



William J Taylor MBE
Chief Executive

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22 June 2011

TO: COUNCILLORS: **GRICE, GREENALL, BALDOCK, MRS BLAKE, BLANE, COYLE, CROPPER, FILLIS, GAGEN, GIBSON, HENNESSY, G JONES, KAY, MORAN, NOLAN, O'TOOLE, POPE, SUDWORTH**

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, 52 DERBY STREET, ORMSKIRK, WEST LANCASHIRE, L39 2DF** on **THURSDAY 30 JUNE 2011** at **07:30PM** at which your attendance is requested.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "W J Taylor", written over a horizontal line.

William J Taylor
Chief Executive

A G E N D A **(Open to the Public)**

1. APOLOGIES

2. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

To be apprised of any changes to the membership of the Committee in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.

3. URGENT BUSINESS, IF ANY, INTRODUCED BY THE CHAIRMAN

Note: No other business is permitted unless, by reason of special circumstances, which shall be specified at the meeting, the Chairman is of the opinion that the item(s) should be considered as a matter of urgency.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

If a member requires advice on Declarations of Interest, he/she is advised to contact the Council Secretary and Solicitor in advance of the meeting. (For the assistance of members a checklist for use in considering their position on any particular item is included at the end of this agenda sheet.)

Page(s) 1 to 2

5. DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP

In accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rule 16, Members must declare the existence of any Party Whip, and the nature of it, when considering any matter in the following categories:

- The review of any decision of the Cabinet or
- The performance of any Member of the Cabinet

N.B. The Secretary of State believes whipping is incompatible with Overview and Scrutiny.

6. MINUTES

To receive as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2011. **Page(s) 3 to 6**

7. PETITION REVIEW REQUEST - DESIGNATION OF WEST LANCASHIRE PENSIONERS' FORUM AS A KEY STAKEHOLDER AND CREATION OF A PUBLIC FORUM

To consider the report of the Director of People and Places. **Page(s) 7 to 20**

8. CALLED-IN ITEMS

There are no items under this heading.

9. KEY DECISION FORWARD PLANS - 1 MAY 2011 - 30 JUNE 2011

There are no items under this heading.

10. RELEVANT MINUTES OF CABINET

To scrutinise the:

(a) MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL CABINET MEETING HELD ON 13 APRIL 2011 **Page(s) 21 to 24**

(b) MINUTES OF CABINET MEETING HELD ON 14 JUNE 2011 **Page(s) 25 to 40**

11. IMPLEMENTING SELF-FINANCE COUNCIL HOUSING

To consider the report of the Director of Transformation. **Page(s) 41 to End**

We can provide this document, upon request, on audiotape, in large print, in Braille and in other languages.

FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE: Please see attached sheet.

MOBILE PHONES: These should be switched off at all meetings.

For further information, please contact:-

Cathryn Jackson on 01695 585017

or email cathryn.jackson@westlancs.gov.uk

FIRE PRECAUTIONS ACT 1971
FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE FOR MEETINGS WHERE OFFICERS ARE
PRESENT
(52 DERBY STREET, ORMSKIRK)

PERSON IN CHARGE: Most Senior Officer present
ZONE WARDEN: Member Services Officer

IF YOU DISCOVER A FIRE

1. Operate the nearest **FIRE CALL POINT** by breaking the glass.
2. Attack the fire with the extinguishers provided only if you have been trained and it is safe to do so. **Do not** take risks.

ON HEARING THE FIRE ALARM

1. Leave the building via the **NEAREST SAFE EXIT**. **Do not stop** to collect personal belongings.
2. Proceed to the **ASSEMBLY POINT** on the car park and report your presence to the **PERSON IN CHARGE**.
3. **DO NOT** return to the premises until authorised to do so by the **PERSON IN CHARGE**.

NOTES:

Officers are required to direct all visitors regarding these procedures i.e. exit routes and place of assembly.

CHECKLIST FOR PERSON IN CHARGE

The Person in Charge must take the following actions:

1. Advise other interested parties present that you are the person in charge in the event of an evacuation.
2. Make yourself familiar with the location of the fire escape routes and inform any interested parties of the escape routes.
3. Make yourself familiar with the location of the assembly point and inform any interested parties of that location.
4. Make yourself familiar with the location of the fire alarm and detection control panel.
5. Ensure that the Zone Warden is aware of their role and responsibilities.
6. Arrange for a register of attendance to be completed (if considered appropriate/practicable).

IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE, OR THE FIRE ALARM BEING SOUNDED

1. Ensure that the room in which the meeting is being held is cleared of all persons.
2. Evacuate via the nearest safe Fire Exit and proceed to the **ASSEMBLY POINT** in the car park.
3. Delegate a person at the **ASSEMBLY POINT** who will proceed to the HOME CARE LINK SECTION in Westec House, in order to ensure that a back-up call is made to the **FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**.
4. Ensure that the **ZONE WARDEN** has reported to you on the results of his checks, i.e. that the rooms in use have been cleared of all persons.
5. If an Attendance Register has been taken, take a **ROLL CALL**.

6. Report the results of these checks to the **FIRE AND RESCUE OFFICER IN CHARGE** on arrival and inform them of the location of the **FIRE ALARM CONTROL PANEL**.
7. Authorise return to the building only when it is cleared to do so by the **FIRE AND RESCUE OFFICER IN CHARGE**.

NOTE:

The Fire Alarm system will automatically call the FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE. The purpose of the 999 back-up call is to meet a requirement of the Fire Precautions Act to supplement the automatic call.

CHECKLIST FOR ZONE WARDEN

1. Carry out a physical check of the rooms being used for the meeting, including adjacent toilets, kitchen.
2. Ensure that **ALL PERSONS**, both officers and members of the public are made aware of the **FIRE ALERT**.
3. Ensure that **ALL PERSONS** evacuate **IMMEDIATELY**, in accordance with the **FIRE EVACUATION PROCEDURE**.
4. Proceed to the **ASSEMBLY POINT** and report to the **PERSON IN CHARGE** that the rooms within your control have been cleared.
5. Assist the **PERSON IN CHARGE** to discharge their duties.

