

West Lancashire Three Tier Forum

Note of the Meeting held on Monday, 25th November, 2013 at 7.00 pm in Cabinet and Committee room, West Lancashire Borough Council Offices, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk

Present:

Chair

Councillor Ian Grant

Forum Members

County Councillor Terry Aldridge
County Councillor Malcolm Barron
County Councillor Cynthia Dereli
County Councillor John Fillis
County Councillor Julie Gibson
County Councillor Nikki Hennessy
County Councillor David O'Toole
County Councillor David Westley
Councillor Roger Bell
Councillor Mrs May Blake
Councillor Ms Ruth Melling
Councillor David Sudworth
Councillor Margaret Sumner

* Councillor R Melling replaced Councillor R Bailey at this meeting.

Also in attendance:

C Mather - Democratic Services, Lancashire County Council
S Palmer - Localities Team, Lancashire County Council
G Concannon - Assistant Director Street Scene, West Lancashire Borough Council
G Kilpatrick – County Treasurer, Lancashire County Council
L Forsyth – CEO HealthWatch Lancashire

1. Appointment of Chair

Councillor Grant and County Councillor Hennessy were nominated for the position of Chair. Upon being put to the vote, Councillor Grant was elected as Chair of the Forum for the ensuing year.

2. Appointment of Deputy Chair

County Councillor Hennessy and Councillor Sudworth were nominated for the position of Deputy Chair. Upon being put to the vote, County Councillor Hennessy was elected as Deputy Chair of the Forum for the ensuing year.

3. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor N Furey.

4. Membership and Terms of Reference of the Forum

The membership and terms of reference of the Forum were noted.

5. Lancashire County Council Budget

Gill Kilpatrick presented a detailed report regarding the nature of the financial challenge facing the County Council over the next few years and informed the meeting that the County Council was faced with making savings of around £300m over the next four financial years which was the equivalent to almost 40% of its current budget.

It was noted that the County Council was currently focussing on balancing the 2014/15 budget and this would enable time to be devoted to the huge challenge of downsizing the County Council to a new budget level of £640m by 2017/18. Members were informed that this reduction needed to be set within the context that between the years 2010 to 2017, the County Council would have had to make savings of over £0.5b.

It was reported that in response to the increasing financial constraints the County Council had adopted a number of approaches, including a review of planning assumptions and forecasts which had led to a reduction of £17.4m in the level of savings required over the next four years. In addition employees had identified a further saving of £19.1m through a 10% challenge to drive out waste and increase efficiency across the County Council. A number of areas totalling £17.4m had also been identified where the cost of being in business could be reduced, with no impact on the level or quality of services provided by the County Council to communities.

However, given the scale of the overall challenge facing the County Council it was clear that the level of savings required could not be achieved without impacting on services. The County Council was therefore undertaking a consultation exercise on a number of policy options and proposals for reshaping the way in which services would be delivered in the future.

In considering the report the following points were raised by members of the Forum:

- In view of the unprecedented financial situation over the next few years it was vital that the County and Borough Councils worked together to find viable solutions and to ensure no surprises.
- It would be helpful to receive a report on the effects of the budget reductions and the reshaping of services in West Lancashire. Members were informed that whilst some information could be provided e.g. commissioning plans, it would be difficult to provide information at a district level as many services and budgets were interlinked across the county.
- It was clear that the downsizing of the County Council's budget would result in a reduced workforce but the full effect on staffing numbers was not yet known.
- The £300m savings had been profiled over four years based on the combined increase in costs and reductions in resources from central government.

- The current budget proposals did not take into effect any assumptions around future council tax levels.

The Forum thanked Gill for her attendance and presentation.

6. HealthWatch Update

Leslie Forsyth gave a presentation on the role and work of HealthWatch Lancashire.

Members were informed that HealthWatch had replaced Lancashire Link as the independent consumer champion for health and social care in the area covered by the County Council. A key aim would be to give children, young people and adults a pro active and powerful voice that would enable their views and experiences to be heard by those who run, plan and regulate health and social. HealthWatch would help to signpost people to local health and social care services.

Members thanked Mr Forsyth for his informative presentation and the following points were raised:

- A concern was expressed about the geographical size of the area covered by HealthWatch Lancashire. The two unitary authority areas of Lancashire were much smaller in size but each area had its own HealthWatch organisation. This was not felt to be a problem particularly as the HealthWatch Lancashire budget was considerably larger than the budgets held by the other HealthWatch organisations.
- It was confirmed that HealthWatch Lancashire would work closely with other neighbouring HealthWatch organisations and in particular those covering the two unitary areas of Lancashire, as well as Cumbria and Sefton.
- Whilst HealthWatch organisations had little power delegated to them, it was hoped that the organisations could be influential in improving services through the credibility of their work.
- A HealthWatch board member had been appointed to each Clinical Commissioning Group
- There was a real need to improve 'signposting' to services and communication channels generally given the fragmentation of the NHS. Amongst other things, HealthWatch Lancashire would be looking to invest heavily in developing its website. It would run evidenced based campaigns and establish focus groups to oversee key areas e.g. mental health.
- It was noted that complaints about health and social care would be determined by other advocacy agencies and not HealthWatch Lancashire. Any complaints received by HealthWatch Lancashire would be passed to the relevant agency and members indicated that they would like to be kept informed of any complaints received from West Lancashire residents. This would enable them to monitor and track local complaints.

