

Community Focus Scrutiny Committee



Date	Wednesday, 29 September 2010
Venue	Town Hall, St Annes
Committee members	Councillor Keith Hyde (Chairman) Councillor Roger Small (Vice-Chairman) Councillors Christine Akeroyd, Maxine Chew, Tony Ford, Kathleen Harper, Ken Hopwood, Linda Nulty, Janine Owen, Paul Rigby, John Singleton
Other Councillors	Susan Fazackerley (Deputy Leader) Cheryl Little (Portfolio Holder for Social Wellbeing)
Officers	Phillip Woodward, Clare Platt, Tracy Scholes, Allan Oldfield, Paul Walker, Paul Drinnan, David Gillett, Lyndsey Lacey, Darius Ward, Viv Wood

Membership - Community Focus Scrutiny Committee

At the commencement of the meeting, the Chairman made reference to the recent membership changes to the committee. In doing so, he welcomed Councillor Roger Small, newly appointed Vice-Chairman to the meeting.

1. Declarations of interest

Members were reminded that any personal/prejudicial interests should be declared as required by the Council's Code of Conduct adopted in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000. No members declared any interests.

2. Confirmation of minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Community Focus Scrutiny Committee held on 8 July 2010 as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

3. Substitute members

There were no substitutions

4. Open Golf Championship - Lytham St Annes

Paul Drinnan (Head of Regeneration) and Viv Wood (Tourism Officer) gave a comprehensive presentation to committee on the preparations that were being undertaken in relation to the Open Golf Championship being held at the Royal Lytham St Annes in 2012.

In brief, the report included the background to Royal Lytham St Annes hosting the international event, the involvement of Royal and Ancient which run the competition, the value of the Open to Fylde and the various opportunities/long term benefits the event offered to the area.

Mr Drinnan explained that a Project Board had been created that would deal with four strands of organisation of the event (details of which were included in the report) In addition, he highlighted the importance of the public realm works in terms of showcasing the event and the significance of the classic resort concept as a marketing tool.

Mr Drinnan highlighted some of the challenges for 2012 including:

- Support for the public realm project action plan
- Maximise investment through use of the voluntary sector / training programmes
- Support through the capital programme
- Partners/ LSP support
- Need to provide high quality visitor information services
- Support from the regional growth fund

Members of the committee sought clarification on various matters including: the Regional Growth Fund, responsibility for car parking, no of beds in the area, impact on the local economy including cafés/ restaurants and local shops and the legacy of the event. In addition, various suggestions were tabled by members at the meeting including the possibility of using Lowther to stage golfing events, the use of large screen to show the live event to a larger audience and “pass outs” etc.

Following detailed consideration of this matter it was RESOLVED to note the report and present an updated report to a future meeting of the committee when details of the funding arrangements are known.

(The Chairman indicated that he was satisfied that the matter was not controversial and dealt with the matter by a show of hands rather than by taking a recorded vote on it)

5. Transforming Community Services (TCS) Programme

By way of introduction, the Chairman (Councillor Keith Hyde) made reference to the meeting held on 9 September when an informal presentation was given

to members by Sally Parnaby (Director of Regional Development and Provider Services) and Carole Sharrock (Head of Strategy) of NHS North Lancashire, on the Transforming Community Services Programme.

An Executive Summary and briefing paper detailing the background of the TCS Programme and the work undertaken to date by North Lancashire Teaching Primary Care Trust had previously been circulated.

The Committee RESOLVED to note the report.

(The Chairman indicated that he was satisfied that the matter was not controversial and dealt with the matter by a show of hands rather than by taking a recorded vote on it)

6. General Fund Budget Monitoring Report 2010/11 Position as at Quarter ended 30 June 2010

Tracy Scholes (Director of Governance and Partnerships) together with other relevant Directors provided members of the committee with an update on the General Fund 'hot spots' under and over spending for the quarter ended 30 June 2010.

The report provided details of the actions being taken to address the 'hot spots' variances in excess of 10K against the profiled budget. In particular, the report highlighted budget areas of concern that impinged on the Council's general income and areas that required further attention relating to costs for the first quarter.

Members of the committee sought clarification on various matters including: vacancy savings, concessionary fares, car parking income/enforcement, land charges (revocation of personal search fees) sewage/ environmental services costs at Lowther and general utility costs. The relevant Directors addressed each matter at the meeting.

The Chief Executive (Phillip Woodward) further reported that since the publication of the report, additional analysis had been undertaken of information received from other agencies about budget projections. In this respect, he addressed the committee on the implications of the public spending reductions and the associated impact for Fylde.

