



Meeting Agenda

Community Focus Scrutiny Committee,

**Wednesday 19 January 2011, 4:30pm,
United Reformed Church Hall, St Georges Road,
St. Annes
&**

**Thursday 20 January 2011, 6:00pm,
Reception Room, Town Hall, St Annes**

COMMUNITY FOCUS COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

CHAIRMAN	Keith Hyde
VICE-CHAIRMAN	Roger Small

Councillors

Christine Akeroyd	Elizabeth Clarkson
Barbara Douglas	Dawn Prestwich
John Singleton	Paul Rigby
Kathleen Harper	Janine Owen
Maxine Chew	Tony Ford
Ken Hopwood	Linda Nulty
Barbara Pagett	Simon Renwick

Contact: Lyndsey Lacey, St. Annes (01253) 658504
Email: lyndseyl@fylde.gov.uk



Our Vision

Fylde Borough Council will work with partners to provide and maintain a welcoming, inclusive place with flourishing communities.

Our Corporate Objectives

- To Promote the Enhancement of the Natural & Built Environment
 - To Promote Cohesive Communities
 - To Promote a Thriving Economy
- To meet the Expectations of our Customers

The Principles we will adopt in delivering our objectives are:

- To ensure our services provide value for money
- To work in partnership and develop joint 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
1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: <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
2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES: <i>To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Community Focus Scrutiny Committee held on 2 December 2010. As attached at the end of the agenda.</i>	4
3. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS: Details of any substitute members notified in accordance with council procedure rule 26.3	4
4. BUDGET PREPARATION : At the 19 January meeting members will be given an overview of the current position by the Section 151 officer. It is then proposed to consider the detailed budget options for two Directorates at each meeting so that members of the Committee can formulate recommendations to Cabinet at the 20 January meeting. The Directorates to be considered at each meeting is as follows: <p style="margin-left: 40px;">(a) 19 January – Community Services Directorate and Governance and Partnerships Directorate.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">(b) 20 January – Customer and Operational Services Directorate and Strategic Development Services Directorate.</p>	4

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
MANAGEMENT TEAM	COMMUNITY FOCUS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	19 th & 20 TH JANUARY 2011	4

BUDGET PREPARATION

Public Item

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

Summary

The Scrutiny Committee has recently considered the Council's medium term financial forecast and has requested further information on budget savings options for 2011/12 and beyond in view of the need to identify cost reductions of £4m during the next four years.

This report presents a summary of the key areas of the Council's current expenditure by Directorate in order to allow members of the Committee to examine potential areas of cost savings from 2011 and to make recommendations to Cabinet.

Members will be asked to explore, by Directorate, statutory and non-statutory services and make any observations to Cabinet to where they feel that service reductions could be made or income generated.

An overview of the current financial forecast will be provided at the start of the meeting on the 19th. It is proposed that the savings options will be addressed on the following basis:-

Wednesday 19th - Community Services Directorate
- Governance & Partnerships Directorate
Thursday 20th - Customer & Operational Services Directorate
Strategic Development Services Directorate

The relevant Directors and service managers will be present at each meeting to assist the Committee in developing options.

Recommendation

That the Committee considers the information within and attached to the report together with that presented by staff at the meetings and makes appropriate recommendations to Cabinet on budget saving proposals for 2011 - 2015.

Reasons for recommendation

To involve a broad cross-section of elected members in developing the Council's budget preparation process from 2011 onwards.

Alternative options considered and rejected

N/A

Cabinet Portfolio

The item falls within the following Cabinet portfolio: - Finance & Resources
: Councillor Karen Buckley

Report**Background**

1. At the meeting of the Committee in December 2010 it was resolved (inter alia) to :-
 - make appropriate arrangements for an additional meeting of the committee to take place in January to consider the 2011 – 2015 budgets.
2. The meetings of the Committee scheduled for the 19th and 20th January satisfies this requirement.

Current Situation

3. The Council received the details of its financial settlement from Government on 13th December 2010. In keeping with the Government's previously stated intent in its Comprehensive Spending Review to reduce the public sector deficit, the settlement sees a substantial reduction in grant support for the Council over the next four years – a estimated reduction (based on latest forecast as at January 2011) totalling £4m.
4. Attached at Appendix A is an updated forecast indicating both the impact of the reduced settlement on the Council's spending power and the scope of savings required in order to "balance the Council's books".
5. The job of balancing the budget over the period of the forecast is made that much harder by the fact that the Council has already delivered significant savings during the last three years. Appendix B illustrates the extent of savings achieved already since 2007.
6. However, the Council is under a legal duty to agree and set a balanced budget. Savings (or additional income) will therefore need to be

implemented in order to ensure that the Council remains financially viable during the life of the forecast.

