

## Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee



Date	11 December 2008
Venue	Town Hall, St Annes
Committee members	Councillor Kevin Eastham (Chairman) Councillor Ben Aitken (Vice-Chairman)  John Bennett, Maxine Chew, Lyndsay Greening
Other Councillors	Trevor Fiddler, Albert Pounder, Elaine Silverwood
Officers	Paul Walker, Tony Donnelly, Mark Sims, Lyndsey Lacey
Representatives	John Crellin (City Centre Planning Manager) Preston City Council  Jonathan Smith (Partner at Steven Abbott Associates) Retail Planning Consultants  Michael Gage (Accredited Peer Member)  Martin Curtis (Accredited Peer Member)
Members of the public	John Moxham, Douglas Cooper

### Peer Members

The Chairman, Councillor Kevin Eastham, welcomed the Peer Members, Michael Gage and Martin Curtis to the meeting.

#### 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 Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 9 October 2008 as a correct record for signature by the chairman.

## 3. Substitute members

There were no substitutions.

## 4. Fylde Coast Retail Study

Mark Sims (Principal Planning Officer - Policy) reported on the publication of the Fylde Coast Retail Study.

Mr Sims explained that in order to provide retail evidence for their Core Strategies; White Young Green, was commissioned, in September 2007, by Fylde Borough Council, Blackpool Council and Wyre Borough Council to undertake an assessment of the current and future retail role of the main centres within the Fylde Coast Sub-Region.

Mr Sims added that the Study provided an in-depth analysis of the retail provision within the main centres of the Fylde Coast Sub-Region, including an assessment of the extent to which the centres are meeting the retail needs of the local population and the role of the local shopping network and the sub-regional shopping hierarchy.

The Committee was advised that the evidence contained in the Study would inform the retail policies to be included in the Council's Core Strategy. The findings of the study might also have relevance to any retail proposals submitted to the Council.

A copy of the Study's Executive Summary was circulated with the agenda.

The Chairman sought clarification on whether the document would inform the LDF process and be included as a material consideration. Mr Sims confirmed this to be the case.

Councillor Chew expressed her concern about the timing of the study and whether it was now a realistic and relevant document taking into consideration recent changes in the economy. Mr Sims stated that it was a robust document which was intended to present a long term view.

Members enquired about reference in the document to enhance and strengthen St Annes as a 'classic resort' and whether this was still an ongoing project. It was reported that Mr Drinnan was pursuing this as one of his key projects.

Councillors Chew and Silverwood commented on paragraph 2 of the Executive Summary which stated that a business survey had been distributed to all businesses within the main centres of the Fylde Coast Sub Region. It was suggested that Kirkham Chamber of Trade were unaware of this and it

was unlikely that all businesses in the Kirkham area had been consulted. In view of this, members considered the report not to be a true reflection of the situation in Kirkham and suggested that the methodology was flawed.

Councillor Silverwood also commented on the SWOT analysis for Kirkham. She added that there had been dramatic changes over the last 12 months with many retailers closing down in the area. The “low proportion of vacancies” was now unrealistic. Similar concerns were raised for the St Annes and Lytham areas.

Councillor Greening enquired whether the weaknesses identified in the SWOT analysis for St Annes could be picked up by the Regeneration Team. It was confirmed that this would be referred to the team for consideration.

The Committee commented that the Chambers of Trade for Kirkham, Lytham and St Annes should have been featured in the consultation exercise.

Mr Donnelly (Head of Planning-Policy) stated that the company commissioned to undertake the Study was considered competent. He added that the purpose of planning was not to defend the interests of individual businesses but to maintain the vitality and viability of town centres. Generally it was not appropriate to give anecdotal evidence greater weight than evidence based on robust survey work. It was in the nature of surveys that they are only valid for the period in which they were undertaken. Planning applications for new retail floorspace (where appropriate) would be supported by retail impact assessments undertaken at the time of the submission. As such, the White Young Green retail study would not be the only evidence considered in relation to future planning applications.

Following a detailed discussion IT WAS RESOLVED:

1. To defer consideration of this matter to allow copies of the relevant document(s) to be forwarded to the Chambers of Trade for their observations and
2. To invite representatives of White Young Green to the next meeting of the Committee to address the issues raised.

##### 5. Residential Use of Holiday Caravans

As requested by Committee at their last meeting, Tony Donnelly (Head of Planning-Policy) presented an updated report on the approach taken by Ribble Valley Borough Council to control the unauthorised use of holiday caravans for residential purposes.

Mr Donnelly explained that Ribble Valley Council had subsequently confirmed that it had no special approach to the issues and challenges previously reported other than an procedure for taking enforcement action where Council Tax was being paid by a person living in a holiday caravan.

