



FYLDE BOROUGH COUNCIL



## Meeting Agenda

**Policy & Service Review  
Scrutiny Committee  
Town Hall, Lytham St. Annes  
Thursday 3 September 2009, 7:00pm**

**The maximum capacity for this meeting room is 60 persons –  
once this limit is reached no other person can be admitted.**

# **POLICY & SERVICE REVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

|               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| CHAIRMAN      | Karen Buckley  |
| VICE-CHAIRMAN | John Prestwich |

## **Councillors**

|                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| Thomas Threlfall   | Patricia Fieldhouse |
| Tony Ford          | William Thompson    |
| Elizabeth Oades    | Elaine Silverwood   |
| Elizabeth Clarkson |                     |

Contact: Annie Womack, St. Annes (01253) 658423  
Email: [anniew@fylde.gov.uk](mailto:anniew@fylde.gov.uk)



## **Our Vision**

*To establish Fylde Borough Council as a high performing local authority*

## **Our Corporate Objectives**

To improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of our communities through:

- The promotion and enhancement of the natural built environment
- Increasing the availability and access to good quality housing for all
- Maintaining healthy and safe communities to reduce the fear of crime
- Supporting and sustaining a strong and diverse Fylde coast economy to further enhance employment prospects

## **We will achieve this by:**

Focusing on customer requirements  
Clear community and organisational leadership  
Delivering high quality, cost-effective services  
Partnership working



## A G E N D A

### PUBLIC PLATFORM

*To hear representations from members of the public in accordance with  
Committee procedure rules*

| ITEM  | PAGE  |
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| <b>1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:</b> <i>If a member requires advice on Declarations of Interest he/she is advised to contact the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting. (For the assistance of Members an extract from the Councils Code of Conduct is attached).</i> | 4     |
| <b>2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES:</b> <i>To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Policy &amp; Service Review Scrutiny Committee held on 6 August 2009 attached at the end of the agenda.</i>   | 4     |
| <b>3. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS:</b> <i>Details of any substitute members notified in accordance with council procedure rule 26.3</i>  | 4     |
| <b>4. DRAFT PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING POLICY</b>   | 7-28  |
| <b>5. CAPITAL PROGRAMME – REPLACEMENT OF CREMATORS AND INSTALLATION OF MERCURY ABATEMENT EQUIPMENT</b>  | 29    |
| <b>6. HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION ACTION PLAN</b>   | 30-48 |
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**Personal interests**

**8.—(1)** You have a personal interest in any business of your authority where either—

(a) it relates to or is likely to affect—

- (i) any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by your authority;
- (ii) any body—
  - (aa) exercising functions of a public nature;
  - (bb) directed to charitable purposes; or
  - (cc) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union),

of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management;

- (i) any employment or business carried on by you;
  - (ii) any person or body who employs or has appointed you;
  - (iii) any person or body, other than a relevant authority, who has made a payment to you in respect of your election or any expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties;
  - (iv) any person or body who has a place of business or land in your authority's area, and in whom you have a beneficial interest in a class of securities of that person or body that exceeds the nominal value of £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital (whichever is the lower);
  - (v) any contract for goods, services or works made between your authority and you or a firm in which you are a partner, a company of which you are a remunerated director, or a person or body of the description specified in paragraph (vi);
  - (vi) the interests of any person from whom you have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25;
  - (vii) any land in your authority's area in which you have a beneficial interest;
  - (viii) any land where the landlord is your authority and you are, or a firm in which you are a partner, a company of which you are a remunerated director, or a person or body of the description specified in paragraph (vi) is, the tenant;
  - (xi) any land in the authority's area for which you have a licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy for 28 days or longer; or
- (b) a decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well-being or financial position or the well-being or financial position of a relevant person to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward, as the case may be, affected by the decision;

(2) In sub-paragraph (1)(b), a relevant person is—

- (a) a member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association; or
- (b) any person or body who employs or has appointed such persons, any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are directors;
- (c) any person or body in whom such persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or
- (d) any body of a type described in sub-paragraph (1)(a)(i) or (ii).

**Disclosure of personal interests**

- 9.—(1)** Subject to sub-paragraphs (2) to (7), where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority and you attend a meeting of your authority at which the business is considered, you must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent.
- (2) Where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority which relates to or is likely to affect a person described in paragraph 8(1)(a)(i) or 8(1)(a)(ii)(aa), you need only disclose to the meeting the existence and nature of that interest when you address the meeting on that business.
  - (3) Where you have a personal interest in any business of the authority of the type mentioned in paragraph 8(1)(a)(viii), you need not disclose the nature or existence of that interest to the meeting if the interest was registered more than three years before the date of the meeting.
  - (4) Sub-paragraph (1) only applies where you are aware or ought reasonably to be aware of the existence of the personal interest.

- (5) Where you have a personal interest but, by virtue of paragraph 14, sensitive information relating to it is not registered in your authority's register of members' interests, you must indicate to the meeting that you have a personal interest, but need not disclose the sensitive information to the meeting.
- (6) Subject to paragraph 12(1)(b), where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority and you have made an executive decision in relation to that business, you must ensure that any written statement of that decision records the existence and nature of that interest.
- (7) In this paragraph, "executive decision" is to be construed in accordance with any regulations made by the Secretary of State under section 22 of the Local Government Act 2000(d).

#### **Prejudicial interest generally**

- 10.—**(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority you also have a prejudicial interest in that business where the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.
- (2) You do not have a prejudicial interest in any business of the authority where that business—
- (a) does not affect your financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in paragraph 8;
  - (b) does not relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or any person or body described in paragraph 8; or
  - (c) relates to the functions of your authority in respect of—
    - (i) housing, where you are a tenant of your authority provided that those functions do not relate particularly to your tenancy or lease;
    - (ii) school meals or school transport and travelling expenses, where you are a parent or guardian of a child in full time education, or are a parent governor of a school, unless it relates particularly to the school which the child attends;
    - (iii) statutory sick pay under Part XI of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, where you are in receipt of, or are entitled to the receipt of, such pay;
    - (iv) an allowance, payment or indemnity given to members;
    - (v) any ceremonial honour given to members; and
    - (vi) setting council tax or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

#### **Prejudicial interests arising in relation to overview and scrutiny committees**

- 11.—** You also have a prejudicial interest in any business before an overview and scrutiny committee of your authority (or of a sub-committee of such a committee) where—
- (a) that business relates to a decision made (whether implemented or not) or action taken by your authority's executive or another of your authority's committees, sub-committees, joint committees or joint sub-committees; and
  - (b) at the time the decision was made or action was taken, you were a member of the executive, committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee mentioned in paragraph (a) and you were present when that decision was made or action was taken.

#### **Effect of prejudicial interests on participation**

- 12.—**(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), where you have a prejudicial interest in any business of your authority—
- (a) you must withdraw from the room or chamber where a meeting considering the business is being held—
    - (i) in a case where sub-paragraph (2) applies, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence;
    - (ii) in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at that meeting;
 unless you have obtained a dispensation from your authority's standards committee;
  - (b) you must not exercise executive functions in relation to that business; and
  - (c) you must not seek improperly to influence a decision about that business.
- (2) Where you have a prejudicial interest in any business of your authority, you may attend a meeting (including a meeting of the overview and scrutiny committee of your authority or of a sub-committee of such a committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the business, provided that the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose, whether under a statutory right or otherwise.

# REPORT



| REPORT OF          | MEETING   | DATE                   | ITEM NO |
|--------------------|---|------------------------|---------|
| COMMUNITY SERVICES | POLICY AND SERVICE REVIEW<br>SCRUTINY COMMITTEE | 3<br>SEPTEMBER<br>2009 | 4       |

## DRAFT PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING POLICY

### Public Item

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

### Summary

The report presents a final draft revised private sector housing policy. The revised policy takes account of the latest stock condition information available to the council and proposes changes to the types of assistance to be made available to the community. It recognises that the main responsibility to maintain their homes lies with the owner but that there is a part of the community that will need assistance to maintain and improve their homes to a basic minimum standard.

The policy will require capital resources in order to be implemented. These resources are currently found only by way of external grant funding. The level of funding for 2009-10 has recently been announced and the allocation for Fylde has risen to £579k. It is likely that the allocation for future years will be significantly reduced and members will need to consider how the policy will be resourced in the future.

### Recommendations

1. That the final draft policy be approved and recommended for adoption by cabinet.

### Reasons for recommendation

To have in place an up to date policy that reflects the current need for improvement of housing conditions in the district.

### **Alternative options considered and rejected**

1. Having no assistance policy. Rejected because a local housing authority would be failing in its statutory duty if it had a 'no assistance' policy.
2. Continue with the current policy. Rejected because the latest information now available in respect of local housing conditions suggests that new more focussed assistance is now appropriate. It is also a requirement of the current policy that it will be reviewed from time to time as circumstances and information change. Review is therefore appropriate.

### **Cabinet Portfolio**

The item falls within the following Cabinet portfolio:

Social Wellbeing                      Councillor Cheryl Little.

### **Report**

1. A report was presented to the April 2009 meeting of this committee containing a draft revised private sector housing policy. That meeting resolved to adopt the policy for the purpose of carrying out a consultation exercise with a requirement to return to the committee following the consultation.
2. The consultation has been carried out through the newly formed housing theme group of the local strategic partnership and by publication on the council's web site. The response to the consultation has been disappointing with only two responses received from external sources.
3. The responses received have been considered and changes and additions have been made to the policy.
4. The changes resulting from the consultation have generally not been significant and mainly relate to drafting issues and providing additional links to local and national strategic priorities. The now final draft policy does, however, differ from the policy that is currently in use. A summary of these changes is attached at appendix 2.
5. The meeting of this committee in April also resolved to defer any further consideration of using a system of loans until after the body of work sponsored by GONW has been completed. References to the availability of loans have therefore been removed from the policy. On completion of this work a further report will be presented to this committee reporting on its outcomes.
6. A copy of the revised draft policy is attached at appendix 1.

### **Conclusion**

7. The adoption of a revised policy is now appropriate. It should be noted though that all the capital funding for the discretionary elements of the policy are provided by external funding through the regional housing board. However with the current level of funding and the future anticipated cuts in public expenditure it will still be necessary to prioritise activity given that there is insufficient funding to address all the issues identified in the house condition survey and subsequently this policy.
8. The external funding for 2009-10 has been increased to £579k. This increase is welcomed and could potentially lead to the number of grant assisted interventions



rising to approximately 120 in the next year. However this needs to be considered in the context of an identified need to improve over 1000 additional private sector homes in order to meet the decent homes target.

9. It is also likely that this increase has come about for reasons including the desire to help stimulate the local construction industry. It is highly likely therefore that it will not be a long term increase in resources and cuts are anticipated for future years. Members will need to consider methods of maintaining an adequate level of resources into the future.

| Report Author | Tel            | Date    | Doc ID |
|---------------|----------------|---------|--------|
| John Cottam   | (01253) 658690 | July 09 |        |

| List of Background Papers             |          |                                    |
|---------------------------------------|----------|------------------------------------|
| Name of document                      | Date     | Where available for inspection     |
| Private sector stock condition survey | Sep 2008 | Housing services offices Town Hall |

#### Attached documents

Appendix 1 – Draft Private Sector housing policy

Appendix 2 – Summary of changes

| IMPLICATIONS                            |   |
|---|---|
| Finance                                 | A fully resourced policy will require significant capital investment.   |
| Legal                                   | A local housing authority would be considered to be failing in its statutory responsibilities if it had a blanket 'no assistance' policy.   |
| Community Safety                        | None arising from this report.  |
| Human Rights and Equalities             | The policy will be applicable to all sections of the community. The council's responsibilities under the Disability discrimination Act have been considered. The council has consistently provided resources to deliver the mandatory disabled facilities grant and where resources permit will consider additional assistance through the discretionary disabled facilities grant. |
| Sustainability and Environmental Impact | A decent home and improved housing conditions will contribute to maintaining sustainable communities.   |
| Health & Safety and Risk Management     | None arising from this report.  |

## **Private Sector Housing Policy**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this policy is to set out the ways in which the council will provide financial and other forms of assistance to private sector housing owners and occupiers within the administrative area of Fylde Borough Council.

The Regulatory Reform Order on housing renewal was made in 2002. The order introduced sweeping changes to the powers available to local housing authorities to provide assistance to people to deal with unsatisfactory housing conditions.

Guidance has been given by the government to local authorities about the use of the new powers and flexibilities provided by the order. It remains the government's view that the prime responsibility for the maintenance of their property remains with the owners of the property. It does though recognise that there will be some owners, particularly the elderly and vulnerable, who will not have the necessary resources to do so. Local authorities therefore have an important role to play in providing assistance in these cases.

The government therefore recognises the role of local authorities in providing assistance. It would consider that a local authority would be failing in its duty as a housing enabler and its statutory responsibility to consider the condition of housing in its area if it did not make some provision for assistance. A blanket 'no assistance' policy would therefore be unacceptable. (ODPM circular 05/2003)

The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles by which Fylde Borough Council will provide assistance to private sector property owners. It will set out the type and extent of assistance that will be available.

### **Policy Implementation plan**

The policy will become effective on.....

The delivery of the policy will be through councils housing services staff within the Directorate of Community Services.

The policy will be reviewed from time to time as circumstances dictate. The first policy was developed in 2003 following the regulatory reform order, the current policy was adopted in 2007 and this policy is being reviewed and revised in light of the information provided by the most recent private stock condition survey in 2008.

Factors that may prompt a review of the policy could include

- Changes to capital spending plans
- Acute changes to local circumstances
- Changes to national or regional policy
- Legislative changes
- Local Strategic Partnership influences.

Minor amendments to the policy can be made by the Director of Community Services with the approval of the relevant portfolio holder.

Performance issues relevant to the policy will be reported in accordance with the directorate and corporate performance management framework.

### The Local Context

The Fylde Borough Council private sector house condition survey of 2007/08 is a useful source of information in respect of the local context for private sector housing.

The private sector housing stock comprises approximately 33,400 dwellings of which approximately 28,500 are owner occupied and 4,900 privately rented. By comparison the social rented stock is approximately 2,300 dwellings. The tenure profile in Fylde differs significantly from both the national and regional averages. Owner occupation is high as is private renting whilst social renting is very low.

Average house prices in Fylde are high by comparison to the regional averages and there are acute affordability issues in Fylde. The lack of supply of social rented accommodation means that many, often vulnerable, households are meeting their affordable housing needs within the private rented sector.

More than 31% of households in Fylde have an annual income of less than £15,000 and more than 42% of households have an annual income of less than £20,000. Additional data on income levels show that low income households (less than £10,000 pa) are most likely to be found in the 16-24 and over 60 age groups.

Fylde has a higher than average number of residents who are aged 60 or over. When combined with the numbers of people on a low income or in receipt of benefits this is likely to lead to a higher than average number of vulnerable people.

With respect to benefit receipt, overall 19% of households contain a person in receipt of a means tested benefit with the proportion of benefit receipt rising to 34% of households in the private rented sector.

The condition of housing is assessed using the Housing Health and Safety Rating system (HHSRS) and by the use of the Decent Homes Standard. The HHSRS assesses the hazards to health present in a dwelling and rates the hazards as category 1 or 2 hazards. Category one hazards are those that are most serious and are such that the local authority is required to take action.

The decent homes standard takes account of the presence of category 1 hazards but also considers other items such as the state of repair of the dwelling, the age of the kitchen and bathroom facilities and the thermal efficiency of the dwelling. Although not a statutory standard the decent homes standard has become an accepted measure of the suitability for occupation of dwellings.

In Fylde just over 34% of dwellings fail the decent homes standard. Within the private rented sector the failure rate rises to just over 50%. The main cause of failure in both cases is the poor degree of thermal comfort which is strongly linked to HHSRS failures related to excess cold. Many of the non decent homes are occupied by vulnerable people.

The overall proportion of dwellings in the private sector with a category 1 hazard is just under 15%. This represents about 5000 dwellings. The proportion of the private rented sector with a category 1 hazard rises to just under 27%. This represents over 1300 dwellings.

The category 1 hazards are dominated by excess cold issues with falls in the home as the next most common occurrence.

The house condition survey also assessed the amount of empty property in the private sector. It is estimated that there are about 780 dwellings that are classed as long term vacant and have been vacant for more than 6 months.

The costs associated with the removal of category 1 hazards and the repair of dwellings is significant. It is estimated that to comprehensively improve dwellings with a category 1 hazard would cost £42 million. The estimated cost to comprehensively repair the dwelling stock would be in the order of £216 million. Clearly, as stated earlier, the responsibility for providing the resources to carry out the required improvements must lie mainly with the property owners. There will, though, always be a proportion of owners who cannot fund the required works and it is this group of people to whom the council owes a responsibility to ensure that their living conditions are improved.

### **Resourcing the policy**

The operation and delivery of the policy will be carried out by the housing team which is located within the directorate of community services. The revenue costs to the service are primarily salary costs. There is in addition a revenue support grant of £30k to support the Wyre and Fylde Home Improvement agency.

The capital funding required to deliver the aims of the policy is provided by a mixture of government grant and the councils own resources. Some funding streams will only be available for specific purposes whereas others will be capable of being used at the discretion of the council.

The scale of the funding needs in the private sector as a whole and the limited availability of public sector resources mean that it will not be possible to rectify all known problems. In order to best use the limited resources targeting and prioritisation of interventions will be required. Such targeting will be based on a wide range of information sources including stock condition surveys, local knowledge, customer and partner feedback.

Allocation of resources into any particular area of work or intervention will be set at the beginning of each financial year. If circumstances warrant during the year a redistribution of funding may take place by the director for community services with the approval of the relevant portfolio holder.

### **Links to other strategies and policies**

This private sector housing policy cannot be a standalone policy. It must recognise and take account of national, regional and local policies and priorities in order to be effective.

The local strategic partnership has developed a Sustainable Community Strategy for Fylde which is representative of the community wishes. In 2008 the council has revised its corporate plan to take account of the sustainable community strategy. The corporate objectives of the council are

- The promotion and enhancement of the natural and built environment.
- Increasing the availability of and access to good quality housing for all.
- Maintaining healthy and safe communities to reduce the fear of crime
- Supporting and sustaining a strong and diverse Fylde coast economy to further enhance employment prospects.

This policy will sit below the sustainable community strategy and the corporate plan along the 'golden thread'. The policy's aims and objectives will be delivered through directorate service planning and as previously mentioned will be monitored through the corporate performance management processes.

There are clear link with other strategies and policies such as;

- The housing strategy
- The homelessness strategy
- The enforcement policy
- The draft Fylde Coast Housing strategy
- The draft Fylde Coast affordable Warmth strategy.

## **Types of assistance available**

There are three broad types of assistance available from the council under the terms of this policy. These are advice, financial and enforcement.

### **Advice**

Advice will be offered to all sections of the community on an impartial basis.

The council recognises that appropriate and timely advice can minimise the need for financial and enforcement interventions. The council will carry out campaigns of awareness raising to encourage property owners to properly maintain their homes. Council officers will be available to offer specific advice to homeowners whether or not any financial assistance might be available. Information and advice will be made available through the council's web site and through various partner agencies such as CAB, Face to Face and at appropriate public places.

Consideration will also be given to a method of cascading advice and information through the range of public and voluntary sector workers who have access into the community.

In addition the council will carry out targeted campaigns from time to time to raise awareness of energy efficiency and thermal comfort issues. It will also assist in the promotion and take up of other sources of direct assistance such as the 'warmfront' scheme and other energy efficiency schemes delivered by the utility companies and others.

The provision of advice and in some cases, direct assistance through the handyperson scheme, is available through the Wyre and Fylde Home Improvement Agency. The council has recently scrutinised the support it offers to this agency and has concluded that it remains a priority for continued financial support.

### **Financial Assistance**

Financial assistance can be mandatory or discretionary. It may be in the form of a grant, loan or a combination of both.

Types of grant that may be available include

- Mandatory disabled facilities grant
- Discretionary disabled facilities grant
- Discretionary decent homes grant
- Discretionary energy efficiency grant
- Discretionary park homes grant

A scheme offering discretionary loans to householders may be appropriate for a number of reasons

- It will recognise the equity available in many householders homes which could be unlocked to fund repairs and improvements
- It will enable limited public funds to be reused on repayment of a loan for the benefit of future clients
- It will reinforce the responsibility that home owners should have for looking after their own home.

The private sector house condition survey asked households whether or not they would be prepared to release their equity in order to fund repairs and improvements. 98% of households indicated that they would not consider equity release as a means of funding such work. In the current economic climate, with falling house values, the attractiveness of equity release diminishes significantly. Government Office for the North West has recently announced that it is investigating the feasibility of establishing a regional loan scheme. It is likely that this will require support from local authorities in the region but it may prove to be a more attractive proposition to private sector lenders and potential loan recipients.

Fylde Borough Council is supportive of the research work being carried out at a regional level into a loan scheme and will defer any local loan scheme pending the outcome of the research.

## **Enforcement**

The council has a range of statutory powers available to it to improve the housing conditions in the private sector. The use of these powers will be in accordance with the Good Enforcement Concordat and the council's enforcement policies. Enforcement will generally not be the first response to a situation but there may be circumstances where it may be an appropriate first response. Factors to consider could include the severity of the problem, the past history of a landlord, the presence of an imminent risk etc. The enforcement policy can be accessed through the council's web site.

## **Priorities for assistance**

There are a number of wider public policy priorities that can influence local priorities for assistance. For example helping vulnerable people fits with wider public health objectives; reducing winter deaths has a strong fit with improving thermal comfort; adaptations work and removing category 1 hazards have strong links to staying healthy and reducing the NHS burden by allowing timely hospital discharge.

The responsibility for maintaining housing standards and conditions lies predominantly with the owner of the property. There will though be occasions where it is appropriate for support from public resources to assist people who

otherwise would not be able to carry out works using their own resources. There may also be occasions where the use of public funds is appropriate in order to deliver outcomes in relation to local, regional or national priorities.

The private sector house condition survey of 2007/08 provides up to date data to help inform to view of the priority areas for assistance. It indicates that there are significant issues around meeting the decent homes standard in respect of homes occupied by vulnerable households. It also indicates that around 5000 dwellings in Fylde have a category 1 hazard. There is a common link between decency and the existence of a category 1 hazard in that the majority of failures in both standards are due to a lack of adequate heating and insulation leading to excess cold issues. This suggests that thermal comfort and excess cold factors should be a priority area for assistance.

The survey also indicates that the private rented sector has an incidence of category 1 hazards that is twice the rate of the owner occupied sector. The private rented sector in Fylde is larger than average and is used as an affordable housing solution to many. Additionally many of the occupants in the private rented sector are vulnerable. It is likely that many of these vulnerable households will be living in non decent accommodation the cause of which is more likely to be due to thermal efficiency issues. These factors therefore suggest that assistance into the private rented sector should be prioritised. A balance needs to be established that recognises both the landlords' responsibility to provide safe accommodation and the need to raise the thermal comfort standards in this sector. Enforcement will also, therefore, play a part in achieving the required improvements. The balance should therefore provide for some assistance to improve the thermal efficiency of the private rented sector whilst ensuring that other issues remain the responsibility of the landlord.

There are a number of other factors that can cause a property to be non decent or cause the existence of a category 1 hazard. In the private rented sector these other matters can usually be remedied by appropriate advice and enforcement where necessary. It would not generally be appropriate to offer financial assistance to the private rented sector in these circumstances.

In the owner occupied sector there will be circumstances where assistance is appropriate to remedy non decency and remove category 1 hazards. The circumstances should recognise the responsibility that home owners have to maintain their own property but also recognise that some owners will not be able to do so. Assistance to remedy non decency and to remove category 1 hazards will therefore be limited to vulnerable households. There may be occasions where a category 1 hazard exists in the owner occupied sector and financial assistance is either not available or not wanted. In these circumstances action could be taken under the council's enforcement policy.



In the Fylde there are approximately 660 licensed residential mobile homes (commonly known as Park homes). Many of these mobile homes have inadequate levels of thermal efficiency due to their age and construction. They are amongst the poorest types of accommodation when considering the effects of excess cold on their occupants. Many of them are also occupied by vulnerable or low income households. It must be recognised that the methods for improving the energy efficiency of mobile homes differ significantly from those used in traditional dwellings and the costs are therefore generally greater. It should also be noted that mobile homes are generally a depreciating asset with a limited life expectancy. Forms of assistance that may be considered will need to recognise these issues.

## **Grant Assistance**

### **Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)**

DFG can be available to adapt the main home of a disabled person to meet their needs. They are given under the provisions of The Housing Grants (construction and regeneration) Act 1996, as amended from time to time. The legislation applies nationally and is prescriptive on eligibility, processes, types of work, cost limits, the means test etc.

In order to consider an application for a DFG there must be a defined need for the benefit of a disabled occupant. The need is usually assessed by the local social services and occupational therapy services and must be reasonable and practical to meet the need in the circumstances. It is for the council to consider what is reasonable and practical in the circumstances.

In Fylde the partner agencies of the social services, the occupational therapy services, New Fylde Housing when appropriate and council officers hold regular priority panel meetings. The purpose of the priority panel is to jointly assess the urgency and appropriateness of clients needs for adaptations in order to deal with the most urgent cases more speedily.

There is a prescribed maximum grant for any DFG that is currently (August 2009) £30,000. In certain cases an applicant will be required to make a contribution towards the costs of the necessary works. The applicant's contribution is assessed using a nationally prescribed Test of Resources, (Commonly referred to as the 'means test').

There is a formal application process and in the case of larger schemes costing more than £5000 there may also be a requirement to repay some or all of the grant in certain circumstances. If such a repayment is required it will be no more than £10,000.

More detailed advice and information about DFG can be obtained from the housing services staff.

### **Discretionary DFG**

The mandatory DFG process is prescribed by national legislation. The works that are eligible for consideration for a mandatory DFG are limited and are also prescribed by the legislation. The maximum mandatory grant that can be awarded is also determined by a national cap which is currently £30,000.

There are a number of circumstances where it would be appropriate to consider the award of a discretionary DFG either to complement a mandatory DFG or where the mandatory grant is not appropriate.

