



Meeting Agenda

**Policy & Service Review
Scrutiny Committee
Town Hall, Lytham St. Annes
15 February 2007, 7:00pm**

POLICY & SERVICE REVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

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VICE-CHAIRMAN

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Councillors

Stephen Carpenter

Elizabeth Oades

Maxine Chew

Dawn Prestwich

Elizabeth Clarkson

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CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

The Council's investment and activities are focused on achieving our five key objectives which aim to :

- Conserve, protect and enhance the quality of the Fylde natural and built environment
- Work with partners to help maintain safe communities in which individuals and businesses can thrive
- Stimulate strong economic prosperity and regeneration within a diverse and vibrant economic environment
- Improve access to good quality local housing and promote the health and wellbeing and equality of opportunity of all people in the Borough
- Ensure we are an efficient and effective council.

CORE VALUES

In striving to achieve these objectives we have adopted a number of key values which underpin everything we do :

- Provide equal access to services whether you live in town, village or countryside,
- Provide effective leadership for the community,
- Value our staff and create a 'can do' culture,
- Work effectively through partnerships,
- Strive to achieve 'more with less'.



A G E N D A

ITEM	PAGE
1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: <i>In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, members are 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.</i>	4
2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES: <i>To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Policy & Service Review Forum held on 14 December 2006 attached at the end of the agenda.</i>	4
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REPORT



REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEMOCRATIC AND MEMBER SERVICES BUSINESS UNIT	POLICY AND SERVICE REVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE		4

POLICY ON THE OPERATION OF THE MAYORALTY

Public Item

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

Summary - The attached draft policy document seeks to establish and set out in writing the framework in which the mayoralty operates in any given year. At present, other than guidance contained in the Constitution about the role and function of the Mayor, there is no written guidance to establish how the office will be administered in practical terms. The Mayoral Team have of course provided verbal guidance to each Mayor in advance of and throughout their mayoral years but written guidance would be useful to manage expectations of both members and officers and establish a better understanding of how the mayoral office and team works in practical terms.

Recommendation

1. To consider the draft Policy document on the Operation of the Mayoralty and make recommendations as requested in the report and any other recommendations that the Scrutiny Committee feels it pertinent.

Cabinet Portfolio

The item falls within the following Cabinet portfolio:

Portfolio Title: Corporate Performance and Development
Fazackerley

Councillor Sue

Report

Framework for the operation of the mayoralty

1. The Mayor provides a pivotal role within the local community and is the first citizen of the Borough. At the Annual Meeting of the Council held each year in May a new Mayor is appointed to serve for the forthcoming 12-month period.
2. In broad terms the role of the Mayor is established by the Council through its Constitution and is described as follows:

a) First Citizen

The Mayor has precedence in and is the first citizen of the Borough

b) Promotion of the Council

The Mayor promotes the Borough and the Council as a whole and acts as a focal point for the community

c) Ceremonial Matters

The Council is responsible for determining the civic and ceremonial duties that the Mayor is to carry out

d) Chairman of the Council

The Mayor presides over meetings of the Council

3. The attached document seeks to set out in writing the framework in which the mayoralty operates in any given year.
4. At present, other than guidance contained in the Constitution about the role and function of the Mayor, there is no written guidance to establish how the office will be administered in practical terms. The Mayoral Team have of course provided verbal guidance to each Mayor in advance of and throughout their mayoral years but written guidance would be useful to manage expectations of both members and officers and establish a better understanding of how the mayoral office and team works in practical terms. It also establishes policy in a number of areas, for example, how invitations to events should be ranked in order of importance.

Issues for scrutiny to consider

5. The attention of scrutiny members is drawn to two particular areas to consider.
6. The Constitution outlines the role of the Deputy *is to discharge the roles, functions and responsibilities if the Mayor is away*. On occasions, there is a need for the Deputy to discharge duties whilst the Mayor is in precedence, for example, during the Remembrance Sunday parades when parades take place simultaneously in differing towns. It is usual practice for the Mayor to attend one and the Deputy the other. An informal policy has evolved whereby if the Mayor has accepted an engagement and another is received, the latter engagement will be offered to the Deputy to attend, thus maximising the number of engagements attended throughout the mayoral year. Scrutiny members are requested to address if the role of the Deputy is as limited as outlined in the Constitution or is in fact more wide ranging and should be acknowledged

as thus. If members consider that the role is more wide ranging not only should the policy be amended to reflect this but there should also be a recommendation to amend the Constitution. If members take this route a recommendation on the form of transport to be used by the Deputy Mayor should also be considered. This would need to be considered in the context of a limited budget which would cover costs for the Deputy Mayor to use their own vehicle; for a taxi cab service to be utilised or for a chauffeur driven car to be hired (although if the latter option was selected the number of engagements would have to be limited to around 15 to remain within the proposed budget allocation for 2007/08).

7. The second issue is around the fundraising activity, which is undertaken. This is an extremely worthwhile and rewarding part of the mayoral year and has raised substantial amounts of money in recent years. Scrutiny members are requested to consider if the number of charity events supported by the mayoral team should be limitless or whether a number of larger or smaller events should be specified, thereby allowing for better planning of the workload within the team. There is a section on the issue of charity fundraising within the draft Policy which leaves the number of events for which assistance will be offered unpopulated and members may wish to make a suggestion as to an appropriate level of support for this in any given year.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	The budget for mayoral transport is affected by the number of engagements undertaken throughout the mayoral year and this should be balanced against the differing types of engagements attended
Legal	The Chairman of a Council with borough status automatically assumes the style of 'mayor'. However, the ceremonial functions and roles of the Mayor are a matter that can be decided and revised by the council concerned.
Community Safety	
Human Rights and Equalities	
Sustainability	
Health & Safety and Risk Management	The Risk Assessment undertaken with respect to the overnight housing of the mayoral car is an important risk management consideration and should be kept under regular review

Report Author	Tel	Date	Doc ID
Tracy Scholes	(01253) 658521	Date of report	

List of Background Papers

Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Policy on the operation of the mayoralty	22 November 2006	Town Hall Offices (attached to the agenda papers)

Attached documents

1. Policy on the operation of the mayoralty



Operation of the mayoralty

Title of Policy	Operation of the mayoralty
Purpose of Policy	A written policy encompassing procedure notes for the Mayor/Deputy Mayor and Mayoral Team to follow for each mayoral year
Date of Policy	December 2006
Policy Review Date	December 2008
Policy Author	Executive Manager, Democratic and Member Services and Mayoral Team

Introduction

This policy has been produced to set out procedures for the operation of the mayoralty.

Throughout the mayoral year, the mayoral support staff will aim to ensure that the Mayor and other Civic representatives receive suitable support and advice in order to undertake their year in office to the full and that the work undertaken benefits both the office of Mayor and the people of Fylde.

The Democratic and Member Support Business Unit, which is managed by Tracy Scholes, provide the support for the Mayoralty. The mayoral team is managed by Lyndsey Lacey, Senior Democratic Services Officer and comprises Anne McVittie, the Mayors Secretary/Democratic Services Officer (herein after referred to as Mayor's Secretary in the text for ease of purpose), Alan Blundell, Mayors Attendant/Driver and Jo Christensen, Casual Mayors Attendant/Driver. There is also a further casual Attendant/Driver employed on a contract basis

The mayoral team provides administrative support to the Mayor together with attendant services at engagements.

As soon as nomination for the mayor elect has been approved by Council, the mayoral staff will invite the Mayor-Elect, Mayoress\Consort-Elect, Deputy Mayor-Elect and Deputy Mayoress\Consort-Elect to an induction meeting. This is the chance for the team to outline the provisions of this policy to the Mayor and outline what support can be expected during the mayoral year.

1. Role and Functions of the Mayor

These are described in Article 5 of the Constitution as follows:

(a) First Citizen

The Mayor has precedence in and is the first citizen of the Borough

(b) Promotion of the Council

The Mayor promotes the Borough and the Council as a whole and acts as a focal point for the community

(c) Ceremonial Matters

The Council is responsible for determining the civic and ceremonial duties that the Mayor is to carry out.

(d) Chairman of the Council

The Mayor presides over meetings of the Council.

Within Fylde, the Mayor takes precedence over all others except the Queen and certain members of the Royal family. In addition H.M. Lord Lieutenant for the County and the current High Sheriff being, in the exercise of the Royal Prerogative, also enjoy precedence over the Mayor. On occasions of Royal visits to the Borough the purpose of which is not directly associated with the borough, H.M. the Queen, in exercise of the Royal Prerogative, has directed that the Chairman of the County Council and his/her partner, and the County Chief Executive and his/her partner be presented to the Royal Personage immediately before the Mayor and Mayoress. Where the purpose of a Royal visit is purely a municipal matter, the Mayor and Mayoress of the Borough will take precedence over any County Council representatives.

Formal introductions should be made as, "The Worshipful the Mayor of the Borough of Fylde". On less formal engagements the correct introduction is "the Mayor of Fylde" and when speaking to the Mayor, the correct form of address is "Mr Mayor", even if the Mayor is female.

2. Role and Functions of the Deputy Mayor

These are described in Article 5 of the Constitution as follows:

If the Mayor is away, the Deputy Mayor discharges the roles, functions and responsibilities of the Mayor.

The Deputy Mayor-Elect is chosen personally by the Mayor-Elect and acts in the Mayor's absence. He/she is not entitled to wear either the Mayoral Robes or the Mayor's Chain of Office but is provided with a Chain of office, which they will be responsible for during their year in office.

Protocol states that the Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayoress/Consort should not wear the chain of office when in the company of the Mayor, unless permission has been granted by the Mayor. This in practice is usually given at Civic functions hosted by the Mayor in the Town Hall.

3. Mayoress\Consort

The Mayor appoints the Mayoress or Consort personally and the Mayoress or Consort wears a chain of office when performing duties.

4. Mayor's Chaplain

The Mayor may appoint a Chaplain to provide spiritual support during the year of office. This includes opening Council meetings with a prayer, saying grace at Civic Dinners and planning and officiating at the Civic Sunday Service.

5. Impartiality

When performing his\her duties, the Mayor represents the whole of the Fylde community and should be seen to be impartial on matters, which might be considered controversial by some such as politics and religion.

6. Main Events in the Mayoral Calendar

(i) Annual Council Meeting\Mayor Making Ceremony

The Council will elect the Mayor, at each Annual Meeting of the Council, which usually takes place in May in Lowther Pavilion. Although this is a formal meeting of the Council, the primary purpose of the meeting is to appoint the Mayor and Deputy and as a consequence this meeting is often referred to as 'Mayor Making'.

As this is in main a ceremonial occasion, there is a wide invitation list to the event and hospitality is provided. In addition to all Councillors and partners, the following guests are invited: Honorary Aldermen, former Mayors, former Mayoress and consorts, MP and guest, County Councillors for the Fylde and guests, Parish and Town Council Chairpersons and guests, local organisations and businesses, Mayor's personal guests (up to 60), Deputy Mayors personal guests (up to 40), Chaplains (outgoing and incoming) and visitors from the twin town of Werne if this coincides with a visit to the Borough.

During the Annual General Meeting, arrangements will be made for the Halberds to be removed from the outgoing Mayor's home and they will be installed at the incoming Mayor's home.

The council finances the mayor making ceremony apart from any photographs which the Mayor Elect may wish to request which should be financed from the Mayor's Allowance.

(ii) Civic Sunday

The Civic Sunday Service and Parade is usually organised shortly after the Annual meeting. Administrative support will be provided for the organisation of this event by the Mayoral Team. However, as this is the Mayor's personal service, the content of which he/she should decide upon with the Mayor's Chaplain.

The Council finances Civic Sunday expenses.

(iii) Armistice Day - 11.00am - 11 November

Events to mark the 2 minutes silence on the 11th November will be arranged and will be attended by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor (in attendance at differing locations).

(iv) Remembrance Sunday and Parade – Second Sunday in November

Services will be held in the morning in Lytham and St Annes and will be attended by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. A Service will normally be held in the afternoon in Kirkham and will be attended by either the Mayor or the Deputy Mayor.

(v) Mayoress at Home

Date and venue to be determined by Mayoress and Mayor's Secretary (this event is paid for out of the Mayoral Allowance).

(vi) Royal Garden Party

The Mayor is able to choose in order of preference from three dates offered for the annual attendance at the Royal Garden Party, although he/she may not be offered his first choice.