6.	I must regard myself as having a personal and prejudicial interest in the business because it relates to a decision made (whether implemented or not) or action taken by the Cabinet or another of the Council's committees or sub-committees and, at the time the decision was made or action was taken, I was a member of the Cabinet, committee or sub-committee and I was present when that decision was made or action was taken, however I am attending the meeting for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the business as the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for this purpose, whether under a statutory right or otherwise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>You may make representations, answer questions or give evidence but must leave the room once you have finished and cannot vote</i>
7.	A Standards Committee dispensation applies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>See the terms of the dispensation</i>

* **“Personal Interest”** in the business of the Council means either it relates to or is likely to affect:

- 8(1)(a)(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;
- (iii) any employment or business carried on by you;
- (iv) any person or body who employs or has appointed you;
- (v) 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;
- (vi) 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);
- (vii) 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);
- (viii) the interests of any person from whom you have received a gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25;
- (ix) any land in your authority's area in which you have a beneficial interest;
- (x) 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;
- (xi) 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

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.

“a relevant person” means

- (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 8(1)(a)(i) or (ii).

“body exercising functions of a public nature” means

Regional and local development agencies, other government agencies, other Councils, public health bodies, council-owned companies exercising public functions, arms length management organisations carrying out housing functions on behalf of your authority, school governing bodies.

A Member with a personal interest who has made an executive decision in relation to that matter must ensure any written statement of that decision records the existence and nature of that interest.

NB Section 21(13)(b) of the LGA 2000 overrides any Code provisions to oblige an executive member to attend an overview and scrutiny meeting to answer questions.

EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD: 31 MARCH 2011

Start: 7.30pm

Finish: 8.35pm

PRESENT: O'Toole (Chairman)

Councillors: Mrs Blake Hennessey
Coyle Moran
Cropper Nolan
Mrs Evans R A Pendleton
Furey Pope
Gibson G M Roberts
Gartside Tattersall
Grice

In attendance:

Councillors: Westley (Portfolio Holder – Finance & Performance Management)

Officers: Executive Manager Housing and Property Maintenance Services
(Mr B Livermore)
Interim Head of Planning and Policy (Mr I Gill)
Deputy Treasurer (Mr M Kostrzewski)
Estates and Valuation Manager (Ms R Kneale)
Legal Services Manager (Mr T P Broderick)
Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer (Mrs C A Jackson)

73. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mawdsley.

74. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, Members noted the termination of membership of Councillor Fillis and the appointment of Councillor Gibson for this meeting only, thereby giving effect to the wishes of the Political Group.

75. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

76. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Cropper and O'Toole as members of the Lancashire County Council (LCC) declared personal interests in the event of any reference to LCC during consideration of the business of the Committee.

77. DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of a party whip.

78. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

79. CALLED IN ITEMS

There were no called-in items.

80. KEY DECISION FORWARD PLANS - 1 MARCH 2011 TO 31 JULY 2011

There were no items under this heading.

81. RELEVANT MINUTES OF CABINET

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 15 March 2011. A member raised questions/comments in relation to:

Minute 145 (Strategic Asset Management Project – Outcome of the Pilot Project) – publication of report. It was noted that this item was listed for consideration as the last item of business.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 15 March 2011 be noted.

82. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING

Consideration was given to the report of the Director Designate (Council Secretary and Solicitor) as circulated and contained on pages 597 to 603 of the Book of Reports which provided a projection on the financial position on the General and Housing Revenue Accounts to the end of the financial year.

During the ensuing discussion Members raised questions/queries relating to:

- Benefit expenditure
- Subsidy System
- Higher benefits payments related to exempt accommodation
- Concessionary travel – financial changes related to transfer to LCC.
- Council Tax freeze.

The Deputy Borough Treasurer responded to questions referencing details contained in the report and at the invitation of the Chairman the Portfolio Holder responded to comments on the strategic obligations related to housing finance, particularly rents and services charges.

RESOLVED: That the financial position of the Revenue Accounts be noted.

83. CAPITAL MONITORING 2010/11

Consideration was given to the report of the Director Designate (Council Secretary and Solicitor) as circulated and contained on pages 605 to 614 of the Book of Reports which provided an update on the current position in respect of the 2010/11 Capital Programme.

During the ensuing discussion Members raised questions/queries relating to:

- Capital Expenditure against Budgets
- Rights to Buy sales/legislation
- Introduction of the 'self-financing' housing model

The Deputy Borough Treasurer responded to questions referencing details contained in the report.

The Executive Manager Housing and Property Maintenance Services explained that a cross-party Landlord Services Committee Cabinet Working Group had been established whose membership included tenant representatives and that the Working Group's terms of reference also included consideration of the preparation to manage the introduction of 'self financing' investment in the housing stock. He further confirmed that representations had been made to Government relating to the proposed pooling arrangement under Right To Buy, whereby the Government will receive 75% of Right To Buy sales remitted to them.

RESOLVED: That the current position of the 2010/2011 Capital Programme be noted.

84. LDF CORE STRATEGY - PREFERRED OPTIONS PAPER FOR CONSULTATION

Consideration was given to the report of the Acting Executive Manager Planning which detailed progress on the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) for the West Lancashire Local Development Framework (LDF), particularly in relation to the proposed Preferred Options Paper on the Core Strategy for public consultation as contained on pages 615 to 624 and pages 631 to 830 of the Book of Reports which sought agreed comments, if any, of this Committee prior to the document being issued for public consultation.

Members discussed the comments raised at a previous meeting of the Committee in relation to the rejected Option A and the profile of this option in the Preferred Options Paper going out for consultation.

The Interim Head of Planning and Policy responded to questions and queries and explained that representations can be put forward at the consultation phase on any rejected options, including Option A, or any other options that had previously been discarded. He then went on to explain the consultation arrangements, the various ways those consulted would be able to make comments, the documentation being issued and the various on-line communication methods also being used to assist the public consultation process.

RESOLVED: That the Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper and consultation arrangements be noted.

85. LDF CORE STRATEGY EVIDENCE BASE - DRAFT GREEN BELT STUDY

Consideration was given to the report of the Acting Executive Manager Planning which detailed progress on the Draft Green Belt Study, as contained on pages 625 to 630 and pages 831 to 904 of the Book of Reports. The report explained that the Study forms a key plank of evidence within the West Lancashire Local Development Framework (LDF) Evidence Base. Agreed comments, if any, of this Committee were sought on the draft prior to the document being issued for public consultation.