- Increasing the grant paid for a mandatory DFG by up to £5000 where the reasonable costs of the structural building works only exceeds the limit and the applicant has been assessed as having no contribution to make towards the cost of the works.
- The provision of desirable works for the benefit of a disabled occupant that are not within the scope of the mandatory DFG. Such works could include the provision of a home work space, a home treatment space, the provision of space or facilities for a carer etc. Such applications will be subject to the means test and will be available subject to a maximum award of £10,000.
- Enabling a disabled occupant to relocate to a more suitable property where this is a more cost effective solution to meeting the needs of the disabled person. Such applications will be subject to a maximum award of £2,000 plus fees and will be subject to the means test. In this case agency fees will be fixed at 5% of the approved costs.

Discretionary DFG will be subject to a range of application and future occupation conditions as detailed later in this policy.

### **Discretionary Decent Homes Grant**

The decent homes standard is a prescribed standard used nationally to assess the condition and suitability for occupation of dwellings. To meet the standard and therefore be decent a dwelling must;

- Be free from category 1 hazards as measured by the HHSRS
- Be in a reasonable state of repair
- Have reasonably modern kitchen and bathroom facilities
- Have reasonable thermal comfort standards through a combination of adequate heating and insulation.

Reasonable state of repair will be judged having regard to the age, character and location of the property.

Reasonable thermal comfort will be judged having regard to the level of insulation present, the type and adequacy of heating facilities and the 'SAP' rating of the property.

To be eligible for a decent homes grant the dwelling must be non decent and therefore be failing in one or more of the above criteria.

Eligibility for this grant will be limited to occupants who are vulnerable according to the most recent government definition of the term. Currently a vulnerable household is one that receives one or more of a number of income related or disability benefits. These benefits are income support, housing benefit, council tax benefit, disabled persons tax credit, income based job seekers allowance, working families tax credit, attendance allowance, disability living allowance, industrial injuries disablement benefit, war disablement pension.

The council will consider applications from qualifying owner occupiers and tenants who have been resident in the dwelling for at least three years prior to the date of application.

The outcomes required from this discretionary grant are that the property must be free from a category 1 hazard and must meet the decent homes standard in all respects. The grant will have a cash limit to any approval and notwithstanding this cash limit the applicant must ensure that all necessary works to achieve decency are carried out before a grant can be paid.

The maximum grant that can be approved in any single application will be £5000 for eligible works. Appropriate fees will be additional to the eligible works costs. There will be a maximum limit of assistance of £10,000 in any 5 year period. Additional external funding may be available to assist with the installation of measures to improve the thermal comfort of a property. Where an applicant is eligible for other external funding such as from the 'warmfront' or utility company schemes, any grant will be net of the availability of any such funding.

The discretionary decent homes grant will be subject to a range of application and future occupation conditions as detailed later in this policy.

### **Discretionary Energy Efficiency Grant**

This grant will be made available to home owners not eligible for a decent homes grant. It will also be made available for private sector landlords where a vulnerable tenant occupies the dwelling in question. In all cases any assistance will be subject to the applicant having taken advantage of any other available funding through Warmfront or utility company schemes etc.

Eligible works will include:

- Loft, tank and pipe insulation

- Draught proofing when carried out in conjunction with other measures.
- Wall insulation
- Appropriate energy efficient heating systems.

Whilst assistance may be offered to private sector landlords for energy efficiency measures it remains their responsibility to ensure that the rented accommodation complies with any requirements of the HHSRS.

The amount of grant available in respect of any single application will be 50% of the approved costs subject to a maximum of £500.

Application conditions apply to the grant but there will be no conditions imposed as to the future occupation of the dwelling. From time to time it may be appropriate to target assistance available under the energy efficiency grant towards selected area or particular groups of people. Such targeting may be carried out by the director of community services following consultation with the relevant portfolio holder.

### **Discretionary Park Home Grant**

The availability of this grant recognises that the condition of many park homes can deteriorate more rapidly than traditional dwellings. It is also recognised that many of the older park homes are particularly energy inefficient and suffer from poor standards of thermal comfort.

There is a basic eligibility criterion that requires any potential applicant to have occupied the park home under a mobile homes agreement for at least 3 years prior to the application date. The potential applicant will also be required to demonstrate that there is an unexpired term of the mobile homes agreement that is at least equal to the length of the time during which future occupation conditions will apply.

Eligible works will include

- The provision of an envelope of external wall insulation
- The provision of adequate and efficient heating facilities
- Basic repairs to the fabric and/or sub frame of the home

The grant will be subject to a means test and the maximum amount of grant available in any single application is £5,000 for eligible works. There will be a maximum limit of assistance of £10,000 in any 5 year period. Appropriate fees will be additional to eligible works costs. The grant will be subject to application and future occupation conditions as detailed later in this policy.

## **Agency Service**

The council provides a full agency service to applicants to assist with the whole process of making an application through to monitoring and completion of the works. The service is provided by members of staff from the housing team and a fee is payable for the service. The fee is currently 10% of the approved costs of the relevant work. The fee payable is a cost included as an eligible expense and can therefore be included in the grant aided works. In the case of a DFG the fee will be capped at the appropriate percentage of the maximum grant level of, currently, £30,000. There are cases, particularly with larger more complex DFG applications where an external architect is used, when a lesser agency fee may be appropriate. The Director of Community services will be authorised to agree an appropriate level of agency fees in these cases.

The agency service may include;

- Help with completion of necessary forms
- Help with obtaining proof of financial information including copying of documents as required.
- Help with obtaining proof of title.
- Help with obtaining plans, planning and/or building regulation approval.
- Help with the selection of contractors and obtaining estimates.
- Help with organising contractual matters including start and completion dates.
- Liaising with other agencies during the process of carrying out the works.
- Monitoring the progress of the works
- Help with the resolution of difficulties or disputes that may arise during the course of the works.

Notwithstanding the services offered by the agency service the contractual obligation for the relevant works will remain between the applicant and the chosen contractor.

## **Loan Assistance**

As detailed earlier, work is currently being carried out at a North West regional level to investigate the feasibility of establishing a regional loan scheme. It is expected that, subject to the result of the study, all local authorities in the regional will be able to contribute to and access funding from such a scheme. Until the conclusion of the research work Fylde will defer any introduction of a local loan scheme.

## **Prioritisation of Assistance**

As mentioned previously there will not be sufficient resources available to address all the known problems in the private sector housing stock. The

resources available to the council for delivering assistance have been reducing over recent years. If no additional resources are made available the limited funds that are available will need to be used to address the most urgent issues. The order of priority for assistance will be:

- i. discretionary decent homes assistance
- ii. discretionary energy efficiency assistance
- iii. discretionary park homes assistance
- iv. discretionary disabled facilities grant

## **The Application Process**

The application process is administered by staff from the housing team who are located in the Town Hall St Annes, FY8 1LW. For telephone enquiries the number is 01253 658658 and for e-mail enquiries the address is [housing@fylde.go.uk](mailto:housing@fylde.go.uk).

The policy recognises that the prime responsibility for maintaining their home will rest with the home owner. Assistance may be appropriate in some cases but it will not be possible for the council to have sufficient resources available to remedy all defects in the private sector housing stock. The availability of assistance will vary with the availability of resources and it will be necessary at times to hold a waiting list of potential applicants for assistance. Applications will not be accepted in relation to works which have already commenced or which have been completed.

The application process will begin when a potential applicant makes contact with the council. At this point details of the client will be taken and recorded on the grants computer system. Basic information to be recorded will include name, address, duration residency at address, date of enquiry, proposed works. Initial advice will be offered about potential eligibility and estimated waiting time before an application might be considered.

At this point an initial enquiry form will be sent to the potential applicant. The purpose of the enquiry form is to enable the council to get a reasonable indication of the enquirer's likely financial contribution (if any) and the type of work that may be required. It will also enable the council to estimate the urgency of any works and of the likely presence of a category 1 hazard or failure of the decency standard. Priority will be given to enquiries where there appears to the council to be a serious and imminent risk to the health and safety of the occupants of the dwelling.

As resources permit, having taken account of priority applications, enquirers will be contacted from the waiting list inviting an application for assistance to be made. A home visit will normally be made by a member of the housing team to

advise on the relevant works and to produce a schedule of works. A completed application will contain a number of documents including;

- Completed application forms
- Estimates for the work from contractors. It should be noted that estimates and invoices will not be accepted from the applicant or a member of their family.
- Proof of a relevant interest in the property
- Proof of income and capital of the applicant(if required)
- Proof of receipt of any state benefits
- Proof of national insurance number
- Appropriate permissions (if required) for carrying out the works
- Proof of any required planning or building regulation approval

Applicants should note that the approval of any housing assistance application does not give or imply any other approval that may be required such as planning permission or building regulation approval. It remains the responsibility of the applicant to obtain any such consents that may be required.

Detailed advice on the processes involved can be obtained from the housing team.

### **Applications Outside Policy**

This policy details those types of applications that are, in the opinion of the council, the priorities for intervention and assistance. All initial enquiries for assistance will be considered but inevitably there will be those that fall outside the policy.

If, on occasion, there appears to be special circumstances surrounding a particular client the Director of Community Services may consider whether it may warrant special consideration outside of normal policy. Any decision made by the Director for Community Services in such a matter will be considered final.

It should be noted that the means test is a nationally prescribed system and as such there is no appeal against the outcome.

### **Complaints or Comments**

In the event of dissatisfaction with the service being provided the enquirer/applicant should first raise the matter with the member of staff dealing with the case. Given the opportunity to do so most issues should be resolved by the member of staff concerned.

In the event of the matter not being resolved the it should then be referred, in writing, to the Housing Options Manager at the Town Hall, St Annes, FY8 1LW.

The council has adopted a formal complaints procedure for any customer who may be dissatisfied by any of its services.

The housing service routinely asks for comments through its customer satisfaction surveys and applicants are encouraged to return questionnaires. The council also welcomes comments at any time about its services.

### Housing Assistance Conditions

Housing assistance means any form of financial assistance provided by the council for the purposes of repairing maintaining or adapting private sector property. Housing assistance condition means any condition attached to any such assistance.

If any of the housing assistance conditions are breached within the relevant time period the council may recover from the owner of the property some or all of the assistance given.

A qualifying owner is a person with an owner's interest in the property and who has lived in the property for at least 3 years ending with the date of the application. A qualifying tenant is a tenant who is required under the terms of the tenancy to repair and maintain the property and who has lived in the property for at least 3 years ending with the date of the application and has an unexpired term of the tenancy remaining at the date of approval of at least equal to the relevant housing condition period.

The eligible works must be carried out within the time limit set by the council at the time of approval. This will be not less than 12 months in the case of mandatory DFG but may be less in respect of other forms of assistance. If the works are not completed within the specified time the grant may not be paid and any interim payments made may be recovered.

Certified date means the date on which the relevant works are confirmed as having been completed to the satisfaction of the council.

Housing assistance condition period means the time period beginning on the certified date and lasting for;

- In respect of a mandatory DFG with a value of not more than £5000, 5 years
- In respect of a mandatory DFG with a value of greater than £5000, 10 years
- In respect of a discretionary DFG 10 years.
- In respect of a discretionary decent homes grant 10 years.
- In respect of a discretionary park homes grant 10 years.



In respect of applications in which a future occupation certificate is completed it is a condition of the assistance that for the appropriate time period detailed above the relevant dwelling will be the main residence of and will be occupied by the applicant or a member of the applicant's family.

A person is a member of another's family if that person is-

- The others wife or husband or that person lives with another as wife or husband
- The son or daughter or son in law or daughter in law of the other or of the others wife or husband (son or daughter includes any step son or step daughter and any illegitimate son or daughter and son in law and daughter in law are to be similarly construed)
- A parent, grandparent, grandchild, brother, sister aunt, uncle, nephew or niece of the other or of the others wife or husband, whether the relationship is by blood or marriage.

It is a condition of assistance that if an owner of the property to which the assistance relates makes a disposal of the property within the time period as above he shall repay to the council the amount of the grant.

The council may exercise its discretion to require a repayment of a lesser amount than the amount of grant given. Each case will be considered on its merits. The council will consider all the information and facts of the case which will include;

- The nature of the breach and the reasons for it
- The nature of the disposal and to whom the disposal is made
- The financial circumstances of the owner at the time of the breach/disposal and whether any financial hardship would ensue if repayment was required.
- The length of time from the certified date to the occurrence of the breach

Where any condition is in force the council may require the owner of the property to provide to the council such information as the council may reasonably require to satisfy itself that the condition is being met. Failure to meet his requirement will of itself be considered a breach of conditions.

The financial assistance and related conditions attached to the assistance will be registered as a charge against the property and will be recorded in the land charges register. The charge will remain until the expiry of the assistance condition period or until such time as the grant is repaid.

## Appendix

| Funding available | Outcomes   | Waiting list time    |
|-------------------|--|----------------------|
| 2007-08 £394k     | 60 approvals<br>2 community adapted<br>bathrooms         | 18 months            |
| 2008-09 £276k     | 42 approvals<br>1 community adapted<br>bathroom          | 2yrs + (Mar 09)      |
| 2009-10 £579k     | 120 approvals (est)<br>2 community adapted<br>bathrooms. | Reduced waiting time |

The decent homes target is a measure of the proportion of homes in the private sector occupied by vulnerable people that are decent. The target for 2010-11 of 70% of such households living in decent homes will require a further 1060 homes being made decent before the end of March 2011. Significant work will need to be done by the council to meet the target. Other interventions to meet decency are available and include enforcement where appropriate, energy efficiency initiatives such as 'warmfront' and the recently launched Blackpool Wyre and Fylde credit union. The activities of the Fylde and Wyre home improvement agency will also contribute to the improvement in rates of decency in the area.

The assistance available under the private sector housing policy should also play a significant role in meeting the decency target. Clearly, even with the level of funding available as shown above this is not proving to be the case and it is most likely therefore that the target will not be achieved.

**Draft Private Sector Housing Policy – Summary of the Main Changes**

| <b>Change</b>  | <b>Reason for change</b>   |
|--|--|
| Removal of the availability of facelift schemes  | There has been no demand for such schemes. If considered they would be at the instigation of the council and be in response to known areas of decline. The house condition survey did not identify such areas and it is unlikely that such schemes would be implemented in the future.   |
| Removal of the availability of equity loans for improvements   | As confirmed by this committee at its meeting of April 2009 and in order to allow the regional research work to conclude. The issue will be reconsidered in light of the outcome of the research work.   |
| Removal of the landlord energy efficiency assistance to be replaced by a discretionary energy efficiency grant.  | The previous policy restricted assistance to landlords only and has not been successful in its uptake. The new proposal extends the availability to all home owners, including landlords, and will be a more simple process. It will focus on the 'quick wins' of insulation measures and efficient heating systems and should present a more attractive option to help improve the energy efficiency in the private sector. |
| Change from housing renewal assistance to decent homes grant with a restriction of eligibility to vulnerable applicants.   | To focus on the requirement to improve the rates of decency in the private sector. To target assistance to vulnerable households in line with government policy and in recognition of the information in the house condition survey.   |
| Park Home Assistance. Addition of an additional eligibility criterion to ensure that the applicant has a sufficiently long occupancy agreement in respect of the park home | To enable full compliance with the future occupation conditions attached to a grant.   |
| Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant. Changes and clarification to future occupation conditions and the introduction of potential repayment requirements.                   | To comply with recent changes in legislation.  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Introduction of a discretionary disabled facilities grant. Removal of the home loss disturbance grant.           | <p>To enable consideration of applications outside the scope of the mandatory process. To enable 'top up' grants in cases where the maximum grant may be reached in respect of mandatory DFG.</p> <p>The home loss disturbance grant was only available to social tenants and has not been used to date. The new discretionary DFG will extend the eligibility criteria to all disabled people. It will offer financial support to enable a disabled person to move to a more suitable property where this is the best course of action.</p> |
| Indication of priorities for assistance  | To guide members and officers on the approved priority areas for assistance in cases of financial restraint.   |
| Equalisation of maximum eligible costs of works between decent homes grants and park homes grants.               | In the interests of fairness and equality.   |
| Equalisation of the length of future occupation conditions attached to decent homes grants and park homes grants | In the interests of fairness and equality.   |

# REPORT



| REPORT OF                         | MEETING                                       | DATE                                 | ITEM NO |
|-----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|---------|
| DIRECTOR OF<br>COMMUNITY SERVICES | POLICY & SERVICE REVIEW<br>SCRUTINY COMMITTEE | 3 <sup>RD</sup><br>SEPTEMBER<br>2009 | 5       |

## CAPITAL PROGRAMME – REPLACEMENT OF CREMATORS AND INSTALLATION OF MERCURY ABATEMENT EQUIPMENT

### Public item

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

### Summary

Report to follow.

# REPORT



| REPORT OF          | MEETING   | DATE                   | ITEM NO |
|--------------------|---|------------------------|---------|
| COMMUNITY SERVICES | POLICY AND SERVICE REVIEW<br>SCRUTINY COMMITTEE | 3<br>SEPTEMBER<br>2009 | 6       |

## HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION ACTION PLAN

### Public Item

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

### Summary

The purpose of the report is to advise members of additional resources made available by the Government to deal with an expected increase in repossessions and the provision of additional debt advice. The report sets out the resources currently available and an action plan for approval.

### Recommendation

Members are requested to recommend to Cabinet:

1. A funded budget increase of £36,000 for 2009/10 to create an intervention budget within the existing homelessness budget
2. The success of the Invest to Save pilot scheme and approve its continuation
3. Adoption of the Homelessness Prevention Action Plan as detailed at Appendix 3.

### Reasons for recommendation

To ensure resources and policies are in place to assist in the prevention of homelessness in the Borough.

### **Alternative options considered and rejected**

It is a requirement from CLG that local authorities develop a homelessness prevention action plan consequently no alternative option is available.

### **Cabinet Portfolio**

The item falls within the following Cabinet portfolio:

Portfolio Title: Social Wellbeing

Councillor Cheryl Little

### **Report**

### **Background**

In recent months a number of new initiatives have been announced by the Government to tackle debt related issues arising from the current and anticipated difficulties in the housing market, with the aim of the prevention of homelessness.

#### **1. Sub Regional Funding**

- 1.1 The Government has made £3.7million available in March 2009 to local authorities to support the development of actions to tackle the threat of repossessions across all tenures. The funding has been distributed on a sub regional basis and Blackpool, Fylde, Wyre and Lancaster have been awarded £30,000 to split across the region.
- 1.2 A short guide has been developed to assist local authorities (LAs). The appendices to this report contain information which examines national and local statistics, what is happening now, and an action plan for future work to prevent repossessions.

#### **2 Additional Homelessness Grant**

- 2.1 The Government has also made additional funding available to local authorities by uplifting their existing homelessness grant payments. Fylde Borough Council has received a one off additional grant of £28,500 during the 2009/10 financial year.
- 2.2 This funding has been made available to prevent homelessness through repossessions. It is important to ensure that this funding supports the maximum number of households in need of financial assistance, enabling them to stay in their homes. Where appropriate financial assistance through small loans allows money to be recycled to help other households in the local authority area in the future. The Government estimates that any loans made by a local authority should range from £1,000 to £3,000 per household, capped to a maximum of £5,000 available at 0% interest.
- 2.3 It is proposed that a homelessness intervention policy and budget is developed to include these new funding initiatives and incorporating the existing Invest to Save policy which has been piloted successfully.

### 3 Action Plan

3.1 The Government has asked each local authority to plan to mitigate the risk of homelessness across all tenures. The effect of the recession will not just be seen in mortgage cases, there is a risk of an increase in the number of people losing their home in the social sector and private rented sector due to evictions for rent arrears caused by debt and loss of income due to unemployment or reduced household income. There may also be an increase in family breakdown cases where tensions increase at home, and increased homelessness due to relationship breakdown. There may also be an increase in the number of repossessions where a landlord has not been able to keep up with the mortgage repayments.

3.2 Given the depth of the recession, the logical conclusion is that more people will approach the local authority seeking assistance. At the same time there are many others who will be affected but may be reluctant to seek help or unaware of the services available. The impact may not be seen immediately in higher levels of homelessness, but undoubtedly more people will be in financial and consequently housing difficulties.

3.3 A proposed action plan is outlined in Appendix 3.

### 4 Housing Advice Enquiries in Fylde

4.1 The Housing Advice service is well used and well respected, as demonstrated by customer satisfaction surveys. There is one full time equivalent Housing Advice Officer post in the Housing Services Team.

4.2 The table below details housing advice enquiries relevant to repossession. Concern about security of tenure is one of top categories for housing advice enquiries year on year.

**Housing Advice Enquiries (Repossession) – April 2008 to May 2009**

|                                       | April 08 | May 08 | June 08 | July 08 | Aug 08 | Sept 08 | Oct 08 | Nov 08 | Dec 08 | Jan 09 | Feb 09 | Mar 09 | April 09 | May 09 | TOTAL     |
|---------------------------------------|----------|--------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------|--------|-----------|
| <b>Security of tenure</b>             | 7        | 5      | 5       | 2       | 0      | 7       | 6      | 6      | 6      | 3      | 2      | 7      | 7        | 2      | <b>65</b> |
| <b>Possession action rent arrears</b> | 1        | 1      | 2       | 0       | 2      | 3       | 2      | 0      | 2      | 1      | 1      | 5      | 2        | 4      | <b>26</b> |
| <b>Mortgage arrears</b>               | 1        | 0      | 2       | 1       | 1      | 2       | 1      | 3      | 0      | 6      | 3      | 2      | 2        | 5      | <b>29</b> |

4.3 The Housing Advice officer utilises the Invest to Save budget and other initiatives such as charitable sources, to help prevent homelessness.

4.4 In total the officer deals with approximately 26 enquiries a month, with 361 enquiries received for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 – 31<sup>st</sup> May 2009. If the anticipated growth in enquiries and cases materialises it can be expected that the case load will increase due to the demand for financial assistance to prevent homelessness.



## **5 Homelessness Presentations**

- 5.1 There have been 126 homelessness presentations during 2008/09. Of these the Council accepted a statutory duty to two households specifically because of the economic situation; one due to mortgage arrears and one due to private sector rent arrears. At this moment in time there is no evidence to suggest that mortgage repossessions are currently a main cause of homelessness.
- 5.2 However it should be noted that Fylde does have high levels of home ownership therefore changes in household income can have major effects on households who have taken out large mortgages in order to get a foot on the property ladder.
- 5.3 It is also worth noting that the private rented sector has increased over the last few years from 12% of all stock to 14% of all stock. Many investors took advantage of lower house prices a number of years ago and joined the buy to let market. Anecdotal evidence suggests that a number of private landlords have served notice on their tenants as the property was at risk of repossession.

## **6 Information and Assistance**

- 6.1 The Housing service has undertaken a number of measures to ensure advice and assistance is available to residents.

These measures have included the following:

- Housing advice information posters sent to all GPs, post offices and libraries
- Mortgage rescue information and government leaflets on the Council's website
- Presentation to staff at the job centre regarding the work we do and also about the new mortgage rescue scheme
- Press release in the local media advertising our service and to seek help early (which unfortunately was not printed)
- Advertised mortgage rescue scheme at the Homelessness Action Group
- Monitoring debt and court statistics
- Monitoring prevention and mortgage rescue statistics as internal performance indicators
- Monitoring homelessness prevention data with the Lancashire homelessness forum
- Implemented the Government Mortgage Rescue Scheme
- Fylde Borough Council has developed a financial help section on the Council website.
- A leaflet is available from Fylde Direct detailing all basic bank accounts available from the high street banks
- The Legal Services Commission leaflet 'Dealing with Debt' is available from Fylde Direct
- Advertising space is to be purchased in the Fylde Community Safety handbook about seeking help and advice sooner rather than later

## **7 Gaps in Existing Provision/Information**

7.1 The main gap in existing provision is that there are not enough specialist debt workers to deal with the demand in the Borough. In addition of the following information could be usefully collated :

- Local knowledge from the banks and building societies regarding their views / statistics are on the local situation.
- What the floating support service can offer in way of debt advice as they assist people to remain in their own homes
- Details of court cases by developing links with the court desk
- Information from the local housing associations regarding rent arrears and if there has been an increase in the number of tenants defaulting on their rent payments.
- How the recession is impacting on the private rented sector in terms of letting properties quickly and also landlords experiencing difficulty repaying mortgages or loans attached to the property.

7.2 These issues have been identified in the development of the Homelessness Prevention Action Plan set out in Appendix 3.

## **8 Resources**

8.1 Further to the current Homelessness Strategy, Fylde BC was successful in gaining an extra £10,000 per year in Homelessness Grant paid by Communities and Local Government (CLG). An Invest to Save policy was developed in 2008 and the additional CLG monies have been used to deliver the policy and provide a fund which helps people to remain in their home or find alternative accommodation.

8.2 The fund has been successful in the prevention of homelessness and achieved savings in the homelessness budget through a reduction in the use of bed and breakfast accommodation.

8.3 Details of the use of the fund in 2008/09 are set out below:

- Number of cases approved for Invest to Save funding – 22 (15 loans & 7 grants)
- Total amount spent – £7415.58
- Average spend per case – £337.07
- Estimated savings in the provision of temporary accommodation – £32,700

8.4 The current fund is only able to assist cases where a relatively small amount of money would successfully prevent homelessness. The scheme has only been in operation for a year and it is expected that requests for small scale funding will increase; consequently, it is proposed to match and support the CLG funding by £10,000 additional funding which would be vired from the existing homelessness contingency budget.

8.5 The Government has made funding available on a sub regional basis to LAs to tackle housing problems caused by the recession, as detailed earlier. Following discussions between officers of each Council it has been agreed to split the allocation equally amongst the four authorities. This will therefore provide an additional £7500 available for homelessness prevention initiatives to Fylde BC in the current financial year.

8.6 It is anticipated that the funding could be used to support increasing debt advice available through the Citizen's Advice Bureau. It could also pay for appropriate publicity to advertise this provision.

8.7 The Government has also made available additional homelessness grant of £28,500 for the financial year 2009/10. This funding has been made available specifically to prevent homelessness through repossessions.

8.8 These two funding initiatives are in addition to the governments mortgage rescue schemes announced earlier in the year.

## **9 Intervention Fund**

9.1 Taking into account both existing resources and the new resources available through the CLG initiatives it is proposed to consolidate this funding and create a specific Intervention fund within the homelessness budget. This consolidated fund will pull together all the current resources to provide a number of different tools to prevent homelessness caused by debt and or repossession in the private rented and owner occupier sectors.

9.2 Government evidence suggests that the real impact of the recession will only hit in 18 months time. Therefore it is essential that resources available at that time. CLG has provided funding as a one off, and it is recommended that any unspent monies in 2009/10 to be carried forward to 2010/11.