The Mayoral Team will make travel arrangements to and from London for the Mayor and Mayoress/Consort through the most cost-effective means.

7. Chairing Council Meetings

As the person presiding at meetings of the Council, the Mayor has the following particular responsibilities. He/she is assisted by the Deputy Mayor:

- To uphold and promote the purposes of the Constitution and to interpret its provisions and give rulings on points of order as and when necessary
- To conduct the meetings of the Council in such a way that its business can be carried out efficiently and with regard to the rights of all Councillors and the interests of the community

- To ensure that the Council meeting can be a forum for the debate of matters of concern to the local community and a place at which Councillors who are not members of the Executive Cabinet are able to hold the Cabinet to account.

8. Official engagements

A wide variety of invitations will be received during each year and, due to volume, it is inevitable that some must be declined. It is therefore of paramount importance that engagements should be prioritised where possible.

An official engagement is one for which the Mayor's Secretary has received an official invitation from the host of the function. There should be a role for the Mayor to perform and it must be in keeping with the dignity of the office. Invitations made to the Mayor in person either written or oral must not be accepted; instead the invitation must be made in writing to the Mayor's Secretary. The Mayor must not solicit invitations to events, as this would undermine the dignity of the office.

The Mayor's Secretary will regularly update and issue the Mayoral Calendar, which lists all the engagements accepted during the Mayoralty.

It is preferable that the Mayor should leave in advance of the last guests at any event. However protocol dictates the Mayor should not leave a dinner, except by arrangement, before the toast to the guests has been proposed and responded to. When an engagement is accepted, a conclusion time for the event is indicated on the engagement form. Recognition needs to be taken of the Working Time Directive, which stipulates there should be no continuous working in excess of six hours and this is applicable to the Attendant/Driver.

Taking into account the level of invitations received there needs to be agreed guidance on the value or quality of different types of engagements.

The National Association of Civic Officers has undertaken research into this subject, and has produced a set of performance indicators relating to each engagement attended. They have concluded that every invitation received must fall within one of seven major types of activity: -

- **Social** – work colleagues, fellow councillors etc.
- **Community** – attending events such as local amateur dramatics, sports clubs, church group's etc.
- **Promoting** – Council initiatives, tourism etc.
- **Civic Hosting** – Receptions, buffets dinners in connection with community and promoting.
- **Charities** – fundraising events
- **Civic Circuit** – visiting other authorities, Civic services, Balls, tours etc.
- **Council/Ceremonial** – Charing Council Meetings, Remembrance Sunday, Civic Sunday etc.

These broad headings can be broken into smaller units without altering the meaning of them.

The National Association of Civic Officers suggest that the list is placed in the following order of priority and the Council endorses that each engagement should be scored as indicated. The engagements scoring the highest are those supporting the community leadership and promotion, thereby contributing to raising the reputation of the council or which are community and corporate plan objectives. If two invitations are received for the same date and time, priority should be given to the one scoring the highest in terms of the ranking (obviously this would not be possible if one had been received far in advance of another and already accepted). The Mayors Secretary will give guidance in these circumstances.

• Civic Circuit	1
• Social	1.5
• Charities	2
• Council/Ceremonial	3
• Civic Hosting	3
• Community	5
• Promoting	5

9. Late engagements

Invitations to events or functions are normally received well in advance. This allows the Mayor, his/her support staff and the wider Business Unit to properly plan and organise the Mayor's time and provides a proper framework for the operation of the mayoral office.

If an invitation for an engagement is received less than seven working days prior to the event it will not be considered, unless the Mayor's Secretary perceives that the engagement is of major importance to the Borough, as the Mayor is entitled to expect that event organisers will extend him/her the courtesy of allowing for adequate time to be allocated and for staffing arrangements to be made.

10. Mayoral Charities

During the year in office the Mayor may wish to raise funds, and organise fund raising events in aid of nominated charities.

Although charity fundraising is not one of the Council's Corporate Objectives it is a worthwhile activity, but should be kept in context. As a consequence, the Mayoral Team will give assistance with the organisation of a number of larger and smaller events throughout the mayoral year. However, a limit on charity events is necessary to allow the Mayor's Secretary to perform other activities, which form part of her Job Description.

At the earliest opportunity the Mayor Elect should seek a meeting with his/her nominated charities (in particular if these are local charities) and seek their support in organising any additional charity events, which might be sought outside the support offered by the Mayoral Team. The Mayoral Ball is usually the largest event of the fund raising year and the date and venue are determined by the Mayor and Secretary at an early date.

11. Mayor's Official Photograph for Members' Room

Shortly after the Annual Council Meeting, arrangements will be made by the Mayor's Secretary for a local photographer to come into the Town Hall for a photo-sitting in the Mayoral robes for the Mayor to select the official Mayoral portrait.

The Council will finance the cost of the official photograph.

12. Official Photograph of Council

If the Mayor wishes to have an official photograph of Council during his Mayoralty, the Mayor's Secretary will arrange for a local photographer to take one. Copies will be available for the Mayor and Councillors to purchase from the photographer.

13. Biography

The Mayor-Elect and Deputy Mayor-Elect are requested to forward biographical details to the Mayor's Secretary as soon as possible after the confirmation of their appointment. Brief details of the Mayoress and Deputy Mayoress\Consort would also be useful. These will be shown on the Council's website and circulated to the Press.

14. Chains of Office and Robes

The Chains of office should be worn at all official engagements within the Borough and for all full Council Meetings. The Mayor's Attendant is responsible for the maintenance and security of the Chains of office worn by the Mayor and Mayoress/Consort. The Chains of Office are to be stored in a safe place as agreed by the Executive Manager taking on the requirements of the Council's insurers.

When attending an engagement outside the Borough of Fylde permission to wear the Chains of Office must be sought from the Mayor (Mayor's Office) of the area to be visited. The mayoral team will seek this permission prior to the visit. There is however, an agreement between the Boroughs of Fylde, Blackpool and Wyre that the Mayor of one of these Boroughs has automatic permission to wear the Chain of office in either of the neighbouring Boroughs. The chains should not be taken on engagements where their security could be put at risk, for example, trips abroad or far afield when unaccompanied by the Attendant/Driver.

The Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayoress/Consort will be responsible for their own chains of office during their year in office.

The Robes may be worn at all Council Meetings and at all functions where the Mace is carried, e.g. Civic Sunday, Remembrance Sunday Services. There may be occasions when the Mayor is asked specifically to wear the Robes, i.e. a visit to the Town Hall from a school etc. The Mayor always has discretion whether or not to wear the Mayoral robes on any of these occasions.

15. Mayoral Car

The Council will provide a chauffeur-driven mayoral car for the use of the Mayor and Mayoress for all official engagements. The Mayor's Attendant will drive the car and act as chauffeur. This car is also for the use of the Deputy Mayor in the absence of the Mayor.

On the occasions where both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are in attendance at separate events, such as Remembrance Sunday, a suitable chauffeur driven car will also be provided for the Deputy Mayor.

Attending the Queen's Garden Party at Buckingham Palace is the exception to this arrangement as outlined earlier in this document.

The mayoral car is for use on official engagements and care must be taken not to allow inappropriate use of the vehicle. However, when attending an official engagement, the Mayor, at his/her discretion, may offer use of the car to another person attending the engagement.

The Attendant is responsible for the daily cleaning and checks of the vehicle. He/she will ensure that the car at all times reflects the highest standards of cleanliness to the bodywork and interior.

The Mayoral car may, subject to relevant regulations, display the Borough coat of arms pennant when on official engagements within the Borough. The pennant must never be displayed unless the Mayor is present in the vehicle and must be removed as soon as the Mayor leaves the vehicle. It would be correct to display the pennant for the Deputy Mayor when deputising in the absence of the Mayor.

The overnight location/storage of the Mayoral car is determined by a Risk Assessment which takes into account the safety of the Driver/Attendant balanced against the security of the car. This Risk Assessment is the responsibility of the Executive Manager and must be adhered to. If there is an opportunity to house the mayoral car at the Mayor's home during the mayoral year, this should be raised prior to the commencement of the mayoral year to allow for a Risk Assessment to be carried out and the location agreed by the Executive Manager.

16. Mayor's Parlour

The Mayor's Parlour in the Town Hall is for the official sole use of the Mayor during his/her year in office. It is used for providing hospitality to the Mayor's guests, and for official meetings and briefings at which the Mayor is present. Meetings with the Mayor's Secretary will take place in the Parlour. Before the Parlour is used by any other person or for any other purpose, permission must be sought from the Mayoral Team.

In the absence of the Mayor, the Mayor's Parlour will be locked at all times.

17. Mayor's Attendant

The Attendant has a duty of care for the Mayor's wellbeing at all times.

The Attendant will be available to accompany the Mayor (or Deputy if he/she is deputising for the Mayor) on all official engagements and will be responsible for the security of the Mayoral Chains of Office at all times. The only exception to this would be whilst attending the Queen's Garden Party at Buckingham Palace when the Attendant is not admitted to the Palace grounds.

The Attendant will maintain at all times, whilst on duty, a clean and smart appearance. He/she will be well mannered and courteous but prepared to be firm, and intervene when the situation demands.

The duties of the Attendant are many and varied, but in broad terms it is the responsibility of the Attendant to ensure that the Mayor arrives punctually at engagements. While at the function the Attendant will ensure that the Mayor is formally introduced to the host and afforded the appropriate precedence. The Attendant will then be on hand to advise on matters of protocol and tradition and will undertake any other duties, which may arise, within the parameters of his/her role, including taking photographs at engagements.

The Attendant is also the Borough Mace-Bearer and will precede the Mayor on all appropriate ceremonial occasions.

18. Mayor's Secretary/Democratic Services Officer

The Mayor's Secretary provides administrative support to the Mayor. This includes dealing with all incoming and outgoing mail, organising the diary, producing mayoral itineraries and submitting press releases. The Mayor's Secretary is part of the wider Democratic and Member Services Team and the Mayor is asked to respect that her duties extend beyond that of purely dealing with mayoral administration.

The Mayor's Secretary will also undertake duties outlined in association with the Mayor's Charities which will include raising sponsorship, banking cash and administering the Mayors charity accounts.

The Mayor's Secretary will discuss with the Mayor all new invitations received each week through a means convenient to the Mayor (for example, telephone or face-to-face meeting). A time will be arranged for this meeting each week and this meeting is held in the Mayor's Parlour. The Mayor's Secretary will offer advice on the suitability and priority of all invitations in line with this Policy.

In addition, the Mayor's Secretary will organise the main civic events, which were outlined earlier in this document.

The Mayor's Secretary will work predominantly office hours.

19. Speeches

Whilst every effort is made to ensure that the Mayor is advised when a speech is required at an engagement (the Mayoral Engagement form should indicate this), there are occasions when the Mayor is called upon to say a few 'impromptu' words. It is therefore important that the background information available has been read beforehand.

20. Mayoral Allowances

Both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are provided with an allowance each year to support their year in mayoral office. This increases each year with inflation. This is supplemental to the standard member's allowance which they receive as a member of the Council. This budget is provided each year through the budget setting process.

The Mayor's Secretary will provide guidance on what the allowance should be used for. Examples of how this money is expended include clothing purchases, hospitality at events such as cocktail parties and photographer for the annual meeting.

In addition to this, the Mayor's Secretary is budget holder for other areas, which support the mayoralty, such as transport costs for the mayoralty. Whilst the Mayor is not directly responsible for these budgets there is an expectation that the Mayor's Secretary will update the Mayor on the spend against these budgets and the Mayor will act within the parameters of these budgets. The Mayor's Secretary will run through these budgets with the Mayor at the commencement of the mayoral year and will periodically report on these budgets to the Mayor through the briefing meeting process.

21. Website

The Council's website contains pages for the Mayor. These normally carry the Mayor's biography, photograph, weekly engagements and links to the Mayor's charities. The Mayor may also use his pages as an on-line journal of his activities and impressions during his year in office. The Mayor's Secretary will ensure that any material is posted on the website

REPORT



REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
TECHNICAL SERVICES MANAGER - STREETSCENE	POLICY AND SERVICE REVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	15 TH FEBRUARY 2007	5

FYLDE CAR PARK STRATEGY – 2 YEAR REVIEW

Public Item

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

Summary

This report has been prepared in order to commence a 2 yearly review of the Council's car park strategy. The Strategy was adopted in 2005 and agreement was reached at that time to review it every two years or sooner as appropriate.

