



MINUTES

Environment, Health and Housing Committee

Date:	Tuesday, 2 June 2020
Venue:	Remotely via Zoom
Committee Members Present:	Councillor Ben Aitken (Chairman) Councillor Viv Willder (Vice-Chairman) Councillors Frank Andrews, Paula Brearley, Noreen Griffiths, Peter Hardy, Will Harris, Gavin Harrison, Karen Henshaw, Roger Lloyd, Michelle Morris and Bobby Rigby.
Other Councillors Present	Councillor David O'Rourke
Officers Present:	Tracy Manning, Ian Curtis, Kathy Winstanley, Kirstine Riding and Katharine McDonnell

Public Platform

There were no speakers on this occasion.

1. Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that any disclosable pecuniary interests should be declared as required by the Localism Act 2011 and any personal or prejudicial interests should be declared as required by the Council's Code of Conduct for Members. No interests were declared on this occasion.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Environment, Health and Housing Committee meeting held on 17 March 2020 as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

3. Substitute Members

There were no substitutions on this occasion.

Decision Items

4. COVID 19 Impact Assessment and Recovery

Tracy Manning, Director of Resources provided an overview of the known and potential impact of the COVID 19 lockdown measures on the services and functions within the remit of the Environment, Health and Housing Committee. The report, considered by the committee, stated that the information was based on the data available and government policy in place at the time the report was written. Plans were being made across the council to revise budget forecasts and business plans in response to the changes brought about by the COVID 19 measures. Further reports would be published for the committee over the coming months to provide updates on the impact of COVID 19 measures as the nation moves out of lockdown through a phased approach.

Mrs Manning provided a comprehensive overview of the changes and challenges affecting the work of the Bereavement Services team. She advised that in accordance with national guidance, the number of mourners at services had had to be strictly limited to ten, and visitors to cemeteries only permitted to attend when services

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were not in progress. There had sadly been a substantial increase in the number of additional cremations on the same period last year. The financial impact on the services included an increase in overtime due to operating outside usual hours, the requirement for PPE and additional grave digging equipment. Increased revenue however has offset the additional costs.

Kathy Winstanley, Head of Health and Environment, provided an update on the impact of the pandemic on Environmental Health services. She advised that there had been an impact on every section of the department. In Environmental Protection, there had been an increase in the number of complaints across the board. Noise complaints had been at such a level that access to the, usually free to access, noise app had had to be restricted and prioritised. She advised there had been an increase in the incidents of fly tipping, as a consequence of an increase in the volume of household waste generated, coupled with the closure of the household waste recycling centre by Lancashire County Council. Linked to the increase in household waste, had been the increase in garden bonfires, which had generated neighbour complaints around smoke nuisance, at such a volume they too had needed to be prioritised.

Whilst, Mrs Winstanley reported, there had not been any major issues with Anti Social behaviour, enforcement capacity had been impacted. Fixed Penalty Notices were still being issued but PACE interviews had had to be put on hold.

She further advised that the emergency planning function for the council sits within Environmental Protection team so initially it had been very intensive for staff.

The Food Safety team's work had radically changed with face to face inspections and the Food Hygiene rating scheme both on hold. However a lot of advice had been provided to food establishments who were offering new takeaway services.

With the reopening of more shops on 15 June, the team would be providing advice to retailers on health and safety grounds. The recovery phase would be resource intensive for the team and a call had been put out to the wider council to provide additional staff to assist. Track and Trace would also have an impact as there would be a role for our officers but little clarity as yet.

For the licensing team there had been less demand as there were none of the usual events notices coming in, so some resources had been redeployed to support demand in other areas of the department. However a small number of licensing hearings had been undertaken remotely. There had also been a lot of enquiries from caravan site owners regarding opening or closure of sites and who was permitted to be on site. In regards to taxi licensing, 23 vehicle licence holders had chosen not to renew or had suspended their licences. Some had already indicated that they would not be returning to the trade. This would have an impact on the revenue of the licensing team and Fleet Management Services.

