



FYLDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting Agenda

**Policy and Service Review
Community Forum
Studio Room,
Lowther Pavilion, Lytham
9 June 2005, 6.00p.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

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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 Policy and Service Review Community Forum meeting held on 7 April 2005 (previously circulated).</i>	4
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REPORT



REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
STREETSCENE BUSINESS UNIT	POLICY AND SERVICE REVIEW COMMUNITY FORUM	9 TH JUNE 2005	4

INTERIM REPORT ON PUBLIC CONVENIENCE PROVISION

Public/Exempt item

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

Summary

The report aims to initiate the involvement of the Policy and Service Review Community Forum in looking into public convenience provision throughout the Borough.

Recommendation/s

1. That Members note the report and make suggestions as they see fit into the progression of this area of scrutiny.

Executive brief

The item falls within the following executive brief[s]: Quality Services (Councillor John Coombes)

Report

1. Councilor Pagett submitted a request for the Community Forums to look into the closure of certain public conveniences and for the Forums to look into the provision of public conveniences in its wider context.

2. This item has been given an urgent priority as the reopening of certain facilities after closure due to budget considerations means there is time pressure to resolve the issue. The Scrutiny Management Board were asked to indicate whether or not they agreed that the item was urgent and should proceed directly to the Policy and Service Review Community Forum. Members of the Scrutiny Management Board were contacted electronically through email and a majority agreed.
3. At the meeting an oral report will be given by Dave Jenkinson (Unit Business Manager of Streetscene), which will focus on starting the scrutiny process in this area and detailing some of the possible wider implications of the closures. A more detailed written report will be brought before the Forum after adequate time has been given to fully investigate the issue.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	These will be detailed within the meeting.
Legal	It should be remembered that there are no statutory duties to provide public conveniences and that it is a discretionary power of the Council. If public toilets are provided, the council is required to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act in the way it provides them.
Community Safety	No further implications.
Human Rights and Equalities	No further implications.
Sustainability	No further implications.
Health & Safety and Risk Management	No further implications.

REPORT AUTHOR	TEL	DATE	DOC ID
Oliver Shimell	(01253) 658423	27 May 2005	Interim Report on Public Convenience Provision

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS		
NAME OF DOCUMENT	DATE	WHERE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION
N/A	N/A	N/A

Attached documents

Letter to all Councillors from Dave Jenkinson

STREETSCENE BUSINESS UNIT

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

*Please ask David Jenkinson
for:*

Tel.: 01253 658631

Email: davidj@fylde.gov.uk

Date: 17th May 2005

Dear Councillor,

Public Toilet Provision – Borough Wide

I have been receiving telephone calls (no doubt you have) regarding the closure of some of our public toilets. This note is an explanation of why this situation has arisen and an explanation of the rationale behind choosing the facilities to keep open and the ones to temporarily close.

Why.

Due to the financial pressures facing the Council for the period 2005/06 Unit Business Managers were asked to prepare reports detailing potential revenue savings for presentation to the Executive committee for consideration.

A series of budget meetings took place (Exec committees on 8th and 23 February, an Informal Council meeting on the 14th February and the Performance Improvement Community Forum on the 17th February) where the Executive committee scrutinised each UBM's suggestions and either accepted or rejected the potential savings. One of my suggestions was to reduce the number of public toilet facilities we operate, and therefore the number of people we have employed on that service. I indicated that if we took this step there would be a potential saving to the Council of approximately £40k in the 2005/06-revenue budget.

The Executive committee accepted this proposal and the minutes were approved at full Council on 3rd March 2005.

It should be noted that the Council is not statutorily obliged to provide public toilet facilities. Indeed, statutory provision, or not, was one of the main criteria on which the Executive committee judged proposals.

The Rationale

The rationale behind choosing which facilities to keep open and which to temporarily close was arrived at using three inter-related key indicators. They were as follows:

- Financial/Operational

We would have a budget to employ one person on the service. That meant we had to determine how many facilities one person, could, physically open, cleanse and close, in one day. (For seven days a week). That figure was six permanent facilities and one summer facility, Borough-Wide.

- Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

As you know we now have the DDA requirements upon us and therefore had to do a building structural survey on all our facilities to determine the cost of bringing the facilities up to DDA compliance. I have that in depth material should you wish a copy. To fit in with the other two key indicators we did choose some facilities that were more expensive to upgrade, because they gave a better Location/Financial fit.

- Location.

We can operate six full time facilities and one summer facility (budget & physical capability) We had to determine how to maximise the remaining facilities in terms of location for the number of potential users, both residents and visitors, and provide a **'borough- wide'** service.

If we take this one step further it means where possible, we have to have strategically placed facilities. For example, with only having six permanent facilities throughout the Borough we can only operate one facility in the St Anne's Sq. area, Consequently, using the details from all three key indicators, St Anne's Sq. facility is the strategic choice, and not that at Ashton Gardens. Similarly in Lytham, we can operate only one facility in Lytham, using the above key indicators the strategic choice is Pleasant St Car park, rather Lowther Gardens or the Lytham esplanade. In Kirkham, we can operate one facility, so it has to be that at the Market Sq. and consequently the Moor St. facility is temporarily shut.

The consequences.

We have budget provision to implement the Council decision to operate 6 full time facilities and one in the summer only. In the budget planning process there were four opportunities (if the full Council meeting on the 4th March is included) opportunities for this proposal to be refused if it was found to unacceptable and identify compensatory savings from other service areas. This proposal was approved.

To implement this resolution of the Council I have issued three redundancy notices to the staff engaged on the service, in accordance with the Councils Redundancy and Redeployment procedures. This process culminated with the individuals notice being completed on Friday 6th May, hence, from that time on there has only to be one person employed on the service and that is why the facilities in question were shut on that date.

I can appreciate that special cases could be made to reopen facilities for virtually every facility we have temporarily closed. If that were the case then we would of course have to find compensatory savings from another service area.

I understand that Councilor Barbara Padgett has set in motion a process to review the decision to close the Ashton Gardens facility through a scrutiny committee. If that scrutiny were to take place, the scope of the scrutiny would need to be widened to include all the closed facilities.

Due to the current situation and, whilst the scrutiny process is being investigated, I have reopened the facilities at Lowther, Ashton Gardens and Stannah Bank at Fairhaven.

Also, a press release has been prepared and issued on the subject and is attached for your information.

I would be happy to discuss with you the details described above and supply any information that should be requested.

Kind Regards

Yours faithfully,

David Jenkinson
Street Scene Unit Manager

REPORT

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
UNIT BUSINESS MANAGER (BUILT ENVIRONMENT UNIT)	POLICY AND SERVICE REVIEW COMMUNITY FORUM	9 TH JUNE 2005	5

THE HOUSING ACT 2004

Public/Exempt item

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

Summary

To advise members of recent legislative changes by the introduction of the Housing Act 2004 and to consider the implications on the workload of the housing service. Members will also need to consider the policy requirements for the use of the new provisions.

Recommendation/s

1. That members consider the implications of the new legislative requirements and consider the need for policy development relating, in particular, to empty property management orders.

Executive brief

The item falls within the following executive brief[s]: Quality of Life (Councillor Patricia Fieldhouse)

Report

1. The Housing Act of 2004 received royal assent in Nov 2004. It introduced a number of significant changes that will impact on the delivery of housing services in Fylde. The purpose of this report is to inform and advise members of these changes and of their impact. The more important changes are summarised below.

2. Licensing of houses in multiple occupation

The act introduces a new definition for 'house in multiple occupation' as a building

- Which is occupied by more than one household in which there are shared facilities;
 - Which is occupied by more than one household and which is a converted building not entirely consisting of self contained units;
 - Which comprises entirely of self contained flats and the standard of conversion does not meet the requirements of at least the building regulations of 1991 and at least one third of the flats are occupied on a short tenancy.
3. The Act allows for the secretary of state to make regulations prescribing those Categories of HMO that will be subject to mandatory licensing. The regulations have not yet been made but it is envisaged that the focus on licensing will be on larger (3 storey or more) that are occupied by 5 or more people in two or more households. It is now more likely that exemptions from licensing will be available to HMO's that comprise of converted buildings. The exemptions are expected to be more extensive than previously believed.
 4. The majority of the stock of HMO's in Fylde is made up of converted buildings containing flats that do not share amenities. It is likely that mandatory licensing will not have as great an impact as previously believed although the regulations have not yet been laid before parliament. The maintenance of appropriate standards for safety and well being of occupants in exempt buildings will continue to be enforced through the use of the appropriate housing fitness legislation.
 5. The new legislation also provides for schemes for the discretionary licensing of HMO's that are not subject to mandatory licensing. Such schemes will be subject to the approval of the secretary of state and will need to demonstrate that they represent the most appropriate method of dealing with problems associated with the category of HMO being targeted.
 6. The perceived reduction in the scale of licensable HMO's in Fylde will raise the importance of a continued programme of routine inspections of such properties in Fylde. It will remain important to be seen to be working in co-operation with the private rented sector to secure a continued improvement in standards in this important part of the housing market.

THE HOUSING HEALTH AND SAFETY RATING SYSTEM (HHSRS)

7. At present the suitability of fitness for occupation of a dwelling is governed largely by the physical condition of the structure of the dwelling. Little emphasis is given to the risks imposed by the dwelling on the occupants. The fitness regime is as set out in the housing act 1985 but is based largely on criteria first considered about 80 years ago.
8. The test of fitness for occupation is to be replaced by a new evidence based risk assessment process using the housing health and safety rating system. The HHSRS is

based on an assessment of the risk posed by the living conditions to the potential occupant who is the most vulnerable to the particular condition or hazard under consideration. For example stairs pose a greater risk to the elderly so when assessing risks relating to stairs they are considered as the most vulnerable group. The very young as well as the elderly are susceptible to the cold so both groups would be considered vulnerable in relation to risks associated with the cold. A dwelling that is safe for the most vulnerable will be safe for all.

9. The HHSRS will also judge the effect of an occurrence of the risk that may be present. For example the effect of a fall from a window on the upper floors of a building will be greater than that of a fall from the ground floor. The risk of the two taking place may, though, be the same for a similar defect. The HHSRS will require a consideration of both the risk and effect of the risk actually taking place.
10. The system will require the assessment of 29 categories of housing hazard that were not covered or not adequately covered by the old fitness standard. A rating for each hazard will be required from an inspection of a dwelling that will be expressed as a numerical score. The score will fall within one of 10 bands. Bands A to C will require the local authority to take action to remove the risk associated with the hazard.
11. The HHSRS represents a significant departure from the existing method of dealing with housing conditions and will apply to all dwelling types and tenures. It introduces a complex system of risk assessment and it will require significant training for the majority of staff in housing services. The training is to be provided on behalf of the government by the I&DeA. The training programme will be rolled out during the summer of 2005 and it is expected that the new system will be fully operational by October 2005.

EMPTY HOMES

12. New powers are introduced that will allow the local housing authority to take action to bring into use dwellings that have been empty for more than 6 months. The power to do this is known as an Empty Dwelling management order. The order will enable the council to take management control of the dwelling so that it can ensure occupation of it. The council would effectively take over most of the rights and responsibilities of the owner. The council would have the right to possession of the dwelling and would be able to create and manage tenancies, collect rent, carry out repairs and renovations etc.
13. The first stage of the process is the making of an interim management order. The council will need to make application for authorisation to a residential property tribunal. Before doing so it must be satisfied that the dwelling is empty and has been so for at least 6 months, and that the making of the order is the most appropriate course of action having regard to the rights of the owner and of the wider community in which the dwelling is located. Guidance will be issued to assist in the process and it is expected that a number of exemptions will be made to the provisions.
14. There will be significant increases in workload associated with the above changes some of which have been taken account of during the recent considerations on the structure of the housing services section of the built environment unit.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	Staffing implications, revenue generation from licensing, financial implications from managing tenancies
Legal	Licensing and HHSRH will be mandatory. Legal implications to tenancy creation and management through use of management orders.
Community Safety	No further implications
Human Rights and Equalities	The rights of owners subject to management orders will need to be carefully considered.
Sustainability	None other than contained in the report
Health & Safety and Risk Management	No further implications

REPORT AUTHOR	TEL	DATE	DOC ID
John Cottam	(01253) 658690	23 May 2005	Housing Act 2004 Report

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS		
NAME OF DOCUMENT	DATE	WHERE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION
N/A	N/A	N/A

Attached documents

N/A

REPORT



REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
BUILT ENVIRONMENT UNIT	POLICY AND SERVICE REVIEW COMMUNITY FORUM	9 JUNE 2005	6

FYLDE BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING STRATEGY 2004-2007

Public/Exempt item

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

Summary

To advise members on the progress in achieving a “fit for purpose” housing strategy and to highlight the actions to be taken and resources required in delivering the aims and objectives of the strategy.

Recommendation/s

1. To consider the amended Fylde Borough Council Housing strategy 2004-2007 and recommend its adoption to the Executive committee.
2. Consider how Members of this Committee can be engaged and involved in the monitoring and implementation of the strategy and action plan.

Executive brief

The item falls within the following executive brief[s]: Quality of Life (Councillor Patricia Fieldhouse)

Report

1. The Fylde Borough Council Housing Strategy 2004-2007 was presented as a draft document for consideration by the Executive Committee on 27th October 2004. That committee adopted the strategy for submission to government offices. Since its adoption further consultations have taken place with officers from the Government Offices for the North West (GONW). A copy of the amended document is attached for members' consideration and debate.

2. Further, relatively minor, amendments have been made following the advice received and the document has been submitted to GONW for its formal assessment and feedback. A feedback meeting took place with council officers and a representative of GONW on 1st April 2005.
3. The feedback has at this stage scored the strategy at 25 points out of a maximum possible of 30 points. A full 30 point score is required to enable the document to be classed as 'fit for purpose'. The weaknesses in the current strategy are relatively minor and it is felt that changes can be made at this stage with the prospect of achieving fit for purpose on resubmission.
4. The action plan contained in the document details the proposed actions over the life of the strategy and indicates the expected levels of expenditure required to deliver the actions. In addition to playing a key role in the development of this strategy, it is anticipated that Members will be involved specifically with regular monitoring of the objectives contained within the action plan.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	Significant resource implications to delivery of the actions within the strategy
Legal	The council is required to produce a housing Strategy that is fit for purpose
Community Safety	No further implications
Human Rights and Equalities	No further implications
Sustainability	The strategy seeks to assist in maintaining a sustainable balanced housing market.
Health & Safety and Risk Management	No further implications

REPORT AUTHOR	TEL	DATE	DOC ID
John Cottam	(01253) 658690	23 May 2005	Housing Strategy Report 2004-2007

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS		
NAME OF DOCUMENT	DATE	WHERE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION
N/A	N/A	N/A

Attached documents



Housing Strategy 2004-07



“Providing additional affordable housing is the number one housing priority in Fylde”



If you require this document in large print, audio or braille, please contact the Town Hall on
01253 658658



Housing Strategy

Executive Summary

2004-07

*“Providing additional
affordable housing is
the number one housing
priority in Fylde”*

Executive Summary

Issues Considered in the Housing Strategy

There are 34,300 dwellings in the Fylde Borough, of which 81% are owner-occupied, 11.5% are private-rented and 7.1% are housing association

Fylde is a popular place to live and visit, comprising 3 main urban areas of Lytham, St Annes and Kirkham/Wesham and 15 semi/rural settlements

The housing market compares more easily with the south-east rather than the north-west

The council transferred its stock to a housing association in 2000

No Local Authority-Social Housing Grant is available to enable the council to support social housing development

Although the council fails to meet many of the regional funding criteria, its priorities do reflect regional and national priorities

Historically the council has under-performed in terms of its housing function, but in August 2004 it became the first council nationally to successfully come out of 'support and supervision' by the Audit Commission. It has undergone a comprehensive Best Value review and has been awarded a 'fair' rating with promising prospects of improvement

Comparatively high level of dwellings in the private rented sector, higher than regional and national averages

Historically high house prices which have risen by more than 75% since 2000. This trend is continuing.

Relatively static income levels

Since Right to Buy was introduced, social housing levels have reduced by 40%

5.2% of housing stock is vacant which includes a proportion of second homes

Social housing demand remains high and is continuing to increase

Social housing lettings show a steady decline since 2002

Housing Benefit levels fall short of actual rents charged in the private rented sector, by an average of approximately £50 per week. This is higher for family accommodation

The emerging Joint Lancashire Structure Plan indicates no need to release additional housing sites. However the council's planning policy states that affordable housing is an exception

Fordham Research completed a housing needs and stock condition survey in 2002. At that time the housing market was considerably less expensive, but it still found a requirement for 420 affordable dwellings per year up to 2007

The overall average house price in the borough in 2004 is £153,000

The average household income is £22,544

Affordable housing is needed for all property types, with the majority being family housing

Discounted sales on new build dwellings is not an option in Fylde as the market is too expensive

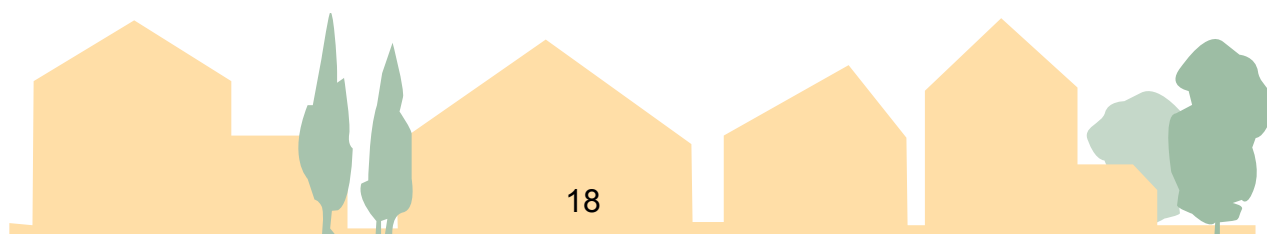
The ability of local people to afford housing in the borough is the primary concern

Homelessness presentations have increased, probably due to the increased profile of the new service, launched in April 2004 and also improved performance

The Homelessness Unit's target to prevent families staying in bed and breakfast longer than 6 weeks is being met. This proves challenging in a borough with no emergency accommodation. The council relies on hostels out of the area and the units made available by New Fylde Housing

5.6% of homes are unfit – of which 14.5% are in private rented sector

Estimated cost to carry out repairs in private rented sector is £18.9 million over the next 10 years





40% of households contain an older person over retirement age

Fylde's ageing population places increased demands on council, health and social services resources

The council has overspent its Disabled Facilities Grant budget for 2003 and 2004 and a waiting list system has also been introduced

7.7% of households have a member with a physical disability – this figure includes frail elderly

Key Priority Themes

- 1 Affordable Housing
- 2 Homelessness
- 3 Private Sector
- 4 Supported Housing

Each theme has its own action group and action plan covering a range of objectives

How the Strategy was Developed

Excellent commitment to work in partnership with up to 300 strategic housing partners

Fylde has a well-attended Housing Strategy Forum which acts a steering group for the strategy development

Annual strategy conference – decided upon the 4 priority themes

4 action groups established and co-ordinated jointly with partners to look at the themes in more detail and formulate action plans

There's a corporate acknowledgement of housing as a priority and it is included in the Corporate Plan and Local Strategic Partnership

Ongoing consultation with stakeholders and members of the community

What Happens Next?

