

Policy & Service Review Community Forum



Date	8 July 2005
Venue	Council Offices, Derby Road, Wesham
Committee members	Simon Renwick (Chairman) John Prestwich (Vice-Chairman) Stephen Carpenter, Peter Collins, Raymond Norsworthy, Martin Taylor
Other Councillors	-
Officers	Allan Oldfield, Paul Walker, Mark Evans, Oliver Shimell, Carolyn Whewell, Peter Welsh

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 meetings held on 9 June 2005 as correct records for signature by the chairman.

3. Substitute members

There were no substitute members.

4. Customer Contact Centre - Lytham

Paul Walker (Economic Wellbeing & Regeneration Manager) presented his report (copies of which were included with the agenda papers) which in brief reminded members of the Council's proposals for modernising its accommodation and as part of which involved the development of 3 Customer Contact Centres (CCC). Two had been developed (St Annes and Kirkham) but funding for the third (Lytham) had not yet been identified.

The report presented points of discussion, which sought to inform Members of the current situation so as to prompt consideration of and recommendations for a future course of action in relation to the CCC proposed for Lytham.

Following the presentation by Mr Walker members raised several issues concerning the provision of a Customer Contact Centre in Lytham which included the need for the facility; the likely staffing requirements; potential location and estimated costs. Members also

questioned the need for an additional CCC and that the long term solution be by way of communicating electronically.

Mr Walker informed members that a full evaluation of the effectiveness of the new Customer Contact Centres was currently being undertaken and that an evaluation report would be presented to the Executive Committee.

Following a full debate the Forum RESOLVED-

1. In view of the current evaluation of the Customer Contact Centres the Executive Committee be asked to re-confirm the vision of a Customer Contact Centre at Lytham.
2. That an additional question be included on the Community Listening day questionnaire (for use at Lytham and Ansdell) on the provision of a Customer Contact Centre in Lytham.
3. That Mr Walker be thanked for his report and attendance.

5. The Home Working Policy

Allan Oldfield (Policy & Change Manager) presented to the committee the Home Working Policy developed in response to the IEG (Implementing Electronic Government) national priority outcomes that must be achieved by March 2006. (A copy of the policy was included with the agenda papers).

The Home Working Policy had been based on national practice developed through pilot authorities in the national projects. The Human Resource team and senior managers had been engaged in developing the policy. The IT and the Human Resource team would be responsible for developing the detailed procedures to support the delivery of the policy. Mr Oldfield also informed members that the following needed to be included in the policy.

'Employees undertaking Home Working will be required to adhere to all other corporate policies in respect of the work place.'

Following Mr Oldfield's presentation members raised a number of issues that included the anticipated take-up of staff working from home; the need for the policy as informal arrangements already in place; how the policy would be monitored; cost implications and the effects the scheme might have on the council's corporate approach.

Following consideration the Forum RESOLVED-

1. That the Home Working Policy, (as amended) be recommended for approval by the Executive Committee.
2. That 6 months after the implementation of the policy a further report be submitted to the Forum.
3. That Mr Oldfield be thanked for his report and attending.

6. Introduction and operation of high hedges legislation under Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003

Mark Evans (Development Control Manager) presented a report on recently introduced legislation which allows councils to deal with complaints regarding high hedges, provided the complainant had exhausted all other avenues (short of civil proceedings) to resolve their dispute. The legislation allowed local authorities to charge for this service, but stopped short of prescribing an appropriate fee.

This report sought to establish a fee of £450, in common with neighbouring authorities, which would be reviewed after 12 months of operation of the system.

The report also sought authority to determine any high hedge applications under the approved scheme of delegation.

Following Mr Evan's presentation, Members sought clarification on various aspects of the new legislation and examined a number of scenarios the legislation may trigger.

Members were concerned that there were no concessions for persons on low incomes but agreed that this could be re-visited at a later date.

After full consideration the Forum RESOLVED-

1. That the standard fee for handling a high hedges complaint be set at £450 for the current financial year;
2. That there be no concessionary fees for persons on low incomes
3. That the fee levels be reviewed after 12 months of operation when more information is available on the actual costs incurred and the demands made on the service.
4. To recommend to the Full Council that applications be determined by the Manager of the Built Environment Unit under delegated powers.
5. That Mr Evans be thanked for his presentation.