

JOINT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Fylde and Wyre Committee held on Monday 5th November 2007 at the Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde.

PRESENT:

From Wyre:

Members: Councillors Russell Forsyth (Leader) (in the Chair), Alan Vincent (Deputy Leader and Corporate Resources Portfolio Holder) and Councillor Mrs V. Taylor (Living Places Portfolio Holder).

Other Councillors: Councillors David Bannister, Lynne Bowen (Living Healthily Portfolio Holder), Roger Brooks, Graham Cocker (Living Safely Portfolio Holder), Elizabeth Collinson, May Gandhi, Ramesh Gandhi, Peter Hawley (Living Economy Portfolio Holder) Jim Lawrenson (Living Community Portfolio Holder), Gordon McCann Paul Moon, and Mike Sanderson.

Officers: Mr Jim Corry (Managing Director), Mr. Barry Parsonage (Executive Director), Mr Roger Beer (Policy Consultant), Mr. Rob. Posner (Head of Neighbourhood Services), Mr. Tom Pridmore (Head of Leisure, Cultural and Tourist Services) Grant Sellars (Business Development Consultant and Waterfront Manager) and Mr Roy Saunders (Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager).

From Fylde:

Members: Councillors John Coombes (Leader), Tim Ashton (Street Scene Portfolio Holder) and Paul Rigby (Finance and Efficiency Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Mr. Philip Woodward (Chief Executive), Mr Dave Joy, (Deputy Chief Executive), Mr Ian Curtiss (Legal Services Officer), Mr. David Jenkinson (Executive Manager – Street Scene) and Mr. Paul Norris (Executive Manager – Community and Cultural Services).

Others: Four members of the public and a representative of the local press were also present.

1. MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Committee held on 30 July 2007 were confirmed as a correct record.

2. **JOINT SERVICES: STREET SCENE**

Dave Joy submitted the minutes of the Street Scene Project Board meeting held on 25 September 2007. He said that the Project Team and the Project Board had so far been working on a broad brief for the development of shared street scene services. The Project Board was now seeking further guidance from this Joint Committee to enable it to focus on a number of more specific issues to bring shared services to fruition. The issues considered by the Project Board and on which further guidance was now sought were as follows.

(a) “Why are we doing this and what will it look like”

Dave Joy submitted a report of the street scene services project team.

Dave Joy said that the fundamental aim of the discussions on shared services was to enable both councils to provide better services at the same cost or the same services at a lower cost. He said that the inclusion of grounds maintenance services in the street scene “package” would enable a shared service to be developed without any financial disadvantage to Fylde which might otherwise occur if the existing formal contract for Waste Management services is developed into a ‘negotiated partnership’ arrangement.

David Jenkinson stated, in response to a question from Councillor Moon, that Fylde’s vehicle maintenance team would have the capacity to provide vehicle maintenance support to the proposed shared service.

David Jenkinson also informed the committee, in response to a further question from Councillor Moon, that the directors of the holding company referred to in the report (established as a future potential vehicle for joint working) were currently three named Executive Managers from Fylde - Ian Curtis, Brian White and himself. He said that this was a “shell” company which was not currently operating and would not operate until Members had given the necessary approvals.

Roger Beer stated, in response to a question from Councillor Brooks about a realistic estimate of the potential efficiency savings to be achieved by the development of shared services, that a team of accountants from both councils was currently undertaking a detailed analysis of current costs, which would enable a better judgement to be made about the potential for future savings. He expected the costings to be available in 2 or 3 weeks.

Councillor Coombes pointed out that total spending by both councils on Street Scene and Cultural Services was in the region of £12m to £15m per annum. If efficiency savings in the region of 10% could ultimately be achieved, it was apparent that there could be a

significant financial impact.

It was agreed :-

- (1) That the report be noted.
- (2) That, from now on, the name "community services" be used instead of street scene services to include the service areas detailed in the report.
- (3) That the grounds maintenance service be included within the timescale of the Community Services review as the first tranche of the Leisure, Cultural and Tourist services.

(b) Employment and Governance Arrangements

Dave Joy introduced a report prepared by Ian Curtis (Legal Services Officer Fylde B.C.) on behalf of the Street Scene Project Team. He emphasised that no definite commitment was intended to be made to specific governance arrangements at this stage. Guidance was being sought from the Joint Committee on the parameters within which the Project Board could continue its deliberations.

Ian Curtis acknowledged, in response to a comment from Councillor Brooks, that there would need to be processes within the structural and governance arrangements to enable any possible future conflicts, including potential difference in budget priorities to be addressed. The purpose of the final paragraph of the report had been to identify the need for further discussions on that issue.

Barry Parsonage informed the Committee, in response to a question from Councillor Moon about the proposed number of joint Overview and Scrutiny committees, that the proposal from the Project Board meeting on 31 October 2007 (to be reported later in this meeting) had been that there should be one Project Board leading into one Joint Committee and possibly one Joint Scrutiny Committee. Some concerns were expressed by the Members of the Joint Committee and by other Councillors present that under such an arrangement too much responsibility would be concentrated amongst a small number of Councillors.

Councillor Forsyth said that he disagreed with a suggestion from Councillor Brooks that a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be established sooner than currently envisaged so that joint Scrutiny working could be established before the joint services were operating.

It was agreed:- That officers be asked to consider further the issues identified in the report (in particular, the potential impact of establishing a large joint "community services" operation on the

central services of each Council) and to work up more specific proposals noting that members of the Joint Committee favoured currently a structure including the following elements:

- 3 project teams;
- 1 project board;
- separate joint executive committee's for the two main services;
- separate joint scrutiny committee's for the two main services, possibly with 6 members from each council.