The strategy document includes a detailed action plan on how the council intends to address the key concerns and how to deliver on highlighted objectives

Progress will be monitored by the Housing Strategy Forum, Executive Committee, Local Strategic Partnership and action groups

Major changes to the document are not anticipated within the 2005/06 but as this is an organic process, should the need arise the document will be re-published and full consultation with all stakeholders will be conducted.

Further Information

If you have any comments or want to know more you can contact any of the following:

David Wilkinson - Unit Business Manager
(overall responsibility for housing and corporate priorities)
Tel: 01253 658658
davidw@fylde.gov.uk

John Cottam - Housing Services Manager
(private sector housing, grants and development)
Tel: 01253 658690
johnc@fylde.gov.uk

Linda Chippendale - Principal Housing Policy Officer
(strategy process, policy development, older people, homelessness/advice)
Tel: 01253 658689
lindac@fylde.gov.uk

This document and related policies and information are available on the Council's website
www.fylde.gov.uk/housing
and from the following Council Office

Town Hall
St Annes
FY8 1LW
01253 658658





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Contact details are on the back cover

Introduction

“Providing additional affordable housing is the number 1 housing priority in Fylde”.

The Fylde coast is a popular place to live and visit. As a consequence of this our housing stock is subject to many of the influences and pressures seen more often in the south-east than the north-west of the country. Many people who already live here understandably want to ensure that the history and unique qualities of the area are maintained. The Council is supportive of this sentiment and needs to use its influence to promote a balanced and varied housing market which is able to cope with the social and lifestyle changes which all communities are facing.

The purpose of this strategy is to set out how the Council and its partners propose to use their influence over the next few years to address the housing needs in the borough.

It is also a Government requirement that every local authority must produce a housing strategy, which will be formally assessed.

There is little doubt that the current major housing issue in Fylde Borough is to provide affordable housing. Over the last 3 years the affordability gap has widened. House prices have increased on average by over 75% since the Council transferred its housing stock to New Fylde Housing, (NFH). However this is not reflected in income levels, which have remained relatively static. Additionally the existing provision of affordable housing is diminishing, mainly through right to buy sales. When we consider these factors alongside a popular private rented sector a picture of acute need emerges. This strategy will demonstrate how we will address these serious problems. Housing has a high profile on the political and strategic agendas. This has led to:

- Increased resources being channelled into the improvement of the Housing Services
- The appointment of 4 additional members of staff during Autumn/Winter 2003
- The introduction of new planning policies to help us provide affordable housing
- A co-ordinated approach to affordable housing provision between our 3 housing association preferred partners

- Comprehensive strategic partnerships with up to 300 stakeholders to help us deliver our objectives
- Detailed service user consultation has begun and will continue in the future

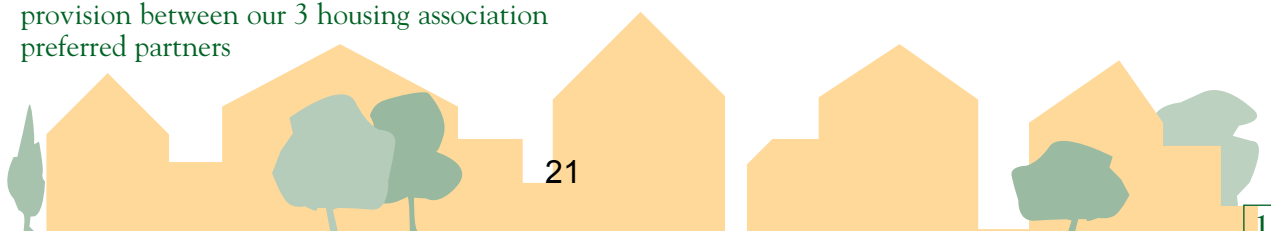
We are pleased with the progress we have made in a short space of time but we recognise that we need to maintain the pace of improvement and prioritise our efforts and investments to deal with the big housing issues facing Fylde Borough. Some of the initiatives we have developed and continue to develop include:

- Launching Fylde's Housing Advice and Homelessness Partnership on 1 April 2004. The partnership is between Fylde Borough Council, Face to Face (local charitable homelessness project), and New Fylde Housing
- The continued development of the Landlords' Forum with plans to expand affordable housing into the private rented sector
- The introduction of a private sector accreditation scheme
- The launch of an Empty Homes Strategy and marketing campaign in May 2004
- Improved customer access to all our housing services
- Introduction of a Home Improvement Agency jointly with Wyre Borough Council
- A substantial increase in government funding to support Disabled Facilities Grants

This Strategy Statement is the result of 12 months consultation with approximately 300 stakeholders and service users. As such it is, in real terms, a shared strategy. We are proud of what we have achieved so far with our partners and have built a strong foundation to continue to improve our housing services for our community.

Thanks to everyone who took part.

Cllr John Coombes
Leader of the Council



National Policies

The following initiatives are at the heart of the Government's national housing policies and have been used to determine regional priorities.

The Communities Plan

The essence of the plan is to create sustainable communities which are successful, safe, inclusive and economically active. A key priority is to tackle deprived areas across all the regions. Although Fylde is not regarded as a deprived area the Council has adopted a holistic approach to housing developments in order that the wider range of community needs, such as transport, crime prevention, education, employment and broader environmental issues are considered.

Housing Market Renewal Fund

A Government fund has been made available specifically to tackle areas with a low demand for housing. Obviously Fylde does not qualify for this funding as demand remains consistent throughout the borough, as indicated throughout this document.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Another funding stream was established to bring about harmonisation between deprived and more successful areas of the country. Once again, Fylde does not qualify as a priority area.

The Planning Reform Agenda

The Government wants to place the planning system at the centre of the regeneration mechanism in order to deliver the urban renaissance objectives. Housing requirements are dictated by local structure plans which place emphasis on areas in need of redevelopment. Fylde BC's response to this issue is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

Decent Homes

The council is aware that one of the national priorities is to reduce the number of vulnerable people living in non-decent housing.

It is estimated that 32% of dwellings in Fylde are non-decent, (FBC stock condition survey 2002), with the vast majority (82%) of these failing the standard on a single item. Of the total non-decent dwellings, 70% fail to meet the standard because of a lack of a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

The council's adopted Housing Renewal Policy seeks to address the Decent Homes Standard by including: works to make homes decent, as a specific criterion of eligibility for grant assistance. These works will be primarily for homes that need works of repair or improvement and will not be targeted at thermal comfort measures. The policy is targeted towards low-income groups by the utilisation of a means test on all applications.

To address the failures of the Decent Homes Standard that occur due to a lack of reasonable thermal comfort, the council has introduced and will maintain a home insulation scheme for all residents of the borough. The scheme is designed to be additional to and supplement the national Warmfront scheme. The scheme is delivered in partnership with a local installer and is funded by a major energy company. The scheme offers substantial discounted insulation measures to all households with additional discounts available to elderly households.

Regional Housing Priorities

The four priorities for the north west region as set out in the Regional Housing Statement are:

1. Urban renaissance and dealing with changing demand

The Regional Planning Guidance, Regional Economic Strategy and Regional Housing Strategy all cite market failure and low demand housing as a major concern for the region. The Communities Plan earmarked £500 million for nine Market Renewal Pathfinders across the region to address this concern. However, this aspect of housing need and concern is not identified in Fylde. It remains a popular area, with a relatively buoyant economy, successful schools, good public transport and one of the safest areas in the country to live.

2. Providing affordable homes to maintain balanced communities

The Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, (CURS), report identified affordability 'hot spots' across the region, specifically in rural areas. As such investment will be targeted to these areas whilst encouraging urban renaissance of nearby low demand areas. The Housing Corporation has reflected its support through its Approved Development Programme. Fylde's stock transfer association, New Fylde Housing, has received £621,000 ADP funding for 2004/05 to develop rural purchase and repair and shared ownership schemes. Fortunately in this instance, an element of Fylde's needs reflect a regional priority. However, whilst the rural funding is essential, so is investment in our urban settlements, specifically Lytham and St Annes, which remain the areas with the highest housing need in the borough, (Housing Needs Survey 2003). Regional thinking seems to be that once the lower demand urban areas are revived through investment, markets like Fylde should witness a 'cooling off'. Affordability has always been an issue in Fylde, especially for first-time buyers. Increasingly, Fylde's young people and families have no option but to move into the private rented sector, usually Houses in Multiple Occupation, or to move out of the borough to less expensive areas. It is these people we need to help if we are to achieve balanced housing, economy and communities.

3. Delivering decent homes in thriving neighbourhoods

This priority is intended to focus on the condition of housing stock as part of a broader regeneration issue. As it prioritises areas of concentrated unfit and disrepair, Fylde B.C. is unlikely to benefit from any regional investment funds. However, the Council is currently working on maximising the opportunities set out in the Regulatory Reform Order through its private sector renewal policies. (further details in the action plan).

4. Meeting the region's needs for specialist and supported housing

Whilst the North West Regional Housing Board admits that insufficient evidence exists on the levels and need for supported and specialist housing, it will provide funding for the development of supported housing initiatives, if based on sound evidence of need. Housing partners in Fylde are working hard at a local level through the Supported Housing Action Group to identify borough specific issues.

Whilst Fylde Borough does not share some of the large-scale problems of other areas in the north west, e.g. identifiable areas in need of regeneration and low demand for housing, we believe this strategy's objectives demonstrate clear links with other regional themes. Some examples are contained Box 1 and in Chapter 4 of this document.

Box 1

- We will require larger private developments to have a mix of affordable housing for rent, shared ownership and some discounted sales, with a view to providing balanced and sustainable communities.
- We welcome commuted sums from developers for sites where on-site provision would not be practical. This enables us to provide affordable housing within existing communities, whilst at the same time improving unfit or empty dwellings.
- Our private sector grant budget has increased and prioritises unfit dwellings.
- In advance of formal supported housing research findings, we are working with the Supported Housing Action Group to consider needs locally.
- New Fylde Housing employs tenancy support workers for its own tenants and homeless applicants.
- The council funds a tenancy support worker specifically for private sector tenants and landlords.
- A specialist acquired brain injury scheme will be developed during 2004/05 by NFH, in partnership with Lancashire County Council.

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Sub-Regional Strategic Work

Fylde B.C. is a member of the Lancashire West Housing Group which occasionally joins the other groups in the county and beyond to consider strategic issues. This group recently met to consider the development of sub-regional housing strategies. Links have been made with the Housing Quality Network and other successful sub-regional groups, such as the Welland Partnership in the East Midlands, to share ideas and learn from their experience. The Lancashire West Group meets bi-monthly to develop a sub-regional housing strategy incorporating district-specific and shared priorities. Representatives from the North West Regional Housing Board have been involved in this process. One of the key aims of this strategy will be to raise the profile at a regional level of district authorities that do not meet regional or national housing priorities. The strategy should be finalised during the early part of 2005.

Community and Corporate Context

Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate the integrated approach the Council and its partners have adopted towards improved strategic planning.

The *Community Plan* represents the long-term vision for the borough over the next 10-15 years and is produced by the *Local Strategic Partnership*. The *Corporate Plan* represents specific objectives the Council will deliver over a shorter timescale. The *Local Strategic Partnership* (LSP) is the over-arching body which reviews and informs the aims and objectives of the Community Plan. Membership of the partnership is broad ranging and includes: Lancashire County Council; Lancashire Constabulary; National Probation Service; Fylde Primary Care Trust; Fylde Youth Council; Age Concern Fylde; Fylde Community Safety Partnership; Fylde Housing Partnership; Council for Voluntary Service; Face to Face; North & West Lancashire Learning Partnership; New Fylde Housing; Muir housing Group; Five Piers Housing; Connexions; Lancashire Fire & Rescue service and Fylde Borough Council. Housing professional and other stakeholders therefore play important roles in this forum and help to ensure that housing issues are adequately addressed.

Figure 1 illustrates housing's input into elements of the Local Strategic Partnership, (LSP). A housing specific sub-group does not exist, however 2 housing representatives sit on the Executive Board and the Health and Well-being sub-group. The latter group is currently producing an action plan which will reflect the objectives and actions of this Strategy and ensure that the health impacts of access to decent housing are recognised and addressed. Chairs of the sub-groups meet to discuss cross-cutting issues and avoid duplication of actions. The Executive Board is responsible for prioritising the actions across the

Community Plan themes. As such, housing has an input into every area of the LSP.

Housing issues also form a major strand of the five key objectives of the Council's own Corporate Plan, which are listed below:

1. Environment
2. A Safer Community
3. The Local Economy
4. Quality Services
5. Quality of Life

Specific housing actions within the key objectives are detailed in Table 1. More detailed housing objectives are contained within the Action Plan in Appendix 1. The Action Plan is a statement of intent and will inform the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. We will also use it to influence the investment decisions of our partners.

Community Safety

The Council is also an active member of the Community Safety Partnership, with particular interest in the town centres initiatives, crime and fear of crime. The partnership discusses how the Housing and Community Safety strategies share common objectives to improve the quality of people's lives in the borough. Outcomes of the partnership include:

- Setting up a Nominated Neighbour Scheme to help vulnerable members of the community avoid bogus callers.
- Working with managers of local children's homes to educate the young people about housing issues in the Fylde area.
- Multi-agency sharing of information around specific crime 'hot-spots', including houses in multiple occupation (HMO's) in town centres.

