



FYLDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting Agenda

**Policy and Service Review
Community Forum
Reception Room, Town Hall
26 July 2005, 1.00p.m.**

Policy and Service Review Community Forum

CHAIRMAN – Councillor Simon Renwick
VICE-CHAIRMAN – Councillor John Prestwich

Councillors

Stephen Carpenter	Martin Taylor
Peter Collins	Keith Wright
Raymond Norsworthy	

Contact: Peter Welsh, St. Annes (01253) 658502, Email: peterw@fylde.gov.uk



CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

The Council's investment and activities are focused on achieving our five key objectives which aim to :

- Conserve, protect and enhance the quality of the Fylde natural and built environment
- Work with partners to help maintain safe communities in which individuals and businesses can thrive
- Stimulate strong economic prosperity and regeneration within a diverse and vibrant economic environment
- Improve access to good quality local housing and promote the health and wellbeing and equality of opportunity of all people in the Borough
- Ensure we are an efficient and effective council.

CORE VALUES

In striving to achieve these objectives we have adopted a number of key values which underpin everything we do :

- Provide equal access to services whether you live in town, village or countryside,
- Provide effective leadership for the community,
- Value our staff and create a 'can do' culture,
- Work effectively through partnerships,
- Strive to achieve 'more with less'.



A G E N D A

PART I - MATTERS DELEGATED TO COMMITTEE

ITEM	PAGE
1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: <i>In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, members are 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.</i>	4
2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES: <i>To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Public Protection Committee meeting held on 9 June 2005 (previously circulated).</i>	4
3. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS: <i>Details of any substitute members notified in accordance with council procedure rule 26.3</i>	4
4. THE COUNCIL'S POLITICAL STRUCTURE	5

REPORT

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES	POLICY & SERVICE REVIEW COMMUNITY FORUM	26 JULY 2005	1

THE COUNCIL'S POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Public/Exempt item

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

Summary

Councillors Eastham and Longstaff submitted a notice of motion which was put before the last council meeting. Under the council procedure rules, the motion was referred automatically to the executive committee. The executive committee considered a recommendation to refer it to this Forum for further consideration

Recommendation/s

1. That the Forum members note and consider the information provided by the various bodies attending the meeting.
2. That the Forum members determine whether the information presented on the day is sufficient to allow them to develop recommendations on the most effective way for the Council to conduct its business.
3. That, depending on the outcome of recommendation 2, the members of the Forum convene a special meeting to develop their recommendations for presentation to the Executive Committee.

Executive brief

The item falls within the following executive brief[s]: Leader and quality services (Councillor John Coombes).

Report

1. At the council meeting of May 26, it was reported that notice had been given of a motion under what was then rule 9 of the council procedure rules. Under that rule, the motion would stand referred to the executive committee or other relevant committee(s) of the Council for consideration unless the Mayor considered it convenient and conducive to the despatch of business allow the motion to be dealt with at the meeting at which it was brought forward.
2. The motion therefore stood referred to the executive committee, who were due to consider it at their meeting on July 20.
3. The motion calls for a significant change in the way the council administers its business. As such, the leader of the council considered that the issues that the motion raised ought to be considered in detail by a community forum before being reported back to the Executive Committee to make recommendations to the council. The Leader was therefore expected to ask the executive committee to refer the matter to this special meeting.
4. Because of the fundamental importance of the council's structure in enabling it to deliver the government's modernisation objectives and the services that the people of Fylde demand, a number of external organisations concerned with local governance have been invited to contribute to the discussions at today's meeting. A draft outline schedule (which may be amended in the next few days to accommodate individual's availability) showing the contributors and setting out a suggested timetable for the meeting is attached.
5. This report has been necessarily written in advance of the executive committee meeting. Any further observations and recommendations of that committee will be reported to members as soon as possible.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	None arising directly from the report
Legal	The motion proposes constitutional changes, which can only be made by full council.
Community Safety	None arising directly from the report
Human Rights and Equalities	None arising directly from the report
Sustainability	None arising directly from the report
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None arising directly from the report

REPORT AUTHOR	TEL	6	DATE	DOC ID
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Ian Curtis	(01253) 658506	5 July 2005	
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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS		
NAME OF DOCUMENT	DATE	WHERE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION
Notice of motion	18 July 2005	Town Hall, St Annes

Attached documents

Notice of motion received on 25 April 2005

Suggested timetable

DRAFT OUTLINE PROGRAMME
SPECIAL POLICY & SERVICE REVIEW COMMUNITY FORUM - 26TH
July 2005

PURPOSE OF MEETING

1. To commence a consideration of alternative political structures for the Council in response to the Notice of Motion submitted to the Council meeting on ????
2. To take evidence and comments from interested parties in order to develop recommendations for a preferred political structure.

REQUIRED OUTCOME

1. To prepare a report and recommendations on the preferred political structure for the Council

Time	Name	Comments	Contact
12.30		Refreshments	
13.00	Ian Curtis FBC Monitoring Officer	Presentation – Setting the scene & legal framework.	
13.30	Councillor J Coombes	Views and comments from the Council Leader.	
14.00	George Buckley IDeA Member Peer	Views and comments from a Conservative representative from IDeA.	
14.30	Keith Whaley IDeA Member Peer	Views and comments from an Independent representative from IDeA.	
15.00	(Deputy) Chief Exec	Views and comments relating to officer support.	
15.30	Open session for Members of Council		
17.00		‘Stocktake’ & refreshments	
18.00	Chair of Fylde LSP (Michael Wren- Hilton)	Stakeholder views.	
18.30	Mike Greenwood Director of Local Government Practice, ODPM	Views and comments of ODPM / GONW.	
19.00	Mrs J Hunter Chief Exec South Ribble BC	Experiences from a council rated as ‘good’ under the CPA process.	
20.00	Open session for Members		
21.00	Close	‘Stocktake’	

All timings are approximate.

