



Meeting Agenda

**Policy Development Scrutiny Committee,
Town Hall, Lytham St. Annes
Thursday 21 October 2010, 7:00pm**

The main doors to the Town Hall will be open to the public at 6:45pm
The maximum capacity for this meeting room is 60 persons –
once this limit is reached no other person can be admitted.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

CHAIRMAN Fabian Craig-Wilson
VICE-CHAIRMAN Kiran Mulholland

Councillors

Brenda Ackers	Ben Aitken
George Caldwell	Frank Andrews
Patricia Fieldhouse	Richard Fulford-Brown
Craig Halewood	Leonard Davies
John Davies	Karen Henshaw
David Chedd	Elizabeth Oades
Elaine Silverwood	Heather Speak

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Our Vision

Fylde Borough Council will work with partners to provide and maintain a welcoming, inclusive place with flourishing communities.

Our Corporate Objectives

- To Promote the Enhancement of the Natural & Built Environment
 - To Promote Cohesive Communities
 - To Promote a Thriving Economy
- To meet the Expectations of our Customers

The Principles we will adopt in delivering our objectives are:

- To ensure our services provide value for money
- To work in partnership and develop joint working



A G E N D A

PUBLIC PLATFORM

*To hear representations from members of the public in accordance with
Committee procedure rules*

ITEM	PAGE
1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: <i>If a member requires advice on Declarations of Interest he/she is advised to contact the Monitoring Officer in advance of the meeting. (For the assistance of Members an extract from the Councils Code of Conduct is attached).</i>	4
2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES: <i>To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee held on 30 September 2010. As attached at the end of the agenda.</i>	4
3. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS: <i>Details of any substitute members notified in accordance with council procedure rule 26.3</i>	4
4. RESIDENTIAL USE OF HOLIDAY CARAVANS AND CHALETS	7 - 13

Personal interests

8.—(1) You have a personal interest in any business of your authority where either—

(a) it relates to or is likely to affect—

- (i) any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by your authority;
- (ii) any body—
 - (aa) exercising functions of a public nature;
 - (bb) directed to charitable purposes; or
 - (cc) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union),

of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management;

- (i) any employment or business carried on by you;
 - (ii) any person or body who employs or has appointed you;
 - (iii) any person or body, other than a relevant authority, who has made a payment to you in respect of your election or any expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties;
 - (iv) any person or body who has a place of business or land in your authority's area, and in whom you have a beneficial interest in a class of securities of that person or body that exceeds the nominal value of £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital (whichever is the lower);
 - (v) any contract for goods, services or works made between your authority and you or a firm in which you are a partner, a company of which you are a remunerated director, or a person or body of the description specified in paragraph (vi);
 - (vi) the interests of any person from whom you have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25;
 - (vii) any land in your authority's area in which you have a beneficial interest;
 - (viii) any land where the landlord is your authority and you are, or a firm in which you are a partner, a company of which you are a remunerated director, or a person or body of the description specified in paragraph (vi) is, the tenant;
 - (ix) any land in the authority's area for which you have a licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy for 28 days or longer; or
- (b) a decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting your well-being or financial position or the well-being or financial position of a relevant person to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward, as the case may be, affected by the decision;

(2) In sub-paragraph (1)(b), a relevant person is—

- (a) a member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association; or
- (b) any person or body who employs or has appointed such persons, any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are directors;
- (c) any person or body in whom such persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or
- (d) any body of a type described in sub-paragraph (1)(a)(i) or (ii).

Disclosure of personal interests

9.—(1) Subject to sub-paragraphs (2) to (7), where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority and you attend a meeting of your authority at which the business is considered, you must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent.

- (2) Where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority which relates to or is likely to affect a person described in paragraph 8(1)(a)(i) or 8(1)(a)(ii)(aa), you need only disclose to the meeting the existence and nature of that interest when you address the meeting on that business.
- (3) Where you have a personal interest in any business of the authority of the type mentioned in paragraph 8(1)(a)(viii), you need not disclose the nature or existence of that interest to the meeting if the interest was registered more than three years before the date of the meeting.
- (4) Sub-paragraph (1) only applies where you are aware or ought reasonably to be aware of the existence of the personal interest.