7. A public consultation exercise has been undertaken during December and January through the Council's website and through Fylde Matters and the feedback from this will be reported to Cabinet in February when it needs to develop recommendations on the 2011/12 budget (and over the medium term) in advance of the Council budget setting meeting on 2nd March.
8. The format of the consultation information has been to identify (by Service Directorate) which of the Council's services are statutory and those that the Council has some choice over whether it provides them or not. It is felt that this is also a useful format for the Committee to consider the information in and the detail of this is reproduced below.
9. The figure used for the budget consultation differs from that found within the budget book. The figure used in the budget consultation is £9.658m. The figure for the budget consultation has been derived from the list of "musts, coulds and shoulds" produced by Service Directors (musts are defined as statutory services below and coulds and shoulds are non statutory) which has excluded the direct support costs and recharges associated running these services. The presumption made is that if a service or function of the Council were to shrink an element of associated support costs would be reduced appropriately. These adjustments will be taken into account in the overall final recommended budget proposals.

Total cost of these services this year £9,658,000

All spending is being broken down into statutory and non-statutory services. Statutory spending is a legal requirement while non-statutory services are those which complement or add value to a statutory service.

It will be necessary to consider expenditure across all areas to produce a balanced and sustainable budget.

Community Services - statutory services

Environmental health—food hygiene/safety, noise pollution, neighbour nuisance, drainage defects, fly-tipping, alcohol and entertainment licensing, taxis, street-trading, emergency planning, housing maintenance and improvement of housing standards through property grants and enforcement activity, minor housing repairs, homelessness prevention and accommodation and provision of affordable housing.

Impact of reduction: reduced level of environmental/public protection in terms of proactive inspections; reduced response to complaints; reduced

enforcement of licence conditions; deterioration in housing conditions; reduced protection for people in privately rented homes.

-30%	-25%	-20%	-15%	-10%	-5%	£0.81m	+5%
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Customer/operational services - statutory services

Street cleaning, refuse and recycling services.

Impact of reduction: reduced street cleaning; fewer litter bins; more fly-tipping and graffiti; reduced sand clearance; reduction in recycling, adverse health impact.

-30%	-25%	-20%	-15%	-10%	-5%	£2.76m	+5%
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Governance/Partnerships - statutory services

Council tax collection; housing benefit administration; business rates administration; elections; electoral registration; internal and external audit; standards of conduct (officers and members); bank charges; community safety (named officer with overall responsibility).

Impact of reduction: risk of increased time to process housing benefit resulting in potential hardship; reduced income from tax collection (affecting overall service funding); elections going wrong; residents not being registered to vote; declining confidence in probity with increased opportunity for fraud against public purse.

-30%	-25%	-20%	-15%	-10%	-5%	£0.94m	+5%
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Community Services - non-statutory services

Management, maintenance and development of parks/open spaces (including beaches and dunes); work with community bodies such as "Friends" and "In Bloom" groups to regenerate park/play areas; recreational facilities including swimming pool, bowling greens and mini-golf; support to Lowther Gardens Trust; cemetery and crematorium; management of art collection.

Impact of reduction: reduced maintenance standards in parks/open spaces; less support

to community groups to develop parks and play facilities.

-30%	-25%	-20%	-15%	-10%	-5%	£1.8m	+5%
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Customer/Operational Services - non-statutory services

Website and intranet services, Town Hall attendants, dog control, directorate management team, public conveniences, customer services, computer services, human resources, waste enforcement team.

Impact of reduction: shorter opening hours for customer One Stop Shop and call centre;
longer waiting times for customer queries; possible introduction of appointment-only system for members of public; deterioration of online services.

-30%	-25%	-20%	-15%	-10%	-5%	£1.73m	+5%
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Governance/Partnerships - non-statutory services

Community grants, democratic process (decision-making by elected members), health and safety advisory service, partnership working, community safety initiatives, sports development and diversionary activities for young people, members' allowances, civic office and events such as Remembrance Sunday, corporate services including procurement, performance management and communications (internal and external).