However, it was recognised that HealthWatch needed time to establish itself and it was suggested that Mr Forsyth be invited to a future meeting to provide an update on the work of HealthWatch Lancashire including the complaints received and action taken.

7. Note of the meeting held on 18 September 2013

The note of the meeting held on 18 September 2013 was presented and agreed.

8. Action sheet update from last meeting

Members received an update on the action taken in response to issues raised at the previous meeting. The following points were raised:

- There was a further discussion on the difficulties in relation to securing the adoption status of roads. A concern was expressed about the retention and availability of records and agreements
- Members were informed that the County Council was working with Chorley Borough Council to tighten up the planning process. Councillor Fillis also reported that he had asked officers to look into the legal issues surrounding highway adoptions, these would form the basis of a letter lobbying the government to tighten up loopholes. All district councils would be given the opportunity to sign up to this letter. It was agreed that a further report would be presented in due course.

9. 2013/14 Quarter 2 Environment Directorate Performance Dashboard

The Forum noted the Quarter 2 "dashboard" performance report.

Officers provided the following updates:

- A contractor had been appointed to carry out concrete repair works on bridges. It was anticipated that work would be completed in quarter 3 2013/14.
- Work on:
 - the Stocks Bridge scheme would now be undertaken in 2014/15
 - Blaguegate Lane/Ormskirk Road would be completed by the end of 2013.
 - Ormskirk Road, Up Holland would be completed in quarter 4 2013/14.
- Discussions between the County and Borough Councils in relation to the refurbishment of Ormskirk bus station were on-going. It was noted that charges on bus companies using the bus station were some of the lowest in Lancashire. A further update on the refurbishment plans would be provided to members as part of the Q3 dashboard.
- County and Borough Council officers were close to agreement on the proposed Ormskirk Town Centre improvement scheme.
- In response to a question about the Derby Railway Street Bridge scheme, it was reported that the draft West Lancashire masterplan included a proposal that would significantly reduce the number of vehicles using Derby Street.
- Members noted the on the proposals in relation to Tawd Valley, Skelmersdale.

10. 2014/15 Environment Directorate Commissioning Plan for West Lancashire

The Forum was presented with a list of priorities identified by members since the last meeting which could be funded from the Local Priorities Response Fund. In order to support the development of the 2014/15 Commissioning Plan, members were asked to

consider the schemes using the allocations and information contained within the report presented to the meeting.

There was a lengthy discussion on the list of priorities and the following points were raised:

- It was reported that it might be possible to find alternative sources of funding for some of the listed schemes including the highest ranked 'Skelmersdale level crossings' scheme.
- A discussion followed around the merits of splitting the funding by some other means.
- Several members felt unable to prioritise the listed schemes due to insufficient knowledge about the schemes.
- Other members felt that should the highest ranked 'Skelmersdale level crossings' scheme be funded elsewhere, all schemes listed under 'Footway Works' and the 'Non Footway Works' schemes at Narrow Lane, Clieves Hill and Brandreth Drive Estate, Parbold should be taken forward as the suggested schemes for the 2014/15 capital programme to be funded from the Local Priorities Response Fund.
- It was noted that the 2014/15 Commissioning Plan would be presented to the next meeting of the Forum.

It was agreed that the County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport should be asked to consider the comments and suggestions made by members as part of his consideration of the 2014/15 capital programme.

11. Items raised by members of the Forum

12. Transport in Lancashire Ranking

The Forum received details of the ranking of transport schemes in Lancashire, as requested by Councillor Grant.

A concern was raised about the ranking of some of the schemes and the methodology used to determine the list of priorities.

It was noted that the list of priorities had been established some months ago, and it was felt that the draft West Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan was of greater relevance and importance to members of the Forum. A copy of the recently approved Masterplan consultation document was presented at the next item on the agenda.

13. West Lancashire Masterplan (suggested by County Councillor Fillis)

The Forum received a copy of the West Lancashire Highways and Transport Masterplan consultation document.

It was noted that the Masterplan set out the County Council's vision for improved travel and transport in West Lancashire. Members welcomed the Masterplan and particularly the proposals relating to the development of Skelmersdale's highways and transport network including the construction of a new railway station.

Members were informed that the County Council would be undertaking an extensive consultation exercise and it was noted that any comments must be submitted by mid January 2014. It was agreed that an update would be presented to the next Forum.

14. Developing the Three Tier Forums

There was a discussion on the further development of the Forum and in particular the frequency of meetings and whether meetings should be open to the public.

Members agreed the following

- The Forum should continue to meet three times per annum.
- Meetings should be open to the public
- The Chair and Deputy would work with Sarah Palmer at the next agenda setting meeting to agree how the public involvement element would work in practice. It was suggested by members of the Forum that this could be as follows:
 - Members of the public can raise any matters of interest or concern during a maximum 30 minute period prior to the start of a meeting.
 - The public cannot speak once a meeting has started.
 - The revised arrangements to be reviewed in 12 months time.

Officers were requested to produce revised terms of reference based on the above for implementation at the next meeting.

15. Themes for Future Meetings

Members of the Forum were asked to submit any other items to Sarah Palmer sarah.palmer@lancashire.gov.uk by 7 March 2014. Any suggestions would need to be cleared with the Chair.

16. Urgent Business

None.

17. Date of Next Forum

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 15 April 2014 at the Borough Council offices, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk.

Ian Fisher
County Secretary and Solicitor

County Hall
Preston