

Policy & Service Review Scrutiny Committee



Date	15 February 2007
Venue	Town Hall, Lytham St Annes
Committee members	Raymond Norsworthy (Chairman) Martin Taylor (Vice-Chairman) Stephen Carpenter, Peter Hardy, Elizabeth Clarkson, John Longstaff, Elizabeth Oades, Dawn Prestwich, Fabian Wilson
Other Councillors	Harold Butler, John Coombes, Patricia Fieldhouse, Alfred Jealous, Barbara Pagett, Hilda Wilson, Ronald Wilson
Officers	Ian Curtis, Clare Platt, Tracy Scholes, John Cottam, Andrew Shore, Lyndsey Lacey, Annie Womack, Richard Wood
Others	Members of the Public

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 & Service Review Community Forum meeting held on 14 December 2006 as a correct record for signature by the chairman.

3. Substitute members

The following substitution was reported under council procedure rule 25.3:

Councillor Peter Hardy substituted for Councillor Maxine Chew

4. Policy on the operation of the Mayoralty

Tracy Scholes (Democratic and Member Support Executive Business Manager) presented a detailed report on a proposal to introduce a policy on the operation of the Mayoralty.

Mrs Scholes explained that the purpose of the document was to provide a framework for the operation of the mayoralty. She added that the only guidance about the role and functions of the Mayor was a brief description in contained in the constitution. A copy of the draft policy was circulated with the agenda.

The report specifically concentrated on two particular areas for scrutiny to consider:

- The role of Deputy Mayor.
- The appropriate level of support to be given to fundraising activities.

The Chairman invited the current Mayor/ Deputy Mayor and Past Mayors/ Deputies to give evidence on the issues.

The Committee generally welcomed the policy. Members commented on a number of areas contained within the document including, the role and functions of Mayor/ Deputy Mayor; transport arrangements for the deputy mayor; performance indicators relating to mayoral engagements; the wearing of the chains of office; arrangements for Royal Garden Party visits; the management of the mayoral budget and fundraising activities.

Following a full debate the Committee RESOLVED to recommend to Cabinet the approval of the Policy as circulated subject to the following observations:

- The Council should consider amending the constitution to reflect the Deputy Mayor's role more fully in that rather than acting in the Mayor's absence only, it was acknowledged to be a more supportive role to the Mayor in discharging their roles, functions and responsibilities.
- Transportation for the Deputy Mayor being arranged in the context of the limited budget in consultation with the Mayor.
- The number of charitable events supported by the mayoral team is at the discretion of the Mayor.
- The Policy should refer to the arrangements for the selection of Mayor in so far as the appointment of the Mayor in each municipal year is based on the seniority of members in terms of their length of office.

5. Fylde Car Park Strategy - 2 Year Review

Andrew Shore (Technical Services Manager) presented a report on a proposed review of the council's car park strategy. A copy of the Strategy which included details of the current tariff and operating hours was circulated with the agenda. A supplementary sheet with detailing various statistics was also circulated at the meeting.

Members were advised that council adopted the car park strategy in 2005 on the understanding that it would be reviewed every two years. The committee was asked to consider the appropriateness of the policies within the Strategy.

As part of the review the committee was specifically asked to concentrate on a number of areas including the operational hours and evening charges; parking fees and 07/08 budget position; disabled parking provision and charges; long stay option in short stay car parks and enforcement protocol within the car parks.

Following discussion it was RESOLVED:

1. To recommend to Cabinet the establishment of a task and finish group to examine in detail the Council's car park strategy.
2. To ask the task and finish group (comprising Councillors Elizabeth Oades, Martin Taylor and Fabian Wilson) to report back to the next meeting of committee with its findings and make recommendations for policy change as necessary.
3. To extend the invitation to join the task and finish group to the Lytham and St Annes Chambers of Trade.

6. Private Sector Housing Policy

Councillor Patricia Fieldhouse (Portfolio Holder for Community and Wellbeing) and John Cottam (Housing Manager) presented an updated report on a revision undertaken of the private sector housing renewal policy.

The policy had been adapted to incorporate the views of the consultation process undertaken resulting in the version of the policy circulated with the agenda. It set out the council's approach to improving private sector conditions in the borough and focuses on promoting the Decent Homes Standard in the private sector with particular emphasis on provision for vulnerable people.

Members were advised that equity loans would be offered as alternative funding for applicants who fail to achieve grant funding through the means test and unable to access high street finance in the traditional way.

The report detailed how the strategy had been developed, the priorities that the council wished to address and the types of assistance that would be available, including where to obtain the services, eligibility, how to apply, conditions etc. It introduced equity loans as part of the package, and recognises the role of a grant agency in delivering assistance whilst also increasing revenue to the Council. The transitional arrangements proposed were also set out in the report.

Mr Cottam indicated that the policy was aligned to a large extent to that of Wyre council and that work would continue to develop a wider Fylde coast policy working with both Blackpool and Wyre councils.

Members sought clarity on how the equitable loan system would operate. Mr Cottam addressed this point and offered examples by way of illustration.

The Committee RESOLVED:

1. To adopt the revised Private Sector Hosing Policy as detailed in the report.
2. To authorise the Executive Manager for Consumer Wellbeing and Protection, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community and Social Wellbeing to negotiate a package of equity loan provision jointly with Wyre Borough Council.
3. To process the waiting list of applicants prior to 31 Oct 2006 under the terms of the previous policy thereby retaining the 10K limit and introducing a 15 year repayment period.

7. Vice- Chairman's report on previous recommendations

The Vice- Chairman (Councillor Martin Taylor) presented a tracking report on previous recommendation made by the committee. A copy of the document was circulated with the agenda.

The Vice-Chairmen provided the committee with an update on action undertaken on all the items listed.

The Committee RESOLVED to note the report.