Impact of reduction: potential for closure/reduced services of voluntary bodies such as Age Concern and Citizens' Advice Bureau; fewer diversionary activities for young people (potential increases in anti-social behaviour); reduction or removal of CCTV (potential increases in crime); reduced community engagement; non-compliance with legal requirements (risks to public and employees); increased risk of poor performance; loss/reduction in council newspaper; less support for civic events.

-30%	-25%	-20%	-15%	-10%	-5%	£1.85m	+5%
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Strategic Development - statutory services

Building control service; building control enforcement; Local Development Framework/Core Strategy; development management/control; Land Charges/local land gazetteer; management of operational assets; street nameplates, signs.

Impact of reduction: delay in planning decisions; lack of adherence to planning and building regulations; inappropriate development; lack of maintenance of operational assets/street signs.

-30%	-25%	-20%	-15%	-10%	-5%	£1.36m	+5%
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Strategic Development - non-statutory services

Tourism and events; economic development; town centre regeneration; car parking; highway/footway lighting; drain clearing, pumping station maintenance; surface water management; property management/technical services; bus shelters and seats; Fylde Low Energy Initiative; public transport support; Lytham windmill.

Impact of reduction: fewer regeneration initiatives; no tourism co-ordination and marketing; less maintenance/provision of footway lighting; higher charges on car parks.

-30%	-25%	-20%	-15%	-10%	-5%	£0.99m	+5%
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How we can generate money?

The council generates income from a number of different statutory and non-statutory sources. These can be increased, for example increasing parking charges or decreased for example providing some services at no charge to the public or businesses. **Which of the following areas would you increase or decrease?**

Community Services - non-statutory services

Burial and cremation fees; bowling fees; mini-golf fees; football pitch hire; tennis court hire; motorboat hire (Fairhaven Lake).

-5%	-2.5%	£0.57m	+2.5%	+5%
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Governance/Partnerships - non-statutory services

Corporate sponsorship, sports development - play workers.

-5%	-2.5%	£0.002m	+2.5%	+5%
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Strategic Development - statutory services

Land charges, development control, building control, concessionary travel.

-5%	-2.5%	£0.58m	+2.5%	+5%
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Customer/Operational Services - non-statutory

Commercial Waste Service, bulky waste collections.

-5%	-2.5%	£0.9m	+2.5%	+5%
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Strategic Development - non-statutory services

Building control - other; leases and concessions; planning development; car parks.

-5%	-2.5%	£0.53m	+2.5%	+5%
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10. In addition to this public consultation the Cabinet has held two workshops with the Council's management team in the recent months and has considered a number of options for budget reduction and income generation. The Cabinet will not refine their precise budget proposals until early February after they have received feedback both from the public consultation and from this Scrutiny Committee.
11. However, there are some major factors currently being debated in other forums of the Council which will clearly need to be taken account of as the budget and medium term financial forecast are being prepared for 2011/12. These include the transfer of open space assets to town councils, the terms and conditions of staff employed by the

Council and the funds which might be raised through the new homes bonus.

12. It is proposed that the two meetings of the Committee are conducted on an interactive basis with relevant directors and service managers being present at each of the meetings to help identify the risks, opportunities and other implications of any proposals for budget savings that the Committee may wish to explore.
13. Staff of the Community Services Directorate and the Governance & Partnerships Directorate will be present for the meeting on the 19th. Staff of the Customer & Operational Services Directorate and the Strategic Development Services Directorate will be present at the meeting on the 20th.
14. Members will be asked to explore, by Directorate, statutory and non-statutory services and make any observations to Cabinet to where they feel that service efficiencies could be made or further income generated.

Report Author	Tel	Date	Doc ID
Phillip Woodward/Tracy Scholes	(01253) 658521	6 January 2011	

List of Background Papers		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
None		

Attached documents

1. Appendix A - Summary financial forecast
2. Appendix B - Summary of budget trends 2007 - 2010

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	The financial implications are set out in the Forecast Report to Cabinet (19 January 2011)
Legal	None arising directly from the report.
Community Safety	None arising directly from the report.
Human Rights and Equalities	None arising directly from the report.
Sustainability and Environmental	None arising directly from the report.