In his report, he made reference to key assumptions made in the existing budget strategy (March 2010) and the subsequent implications of the Government announcements (June 2010) which essentially impacts a number of key areas:

- A reduction in public sector budgets by an average of 25% over 4 years
- Council Tax freeze in 2011-12
- An increase in VAT to 20% (Jan 11)
- Public sector pay freeze in 2011/12

- Immediate reductions in special grant streams
- Concessionary fares responsibility transfer to County Council
- Review of public sector pensions

The Chief Executive further outlined key dates for the Comprehensive Spending Review and the Local Government Grant Settlement. In addition, he explained the potential local risks and details of how the Council was intending to respond to the public spending reductions. In doing so, he stated that it was intended to set up an 'all council' briefing session in early November on the matter.

A chart depicting the journey so far (approved budget compared to budget if no cuts/savings had been approved) was circulated at the meeting.

Following detailed consideration it was RESOLVED to note the current position and the contents of the Chief Executive's report.

(The Chairman indicated that he was satisfied that the matter was not controversial and dealt with the matter by a show of hands rather than by taking a recorded vote on it)

7. Performance Exception Report

Tracy Scholes (Director of Governance and Partnerships) presented a report detailing the performance exceptions for data for Council for the first quarter of 2010/11. The report highlighted both good and poor performance to date measured against the targets set for the current financial year.

Particular consideration was given at the meeting to areas of under performance including: (NI154) net additional homes provided, (FLI020) percentage of undisputed invoices paid within 30 days, (NI181) time taken to process housing benefit/council tax benefit new claims and change events, (FL1019) the number of missed bins per 100,000 collections, (FL017) percentage of phone calls answered and (XN114) avoidable contact made to the Council.

Councillor Akeroyd asked about the costs associated with vet bills. In response, Mr Oldfield outlined the Council's statutory responsibility for stray dogs and the associated cost implications.

Councillor Nulty sought clarification on the net number of additional homes (NI 154). Mr Walker confirmed that this related to the total number of additional homes within the borough.

Councillor Nulty also sought further details on the time taken to process housing benefits/council tax benefit claims (NI181). In response, Tracy Scholes provided an overview of the issues associated with the System Replacement project which placed various challenges on the team. She explained that the transfer of systems had inevitable impacts on processing times which in turn affected the recovery of former performance levels

Mrs Scholes further stated that in addition to the normal workloads, every member of staff required training and that this was further compounded by the time required to undertake data cleansing and reconciliation work. She added that the situation was further exacerbated as a result of the recession in that workloads had increased by a considerable amount of new claims.

In addition to the above, members commented on (XNI14) Avoidable contact and (FL109) the number of missed bins per 100,000. These were addressed by the relevant directors.

Following discussion it was RESOLVED to ask Marie McRoberts (Assistant Director: Revenues and Benefits) to provide an update to the next meeting of the committee on matters associated with NI181.

(The Chairman indicated that he was satisfied that the matter was not controversial and dealt with the matter by a show of hands rather than by taking a recorded vote on it)

8. Annual Report - Care and Repair (Wyre & Fylde)

In accordance with the recommendations of the task and Finish group in 2007, the third Care and Repair (Wyre and Fylde) Annual Report was presented to the committee by David Gillett (Housing Manager) and Councillor Cheryl Little (Portfolio Holder for Social Wellbeing)

In brief, the report provided details of the background to the service, key objectives of the service and its performance framework together with funding arrangements. In addition, it provided an evaluation of the service based on trends and comparisons.

Included within the report was a copy of the Care and Repair progress report, an analysis of Customer Satisfaction Surveys 2009/10, an analysis of Handyperson Customer satisfaction questionnaires and the Handy person / small repairs handyperson data.

Councillor Cheryl Little (Portfolio Holder for Social Wellbeing) endorsed the contents of the report and in doing so, stated that there was continued evidence that during 2009/10 there had been increased interest in the scheme from residents of Fylde and that the Care and Repair service had performed well in relation to its set targets and objectives.

In summary, Councillor Little reminded members that the service was provided on an impartial basis and provided support to vulnerable members of the Community. In addition, it provided support to a number of Community Safety initiatives of which she supported. She added that its ongoing funding remained a critical issue to the continued delivery of the service and as such, sought the committee's support for its continuity.

Following discussion it was RESLOVED:

1. To note the contents of the Fylde and Wyre Care and Repair Annual Report and support the continued funding of the service.

2. To convey the Committee's thanks and appreciation for the excellent service provided.

(The Chairman indicated that he was satisfied that the matter was not controversial and dealt with the matter by a show of hands rather than by taking a recorded vote on it)
