

Policy & Service Review Community Forum



Date	1 December 2005
Venue	Council Offices, Derby Road, Wesham
Committee members	Simon Renwick (Chairman) John Prestwich (Vice-Chairman) Stephen Carpenter, Peter Collins, Maxine Chew Raymond Norsworthy, Martin Taylor
Other Councillors	John Coombes, Kevin Eastham, Linda Nulty, Barbara Pagett, Fabian Wilson
Officers	Ian Curtis, David Jenkinson, Paul Norris, Tracy Scholes, Lyndsey Lacey, Oliver Shimell

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 & Service Review Community Forum meeting held on 3 November 2005 as a correct record for signature by the chairman.

3. Substitute members

The following substitution was reported under council procedure rule 22.3:

Councillor Maxine Chew for Councillor Keith Wright

4. Youth Services Best Value Review - progress update

Paul Norris (Cultural Services Business Manager) presented an updated report on the Youth Services Best Value Review.

In brief, the report detailed the findings of the review undertaken to investigate the existing level and types of services and activities provided by the Council and a wide range of organisations across the borough. It also outlined the Government's new youth agenda for Children's Services, which was being spearheaded by Lancashire County Council, entitled 'Every Child Matters'.

Mr Norris reported on the next stages of the process in particular, the proposed Terms of Reference and how the action plan could link into the Local Strategic Partnership and the proposed reporting mechanism for future progress monitoring.

A copy of the Improvement Plan together with the draft Terms of Reference was circulated with the agenda.

Members raised a number of issues that included the proposed cost to the Council; how effective the service would be; whether the right organisations had been contacted to support the process; the need to introduce more specific actions to meet targets and the role of the parents in the process. It was commented that members from all areas of the borough/police representatives should be invited to become members of the multi agency development group. In response, Mr Norris indicated that the service would be funded from money through the Government's Every Child Matters scheme and resources under the sport development work, which would be channelled in a more strategic and cohesive way. In terms of member /police involvement this would be done through the LSP process.

Following a full debate the Forum RESOLVED:

1. To note progress on the Youth Services Best Value Review and to make the additional recommendations to the LSP Executive and the Council's Executive Committee as outlined above.
2. Members were satisfied with the draft terms of reference.
3. To thank Mr Norris for his report.

5. Corporate Objectives

Oliver Shimell (Overview and Scrutiny Officer) sought the views of the Forum on the appropriateness of the current Corporate Objectives and any suggestions for strengthening them for the year ahead.

A copy of a questionnaire, which included details of the comments received, was attached to the agenda papers.

The Forum RESOLVED to make no changes to the existing Corporate Objectives.

6. Constitution Options

At the meeting on 3 November, the forum had asked the chairman and vice-chairman to discuss detailed constitutional options for a possible move to a leader and cabinet system of governance with the officers. Ian Curtis (Legal and Democratic Services Business Manager) and Tracy Scholes (Overview and Scrutiny Business Manager) presented a report on the outcome of that work for members' consideration. In general terms the elements were aimed at giving the Leader flexibility. A copy of the draft constitution, which reflected the proposed changes, was circulated with the agenda.

Mrs Scholes explained that since the publication of the agenda there had been further developments on the subject of Area Committees. Mrs. Scholes outlined that there were a number of issues, which would be required to be considered, and recommendations put to the council with respect to the implementation of area committees. Issues for consideration included the number to be introduced; geographic coverage; membership; purpose/Terms of Reference; consultation required, for example, with Town and Parish Councils; the relationship with Lancashire Locals and budgetary and resource provision.

Discussion took place on the feasibility of mirroring the number of cabinet members with any new officer structure and the Leader being without portfolio. It was also suggested that the constitution should reserve to the council the right to choose the number of Executive members. Members also commented on the need to set up a sound and solid system that the public could understand.

Members were advised that as a result of recommendations from the Scrutiny Management Board it was proposed to establish an Audit and Governance Member Panel, which would sit under the Performance Improvement Forum. It was envisaged that there would be around 4 or 5 members appointed to the panel. Its remit would be as follows:

- To approve (but not direct) internal audit's strategy, plan and performance
- To review summary internal audit reports and the main issues arising, and seek assurance that action has been taken where necessary.
- To consider reports of external audit and inspection agencies.
- To consider the effectiveness of the authority's risk management arrangements, the control environment and associated anti fraud and anti corruption arrangements. Seek assurances that action is being taken on risk related issues identified by auditors and inspectors.
- To be satisfied on the authority's assurance statements, including the Statement of Internal Control, properly reflect the risk environment and any actions required to improve it.

