

Community Outlook Forum



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| Date | 17 th October 2005 |
| Venue | Studio Room, Lowther Pavilion, Lytham |
| Committee members | Louis Rigby (Chairman) Susan Fazackerley (Vice Chairman) Richard Fulford-Brown, Karen Henshaw, Kiran Mulholland, Stephen Wall and Colin Walton |
| Other Councillors | Fabian Wilson |
| Officers | Ian Curtis, Andrew Lee, Penny Rose, Oliver Shimell, Peter Welsh and Carolyn Whewell |
| Others | None |

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 Community Outlook Forum meeting held on 8 September 2005 as a correct record for signature by the chairman.

3. Substitute members

No substitute members were reported.

4. Concluding Report of the Children's Homes Task and Finish Group

At the commencement of the item the Chairman opened the floor for members of the public to speak on their concerns surrounding two Children's Homes in St Annes.

There were a number of issues raised by members of the public. These included reports of anti-social behaviour, drinking on the street and the use of threatening and abusive language towards residents.

After the public discussion, Councillor Kiran Mulholland spoke on the Task and Finish Group's work with the regulatory agencies.

Members found that it was the responsibility of the Commission for Social Care Inspectorate (CSCI) to monitor the running of the homes. The CSCI licenses the homes

and on an annual basis carried out one planned inspection and one unannounced inspection.

At the meeting with the regional director of CSCI it was made clear to the Task and Finish Group that it was not within CSCI's inspection remit to look into how the homes interacted with the community. It was stated that their prime concern was for the children who lived at the homes. CSCI commented that they did have concerns with children being placed in the homes from outside the area but this was true on a national scale.

The group also asked under what circumstances a home would have its licence taken away. CSCI replied that this would only occur in very extreme cases.

Councillor Fabian Wilson spoke on the police issues surrounding the homes.

Police Issues concerned the amount of time that Police Officers had spent in attending call outs concerning the homes in question. At their peak the number of times police were called to the properties in the St. Annes area could be seen to be having a draining effect on police resources.

As part of this line of investigation the use of an injunction was considered in meetings involving the police and several council officers. A local authority could seek an injunction under section 222 of the Local Government Act 1972 where they considered it expedient for the promotion or protection of the interests of the inhabitants of their area. In cases of anti-social behaviour, local authorities could use Section 222 to apply for an injunction to stop behaviour that could be shown to be a public nuisance. The major problem with seeking an injunction would be the difficulty in identifying the acts to be restrained and an appropriate defendant. The courts would be unlikely to grant an injunction unless it was clear that it could be enforced.

From evidence gathered at PACT meetings and a meeting with the children's homes managers it was clear that the residents of the children's homes were not solely responsible for concerns the police and residents had in the area. There were significant concerns surrounding other youths not necessarily resident in the local area congregating near the homes and causing a great deal of anxiety to residents. Through a detailed discussion with the children's homes managers and the police a Dispersal Order was suggested as a way that could bring about improvements for both the local residents and the operations of the homes.

Following discussion the forum RESOLVED:

1. That relevant parties (Police/Community Partnership Team) are recommended to put in place a Dispersal Order around the two homes in St. Annes, the exact area to be covered to be a matter for police discretion.
2. Residents to be informed that when making a complaint about the homes they should do so in writing to the relevant children's home retaining a copy as the homes have a duty to demonstrate that they are responding to complaints.
3. On the basis of the information provided on the use of the buildings in St. Annes, officers of the Built Environment Unit be asked to confirm:
 - a. Their view that the homes fall within the normal use of a dwellinghouse (class C3);

- b. That liaison has taken place with other authorities which hold the view that this type of property is classed differently and report back to the Forum and the Development Control Committee on the implications for the authority in adopting this approach.
4. That all information is passed on to Michael Jack MP and the Secretary of State expressing the Council's deep concerns that:
 - a. Parental responsibility for children placed in the homes lies with social workers of local authorities that are often very remote from where the child is resident.
 - b. Extra strain is placed on both our educational, police and health service resources.
5. Update on Lancashire County Council's Health Equalities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Fulford-Brown presented an update on the topics which had been covered at the County Council's Health and Equalities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These included; Child diet and obesity, Concerns over the spread of MRSA in hospitals, The development of primary care trusts facilities, mental health, mortality rate levels in certain areas of the county, binge drinking and smoke free elements in the Health Improvement Bill.

The Forum RESOLVED to note the work of the Lancashire County Council Health Equalities Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and agreed to receive updates on a quarterly basis.

6. Fylde Local Strategic Partnership

Penny Rose (Fylde Local Strategic Partnership Manager) presented a report on how the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) was formed, its structure, membership and activity.

Members asked a number of questions regarding the current projects of the LSP, how it was funded and advertised and how people could apply for funding from the LSP.

Following discussion the Forum RESOLVED:

1. To note the work of the LSP to date.
2. To agree that the LSP report back to the Community Outlook Forum on a six monthly basis, commencing in April 2006 with the annual report.
3. To request that LSP updates be reported in Fylde in Focus and Grapevine.