- (5) Where you have a personal interest but, by virtue of paragraph 14, sensitive information relating to it is not registered in your authority's register of members' interests, you must indicate to the meeting that you have a personal interest, but need not disclose the sensitive information to the meeting.
- (6) Subject to paragraph 12(1)(b), where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority and you have made an executive decision in relation to that business, you must ensure that any written statement of that decision records the existence and nature of that interest.
- (7) In this paragraph, "executive decision" is to be construed in accordance with any regulations made by the Secretary of State under section 22 of the Local Government Act 2000(d).

Prejudicial interest generally

- 10.—**(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority you also have a prejudicial interest in that business where the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest.
- (2) You do not have a prejudicial interest in any business of the authority where that business—
- (a) does not affect your financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in paragraph 8;
 - (b) does not relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or any person or body described in paragraph 8; or
 - (c) relates to the functions of your authority in respect of—
 - (i) housing, where you are a tenant of your authority provided that those functions do not relate particularly to your tenancy or lease;
 - (ii) school meals or school transport and travelling expenses, where you are a parent or guardian of a child in full time education, or are a parent governor of a school, unless it relates particularly to the school which the child attends;
 - (iii) statutory sick pay under Part XI of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, where you are in receipt of, or are entitled to the receipt of, such pay;
 - (iv) an allowance, payment or indemnity given to members;
 - (v) any ceremonial honour given to members; and
 - (vi) setting council tax or a precept under the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

Prejudicial interests arising in relation to overview and scrutiny committees

- 11.—** You also have a prejudicial interest in any business before an overview and scrutiny committee of your authority (or of a sub-committee of such a committee) where—
- (a) that business relates to a decision made (whether implemented or not) or action taken by your authority's executive or another of your authority's committees, sub-committees, joint committees or joint sub-committees; and
 - (b) at the time the decision was made or action was taken, you were a member of the executive, committee, sub-committee, joint committee or joint sub-committee mentioned in paragraph (a) and you were present when that decision was made or action was taken.

Effect of prejudicial interests on participation

- 12.—**(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), where you have a prejudicial interest in any business of your authority—
- (a) you must withdraw from the room or chamber where a meeting considering the business is being held—
 - (i) in a case where sub-paragraph (2) applies, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence;
 - (ii) in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at that meeting;
 unless you have obtained a dispensation from your authority's standards committee;
 - (b) you must not exercise executive functions in relation to that business; and
 - (c) you must not seek improperly to influence a decision about that business.
- (2) Where you have a prejudicial interest in any business of your authority, you may attend a meeting (including a meeting of the overview and scrutiny committee of your authority or of a sub-committee of such a committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the business, provided that the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose, whether under a statutory right or otherwise.

REPORT



REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT	POLICY DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	21 OCTOBER 2010	4

RESIDENTIAL USE OF HOLIDAY CARAVANS AND CHALETS

Public Item

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

Summary

This report follows several previous reports, the last of which was considered by the then Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee in December 2008. This current report sets out the position statement in terms of what has previously been considered in seeking to control the unauthorised use of holiday caravans for residential purposes.

Recommendations

1. That the more rigorous planning conditions agreed by cabinet in January 2009 continue to be impose on **new** planning applications for holiday caravan sites
 - the caravans (cabins/chalets) are occupied for holiday purposes only
 - the caravans (cabins/chalets) shall not be occupied as a persons sole or main place of residence
 - the owners/operators shall maintain an up-to-date register of the names of all owners of individual caravans/cabins/chalets on the site. Their main home address and two forms of documentary evidence verifying the address; and shall make this information available at all reasonable times
 - the owners/operators shall maintain an up-to-date register on a weekly basis of the names of all occupiers of individual caravans/cabins/chalets on the site, their main home address and where occupation exceeds three months in any six month period, two forms of documentary evidence verifying the main home address; and shall make this information available at all reasonable times

2. That having regard to the current level of resources for enforcement in the Development Control and Environmental Health licensing units, enforcement against any breaches of control be carried out on a case by case basis having regard to the availability of resources, an assessment of the enforceability of occupancy conditions on each individual caravan site and having regard to the planning and licensing merits of each case.