The Interim Head of Planning and Policy gave an overview of the purpose of the Green Belt Study, the three stages of that study and the methodology of the public consultation exercise.

RESOLVED: That the Draft Green Belt Study document be noted.

86. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 (Financial/Business Affairs) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of that Act and as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption under Schedule 12A outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

87. STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PROJECT - OUTCOME OF THE PILOT PROJECT

Members considered the request put forward by a Member whether to ask the Executive Manager Regeneration and Estates or the Council to make the report Strategic Asset Management Project – Outcome of the Pilot Project as contained on pages 905 to 938 of the Book of Reports, considered by Cabinet on 15 March and to be considered by Council on 13 April 2011, available to the public.

On behalf of the Executive Manager Regeneration and Estates, the Estates and Valuation Manager attended the meeting and answered questions on the report and gave an explanation in relation to the recommendation to maintain the exemption by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

RESOLVED: That the position be noted.

.....
Chairman



AGENDA ITEM: 7

**EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW &
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
30 June 2011**

Report of: Director of People and Places

Relevant Head of Service: Acting Borough Solicitor

**Contact for further information: Mrs J Denning (Extn. 5384)
(E-mail: jacky.denning@westlancs.gov.uk)**

**SUBJECT: PETITION REVIEW REQUEST – DESIGNATION OF WEST
LANCASHIRE PENSIONERS' FORUM AS A KEY STAKEHOLDER AND
CREATION OF A PUBLIC FORUM**

Wards affected: Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To consider a request to review the steps that the Council has taken in response to a petition received in respect of the above, as required by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee determines whether it considers the steps taken by the Council in response to the petition are adequate.
- 2.2 That if the Committee does not consider the steps taken to be adequate, consideration be given as to what action to pursue within existing terms of reference.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 requires every local authority to adopt a 'Petition Scheme' that sets out how it will handle petitions which must be complied with as adopted. In accordance with the procedure if a 'petition organiser' does not feel that the Council has dealt with the petition adequately, he/she can request the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review the steps taken to respond.

4.0 STEPS TAKEN TO RESPOND TO THE PETITION

4.1 A petition was received on Wednesday, 16 February 2011 containing 33 signatures, details are attached at Appendix A.

4.2 An acknowledgement letter was sent to the 'petition organiser' on 21 February 2011 which advised that a formal response would be sent to him within 15 working days and detailed what steps the Council may take to deal with the petition i.e.:

- Take the action requested
- Give a written response setting out the Council's views about the request
- Refer to the relevant overview and scrutiny committee
- Refer to Cabinet (executive functions)
- Consider at a meeting of the Council
- Hold an inquiry
- Undertake research
- Hold a public meeting
- Hold a consultation
- Hold a meeting with petitioners
- Call a referendum

4.3 On 8 March 2011 a letter was sent to the 'petition organiser' which advised that the following step would be taken to deal with the petition:

"The Assistant Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, will give a written response setting out the Council's views about the request, within 10 working days."

4.4 On 21 March 2011 a letter was sent to the 'petition organiser' from the Assistant Chief Executive, a copy of which is attached at Appendix B.

5.0 REVIEW REQUEST

5.1 A request to review the steps taken was received, within the deadline, on 5 April 2011. A copy of the request is attached at Appendix C.

6.0 COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF TRANSFORMATION

6.1 As set out in my letter of 21st March 2011, appended to this report, I consider that the West Lancashire Pensioners Forum (WLPF) is already considered as a stakeholder group with which to consult on appropriate issues. There are already a range of fora in place for the purpose the petitioners request, and in order to avoid duplication it is my view that these fora should be used, rather than establish new mechanisms. As set out in my letter of 21st March 2011 it is possible for the WLPF to join these mechanisms by request.

7.0 PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH REVIEW REQUESTS

- 7.1 The 'petition organiser', Mr Brookfield, has been notified of the time, date and place of this Committee meeting and, with the permission of the Chairman, he may be allowed to address the committee on why he considers that the authority's decision on the petition is inadequate, under usual procedures.
- 7.2 Following consideration of the steps taken, the request for a review of the steps taken and the comments of the Director of Transformation, the Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee can decide if it considers the petition was dealt with adequately or it may use any of its powers under the Local Government Act 2000 to deal with the matter.
- 7.3 If the Committee considers that the petition was not dealt with adequately it could:
- Request the relevant officer to bring back a more detailed report on the issue.
 - Make a recommendation to Cabinet / Council as appropriate
 - Request the Corporate / Environmental Overview & Scrutiny Committee to undertake a Review on the subject matter (subject to current work programmes and resources).
 - Set up a Working Group to look at the issue in more detail (subject to the Committees work programme and resources).
- 7.4 Once the 'review request' has been considered the 'petition organiser' will be informed of the results within 5 working days. The results of the 'review request' will also be published on the website.

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 8.1 Petitions are another method to enable local people to raise concerns with the Council providing a feedback mechanism for the community and improving access for all.

9.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no significant financial or resource implications other than officer and Member time in dealing with this request.

10.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 The Council is required to comply with Sections 10 to 22 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

There is a significant direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as Appendix 4 to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report.

Appendices

- A. Copy of petition request – 16 February 2011
- B. Letter to R Brookfield, Secretary of the West Lancashire Pensioners' Forum from Assistant Chief Executive – 21 March 2011
- C. Review request from Mr R Brookfield, Secretary of the West Lancashire Pensioners' Forum – Received 5 April 2011.
- D. Equality Impact Assessment

PETITION

Topic: West Lancashire Pensioners' Forum, being aware of the West Lancashire Borough Council Consultation and Community Engagement Strategy 2007 – 2010" (CCES) wishes to be recognised as a key stakeholder with formal input that will ensure council's awareness of the effects of any and all decisions made about us on our homes, our safety, our wellbeing, our community, and all issues of age equality and discrimination.

