



# MINUTES

## Executive Committee

<b>Date:</b>	Tuesday, 5 March 2024
<b>Venue:</b>	Town Hall, St Annes.
<b>Committee Members Present:</b>	Councillor Karen Buckley (Chairman) Councillor Richard Redcliffe (Vice-Chairman)  Councillors Peter Collins, Chris Dixon, Ellie Gaunt, Karen Henshaw JP, Matthew Lee, Michelle Morris, Ed Nash, Jayne Nixon, Tommy Threlfall.
<b>Officers Present:</b>	Allan Oldfield, Paul O'Donoghue, Mark Evans, Darren Bell, Andrew Thomas, Keith Vernon, Lisa Foden, Catherine Kitching and Katharine McDonnell. Louise Jones, Graham Ruse and David Holmes (Shared Service)

### 1. Declarations of Interest

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

### 2. Substitute Members

The following substitute was reported under Council procedure rule 23 (c):

There were no substitutions on this occasion.

### 3. Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held on 19 February as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

### Decision Items

#### 4. Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount Policy – 2024/25

Councillor Gaunt introduced the Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount Policy for 2024/25 for approval. The updated Policy included measures to support businesses announced in the autumn statement on 22 November 2023 and changes included in subsequent statutory instruments. These related to the continuation of the retail, hospitality and leisure discount at 75% for the period 1st April 2024 to 31 March 2025, including a cap on how much relief businesses could be received over 3 financial years. The update also included the removal of discretionary rural rate relief to support small businesses within rural settlements – which had been removed as a discretionary discount as central government had now committed to meeting the full cost of the scheme as a mandatory relief. The final change related to the removal of statutory backdating limits.

It was RESOLVED to approve and adopt the Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount Policy (2024/25).

5. Write-Off of Uncollectable Debts 2023/24

Councillor Gaunt introduced the report which detailed the proposed write-off of debts in relation to Business Rates, Council Tax, and the recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments. Councillor Gaunt advised that write-off was only considered in exceptional circumstances when other recovery options had been exhausted and that although the report sought approval to write-off a number of uncollectable debts, any debt that was written-off could be reinstated at a later date should there be a further opportunity to recover part or all of the debt.

It was therefore RESOLVED to

1. Note the write-off by the Chief Financial Officer under delegated powers of the eight uncollectable debts below £25,000, details of which were set out in Appendix A to the report.
2. Approve the write-off of the one uncollectable debt over £25,000, details of which was also set out in Appendix A.

6. Swimming Pool Support Fund – St Annes Pool

Councillor Nixon introduced a report detailing the award of a £220,000 grant from Phase II of the Swimming Pool Support Fund operated through Sport England.

The awarded Phase II funding would fund a replacement boiler for St Annes Pool, and the installation of photo voltaic panels (solar panels) both of which would assist in the building becoming more energy efficient.

It was RESOLVED

1. That the Executive Committee approve the receipt of £220,000 from the Swimming Pool Support Fund for the installation of solar panels and a replacement boiler system with the commitment that the asset will have at least a 10-year life in accordance with the grant offer; and
2. That a new scheme to the value of £220,000 is included in the capital programme for 2024/25 entitled “Swimming Pool Support Fund – St Anne’s Pool”, fully funded from the grant.

7. Fully Funded Revenue Budget Increase – Planning Skills Delivery Fund

Councillor Redcliffe introduced a report regarding a fully funded budget increase following a successful bid to the Planning Skills Delivery Fund, with the council being awarded the maximum grant of £100,000. The funding would be used to increase capacity within the Planning team to progress planning applications to determination.

The primary focus of the role would be to determine major planning applications where progress to determination had stalled.

In response to a question, Mark Evans, Head of Planning, advised that the officer would have a specific portfolio targeting newly submitted major applications and also ‘legacy’ applications that had stalled for a number of reasons.

It was RESOLVED to approve a revenue budget increase of £100,000, fully funded from specific Planning Skills Delivery Fund, to be used to increase the capacity of the planning team in order to progress planning applications to determination. The funding to be split with £48,600 being spent in 2023/24 and the remaining £51,400 being spent in 2024/25.

8. Establishment of a Local Plan Member Steering Group

Councillor Buckley introduced a report regarding the establishment of a Local Plan Member Steering Group. The Planning Peer Review Action Plan included a provision for the establishment of a cross party board of councillors to oversee and input into the production of the next Local Plan period beyond 2032. The report sought to establish a cross party Local Plan Member Steering Group and set out the prime objectives of that group to provide councillor oversight during the evidence gathering, analysis and policy development stage of the review of the existing local plan and the future production of an updated local plan that will guide officers and members in reaching any decisions regarding the development of planning policy.