Cabinet Portfolio

The item falls within the following Cabinet portfolios:

Planning and Development:
Social Wellbeing:

Councillor Dr Trevor Fiddler
Councillor Cheryl Little

Report

Background

The residential use of holiday caravans and chalets has been a long-term issue for members of Fylde Borough Council, and has been the subject of several investigations and reports over the years. The chronology of previous considerations is outlined in Appendix A. The primary concerns are:

- (a) there is a perception that some people are improperly using their static holiday caravans as permanent residences as opposed to the 'holiday' use for which the site is authorised and licensed;
- (b) that such people receive the full benefit of council and community services without being directly liable for council tax, and that, as they age, become a burden on local services such as health and housing (members have been advised that the decision as to who is and is not liable to pay council tax rests solely with the Valuation Office Agency - part of Her Majesty's Revenues & Customs - as opposed to the local authority); and
- (b) that where residential occupants of these caravans declare themselves and are charged council tax, or claim housing benefit, no enforcement action is taken against them for occupying a holiday caravan as their permanent home, contrary to planning conditions.

At no time has a satisfactory resolution been found to the problem because of the complex inter-relationship between various social issues, which cannot be resolved by Fylde planning officers in isolation from all other factors.

Summary of benchmarking and barriers to further effective action

At various times, information has been provided to Members outlining the complexity of the issues and the difficulties inherent in achieving a solution which appears to be satisfactory and cost-effective. In summary, these are the matters presented:

- There are 22 holiday camping and caravan parks in the Borough made up of 14 static caravan parks with 1,941 static holiday caravans; 4 sites with 54 chalets and 17 sites with around 737 touring caravans (HLL Research 2009).

- Some caravan sites were established before there was a requirement for planning permissions, or may have been subject to conditions which are now unenforceable due to poor drafting during the last 50 years.
- If a caravan has been used as a primary residence in excess of 10 years it would be immune from enforcement action
- If a strong enforcement approach is taken, and there is the will and resources to do so, the end result could be a homeless person or family with the potential attendant duty to rehouse, the legal consequences of creating homelessness and possible adverse publicity for the Council.
- As part of the previous reviews we have explored the potential to influence national legislation through the local MPs and Local Government Association without much success. A copy of a recent letter from the relevant Parliamentary Under Secretary to a local MP is attached at Appendix B.
- The ownership records of third parties cannot be currently relied upon to provide reliable information relating to the status of individual caravan owners / occupiers.
- Other authorities that we have approached on this matter either did not see the issue as a problem, or had consciously resolved not to tackle it because of the practical difficulties and negligible return in taking action and the excessive resources required to investigate and pursue the matter.
- Tackling the problem through the Caravan Site Licensing conditions (perhaps by imposing additional licensing conditions) is generally at odds with the main purpose of the relevant legislation which is drafted to ensure the safeguarding of the health and safety of occupiers. Such conditions would also be subject to appeal and legal challenges from the site owners.
- Although the council now employs two planning enforcement officers the pursuit of enforcement action in relation to holiday caravans/chalets would require additional operational and legal resources to carry out site assessments and deal with the resultant legal issues and appeals.
- There is no dedicated budget to allow for full-scale investigative action or enforcement. Also there is no provision to charge for enforcement action, therefore the whole cost would be borne by the council.

Summary

There are no simple remedies to this perennial problem, and members are requested to consider the summarised information provided above and attached, and to decide what further action, if any, they are minded to recommend to Cabinet.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	Enforcement would have significant implications for the Council's revenue budget. There is no provision in the current budget to employ additional staff to undertake this additional enforcement work.

Legal	All suggested enforcement solutions depend on the council being prepared to invest in resources to make them effective. Members should be under no illusions that present resources do not allow for a comprehensive solution to the perceived problems without diverting resources presently used for other priorities.
Community Safety	No direct implications.
Human Rights and Equalities	There are likely to be implications if enforcement leads to people losing their homes.
Environmental Sustainability	None arising directly from this report
Health & Safety and Risk Management	Enforcement procedures which could result in people being made homeless may present a risk of reputational damage for the Council.

Report Author	Tel	Date	Doc ID
Annie Womack	(01253) 658423	28 Sept 2010	
Paul Walker	(01253) 658431		

List of Background Papers		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Previous Report to PPSC	9 October 2008	Council website

Attached documents

- Appendix A - Summary of previous consideration by Members
- Appendix B - Letter from Under Secretary of State.