9.3 Further consideration will need to be given as part of the budget setting process for 2010/11 as to whether additional resources from the Council can be provided at that time to meet these anticipated needs.

9.4 The profile for the proposed Intervention Fund would be as follows.

| <b>Intervention Fund</b>                               | <b>Proposed<br/>2009/10<br/>£</b> | <b>2010/11<br/>£</b> |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Invest to Save   | 10000                             | 10000                |
| Virement from<br>contingency fund to Invest<br>to Save | 10000                             | 10000                |
| One-off CLG Additional<br>Homelessness grant           | 28500                             | 0                    |
| One-off CLG grant                                      | 7500                              | 0                    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>56000</b>                      | <b>20000</b>         |

## 10. Conclusion

10.1 The provision of additional resources to support homelessness prevention is welcome and will assist service provision in the Borough. The recovery in the housing market is uncertain and provision needs to be made to address potential debt issues and repossessions that may occur in the future.

| Report Author          | Tel            | Date   | Doc ID |
|------------------------|----------------|--------|--------|
| D Gillett/Lucy Edwards | (01253) 658689 | 3/9/09 |        |

| List of Background Papers |      |                                |
|---------------------------|------|--------------------------------|
| Name of document          | Date | Where available for inspection |
|                           |      |                                |

### Attached documents

**Appendix 1:** Statistical data relating to the National picture, regionally and in Fylde

**Appendix 2:** Intervention Fund

**Appendix 3:** Homelessness prevention action plan

| IMPLICATIONS                        |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Finance                             | There are no immediate implications, an increase in homelessness may require additional resources in the future |
| Legal                               | There are no legal implications   |
| Community Safety                    | The Action plan contributes to the Councils overall strategy to improve the 'quality of life' in the Borough    |
| Human Rights and Equalities         | None specifically arising from this report  |
| Sustainability and Environmental    | None specifically arising from this report  |
| Health & Safety and Risk Management | There are no issues arising from the policy and Action plan   |

## **The National Picture**

### **Mortgage and Landlord Repossessions**

Repossession activity in the Courts increased during 2008. However the levels of increase in business going on in County Courts differed across the Country.

Mortgage repossession claims issued rose by 4% up to 142,626 across the country, the highest levels seen since 1992. Mortgage repossession orders also went up, to 114,296, an increase of 19%, the highest levels since 1992. From data released by the Council of Mortgage Lenders, properties taken into repossession went up to approximately 42,000 during 2008, the highest levels since 1996 but nowhere near levels experienced during the height of the last recession when levels reached over 75,000 in 1991.

During 2008, landlord repossession claims (social landlord and private landlord repossessions combined) increased by only 1% up to 148,040, way below the peak of 195,000 recorded in 2002. Landlord repossession orders made went up during the same period by only 5% to 112,294.

During 2008 the number of accelerated repossession claims made and orders issued increased up to the highest level since records began in 1999. The number of standard repossessions (both claims and orders) experienced an increase during the same period but was still well below peak levels recorded in 2002.

### **Homelessness Acceptances due to mortgage arrears and rent arrears**

The number of homeless applicants becoming homeless due to either mortgage arrears or rent arrears has varied in some regions but across England as whole, levels remain fairly stable at this point. Coordinated local authority action can prevent maintain this position and prevent the increases in repossessions seen in the last recession.

Despite increased repossession activity in Courts across England, this has not as yet made a significant impact on the numbers of homeless households. Acceptances across England during 2008 were at 57,000 a reduction of 14% compared to the previous year and a 60% reduction on the levels experienced in 2003. Due to the efforts focused around local authority homeless prevention and housing options services. Building on these firm foundations can significantly reduce the homelessness impacts of the recession.

Across England, homelessness acceptances due to mortgage arrears has changed from 650 during the first quarter of 2008 (3.1% of all acceptances) down to 598 during the last quarter of 2008 (4.2% of all acceptances). The reduction in total homelessness acceptances during this time has meant that although in real terms mortgage arrears acceptances have stayed fairly stable, as percentage of all acceptances there has been a slight increase. However when compared to levels of mortgage arrears acceptances ten years ago there levels are still much lower, 6,130 households accepted in 1998 (6%) of the total) compared to 2,340 (4%).

This situation is reflected across all regions of the country. The portion of mortgage arrears acceptances is higher in the most parts of north of England and midlands than the national level, however the levels in south and London are lower.

|                         | 2006/07                           |                                   |                              | 2007/08                           |                                   |                              |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
|                         | Mortgage<br>arrear<br>acceptances | Total<br>acceptances<br>(rounded) | proportion of<br>acceptances | Mortgage<br>arrear<br>acceptances | Total<br>acceptances<br>(rounded) | proportion of<br>acceptances |
| <b>England</b>          | <b>2,618</b>                      | <b>73,360</b>                     | <b>3.6</b>                   | <b>2,283</b>                      | <b>63,170</b>                     | <b>3.6</b>                   |
| North East              | 275                               | 4,790                             | 5.7                          | 239                               | 3,600                             | 6.6                          |
| North West              | 389                               | 11,380                            | 3.4                          | 377                               | 8,530                             | 4.4                          |
| Yorkshire and<br>Humber | 250                               | 8,220                             | 3.0                          | 228                               | 7,350                             | 3.1                          |
| East Midlands           | 288                               | 6,020                             | 4.8                          | 241                               | 4,780                             | 5.0                          |
| West<br>Midlands        | 477                               | 8,740                             | 5.5                          | 476                               | 9,170                             | 5.2                          |
| East of<br>England      | 271                               | 6,890                             | 3.9                          | 218                               | 5,900                             | 3.7                          |
| London                  | 279                               | 15,390                            | 1.8                          | 206                               | 13,800                            | 1.5                          |
| South East              | 232                               | 6,660                             | 3.5                          | 176                               | 5,510                             | 3.2                          |
| South West              | 157                               | 5,270                             | 3.0                          | 122                               | 4,520                             | 2.7                          |

The levels of homelessness acceptances due to rent arrears has reduced in real terms during the past ten years from 2,640 (3%) down to 1,400 (2%) in 2008. Furthermore homelessness due to end of assured shorthold tenancy has dropped from 15,390 in 1998 to 7,870 in 2008 and homelessness due to other rented or tied accommodation has fallen from 8,520 down to 3,130 during the same period. Although there have been increases in the number of landlord repossessions going through the courts, this has not yet impacted on homelessness acceptances.

However, despite these encouraging figures with unemployment levels now over 2 million and still increasing more people are experiencing a reduction in wages, hours worked, or redundancy. More households are and will struggle to pay their rent and mortgage, therefore it will be more important than ever that local authorities have a targeted plan for supporting people who are affected and that the plan includes actions for both home owners and tenants in the social sector and the private rented sector.

## **The Fylde Picture**

### **Mortgage and Landlord Repossessions**

The Ministry of Justice publish quarterly statistics by calendar year. (Q1 covers Jan – March, Q2 covers April – June, Q3 covers July – Sept and Q4 covers Oct – Dec).

Court statistics cannot be displayed at district level, but relate to the County Court jurisdiction. Both Blackpool and Preston County Court statistics are relevant since cases from Lytham and St Anne's are heard at Blackpool County Court, whereas cases from Freckleton and Kirkham are heard at Preston County Court. It should be noted that the figures are therefore not specific to Fylde but a wider geographical area.

The figures report how many possession proceedings have been issued, and how many orders for possession have been made by the County Courts. They do not indicate how many properties have actually been repossessed. Repossessions can occur without a court order being made and not all court orders result in repossession.

Mortgage Possession claims issued 2008 (not seasonally adjusted) source Ministry of Justice

|                  | Possession claims Q1 2008 | Possession claims Q2 2008 | Possession claims Q3 2008 | Possession claims Q4 2008 | <b>TOTAL 2008</b>                |
|------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Blackpool</b> | 312                       | 326                       | 297                       | 187                       | <b>1125</b>                      |
| <b>Preston</b>   | 258                       | 211                       | 226                       | 132                       | <b>832</b>                       |
|                  |                           |                           |                           |                           |                                  |
|                  | % change since Q1 2007    | % change since Q2 2007    | % change since Q3 2007    | % change since Q4 2007    | <b>% change since Q1-Q4 2007</b> |
| <b>Blackpool</b> | 13%                       | 24%                       | 1%                        | -34%                      | <b>1%</b>                        |
| <b>Preston</b>   | 22%                       | 7%                        | 25%                       | -33%                      | <b>6%</b>                        |

For Q1 2009 there were 175 possession claims issued at Blackpool County court, a -45% difference compared to Q1 2008.

For Q1 2009 there were 150 possession claims issued at Preston County Court, a -43% difference compared to Q1 2008.

Mortgage Possession orders issued 2008 (not seasonally adjusted) source Ministry of Justice

|           | Possession orders Q1 2008 | Possession orders Q2 2008 | Possession orders Q3 2008 | Possession orders Q4 2008 | TOTAL 2008                 |
|-----------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Blackpool | 231                       | 246                       | 253                       | 223                       | 949                        |
| Preston   | 158                       | 155                       | 173                       | 189                       | 676                        |
|           |                           |                           |                           |                           |                            |
|           | % change since Q1 2007    | % change since Q2 2007    | % change since Q3 2007    | % change since Q4 2007    | % change since Q1- Q4 2007 |
| Blackpool | 32%                       | 38%                       | 56%                       | 1%                        | 29%                        |
| Preston   | 19%                       | -3%                       | 84%                       | 11%                       | 20%                        |

For Q1 2009 there were 89 possession orders issued at Blackpool County court, a -61% difference compared to Q1 2008.

For Q1 2009 there were 79 possession orders issued at Preston County Court, a -49% difference compared to Q1 2008.

CLG have provided Fylde specific court statistics although these are not as up to date as the current statistics available from the Ministry of Justice. However they do show an increase in court possession orders right across the Fylde coast between the two years analysed:

| LA        | Court possession orders 2005-2006 | Court possession orders 2007-2008 | Difference | % difference | Prop. of COP households (%) 2005 - 2006 | Prop. of households (%) 2007-2008 |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------|--------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Fylde     | 143                               | 190                               | 47         | 33           | 0.42                                    | 0.56                              |
| Wyre      | 257                               | 330                               | 73         | 28           | 0.54                                    | 0.67                              |
| Blackpool | 648                               | 759                               | 111        | 17           | 1.00                                    | 1.17                              |

## Citizens Advice Bureau Statistics

In the financial year 08/09 a total of 2,711 clients were seen and 2,945 enquires dealt with. Each enquiry raised may cover more than one subject, or social policy issue. This is clearly shown in the table below as a total of 12,603 issues were covered through the enquiries dealt with.

### **Classification of Clients Issues by Social Policy Area in the Financial Year 2008/09**

| <b>Category</b> | <b>Q1</b>   | <b>Q2</b>   | <b>Q3</b>   | <b>Q4</b>   |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Benefits</b> | <b>605</b>  | <b>456</b>  | <b>274</b>  | <b>882</b>  |
| Consumer        | 116         | 86          | 76          | 108         |
| <b>Debt</b>     | <b>721</b>  | <b>592</b>  | <b>300</b>  | <b>3545</b> |
| Education       | 10          | 20          | 2           | 13          |
| Employment      | 276         | 191         | 182         | 503         |
| Financial       | 62          | 37          | 36          | 75          |
| Health          | 62          | 43          | 27          | 32          |
| <b>Housing</b>  | <b>294</b>  | <b>203</b>  | <b>108</b>  | <b>326</b>  |
| Immigration     | 5           | 4           | 10          | 17          |
| Legal           | 151         | 86          | 62          | 135         |
| Other           | 32          | 27          | 24          | 43          |
| Relationships   | 135         | 129         | 97          | 216         |
| Sing posting    | 237         | 181         | 62          | 234         |
| Taxation        | 24          | 21          | 8           | 31          |
| Travel          | 53          | 38          | 23          | 48          |
| Utilities       | 69          | 55          | 27          | 56          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    | <b>2852</b> | <b>2169</b> | <b>1318</b> | <b>6264</b> |

CAB acknowledge that debt is now the highest area of use with debt clients now making up approx 41% of clients seen by the Bureau. This is clearly shown by the number of debt issues raised in quarter 4 where there are increases in a number of issues raised - benefits, debt, employment, housing, and relationships. It could be argued that all of the categories are key areas of concern for large numbers of the population during a recession. The Homelessness Action Group monitors debt specific statistics each quarter, and the group will continue to monitor figures during this financial year. Q1 figures for 2009/10 will be looked at to see if the high number of issues experienced in Q4 has continued.

As part of their annual monitoring report presented to Members the CAB has completed an exercise to establish the value of debts and financial gains to clients as a consequence of advice provided. This has been completed just for the month of March 2009 and March 2008 as detailed below:



**Debt and Gains Comparison:**

|                               | March 2008         | March 2009         |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Total debt re-scheduled       | £273,157.89        | £295,202.97        |
| Total debt written off        | £120,916.78        | £5,797.77          |
| <b>Total debts seen</b>       | <b>£565,464.63</b> | <b>£658,833.52</b> |
| Total benefit gains           | £85,407.18         | £154,999.65        |
| Total grants received         | £0.00              | £1,850.00          |
| Total wages/pay               | £7,535.00          | £17,023.22         |
| Total lump sum payments       | £32,662.17         | £175,586.00        |
| Total value of other services | £0.00              | £1,000.00          |
| <b>Total gains</b>            | <b>£125,604.35</b> | <b>£350,458.87</b> |
|                               |                    |                    |

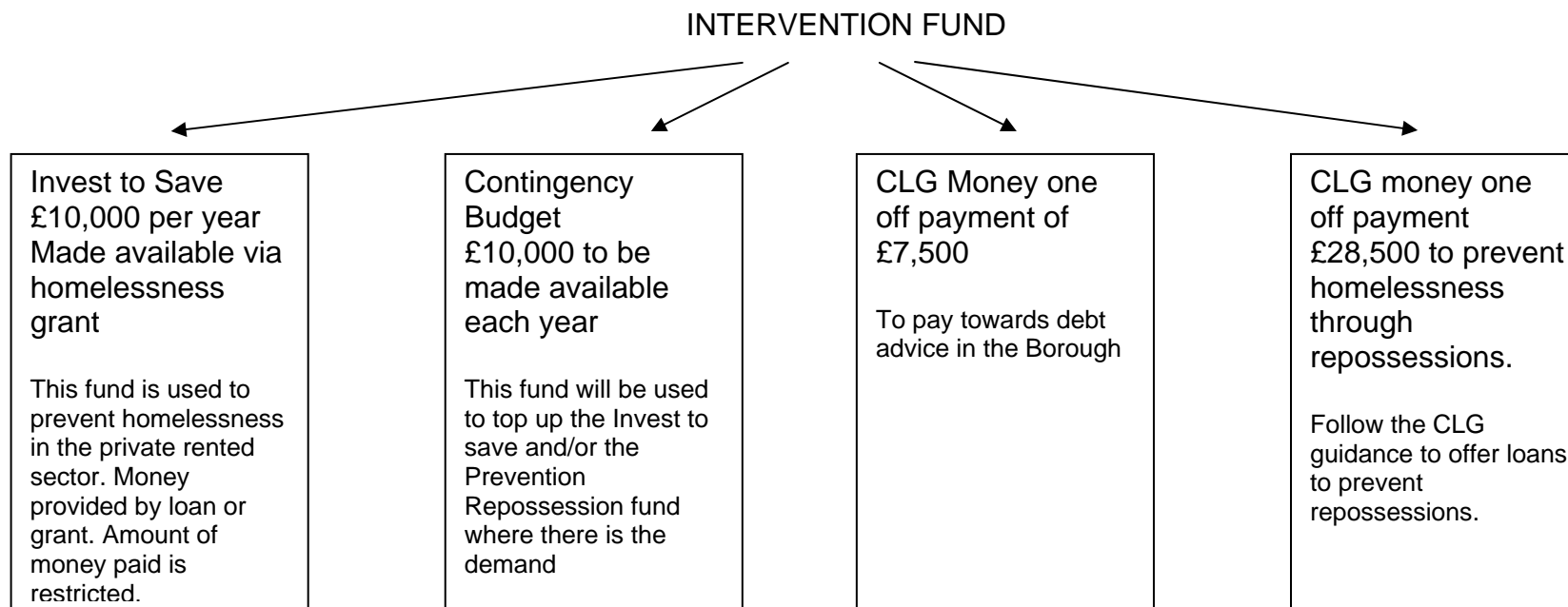
## **What tools have we got so far to assist in repossession prevention**

### **National perspective**

| <b>Scheme</b>  | <b>Strengths</b>  | <b>Weaknesses</b>   |
|--|---|---|
| Government launched awareness campaign Feb 2009<br>– Real help for home owners<br><a href="http://www.direct.gov.uk/mortgagehelp">www.direct.gov.uk/mortgagehelp</a> | Comprehensive list of information.  | Awareness of the website<br>Need to add the link to the Council 's website            |
| Pre-action protocol launched 2008. This details what lenders should do before taking action  | It would seem that this has started to make an impact   | Not aware of any  |
| Enhanced supported for mortgage interest (SMI)   | Another tool to assist in repossession prevention   | Further training needed from Job Centre+ to see how this fits in with other benefits. |
| Mortgage Rescue scheme launched Jan 2009. District Councils including Fylde administer the scheme.   | Well written information received from CLG.<br>Information sent on a regular basis from CLG<br>Households in negative equity can now be eligible for MRS.<br>Property price caps have increased but are still too low for some areas of Fylde | Property price caps set too low (but have changed)                                    |
| Homeowners Mortgage support scheme commencing April 2009   | Launched on 21 <sup>st</sup> April  | Still very new  |
| Shelter provide initial support for people in mortgage difficulties who are eligible for Home owner mortgage support.  | Information advertising the scheme provided by Shelter  | Still very new  |

## Fylde Perspective

| Scheme   | Strengths   | Weaknesses  |
|--|---|---|
| Rent bond guarantee scheme run by Face to Face YMCA  | Excellent reputation in the town<br>Complete on average 60 bonds a year<br>Number of bonds completed increasing all the time<br>One of the few ways in Fylde to obtain affordable accommodation | Too few landlords and agents willing to take people on benefits.<br>Unable to assist under 25s due to the rent restrictions |
| Invest to save fund run by Fylde Borough Council   | First year was successful<br>A mixture of grants and loans are issued<br>Really worked where F2FYMCA provide the bond and FBC provide the rent in advance                                       | Not always able to help everyone<br>Not able to give out large amounts of money e.g. £700+                                  |
| Housing advice service provided by FBC   | Good quality service<br>Good quality advice provided<br>Homelessness is prevented with limited tools available  | Limited resources – not always able to offer an appointment that week due to demand   |
| Debt advice via the Citizens advice bureau   | Good quality service<br>Well used   | Always operating at capacity – more resources needed  |
| Court desk Blackpool and Preston court   |   | No experience – we need to improve links with these services.   |
| Links with all housing solicitors  | Good links – provide a good quality service   | Limited resources?  |
| CAB are the required money advice provider for the Mortgage Rescue Service administered by FBC           | Local service<br>Excellent reputation in the Borough  | Limited resources   |
| Specialist debt advice CAB once a fortnight  | Provided using funding gained from the Financial Inclusion Fund (FIF) project   | Only available to clients who fit the FIF criteria  |
| Shelter working jointly with CAB to provide assistance with complicated debt and welfare benefit queries | Good partnership working between CAB and Shelter  |   |
| Blackpool Advice Bus project   | Fylde CAB are able to advertise their service on the bus and arrange for advice to be given   |   |
| CAB is developing their own financial capability course for the instruction of frontline debt workers.   |   | Funding required to roll out to other agencies  |



**ACTION PLAN**

| <b>What we will do</b>   | <b>When will we do it by</b> | <b>Who will deliver this</b> | <b>Resources needed</b>   | <b>Target/outcome</b>  | <b>Comments</b>  |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|---|--|--|
| Take this report and action plan to be approved by members   | Sept 09                      | Housing Manager              | Officer time  | Member approval  |  |
| Feed this action plan into the LSP housing theme group   | Sept 09                      | Housing Manager              | Officer time  | Incorporated into the LSP actions  |  |
| Develop and implement the CLG repossession prevention fund for homeowners & tenants at risk of repossession. | Oct 09                       | Housing Team                 | Officer time<br>CLG fund £28K<br>Future budget arrangements need to be approved | Scheme in place  |  |
| Provide information on assistance available to the OSS customer service team                                 | Sept 09                      | Housing Team                 | Officer time  | OSS staff informed and able to refer cases to the housing advice officer |  |
| Develop an information poster for the court desk joint with Blackpool & Wyre                                 | Sept 09                      | Housing Team                 | Officer time<br>Buy in from Blackpool & Wyre                                    | Finished poster. Named contacts at the Court desk                        |  |
| Review the impact of the Court desk leaflet on a weekly basis  | Ongoing                      | Housing Team                 | Officer time  | Monitor the impact on the housing advice service                         | A huge increase in housing advice enquiries, could impact on the service – additional resources would be required. |

| <b>What we will do</b>  | <b>When will we do it by</b> | <b>Who will deliver this</b> | <b>Resources needed</b> | <b>Target/outcome</b>  | <b>Comments</b>   |
|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|--|---|
| Arrange a meeting with the court desk at Blackpool and Preston  | Sept 09                      | Housing Advice Officer       | Officer time            | Increased knowledge<br>Contact details exchanged             |   |
| Advertise the Court desk on the housing website   | Sept 09                      | Housing Policy Officer       | Officer time            | Improved information to residents of the Borough             |   |
| Provide the new updated NHAS mortgage leaflet to the Job Centre, CAB and Housing Website  | End of Aug                   | Housing Team                 | Officer time            | All residents and agencies have access to update information | The Job Centre have been sending these out to all JSA claimants who have a mortgage |
| Contact the Job Centre+ and enquire if they receive information about future business closures.   | Sept 09                      | Housing Team                 | Officer team            | Information collected  | Decide what action to take depending on the information provided                    |
| Produce an information leaflet for members detailing help that is available and useful contact numbers  | Sept 09                      | Housing Policy Officer       | Officer time            | Members are able to signpost residents who contact them      |   |
| Advertise Real Help Now by adding a link to the Housing web page  | July 09                      | Housing Policy Officer       | Officer time            | Improved information on housing website                      |   |
| Produce a map of all services available that would help in a repossession case. Make this available online, to ALL RSLs and other relevant agencies | Oct 09                       | Housing Policy Officer       | Officer time            | All services know who to sign post to                        |   |

| <b>What we will do</b>   | <b>When will we do it by</b> | <b>Who will deliver this</b>       | <b>Resources needed</b>                | <b>Target/outcome</b>                                | <b>Comments</b> |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|--|-----------------|
| Engage with RSLs to ensure that all housing applications from owner occupiers facing repossession are referred to the Housing Section at the Council for free independent housing advice       | Oct 09                       | Housing Policy Officer             | Officer time<br>Commitment from RSLs   | All RSLs operating in the Borough to sign up to this |                 |
| Engage with RSLs to ensure that all housing applications to RSLs from private tenants facing possession are referred to the Housing Section at the Council for free independent housing advice | Oct 09                       | Housing Policy Officer             | Officer time<br>Commitment from RSLs   | All RSLs operating in the Borough to sign up to this |                 |
| Contact all RSLs to confirm that they maintain early warning systems to identify those accumulating arrears  | Oct 09                       | Housing Policy Officer             | Officer time<br>Information from RSLs  | All RSLs operating in the Borough to commit to this  |                 |
| Benefits campaign aimed at people who are working to ensure households are claiming what they are entitled to  | Dec 09                       | Housing Team and Benefits team     | Office time<br>Maybe advertising costs |  |                 |
| Arrange training with Job Centre+ regarding mortgage interest relief   | Sept 09                      | Job Centre +                       | Officer time                           | Increased knowledge.                                 |                 |
| Complete a review with Plum life every 6 months on Mortgage Rescue Service (MRS)   | Dec 09 and every 6 months    | Housing Team                       | Officer time                           | Systems are working correctly                        |                 |
| Complete a press release for the first successful mortgage rescue case   | When the case is complete    | Housing Team & Communications Team | Officer time                           | Information provided to the local community          |                 |

| <b>What we will do</b>   | <b>When will we do it by</b>       | <b>Who will deliver this</b> | <b>Resources needed</b> | <b>Target/outcome</b>  | <b>Comments</b>  |
|--|------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|--|--|
| Write to all identified MRS contacts within all banks and building societies working with the scheme to establish current and future trends in the mortgage market in Fylde. | Nov 09                             | Housing Team                 | Officer time            | Information about market conditions to establish if there will be problems in the future                     |  |
| Share good practice and experiences of MRS with other districts attending the Lancashire homelessness forum  | July 09 each quarter there after   | Housing Policy Officer       | Officer time            | Implement any ideas gathered from the forum. Continued communication with districts in Lancashire            | All authorities across Lancashire are going to work on a consistent approach regarding the Repossession Prevention Fund. |
| Share good practice and experiences of MRS with the Fylde Coast Housing Options Group.   | Aug 09 onwards – meetings arranged | Members of the group         | Officer time            | Implement any ideas gathered from the group. Continued communication with our immediate authority neighbours |  |
| Continue to monitor repossession statistics and review the action plan at the end of each quarter. Add new actions as required   | Quarterly                          | Housing Policy Officer       | Officer time            | Live action plan meeting the needs of the Borough and responding to the economic climate in a timely fashion |  |



# REPORT



| REPORT OF                         | MEETING   | DATE                                 | ITEM NO |
|-----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|---------|
| DIRECTOR OF<br>COMMUNITY SERVICES | POLICY AND SERVICE REVIEW<br>SCRUTINY COMMITTEE | 3 <sup>RD</sup><br>SEPTEMBER<br>2009 | 7       |

## SAND DUNES MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

### Public Item

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

### Summary

This report relates to the proposed future management and maintenance of the coast and dune system from Starr Gate to Lytham. The aim is to create a well managed and marketed coastline with duneland that is clean, safe, environmentally sustainable, educational, biologically competent and hosts a variety of community involvement.

The Lytham St. Anne's Dunes Management Plan was adopted in 2005. The Dunes Management Action Plan has been prepared to manage delivery of the environmental aspects of the original Management Plan. The Action Plan has been developed through consultation processes with professional bodies such as Natural England, other partner organisations and interested parties. The Action Plan is presented to Members for consideration.

