved anything of value, and that where they were failing they should be identified and taken out of the schedule, as they wasted officer time.

After a discussion, the committee RESOLVED:

1. To note the report
2. As individuals to examine in detail the schedule of partnerships and to send comments or queries to Democratic Services for collation, and a new report to be prepared for the committee meeting on 3 February 2011.

There was no recorded vote as the Chairman decided that the matter was not controversial, and the resolution was carried by show of hands.

5. Management of Leisure Assets

Mr Paul Walker, Director of Strategic Development, and Mr Gary Sams, Principal Estates Surveyor presented this report to the committee, which summarised the procedures which are in place to facilitate and regulate the sales, letting and management of property assets, particularly leisure assets. The latest draft of the Asset Management Plan was attached for members' comments prior to its adoption in January 2011.

Mr Walker reminded members that as a result of recommendations from the former Policy and Service Review Scrutiny Committee, Land Transaction Procedure Rules were now incorporated into the Constitution specifically to govern the disposal and acquisition of property assets.

Members were advised of the roles and decision-making links of the Asset Management Group, which used to have a Member Champion for assets.

Leisure assets can be let on formal leases or on licence agreements / concessions. The committee was shown pictures of various leisure assets and received a commentary on the specific arrangements. It was explained that

lets on formal leases were more difficult to actively manage as the tenants have the protection of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954, and in fact the leases could be sold on by the original tenants. Some lets had previously been agreed on an undervalue to certain organisations, such as Lytham Windmill Museum, the Sea Scouts Boathouse and the bowling and tennis clubs, although it was recognised that they would need to be reviewed in light of the council's financial situation. The council had nevertheless achieved an average 32.5% increase in income from rents, licence fees and sea front concessions. There was also a proposal for a reintroduction of beach huts which was still being assessed for feasibility.

The officers also touched on the council's major leisure assets – the Island Leisure Complex, Fairhaven Lake and Ashton Gardens, each of which will have its own masterplan which will be the principal policy document governing the use of assets in those areas.

Members had several queries and comments, and in particular wanted to know whether the council acted in a commercial manner in the granting of leases, licences and concessions. They did not believe that the council should be subsidising lawn tennis clubs and cruising clubs and wanted officers to review all such subsidies.

Mr Sams was asked whether Fairhaven Cottage could be let whilst the Masterplan for Fairhaven Lake is completed and he confirmed that they were looking at a commercial use for the property. In the long term the nature of this use would be shaped by the Masterplan but in the meantime the property will be advertised as available for a short term let.

After a full debate the committee RESOLVED:

1. To request that officers review all our leisure assets to identify
 - (a) where there are subsidies provided and
 - (b) to examine these on a case by case basis to see whether commercial charges should be applied
2. To request that a Member Champion for assets be nominated and appointed

There was no recorded vote as the Chairman decided that the matter was not controversial, and the resolution was carried by show of hands.

5. Review of PACTs – Task & Finish

Scrutiny Management Board had received from Councillor Keith Hyde a suggestion for reviewing the role of PACTs (Police and Community Together) in increasing community safety, and the role that the council as a whole and individual councillors could play in that process.

The Board agreed that there was potential for a review and a meeting was arranged in order to set the scope for a potential investigation of the topic. The resulting scoping document was attached to the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Social Wellbeing, Councillor Cheryl Little, was present and advised members that she had a copy of a document entitled *PACT Plus* which had been nominated for an award, and which, if invited to, she would like to bring to a Task and Finish Group meeting to inform the review.

Members discussed the scoping of the review and RESOLVED:

1. To form a Task and Finish Group for a review of PACTs

There was no recorded vote as the Chairman decided that the matter was not controversial, and the resolution was carried by show of hands.

Following the vote the Chairman asked for volunteers to be on the T&F Group, and the following Councillors offered to be on the group:

Leonard Davies, Maxine Chew, Karen Henshaw, Fabian Craig-Wilson and Kiran Mulholland.

The Chairman stated that if anyone else wanted to volunteer they should contact the Principal Democratic Services Officer.