The CCES states... Local people are at the heart of the Council's consultation and community engagement activity and this Strategy puts into action the Council's commitment to listen to, inform and consult local people in all sections of the community. The Council's vision is to put customer services first, and build a community second to none. It is our promise that we will not only satisfy customers, but delight them. Putting the customer first means, above all, knowing our customers. If we are to delight customers, we need to know what they want. We need to find out their aspirations, their concerns, what they think is important, and what they expect from us. We need to know what they think about the services we offer and how they would like us to improve. As well as finding out people's views and attitudes, the Council wishes to provide opportunities wherever possible for people to play an active role in influencing decisions, to enhance people's involvement with the authority, and extend community engagement. This is central to achieving social inclusion, to enhancing the well-being of the district and to encouraging involvement in local democracy.

A community development approach can assist in making community engagement successful. In addition, the Council must conform to a range of legislation and government guidance which require it to consult and engage with stakeholders. Consultation through two-way dialogue to give people the opportunity to give their views on specific issues of importance to them. The results influence the decisions that are made. Examples include: inviting people to comment on the draft replacement local plan. Participation – providing opportunities for local people to get involved in influencing decisions and developing plans that affect their communities. Examples include: running a focus group of disabled service users to discuss with Council staff how leisure facilities can be improved to meet their needs; bringing together key stakeholders to work together e.g. Ormskirk Town Centre Forum and the Local Strategic Partnership.

The CCSE also includes this; Comprehensive Performance Assessment The importance the Audit Commission places on this area of work is underlined in a special Audit Commission CPA briefing report which identifies the linked themes of user focus and citizen engagement as key drivers for improvement. It identifies five factors as critical to successful user and citizen engagement: Commitment to user and citizen engagement Understanding your communities Clarity of purpose Communicating in appropriate ways Delivering change and improved outcomes. It is likely therefore that the CPA process, and other external inspections, will continue to place increased emphasis on consultation and community engagement which will again make a significant contribution to overall ratings. The Council can expect that assessors will scrutinise councils' consultation activities in the light of the key factors listed above, as well as consider how authorities have improved since their last inspection..

We feel the best way for council to deliver the first rate service it refers to is to talk to and listen to us regularly. It is our aim that council will provide such a service to pensioners and by doing so to continuously improve its claim to transparency by keeping pensioners involved every step of the way. In support of our petition we quote the council statistic of there being 26,600 older

people in the borough, representing about 18% of the total population and 36% of the council tax-paying population.

We refer to any and all Local Government legislation which imposes duties on all local authorities and best value authorities to involve local representatives when carrying out any of its functions by providing information, consulting or involving in another way. The duties are wide ranging and apply to the delivery of services, policy, and decision making. Authorities also must consider how organisations to which their external contractors belong adhere to the principles underpinning the duty. Authorities must not discriminate in the way they inform, consult or involve local people. They must promote equal opportunities for people to engage and get involved.

In its Equality Policy Document WLBC committed itself to the following; "We will engage and involve communities in the way we plan and design our services to ensure that our service plans match the needs of the community as accurately as possible" and "We will seek to involve Members, employees, service users and our communities' in all that we do. We will ensure services are based on consultation and will also work in partnership with the Equality Target Groups to identify needs and delivering services to meet those needs". We are neither satisfied nor delighted. WLBC has failed us in respect of both equality commitments stated above. They did not engage and involve pensioners, or provide all information about the travel concession, unless it was sought under the Freedom of Information Act. They did not consult about the travel concession until they were informed of their legal obligation to do so. It is worth repeating;

On Consultation: Beatson J noted the settled law on consultation, namely that: (a) consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage; (b) sufficient reasons must be given for any proposal to enable intelligent consideration and response; (c) adequate time must be given for such consideration and response; and (d) the product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising any proposals. These were referred to in the proceedings as the 'Sedley requirements' because they were originally formulated in 1985 by Stephen Sedley QC, as he then was, in submissions in *Ex parte Gunning* [1985] 84 LGR 168. They were notably referred to by Lord Woolf in the leading case of *Coughlan (R v North East Devon Health Authority, ex parte Coughlan)* [2001] QB 213).

What do you want the council to do?:

We Petition council to meet with the officers of the West Lancashire Pensioners' Forum as soon as possible to establish a public Forum consisting of Over60s, Residents and Councillors that will meet quarterly at the Council offices to discuss any and all proposals before decisions are made about us, our homes, our safety, our wellbeing, our community, and address all issues of age equality and discrimination, and that Council puts forward to the West Lancashire Pensioners' Forum a draft document in the form of a proposed constitution of such a Forum.

[REDACTED]

Lead petitioner: Name: Raymond Brookfield Esq, Secretary of the West Lancashire Pensioners' Forum; Email address: [REDACTED]
Telephone: Home [REDACTED] Address: [REDACTED] Halsall, Ormskirk, West Lancashire [REDACTED]

We, the undersigned, request West Lancashire Borough Council to consider this Petition.

01695 585229
kim.webber@westlancls.gov.uk

R. Brookfield, Esq.
Secretary of the West Lancashire
Pensioners Forum
Halsall
Ormskirk
West Lancashire

21st March 2011

KW/CMT
Ms. K. Webber
01695 585005
5005

Dear Mr. Brookfield,

**PETITION: DESIGNATION OF WEST LANCASHIRE PENSIONERS' FORUM AS A KEY
STAKEHOLDER AND CREATION OF A PUBLIC FORUM**

I refer to your petition regarding the above which was received on 16th February 2011, and to Mrs. Denning's subsequent letter to you of 8th March 2011.

In your petition you request that:

"Council... meet with officers of the West Lancashire Pensioners' Forum as soon as possible to establish a public Forum consisting of Over 60's, Residents and Councillors that will meet quarterly at the Council offices to discuss any and all proposals before decisions are made about us, our homes, our safety, our well-being, our community, and address all issues of age, equality and discrimination, and that Council puts forward to the West Lancashire Pensions' Forum a draft document in the form of a proposed constitution of such a Forum."

In providing this response I have taken account of all the contents of your petition, and have had full regard to both the Council's relevant policies and legislation.

The Council has a range of approaches in place for informing, consulting and involving relevant stakeholder groups, a number of which exist in the form of fora. The Council also consults stakeholders, individuals and collectively on topics as appropriate. To give an example of this, the West Lancashire Pensioners' Forum was recently included in the consultation undertaken in relation to the future of Travel Concessions. As highlighted by this example I can confirm that the Council already regards the West Lancashire Pensioners' Forum as a stakeholder group with which to consult on appropriate issues.