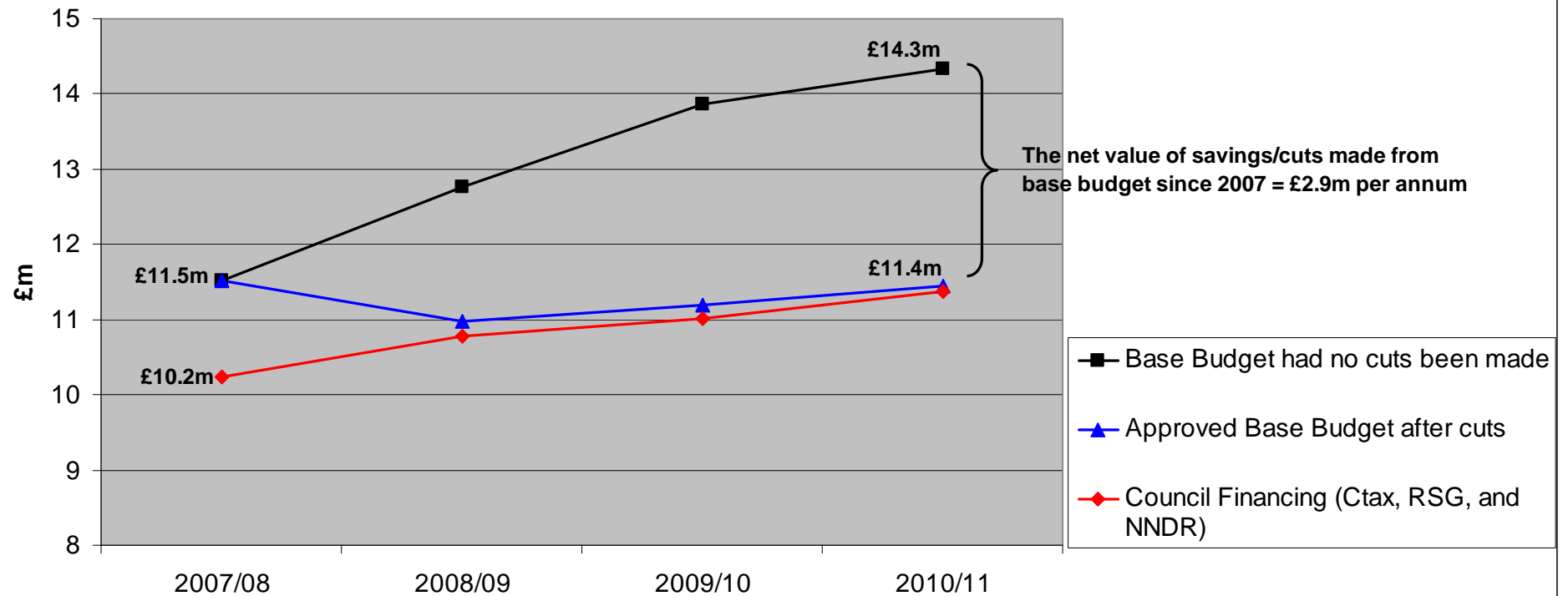
Impact	
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None arising directly from the report.

Latest General Fund Budget Forecast Position 2010/11 to 2014/15

	2010/11 £000	2011/12 £000	2012/13 £000	2013/14 £000	2014/15 £000	Adv (A)/ Fav (F)
Forecast Approved at Council 22nd November 2010	11,807	12,765	12,774	12,624	12,639	
Unavoidable changes - per Appendix B	- 864	- 1,441	- 1,352	- 1,318	- 1,303	(F)
Forecast Budget Requirement	10,943	11,324	11,422	11,306	11,336	
Financed by:						
Government Grant - NNDR	5,116	3,308	} 3,760	} 3,478	} 3,217	
Government Grant - RSG	743	1,021				
Sub Total - Government Grant	5,859	4,329	3,760	3,478	3,217	
Council Tax (incl annual Tax Base Increases & Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit)	5,507	5,638	5,803	5,993	6,188	
Indicative Council Tax Freeze grant		139	139	139	139	
Forecast Financing	11,366	10,106	9,702	9,610	9,544	
Call on Reserves	- 423	1,218	1,720	1,696	1,792	
General Fund Reserves						
Balance of General Fund Reserves b/f	1,500	1,923	705	- 495	- 2,191	
In Year Use of Ringfenced & Other Earmarked Reserves:						
- CSR reserve released to maintain minimum balances			520			
Less transfer to/from(-) reserves in year	423	- 1,218	- 1,720	- 1,696	- 1,792	
Forecast Reserves at Year End	1,923	705	- 495	- 2,191	- 3,983	
		ALERT	ALERT	ALERT	ALERT	
Band D Council Tax (Excl Parish Precepts)	£186.29	£186.29	£190.95	£195.72	£200.61	
Council Tax Increase	4.99%	0.00%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%	

