

Agenda



FINANCE AND DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE

Date:	Monday, 20 March 2017 at 6:30 pm
Venue:	Town Hall, St Annes, FY8 1LW
Committee members:	<p>Councillor Karen Buckley (Chairman) Councillor Roger Small (Vice-Chairman)</p> <p>Councillors David Donaldson, Tony Ford JP, Angela Jacques, Kiran Mulholland, Linda Nulty, Liz Oades, Richard Redcliffe, Vince Settle, Elaine Silverwood, Richard Taylor.</p>

Public Platform

To hear representations from members of the public in accordance with council procedure rule 11.
To register to speak under Public Platform: see [Public Speaking at Council Meetings](#).

	PROCEDURAL ITEMS:	PAGE
1	Declarations of Interest: Declarations of interest, and the responsibility for declaring the same, are matters for elected members. Members are able to obtain advice, in writing, in advance of meetings. This should only be sought via the Council's Monitoring Officer. However, it should be noted that no advice on interests sought less than one working day prior to any meeting will be provided.	1
2	Confirmation of Minutes: To confirm the minutes, as previously circulated, of the meeting held on 20 February 2017 as a correct record.	1
3	Substitute Members: Details of any substitute members notified in accordance with council procedure rule 24(c).	1
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Contact: Katharine McDonnell - Telephone: (01253) 658423 – Email: democracy@fylde.gov.uk

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<http://fylde.cmis.uk.com/fylde/DocumentsandInformation/PublicDocumentsandInformation.aspx>

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DECISION ITEM



REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	FINANCE AND DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE	20 MARCH 2017	4
COUNCIL TAX AND BUSINESS RATES DISCRETIONARY DISCOUNT POLICY - 2017/18 UPDATE			

PUBLIC ITEM

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

SUMMARY

In respect of both Council Tax and Business Rates, national schemes of discounts and exemptions have been in place since the introduction of those arrangements for local taxation. Fylde BC, in line with all local authorities, implemented the schemes of discounts and exemptions as directed by central government.

It is necessary, from time-to-time, to update the Council's policy of Discretionary Discounts to incorporate new reliefs, or amendments to schemes of existing reliefs, or to provide clarification where such would be helpful.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve and adopt the Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount Policy (2017/18 update).

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Finance and Democracy Committee 21st March 2016 – resolved to 'Approve and adopt the Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount Policy (2016/17 update).'

Council 5th December 2016 – as part of the approval of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18 the Council resolved 'To approve the continuation of Discretionary Hardship Relief for 2017/18 to provide additional support for claimants in exceptional circumstances'.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES	
Spending your money in the most efficient way to achieve excellent services (Value for Money)	√
Delivering the services that customers expect of an excellent council (Clean and Green)	
Working with all partners (Vibrant Economy)	
To make sure Fylde continues to be one of the most desirable places to live (A Great Place to Live)	
Promoting Fylde as a great destination to visit (A Great Place to Visit)	

BACKGROUND

1. In respect of both Council Tax and Business Rates national schemes of discounts and exemptions have been in place since the introduction of those arrangements for local taxation. Fylde BC, in line with all local authorities, implemented the schemes of discounts and exemptions as directed by central government. Information of the available discounts and exemptions has always been made available to potential claimants and beneficiaries of such and for a number of years this information has also been promoted through the Council's website.
2. With the introduction of the local CTRS in April 2013 it became necessary for the Council to consider the provision of discretionary hardship relief to provide support for claimants in exceptional circumstances, and who are unable to increase their income from other means. Such provision is a key element of the operation of the scheme.
3. Section 76 of the Local Government Act 2003 (as amended by section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 2012) empowers a billing authority to reduce the amount of tax payable as it thinks fit. Funding for such reductions must be provided by the Council and major preceptors as necessary.
4. In order to mitigate part of the impact of the CTRS on the most vulnerable households, the Council at that time approved the award of discretionary Hardship Relief under the above powers. Strict criteria are used to determine if any additional relief is appropriate and the level of any such award. Awards are made to those unable to increase their income and then only in exceptional circumstances.
5. With regard to Non-domestic (i.e. business) rates the Council is required to apply the national (mandatory) schemes of relief, as determined by central government. The Council may also award additional (discretionary) business rate relief. This may be in relation to charitable organisations (following the application of 80% mandatory relief) or in respect of other organisations in exceptional circumstances.

CHANGES REFLECTED IN THE PROPOSED UPDATE OF THE POLICY

6. From time-to-time it is necessary to revise the Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount Policy in order to reflect changes in reliefs that were introduced by central government, and any changes in the application of the policy due to changes in local circumstances or to provide clarification.
7. The proposal is to update the Discretionary Discount Policy for 2017/18 to reflect the discontinuation of the following reliefs and references to the 2017 Rating List:
 - Retail Relief
 - Re-occupation Relief
 - New Build Relief
8. It is worth noting that for the years 2014/15 and 2015/16 qualifying retail properties with a rateable value of under £50,000 could request specific Retail Relief of up to £1,500 in 2015/16 (and up to £1,000 in 2014/15). Although Retail Relief was not extended beyond 2015/16, the new Small Business Rate Relief scheme is likely to provide lower bills for many of these ratepayers for 2017/18.
9. The revised policy will contain up-to-date information on available reliefs and discounts and it will be consistent with both the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18 and the Council Tax Discounts and Premium for 2017/18, each of which were the subject of reports to Council in December 2016.

10. The Discretionary Discount Policy for 2017/18, as it would appear if the proposal is accepted, is attached at Appendix A.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.
Legal	Section 76 of the Local Government Act 2003 (as amended by section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 2012) empowers a billing authority to reduce the amount of tax payable as it thinks fit.
Community Safety	None
Human Rights and Equalities	None
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None

LEAD AUTHOR	TEL	DATE	DOC ID
Paul O'Donoghue Chief Financial Officer	01253 658566	March 2017	

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017/18	5th December 2016	www.fylde.gov.uk

Attached documents

Appendix A - Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount Policy

Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount Policy



Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount Policy



Fylde
Council

Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount Policy

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Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount Policy

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Record of Amendments:

Date	Version	Amended by	Description of changes
10/03/2014	1.1	Graeme Ruse	Business Rates Reliefs added - Retail Relief pages 19 to 22, New Build Relief page 23 to 24, Temporary Reoccupation Relief page 25 to 26.
01/10/2014	1.2	Andrew Turpin	Rural Rate Relief pages 27 to 28
19/12/2014	1.3	Andrew Turpin	Retail Relief page 19
02/11/2015	1.4	Graeme Ruse	Temporary Part Occupation Rlf.
21/10/2016	1.5	Graeme Ruse	Removal of new build and re-occupation relief

Approved By:

Name	Title	Signature	Date
	Head of Revenues and Exchequer Services		26 th October 2016

Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount Policy

1. Introduction

Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) and sections 47, 48 and 49 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended) empowers a billing authority to reduce the amount of tax payable.

Fylde Borough Council has adopted a local Council Tax Reduction Scheme, to take effect from 1st April 2013, which replaces Council Tax Benefit. However it is likely that other circumstances will arise where the Council could consider a further discretionary reduction in respect of Council Tax and Business Rates in exceptional circumstances.

Funding for such reductions must be provided by the Council. This policy sets out how the Council will use these powers and the criteria that must be satisfied.

The Council is committed to ensuring that the local taxpayers are aware of the policy as set out in this document.

Aims of the Discretionary Discount Policy

- Provide a mechanism for the Council to support members of the community to enable them to meet the financial burden of local taxation
- Helping residents in receipt of Council Tax Reduction who are unable to increase their income
- Alleviating poverty
- Helping those who are trying to help themselves
- Supporting people who are starting work
- Supporting the most vulnerable in the local community
- Helping customers through difficult personal events
- Assisting customers in accordance with the Council's Child Poverty Strategy

Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount

2. Policy Objectives and Action Plan

Objective 1: To ensure that assistance is available and accessible to members of the community most in need

- Issue regular bulletins to staff reminding them of the policy and qualifying criteria
- Regular refresher training for assessment staff to promote proactive identification of potential cases
- Provide effective overview training to non-benefits staff on the policy and qualifying criteria to promote take-up and awareness in appropriate circumstances.
- Promote access to the scheme through:
 - Leaflets and posters in areas accessed by customers.
 - Continued development of the Fylde Borough Council website to ensure that up to date information is provided and that relevant forms and information can be downloaded.
- Ensure third sector advice agencies are aware of the policy and qualifying criteria.
- Promoting awareness to Members
- Identifying target client groups who will be unlikely to be able increase their income. This may include:
 - Council Tax Reduction recipients in receipt of Employment Support Allowance (Support Component) and Long Term Incapacity Benefit
 - Council Tax Reduction recipients, in receipt of Carer's Premium, who are full time carer's
 - Council Tax Reduction recipients with disabled children
 - Council Tax Reduction recipients with children under 5
 - Council Tax Reduction recipients who are starting employment
 - Council Tax Reduction recipients who do not have English as a first language
 - Council Tax Reduction recipients with learning difficulties

Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount

- Identify target groups from records held by other Council Services:
 - Social and Private Sector Housing Tenants with significant arrears who may qualify for a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP).
 - Council Tax payers who have been issued with a summons.
 - Customers who are eligible for but have not claimed a disabled parking badge.
 - People requiring assistance following an emergency
- Providing a facility to visit customers to assist them in making an application and provide supporting documents.
- Working closely with existing and new service partners and stakeholders to promote awareness of the policy.

Objective 2: To ensure discretionary discounts are only considered when no other means of assistance is available.

- Ensure assessments of applications for local Council Tax Reduction incorporate a benefits maximization check.
- Ensure the applicant does not have income or capital which should be used to meet the liability.
- Signpost customers who do not meet the criteria to appropriate alternative advice services
- Conduct a regular review of the policy and outcomes of applications in order to review qualifying criteria and improve targeting procedures and processes.
- Provide guidance for decision makers (Senior Benefits Assistant, Senior Benefits Specialist or Team Manager) which is regularly reviewed and updated.
- Implement a quality monitoring regime to ensure decisions are independent, fair and consistent.
- Ensure publicity is available to encourage customers to claim other benefits they are entitled to and where to access debt advice and money management tools.

Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount

- Ensure other sums owed to the Council (e.g. sundry debts, Housing Benefit overpayments) are reviewed and reduced repayments agreed where appropriate.
- Ensure a Discretionary Housing Payment for Housing Benefit is awarded if appropriate
- Ensure recovery action is delayed where appropriate
- Awards will be tailored to match need. The period and amount of an award will be determined based upon the circumstances in each case.
- Awards will only be made for a period relating to the financial year in which the application is made.
- Awards may be reviewed at any time and may be revised, reduced or withdrawn if it is found that the circumstances of the applicant have changed and the award is no longer appropriate.

Objective 3: To monitor and evaluate the administration of the policy to ensure that the service reflects the needs of the community

- Monitoring of fund spending:
 - Monthly reporting of expenditure to be provided to Divisional Management Team meetings.
 - Quarterly reporting to the Chief Financial Officer.
 - Analysis of applications received and outcomes in order to review policy, methodology and improve targeting.
- Conduct a regular review of income and expenditure forms, policy, criteria and guidance for decision makers.
- Review the outcome of requests for reconsideration to improve guidance and methodology.

Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount

- Conduct an annual review and analysis of applications received to identify and learn from:
 - Reasons for the award
 - Reasons for the refusal of an award
 - Origin of the application
- Invite and action feedback on processes and procedures from partners and stakeholders.

Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount

3. Discretionary Discount - Customers in receipt of local Council Tax Reduction (Hardship Fund)

Fylde Borough Council adopted a local Council Tax Reduction Scheme which is effective from 1st April 2013. During the development of the scheme the Councils' Equality Analysis identified that certain groups affected by the reduction in support would be unlikely to be able to increase their income. The Discretionary Discount Policy will prioritise these customers.

For an award of this type of discretionary discount to be considered, the applicant must be:

- In receipt of Council Tax Reduction; and
- Have a shortfall between the level of Council Tax Reduction and their council tax liability; and
- In the opinion of the Council, be in need of further assistance with Council Tax in accordance with the qualifying criteria.

Requests for further reductions in Council Tax liability will be required in writing from the customer, their advocate / appointee or a recognised third party acting on their behalf.

Each case will be considered on 'its merits' however all of the following criteria should be met:

- There must be evidence of hardship or personal circumstance that justifies a further reduction in Council Tax liability.
- The Council must be satisfied that the customer has taken reasonable steps to resolve their situation prior to application.
- The customer does not have access to other assets that could be realised and used to pay the Council Tax.
- All other eligible discounts/reliefs have been awarded to the customer.

Responsible officer

The responsibility for making discretionary discount decisions will rest with the Chief Financial Officer, who will discharge this responsibility by the following process:

Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount

Decision making process

Stage 1: The initial request will be dealt with by a decision maker (Senior Benefits Assistant, Senior Benefit Specialist or Team Manager) who will consider the application against the criteria set out in this policy, based upon the information provided by the applicant and known to the Council.

Stage 2: A Senior Benefits Manager will authorise the decision.

Notification of decision

The Council will notify the applicant of its decision within 28 days of receiving sufficient information to make a decision.

Review of decision/re-determination requests

The Council will accept an applicant's written request for a redetermination of its decision. The process will be as follows:

Stage 1: The original decision and any additional information provided will be reviewed by a different decision maker who will recommend either to confirm or amend the original decision.

Stage 2: The Head of Benefits and Customer Services, or Head of Revenues and Exchequer Services, will consider the application for review and the recommendation and determine whether to award a discretionary discount.

Notification of review/re-determination decision

The Council will notify an applicant of its decision within 28 days of receiving a request for a re-determination.

A discretionary reduction made under section 13A (1)(a) or (c) of the Local Government Finance Act (LGFA) 1992 can be the subject of an appeal to the Valuation Tribunal under section 16 of the LGFA 1992.

Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount

4. Discretionary Discounts – Customers not in receipt of local Council Tax Reduction

Requests for reductions in Council tax liability will be required in writing from the customer, their advocate / appointee or a recognised third party acting on their behalf

Each case will be considered on 'its merits' however all of the following criteria should be met:

- There must be evidence of hardship or personal circumstance that justifies a reduction in Council Tax Liability.
- The Council must be satisfied that the customer has taken reasonable steps to resolve their situation prior to application.
- The customer does not have access to other assets that could be realised and used to pay the Council Tax.
- The customer is not entitled to an award under the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme.
- All other eligible discounts/reliefs have been awarded to the customer.

Responsible officer

The responsibility for making discretionary decisions will rest with the Chief Financial Officer, who will discharge this responsibility by the following process:

The Senior Revenues Team Manager will liaise with the applicant in each case to request sufficient information in order that a decision can be made

Decision making process

Stage 1: The initial request will be dealt with by a decision maker (Senior Revenues Team Manager) who will consider the application against the criteria set out in this policy, based upon the information provided by the applicant and known to the Council. The decision maker (Senior Revenues Team Manager) will liaise with the applicant in each case to request sufficient information in order that a decision can be made.

Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount

Stage 2: A Senior Revenues Manager will authorise the decision.

Notification of decision

The Council will notify the applicant of its decision within 28 days of receiving sufficient information to make a decision.

Review of decision/re-determination requests

Council will accept an applicant's written request for a redetermination of its decision.

Stage 1: The original decision and any additional information provided will be reviewed by a different decision maker who will recommend either to confirm or amend the original decision.

Stage 2: The Head of Revenues and Exchequer Services, or Head of Benefits and Customer Services, will consider the application for review and the recommendation and determine whether to award a discretionary discount.

Notification of review/re-determination decision

The Council will notify an applicant of its decision within 28 days of receiving a request for a re-determination.

A discretionary reduction made under section 13A(1)(a) or (c) of the Local Government Finance Act (LGFA)1992 can be the subject of an appeal to the Valuation Tribunal under section 16 of the LGFA 1992.

Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount

5. Discretionary Discounts – Rate Relief Policy relating to Organisations established for Charitable, Sporting and Community Purposes.

Each case will be considered on its merits however all of the following criteria should be met:

- Requests for reductions in Business Rates will be required in writing from the ratepayer or a recognised third party acting on their behalf.
- It must be in the interest of Council Tax payers for the local authority to grant a reduction.
- All other eligible discounts/reliefs have been awarded to the ratepayer.

In addition to the above, the Council has determined the following guidelines for the granting of discretionary rate relief.

- a) The organisation is small in stature in that it occupies a hereditament with a Rateable Value of less than £13,000 in the National Non-Domestic Rating List effective from 1 April 2017.

(The premise is that larger organizations are generally well established and can, to a certain extent, exist without any external aid at all).

And

- b) The organisation is not part of a charging or precepting authority.

And

- c) The organisation has been specifically set up for the benefit of the young, the aged, the disabled or for ethnic minorities.

Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount

Sports organisations that allow or promote junior or senior citizen membership would not necessarily fall under the jurisdiction of this rule. The organisation must have been created or is in being for the sole or main purpose of aiding any one of these sections of the community.

Or

- d) The property is for the general use of the local community without any membership and/or subscription requirements and has no specific use except for the general benefit of the community

Or

- e) The property is used for the housing of vehicles used only for offshore emergency purposes

Or

- f) The aims of the organisation are to educate volunteers in emergency training for the benefit of the local community.

Discretionary Relief of the remaining balance (taking into account 80% mandatory relief granted to all charitable bodies) may be granted to any non-profit making organisations that meet the above criteria.

The above is intended only as a guide when considering applications for discretionary rate relief. All applications will be considered on their merits and it might be found that it is only right and proper to approve applications which do not conform exactly to the above.

Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount

- g) The Council will continue with its current policy regarding granting discretionary rate relief, each application be considered on its merits and favourable consideration be given to applications from qualifying organisations in instances when the non-granting of relief could seriously jeopardize the financial viability of the organisation.
- h) One factor to be taken into account in determining discretionary rate relief shall be the training or coaching provided by sports clubs for the youth of the Borough.

In addition, Organisations with charitable status and not being Limited Companies, and set up for recreational purposes:

- Whose membership is open to all sections of the community.
- Do not restrict membership on the grounds of ability or the availability of their facilities,
- Whose membership levels are not set at such a rate to preclude membership by all sections of the community,
- Who provide outside sporting activities,
- Who actively encourage participation by young people,
- Make their facilities available to people other than members eg. to schools or casual public sessions,
- Whose main aim is sporting rather than social,
- Whose members are mainly from Fylde Borough.

May be given discretionary relief of 100% based on the Rateable Value of the outside playing area and changing areas only.

- i) Retail premises operated by a registered charity which have been granted mandatory rate relief may, in exceptional circumstances, receive a further discretionary award. The Council will consider the merits of each case but such an award is likely to be the exception rather than the rule.

Responsible officer

The responsibility for making discretionary decisions will rest with the Chief Financial Officer, who will discharge this responsibility by the following process:

Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount

Decision making process

Stage 1: The decision making process will involve the Principal Income and Recovery Manager making a recommendation to the Head of Revenues and Exchequer Services, considering the application against the criteria set out in this policy, based upon the information provided by the applicant and known to the Council. The Senior Revenues Team Manager will liaise with the applicant in each case to request sufficient information in order that a decision can be made.

Stage 2: The Chief Financial Officer will consider the application and the recommendation of the Head of Revenues and Exchequer Services and determine whether to award a discretionary discount.

Notification of decision

The Council will notify the applicant of its decision within 28 days of receiving sufficient information to make a decision.

Review of decision/re-determination requests

The Council will accept an applicant's written request for a redetermination of its decision. The process will be as follows:

Stage 1: The original decision and any additional information provided will be reviewed by a different decision maker who will recommend either to confirm or amend the original decision.

Stage 2: The Chief Financial Officer will consider the application for review and the recommendation and determine whether to award a discretionary discount.

Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount

Notification of review/re-determination decision

The Council will notify an applicant of its decision within 28 days of receiving a request for a re-determination.

Following the redetermination of a request for discretionary discount, there is no further right of appeal.

Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount

6. Other Discretionary Discounts

It is possible that other exceptional circumstances will arise where the Council could consider a further discretionary reduction in respect of Business Rates.

Each case will be considered on its merits however all of the following criteria should be met:

- Requests for reductions in Business Rates will be required in writing from the ratepayer or a recognised third party acting on their behalf.
- It must be in the interest of Council Tax payers for the local authority to grant a reduction.
- All other eligible discounts/reliefs have been awarded to the ratepayer.

The Chief Financial Officer will consider such applications in line with the Council's Financial Regulations.

Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount

7. Rural Rate Relief

Relief of up to 100% can be granted to the occupier of a general store, post office, pub or petrol station if it is the only such business in the authority's rural settlement list. Each case will be dealt with on its own set of circumstances and rateable value limits will apply.

Responsible officer

The responsibility for making discretionary decisions will rest with the Chief Financial Officer, who will discharge this responsibility by the following process:

Decision making process

Stage 1: The decision making process will involve the Principal Income and Recovery Manager making a recommendation to the Head of Revenues and Exchequer Services, considering the application against the criteria set out in this policy, based upon the information provided by the applicant and known to the Council. The Senior Revenues Team Manager will liaise with the applicant in each case to request sufficient information in order that a decision can be made.

Stage 2: The Chief Financial Officer will consider the application and the recommendation of the Head of Revenues and Exchequer Services and determine whether to award a discretionary discount.

Notification of decision

The Council will notify the applicant of its decision within 28 days of receiving sufficient information to make a decision.

Review of decision/re-determination requests

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Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount

Stage 2: The Chief Financial Officer will consider the application for review and the recommendation and determine whether to award a discretionary discount.

Notification of review/re-determination decision

The Council will notify an applicant of its decision within 28 days of receiving a request for a re-determination.

Following the redetermination of a request for discretionary discount, there is no further right of appeal.

Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount

8. Temporary Part Occupation Relief

The Ratepayer is liable for the full non-domestic rate whether a property is wholly occupied or only partly occupied. Under s44A of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, where a property is partly occupied for a short time the Council has discretion to request that the Valuation Office apportion the rateable value of a property between the occupied and unoccupied parts; thereby reducing the amount payable.

Applications must be made in writing and supported by: -

- Detailed maps which outline the whole property and indicate the partly occupied section.
- Details of the planned period of time for the part occupation.
- Details of future intentions.
- Details of the cause for the part occupation.

A site visit will normally be undertaken.

Where necessary the ratepayer may be required to provide additional information to support their application.

Responsible officer

The responsibility for making discretionary relief decisions will rest with the Chief Financial Officer, who will discharge this responsibility by the following process:

Decision making process

Stage 1: The decision making process will involve the Principal Income and Recovery Manager making a recommendation to the Head of Revenues and Exchequer Services, considering the application against the criteria set out in this policy, based upon the information provided by the applicant and known to the Council. The Senior Revenues Team Manager will liaise with the applicant in each case to request sufficient information in order that a decision can be made.

Stage 2: The Chief Financial Officer will consider the application and the recommendation of the Head of Revenues and Exchequer Services and determine whether to award a discretionary discount.

Notification of decision

The Council will notify the applicant of its decision within 28 days of receiving sufficient information to make a decision.

Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount

Review of decision/re-determination requests

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Stage 2: The Chief Financial Officer will consider the application for review and the recommendation and determine whether to award a discretionary discount.

Notification of review/re-determination decision

The Council will notify an applicant of its decision within 28 days of receiving a request for a re-determination.

Following the redetermination of a request for discretionary discount, there is no further right of appeal.

Council Tax and Business Rates Discretionary Discount

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Date: Oct 2014

Review Date: Oct 2016

Our Ref: Discretionary Discount Policy

Authorised by: A Turpin,

Head of Revenues and Exchequer Services



DECISION ITEM



REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	FINANCE AND DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE	20 MARCH 2017	5
WRITE-OFF OF UNCOLLECTABLE DEBTS 2016/17			

PUBLIC ITEM

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

SUMMARY

This report details the proposed write-off of debts in relation to Business Rates, Council Tax, and the recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments.

Under this Council's Constitution the two joint heads of the Shared Service (The Head of Revenues and Exchequer Services; and the Head of Benefits and Customer Services) each have delegated authority to write-off uncollectable Business Rate debts up to £10,000 and uncollectable Council Tax debts of up to £5,000.

Additionally, the Council's Constitution provides delegated authority to the Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) to write-off uncollectable debts in excess of those levels up to £25,000 per individual debt, such write-offs to be subsequently reported to the Finance and Democracy Committee for information purposes.

The Chief Financial Officer has recently exercised this delegated power by writing-off three uncollectable Business Rate debts. To meet the requirement that these written-off sums are reported to the Finance and Democracy Committee details of each is provided at Appendix A.

The writing-off of debts in excess of £25,000 requires the prior approval by the Finance and Democracy Committee.

There are two uncollectable Business Rates debt in excess of the £25,000 limit for which write-off is now requested. Details of these are also provided at Appendix A. There are no uncollectable debts in excess of the £25,000 limit in respect of any other category of debt.

All of the uncollectable debts for which write-off is requested (or is being reported) relate to the period to 31st March 2017.

The cost of writing off these debts will be met from the appropriate bad debt provision. In respect of Business Rates and Council Tax the provision is funded by contributions by all the recipients of Business Rate or Council Tax income (those being Lancashire County Council, the Lancashire Combined Fire Authority and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire, together with Fylde Council).

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve the write-off of the two uncollectable Business Rates debts in excess of £25,000 details of which are provided at Appendix A this report; and
2. Note the write-off by the Chief Financial Officer under delegated powers of the three uncollectable

Business Rates debts below £25,000, details of which are also set out in Appendix A to this report.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

No previous decisions have been made in respect of these specific debts.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Spending your money in the most efficient way to achieve excellent services (Value for Money)	√
Delivering the services that customers expect of an excellent council (Clean and Green)	
Working with all partners (Vibrant Economy)	
To make sure Fylde continues to be one of the most desirable places to live (A Great Place to Live)	
Promoting Fylde as a great destination to visit (A Great Place to Visit)	

REPORT

Background

1. The Council is responsible for collecting substantial amounts of income each year in respect of Business Rates (NNDR), Council Tax and Sundry Debtors. In addition the Council seeks to recover any overpayment of Housing Benefit.
2. Historically, the Council's overall collection rate of income for Business Rates and Council Tax is high with approximately 98% of all income due to the Council eventually collected. Similarly, non-collection of sundry debts are at a low level.
3. Good recovery procedures are in place and the recovery teams within the Revenues and Benefits Shared Service and the Fylde Council Finance Administration team pursue all monies due with vigour, and continue to explore new avenues of debt recovery in pursuit of challenging performance targets. Debt write-off is only considered in exceptional circumstances when other recovery options have been exhausted.
4. Where an amount outstanding has not been collected due to the debtor absconding, officers make enquiries of various agencies with a view to obtaining a forwarding address. Unfortunately, there are usually a small number of cases in each year for which it is not possible to trace the debtor and where the action taken has been unsuccessful in recovering the debt.
5. In respect of the debts in relation to Business Rates, Council Tax and the recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments The joint heads of the Shared Service (The Head of Revenues and Exchequer Services and the Head of Benefits and Customer Services) have presented these debts for write-off and is satisfied that every effort has been made to recover the money owed to the Council. However, for absconders, should the Shared Service become aware of the debtor's location, the amount written-off will be re-instated and action taken to recover the amount outstanding.
6. In some cases where a debtor has been made bankrupt, or a company has gone into liquidation, the Council has little control. However, the debt, or part of it, may be re-instated at a later date upon payment of a dividend. Further information in relation to bankruptcy and liquidation terminology is provided at Appendix B.

Implications

7. The collection of revenue is of vital importance to the financial management of the Council. Failure to collect debts, and in a timely manner, has adverse implications to the Council's finances and cash flow.
8. All of the debts for which write-off is requested (or is being reported) within this report relate to the period prior to 31st March 2017.
9. Although this report seeks approval to write-off a number of uncollectable debts, any debt that is written-off can be re-instated at a later date should there be a further opportunity to recover part or all of the debt.
10. The names of individual debtors have not been published because to do so may infringe the Data Protection Act 1998.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	The financial implications are detailed within the body of this report.
Legal	The Council's Constitution determines that the writing-off of debts in excess of £25,000 requires the prior approval by the Finance and Democracy Committee. Additionally amounts above a specified level that have been written-off by the Chief Financial Officer under delegated powers are required to subsequently be reported to the Finance and Democracy Committee for information purposes. This report fulfils those requirements.
Community Safety	No direct implications
Human Rights and Equalities	No direct implications
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	No direct implications
Health & Safety and Risk Management	No direct implications

LEAD AUTHOR	TEL	DATE	DOC ID
Paul O'Donoghue Chief Financial Officer	01253 658566	March 2017	

Attached documents

Appendix A – Information on debts written-off and for which write-off is requested

Appendix B – Glossary of Terms

APPENDIX A

Section 1: Debts in excess of £25,000: (Authority sought to write off debt)

National Non Domestic Rates			
Name	Account Ref	Amount (£)	Reason
Carsnphones Limited	51764944	£33,938.10	No Prospect of Recovery
Property type - Offices. The business rates liability was from April 2012 to August 2014. Numerous payment arrangements were made, and the account was passed to Enforcement Agents for collection. After vacating the premises, the Council were informed that the Company had ceased trading in December 2015, and was dissolved in June 2016. The company had no assets and therefore no further action to recover the outstanding Business Rates is possible.			