Summary of previous consideration by Members

September 2003 - the former Economy and Development Committee established a task and finish group to make recommendations in respect of a number of issues arising from the fact that it was believed that a number of static holiday caravans were being used as residential caravans, contrary to planning permission conditions.

A number of 'task and finish' group meetings were held in the months following but the issues continued to remain unresolved.

April 2007 - The issues were raised again and a detailed report and addendum paper was considered by the Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee (PPSC).

March 2008 - An informal joint member / officer meeting took place the outcome of which was referred to the next meeting of PPSC in April 2008.

April 2008 – At that meeting PPSC resolved:

- to ask officers to consult with other Lancashire authorities to ascertain whether they had identified similar issues, and if so, how they were dealing with the matters;
- to arrange for one to one meetings with site owners to be undertaken to discuss relevant issues, particularly when planning applications are submitted to extend the season;
- to undertake enforcement action (a test case) in respect of sites where there is evidence that planning conditions are being breached; and
- to ask Environmental Health officers to research whether there was a means whereby site owners could be charged for enforcement proceedings;
- to ask the Executive Manager (SP&D) to write to the MP for Fylde and the Local Government Association to raise awareness of the issues;
- to invite representatives of the Valuation Office and the licensing, tourism and rating sections of the Council to brief members on issues appertaining to their areas of responsibility;
- to ask the Executive Manager (SP&D) to obtain evidence substantiating the need for static/touring caravan sites in the borough;
- to ask the Executive Manager (SP&D) to produce an options report for consideration by Committee, detailing all the issues to be considered in preparing a suitable policy.

October 2008 - All of the recommendations were fully addressed and the results reported to PPSC in October 2008. The minutes from that meeting show that the committee requested only that a further report on the approach taken at Ribble Valley BC be obtained, and invited Fylde's MP to take the matter up at regional and national level in order to influence a change in policy.

December 2008 (i) – At a further meeting of PPSC, the response from Ribble Valley was presented (no special approach except for enforcement where Council Tax was being paid by a person living in a holiday caravan) and members were advised that no response had been received from the MP. The committee decided that the most appropriate response was to recommend the use of more rigorous conditions on new planning applications, as outlined by officers. They also recommended that no action be taken on the matter until a

definitive response was received on the national position from the MP or appropriate government department. This recommendation was made having regard to the levels of resources for enforcement in Developmental Control and Environmental Health.

December 2008 (ii) – Mr Donnelly, then Head of Planning, wrote to Michael Jack MP advising that the committee felt that a change of policy by government was required, and invited him to take up the matter at regional and national levels to secure the necessary changes. No response was received.

January 2009 – Cabinet considered the recommendations from the PPSC of December 2008 which were :

1. To recommend to the Portfolio Holder that the following more rigorous conditions be adopted on **new** planning applications
 - I. the caravans (cabins/chalets) are occupied for holiday purposes only;
 - II. the caravans (cabins/chalets) shall not be occupied as a persons sole or main place of residence;
 - III. the owners/operators shall maintain an up-to-date register of the names of all owners of individual caravans/cabins/chalets on the site. Their main home address and two forms of documentary evidence verifying the address; and shall make this information available at all reasonable times;
 - IV. the owners/operators shall maintain an up-to-date register on a weekly basis of the names of all occupiers of individual caravans/cabins/chalets on the site, their main home address and where occupation exceeds three months in any six month period, two forms of documentary evidence verifying the main home address; and shall make this information available at all reasonable times.
2. That having regard to the current level of resources for enforcement in the Development Control and Environmental Health licensing units, no further action be taken on this matter until a definitive response on the national position is received from the MP or the appropriate government department.
3. To recommend that the Council take appropriate enforcement action on holiday caravan sites where the payment of Council Tax or Housing Benefit is known.

Cabinet endorsed all of the recommendations **apart from item 3.**

During 2009, the topic was raised as part of overall discussions at scrutiny committees relating to the Fylde Coast Housing Strategy, although no formal recommendations were made.



Bob Neill MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

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Our Ref: ER/BN/013993/10

- 9 JUL 2010

Thank you for your letter of 14 June to the Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP regarding council tax and mobile home/caravan owners. I am replying because this falls within my Ministerial responsibilities.

You ask whether the department could look into what extra powers it can grant Councils to compel caravan owners who are living in their caravans to be rated for council tax purposes. The administration of council tax and business rates is for local, not central, government including making decisions regarding a person's/businesses' liability. Councils are under a duty to take reasonable steps to ascertain who is liable. How they do this is for each individual council, not central government.