In regards to community safety there had been few incidents but one of the dog wardens had been physically assaulted by a member of the public. Support had also been given to the Housing Team to deal with rough sleepers and beggars.

Tracy Manning provided the committee with an overview regarding the Community Hub. She advised that local authorities had been directed to establish a humanitarian response to the health crisis, which led to the establishment of the community hub. The hub comprised a call centre, food distribution centre and volunteer coordination.

The call centre was manned by council officers whose substantive responsibilities had diminished due to the crisis. All Hub telephone staff were operating from home with telephone access. The principal aim was to reach all residents on the NHS Shielding List, but also those on the assisted bin collection list and council tax reduction list, as well as taking calls from residents ensuring they had access to food, support and a friendly voice.

The food distribution centre initially filled the gaps whilst the NHS food parcel delivery scheme bedded in. It also continues to support vulnerable residents and steps in when there have been interruptions in the NHS Delivery service. Mrs Manning advised there had been great partnership working and support from the Foodbanks and the YMCA, whose St Annes centre was used as the base for the food hub.

Volunteer coordination has been tremendous. When residents have requested shopping, dog walking, pharmacy collections, it has been the volunteer groups who have undertaken these jobs and they have been phenomenal.

For residents who are suffering through isolation, it is our staff who have done weekly calls, or those needing

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more support have been signposted through to the befriending service. Mrs Manning advised that the Hub had been inspected on numerous occasions and had been given a clean bill of health by the Lancashire Resilience Forum.

Kirstine Riding, Housing Services Manager, provided an overview of the work of the Housing Services Team. She advised that Affordable Housing delivery had continued as normal, but the Disabled Facilities Grants installations and applications were largely on hold due to restrictions on construction, and the number of applicants who have had to shield.

For homeless households specific requirements were put in place at the beginning of the lockdown period. She advised that the team, working with statutory partners, had removed seven rough sleepers from the streets, and rehoused them into B&Bs or supported housing.

Additionally Covid care and protect housing had to be identified for those who needed to self isolate or shield. This has been achieved with partners across both the Fylde coast and Lancashire. Miss Riding advised that in Fylde there was provision for both homeless accommodation and Covid protect accommodation in place.

The Chairman thanked officers for the comprehensive report. He commented that it had been a huge undertaking and that all the staff involved should be thanked.

His comments were echoed by the committee, with thanks also to the YMCA for their assistance and support.

Following a short debate, it was RESOLVED;

1. That the impact of the COVID 19 measures on functions within the remit of the committee were noted.
2. To thank all the staff involved and give thanks to the Fylde Coast YMCA for their assistance and support with the food aspect of the Community Hub.

(Councillor Harris left the meeting during the above item)

5. Procurement of Disabled Facilities Grant Equipment

Kirstine Riding, Housing Services Manager, introduced a report regarding the procurement of Disabled Facilities Grant equipment. She advised that Lancashire County Council (LCC) currently procured equipment for installation in the homes of Fylde residents through the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) process administered by Fylde Council. However following a decision by Lancashire County Council, the district councils were due to take over these responsibilities from 1 October 2020 where stairlifts and other lifting equipment were required for adults.

The report outlined the steps which were being taken to ensure that procurement could be completed and the new arrangements operational by the handover date.

It was RESOLVED:

1. The council work in partnership with Preston City Council to procure DFG equipment such as stairlifts and through floor lifts through the Northern Housing Consortium.
2. A further information report will be provided to this Committee updating on the arrangements that are in place for the procurement of equipment installed in the home of Fylde residents through the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG).

Information Items

6. Age UK Lancashire – Annual Report

The Committee received the 2019/20 annual report from Age UK Lancashire.

7. Reports of the various Outside Bodies

The Committee received information from representatives of the Outside Bodies.

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