National Non Domestic Rates			
Name	Account Ref	Amount (£)	Reason
Individual Ratepayers	50086702	£27,951.09	Bankruptcy / Insolvency
Property type - Hotel. A couple running an established hotel business found that it began to struggle. Over a period of 12 years they had paid over £600,000 in business rates, however due to difficult trading conditions they eventually had to enter into IVAs early in the 2016/17 financial year. Although payment in full of the amount outstanding is unlikely, there remains a possibility of partial payment under the terms of the IVA.			

Section 2: Debts under £25,000: (For information only)

National Non Domestic Rates			
Name	Account Ref	Amount (£)	Reason
Horizon Pub Management Ltd	51789776	£13,861.63	Bankruptcy / Insolvency
Property Type - Public House. The period of liability was from April 2015 to April 2016. This Company appeared to struggle from the start of its liability for Business Rates, and no payments were received. Enforcement Agents were instructed, however they were unsuccessful and the Company went into liquidation. As with many Public Houses, the lease agreement for the property means that the rate-payer has no assets and therefore no further action to obtain payment is possible.			

National Non Domestic Rates			
Name	Account Ref	Amount (£)	Reason
Fylde Leisure Service Ltd	51782713	£13,021.57	No Prospect of Recovery
Property Type - Public House. Liability from April 2015 to April 2016. The business appeared to have problems from its inception, and the property was vacated without the Council being informed. The Company was dissolved 15th March 2016. The company had no assets and therefore no further action to recover the outstanding Business Rates is possible.			

National Non Domestic Rates			
Name	Account Ref	Amount (£)	Reason
Capricci Bar and Grill Ltd	51792833	£12,130.56	No Prospect of Recovery
Property Type - Public House. This liability is for a short period from December 2015 to May 2016. The property remained vacant during this period, and the Company dissolved prior to enforcement action. After the dissolution of the company it ceases to be a legal entity and as a consequence further recovery action against it is not possible.			

TERMINOLOGY

Bankruptcy

Bankruptcy is a legal proceeding involving an individual, sole proprietor or partnership that is unable to repay outstanding debts when they become due. It is a legal procedure petitioned either by the debtor (voluntary), or by creditors (involuntary), when the debtor is unable to make his or her payments.

A trustee is appointed by the court to measure, evaluate and dispose of the debtor's assets and distribute any proceeds to the creditors.

The debtor is relieved of the debt obligations incurred, prior to filing for bankruptcy.

Liquidation

Where a Limited Company cannot meet its debts and calls a creditors meeting to have the company voluntarily wound up, or where a creditor has petitioned the court for a compulsory winding-up order.

A Liquidator is appointed to dispose of any assets and distribute any proceeds to the creditors.

Receivership & Administration

Voluntary administration is where a business is in danger of becoming insolvent and has an administrator appointed in order to try to improve the financial viability of the business and to come to an agreement with creditors.

Receivership is where a Limited Company cannot meet its debts and a creditor(s), usually a debenture holder or a mortgagee, has applied to the court for the appointment of a receiver or administrator. Unlike liquidation, the business may not necessarily be wound up.

The task of the receiver or administrator is to protect the interest of the appointer, not the creditors as a whole. He will attempt to sell the business as a going concern, whether as a whole or in part. Any remaining proceeds from the sale will be distributed to the creditors after the debenture or mortgage has been paid.

In administrative procedures for all the above cases, Proof of Debt forms are submitted to the Insolvency Practitioner before the debt is submitted for write-off.

Proposal to strike off - Dissolution

A company may apply to the registrar to be struck off the register and dissolved. The company can do this if it is no longer needed. For example, the directors may wish to retire and there is no one to take over from them; or it is a subsidiary whose name is no longer needed; or it was set up to exploit an idea that turned out not to be feasible. Some companies who are dormant or non-trading choose to apply for strike off.

A company cannot apply to be struck off if it is the subject of:

- any insolvency proceedings such as liquidation, including where a petition has been presented but has not yet been dealt with); or

- a section 895 scheme (that is a compromise or arrangement between a company and its creditors or members).

Or, within the last three months, it has traded, changed its name, or engaged in other activity, unless necessary for the purposes of concluding the affairs of the company.

However, a company can apply for strike off if it has settled trading or business debts in the previous three months.

There are safeguards for those who are likely to be affected by a company's dissolution. If the company has creditors, they should be warned of the proposal before application, as any of them may object to the company being struck off.

This procedure is not an alternative to formal insolvency proceedings where these are appropriate. Even if the company is struck off and dissolved, creditors and others can apply for the company to be restored to the register.

The registrar can strike a company off the register if he views that it is neither carrying on business nor in operation, for example:

- he has not received relevant documents (eg. accounts) from a company that should have sent them to him; or
- mail that the registrar has sent to a company's registered office is returned undelivered; or
- the company has no directors.

The registrar publishes a notice in the relevant Gazette stating his intention to strike the company off the register unless he is shown reason not to do so. Company house records will show "action - proposal to Strike off" and this indicates there is dissolution pending.

If the registrar sees no reason to do otherwise, he will strike off the company not less than three months after the date of the notice. The company will be dissolved on publication of a further notice in the relevant Gazette.

In administering these cases, the outstanding debt is written off on systems but records at Companies House are continually checked to confirm that the dissolution of the company has been completed.

Individual Voluntary Arrangement (IVA)

An IVA involves a formal proposal to creditors to pay part or all of the debt. An insolvency practitioner will act for the debtor and application is through the court for an "Interim Order" which prevents creditors from presenting, or proceeding, with a bankruptcy petition against the debtor while the interim order is in force. It also prevents them from taking other action against the debtor during the same period, without the permission of the court.

The Insolvency Practitioner tells the court the details of the proposal and whether in his opinion a meeting of creditors should be called to consider it. At the meeting, the creditors vote on whether to accept the proposals. If enough creditors (over 75% in value of the creditors present in person or by proxy, and voting on the resolution) vote in favour, the proposals are accepted. They are then binding on all creditors who had notice of, and were entitled to vote at, the meeting.

The insolvency practitioner supervises the arrangement and pays the creditors in accordance with the accepted proposal.

The IVA avoids the restrictions that apply to bankruptcy and gives the debtor more say in how his assets are dealt with and how payments are made to creditors. He may be able to

persuade creditors to allow him to retain certain assets (such as the home). The debtor will obviously have to act responsibly and flexibly in order to reach agreement with the creditors.

Debt Relief Order (DRO)

The DRO is a cheaper, quicker and easier alternative to bankruptcy for individuals who have less than £300 in assets, aren't homeowners and have less than £50 in disposable income per month.

To qualify for a DRO individuals must have less than £15,000 in qualifying debts, have no vehicle or a vehicle worth less than £1,000, and haven't had an existing Bankruptcy Order, Individual Voluntary Arrangement or a Debt Relief Order in the last six years.

A DRO usually lasts for 12 months, and listed Creditors are not able to take action to recover the amounts owed, however normal expenses that fall due during the period, such as utility bills, council tax and rent, must be paid.

Arrangements to repay creditors must be made if the financial circumstances of the individual improve during the 12 month period.

The courts are not involved in the process and individuals contact an approved debt adviser like the Citizen's Advice Bureau who can check if the relevant conditions are met and assist in completing the relevant application.

DECISION ITEM



REPORT OF		MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE		FINANCE AND DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE	20 MARCH 2017	6
ACCOMMODATION PROJECT – PHASES 7 WORKS				

PUBLIC ITEM

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

Please note that the Accommodation Project - Phases 7 Works report is TO FOLLOW

DECISION ITEM



REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	FINANCE AND DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE	20 MARCH 2017	7
APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES/WORKING GROUPS			

PUBLIC ITEM

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

SUMMARY

In May 2015 Council asked that the programme committees make recommendations to appointments from within their respective memberships for those outside bodies relating to the brief for the committee. This report covers those appointments that relate to the Finance and Democracy Committee.

Council will make appointments to outside bodies for the forthcoming municipal year at its meeting on 3 April 2017.

RECOMMENDATION

The committee is invited to

1. recommend nominations to the outside bodies listed for consideration by council
2. confirm the establishment of the working groups(s) listed which will meet as and when required
3. to note the reports from members currently serving on outside bodies

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

20th May 2015 - Council sought recommendations from individual programme committees as to nominations for representation.

6 July 2015 – Council confirmed the nominations from the programme committees.

11 April 2016 – Council confirmed the nominations from the programme committees.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES	
Spending your money in the most efficient way to achieve excellent services (Value for Money)	√
Delivering the services that customers expect of an excellent council (Clean and Green)	√
Working with all partners (Vibrant Economy)	√
To make sure Fylde continues to be one of the most desirable places to live (A Great Place to Live)	√
Promoting Fylde as a great destination to visit (A Great Place to Visit)	√

REPORT

1. The Council makes a number of appointments to outside bodies in each municipal year. In an election year these appointments are made at the AGM. In non-election years, these appointments are made at the last Council meeting of the municipal year. In May 2015, the Council deferred the decision to appoint to *'.... allow the various programme committees the opportunity to recommend appointments from within their respective memberships for those outside bodies relating to the brief of their committee'*.
2. The Council needs to make appointments to outside bodies at its meeting on 3 April 2017 for the forthcoming municipal year 2017/18. Nominations are sought from the programme committees for representatives to the outside bodies.
3. This report deals with the outside bodies that relate to the terms of reference for the Finance and Democracy Committee. The first table below includes the name of the body/group, the role/purpose and which elected member currently represents the Council. The committee is invited to recommend nominations for consideration by Full Council.
4. Under the previous governance arrangements there existed the facility through scrutiny for members to establish specific task and finish groups to look in some depth at particular issues and make recommendations to Cabinet. With the adoption of the new governance arrangements that is no longer possible. However programme committees may wish to establish their own subject specific working groups to be set up when required in order to advise the parent programme committee on a particular topic/issue.
5. The second table below lists those working groups that relate to the terms of reference of the Finance and Democracy Committee that are currently established. The establishment of working groups is within the responsibility of the individual programme committees and does not need the approval of Council.
6. It is important that the members nominated to represent the Council on outside bodies/working groups have an appropriate interest in the body/partnership/subject, can commit to positively represent the Council and be available to commit the time to attend the majority of the meetings involved.
7. The members nominated should ideally be a member of the programme committee to which the matter relates to.
8. The current protocol is that members are required to produce regular reports about the outside bodies on which they serve, currently every six months. It is the intention that this information will be made available to the programme committee members to which the external partnership relates.
9. The conclusion of any working group would be brought to committee in a formal report as previously occurred in scrutiny.

Finance and Democracy Committee- Outside bodies/partnerships			
Outside body / partnerships	Role/Purpose	Frequency of meetings	Current representation
Fylde Community Project Fund	Decision making body allocating small grants to local volunteer groups and organisations from the Community Project Fund	3 x p/a plus smaller bids considered by email	The Mayor
North West Employers Organisation	Provides a network of support, advice and consultancy regarding human resources, policy and practice, leadership, development, organisational design and performance. It works with regional and national partners representing North West authorities as employers including consultation on pay and conditions.	Quarterly (4xp/a)	Councillor Buckley (Councillor Taylor as named substitute)
North West of England & the Isle of Man Reserve Forces & Cadets Association	To support and maintain Armed Forces Reserves and Cadets in North West England.	Annually with two optional outside days	Councillor Ed Nash

Finance and Democracy Committee– Working groups			
Working group	Role/purpose	Notes	Current representation
Budget Working Group	To co-ordinate and oversee the budget setting process and to provide a strategic steer to programme committees on key elements of the budget setting process such as the level of growth or savings required in light of the overall financial position of the Council, capital bid expectations, fees and charges levels etc	The establishment of this working group was considered and recommended for approval by the Governance Working Group. The group meet as and when required during the annual budget setting cycle. It is recommended that the group includes representation from each of the main programme committees in order to ensure a corporate cross-cutting approach to budget setting	Councillors Fazackerley, Buckley, Little, Aitken, Eaves, Fiddler, Redcliffe, Small and Donaldson.
Accommodation Working Group	To oversee and give a steer to the implementation of the council's overall accommodation rationalisation strategy	The group meets as and when required	Councillors Fazackerley, Oades, Buckley, Fiddler, Ford and Jacques.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	No implications arising from this report
Legal	No implications arising from this report
Community Safety	No implications arising from this report
Human Rights and Equalities	No implications arising from this report
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	No implications arising from this report
Health & Safety and Risk Management	No implications arising from this report

LEAD AUTHOR	TEL	DATE	DOC ID
Tracy Morrison	01253 658521	Date of report	

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection

Appendices attached to this report

Appendix 1 – Status of reports from Outside Bodies representatives

Appendix 2 – Reports from Outside Bodies representatives.

Outside Bodies Returned Forms – Feb/March 2017

Outside Body	Councillor	Info First Requested	First Reminder	Second Reminder	Date Returned	Notes
Finance & Democracy, 20/3/17 meeting. Closing Date for reports Tuesday 7 March						
Blackpool Airport and Hillhouse Enterprise Zone Project Board	Chairman F&D – Karen Buckley	9/01/2017	31/1/17	20/2/17		
Fylde Community Projects Fund	The Mayor – Christine Akeroyd	9/01/2017	31/1/17	-	2/2/17	Saved in F&D Folder
North West Employers Organisation	Chair F&D – Karen Buckley (sub Richard Taylor)	9/01/2017	31/1/17	20/2/17		
NW of England & Isle of Man Reserve Forces & Cadets Association	Ed Nash	9/01/2017	31/1/17	20/2/17	23/2/17	Saved in F&D Folder

Details

Councillor Name and Role on Outside Body (for example, Observer, Trustee, Director)	Cllr Karen Buckley
Email	
Period this report covers (date):	17 October 2016 to 9th March 2017
Name of Outside Body:	Blackpool Airport EZ Project Board
How often does the organisation meet? And how often have you attended?	Since appointing a Project Board there has been one meeting on 24th November 2016, which I attended. Another meeting scheduled for 9th March 2017 was cancelled.
Key issues arising for Fylde Borough Council	Economic development on the site of the EZ to provide growth which supports the retention of the airport.
	Examples of issues could be those that may affect decisions regarding budget setting, challenges for residents, policy changes that affect partnership working etc
Who did you inform of these issues within Fylde Borough Council?	s.151 Officer (who also attends the meetings)
In the light of these meetings, is it worthwhile for the Council to continue to have a representative/representatives on this body?	Yes
Any further comments?	A funding bid was submitted to DCLG in the sum of £50k for development of a masterplan for the site. The bid was successful and the plan is now being drawn together. It would be beneficial for the committee to invite Rob Green (Head of Enterprise and Investment) in the autumn to give an update on the EZ.

