

MINUTES

Environment, Health and Housing Committee

Date:	Tuesday, 14 June 2022
Venue:	Town Hall, St Annes.
Committee Members Present:	Councillor Tommy Threlfall (Chairman) Councillor Chris Dixon (Vice-Chairman) Councillors Ben Aitken, Frank Andrews, Paula Brearley, Noreen Griffiths, Peter Hardy, Will Harris, Karen Henshaw JP, Roger Lloyd, Michelle Morris, Bobby Rigby.
Other Councillors Present:	Councillors Mark Bamforth (via remote access), Shirley Green, Roger Small and Michael Withers.
Officers Present:	Allan Oldfield, Darren Bell, Gemma Broadley, Kirstine Riding, Cheryl Bennett, Geoff Willetts, Adam Sugden and Hannah Kirk.
Other Attendees:	Nicki Rushton and Natalie Walsh from the Environment Agency, Steve Wong, Simon Holding and Paul Forshaw from United Utilities and 2 members of the public were in attendance.

Public Platform

There were no speakers on this occasion.

1. Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that any disclosable pecuniary interests should be declared as required by the Localism Act 2011 and any personal or prejudicial interests should be declared as required by the Council's Code of Conduct for Members. Councillor Griffiths declared a personal interest in agenda item 12, Citizens Advice Fylde - Annual Report 2021/22, as she was a member of Fylde Citizen Advice Bureau.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Environment, Health and Housing Committee meeting held on 29 March 2022 as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

3. Substitute Members

The following substitutions were reported under Council procedure rule 23 (c):

Councillor Michelle Morris substituted for Councillor Sally Nash-Walker.

Decision Items

4. Presentation from Dr Sakthi Karunanithi

The Chairman advised that due to unforeseen circumstances this item had been withdrawn.

5. Household Support Fund

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Kirstine Riding, Housing Services Manager, introduced the item on the Household Support Fund, which had recently been extended to March 2023. In doing so, she provided a further update following the publication of the agenda.

Fylde Council had been notified that it would receive £276,000 in the next phase of household support funding. It was highlighted that this would be directed to OAPs who are in receipt of council tax support and make up a significant portion of the population in Fylde.

Ms. Riding informed members that an additional top up of the funding had been negotiated with Lancashire County Council, allowing £40k - £50k to be passported to Citizens Advice Fylde (CAB) to allow them to continue to support families and individuals in need. A further bid for funding had been submitted, which, if successful, would allow Fylde Council to work more widely with Fylde CAB, Age UK and local food banks.

It was advised that the outcome of the further bid was pending but was envisaged that an update would be taken to the June meeting of the Council, leading to a request for a larger funded budget increase.

Following discussion, it was RESOLVED to:

1. Note the position; and
2. Request that Council approve a fully funded budget increase in the sum of £276,000 for household support funding.

6. Update Fylde Council 'Handyperson and Sanctuary Scheme Pilot Service'

Ms. Riding was invited to introduce the update on the Fylde Handyperson and Sanctuary Scheme. In doing so, she advised that Fylde Council had undertaken a pilot to provide a scheme within Fylde for a period of 12 months, commencing in July 2021, to assess the demand for services within Fylde to inform a formal competitive procurement of the service.

Ms. Riding highlighted the variations between the two schemes. She advised that the Handyperson service straddled both health, housing and social care aims to ensure the upkeep and appropriate adaptations are in place for lower income households, particularly older and disabled people.

She further advised that the sanctuary scheme had been implemented to enable victims of domestic abuse to remain in their homes, where possible. It was highlighted that the Domestic Abuse Bill 2021 had placed new duties on Local Authorities to provide support and safe accommodation for victims of domestic abuse and their children, along with the development and publication of a strategy which assessed the need for accommodation-based services.