<u>Savings to be achieved:</u>	2010/11 £000	2011/12 £000	2012/13 £000	2013/14 £000	2014/15 £000
Savings to be made to achieve minimum level of balances	0	45	1,200	1,696	1,792
Re-stated forecast reserves including savings to be made	1,923	750	750	750	750

The Journey So Far - Approved Budget Compared to Budget if no Cuts / Savings had been achieved



Community Focus Scrutiny Committee



Date	Thursday, 2 December 2010
Venue	Town Hall, St Annes
Committee members	Councillor Keith Hyde (Chairman) Councillor Roger Small (Vice-Chairman) Councillors Christine Akeroyd, Maxine Chew, Barbara Douglas, Tony Ford, Kathleen Harper, Ken Hopwood, Janine Owen, Dawn Prestwich, John Singleton, Paul Rigby
Officers	Phillip Woodward, Bernard Hayes, Allan Oldfield, Clare Platt, Tracy Scholes, Darren Bell, Lyndsey Lacey, Darius Ward

1. Declarations of interest

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

2. Confirmation of minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Community Focus Scrutiny Committee held on 14 October 2010 as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

3. Substitute members

There were no substitutions

4. Performance Exception Report

Darius Ward (Corporate Performance and Efficiency Officer) presented the Performance Exception Report. The report examined areas of under and over performance for the Authority based on the National Indicator set and local (service based) indicators. For each item identified an overview of the position was detailed in the report.

Particular consideration was given at the meeting to areas of under performance including: (NI181) time taken to process new changes and change of events, (FLI015) Percentage of Overdue Freedom of Information Requests, (FLI016) average number of days to respond to all Freedom of Information requests, (XNI14) avoidable contact made by customers, (SPPP002) percentage of high risk food hygiene inspections completed together with a new indicator (SPPP001) relating to the satisfaction of non-business users with service.

In terms of areas of good performance, Mr Ward highlighted the following areas: (SPL001) Green Flag Awards, (SPL002) Community Groups Supported, (SPL003) In Bloom, (FLI028) number of complaints received, (FLI029) % of complaints dealt with in 5 working days and (FLI013) the number of unique web hits on the council's website

An update was also given by Mr Ward on (NI187) relating to tackling fuel poverty, ((NI157a) processing of 'major' applications within 13 weeks, and (NI157c) processing of 'minor applications

Councillor Tony Ford asked about the implications associated with (SPPP002) high risk food hygiene inspections. In response, Ms Platt made reference to the recent reduction in permanent staff. She stated that the shortfall essentially related to category C premises but that the team would continue to respond to complaints and notifications of food poisoning. Essentially, the increased workload within the section related to investigation of food poisoning outbreaks/ formal prosecutions and the reductions in staffing had given rise to the backlog. Members were advised that measures to address the shortfall were currently being implemented.

Councillors Christine Akeroyd and Paul Rigby sought further clarification on the time taken to process housing benefits/council tax benefit claims (NI181). In response, Tracy Scholes made reference to the recent report presented to committee by Marie McRoberts (Assistant Director: Revenues and Benefits) She reiterated that the System Replacement project had placed various challenges on the team. The transfer of systems had inevitable impacts on processing times which in turn affected the recovery of former performance levels. She explained that in addition to the normal workloads, every member of staff required training and that this was further compounded by the time required to undertake data cleansing and reconciliation work. Members were reminded that Marie McRoberts had previously advised that it was the intention to bring processing times back to target as quickly as possible aiming for 31 March 2011.

Councillor Janine Owen expressed her disappointment that the local performance indicator (FYS17) relating to the percentage of employees trained in customer care had not been included within the data presented as previously requested by committee. As assurance was given that this would be included in future reports.