It was RESOLVED;

1. That the committee agree to establish a Local Plan Member Steering Group, to be chaired by the Lead Member for Corporate and Economic Development, to act as an informal cross-party panel to ensure councillor oversight during the evidence gathering, analysis and policy development stage of the review of the existing local plan and the future production of an updated local plan that will guide officers and members in reaching any decisions regarding the development of planning policy;
2. That the Executive Committee nominate Councillors Buckley, Morris, Dixon and Lee to attend the Local Plan Steering Group; and
3. That the Executive Committee requests the Planning Committee to nominate 3-4 members to attend the Local Plan Steering Group, of which at least one should be an opposition member.

#### 9. Local Lists of Heritage Assets - Warton & Other Rural Areas

Councillor Redcliffe introduced a report detailing a list of proposed properties and structures to be added to the local list of heritage assets. The proposed list were from the rural areas including Greenhalgh, Thistleton, Little Eccleston, Elswick, Warton and other rural areas.

He advised that the purpose of a local list was to raise awareness of an area's local heritage assets and their importance to local distinctiveness. The list informed developers and owners through guidance and specialist advice, helped protect the character and setting of those buildings, and assisted the planning authority when determining planning applications.

The local list was an important part of the Council's Built Heritage Strategy, which was adopted in 2015.

In response to questions Mark Evans, Head of Planning, advised that the project was shortlisted for a Royal Town Planning Institute – Planning for Excellence Award in 2018, and was also used as an example of good practice by Historic England. He also advised that were instances where locally listed buildings had not been able to be saved. The Wesham Hospital, as an example, had been demolished, but prior to demolition the building had been recorded for posterity and key architectural elements had been used in public open spaces. On another occasion, Mr Evans advised that a locally listed building had saved from demolition through the issue of an Article 4 direction

Councillor Redcliffe thanked Catherine Kitching, Conservation Officer and the whole team for their work on the project.

It was RESOLVED that the buildings and structures set out within the schedule attached at appendix 1 be added to the local list of heritage assets.

#### 10. Proposal to Develop a Wyre and Fylde Building Control Shared Service

Councillor Threlfall introduced a report seeking approval to commence work on developing a shared building control service between Fylde Borough Council and Wyre Borough Council. He advised that the Building Safety Act had led to extensive changes to building control services nationally.

He explained that a shared service proposal required further exploration and development between the two authorities, and that all alternative service delivery options, including a shared service agreement, would be subject to a further detailed report to a future meeting of the Executive Committee.

Keith Vernon, Building Control and Land Charges Manager, provided a detailed overview of the changes, explaining the requirements on building control officers from the Building Safety Regulator, and the impact these changes were having both locally and nationally. He explained there was a national recruitment and retention issue, coupled with competition from the private sector. He concluded that by exploring a shared service and combining the two small teams of Fylde and Wyre, it would build resilience, improve efficiency and effectiveness, whilst allowing skills to be built and maintained.

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In response to questions, it was advised that all building control staff at Fylde were registered with the Building Safety Regulator. It was also advised that early discussions had also been held with Blackpool Council, but Blackpool were at a different stage to Fylde and Wyre in the process.

It was RESOLVED to approve commencement of work on developing the shared service proposals as outlined in the report and delegate the Head of Technical Services to undertake the work with Wyre Borough Council to achieve this.

#### 11. Improvements to Children’s Play Areas 2023/ 2024

Councillor Nixon introduced a report detailing a scheme included in the Council’s 2023/24 capital programme for improvements to Fylde’s children’s play areas. She advised that works included the refurbishment of playground surfacing and equipment. Councillor Nixon further advised that the scheme had now been tendered and the report detailed the tender process and a recommendation to proceed. It was envisaged that the works would be completed by September 2024.

In concluding Councillor Nixon drew members attention to a consultation that had been carried out with residents in the Raleigh Park area due to its proximity to Frobisher Drive, with majority of residents agreeing that a renovation was needed.

The committee thanked Lisa Foden for her work, specifically for conducting a consultation with Raleigh Park residents.

It was RESOLVED to

1. Authorise the drawdown of the capital expenditure of £120,000 in respect of the approved capital scheme Play Area Improvements in 2023/ 2024, as detailed within this report; and
2. Approve the letting of the contract to ESP Scotland Ltd for the sum of £120,000 and to carry out the capital scheme as outlined within this report.

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