



Minutes

ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

Date:	Tuesday, 10 January 2017
Venue:	Town Hall, St Annes.
Committee Members:	Councillor Ben Aitken (Chairman) Councillor Viv Willder (Vice-Chairman) Councillors Maxine Chew, Delma Collins, Gail Goodman JP, Shirley Green, Angela Jacques, Roger Lloyd, Louis Rigby and Ray Thomas.
Other Councillors Present:	Councillor Sue Fazackerley
Officers Present:	Tracy Morrison, Paul Walker, Andrew Dickson, Kirstine Riding, Katharine McDonnell
Other Attendees:	Robert Tidswell, United Utilities, Graham Miller, Environment Agency and Sue Andrew, Progress Housing Group. One member of the public was also in attendance.

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 Rigby declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 7 regarding the Fylde Citizens Advice Bureau. The nature of the interest being that he was one of the Council's appointed representative to the CAB. Councillor Rigby left the meeting for the duration of the item.

2. Confirmation of minutes

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the Environment, Health and Housing Committee meeting held on 1 November 2016 as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

3. Substitute members

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

Councillor Angela Jacques for Councillor Graeme Neale.

Councillor Ray Thomas for Councillor Peter Anthony

Decision Items

4. Request for S106 Funds – Keenans Mill, Lord Street, St Annes

Kirstine Riding, Housing Services Manager, and Sue Andrew, Development Manager, Progress Housing Group, presented details of an affordable housing scheme at the former Keenan's Mill site, Lord Street, St Annes. Ms Riding explained that the site had been identified as part of the S106

project to identify suitable brownfield sites for redevelopment with the purpose of delivering more affordable housing in the borough. The scheme was to be part funded from a S106 contribution emanating from the Queen Mary School development.

Ms Riding advised that the scheme was considered to be achievable, there was land available, a scheme had been drawn up, planning permission had been applied for, and a housing association partner had been identified. Ms Riding advised that the proposed scheme provided a good mix of housing to meet the required needs. She provided a thorough breakdown of the funding in place with the contribution from the S106 monies being £840,000 or 25% of the total scheme cost.

Ms Riding further explained that S106 contributions were usually calculated at £50k per affordable housing unit, the scheme before committee represented £32,300 per unit and therefore was good value for money. Ms Riding concluded by explaining that the contribution would be paid in two installments, with 50% up front and 50% on completion of the scheme.

The Committee RESOLVED unanimously to RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

1. A fully funded addition to the Capital Programme in the sum of £840,000 – “Affordable Housing Scheme at Keenans Mill” for 2017/18 to be fully-funded from part of the balance of S106 developer contributions for affordable housing currently held by the Council for this purpose (from Agreement Ref:03/0157 – Queen Mary School Development: a total capital contribution of £444,300 and £395,700 from Land East of Richmond Avenue, Wrea Green Agreement Ref 13/97 and 12/408); to deliver 26 units for affordable rent at Keenans Mill, Lord Street, St Annes to New Progress Housing Association; and
 2. To authorise expenditure in the sum of £840,000 to New Progress Housing Association in relation to the scheme after regard and consideration of the compliance with the financial regulations covered within the body of the report.
5. Lancashire Syrian Refugee Families and Vulnerable Children’s and their Families Resettlement Programme

Kirstine Riding, Housing Services Manager, presented information regarding the Asylum Seeker Wider Dispersal programme, the Syrian Resettlement Programme and Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme. She also provided information regarding the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children as protected under the European legislation.

Ms Riding provided information regarding definitions of refugees, asylum seekers and economic migrants. She explained that asylum seekers were usually held at centres in Leeds and Liverpool whilst their claims for asylum were assessed, however due to the increase in numbers local authorities had been asked to be involved in the wider dispersal programme.

Ms Riding further explained that the wider dispersal programme managed by Serco, working on behalf of the Home Office, worked in conjunction with the local authority to undertake postcode checks on potentially suitable properties. The postcode checks involved engaging with other statutory authorities such as the police, licensing service and planning department to check on the suitability of a property. Of 19 postcode checks requested by Serco in Fylde, 1 property had been used by Serco, this was situated in St Annes. This property currently accommodated 4 asylum seekers.

The Syrian Refugee and Vulnerable Children Resettlement programmes were to be managed by the local authorities and not by Serco. The government had asked local authorities to commit to resettling a number of Syrian refugees over the next five years. Across Lancashire this commitment

would equate to 575 refugees. Ms Riding explained that the local authority would undertake to support and resettle a number of families over a 5 year period. Initially the support would be very intensive to ensure that basic needs of housing, education, medical needs, language and community engagement were met. Over the five year period the support would reduce to assist the refugees in becoming independent. The funding provided would reflect the levels of support with the most funding being available in the first year and reducing year on year.

She was recommending to committee that Fylde pledged to take 5 families in 2019/20. In response to committee questions she explained that this would allow the council to learn from the experiences of other local authorities and use experienced neighbouring authorities as mentors as well as a source of knowledge.

It was RESOLVED to

1. Note the contents of the report regarding the Asylum Seeker Wider Dispersal Programme;
2. Note the contents of the report regarding the Lancashire Syrian Refugee families and Vulnerable Children and their families resettlement programmes;
3. Pledge that Fylde Council, under the Lancashire Syrian Refugee Families and Vulnerable Children and their Families Resettlement Programmes, accommodate 5 families in 2019/20;
4. Commence negotiations with Lancashire County Council to establish how the available funding would be shared between Lancashire County Council and Fylde Council and how the various services are to be delivered and by which body; and
5. Note that a further report will be presented to update the committee on this matter during 2017/18.