### Recommendations

1. That the Committee recommend to Cabinet the adoption of the Dunes Management Action Plan.

### Reasons for recommendation

To provide structure to the delivery of the environmental aspects of the Lytham St Anne's Dunes Management Plan.

## **Alternative options considered and rejected**

To manage the dunes without the aid of the Dunes Management Action Plan. This would provide a disjointed approach to the future management of the coast and duneland and could potentially lead to the systematic deterioration of the dunes.

## **Cabinet Portfolio**

The item falls within the following Cabinet portfolio:

Leisure and Culture:

Councillor Susan Fazackerley

## **Report**

### **Background**

1. Sand dunes have been identified as a national priority due to high losses resulting from both human and natural factors. There are currently around 54,500ha of dune habitat in the UK, with less than 12,000ha in England. This is predicted to reduce by at least 2% through natural factors alone in the next 20years.
2. The European Habitats Directive identifies fixed dunes and decalcified fixed dunes (dune heath) as priority habitats. Coastal sand dunes are also a UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitat supporting many priority species. The Fylde coast comprises a diversity of natural habitats including sand dune and salt marsh. Over 90% of Lancashire's sand dunes are on the Fylde coast. They form a natural coastal defence from Starr Gate to the western boundary of Lytham Green and are subject to a variety of natural, human and commercial interests.

### **Current Situation**

3. The Lytham St Anne's Dunes Management Plan was adopted by Members at the Executive Committee meeting of 18 May 2005. Members also agreed to implementation of the actions therein subject to available resources being identified. An executive summary of the plan is attached at Appendix 1 and provides an overarching strategy for dunes management in the Borough. The report identified that the next step was the development of an environmental action plan to carry forward relevant issues from the Management Plan.
4. At the Executive Committee meeting of 28 September 2005 the Management Plan was also identified as an important element of the coastal defence system, supplementing the artificial defences along the coast.
5. In order to deliver the environmental outcomes of the Management Plan, a project steering group was created comprising Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Natural England, coastal ecologists, Botanical Society of the British Isles, Fylde Borough Council and Blackpool Council. Lancashire Wildlife Trust and the Council successfully bid for funding from the LSP to produce an Action Plan.

6. In addition to the overarching Dunes Management Plan, the Action Plan takes into consideration the existing policies and strategies that already apply to the coast, including:
  - Safer sands report
  - Coastal defence inspection report
  - Shoreline management plan
  - Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) condition surveys
  - Lancashire sand dunes habitat plan
  - Various biological documents
7. The steering group also successfully gained £35,012 external funding to create the post of Sand Dunes Project Officer, to deliver the Action Plan 'on the ground' and to source further funding to sustain the post for at least a further 3 years.
8. An officer has been in post for 1 year funded by Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund administered by Lancashire County Council. The officer is employed directly by Lancashire Wildlife Trust, but works as part of the Parks team.
9. During the first 12 months the Dunes Project Officer has delivered the following:
  - Developed the Dunes Management Action Plan
  - Secured 3 years funding to deliver the action plan targets.
  - Publicity and marketing
  - Delivered a number of community events/volunteer days as detailed below:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Number of volunteer events                     | 14  |
| Number of volunteers                           | 90 individuals, giving over 270hours of their time (Litter picks, scrub removal activities) |
| Number of young people (15-20yrs) volunteering | 21  |
| Number of family events:                       | 6   |
| Number of guided walks                         | 4   |
| Number of schools                              | 4   |
| Number of universities/colleges worked with    | 5   |

10. The Action Plan has been used to draw down £141,917 funding for the next 3 years as follows:
  - £32,838 from Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund
  - £80,879 from the SITA trust
  - £28,200 from Lancashire Environment Fund

Fylde Borough Council's contribution to the project was £8,897, split between 2007/08 and 2008/09 as a contributing third party, plus support in kind. The funding pays for continuation of the Project Officer post to deliver the practical management actions shown in the Action Plan – Workplan at Appendix 3.

## **Dunes Management Action Plan**

11. The identified aims of the Action Plan are to:

- enhance the nature conservation interest of the coastal habitats
- improve the efficiency of the dunes and saltmarsh as soft sea-defence (with associated cost-savings in maintenance of hard sea-defences)
- enhance public appreciation and enjoyment of the dunes

12. The main aims are to be delivered through 5 the operational objectives listed below:

- Enhance the nature conservation value of the sand dune and other natural coastal habitats, including the shingle bed and accreting saltmarsh.
- Increase the area of sand dune and saltmarsh habitats where appropriate, particularly by allowing conditions for natural seaward accretion.
- Maintain and, where appropriate, enhance sea defences, with natural accretion of sand dune and saltmarsh forming the primary defence and repairs to hard defences only undertaken where current or potential soft defence is not adequate.
- Promote knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the ecological value of the sand dunes and other natural coastal habitats, and of their key role in coastal flood defence.
- Enable safe recreational use of the dunes and beach where this does not significantly compromise the nature conservation or flood-defence properties of the dunes and other natural coastal habitats.

13. For Members' consideration, a summary of the Action Plan is attached at Appendix 2, with the operational workplan attached at Appendix 3.

14. The Action Plan has gone through consultation processes to produce this draft. Various environmental and coastal bodies were heavily consulted including the Environment Agency, Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Natural England, Blackpool Council's coastal team, and several coastal ecologists. A wider consultation process has also included local colleges and schools, community environmental groups (including Fylde Bird Club and Blackpool Environmental Action Team) and experienced sand dune managers (including Sefton Metropolitan Council and Liverpool Hope University).

15. It is proposed to hold a series of briefing sessions with Members regarding the main issues, and hold a number of public exhibitions about the Action Plan. In addition information will be available on the Council website, as well as through leaflets and community events.

## **Conclusion**

16. The Lytham St. Anne's Dunes Management Plan was adopted in 2005. The Dunes Management Action Plan has been prepared to manage delivery of the environmental aspects of the original Management Plan. The Action Plan has been developed through consultation processes with professional bodies such as Natural England, other partner organisations and interested parties. The Action Plan and associated workplan are presented to Members for consideration.

| Report Author | Tel            | Date      | Doc ID                       |
|---------------|----------------|-----------|------------------------------|
| Clare Platt   | (01253) 658602 | 03. 09.09 | 3.9.094 Sand Dunes Mgmt Plan |

| List of Background Papers               |               |                                |
|---|---------------|--------------------------------|
| Name of document                        | Date          | Where available for inspection |
| Lytham St Anne's Dunes Management Plan  | February 2005 | Town Hall, Lytham St Anne's    |
| Fylde Sand Dunes Management Action Plan | December 2008 | Town Hall, Lytham St Anne's    |

### Attached documents

Appendix 1 – Lytham St Anne's Dunes Management Plan – Executive Summary

Appendix 2 – Fylde Sand Dunes Management Action Plan – Summary

Appendix 3 – Fylde Sand Dunes Management Action Plan – Workplan

| IMPLICATIONS                            |  |
|---|--|
| Finance                                 | The Council's financial contribution to the project and action plan was during 2007/08 and 2008/09. There are no further financial implications than the in kind commitments identified in the report. The project and action plan are fully funded. |
| Legal                                   | None arising directly from this report.  |
| Community Safety                        | Promoting appropriate use of the sand dunes will support community safety objectives.  |
| Human Rights and Equalities             | Promoting the widest public appreciation and enjoyment of the dunes is a key aim of the action plan.   |
| Sustainability and Environmental Impact | Delivering the action plan will ensure the ongoing sustainability and minimise adverse environmental impact on the dunes.  |
| Health & Safety and Risk Management     | None arising directly from the report.   |

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **1. Introduction**

Blackpool Borough Council has been acting as lead Authority for the production of a management plan for the intermittent areas of sand dunes that comprise the Lytham St Annes dunes, which lie between Starr Gate at Blackpool and the western boundary of "the Green" at Lytham.

The dunes form a natural coastal defence to the coastal strip across the frontages in question and are subject to a variety of natural, human and commercial pressures. However across most of this part of the Fylde peninsula hinterland development and the erection of artificial defences has halted the natural development of a complete dune belt leaving only fragmented intermittent frontages remaining.

A partnership approach has been adopted in the processes leading up to implementation of the Management Plan to ensure that views and opinions of key organisations are addressed from the earliest stages. The Lytham St Annes Dunes Management Partnership (LSADMP) comprises representatives of Blackpool Borough Council, Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Fylde Borough Council, Lancashire County Council, English Nature and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. The Environment Agency has also endorsed production of the plan.

The management plan has been produced by external technical advisors, Coastal Engineering UK Ltd, on behalf the Lytham St Annes Dunes Management Partnership, who have monitored, reviewed and endorsed its production throughout the period of preparation. The draft plan was made available for public consultation and examination during April 2004.

### **2. Background to Development of the Management Plan**

The need to examine the coastal defence function and define appropriate management actions for the Starr Hills Sand Dunes, between Squire's Gate and Todmorden Road, St Annes, was originally identified in the Blackpool Shoreline Strategy Plan (Blackpool BC, 1993). At the time Blackpool Borough Council, who are landowners for the area of dunes between Squire's Gate and the northern boundary of the Thursby nursing home, were considering implementing a policy of 'Managed Advance' for the frontage, in order to prevent potential future outflanking of their new hard coastal defences at South Shore.

As part of the Planning Consent for the South Shore Works Blackpool BC agreed to carry out "environmental improvements" in mitigation for the loss of a small area of foreshore inter tidal feeding grounds within the Ribble Estuary SSSI/RAMSAR/SPA site.

Production of management plan for the Starr Hill dunes, between Squires Gate and the northern boundary of St. Annes, was the mitigation agreed with English Nature and RSPB.

At the outset a steering group of representatives from public authorities, and statutory and non-statutory conservation bodies with an interest in the dunes was set up to oversee production of the management plan. The steering group comprises representatives from the following organisations:

- Blackpool Borough Council (as landowners)
- Fylde Borough Council (as landowners and Local/Coast Protection Authority)
- Lancashire County Council
- English Nature (as statutory conservation body)
- RSPB

The first stage comprised production of a scoping report, the results of which were published in January 2000 (Blackpool BC, 2000).

Following completion of the scoping report and the subsequent 5 yearly review of Blackpool's Shoreline Strategy Plan (Blackpool BC, 2000), which included on-going provision for further examination of the problems at Starr Hills, approval was given by the DEFRA, in June 2002, for production of the management plan.

An inception meeting for the plan was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2002, which:

- Confirmed the issues that need to be addressed, particularly in the light of changes that may have occurred since the scoping report was prepared
- Discussed and agreed the objectives for production of the plan
- Identified the extent of the database available
- Confirmed the scope of additional work to be carried out
- Confirmed the approach to be adopted in preparation of the plan

Also at this meeting, the representatives from Fylde BC and English Nature reiterated the first of the scoping report recommendations, that the management plan should include not only Starr Hills but the other areas of dunes that exist between St. Annes and Lytham. This would provide for a holistic approach to dune management across all the dune areas within the Borough. This approach is consistent with the strategic assessment of coastal defence advocated by Central Government (MAFF, 2000).

As a result this approach was presented to DEFRA for approval. The extension of the management plan to include all the areas of dunes within the Lytham St Annes dune belt was subsequently accepted as a variation to the original proposals.

The ultimate aim was to produce and implement a Management Plan that made recommendations relating to specific activities at the dunes. The scope of the Management Plan follows the recommendations of the scoping report and covers the entire dune system, including adjacent beach areas. The Plan determines the nature, extent and more specific details of any subsequent management actions, works and environmental improvements deemed necessary.

Preparation of the plan has been carried out in three stages, as follows:

#### Stage 1

Specific additional studies, identified in the scoping report, were carried out and this additional information together with existing data was collated to form the technical database to underpin examination of management actions and production of the plan document. The results of this exercise are provided in the Lytham St Annes Dunes Management Plan - Technical Report (Coastal Engineering UK Ltd, May 2003).

#### Stage 2

The second stage of plan preparation:

- Reviewed the technical database to provide relevant management criteria for option evaluation and management definition
- Defined and examined options for future management to accord with objectives
- Carried out a preliminary risk assessment associated with on-going management of the dunes
- Considered the effects for the dunes and the wider hinterland if no co-ordinated management of the dunes takes place
- Reconciled future monitoring requirements with current local and regional proposals
- Identified a series of management actions to be taken implemented by relevant bodies
- Identified potential sources and mechanisms of funding for on-going management actions
- Produced a draft management plan for public consultation



Production of the management plan drew on experience gained from production of management plans for dune areas elsewhere in the country together with the results of recently published research into sand dune processes and management (Royal Holloway College, University of London, 2003).

### Stage 3

The final stage of plan preparation involved public consultation on the draft proposals, finalising of the plan and adoption of the plan by the relevant bodies.

### **3. Consultation**

The management plan is a statement of public policy prepared using public monies and likely to be implemented using a combination of public and private funds. Ownership of the plan rests with the Lytham St Annes Dunes Management Plan Partnership, who will provide the impetus for implementing the majority of the actions defined, on behalf of the general public.

The plan has been produced based on the best available technical information, recognising that stakeholder involvement is a key element in producing a workable plan

Throughout preparation of the plan there has been on-going liaison between partnership members, external advisors and other bodies who have an interest in preparation of the plan.

The following principal organisations were identified and consulted directly, throughout preparation of the plan:

- Blackpool Boat Angling Club
- Blackpool Light Craft Club
- Defend the Dunes
- Fylde Sand Yachting Club
- HM Coastguard
- Morris Homes (Developer for ex Blackburn Home site)
- Pontins Holiday Park
- RNLI
- St Annes Pier
- St Annes Police
- Thursby Nursing Home
- United Utilities
- William Rainford (Holdings) Ltd

Meetings and discussions were held with representatives of the above bodies who expressed an interest in commenting on the plan during its preparation. Copies of draft documents were made available to any of the above parties who requested them. Press releases for circulation in local newspapers and at public buildings advising the general public of progress were also prepared

Copies of the draft plan were made available for examination at Blackpool BC Offices at Westgate House and at Fylde BC St Annes Town Hall in April 2004

Future Consultation following adoption of the draft plan will include press releases and production of newsletters, further meetings with key stakeholders and public meetings, as necessary.

### **4. Site Characteristics**

The present areas of dune frontage are the last remnants of a complete system that once covered the whole of the Fylde frontage with the overall frontage now broken down into a series of essentially smaller individual systems,



as detailed in table 1 below, which apart from the two frontal areas at the northern end (Areas 1 & 3), have little or no linkage with each other.

**TABLE 1: DUNE FRONTAGE LENGTHS**

| Area |  |              | Start Co-ordinates |          | Finish Co-ordinates |          | Comments  |
|------|--|--------------|--------------------|----------|---------------------|----------|---|
| No.  | Description  | Distance (m) | Easting            | Northing | Easting             | Northing |   |
| 1    | Squires Gate to Todmorden Road                     | 2100         | 330500             | 431660   | 331200              | 429700   | "Starr Hills" dunes on seaward side of Clifton Drive North, part owned by BBC, north of Thursby Nursing Home. Remainder owned by FBC  |
| 2    | Pontins to Kilgrimol Gardens                       | 700          | 330885             | 430935   | 331120              | 430280   | Part of the "Starr Hills" area but now effectively cut off from the main area by the A547 trunk road (Clifton Dr. North). Designated Local Nature Reserve, owned by FBC.  |
| 3    | Todmorden Road to St. Annes Pier                   | 1260         | 331200             | 429700   | 331825              | 428620   | Dunes in front of promenade north of St. Annes pier, mostly owned by FBC, apart from a 115 metre long section north of Bentinck Road, which is owned by the residents of the adjacent properties on North Promenade |
| 4    | St Annes - Miniature Golf Course to Fairhaven Lake | 1500         | 332280             | 428070   | 333580              | 427300   | Low lying area of dunes in front of St Annes South Promenade, owned by FBC  |
| 5    | Lytham - Ansdell Road South to Lytham Green        | 765          | 334730             | 427190   | 335450              | 426930   | Dunes encased by sea wall, owned by FBC   |

The dunes comprise approximately 75% of the total shoreline length of 7.5km between Squires Gate at the Blackpool/Fylde borough boundary and the western end of Lytham Green. The remaining lengths of frontage comprise artificial hard coastal defences on the south side of St. Annes Pier and around Fairhaven Lake and Granny's Bay. The Starr Hills dune frontage between Squires Gate and the northern boundary of the built up area of St Annes is effectively split in two by the main Blackpool to Preston coast road (A547). At the south eastern end of the dune belt the final area of dune was enclosed by the construction of a new sea wall in the 1900's

Across the majority of the frontage existing settlements extend to the rear edge of the dune areas with the public highway providing a barrier between the dunes and residential or commercial developments.

The Starr Hills length of shoreline represents a short break in the ribbon coastal development that occurs along the remainder of the frontage. The Pontins holiday park is situated behind the Starr Hills foredunes and on the landward side of the public highway adjacent to the separated dune area.

The location of the various dune frontages are shown on figure 1. For the purposes of management definition each area has been assessed as a separate entity albeit that there are a number of issues that are generic to all units.

The dunes rise to a maximum height of approximately 15 metres above Ordnance Datum but are as low as 6.0 metres AOD in places. The width of the dune belt is typically between 60 and 200 metres but locally it can be as low as 10-15 metres, adjacent to specific hinterland development e.g. car parks, utilities infrastructure etc. The width and height of the dunes varies within each area and from area to area. Table 2 below provides details for each area of dune

**TABLE 2: DUNE FRONTAGE CONDITIONS**

| Area |  |                         |                      | Dune Width (m) |         | Frontal Dune Crest Height (m AOD) |         |
|------|--|-------------------------|----------------------|----------------|---------|-----------------------------------|---------|
| No.  | Description  | Area (km <sup>2</sup> ) | Foreshore width (km) | Minimum        | Maximum | Minimum                           | Maximum |
| 1    | Squires Gate to Todmorden Road                     | 0.28                    | 0.8-2.0              | 125            | 175     | 8                                 | 15      |
| 2    | Pontins to Kilgrimol Gardens                       | 0.16                    | NA                   | 220            | 250     | 6                                 | 10      |
| 3    | Todmorden Road to St. Annes Pier                   | 0.06                    | 2.0-3.0              | 12             | 65      | 7                                 | 12      |
| 4    | St Annes - Miniature Golf Course to Fairhaven Lake | 0.16                    | 2.0                  | 15             | 175     | 7                                 | 10      |
| 5    | Lytham – Ansdell Road South to Lytham Green        | 0.04                    | 0.8                  | 30             | 60      | 9                                 | 11      |

The dunes are defined as being “Open coast, inland, transgressive and non-climbing”, with a high flood defence significance and a current behaviour status of Net Accretion” (DEFRA, 2003).

### 5. Aims and Objectives

The overall management goal for the Lytham St Annes Dunes may be described as **“To produce an integrated management plan that provides an integrated, environmentally acceptable and sustainable system of management”**

The following overall objectives for production of the management plan were identified from steering group discussion and subsequent consultation with interested parties:

- **Objective GEN:** To produce a strategic management plan for the whole of the Lytham St. Annes dune system between Lytham and Squires Gate, Blackpool.
- **Objective NAT:** To ensure that the plan and the management actions therein allow future dune behaviour to function as naturally as possible, within constraints identified.
- **Objective PROC:** To provide an understanding of the natural processes applying and to define a system of monitoring that will inform the definition of appropriate management actions, now and in the future.
- **Objective CD:** To provide a framework for future management that maintains the integrity of the foreshore and dunes as a natural coastal defence and minimises the flood risk to developed areas of South Blackpool and Lytham St. Annes.
- **Objective HUM:** To ensure that human pressures on the dunes are appropriately managed to preserve and, where possible, improve the integrity and nature conservation value and status of the dunes and foreshore.
- **Objective COM:** To examine the effects of existing commercial activities and to define appropriate conditions to be applied to any future approvals for continuation of the operations, that mitigate against any damage to dune and foreshore integrity and function that the activities have caused in the past or may cause in the future.
- **Objective DEV:** To examine the effects of existing developments on dune behaviour and function, such that appropriate policy(s) for future development may be defined, that will inform the statutory planning process.
- **Objective EDU:** To ensure that management actions raise awareness of the nature conservation value and coastal defence role of the dunes and that they inform and educate the general public of the need to preserve the dunes for future generations.

### 6. Plan Development

Development of the management plan was issue based aimed at identifying actions that address the specific problems that exist, to provide the basis for focussing resources to provide the maximum gains in terms of improvement in management and value for money



Table 3 below provides a list of the specific issues considered, which of the dune areas the issue is relevant to and the category(s) of the database provides relevant supporting information in examining potential actions to address the issue e.g. coastal defence, nature conservation etc.

| <b>TABLE 3 - DUNE MANAGEMENT ISSUES</b> |   |                |  |
|---|---|----------------|--|
| <b>Issue</b>                            |   |                |  |
| <b>No.</b>                              | <b>Description</b>  | <b>Area(s)</b> | <b>Database Category(s)</b>  |
| 1                                       | Integrity of artificial dune section adjacent to Squire's Gate Lane   | 1              | Natural Processes<br>Coastal Defence   |
| 2                                       | Flood Risk at interface with Blackpool South Shore  | 1              | Natural Processes<br>Coastal Defence   |
| 3                                       | Location of Compounds in Dunes on South Side of Squire's Gate Lane  | 1              | Recreation & Tourism   |
| 4                                       | Dune stability opposite Pontins entrance - Blow outs, uncontrolled access, stability of rear face, wind blown sand                    | 1              | Natural Processes<br>Coastal Defence<br>Recreation and Tourism<br>Nature Conservation<br>Development |
| 5                                       | Effects of Sandwinning Operation - Damage to dunes from stockpiling, double handling and transportation; Flood Risk; Erosion of dunes | 1              | Natural Processes<br>Coastal Defence<br>Commercial Activities<br>Nature Conservation                 |
| 6                                       | Redevelopment of Blackburn Home Site  | 1              | Natural Processes<br>Coastal Defence<br>Development<br>Nature Conservation                           |
| 7                                       | Flood Risk to Thursby Nursing Home  | 1              | Natural Processes<br>Coastal Defence<br>Development  |
| 8                                       | Location of Sand Yacht Club Compound  | 1              | Natural Processes<br>Coastal Defence   |
| 9                                       | Flood Risk at Coastguard Access   | 1              | Natural Processes<br>Coastal Defence   |
| 10                                      | Dune Integrity and Coastal Defence function between Coastguard and Todmorden Road   | 1              | Natural Processes<br>Coastal Defence   |
| 11                                      | Integrity of Artificial Coastal Defences at Todmorden Road  | 3              | Natural Processes<br>Coastal Defence   |
| 12                                      | Location and Effects of Bentinck Road Pumping Station   | 3              | Natural Processes<br>Coastal Defence<br>Commercial Activities<br>Development                         |
| 13                                      | Flood Risk at Pier North Promenade and Pier Car Parks   | 3              | Natural Processes<br>Coastal Defence   |
| 14                                      | Dune Accretion adjacent to Pier   | 3              | Commercial Activities  |
| 15                                      | Flood Risk at Fairhaven Road Car Park   | 4              | Natural Processes<br>Coastal Defence   |
| 16                                      | Location of Fairhaven Sewage Treatment Works  | 4              | Natural Processes<br>Coastal Defence<br>Commercial Activities<br>Development                         |
| 17                                      | Artificial Coastal Defence Integrity at Lytham (area 5)   | 5              | Natural Processes<br>Coastal Defence<br>Commercial Activities<br>Development                         |
| 18                                      | Wind Blown Sand   | 1,2,3,4        | Natural Processes<br>Nature Conservation   |
| 19                                      | Marine Dune Erosion   | 1,2,3,4        | Natural Processes<br>Coastal Defence   |

**TABLE 3 - DUNE MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

| <b>Issue</b> |   |                |                                 |
|--------------|---|----------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>No.</b>   | <b>Description</b>  | <b>Area(s)</b> | <b>Database Category(s)</b>     |
|              |   |                | Nature Conservation             |
| 20           | Uncontrolled pedestrian access across dune areas                  | All            | General                         |
| 21           | Uncontrolled Vehicular access across dunes and beach              | 1,3,4          | General                         |
| 22           | Control of scrub, invasive species and planted non-native species | All            | Nature Conservation             |
| 23           | Affects of Rabbits on dune integrity                              | 1,2,3,42       | Nature Conservation             |
| 24           | Beach / Dune Cleaning and Pollution                               | All            | Recreation & Tourism<br>General |
| 25           | Increased Public Awareness & Education                            | All            | General                         |
| 26           | Health and Safety   | All            | Recreation & Tourism<br>General |

In order to inform the decision making process examination and assessment of the risks associated with on-going management of the dunes was carried out and risk registers produced. For each of the issues identified in Table 3 above an assessment was carried out that provided the following:

- Description of the Issue. Where available thumbnail photographs that illustrate the issue are provided.
- Identification of the factors that influence the issue
- How the issue affects the dunes
- Risks associated with the issue
- The extent of existing management actions currently adopted to manage the issue
- Organisations responsible for management
- Definition, based on available evidence, of how the issue will develop without improved management action
- The range of possible management responses available (including the rationale for the preferred response, if identified)
- Potential funding arrangements for future management responses

## **7. Management Action Plans**

In order to meet the overall objectives for future management of the dunes and to address the issues raised and identified during preparation of the plan, the proposed management responses were developed into an action plan to be adopted by those bodies responsible for management of the dunes and the activities that affect it.

These actions include additional investigations and studies, applications for funding as well as physical activities and construction work. In defining these actions organisations responsible are defined, the urgency is identified and a preliminary assessment of the economic implications is made.

In terms of the proposed management actions, the dune system is divided into the different areas identified (areas 1-5). Some actions are relevant to the whole dune system, others to a specific location within an area, a whole area or a number of areas. Individual elements of the action plan are set out in Table 4 below. For each action, the table lists the objectives and issues driving the action, the agency(s) likely to be responsible, and the earliest potential implementation date (MM/YY) for the action.

The following acronyms have been used for the various agencies involved:

- BBAC      Blackpool Boat Angling Club
- BBC      Blackpool Borough Council
- BLCC      Blackpool Light Craft Club
- DEFRA      Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- EA      Environment Agency
- EN      English Nature
- FBC      Fylde Borough Council

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- FISYC Fylde International Sand Yachting Club
- HMC HM Coastguard
- LCC Lancashire County Council
- LR Local Residents Groups/Associations
- MOR Morris Homes (Blackburn home site developer)
- SAP St Annes Pier
- RAIN William Rainfords
- PON Pontins
- UU United Utilities
- THU Thursby Nursing Home

In addition, the typical level of expenditure required to carry out the actions is indicated. Costs suffixed (p.a) indicate annual levels of expenditure. It is assumed at this stage that the agency(s) who are emboldened will be responsible for financial aspects of implementation of the actions. Where grant aid is potentially available for an action, this is identified in the accompanying notes at the foot of table 4.