Figure 1

The Role of Housing in the Local Strategic Partnership

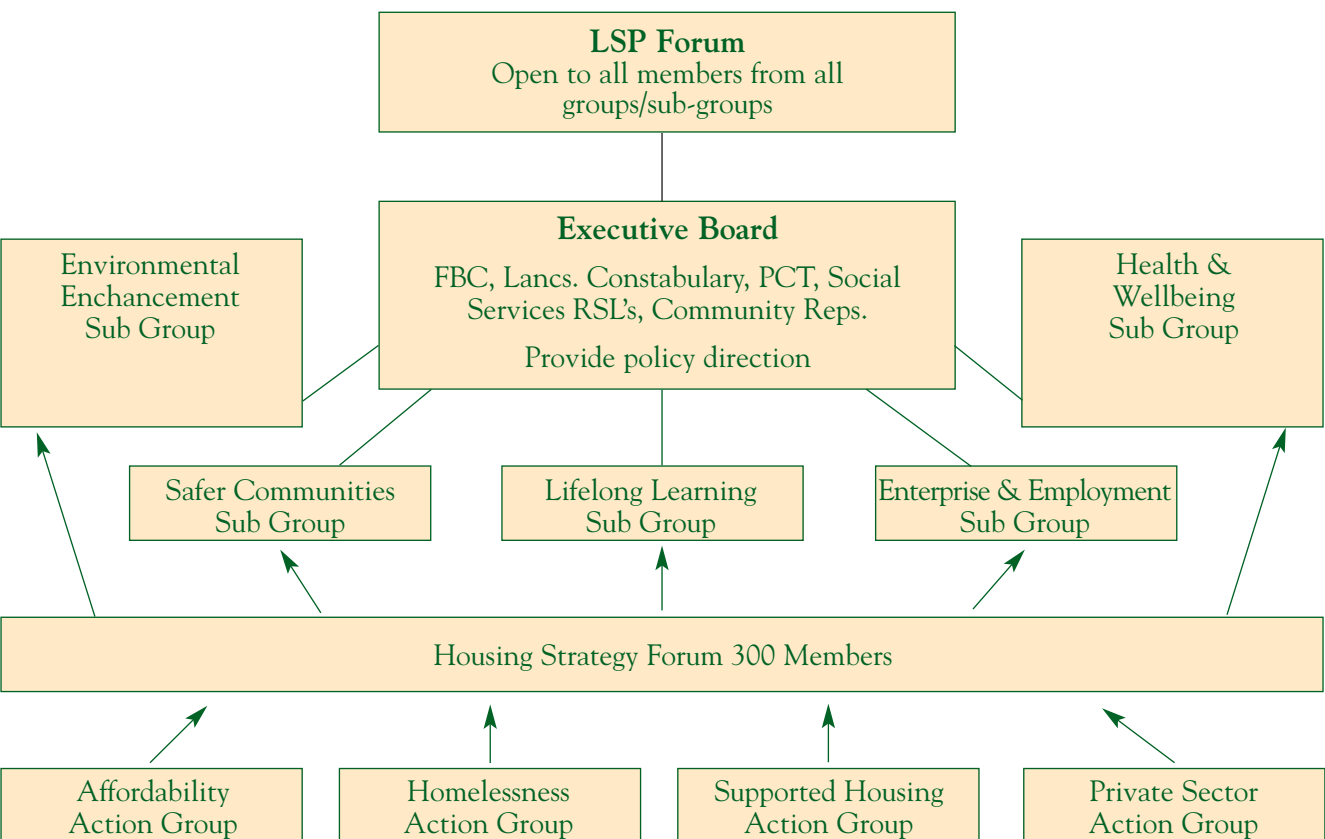


Figure 2

Corporate Strategic Framework

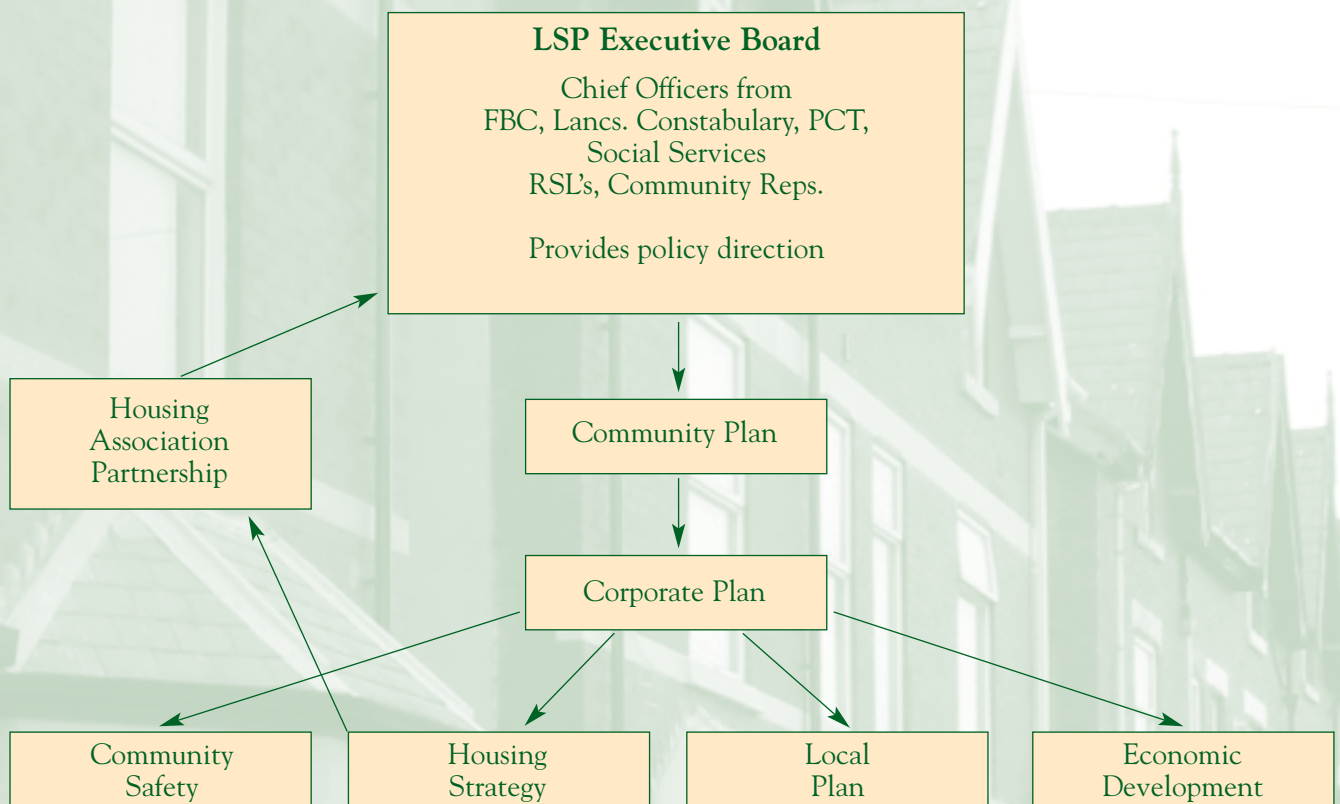


Table 1 Corporate Plan Objectives

Priority Objective	Action	Outcome	Implementation
Environment	Review housing chapter of the Local Plan	Clear housing policies in Local Plan Balanced housing market	2004
	Implement new housing renewal policies	Increased availability of quality housing Balanced housing market	2004
	Establish a Home Improvement Agency	Better housing services delivered in the borough	2004
	Enable the provision of additional units of affordable housing	Increased availability of affordable housing for rent or sale to people in housing need	2004/05 and ongoing
	Revise and publish a 'fit for purpose' housing strategy	Balanced housing market Positive rating by Government Office North West	2004/07
A Safer Community	A Audit of all Council partnerships	Improved access to services More effective partnership working and sharing of resources	2004/05
	Implement the homelessness strategy	Improved access to services BVPI performance in top quartile	2004/05
The Local Economy	Develop a Rural economy Diversification Policy	Improved access to employment opportunities. Number of new and different businesses set up in rural areas.	2004/05
	Review the Economic Development Strategy	Increase employment opportunities. Improved strategy with new targets in place.	2005/06
Quality Services	Ensure that service standards are defined within Service Plans for all customer facing services	Improved customer access and community awareness. All communication responded to within published standard requirements and within target timescales.	2004
	Six-monthly reporting against national and local BVPI trends	Openness & accountability. Published results on notice boards and newsletters communicated to all stakeholders and general public	2004 and ongoing
	Implement a rolling programme of customer satisfaction surveys in all Business Units	Improving service quality. Customer satisfaction rates no lower than 75% in any service area by April 2005.	2004 and ongoing
	Assess the benefits of a quality accreditation schemes and the use of European Foundation for Quality Management for implementation across the Council.	Improved customer satisfaction. Delivery of efficient quality services for our customers.	2005/06
Quality of Life	Consider the potential for Strategic Partnership	Community accountability & value for money	2004/05

Housing Strategy Forum

The Housing Strategy Forum is a key partnership which debates and prioritises housing issues for the borough, alongside the LSP Executive and sub-groups. There are approximately 300 members including statutory, voluntary and private sector organisations, community representatives and elected members. A list of active partners and consultees is contained in Appendix 3. The forum was re-established during 2003 and is led by new staff appointed by the Council. It meets quarterly and is regularly well attended. In fact it was so well attended that it became difficult to cover all the issues which required consideration. The forum agreed to host a full day *housing conference* in December 2003, which has helped determine housing priorities and set out the future structure and delivery mechanism of the forum.

Fylde Housing Conference

The housing conference was a great success with nearly 200 people in attendance on the day. Guest speakers attended from top performing local authorities in the northwest. The delegates identified the following 4 priority themes which are now incorporated as the main issues to address locally within this Strategy:

- Affordability
- Homelessness
- Private sector
- Supported housing

A number of delegates volunteered to set up action groups for each of the 4 themes. Each action group met throughout 2004 and considered the issues in more detail. Action plans were produced which have been incorporated into this strategy's Action Plan in Appendix 1.

Housing Action Groups

The emphasis in Fylde is to avoid holding 'talking shops' in favour of vibrant action groups with a shared responsibility for housing services in the borough and a Housing Strategy that everyone can influence and own.

Chapter 2 goes on to demonstrate how this true partnership has worked in a systematic and planned way in order to develop this strategy. It also shows how we value and act upon the views of our community.

The development of this Strategy has also been informed by experience gained by officers and Councillors during visits to Beacon Councils in different regions of the UK. Box 2 indicates some examples of this cross-boundary working.

Box 2

Enabling & Cross-Boundary Working

- Developing a sub-regional case with similar districts in the north-west to feed into the Regional Housing Statement
- Partnering with a neighbouring Council, PCTs, Supporting People Team and Social Services to develop a Home Improvement Agency
- Shelter Cumbria provide a quarterly independent review of homelessness and housing advice cases to improve service delivery
- The Council has commissioned an independent mediation service based in Preston
- Internalising best practice from Harrogate B.C. on the use of affordable housing policies in the Local Plan
- Visits to high performing authorities on 'fit for purpose' Housing Strategies, (Barking & Dagenham, Bolton, Blackburn with Darwen, Tameside & LB Harrow)

Performance

Prior to the development of this strategy, the council was placed under 'support and supervision' by the Audit Commission as a result of a poor Best Value inspection in 2003. Since then the Council has invested resources to increase the capacity within the team (4 new members of staff) and overhaul the housing service provided. One of the crucial initiatives that have been introduced is a rolling programme of customer satisfaction surveys. A performance target of 80% satisfaction was set and the response up to December 2004 shows that 96.25% of all housing customers are happy with the service the council provides. Learning from best practice and top-performing authorities all over the country, a range of policies and initiatives have been developed. Also regular media advertisements are placed and leaflets produced relating to the full range of housing services available. Key areas that were focused upon include:

Fylde has been developing local performance indicators over the last four years changing several over time as we learn about what works well, especially from our customers. Both national and local performance indicators are set out in the corporate Best Value Performance Plan which is updated annually which informs individual service plans for all Council departments. The indicators are monitored monthly by Executive Directors, senior

Strategic Context

politicians and any exceptions are considered by the Scrutiny Committee. The current local performance indicators for housing are detailed below but these are currently being revised and some will be removed/amended and new ones added. Full details of the current position together with all the Council's performance information can be found on the Council's website: www.fylde.gov.uk

Performance Indicator	Target
The no. of HMO's inspected during year	100
Proportion of homelessness decisions within 33 working days	95%
Percentage of grant payments processed within 2 weeks of receipt of invoice	100%
Percentage of service requests responded to within 3 days	98%
The number of new units of affordable housing provided per year	20
The number of private sector landlords that have become accredited	50
The average length of time to provide a disabled adaptation through the grant process	12 months
Percentage of homelessness nominations accepted by New Fylde Housing or other housing association	98%
The percentage of homelessness decisions issued within 10 calendar days	50%
The number of enquiries handled by the Housing Advice Officer each month	30
Positive customer satisfaction levels for housing services	80%

Homelessness and Housing Advice

As detailed in Chapter 4, the council and its partners now deliver a comprehensive homelessness and advice service. The Audit Commission stated in a 2004 press release that some of the work around homelessness in Fylde is "ground-breaking". In addition to the national performance indicators that the council needs to achieve, it has adopted a range of local indicators to help with the continuous assessment of the service.

The council has also commissioned Shelter Cumbria to conduct independent performance reviews of casework each quarter.

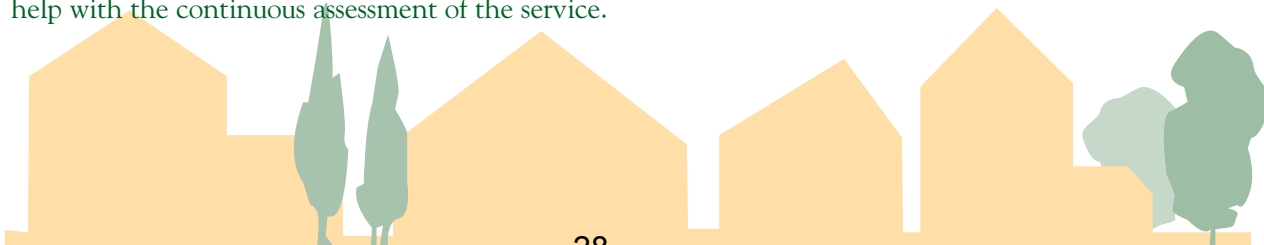
The homelessness partnership now delivers a top-quartile service and has plans to improve it further. This is a real achievement, especially as the service was only launched in April 2004 and it has managed to cope with increased demand whilst delivering an excellent service.

Private sector

Performance continues to improve in the council's private sector work. It has achieved 4.4% of properties made fit during 2004, which again is around the top-quartile mark. Pro-active policies have been introduced including, an empty homes campaign, enforcement and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) policies. The council has had long-term staffing shortages which has hindered the progress of the HMO policy. A local performance target of 100 HMO inspection per year was set and even with the staffing shortages, during the first 3 quarters of 2004 more than 40 properties have been inspected with follow-up action being taken. A restructure of the housing service has been approved by Members and will be implemented in Spring 2005. This will create increased capacity to improve the service further.

Strategic housing function

Historically the council has taken sole responsibility for the development of the housing strategy. However, in 2003 2 new members of staff joined the team and began a lengthy process of engagement with stakeholders and the community. The council's partners are now equally responsible for assessing local need and deciding upon local housing and related priorities in the borough. They are also responsible for ensuring that the housing objectives are delivered. This will be achieved by a transparent approach and 'true' partnership working. More details are included in Chapter 2.



Chapter 2 Fylde's House Strategy - The 10 Stage Approach

Stage 1 - Communication and Engagement

New member of staff in post who wrote to all stakeholders with a position statement and plans for improved strategic and partnership working.

Aug 03

Stage 2 - Housing Strategy Forum (re-launched)

- 35 attendees including Councillors and stakeholders
Discussions included:
- Council's position regarding Best Value
- Homelessness
- Private sector
- Information exchange between attendees
- Planning of Strategy Conference
- Joint ownership of Fylde's Housing Strategy

30 Sep 03

Stage 3 - Partnership Development

- Homelessness partnership between the Council, New Fylde Housing and Face to Face in embryonic phase
- Grant officers and Occupational Therapists meet to review referral procedures
- A joint Home Improvement Agency planned with Wyre BC
- Housing association partnership consider approach to development opportunities
- Council Officers attend the Learning Disability Partnership Board
- New Fylde Housing provide units for homeless temporary accommodation
- Generally advertised the Council's willingness to work in partnership

Stage 4 - Housing Conference

- Approx 200 attendees including general public
- Workshops held and 4 themed priorities identified, ie. homelessness/private sector/affordability/supported housing
- 4 action groups set up to consider themes in more detail
- Guest speakers attended from good performing authorities, Tameside and Blackburn with Darwen
- Press releases to report on the event

16 Dec 03

Stage 5 - Action Groups

- Strategy sub groups met to discuss 4 themes in detail
- Actions identified, prioritised and plans produced
- Average of 15 members per group including Councillors, partners, residents' groups etc.
- Feedback circulated to all

Jan 04

Stage 6 - Housing Strategy Forum

- Action group feedback discussed and priorities finalised
- Approx. 50 attendees, multi-agency/residents/Councillors
- Volunteers recruited to help draft strategy statement

25 Feb 04

Stage 7 - Strategy Production Group

- 6 individuals from housing association/Council officers/Councillor/social services met to determine outline of draft strategy statement and provide specific text

Mar 04

Stage 8 - Draft Strategy Statement

- Submitted to GO-NW for feedback Circulated to all conference attendees for feedback and comments

11 Jun 04

Stage 9 - Consultation Ends

Feedback incorporated into document

Stage 10 - Final Submission to GO-NW

Jan 05



Customer Consultation

We value the opinions of our service users and our potential customers. As such we have conducted a series of consultation exercises in order to inform our service improvement. We plan to continue with a rolling programme of consultation and feedback evaluation which will help us to continuously improve our own performance and that of our partners where their work helps to support this Strategy.

Mystery Shopping

In recent months we have conducted a series of mystery shops by telephone and personal visits. Typical customer scenarios have been used to test services offered by the Council and some of its key partners. Results have been mixed and various initiatives have been introduced to help service improvement, which are contained in Box 3.

Customer Satisfaction Surveys

We have a rolling programme of customer satisfaction surveys covering various elements of the Council's housing service to include, homelessness, housing advice, disabled facilities grants and home renewal assistance. A corporate target of 75% satisfaction has been adopted; the housing team is striving to achieve 80%. A separate questionnaire is used for each service area and all surveys are conducted either in person or by telephone.

Engaging Young People

Historically it has proved difficult to obtain the views of the younger members of our community. In order to address this, in February this year, we gave a presentation on housing issues and homelessness in partnership with Harbour House, which provides young homeless people with accommodation. We attended Lytham High School and spoke to approximately 200 pupils aged 16 years. It is worth pointing out that this school is actually one of the largest in Lancashire and as such represents a breadth of views of this age group. We asked the students to complete a questionnaire prior to our presentation in order for us to gain an insight into their understanding of housing and homelessness issues and services. We also asked them to complete an evaluation of the presentation to help us learn how we can improve our methods of consultation. The results were interesting to say the least, especially when so many of them thought that Housing Benefit payments were double the private sector rental amounts. It was also useful as many of them would be willing to involve an independent mediator if circumstances became difficult at home. The planned mediation service will therefore be of great benefit to many young people in the borough. We repeated this exercise at an evening meeting of the Fylde Youth Council and obtained similar responses.

Equality and Diversity

The Council is working with the I&DEA and has funded a project to assess how well the Council address equality and diversity issues in the borough. A corporate action plan has been developed, working groups are being established and a series of focus groups with members of minority groups have been conducted. The housing team helped with the recruitment and provided questions to be discussed by the groups. The Local Strategic Partnership has also established a multi-agency cross-cutting Equality and Diversity Steering Group which will consider policies, working practices and related projects. Council officers and elected members are partners in this group which meets monthly and reports to the LSP Executive.

Box 3

What we've done about the feedback

- Shared the results with partners such as CABx, Age Concern Fylde, New Fylde Housing so that any concerns raised can be addressed. Cross referrals are received and customers are easily signposted to the housing service.
- Arranged housing advice and homelessness training delivered by Shelter for the Council, Face to Face and New Fylde Housing. Good quality services are provided in partnership with a consistent high service standard.
- Conducted a series of training sessions for all elected members detailing the responsibilities and issues facing the housing services. Knowledge and understanding has increased which in turn has a positive impact for the community.
- Held training sessions for the Corporate Admin Team to improve advice and customer services at the front line. This improvement has been evidenced by the Audit Commission who conducted further mystery shops recently.
- Invited a range of stakeholder organisations, which provide services to the public, to an evening event explaining the Council's housing role. The result being that awareness has increased and many advertise our services by displaying posters/leaflets which in turn helps more people access our services.
- Amended our grant approval letters to be more reader friendly



Table 2 Involving Local People

Ongoing Media Coverage	Issues	Focus in Fylde*	Survey	Conference	Public Speaking	Service User Pilot	Focus Group	Mystery Shopping
	Advice & Homelessness Service	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Service Standards Info.	✓		✓		✓		✓
	Performance monitoring		✓	✓				✓
	Young People & Homelessness	✓	✓	✓	✓			
	Affordability	✓	✓	✓				
	Customer Care	✓	✓					✓
	Renewal & enforcement policies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Landlords Forum & accreditation							
	Equality & Diversity						✓	
	Supported Housing	✓	✓	✓				✓

* LSP free newspaper that is delivered to every household in the borough

Feedback has been gathered using the various routes highlighted in the table above and is used to inform service development and improvement. Examples include:

- Leaflets and service standards were piloted on customers
- Approval letters for disabled facilities grants were amended to be more reader-friendly and less technical
- Comments from homelessness and advice dictate where the service is based
- Suggestions from the Equality and Diversity focus group will inform the strategy to be produced in 2004/05
- Members of the public were invited to the Housing Strategy Conference
- Results are used to inform our performance indicators and service plan



Chapter 3

Summary of Housing Market and Needs

Housing Needs

The Council commissioned Fordham Research to conduct a comprehensive housing needs and stock condition survey, the findings of which were published during 2003 and updated in January 2004. A representative sample of responses were received from 2400 households and the findings were analysed overall and at the following sub areas:

1. Lytham
2. St Annes
3. Kirkham/Wesham
4. Freckleton/Warton
5. Remaining rural area

The sub areas are ranked in accordance with the housing need requirements, with Lytham and St Annes being the most in need and the remaining as the lowest requirement.