Details

Councillor Name and Role on Outside Body (for example, Observer, Trustee, Director)	Councillor Christine Akeroyd, Panel Member
Email	cllr.cakeroyd@fylde.gov.uk
Period this report covers (date):	Mayoral Year, ie. May to May
Name of Outside Body:	Community Projects Fund
How often does the organisation meet? And how often have you attended?	The panel meet quarterly for larger funding bids (£500-£2000) and bids are decided by panel members electronically (email) for bids £1-£300.
Key issues arising for Fylde Borough Council	If the funding did not continue, this could have a detrimental effect on Fylde community groups who often need initial financial help for new projects.
	Examples of issues could be those that may affect decisions regarding budget setting, challenges for residents, policy changes that affect partnership working etc
Who did you inform of these issues within Fylde Borough Council?	Tracy Morrison
In the light of these meetings, is it worthwhile for the Council to continue to have a representative/representatives on this body?	Yes
Any further comments?	We welcome the support of the Finance & Democracy committee in proposing that funding continues in the 2017/18 budget.

Details

Councillor Name and Role on Outside Body (for example, Observer, Trustee, Director)	Edward Nash Member
Email	cllr.enash@fylde.gov.uk
Period this report covers (date):	to 1 March 2017
Name of Outside Body:	Reserve Forces and Cadets
How often does the organisation meet? And how often have you attended?	twice a year with some ancillary events. I attended twice during this period.
Key issues arising for Fylde Borough Council	Decision to close Fulwood Barracks Preston by 2022 and move all elements to Weeton, involving new builds and refurbishment. 42(NW) Brigade has disbanded, leaving a small NW Garrison HQ
	Examples of issues could be those that may affect decisions regarding budget setting, challenges for residents, policy changes that affect partnership working etc
Who did you inform of these issues within Fylde Borough Council?	Chief Executive
In the light of these meetings, is it worthwhile for the Council to continue to have a representative/representatives on this body?	Yes
Any further comments?	Fylde Borough by 2022 will house the bulk of regular armed forces in the North West. We will need to revisit our Covenant commitments in the light of this.

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF		MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE		FINANCE AND DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE	20 MARCH 2017	8
LYTHAM MUSSEL TANK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT				

PUBLIC ITEM

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

SUMMARY

This scheme was considered by the Tourism and Leisure Committee on the 9th March 2017.

The report details a scheme developed by the Civic Society to landscape one of the former mussel tanks adjacent to Ribble Cruising Club site. The Civic Society have designed the scheme based around the mussel fishing heritage of the site, raised the necessary funding and have undertaken extensive consultation with the community.

In the delivery of the scheme the Civic Society have requested that the Council be the accountable body and include the scheme within the 2017/18 Capital programme. The scheme has been tendered by the Council and the report requests approval to appoint Landscape Engineering at a tender sum of £112,506.50 to implement the scheme on an 8 week programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Finance and Democracy Committee is recommended:

1. To agree that the Council act as an accountable body for the proposed capital scheme;
2. To approve an addition to the 2017/18 capital programme in the sum of £130,000 to be fully funded from a grant from the Lytham St Annes Civic Society as detailed in the report;
3. To specify that in relation to the Lytham Mussel Tank Improvement Project, expenditure on the scheme will only be committed following receipt of funding from the LSA Civic Society in at least the same sum.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Tourism and Leisure 9th March 2017 –Lytham promenade mussel tank improvement project: After full consideration it was resolved –

1. Agree that the Council act as the accountable body for the Lytham Mussel Tank Improvement Project as described within the report, in the overall sum of £130,000 (inclusive of professional fees, contingencies, and provisional sums);
2. Approve an addition to the 2017/18 capital programme in respect of the Lytham Mussel Tank Improvement Project in the sum of £130,000 fully funded by a grant from the LSA Civic Society in the same amount;
3. Authorise the proposed expenditure in respect of the scheme to undertake improvements to the

mussel tank as detailed in the report contingent upon the Finance and Democracy Committee approving the addition of the project to the capital programme;

4. Agree the letting of the contract for the construction of the hard landscaping scheme and associated improvement works to Landscape Engineering Ltd in the sum of £107,149.05 + a contingency of £5,357.45 for a total of £112,506.50, subject to the scheme addition of £130,000 to the 2017/18 capital programme, being approved by the Finance & Democracy Committee.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES	
Spending your money in the most efficient way to achieve excellent services (Value for Money)	✓
Delivering the services that customers expect of an excellent council (Clean and Green)	✓
Working with all partners (Vibrant Economy)	✓
To make sure Fylde continues to be one of the most desirable places to live (A Great Place to Live)	✓
Promoting Fylde as a great destination to visit (A Great Place to Visit)	✓

REPORT

BACKGROUND

1. The Council owns the site of the three former mussel tanks on Lytham foreshore originally used for the purification of sea food brought ashore by local fishermen.
2. Following Cabinet approval on 27th May 2014 the Lytham St Annes Civic Society have been working to secure the necessary funding to develop a scheme to landscape one of the former mussel tanks adjacent to Ribble Cruising Club site.
3. The Civic Society have engaged BCA Landscape (Chartered Landscape Architects), to develop and project manage the scheme to practical completion.
4. Widespread consultation has influenced the development of the proposals. Local groups, professional members of the Civic Society, officers from the Council and BCA Landscape have all contributed towards the design and development of the scheme.
5. During the development phase the scheme has been altered to reflect the original mussel tank design in the paving and the material choice has been substituted from natural stone to Kellen which is a pre cast concrete material with a natural stone veneer.
6. The revised scheme was costed based on recent estimates and industry rates. The total project costs were estimated around £100k (excludes professional fees, provisional sums and contingencies)

SCHEME DETAIL

7. The tanks were built by Lancashire County Council in 1934 as part of a strategy to improve public health by cleansing the mussels prior to consumption. This practice stopped in the 1940's, since when the area has been redeveloped to include the Lifeboat Station, the Ribble Cruising Club, and (on the proposed site) a variety of uses including a cafe/nightclub; this building was demolished and the site paved over to provide a viewing point over the Ribble estuary.
8. The Civic Society have promoted a scheme which celebrates the mussel fishing heritage. The proposals maintain the basic configuration of paving and levels, but refreshes this to provide a

facility which will contribute to the enjoyment of the place and explain (through artwork and interpretation) aspects of Lytham's heritage.

9. All surfaces are renewed with contemporary materials; these are the 'Kellen' paving material which is a precast concrete block with a stone veneer, thus ensuring the material will retain its vibrancy and colour over time. The product range allows a distinctive design to be presented as the focal point, this being based on the original configuration of brick plinths used to support the mussel sacks during the cleansing process.
10. The existing access points are retained. The ramp on the west side will be flanked by a new in situ concrete wall in which recesses will be cast to receive the artwork tiles being produced by Lytham Sixth Form College as a student project (BCA Landscape and the Civic Society have contributed to the students' teaching sessions to assist). The steps on the east side are retained but rebuilt to modern standards with tactile paving and new handrails.
11. The level of the north (inland) side of the site have been raised by 300mm to create two low terraces, for informal sitting and to create an 'amphitheatre effect' to view any performances which might be arranged in the central space. The existing stone wall along the promenade is retained, with a new face constructed from precast concrete wall units, installed at a convenient height for sitting. The same units are used to create a raised planting bed on the east side, along the boundary with the Ribble Cruising Club: the bed will be planted to display species typically found in the local foreshore as part of the general aim to explain the context of the estuary.
12. Interpretation boards are included as a provisional sum - the detail is to be resolved as a further consultation exercise, but will include summary notes and images produced as 'photocast' panels to explain the origins of the site.

A COST BREAKDOWN OF THE SCHEME

Mussel Tank Project			
	Design Categories as described in the schedule of works	Net Figure	Note
i)	Site Clearance	£ 8,285.65	
ii)	New Kerbs & Edgings	£34,378.20	
iii)	New Paving	£41,587.60	
iv)	Site Furniture	£ 3,816.00	
v)	Wall to Edge of Ramp	£ 6,664.00	
vi)	Drainage & Services	£ 2,310.00	<i>Includes P/ Sum for cleaning drains</i>
vii)	Painting (perimeter walls)	£ 1,000.00	
viii)	Planting	£ 2,976.80	<i>Includes P/ Sum for plants/planting</i>
ix)	Maintenance (12 months)	£ 1,130.00	<i>Includes P/ Sum for watering</i>
x)	Provisional Sums	£ 5,000.00	<i>For Signage (£2k) and Interpretation (£3k)</i>
xi)	Contingency	£ 5,357.45	<i>Calculated at 5% of Items 1 - 10</i>
S/total		£112,506.50	

Add - Allowance for Fees, surveys £ 15,500.00

TOTAL £128,006.50

THE METHOD AND COST OF FINANCING THE SCHEME

13. The total project cost has been calculated at around £130k (inclusive of professional fees, provisional sums, and contingencies)
14. The Civic Society have developed a funding strategy to deliver the project, which is identified in the following table.

Funding Stream	Amount	Status
Civic Society Legacy Funding	£60,000	Secured
Civic Society - reallocation from other projects	£17,000	Secured
Thomas Blasson Trust	£30,000	Secured
Lytham Schools Foundation	£20,000	Secured
Civic Society - specific fund raising for Mussel Tank project	£3,000	Secured
Total	£130,000	

ACCOUNTABLE BODY STATUS

15. The Civic Society has requested that the Council act as the accountable body for the delivery of this project. The role of an accountable body in grant funded schemes involves taking on the responsibility and accountability for the spending of grant monies and the delivery of planned outcomes. Requirements include actively managing the expenditure, ensuring specific milestones and planned delivery outputs are met, completing regular claims to funding partners and producing evidence of spend. The accountable body is obliged to undertake monitoring visits to ensure the outputs are being delivered and maintain robust systems for collecting, collating and reporting on both the outputs and the associated spend. The accountable body undertakes to pay back any grant which is deemed to relate to either spend that is not eligible for funding or to schemes that do not fully deliver there outputs.
16. It is recommended that the Council agrees to act as the accountable body for the scheme.
17. In respect of the proposed Mussel Tank Improvement Scheme, the role of ensuring compliance with the grant conditions of the awarding body would be undertaken by officers from the Technical Services Team at no additional cost to Fylde Council.
18. In order to protect the financial position of the Council, expenditure on the Lytham Mussel Tank Improvement Project scheme will only be committed following receipt of funding from the LSA Civic Society in at least the same sum.

FUTURE REVENUE BUDGET IMPACT

19. The mussel tank site is 780 sq m and is owned by Fylde Borough Council. The scheme is fundamentally a paving scheme with 91 sq m of planting. The paving is relatively maintenance free. The planting is densely planted with a 12 months maintenance period which should allow the shrubs to touch cover which will prevent weeds from establishing within the shrubbed areas. The Civic Society have agreed to undertake periodic community clean ups to keep the site maintained in the long term. Consequently there will be no additional revenue costs to the Council arising from maintenance of the site.

RELEVANT VALUE FOR MONEY ISSUES

19. In order to ensure that value for money is achieved a procurement exercise has been undertaken in accordance with the Council's contract procedure rules. Selection of the successful tenderer will be on the basis that value for money is a key consideration as well as the suitability of the new facility.

RISK ASSESSMENT

20. A risk assessment has been carried out to identify and mitigate any risks associated with the project which is attached as appendix 1.

VIABLE ALTERNATIVES

21. The project could have been procured and delivered by the Community group or Parish Council. However, professional assistance from Council Officers with specific regard to landscape design, procurement and project management proves to provide the best value for money, competent schemes and is the favoured delivery option by external funders.

PROCUREMENT PATH (AND ANY DELEGATIONS AS REQUIRED)

22. Officers from the Technical Services Team have led the procurement process. A select list of tenderers was drawn up and the tender followed the restricted tendering procedure using the CHEST procurement portal.
23. Quotations have been received for the refurbishment of the existing paved area to create a public open space with associated artwork.
24. 8 tenders were sought and 3 completed tenders were received and evaluated on a 60% cost and 40% quality basis.
25. The quality evaluation was carried out as follows: quality criteria formed 40% of the total, based on the following quality criteria:

• Quality	25
• Schedule of Works	5
• Experience	5
• Health and Safety	5
Quality Total	40

26. The quality evaluation was made under the criteria listed below, and the information required from the suppliers was scored on the following basis:

Score	Description
0	The Evaluation Panel felt that none of the requirement was met or demonstrated or no response was provided.
1	The Evaluation panel felt that a few areas (20% or less) of the requirement has

- been met or demonstrated.
- 2 The Evaluation panel felt that some areas (between 21% and 59%) of the requirement has been met or demonstrated.
 - 3 The Evaluation panel felt that most of the requirement (60% and above) has been met or demonstrated
 - 4 The Evaluation panel felt that the requirement has been fully met or demonstrated.
 - 5 The Evaluation Panel felt that the supplier had exceeded this requirement.

27. The 3 quotes for the work received via the Chest system were as follows:-

Landscape Engineering Ltd	£107,149.05 + 5,357.45 contingency = £112,506.50
William Pye Ltd	£131,524.85 + 6,576.24 contingency = £138,101.09
Clement Dickens & Sons Ltd	£132,681.00 + 6,634.00 contingency = £139,315.00

J & C Devlin Ltd, King Construction, W Monks Ltd, Lanes Landscapes Ltd and Creative Landscapes of Lytham did not quote.

28. The cost and quality evaluation scores were as follows:

Company	Evaluation score
Landscape Engineering	65
William Pye	64.91
Clement Dickens	57.99

29. Following the evaluation procedure it is therefore recommended that Landscape Engineering Ltd be awarded the contract.

OBJECTIVES, OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

30. Objectives, Outputs and Outcomes:

- Refurbish a life-expired area of public realm as an attractive destination point for users of The Green
- Achieve the ambitions of the local community
- Explain a feature of Lytham's heritage.
- Involvement of the local community in the design development, including the installation of artwork generated by the local Sixth Form College
- Clean and Green – “Deliver high quality parks and open spaces”
- Great Place to Live – “Support and promote volunteers effort to improve their local community”

DRAWINGS AND PLANS

31. A drawing detailing the scheme proposals is included in Appendix 2.

PROGRAMME AND DELIVERY

32. Following approval the contractor will be appointed in March 2017 to deliver the project. The contractor will be on site by the end of April with a completion date of Mid-June 2017 allowing an 8 week construction period.

