

Minutes

ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

Date:	Tuesday, 14 March 2017
Venue:	Town Hall, St Annes.
Committee Members:	Councillor Viv Willder (Vice Chairman) Councillors Peter Anthony, Delma Collins, Roger Lloyd, Graeme Neale, Sandra Pitman, Louis Rigby, Ray Thomas.
Other Members:	Councillor Susan Fazackerley
Officers Present:	Paul Walker, Kirstine Riding, Katharine McDonnell
Other Attendees:	One member of the public was 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.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Confirmation of minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Environment, Health and Housing Committee meeting held on 21 February 2017 as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

3. Substitute members

The following substitutions were reported under Council procedure rule 24(c):

Councillor Ray Thomas for Councillor Gail Goodman.

Councillor Sandra Pitman for Councillor Ben Aitken.

Decision Items

4. Fylde Coast Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer

Kirstine Riding, Housing Services Manager, presented information regarding funding awarded from the Department of Communities and Local Government, to Fylde, Blackpool and Wyre for a joint Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer Project. She explained that it had been a joint funding bid by the three authorities.

Ms Riding explained that the Homelessness Prevention Trailblazer Project had been set up by DCLG to have Trailblazer authorities gather evidence to assist with the implementation of the Homeless Reduction Bill, which was due to gain Royal Assent in summer 2017.

She explained that the Trailblazer project planned a holistic approach to tackle homelessness across the three Fylde Coast authorities. It would seek to strengthen services aimed at homelessness prevention by raising awareness among public sector worker of the risks of homelessness; combining tenancy training programmes across the three authorities to reduce the numbers at risks of homelessness; to resolve housing issues for vulnerable people earlier through improved working with social services and the hospital; and helping people with multiple and complex needs. The project would also seek to improve access to a wider range of housing options including the private rented sector and strengthen arrangements for temporary accommodation.

She also reported that the project would enable the employment of Tenancy Support Workers across the three authorities to work with complex needs households, in addition to a Trailblazer Champion and Hospital Link Worker post which would be based at Blackpool Council.

In terms of the outcomes for the project, it was expected to prevent homelessness for 100 people, prevent eviction for 50 people, reduce the requirement on temporary accommodation by 25, reduce roughsleeping by 20 and arrange to find employment for 25 clients, either paid or voluntary employment.

Build evidence base for DCLG, the data will inform the new Homeless Reduction Bill, holding quarterly partnership meetings, Fylde Coast-wide Homeless Forum.

Ms Riding explained that Fylde would use the additional £60k in each year of the project, to change the way the Housing Service currently interacted with people vulnerable to homelessness. She further explained that the Tenancy Support Worker would have a caseload of vulnerable tenants at risk of tenancy breakdown. The support worker would also provide support service, by coordinating packages of support for clients with complex needs. The additional funding would provide for a housing specialist in customer services, who would be able to provide advice and information on housing options. Ms Riding advised that since the report was published, the grading of the housing specialist in customer services had been agreed as a Scale 4, not Scale 3 as published in the report.

In response to questions from committee, Ms Riding advised that the change in grading for the Housing Specialist post would not affect the budget. She further advised that the funding would create two new jobs for two years. However when the Homelessness Reduction Bill became law, it would place a requirement on local authorities to reduce homelessness, and therefore the service would be looking for alternative funding for the tenancy support worker position after the two year project.

Following consideration of this matter it was RESOLVED:

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 recommend to the Finance and Democracy Committee the approval of a fully-funded revenue budget increase for the total sum of £120,000 (£60,000 in 2017/18 and £60,000 in 2018/19).

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