Recommendation

1. That a task group of Officers and Members be established to examine in detail the Council's car park strategy.
2. That the task group be asked to report back to the Committee with its findings and recommendations for policy change as necessary.

Cabinet Portfolio

The item falls within the following Cabinet portfolio:

Streetscene - Councillor Tim Ashton

REPORT

- 1.0 Members will be aware that the Council adopted a car park strategy in 2005. A copy of the strategy is included at Appendix A along with details of the the current tariff and operating hours. A review of the policy is now due to test the appropriateness of the policies within the Strategy.
- 2.0 The Council has responsibility for managing and providing enforcement for 22 car parks with a total of approximately 1750 spaces. The Council also manages on street enforcement under the Parkwise scheme through an agency arrangement with Lancashire County Council. This arrangement is not under review, however, there will be opportunity to scrutinise enforcement protocols within the Councils own car parks as part of this process.
- 3.0 This review will also not examine the introduction of charges into any other car parks within the Borough, moreover, will focus attention into the existing pay and display car parks and their associated tariffs and operation.
- 4.0 Members are asked to note the scale of the parking service provided by the Council and to aid this some basic statistics are attached for information as follows.

Car Parks

Pay and Display tickets purchased 05/06	325,298 tickets
Total Customers	In excess of 1.5 million
Car Park Income 05/06	£415,000
Forecast for 06/07 is 2% increase on 05/06 income	
Permits issued	432
Permit Income	£17,115
Penalty Charge Notices Issued	4100 (0.01% of all customers)
Penalty Charge Notices Cancelled	1889 (23% of total issued)

- 5.0 There are a number of specific areas that require closer examination as part of this review and it is expected that these will set the focus for the proposed task group. The areas requiring particular attention are as follows –

- 5.1 Operational hours and evening charges

- 5.2 Parking Fees and 07/08 budget position

5.3 Disabled parking provision and charges

5.4 Long stay option in short stay car parks

5.5 Enforcement protocol within the car parks

6.0 Members of this Committee are asked to highlight any other specific areas they feel require scrutiny attention as part of this review process.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	
Legal	
Community Safety	
Human Rights and Equalities	
Sustainability	
Health & Safety and Risk Management	

Report Author	Tel	Date	Doc ID
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List of Background Papers		
Name of document	Date	Location
FYLDE CAR PARK STRATEGY	JUNE 2005	COUNCIL OFFICES STREETSCENE

ATTACHED DOCUMENTS

1. FYLDE CAR PARK STRATEGY
2. CAR PARK TARIFF

Location	Free or P&D	No of spaces	Long stay / short stay	Disabled spaces	Cycle / Motorcycle provision	Coach Parking	Tariff	Maximum Stay / No Return Period	CCTV (camera's are rotated between sites)	Lighting	Etc. etc.
Stannerbank	P&D	150	Long	6	No	No	All days 8am - 8pm Up to 2hrs £1.20 2-3hrs £1.80 3-4hrs £2.40 Over 4hrs £3.00	over 4 hours with valid P&D ticket / No Return within 1 Hour	No	No	Public Toilets & Icecream shop
Lytham Green - Dicconson Terrace	P&D	49	Long	2	No	No	All days 8am - 8pm Up to 2hrs £1.20 2-3hrs £1.80 3-4hrs £2.40 Over 4hrs £3.00	over 4 hours with valid P&D ticket / No Return within 1 Hour	No	Yes	
Lytham Green - Bath Street	P&D	51	Long	2	No	No	All days 8am - 8pm Up to 2hrs £1.20 2-3hrs £1.80 3-4hrs £2.40 Over 4hrs £3.00	over 4 hours with valid P&D ticket / No Return within 1 Hour	No	Yes	
Lytham Station	P&D	96	Long	4	No	No	All days 8am - 8pm Up to 2hrs £1.20 2-4hrs £1.80 Over 4hrs £2.40	over 4 hours with valid P&D ticket / No Return within 1 Hour	Yes	Yes	PERMIT PARKING £150.00 p.a.
Pleasant Street	P&D	119	Short	9	No	No	All days 8am - 8pm Up to 1hrs £1.00 1-2hrs £1.70 2-3hrs £3.00	3 hours with valid P&D ticket / No Return within 2 Hours	Yes	Yes	Public Toilets
St Pauls Avenue	P&D	100	Long	4	No	No	All days 8am - 8pm Up to 2hrs £1.20 2-3hrs £1.80 3-4hrs £2.40 Over 4hrs £3.00	over 4 hours with valid P&D ticket / No Return within 1 Hour	No	Yes	
North Beach	P&D	150	Long	0	No	No	All days 8am - 8pm Up to 2hrs £1.20 2-3hrs £1.80 3-4hrs £2.40 Over 4hrs £3.00	over 4 hours with valid P&D ticket / No Return within 1 Hour	No	No	
North Promenade	P&D	220	Long	6	No	No	All days 8am - 8pm Up to 2hrs £1.20 2-3hrs £1.80 3-4hrs £2.40 Over 4hrs £3.00	over 4 hours with valid P&D ticket / No Return within 1 Hour	No	Yes	
St Annes Swimming Pool	P&D	84	Long	4	Yes	No	All days 8am - 8pm Up to 2hrs £1.20 2-3hrs £1.80 3-4hrs £2.40 Over 4hrs £3.00	over 4 hours with valid P&D ticket / No Return within 1 Hour	No	Yes	
St Annes Square	P&D	35	Short	4	Cycle	No	All days 8am - 8pm Up to 1hrs £1.00 1-2hrs £1.70 2-3hrs £3.00	3 hours with valid P&D ticket / No Return within 2 Hours	Yes	Yes	
Town Hall	P&D	55	Long	2	Cycle	No	Saturday - Sunday & Bank Holidays 8am - 8pm Up to 2hrs £1.20 2-3hrs £1.80 3-4hrs £2.40 Over 4hrs £3.00	over 4 hours with valid P&D ticket / No Return within 1 Hour	No	No	
Public Offices	P&D	50	Long	2	No	No	Saturday - Sunday & Bank Holidays 8am - 8pm Up to 2hrs £1.20 2-3hrs £1.80 3-4hrs £2.40 Over 4hrs £3.00	over 4 hours with valid P&D ticket / No Return within 1 Hour	No	No	
Wood Street	P&D	16	Short	3	Yes 2 Motorcycle bays	No	All days 8am - 8pm Up to 1hrs £1.00 1-2hrs £1.70 2-3hrs £3.00	3 hours with valid P&D ticket / No Return within 2 Hours	No	No	
Fairhaven Road	P&D	100 P&D 33 Café	Long	4	No	7	All days 8am - 8pm Up to 2hrs £1.20 2-3hrs £1.80 3-4hrs £2.40 Over 4hrs £3.00 Coaches Free	over 4 hours with valid P&D ticket / No Return within 1 Hour	Yes	Yes	Public Toilets, Coach Parking
Mill Street	Free	105	Long	4	No	No	-		No	No	
Eagles Court	Free	16	Short	0	No	No	All days 8am - 8pm Free Parking	2 Hours / No Return within 2 Hours	No	No	Public Toilets
Orders Lane	Free	20	Short	0	No	No	All days 8am - 8pm Free Parking	2 Hours / No Return within 2 Hours	No	No	
Toms Croft	Free	75	Long	0	No	No	-		No	Yes	
Kirkham Baths	Free	25	Long	0	Cycle	No	-		No	No	
St Albans Road	Free	14	Short	0	No	No	All days 8am - 8pm Free Parking	2 Hours / No Return within 2 Hours	No	No	
Lowther Gardens	Free	50	Long	2	Cycle	No	-		No	Partial	Public Toilets
Wesham Offices	Free	30	Long	3	Cycle & Motorcycle	No	-		No	Partial	

Fylde Car Park Strategy

Streetscene Unit – Technical Services Section



Streetscene Unit - Technical Services Section

Fylde Car Park Strategy

15th June 2005

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Appendices

Appendix A	Car Park Schedule
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Fylde Borough Council (FBC) has responsibility for managing 22 car parks with a total of approx. 1750 spaces. The Council does not presently have a car park strategy and this document is intended to fill the void.

1.2 Parking space is becoming more and more of a scarce commodity and the Council has to have clear policy on how to manage the limited parking space under its control. As demand for this limited parking space increases, it becomes more important, to have a formal statement on policy to identify what the Council wants from its car parks and how this service is best delivered. This is particularly important where national and regional policies dictate that more sustainable travel choices should be actively encouraged and promoted in favour of trips made by car. This strategy acknowledges these transport objectives.

1.3 The production of this Strategy is an integral part of the planning and development control process that is covered by the Lancashire Structure Plan, Fylde Local Plan and by the Lancashire County Council Local Transport Plan. The Strategy also considers Planning Policy Guidance 13 (PPG13) which covers town centres, parking provision and transport. This Strategy aims to support and compliment the planning guidance offered as part of the development control process. The planning process is already well documented in terms parking policy and will, therefore, remain outside the scope of this specific Car Park Strategy. Reference should be made to these documents for guidance on parking control as part of any new or proposed development.

1.4 FBC is not responsible for on-street parking provision as this is within the remit of Lancashire County Council, as the highway authority and traffic manager for the area. This Strategy only reflects the parking responsibilities and desires of FBC in terms of its off street car park provision and what it hopes to achieve by managing the space within its car parks.

1.5 This Strategy acknowledges, however, that since September 2004 FBC has been responsible for both on and off street parking enforcement under the Decriminalised Parking Enforcement powers. These powers do offer the Council a certain degree of traffic management responsibility in terms of parking enforcement which are exercised through an agency arrangement with Lancashire County Council. The responsibility is purely one of enforcement and not one of on street parking provision.

1.6 A schedule of the Council's car parks and their characteristics is appended.

2.0 Strategy - Aims and Objectives

2.1 In developing a Strategy, a clear hierarchy of Aims, Objectives, Policies and Proposals has been identified.

2.2 The aims are what the Strategy seeks to achieve. The aims are developed further as objectives of the Strategy, which in turn are translated into policies that the proposals will deliver.

2.3 The future of the town centres, the tourist attractions of St Annes and Lytham and the issue of sustainable transport provide the strategic context for and demonstrate the need for a coherent and realistic off street parking Strategy. The provision of car parking is not an end in itself and hence the Strategy must recognise -

- The needs of town centres as places to live, work, visit and shop
- That much of the Fylde is rural and the use of the car is often the only means of transport to the town centres
- The large number of visitors to St Annes and Lytham, both to shop and to access the tourist attractions

3.0 Aims of the Service

The parking Strategy sets out three main aims of the service which are then developed into a series of more detailed objectives.

Aim 1

To provide the residents, shoppers, visitors and commuters with a range of safe, secure, attractive and affordable car parks in a sustainable manner. This provision should be in line with national and regional integrated transport objectives set to address the environment, accessibility, safety, economy and congestion.

Aim 2

To ensure that parking is provided for cars, private hire coaches, bicycles and motorcycles, and is suitable in terms of the number of spaces, the locations and the quality of the facilities.

Aim 3

To provide a set of policies that will enable the Council to manage the parking facilities in such a way that the viability and vitality of the town centres and tourist attractions within Fylde are maintained for its residents, shoppers and visitors alike.

4.0 Objectives

- 4.1 To provide a parking service whose operating, maintenance and improvement costs are covered by the revenue that is generated and which also contributes to the Council's budget.
- 4.2 To provide short stay customer and visitor parking in central areas in support of town centre businesses.
- 4.3 To provide, where required, long stay parking for commuters and visitors in car parks on the periphery of town centres and at tourist attractions.
- 4.4 To ensure an adequate level of designated parking space is available for disabled badge holders within the car parks.
- 4.5 To provide accessible, welcoming and clearly signed car parks where appropriate information is easily available.
- 4.6 To provide parking facilities that are safe and secure to use.
- 4.7 To provide clear signage to the car parks from the local highway network to indicate short or long stay options and number of spaces.
- 4.8 To allocate funding to allow a regular maintenance, cleansing and improvement programme to ensure those Objectives 4.1 – 4.7 are achieved.
- 4.9 To maintain a charging structure which is competitive with that in other local towns outside the Borough and which retains the attractiveness of the town centres as locations for shopping and employment. The Council will aim set charges that will not discourage the use of local facilities or disadvantage local business in order that the vitality and viability of the area is maintained and improved wherever possible.
- 4.10 To consider the future level of short and long stay parking provision in the light of alternative modes of transport.
- 4.11 To ensure that, where practicable, motorcycle parking facilities are provided.
- 4.12 To ensure that, where practicable, cycle parking facilities are provided.
- 4.13 To help identify locations in or near the town centres for use as coach drop off/pick up points for use by private hire coach companies and to identify locations for coach parking.
- 4.14 To consult with the community on the off street parking needs of the Borough.
- 4.15 To manage, in partnership with Lancashire County Council, the parking enforcement service, for both on and off street parking, under the powers granted through the Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement (DPE).