(c) Human Resources Implications

Barry Parsonage introduced a report prepared by Stuart Hampson (Wyre's Human Resources Advisor). He said that this Committee's support was being sought for the general approach set out, prior to consultations being undertaken with employees.

It was agreed:-

1. That the report be noted.
2. That a project plan be developed to address the issues raised in the report.

(d) Base Line Budget

Barry Parsonage introduced a report prepared by Roger Beer (Policy and Improvement Consultant at Wyre B.C.). He said that, as previously mentioned in this meeting, a group of officers was currently looking in detail at the breakdown of costs of current services and some of the figures quoted in the report submitted had already changed. He said that he would circulate a revised schedule of costs with the minutes of this meeting.

He said that, on the basis that the projected start date for various elements of the shared "community services" was September, 2008 he hoped that it would be possible for both Councils to include in their respective budgets for 2008/09 estimates of savings to be achieved in the second part of that year.

It was agreed:- That the position be noted.

(e) Implications for Existing Services

Barry Parsonage introduced a report prepared by Roger Beer (Policy and Improvement Consultant Wyre B.C.). He said that there was clearly an integral link between the proposed shared services and the current support services for those areas of activity. More work needed to be done on this aspect and it was proposed that another joint project team be established for that purpose.

It was agreed:- That a joint project team be established to consider and submit a report to the joint committee on all of the issues associated with this matter.

(f) Street Scene Project Board, 31 October 2007

Barry Parsonage made a verbal report to the Committee on the outcome of the Street Scene Project Board meeting held on 31 October 2007. He mentioned the following significant issues.

Ashdell Nursery

The Project Board had concluded that this was primarily an issue for Wyre Borough Council and that any review of its efficiency and effectiveness would be the responsibility of Wyre.

Impact on Support Services

The Project Board had agreed to recommend that a separate Project Team should be established to look at this issue.

Single Project Board

The Project Board agreed to recommend the use of one single Project Board to receive, and feed into the Joint Committee, the reports from the existing two Project Teams and the proposed Project Team for Support Services.

Accountancy Input

The Project Board had acknowledged that there would need to be a significant input from both councils and had agreed that an accountant from each council be nominated to advise the project teams as necessary.

Cultural Services

The Project Board had received an update from Tom Pridmore, Head of Leisure, Cultural and Tourist Services, Wyre Borough Council. A definition of parks and open spaces had been produced and it was noted that as a recent market testing of the management of swimming facilities in Fylde there had been a recent recommendation from a Fylde Scrutiny Committee that their in-house operation be retained.

(It was noted at the Joint Committee that Fylde coast YMCA – the organisation which currently managed all Wyre BC leisure facilities - had been a tenderer for the operation of the Fylde Borough swimming facilities and had expressed a keen interest in developing a partnership agreement with both councils.)

Project Plan

It has been agreed to establish a rolling project plan with detailed work schedules and targets for the forthcoming three months and more indicative information for a longer period.

(i) Next Meeting

It has been agreed that the next meeting of the Project Board would be held in the first week of December.

The Joint Committee noted the position.

3. JOINT SERVICES: LEISURE AND CULTURAL SERVICES

Dave Joy submitted the minutes of the first meeting of the Leisure and Cultural Services Project Steering Group held on 16 October 2007. He also introduced a report prepared by Tom Pridmore (Head of Leisure Cultural & Tourist Services Wyre B.C.) and Paul Norris (Cultural Services Business Unit Manager Fylde B.C.).

It was agreed:-

1. That the recommendation of the Project Board to develop a shared leisure and cultural service between the two councils be supported.

4. FYLDE COAST MULTI AREA AGREEMENT: PROGRESS

Phil Woodward (Chief Executive Fylde B.C) informed the Joint Committee of the current position on the developments of a Fylde Coast Multi Area Agreement (MAA). He said that the external consultants appointed by Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Councils and funded by the North West Improvement Network, had submitted an interim report following a number of thematic workshops which had been held to identify joint priorities. A report on this first stage of the process would be submitted to the Cabinets of both Fylde and Wyre Councils in the near future. The issues would also be discussed at an informal meeting of members of all three Cabinets to be held on 28 November. A final report was due to be submitted by the consultants in March 2008.

Councillors Coombes and Forsyth both stressed the importance of this issue and the exciting potential to improve the infrastructure, the availability of jobs, and housing and to improve tourism and leisure facilities. They both indicated that progress reports would be submitted to their respective full Council meetings.

It was agreed:- That the position be noted.

5. WASTE MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE – JOINT SCRUTINY REVIEW:

PROGRESS

Councillor David Bannister (Wyre B.C., Chairman of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Task Group) submitted a report. He outlined the main findings of the Task Group.

David Jenkinson gave an assurance that in conjunction with Rob Posner, he would ensure that all the operational issues identified by the Task Group, including problems with the repositioning of bins, would be addressed by senior managers and that, where necessary, improvements would be made.

It was agreed:

1. That the Joint Task Group be thanked for the extensive and detailed scrutiny work that had been carried out.
2. That the issues identified by the Task Group, as set out in section 5 of the report be noted.
3. That the assurance given by David Jenkinson to address each of the issues set out in section 5 of the report be welcomed.
4. That the Task Group be asked to review performance and the effectiveness of any changes introduced as a result of this report, in six months time.

6. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that a further meeting of the Joint Committee be held at Fylde Borough Council in approximately 3 months, on a date to be agreed by the Chief Executive of Fylde and the Managing Director of Wyre.

The meeting started at 6.00 p.m. and finished at 7.37 p.m.

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