CONCLUSION

33. The proposal is to award the tender to refurbish the existing paved area to create a public open space with associated artwork as detailed in this report at Mussel Tank, Lytham as per the agreed tender specification to Landscape Engineering Ltd, to the value of £107,149.05 + a contingency of £5,357.45 for a total of £112,506.50 for completion before 28th July 2017.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	The report requests that the committee approve a fully-funded addition to the 2017/18 capital programme in respect of the Lytham mussel tank development project. The scheme cost is £130,000 and is to be funded by a grant from the LSA Civic Trust.
Legal	The procurement process is in accordance with the council's contract procedure rules, notwithstanding that the council is acting as accountable body rather than incurring spend on its own behalf.
Community Safety	None arising from this report
Human Rights and Equalities	None arising from this report
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None arising from this report
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None arising from this report

LEAD AUTHOR	TEL	DATE	DOC ID
Darren Bell	01253 658436	24 Feb 2017	

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Committee risk assessment Scheme drawings	9/3/17	https://fylde.cmis.uk.com/fylde/MeetingsCalendar/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/924/Committee/18/Default.aspx

DECISION ITEM



REPORT OF		MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	FINANCE AND DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE		20 MARCH 2017	9
FYLDE COAST HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION TRAILBLAZER				

PUBLIC ITEM

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

SUMMARY

In December 2016 Fylde BC, working jointly with Blackpool Council and Wyre Council were awarded two year Homeless Trailblazer funding from DCLG. This report details how the Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer project will be managed across the Fylde local authorities and within Fylde Borough Council.

The aim of the funding is to develop innovative approaches to preventing homelessness by carrying out prevention activity earlier and work with a wider group of people and reduce the number of people who face a homelessness crisis in the first place.

According to the Financial Procedurals set out in the Constitution this item was considered by the Environmental Health and Housing Committee on at an additional meeting on the 14th March 2017.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended:

1. To note the contents of the report and proposals to undertake the Fylde Coast Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer project across the Fylde Coast Authorities; and
2. To approve a fully- funded revenue budget increase for the total sum of £120,000 (£60,000 in 2017/18 and £60,000 in 2018/19) in line with the recommendation from the Environment, Health and Housing Committee of the 14th March 2017.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

This item was considered by the Environment, Health and Housing Committee on at an additional meeting on the 14th March 2017.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Spending your money in the most efficient way to achieve excellent services (Value for Money)	√
Delivering the services that customers expect of an excellent council (Clean and Green)	√
Working with all partners (Vibrant Economy)	√
To make sure Fylde continues to be one of the most desirable places to live (A Great Place to Live)	√
Promoting Fylde as a great destination to visit (A Great Place to Visit)	

FYLDE COAST HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION TRAILBLAZER PROJECT

'TURNING THE TIDE'

BACKGROUND

1. In December 2016 Fylde BC, working jointly with Blackpool Council and Wyre Council were awarded two year Homeless Trailblazer funding from DCLG. The aim of the funding is to develop innovative approaches to preventing homelessness by carrying out prevention activity earlier and work with a wider group of people and reduce the number of people who face a homelessness crisis in the first place.
2. The bidding prospectus was announced in October 2016. Government is committed to helping the most vulnerable in our society and over the next four years they will invest £139million in central programmes to prevent and reduce homelessness in England. Government has also protected and maintained homelessness prevention funding for councils, reaching £315 million by 2019/20, to ensure that they can provide advice to all those who approach them for help. Fylde BC homelessness prevention funding for 2016/17 was £49,263.
3. The Trailblazer local authorities will work with DCLG to build an evidence base on what works to prevent homelessness, and work with other local authorities to share best practice. The funding is to inform the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Bill. The Bill seeks to ensure a greater focus on the prevention of homelessness and offers some increased protection for single homeless people and childless couples. The Bill has reached Committee Stage in the House of Lords and it is expected receive Royal Assent in the summer of 2017.

HOMELESS WITHIN FYLDE AND THE WIDER FYLDE COAST

4. In 2015/16 Fylde BC completed 92 Homeless Applications and all of these households were found to be homeless or threatened with homelessness within 28 days. Prior to taking a Homeless Application households would have worked with the Authority through the preventative housing advice route, prior to a need for a homeless application. In 2015/16 we dealt with 392 cases for housing advice.
5. Homeless legislation requires that temporary accommodation is provided for all households who appear to be in priority need. Of those 92 homeless presentations; 24 were from families (6 couple with dependent children and 18 lone parent with dependent children), 61 single person households and 7 other households. Fylde BC currently leases 10 units of Homeless Interim accommodation from Progress Housing Group. Table 1 below details the situation with homelessness across the Fylde Coast in 2015/16.

Table 1: Homelessness in Fylde Coast authorities 2015/16

Authority	Total cases of Housing Options advice and support	Prevention and Relief	Homeless apps assessed	Found to be Homeless	Full Duty Accepted *	Total Rough sleepers (Ave per night)
Blackpool	2886	1053	978	687	86	124 (10-15)
Fylde	392	63	92	92	6	5 (2)
Wyre	459	301	29	25	9	15 (2)
Fylde Coast	3737	1417	1099	804	101	144 (14-19)

* Full Duty Accepted - A 'main homelessness duty' is owed where the authority is satisfied that the applicant is eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and falls within a specified priority need group. Such statutorily homeless households are referred to as 'acceptances'

6. Annually local authorities are requested by Government to submit a figure for the number of rough sleepers within their authority either as a physical count or estimate. The Government's definition of a rough sleeper is people sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations or "bashes").

Rough Sleeper estimate Fylde Borough

2014	6
2015	1
2016	5

7. Within Fylde there has been an increase in vulnerable single households applying to the Authority as Homeless and we rely on B&B accommodation. The single homeless households we support often present with a range of issues including drug and alcohol misuse and mental health illnesses. Accessing supported accommodation and/or support can be difficult. There are often barriers to sourcing permanent accommodation for individuals due to previous tenancies, for example tenancies lost through ASB or rent arrears, and lack of affordable one person accommodation in the private and social rented sectors in Fylde.

FYLDE COAST HOMELESS TRAILBLAZER PROJECT

8. Across the Fylde Coast our planned new holistic approach "Turning the Tide", will seek to strengthen services aimed at homelessness prevention by:
 1. Strengthen public understanding of the risks of homelessness by raising awareness among all public sector workers and combining tenancy training programmes across the Fylde Coast to reduce the numbers at risk of homelessness.
 2. Identify and resolve housing issues for vulnerable people known to other public services across the Fylde Coast earlier. This will be achieved by strengthening engagement in social services cases, and dedicated housing support at local hospitals. We will establish better information sharing to track individuals' progress, inform the development of services, and direct the use of resources between agencies across the Fylde Coast. This will prevent homelessness in more cases and set up more sustainable accommodation and support than would otherwise have been achieved.
 3. Further develop access to the private rented sector in Fylde and Wyre to provide a wider range of alternative housing options for anyone at risk of homelessness.
 4. Establish strengthened arrangements for temporary accommodation that is combined with holistic support for other vulnerable individuals who are not owed the full homelessness duty.
 5. Help people with multiple and complex needs by addressing underlying issues to achieve sustained positive outcomes, including bringing intensive support to people through a new Housing First project linked to the Blackpool Fulfilling Lives programme.
9. The project will offer help with training and employment for all individuals who present as homeless through a new More Positive Together programme provided by local social landlords. Outcomes will include more people engaging with training programmes, finding employment, and more sustainable housing.
10. Tenancy Support Workers will be employed across the three authorities to work with complex needs households and a Trailblazer Champion and Hospital Link Worker post will be based within Blackpool BC. The Trailblazer Champion will act as Project Team Leader and facilitate networking and sharing of information between the Tenancy Support Worker posts.

11. Table 2 details the expected outcomes for the full two years of the project across the Fylde Coast authorities.

Table 2 - Expected outcomes from the Fylde Coast Homeless Prevention Trailblazer project

Homelessness prevented	100
Evictions prevented	50
Reduced requirement for Temporary Accommodation	25
Reduced rough sleeping	20
Clients find employment	25
TOTAL	

ACCOUNTABILITY

12. A Terms of Reference for the Homeless Prevention Trailblazer Project will be entered into between the Fylde Coast Local Authorities and each organisation will agree to; work towards the aims of the project as detailed in Section 8 that formed the funding bid; report on the expected outcomes as detailed in Table 2 above; work with DCLG to build an evidence base on what works to prevent homelessness; and, work with other local authorities to share best practice.
13. Partnership meetings will be held monthly for the first 6 months and then quarterly when:
- Suite of job descriptions for the project have been agreed within each organisation's HR procedures
 - Complex needs posts will all be based on a generic job description for a Tenancy Support Worker and amended to reflect each local authority's service needs
 - Posts are in place or work has begun to recruit to posts
 - Project funding has been confirmed and Year 1 funding has been received
14. Fylde Coast Homeless Forum will be arranged by each local authority in turn, being begun by Fylde BC in April 2017. The hosting local authority will Chair the meetings and take minutes. These meetings will be held quarterly and will be attended by all Charities and Statutory Agencies that work across the Fylde Coast to support vulnerable households. Membership of the group shall not be exclusive to these agencies and is therefore open to others.
15. The profile of the bid across the Fylde Coast Authorities is detailed below.

Table 3: Fylde Coast Homeless Prevention Trailblazer

	Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre		Fylde	
	2017/18	2018/19	2017/18	2018/19
Support	£20,000	£10,000	£0	£0
Staff Costs	£273,000	£274,000	£60,000	£60,000
Other	£30,000	£0	£0	£0
Total	£323,000	£284,000	£60,000	£60,000

FYLDE BC HOMELESS TRAILBLAZER PROJECT

16. Within Fylde BC the funding will be used to bring in new services that will engage with households threatened with homelessness earlier and signpost them to agencies for additional support and maximising opportunities that will lead to more stable lifestyles. An overarching aim of the funding is to be in a different approach to preventing homelessness in the longer term and picking up households at risk of becoming homeless sooner rather than at crisis point.

1. Tenancy Support Worker

To support a case load of vulnerable tenants across all client groups who are at high risk of tenancy failure to maximise their independence and minimise the risk of tenancy breakdown within both the social and rented sectors and the homeless. Deliver a support service and co-ordinating packages of support for customers with complex needs such as mental health, drug or alcohol misuse issues, offenders and rough sleepers. The job description for this post is at Appendix 1.

2. Housing Options Customer Services Specialist

Provide a first point of contact, information and advice on Housing Options in respect of Fylde BC Homelessness, Housing Advice and Private Sector services, in a professional and courteous manner. Aiming to deal with 80% of customers at the first point of contact. The job description for this post is at Appendix 2.

3. Smile Mediation

12 month trial of Smile Mediation Services across Community Safety, Environmental Health Services and Housing Services with a purpose to prevent the causes of homelessness, for example landlord disputes and anti-social behaviour and provide individual mediation where individuals or households are struggling to engage with support services available to understand the barriers preventing engagement. An application has been submitted to the Community Safety Partnership for a contribution of £3,000 towards the total costs of £6,000 for 100 units of mediation support.

4. Tenancy Training

12 month continuation of Tenancy Training courses established under the Lancashire Single Homeless funding 2014 - 2016. Course referrals are through Fylde BC Housing Services and will run weekly for a fortnight every month. Within Fylde the Tenancy Training has worked well with over the length of the project with over 50% of referrals made (148) beginning the course, 61 households completing the course and 22 households sourcing accommodation, with 16 of those households sustaining their tenancies for over 6 months.

17. Within Fylde the funding will be allocated as follows:

	2017/18	2018/19	Total	Note
Tenancy Support Worker	£30,000	£30,000	£60,000	Scale 5 awarded by Job Evaluation Panel
Housing Options Customer Services Specialist	£21,000	£21,000	£42,000	Scale 3 awarded by Job Evaluation Panel
Smile Mediation	£3,000	£3,000	£6,000	Awaiting confirmation from Community Safety for contribution of £3,000
Tenancy Training	£4,000	£4,000	£8,000	
Contingency	£2,000	£2,000	£4,000	
TOTAL	£60,000	£60,000	£120,000	

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	This report proposes a fully-funded revenue budget increase for the total sum of £120,000 (£60,000 in 2017/18 and £60,000 in 2018/19).
Legal	Blackpool BC are taking the Lead on the Project and a Terms of Reference will be entered into between all the Fylde Coast Authorities to work towards the aims and outcomes of the project
Community Safety	Funding of £3,000 from the Community safety Partnership will support SMILE mediation services to be available within the Borough for a trial period of 12 months.
Human Rights and Equalities	None
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None

LEAD AUTHOR	TEL	DATE	DOC ID
Kirstine Riding	01253 658569	28/02/2017	

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection

Attached documents

1. Appendix 1: Job Description tenancy Support Worker
2. Appendix 2: Housing Options Customer Services Specialist

APPENDIX 1 - Job Description Tenancy Support Worker

Post Title	Tenancy Support Worker Turning the Tide	Grade	Scale 5
Post No		Other Payments	N/A
Directorate	Development	Hours of work	37 hours per week
Team	Customer Services	Contract Period	2 years fixed term contract
Responsible to	Housing Services Manager	Supervisory Responsibility for	N/A

Job Purpose
<p>To support a case load of vulnerable tenants across all client groups who are at high risk of tenancy failure to maximise their independence and minimise the risk of tenancy breakdown within both the social and rented sectors and the homeless.</p> <p>Deliver a support service and co-ordinating packages of support for customers with complex needs such as mental health, drug or alcohol misuse issues, offenders and rough sleepers.</p>
Responsibilities and Duties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To support tenants and prospective tenants, including those with complex needs such as mental health, drug or alcohol misuse issues, offenders and rough sleepers to improve their quality of life and their ability to manage their tenancies successfully by the provision of assertive and responsive tenancy support ▪ Using a personalised approach undertake assessments of all new referrals developing an individual programme of support, 'Support Plan', for each case with the objective of promoting and encouraging independence and ensuring tenancy sustainment ▪ Co-ordinate multi agency joined up Support Plans that give solutions to: Access to accommodation, pre-tenancy training, work readiness, engagement and relevant health services, volunteering, Job Club, CV writing and interviewing techniques, physical activity and life skills training ▪ Regularly review the Support Plan, monitor outputs and work closely with key statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure that the support needs of the tenant are met ▪ Ensure take up of Housing and other welfare benefits, providing support and assistance to ensure income is maximised where appropriate ▪ Assist tenants with developing budgeting skills and promote regular rent/bond/credit union payments as appropriate ▪ Undertake short term intensive work with tenants whose tenancies are at immediate danger of failing

- Keep up to date with the latest development and initiatives in relation to the range of presenting support needs
- Maintain and build on the network of relationships with other agencies to refer people on for longer term support
- Prepare and maintain appropriate and contemporaneous case files
- Keep up to date records of client progress
- Attend multi-agency meetings where appropriate. This will include amongst others: Child in Need, Child Protection, MAPPA, MARAC and ASB groups
- To effectively deal with customer enquiries/complaints
- To undertake such other duties commensurate with the grading and responsibility of the post as may be necessary for the efficient and effective operation of the Service
- To undertake personal training and development in accordance with service requirements as identified through appraisal and in accordance with professional requirements
- Promote equality of opportunity and valuing diversity within the service
- To support, champion and enhance the competencies and behaviours in the Housing Services Team that are consistent with the culture at Fylde Council
- To ensure that the Housing Services Team works effectively with partner organisations in the local community and across the region
- To ensure that the Housing Services Team remains an integral part of the 'one council, one team' approach at Fylde working effectively with all other service areas.

