

**Policy & Service
Review
Community
Forum**



Date	24 August 2005
Venue	Reception Room, Town Hall
Committee members	Simon Renwick (Chairman) John Prestwich (Vice-Chairman) Stephen Carpenter, Raymond Norsworthy, Elizabeth Oades, Heather Speak, Martin Taylor.
Other Councillors	George Caldwell, Maxine Chew, Dr Trevor Fiddler, Karen Henshaw, Derek Lancaster, Barbara Pagett, Albert Pounder, Dawn Prestwich, Louis Rigby, Paul Rigby, Colin Walton, Fabian Wilson, Keith Wright
Officers	Ken Lee, Oliver Shimell, Peter Welsh
Others	<u>Ribble Valley Borough Council</u> John Hill - Leader David Morris - Chief Executive Paul Timson - Director Legal Services <u>Wyre Borough Council</u> Councillor Marlene Colby (opposition member) Councillor Penny Martin (opposition member)

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 & Service Review Community Forum meeting held on 26 July 2005 as correct records for signature by the chairman.

3. Substitute members

The following substitutions were reported.

Councillor Heather Speak for councillor Collins; councillor Elizabeth Oades for councillor Wright.

4. The council's political structure

At the meeting of the Forum on 26th July it was resolved to undertake additional follow-up work to the evidence gathering, which the Forum Members had been asked to carry out on behalf of the Council.

This report introduces the parties invited on this occasion to participate in this follow-up work.

1. Ribble Valley Borough Council

John Hill - Leader

David Morris - Chief Executive

Paul Timson - Director Legal Services

Ribble Valley has a population of 54,000 and is principally a rural area with Clitheroe and Longridge being the main centres of population. The political composition is 21 Conservatives, 15 Liberal Democrats, 3 Independent, and 1 Labour. The Council has 5 policy committees (with full delegation) comprising of - Community; Housing; Personnel, Planning and Development; Policy and Finance, in addition they have 1 Licensing committee 2 Overview and Scrutiny committees and a parish council liaison committee. Public participation is permitted at all policy and council meetings.

John Hill (Leader) indicated he would prefer the cabinet system because it provided a far more efficient service, however, it was acknowledged that all members had to be engaged and Overview & Scrutiny was a means to address this together with devolved powers to area committees. Under the current committee system every member was serving on a committee.

It was noted that the planning and development policy committee dealt with regulatory and policy issues however members were informed by the Chief Executive that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) had advised the previous Monitoring officer that this would not be permitted under modernisation.

2. Wyre Borough Council

Councillor Marlene Colby (opposition member)

Councillor Penny Martin (opposition member)

Wyre has a population of 106,000 and is an urban and a rural area with Fleetwood, Cleveleys, Garstang and Poulton Le Fylde being the main centres of population. The political composition is 33 Conservatives, 21 Labour and 1 Independent. The Council operates a one party cabinet comprising of the leader and 5 cabinet members; in addition they have Licensing and Planning regulatory committees, 5 Overview and Scrutiny committees together with a number of 'Task Groups'. Public participation is permitted at cabinet and council meetings.

Councillors Colby & Martin stated that the Task Groups were used for specific issues and their recommendations were submitted to the Cabinet. The role of task groups was still evolving and their Council was looking at how other local authorities operated. Having recently visited South Ribble BC both councillors were of the opinion that the structure operated at South Ribble worked well and had full member involvement.

Councillors Colby & Martin also stated that in their view the committee structure previously operated at Wyre had been politically adverse and that a well run cabinet with member input from overview and scrutiny committees would be their preferred option

RESOLVED

1. That the Forum members note and consider the additional information provided by the various bodies attending the meeting.
2. That the members of the Forum convene a special meeting, after the proposed visit to the Cabinet meeting of South Ribble BC, to develop their recommendations for presentation to the Council
3. That the representatives who provided presentations to the Forum be thanked for their assistance and attendance at the meeting