**TABLE 4: LIST OF PROPOSED MANAGEMENT ACTIONS**

| No. | Action Description   | Relevant Objective(s)   | Relevant Issue(s)        | Agency(s) Responsible                 | Earliest Commencement | Cost Band (£k)   |
|-----|--|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1   | Implement recommendations of cell wide beach, dune and coastal defence structure monitoring strategy in relation to dune frontages <sup>(1,2)</sup>  | GEN; PROC; CD           | 1, 4-21                  | <b>FBC, BBC, DEFRA</b>                | 06/05                 | 10-25 p.a        |
| 2   | Carry out coastal defence management plan project appraisal and submission to DEFRA for grant aid <sup>(2)</sup> , with specific regard to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal access provision and associated work (fencing, vegetation etc) to reduce dune erosion risk</li> <li>Regrading and recycling of material to reduce erosion and flood risk</li> <li>Provision of suitable measures to reduce flood risk</li> </ul> | GEN; CD; NAT            | 1, 4-21                  | <b>FBC, BBC, DEFRA</b>                | 06/05                 | 2-5              |
| 3   | Implement local dune management arrangements associated with re-development of Blackburn home site   | GEN; DEV; NAT           | 5, 6, 18, 19, 20, 21, 26 | <b>FBC, MOR, LRA, EN</b>              | NYK                   | 10-25<br>2-5 p.a |
| 4   | Amend existing stockpiling arrangements, repair damaged area of dunes to ensure that existing sandwinning operations are carried out in accordance with licence conditions   | GEN; COM                | 5, 19, 26                | <b>FBC, EN, RAIN</b>                  | 06/05                 | 10-25            |
| 5   | Assess future of sandwinning operations - renewal of planning permission, licence arrangements and conditions, review of health and safety implications etc.   | GEN; COM                | 5, 19, 26                | <b>FBC, EN, RAIN</b>                  | 01/05                 | 25-50            |
| 6   | Implement revised arrangements associated with sandwinning operation, if approval renewed  | GEN; COM                | 5, 19, 26                | <b>FBC, EN, RAIN</b>                  | 01/05                 | 10-25 p.a        |
| 7   | Produce evacuation plan for Thursby Nursing Home   | GEN; DEV                | 5, 7                     | <b>FBC, EA, THU</b>                   | 06/05                 | <2               |
| 8   | Explore options for relocation of compounds in dunes at Starr Gate   | GEN; DEV                | 2, 3                     | <b>FBC, BBC, BBAC, BLCC</b>           | 06/05                 | 2-5              |
| 9   | Explore options for relocation of Fylde Sand Yachting Club compound  | GEN; DEV                | 8, 9                     | <b>FBC, FISYC</b>                     | 06/05                 | 2-5              |
| 10  | Implement coastal defence management plan subject to approval from DEFRA for grant aid <sup>(3)</sup>  | GEN; CD; HUM; PROC; NAT | 1, 4-21                  | <b>FBC, BBC, DEFRA, PON, RAIN, UU</b> | 04/06                 | >50              |

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|    |  |                    |                          |                             |       |             |
|----|--|--------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|-------------|
| 11 | Examine and amend existing by-laws   | GEN; HUM           | 4, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26    | FBC, BBC                    | 06/05 | NYK         |
| 12 | Examine implications for removal of artificial defences between Todmorden Road and Bentinck Road   | GEN; CD; NAT       | 11, 19                   | FBC, DEFRA, LR              | 04/09 | 5-10        |
| 13 | Produce plan for recycling of wind blown sand <sup>(6)</sup>                                       | GEN; PROC; CD; NAT | 1, 4, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20 | BBC, FBC, EN, SAP           | 06/05 | 2-5         |
| 14 | Implement plan for recycling of wind blown sand <sup>(6)</sup>                                     | GEN; PROC; CD; NAT | 1, 4, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20 | BBC, FBC, EN, SAP           | 09/05 | 5-10 p.a    |
| 15 | Amend local access provision outside of coastal defence arrangements                               | GEN; NAT; HUM      | 13, 14, 15               | FBC, BBC                    | 04/06 | 10-25       |
| 16 | Removal of Gun Turret and dune reinstatement adjacent to Fairhaven Road car park                   | GEN; CD; NAT; PROC | 15, 19                   | FBC                         | 06/05 | 10-25       |
| 17 | Examine options for amended car parking arrangements   | GEN; DEV           | 9, 10, 13, 15, 20, 21    | FBC, LCC                    | 06/05 | 2-5         |
| 18 | Agree and implement plan for control of scrub and non-native dune species <sup>(6)</sup>           | GEN; NAT           | 22                       | FBC, EN                     | 06/05 | 0-2 NYK p.a |
| 19 | Examine implications for removal of artificial defences to area 5 <sup>(2)</sup>                   | GEN; PROC; CD      | 17, 19                   | FBC, DEFRA, EN              | 04/09 | 5-10        |
| 20 | Provision of improved signing etc. for access control <sup>(6)</sup>                               | GEN; HUM           | 4, 20, 21                | BBC, FBC, LCC               | 06/05 | 5-10        |
| 21 | Examine effects of rabbit population on dune integrity <sup>(6)</sup>                              | GEN; NAT           | 23                       | FBC, EN                     | 06/05 | 2-5         |
| 22 | Maintain and improve as necessary existing beach cleaning operation                                | GEN; HUM           | 24                       | BBC, FBC                    | 06/05 | 50-75 p.a.  |
| 23 | Maintain and improve as necessary existing litter collection operation                             | GEN; HUM           | 24                       | BBC, FBC                    | 06/05 |             |
| 24 | Provide improved dissemination of information relating to management of the dunes <sup>(6,7)</sup> | GEN; EDU           | 25                       | BBC, FBC, EN, PON, RAIN, UU | 06/05 | 5-10 p.a    |
| 25 | Produce and manage dune management web site <sup>(6,7)</sup>                                       | GEN; EDU           | 25                       | BBC, FBC, EN, PON, RAIN, UU | 06/05 | 2-5 p.a     |
| 26 | Relocate existing visitor centre and set up satellite arrangements <sup>(4,6,7)</sup>              | GEN; EDU           | 25                       | BBC, FBC, EN, PON, RAIN, UU | 04/06 | 5-10        |
| 27 | Employ full time and part time warden staff <sup>(5,6,7)</sup>                                     | GEN; HUM; EDU      | 20, 21, 25, 26           | BBC, FBC, EN, PON, RAIN, UU | 04/06 | 25-50p.a    |
| 28 | Future NVC surveys (every five years)  | GEN; NAT           | 20, 21, 22, 23           | BBC; FBC; EN                | 09/08 | 5-10        |

#### Notes

<sup>(1)</sup> Costs for implementing and carrying out the cell wide monitoring strategy are not included in the management plan and are grant aided by DEFRA under coastal defence legislation

<sup>(2)</sup> Costs for this element would be grant aided by DEFRA under coastal defence legislation with the balance being met by the Coast Protection Authorities (BBC and/or FBC)

<sup>(3)</sup> All or some of the costs for this would be grant aided by DEFRA subject to meeting relevant technical, environmental and economic criteria with the balance being met by the Coast Protection Authorities. Contributions would be sought from private parties that would benefit from implementation of actions. Private contributions would be deducted from total cost with grant aid being paid on the balance. Current grant rates BBC 75% (65% for dunes), FBC 35%

<sup>(4)</sup> Costs assume existing buildings available to accommodate this element and no new construction required

<sup>(5)</sup> Grant towards costs for employing warden(s) may be available through English Nature

<sup>(6)</sup> Grant towards costs potentially available through DEFRA Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) grants and/or Lancashire Environmental Fund

<sup>(7)</sup> Grant towards costs for these elements may be available through Heritage Lottery funding





Figure 1 - Location of Dune Frontages





# **Fylde Sand Dunes**

## **Management Action Plan**

### **SUMMARY DOCUMENT**



a report produced on behalf of the  
**Fylde Sand Dune Project Steering Group**







## The Fylde Sand Dune Management Action Plan

The Fylde Sand Dune Management Action Plan was commissioned by the Fylde Sand Dune Project Steering Group in order to evaluate the importance of the Fylde Sand Dunes and other natural coastal habitats and to suggest management proposals in order to maintain or enhance the key features. Funding for the project was provided by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The main areas under consideration are the coastal habitats from Squire's Gate in the north (at the northern limit of the Fylde Borough boundary), continuing southwards and eastwards around the coast to the western edge of Lytham Green; most of which is owned by Fylde Borough Council or Blackpool Borough Council. Brief consideration is also given to the inland, and privately-owned, sand dunes.

The main aims for management of the Fylde Sand Dunes are to

- enhance the nature conservation interest of the coastal habitats,
- improve the efficiency of the dunes and saltmarsh as soft sea-defence (with associated cost-savings in maintenance of hard sea-defences) and
- enhance public appreciation and enjoyment of the dunes.

These aims are addressed under the more specific operational objectives listed below:

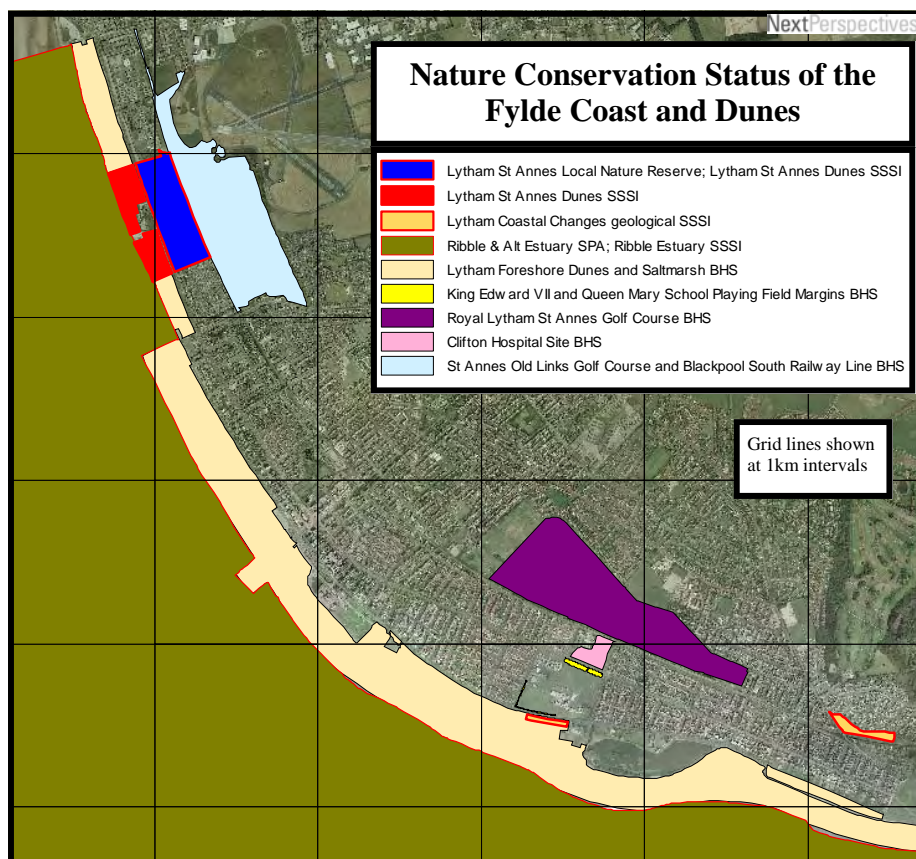
1. **Enhance the nature conservation value of the sand dune and other natural coastal habitats, including the shingle bed and accreting saltmarsh.**
2. **Increase the area of sand dune and saltmarsh habitats where appropriate, particularly by allowing conditions for natural seaward accretion.**
3. **Maintain and, where appropriate, enhance sea defences, with natural accretion of sand dune and saltmarsh forming the primary defence and repairs to hard defences only undertaken where current or potential soft defence is not adequate.**
4. **Promote knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the ecological value of the sand dunes and other natural coastal habitats, and of their key role in coastal flood defence.**
5. **Enable safe recreational use of the dunes and beach where this does not significantly compromise the nature conservation or flood-defence properties of the dunes and other natural coastal habitats.**

Proposed management works to achieve these aims will include enabling natural seaward accretion of the dunes by removing the current causes of man-induced erosion (both to increase the area of wildlife habitat and to improve the efficiency of flood defence), together with grassland and scrub management works to enhance the nature conservation value of the existing dunes.



## The Fylde Coast Sand Dunes

The majority of the Fylde coastal frontage between Squire's Gate and Lytham Green is covered by sand dune, but this is a very small and narrow fragment of what should naturally occur, and of what formerly occurred just some 150 years ago. This substantial loss and fragmentation of dune habitat has been caused by a century or more of housing, transport and other built development; most significantly over the inland dunes (and particularly following the creation of St Anne's in 1875) but which has continued to erode the area of coastal dunes up until as recently as the mid-1990s. Despite the enormous losses to built development, the Fylde Dunes still represent almost 1% of the total area of dune in England.



## Why are Sand Dunes Important?

Sand dune is a scarce habitat in Britain today, with less than 10,000 ha remaining in England. About a third of the English dune resource is in north-west England, with the most extensive examples being the internationally significant dunes at Sefton in Merseyside and Walney Island, Sandscale Haws and Drigg in Cumbria.

Sand dunes provide a vitally important habitat to a wide range of wildlife, including a large number of species which are incapable of surviving in any other habitat, and many of these are of national or international significance. The value of sand dune for nature conservation has been recognised by its inclusion on Annex I of the *EC Habitats Directive* and by being listed as a Priority Habitat for conservation in the *UK Biodiversity Action Plan*. Fixed dune and decalcified fixed dune (i.e. dune heath) are additionally considered priority habitats in Europe under the *EC Habitats Directive*. On the Fylde Coast, an area of inland dune was declared a Local Nature Reserve in 1968, the Reserve and adjacent area of coastal dune at Starr Hills was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1991 and most of the remaining dune habitat was classified as Biological Heritage Site (BHS) in 1997.

Dunes are also extremely important because of their flood-defence properties; both by providing a barrier to inundation and by releasing sand during storm conditions to reduce wave action. This natural coastal defence is hugely cost-effective compared to the expenses incurred in maintaining the alternative sea-walls and other hard coastal defences, and often far more efficient. While much depleted, the remnant dunes in Fylde Borough still form the most significant part of the Borough's coastal defence.

Sand dunes are also popular for informal recreation and hence indirectly can generate revenue for the local economy.



## Why Do Sand Dunes Form?

Sand dunes form where:-

- there is a supply of sand over a wide foreshore which has sufficient time to dry between tidal inundation,
- a backshore area of low relief and
- predominant onshore winds for at least part of the year.

Initially wind-blown sand accumulates around small objects such as clumps of seaweed, driftwood or other debris cast along the strandline. Ideal conditions for the transport of sand from a beach to the dunes occur after low-height and long-period waves have deposited sand on the upper beach and inter-tidal foreshore. At low-tide, the sand dries and onshore winds can carry substantial volumes of sand onto the dunes. Once formed, low hills of loose sand are then colonised by salt-tolerant, pioneer plants that both increase the resistance of the surface layer of sand to wind erosion and reduce the wind-speeds. The embryo dunes, or foredunes, will continue to grow unless they are destroyed by wave action at high tide levels. The main pioneering colonisers of loose sand include sand couch-grass and lyme-grass which are able to withstand short periods of immersion by seawater and have long roots, rhizomes and runners which are able to bind the surface grains and extend the vegetation cover laterally.

As the foredunes grow vertically above the level of wave run-up, they are colonised by the dune-building grass marram which thrives on continual burial by the blown sand deposits. The marram dominated dunes remain unstable due to the exposure of sand between the clumps of vegetation. If new foredunes develop in front of the mobile dunes, the marram ceases to be supplied with fresh sand deposits and other species colonise and stabilise the dune surface. The composition of the formed fixed dunes then varies depending upon soil chemistry but is often quite calcareous. Fixed dunes are usually dominated by red fescue and support a much higher diversity of species than mobile dunes. As the fixed dunes age, they lose lime and develop a flora with common bent and patches of heather which is known as dune heath.

Dune slacks are damp, low-lying areas between dune ridges which can be particularly rich in plant species including creeping willow, sedges, rushes, orchids and mosses.

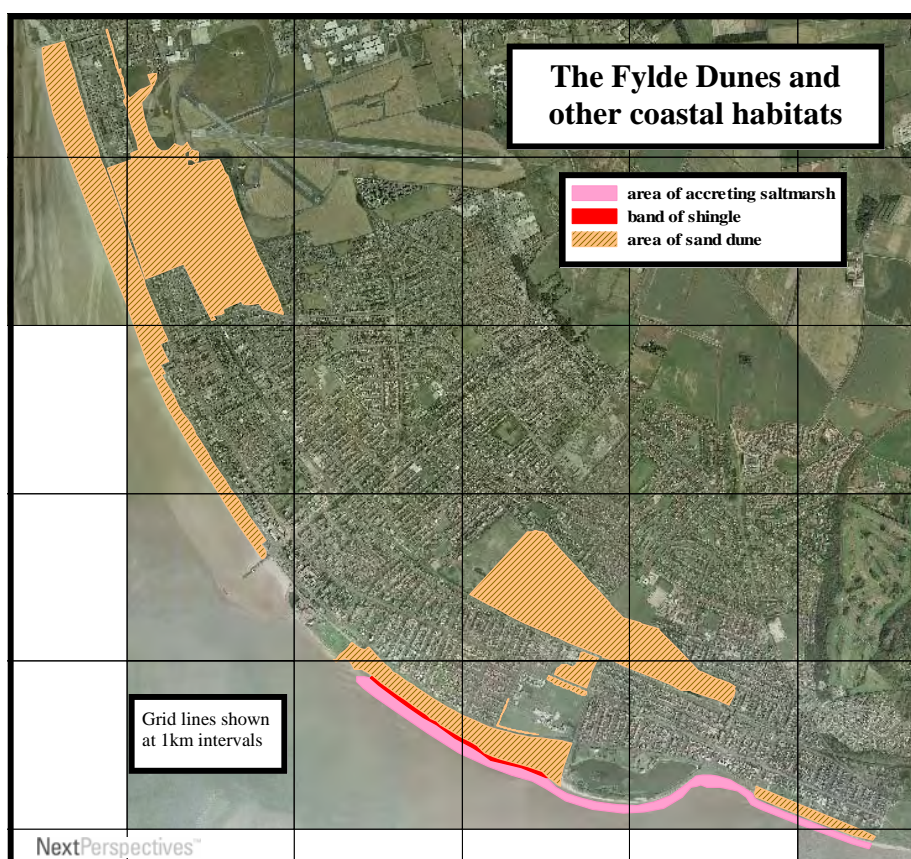
Along the Fylde Coast, conditions are currently favourable for natural sand dune accretion at Starr Hills and St Anne's due to a combination of natural movement of sand sediment from the Irish Sea bed and man-made intervention within the Ribble Estuary. This is in contrast to most British dunes systems which are either eroding due to loss of sediment and rising sea-levels, or are only accreting because sediment is being eroded from another nearby part of the coast.



*Foredunes and beach at Starr Hills*

## Other Important Habitats on the Fylde Coast

Where the beach is muddier and subject to more frequent tidal inundation, conditions are not suitable for sand dune development but are ideal for the development of saltmarsh. Saltmarsh is accreting at Lytham and Fairhaven and there is a more mature established marsh at Granny's Bay. A narrow band of shingle is also present between the sand dunes and accreting saltmarsh at Fairhaven. Saltmarsh and Coastal Vegetated Shingle are both important habitats in Britain and Europe. Both are listed on Annex 1 of the *EC Habitats Directive* and as Priority Habitats for conservation in the *UK Biodiversity Action Plan*. The saltmarsh and mudflats of the adjacent Ribble Estuary also form a designated Ramsar site, Special Protection Area (SPA) and SSSI for their internationally important numbers and assemblage of waders and wildfowl. Saltmarsh is also extremely important as part of the Coast's flood defence by reducing the wave action before the coastline is reached.



## Flood Defence

The most important attributes of coastal dunes in terms of flood defence are the crest elevation above sea-level, the shape of the dunes and the dune width. Dune systems which have the greatest flood-defence value are both wide and high. A relatively narrow dune system (30 - 40 m wide) can have a high flood defence value if the dunes are above 10 m in height, though such a system is at significant risk from erosion; on exposed sections of coast, 10 m or more of dune can be eroded during a single severe storm. Dune systems which are less than 5 m wide or less than 2 m high are considered to have no flood defence value. The linear integrity of dune systems is also important and continuous dune ridges provide the greatest flood defence value. Blow-outs and other low or narrow points in the crest are potential weak-points, depending on the presence or condition of any land-ward dunes. The degree of vegetation cover on dunes is also an important attribute affecting flood defence since it influences dune resistance to both wind and marine erosion.

While they remain in their current extent and condition, the dunes and saltmarsh of the Fylde Coast therefore form a perfectly serviceable coastal flood-defence under current coastal conditions, and are more efficient and considerably more cost-effective than the hard-engineering alternatives. However, because the width of the dunes has been depleted so greatly by built development and because seaward accretion is inhibited by man-induced activities, the dunes are extremely vulnerable to erosion during sustained storms or from future changes in sea-level or coastal dynamics, which could severely compromise the dune's flood-defence properties.



## The Wildlife of the Fylde Sand Dunes - Plants

Over 300 species of vascular plant species have been recorded within the Fylde Dunes; over 50 of which are nationally or regionally notable. Many of these species, hybrids of two or more species or particular subspecies are of international significance; being endemic to the British Isles.



*Isle of Man cabbage*

The most widespread British endemic along the Coast is the Isle of Man cabbage; found throughout the more mobile dune areas from Lytham in the south to the northern parts of the Local Nature Reserve. Dune helleborine and early marsh orchid (subspecies *co-cinea*) are scattered within the dune-slacks of the Local Nature Reserve and Starr Hills Dunes. The Baltic rush hybrid (Baltic rush x hard rush), the hybrid willow *Salix x angusensis* and the purple ramping fumitory all occur only in one or two locations each on the Coast.



*Dune fescue*

Amongst the plant species which are of national importance, dune fescue is widely distributed in the mobile and semi-fixed dunes from Fairhaven to Squires Gate. Green-flowered helleborine and round-leaved wintergreen have a similar distribution to dune helleborine and early marsh orchid, being present in the dune-slacks of the Local Nature Reserve and Starr Hills Dunes. Seaside centaury and variegated horsetail are present in the Local Nature Reserve and in the coastal dunes immediately opposite across Clifton Drive North. Sticky stork's-bill is also very thinly distributed on the Local Nature Reserve and elsewhere on the coast. Lax-flowered sea-lavender is found in the saltmarsh of Granny's Bay and the nearby accreting saltmarsh rather than within sand dune habitats.



*Baltic rush hybrid*



*Round-leaved wintergreen*

## The Wildlife of the Fylde Sand Dunes - Birds

Three species of bird which regularly breed within the Fylde Sand Dunes are listed as Priority species for conservation in the *UK Biodiversity Action Plan* and are also on the RSPB's Red List of species of conservation concern; these are reed bunting, skylark and linnet. All of these breed principally on the Local Nature Reserve. House sparrow and starling (both on the RSPB Red List and *UK BAP* Priority list) both utilise the dunes during the breeding season but probably nest nearby.



*Reed bunting at LNR slack*



*Stonechat family at Fairhaven*

One of the most conspicuous breeding birds on the dunes is the stonechat, which nests in tall marram at Starr Hills and at Fairhaven. This species is on the RSPB's Amber List of species of conservation concern. Other breeding birds within the scattered scrub at Fairhaven and the Local Nature Reserve include whitethroat and other warblers.

The saltmarsh and mud-flats of the Ribble Estuary are of international importance for their numbers and variety of wintering waterfowl. The accreting saltmarshes of the Fylde Coast, while not currently included in the SSSI, will contribute to the importance of the Ribble for these species.

Additional interest in winter on the Fylde Coast is provided by the occasional occurrence of snow bunting and, less frequently, shore lark feeding on seeds along the fore-dune and strandline. Twite are also occasional visitors and are usually more associated with the saltmarsh habitats.



*Oystercatcher at Fairhaven shore*

## The Wildlife of the Fylde Sand Dunes - Reptiles and Amphibians

The Fylde Dunes support a population of common lizard, while common toad and smooth newt occur in the deeper slacks on the Local Nature Reserve. Common lizard and common toad are both recent additions to the list of Priority species for conservation in the *UK Biodiversity Action Plan*.



## The Wildlife of the Fylde Sand Dunes - Invertebrates

The dunes provide habitat for a wide range of invertebrate species which are often specialists of dune habitats and unable to survive elsewhere. These include the British endemic sandhill rustic moth *Luperina nickerlii* subsp. *gueneei*, the nationally rare vernal colletes bee *Colletes cunicularius* and the nationally scarce spiders *Mecopisthes peussi* (a money spider), *Philodromus fallax* (a running crab-spider) and *Sitticus saltator* (a jumping spider).

A total of 31 moth species have been recorded on the Fylde Dunes which are either nationally rare, nationally scarce or listed as Priority species in the *UK Biodiversity Action Plan*. Perhaps most significant amongst these is the sand hill rustic sub-species which is confined to north Wales and north-west England.

The vernal colletes is a mining bee confined to coastal sand dunes in north-west England and Wales which favours mobile and semi-fixed dunes, including old blow-outs. It requires areas of exposed sand in which to dig its burrows along with a supply of creeping willow for foraging.



Amongst the most conspicuous invertebrates on the Fylde Dunes are the butterflies which include the *UK BAP* Priority species; small heath, grayling and wall brown. Grasses provide the larval foodplant for all three of these species. The populations of grayling on the Fylde Dunes are currently the strongest in Lancashire. Other butterfly species found on the Fylde Dunes include common blue, meadow brown and gatekeeper, which are all found widely throughout the dunes, while holly blue, small copper, large skipper and small skipper also occur.



Another conspicuous invertebrate, which is of local interest and easily seen in the mobile dunes along the Fylde Coast during early summer, is the large chafer *Euchlora dubia*. This species needs areas of bare sand in which to burrow and is particularly common on the Starr Hills Dunes.