4.16 To restrict the issuing of parking permits for the Council's short stay car parks in favour of the designated long stay car parks.

4.17 To monitor the performance of the car parks in terms of usage and income generation.

4.18 To allow the car parks to be used for charity or public information displays and commercial events, subject to adequate agreements being in place.

4.19 To restrict and prevent inappropriate use of the Council's car parks.

5.0 Policies

5.1 The demand for and the supply of parking spaces.

PP1 The demand for and the supply of car park spaces will be kept under review. New car park spaces will only be provided when there is a recognised shortage of spaces in the locality concerned.

5.2 Short Stay Parking (Objective 4.2)

PP2 Preference will be given to short stay parking in town centres by imposing maximum lengths of stay where necessary and by introducing tariffs to reflect the desired use.

5.3 Long Stay Parking (Objective 4.3)

PP3 Long stay parking will be located on the periphery of town centres and at tourist attractions.

5.4 Parking Tariffs

5.4.1 Parking tariffs are a central issue to the parking operation: as a source of dissatisfaction to a proportion of people that have to pay them; those who consider that they impede trade; as a source of revenue; and as a potential traffic and transportation management tool.

5.4.2 Objective 4.1 of this Strategy refers to securing sufficient income to cover the operational costs and to fund improvements.

5.4.3 Objective 4.9 of this Strategy seeks to establish a charging structure for parking that will maintain the competitiveness and attractiveness of the town centres. The revenue generated will also provide the funding for the maintenance programme identified in Objective 4.8. Objective 4.14 identifies the need to consult with the Community, so that the tariffs are viewed with less resentment than might otherwise be the case.

PP4 A competitive tariff structure will be maintained for all car parks serving the town centres and tourist attractions. Tariffs will be reviewed at least every two years on consideration of –

- the need to maintain the vitality and viability of town centres and tourist attractions.
- the need to maximise the benefits of available car park space.
- the patterns of usage and turnover of spaces at each location.
- existing tariff rates.
- the need to fund maintenance and improvement works.
- the need to consider residents.

The issuing and cost of parking permits will be kept under review. Further issuing of permits in premium town centre car parks will be discontinued in favour of issuing permits in long stay car parks.

5.5 Parking for Disabled Person Vehicles (Objective 4.4)

5.5.1 There are 60 spaces in the Council's car parks designated for blue badge holders. This represents an average of 3.5% of the parking spaces available in all these car parks. LCC mobility guidelines recommend that in town centre (short stay) car parks 6% of spaces be reserved for blue badge holders. The Council presently provides approximately 10% of spaces in short stay/town centre car parks for disabled users.

5.5.2 It is considered that the current level of short stay/town centre provision is adequate and generally satisfies the demand.

5.5.3 It is considered fair to maintain a policy of charging disabled badge holders when parked outside one of the designated disabled parking bays.

PP5 The provision of disabled badge holder parking in the car parks will be maintained in terms of number of spaces unless it can be demonstrated that -

- **there is a shortage of spaces for badge holders and additional spaces can be identified; or**
- **there is a surplus of spaces for badge holders and an appropriate number can be reallocated for other uses.**

5.6 Safety and Security (Objective 4.6)

5.6.1 An important consideration in influencing peoples views of a car park and whether it is a place they will continue to visit, is whether they feel safe for themselves and their vehicle. Factors relevant to safety and security include lighting, visibility, layout, accessibility and security barriers.

PP6 The issues of personal safety and vehicle security at car parks will be a priority. Measures will include –

- **High quality lighting**
- **Minimising obstruction of sight lines for motorists and pedestrians**
- **Regulating arrangements for pedestrian and vehicle access**
- **Regular patrols and enforcement by Parking Attendants**

5.7 Signage of Car Parks (Objective 4.7)

5.7.1 Clear signage will reflect the use of all car parks in town centres and tourist attractions. Such signage, with details of the number of spaces and the length of stay, can reduce motorist's length of search for parking, thereby avoiding excessive traffic movement and congestion.

PP7 A comprehensive and clear system of signing to all car parks will be reviewed and implemented to identify directions, number of spaces and long or short stay options.

5.8 Motorcycle Parking (Objective 4.11)

5.8.1 Secure motorcycle parking is presently available in St Annes. Provision is due to be made in Lytham and Kirkham in 2005/06. The Council will investigate further locations in consultation with motorcyclist's organisations.

PP8 The Council will work in partnership with motorcyclist's organisations to provide facilities for motorcycle parking.

5.9 Cycle Parking (Objective 4.12)

5.9.1 In order to encourage cycling as a sustainable form of transport, the Council will be producing a cycling strategy during 2005/06, which will include policies on cycle parking provision.

PP9 The Council will continue to fund and install cycle parking facilities in strategic locations in town centres and tourist attractions

5.10 Coach Parking (Objective 4.13)

5.10.1 Tourism is a major part of the economies of the towns in Fylde served by many national, regional and local coach companies. Demand for spaces will vary throughout the year and provision will continue to be made available where there is a sufficient demand.

PP10 To identify appropriate locations for long stay parking for coaches.

5.11 Improvement and Maintenance of Parking Infrastructure

5.11.1 A major determining factor in people's experience of visiting the towns of Fylde is the quality of the environment. The first place those visitors often see and experience once they leave their car is the car park. Consequently, the quality of the parking infrastructure is important and should create a good first impression to those visitors.

5.11.2 Financially, the Council is limited in what it can achieve and how quickly it can be achieved. It is important, however, that a good standard of parking is achieved and maintained. There has been minimal investment made in the Council's car parks for many years and most now require significant capital investment. A programme of works will be identified with a view to securing future funding for improvements.

5.11.3 Prior to implementing significant improvement or maintenance of any car park a scheme will be designed, in conjunction with the Council's Regeneration Unit, in order to achieve the best possible efficient layout, landscaping and integration within its surrounding area.

5.11.3 The pay and display equipment in all the Council's car parks has been replaced in January 2005 and is now linked to a central computer to enable real time detailed car park monitoring.

PP11 The parking infrastructure will be improved and maintained to a high standard to encourage their use and to ensure that the car parks are welcoming locations at which to park.

5.12 Enforcement (Objective 4.15)

5.12.1 The Council is responsible for parking enforcement for both on and off street. The on street powers are operated through agency arrangements with Lancashire County Council.

5.12.2 The enforcement contractor will maintain a high level of enforcement and uniformed presence in the Council's car parks. This will offer advantages in terms of safety and security for the customers and also provide enforcement of car park regulations.

PP12 The Council will continue to manage the enforcement of parking regulations both on and off street in a positive, consistent and transparent manner.

5.13 Use of the Car Parks (Objective 4.18)

5.13.1 The car parks are used for various events, displays, markets and public information exercises throughout the year subject to appropriate risk assessments, insurances and agreements being in place.

PP13 The Council will consider the use of the car parks for various events, displays, markets and public information exercises subject to adequate agreements being in place and the payment of an appropriate fee for their use.

5.14 Safety and Security (Objective 4.19)

5.14.1 The Council's car parks are not protected in any way from unauthorised use or occupation. It is proposed that when a funds become available some of the car parks be protected by the use of height restriction barriers to prevent unauthorised access or occupation. These barriers would remain open throughout the year except when there is a threat of an anticipated occupation.

PP14 To introduce height restriction barriers to car parks to prevent unauthorised vehicular access.

5.15 Leisure Pass/Car Park Concession Scheme

- 5.15.1 The Council is exploring the feasibility of introducing a leisure pass scheme for residents of the Borough which it is anticipated will allow a concession within the Councils car parks for a period of limited free parking.

PP15 To examine the feasibility of a resident concessionary parking scheme in conjunction with the proposed introduction of a Council leisure pass.

6.0 Implementation

- 6.1 Within the policy context established in the preceding section a number of initial proposals can be identified at this stage for implementation during the financial year 2005/06.

- PP5 Parking for Disabled Person Vehicles

Additional Disabled bays to be provided at Fairhaven Lake (café) car park

Additional bay to be provided at Wood Street car park, St Annes

- PP6 Safety and Security

CCTV and lighting improvements - Pleasant Street Car Park, Lytham

CCTV and lighting improvements - Fairhaven Road Car Park, St Annes

- PP11 Maintenance and Improvement

Pay and Display – Town Hall and Public Offices car parks (weekends only)

Resurfacing Improvements – Lytham Green car parks

Remarking and Safety Improvements – Toms Croft Car Park, Freckleton

Demolition of garages and creation of new parking spaces – Pleasant Street Car Park

- PP7 Signage

Review of Lytham Town Centre car park signage

Renewal of internal signage in all pay and display car parks

One Stop Shop, St Annes – signage and marking out

Remarking and signage to Orders Lane Car Park

- PP12 Enforcement

Extended to cover Town Hall and Public Offices

- 6.2 Ongoing policy implementation will be dependent on resources and budgets being made available on an annual basis. Other external revenue streams will be explored to secure funding to assist implementation of the policy where possible.

7.0

Monitoring and Review

The Fylde car park strategy will not remain static but will evolve to keep pace with changes in Government policy and with changes in demand. This Strategy has a set of core Aims, Objectives and Policies from which the detailed proposals to be implemented will emerge. As a result, there will be a need for ongoing monitoring and review.

REPORT



REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
CONSUMER WELLBEING & PROTECTION UNIT	POLICY & SERVICE REVIEW SCUTINY COMMITTEE	15 FEBRUARY 2007	6

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING POLICY

Public Item

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

Summary

The revised Private Sector Housing Policy sets out the Council's approach to improving private sector housing conditions in the Borough. It introduces the use of equity loans for the first time. These will be offered as alternative funding for applicants who fail to achieve grant funding through the means test and yet are unable to access high street finance in the traditional way. Similarly it may be offered to supplement grant monies to fund other works.

The revised policy also focuses on attaining the "Decent Homes Standard" in the Private Sector with particular emphasis on its provision for "vulnerable people"

The policy was initially reported to the Policy Service Review Community Forum on 30th March 2006. Since then the policy has been put out to consultation, resulting in the version shown at Appendix 1.

Recommendations

1. That the Council adopts the revised Private Sector Housing Policy as detailed in this report.
2. That the Executive Manager Consumer Wellbeing & Protection, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Community & Social Wellbeing, negotiates a package of equity loan provision jointly with Wyre Borough Council.
3. That the waiting list of applicants prior to 31 Oct 2006 be processed under the terms of the previous policy thereby retaining the £10k max limit and the 5 yr repayment period.

Cabinet Portfolio

The item falls within the following Cabinet portfolio:

Community and Social Wellbeing

Councillor Patricia Fieldhouse

Report

1. The revised Private Sector Housing Policy sets out the Council's approach to improving private sector housing conditions in the Borough.
2. The revised policy focuses on attaining the "Decent Homes Standard" in the Private Sector with particular emphasis on its provision for "vulnerable people". It extends the period for future occupation before resale or change of ownership in order to maximise the recycling of future grant funding
3. The transitional arrangements proposed are that those people on the waiting list for housing renewal assistance before the 31st October 2006 will still be dealt with using the previous eligible expense limits, (i.e. they will still receive up to £10,000 grant and not the new £5,000 limit proposed).
4. The policy introduces the use of equity loans for the first time. These will be offered as alternative funding for applicants who fail to achieve grant funding through the means test and yet are unable to access high street finance in the traditional way. Similarly it may be offered to supplement grant monies to fund other works. Hence it is envisaged that a mixture of grant assistance and loans will be provided in the future.
5. Equity loans are provided on the basis of being repaid out of the proceeds of the property on sale, and at the same proportion. Therefore as the value of the property increases so does the amount to be repaid in real terms. However as a safeguard, a maximum of 6.5% interest would be levied if the property had increased disproportionately in value. The amount to repay would therefore be the lower of the two figures.
6. The capped rate of 6.5% was established by Regenda, one of the main local authority equity loan providers and has become a norm across the sector. It is based on the "Long term Interest Rate Function" which is set to calculate the return on government bonds. To reduce this figure would place the authority at risk of failing to recycle monies effectively, see a long term depreciation of the fund value and ultimately placing at risk the long term availability of funding.
7. Fees for equity loans are expensive compared to the usual private sector loan. This is because of the administration assistance required for the vulnerable applicant coupled with the professional services required for the preparation of the schedule of works and the supervision of those works. The Council already charges agency fees for similar technical work required in respect of grants awarded and this will continue to be the case for those grants which are awarded. It is expected that the average fee package would be approximately £2000 with around half of this attributable to the technical agency work.
8. As the cost of the fee package is high, for loans smaller than £5000 it is considered that this would not represent particularly good value for money.