Overall the net affordable housing requirement is 420 units per annum, up to 2007. Fordham's calculated that low cost housing for sale would not be a feasible affordable option for Fylde as the discounted newbuild prices would still be higher than the second-hand minimum prices. As the market has increased considerably since the needs survey was completed, this argument is all the more valid today. A breakdown of the annual affordable housing requirement by size and tenure is shown in Table 3 below.

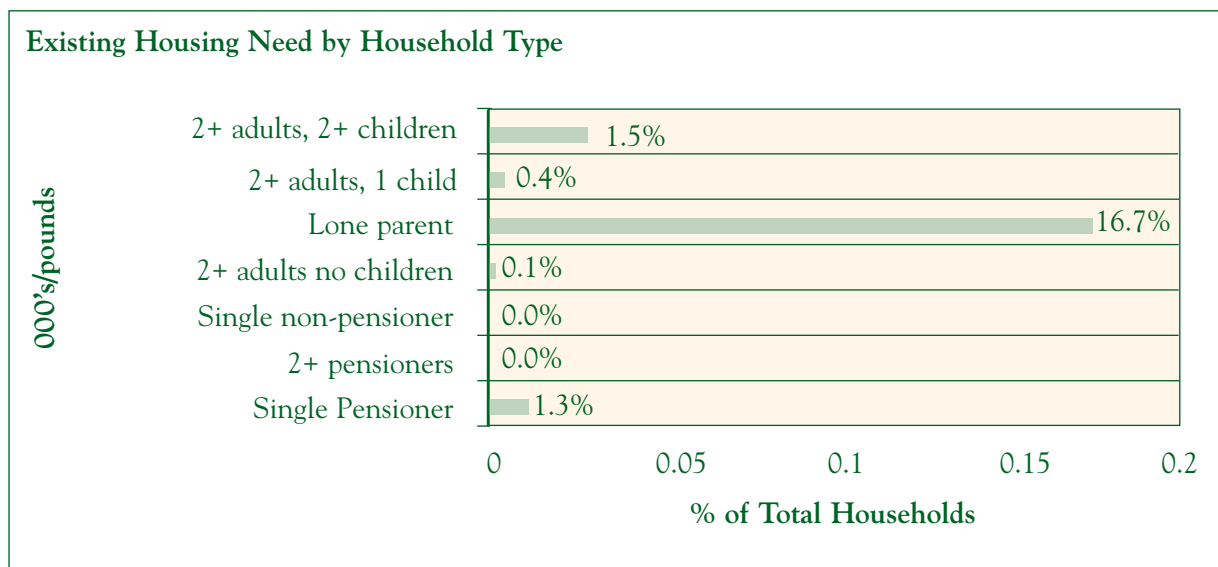
Table 3 Affordable Housing Requirements

Dwelling Size	Type of Housing			
	Low Cost Sale	Shared Ownership	Social Rented	TOTAL
1 bedroom	0	3	67	70
2 bedrooms	0	4	147	151
3 bedrooms	0	0	113	113
4+ bedrooms	0	5	81	86
TOTAL	0	12	408	420

As chart A illustrates, 16.7% of the total households in the borough are lone parents who cannot afford market housing and/or are living in unsuitable housing.

The main affordable housing type needed in the borough is for rented family accommodation.

Chart A



Summary of Housing Market and Needs

Household Income

In order to carry out an effective assessment of affordability, information relating to household income is essential. 'An accurate estimate of household income is one of the most important pieces of information that has to be obtained from a housing needs survey', (ODPM guidance). This was incorporated into the housing needs survey (HNS) by Fordhams.

- The calculated average household income for Fylde is £22,544 per annum.

This indicator, and other data from the HNS, have been used by the council to inform planning policies and negotiations with developers and housing associations for affordable housing. Household income by tenure is summarised in Table 4.

Table 4 Household Income by Tenure

Tenure	Average gross income £	Average net weekly income £	Average savings £
RSL ¹	6,339	176	999
Private rented	13,122	251	1,977
Owner-occupied (no mortgage)	17,374	332	7,607
Owner-occupied (with mortgage)	33,343	509	4,926
ALL HOUSEHOLDS	22,544	383	5,425

Source: FBC HNS Survey 2002

Of these households, pensioners and lone parent households have average incomes considerably lower than the borough average. However, many older owner-occupiers have no mortgages. A summary of income by household types is in Table 5.

Table 5 Household Income by Household Type

Household Type	Average gross annual income	Average net weekly income	Average savings
Single pensioner	5,250	151	4,858
Lone parent	12,715	264	1,095
2 or more pensioners	13,286	317	7,026
Single non-pensioner	19,278	298	5,316
2 or more adults, no children	30,936	497	6,526
2+ adults, 1 child	35,721	544	3,650
2+ adults, 2+ children	37,207	567	3,978
ALL HOUSEHOLDS	22,544	383	5,425

When the council and its strategic partners considered these findings against the local housing market, it is easy to understand why affordability is the top housing priority.

Local Housing Market

For several years now, the borough of Fylde has had either the highest or second highest property prices in Lancashire, with Ribble Valley being in a similar position. In an area which has remained a relatively

expensive place to purchase a property, the trend over the last 4 years is very alarming, (Chart E illustrates). Chart E shows an increase of 76.5% in overall property prices since 2000. The chart also includes projections up to 2007. Despite the anticipated national cooling of the housing market, house prices in Fylde have increased by 20% during the 12 months up to October 2004. However, account has been taken of the national trends and an increase of only 10% has been incorporated into the forecast. It is highly unlikely the local market will drop any further than this.

¹ RSL: Registered Social Landlord is another name for housing association and means the same thing. The registered element refers to the RSL being registered with and regulated by the Housing Corporation.

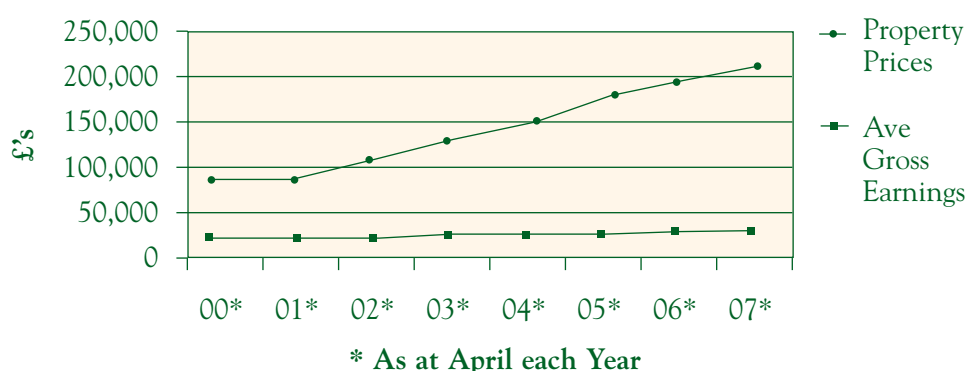
Summary of Housing Market and Needs

Chart B also demonstrates how the market has increased since the housing needs survey was completed in 2002, when the average overall property price was approximately £110,000. At this time the annual affordable housing requirement was 420 dwellings per year. It is highly unlikely the market will plummet by 100%, but even if it did, it would place us in a similar position to 2002. The requirement would therefore be the same and the need for affordable housing still would be essential.

Even though average earnings have historically usually only risen by the rate of inflation, i.e. 2-3%, chart E includes a projected increase of 4% per year from 2004 to 2007. As this is likely to be higher than the rate of inflation, the gap will probably be even larger.

Chart B

Average property prices against average annual earnings



At at 2002 a need for 420 dwellings per year was identified.

In 2004 the need is even greater and is likely to increase to 2007.

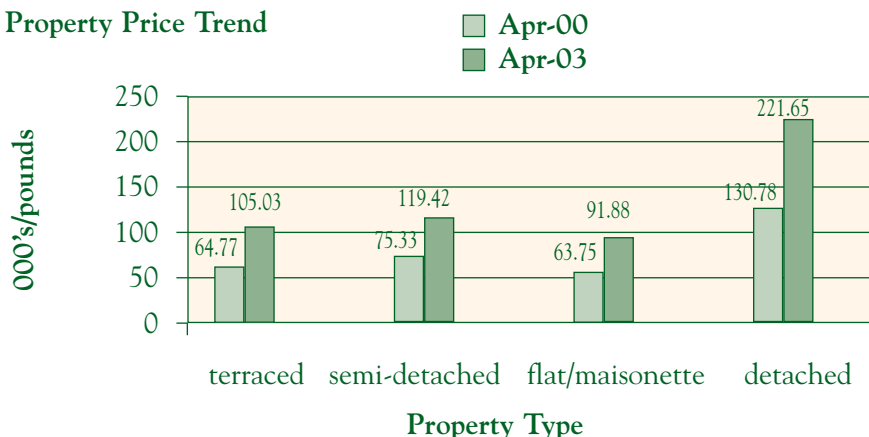
Source: ONS: New Earnings Survey
Land Registry: Residential Property Prices

As Chart C illustrates, each property type has been subject to a substantial increase. The highest being detached, which has increased by 69.5% and the lowest being flat/maisonette, which has increased by 44.3%. Unfortunately, average earnings have not followed suit, as they have only increased by 12% over the 4-year period.

As such, the prospect of local people being in a position to afford to buy their own home in the borough is becoming increasingly unlikely. Local people therefore continue to be dependant upon the private rented sector.

Chart C

Property Price Trend



Source: ONS & Land Registry

Summary of Housing Market and Needs

Private Rents

Representatives from the Rent Service are engaged in the various strategic groups and the landlords' forum in the borough. As such they are increasingly aware of the local problem of affordability in Fylde, specifically relating to the increasing property values in the borough. As a result, the rental

determinations have increased over the last 6 months and the Rent Officers adopt a more flexible approach to their assessments, taking into consideration market values and specific locations. However, a shortfall still exists between their assessments and typical rents charged by local landlords, as Table 6 demonstrates.

Table 6 Private Rents/Benefit Levels

Property Size	Rent Office Assessments	Typical Rents
1 bed	70-75 p/wk	95+ p/wk
2 bed	80-85	150+ p/wk
3 bed	95-100	160+ p/wk

Source: FBC Housing Benefit Dept

The shortfall is greater for family accommodation, which is the category in most need of affordable housing as identified from the housing needs survey. Further evidence that **affordable housing is needed now more than ever in Fylde**.

Stock Condition

The stock condition survey achieved 1,008 inspections which allowed an accurate and detailed analysis across the borough. Three main characteristics were considered to influence the condition of the housing stock in the borough. Table 7 highlights the profile of stock by these characteristics.



Table 7 Stock Profile

		Fylde	North West	England
Tenure	Owner-occupied	81.4%	71.4%	68.4%
	Private rented	11.5%	6.7%	10.0%
	RSL	7.1%	4.3%	4.6%
	Council	0	17.6%	17.0%
Building Type	Terraced	20.8%	37.7%	30.4%
	Semi-detached	32.2%	31.7%	29.7%
	Detached	25.9%	18.6%	20.6%
	Purpose built flat	11.5%	10.6%	14.8%
	Converted flat	9.6%	1.3%	4.5%
Age	Pre 1919	22.4%	26.7%	23.5%
	1919 - 1944	16.6%	19.2%	19.1%
	1945 - 1964	21.9%	20.1%	20.9%
	Post 1964	39.2%	34.0%	36.5%

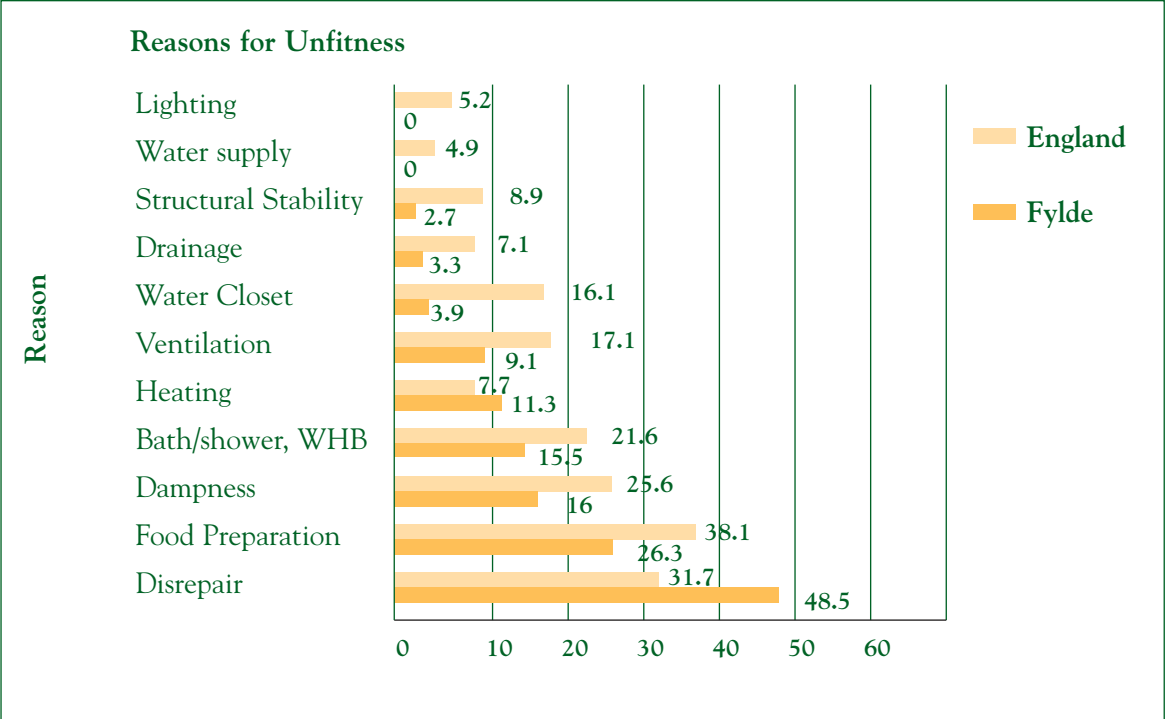
Summary of Housing Market and Needs

Levels of Unfitness

An estimated 1,782 dwellings are unfit in Fylde, which accounts for 5.6% of the housing stock. (The

national unfitness rate is 7.5%) The chart below shows the reasons for unfitness in Fylde with comparative figures for England.

Chart D

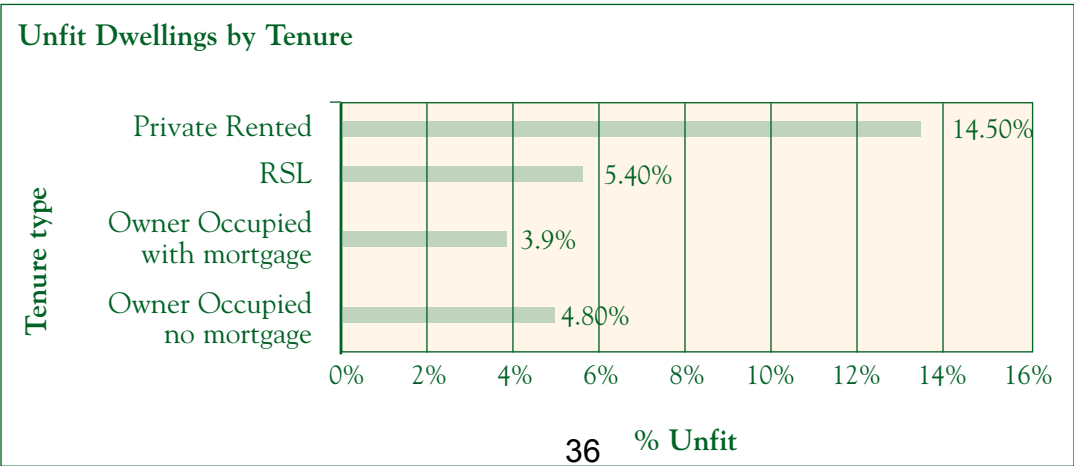


In general, Fylde shows similar patterns to national characteristics of unfit dwellings, as identified in the English House Condition Survey 1996. The private rented sector demonstrates the highest levels of unfitness at 14.5%, as opposed to 4.8% of owner-occupied dwellings with no mortgage. The council's renewal assistance policies reflect this need for improvement. In Fylde, properties built before 1944 exhibit the greatest proportion of unfitness, i.e. 9.6%. This compares with only 1.5% of dwellings built after 1964. It is estimated that 63.2% of all unfit dwellings date from before 1944,

(HNS 2002). Trends indicate that converted flats are most likely to be unfit whilst purpose-built flats show the lowest levels of unfitness. This is probably because converted flats form the majority of the private rented sector. However, tenant complaints do not reflect the findings and are still very low. 70% of contacts received relate to semi-detached or terraced houses in almost equal proportions. The council is therefore addressing unfitness in converted flats by implementing a pro-active inspection process and enforcement policy.

Chart E shows the breakdown of unfit dwellings for each tenure type.

Chart E



Summary of Housing Market and Needs

The estimated grant costs to carry out all required repairs over the next ten years in the private rented sector is £18.9 million. This is one of the reasons why the Council is considering an appropriate package of measures, as detailed in the Action Plan.

Repair Costs

The survey identified the following repair costs

	(Average cost per dwelling)
Urgent within 1 year	£729
Repair and replacement within 5 years	£1,420
Comprehensive – all works within 10 years	£2,842

The figures are highest for private rented and lowest for owner-occupied properties.