## Some of the Issues Considered within the Fylde Dune Management Action Plan

### Habitat Management Issues

#### *Natural Succession of Fixed Dunes*

In the pioneer, mobile and semi-fixed dunes, natural movement of sand will constantly rejuvenate the vegetation and, unless specific issues arise, these areas generally require no habitat management. However, where the sands are more stable, on the fixed dune grasslands and dune-slacks, there will be a natural succession to a denser, coarser, less herb-rich sward and eventual colonisation and development of scrub. This process is likely to lead to drying of the dune slacks with an associated loss of botanical diversity. To maintain more open, diverse, herb-rich grassland and slacks it is necessary to manage these areas either by controlled grazing or by autumn mowing. Currently grazing is not feasible so a mowing regime needs to be established in appropriate areas.

#### *Spread of Non-native Scrub and Garden Plants*

Some scattered scrub on the dunes is beneficial for breeding or resting migrant birds and for invertebrate feeding, perching or shelter. However, certain species can be highly invasive and can easily cover large areas of ground at the expense of species-rich grassland. The most problematic species on the Fylde Coast are sea buckthorn and white poplar. White poplar is a non-native introduction to Britain while sea buckthorn is only native on the east coast and has been introduced elsewhere. Both are able to spread readily in a dune environment. In places scrub cover will need to be trimmed regularly to maintain its existing extent but in other parts of the dunes complete removal would be preferable. Areas which will require heavy scrub control or removal are the stands of sea buckthorn and white poplar in the southern half of Starr Hills, the large stand of white poplar at the rear of St Anne's Dunes to the north-west of the North Promenade car park, and the stands of sea buckthorn and white poplar in the central area of the Fairhaven Dunes.



*Sea buckthorn on Starr Hills Dunes*

The non-native Japanese knotweed and Japanese rose also occur locally within the Fylde Dunes and require control or removal. The former, in particular, is a persistent and highly invasive weed which requires eradication. In general, the willows, hawthorns and other native shrub species just need to be monitored and trimmed back occasionally if deemed necessary.

Elsewhere, there are many varieties of garden flowers which have spread almost throughout the upper dune areas. Mostly these seem not to be impacting upon the wildlife interest and some are useful sources of nectar for a number of invertebrate species. These species may be tolerated, but monitoring will be required to ensure that none become too invasive at the expense of the natural dune vegetation.

## Coastal Dynamics

### *Natural Dynamics of the Coastal System*

Overall the Fylde Coast is currently an accreting system. To the north of St Anne's Pier the wide, sandy beach and climatic conditions are conducive to formation of coastal dunes. To the south of the pier, and further into the comparative shelter of the Ribble Estuary, the high tides regularly reach the shoreline and the generally wetter and more silty beach provides suitable conditions for the developing saltmarsh. Occasionally there may be some local erosion caused by storm damage, but this is not a sustained process.

Most dune systems in Britain today are retreating due to loss of existing sand and an increase in mean sea-levels around the world. Where dunes are accreting, it is usually because sediment is eroding from another part of the coast. In the case of the Fylde Coast, however, there has been a net accretional trend associated with the Ribble Estuary over the last 150 years. The floor of the south-eastern Irish Sea is veneered with a mantle of largely sandy sediment derived from tidal and current reworking of glacial sediments. Circulation studies in the Irish Sea indicate long-term onshore movement of these sediments. This tendency is favoured by the presence of a large tidal range and a weak ebb tide, and the rate has been strongly enhanced by human interference during the last 200 years; including embankment construction and reclamation of land within the Estuary after 1810 (which reduced tidal current velocities, leading to deposition) and construction of a trained navigation channel between 1847 and 1910 together with its subsequent maintenance by dredging (which concentrated ebb flow in this over-deepened navigation channel and reduced periodic scour over the sand banks on both sides, and enhanced sedimentation).

Over time, these processes may change according to natural changes in the channel courses within the Ribble Estuary, which may affect the nature and availability of sediment. The combination of wave action and tidal currents could cause redistribution of sediment, perhaps transferring sand from one side of the estuary to the other, or the beaches and dunes outside the estuary could erode and the sand be moved back into the estuary. Unnatural developments (including sand extraction, off-shore constructions, hard sea-defence works and urban and industrial developments elsewhere on the coastline) could also have a significant impact in decreasing sediment supply to the beaches and dunes.

Phases of both coastal retreat and accretion have been reported along the Fylde Coast over the last century. Recent changes in the increase of saltmarsh vegetation around the Ribble Estuary is believed to be due to the cessation of channel dredging following the closure of the Port of Preston in 1980. It is therefore important to take advantage of the present accreting system to broaden the area of coastal vegetation so that a more substantial defence exists to counter any possible future changes.



*Accreting vegetation along Starr Hills foredunes*





*Saltmarsh and shingle at Fairhaven*

### ***Saltmarsh Accretion***

Works have been carried out in the past to cover an area of accreting saltmarsh in front of Fairhaven car park with sand. The intention has been to prevent further spread of the saltmarsh towards St Anne's. There has been a perception that saltmarsh is an undesirable habitat which will cause the public beaches to become muddy. However, trying to prevent colonisation by saltmarsh is likely to be a losing battle. If saltmarsh is colonising then the nature of the beach will already be rather muddy due to more frequent tidal inundation. Growth of saltmarsh vegetation is therefore a response to existing silty conditions rather than the cause of such.

Saltmarsh is, in fact, an excellent habitat for wildlife. The saltmarsh of the adjacent Ribble Estuary is of international importance for its numbers and diversity of waterfowl and the accreting saltmarsh on the Fylde Coast could potentially become just as important to these birds. Saltmarsh can also play an important role in the Coast's sea-defence, along with the sand dune habitats, by absorbing much of the sea's wave action before it reaches the land. While broadening the area of sand dune along the coast to the north of St Anne's Pier would be a feasible and effective way to enhance the flood-defence properties provided by the natural vegetation on this stretch of coast, the nature of the tides and lack of extensive areas of frequently dry sand means that further accretion of the dunes to the south of St Anne's Pier would not be feasible. However conditions clearly are suitable for the development of saltmarsh and further development of saltmarsh should thus not be discouraged.

### ***Presence of Shingle***

A band of shingle presently separates the sand dunes at Fairhaven from the accreting saltmarsh on the beach. It is not clear whether this is a completely natural feature or whether it has resulted from artificial activities, but vegetated shingle is certainly a natural and desirable habitat on British coasts. At Fairhaven, however, the shingle is currently almost devoid of vegetation. This may be partly due to heavy public disturbance along the beach in this area but it is believed that this state is principally due to beach-cleaning activities which are removing vegetation in a similar manner to the removal of pioneer sand dune vegetation elsewhere on the coast. The opportunity exists to allow development of shingle vegetation by excluding vehicle and pedestrian access. Such vegetation would aid the flood-defence properties of the coast and could provide a habitat for notable plant species and also for seed-eating birds over winter.



### ***Hard Sea-defence***

The dunes form the primary sea-defence along most of the coast between Squire's Gate and Lytham, but hard sea-defences have been built at a number of points along the coast; either to reinforce the dunes or to protect artificial developments within the dunes. Maintenance of these structures will be necessary as required, and vehicular access will occasionally be needed across the dunes or beach to undertake such works. Where appropriate, however, it would be preferable to replace hard sea-defence by accretion of sand dune or saltmarsh, not only to benefit wildlife but also because, in the long-term, this will provide a more efficient and far more cost-effective coastal defence.



### ***Climate Change***

Predicted climate change is likely to exacerbate any adverse affects of potential change in coastal dynamics, with anticipated rises in sea level and an increase in the frequency of storms. Figures published in the *Fylde Borough Strategic Flood Risk Assessment* suggest that an allowance should be made for a sea-level rise of 1000 mm over the next 100 years in order to accommodate likely climate change. This emphasises the need to consider, not just whether the present width of dune is sufficient to restrict flooding in the immediate future but whether sufficient dune remains to cope with long-term flooding risks.

## Dune Erosion

### *Erosion of Dunes by Human Activity*

Erosion caused by human activity occurs both within the foredune area and within the established dunes. Most significant, in terms of its adverse impact, is the erosion along the beach front at the toe of the dunes which is preventing or impeding natural accretion of pioneer and foreshore vegetation. This is caused partly by unrestricted pedestrian activity along the top of the beach and is also affected by vehicular use. Public vehicle use on the beach and dunes is now banned but there is still fairly frequent traffic of authorised vehicles undertaking maintenance of one form or another along the beach. Most damaging, however, are the mechanical beach-cleaning operations which not only remove pioneer dune vegetation but also remove the organic detritus on the strandline which attract initial sand deposition and help pioneer vegetation to establish.

Within the established dunes, a little pedestrian disturbance is actually quite beneficial in creating areas of bare sand which can be colonised by specialist plants and invertebrates. However, problems arise where persistent disturbance does not allow vegetation to re-colonise and the areas of bare sand grow increasingly larger. This is particularly an issue in Starr Hills Dunes where frequent pedestrian traffic to and from the beach has created huge valleys of bare ground which stretch almost the entire width of the dunes. This is not only bad for wildlife but also compromises the sea-defence properties of the dunes by providing weak-points in the dune barrier for possible tidal penetration.



*Erosion on Starr Hills Dunes caused by regular pedestrian traffic*

### ***Dog-walking***

Dog-walking is one of the more common current uses of the dunes. Present level of use causes some erosion, but this appears to be no more significant than the wider public use. It is the frequent human traffic in vulnerable locations that causes problems rather than low levels of public access spread widely over the dunes, and there is no evidence that the presence of dogs causes additional problems in this respect. Localised problems are likely to occur where frequent dog fouling leads to nutrient enrichment of the sand, which would lead to a loss of typical dune vegetation in favour of the more commonly occurring coarse and ruderal vegetation. This has been resolved to a degree by 2001 legislation making it an offence for dog owners not to remove their dog's faeces from public places, together with Fylde Borough Council providing dog-waste bins. Disturbance to breeding birds in the dunes or to winter roosting birds on the shoreline could be an issue and this situation needs to be monitored to determine whether sensitive areas need to be protected from disturbance during certain seasons or times of day. Again, there is no evidence at present that dogs are causing significantly more disturbance in this respect than general public use of the dunes and beach.



### ***Blow-outs***

Blow-outs occur within the mobile dunes following storms, where sand is scoured out from a locality and blown elsewhere in the dunes. The resulting hollow of bare sand can appear to be a negative element but in fact is a perfectly natural feature of the sand dune dynamics. In the absence of any further disturbance, blow-outs will gradually re-vegetate and new blow-outs will form elsewhere. The bare sand and early stages of vegetation colonisation are valuable components within the diversity of sand dune system habitats and provide a niche for some notable plant species, including Isle of Man cabbage and dune fescue, as well as being essential for certain specialist invertebrates.



Requests are sometimes received by Fylde Borough Council for blow-outs to be infilled because they are perceived to be a sign of sustained erosion and a risk to the flood-defence properties of the dunes. There are also problems locally with blow-outs being used for camping or barbeques, with associated litter being left behind, and also for various forms of anti-social behaviour, which again have led to calls for infilling of blow-outs. Blow-outs are natural features and should not automatically be filled in. Where particular problems exist, most notably where blow-outs are prevented from naturally re-vegetating by persistent man-induced erosion, then blow-outs may require temporary fencing to remove the causes of erosion, while planting of marram could be undertaken to stabilise the area. If absolutely necessary, depressions may be filled with sand from the beach or thatched with brush-wood or Christmas trees to trap wind-blown sand and then planted with marram to help bind the sand, but builder's rubble, quarried stone or any other artificial substance should not be used.

### **Other issues**

#### ***Built Developments within the Dunes***

There is a long history of man-made developments on the Fylde Dunes which have gradually eroded and fragmented the areas of natural dune vegetation. Most of the inland dune area has been lost to housing, golf courses and transport links which have been constructed over the last 150 years. Apart from the major developments of the Pleasure Island complex and around Fairhaven Lake, there are a number of small, but significant developments constructed throughout the length of the coastal dunes, while the construction of Clifton Drive North has separated the rich dune habitats of the Local Nature Reserve from the coastal dunes.

As well as causing direct loss of habitat on an immense scale, these various structures fragment the remaining dune area and obstruct movement of sand which restricts the natural development of dune vegetation and compromises the integrity of the dunes as a natural sea-defence.

### ***Wind-blown Sand Falling onto the Highway and Adjacent Properties***

Accumulations of wind-blown sand are an issue purely because the features affected (i.e. the roads, houses and other developments) have been built on land which should naturally support sand dune vegetation and the sand reaches these areas in such quantities because man-induced erosion and fragmentation have resulted in the remnant dunes being too narrow to support a full dune system (from mobile dune to fixed grassland) so that the areas of open beach and mobile sand dune lie immediately adjacent to the affected developments. In natural circumstances, wind-blown sand would simply move within the dune system to replenish the dune-building processes. Sand falling onto the highway is considered by the Environment Agency to be contaminated waste and therefore has to be disposed of as such, with associated costs, and cannot be recycled onto the beach. Thus, there is also a loss of sediment from the system which potentially could hinder future dune development. Options are currently being explored with the Environment Agency to allow this return of sand to the beach.



*Accumulation of wind-blown sand alongside Clifton Drive North*

### ***Removal of Sand Accumulations from the Beach to Prevent Sand Blowing onto the Highway***

Accumulations of sand blown in from the beach form adjacent to the brick wall which separates North Beach car park and adjacent sea-front houses from the beach and also by the concrete revetment sea-defence opposite Todmorden Road in the northern part of St Anne's Dunes. Current practice is to remove this sand regularly using a digger and redistribute it on the lower beach, to prevent over-topping of the wall and sea-defence and the associated problems of sand falling on the adjacent car park and highway. While this practice alleviates the problem in the short-term it is, however, counter-productive in the long-term and simply serves to sustain the issue. If left alone, build up of sand will eventually stabilise and allow colonisation by dune vegetation, which will eventually protect the car park wall and sea-defence revetment; both limiting the impact of wind-blown sand and improving coastal-defence functions.

### ***Management of Public Beach at St Anne's***

The area immediately to the south of St Anne's Pier has been long established as a public beach with development of dune actively discouraged. From an ecological perspective, it would be preferable to allow natural dune formation in this area, but this is only a short section of coast, isolated from other dunes by the Pier to the north and the Pleasure Island complex to the south so this is not too critical. Also, the situation is recoverable and will not interfere with potential future flood-defence management unlike the areas of coastal land lost to built development. However, there appears to be a significant issue with sand blowing into St Anne's town centre in this area which will be due mostly to the proximity of this open area of beach to the town. Regular removal of any accumulated sand against the sea wall will reduce the quantity of wind-blown sand but sediment will still blow in from the open beach. Allowing dune development (with associated benefits for wildlife and flood-defence) would provide a buffer between the beach and the town which, in time, would trap most of the wind-blown sand. The public beach would then need to be moved seaward of the dunes, requiring a short walk through the dunes to reach it, though there may be issues to consider with respect to access to and maintenance of the Pier. Options for this area need to be considered.



### ***Management of Fixed Dune Grassland as Amenity Grassland***

Management of amenity grassland is principally an issue to the rear and, more extensively, to the south-west of Fairhaven Road car park. This grassland lies just behind a narrow ridge of mobile dunes. It has a high cover of rye-grass, which is indicative of past seeding and some form of artificial nutrient enrichment, and is regularly mown to maintain a short-sward for recreation. Given the rarity of dune habitats and the generally widespread availability of short-sward recreational grasslands, it would be desirable to restore this area to a more natural dune grassland.

### ***Agricultural Weeds***

Under the 1959 Weeds Act, there is an obligation upon landowners to control common ragwort, broad-leaved dock, curled dock, creeping thistle and spear thistle where there is a risk of these invasive species spreading to agricultural land. Ragwort can be particularly dangerous to livestock because it contains toxins which can have debilitating or fatal consequences if eaten by horses or other grazing animals. Ordinarily, livestock will not eat live plants but are less likely to reject dried ragwort and contamination of hay is a particular problem. Consequently there has been wide-scale removal of ragwort in particular over recent years, carried out by local authorities, private bodies and concerned individuals. However Defra guidelines for the control of ragwort make it clear that the aim of control is not eradication of ragwort but to control this species only where there is a risk to agricultural land and livestock. These guidelines suggest that notified weeds should be controlled within 50 m of agricultural land and monitored for possible spread within 100 m.

In dune habitats, curled dock is often one of the key components of strandline, pioneer dune and shingle vegetation (where it is usually the coastal sub-species which is not at all invasive), ragwort is a frequent component of semi-fixed and fixed dune grasslands and is also the primary larval foodplant for the resident *UK BAP* Priority species the cinnabar moth, while thistles and ragwort provide excellent sources of nectar for many invertebrate species.



*Green-veined white butterfly nectaring on ragwort at Fairhaven*

There is no agricultural land anywhere near the Fylde Dunes and certainly not within 100 m. Horse-riding is practiced on the beach but there is absolutely no risk of ragwort growing on the beach. Horses should not be present on the dunes because of the excessive disturbance and subsequent erosion of the dunes which this would cause. There is therefore absolutely no reason to control any of these plants where they occur scattered within appropriate zones of the dunes. If these species become locally abundant in any area then this will be because there is a more serious management issue (most likely excessive disturbance and/or nutrient-enrichment) which needs to be addressed and which will not be resolved simply by removal of these plants. An education programme may be required to highlight the value of ragwort and other 'weeds' on the dunes and explain why their control is not required at this site.

### ***The Effects of Sand Extraction Storage and Access***

Since the industrial revolution, large parts of the Fylde coast dunes have been affected by historic sand removal for building and industrial purposes. The area of the Local Nature Reserve was subjected to sand extraction in the 1930s and 1940s, with dune vegetation subsequently re-colonising the overburden and scrapes left behind. The current sand extraction operation at Starr Hills is a current issue which is primarily beyond the scope of the management action plan. Essentially, the stockpiling of sand near to the dune system has led to some visible erosion around the toe of the dunes in this area and the broad access track from the road presents an obvious flood risk. The operation of heavy vehicles operating on this stretch of the public beach may also raise questions about the compatibility of these competing uses. The continuation of the current sand extraction operation may present a barrier to improving the Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) status and potential extension in this area.



### ***Education and Interpretation***

Public education is necessary to explain the value of the coastal habitats for wildlife and the importance of these habitats for flood-defence, in order to secure public support for and cooperation with essential management works. The recent employment of a Dune Project Officer is an important advance in promoting management and education.

A key target to achieve in the very near future must be to set up a new visitor centre which would also serve as a focus for volunteer workers on the dunes. A small visitor centre was built on the Local Nature Reserve but the last Reserve warden retired in 2002 and the visitor centre has remained closed since. This building is very poorly sited to be a viable visitor centre, having no parking facilities and being detached from the main coastal dunes by an extremely busy road which is often very difficult to cross. It is therefore an unsuitable base for school or college groups arriving by minibus and is unlikely to attract casual visitors.

Over time, development of a new visitor centre would have enormous potential for establishment of a dedicated education centre with a fully developed schools education programme and a programme of events for local people and visitors to the area, based upon understanding and appreciation of the coastal habitats. Such a centre could greatly enhance the local economy as the dunes increasingly become viewed as a visitor attraction in their own right.

Student research projects which will enhance our understanding of the coastal habitats should be encouraged whenever opportunities arise. Continued survey and monitoring by amateur naturalists should also be encouraged and supported as this has generated much of the information presently known about the Fylde Sand Dunes and will undoubtedly make an extremely valuable contribution to future knowledge.



*Children enjoying the dunes at Starr Hills*

## Key Management Actions Required to Meet the Conservation Objectives

See maps on pages 22 and 23 for locations of main management actions.

### Objective 1: Enhance the nature conservation value of the sand dune and other natural coastal habitats, including the shingle bed and accreting saltmarsh.

- Undertake autumn mowing in defined areas of fixed dune grassland and dune slack at Starr Hills, the Local Nature Reserve, Fairhaven and Lytham. Cutting should be carried out by hand using a strimmer or by use of a mower attached to a soft-wheeled tractor. All cuttings must be removed from site. Mowing should be carried out gradually so that small zones are cut progressively over a period of several weeks between late August and early November. Approximately 50% of identified areas will be cut in each year, where c25% is cut annually and a different c25% cut each year on a 3 year rotation in order to provide a diversity of swards for plants and insects.
- Investigate options for the use of controlled grazing management, instead of mowing, in appropriate areas.
- Extend the dune grassland mowing regime to the areas of amenity grassland by Fairhaven Road car park, and ensure that this area is mown no more than once per year with removal of cuttings and no application of fertiliser or other chemical. If the ground is too compact in the amenity grasslands for ready colonisation by dune vegetation, undertake removal of surface vegetation or plough experimental plots to allow reversion to dune habitat.
- Cut and remove sea buckthorn, white poplar and Japanese rose at Starr Hills Dunes and in the central and eastern areas of the Fairhaven Dunes.
- Cut approximately 80% of the large stand of white poplar at the rear of St Anne's Dunes in blocks gradually over a few years, leaving a narrow band of scrub along the back of the dunes until the width of the dunes has accreted sufficiently to allow complete removal.
- Trim sea buckthorn on the Local Nature Reserve and mature white poplar stands at Fairhaven annually around the margins of each stands to maintain their present extent.
- Eradicate Japanese knotweed from the western end of Fairhaven Dunes and from anywhere else it might be found in the future.
- Monitor scattered scrub elsewhere on the dunes and trim back if found to be spreading significantly at the expense of dune grassland habitats, but ensure that notable willow hybrids are retained.
- In areas of relatively species-poor vegetation within upper dune areas at Lytham, Fairhaven and Starr Hills and in the rank grassland areas at the rear of the Local Nature Reserve, create small scrapes down to the water table to replicate immature slack habitat and use the excavated soil to profile banks in appropriate locations nearby.
- Where erosion has been heavy in the area of Starr Hill Dunes opposite Pontins, repair the dunes by temporarily fencing off the worst affected areas to prevent further erosion. Possibly employ marram planting or thatching with brush wood or Christmas trees to encourage build-up of sand in order to hasten the stabilisation of these dunes.
- Fence the strip of shingle at Fairhaven, or mark by posts with strategically placed explanatory notices asking people to avoid disturbing the shingle, to prevent all vehicle access and at least most pedestrian access and allow development of shingle vegetation.
- Liaise with other dune owners to encourage appropriate management of private dunes and provide support where necessary.
- Ensure that all works undertaken by Council staff in and around the coastal habitats are coordinated and that all workers are aware of the aims and management regime included within this plan.

**Objective 2: Increase the area of sand dune and saltmarsh habitats where appropriate, particularly by allowing conditions for natural seaward accretion.**

- Erect chestnut-paling fencing or posts at between 5 and 10 m from the toe of the dunes from St Anne's Pier to Squires Gate (encompassing any existing pioneer vegetation) to prevent all vehicle access and at least most pedestrian access and allow natural dune accretion.
- If posts are used, notices will be erected to request that pedestrians stay out of this zone. If fencing is used, gaps will need to be left at strategic places to allow access from the beach to the rear dunes.
- Move the line of posts/fencing forward by another 5 to 10 m each year as the dunes accrete until it is felt that the dune-width has reached its natural limit, but review annually according to the observed rate of accretion. Fencing or posts should not be reused where these are buried by sand, to prevent disturbance to accumulated sand. Inexpensive materials should therefore be used which will biodegrade in 2 - 3 years.
- In key areas, (e.g. the artificial dunes at Squire's Gate, in front of north beach car park and in front of the concrete revetment opposite Todmorden Road), use brush wood or old Christmas trees to artificially trap sand, followed by marram planting to bind the sand. Ensure that there is no disturbance of the sand in these areas and in particular no removal of accumulated sand.
- Liaise with sea-front householders in order to explain the long-term benefits of dune accretion work.
- Investigate options for the future of the public beach area at St Anne's to determine whether long-term management should be open beach (with associated continued wind-blown sand falling in the town centre but carrying out regular removal of sand accumulations to alleviate this to some degree) or whether natural development of dune habitat should be allowed and the public beach moved seaward of this.
- Allow accretion of saltmarsh vegetation to the south and east of St Anne's Beach, without undue disturbance.
- Ensure that vehicle routes required for beach maintenance and routine patrol are agreed to cause minimum possible disturbance to the natural coastal habitats.
- Prepare a policy for beach cleaning operations and ensure that this is adhered to by all relevant Council employees.
- Apply existing Council policy to protect existing areas of sand dune or natural coastal habitat. Whenever opportunities allow, and agreement can be reached with owners and occupiers, remove artificial developments from the coastal dunes and allow re-establishment of the natural dune habitats. Encourage no further loss of Council control upon land to the seaward side of the coast roads so that any potential future flood defence works are not compromised by concessions to other landowners.
- Continue negotiations to resolve issues surrounding sand winning; in particular addressing erosion of the adjacent dunes, loss of sediment from the system, flood-risks and the affect of wind-blown sand on the high-way caused by the access track, and health and safety issues on the beach.

**Objective 3: Maintain and, where appropriate, enhance sea defences, with natural accretion of sand dune and saltmarsh forming the primary defence and repairs to hard defences only undertaken where current or potential soft defence is not adequate.**

- Repair existing hard defences as necessary in a manner which is least damaging to the natural coastal habitats.
- Promote soft, natural sea-defences as the main form of flood-defence so that, in time, at least some of the hard defences become redundant and either will no longer need to be repaired or can be removed completely with natural dune vegetation reinstated in their place.
- Encourage no further loss of Council control upon land to the seaward side of the coast roads so that any potential future flood defence works are not compromised by concessions to other landowners.

**Objective 4: Promote knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the ecological value of the sand dunes and other natural coastal habitats, and of their key role in coastal flood defence.**

- Provide interpretative material, such as leaflets, strategically placed notice boards and regular updates on the Fylde Council website, to explain the value of the dunes and the reasons for certain management actions.
- Investigate the possibility of establishing a visitor centre with a fully developed schools education programme and a programme of events for local people and visitors to the area, based upon understanding and appreciation of the coastal habitats.
- Extend the area of the Local Nature Reserve to include the whole of Starr Hills Dunes.
- Encourage student research projects which will enhance our understanding of the coastal habitats whenever opportunities arise, providing such work will not be damaging to these habitats or their features and establish good links with local educational institutions.
- Encourage and support continued survey and monitoring work by amateur naturalists.