- To ensure that there are effective relationships between external and internal audit, inspection agencies and relevant bodies, and that the value of the audit process is actively promoted.
- To review the financial statements, external auditor's opinion and reports to members, and monitor management action in response to the issues raised by external audit.

Following a full discussion it was RESOLVED:

1. To note the report
2. To incorporate the comments made by the Forum in to the draft constitution.
3. To endorse the recommendation of the Scrutiny Management Board to set an Audit and Governance Member Panel and that an interim report be presented to this Forum at its meeting on 26 January 2006.
4. To establish a Task and Finish Group comprising the whole membership of the Policy and Service Review Forum to consider issues relating to the establishment of Area Committees.

7. Trees 4 Fylde - Borough Tree Planting Scheme

Paul Norris (Cultural Services Business Manager) and Councillor Martin Taylor presented a joint report on a proposed programme of tree planting throughout the borough.

It was explained that the principle of tree planting was divided into two distinct programmes woodland and garden schemes. An investigation into the implications and opportunities to engage in a tree planting programme both on council owned and private land had been undertaken.

Mr Norris further reported that the council had identified the need to increase the number of areas of woodland within the borough and following an investigation of the options available a schedule had been drawn up detailing potential areas for woodland. A copy of this schedule was contained in the report. Mr Norris indicated that the Asset Management Group had subsequently identified Calder Close, Kirkham as a suitable area for a woodland planting scheme. He also explained that the coppicing of trees would be undertaken at a future date. Mr Norris confirmed that the front garden scheme would include side and back gardens.

It was suggested the Development Control Committee's attention be drawn to the report and that it be asked to comment upon the Corporate Plan and its relationship to the policies which they are asked to follow. The Committee also be asked to look at doing more on the back of planning permissions.

Reference was made to the Fylde and Bloom initiative and the feasibility of working in conjunction with the team to obtain more tree, hedge and shrub planting.

Following consideration of this matter the Forum RESOLVED:

1. To recommend the proposed programme of tree planting to the Executive Committee in line with key action ENV2 in the council's Corporate Plan.
2. To recommend further investigation into the feasibility of coppicing woodland in order to a) provide a renewable energy source for council buildings and b) to develop as a key activity in countryside recreation activities.
3. To recommend the programme of a garden tree planting scheme throughout the borough to the Executive Committee.
4. To recommend that Calder Close, Kirkham as the proposed area for a woodland-planting scheme.
5. To ask the Development Control Committee to support the areas highlighted in the report.

8. Update - Public Convenience Task and Finish Group

Dave Jenkinson (Unit Business Manager for Streetscene) and Councillor Martin Taylor presented position statement (circulated at the meeting) on the recommendations reached by the Public Convenience Task and Finish Group as follows:

- *That the option to form a partnership with our neighbouring authorities to procure a service based on 7 In-Builds (strategically placed throughout the Borough) with two more facilities being cleaned with a private service provider be implemented/investigated with an anticipated increase in the revenue budget to be in the order of £55k p/a. This would mean that 5 facilities would shut.*
- *That, should recommendation 1 not be approved through the executive budget process, to reduce the service down to the 7 facilities currently disabled adapted and spend the £37.2K required making them DDA compliant. This expenditure to be raised through savings in closing the other 7 facilities*

It was reported that a visit to Blackpool on the 25/11/05 re the Danfo facilities contract confirmed that it was not possible to join onto their contract with Danfo as the original contract was a property lease based contract. However, Colleagues from Wyre were at the same meeting and it was agreed that should recommendation 1, be approved, we would go to the market in a joint procurement exercise.

Dave Jenkinson advised the committee of the implications of not supporting the proposal including the possibility of most conveniences being permanently to conform to the DDA regulations. Councillor John Coombes gave his public support to this action.

A copy of the minutes of the 23 November Task and Finish group meeting together with a cost analysis matrix was circulated at the meeting.

Following discussion the Forum RESOLVED:

- 1.To recommend approval of the Task and Finish group recommendations.
- 2.To note the activities and time scales indicated within the report against the suggested activities and make a recommendation to the TFG to report back to the Forum in line with the indications of the report
- 3.To ask the Unit Business Manager to facilitate the Forums recommendations through the budget process/cycle
4. That the Forum's thanks and appreciation be passed on to all those involved in undertaking the work.
