

# Policy Development Scrutiny Committee

<b>Date:</b>	Thursday, 12 March 2015
<b>Venue:</b>	Town Hall, St Annes
<b>Committee members:</b>	Councillor Fabian Craig- Wilson ( Chairman)  Councillor Len Davies (Vice-Chairman)  Councillors Ben Aitken, Susan Ashton, David Chedd, Maxine Chew, Peter Collins, John Davies, David Donaldson, Karen Henshaw JP, Barbara Nash, Edward Nash, Elizabeth Oades, Vivienne Willder
<b>Officers:</b>	Allan Oldfield, John Cottam, David Gillett, Lucy Wright, Kirstine Riding, Katharine McDonnell
<b>Members of the public</b>	There were no members of the public

## Mr Bernard Judge

The Committee observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect for Bernard Judge (a long standing employee of the Council) who sadly died on 3 March.

## Public Platform

There was no speakers for public platform on this occasion.

### 1. Declarations of interest

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

### 2. Confirmation of minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 19 February 2015 as correct records for signature by the Chairman.

### 3. Substitute members

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

Councillor Barbara Nash for Councillor Richard Redcliffe

Councillor Peter Collins for Councillor Charlie Duffy

#### 4. Home Energy Conservation Act – Further Report March 2015

John Cottam (Principle Environmental Health Officer – Housing) presented the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) report. He advised that the Council was under a statutory obligation to report, every two years, its progress on the implementation of home energy conservation initiatives. Mr Cottam highlighted that the actions currently being undertaken would be insufficient to achieve significant improvement in energy efficiency and therefore unlikely to achieve significant reductions in carbon dioxide emissions.

Mr Cottam explained the reason the actions were insufficient was due to a lack of resources. He further explained that fuel poverty was reported in 10% of households in 11 super output areas in Fylde, and that Fylde was in the top 20% nationally for poor energy efficiency.

Mr Cottam turned to the report and highlighted a number of initiatives. He explained that all the actions were being carried out in partnership with other Lancashire authorities. A number of successful initiatives included Cosy Homes in Lancashire (CHiL) which was funded with public health money; the Warm Homes Healthy People Project which focussed on reducing the number of winter deaths amongst the elderly and vulnerable; and the Lancashire Home Energy Officers Group which worked to reduce fuel poverty, carbon emissions and winter deaths.

Following Mr Cottam's presentation members asked a number of questions and raised a number of concerns. In response Mr Cottam explained that private rented accommodation tended to be the worst affected however new legislation was being introduced from March 2018 which would require landlords to meet EEC standards before letting a property.

He advised that eco funding available only targeted initiatives that reduced emissions, not fuel poverty. To tackle fuel poverty a range of strategies would need to be employed including fuel use advice, insulation, fuel tariff advice and new boilers. However a targeted approach, if the resources were available, would help reduce the amount of households suffering fuel poverty.

Following a discussion it was RESOLVED;

1. That the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 report of March 2015 be adopted, published, and notification of its publication be sent to the Secretary of State; and
2. That a costing exercise be undertaken to inform the Cabinet of the cost implications for focussing resources on those households suffering fuel poverty.

#### 5. Lancashire Single Homeless Initiative

Kirstine Riding (Senior Housing Officer) presented a report on the Lancashire Single Homeless Initiative. She advised this centrally funded pilot was being run across Lancashire, with the Lancashire authorities grouped into clusters for the implementation of the pilot. She reminded members that Fylde was the administrative centre for the North Lancashire Cluster, which included Wyre and Lancaster.

Mrs Riding advised that the project had three strands, pre-tenancy training, shared accommodation for under 35 year olds, and an accommodation finding service. She advised that each strand had attainment targets. For the pre-tenancy training there had been an attainment target of 100 delegates over 5 separate intakes. She reported that there had been 22 referrals to 6 courses in the first 5 months of the project. The shared housing required a minimum of 1 house share in each authority area. One house share had been delivered in Lancaster and two in Wyre.