In relation to your request that a public Forum be established, the Council recognises and values the role of such fora. In this regard, the Council supports and inputs to a range of

fora as part of the Local Strategic Partnership arrangements, and these provide an opportunity to meet with, inform, consult and involve local residents and groups on a range of topics.

As you may be aware, the Local Strategic Partnership has a thematic group called the Older People's Partnership Board. This body, as one of its functions, provides a means for consulting with and involving older people and provide a formal consultation body on Older People's issues for partners working to improve the well-being of residents, including this Council, in West Lancashire.

You may also request to join this body, and also the wider West Lancashire Strategic Partnership Forum. Further details of these bodies can be found at: www.westlancslsp.org and should your organisation wish it, I can provide contact details to enable you to request membership.

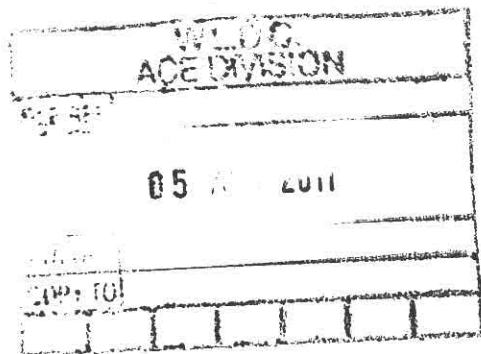
In summary, it is the Council's current view that there are sufficient arrangements in place for the purpose outlined in your petition.

I hope you are satisfied with this response, however in the event that you are not, Mrs. Denning has outlined the process you should follow in her letter to you of 8th March 2011.

Yours sincerely,

Kim Webber
Director Designate
(Assistant Chief Executive)

c.c. Director Designate (CSS),
Jacky Denning, Assistant Member Services Manager



Mr R Brookfield
Secretary
West Lancashire Pensioners Forum
[REDACTED]
Halsall
Ormskirk
West Lancashire
L39 [REDACTED]

Mrs Kim Webber B.Sc., M.Sc.
Assistant Chief Executive
PO Box 16
52 Derby Street
Ormskirk
West Lancashire
L39 2DF

April 1st 2011.

Dear Mrs Webber

Thank you for your letter of 21st March 2011 about the Petition: Designation of West Lancashire Pensioners' Forum as a key Stakeholder and Creation of a public Forum

I note your reference to the Forum being recently included in the consultation undertaken in relation to the future of travel concessions and your belief that council regards the Pensioners Forum as a stakeholder group with which to consult on appropriate issues. I doubt the Forum members will look seriously on completing a questionnaire as consultation, but I will ask them in due course.

Noting your comment that we may request to join the Older People's Partnership Board I can advise you Forum officers have attended that Board since its inception, and perhaps your lack of knowledge about our membership of it reflects how ineffective that Board is. The body as you describe it, that one of its functions provides a means for consulting with and involving older people and providing a formal consultation body on Older People's issues for partners working to improve the well-being of residents, is unsuitable for purpose

For example, from the minutes of a Partnership Board meeting held on 20 January 2010

"6. Feedback from Pensioners Forum. The issue of free travel for pensioners in West Lancashire had been raised at previous meetings but it was agreed that it was not an issue for the Partnership Board. Jim Bevan advised that this issue had now been raised in the House of Commons by Rosie Cooper MP.

"Not an issue for the Partnership Board" says it all. In the light of your not being aware of how our membership of the Partnership Board has not fulfilled our expectations of consultation, and having discussed your response with some signatories to the petition I do not feel that you have dealt with our petition properly and I therefore request that the Executive Overview and scrutiny Committee

review the adequacy of the step that the Council has taken, or proposed to be taken, in response to the petition

Yours sincerely

R Brookfield
Sec to WLPF.

West Lancashire Borough Council
EIA process for services, policies, projects and strategies

Question 1

Using information that you have gathered from service monitoring, surveys, consultation, and other sources such as anecdotal information fed back by members of staff, in your opinion, could your service/policy/strategy/decision (including decisions to cut or change a service or policy) disadvantage, or have a potentially disproportionately negative effect on, any of the following groups of people:

- People of different ages – including young and older people
- People with a disability
- People of different races/ethnicities/nationalities
- Men
- Women
- People of different religions/beliefs
- People of different sexual orientations
- People who are or have identified as transgender
- People who are married or in a civil partnership
- Women who are pregnant or on maternity leave or men whose partners are pregnant or on maternity leave
- People living in areas of deprivation or who are financially disadvantaged

No.

Question 2

What sources of information have you used to come to this decision?

There is no evidence from an initial assessment of a negative impact on equality in relation to the equality target groups as the rules on petitions are intended to enable public access to the decision-making process of the authority and as such contribute towards open and inclusive governance.

Question 3

How have you tried to involve people/groups in developing your service/policy/strategy or in making your decision (including decisions to cut or change a service or policy)?

No – the report provides details of a process undertaken; any future decision to change the policy would be subject to a further report to Cabinet/Council.

Question 4

Could your service/policy/strategy or decision (including decisions to cut or change a service or policy) help or hamper our ability to meet our duties under the Equality Act 2010? Duties are to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity (removing or minimising disadvantage, meeting the needs of people)
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it

No – the report and appendices address this issue

Question 5

What actions will you take to address any issues raised in your answers above?

No issues raised.

CABINET (SPECIAL MEETING)

HELD: 13 APRIL 2011

Start: 7.00pm

Finish: 7.10pm

PRESENT:

Councillor Grant (Leader of the Council, in the Chair)

Councillors	Ashcroft	<u>Portfolio</u>
	Forshaw	Human Resources and Partnership
	Fowler	Planning and Transportation
	Greenall	Community Services and Health
	Mrs Hopley	Street Scene Management
	Owens	Housing
	Westley	Deputy Leader & Regeneration and Estates
		Finance and Performance Management

In attendance
Councillors: Furey
O'Toole

Officers

Chief Executive (Mr W Taylor)
Director Designate (Council Secretary and Solicitor) (Mrs G Rowe)
Director Designate (Assistant Chief Executive) (Ms K Webber)
Executive Manager Regeneration and Estates (Mrs J Traverse)
Borough Treasurer (Mr M Taylor)
Member Services Manager (Mr G Martin)

147. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

148. SPECIAL URGENCY (RULE 16 ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROCEDURE RULES)/URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

149. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

150. PROPER OFFICER PROVISIONS AND SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Councillor Grant introduced the report of the Chief Executive, as contained on pages 1789 to 1793 of the Book of Reports, setting out the new management structure and seeking approval of the "Proper Officer Provisions and Scheme of Delegation" which had been updated to take account of the changes.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained in it.