9. Rather than to refuse loans below £5000 it may be better to ensure that the applicant is strongly advised against such a loan. However they may have no realistic alternative and the works though relatively low value are critical to their quality of life or personal safety. This serves to demonstrate a continuing need for housing grant provision to a maximum level of £5000
10. Grant funding would also need to be continued in the case of park homes as these would never be accepted as security for an equity loan or indeed any other type of loan normally secured against the property. These structures are a depreciating asset and yet they still provide permanent accommodation to many low income people with no chance of relocating in the event that the property fails to meet housing standards. A lower repayment period of 10 yrs would also be more appropriate for these properties.
11. Grant funding would also need to be maintained to facilitate the empty homes policy, i.e., to provide an incentive to bring empty and substandard homes back into use.
12. There is currently a waiting list of approximately 18 months for financial assistance to those in housing need and meeting means tested criteria.
13. As the programme develops over time loans will mature and grant aided properties will be sold with repayment requirements. Old funding will therefore be recycled in this way. It is not possible to use commuted sums for this purpose as these are ring fenced solely for the provision of new affordable housing
14. Given that there are some existing grant commitments, and that grant funding to a lesser extent will occur in the future, it is recommended that the term requiring repayment of grant monies in the event of house sale or change of ownership be extended from the present 5 years to 15 years. This will allow for a significant return of these grant monies throughout the subsequent fifteen year period to recycle monies into further grants or capital for equity loans
15. In this way it is expected that the requirement for new funding each year will begin to reduce in the medium term (say 5 – 10 years). The need, however, to commence the equity loan scheme as soon as possible, together with funding the transitional arrangements for grants promised to those already on the waiting list will result in the need for an initial increase in expenditure. A capital growth bid has been submitted for this purpose.
16. Regionally the Government is encouraging local authorities to adopt similar policies in respect of equity loan provision and in particular amalgamate regionally to use a common service provider. This then in turn will make it easier to lever in additional finance from the private sector with a potential funding enhancement of approximately 30% being a real possibility.
17. Our recent review of service providers shows that the loans provider Regenda offers the most comprehensive and yet flexible service package and the best value, both for the authority and the applicants.
18. This policy is aligned to a large extent with that of Wyre Borough Council; however work will continue to develop a wider Fylde coast policy, working with both Blackpool and Wyre Councils.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	<p>Capital growth bids have been submitted to support the policy. They will be considered in the general budget setting process.</p> <p>This policy introduces the concept of equity loans as a means of reducing dependence on grant aid.</p>
Legal	<p>The policy will involve extended land charge provision to serve the extended period of future occupation</p> <p>A service level agreement will be required with the equity loan service provider, & co-lateral agreement between authorities</p>
Community Safety	Decent housing is an important element of a thriving sustainable community where people feel safe.
Human Rights and Equalities	Assistance is targeted at the most vulnerable and deprived people of the Borough.
Sustainability	<p>Decent housing is an important element of a thriving sustainable community.</p> <p>The proposals are also a move towards a more sustainable approach to public sector financing of home improvement.</p>
Health & Safety and Risk Management	No implications

Report Author	Tel	Date	Doc ID
John Cottam & Richard Wood	(01253) 658658	15 Feb 07	PSR OS 15.2.07 Report.doc

List of Background Papers		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Document name		Council office or website address

Attached documents

1. Private Sector Housing Policy – Appendix 1

Private Sector Housing Policy

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Purpose of this Policy

- 1.1** The purpose of this Policy is to set out the principles by which Fylde Borough Council will assist owner-occupiers, tenants and landlords in the private sector with housing renewal.
- 1.2** This document sets out the background and the detail of the Council's policy framework in relation to the provision of housing assistance to homeowners (owner-occupiers and private landlords).
- 1.3** The guidance provides information about how our strategy has been developed, who we consulted, the priorities that we wish to address and the types of assistance that will be available, including where to obtain the services, eligibility, how to apply, conditions etc.
- 1.4** The Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy, contained in this document, will be effective from ? .It will be subject to regular review, with revised versions produced when significant changes occur e.g. to the type of assistance available.
- 1.5** This policy document limits itself to consideration of works of repair, improvement or adaptation rather than enabling housing provision in the first place, which will be considered through the Housing Strategy.

Summary of the New Housing Renewal Framework

- 2.1** The introduction of the Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) in July 2002 made sweeping changes to legislation governing home assistance in England and Wales. The RRO and associated Government Guidance provided local authorities with a much greater degree of flexibility in devising both a strategy for dealing with poor conditions in private sector housing and in the tools available.
- 2.2** It is the Government's stated view that it is primarily the responsibility of homeowners to maintain their own property. However, the Government wants to see an improvement in housing quality across all tenures and accepts that some homeowners, particularly the elderly and most vulnerable, do not have the necessary resources to keep their homes in good repair. Local authorities have an important role to play providing assistance in these cases.

Policy Implementation Plan

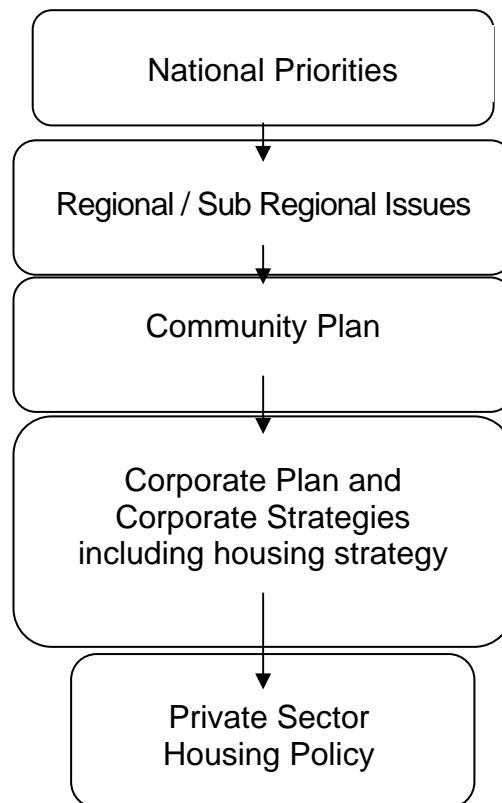
- 3.1** This Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy will be subject, as a minimum, to review through the overall Housing Strategy process.
- 3.2** Amendment will only be necessary in the case of significant change to policy. Smaller changes will be made by the Executive Manager Consumer Wellbeing & Protection, with Portfolio Holder approval.
- 3.3** The Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy will be amended to reflect changing needs of the local community and/or its homes or in the event that it is found not to be meeting its objectives. Such information will be conveyed to the Council by various means including stock condition surveys and customer satisfaction surveys.
- 3.4** It is intended that the first major review of the policy will take place when the Housing Strategy is reviewed. However, there may be external factors, which result in the need for a major review to be carried out earlier than anticipated, e.g.
- Changes to capital spending plans
 - Acute changes to local circumstances
 - National policy/legislative changes
 - Local Strategic Partnership influences
- 3.5** The methodology for assessing statutory fitness of housing is the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.
- 3.6** Performance issues within this policy domain will be reported in accordance with the corporate performance management framework, reporting performance indicators to Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny on a regular basis.

Fundamental Principles on which the Policy is based

- 4.1** It is agreed that homeowners should be responsible for their properties. In parts of Fylde house prices and the buoyant nature of the housing market enable owners to release equity to enable property maintenance and improvement to be undertaken. However, in some cases owners are on low fixed incomes and are consequently unable to release funds in this way.
- 4.2** Fylde Borough Council believes that it owes a duty to its residents to ensure that the quality of the housing is as high as possible.
- 4.3** To this end it provides financial assistance to the most deprived and vulnerable people, to bring their homes up to a standard considered acceptable, and as a minimum, to the Decent Homes Standard. The mechanisms which the Council have historically used have been the various statutory grant regimes.
- 4.4** Implementation of this policy is the start of the process to eliminate grant dependency by targeting the worst properties where owners cannot afford to maintain or repair their homes.

Links to other Strategies and Policies

- 5.1** The Council carries out its responsibilities using various strategies, plans and policies, which have been developed to take account of national, regional and local demands and priorities. A simple illustration of this hierarchical arrangement is shown below:



- 5.4** The Council's Corporate Plan supports the long term vision outlined in the Community Plan

- 5.5** The corporate objectives are to :

- Improve, protect and enhance the street scene and the local environment
- Tackle the fear of crime and maintain safe communities
- Create a strong and diverse local economy and improved employment prospects
- Improve access to good quality affordable housing and promote the health, wellbeing and the quality of life for everyone in the community
- Deliver value for money, high quality local services

- 5.6** The Private Sector Housing Policy also has close links to, and impacts upon, the

following strategies and policies:

- Housing Strategy
- Empty Homes Strategy
- Enforcement Policy
- Homelessness Strategy

Main Priorities for Assistance

6.1 Based on the results of our Private Sector Stock Condition and Housing Needs Survey 2002, and the consultation carried out for our Housing Strategy 2004-2007, the following priorities and key policy frameworks have been identified:

6.2 Assistance for vulnerable people

We recognise that there are residents in need of support in order to deal with disrepair, ill health problems caused through the condition of their home or the need for adaptations due to a disability. We will continue to help these vulnerable households.

6.4 Theme based

Improving energy efficiency is a key priority for the Council both in terms of reducing damaging CO² emissions and tackling fuel poverty. Energy efficiency measures will in future be incorporated at every reasonable opportunity when offering housing renewal assistance.

6.5 Enforcement

As well as providing financial assistance, advice and other types of practical help, we will also use enforcement powers available to us to improve private sector housing. If necessary, we will use our legal powers to force irresponsible owners to manage and maintain their properties. The types of action we can take include serving statutory notices, the use of clearance/compulsory purchase powers or enforced sale procedures.

Resources

- 7.1** This policy recognises that there is a variety of sources of funding for private sector housing renewal. Some funding streams may be available only for specified projects or areas; others will be capable of being distributed at the local authority's discretion. Other sources of funding, such as loans, may be available from the private sector including charitable organisations and the discretion for allocation may be outside the control of the Council.
- 7.2** Local authority funding for intervention will be limited and it will not be possible to rectify all the known problems. In order to ensure that the most cost-effective use of the available finance is made, funds will be targeted to areas of work at the beginning of each financial year.
- 7.3** If circumstances require a reallocation of funds during the financial year, the Portfolio Holder for Community and Social Wellbeing will reserve the right to redistribute the remaining funds to meet the changing circumstances, in accordance with delegated powers.

Types of Assistance Available

- 8.1** We aim to provide assistance to homeowners and private landlords based on a mixture of advice and information, signposting, equity release loans and grants.

i) Facelift Schemes

- 8.2** These discretionary schemes are intended to improve the front façade of a whole block or street, the aim being to improve the visual appearance and feel of the street or block, without carrying out major works.

- 8.3** In certain situations, the Council may put together a scheme to improve the appearance of a number of properties including such works a cleaning and painting the external fabric of buildings and the rebuilding of garden walls to blocks of properties. The aim being to have a positive impact on the wider area, encourage owners to invest in their homes and help contribute to the overall stability of the neighbourhood.

- 8.4** Who is eligible for this type of assistance?

These schemes will be offered at the discretion of Fylde Borough Council. Streets or blocks of properties will be surveyed and assessed before it is decided whether they are suitable. Whilst there will be no minimum number of properties within a block that may benefit from this assistance, visual impact, the value of the block treatment, level of interest and contribution to overall strategy will be considered in deciding viability.