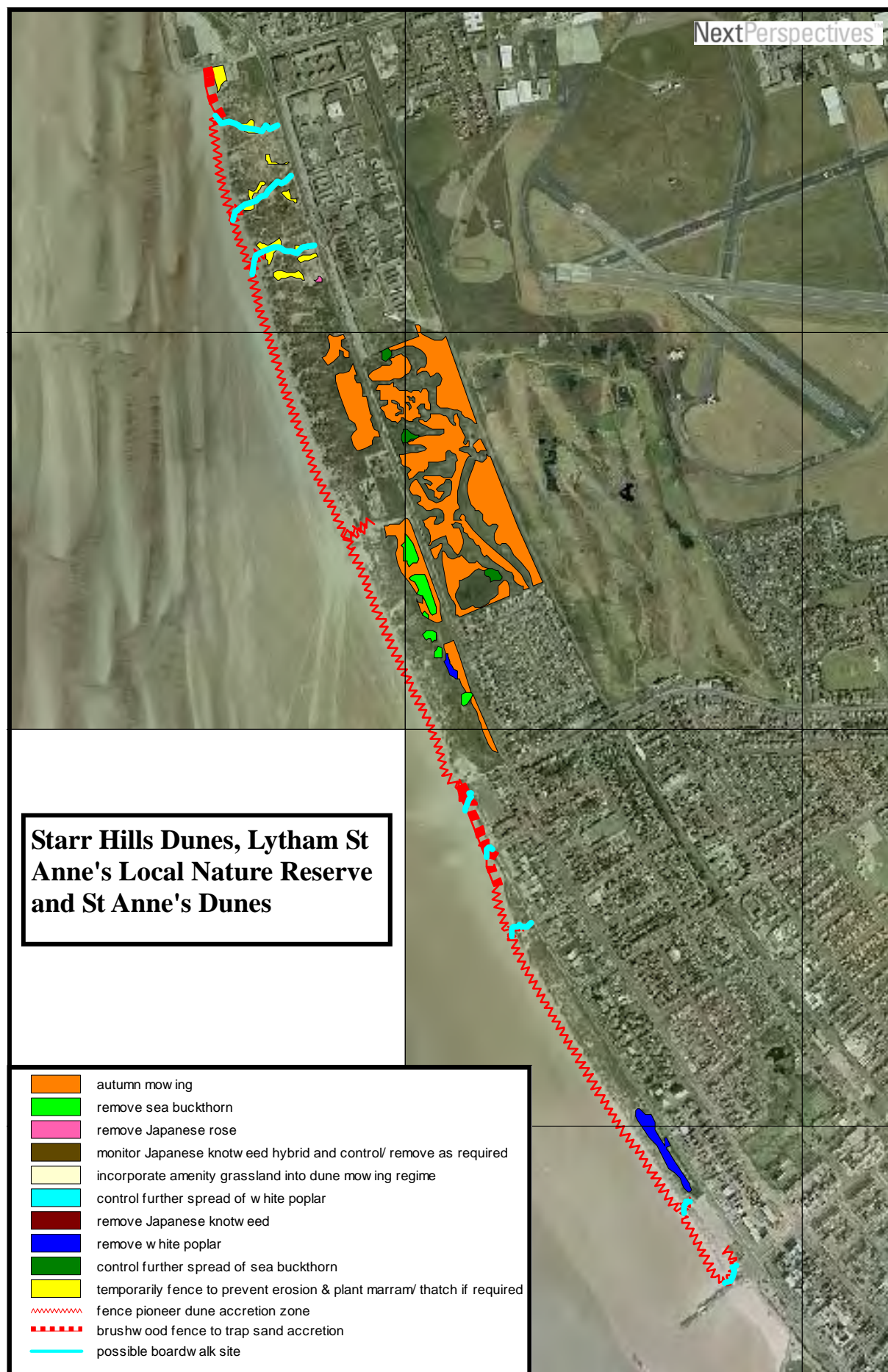
**Objective 5: Enable safe recreational use of the dunes and beach where this does not significantly compromise the nature conservation or flood-defence properties of the dunes and other natural coastal habitats.**

- Liaise with organisations who regularly use the beach to ensure that activities do not impinge upon the marked accretion zones for both dune and saltmarsh.
- Install a limited number of boardwalks at the most heavily used access points through the dunes to avoid excessive erosion in these parts. Boardwalks should be adjustable to accommodate natural sand movement and the beach-ends should be set at an angle to the prevailing winds in order to reduce the risk of flooding or erosion.
- Mark the ends of these boardwalks so that they can clearly be seen from the beach as the main exit points from the beach.
- Monitor public use over the rest of dunes and provide additional boardwalks in the future if absolutely necessary to prevent further severe erosion.
- Investigate options for a pedestrian crossing or footbridge to connect the Local Nature Reserve with the coastal dunes and car park.
- Maintain dog-waste bins and enforce legislation to ensure that dog-walkers remove all dog excrement.
- Where essential for safety purposes, large accumulations of roadside sand may be pushed back onto the dune at Clifton Drive North and Promenade North opposite Todmorden Road, but seek the advice of the Dune Project Officer or other qualified person in each instance first to minimise damage to the dune ecology.
- Where serious social problems are occurring in blow-outs, infilling with sand from the beach may be permitted, with subsequent marram planting to bind the sand. Thatching with brush wood or Christmas trees to trap sand could also be considered but builder's rubble, quarried stone or other artificial material should not be used. In each instance, seek the advice of the Dune Project Officer or other qualified person first to minimise damage to the dune ecology.
- Ensure that the ban on unauthorised vehicles on the beach and dunes is enforced.
- Ensure that there is no horse-riding across the dunes other than at approved access routes to the beach.
- If necessary, install posts along the roadside in accessible areas of dunes to prevent vehicle access.
- Liaise with Fylde Coast leisure-interest groups to limit the impact of maintenance activities upon the dunes.
- The Fylde Borough Council Beach Patrol should continue to prevent any prohibited activities.
- Ensure that all work undertaken is carried out with respect to all legal obligations, including health and safety regulations, public liability and consultation with Natural England concerning all management works to be undertaken within the SSSI boundaries.

**For All Objectives**

- Undertake appropriate survey and monitoring of features to evaluate effectiveness of management and form any management review







## List of Notable Habitats and Species

| Habitat                                  | Status  |
|--|---|
| Coastal sand dune (including dune heath) | EC Habitats Directive Annex 1 habitat;<br>UK BAP Priority habitat |
| Coastal vegetated shingle                | EC Habitats Directive Annex 1 habitat;<br>UK BAP Priority habitat |
| Coastal saltmarsh                        | EC Habitats Directive Annex 1 habitat;<br>UK BAP Priority habitat |

| Vascular plants  | Status   |
|--|--|
| <i>Epipactis dunensis</i> dune helleborine                                 | Internationally rare (endemic to the British Isles);<br>Nationally rare                            |
| <i>Juncus balticus</i> x <i>J. inflexus</i> Baltic rush hybrid             | Internationally rare (endemic to the British Isles) ;<br>Nationally rare                           |
| <i>Salix</i> x <i>angusensis</i> hybrid willow                             | Internationally rare (endemic to the British Isles) ;<br>Nationally rare                           |
| <i>Fumaria purpurea</i> purple ramping-fumitory                            | Internationally rare (endemic to the British Isles);<br>Nationally scarce; UK BAP Priority species |
| <i>Coincya monensis</i> subsp. <i>monensis</i> Isle of Man cabbage         | Internationally rare (endemic to the British Isles);<br>Nationally scarce                          |
| <i>Dactylorhiza incarnata</i> subsp. <i>coccinea</i> early marsh orchid    | Internationally rare (endemic to the British Isles);<br>Nationally scarce                          |
| <i>Centaureum</i> x <i>intermedium</i> seaside centaury hybrid             | Nationally rare  |
| <i>Salix</i> x <i>friesiana</i> hybrid willow                              | Nationally rare  |
| <i>Centaureum littorale</i> seaside centaury                               | Nationally scarce  |
| <i>Epipactis phyllanthos</i> green-flowered helleborine                    | Nationally scarce  |
| <i>Equisetum variegatum</i> variegated horsetail                           | Nationally scarce  |
| <i>Erodium lebelii</i> sticky stork's-bill                                 | Nationally scarce  |
| <i>Limonium humile</i> lax-flowered sea-lavender                           | Nationally scarce  |
| <i>Pyrola rotundifolia</i> subsp. <i>maritima</i> round-leaved wintergreen | Nationally scarce  |
| <i>Vulpia fasciculata</i> dune fescue                                      | Nationally scarce  |
| <i>Salix</i> x <i>subsericea</i> hybrid willow                             | Nationally scarce  |
| x <i>Festulopia hubbardii</i> dune fescue x red fescue hybrid              | Nationally scarce  |
| <i>Monotropa hypopitys</i> yellow bird's-nest                              | UK BAP Priority species; RDB 'endangered'  |
| <i>Blysmus compressus</i> flat-sedge                                       | UK BAP Priority species; RDB 'vulnerable'  |
| <i>Salsola kali</i> subsp. <i>kali</i> prickly saltwort                    | UK BAP Priority species; RDB 'vulnerable'  |
| <i>Cynoglossum officinale</i> hound's-tongue                               | RDB 'near threatened'  |
| <i>Juncus compressus</i> round-fruited rush                                | RDB 'near threatened'  |
| <i>Viola canina</i> heath dog violet                                       | RDB 'near threatened'  |

| Bees   | Status          |
|--|-----------------|
| <i>Colletes cunicularius</i> vernal colletes bee | Nationally rare |

| Beetles                           | Status          |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Cleonus piger</i> a weevil     | National scarce |
| <i>Notoxus monocerus</i> a beetle | National scarce |



| <b>Flies</b>                              | <b>Status</b>   |
|---|-----------------|
| <i>Nephrotoma submaculosa</i> a crane fly | National scarce |

| <b>Butterflies</b>                       | <b>Status</b>           |
|--|-------------------------|
| <i>Lasiommata megera</i> wall            | UK BAP Priority species |
| <i>Hipparchia semele</i> grayling        | UK BAP Priority species |
| <i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i> small heath | UK BAP Priority species |

| <b>Moths</b>  | <b>Status</b>   |
|---|---|
| <i>Luperina nickerlii</i> subsp. <i>gueneei</i> sandhill rustic | Internationally rare ( sub-species endemic to the British Isles); Nationally rare |
| <i>Sesia benbeciformis</i> luner hornet moth                    | Nationally rare   |
| <i>Actebia praecox</i> Portland moth                            | Nationally scarce   |
| <i>Agrostis ripae</i> sand dart                                 | Nationally scarce   |
| <i>Dicallomera fascelina</i> dark tussock                       | Nationally scarce   |
| <i>Euxoa cursoria</i> coast dart                                | Nationally scarce   |
| <i>Hydriomena ruberata</i> ruddy highflyer                      | Nationally scarce   |
| <i>Lithomoia solidaginis</i> golden-rod brindle                 | Nationally scarce   |
| <i>Lithophane socia</i> pale pinion                             | Nationally scarce   |
| <i>Mythimna litoralis</i> shore wainscot                        | Nationally scarce   |
| <i>Sideridis albicolon</i> white colon                          | Nationally scarce   |
| <i>Xylena exsoleta</i> sword-grass                              | Nationally scarce; UK BAP Priority species  |
| <i>Amphipoea oculea</i> ear moth                                | UK BAP Priority species   |
| <i>Amphipyra tragopoginis</i> mouse moth                        | UK BAP Priority species   |
| <i>Arctia caja</i> garden tiger                                 | UK BAP Priority species   |
| <i>Caradrina morpheus</i> mottled rustic                        | UK BAP Priority species   |
| <i>Celaena leucostigma</i> crescent                             | UK BAP Priority species   |
| <i>Chiasmia clathrata</i> latticed heath                        | UK BAP Priority species   |
| <i>Diarsia rubi</i> small square-spot                           | UK BAP Priority species   |
| <i>Euxoa nigricans</i> garden dart                              | UK BAP Priority species   |
| <i>Hepialus humuli</i> ghost moth                               | UK BAP Priority species   |
| <i>Hydraecia micacea</i> rosy rustic                            | UK BAP Priority species   |
| <i>Melanchra pisi</i> broom moth                                | UK BAP Priority species   |
| <i>Mesoligia literosa</i> rosy minor                            | UK BAP Priority species   |
| <i>Orthosia gracilis</i> powdered quaker                        | UK BAP Priority species   |
| <i>Scotopteryx chenopodiata</i> shaded broad-bar                | UK BAP Priority species   |
| <i>Spilosoma lubricipeda</i> white ermine                       | UK BAP Priority species   |
| <i>Spilosoma luteum</i> buff ermine                             | UK BAP Priority species   |
| <i>Tholera cespitis</i> hedge rustic                            | UK BAP Priority species   |
| <i>Tyria jacobaeae</i> cinnabar                                 | UK BAP Priority species   |
| <i>Xanthorhoe ferrugata</i> dark-barred twin-spot carpet        | UK BAP Priority species   |

## List of Notable Habitats and Species (continued)

| Spiders   | Status                                     |
|---|--|
| <i>Philodromus fallax</i> a running crab-spider | Nationally scarce; UK BAP Priority species |
| <i>Mecopisthes peussi</i> a money spider        | Nationally scarce; UK BAP Priority species |
| <i>Sitticus saltator</i> a jumping spider       | Nationally scarce                          |
| <i>Alopecosa cuneata</i> a wolf spider          | Nationally scarce                          |
| <i>Xerolycosa miniata</i> a wolf spider         | Nationally scarce                          |
| <i>Zelotes electus</i> a ground spider          | Nationally scarce                          |

| Breeding birds                           | Status  |
|--|---|
| <i>Alauda arvensis</i> skylark           | Red list species (high conservation concern); UK BAP Priority species |
| <i>Carduelis cannabina</i> linnet        | Red list species (high conservation concern); UK BAP Priority species |
| <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i> reed bunting | Red list species (high conservation concern); UK BAP Priority species |
| <i>Passer domesticus</i> house sparrow   | Red list species (high conservation concern); UK BAP Priority species |
| <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> starling         | Red list species (high conservation concern); UK BAP Priority species |
| <i>Saxicola torquata</i> stonechat       | Amber list species (medium conservation concern)                      |

| Reptiles and amphibians               | Status                  |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Zootoca vivipara</i> common lizard | UK BAP Priority species |
| <i>Bufo bufo</i> common toad          | UK BAP Priority species |



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Anne Heslop (Fylde Sand Dunes Project Officer), Jane Ashley and Kim Wisdom (Lancashire Wildlife Trust), Mark Wilde, Paul McWilliams, Geoff Willets and Julie Glaister (Fylde Borough Council), Phil Smith (coastal ecologist), Eric Greenwood (Botanical Society of the British Isles), Janette Gazzard (Natural England), Dave McGrath and Justine Hall (Blackpool Borough Council)

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## Action Plan Work Programme

## Appendix 3

| Main Task              | Sub Tasks                      | Dune Location                | Lead                     | Details of task  | What tasks needs to happen first?                              | Timescale    |              |              |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|                        |                                |                              |                          |  |  | Year 1       | Year 2       | Year 3       |
| Autumn Mowing          | Identify mowing sites          | LNR, SSSI, Lytham            | Dunes Officer            | Identify which areas need to be mown in the autumn. Prioritise those areas which need to be cut first. Establish mowing plan over 3 years.   | n/a  | before works | before works | before works |
|                        | Mowing sites                   | LNR, SSSI, Lytham            | Contractor or Council    | Undertake autumn mowing in defined areas of fixed dune grassland and dune slack at Starr Hills, the Local Nature Reserve, Fairhaven and Lytham. Cutting should be carried out by hand using a strimmer or by use of a mower attached to a soft-wheeled tractor. All cuttings must be removed from site. Mowing should be carried out gradually so that small zones are cut progressively over a period of several weeks between late August to early November. Initially aim for a 50% cut of identified areas in each year, where 25% is cut annually and a different 25% cut each year on a 3 year rotation. | Identify areas which need mowing. Prioritise areas.            | Sept-Nov     | Aug-Nov      | Aug-Nov      |
|                        | Removal of cuttings            | LNR, SSSI, Lytham            | Contractor or volunteers | Remove all cuttings from site, to reduce enrichment  | Mowing of the site   | Sept-Nov     | Aug-Nov      | Aug-Nov      |
| Invasive plant control | Planning for scrub control     | all                          | Dunes Officer            | Identify areas of invasive plants for control. Create programme for cutting or spraying. Identify timescale of works.  | n/a  | before works | before works | before works |
|                        | Identify & mark hybrid willows | SSSI area                    | Dunes Officer            | Determine the location of notable hybrid willows. Immediately prior to any cutting works, mark around notable species (e.g. hybrid willows) to ensure that these are not damaged.  | n/a  | before works | before works | before works |
|                        | Community liaison              | -                            | Dunes Officer            | Ensure local community are aware of reasons for white poplar, sea buckthorn and Japanese rose control and know when it is going to happen.   | Identifying areas to control and creating programme of control | before works | before works | before works |
|                        | Cut buckthorn                  | SSSI, Fairhaven, Lytham      | Volunteers               | Cut and remove sea buckthorn Trim sea buckthorn on the Local Nature Reserve annually around the margins of each stands to maintain their present extent. Monitor scattered scrub elsewhere on the dunes and trim back if found to be spreading significantly at the expense of dune grassland habitats.  | Identify priority areas  | Oct-Mar      | Oct-Mar      | Oct-Mar      |
|                        | Spray buckthorn re-growth      | SSSI, Fairhaven, Lytham      | Contractor or Council    | Re-growth can be sprayed with a herbicide during Autumn months   | Cutting down over mature stands                                | n/a          | Sept         | Sept         |
|                        | Cut white poplar               | St. Annes, Fairhaven         | Volunteers               | Cut and remove white poplar. Cut approximately 80% of the large stand of white poplar at the rear of St Anne's Dunes in blocks gradually over a few years, leaving a narrow band of scrub along the back of the dunes until the width of the dunes has accreted sufficiently to allay concerns that its complete removal may lead to increased wind-blown sand onto the highway.   | Identifying areas to control and creating programme of control | Oct-Mar      | Oct-Mar      | Oct-Mar      |
|                        | Remove/spray Japanese knotweed | Fairhaven                    | Contractor or Council    | Eradicate Japanese knotweed from the western end of Fairhaven Dunes and from anywhere else it might be found in the future.  | n/a  | Sept         | Sept         | Sept         |
|                        | Control Japanese rose          | Fairhaven, nr. Pontins, SSSI | Contractor or Council    | Cut and remove Japanese rose. Programme needed.  | Identifying areas to control and creating programme of control | n/a          | Oct-Mar      | Oct-Mar      |
| Foreshore Works        | Planning for foreshore ops     | all                          | Dunes Officer            | Establish whether to use bollards or fences depending upon location and public consultation. Prioritise which areas to fence first. Calculate length of fencing/no bollards needed. Tender out to contractors. Establish if volunteers can help.   | n/a  | before works | before works | before works |
|                        | Council Liaison                | n/a                          | Dunes Officer            | Liaise with Streetscene and Beach Patrol to ensure that vehicles keep away from the area.  | identify what areas are priority                               | Feb - Mar    | n/a          | n/a          |
|                        | Community Liaison              | n/a                          | Dunes Officer            | Liaise with the local community to let them know why these fencing/bollards are being put in. Ask opinion on fencing or bollards.  | options of what could happen                                   | Feb - Mar    | Feb - Mar    | Feb - Mar    |
|                        | Erecting bollards/fencing      | all                          | Contractor or Volunteers | Erect chestnut-paling fencing or posts at between 5 and 10 m from the toe of the dunes from St Anne's Pier to Squires Gate and on the shingle areas (encompassing any existing pioneer vegetation) to prevent all vehicle access and at least most pedestrian access and allow natural dune accretion. If posts are used, notices will be erected to request that pedestrians stay out of this zone. If fencing is used, gaps will need to be left at strategic places to allow access from the beach to the rear dunes.   | Planning, preparation and community + Council liaison          | Apr - Jun    | Apr - Jun    | Apr - Jun    |



|                              |                                    |                            |  |  |  |                  |             |             |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|--|--|--|------------------|-------------|-------------|
|                              | Erect Information signage          | all                        | Contractors, Dunes Officer, Volunteers | Create information signs to inform people to keep away from fenced off areas and to explain why these works are being carried out.   | Planning, preparation and community + Council liaison                    | Oct onwards      | Oct onwards | Oct onwards |
|                              | Maintenance of bollards/fences     | all                        | Contractor or Volunteers               | Move the line of posts/fencing forward by another 5 to 10 m each year as the dunes accrete until it is felt that the dune-width has reached its natural limit, but review annually according to the observed rate of accretion. Fencing or posts should not be reused where these are buried by sand, to prevent disturbance to accumulated sand. Inexpensive materials should therefore be used which will biodegrade in 2 - 3 years.                             | putting in the bollards/fencing  | n/a              | Apr - Jun   | Apr - Jun   |
| Boardwalks and route markers | Planning for boardwalks            | nr Pontins                 | Dunes Officer                          | Decide where boardwalks should be installed. What type of boardwalk is most effective and length needed. Tender out to contractors/can volunteers be used  | ideal if public usage monitoring had been carried out                    | Nov-Dec          | Nov-Dec     | Nov-Dec     |
|                              | Boardwalk creation                 | nr Pontins                 | Contractors, Volunteers                | Install a limited number of boardwalks at the most heavily used access points through the dunes to avoid excessive erosion in these parts. Boardwalks should be adjustable to accommodate natural sand movement and the beach-ends should be set at an angle to the prevailing winds in order to reduce the risk of flooding or erosion. Mark the ends of these boardwalks so that they can clearly be seen from the beach as the main exit points from the beach. | Planning & prep for boardwalks   | Jan-Mar          | Jan-Mar     | Jan-Mar     |
|                              | Map & plan paths                   | LNR and SSSI               | Dunes Officer                          | Map the network of paths using a GPS, to establish walk routes and marker points. Price up the number of bollards needed. Establish if volunteers can put them up.   | n/a  | Nov-Dec          | Nov-Dec     | Nov-Dec     |
|                              | Erect Marker posts                 | LNR and SSSI               | Contractors, Volunteers                | Install marker posts to encourage people to stick to path. The creation of nature trails to give a round loop of the SSSI and LNR  | planning & prep for posts  | Jan-Mar          | Jan-Mar     | Jan-Mar     |
|                              | Information signage                | all marked/boarded areas   | Contractors, Dunes Officer, Volunteers | Create information signs to inform people to keep to marked paths and why.   | n/a  | Oct onwards      | Oct onwards | Oct onwards |
| Blow-out protection          | Planning for blowout protection    | coastal dunes              | Dunes Officer                          | Establish which blow-outs/erosional areas need protection. Can Volunteers be used? How much materials are needed? Cost estimates? Will grass planting or brushwood be needed?  | n/a  | Dec              | Dec         | Dec         |
|                              | Fence areas                        | coastal dunes              | Contractor or volunteers               | Where erosion has been heavy in the area of Starr Hill Dunes opposite Pontins, repair the dunes by temporarily fencing off the worst affected areas to prevent further erosion.  | planning & prep for blow-out protection                                  | Jan-Mar          | Jan-Mar     | Jan-Mar     |
|                              | Create info signage                | n/a                        | Dunes Officer                          | Create information signs to inform people to keep away from fenced off areas and why these works are being done.   | n/a  | Oct onwards      | Oct onwards | Oct onwards |
|                              | Erect info signage                 | By fenced off areas        | Volunteers                             | Erect information signs where needed.  | planning & prep for blow-out protection. Signage creation.               | Oct onwards      | Oct onwards | Oct onwards |
| Dune restoration             | Planning for Dune restoration      | n/a                        | Dunes Officer                          | Establish areas which need restoration works. Calculate costs and precise management prescriptions. Can volunteers be used?  | -  | Sept             | Sept        | Sept        |
|                              | Brushwood fencing                  | Squires gate, todmorden rd | Contractor or volunteers               | In key areas, (e.g. the artificial dunes at Squire's Gate, in front of north beach car park and in front of the concrete revetment opposite Todmorden Road), use brush wood or old Christmas trees to artificially trap sand, followed by marram planting to bind the sand. Ensure that there is no disturbance of the sand in these areas and in particular no removal of accumulated sand.   | planning & prep for dune restoration                                     | Oct-Dec          | Oct-Dec     | Oct-Dec     |
|                              | Marram Grass planting              | at restoration areas       | Volunteers                             | Plant marram grass where needed to encourage vegetation growth.  | planning & prep for dune restoration. Installation of brushwood fencing. | Jan-Mar          | Jan-Mar     | Jan-Mar     |
|                              | Erect info signage                 | nr. restoration areas      | Volunteers                             | Erect information signs where needed.  | planning & prep for dune restoration. Signage creation                   | Oct onwards      | Oct onwards | Oct onwards |
|                              | liaison with Summerfield residents | Nr. N Beach Car park       | Dunes Officer                          | If requested by Summerfields householders, investigate possibility of undertaking careful manual removal of sand along the immediate length of the boundary wall with these properties to prevent over-topping by sand and prevent any risk of damage to the wall. Disturbance of sand to be kept to an absolute minimum and no removal of sand by mechanical means.   | creation of options available  | Sept             | Sept        | Sept        |
| Dune Slack creation          | Planning for slack creation        | LNR, Fairhaven, SSSI       | Dunes Officer                          | Establish which areas would be most suitable for dune slack creation, through vegetation and level surveys. Establish the best practice to create slacks within minimum damage to surrounding dune vegetation.   | NVC and rare plant surveys   | surveys all year | Oct         | Oct         |