Energy Efficiency

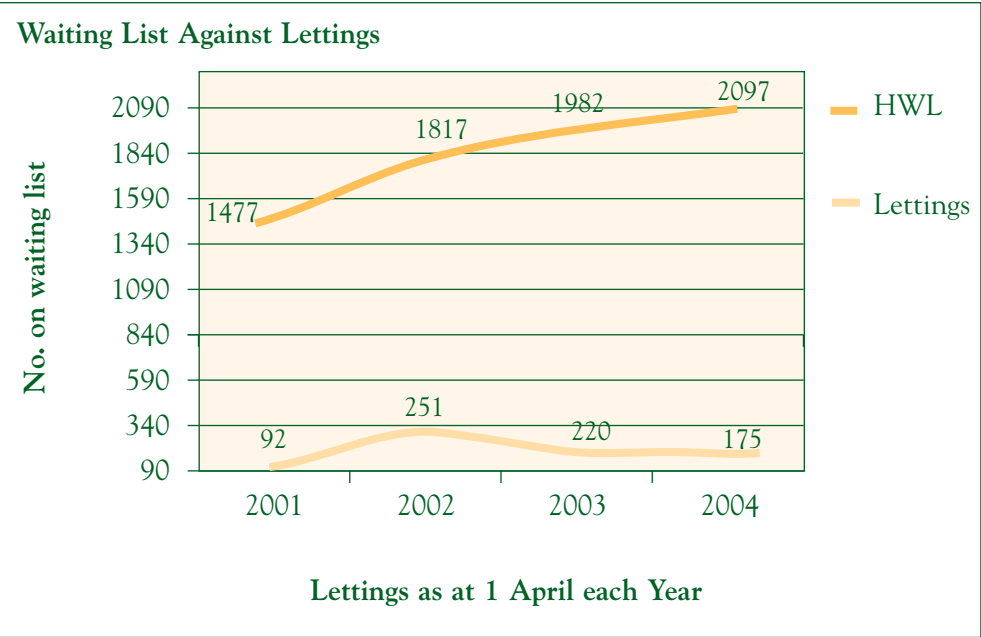
The government-specified energy rating for dwellings was used as an indicator to assess the energy efficiency of Fylde stock. The energy efficiency Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating for Fylde is 46 which compares to a national average of 44. We are reassured by this better than average rating which further demonstrates the effectiveness of our partnership with Home Insulation Services and Scottish Power. (Higher numbers equate to better ratings.) We intend to continue with a proactive programme of energy efficiency works to improve this rating even further and also continue to give support to the Warmfront programme.



Housing Demand

New Fylde Housing (NFH) is the Council's stock transfer Association with the highest level of affordable dwellings in the borough. Analysis of its waiting list therefore provides a good indication of local demand. Chart F demonstrates that demand in the borough remains high and continues to increase, whilst the dwellings available for letting reduces each year.

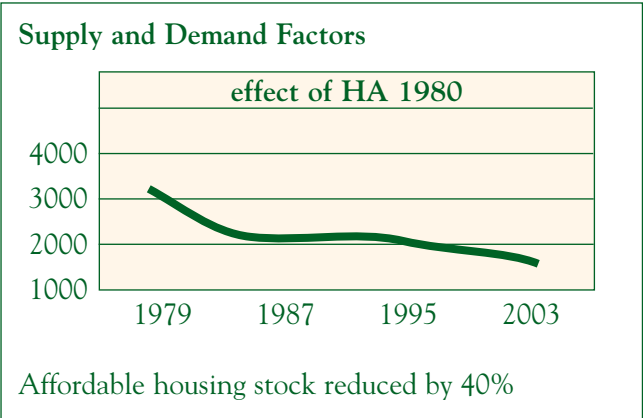
Chart F



Summary of Housing Market and Needs

This issues is further demonstrated when we consider the reduction in NFH's stock due to Right to Buy sales. Chart G demonstrates.

Chart G



Allocation of Housing Association Stock

The Council no longer maintains a housing register. However it does have an agreement with New Fylde Housing that 75% of its vacant dwellings will be offered to applicants from the homelessness register which is maintained by the Council. In addition a performance indicator is in place with a target that 98% of all homeless applicants nominated to New Fylde Housing will be allocated a property. The Council has also engaged with other associations in the borough to achieve 50% nomination rights against their vacancies.

Black and Minority Ethnic Issues

Whilst the proportion of BME population is low in Fylde (<1%), New Fylde Housing has a target in its business plan to ensure that this client group is not overlooked when allocating properties. As such it allocates 1% of all vacancies to this client group to reflect 2001 Census data. This target is regularly monitored by the Council during quarterly partnership meetings.

Chapter 4 - Priorities in Fylde

The housing priorities for Fylde have been determined using a combination of methods:

1. Housing needs and conditions survey
2. Housing Strategy Forum, conference and action groups feedback
3. Local Strategic Partnership
4. RSL Preferred Partnership
5. Customer feedback
6. Market analysis
7. Various research and trend analysis
8. Regional Housing Statement and Government policies
9. Information from the Local Plan & Structure Plan processes

As such, we believe they represent an accurate profile of the borough. The Strategy Forum, action groups and LSP regularly meet and review priorities. Whilst this process is very dynamic, open channels of communication exist with partners to enable ongoing dialogue as and when new priorities emerge. Development of new initiatives and services must comply with the Council's procurement strategy and be in accordance with the Best Value approach. Whenever appropriate, open tenders are sought to ensure that services are effective and offer value for money. The four themes identified will be addressed in turn in this chapter.

Priority 1 Affordability

Affordable housing is contained within priority 1 of the Corporate Plan. It is also one of the four northwest regional priorities, working towards balanced communities with some emphasis placed on rural areas. At a national level, the Government wants to encourage sustainable, successful communities with a planning system to help achieve this. Affordable housing must therefore play a central role. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 1 and later in this Chapter.

As highlighted in Chapter 3, affordability is the major current concern for the borough. The following table highlights some of the key issues identified from the action group. How we intend to address these issues is set out in the appended Action Plan.

Box 4

Key Affordability Issues

- The emerging Joint Lancashire Structure Plan calculates an over-supply of housing land. It states that the housing requirement has been met up to 2012. This conflicts with the need for affordable housing.
- The shortfall between housing benefit limits and actual rents charged in the private sector is increasing. This leads to increased debt, arrears and homelessness.
- There's a shortfall in the number of people applying for housing benefit, particularly from the older population.
- The Housing Needs Survey and waiting list figures indicate that needs and demand are still high.
- Inflated house prices force younger people to move out of the area which adds to the imbalance in our community.
- Fylde's ageing population places increased demands on Council, health and social services resources.
- Existing service providers, e.g. Harbour House and Fylde Coast Women's Refuge, are feeling the strain of repeat presentations due to lack of supported, affordable move-on accommodation. A cycle of need continues.

Planning Policy

Policy 12 of the emerging Joint Lancashire Structure Plan indicates a provision of 155 dwellings per year should be made in Fylde Borough during the period 2001-2016.

Based on the number of house completions, dwellings under construction and dwellings with planning permission, there is no current need to release land for additional housing sites. In fact the Council has recently refused applications for approximately 300 dwellings on this basis.

However, the Council's planning and housing staff work closely together within the same Business Unit to ensure that local policies meet the needs of the local community. As such, the Housing Chapter of the Local Plan has been revised during 2004 to take into account the need for affordable housing in the borough. It is evident from the housing needs survey that the level of need for affordable housing significantly exceeds the maximum level of total house building provided for in the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan. As such the Examination in Public Panel met recently, (members include representatives from GO-NW & Lancs CC), and it confirmed the Council's updated policy as being the best approach for Fylde.

Further evidence of housing's corporate importance has been demonstrated by senior managers and elected members who view the provision of affordable housing for families in the community as the highest priority in terms of general planning and housing responsibilities. Three key issues have informed this opinion:

1. House prices have significantly increased since the housing needs survey was commenced in 2002.
2. If housing completions continue at a level lower than market demand, then this will fuel the housing market and prices will probably increase, further widening the affordability gap
3. The housing needs survey post dates the Regional Planning Guidance, so the level of need in the borough was not considered fully in those Regional documents.

A policy has therefore been proposed that planning permission will only be granted for any housing development where the majority of dwellings proposed within the scheme are affordable, within the terms defined in the Council's housing needs survey. Consultation with stakeholders is currently being undertaken prior to the adoption of a formal policy.

Housing Association Preferred Partners

A formal partnership exists in Fylde between the Council and 3 housing associations, namely:

- New Fylde Housing
- Muir Housing Group
- Five Piers Housing Association (Manchester Methodist)

Feedback from the partners is very positive. In fact Muir, which is involved in many partnerships across the country views the Fylde partnership as one of the most successful ones in that it welcomes creative thinking and has a very open approach. The Local Authority Social Housing Grant (LA-SHG) was used between 2001 and 2003 to provide 54 additional affordable rented units and although this funding stream is no longer available, the housing association partners have designed affordable schemes without the need for grant funding. In order to take this partnership forward, the Council will consider offering its own capital resources or its own land assets to support the further provision of affordable housing. The partnership has signed up to a s106² sharing protocol which determines how development sites will be apportioned. This agreement will be followed as and when resources or sites become available. Members are actively involved in the strategy forum and action groups.

Section 106² The planning system can help the provision of affordable housing units through the implementation of planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. These are contractual agreements entered into between a local planning authority and a developer that determine what proportion of units provided in residential developments will be designated as affordable housing units.

Box 5

Affordable Achievements So Far

- Rent Officers are members of the Housing Strategy Forum and attend the Landlords' Forum which has resulted in a more flexible approach which reflect local market prices
- A 5-year agreement has been made with a private sector landlord to provide dwellings within affordability levels, without any grant assistance. More are being negotiated at present through the Landlords' Forum.
- The Council is currently considering disposing of Council owned sites for affordable housing.
- The Council's preferred housing association partners are conducting feasibility studies for potential developments with minimum or no subsidy
- Face to Face, one of the Council's key partners, is in the process of negotiating to purchase private sector dwellings to increase the supply of affordable housing
- Joined up housing and planning policies with the aim of helping local people obtain decent housing they can afford
- Outline planning permissions have been granted to include 202 affordable dwellings
- Permissions have been granted on 4 developments which will provide commuted sums of more than £4 million during 2005/2006. Further sites are subject to negotiation offering potential significant affordable provision
- A scheme to develop a retirement village in St. Annes is a development proposal. A partnership arrangement with New Fylde Housing. This will provide 60 additional affordable units.

Priority 2 Homelessness & Advice

Homelessness meets priorities 1,2,4 & 5 of the Corporate Plan. It could also be argued that a comprehensive homelessness service would have an indirect impact on the local economy and therefore meets all the priorities, by helping to maximise household income, increased skills as a result of access to training and a joined up approach between partner organisations. It is a statutory function and as such remains a priority at a regional and national level.

Historically, homelessness levels have not been accurately recorded in the borough. On 1 April 2004 the Council launched a brand new homelessness service in partnership with New Fylde Housing and Face to Face (Homelessness Project). The statutory functions are now provided and managed directly by the Council. Previously they were outsourced at the time the stock was transferred. Prior to introducing this new service an exercise was conducted to test the market to identify whether alternative external providers would be interesting in delivering the service.

Priorities in Fylde

Only 2 external bids were received, neither of which met the Council's performance criteria and council officers also submitted a partnership bid with New Fylde Housing and Face to Face. It was therefore decided by elected members that as the Council already supported Face to Face and New Fylde Housing continued to provide an out-of-hours service, the best approach would be to launch the new service in partnership.

Whilst the Council is responsible for day-to-day management of the homelessness and housing advice service, the two partners are vital in helping provide a more efficient streamlined approach. New Fylde Housing provides 6 dwellings from its own stock for temporary accommodation and it also provides an out-of hours contact service from a 24 hour control centre. It also offers the services of its tenancy support team which is invaluable in helping with welfare benefit maximisation and helping households maintain effective tenancies. Conversely Face to Face provides an important service at the earlier stages of homelessness and is actively involved in the development of a prevention strategy. It helps people in housing need access private sector accommodation by providing rent bonds and making referrals to known landlords. It also provides housing and homelessness advice and interviews non-priority homeless applicants.

Homelessness presentations have increased over recent years and continue to do so. The target set by the Homelessness Unit of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to prevent families or pregnant members from staying in bed and breakfast for more than 6 weeks is being met. This proves to be a challenge in Fylde as there is no emergency accommodation available. Instead we rely on hostels out of the area and the dwellings made available by New Fylde Housing. This is a priority objective and the Homelessness Action Group and RSL partners are developing a model to address local needs, details of which are included in the action plan. Already the new service demonstrates a marked improvement on last year's performance, despite there being a significant increase in the number of homeless presentations. The number of decisions made within the first month totals nearly 50% of the entire year for 2003/04. Overall quicker decisions are being made and fewer applications are being accepted. Table 5 provides a summary of the homelessness performance for the first two quarters of 2004, since the new service commenced. The Council purchased a software package to assist with the management of the service. It is now felt that an improved picture of homelessness can be recorded, although an understanding of the levels of "hidden homeless" households has still to be developed. This is something the partnership and Homelessness Action Group will consider.

Table 8 Homelessness Statistics

	Actual 1/7/04 - 30/9/04	Actual 1/4/04 - 30/6/04	Performance Target	Actual 03/04
Applications received	68	47	N/A	N/A
No of applications accepted	23	10 (21% of apps)	N/A	38 (70% of apps)
% of decisions issued within 33 working days	100%	96%	95%	75%
Decisions issued within 10 calendar days	72%	82%	50%	25%
Average decision time	4 working days	10.5 working days	N/A	N/A
Average time a household with child or pregnant member spent in B&B	4 weeks	1.6 weeks	Max. 6 weeks	14 weeks
No. of households with child or pregnant member in B&B more than 6 weeks	Zero	Zero	Zero	N/A
No. of households placed in B&B	7	8	N/A	43 (5mths Aug - Jan 03/04)

Homeless Prevention

The needs and profile of homeless cases will be continuously assessed and will inform the homelessness strategy to be updated in 2005. Whilst it is good to have a clearer understanding of homelessness in the borough, our primary aim is to prevent it whenever possible. As such, a prevention strategy will be produced later in 2004. The Homelessness Action Group met in October 2004 to set the framework for the strategy and the Homelessness Unit of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has offered to visit the area to provide specific advice and support.

Box 6

Homelessness Achievements So Far

- Improved customer service - quicker decisions & comprehensive advice
- Bed & Breakfast use has been minimised with an average stay of 1.5 weeks
- The Council has commissioned a mediation service during 2004 to work with a range of client groups
- The Housing Advice Worker and Homelessness Officer work closely together to prevent homelessness by liaising with landlords, families and friends of applicants
- NFH provide 7 units of temporary accommodation from its own stock for homeless households
- An agreement has been made with a private sector landlord to utilise 2 units for temporary accommodation purposes
- Expressions of interest have been received through the empty homes campaign from owners willing to accept nominations
- The Council has presented to youth groups on the issues of finding accommodation in the private sector, affordability issues and homelessness.

Priority 3 Private Sector

Regeneration and a healthy environment is the number 1 priority in the council's Corporate Plan. We aim to do this through our implementation of the Regulatory Reform Order and broader Private Sector Housing Strategy, (PSHS). This reflects the regional policies which aim to "deliver decent homes in thriving neighbourhoods". Nationally, the emphasis is on renewal and sustainable communities which will be at the centre of our PSHS. Key issues identified from the Private Sector Action Group are detailed in the box below.

Box 7

Key Private Sector Issues

- There are 1700 unfit dwellings in the borough which have been prioritised for action, ie. grants, loans, equity release schemes and enforcement action
- A need has been identified to provide additional support for vulnerable people living in dwellings which do not fall within the 'unfitness' category. This need can be met by the establishment of a Home Improvement Agency
- Demand for Disabled Facilities Grants is increasing and vulnerable people are waiting an unnecessary length of time for the adaptations to be carried out
- The stock condition survey reinforces local intelligence and the need to improve and maintain the physical condition of private rented sector dwellings
- There are approximately 900 HMO's in the borough of which 35% are either unfit or require improved fire precautions
- Although fuel poverty is less of an issue in Fylde as it is in other areas, it is still of concern. We are working with partners to develop a comprehensive fuel poverty strategy during 2004/05
- Fylde has 1200 empty dwellings, 500 of which have been empty longer than 6 months. This is a wasted resource in an area with a shortage of affordable housing
- A need to improve knowledge and skills for private sector landlords and also educating tenants about their housing rights.

The Council has already begun addressing some of the issues identified. In order to continue to improve, the housing service will be re-structured in Spring 2005 which will increase capacity with the team. The changes will enable the delivery of a vastly improved comprehensive grants agency. The work conducted by the home improvement agency will complement this service and should demonstrate a marked improvement for local customers. Even though satisfaction levels are above 90% we do not intend to rest on our laurels and aim to achieve 100%. Other achievements are detailed in the box below and the appended Action Plan.