Mr Donnelly reported that to date, no response had been received from the Member of Parliament for Fylde or the LGA on the matter.

Members were requested to re-consider the options set out in the October report which was attached to the agenda.

A number of members commented on the fact that letters should be sent to park owners reminding them of their responsibilities concerning static caravans. A debate also took place on whether this should be classed as a high priority for enforcement action.

The Committee RESOLVED that having regard to the previous report:

1. To recommend to the Portfolio Holder that Option 2 as detailed below be adopted (the use of a more rigorous condition on new planning applications)

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- i. the caravans (cabins/chalets) are occupied for holiday purposes only;
- ii. the caravans (cabins/chalets) shall not be occupied as a person's sole or main place of residence;
- iii. the owners/operators shall maintain an up-to-date register of the names of all owners of individual caravans/cabins/chalets on the site, their main home address and two forms of documentary evidence verifying the address; and shall make this information available at all reasonable times;
- iv. the owners/operators shall maintain an up-to-date register on a weekly basis of the names of all occupiers of individual caravans/cabins/chalets on the site, their main home address and where occupation exceeds three months in any six month period, two forms of documentary evidence verifying the main home address; and shall make this information available at all reasonable times”

2. That having regard to the current level of resources for enforcement in the Development Control and Environmental Health licensing units, no further action be taken on this matter until a definitive response on the national position is received from the MP or the appropriate government department.

3. To recommended that the Council take appropriate enforcement action on holiday caravan sites where the payment of Council Tax or Housing benefit is known.

#### 6. Regional Spatial Strategy Partial Review -District Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Showmen

Tony Donnelly (Head of Planning - Policy) reported that 4NW had consulted the Council on the Partial Review of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

The report made reference to an earlier Lancashire Assessment undertaken by Salford University on local needs for additional accommodation for gypsies,

travellers and travelling showmen up to 2016. In brief, the partial review provision levels significantly exceeded those previously published.

The current consultation indicates a proposed need for 10 permanent pitches and 5 transit pitches for gypsies in each of the three Fylde Coast authorities. Additionally, the consultation indicated a requirement of at least 15 pitches for travelling show people on Fylde borough and 12 pitches in both Blackpool and Wyre.

Mr Donnelly explained that given the consultation date of 2 Dec and on the basis of the significant increase in numbers compared with the recent Lancashire Assessment and the lack transparency as to how the new figures had been determined, officers had lodged objections to the figures pending discussions with 4NW.

RESOLVED - to note the report

#### 7. Consultation Response to Central Lancashire Preferred Core Strategy and Planning Application to Preston City Council for Retail Proposals at Tithebarn Preston.

Mark Sims (Principal Planning Officer- Policy) introduced a report on the proposed response to the Central Lancashire Preferred Core Strategy and Preston City Council's consultation on the planning application for comprehensive re development at the Tithebarn Regeneration Area.

John Crellin (City Centre Planning Manager) at Preston City Council attended the meeting and addressed the committee on the background to the application. He also provided the committee with planning application description, aerial photographs of the site, information on the size of the retail element including the proposed buildings to be demolished and the illustrative Master Plan together with an indicative timetable for the application.

Jonathan Smith (Partner at Steven Abbott Associates) Retail Planning Consultants also attended the meeting and addressed the committee on the counter view.

Mr Smith expressed his reservations on the scale of the proposed development and the impact of trade diversity from other local centres. He added that the proposed development would have a fundamental impact on shopping patterns in the future and huge ramifications for future retail investment. To appreciate the size of the development comparisons were made to the Trafford Centre (Manchester) and Hounds Hill (Blackpool). Mr Smith stated that if the coastal authorities were duly concerned about the threat to local retailers he would recommend a precautionary approach.

Mr Sims advised the committee that with regard to the Tithebarn scheme the North West Development Agency was proposing to undertake further research on the impact of the proposal.

Following a lengthy debate the Committee RECOMMENDED the following:

1. To thank Mr Crellin and Mr Smith for their attendance at the meeting.
2. To recommend to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development the following:
  - (a) Central Lancashire Preferred Core Strategy: That a response, as set out in section 2.1 of the draft Portfolio Holder decision notice, (reference 2008/009) be submitted as a representation to the current consultation.
  - (b) Tithebarn Retail Proposals: That an objection to the planning application, as set out in section 2.2 of the draft Portfolio Holder decision notice, (reference 2008/009) be submitted to Preston City Council; and
3. That with regard to 2(b) above, the committee notes that further research is being undertaken on the impact of the proposal, the findings of which will be referred to the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Development for comment. In view of this, the Council reserves the right to amend or withdraw its response in light of the findings, or amendments to the planning application.

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