|   |                                       |                            |   |   |   |                   |                   |                   |
|---|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|---|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|   | Creating dune slacks                  | LNR, Fairhaven, SSSI       | Contractor                              | In areas of relatively species-poor vegetation create small scrapes down to the water table to replicate immature slack habitat and use the excavated soil to profile banks in appropriate locations nearby.  | planning & prep for slack creation                | -                 | Nov-Mar           | Nov-Mar           |
| Monitoring invasive/scrub                 | Monitor controlled areas/species      | All                        | Dunes Officer or volunteers or students | Monitor areas of sea buckthorn, white poplar and Japanese rose which have been controlled. Monitor scattered scrub elsewhere on the dunes with the view to trim back if found to be spreading significantly at the expense of dune grassland habitats.  | after control has taken place                     | Mar-July          | Aug, Mar-July     | Aug, Mar-July     |
|   | Monitor uncontrolled areas/species    | All                        | Dunes Officer or volunteers or students | Monitor those areas which haven't been controlled to establish if species is spreading and to what extend. Feedback into scrub control programme.   | n/a   | Mar-July          | Aug, Mar-July     | Aug, Mar-July     |
|   | Monitor Japanese Knotweed             | All                        | Dunes Officer or volunteers or students | Monitor dunes for Japanese knotweed presence. Particular attention to those areas which have been previously treated.   | after control has taken place                     | Mar-July          | Aug, Mar-July     | Aug, Mar-July     |
| Monitor public use                        | Monitoring public use                 | Pontins, nr Car Parks, LNR | Dunes Officer or volunteers or students | Monitor public use over the rest of dunes and provide additional boardwalks in the future if absolutely necessary to prevent further severe erosion.  | n/a   | every other month | every other month | every other month |
| Monitoring dune profiles and developments | Monitor accretion                     | foreshore                  | Dunes Officer or volunteers or students | Monitor dune and saltmarsh accretion by annual inspection and by measurements derived from annual aerial photography.   | foreshore working. Although baseline data useful. | Annually          | Annually          | Annually          |
|   | Monitor dune profiles/wind blown sand | all                        | Dunes Officer or volunteers or students | Monitor extend of wind -blown sand, and dunes change their profiles.  | foreshore working. Although baseline data useful. | Annually          | Annually          | Annually          |
| Monitoring flora & fauna                  | Monitor key species                   | all                        | Dunes Officer or volunteers or students | Periodically monitor key species by counts of individuals or distribution mapping. Encourage and support continued survey and monitoring work by amateur naturalists  | n/a   | Apr - Sept        | Apr - Sept        | Apr - Sept        |
|   | Undertake NVC                         | all                        | Dunes Officer or volunteers or students | Undertake a base-line NVC survey of coastal dune, saltmarsh and shingle habitats during the summer of 2009, immediately prior to most of the management works taking place. Repeat at 15 year intervals over the whole site and at 5 year intervals where significant management works are being carried out.                 | n/a   | Apr - Sept        | Apr - Sept        | Apr - Sept        |
|   | Monitor SSSI                          | SSSI                       | Dunes Officer or volunteers or students | Assess SSSI against criteria for favourable condition. Establish what works need to be undertaken to bring it into favourable.  | n/a   | Apr - Sept        | Apr - Sept        | Apr - Sept        |
|   | Monitor non-natives                   | all                        | Dunes Officer or volunteers or students | Monitor the extent of non-native plants by informal assessment. More formal local monitoring may be necessary in the future if problems are perceived. Monitor stand of Japanese Knotweed hybrid at the Eastern end of Fairhaven dunes and control or eradicate as necessary. Monitor scattered scrub elsewhere on the dunes. | n/a   | Apr - Sept        | Apr - Sept        | Apr - Sept        |
| Local Nature Reserve Management Plan      | Creation of a LNR management plan     | LNR                        | Consultant                              | Produce a more detailed management plan for the Lytham St Anne's Local Nature Reserve.  | NVC survey  |                   | Apr - Sept        |                   |
| PR and Interpretation                     | PR - Start of funding                 | n/a                        | Dunes Officer                           | Press release to start of project. Inform community of funding. Liaise with press officers at Wildlife Trust and Fylde BC.  | n/a   | Sept              | n/a               | n/a               |
|   | Gazette Column                        | n/a                        | Dunes Officer                           | Use regularly to inform of management works, events and dune highlights   | create programme of topics                        | monthly           | monthly           | monthly           |
|   | PR for events                         | n/a                        | Dunes Officer                           | Press releases before (and after is required) events. Liase with press officers at Wildlife Trust and Fylde BC.   | event planning                                    | As required       | As required       | As required       |

|                              |                                    |                     |  |   |                         |                     |                     |                     |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|--|---|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
|                              | PR -Before large scale management  | n/a                 | Dunes Officer                                    | Inform community of management, and consultation. Press release and letters.  | planning for management | As required         | As required         | As required         |
|                              | Posters/flyer for events           | n/a                 | Dunes Officer                                    | Create posters for events. Put up at libraries, Fylde BC, lowther etc   | event planning          | As required         | As required         | As required         |
|                              | Create and maintain webpages       | n/a                 | Dunes Officer                                    | Ensure webpages are regularly updated and maintained. Events and information.   | n/a                     | As required         | As required         | As required         |
| Investigate options          | Grazing                            | LNR                 | Dunes Officer                                    | Investigate options for the use of controlled grazing management, instead of mowing, in appropriate areas.  | n/a                     |                     | Investigate options |                     |
|                              | extend SSSI                        | Coastal dunes       | Dunes Officer                                    | Investigate the possibilities of extending the Lytham St Anne's Dunes SSSI to include all areas of the Fylde coastal dunes and extending the Ribble Estuary SSSI to include the accreting saltmarsh at Fairhaven and Lytham.  | NVC                     |                     |                     | Investigate options |
|                              | extend LNR                         | SSSI                | Dunes Officer                                    | Investigate extending the area of the Local Nature Reserve to include the whole of Starr Hills Dunes.   | n/a                     |                     | Investigate options |                     |
|                              | Pedestrian crossing                | Clifton Drive North | Dunes Officer<br>2 liaise with Council           | Investigate options for a pedestrian crossing or footbridge to connect the Local Nature Reserve with the coastal dunes and car park.  | n/a                     | Investigate options |                     |                     |
|                              | Visitors centre                    | n/a                 | Dunes Officer<br>2 liaise with Council           | Investigate the possibility of establishing a visitor centre with a fully developed schools education programme and a programme of events for local people and visitors to the area, based upon understanding and appreciation of the coastal habitats.   | n/a                     |                     | Investigate options |                     |
|                              | Recreational Beach                 | Nr the pier         | Dunes Officer<br>2 liaise with Council           | Investigate options for the future of the public beach area at St Anne's to determine whether long-term management should be open beach (with associated continued wind-blown sand falling in the town centre but carrying out regular removal of sand accumulations to alleviate this to some degree) or whether natural development of dune habitat should be allowed and the public beach moved seaward of this. | n/a                     | Investigate options |                     |                     |
| Schools education            | Create an education pack           | n/a                 | Dunes Officer with Wildlife Trust Education team | Work with Education team to create an education pack to use for Key stage 2.  | secure funding          | Sept- Oct           |                     |                     |
|                              | target schools                     | n/a                 | Dunes Officer                                    | Target schools to offer on site/classroom dunes education   | pack creation           | During term time    | During term time    | During term-time    |
|                              | take schools out/visit classrooms  | n/a                 | Dunes Officer                                    | Use activity pack to teach children about the dunes. Wildlife and caring for it.  | pack creation           | During term time    | During term time    | During term-time    |
|                              | Target and visit secondary schools | n/a                 | Dunes Officer                                    | Work with secondary schools. Link with education team. Activities & field trips   | planning                | During term time    | During term time    | During term-time    |
| dune education and awareness | leaflets                           | n/a                 | Dunes Officer                                    | Provide interpretative material such as leaflets to explain the value of the dunes and the reasons for certain management actions. Inform visitors about what wildlife they may see on site. Link in with walk routes.  | walk routes             | April - Sept        |                     |                     |
|                              | Interp. Signs                      | n/a                 | Dunes Officer                                    | Provide interpretative material such as strategically placed notice boards to explain the value of the dunes and the reasons for certain management actions. Inform visitors about what wildlife they may see on site.  | secure funding          | April - Sept        | April - Sept        | April - Sept        |
|                              | guided walks                       | n/a                 | Dunes Officer and volunteers                     | Create a programme for guided walks. Focusing on the summer months. Advertise events through website etc.   | n/a                     | April - Sept        | April - Sept        | April - Sept        |
|                              | ecology training days              | n/a                 |  | Work with Liverpool Hope University to create and deliver dune training. Link into to other dune managers.  | n/a                     | April - Sept        | April - Sept        | April - Sept        |
|                              | Talks to local interest groups     | n/a                 | Dunes Officer and volunteers                     | Target local groups to talk about the dunes project. Wildlife and management.   | n/a                     | all year            | all year            | all year            |

|                                |  |   |                                     |  |     |                    |                    |                    |
|--------------------------------|--|---|-------------------------------------|--|-----|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Colleges and Universities      | Build up and maintain links with local colleges and universities | n/a   | Dunes Officer                       | Encourage student research projects which will enhance our understanding of the coastal habitats whenever opportunities arise, providing such work will not be damaging to these habitats or their features.   | n/a | During term time   | During term time   | During term-time   |
|                                | Create projects for students                                     | n/a   | Dunes Officer                       | Maintain good links with the Blackpool and Fylde College and establish links with other local educational institutions.  | n/a | During term time   | During term time   | During term-time   |
| Volunteers                     | Recruitment  | n/a   | Dunes Officer                       | Continuation of volunteer recruitment. Target harder to reach groups (young people etc)  | n/a | All year           | All year           | All year           |
|                                | Training and support   | n/a   | Dunes Officer                       | Inform volunteers of training opportunities. Regular contact and support.  | n/a | All year           | All year           | All year           |
| litter pick group              | Recruit volunteers   | n/a   | Dunes Officer                       | Recruitment of 'litter pickers' group.   | n/a | All year           | All year           | All year           |
|                                | Provide volunteers with resources and support needed             | foreshore   | Dunes Officer                       | Ensure rubbish bags can be collected. Ensure litter pickers and are made bags available.   | n/a | All year           | All year           | All year           |
| Liaison with other dune owners | Fylde dunes  | Nursing home, UU, Hospital, golf courses, schools | Dunes Officer                       | Liaise with other dune owners to encourage appropriate management of private dunes (including Thursby Nursing Home, United Utilities, Clifton Hospital, King Edward & Queen Mary School, the golf clubs and the private owners of St Anne's Dunes) and provide support where necessary.  | n/a | sept-dec           | ongoing            | ongoing            |
|                                | wyre dunes   | Wyre  | Dunes Officer                       | Extend dunes project up to include all Lancashire dunes. Liaison with countryside rangers regarding management and events.   | n/a | sept-dec           | ongoing            | ongoing            |
|                                | Potts Corner dunes   | Nr. Lancaster                                     | Dunes Officer                       | Extend dunes project up to include all Lancashire dunes. Liaison with countryside rangers regarding management and events.   | n/a | sept-dec           | ongoing            | ongoing            |
| Council Liaison & policies     | Fairhaven 'green'  | Fairhaven   | Dunes Officer 2 liaise with Council | Extend the dune grassland mowing regime to the areas of amenity grassland by Fairhaven Road car park, and ensure that this area is mown no more than once per year with removal of cuttings and no application of fertiliser or other chemical. If the ground is too compact in the amenity grasslands for ready colonisation by dune vegetation, undertake removal of surface vegetation or plough experimental plots to allow reversion to dune habitat.   | n/a | one mow in Aug-Nov | one mow in Aug-Nov | one mow in Aug-Nov |
|                                | Vehicles on the beach  | All   | Dunes Officer 2 liaise with Council | Ensure that vehicle routes required for beach maintenance and routine patrol are agreed: probably to involve the narrowest possible track at the base of the sea-walls at Pleasure Island, Fairhaven Lake and Lytham Dunes and the strip of compacted sand in-between the shingle and saltmarsh belts at Fairhaven. If necessary, install posts along the roadside in accessible areas of dunes to prevent vehicle access.   | n/a | ongoing            | ongoing            | ongoing            |
|                                | Enforcement  | All   | Dunes Officer 2 liaise with Council | Ensure that there is no horse-riding across the dunes other than at approved access routes to the beach. Ensure that the ban on unauthorised vehicles on the beach and dunes is enforced. Enforce legislation to ensure that dog-walkers remove all dog excrement.   | n/a | ongoing            | ongoing            | ongoing            |
|                                | Beach Policy and cleaning  | All   | Dunes Officer 2 liaise with Council | Work with Council officers to develop beach cleaning procedures and ensure that this they are adhered to. Where essential for safety purposes, large roadside accumulations of sand may be pushed back onto the dune at Clifton Drive North and Promenade North opposite Todmorden Road, but seek the advice of the Dune Project Officer or other qualified person first to minimise damage to the dune ecology.   | n/a | sept-dec           | ongoing            | ongoing            |
|                                | Development issues   | All   | Dunes Officer 2 liaise with Council | Apply existing Council policy to protect existing areas of sand dune or natural coastal habitat. Whenever opportunities allow, and agreement can be reached with owners and occupiers, remove artificial developments from the coastal dunes and allow re-establishment of the natural dune habitats. Encourage no further loss of Council control upon land to the seaward side of the coast roads so that any potential future flood defence works are not compromised by concessions to other landowners. | n/a | ongoing            | ongoing            | ongoing            |
|                                | Sand extraction  | Nr. SSSI  | Dunes Officer 2 liaise with Council | Continue negotiations to resolve issues surrounding sand extraction; in particular addressing erosion of the adjacent dunes, loss of sediment from the system, flood-risks and the affect of wind-blown sand on the highway caused by the access track, and health and safety issues on the beach.   | n/a | April-June         | April-June         | April-June         |

|  |                           |           |   |  |     |         |         |         |
|--|---------------------------|-----------|---|--|-----|---------|---------|---------|
|  | Sea Defences              | All       | Dunes Officer<br>2 liaise with<br>Council | Allow repair to existing hard defences as necessary in a manner which is least damaging to the natural coastal habitats. Maintain good communication with the engineers responsible for flood-defence and the workers on the ground to ensure best possible working practices. Promote soft, natural sea-defences as the main form of flood-defence so that, in time, at least some of the hard defences become redundant (e.g. the artificial dunes at Squire's Gate, the concrete revetment in St Anne's Dunes opposite Todmorden Road and the sea-wall below Lytham Dunes) and either will no longer need to be repaired or can be removed completely with natural dune vegetation reinstated in their place. | n/a | ongoing | ongoing | ongoing |
|  | Anti-social<br>behaviours | Fairhaven | Dunes Officer<br>2 liaise with<br>Council | Where severe social problems are occurring in blow-outs, infilling with sand from the beach may be permitted, with subsequent marram planting to bind the sand. Thatching with brush wood or Christmas trees to trap sand could also be considered but builder's rubble, quarried stone or other artificial material should not be used. In each instance, seek the advice of the Dune Project Officer or other qualified person first to minimise damage to the dune ecology.   | n/a | ongoing | ongoing | ongoing |
|  | Liaison                   | All       | Dunes Officer<br>2 liaise with<br>Council | Liaise with organisations who regularly use the beach to ensure that activities do not impinge upon the marked accretion zones for both dune and saltmarsh.  | n/a | ongoing | ongoing | ongoing |
|  | Saltmarsh<br>accretion    | All       | Dunes Officer<br>2 liaise with<br>Council | Allow accretion of saltmarsh vegetation to the south and east of St Anne's Beach, without undue disturbance. Ensure that there is no deliberate dumping of sand on the saltmarsh.  | n/a | ongoing | ongoing | ongoing |



## Work Programme - Lancashire Coastal Dunes Project

|                     |          |                       |                         |
|---------------------|----------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Key: practical task | planning | survey and monitoring | awareness and education |
|---------------------|----------|-----------------------|-------------------------|

| Project Year 1 |                | Q4             |                |                | Q1              |                 |                 | Q2              |                 |                 | Q3              |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Q3             | Q3             | Q4             | Q4             | Q4             | Q1              | Q1              | Q1              | Q2              | Q2              | Q2              | Q3              |
| Aug-09         | Sep-09         | Oct-09         | Nov-09         | Dec-09         | Jan-10          | Feb-10          | Mar-10          | Apr-10          | May-10          | Jun-10          | Jul-10          |
| Mowing         | Mowing         | Mowing         | Mowing         |                | Invasive scrub  | Invasive scrub  | Invasive scrub  |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| JapKnotweed    | Invasive scrub | Invasive scrub | Invasive scrub |                |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                | JapKnotweed    |                |                |                |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                | Brush/Plant    | Brushwood      | Brushwood      | Brushwood      |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                |                |                |                |                | Marram Plant    | Marram Plant    | Marram Plant    |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                |                | Info boards    | Info boards    |                |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                |                |                |                | Fence out      | Fence out       | Fence out       | Fence out       |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                |                |                | Bordwlk/route  | Bordwlk/route  | Bordwlk/route   | Bordwlk/route   | Bordwlk/route   | Bordwlk/route   | Bordwlk/route   | Bordwlk/route   |                 |
|                |                |                |                |                |                 | Foreshore       | Foreshore       | Foreshore       | Foreshore       | Foreshore       |                 |
|                |                |                |                |                |                 |                 |                 | NVC             | NVC             | NVC             |                 |
|                |                | GIS mapping    | GIS mapping    |                |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                |                |                |                |                | Survey wildlife | Survey wildlife | Survey wildlife | Survey wildlife | Survey wildlife | Survey wildlife | Survey wildlife |
|                |                |                |                |                |                 | Monitr n-native | Monitr n-native | Monitr n-native | Monitr n-native | Monitr n-native | Monitr n-native |
|                |                |                |                |                |                 | Monitr useage   |                 | Monitr useage   |                 | Monitr useage   |                 |
| target schools | target schools | target schools | target schools | target schools | walk/events     | walk/events     | target schools  | walk/events     | walk/events     | walk/events     | walk/events     |
|                |                |                |                |                | target schools  | target schools  |                 | target schools  | target schools  | target schools  |                 |
|                |                |                |                |                |                 |                 |                 | interpetation   | interpetation   | interpetation   | interpetation   |

| Project Year 2  |                 | Q4             |                |                | Q1             |                |                 | Q2              |                 |                 | Q3              |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Q3              | Q3              | Q4             | Q4             | Q4             | Q1             | Q1             | Q1              | Q2              | Q2              | Q2              | Q3              |
| Aug-10          | Sep-10          | Oct-10         | Nov-10         | Dec-10         | Jan-11         | Feb-11         | Mar-11          | Apr-11          | May-11          | Jun-11          | Jul-11          |
| Mowing          | Mowing          | Mowing         | Mowing         |                | Invasive scrub | Invasive scrub | Invasive scrub  |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| JapKnotweed     | Invasive scrub  | Invasive scrub | Invasive scrub |                |                |                |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                 | JapKnotweed     |                |                |                |                |                |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                 | Brush/Plant     | Brushwood      | Brushwood      | Brushwood      |                |                |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                 |                 |                |                |                | Marram Plant   | Marram Plant   | Marram Plant    |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                 |                 | Info boards    | Info boards    |                |                |                |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                 |                 |                |                | Fence out      | Fence out      | Fence out      | Fence out       |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                 |                 |                | Bordwlk/route  | Bordwlk/route  | Bordwlk/route  | Bordwlk/route  | Bordwlk/route   | Bordwlk/route   | Bordwlk/route   | Bordwlk/route   |                 |
|                 |                 |                |                |                |                |                |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                 |                 | Dune slack     | Dune slack     | Dune slack     |                |                |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| NVC             | NVC             |                |                |                |                |                |                 | LNR plan        | LNR plan        | LNR plan        | LNR plan        |
|                 |                 | GIS mapping    | GIS mapping    |                |                |                |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| Survey wildlife | Survey wildlife |                |                |                |                |                | Survey wildlife | Survey wildlife | Survey wildlife | Survey wildlife | Survey wildlife |
| Monitr n-native | Monitr n-native |                |                |                |                |                | Monitr n-native | Monitr n-native | Monitr n-native | Monitr n-native | Monitr n-native |
| Monitr useage   |                 | Monitr useage  |                | Monitr useage  |                | Monitr useage  |                 | Monitr useage   |                 | Monitr useage   |                 |
| walk/events     |                 | walk/events    |                |                |                | walk/events    |                 | walk/events     | walk/events     | walk/events     | walk/events     |
|                 |                 | target schools | target schools | target schools | target schools | target schools | target schools  | target schools  | target schools  | target schools  |                 |
| interpetation   | interpetation   |                |                |                |                |                |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |

| Project Year 3  |                 | Q4             |                |                | Q1             |                |                 | Q2              |                 |                 | Q3              |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Q3              | Q3              | Q4             | Q4             | Q4             | Q1             | Q1             | Q1              | Q2              | Q2              | Q2              | Q3              |
| Aug-11          | Sep-11          | Oct-11         | Nov-11         | Dec-11         | Jan-12         | Feb-12         | Mar-12          | Apr-12          | May-12          | Jun-12          | Jul-12          |
| Mowing          | Mowing          | Mowing         | Mowing         | Mowing         | Invasive scrub | Invasive scrub | Invasive scrub  |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                 | Invasive scrub  | Invasive scrub | Invasive scrub | Invasive scrub |                |                |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| JapKnotweed     | JapKnotweed     |                |                |                |                |                |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                 | Brush/Plant     | Brushwood      | Brushwood      | Brushwood      |                |                |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                 |                 |                |                |                | Marram Plant   | Marram Plant   | Marram Plant    |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                 |                 | Info boards    | Info boards    |                |                |                |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                 |                 |                | Bordwlk/route  | Fence out      | Fence out      | Fence out      | Fence out       |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                 |                 |                |                | Bordwlk/route  | Bordwlk/route  | Bordwlk/route  | Bordwlk/route   | Bordwlk/route   | Bordwlk/route   | Bordwlk/route   |                 |
|                 |                 | Dune slack     | Dune slack     | Dune slack     | Dune slack     | Dune slack     | Dune slack      |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| LNR plan        | LNR plan        |                |                |                |                |                |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
|                 |                 | GIS mapping    | GIS mapping    |                |                |                |                 |                 |                 |                 |                 |
| Survey wildlife | Survey wildlife |                |                |                |                |                | Survey wildlife | Survey wildlife | Survey wildlife | Survey wildlife | Survey wildlife |
| Monitr n-native | Monitr n-native |                |                |                |                |                | Monitr n-native | Monitr n-native | Monitr n-native | Monitr n-native | Monitr n-native |
| Monitr useage   |                 | Monitr useage  |                | Monitr useage  |                | Monitr useage  |                 | Monitr useage   | Monitr useage   | Monitr useage   |                 |
| walk/events     |                 | walk/events    |                |                |                | walk/events    |                 | walk/events     | walk/events     | walk/events     | walk/events     |
|                 |                 | target schools | target schools | target schools | target schools | target schools | target schools  | target schools  | target schools  | target schools  |                 |

**Policy and Service  
Review Scrutiny  
Committee**



|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Date              | Thursday 6 August 2009   |
| Venue             | Town Hall, Lytham St Annes   |
| Committee members | Karen Buckley (Chairman)<br>John Prestwich (Vice Chairman)<br>Christine Akeroyd, David Chedd, Tony Ford, Dawn Prestwich,<br>Elizabeth Oades Angela Jacques |
| Other Councillors |  |
| Officers          | Ian Curtis; Annie Womack   |
| Others            | Members of the public  |

Public Platform

There were members of the public present, and the Chairman asked if anyone would like to speak on the topic of the asset disposal and acquisition procedure.

The first speaker told the committee that he believed it was a failing of the procedure that it did not define what a “major” asset was. Also, in its present form the procedure did not make clear what method of valuation for an asset would be used. He also expressed the opinion that just because an asset was currently underused did not mean that it should be disposed of, and gave as one example the public toilets at Fairhaven Lake. He suggested that an alternative method of measuring the value of an asset could be the satisfaction of residents, and that they should be consulted.

The second speaker expressed his support of the original recommendation to seek the opinion of full council, and of the call-in. He said it would provide an opportunity for Council to express a view as to the method of disposal of an asset, and also to give them an opportunity to decide to hold assets for future investment purposes rather than to dispose of them.

1. Declarations of interest

Members were reminded that any personal/prejudicial interests should be declared as required by the Council’s Code of Conduct adopted in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000.

2. Confirmation of minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Policy and Service Review Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 11 June 2009, as a correct record for signature by the chairman.

### 3. Substitute members

Councillor David Chedd for Councillor Elaine Silverwood

Councillor Christine Akeroyd for Councillor Elizabeth Clarkson

Councillor Angela Jacques for Councillor Thomas Threlfall

Councillor Dawn Prestwich for Councillor Patricia Fieldhouse

### 4. Call-in Request - Asset Disposal and Acquisition Procedure

Ten members of the Council had invoked the recovery and call-in procedure to question the cabinet decision made on 15 July 2009 relating to the procedure for acquiring or disposing of assets; in particular that Cabinet had rejected recommendation number 3 of the Policy and Service Review Scrutiny Committee, which was that Cabinet should seek the opinion of full Council prior to taking a decision on the sale or acquisition of a major asset.

The Chairman explained to the committee about the decisions it was required to make at this meeting, and reminded them of the particular Cabinet decision which was under review.

The Chairman invited the lead signatory, Councillor Liz Oades, to explain why she felt that the decision was not in the interests of the inhabitants of the borough and ought to be reconsidered.

Councillor Oades said that the Policy and Service Review Scrutiny Committee had requested the procedure under discussion as a result of the sale of the land at Heeley Road. She further stated that the Audit committee had also developed some procedure rules which had been referred to Cabinet.

She felt strongly that the procedures governing major acquisitions and disposals should achieve transparency.

She argued that in the public's view all councillors carry the responsibility for such decisions, but in fact all councillors were not making the decisions and in her opinion this was where the current system of governance failed. Cllr Oades said the Council should be the final arbiter on major issues because they affect the whole of borough. When the Council acquires or disposes of assets, the public are entitled to the full representation and transparency that a debate in Council brings. She agreed that the word "major" should be defined.

Councillor Oades accepted that legislation no longer allowed such decisions to be made by the council, but felt that requiring them to be referred by the cabinet to seek the view of the council would be the next best option and would be worthwhile in itself.

Due to prior commitments, the Portfolio Holder was unable to attend this meeting to give

the Cabinet's view of the matter, and so the Chairman opened the debate to the committee.

The speed of decision-making was discussed, and the opinion was expressed that inviting Council to debate issues of major acquisition and disposal could help to avoid call-in of such decisions, and in effect therefore prevent delays to the process.

It was clarified that the intention was for a formal meeting of full Council to consider any disposal or acquisition, and that it should be relatively easy to programme the proposal into the existing Council meeting schedule. The committee were of the opinion that if such a proposal came to full Council for debate it would be open to the public to attend, and would ensure full transparency.

After a full debate, the committee RESOLVED:

- 1 That the decision of Cabinet should be called-in.
- 2 To refer the called-in decision for debate by Council, and for Council to make their recommendation back to Cabinet.



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