Prepared By: Kirstine Riding

Date: February 2017

Person Specification

POST TITLE: Tenancy Support Worker – Turning the Tide

DIRECTORATE: Development

POST NO:

COMPETENCIES (All competencies listed are <u>essential</u> to the post)	METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
CUSTOMER FOCUS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treats employees as customers • Puts the customer first and values the customer in everything they do • Is professional, polite and friendly at all times • Appreciates the customer is the only reason there is a job • Challenges whether the existing ways of doing things meet customer need 	Application form / interview
WORKING TOGETHER <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes effective working across different service areas • Accepts and provides constructive challenge • Is an effective team player • Demonstrates the ability to learn from others • Focuses on solutions rather than problems • Works with others to deliver great performance 	Application form / interview
EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly explains the reasons for decisions made • Open, honest and transparent in all communications • Champions success at every opportunity • Demonstrates the ability to listen and understand • Never 'bad mouths' the organisation • Contributes to feedback and engagement at work 	Application form / interview

COMPETENCIES (All competencies listed are <u>essential</u> to the post)	METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
PRIDE & INTERGRITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates enthusiasm and personal commitment • Takes pride in working for Fylde Council • Enjoys the work they do in their chosen career • Has respect for others at all times • Appreciates and values the opinion, interests and views of others • Always represents Fylde in a positive manner 	Application form / interview
STRONG LEADERSHIP MANAGEMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is always accessible and approachable • Leads by example and always displays a positive attitude • Motivates, encourages and supports others to achieve their best • Has a strong focus on doing what is best for the organisation • Manages change as part of the 'day job' • Makes creative suggestions about how to do things better 	Application form / interview

QUALIFICATIONS	ESSENTIAL/DESIRABLE	METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 5 GCSE's @ A – C including English and Maths 	E	Application form / interview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional qualification in housing or a related discipline 	E	

SKILLS / KNOWLEDGE / EXPERIENCE	ESSENTIAL/DESIRABLE	METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant experience of delivering a tenancy support front line service to homeless and vulnerable households, including those with chaotic lifestyles and complex needs 	Essential	Application form / interview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proven experience of assessment interviewing and managing a diverse and demanding caseload 	Essential	Application form / interview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working with data information systems 	Essential	Application form / interview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of lone working on a one to one basis with a vulnerable client group sometimes with complex needs 	Essential	Application form / interview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working knowledge of the benefits system as it applies to the client group 	Essential	Application form / interview

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of providing responding to queries from people facing housing difficulties, interviewing applicants and providing a high standard of tenancy support to prevent homelessness 	Essential	Application form / interview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of assisting clients to access housing within either the private or social rented sector 	Essential	Application form / interview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of the work of the statutory, voluntary and private sector agencies and the role of tenancy support 	Desirable	Application form / interview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of negotiating with organisations to resolve issues impacting on an applicant's tenancy sustainment or re-housing options 	Desirable	Application form / interview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of the legislative framework and best practice guidance surrounding tenancy support for complex needs clients 	Desirable	Application form / interview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to provide effective cover across the wider Housing Team 	Desirable	Application form / interview

<p>Other Requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good interviewing skills • Good negotiation skills • Good investigation skills • Maintain accurate and up to date records of actions taken • Maintain and collate statistical information relevant to the service for annual returns, performance information and service planning • Maintain operational understanding of relevant computer systems • The ability to demonstrate a positive and constructive attitude • Ability to work under pressure, meet deadlines and achieve challenging objectives • Adhere to the Whistle Blowing Policy • Car user/full driving licence
<p><u>DATED: February 2017</u></p>

APPENDIX 2 - Job Description Housing Options Customer Services Specialist

Post Title	Housing Options Customer Service Specialist – Turning the Tide	Grade	Scale 3
Post No		Other Payments	N/A
Directorate	Resources	Hours of work	37 hours per week
Team	Customer Services	Contract Period	Fixed term 2 year contract
Responsible to	Housing Services Manager and Customer Service Manager/Team Leader	Supervisory Responsibility for	N/A

Job Purpose
To provide a first point of contact, information and advice on Housing Options in respect of Fylde BC Homelessness, Housing Advice and Private Sector services, in a professional and courteous manner. Aiming to deal with 80% of customers at the first point of contact.
Responsibilities and Duties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deal with all initial housing enquiries from customers to provide a comprehensive front line housing service and signposting to other organisations with a focus on preventing homelessness wherever possible ▪ Provide advice and assistance to households on the range of housing options available to them in Fylde and make appointments with the Homelessness and Housing Advice Officers and Private Sector Team, as appropriate. ▪ Assist clients to access housing within either the private or social rented sector with appropriate support required by completing and updating their Choice Based lettings application and/or accessing the Rent Bond scheme. ▪ To assist with the co-ordination and management of MyHomeChoice Fylde Coast ▪ To provide cover and support for Customer Service Team Leader during periods of absence; including complaints handling and staff rotas. ▪ To provide service roll-out to Customer Service team and provide ongoing training, coaching and support in housing services. ▪ To receive full and accurate information from customers to enable timely resolution of enquiries in order to avoid the need for the customer to re-enquire, and to update relevant systems and complete all paperwork as necessary ▪ To display an efficient, effective, professional and sympathetic manner when dealing with customers, treating all enquiries in a fair, sensitive and confidential manner ▪ To communicate effectively with customers and explain complex issues in a clear and concise

manner

- To proactively work alongside colleagues from the Housing Team and key organisations within the public, private and voluntary sectors to enable the provision of holistic housing options services for the residents of Fylde
- To fully resolve customer enquiries relating to all Council housing services via all channels, telephone, face to face and electronic, and in doing so to provide specialist help and advice without the need to refer the enquiry elsewhere, working to the agreed target for first time resolution
- To make unprompted extra efforts to satisfy customer needs and avoid customer complaints, taking ownership of enquiries and proactively feeding back information to customers
- To communicate with other directorates within the authority and other sectors, where appropriate, in order to fully resolve customer enquiries and ensure the confidentiality and security of the Council's and customers data
- To identify and resolve reoccurring customer service issues, recognise trends and suggest solutions for service improvement
- To assist with the successful integration of new service areas, systems and processes into the Customer Services arena, enthusiastically promoting the Council's change initiatives
- To assist with the ongoing development and promotion of electronic service delivery and self-service channels
- To continually examine the level of service provided with a view to advocating improvements
- To ensure compliance with the Council's Corporate Customer Service Standards and Customer Charter
- To ensure that all processes are carried out in accordance with current legislation, regulations and Council policy, with particular emphasis on Health and Safety, customer care and data protection
- To take responsibility for the immediate work area and the surrounding environment ensuring health and safety requirements are adhered to at all times
- To assist with changing to the new "Make A Difference" culture of both Council staff and Fylde residents
- Any other duties commensurate with the grade of the post

Prepared By: Kirstine Riding

Date: February 2017

Person Specification

POST TITLE: Customer Service Specialists – Turning the Tide

DIRECTORATE: Development Services

POST NO:

COMPETENCIES (All competencies listed are <u>essential</u> to the post)	METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
CUSTOMER FOCUS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treats employees as customers • Puts the customer first and values the customer in everything they do • Is professional, polite and friendly at all times • Appreciates the customer is the only reason there is a job • Challenges whether the existing ways of doing things meet customer need 	Application form / interview
WORKING TOGETHER <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes effective working across different service areas • Accepts and provides constructive challenge • Is an effective team player • Demonstrates the ability to learn from others • Focuses on solutions rather than problems • Works with others to deliver great performance 	Application form / interview
EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly explains the reasons for decisions made • Open, honest and transparent in all communications • Champions success at every opportunity • Demonstrates the ability to listen and understand • Never 'bad mouths' the organisation • Contributes to feedback and engagement at work 	Application form / interview

COMPETENCIES (All competencies listed are <u>essential</u> to the post)	METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
PRIDE & INTERGRITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates enthusiasm and personal commitment • Takes pride in working for Fylde Council • Enjoys the work they do in their chosen career • Has respect for others at all times • Appreciates and values the opinion, interests and views of others • Always represents Fylde in a positive manner 	Application form / interview
STRONG LEADERSHIP MANAGEMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is always accessible and approachable • Leads by example and always displays a positive attitude • Motivates, encourages and supports others to achieve their best • Has a strong focus on doing what is best for the organisation • Manages change as part of the 'day job' • Makes creative suggestions about how to do things better 	Application form / interview

QUALIFICATIONS	ESSENTIAL/DESIRABLE	METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
<p><u>You must be able to demonstrate that you have the experience in:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing effective relationships with key stakeholders 2. Identifying and resolving customer service issues, recognising trends and implementing solutions for service improvements 3. Assisting with the development of innovative practices and procedures 4. Working in a busy, customer focused related environment for a minimum of 12 months 5. Engaging in active customer consultation and satisfaction exercises <p><u>You must be able to demonstrate that you are:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Able to commit to ongoing personal and professional development 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Essential 2. Essential 3. Desirable 4. Essential 5. Desirable 1. Essential 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Application form/ interview 2. Application form/ interview 3. Application form/ interview 4. Application form/ interview 5. Application form/ interview 1. Application form/ interview

SKILLS / KNOWLEDGE / EXPERIENCE	ESSENTIAL/DESIRABLE	METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
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<p><u>Skills/Knowledge</u></p> <p><u>You must be able to demonstrate you have the ability to:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communicate effectively, oral and written 2. Work under pressure, with the minimum of supervision and to tight deadlines 3. Respond to situations quickly and demonstrate flexibility 4. Be an excellent team player 5. Understand, respond to and satisfy customer needs and expectations, centring and maintaining attention on the customer at all times 6. Adapt your behaviour to each and every situation and deal with the public in a sympathetic and understanding manner <p><u>You must be able to demonstrate that you have a good understanding of:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The confidentiality and security procedures relating to the Council's and customers data 2. Front and back office processes across the Council 3. Microsoft products and Windows applications 4. The Council's procedures in relation to Health and Safety 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Essential 2. Essential 3. Essential 4. Essential 5. Essential 6. Essential 1. Desirable 2. Desirable 3. Essential 4. Desirable 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Application form/ interview 2. Application form/ interview 3. Application form/ interview 4. Application form/ interview 5. Application form/ interview 6. Application form/ interview Application form/ interview Application form/ interview Application form/ interview Application form/ interview
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<p>Other Requirements</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Flexible approach to working arrangements 2. To be smart and presentable in appearance at all times, wearing the Council's corporate uniform where appropriate 3. To take responsibility for the quality of service provided, to contribute to the teams objectives and to initiate and support service improvements 4. Able to align working hours with Customer demand and work in any of the Council locations
<p><u>DATED: February 2017</u></p>

INFORMATION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE	FINANCE AND DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE	20 MARCH 2017	10

EMPLOYEE SURVEY 2016

PUBLIC ITEM

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

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

Every year the Council carries out an employee survey to determine levels of satisfaction with various aspects of the organisation and to identify areas where improvements can be made to enhance the experience of working at Fylde for every employee. The survey provides an opportunity for all staff to have their say by giving feedback on their work place whilst at the same time influencing future decisions about their work environment.

The outcomes from the survey are published and an Action Plan agreed that is aimed at making improvements for employees based on the analysis of what they have said. The overall level of employee satisfaction from the 2016 survey is exceptionally good with a significant majority of employees 98.4% indicating they enjoy what they do and they are proud to work for Fylde. This is consistent with previous surveys over the last few years providing a strong evidence base for the outcomes.

Regular employee engagement and taking action in response to feedback from surveys are part of good management in any organisation and it is the responsibility of senior officers to facilitate and lead continuous improvement. The survey is designed to canvass anonymously the majority views although the opportunity for individual comment is provided, the individual comments are analysed and discussed by employee working groups with any clear themes drawn out for further action.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Employee survey 2016, the data is taken from the completed responses to the questionnaire.

WHY IS THIS INFORMATION BEING GIVEN TO THE COMMITTEE?

The information is reported every year to members to provide an overview of the current views and opinions of the workforce and to provide an indication of the current levels of employee satisfaction which reflect the management and leadership at the council.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Allan Oldfield (allano@fylde.gov.uk) 01253 658500

Alex Scrivens (alex.scrivens@fylde.gov.uk) 01253 658543

ATTACHED DOCUMENTS

Appendix 1: Employee Survey Report

Appendix 2: Employee Survey Action Plan



Employee Survey 2016



INTRODUCTION

This report outlines the outcomes from the Employee Survey 2016 including the issues raised that will be tackled in the coming year. It is a clear and concise summary the findings that will be used to directly influence decision making on organisational behaviour and the work environment at Fylde.

The focus is deliberately on the 'majority' view or the consensus, specific individual concerns that are not consistent with the majority view are important, but not for this survey, the format for addressing individual concerns is with your line manager or at your appraisal. The outcomes may prompt some employees to consider their perspective of the organisation after reflecting on the prevailing view or culture which could be an issue to discuss further.

The opportunity to provide additional comment was available with some feedback about the questionnaire itself, this will be taken into consideration as part of the review of the survey and if necessary changes made. However, it is important the questionnaire does not change significantly in order to make comparison over time to assess whether we are improving or not. A 'don't know' or 'not applicable' option was not available because as an employee in the organisation you should be able to respond to every question whether factual or your opinion. When comparing outcomes against the 2012 survey, all satisfaction levels show an increase demonstrating that we are moving in the right direction to achieve excellence.

THE RESPONSE RATE

The response rate for the 2016 survey is 54%, or 135 out of a possible 248 employees in post at the time the survey was carried out, lower than 2015 which had a return of 68%. The aim is to have a culture where there is open communication, it is better if more employees have their say. However, 113 employees chose not to have their say suggesting there is room to improve.

There are two schools of thought on none respondents to employee surveys:

- 1) Employees do not feel their view is valued or will make a difference, they are dissatisfied for some reason but chose not to say why, even when given the opportunity to do so. The 'I don't care' and 'I am not signing up to this' employee, they feel by not participating they are demonstrating their dissatisfaction, the challenge is to support these individuals to have their say through whatever mechanism best suits them.
- 2) Employees are content and happy, choosing not to have their say because they feel the outcome won't be changed by their contribution alone. The assumption is that people only choose to complete a questionnaire if they have something to raise, a criticism or concern, by not completing the questionnaire the inference is that everything is fine. However, it is preferable if as many employees as possible have their say.

The reality is none respondents include content and discontent employees. Every effort will be made to increase the response rate. The responses are completely anonymous and cannot be attributed to an individual, it is only the majority view the survey is concerned with.

THE RAW DATA

The data from the survey is available on the intranet. Minor edits had to be made to a small number of comments without changing the sentiment because it may be possible to identify individuals. This is consistent with the competency behaviour around integrity. Constructive criticism is welcome and encouraged, the raw data has been published for all staff to view but it is appropriate to ensure that individuals cannot be identified.