The times allocated to specific individuals may change due to availability on the day.

FYLDE BOROUGH COUNCIL: THE COUNCIL STRUCTURE

This report and its recommendations have been written because of views expressed by Councillors at Council meetings, training meetings and in private conversation. It attempts to represent an 'all group' view bearing in mind the finely balanced majority control of the Council. It is presented as a formal motion for the full Council to consider (see Appendix 1).

There is an underlying belief that the present Executive Committee system is flawed and probably the least attractive option of those which Fylde Borough Council can legally choose from.

Because legislation will not allow it, it is not considered effective to look back to the large Committee and Sub Committee systems of the past where decisions could be debated 3 times over before becoming policy. However it is appropriate to reconsider our position with regard to the overwhelming choice made in 2003 by Councillors (and members of the public following public consultation) to pursue the FOURTH OPTION.

This created greater delegation to Committees. It enabled all Councillors, no matter how experienced or inexperienced, to have a role and to develop knowledge in a chosen area of work. Led by a Chairman and a Vice Chairman, the 4 main committees of the Council could thoroughly consider and vote upon matters before them. Councillors could also develop their thoughts, aspirations and skills to serve the next generation in a meaningful way.

Government's choice was the Cabinet System. It appears to work in large authorities staffed with a wide range of well-qualified experienced officers, accustomed to acting under delegated powers. Portfolio holders (ie members with specific responsibilities who can be shadowed by an opposition deputy) are fully accountable and responsible for major actions after receiving written, publicly available, recommendations for their decision. Fylde cannot go along this route even if it wished, without formal consultation with and approval from its Council taxpayers.

What it can do is to revert to the FOURTH OPTION, in accordance with the attached government guidance (see Appendix 2).

We have had a 6 month trial period of an Executive Committee. Five brief holders from the majority party, together with 4 'opposition' councillors with lesser roles of a subjective nature, are taking all the decisions. Only the Chairman and Vice Chairman have a briefing from the Chief Executive.

We currently have a situation where many serious matters are debated in this Executive without perceived recognition, appreciation or apparent knowledgeable leadership from the brief holders. Members of the public express surprise and concern at this approach where the Executive is overwhelmed by the volume of its work and the paucity of advice and information upon which to base decisions.

We need also to consider numerous outstanding matters, like the work of past Task and Finish Groups, like the need to prepare planning policy guidance statements together with the delay in moving forward the Council's accommodation and dispersal proposals. All have taken a back seat amongst the increasing weight of agenda issues placed upon a few Executive Members. Too many elected councillors are now spectators on the sidelines.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Council Structure reverts to the FOURTH OPTION Committee System based upon that which operated from May 2003 until August 2004. That this takes effect not later than 1st September 2005.

In addition members of Council are recommended to give consideration to the following ancillary matters by each being voted upon for approval, approval in principle subject to further detail information or whatever is the wish of the majority.

1. Each Committee be asked to report to Council upon its recommended terms of delegation before 1st January 2006.
2. Any Committee decision be allowed to be called in for review by any 10 members, eliminating the current arrangements where intangible issues like proportionality determine whether a call-in shall be acted upon.
3. The roles of the 2 former Overview and Scrutiny Committees be developed as they recommended in July 2003 into 3 Scrutiny Committees, with effect not later than 1st September 2005.

APPENDIX 1

The Fylde Borough Council constitution allows 2 or more members to sign and present to the Chief Executive, giving 7 clear working days notice, a motion which must be considered at a Council Meeting.

This motion is addressed to The Mayor's Meeting – The Future of the Council, as advised in a letter to all Councillors dated 22 April 2005.

Paragraph 10.5 of the Standing orders says that any motion shall, upon being moved and seconded, stand referred without discussion to the relevant Committee(s) of the Council for consideration – provided that the Mayor may, if he considers it convenient and conducive to the despatch of business, allow the motion to be dealt with 'there and then'. It is hoped that this latter course of action will be possible.

APPENDIX 2

Government's White Paper 'Local Leadership, Local Choice' puts in place a radical 10 year programme for the reform and modernisation of Local government.

It requires action by each local authority to find new ways of working which put its people and communities first, concentrating upon economy efficiency and effectiveness. Small shire districts must, in their proposals, also secure continuous improvement in the way in which the local authority's functions are exercised.

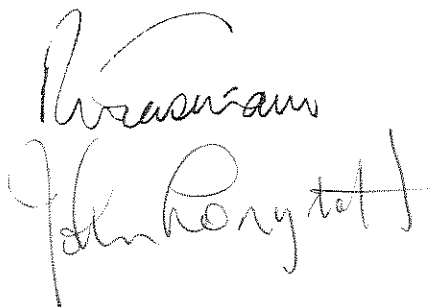
The regulations and their guidance state that the full council shall set the policy framework and approve the budget, which, in general, would be presented to it from one or more committees.

Excluding regulatory committees, there shall be no more than 5 committees.

One or more Overview and Scrutiny Committees must be established to hold the policy committees to account in public and to assist them in policy development, review and in the examination of matters of wider local interest.

There shall also be a Standards Committee.

25.4.05



Two handwritten signatures are present. The top signature is written in a cursive style and appears to read 'R. W. ...'. The bottom signature is also in cursive and appears to read 'John ...'.