At this juncture, it was highlighted that during the pilot, there had been 94 households having enquired about support, with 91 successful referrals and 204 handyperson jobs completed. There had also been 6 enquiries through the Sanctuary scheme, with 16 security measures having been installed. It had been concluded, following the pilot, that there had been a demand for the Handyperson element in Fylde. Whilst the demand for the Sanctuary Scheme appeared to be low, it was still deemed to be important to offer support to victims of domestic violence with the support of Fylde Coast Women's Aid via the Household Support Fund.

Following questions, it was RESOLVED to:

1. Approve the Fylde Handyperson and Sanctuary Scheme going through a competitive procurement exercise to appoint an external contractor to deliver the service on behalf of Fylde Council for a period of three years, with the option to be extended for a further two years, to enable consistency in approach to the delivery of this service; and
2. Note that the costs would be contained within the existing annual rolling budget of £30,000 for Care and Repair Services in Fylde.

7. Commitment to Plastic Free - Carbon Neutral Working Group

Allan Oldfield, Chief Executive, introduced the draft commitment to plastic reduction policy that had been produced to address the corporate plan priority on carbon reduction issues. The cross-party Carbon Neutral Working Group supported the policy and recommended its approval to the committee.

Members posed a number of questions with regards plastic recycling in the borough, which were answered by the Chairman and Mr. Oldfield in turn.

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It was RESOLVED to consider, approve and adopt the draft commitment to the plastic reduction document and action plan, as recommended by the cross-party Carbon Neutral Working Group.

Information Items

The following information items were received and noted by the committee.

8. St Annes Bathing Waters 2021

Darren Bell, Head of Technical Services, was invited to give an overview on the report which served as an update of the water quality at the two St Annes bathing waters. He advised that following the update report, that the Committee received in March 2022, Fylde Council had been liaising with the Environment Agency (EA) and United Utilities (UU) to produce a further update to present to members.

The need for this had stemmed from a national news article which ranked St Annes beach as the worst bathing waters in the country. It was reinforced that the data needed to be kept in perspective when considering this matter, as the ranking had been based on high bacterial counts in single samples, which can be impacted by heavy rain and high tides.

Moving forward the Environment Agency's response was –

- *Environment Agency have designated both St Anne's bathing waters as priorities. They recognise the increased risk to water quality at these sites. The EA currently has limited resource available but will continue to focus resource in the areas where they can make the most impact such as the prioritised farm visits and associated action plan.*
- *The Environment Agency has been working alongside partners through Turning Tides Partnership and other subgroups for several years. They recognise there is an opportunity to work collaboratively with Fylde Council, UU, Ribble RT and others that understand the water story in the Ribble Estuary, rivers and bathing waters as we all identify the part we can play to improve the situation and protect the water environment.*

Combined sewer overflows

- *With regard to storm overflows the new Environment Bill further strengthens delivery of progressive reductions over a 25 year period.*

The Council would continue to work with its partner organisations to implement measures to improve bathing water quality at both St Anne's sites.

At this juncture, Mr. Bell invited officers from both the EA and UU to address members. This was followed by a multitude of questions, which were either answered in turn by representatives from the EA and UU or with an endeavor to provide a written response.

9. Ukrainian Guests in Fylde - Update

The committee received a report, which provided an update on the Ukrainian guests in Fylde.

10. Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF)

The committee received an updated on the Contain Outbreak Management Fund.

11. Age UK Lancashire - Annual Report

The committee noted the annual report of Age UK Lancashire.

12. Citizens Advice Fylde - Annual Report 2021/22

The committee noted the annual report of Citizens Advice Fylde.

13. Performance Reporting 2021/22

The committee received a report detailing the key performance outcomes for the financial yearend 2021/22/

14. Corporate Plan Action Update

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The committee received a report on the Corporate Plan Progress noting there were no actions for quarter 1 under the remit of the committee.

15. Capital Programme Monitoring Report 2021/22 - Outturn Position as at 31st March 2022

The committee received an update on the approved Capital Programme of the Council as at 31 March 2022 and specifically for those schemes under the remit of the committee.

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