All percentage figures presented in this report are based on the number of employees that responded to the question.

SECTION 1 – YOUR PERFORMANCE

This section examines whether employees have clarity about what they should be doing, targets, goals and objectives and whether this is managed the finding are:

- 99.2% of staff are clear about their targets and objectives, an increase from 96.6% in 2015
- 95.5% of staff have performance measured against clear objectives, a big improvement on 88.8% in 2015
- 94.8% regularly discuss training needs with their manager, this is consistent with the 95.2% in 2015
- 92.6% of staff receive regular feedback on their performance, an increase from 89.6% in 2015
- 94.0% of staff felt their performance is evaluated fairly, an increase on 91.2% in 2015

The responses generally show improvement on already great results, there will always be room to improve but the direction of travel is positive. Comments were left by 12 employees with a mixture of positive feedback and concerns, issues raised included the appraisal system and performance feedback:

- I am treated as an equal by my work mates and supervisors and management
- My appraisal was a very positive experience
- Very happy working at Fylde Council and I am lucky to have a really good Manager.
- Manager very fair in appraisal/feedback with 360 degree feedback and open discussions on own team, own/corporate targets and future.
- This is a great place to work and I have only been here six months

Comments must be put into context, they are individual however some concern was expressed over follow up actions agreed when performance is discussed. The primary responsibility for addressing this remains with managers but the employee must reflect and consider what action they can take. In response the following actions will be taken.

Your Performance – Action 1

Agreed actions from performance appraisals or discussions about employee development must have clear responsibility and a target for completion. Agreed actions must be followed up.

SECTION 2 – YOUR VOICE

This section dealt with communication, in particular whether there is sufficient regular opportunity to engage and whether employees are informed about what is happening at work. The findings are:

- 92.5% of staff felt there is opportunity to communicate with senior management, a small decrease from 93.5% in 2015
- 93.3% of staff feel informed about what is happening at the Council, a decrease from 95.1% in 2015
- 89.6% of staff feel informed about what is happening in their service, a decrease from 94.3% in 2015
- 85.1% of staff felt that they were able to provide feedback on the way things are done, a decrease from 92.7% in 2015
- 98.5% of staff are willing to give the extra effort to help the Council succeed compared to 99.2% in 2015

- 92.5% are encouraged to contribute ideas and suggestions, a slight decrease on 93.5% 2015

Though the results are very good communication is always a challenge. Across the board there is a decrease in satisfaction in this area identifying the need to take action. Additional comments were left by 16 employees including:

- There is no incentive to go the extra mile with no hope for a pay rise, therefore this could lead to despondence.
- The new manager and team leaders on our team are very helpful and help create a very positive atmosphere. We work hard but still no how to have fun.
- Having recently been involved in the Time Lean Systems Training and given ideas to ways in which the council can become self-sufficient I feel I have been given the opportunity to offer my opinions.
- The nature of my work means I sometimes need to work unsocial hours and the council have assisted me in having a workplace/home life balance.
- You are encouraged to offer opinions and ideas provided they fit with what is wanted to be heard.
- When one team one council isn't being applied by all the departments it makes you think why bother.
- I know exactly what I need to do and I can influence how my work changes by having a say.
- I think the 5 points are a fantastic tool and a great way to be kept informed about things that are happening in Fylde.
- Although communication from the Chief Executive is outstanding, I do feel that sometimes it could be better at other levels, just knowing what different sections do would be useful.

Communication is a two way process and as such the responsibility for addressing these issues is with all parties concerned while recognising the fact that it is not possible to ever please everyone. To attempt to please everyone is a futile task that makes the situation worse. However, a lack of consistency is an issue management need to address.

Your Voice – Action 1

A comprehensive review of communications aimed at ensuring the right information is provided to the right people in the right way at the right time. A cross departmental working group will be established to carry out the review.

SECTION 3 – YOUR MANAGER

This section focused on the direct line manager exploring the relationship between employees and their manager, the findings are:

- 90.9% of staff feel their manager is good at managing people, an increase from 85.3% in 2015
- 94.7% of staff felt their manager is open and honest, increase from 90.2% in 2015
- 97.7% of staff felt their manager is approachable, an increase from 95.1% in 2015
- 87.2% felt their manager is good at motivating people, an increase from 83.7% in 2015
- 83.4% of staff felt poor performance is dealt with, an increase from 80.5% in 2015

The outcomes in every section of this category are encouraging and improving over time. Dealing with poor performance has been a challenge in the past and it has improved year on year. Comments were left by 20 employees and are listed below:

- My manager is very approachable
- I have had a few different line managers for a few years. They have all been available.
- Last year our manager allowed someone to bring their dog in to work. It was a nice touch.
- Our department has been through a review that has delivered a more streamline team with more management structure in place. Our monthly meetings give all staff the opportunity to update on work they are doing and our manager gives us an update on corporate issues.
- I feel I can approach my manager with any issues I have and they will be dealt with in a fair manner and I know I will always have support
- My manager is a great leader and a great team player
- Some areas of poor performance are not dealt with, however this is improving.
- We have some strong characters in our office, it must be difficult to manage these people at times, but my line manager could set a better example when it comes to a work ethos.

The actions necessary to address these issues will focus on the development of managers across the organisation but the responsibility to achieve the outcomes required to deliver excellence rests with everyone.

Your Manager - Action 1

Training and development on management and leadership will be focused on developing a consistent approach across the council that supports the behaviours that shape the culture at Fylde.

SECTION 4 - YOUR COUNCIL

This section examines corporate behaviour and culture to determine the level of understanding and engagement in corporate initiatives in particular improvement and change. In responding to the questions in this section the term 'management' referred to the senior and middle managers rather than the line manager. The findings are:

- 95.4% of staff felt management communicate a clear vision for the Council, a decrease from 95.1% in 2015
- 95.4% of staff felt they have sufficient communication with management, a decrease from 97.5% in 2015
- 86.3% of staff feel improvement is managed well at the Council, a decrease from 91.8% in 2015
- 96.2% understand the behaviour and culture of the Council, consistent with 96.7% in 2015

Whilst the satisfaction levels are encouraging it is clear that key messages about the competencies and behaviour are not having the same impact and the management of change needs to be communicated more effectively. There were 15 comments made by staff including:

- There are people in the team who are deliberately difficult/disruptive and oppose change and different working practices which would benefit the team. Certainly not team players and really should be looking for other employment where this behaviour would be tolerated.
- There have been a number of changes which have been dealt with in an organised manner.
- The ever changing face of the council will always bring challenges but Fylde Council have dealt with these in a great manner and always kept employees informed when needed.
- The vision of the council "To Achieve Excellence" is one that most employees seek to achieve
- I have never met my senior manager.
- I think the opportunity to join in with improvement initiatives such the bright ideas and income generating schemes is great.
- Some changes / improvement is managed well and some is managed poorly.
- A lot of good ideas are developed but require an individual to drive the change agenda.
- I haven't been here for 12 months yet, but I think most people accept change, but there is still some fear around change with 'We've never done it that way before'.
- New staff bring new ideas. On the whole, the council's culture is fantastic and the employees have really bought into it.
- I support the Council in everything it is trying to achieve and I am very proud to work for such an organisation. My work does enable me to communicate with members of the public and from the feedback I get from them they can see that the Council is working hard for them and I think there is a realisation out there that when decisions go against them it is not actually the Council that has made those decisions but the Government. So I think we are changing people's perceptions of the Council for the better.

Your Council – Action 1

The key messages and behaviours associated to the competencies that shape the culture of the council need to be reinforced through simple but effective methods i.e. posters, screensavers, stories.

SECTION 5 – THE CULTURE

This section included a different style of question developed to assess the prevailing culture of an organisation. The questions are deliberately simple and objective therefore a 'don't know' or 'not applicable' option is not required. The findings are:

- 98.4% of employees know what is expected of them at work, this was lower than 100% in 2015
- 90.7% of staff have the opportunity every day to do what they do best, lower than 91.5% in 2015
- 71.3% received recognition or praise for doing good work in the past two weeks, slight decrease from 72.0% in 2015
- 93.0% said their supervisor / manager or someone at work seem to care about them as a person, increase from 91.5% in 2015
- 80.6% said there is someone at work who encourages them to develop, a decrease from 83.9% in 2015

- 88.2% of staff feel their opinions count at work, slightly higher than the 87.3% in 2015
- 85.2% of staff feel good about the vision 'to achieve excellence', a decrease from 93.2% in 2015
- 93.0% think work colleagues are committed to achieving quality at work, compared with 94.4% in 2015
- 80.6% said they have a good friend at work, a decrease from 89.07% in 2015
- 91.4% of staff have had a conversation about their progress at work in the last 6 month, consistent with 91.5% in 2015
- 87.6% in the last year have had opportunities at work to learn and grow, a decrease from 95.1% in 2015
- 98.4% enjoy the work that they do at Fylde, consistent with 98.3% in 2015

The outcomes in the section are exceptional with improvement in some areas, there is clear evidence that a culture of support, empowerment, recognition and team working is embedded at Fylde but probably not in every service area.

The majority of the comments made in this section were constructive about the challenges we face together and progress made so far. Themes of inconsistency, the tough economic climate and limited development opportunities came through in the comments which include:

- Sometimes there is a feeling that staff without a computer are not part of the team.
- There is still a culture of jobs for the people if your face fits you get on. There is also a 'don't do as I do, do as I say' attitude amongst senior managers.
- It's been a hard year for us with a lot of staff leaving but we get on with the job.
- Despite tough times in local government as an employee at Fylde I feel there is job security and satisfaction.
- I am proud to work for the council. I also reside in the area and it's a great place to both live and work.
- There are some great staff who work here and the new injection of blood into the council from a corporate perspective has been positive.
- I enjoy working at Fylde Council. I always try to do my best. I believe that I give value for money.
- We recently had changes in our department which meant going from a small team to a larger team. I was a bit apprehensive at first having formed a good working relationship with my colleagues but the transition was handled really well and my new work colleagues are as good at their job if not better than my previous colleagues and are equally as friendly.
- The Peer Review outlined just how good the staff are at Fylde.
- I didn't have an opportunity to develop, due to the fact my previous manager didn't process my PD.
- Me, and most of my colleagues enjoy coming to work at Fylde.
- I feel like I have been one of the biggest supporters of the changes implemented since, unfortunately it seems like we are starting to go backwards. What is the point in repeating all the strap lines if there is no substance behind it or if there are still some departments who point blankly refuse to join in?
- I like that Fylde wants to be more like private industry lean/effective but still caring for the customers.
- Fylde has many unsung heroes who don't always claim headlines in the honours list and who work very much under the radar, their knowledge is valuable to the success of the Council.

- I really enjoy working for Fylde Council, I think all the staff are great and have made me feel very welcome since I started.
- Some employees struggle with change because they don't want to change.
- I think the council has too many members now, the staff have reduced the members haven't.
- Fylde Council is a great place to work, we should all count ourselves lucky.
- Fylde has a family feel.
- I have worked in three councils and never met the Chief Executive - at Fylde I met him the first day and he cares about you as a person.
- It is a good place to work with many friendly and welcoming faces. The Team Talks help with meeting new employees and management.
- I have received praise in the last two weeks but only because I had my appraisal in last two weeks; it is not a typical two weeks. I only get praise during my appraisal.
- In the last six months I have talked to someone about my progress but that is with a former colleague and at my appraisal.
- Some colleagues are committed to quality work, some do everything they can to avoid work.
- We are a long way forward from where we were 5-10 years ago.
- A form like this should be created for the members. I feel the members and the employees are trying to achieve different things. The members and the council should be working towards the same thing, the best for the whole of Fylde.
- In my opinion, the members are reluctant to change the status quo, I understand Fylde is a great place to live and work, but everything can be improved.

The **FINAL QUESTION** was asked to determine whether employees were satisfied with working at Fylde, to establish if they enjoy what they do and are proud to do it for Fylde, the outcome is:

- 98.4% of employees said that they were satisfied with Fylde as a place to work compared to 98.3% in 2015

This is encouraging and provides evidence of the strong foundation in place to support the challenging issues we face. The small number of employees that are not satisfied will change their situation by understanding what it is that has led to them being dissatisfied. Once this has been established they can change their situation, if the source of their dissatisfaction is something the Council can help with then all the support necessary will be provided. This message is reinforced whenever the issue of job satisfaction is discussed, it can be uncomfortable for some employees but it is the most constructive means of achieving an outcome that is best for the employee.

The Culture – Action

Employees not satisfied with Fylde as a place to work will get all the support they need to change their situation.

CONCLUSION

The message from the employee survey is overwhelmingly positive with almost every area showing improvement on last year and some showing a big increase over the last three years, in particular:

- 99% aware of objectives and targets
- 95% performance is measured against clear objectives
- 94% discuss training & development needs with managers
- **98% willing to give extra effort to help the council succeed**
- 97% say their manager is approachable

- 95% say management communicate a clear vision for the Council
- 96% say they understand the behaviours and culture of the Council
- **98% said they know what is expected of them at work**
- **98% enjoy the work that they do at Fylde**
- **98% are satisfied with Fylde as a place to work**

Comparing figures with 2016 from 2012:

- 95.5% have discussed my training & development needs with my manager – **30% improvement**
- 92.6% now received feedback on my performance and progress - **26% improvement**
- 92.6% think performance is evaluated fairly - **12% improvement**
- 90% think their manager is good at managing people – **13% improvement**
- 87% think their manager motivates me to be more effective in my job – **13% improvement**
- 83% think poor performance is dealt with effectively in my team – **13% improvement**
- 91% in the last 6 months has someone talked to them about your progress at work – **29% improvement**
- 87% have in the last year had opportunities at work to learn and grow – **13% improvement**

The number of positive comments in the survey is evidence of the progress made to move towards a positive culture where pride, trust, openness and enjoyment prevail. This cannot be achieved by management alone, it requires a concerted conscious effort by everyone in the organisation, everyone should be proud of the progress made in what is the most challenging time for local government.

There are challenges ahead, and there always will be, that we must address together to sustain the culture we have developed. There is inconsistency, some areas are changing at a different pace with a number of employees still unable to demonstrate the behaviour required to embed the competencies. More support and understanding is required but in some instances there is an inability, conscious or sub conscious, to work with or support changes made, wherever this is evident it must be identified and addressed.

Every employee has a responsibility to ensure that it is possible for everyone to enjoy working at Fylde. The inconsistency still evident is a reminder of the need to continue to improve but it is essential to recognise that it is not possible to please everyone, the majority is the best that can be achieved and the results of this survey demonstrate continued excellent performance.