Council tax is only paid on domestic property that is assigned one of eight council tax property bands, A to H and is on the valuation list. Whereas, businesses are liable for Non Domestic Business Rates where parts of a park home i.e. the office and non-permanent caravan pitches are part of a business and no council tax is due. The Valuation Office Agency (VOA), who are part of Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs, are responsible for this list and the valuation of property for council tax and business rate purposes. The Government has no plans to make any changes to this system.

However, I can reassure you that the coalition Government is fully committed to a review of local government finance and will make a further announcement in due course. But their first priority must be to sort out the public finances and to get on with the Government's agreed programme of delivering radical devolution and greater financial autonomy to local government.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Bob Neill", written over a circular stamp or mark.

BOB NEILL MP

Policy Development Scrutiny Committee



Date	30 September 2010
Venue	Town Hall, St Annes
Committee members	Councillor Fabian Craig-Wilson (Chairman) Councillor Kiran Mulholland (Vice-Chairman) Brenda Ackers, Christine Akeroyd, Frank Andrews, David Chedd, John Davies, Leonard Davies, Tony Ford, Elizabeth Oades, Elaine Silverwood
Other Councillors	Cheryl Little
Officers	Allan Oldfield, Paul Walker, Mark Evans, Mike Walker, Chris Hambly, Joceline Greenaway, Annie Womack
Others	-

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 Policy Development Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 25 August 2010 as a correct record for signature by the chairman.

3. Substitute members

The following substitutions were reported under council procedure rule 22.3:

Councillor Tony Ford for Councillor Karen Henshaw

Councillor Christine Akeroyd for Councillor Ben Aitken

4. Vision – A Presentation by Blackpool Fylde and Wyre Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Mr Philip Graham, Head of Information Communications Technology, from Blackpool Fylde and Wyre Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust gave a

presentation to members on their Electronic Patient Record system which is called "Vision".

Mr Graham advised the committee that they were still consulting widely to hear what comments queries and suggestions might be brought to bear on the implementation of the system, which would be done in a phased approach, and which would be completed by the summer of 2012.

He then outlined for the committee members exactly how it would work, and the advantages and benefits it would bring both to patients and to healthcare professionals.

Privacy issues were covered in some detail as well, and assurances were given that safeguards were in place, enabling the public to have trust and confidence in the system.

The committee had several queries for Mr Graham. They asked whether patients could ask to see their own records. Mr Graham confirmed that they could and that they could ask to have them corrected.

Concerns were raised about the fact that this model was not one that was being adopted by the whole region, or even nationally, and Mr Graham was asked how the Blackpool Fylde and Wyre (BFW) system would interface with others. The committee were advised that there was an electronic gateway which would allow electronic exchange of information with others.

In response to a query about back-up systems he advised members that back-up was secure, in accordance with their business continuity plan and that there were dual data centres which replicated each other. He acknowledged that things could go wrong but that in the event of serious problems, the system could print out a position statement of those currently in care, and records could still be created and exchanged by hard copy.

When asked what problems he could foresee he included change issues for staff, training of 4,500 staff, plus locum staff, bank staff and new joiners.

The committee RESOLVED to thank Mr Graham and to note the report.

There was no recorded vote as the Chairman decided that the matter was not controversial, and the resolution was carried by show of hands.

5. Hospital Acquired Infections – Update to Original Review

Jo Lickiss, Consultant Nurse for Infection Prevention, from Blackpool Victoria Hospital gave a presentation on Healthcare Associated Infections (HCAI) which was a follow up to the original review undertaken by the Task and Finish Group in 2008.

That overview of infection control procedures had been based around key questions identified by the task and finish group, and was presented to

committee in July 2008. Subsequent to that committee's recommendation, Cllrs Craig-Wilson and Mulholland had met with Jo Lickiss at Blackpool Victoria Hospital (BVH), and had asked for an update report to a future committee meeting.

Ms Lickiss started her presentation with an overview of the incidence of HCAI globally, in England and Wales, and specifically in Blackpool Victoria Hospital. She advised members of the actions which were being taken to reduce incidents of C-Difficile and MRSA in the hospital, the scrutiny of their performance and what else might be done to reduce these infections.