If owners are eligible for this type of scheme they will be contacted by the housing service.

- 8.5** If we offer an owner the opportunity to take part in a scheme, they will need to provide written consent for works.

- 8.6** What types of works might be included?

We will prepare schedules of work for such schemes after consulting with owners. The list of works will vary to take into account the condition of the properties, local environmental issues and how we can make a visual impact on the surrounding area.

Works can include:

- Some environmental improvements.
- Brick cleaning.
- External redecoration.
- Rainwater gutters and pipe work.
- Boundary wall renewal.

- Some elements of increased security and energy efficiency may also be included, such as window locks and insulation.

In some cases, these schemes may be extended to all elevations of the properties, not just the front facades. Work is normally to the outside of the property, to leave the external fabric in reasonable repair. Internal work will only usually be included to make good disturbance caused by external works.

8.7 How much assistance is available?

This will be identified according to the needs of the individual scheme.

ii) Housing Renewal Assistance

8.8 This assistance is intended to assist owner-occupiers to carry out a range of repairs to their homes.

8.9 To qualify for assistance an applicant must:

- be tenants who are long lease holders with a full repairing obligation
- be an owner occupier; and have been resident at least three years
- be first time buyers

8.10 What type of works qualifies for assistance?

Where the above criteria are met, assistance will be considered for works to:

- make the dwelling meet the Decent Homes Standard, which includes a requirement to comply with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System assessment.
- provide specified energy efficiency and home security measures.
- allow essential works to enable an elderly occupier to remain in their own home.
- There may be occasions when a maximum mandatory disabled facilities grant does not cover the cost of the required work. In these circumstances it may be appropriate to consider the use of the HRA to cover the excess costs.

8.11 How much assistance is available?

The maximum grant will be £5,000, inclusive of any fees, charges or VAT.

The grant is subject to a means test.

8.12 Conditions attached to approvals are shown at Appendix A.

iii)	Home Improve – Equity Loans for Low Income Home Owners
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8.13 'Home Improve' is an equity scheme which allows low income homeowners to release equity in their property, which can then be used to repair and improve their home. There are two key objectives:

- To lever private finance into private sector housing renewal.
- To assist vulnerable low income homeowners to improve and repair their homes.

The principle is that instead of giving grant aid, or possibly to fund additional works not covered by grant, money is paid as a loan secured by a Legal Charge against the value of the homeowners property. This is called an equity stake. No interest is paid on the equity stake, instead the loan (equity stake) is linked to the property value as a percentage. As the value of the property grows so does the equity stake and on sale of the property money is recycled into further loans.

This is exemplified as follows; if the loan is £10,000 and the house is valued at £100,000, the loan represents 10% of the value. The charge registered against the house is therefore 10% of the market value. If the house value rises to £150,000 at the point of sale, then 10% is repaid, ie. £15,000.

There is no limit on the current time the charge lasts for and the Council will only reclaim the loan at the point of sale or if the client chooses at any time to pay off the loan. This effectively means that low income clients can afford to borrow money to carry out essential improvements or repairs.

Working collaboratively with the Regenda Group, the Council will set up a loan procedure together with all necessary legal approvals and directions from the Office of Fair Trading

8.14 Who is eligible for this type of assistance?

General Criteria

- Applicants to the scheme must reside in the Borough of Fylde.
- Applicants must be over the age of 18.
- Applicants must be homeowners with equity in their property.
- The property must not have been built, or provided by conversion less than ten years ago.
- The applicant must have a prior residence and ownership qualification period of one year.
- The applicant must be the owner of the property must sign the legal charge.
- Applicants to this scheme must not be the owner of any other properties.
- The applicant must live in the property where the legal charge is to be registered or intend to live at the property as their main residence once the works requested through the Equity Release Scheme have been completed.

NB. Before a houseowner is considered for the scheme, other financial options

must be explored

Financial Criteria

The financial criteria detailed below are examples of methods to be used in assessing eligibility and levels of assistance that may be offered. In line with recommendation 2. of the report the precise details are to be determined by the Executive manager in consultation with the portfolio holder.

- Applicants must be in receipt of a benefit as identified by the Government Warm Front Scheme.
- Householders can borrow (in certain cases) up to 80% of the free equity in a property. They must have at least sufficient equity to cover the cost of works plus a further 20% free equity in their property calculated on the estimated improved value.
- Applicants registered as bankrupt will be excluded from this scheme.
- Applicants are restricted to type of works defined by Local Authority policy. Essential works to the property must be addressed in order to bring the property up to the decent homes standard (DHS) before desirable works are addressed.
- Where the warm front criteria conflicts with the Association's definition of 'necessitous circumstances' eg. where the benefit is non-means tested, an assessment of the clients income and outgoings must be performed in accordance with the Regenda's low income assessment as set down in the Regenda's Lending Guidelines.
- Where benefits are partially means tested eg. Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit, the number of dependants must be taken into consideration. Families in receipt of tax credits with an income below £14,200 will automatically qualify. Above £14,000 income a scale will be used, based on number of financial dependants. Suggested figures:

2 children = income below £16,200

3 children = income below £18,200

4 children = income below £20,200

This figure will increase by £2,000 increments per child.

- Where works are required to bring property up to the decent homes standard, no maximum will apply.
- Where property already meets the DHS then the maximum loan available will

be £5,000.

- Where applicants to the scheme wish to address desirable works in addition to works required to bring up to DHS, this will be limited to £10,000 total (ie. if £6,000 is needed to bring house up to DHS, then there will be a further £4,000 available to spend on desirable works).
- Where the property already meets the DHS and the purpose of the loan is to facilitate the provision of additional bedrooms to alleviate overcrowded conditions, then the maximum loan available will be the value of the loan required plus £5,000 to facilitate desirable works.
- The minimum loan is £2,500. (although in practical terms it is unlikely that loans of less than £5k will be approved) This will ensure that at least the fees associated with setting up the loan will be recouped within 5 years.
- Priority will be given to applicants in the following order. Where the customer requires works that fall into multiple categories, priority will be given in accordance with the highest priority requirement:

Priority 1: Works required pose a danger to health and safety (either own or third parties)

Priority 2: Property does not meet the fitness standard

Priority 3: Property does not meet the Decent Homes Standard

Priority 4: Essential repairs not covered by priorities 1, 2 and 3

Priority 5: Desirable works

8.15 Exclusions

- Property under 10 years old.
- Creation of garages/parking spaces, except where the client is disabled (or disabled person resides) and mobility is an issue.
- Creation of storage space – except where storage space is needed for medical equipment, or disabled aids.
- Extension to properties, except where existing facilities do not meet Decent Homes Standard (eg. inadequate kitchen space) or to replace existing extensions.
- Decorating, except where the requirement for redecoration has arisen as a result of other works being carried out under the loan.
- Fitted carpets (or floating floors, eg. laminate), wardrobes or other ‘furnishing’ items.
- Conservatories.
- Repairs required as a result of malicious damage, caused by the occupants.
- Any subsequent application for a loan within 10 years of original loan (from date of completion of works).

8.16 Applicant Information

The applicant is advised to have buildings insurance and to increase the cover in

line with the works to be undertaken.

Any applicant providing false information or withholding information may have the loan cancelled and be liable to prosecution.

All information provided by the applicant will be checked thoroughly and may be shared with other organisations handling public funds in order to detect and prevent fraud.

iv)	Energy Efficiency and Warmth(Landlords) Assistance
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8.17 This is intended to assist landlords who are accommodating vulnerable people, to undertake works which will bring their accommodation up to the Decent Home Standard; Landlords will retain all liability for repairs any requirement to resolve hazards requiring action by inspection under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.

8.18 This Policy is to align with Government Policy to bring at least 70% of private rented properties occupied by vulnerable people up to decent homes standard by 2010

8.19 What type of works qualifies for assistance?

Eligible works to include works to provide for adequate thermal insulation and space heating, including:

- loft insulation;
- wall insulation;
- draught proofing;
- heating systems;
- central heating system (boiler A rated);
- central heating controls;
- water heating;
- hot water insulation;
- hot water controls.
- wind turbines

- solar panels
- heat pumps
- other effective renewable energy sources

8.20 How much assistance is available?

The maximum grant is £5000 at a rate of 50% of the approved costs.

8.21 Additional conditions attached to approvals include:

- The property must comply fully with the Decent Home Standard on completion.
- Any funding available from utility companies or government grants must be accessed initially, with funding through this scheme only considered as a last resort.

8.22 There are no conditions about future occupation or sale in respect of these grants.

v) Park Home Assistance

8.23 This scheme offers residents of mobile homes and park homes the opportunity of home energy efficiency improvements through the installation of external wall insulation.

8.24 Who is eligible for this type of assistance?

To qualify for grant assistance, an applicant must:

- be an owner occupier of a residential mobile home which is subject to a mobile homes agreement, and to have lived there for at least three years; and

8.25 What type of works qualifies for assistance?

External insulation to main walls (this does not include intricate artwork or works to the skirt or plinth), roof-works, windows and external doors and necessary repairs to the structure of the home.

8.26 How much assistance is available?

£10,000 subject to means test on application

8.27 Conditions are detailed in Appendix A.

vi) Empty Property Assistance

8.28 This grant is intended to provide funding to improve long term privately owned empty properties and return them to a habitable condition.

8.29 Who is eligible for this type of assistance?

Private sector landlords or first time owner occupiers who:

- own the property; and
- are able to meet their share of the cost of the works; and
- have consent from the mortgage company to carry out the works and let the property; and
- have obtained planning permission for the proposed works before making an application for the grant (where necessary).

8.30 Due to limited financial resources the grant will be discretionary. The purpose of the grant is to return to use vacant residential property and increase the supply of affordable housing in the borough. Eligibility will be dependant on meeting these aims.

8.31 What type of work might be included?

It is expected that in all cases, the property must be fully improved to at minimum the Decent Home Standard, including the installation of energy efficiency, security, means of escape in case of fire and heating provisions.

8.32 How much assistance is available?

Maximum of £10,000 or 50% of the cost of the works, whichever is the lesser.

8.33 Conditions:

For landlords:

- The Council will reserve tenant nomination rights for a period of fifteen years with rents restricted to those payable through housing benefit.
- Applicant to provide a fifteen year certificate of intended letting. The property to be available for letting to a person other than a member of the applicants family throughout the period following the date that the Council certifies that

the grant works have been completed.

For first time owner occupiers:

As shown in Appendix A.

vii) Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant

8.34 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are mandatory grants.

8.35 A DFG is provided to adapt the home of a disabled person to meet their needs. The need for this adaptation is determined by an Occupational Therapist from Lancashire County Council's Social Services Department. The Housing Service will only act on recommendations made by the Occupational Therapist and, providing the work is considered reasonable and practicable, administer the DFG.

8.36 The Council must carry out a means test to assess how much the applicant has to pay towards the work. This test is prescribed by legislation and the Council has no control over it. The grant covers any reasonable costs in excess of the owner's assessed contribution, subject to a mandatory grant limit of £25,000.

Priority 1 - Applications in category one will include works to enable hospital discharge, works to remove significant risk to the applicant, works to provide access to the dwelling or its facilities.

Priority 2 - Applications in category two will usually require more information or additional assessment before being considered further. Such information could include the availability of alternative means of meeting need through community facilities or additional care packages.

Priority 3 - Applications in category three will have been assessed as low Priority and will be held on a waiting list.

viii) Home Loss and Disturbance Grant

8.37 A discretionary type of Disabled Facilities Grant available as a Home Loss and Disturbance Grant.

8.38 Eligibility criteria

- Existing tenant in a registered social landlord's dwelling which has been previously adapted; where those adaptations are no longer required, and where the Council has identified another disabled person requiring those essential adaptations.
- Existing tenant has voluntarily undertaken to move to suitable alternative accommodation offered by a registered social landlord.
- The disabled person requiring the essential adaptations accepts the adapted dwelling.
- The scheme may be considered where a similar arrangement can be made in the private sector, with the primary aim of facilitating suitable accommodation for a disabled person.

8.39 How much assistance is available?

Home loss and disturbance allowance of £2,000

8.40 Conditions

Payable on tenant moving into the alternative accommodation within a specified time period set by the housing service.

ix) Agency Service

8.41 This service provides a full agency service to grant applicants, to assist the applicant in the complete process of making an application for assistance and the management of the works of improvement, repair or adaptation of the dwelling.