Box 8

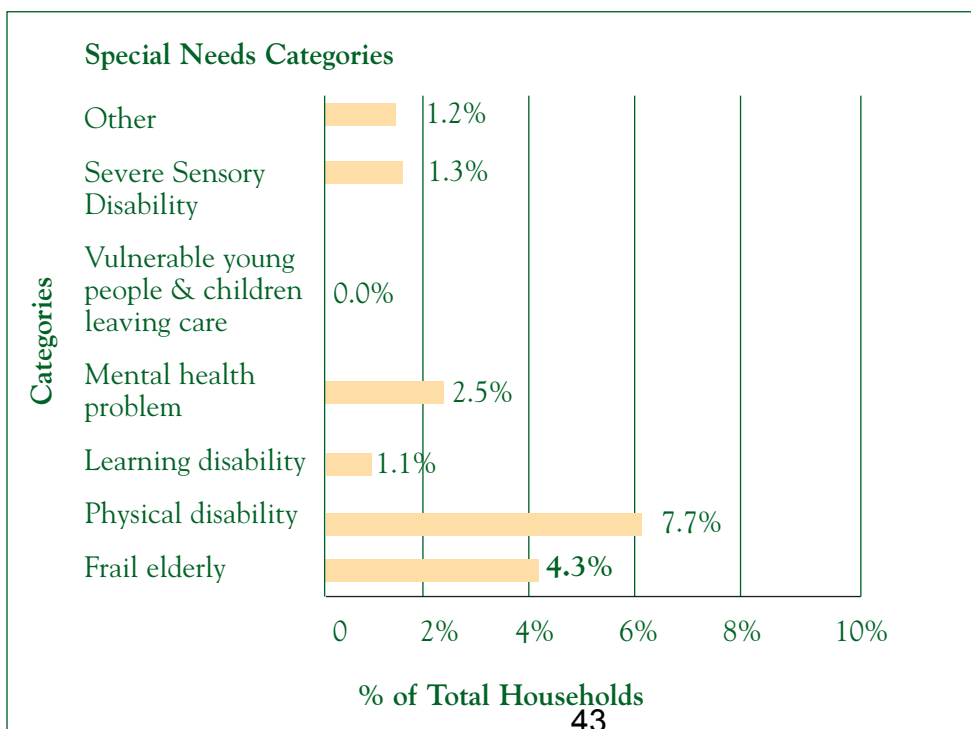
Private Sector Achievements So Far

- The Council has achieved national top quartile performance during 2003/04 in dealing with unfitness and the Housing Investment Programme has been expanded to continue this upward trend.
- A Home Improvement Agency will be launched in partnership with Wyre BC, Lancs CC and Foundations during 2004
- Our DFG budget has been increased by 57% for 2004/05.
- Introduced a rolling programme of HMO inspections
- During autumn 2003, the Council and its partner, North West Landlords Association, launched a private rented sector accreditation scheme
- Our Landlords Forum, launched in 2003 is going from strength to strength, with approximately 100 members and well attended meetings.
- We are helping people to improve the energy efficiency of their homes by working with private sector partners to offer discounted insulation measures. Private funding of £100k has been awarded to the scheme for 2004/05
- An Empty Homes Campaign was launched in May this year. Already a few owners have expressed interest in the grants for nominees scheme
- Fylde's new housing advice service provides assistance to private sector tenants and landlords on a wide range of issues

Priority 4 Supported Housing

Supported housing is a corporate priority and sits within the Corporate Plan's priority areas 4 – Quality Services and 5 – Quality of Life. Progress of the Supporting People agenda is reported regularly to the Executive Committee. This mirrors the regional priority to meet the “needs for specialist and supported housing”. It also complies with the national aim to develop thriving and sustainable communities. The Supported Housing Action Group was well attended by a variety of service providers and advocates. The Lancashire Supporting People 5 Year Strategy is currently being refined for completion in March 2005. The Council has representation on the core strategy group, commissioning body and providers' forum and has open channels of communication with officers. As such we will ensure that the support needs of our community are considered in the strategy. The housing needs survey provides an overview of the incidences of special needs households, as detailed in Chart H. However, it does not identify what proportion of these households were receiving services adequate to meet their needs. This is an area that will be considered by the action group as part of further needs assessments.

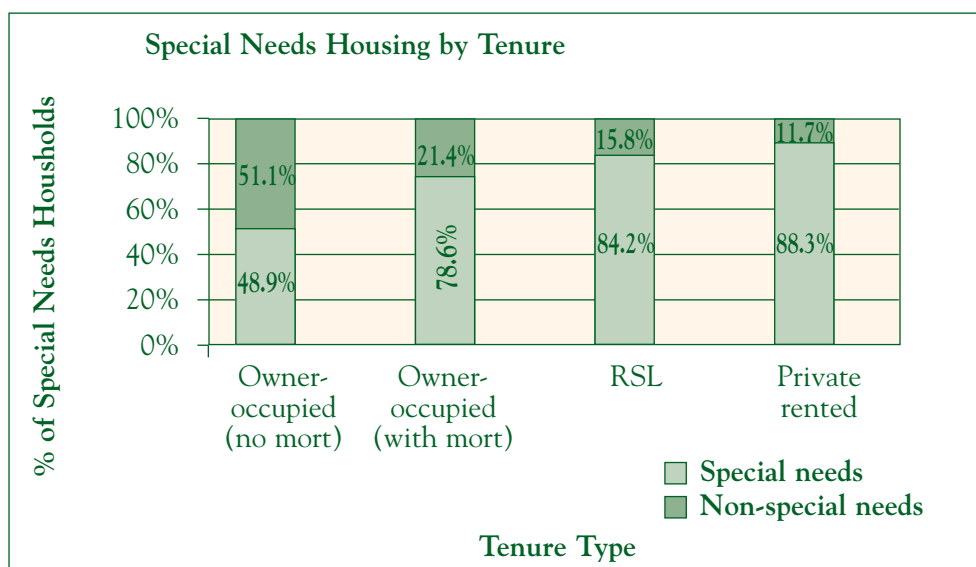
Chart H



Priorities in Fylde

Chart I demonstrates that 72.5% of all households with special needs are in owner-occupation.

Chart I



Disabled

A priority for the council is to help people to live comfortably and be able to move around in a safe and decent home. As such it has tripled the Disabled Facilities Grant budget since 2001, with additional contributions received from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). This trend is forecast up to 2007, (subject to ODPM grants) and will remove the need for a waiting-list which currently exists. No-one should have to wait for essential equipment to improve their quality of life. The council has an excellent working partnership with Lancashire County Council Occupational Therapy Department to pro-actively consider ways of improving the service. This includes regular meetings of a prioritisation panel to assess the applications. Also housing technicians conduct joint customer visits with Occupational Therapists to effectively assess needs and provide a more efficient referral service.

Older People

More than 40% of households in Fylde borough contain an older person over retirement age. It is therefore essential that we understand the issues older people may have in order that we can effectively plan housing related services.

The Health and Wellbeing Group of the LSP, together with other partner organisations are working towards the possible future development of an Older Persons' Partnership Board. This group, together with the Local Implementation Team will be charged with the development of an Older Persons' Strategy.

In the meantime the Council is actively involved in the development of an Extra Care Strategy for Fylde and Wyre which in turn contributes towards the county-wide strategy.

In order to achieve the targets set out in the *National Service Framework for Older People*, DoH, (2001), relating to the closure of residential nursing homes, the Council is a key partner in the re-development of one of the sites, namely Crossacres in St Annes. An extra care scheme of up to 50 units is planned with a developer appointed by 1 November 2004.

The retirement village planned in St Annes by NFH will provide approximately 240 dwellings, with a range of tenure types, i.e. sales, shared ownership and rented. Also a range of needs will be catered for in partnership with health and social services. The idea being that nobody, no matter how great their need for support is, should feel excluded from the rest of the community. Amenities in the village will be accessible to the wider community which again will help break down the barriers of social exclusion.

The Council and the local Age Concern Fylde agency is in the early stages of negotiations with Age Concern Fylde England regarding the establishment of an equity release scheme for older people in the borough. It is hoped that the borough of Fylde will be a pilot area for the scheme.

Priorities in Fylde

Helping people retain independence in their own homes is a high priority for the council and its partners. As such, the Health and Wellbeing Group of the LSP is considering purchasing state of the art assistive technology to monitor health and safety of our older more vulnerable residents.

Box 9

Key Issues from the Action Group

- Lack of clear information about the range of support needs in the borough
- Anecdotal feedback from individual agencies indicates a need for:
 - emergency accommodation
 - floating support
 - move-on
 - help for ageing carers of people with learning difficulties
- Landlords would be more willing to accept vulnerable tenants if a support network were available
- It was considered that supported housing has a negative image in the community

- A mediation service will be introduced in the borough during 2004/05 which will benefit a broad range of client groups
- The Home Improvement Agency will be launched jointly with Wyre BC & other partners in 2004. This will link to NFH's Handyperson Scheme to offer a range of practical support for vulnerable people
- FBC is investigating how it can share the DFG database with social services to help with needs mapping

Box 10

Achievements So Far

- Members of the group are gathering all local needs data for compilation with a view to commissioning sub-regional needs surveys
- Homelessness floating support is provided by Harbour House for its ex-residents. It also has nomination arrangements with some private sector landlords
- A series of positive press releases and media articles have been issued
- NFH have worked with Lancashire County Council (LCC) to develop the first acquired brain injury unit in the borough
- We are members of the Learning Disability Partnership Board which considers local needs and service improvements
- We are engaged with LCC to consider the future services of people with physical disabilities
- The Council is working closely with Lancashire County Council Social Services Department to develop joined-up supported housing strategies
- In order to enable the development of a retirement village in St. Annes, elected Members are considering donating Council-owned land to NFH
- The Council and NFH are working together to expand the tenancy support service into the private sector. This will help broaden the range of housing choices for vulnerable people, help them maintain tenancies and provide reassurance for private sector landlords

Previous Performance

It is fair to say that the Council has performed badly historically in terms of allocating and managing its housing resources. This was probably due to the following factors:

- The confusing position and after-effects of the stock transfer
- A small housing team with limited skills
- Lack of a strong corporate direction with the absence of a Local Strategic Partnership and Corporate Plan

However that is in the past, the Council has now turned a corner and has realised its strategic position for the borough. This is evidenced by increased financial support for housing objectives, a successful LSP and adopted Corporate Plan, increased staffing resources and a long-term vision of how housing should develop in Fylde into the future.

Past & Current FBC Investment

The council is currently debt free as a result of the transfer of its housing stock to New Fylde Housing in 2000. This transfer gave the council a capital receipt of £2.4m. Debt free status brought real advantages as it allowed the council to achieve a “double spend”³ on Local Authority Social Housing Grant. It also meant that high debt financing costs could be avoided.

The Council’s Capital Programme since the housing stock transfer shows direct capital investment of £2.925m in housing.

The provision of affordable housing is the top housing priority. At the time of the transfer the Council committed to the provision of an additional 75 social housing units and to the end of 2003 had achieved 52 units. The Council’s current Corporate Plan, published in Autumn 2003, commits to providing a minimum of 20 additional affordable units per year over the period of the plan to 2007. However this Housing Strategy sets more challenging targets and plans to deliver more than 200 affordable dwellings by 2007, (as detailed in the action plan). These will be achieved through a combination of section 106 agreements, effective partnership arrangements with our housing association partners, the contribution of land and direct investment, where feasible.

In addition, the Council’s commitment to Disabled Facilities Grants and Housing Renewal Assistance has increased and investigations are currently underway into an equity release and loan scheme to supplement the award of grants. The council’s commitment to help our more vulnerable members of the community remains strong and it is important that government offices continue to support our policies by ensuring that Government subsidy continues to be invested in Fylde.

How Resources are Allocated

Each year Unit Business Managers and Parishes submit bids for the following five years for capital and revenue schemes which they wish to progress. As part of the process they are required to identify how the schemes fit with corporate priorities and for capital schemes any ongoing revenue costs.

A member led task group from the Policy and Service Review Community Forum then assess these bids against the corporate criteria and grade them accordingly. For this purpose the corporate criteria have been broken down and a scoring mechanism established which allocated priority grades to those schemes which meet the most corporate priorities and benefits the greatest percentage of the population.

The results from this exercise are then summarised and fed into the Executive Committee who make the final decision on the budget and allocation of resources. Over the last two years while this system has been in operation the housing schemes put forward have all scored in the highest ‘A’ category.

Overall funds available for the following five years are calculated as part of the budget process to give a guideline annual figure for capital spending. All available resources are identified and then allocated to schemes according to the identified priorities as outlined above.

Other Housing Investment in the Borough

Local Authority Social Housing Grant (LA-SHG)

Following stock transfer, the Council anticipated a 3 year LA-SHG programme. However, during 2002, we received very short notice that the rules of the process would change and as such our programme would end. Despite this, a bid for £1.7 million was submitted. Unfortunately all the schemes included were refused by the Housing Corporation.

Approved Development Programme

As table 10 illustrates, there has been a considerable reduction in ADP funding of approximately 40% over the last 2 years. This reduction reinforces the concerns raised in Chapter One of this strategy relating to Fylde not meeting regional investment priorities. As such it is unlikely that ADP investment will increase in future years, unless the Regional Housing Board further consider the affordability challenges faced by some local authorities. Table 7 does include some funding up to 2007 but this is erring on the side of optimism. The council will continue to work with the HC to maximise funding in the borough where possible.

³ Double-spend: Reimbursement of council capital expenditure by the Housing Corporation

Housing Renewal Investment

The council's current housing renewal policy offers financial assistance to private sector landlords, particularly for the re-occupation of empty homes. The Empty Homes Grant is limited to a maximum of 50% of the cost of the eligible works up to an overall grant limit of £10,000 per dwelling. As such, any investment made by the council is match-funded by the landlord.

Housing Renewal Assistance (HRA) Grants for owner-occupiers are offered subject to a full test of the applicant's resources, (means test). This requires the applicant to contribute towards the cost of the works at a level dictated by their own resources. It will therefore contribute towards the council's investment.

Energy Efficiency

Investment continues to be provided to vulnerable residents of the borough through the Warmfront scheme. The council advises eligible residents of the assistance available through the scheme with a view to improving the energy efficiency of their homes. During the year up to December 2003 a total of £186,000 was invested which assisted 326 households. Between April and September 2004 a further 46 households were assisted and a further £15,500 was invested. As this scheme has proved very successful in the borough it is envisaged that existing investment levels will continue in the future.

For several years now the council has worked in partnership with a local installer of energy efficiency measures, (Home Insulation Services) and a major energy utility company, (Scottish Power). The scheme offers energy efficiency measures to all households at significantly discounted prices. Scottish

Power help resource the scheme and have provided a grant of £100,000 for 2004/05. Up to September 2004 over 750 households have benefited from energy efficiency improvements. This is another very successful scheme which should be maintained at existing levels in the future.

Disabled Facilities Grants

The target spend for 2001-2004 remained at £225,000. Unfortunately in 2001/02, inadequate processes were in place to effectively manage the service, which resulted in an underspend. Systems were introduced to remedy this immediately and the following years up to April 2004 showed a marked improvement. In order to further improve the services for disabled people, the Council transferred resources from the Renewal budget to accommodate the overspend in the DFG's. During 2004/05 the target spend is £341,000 which demonstrates increased commitment from government office in terms of exchequer contribution. The service has improved and the programme accelerated to the point where the projected overspend for 2004/05 is £20,000 plus a waiting list for further grants to be carried forward to the following year. This triggered the introduction of a multi-agency prioritisation panel which ranks applications in order of urgency. As detailed in the Action Plan, the Council intends to eliminate the need for a DFG waiting list and has identified resources in the medium term financial strategy. A bid for additional resources has also been submitted to Government Office, North West, the outcome of which is awaited.

Details of the above initiatives and other council policies are available on the council's website, www.fylde.gov.uk/housing and from council offices detailed on the back of this document.

Future Funding

The Council has recently reviewed its approach to the management of its revenue and capital budgets and has produced a Medium Term Financial Strategy. Various resource assumptions are made in this document which are used as the basis for programming future investment in housing priorities in the Borough.

The government has changed capital financing regulations so as to prevent the "double-spend" of Local Authority Social Housing Grant. The advantages of remaining debt free therefore are not as attractive as they were at the time of the stock transfer. The Council is still heavily reliant on the residual capital receipts from the stock transfer and continuing capital receipts from NFH's right to buy sales to fund its entire capital programme,

along with specific grants from a variety of sources. This funding supports expenditure on regeneration, implementing electronic government and disabled facilities grants.

In 2003/04 the Council received £884,000 in right to buy (RTB) receipts from New Fylde Housing to support the council's capital programme. Table 9 shows the projected RTB capital receipts over the next 5 years. The figures assume a house price inflation of 5% per year which should be realistic given that during 2003/04 and 2004/05 house prices increased by more than 20%. It also assumes a reduction in RTB sales from their present level of 44 per year to 40 each year. The bottom row shows an alternative model with sales reducing by 8 per year. This table demonstrates the possible volatility in the level of receipts to be received.

Table 9 Capital Receipts from Right to Buys

	2004/05 £'000	2005/06 £'000	2006/07 £'000	2007/08 £'000	2008/09 £'000
Sales reduce by 4pa	945	908	870	833	785
Sales reduce by 8pa	945	817	678	520	448

The current capital programme forecasted projected capital receipts at £750,000 less than the calculations in table 9, up to 2007. This is good news for the council as it can now commit the £750,000 to housing priorities

identified in this strategy for the 3 year period up to 2007. That equates to an additional £250,000 per year.

Table 10 indicates the proposed resources allocated to housing priorities during the life of this strategy.

Table 10 Allocated/Proposed Housing Resources

Source	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
LA-SHG	708,000	790,000	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Housing Corp ADP	507,356	1,366,047	1,683,174	981,000	500,000	300,000
Renewal Grants	194,000	200,000	164,000	405,000	350,000	350,000
Disabled Facilities Grant	160,000	228,000	252,000	341,000	410,000	449,000
Right to Buy					250,000	250,000*
Commuted Sums	Nil	Nil	Nil	250,000	1,250,000	2,000,000
TOTAL	1,569,356	2,584,047	2,099,174	1,977,000	2,760,000	3,349,000

* £750,000 has been approved in financial strategy for the next 3 yrs to be added to the renewal grants budget (see action plan 10)

This analysis ignores the possible use or sale of council land and other assets which can provide additional resources to supplement the capital programme. The Council's Asset Management

Group and the preferred housing association partners propose to review the use of all assets held by the Council. This would allow the Council to identify any assets that are surplus to requirements or could be utilised more effectively to assist the implementation of this strategy.

No	Objective	Lead Agencies	Target	2004/05	2005/06 Milestones	2006/07	Outcome	Resources	Corporate Links *	Monitored by
1	Increase supply of affordable housing (see also no. 6)	RSL Partnership	212 units by April 2007	20 units	52 units	140 units	People in housing need in good quality housing they can afford	Capital receipt due of £3m in 05/06 as Council releasing its own sites for housing development. This receipt will be supplemented by commuted sums through the planning process	CP Objective 1	RSL Partnership Executive Committee Scrutiny Committee
49		Fylde Borough Council Planning & Partners	The majority of all new private sector housing developments							
2	Development of retirement village in St. Annes	NFH/FBC	Re-development of existing run down area increasing the affordable provision to 240 dwellings		Development work starts	Site complete, properties allocated	An additional 60 affordable units meeting targets in NSF Regeneration of an area comprising of many unfit dwellings	FBC to dispose of its own site at token figure of £1. This is significant contribution given the potential cost of site.	CP Objective 1	FBC Executive Committee Development Control Committee NFH Board Housing Strategy Forum
3	Provision of temporary accommodation for homeless people	FBC/RSL Partners	32 units	6 units RSL - April 04 2 units PRS - April 04 Disposal of Council site to RSL for development	24 units purpose built		Most vulnerable residents in good quality housing. Assist FBC in meeting statutory targets. End use of B&B for all.	£20,000pa revenue for current commitment £500,000 capital grant and £150,000 Supporting People revenue funding	CP Objective 2	Homelessness Action Group Housing Strategy Forum RSL Partnership Executive Committee

* (each element relates to a specific objective within the Corporate Plan (see Ch 1) and as such will also be monitored by the Policy & Service Review Community Outlook Forum.

