

Community Focus Scrutiny Committee



Date	15 April 2010
Venue	Lowther Pavilion, Lytham
Committee members	Councillor Keith Hyde (Chairman) Councillor Thomas Threlfall (Vice-Chairman) Brenda Ackers, Christine Akeroyd, Maxine Chew, Tony Ford, Kathleen Harper, Ken Hopwood, Linda Nulty, Janine Owen, Dawn Prestwich
Other Councillors	Leonard Davies, Cheryl Little
Officers	Ian Curtis, Allan Oldfield, Paul Walker, Paul Rossington, Christine Miller, Lyndsey Lacey, Andrew Loynd, Darius Ward
Members of the Public	Angela Norris - Community Engagement Officer- Lancashire Link Team

1. Declarations of interest

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

2. Confirmation of minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Community Focus Scrutiny Committee held on 4 March 2010 as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

3. Substitute members

The following substitution was reported under Council procedure rule 22.3:

Councillor Brenda Ackers for Councillor John Singleton

4. Shared Service Arrangements- The Human Resource and Payroll Services

Allan Oldfield (Director of Operational Services) presented a progress and evaluation report on the performance of the shared services arrangement for human resources and payroll with Blackpool Council.

Appended to the report was a scrutiny evaluation of the shared services arrangement in the template format agreed by the former Performance Improvement Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The appendix highlighted that:

- The services are delivered at less cost than the in house service provision
- The added value in technology, skills and knowledge are elements that Fylde would not have been able to fund
- The performance of the services is very good with targets being met and high levels of customer satisfaction
- Access to reports and management information had led to improved decision making and policy development
- Value for money from the services has improved year on year with better services delivered at less cost
- Savings had been achieved from economies of scale through the procurement of training and other services i.e. recruitment advertising
- The regional profile of the organisation had been enhanced through successful shared working with a unitary authority that was ground breaking
- Improved working relationships with officers at Blackpool had led to quid pro quo working arrangements that benefit both authorities
- Additional services provided for the organisation and individual employees i.e. taxation advice

Mr Oldfield further reported that he currently acts as Link Officer with the responsibility of ensuring that Fylde is securing best value for money. He added that payroll and human resources was now under the same direct line management and that part of his role was to continually challenge the existing service providers and compare them with alternative market providers and service delivery models.

Councillor Owen enquired whether a time/leave management system had been introduced for staff based at the Town Hall/Public Offices. Mr Oldfield confirmed that the Council had in place an analytical time recording management system which had been introduced under separate arrangements.

Following consideration of this matter it was RESOLVED:

1. To support the continued delivery of the human resources and payroll service under the shared service arrangement as detailed in the report.
2. To request that the Link Officer for Fylde ensures that the services continue to deliver value for money.

5. Lancashire Link

Angela Norris, Community Engagement Officer at Lancashire Link Team (North Zone) attended the meeting and gave a presentation on the work of Lancashire Link.

In brief, the presentation provided an overview of the geographical areas of Lancashire Link, its structure and statutory powers. In addition, it also made reference to arrangements for meetings of Link and its various task and finish groups, its workplan, training and development and accountability arrangements.

A number of questions were raised by members of the committee relating to some of the areas detailed above and these were addressed by Ms Norris.

The Committee RESOLVED to thank Ms Norris for the presentation and her attendance at the meeting.

6. LSP Environmental Enhancement Group Update

Christine Miller (LSP Manager) and Andrew Loynd (LSP Environmental Theme Chair) presented a joint report on the work of the LSP Environmental Enhancement Theme Group. The report provided examples of actions and delivery achieved or facilitated by the group over the last twelve months.

Members were advised that following a recent restructure Andrew Loynd now acted as Chair of the group and as a result the group is now more action and delivery led with performance management processes in-place.

It was reported that over the last twelve months, the group had been responsible for organising, running and/or funding the following events:

‘Greening Your Victorian Home’, aerial thermal imaging surveys for individual domestic homes, hotels/guest houses throughout the borough, the development of the Sand Dunes Management Action Plan and the development and enhancement of community growing via allotments and public open space provision, schools and churches.

It was further reported that in addition to the actual delivery of projects, the group facilitated community endeavours by supporting and promoting funding bids to the LSP Executive and various examples of this were given at the meeting.

Councillor Nulty enquired about the work undertaken with schools in the rural areas and in particular, whether any of the schools had been involved or supported the community growing initiative. In addition, Councillor Nulty enquired about action taken by the theme group with respect to biological heritage sites.

In response to the above, Mrs Miller provided details of the rural schools that had been involved with the community growing initiative. In response to the question raised about the biological heritage sites, Mr Loynd stated that the group was awaiting a report from Lancashire Wildlife Trust detailing the proposed works to be carried out and that this would be considered by the group in due course.

Councillor Threlfall asked about the proposed actions with regard to the results of the Arial surveys carried out. Mr Loynd stated that this was still under consideration.

1. To note the report and the report and verbal update.
2. To proffer support for the activities of the LSP Environmental Enhancement Theme Group in its on-going endeavours.

7. Performance Exception Report

Darius Ward (Corporate Performance Officer) presented an updated report on activity around areas of under performance as identified and discussed at the last meeting of the committee on 4th March meeting.

The update included details of the number of affordable homes delivered and completed during 09/10 (NI155), the processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'minor' applications (N1157b), number of households living in temporary accommodation (NI156), improved street and environmental cleanliness: levels of detritus (NI195b), percentage of Council employees trained in customer care (FYS17) and the percentage overdue Freedom of Information requests (FYS13).

A number of members commented on processing of planning applications in particular, the reasoning behind under performance whilst having full complement of staff and a reduced amount of planning applications. Paul Rossington newly appointed Development Manager addressed the points raised by members on (N1157b). He stated that work was currently being undertaken on process engineering and efficiency which would make considerable improvements to the existing arrangements. He added that the situation was likely to improve in the near future as the majority of under performance related to the original backlog of applications.

Councillor Chew commented on the suggestion remove the local indicator (FYS17) relating to the percentage of Council employees trained in customer care and felt that this should be retained.

Councillor Nulty enquired about the number of affordable housing delivered in accordance with the S106 obligations and the number of household currently in temporary accommodation. This in part was addressed by Mr Rossington.

Councillor Ford sought clarification on the number of Freedom of Information requests (FYS13) and whether the number of requests was disproportionate to other local authorities. In response, Mr Curtis stated that the number of enquiries was typical for local authorities but statistically the sources of requests related to: private 17%, commercial 17%, councillor 1%, public body 2%, voluntary 6%, press 20%, political or pressure group 13%, solicitor 2% and unknown 6%

In addition to the areas identified in the report, a number of members also commented on the response times to telephone calls and issues surrounding the introduction of the white sack (cardboard collection) service.

Following consideration of this matter the committee RESOLVED:

1. To note the contents of the report and the action being taken to address performance.
2. To present an updated report to the next meeting of the committee on the specific areas relating to planning, customer care, the response times of telephone calls and the white sack (cardboard) collection service.