8.42 The service may include the following:

- Help with completion of necessary forms
- Help with obtaining financial information, photocopying of documents as required
- Help with obtaining proof of title
- Help with obtaining plans, Building Regulation or Planning Approval
- Help with obtaining estimates from, and the selection of contractors
- Help with organising the contract particulars, start and completion dates.
- Liaison with other agencies at the start or during the works
- Monitoring the progress of the works
- Help with the resolution of difficulties/disputes that may arise during the course

of the works.

- Consultation with the applicant on the approval of payments to contractors.

There is a fee payable by the applicant, which is 10% of the cost of works plus value added tax at the current rate. The fee payable is an eligible expense and so will be grant aided.

The fee charged will be capped at the maximum eligible works for a disabled facilities grant of £25,000.

However in certain cases, such as when the services of an architect are used and on larger schemes, the Executive Manager Consumer Wellbeing & Protection will consult with the Portfolio Holder for Community and Social Wellbeing, to agree an appropriate agency fee.

x) Care & Repair Wyre & Fylde

8.43 A service for elderly and disabled householders in Fylde and Wyre, offering help, advice and support with repairs and adaptations to the property.

8.44 What type of work might be included?

The aim of the handyperson scheme is to keep people safe in their homes and prevent the risk of trips and falls. As such the scheme provides help with small jobs around the house such as:

- Replacing light bulbs
- Easing doors and windows
- Making safe loose carpet and flooring
- Fitting smoke alarms and batteries
- Fitting door chains and minor security measures
- Fitting grab rails and hand rails
- Installing key safes
- Making safe tripping hazards

There is also assistance available for people who are seeking a reputable contractor for repairs or adaptations to the home, information about for local authority grants, finance schemes (including social fund loans), claiming benefit entitlement, help with form filling, and insurance claims

8.45 Who is eligible?

Residents who:

- Are over 60 years or disabled

8.46 How much assistance is available?

Although the labour for the handyperson service is free, there is a charge for any materials used.

xi) Advice and Information about Improving and Repairing your Home

8.47 Access to appropriate advice and information is a keystone of our policy.

8.48 We will give advice and assistance and seek to drive up standards to improve ways in which clients are given information about our services.

8.49 All enquirers will be offered advice and information, relevant to their needs, to assist them in resolving their property repair or maintenance problem.

8.50 A range of advice and information will be available in a variety of formats and through Wyre and Fylde Care and Repair Agency.

8.51 We will 'signpost' enquiries to a range of partners and other agencies that may be more appropriate to their specific needs. We will advise about any local schemes or initiatives operating in the area.

8.52 From time to time, we will arrange, with our partners, specific promotions and campaigns targeted at particular communities.

Procedures and Processes

Enquiry Process

9.1 Initial enquiries for assistance should be made to Fylde Borough Council, Housing Service, Fylde Borough Council, Town Hall Lytham St Anne's, Lancashire, FY8 1LW. Telephone: 01253 658658.

9.2 Anyone wishing to pursue an application for assistance will be required to complete a preliminary enquiry form.

9.3 This will enable the Council to get a reasonable indication of the enquirer's eligibility for assistance and any likely contribution they would be expected to make. It will also assist in determining a priority in which enquiries will be handled.

9.4 Priority will be given to enquiries where there appears to the Council to be a serious and imminent risk to the health and safety of the occupants of a dwelling.

9.5 The Council will list those works, which are eligible for consideration for assistance, and assistance will only be available in respect of those works. Advice may, however, be given in respect of other matters, which may be

identified during the course of the inspection.

Application

- (i) A completed application form including a test of resources where required.
- (ii) Estimates from two builders for the works specified by the Council, together with details of any preliminary or ancillary fees or charges. In the case of disabled adaptations of a specialised nature one estimate may be accepted.
- (iii) Proof of the applicant's interest in the property.
- (iv) Proof of income and capital.
- (v) Proof of National Insurance number.
- (vi) Where works require building control approval, planning approval or listed building approval, proof that this has been given.
- (vii) Plan of the proposed work (where requested).
- (viii) Written permission from the owner of the property where the application is being made by someone other than the owner.

9.6 Following receipt of a completed application, a decision will normally be made and the applicant will be notified in writing within 12 weeks. The notification will be in the form of an approval, a refusal or a deferral. Approvals will be phased depending on the available budget with priority being given to cases where there appears to be a serious and imminent risk to the health and safety of the applicant

Complaints or Comments about this Policy

10.1 We welcome any queries, complaints or suggestions, which should be addressed in the first instance to the Executive Manager Consumer Wellbeing and Protection, Town Hall, Lytham St Anne's, Lancashire, FY8 1LW., telephone 01253 658658, email consumerwellbeing@fylde.gov.uk. Any complaints will be dealt with using the corporate complaints procedure.

APPENDIX A

Housing Assistance Conditions – General Provisions

- Housing assistance means any form of financial assistance provided by the Authority for the purpose of housing renewal. This may include a grant, an improvement scheme in which people are invited to participate, a loan or any other form of financial assistance, whether provided directly or indirectly. 'Housing Assistance condition' means any condition attached to any such assistance.
- Any reference to a 'person responsible' or to 'the owner' in this section, or in relation to housing assistance conditions generally, is to be taken to mean any owner or other person who is responsible for the relevant housing assistance condition(s), either singly or jointly. This includes the original person(s) who applied for and/or received the assistance, as well as any other person who has subsequently becomes responsible for any condition as a result of acquiring the property or an interest in it.
- 'Certified Date' means the date certified by the Authority as the date on which the execution of the eligible works is completed to their satisfaction.
- 'Housing Assistance Condition Period' means the period of 15 years beginning with the certified date.
- Housing assistance conditions come into force from the date the assistance is approved, so that the Council may recover any interim payments or other costs incurred, should the grant not be completed. Where a housing assistance period is specified, this takes effect from the certified date of completion of the eligible works.
- It is a condition of payment of housing assistance that the eligible works are carried out within 12 months from the date of the approval of the application concerned. The Council may agree, in writing, an extension to this period, but this will only be done if there is an extremely good reason.
- It is a condition of payment that the eligible works are carried out in accordance with the Housing Services Specification of Renovation Works and the detailed specification issued by the Council with respect to the application concerned.
- Housing Assistance will only be paid when the Council receives a satisfactory invoice in relation to the work in question, together with any supporting documentation or information requested by the Council. Where a contractor is employed by the applicant and not directly by the Council, the invoice must be made out to the applicant or their nominated agent. No invoice will be accepted from the applicant or a member of their family.
- It is a condition of the housing assistance that the owner shall enter into a contract

with the Council to repay the assistance in accordance with the Council's policy on repayments where a breach of conditions occurs.

- Unless stated otherwise, any financial assistance and related conditions will be secured as a legal charge against the property, where breach of the condition would require the repayment of all or part of the assistance. This charge will not be removed until either the conditions expire or until the grant is repaid, together with any interest or additional charges that may apply. In some cases, it may be specified that only part of the housing assistance has to be repaid if the conditions are broken and, in these cases, the charge will be removed upon payment of the specified part of the assistance.
- A charge against the property is binding on any person who is for the time being an owner of the premises concerned. Where a housing assistance condition is broken, the Council has all the usual powers and remedies in law to enforce the charge and secure payment of any amount due.
- Where any condition is in force, the Council may require the person responsible to provide any information to satisfy the Council that the condition is being complied with. The Council can require this information in writing or in any other reasonable form. It is a condition that this information be provided, in the form required and within the reasonable time period specified by the Council and as fully, accurately and honestly as reasonably possible. Failure to comply with this requirement is a breach of grant conditions in itself and the housing assistance, or part of the housing assistance where this is specified, must then be repaid to the Council.
- It is the responsibility of the person responsible for any housing assistance condition to demonstrate to the Council's satisfaction that the condition is being complied with. Failure to do so will be treated as failure to comply with the condition. The Council does not have the burden of having to prove that the condition is not being complied with.
- It is a condition of the housing assistance that the applicant shall forthwith notify the authority of his intention to make a relevant disposal of any dwelling, building or house in multiple occupation with respect to which there is in force a housing assistance condition and shall furnish to the Authority any information reasonably requested by them in connection with such notification.
- In the event of a breach of any of the conditions set out in this document the Authority may demand repayment from the applicant of a sum equal to the amount of the housing assistance paid (together with any interest which may have accrued).
- Any reference to a member of a person's family is to be taken to mean someone who is their parent, grandparent, child – including an illegitimate child, grandchild, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew or niece. A relationship by marriage is treated as if it were a relationship by blood. A half-blood relationship is treated as a full blood relationship.
- Any reference to a disposal of a property means:
 - a conveyance of the freehold

- as assignment of the lease, where the lease was used to qualify for the housing assistance – for example, a long lease that was treated as effective ‘ownership’
- the grant of a lease, other than a mortgage term, for a term of more than 21 years otherwise than at a rack rent.

For the purposes of this definition, it will be assumed that any option to renew or extend a lease or sub-lease, whether or not forming part of a series of options, is exercised and that any option to terminate a lease or sub-lease is not exercised. Also, the granting of an option enabling a person to call for a disposal shall be treated as such a disposal made to that person.

- In some situations, the disposal of a property is classed as an ‘exempt disposal’, which means there is no requirement to repay the grant as a result. However, all the housing assistance conditions do then continue to apply and are binding upon the person or persons to whom the disposal is made for the remainder of the housing assistance condition period. A disposal is classed as exempt where the person, or each of the persons, to whom it is made is:
 - the person, or one of the persons, by whom the disposal is made
 - a member of the family of that person, or one of those persons
 - the spouse or former spouse of that person, or one of those persons
 - in the case of a company, an associated company of the company by whom the disposal is made
- Housing Assistance conditions will be enforced in all cases.
- No retrospective application or request for financial assistance will be considered where the relevant work has already been started or completed.
- It is a condition of housing assistance that the applicant takes reasonable steps to pursue any relevant insurance or legal claim and to repay the housing assistance, so far as appropriate, out of the proceeds of such a claim.

The claims to which this section applies are:

- a) an insurance claim, or legal claim against another person, in respect of damage to the premises to which housing assistance relates, or
- b) a legal claim for damages in which the cost of the works to premises to which housing assistance relates is part of the claim.

A claim is a relevant claim to the extent that the works to make good the damage mentioned in paragraph (a), or the cost of which is claimed as mentioned in paragraph (b), are works to which housing assistance relates.

- It is a condition of housing assistance that where the applicant has an insurable interest in the assisted property, he/she shall arrange and maintain in effect

adequate insurance for the property, subject to and with the benefit of the completed works, throughout the housing assistance condition period.

- It is a condition of housing assistance that where the applicant has a duty or power to carry out works of repair to the assisted property, he shall ensure that, to the extent that his duty or power allows, he undertakes his statutory duties with respect to repairs to the house throughout the housing assistance condition period.
- It is a condition of housing assistance that in respect of an application for Housing Assistance, the Authority may require the applicant to:
 - a) carry out an energy efficiency survey of the property, and
 - b) execute such works as the Authority considers practical, cost effective and likely to result in a significant improvement in the energy efficiency of the property.
- It is a condition of housing assistance that in the case of a landlord's application for housing assistance the Authority shall be entitled to nominate tenants to the property (or a relevant part of the property) throughout the housing assistance condition period.
- It is a condition of housing assistance that where a Disabled Facilities Grant is provided and equipment so funded and it is reasonable to do so, that such equipment is returned to Social Services when no longer required.
- The approval of housing assistance does not give or imply the Council's approval to any other consent that may be required, such as planning permission or Building Regulation consent. It is the responsibility of the applicant to obtain any such consent that is required.
- These Housing Assistance conditions may only be varied or revoked by the Council with the consent of the person provided with the assistance.

IMPORTANT

Please see the reserve side of the Approval document and the certificate of occupation for other specific housing assistance conditions relating to your housing assistance application and approval.

APPENDIX B

Policy for reducing repayment of housing assistance, reducing the priority of any registered charge or removing any charge in exceptional circumstances

Process

Any request for:

- reducing the repayment of grant element Housing Assistance,
- reducing the priority of any registered charge on the grant element or loan, or
- removing any registered charge

shall be made in writing prior to any circumstances which may result in a breach of Housing Assistance conditions. No waiver or reduction will be made for any equity release loan provided, this is public money, which is, intended to be recycled and used to assist others.

