

## Policy Development Scrutiny Committee



Date	24 March 2011
Venue	Town Hall, St Annes
Committee members	Councillor Fabian Craig-Wilson (Chairman) Councillor Kiran Mulholland (Vice-Chairman)  Brenda Ackers, Ben Aitken, Frank Andrews, Leonard Davies, John Davies, Patricia Fieldhouse, Richard Fulford-Brown, David Chedd, Karen Henshaw JP, Elizabeth Oades, Dawn Prestwich, Elaine Silverwood, Heather Speak
Other Councillors	Trevor Fiddler, Cheryl Little, Kevin Eastham
Officers	Phillip Woodward, Tracy Scholes, Paul Walker, Ian Curtis, Bryan Ward
Others	Inspector Laura Lawler; Members of the public

### Public Platform

One member of the public and 2 councillors had made requests to address the committee on the topic relating to the call-in request. The Chairman invited them to speak at the start of the meeting, in accordance with the Public Platform rules.

Ms Duffy, speaking as a representative of Melton Grove Tenants Association, said that the estate had been gifted as a lasting legacy and residents very much wished that status to be preserved. She was concerned about the lack of engagement with residents regarding the proposed sale. She said that the residents would be interested in self managing the properties if the opportunity arose.

Councillor Eastham said that he did not want to dwell on whether the estate should be sold or otherwise. He was more concerned about the lack of wider elected member involvement in reaching the decision. He also raised planning considerations.

Councillor Louis Rigby, who is on the Board of Directors of Clifton Lytham Housing, said that he was against the sale to Windmill and felt that the properties should be sold to a registered social landlord.

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.

Councillors Ackers, Fieldhouse and Louis Rigby (who is not a member of the committee but who spoke under Public Platform) declared a personal interest in item 4, as members of the Board of Clifton Lytham Housing Association.

2. Confirmation of minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 3 February 2011 and 21 February 2011 as a correct record for signature by the chairman.

3. Substitute members

The following substitutions were reported under council procedure rule 22.3:

Councillor Dawn Prestwich for Councillor George Caldwell

4. Request for Call-in – Clifton (Lytham) Housing Association Ltd

Ten members of the council had invoked the recovery and call-in procedure to question an individual cabinet member decision made on 3 March 2011 relating to the transfer of shares of the Clifton Lytham Housing Association Ltd. This decision was made by Cllr Trevor Fiddler, the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development. Members of the committee were required to consider whether the decision was not in the interests of the inhabitants of the borough and ought to be reconsidered.

The Chairman invited the lead signatory, Councillor Elizabeth Oades, to explain why she felt that the decision was not in the interests of the inhabitants of the borough and ought to be reconsidered.

Cllr Oades called into question whether there had been wide enough engagement and drew parallels to the time when the council transferred its own housing stock and the thorough consultation that took place.

She had several other queries, including - was the transfer legal in light of the content of a solicitor's letter recently received by some Members of the Council?; should the residents not have had the opportunity to vote on the issue?; how was the decision reached to sell off the estate?; how was the tenderer selected?

There were many other questions and Cllr Oades said that the number of questions she raised illustrated the need for a fuller debate by Council. She

felt that the sale should not be proceeded with until such a debate had taken place as to whether the sale was in the interest of the residents of the Borough as a whole.

The Chairman asked Councillor Trevor Fiddler, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development, to respond.

Councillor Fiddler said that he welcomed the call in. He stated that the Clifton Lytham Housing estate was an anomaly in terms of council business, in so much as the council no longer had an operational housing function and so did not have the expertise to run the company and had made a political decision in 2000 to dispose of its housing stock and its landlord function.

In reaching his decision he understood that the Clifton Lytham Board had sought professional advice and had considered eight options of how they might proceed. The preferred option had been to dispose to a social landlord but as a better offer was received this had been the best option to gain the best consideration for the site.

Cllr Fiddler accepted that with hindsight there should be a wider debate involving councillors and wholeheartedly agreed that a debate at council would be useful.

There were questions from committee members relating to transparency of the decision, the engagement of residents and the legality of the sale, following which the Portfolio Holder left the room.

The committee debated the topic thoroughly. Cllrs Patricia Fieldhouse and Brenda Ackers as Directors of the company reported that they had had legally competent and other professional advisors, and had always had the best interest of the residents at heart.

After an in-depth debate of the various issues raised, the committee RESOLVED:

That the decision of the Portfolio Holder should be called in, and referred to Council for debate.

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

## 5. Community Safety Partnership

Members were reminded that there is a statutory responsibility to scrutinise the performance of the Fylde Community Safety Partnership (CSP) on an annual basis.

The purpose of this report, introduced by Cllr Cheryl Little (Portfolio Holder for Social Wellbeing), was to inform the appropriate Scrutiny Committee of the

work of the CSP to allow an informed scrutiny of the Partnership under the requirements of the regulations as outlined in the report.

The Chairman of the committee, Cllr Craig-Wilson, reported that the three year agreement with LCC for second homes council tax funding for the LSP concluded on 31 March 2012 and it was her intention to add this item to future items for review by scrutiny via the SMB.

The report contained a wealth of detail regarding the work of the CSP during the previous year including statistics on crime and successful initiatives. The committee members were invited to scrutinise the work of all the partners in delivering the five priorities of the CSP.

**Statutory Partners in Fylde CSP comprise:**

- Fylde Borough Council
- Lancashire County Council
- Lancashire Constabulary
- Lancashire Police Authority
- Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service
- North Lancashire Primary Care Trust
- Lancashire Probation Trust

**The Five Priorities are:**

- Domestic Abuse
- Alcohol harm
- Road Safety
- Violent Crime
- Anti Social Behaviour

Inspector Laura Lawler was in attendance on behalf of the police. There were a number of remarks and concerns directed at the police. In particular, members felt that there was room for improvement with police communications. However, they also felt that the initiative to deal with scrap metal crime was very proactive and thanked police for their efforts.

After the debate the committee RESOLVED:

To note the good performance of the Community Safety Partnership in 2010/11 and ask the partnership to seek invitations from two scrutiny members to participate in the 2011 strategic assessment nearer to that time.

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

## 6. Review of Assets

This report was introduced by Paul Walker, Director of Strategic Development. The Committee had commenced a review of assets and at the last meeting

had appointed a Task and Finish group. The group had met and proposed a schedule of concessionary lettings for the Committee to review.

The schedules attached to the report were as follows:

a) 2007 Review

The assets last reviewed by Scrutiny and Cabinet in 2007, including the resolution of Cabinet and a summary of actions since the review.

b) 2008-10 Asset reviews

Reviews or actions that have been instigated and progressed since 2007.

c) Current Asset reviews

Reviews or actions currently underway and about to be concluded.

d) Concessionary lettings subject to review

A list of lettings which it was proposed would be the subject of the latest review.

Members considered the schedules. Mr Walker was asked to investigate the feasibility of community payback being used to tidy up the St David's Road site. He reported that there had been a clean up in the previous year but that he would investigate if further work could be undertaken.

It was noted that item 20 of schedule A needed to reflect that the Friends of Dickie Bush had also been involved in the improvements.

Following the debate, members RESOLVED:

1. To note the contents of schedules A, B and C, with the amendment relating to Friends of Dickie Bush added.
2. To recommend that Mill Street Car Park be added to the list of assets to be transferred to Kirkham Town Council.
3. To agree schedule D to go forward for review to the Task and Finish Group.

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

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