- RESOLVED: A. That the new management structure attached at Appendix A to the report be noted.
- B. That the updated 'Proper Officer Provisions and Scheme of Delegation to Chief Officers' attached at Appendix B to the report be approved insofar as they are Cabinet functions.
- C. That "one-off" delegations be updated as set out below:

Council Secretary and Solicitor	Director of People and Places
Assistant Chief Executive	Director of Transformation
Executive Manager Community Services	Assistant Director Community Services
Executive Manager Housing and Property Maintenance Services	Assistant Director Housing and Property Maintenance Services
Executive Manager Street Scene	Assistant Director Street Scene
Executive Manager Regeneration and Estates	Assistant Director Regeneration and Estates
Acting Executive Manager Planning	Borough Planner
Divisional Managers	Directors/Heads of Service

151. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

- RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of that Act and as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption under Schedule 12A outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

152. SKELMERSDALE TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION PROJECT: AMENDMENTS TO THE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT

Councillor Owens introduced the report of the Director Designate (Assistant Chief Executive), as contained on pages 1795 to 1800 of the Book of Reports, seeking approval for amendments to the Skelmersdale Town Centre Regeneration Project Development Agreement, to allow the construction of a new office for the Co-op Bank plc and providing an update on the position regarding the Co-op Bank's exit from Delf House.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained in it.

- RESOLVED:
- A. That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Estates to negotiate and agree amendments to the Skelmersdale Town Centre Development Agreement to allow the construction of new office facilities in accordance with the proposals outlined at paragraph 5 of the report, to obtain any necessary consents and enter into any incidental agreements to give effect to this.
 - B. That the position in relation to the exit arrangements for Delf House as set out in Section 6 be noted, and that any financial implications be dealt with through the budget setting process for future years.
 - C. That call-in shall not apply as the negotiations are proceeding apace and arrangements need to be finalised to allow development, it being noted that Council is also considering the report.

- LEADER -

CABINET

HELD: 14 JUNE 2011

Start: 7.30pm

Finish: 9.40pm

PRESENT:

Councillor I Grant (Leader of the Council, in the Chair)

Councillors	M Forshaw	<u>Portfolio</u>
	A Fowler	Planning and Technical Services
	Mrs V Hopley	Health and Leisure
	A Owens	Landlord Services and Community Safety
		Deputy Leader & Housing (Finance),
		Regeneration and Estates
	D Westley	Resources and Transformation

In attendance	N Furey	R A Pendleton
Councillors:	J Hodson	D Sudworth

Officers

Chief Executive (Mr W Taylor)
Director of People and Places (Mrs G Rowe)
Director of Transformation (Ms K Webber)
Assistant Director Housing and Property Maintenance Services
(Mr R Livermore)
Assistant Director Community Services (Mr D Tilleray)
Assistant Director Regeneration and Estates (Mrs J Traverse)
Borough Treasurer (Mr M Taylor)
Acting Transformation Manager (Mr S Walsh)
Housing Operations Manager (Ms L McGarry)
Assistant Member Services Manager (Mrs J Denning)
LDF Team Leader (Mr P Richards)

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor I Ashcroft.

2. SPECIAL URGENCY (RULE 16 ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROCEDURE RULES)/URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Owens declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 5(k) 'Proposed Appointment of Partner Registered Provider', as his sister was an employee for one of the suggested partners.

Councillor Westley declared a personal interest in agenda item 7(h) 'Partnership Proposals with Lancashire County Council / One Connect Ltd', as a Member of Lancashire County Council.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 15 March and the Special meeting held on 13 April 2011 be received as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

5. MATTERS REQUIRING DECISIONS

Consideration was given to reports relating to the following matters requiring decisions as contained on pages 1 to 244 and 339 to 346 of the Book of Reports:

6. QUEEN ELIZABETH II FIELDS

Councillor Fowler introduced the report of the Director of People and Places which detailed requests from Parish Councils to support applications to enable Council owned fields leased to parish councils to be nominated for the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge.

The Leader referred to the revised recommendation circulated at the meeting which included reference to the indemnity on the land at Parbold.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the revised recommendations and the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

- RESOLVED:
- A. That, subject to a successful application, the open space land off Chorley Road, Hilldale, identified in Appendix 1 to the report and edged in bold, should be gifted to Hilldale Parish Council to allow the Parish Council to take forward an application to the "Fields in Trust" to allow the land to be included as a nominated site for the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge.
 - B. That, subject to a successful application, the open space land off Alder Lane and Bramble Way, Parbold, identified in Appendix 2 to the report and edged in bold, should be gifted to Parbold Parish Council, subject to the retention of the indemnity from the Council in relation to the landfill site, to allow the Parish Council to take forward an application to the "Fields in Trust" to allow the land to be included as a nominated site for the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge.
 - C. That it be noted that the transfer of the land would only take place if there were to be a successful inclusion and acceptance from "Fields in Trust" for the land to be defined as a Queen Elizabeth II Field. If the nomination is not successful then the transfer will not be completed and the land will be retained by the Borough Council with the existing lease arrangements retained.
 - D. That delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director Community Services to enter into all necessary documentation to facilitate the transfer and to seek and obtain all necessary approvals and consents.

- E. That delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director Regeneration and Estates to obtain if necessary a report from the District Valuer identifying any undervalue.

7. CAR PARKING ARRANGEMENTS - 52 DERBY STREET

Councillor Forshaw introduced the report of the Director of People and Places which sought approval to change the pay and display car parking arrangements on the 52 Derby Street site.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained in it.