“Some employees struggle with change because they don't want to change”

EMPLOYEE SURVEY 2016 – INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS

The individual comments from the 2016 employee survey are listed below in two categories. It should be put into context that these are individual comments, each statement on its own cannot be representative of the organisation. Some comments are very encouraging and others highlight issues everyone needs to be aware of and explore where necessary its validity and extent. Employee workshops, led by employees, will be asked to consider the comments to draw out any common themes that may require further action to address.

Encouraging comments...	Comments to consider or develop.....
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good boss, good team • I am treated as an equal by my work mates, supervisors and management • My appraisal was a very positive experience • Very happy working at Fylde Council and I am lucky to have a really good Manager. • I had the opportunity to discuss my training needs and feedback on my performance during my appraisal which proved beneficial to developing my role further and taking advantage of opportunities • Manager is fair in appraisal/feedback with open discussions on own team, own/corporate targets and future. • This is a great place to work and I have only been here six month. • The new manager and team leaders are very helpful and create a positive atmosphere. We work hard but know how to have fun. • Good communication system through regular team briefs. • Having recently been involved in the Time Lean Systems Training and given ideas to ways in which the council can become self-sufficient I feel I have been given the opportunity to offer my opinions. • The nature of my work means I sometime need to work unsocial hours, the council have assisted me in having a workplace/home life balance. • But on the whole, the communication from top to bottom and back again is very good. • I always feel I can approach senior managers about issues within my role and they are always willing to assist in any way they can. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed restructure is taking too long, and employees have been left in limbo. • I think employees objectives should be geared around the Corporate Plan, this would help Fylde to deliver its main objectives. • I'm not sure how the appraisal process works in others areas, but I think there should be some flexibility built in for different services, one size doesn't always fit all. • I believe that I always give 100% but there are occasions when I go beyond my remit and this is not necessarily recognised. • Feel under valued • There is no incentive to go the extra mile with no hope for a pay rise. • I would love to see more boats available on Fairhaven Lake. • It would be encouraging if the council and schools could work together on leisure activities. • There is evidence of favoured sections / departments where staffing and resources have been bolstered and financially rewarded, yet other sections left to struggle. • You are encouraged to offer opinions and ideas provided they fit with what is wanted to be heard. • One team one council isn't being applied by all departments and makes you think why bother. • We have had limited erratic team briefs, not all staff get manager feedback from the briefs, they just include line managers. • Some feelings of isolation • Team Briefs could be tailored to get messages cascaded down, but I feel the 'Team' part is lost as these are very generic.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know exactly what I need to do and I can influence how my work changes by having a say • I think the 5 points are a fantastic tool and this is a great way to be kept informed about things that are happening in Fylde. • Best place I have worked at • My manager is very approachable • I would assume if there was any issue with poor performance it would be dealt with effectively by my manager. • I have had a few different line managers for a few years. Sometimes in quick succession, they have all been available. • Last year our manager allowed someone to bring their dog in to work. It was a very nice touch. • Our department has been through a review with more staff and a new team in place delivering a more streamline team. • Monthly meetings give staff the opportunity to update on work they are doing and our manager an update on corporate issues. • I feel I can approach my manager with any issues I have and they will be dealt with in a fair manner and I know I will always have his support. • Work isn't school, I would like to think no manger needs to motivate or have a discussion about not doing what you are paid to do. • My manager is a great leader and a great team player • Incredibly supportive manager • Issues have improved over the past 12 months. • Some areas of poor performance are not dealt with, however this is improving. • Relatively new Manager but he has ensured a smooth transition for staff and is excellent. • Excellent at communicating how much sickness is being taken. • There have been a number of changes at Fylde which have been dealt with in an organised manner. • The ever changing face of the council will always bring challenges but Fylde Council have dealt with these in a great manner and always kept their employees informed when needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication from the Chief Executive is outstanding, I do feel that sometimes it could be better at other levels, knowing what different sections do would be useful. • The relationship between some service areas is challenging. • Poor performance is not always dealt with effectively. • I do not know if poor performance is being challenged and dealt with such issues are quite rightly addressed privately. • Whilst poor performance is dealt with effectively in my team this does not appear to be the case across the council – still. • Performance is dealt with effectively in my team but I do not believe there is a consistent approach across the organisation. • I think my line manager could do more by simply setting a better example when it comes to a work ethos. • There are people in the team who are deliberately difficult/disruptive and opposed to change and different working practices which would benefit the team. • Employees that are not team players should be looking for other employment where this behaviour would be tolerated. • Most of Fylde Council behave in a positive manner but it is sometimes difficult to engage with partners in the same way. Some don't pick up the phone even when we know they are available. • The vision is confusing, we get contradictory messages which are not adhered to by everyone. • Councillors do not subscribe to the same message as the staff. • Comments have been ignored in preference for the quantitative data. • I understand the behaviour and culture but it is clear not everybody does or they don't care and nothing is done to tackle this. • It's not good to read about time off sick when you've had no time off sick. • I have never met my senior manage. • We need to now do more to be a self-sufficient council. • A lot of good ideas are developed but require individuals to drive this change agenda.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vision of the council "To Achieve Excellence" is one that most employees seek to achieve • I think the opportunity to join in with improvement initiatives such the bright ideas and income generating schemes is great. • The support is encouraging corporately which makes me feel involved and my creative side to explore new ways of working. • Have one comment box only at the end of the survey titled 'Say whatever you want to say about whatever you want to help improve your workplace' • Fylde is a great place to work, and I enjoy my job, however personally I think but more teambuilding and social events need to be organised to bond the staff. • I like that Fylde wants to be more like private industry lean/effective but still caring for the customer. • I really like working for Fylde Council, and only a few employees are a problem • Some changes / improvement is managed well and some is managed poorly • I haven't been here 12 month yet, but most people accept change, there is still some fear and people challenge some change as 'We've never done it that way before'. • New staff bring new ideas. On the whole, the council's culture is fantastic and the employees have really bought into it. • I support the Council in everything it is trying to achieve and I am very proud to work for such an organisation. • My work enables me to communicate with members of the public and they can see that the Council is working hard for them. • I think we are changing people's perceptions of the Council for the better. • Fantastic place to work. • It's been a hard year for us with a lot of staff leaving but we get on with the job. • Really enjoy working at Fylde. • Despite tough times in local government as an employee at Fylde I feel there is job security and satisfaction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle managers need engagement, not just officers and "senior management". • Management communicate a clear vision for the Council but I do not believe that all staff and Members subscribe to it. • Don't see senior manager very often. • Staff without a computer are not part of the team benefits are only for these who use computers. • Procedures need to be applied consistently across the council to all staff. • Service areas need to work effectively together as one team. • There is still a culture of jobs for the boys and if your face fits you get on. • I do not believe ALL of my colleagues are committed to achieving quality at work. • Great place to work but work load is growing with less people, a point will come where it becomes too much for some people to cope. • The proposed restructure is taking too long, employees have been left in limbo by management. • I didn't have an opportunity to develop, due to the fact my previous manager didn't process my PD. • I have been one of the biggest supporters of the changes implemented, unfortunately it seems like we are goomg backwards. Strap lines are no good if there is no substance or some departments point blankly refuse to join in. • Fylde has many unsung heroes who don't always claim the headlines in the honours list and who work very much under the radar, their knowledge is valuable to the success of the Council. • Some employees struggle with change because they don't want to change. • I think the council has too many members now, staff have reduced members haven't. • Some obstacles prevent me providing great customer service some departments and partners do not answer phones and/or refuse to call customers back
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- I am proud to work for the council. I also reside in the area and it's a great place to both live and work.
- There are some great staff who work here, the new injection of blood from a corporate perspective has been positive.
- I enjoy working at Fylde Council. I always try to do my best. I believe that I not only give value for the money in wages / training / equipment etc. but also time spent by managers and colleagues.
- We recently went from a small team to a larger team. I was a bit apprehensive at first having formed a good working relationship with my colleagues but the transition was handled really well and my new work colleagues are as good at their job if not better than my previous colleagues and are equally as friendly.
- The Peer Review outlined just how good the staff are at Fylde
- We get all the information we need to know about the council, I also believe some people just don't read what is put before them.
- Me, and most of my colleagues enjoy coming to work at Fylde.
- I really enjoy working for Fylde Council, I think all the staff are great and have made me feel very welcome since I started.
- Fylde Council is a great place to work, we should all count ourselves lucky.
- Fylde has a family feel.
- I have worked in three councils and never met the Chief Executive - at Fylde I met him the first day and he cares about you as a person.
- A really nice place with really nice people - I am happy at Fylde
- It is a good place to work with many friendly and welcoming faces.
- The team talks help with meeting new employees and management.
- In the last six months I have talked to someone about my progress
- I like the corporate logo.
- We are a long way forward to improving from where we were 5-10 years ago. "
- The Five Points is like a weekly Thank You to everyone and a real good touch

- I feel that once the ongoing building work has been completed, the council can continue its mission to achieve excellence.
- Stronger ICT systems would improve the council further.
- I have received praise in the last two weeks but only because I had my appraisal in last two weeks. I only get praise at my appraisal.
- A colleague encouraged me to develop but left the Council because they were not encouraged to contribute as much as they clearly could have done and became demoralised.
- Fylde is a good place to work if the nature of your job allows you to make changes yourself but if not it is easy to become demoralised.
- Some colleagues are committed to quality work, some do everything they can to avoid work.
- I feel the members and the employees are trying to achieve different things. The members and the council should be working towards the same things and want the best for the whole of Fylde.
- In my opinion, the members are reluctant to change the status quo, I understand Fylde is a great place to live and work but everything can be improved.
- There is clearly going to be some fundamental change to the Council and ways of working prior to 2020. It is important that officers are kept fully informed in order to alleviate uncertainty.

Employee Survey Questions	2016 Results	2015 Results	2014 Results	2013 Results	2012 Results
SECTION 1 – YOUR PERFORMANCE					
1. I am aware of my objectives and targets	99.2%	96.6%	96.6%	96.5%	92.5%
2. My performance is measured against clear objectives	95.5%	88.8%	92.1%	87.0%	88.9%
3. I have discussed my training & development needs with my manager	94.8%	95.2%	92.1%	71.8%	64.8%
4. I have received feedback on my performance and progress	92.6%	89.6%	85.8%	75.3%	66.0%
5. I think my performance is evaluated fairly	94.0%	91.2%	86.9%	80.6%	82.0%
SECTION 2 – YOUR VOICE					
7. I feel that there is opportunity to communicate directly with Directors & CEX	92.5%	93.5%	90.9%	88.7%	92.2%
8. I am informed about what is happening in the council	93.3%	95.1%	93.2%	90.5%	86.1%
9. I am informed about what is happening in my service area	89.6%	94.3%	92.6%	87.5%	81.2%
10. I feel able to provide feedback on the way things are done in the council	85.1%	92.7%	88.0%	83.9%	86.6%
11. I am willing to give extra effort to help the council succeed	98.5%	99.2%	99.5%	98.2%	95.8%
12. I am encouraged to offer opinions and ideas	92.5%	93.5%	90.2%	86.3%	85.5%
SECTION 3 – YOUR MANAGER					
14. My manager is good at managing people	90.9%	85.3%	84.5%	77.8%	77.7%
15. My manager is open and honest	94.7%	90.2%	90.3%	89.8%	86.1%
16. My manager is approachable	97.7%	95.1%	93.1%	92.2%	94.8%
17. My manager motivates me to be more effective in my job	87.2%	83.7%	81.2%	78.4%	74.2%
18. Poor performance is dealt with effectively in my team	83.4%	80.5%	75.5%	74.9%	70.2%
SECTION 4 - YOUR COUNCIL					
20. Management communicate a clear vision for the Council	95.4%	95.1%	93.6%	92.1%	90.0%
21. I have as much contact as I need with the management	95.4%	97.5%	94.2%	93.9%	92.2%
22. I feel improvement is managed well in the Council	86.3%	91.8%	90.7%	89.7%	83.2%
23. I understand the behaviours and culture of the Council	96.2%	96.7%	96.5%	94.6%	93.5%
SECTION 5 – THE CULTURE					
26. Do you know what is expected of you at work?	98.4%	100%	98.8%	98.2%	96.4%
27. Do you have the opportunity to do what you do best every day?	90.7%	91.5%	87.3%	84.1%	83.5%
28. In the past two weeks, have you received recognition or praise for doing good work?	71.3%	72.0%	62.7%	57.9%	57.7%
29. Does your supervisor / manager or someone at work seem to care about you as a person?	93.0%	91.5%	91.0%	90.2%	88.2%
30. Is there someone at work who encourages you to develop?	80.6%	83.9%	81.3%	75.6%	71.3%
31. At work do your opinions seem to count?	88.3%	87.3%	85.5%	82.3%	83.1%
32. Does the vision for the Council (To Achieve Excellence) make you feel your role is important?	85.2%	93.2%	90.4%	87.8%	82.8%
33. Are your colleagues committed to achieving quality at work?	93.0%	94.4%	91.6%	90.2%	92.6%
34. Do you have a good friend at work?	80.6%	89.0%	86.7%	86.0%	86.8%
35. In the last 6 months has someone talked to you about your progress at work?	91.4%	91.5%	86.7%	84.1%	61.7%
36. In the last year have you had opportunities at work to learn and grow?	87.6%	91.5%	86.1%	80.5%	73.9%
37. I enjoy the work that I do at Fylde <i>(***New Question added 2015***)</i>	98.4%	98.3%	n/a	n/a	n/a
38. Overall I am satisfied with Fylde as a place to work	98.4%	98.3%	98.8%	97.0%	91.2%
KEY					
Colours - green means high (better) and red means lower (worst) for the years individually					

EMPLOYEE SURVEY 2016 ACTION PLAN

Ref	Description of Required Action/Control	Responsible Lead Officer	Corporate Objective Link	Priority H/M/L	Due Date
SECTION 1 – YOUR PERFORMANCE					
1.1	Agreed actions from performance appraisals or discussions about employee development must have clear responsibility and a target for completion. Agreed actions must be followed up.	Management Team	Value for Money	H	March 2017
SECTION 2 – YOUR VOICE					
2.1	A comprehensive review of communications aimed at ensuring the right information is provided to the right people in the right way at the right time. A cross departmental working group will be established to carry out the review.	Management Team	Value for Money	H	June 2017
SECTION 3 – YOUR MANAGER					
3.1	Training and development on management and leadership will be focused on developing a consistent approach across the council that supports the behaviours that shape the culture at Fylde.	Management Team	Value for Money	H	December 2017
SECTION 4 - YOUR COUNCIL					
4.1	The key messages and behaviours associated to the competencies that shape the culture of the council need to be reinforced through simple but effective methods i.e. posters, screensavers, stories.	Management Team	Value for Money	H	September 2017
SECTION 5 – THE CULTURE					
5.1	Employees that are not satisfied with Fylde as a place to work will be encouraged to consider what they can do to change the situation and be given any support they require from the Council.	Management Team	Value for Money	H	September 2017