Mrs Riding reported that unfortunately the contractor for the shared house accommodation and the accommodation finding service AAAW had unfortunately ceased trading at the end of January 2015. As a result it had been agreed with Chorley (the Lancashire wide co-ordinator), that to enable the project to continue that the North Cluster of authorities would be retendering for those services. She further advised that an additional 6 months of project funding was available, and would be

released to enable a full 12 months of the project to be conducted following the re-tendering process.

The discussion focussed on the issues with the amount of Housing Benefit available to under 35 year olds, which severely restricted options for accommodation in Fylde. The Committee also discussed the lack of one bedroom housing stock in the borough.

It was RESOLVED;

1. To note the report and the progression of the projects;
2. To note the additional project funding in the sum of £33,067;
3. To note that a funded budget increase request would be prepared for the sum of £33,067 for authorisation by the Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, to increase the overall project funding;
4. To note that an additional report would be provided to a future meeting of the Environment, Health and Housing Committee on the conclusion of the project to consider the final outcomes and any future opportunities arising from the project; and
5. That Development Management (Policy) Committee consider the issue of the lack of 1 bedroom accommodation available in the borough at a future meeting.

#### 6. Fylde Coast MyHomeChoice Area Lettings Plan 2015

Lucy Wright (Senior Housing Officer) presented the consultation responses to the draft Fylde Coast MyHomeChoice Area Lettings Plan 2015. She reminded members that the consultation had been undertaken over the Christmas period with the Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and Committee had requested that the results were to be reported at a future meeting.

She advised that there were a few minor changes to the Area Lettings Plan as a result of the consultation, and the revised draft was before the Committee for consideration. In addition, Mrs Wright presented a number of concerns raised by the RSLs through the consultation, namely issues regarding the alignment of the allocations process with S106 allocations, and low demand for sheltered accommodation.

Mrs Wright advised that the restrictive S106 allocations were affecting the RSLs ability to meet the funding criteria of their lenders. She further advised that it was also affecting purchasers of shared ownership properties.

The Committee discussed the issue of S106 allocations and the housing allocation policy. A number of members expressed the opinion that the S106 allocations should be discussed in depth by the Development Management Policy committee.

It was RESOLVED;

1. To note the results of the consultation for the Area Lettings Plan with MyHomeChoice partners;
2. To approve the final draft of the Area Lettings Plan for adoption; and
3. To request an update to the appropriate committees regarding planning agreements and sheltered housing, at the appropriate time.

#### 7. The 2014 Employee Survey

Allan Oldfield (Chief Executive) presented the results of the Employee Annual Survey 2014. He advised that the survey was designed to canvass the majority view however he advised there had been the opportunity for respondents to include individual comments.

Mr Oldfield advised that the survey response rate was 68% which was an improvement on the previous year. He also reported that the satisfaction rating was very high, with 99% of respondents were satisfied with Fylde as a place to work, which was an increase of 2% from 2013.

Mr Oldfield concluded his presentation by advising members that the survey informed decision making.

The discussion highlighted some of the individual comments particularly some regarding differing managerial styles and members' behaviour and attitude towards staff. Mr Oldfield undertook to pass those themes highlighted to the staff ambassador groups to suggest ways to tackle the issues raised.

It was RESOLVED

1. To note the outcomes of the 2014 Employee Survey and recognise the progressive and positive culture that was evidenced by the findings and achieved by the hard work and dedication of the employees; and
2. To direct the Chief Executive to note the comments of the committee and to action them appropriately.

#### 8. The Residents Survey 2014

Allan Oldfield (Chief Executive) presented the results of the annual Residents Survey. He advised it was a rolling survey, collecting data on front line services and the general feel of living in the area, throughout the year.

He stressed it was not simply a survey about the Council, but how all the partners, parish and town councils, volunteer and friends groups worked together to contribute to making Fylde a great place to live.

Mr Oldfield reported the numbers of respondents had declined over time and work was underway to increase the response rate, without losing the statistical value of the survey.

It was RESOLVED to note the outcomes from the 2014 Residents Survey and progress made on the satisfaction with services, the Council and the local community.

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