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No	Objective	Lead Agencies	Target	2004/05	2005/06 Milestones	2006/07	Outcome	Resources	Corporate Links *	Monitored by
4	Assessment of FBC asset management	FBC	Adopted plan by Jan 05		Identify opportunities for sites disposal		Increase supply of land available for affordable development	Internal and staff time	CP Objective 1	Executive Director
5	Effective management of the Empty Homes Strategy	FBC	Number of units brought back into use each year	10	15	20	Potential increase in affordable dwellings. Improved property/communities	£100k - Yr 1 £150k - Yr 2 £200k - Yr 2 Contained within renewal budget	CP Objective 1	Housing Strategy Forum Scrutiny Committee Private Sector Action Group
6	Revision of homelessness strategy to incorporate prevention measures	FBC/ Homelessness Partnership/ Homelessness Action Group	Adopted multi-agency strategy	Priorities set and medium term action plan to include reduction targets	May '05 adopted 5% reduction in homelessness applications	Delivery of actions 5% reduction in applications	Fewer local people made homeless. Cost savings from temp accommodation budget	Internal	CP Objective 2	Homelessness Action Group House Strategy Forum Executive Committee
7	Introduction of mediation service	External mediation agency	Fylde Specific service	Agency appointed 2004	Review caseload & service demand	Service expansion as appropriate	Reduced homeless applications Encourage sustainability and tenancy maintenance Meet objectives of Community Plan	£4k year 1 ODPM Grant £10k LSP & Community Safety funding per year	CP Objective 2	Homelessness Action Group Housing Strategy Forum

No	Objective	Lead Agencies	Target	2004/05	2005/06 Milestones	2006/07	Outcome	Resources	Corporate Links *	Monitored by
8	Further consultation with young people on homelessness and housing issues	FBC	Presentations to secondary schools to include research and evaluations	Mar 05 3 Secondary Schools Lytham, Kirkham & St. Annes	Mar 06 3 Secondary Schools Lytham, Kirkham & St. Annes	Mar 07 3 Secondary Schools Lytham, Kirkham & St. Annes	Greater awareness of housing issues. Prevention of homelessness	Internal	CP Objective 2	Homelessness Action Group Housing Strategy Forum
9	Development of comprehensive private sector housing strategy	FBC/partners	Adopted strategy which clearly directs the improvement of private sector housing activity	Adopted Spring 05	Monitoring of actions and revision	Updated strategy Spring 07	Improved living conditions in private sector	Internal	CP Objective 1	Private Sector Action Group Housing Strategy Forum
10 51	Provision of a comprehensive suite of financial private sector assistance	FBC/RSL partners	Improved housing conditions by offering grants, loans and equity release products	Equity release/ Loan scheme feasibility Oct 04. Provision of 80 grant packages	ZProvision of 90 grant packages	Provision of 100 grant packages	Improved living and accommodation on conditions	Additional £750k over 3 yrs in adopted medium term financial plan. Sourced from RTB receipts and added to renewal budget	CP Objective 1	Executive Committee
11	Eliminate the Disabled Facilities Grants waiting list and reduce processing times	FBC/LCC Soc Sers/OTs	Approve all application for DFGs within statutory timescales	100DFG approvals	110DFG approvals	120DFG approvals	Quicker more efficient service. Adaptations provided to all who need them, when needed	£1.2m overall for 3yr period (includes ODFM funding) £636k approved in financial strategy for 3yrs	CP Objective 1	Scrutiny Committee

* (each element relates to a specific objective within the Corporate Plan (see Ch 1) and as such will also be monitored by the Policy & Service Review Community Outlook Forum.

No	Objective	Lead Agencies	Target	2004/05	2005/06 Milestones	2006/07	Outcome	Resources	Corporate Links *	Monitored by
12	Launch a cross-boundary Home improvement Agency	FBC/Wyre BC	Successful launch of joint service	Launch Winter 04/05	Service management and analysis for expansion	Service development & expansion	Help vulnerable people remain in own home. Improved property conditions. Shared resources with adjoining borough offers value for money	£105k FBC overall for 3yr period. Approved revenue. £20k p/yr LSP	CP Objective 1	Scrutiny Committee Supporting People Core Strategy Group
13	Implementation of a Fuel Poverty Strategy	FBC	Adopted strategy with clear action points	Adopted 200 homes to benefit from measures	Delivery 250 homes to benefit from measures	Delivery 300 homes to benefit from measures	Increased energy efficiency and reduction in numbers of people in fuel poverty	£100k private sector grant per year	CP Objective 1	Private Sector Action Group
14	HMO inspection programme to continue	FBC	Completed inspections and actions each year	100	100	100	Improve fitness standards and living conditions for local people	Internal	CP Objective 1	Scrutiny Committee
15	Information sharing and awareness raising for private sector	FBC/Landlords Forum/NW Landlords Association	Regular delivery of training sessions, policy updates etc. Guest speakers to attend forum. Annual half day training event.	4 forum meetings	4 forum meetings 1 formal training event	4 forum meetings 1 formal training event	Improved understanding of housing issues. Encourage sustainable tenancies by improved landlord/tenant relationship	Internal	CP Objective 1	Landlords' Forum Private Sector Action Group
16	Expansion of the Landlords' Accreditation Scheme	FBC/Landlords Forum/NWLA	To encourage self-regulated improvement of private rented sector.	50 landlords to join scheme	50 landlords to join scheme	50 landlords to join scheme	Improved living conditions. Improved relation with the private rented sector.	Internal	CP Objective 1	Landlords' Forum Private Sector Action Group

No	Objective	Lead Agencies	Target	2004/05	2005/06 Milestones	2006/07	Outcome	Resources	Corporate Links *	Monitored by
17	Supported housing needs assessments across Fylde/Wyre	FBC/WBC/ LCC	Analysis of existing data & gaps identification Additional research commissioned if necessary	Gap analysis Nov 04	Additional research conducted if necessary	Findings integrated into multi-agency strategies	Clear understanding of support needs across the 2 districts. Provision of additional support services as id.	£60k overall divided between FBC/WBC/ LCC £20k each member	CP Objective 1	Supported Housing Action Group Supporting People Core Strategy Group
18	Provision of floating tenancy support service for the private rented sector	FBC/NFH/ partners	Allocated Support Worker to specialise in private rented sector	Worker in post 0.5 FTE	Service expansion to 1 FTE as appropriate	Maintain service at 1 FTE	Sustainable tenancies. Reassured private sector landlords. Homeless prevention income maximisation	£12k Yr 1 - ODPM Grant £24k Yrs 2 & 3 ODPM Grant & FBC investment Bid for supporting People Funding	CP Objective 2	Private Sector Action Group Housing Strategy Forum

What happens next? Monitoring of the strategy

- The strategy is formally adopted by the Executive Committee and will be monitored by its members as well as the Policy and Service Review Community Outlook Forum on a quarterly basis. These committees will sanction any major amendments.
- Regular updates of progress will be discussed at the Housing Strategy Forum, action groups, the Local Strategic Partnership and the Preferred Housing Association Partnership.
- Major changes to the document are not anticipated within 2005/06 but as this is an organic process, should the need arise the document will be re-published and full consultation with all stakeholders will be conducted as detailed in Chapter 2.

Monitoring of the Action Plan

- Implementation of the actions identified will be conducted through the Housing Strategy Forum, Housing Action Groups, Local Strategic Partnership and the Preferred Housing Association Partnership each quarter in addition to others identified in the plan against specific objectives.
- It will also be considered in further detail by an informal meeting of the Executive Committee and Management Team on a monthly basis
- Themed Overview and Scrutiny Committees meet every six weeks to assess and challenge progress.
- A specific performance indicator has been incorporated into the service plan, which is monitored monthly by Management Team.

APPENDIX 2 LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Connexions

Fylde Coast YMCA

Healthy Schools Young Persons Development Team

New Fylde Housing

Lancashire Welfare Rights Service

Lancashire Association of Town and Parish Councils

Benefits Agency

Blackpool Foyer

Probation Service

Government Office for North West

Lancashire Supporting People Team

Blackpool Borough Council

Blackpool, Wyre & Fylde Council for Voluntary Service

Fylde Primary Care Trust

Bradford & Northern Housing Association

Care & Repair (Wyre & Fylde)

The Housing Corporation

Victim Support, Blackpool & Fylde Branch

Private Sector Landlords

Muir Group Housing

Five Piers Housing Association

YMCA

Wesham Residents Association

Social Services – Adult Care Services

Lancashire Youth & Community Service

Disability Information & Support, Blackpool, Wyre & Fylde Borough Council

Fylde Coast Women's Refuge

Fylde Primary Care Trust

Eaves Brook Housing Association

North British Housing

Fire & Rescue Service – St Annes

Greater Manchester Jewish Housing Association

Richmond Fellowship

Bromley House

Health Visitors

North West Landlords Association

North West Lancs Health Authority

Centrepont Lancashire

Face-to-Face

Harbour House

Pierpoint House

Community OT Department

Michael Jack MP

Age Concern Fylde

Richmond Rehabilitation Unit

Welfare Rights Service

Neighbourhood Watch

St Annes Police

Fylde Family Support & Resource Centre

Social Services Leaving Care Co-ordinator

Citizens Advice Bureau

Sydney Street Family Centre

Manchester Methodist Housing Group

Wyre & Fylde Youth Offending Team

Ormerod Home Trust

Police Domestic Violence Liaison Unit

Lancashire Teenage Pregnancy Partnership

The Rent Service

St David's Action Group

St Anne's Chamber of Trade

St Anne's Town Centre Steering Group

South Ribble Borough Council

Social Services Adult Care Team

Shelter

Wyre Borough Council

Jobcentre Plus

Local Estate Agents

St David's Road Action Group

Local Developers

Wyre & Fylde Advocacy Service

Windmill Housing Association

Woodlands Mental Health Resources Centre

Wyre Housing Association

Parish Councillors

Councillors

APPENDIX 3 GLOSSARY

ADP	Approved Development Programme
BME	Black & Minority Ethnic
CABx	Citizens' Advice Bureaux
FBC	Fylde Borough Council
GO-NW	Government Office, North West
HC	Housing Corporation
HMO	House in Multiple Occupation
HNS	Housing Needs Survey
HQN	Housing Quality Network
I&DEA	Information & Development Agency
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
NFH	New Fylde Housing
NWLA	North West Landlords' Association
PCT	Primary Care Trust
RRO	Regulatory Reform Order
RSL'S	Registered Social Landlords
s106	Section 106 Planning Agreement

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This document and related policies and information are available on the Council's website
www.fylde.gov.uk/housing and from the following Council Office

Town Hall, St Annes FY8 1LW, 01253 658658

If you have any comments or want to know more you can contact:

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Linda Chippendale - Principal Housing Policy Officer
(strategy process, policy development, older people, homelessness/advice)
Tel: 01253 658689 lindac@fylde.gov.uk



REPORT

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
STREETSCENE UNIT	POLICY AND SERVICE REVIEW COMMUNITY FORUM	9 TH JUNE 2005	7

DRAFT PARKING STRATEGY

Public/Exempt item

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

Summary

Members of the Policy and Service Review Community Forum are asked to examine the proposals for the adoption of a draft car parking strategy for the Council. This policy document is a first draft for discussion, and amendment where necessary, and it is intended that this be an evolving/working document to be reviewed and updated by this Forum on a regular basis.

The document has been prepared by the Technical Services Manager (Streetscene) in consultation with the Unit Business Manager for Streetscene, Economic Wellbeing and Regeneration, Built Environment and Cultural Services and it is aimed at supporting the car parking provision and parking services delivered by Fylde Council.

It is anticipated that the draft will need to be amended following discussion at the Forum to reflect comments made by Members and it is then proposed to refer the Policy to the Executive Committee for formal adoption.

Recommendation/s

1. Members are asked to consider, and amend as necessary, the draft car parking strategy for the Council.
2. Members of the Forum are asked to recommend to the Executive Committee that the strategy is formally adopted by the Council.

Executive brief

The item falls within the following executive brief[s]: Economy (Councillor Roger Small)

Report

1. The report is appended at Appendix 'A'.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	As contained within the appendices.
Legal	As contained within Appendix 'A'.
Community Safety	As contained within Appendix 'A'.
Human Rights and Equalities	As contained within Appendix 'A'.
Sustainability	As contained within Appendix 'A'.
Health & Safety and Risk Management	As contained within Appendix 'A'.

REPORT AUTHOR	TEL	DATE	DOC ID
Andrew Shore	(01253) 658640	26 th May 2005	Draft Parking Strategy Report

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS		
NAME OF DOCUMENT	DATE	WHERE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION
Fylde Local Plan	1996 – 2006	FBC website
LCC Local Transport Plan	2001/2 – 2005/6	LCC website
PPG13 Transport	2004	Built Environment/Streetscene Offices

Attached documents

N/A

Streetscene Unit - Technical Services Section

Fylde Car Park Strategy – First Draft

27th May 2005

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Appendices

Appendix A	Car Park Schedule
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Fylde Council has responsibility for managing 22 car parks with a total of approx. 1750 spaces. The Council does not presently have a car park strategy and this document is the first draft of such a strategy.

1.2 Parking space is becoming more and more of a scarce commodity and the Council has to have clear policy on how to manage the limited parking space under its control. Whilst the Council exercises good practice in its car park service delivery it is becoming increasingly more important, as demand for the limited space available increases, to have a formal statement on policy to identify what the Council wants from its car parks and how this service is best delivered. This is particularly important where national and regional policies dictate that more sustainable travel choices should be actively encouraged and promoted in favour of trips made by car. A car park strategy can contribute to meeting both national and local transport objectives.

1.3 The production of this Strategy is an integral part of the planning and development process that is covered by the Lancashire Structure Plan, Fylde Local Plan and by the Lancashire County Council Local Transport Plan. The Strategy also considers Planning Policy Guidance 13 (PPG13) which covers town centres, parking provision and transport. This strategy aims to support and compliment the planning guidance offered as part of the development control process. The planning process is already well documented in terms parking policy and will, therefore, remain outside the scope of this specific Car Park Strategy. Reference should be made to these documents for guidance on parking control as part of any new or proposed development.

1.4 Fylde Council is not responsible for on-street parking provision as this is within the remit of Lancashire County Council as the highway authority and traffic manager for the area. This draft strategy can, therefore, only reflect the parking responsibilities and desires of Fylde Council in terms of its off street car park provision and what it hopes to achieve by managing the space within its car parks.

1.5 It is acknowledged, however, that since September 2004 Fylde Council has been responsible for both on and off street parking enforcement under the Decriminalised Parking Enforcement powers. These powers do offer the Council a certain degree of traffic management responsibility in terms of parking enforcement, however, these powers are exercised through an agency arrangement with Lancashire County Council. The responsibility is purely one of enforcement and not one of on street parking provision.

1.6 A schedule of the Council's car parks and their characteristics is appended.

2.0 Strategy - Aims and Objectives

2.1 In developing the strategy, a clear hierarchy of Aims, Objectives, Policies and Proposals has been identified.

2.2 The aims are what the strategy seeks to achieve. The aims are developed further as objectives of the strategy, which in turn are translated into policies that the proposals will deliver.

2.3 The issues of sustainable transportation and the future of the town centres provide the strategic context and demonstrate the need for a coherent parking strategy. The provision of parking is not an end in itself but a means for supporting the town centres as places to live, work, visit and shop. The nature of the Fylde area is that it is predominantly a rural area and the use of the car is often the only transport mode available to the town centres. The Strategy has to be realistic and recognise the rural nature of the area and the consequent reliance on the car when setting policies to address national objectives to reduce trips made by car.

3.0 Aims of the Service

The parking strategy sets out four main aims of the service which are then developed into a series of more detailed objectives.

Aim 1

To provide the customer with a range of safe, secure, attractive and affordable car parks to meet the needs of residents, shoppers, visitors and commuters in a sustainable manner. This should be in line with national and regional integrated transport objectives set to address the environment, accessibility, safety, economy and congestion.

Aim 2

To ensure that parking is provided for cars, private hire coaches, bicycles and motorcycles, in terms of the number of spaces provided, the locations and the quality of the facilities, in a manner that meets the overall requirements of those people who require access to the town centre and attractions by these transport modes.

Aim 3

To provide a set of policies that will enable the Council to manage the parking facilities in such a way that the viability and vitality of the town centres within Fylde is maintained for its residents, shoppers and visitors alike.

Aim 4

To recognise the need to encourage people to use more sustainable forms of transport other than cars when travelling to and from the town centres, including public transport, bicycles, motorcycles, and walking, wherever these are practicable and realistic options.

4.0 Objectives

- 4.1 To provide a parking service whose operating, maintenance and improvement costs are covered by the revenue that is generated and that also contributes to the Council's budget.
- 4.2 To provide short stay customer and visitor parking in central areas in support of town centre businesses.
- 4.3 To provide, where required, long stay parking for commuters and visitors at car parks on the periphery of town centres.
- 4.4 To ensure an adequate level of designated parking space is available for disabled badge holders within the car parks.
- 4.5 To provide accessible, welcoming and clearly signed car parks where appropriate information is easily available.
- 4.6 To provide parking facilities that are, as far as practicable, safe and secure to use in terms of CCTV, lighting, visibility, layout and access.
- 4.7 To provide clear signage to the car parks from the local highway network to indicate short or long stay options and number of spaces.
- 4.8 To allocate funding to allow a regular maintenance, cleansing and improvement programme to ensure that Objectives 1 – 7 are achieved.
- 4.9 To continue to maintain a charging structure for parking that is competitive when compared with charges in local towns outside of the Borough and maintains the attractiveness of the town centres as locations for shopping and other visits and also maintains the benefits of the town centres as locations for employment.
- 4.10 To consider the introduction of charges on other Council car parks, where appropriate, and to set charges which do not discourage the use of local facilities or disadvantage local business.
- 4.11 To consider in the long term the level of short and long stay parking provision in light of the provision or improvement of alternative modes of transport.
- 4.12 To ensure that, where practicable, motorcycle parking facilities are provided that meet the requirements of those using motorcycles to access the town centres.
- 4.13 To ensure that, where practicable, cycle parking facilities are provided that meet the requirements of those using cycles to access the town centres and to encourage more people to do so.
- 4.14 To help identify locations in or near the town centres for use as coach drop off/pick up points for use by private hire coach companies and to identify locations for coach parking.

