

## Policy Development Scrutiny Committee

Date	12 Jan 2012
Venue	Town Hall, St Annes
Committee members	Councillor Fabian Craig-Wilson (Chairman) Councillor Leonard Davies (Vice-Chairman)  Ben Aitken, Frank Andrews, Susan Ashton, Peter Collins, Simon Cox, David Donaldson, Charlie Duffy, Nigel Goodrich, Kath Harper, Kiran Mulholland, Edward Nash, Elizabeth Oades, Elaine Silverwood
Other Councillors	Tony Ford
Officers	Paul Drinnan, Steve Smith, Annie Womack

### Public Platform

There were no requests 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. There were no declarations.

#### 2. Confirmation of minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 8 December 2011 as a correct record for signature by the chairman.

#### 3. Substitute members

There were no substitutes.

#### 4. Economic Development Strategy Review – Town Centres

Paul Drinnan, Head of Regeneration and Tourism, introduced this report to members.

On 20 July 2011, Cabinet had requested that Policy and Development Scrutiny Committee (PDSC) review the Fylde Borough Economic Strategy, following its consideration of the draft Fylde Coast Economic Development Strategy produced by the EDC. This would have the benefit of enabling this Council to identify its priorities, but also notify the EDC in these matters to ensure the priorities are reflected in the Fylde Coast (EDC) strategy. To assist in this work, PDSC appointed a Task and Finish Group to undertake a thorough review of economic development issues across the Borough.

He said that the work of the group had included an in depth review of economic issues including very extensive dialogue with public and private sector organisations and it was hoped that recommendations would be presented to Cabinet in the near future in this regard.

Part of the work was around a review of Town centre policy to advise on future direction for the Council in this regard, including a thorough review of policy and practice to date, the impact of government policy, and extensive dialogue with business groups and other organisations. Account had also been taken of the associated work of the Development Management Committee/Core Strategy Group which has been considering retail planning issues and in effect seeks to introduce more detailed proposals that go beyond general planning policies.

An extensive report had been presented on behalf of the Task and Finish Group to the PDSC committee at its meeting on 12 January 2012. The report presented a series of key recommendations that were debated, with the suggestions and additions of Committee now integrated fully into the actual recommendations.

A presentation followed, to give committee members some context, covering such issues as the history of the town centre regeneration programme followed by current, recent and planned activities. Town centre management was also covered, including public realm investments, dealing with absentee landlords, and creating a welcoming impression to the Fylde's town centres.

Mr Drinnan summarised and said that the management of town centres was an ongoing process and the recommendations presented to committee represented key principles that can be developed over time in the form of a single strategy with specific priorities, set within a framework that is achievable and realistic, showing a commitment to support of the economy of town centres as well as smaller centres.

Members had some questions and comments to make, and in particular reference was made to the proliferation of charity shops within town centres, which was not viewed as helpful to town centre economy. There were also observations made about the conflict between support for out of town planning applications, and the protection of town centres. The effectiveness of the Business Improvement Districts (BID) scheme was also challenged.

Members reviewed each of the recommendations contained within the report in turn, and either approved them or made some minor amendments. In addition they proposed 2 further recommendations (R18 & R19).

The recommendations are set out below:

- 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 and other centres and in doing so identifies the level of funding and its priorities for funding such interventions
- R6 That officers identify opportunities for external funding sources to support regeneration activity and advise the Council accordingly.
- R7 That the issue of town centre funding be fully embraced in the development of the LDF/CIL process, and that these locations be identified 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 centres so as to help prioritise actions.
- R11 That the Council supports in principle partnership working, and assists in the formation of a forum for each of the town centres where appropriate. Partnerships would include major stakeholders with an interest in the town centre, and the establishment of potential Business Improvement Districts (BID) could be considered by the partnership to support the economy of the town centre. The potential establishment of a core fund to maximize the use of available resources from partner organisations should be given further consideration.
- R12 That the Council supports in principle the development of Business Plans for the town centres, and as a potential partner, and will assist in the development of such partnership business plans. It will support and assist in the delivery of the plans commensurate with its own responsibilities and priorities. Issues for consideration within business plans could include 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 protects and enhances the vitality and viability of its town and other centres in its consideration of planning applications and other 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 centres/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 centres and continues to work closely with partners in respect of marketing, promotion and management.
- R18 That the Council supports the development of policy, powers and abilities, at the national level, to control the proliferation of charity shops with particular emphasis on the use of business rates, and that the council will lobby government to that end.
- R19 That the Council will seek to include any powers, policy and abilities to control the proliferation of charity shops in its future strategy mix relating to town centres.

The committee RESOLVED:

To approve each of the recommendations and to commend them to Cabinet for approval.

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