RESOLVED: A. That additional short stay, long stay and permit parking, be provided, as indicated on the plan attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

- B. That the parking charging structure on the site be:

Up to 30 minutes	free
Up to 1 hour	70p
Up to 2 hours	£1.10
Up to 3 hours	£1.60
Up to 4 hours	£2.00
Up to 9 hours	£3.00

- C. That charges for permits to park on the site be set at £195 per annum or £24 per month.
- D. That the existing Traffic Regulation Order (Off-Street Parking Places Consolidation Order) relating to parking charges on the site be amended to take account of the changes shown at A, B and C above and to incorporate the former Walmsley House site.
- E. That the minor remedial works detailed in paragraph 6.1 of the report, to the areas shown on the plan at Appendix 1, be agreed.
- F. That the Assistant Director Community Services, be authorised to implement the proposals set out in A - E above.

8. USE OF SECTION 106 MONIES

Councillor Fowler introduced the report of the Director of People and Places which detailed requests received regarding the use of Section 106 monies received by the Council from housing developers for the enhancement of public open space and recreation provision in their Parishes/Wards.

The Assistant Director Community Services undertook to provide Cabinet members with details of the proposed start dates for each of the projects identified, as soon as they become known.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained in it.

- RESOLVED: A. That the proposed projects detailed in section 6 of the report be approved and the Section 106 commuted sums of £9,800 in Parbold, up to £20,000 in Up Holland, £2,000 in Scott Ward, and £10,000 in Appley Bridge be made available to the respective applicants for their projects.
- B. That the commuted sums be paid to the respective applicants subject to them entering into suitable legal agreements with the Council.

9. COASTAL POLLUTION PLAN

Councillor Forshaw introduced the report of the Director of People and Places which sought the adoption of the Coastal Pollution Plan.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained in it.

- RESOLVED: That the policies, as related to the West Lancashire Borough coastline as set out in the Borough Coastal Pollution Plan, set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be adopted.

10. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) AND PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO PUBLIC OPEN SPACE CONTRIBUTIONS

Councillor Forshaw introduced the report of the Director of People and Places that sought authority to begin working towards a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule for the Borough and for the Borough Planner to change the amount of contributions the Council would seek for off-site public open space in residential development in order to discount contributions towards maintenance.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained in it.

- RESOLVED: A. That authority be granted for officers to begin work on the Community Infrastructure Levy framework for the Borough and to prepare a Draft Charging Schedule.
- B. That authority be granted for the proposed amendments to be made to the application of the Open Space / Recreation Provision in New Residential Developments SPD, removing the requirement for a contribution for the cost of maintenance within the provision of off-site open space.

11. AFFORDABLE HOUSING - BUDGET PROPOSALS

Councillor Mrs Hopley introduced the report of the Director of Transformation which set out an approach for utilising the Affordable Housing Budget and delivering a strategic approach to the Council priority.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained in it.

- RESOLVED:
- A. That the Assistant Director of Housing and Property Maintenance Services seek expressions of interest from suitable Registered Providers to maximise the budget availability for 2011/12 together with the budget for 2012/13 as identified in paragraph 3 of the report.
 - B. That a further report be brought back to Cabinet regarding the strategic approach necessary to ensure that adequate availability of Affordable Housing is achieved, including additional information in respect of the self-build project and any potential changes that may be required to the eligibility criteria/principles at Appendix B to the report.

12. IMPLEMENTING SELF-FINANCING FOR COUNCIL HOUSING

Councillor Owens introduced the report of the Director of Transformation which advised Members and Tenants regarding the Governments intention to move to a system of self-financing for Council Housing and consider a timetable of what actions are necessary to meet the requirements of self-financing for Council Housing, which will be part of the Localism Act when enacted.

Feedback was received from the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) held on 7 June 2011 where members had received a presentation on the subject.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the feedback from the Working Group and the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

- RESOLVED:
- A. That the information contained in the report be noted.
 - B. That the outline timetable for implementing self-financing by 2012, at appendix A to the report, be agreed and implemented.
 - C. That the contents of the letter to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) at appendix B be noted and endorsed.
 - D. That the contents of the letter to CIPFA at appendix C to the report, be noted and endorsed.

- E. That the draft HRA Business Plan Indicative Debt Profile at appendix D be noted and the Assistant Director of Housing and Property Maintenance Services and Borough Treasurer, prepare further draft Business Plans based on a range of options and situations.
- F. That the potential adverse financial impact of this new system on the General Fund is factored into the budget setting process for 2012-13.
- G. That a communication strategy for Members, Staff and Tenants be prepared and implemented by the Assistant Director Housing and Property Maintenance Services after consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing finance.
- H. That the report be referred to the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- I. That call in is not appropriate as the matter is to be considered by the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

13. HOUSING SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Councillor Mrs Hopley introduced the report of the Director of Transformation which set out the Housing Service Improvement Plan that would be monitored regularly to ensure that appropriate action was being taken in respect of the Council's compliance with the Regulatory Framework administered by the TSA. The report also referred to a letter from the TSA, attached as an Appendix to the report, which advised that the Council's wish to enter into a Voluntary Undertaking had been accepted and, provided that the Plan is delivered in a timely manner, that formal action would not be taken.

The Cabinet received feedback from the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) held on 7 June 2011 who had no particular concerns with the Plan and had noted the report.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the feedback from the Working Group and the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

- RESOLVED:**
- A. That the revised Housing Service Improvement Plan (Appendix A to the report) be endorsed.
 - B. That the letter from the TSA dated 28 April 2011 (Appendix B to the report) be noted.
 - C. That the feedback from the Landlord Services Committee be noted.
 - D. That call in is not appropriate as a monitoring report will be presented to the next meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 June 2011.

14. AFFORDABLE RENT MODEL

Councillor Mrs Hopley introduced the report of the Director Transformation which detailed the 'Affordable Homes Programme' and the introduction of the 'affordable rent' product and how it was designed to deliver greater numbers of affordable homes, with less reliance on government subsidy.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained in it.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the use of the Affordable Rent Model in the Borough be endorsed.

15. FEEDBACK FROM THE LANDLORD SERVICES COMMITTEE (CABINET WORKING GROUP)

Councillor Mrs Hopley introduced the report of the Director of Transformation which provided feedback from the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) held on 7 June 2011.

Cabinet considered the recommendations arising from the meeting and felt that the Labour membership on the Cabinet Working Group should remain at three and not four as it should aim to reflect the political balance on the Council.