In addition to the above, members sought further clarification on XN114, FLI028, and FLI29. These were addressed by the relevant directors.

Following detailed consideration the Committee RESOLVED:

1. To request that an updated report on N1181 (time taken to process housing benefits/council tax benefit claims) be presented to a future meeting of the committee.
2. To make appropriate arrangements to include the relevant targets relating to customer care in future Performance Exception reports.

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

5. General Fund Budget Monitoring Report 2010/11- Position as at Quarter ended 30 September 2010

By way of introduction, Bernard Hayes (Deputy Section 151 Officer) stated that the Council continued to operate within an environment where tight financial control is essential.

Mr Hayes added stated that this report was for the second quarter and whilst it was not possible to draw any firm conclusions, it did begin to flag up potential problems. However, it was the 3rd quarter report which was the better indicator of the year end financial position.

Mr Hayes provided the committee with an update on the General Fund Revenue budget as at 30 September 2010. In brief, the report provided details of the actions being taken to address the 'hot spots' variances in excess of 10K against the profiled budget. In particular, the report highlighted budget areas of concern that impinged on the Council's general income and areas that required further attention relating to costs for the first quarter.

Mr Hayes further reported that since the publication of the agenda, further information had been received on the concessionary travel front whereby the operators (with the expectation of 1) had agreed to the Lancashire leaders' offer of 59.5%. He added that the latest figure from Lancashire County Council was still awaited.

Councillor Hopwood read out (in part) a letter he had received from Blackpool Transport relating to the reduction of bus routes.

Following consideration of this matter it was RESOLVED to note the current position as outlined in the report.

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

6. Financial Forecast Update (Including Revenue, Capital & Treasury Management) 2010/11 to 2014/15

In accordance the Scrutiny Management Board's request for scrutiny involvement in the budget preparation process, Bernard Hayes (Deputy 151 Officer) presented a comprehensive updated report on the financial forecast for the five years 2010/11 to 2014/15. This included changes arising since the Budget was set by Council in March 2010.

Scrutiny members were requested to consider the report and invited to make any comments or recommendations on the overall budgetary position for consideration by Cabinet.

The report provided an update on the latest financial forecast. It included details on the purpose and background to the financial forecast and key areas of financial risk in relation to the General Fund, Capital and Treasury Management. It also included detailed information on the following areas:

- Forecast approved at Council on 1 March 2010
- Schedule of unavoidable changes to the forecast
- A narrative on general and specific assumptions
- The latest five year forecast position
- Contract performance information (in relation to the Waste Management Contract)
- Comprehensive Spending Review - Summary Position

Mr Hayes stated that the key to the forecast was centred on the Government's grant settlement. In his report Mr Hayes highlighted key areas of financial risk to the general fund revenue budget forecast, the capital programme and for treasury management. In addition, he made particular reference to appropriate adjustments that had been made to the forecast with particular reference to Concessionary Fares exemplifications; Pension Review, Pay inflation, Waste Management Contract and the Government formula grant support.

Councillor Tony Ford enquired about the amount of balances in the Parks and Opens spaces reserves and whether or not this could be utilised to fund the remaining works at Ashton Gardens. Mr Hayes said this was possible but alternative savings would need to be identified. Further to this, Ms Platt provided an update on the Play Builder grant which would be subject to a Cabinet report in December. She added that this would go some way address the concerns raised by Councillor Ford.

Councillor Janine Owen commented on the proposed sale of Clifton (Lytham) Housing Ltd and the proposed new homes bonus scheme and whether this could act as a buffer in the short term. Mr Hayes stated that Clifton (Lytham) would be a capital receipt available to finance the Capital programme and

could not therefore be directly utilised to fund the revenue budget. In respect of the new homes bonus, given that this is still a proposal at present it needed to be omitted from the forecast until the detail was released.

Following detailed consideration of this matter the Committee RESOLVED to note the position.

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

7. Additional meeting of the Community Focus Committee

At the conclusion of the meeting and in relation to the previous item, the Chairman made reference to the possibility of the committee engaging more closely with the budget preparation process and in this regard sought members' views on the matter. It was suggested it would be appropriate to consider an additional meeting of the committee during January to consider such matters.

Following discussion it was RESOLVED to support this proposal and make appropriate arrangements for an additional meeting of the committee to take place in January to consider the 2011 - 2015 budgets.

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