- 4.15 To work with the community to raise awareness of the relevant issues and to develop a consensus for the Strategy's policies and proposals.
- 4.16 To manage, in partnership with Lancashire County Council, the parking enforcement service, for both on and off street parking, under the powers granted through the Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement (DPE).
- 4.17 To control and restrict the issuing of parking permits in the Council's short stay car parks in favour of offering permits for use in designated long stay car parks, where appropriate.
- 4.18 To monitor the performance of the car parks in terms of usage and income generation on a monthly basis.
- 4.19 To allow the car parks to be used for charity or public information displays and commercial events, subject to adequate agreements being in place.
- 4.20 To restrict and prevent inappropriate use of the Council's car parks

5.0 Policies

5.1 The demand for and the supply of parking spaces.

PP1 The demand for and the supply of car park spaces will be kept under review. New car park spaces, where possible, will only be provided when there is a recognised shortage of spaces in the locality concerned.

5.2 Short Stay Parking

PP2 Preference will be given to short stay parking in town centres by imposing maximum lengths of stay where necessary and by introducing tariffs to reflect the desired use

5.3 Long Stay Parking

5.3.1 Where long stay parking exists in town centres it should be relocated to peripheral locations where possible

PP3 To monitor the demand for long stay parking and review the level of long stay spaces in the car parks with regard to the demand.

5.4 Parking Tariffs

5.4.1 Parking tariffs are a central issue to the parking operation: as a source of dissatisfaction to a proportion of people that have to pay them; those who consider that they impede trade; as a source of revenue; and as a potential traffic and transportation management tool.

5.4.2 Objective 1 of this strategy refers to securing sufficient income to cover the operational costs and to fund improvements.

5.4.3 Objective 9 of this strategy seeks to establish a charging structure for parking that will maintain the competitiveness and attractiveness of the town centres. This charging will also provide the funding for the maintenance programme identified in Objective 8. Objective 16 identifies the need to work with the Community to raise awareness of the relevant issues in order that tariffs are viewed with less resentment than might otherwise be the case.

PP4 A competitive tariff structure will be maintained for all car parks serving the town centres for both long and short stay uses. Tariffs will be reviewed at least every two years on consideration of –

- **the need to maximise the benefits of available car park space in support of the town centres**
- **the patterns of usage and turnover of spaces at each location serving the town centres**
- **existing tariff rates**
- **the need to fund maintenance and improvement works**

- the need to consider residents

The issuing and cost of parking permits will be kept under review. Further issuing of permits in premium town centre car parks will be discontinued in favour of issuing permits in long stay car parks.

5.5 Parking for Disabled Person Vehicles

5.5.1 There are 60 spaces in the Council's car parks designated for blue badge holders. This represents an average of 3.5% of the parking spaces available in all these car parks. LCC mobility guidelines recommend that in town centre (short stay) car parks 6% of spaces be reserved for blue badge holders. The Council presently provides approximately 10% of spaces in town centre car parks for disabled users.

5.5.2 It is considered that the current level of town centre provision is adequate and generally satisfies the demand.

5.5.3 It is considered fair to maintain a policy of charging disabled badge holders when parked outside one of the designated disabled parking bays.

PP5 The provision of disabled badge holder parking on the car parks will be maintained in terms of number of spaces unless it can be demonstrated that -

- **there is a shortage of spaces for badge holders and additional spaces can be identified; or**
- **there is a surplus of spaces for badge holders and an appropriate number can be reallocated for other uses**

5.6 Safety and Security

5.6.1 An important consideration in influencing peoples views of a car park and whether it is a place they will continue to visit, is whether they feel safe for themselves and their vehicle. Factors relevant to safety and security include lighting, visibility, layout, accessibility and security barriers. The policy for safety and security at the car parks to reflect Objective 6 is

PP6 The issues of personal safety and vehicle security at car parks will be a priority. Measures will include –

- **High quality lighting**
- **Minimising obstruction of sight lines for motorists and pedestrians**
- **Regulating arrangements for pedestrian and vehicle access**
- **Regular patrols and enforcement by Parking Attendants**

5.7 Signing of Car Parks

5.7.1 Clear signage will reflect the use of all car parks in town centres or periphery areas. Such signing, with details of the number of spaces and the length of stay can reduce motorists length of search for parking, thereby avoiding excessive traffic

movement and congestion around town centres. Signing of the car parks is in accordance with Objective 7.

PP7 A comprehensive and clear system of signing to all car parks will be reviewed and implemented to identify directions, number of spaces and long or short stay options.

5.8 Motorcycle Parking

5.8.1 Secure motorcycle parking is presently available in St Annes. Provision is due to be made in Lytham and Kirkham in 2005/06. The Council will investigate further locations in consultation with motorcyclist's organisations.

PP8 The Council will work in partnership with motorcyclist's organisations to provide facilities for motorcycle parking within the town centres where it can be demonstrated that there is a demand for such facilities.

5.9 Cycle Parking

5.9.1 In order to encourage cycling as a sustainable form of transport, the Council will be producing a cycling strategy during 2005/06, which will include policies on cycle parking provision.

PP9 The Council will continue to fund and install cycle parking facilities in strategic locations in town centres and local attractions

5.10 Coach Parking

5.10.1 Tourism is a major part of the economies of the towns in Fylde served by many national, regional and local coach companies. Demand for spaces will vary throughout the year, however, coach parking provision will continue to be made available where there is a sufficient demand.

PP10 To identify appropriate locations for the provision of long stay parking for coaches.

5.11 Improvement and Maintenance of Parking Infrastructure

5.11.1 A major determining factor in people's experience of visiting the towns of Fylde is the quality of the environment. The first place that visitors often see and experience once they are out of their car is the car park. Consequently, the quality of the parking infrastructure is important and should create a good first impression to those visitors.

5.11.2 Financially, the Council is limited in what it can achieve and how quickly it can be achieved. It is important, however, that a good standard of parking is achieved and maintained. There has been minimal investment made in the Council's car parks for many years and most now require significant capital investment. A programme of works will be identified with a view to securing future funding for improvements.

5.11.3 The pay and display equipment in all the Council's car parks has been replaced in January 2005 and is now linked to a central computer to enable real time detailed car park monitoring.

PP11 The parking infrastructure will be improved and maintained to a high standard to encourage their use and to ensure that the car parks are welcoming locations at which to park.

5.12 Enforcement

5.12.1 The Council is responsible for parking enforcement for both on and off street. The on street powers are operated through agency arrangements with Lancashire County Council.

5.12.2 The enforcement contractor will maintain a high level of enforcement and uniformed presence in the Council's car parks. This will offer advantages in terms of safety and security for the customers and also provide enforcement of car park regulations.

PP12 The Council will continue to manage the enforcement of parking regulations both on and off street in a positive, consistent and transparent manner.

5.13 Use of the Car Parks

5.13.1 The car parks are used for various events, displays, markets and public information exercises throughout the year subject to appropriate risk assessments, insurances and agreements being in place.

PP13 The Council will consider the use of the car parks for various events, displays, markets and public information exercises subject to adequate agreements being in place and the payment of an appropriate fee for their use.

5.14 Safety and Security

5.14.1 The Council's car parks are not protected in any way from unauthorised use or occupation. It is proposed that when a suitable budget is available some of the Council's car parks be protected by the use of height restriction barriers to prevent unauthorised access or occupation. These barriers would remain open throughout the year with the exception of public holidays and when the threat of occupation is reported. Whilst this may present problems for drivers of larger high sided vehicles and coaches the inconvenience it may cause is outweighed by the potential for damage to the car parks should there be an unauthorised occupation.

PP14 To introduce height restriction barriers to car parks to prevent unauthorised vehicular access to the annoyance of residents and detriment to the amenity. When installed the barriers will be closed where there is a threat of unauthorised use or occupation.

6.0 Implementation

6.1 Within the policy context established in the preceding section a number of initial proposals can be identified at this stage for implementation during the financial year 2005/06.

- PP5 Parking for Disabled Person Vehicles

Additional Disabled bays to be provided at Fairhaven Lake (café) car park
Additional bay to be provided at Wood Street car park, St Annes

- PP6 Safety and Security

CCTV and lighting improvements - Pleasant Street Car Park, Lytham

CCTV and lighting improvements - Fairhaven Road Car Park, St Annes

- PP11 Maintenance and Improvement

Pay and Display – Town Hall and Public Offices car parks

Resurfacing Improvements – Lytham Green car park

Remarking and Safety Improvements – Toms Croft Car Park, Freckleton

Demolition of garages and creation of new parking spaces – Pleasant Street Car Park

- PP7 Signage

Review of Lytham Town Centre car park signage

Renewal of internal signage in all p and d car parks

One Stop Shop, St Annes – signage and marking out

Remarking and signage to Orders Lane Car Park

- PP12 Enforcement

Extended to cover Town Hall and Public Offices

6.2 Ongoing policy implementation will be dependent on resources and budgets being made available on an annual basis. Other external revenue streams will be explored to secure funding to assist implementation of the policy where possible.

7.0 Monitoring and Review

The car park strategy will not be adoptable in a final rigid form. It will be a document that evolves to keep pace with changes in Government policy and with changes in demand. This Strategy has a set of core Aims, Objectives and Policies from which the detailed proposals to be implemented will emerge. As a result, there will be a need for ongoing monitoring and review.

Appendix A - Car Park Schedule
27th May 2005

Location	Free or P&D	No of spaces	Long stay / short stay	Disabled spaces (%)	Cycle / Motorcycle provision	Tariff	CCTV	Lighting
Stannerbank	P&D	150	Long	6 (4%)	No	All days 9am - 6pm Up to 2hrs £1.20 2-3hrs £1.80 3-4hrs £2.40 Over 4hrs £3.00	No	No
Lytham Green - Dicconson Terrace	P&D	50	Long	2 (4%)	No	All days 6am - 6pm Up to 2hrs £1.20 2-3hrs £1.80 3-4hrs £2.40 Over 4hrs £3.00	No	Yes
Lytham Green - Bath Street	P&D	50	Long	2 (4%)	No	All days 6am - 6pm Up to 2hrs £1.20 2-3hrs £1.80 3-4hrs £2.40 Over 4hrs £3.00	No	Yes
Lytham Station	P&D	106	Long	5 (5%)	No	All days 9am - 6pm Up to 2hrs £1.20 2-3hrs £1.80 3-4hrs £2.40 Over 4hrs £3.00	Yes	Yes
Pleasant Street	P&D	135	Short	7 (5%)	Yes	All days 9am - 6pm Up to 1hrs £1.00 1-2hrs £1.50 3-4hrs £3.00	Yes	Yes
St Pauls Avenue	P&D	100	Long	4 (4%)	No	All days 9am - 6pm Up to 2hrs £1.20 2-3hrs £1.80 3-4hrs £2.40 Over 4hrs £3.00	No	No
North Beach	P&D	150	Long	0	No	All days 9am - 6pm Up to 2hrs £1.20 2-3hrs £1.80 3-4hrs £2.40 Over 4hrs £3.00	No	No
North Promenade	P&D	220	Long	6 (3%)	No	All days 9am - 6pm Up to 2hrs £1.20 2-3hrs £1.80 3-4hrs £2.40 Over 4hrs £3.00	No	Yes

Appendix A - Car Park Schedule
27th May 2005

St Annes Swimming Pool	P&D	100	Long	4 (4%)	No	All days 9am - 6pm Up to 2hrs £1.20 2-3hrs £1.80 3-4hrs £2.40 Over 4hrs £3.00	No	Yes
St Annes Square	P&D	35	Short	4 (11%)	No	All days 9am - 6pm Up to 1hrs £1.00 1-2hrs £1.50 3-4hrs £3.00	Yes	Yes
Town Hall	P&D	55	Long	2 (4%)	No	Saturday & Sunday 9am - 6pm Up to 2hrs £1.20 2-3hrs £1.80 3-4hrs £2.40 Over 4hrs £3.00	No	No
Public Offices	P&D	50	Long	2 (4%)	No	Saturday & Sunday 9am - 6pm Up to 2hrs £1.20 2-3hrs £1.80 3-4hrs £2.40 Over 4hrs £3.00	No	Yes
Wood Street	P&D	21	Short	3 (14%)	Yes	All days 9am - 6pm Up to 1hrs £1.00 1-2hrs £1.50 3-4hrs £3.00	No	No
Fairhaven Road	P&D	190	Long	4 (2%)	No	All days 9am - 6pm Up to 2hrs £1.20 2-3hrs £1.80 3-4hrs £2.40 Over 4hrs £3.00	Yes	Yes
Mill Street	Free	105	Long	4 (4%)	No	-	No	Yes
Eagles Court	Free	16	Long	0	No	-	No	Yes
Orders Lane	Free	20	Long	0	No	-	No	Yes
Wesham Offices	Free	30	Long	3 (10%)	No	-	Yes	Yes
Toms Croft	Free	75	Long	0	No	-	No	Yes
Kirkham Baths	Free	25	Long	0	No	-	No	No
St Albans Road	Free	14	Short	0	No	-	Yes	Yes
Lowther Gardens	Free	50	Long	2 (4%)	No	-	No	Yes

REPORT



REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
STREETSCENE UNIT	POLICY AND SERVICE REVIEW COMMUNITY FORUM	9 TH JUNE 2005	8

LYTHAM GREEN PARKING

Public/Exempt item

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

Summary

At the Executive Committee of the Council on 26th January 2005 Members considered a report presented by the Technical Services Manager (Streetscene) regarding the Council's car parks. The report covered proposals for increased fees, the introduction of fees in all other car parks and also introduced the concept of additional parking provision on Lytham Green.

With respect to Lytham Green the Committee were asked to consider the feasibility of introducing additional parking by either extending the existing car parks and/or by the provision of a new car park. Members were asked to support the principle of additional parking in this area in terms of both demand management and revenue generation. The Committee was asked to approve further investigation into these options and in turn report back to a future meeting of the Executive Committee with further proposals.

The Executive Committee made the following resolution with regard to this matter –

'The Policy and Service Review Community Forum be requested to examine the feasibility of introducing additional parking on Lytham Green either by extending the existing Lytham Green car parks and/or by the construction of a new car park'

Recommendation/s

1. Members are asked to not pursue further investigation at this stage into the feasibility of additional parking on Lytham Green as outlined due to the likelihood of any proposals being contrary to adopted policies contained within the Local Plan.

Continued....

Executive brief

The item falls within the following executive brief[s]: Economy (Councillor Roger Small)

Report

1. This report follows up the resolution made by the Executive Committee on 26th January 2005 as outlined in the foregoing summary.
2. Consultation has taken place with David Wilkinson, Unit Business Manager – Built Environment, over the planning and development control implications of introducing additional parking on Lytham Green and his comments are as follows –

‘Any development of new car parks or extensions to existing car parks will have to take account of the adopted Fylde Borough Local Plan 1996 – 2006. Policy TREC 13 is the relevant policy against which any proposal would be considered. The Built Environment Managers view is that any such proposal would clearly be contrary to Policy TREC 13 and that such a clear policy objection would in his opinion mean that it would be unlikely to receive planning permission. Lytham Green is an important area of open space and this is why it is protected by the Council’s own policy. Any breach of that policy would, in the Built Environment Manager’s view, weaken the Council’s resolve in protecting open space allocations throughout the Borough.’

3. On consideration of the Built Environment Manager’s opinion, further detailed proposals have not been pursued by Officers at this stage as it is highly unlikely that they could be justified, or indeed receive the required planning permission, due to current policy adopted within the Local Plan.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	No further implications arising from the report.
Legal	No further implications arising from the report.
Community Safety	No further implications arising from the report.
Human Rights and Equalities	No further implications arising from the report.
Sustainability	No further implications arising from the report.
Health & Safety and Risk Management	No further implications arising from the report.

REPORT AUTHOR	TEL	DATE	DOC ID
Andrew Shore	(01253) 658640	27 th May 2005	Lytham Green Parking Report

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS		
NAME OF DOCUMENT	DATE	WHERE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION
Fylde Local Plan	1996 – 2006	FBC website
LCC Local Transport Plan	2001/2 – 2005/6	LCC website
PPG13 Transport	2004	Built Environment/Streetscene Offices

Attached documents

Appendix 'A' TREC 13

Appendix 8 – Extract of TREC13 from Adopted Local Plan

Public Open Space

6.64 There is a large amount of public open space in the Borough in the form of greens, play areas and formal parks and gardens. In Lytham St Annes, locations such as Lytham Green, the Promenades and large areas of seashore are also available for informal recreational pursuits.

6.65 Public open space provides important amenity benefits for local residents, assists in meeting the leisure and recreational needs of locals and visitors to the Borough and contributes to the visual quality of the environment. For these reasons, both residents and visitors alike value such areas and the Council will seek to protect them from development. It is recognised that because of financial constraints the provision of new areas of public open space, except for limited areas within new housing developments, is unlikely to be increased. Furthermore once lost, the likelihood is that such areas could never be replaced.

6.66 In some circumstances it may be appropriate to allow development on areas of public open space if compensatory provision could be made in the locality. In these circumstances, the replacement open space would need to be provided either prior to or shortly after the loss of the existing open space.

POLICY TREC 13

ALL EXISTING AREAS OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE WILL BE SAFEGUARDED FROM DEVELOPMENT UNLESS AS A RESULT OF DEVELOPMENT, EQUIVALENT OR IMPROVED PROVISION WOULD BE ACHIEVED IN THE LOCALITY.