6. Affordable Warmth Scheme

Kirstine Riding, Housing Services Manager, provided details of a two year allocation of £28,210 per year by Lancashire County Council to Fylde Borough Council for the delivery of an affordable warmth scheme during 2016/17 and 2017/18. She explained that the scheme was to provide material improvements to residents' properties such as servicing and boiler replacements, insulation, glazing improvements and installations of central heating. She advised that this funding was available, under strict eligibility criteria to vulnerable residents where an affordability issue had also been identified, and those in fuel poverty.

In response to questions from committee, it was confirmed that if recipients were on a means tested benefit, the receipt of a grant under the affordable warmth scheme would not affect their winter fuel payments.

It was RESOLVED

1. To approved the affordable warmth scheme as described in the report;
2. To recommend to Finance and Democracy Committee the approval of a new fully funded capital scheme in the sum of £28,210 in 2016/17 and £28,210 in 2017/18 in relation to the initiative, fully funded by a grant from Lancashire County Council in the same sum; and
3. To authorise the scheme expenditure as detailed in the report subject to approval of the scheme from the Finance and Democracy Committee.

7. Kirkham Public Offices Building/Renewal of Service Level Agreement with Citizens Advice Fylde

Tracy Morrison, Director of Resources, presented information regarding a request from Fylde Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) for a renewal and extension of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) for Kirkham Public Offices. Fylde Citizens Advice Bureau were also requesting the use of a room at the Town Hall, St Annes to extend their services into St Annes on a more permanent basis.

Ms Morrison explained that the grant covered their core costs, such as staffing as well as the running costs of the public offices building. The CAB have made a number of improvements to the service since expansion into the ground floor of the building, including the development of a call centre. The call centre enabled the CAB to provide a telephone advice service in addition to the drop-in and face to face sessions. This had not only increased the numbers of people helped but had also helped increase CAB's volunteer base. The move into the ground floor of the building had also enabled the expansion of the Fylde Food Bank, which had allowed the Fylde Food Bank to expand their service to Kirkham and rural Fylde.

When the request for an expansion was granted, the SLA was reduced from 3 years to 2, to allow the council to assess the success of the expansion. As the expansion has been a success and the CAB have requested that the SLA is increased back to 3 years. They have also requested a small inflationary uplift each year to meet overhead costs. Additionally the CAB have requested the use of a private room in the new reception area of the Town Hall, St Annes to further expand the service into St Annes.

Ms Morrison advised that the recommendation was to grant, in principle, the request for the use of a room at the Town Hall. However she further explained that a final decision would need to be made after the council's own operational need had been assessed. As the move to the new reception area had taken place only a few weeks ago that assessment was still taking place, but CAB would be informed as soon as possible.

It was RESOLVED

1. To renew the existing Service Level Agreement for a period of three years with a grant to reflect inflationary staffing costs, to be contained within existing budgets, as follows in the years as outlined;
2017/18 - £88,084
2018/19 - £89,405
2019/20 - £90,746
2. To approve in principle the use of accommodation in the refurbished reception area subject to the Council's own operational needs being established post move.

(Councillor Rigby left the room for the duration of the above item)

8. Budget Setting – Fees and Charges 2017/18

The proposed schedule of fees and charges for those services within the remit of the Environment, Health and Housing Committee were put before the members for consideration.

The committee considered the attached schedules, noting that some fees were set at a prescribed level, some services were statutorily required and no profit could be gained from the provision of those services.

There was discussion regarding the levels of fees and suggestions that a comparison pricing could be undertaken to ensure competitiveness with neighbouring authorities. Members expressed interest in receiving a future information item illustrating comparative costs with neighbours in particular with respect to the crematorium.

It was RESOLVED

1. To recommend to Council a proposed schedule of fees and charges applicable for 2017/18; and
2. To note that the final fees and charges for 2017/18 would be approved by the Budget Council in March 2017.

Information Items

The Committee received the following information items:

9. Budget Setting – Revenue Budget 2017/18

The Committee were advised that the first draft of the Revenue Budget for 2017/18 was now available for members to view. Committee members were encouraged to contact the Chief Financial Officer, Senior Officers or budget holders with any specific questions.

10. General Fund Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2016/17 – Position as at 30 November 2016

The Committee were provided with an up to date position of the General Fund Revenue Budget as at 30 November 2016.

11. Capital Programme Monitoring Report 2016/17 – Position as at 30 November 2016

The Committee were provided with an up to date position of the Capital Programme as at 30 November 2016.

Mr Walker provided an update on the windbreak scheme which he advised was currently under consultation with undertakers and clergy. It was advised that a report would come to a future meeting of the committee and the scheme was programmed for commencement in summer 2017.

12. Age UK Lancashire – Annual Report

The Committee were provided with Age UK Lancashire's Annual Report which detailed the charity's activities in Fylde borough.

13. St Annes Bathing Waters 2016

The Committee were provided with information, by way of a presentation from United Utilities and the Environment Agency regarding the latest information about ongoing work regarding water quality and improvement works and a further presentation from Andrew Dickson, Head of Technical Services regarding the quality of the St Annes Bathing Water. A number of questions were asked by the committee and answered by the officers and representatives present.

The committee thanked Andrew Dickson for his years of service and wished him well in his retirement.

14. Mid Year Performance 2016/17

Details of the key performance outcomes for the first two quarters were provided to the Committee. The Food Hygiene team were congratulated on their exemplary work.

15. Corporate Plan 2016-2020 Progress Update

Progress to date against corporate plan actions scheduled for completion between April 2016 and October 2016 were reported to the Committee.

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