The request shall be made in writing to the Executive Manager Consumer Wellbeing and Protection, setting out any exceptional circumstances that exist.

Any person aggrieved with a decision should follow the Council's formal complaints procedure.

REPORT



REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND MEMBER SUPPORT	POLICY AND SERVICE REVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	15 FEBRUARY 2007	7

VICE-CHAIRMANS REPORT ON PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

Public Item

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

Summary

Scrutiny Management Board have agreed a process by which the recommendations made by scrutiny committees are recorded and tracked. The tracking document is appended to this report, for information.

Recommendation

1. To note the Policy and Service Review Scrutiny Committee Implementation Tracking Document.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	None
Legal	None
Community Safety	None
Human Rights and Equalities	None
Sustainability	None

Health & Safety and Risk Management	None
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Report Author	Tel	Date	Doc ID
Christopher Kitchen	(01253) 658491	1 December 2006	

List of Background Papers		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Chairman's Report	1 December, 2006	www.fylde.gov.uk

POLICY & SERVICE REVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - IMPLEMENTATION TRACKING

Date of meeting	Item	Recommendation Requiring Action	Action to be taken	Responsible Officer/Member/Committee	Outcome and date signed off
18 May 2006	Housing Services Improvement Plan	None - report was noted	N/A	N/A	18 May 2006
18 May 2006	Final report of the public convenience task & finish group	(1) Recommendation to Cabinet that services are operated at 10 named locations	Monitor cabinet decisions Comments:	Cllr Norsworthy/ Annie Womack	<i>Accepted by Cabinet on 13th July 2006</i>
		(2) To ask Portfolio holder to respond to the letter received from St Annes Town Council on the lines agreed at the meeting	To record that a copy of the letter has been received Comments:	Cllr Norsworthy	<i>Letter sent, including offer re North Promenade Toilets. No response from St Annes T C .</i>
		(3) To enter into dialogue with the relevant town/parish councils and bowling clubs re future use of disused facilities	To require progress report from responsible officer Comments: No target date set	Cllr Norsworthy/ Jamie Dixon	<i>Progress received at PSRSC on 30th August 2006</i>
		(4) Request for further report on financial aspects of the proposal	Portfolio Holder to report back to September 06 scrutiny committee meeting Comments: Target date September	Cllr Tim Ashton/ Cllr Norsworthy/ Jamie Dixon	<i>Progress received at PSRSC on 30th August 2006</i>
18 May 2006	Future management of indoor sports/swimming service	Task & finish group appointed - Cllrs Norsworthy, Oades and D Prestwich to look at the basis of the consult-ation exercise	Task & finish group to report back to a special meeting of the committee in September Comments: Target date September	Cllrs Norsworthy, Oades & Prestwich	<i>TFG completed task and reported back to PSRSC on 30th August 2006</i>
13 July 2006	Gambling Act 2005	Portfolio Holder requested to keep the level of resource required under review	Committee to enquire of Cllr Fieldhouse / Stuart Handley whether such review is ongoing Comments: This is not a formal recommendation – however, committee may wish to	PSRSC	

POLICY & SERVICE REVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - IMPLEMENTATION TRACKING

Date of meeting	Item	Recommendation Requiring Action	Action to be taken	Responsible Officer/Member/Committee	Outcome and date signed off
			revisit in perhaps 6 months time.		
13 July 2006	Houses in multiple occupation (HMO) Licensing Policy	To delegate to Exec Manager and Portfolio Holder any amendments that may need to be made to the policy (eg discretionary powers)	Cllr Fieldhouse to keep issue of "properties of concern" under review; also to consider what level of member involvement in the licensing process is appropriate Comments: To be included on PSRSC workplan for July 07	Cllr Fieldhouse / Stuart Handley Annie Womack	
13 July 2006	Electronic service delivery and customer transaction policy	To ensure that any matter laid before the committee incorporates the requirement to provide and promote electronic means of service delivery	Amend relevant documents Comments:	Annie Womack	<i>Sept 06 – requirement is a standing item on the issues sheet for every committee</i>
30 August 2006	Future Management of Indoor Sports/Swimming services at Fylde	(1) Subject to a full building survey being undertaken of the pools to determine refurbishment costs, consideration be given to both Option 2 (retain in house and invest in new/ existing facilities) and Option 4 (externalise via part repairing lease with an option to invest in new/ existing facilities)	To recommend to Cabinet that consideration be given to both option 2 & 4. Comments:	Paul Norris/Cllr Norsworthy	<i>Recommended /accepted to/by Cabinet on 13th September 2006</i>
		(2) To ensure appropriate budget provision to enable the above to be carried out.	To ensure appropriate budget provisions. Comments:	Paul Norris/Cllr Norsworthy	<i>Recommended /accepted to/by Cabinet on 13th September 2006</i>
		(3) That on receipt of the building survey	Organise the Building Survey results	Paul Norris/Cllr	

POLICY & SERVICE REVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - IMPLEMENTATION TRACKING

Date of meeting	Item	Recommendation Requiring Action	Action to be taken	Responsible Officer/Member/Committee	Outcome and date signed off
		results referred to, a site visit of the facilities is organised for the Policy and Service Review Scrutiny Committee membership.	for the Committee Comments:	Norsworthy	
30 August 2006	Lowther Gardens Charitable Trust	(1) The finalisation of the registration of the trust be undertaken as soon as possible	To present the recommendation to Cabinet. Comments:	Cllr Norsworthy/Ian Curtis	
		(2) A further report be presented to Committee in three months detailing options & impact on rate relief and the ability to attract grants.	To provide a new report in November Comments: Due to go to committee in December	Ian Curtis AW to add to work plan	
30 August 2006	Public Conveniences Provision	To recommend support of the contractual arrangements as outlined in the report	To track progress Comments: <i>Needs checking with Cllr Rigby</i>	Cllr Norsworthy/Dave Jenkinson	.
30 August 2006	Review of Council Assets	(1) To establish a working group comprising the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Committee together with Councillors Thompson, Oades and Chew..	N/A - Working Group appointed at committee Comments:		August 06
		(2) To recommend that the forward planning and regeneration business manager considers the employment of a temporary surveyor to assist with the breakdown of the four categories.	To commence work according to the published Terms of Reference once resources for valuation are available Comments:	T&F Group	

POLICY & SERVICE REVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - IMPLEMENTATION TRACKING

Date of meeting	Item	Recommendation Requiring Action	Action to be taken	Responsible Officer/Member/Committee	Outcome and date signed off
23 October 2006	Child Protection Policy	To recommend to Council the adoption and implementation of the Child Protection Policy.	Review minutes from November Cabinet meeting	Cllr Taylor/Annie Womack	
		To recommend that the Portfolio Holder (Corporate Performance and Development) be responsible for all matters concerning child protection issues relating to the Council.	Make recommendations to the Portfolio Holder Comments:	Paul Norris	
23 October 2006	Corporate Equality Policy	To Support the draft Equality Policy incorporating the Council's Race Equality Scheme.	N/A	Lorraine Charlesworth	October 06
		To support the Council's commitment to achieving the Local Government Standard	N/A	Lorraine Charlesworth	October 06
		To support the action plan and the timetable for achieving the Local government Equality Standard as outlined in the report.	N/A	Lorraine Charlesworth	October 06
		To monitor progress through the Performance Improvement Scrutiny Committee.	Monitor the progress of the Equality Policy. Comments: Update to be brought to the committee in the New Year	Lorraine Charlesworth	
23 October 2006	Corporate Objectives Review	To support the conclusion that there was no requirement at this time to make changes to the high level corporate objectives at Fylde.	N/A	Allan Oldfield	October 06

POLICY & SERVICE REVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - IMPLEMENTATION TRACKING

Date of meeting	Item	Recommendation Requiring Action	Action to be taken	Responsible Officer/Member/Committee	Outcome and date signed off
		To make any appropriate recommendations to officer and/or Portfolio Holders to ensure emerging issues are monitored or addressed including all aspects of communications as outlined at the meeting.	Make appropriate recommendations to officer and/or Portfolio Holders to ensure emerging issues are monitored or addressed including all aspects of communications	Allan Oldfield	

Policy & Service Review Scrutiny Committee



Date	14 December 2006
Venue	Town Hall, Lytham St Annes
Committee members	Raymond Norsworthy (Chairman) Martin Taylor (Vice-Chairman) Maxine Chew, Elizabeth Clarkson, John Longstaff, Elizabeth Oades, Dawn Prestwich, Fabian Wilson
Other Councillors	John Coombes, Kiran Mulholland, Barbara Pagett
Officers	Ian Curtis, John Cottam, Lyndsey Lacey, Annie Womack , Hazel Wood

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 and Service Review Scrutiny Committee held on 23 October 2006 as a correct record for signature by the chairman.

3. Substitute members

There were no substitute members

4. Data Protection Policy

Ian Curtis (Head of Legal Services) presented a report on proposals to introduce a policy setting out how the council intended to comply with its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Mr Curtis explained that most organisations adopt and maintain an information or data protection policy setting out how it would comply with its obligations. He added that such a policy could serve to assist persons working in the organisation to know how they are expected to deal with personal data. It

could also help provide assurance to external bodies that the council takes its obligations seriously and is complying with them. He explained that the act required the council to comply with the eight data protection principles in dealing in any way with personal data.

A copy of the draft data protection policy was circulated with the agenda for members' consideration.

Members enquired whether the council had a central data system in place. Mr Curtis confirmed that no such system has been established.

The Committee RESOLVED to recommend that the Cabinet adopt a Data Protection Policy as set out in the report.

5. Lowther Gardens charitable trust

Ian Curtis (Head of Legal Services) introduced an updated report on the financial implications of the council remaining the sole trustee of Lowther Gardens in particular the effect on rate relief and potential grant income.

Mr Curtis confirmed that if the council remained the sole trustee of the Gardens this would not impact significantly on rate relief or potential grant income. Details with respect to the mandatory rate relief scheme and information obtained from a desk top study of potential sources of grant funding was set out in the report.

The committee enquired whether there was any difference in the Council applying for grants and the council as a charitable trust applying for the same. Mr Curtis addressed this point.

Members also asked how the council intended to manage and administer Lowther Gardens if it remained a sole trustee. Mr Curtis recommended that a proper management structure be established. He suggested that as a registered trust the council would need to administer Lowther separately which would include a revision of the accounting system.

The feasibility of establishing a small committee to manage the trust was also discussed.

Following discussion the committee RESOLVED:

1. To report to Cabinet that the eventual decision about whether the council continues as sole trustee of the Gardens would not impact significantly on rate relief or potential grant income.
2. To recommend to Cabinet the establishment of a small member/officer committee to consider an appropriate management structure and constitution for the Lowther Gardens trust and report on its proposals to a future meeting.

6. Discretionary additional licensing of houses in multiple occupation

John Cottam (Housing Services Manager) presented a report on the feasibility of introducing a discretionary licensing scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation.

The report set out the background and benefits of the scheme, powers available to the council under the Housing Act 2004 and the possibilities, impact and resource requirements of the introduction of the discretionary scheme to cover properties that did not fall to be licensed under the mandatory scheme.

Mr Cottam explained that the review was prompted by concerns of elected members in the central ward. He added that the proposed scheme would initially affect the central ward with the potential for other wards in the future.

Members enquired about the number of properties that would need to be inspected and the associated cost implications. Mr Cotam responded to this point. The committee also asked whether the LSP could contribute towards the project or whether there could be some joint initiative for the scheme.

Members asked how many landlords were likely to register under both schemes. Mr Cottam indicated that, with the mandatory scheme, no more than 30 properties were likely to be registerable. With the discretionary scheme, up to 500 properties were likely to be eligible across the borough of which 200 were likely to be in central ward and could be eligible for registration.

Following a full debate, it was RESOLVED to recommend to Cabinet that a cross cutting review of the scheme be undertaken by representatives of the Policy and Service Review Scrutiny Committee (Councillors Dawn Prestwich and Fabian Wilson) and representatives of the Community Outlook Scrutiny Committee (Councillor Kiran Mulholland and one other)

7. Vice- Chairman's report on previous recommendations

The Vice-Chairman (Councillor Martin Taylor) presented an implementation tracking document detailing previous recommendations made by the committee. The tracking document was circulated with the agenda for members consideration

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

The Committee RESOLVED to note the report.

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