She outlined BVH's results to date which showed great improvements and she assured the committee that their targets had not just been met but had been bettered.

Members were told about successful prevention initiatives such as hand hygiene audits, screening of all emergency and elective admissions (bar some day case patients). There had been a change in culture at the hospital and a commitment to infection prevention by all staff.

Ms Lickiss told the committee that whilst it was impossible to totally eradicate infections, simple controls like visitors not visiting hospital when they were ill, visitors practising hand hygiene, and healthcare professionals not overusing antibiotics would all contribute to an overall improvement. The latter was particularly important to prevent infections becoming more resistant.

Members queried what would happen if BVH failed to meet its targets and were advised that this could be a fine, or a full investigation, and could even lead to a loss of Trust status.

It was apparent that a reduction in claims against the hospital which followed a reduction in cases meant that more money could be invested in prevention, and this was clearly showing results.

In response to other questions Ms Lickiss advised that there was a stringent cleaning regime in force, the performance of which was closely monitored.

The committee RESOLVED:

1. To thank Johanne Lickiss, Consultant Nurse for Infection Prevention, for attending the committee and for her presentation.
2. To ask that a yearly update should be provided to the committee.

There was no recorded vote as the Chairman decided that the matter was not controversial, and the resolution was carried by show of hands.

6. Revision of Statement of Licensing Policy

Chris Hambly (Licensing Officer) explained that S5 of the Licensing Act 2003 requires the Licensing Authority to determine and publish a statement of Licensing Policy for a 3 year period to enable the proper discharge of the

Council's responsibilities for the regulation of alcohol sales, public entertainment and late night refreshment in the Borough.

The current Statement of Licensing Policy must be re-considered by the 7th January 2011 and as such, the purpose of the Report is to inform Members of the consultation process being undertaken and the amendments to the current policy.

Mr Hambly advised that new licensing regulations were expected next year which meant that this revised policy could quickly become out of date; nevertheless the Council was required by the Act to have it in place by the deadline.

The committee RESOLVED: To note the report.

There was no recorded vote as the Chairman decided that the matter was not controversial, and the resolution was carried by show of hands.

7. Planning Enforcement

Mark Evans (Assistant Director, Planning Services) presented a report which reviewed the progress made on planning enforcement following the recruitment of officers to two posts in November 2009. It looked at the capacity to deliver this element of the service, the performance and workload issues that are currently being faced and the future management of the enforcement process.

He told members that the new appointments had allowed inroads to be made into the backlog of complaints and had allowed officers not only to be more responsive to complaints but also to become more proactive in their methods.

As the numbers came down, they were looking at prioritising proactive enforcement, for example in the key gateway locations, town centres and conservation areas.

Overall he said that there was now a much more efficient, effective and responsive enforcement service, and there were opportunities to move into closer working relationships with other partners and with the community.

Members expressed approval of the improved enforcement performance and looked forward to officers having the capacity to tackle other issues such as illegal signage. It was also felt that, as had been expressed in previous scrutiny of this topic, it would be desirable at some future point to have an officer able to deal with conservation issues.

After a debate the committee RESOLVED: To note the report.

There was no recorded vote as the Chairman decided that the matter was not controversial, and the resolution was carried by show of hands.

8. The Tourist Information Service – T & F Review

The Policy Development Scrutiny Committee meeting of 15 July 2010 received a report from the Director of Customer and Operational Services outlining the current position with regard to the Tourist Information Centre (TIC).

The committee appointed a Task and Finish Group to conduct a review. The Group had looked at the inability of the Council to provide a face-to-face or telephone service on Bank Holidays and weekends and had felt that for a seaside resort that was far from an ideal service. However, the Council was unable to open the Town Hall, where the TIC is situated, at those times.

Under the circumstances the Group had decided to recommend that the issue be referred back to Cabinet and for Cabinet to consider whether it was appropriate to seek other groups or organisations to provide the service on its behalf.

After some debate of the issues surrounding the delivery of the TIC service and the involvement of other groups with an interest in the outcome, as well as making a commitment to any extension of the service not having a cost to the Council, the committee RESOLVED:

To refer the matter to Cabinet, with a recommendation that Fylde Borough Council should look further into alternative ways of providing an extended service.

There was no recorded vote as the Chairman decided that the matter was not controversial, and the resolution was carried by show of hands.

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