Councillor Hopley considered that all Councillors, including the Working Group, would benefit from accessing the HouseMark web site.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the comments expressed and the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

- RESOLVED:**
- A. That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2011, attached at Appendix A to the report, be noted.
 - B. That the following recommendations at Minute 3. 'Terms of Reference of the Landlord Services Committee', be approved:
 - (i) That the tenant representatives be given voting rights on the Working Group.
 - (ii) That substitutes should not be allowed on the Working Group.
 - (iii) That the terms of reference be amended to read as follows:
 - “(1) To support and enable the delivery of Tenant led improvement and deliver the necessary action to meet the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) regulatory requirements via existing officer and Portfolio Holder delegations or by referring matters to Cabinet or Council as appropriate.
 - (2) To consider reports and recommendations from the Services Evaluation Group and refer matters to Cabinet as appropriate.

- (3) To monitor the Landlord Services Improvement Action Plan and make comments to Cabinet.
 - (4) To consider preparations to manage the introduction of 'self-financing' of the Housing Revenue Account and the HRA Business Plan, and to make comments to Cabinet/Council.
 - (5) To receive Performance Monitoring Reports for Housing Services.
 - (6) To ensure all Strategies and procedures are in place as highlighted in the Audit Commission's report."
 - (iv) That all Borough Councillors and Members of the Working Group be given Access to the HouseMark Website and database and any other information about good practice.
- C. That in respect of Minute 4. 'Terms of Reference – Service Evaluation Group', the protocol, amended terms of Reference and Draft Work Programme, attached at Appendix 2 to the report, be endorsed.
- D. That Minute 10. 'Proposed Appointment of Partner Registered Provider' and Minute 13. 'Brookside – Impact Assessment', be taken into account when considering the corresponding reports listed as items 5(k) and 7(d) on the Cabinet agenda.

16. PROPOSED APPOINTMENT OF PARTNER REGISTERED PROVIDER

Councillor Hopley introduced the report of the Director of Transformation which detailed proposals and processes necessary to appoint a Partner Registered Provider to work with the Management Team to deliver changes and improvements to Service Delivery.

Cabinet considered Minute 10 of the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) held on 7 June 2011 that recommended the removal of the reference to the Service Evaluation Group (SEG) and the Service Improvement Groups (SIGs) from the consultation process.

Councillor Hopley advised that this had been recommended due to the Registered Provider being appointed as a Management tool rather than to assist tenants and as such it was felt that tenant involvement at the Working Group would be sufficient.

A copy of a letter from the Chairperson of the SEG was circulated for consideration which expressed a view that the SEG and SIGs would like to continue to be involved in the consultation process.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the recommendation from the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) and the comments from Councillor Hopley and took into account the letter received from the Chairperson of the SEG, and in considering the details set out in the report, it accepted the reasons contained therein.

- RESOLVED:
- A. That the Process to be adopted for selection of Registered Provider set out in Appendix A be approved, subject to necessary amendments to remove reference to the SEG and the SIGs from the consultation process.
 - B. That the draft specific work requirement, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be approved and that the Assistant Director Housing and Property Maintenance Services be authorised to use this as the basis for the specification to allow Registered Provider to submit quotations.
 - C. That the proposed list of Registered Providers who should be approached (Appendix B to the report), be approved.
 - D. That call in is not appropriate as the timescale to deliver the Service Improvement Plan does not cater for this but Members are encouraged to scrutinise this using the post hoc scrutiny facility open to them at Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

(Note: Councillor Owens declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the above item and left the room whilst the item was being considered.

17. LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

Councillor Grant introduced the report of the Director of Transformation which provided an update on the Local Enterprise Partnership and provided information on Enterprise Zones and Regional Growth Fund.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained in it.

- RESOLVED:
- A. That the outcome of the Governments decision in respect of a Local Enterprise Partnership for Lancashire be noted.
 - B. That delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director Regeneration & Estates in consultation with the Leader of the Council and relevant Portfolio Holder to support, engage with and take all necessary action in relation to the Local Enterprise Partnership, including representation on the Local Enterprise Partnership Board and associated officer support groups, as appropriate.
 - C. That the bid for an Enterprise Zone in West Lancashire should not be pursued.
 - D. That the bid into Round2 of Regional Growth Fund for Skelmersdale Town Centre be supported.

18. QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (JANUARY 2011 TO MARCH 2011)

Councillor Westley introduced the report of the Director of Transformation which presented the performance monitoring data for the quarter ended 31 March 2011.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained in it.

RESOLVED: A. That the Council's overall good performance against the indicator set for the quarter ended 31 March 2011 be noted.

B. That the call-in procedure is not appropriate for this item as the report is being submitted to the next meeting of the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 23 June 2011.

19. 2010/11 PERFORMANCE AND FUTURE MONITORING

Councillor Westley introduced the report of the Director of Transformation which presented the performance monitoring data for the 2010/11, the proposed targets for 2011/12 corporate suite of performance indicators and provide an update on the progress that has been made towards achieving the Corporate Priorities in 2010/11.

Concerns were raised regarding the reduced performance indicator targets in 2011/12 for WL90 - % of Contact Centre Calls answered and WL108 - Average waiting time for callers to the Contact Centre as it was felt that the reasons for the reduction were not acceptable.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details set out in the report before it and the concerns raised regarding the targets for the above and accepted the reasons contained therein.

RESOLVED: A. That Appendix A 'Outturn figures for the Corporate Suite of Performance Indicators 2010/11 and targets for the 2011/12 Corporate Suite be noted and delegated authority be given to the Director of Transformation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Transformation to agree all targets.

B. That Appendix B 'Progress on the Key Initiatives of the 2010/11 Corporate Performance Plan' be noted.

C. That the Director of Transformation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Transformation be authorised to finalise the 2011-12 Suite of Performance Indicators and targets, having regard to the views of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

20. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph(s) 1, 2, 3 and 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of that Act, as set out on the agenda, and as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption under Schedule 12A outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

21. MATTERS REQUIRING DECISIONS

Consideration was given to reports relating to the following matters requiring decisions as contained on pages 245 to 338 of the Book of Reports:

22. HOUSING REPAIRS AND HEATING CONTRACTS

Councillor Hopley introduced the report of the Director of Transformation which sought a decision on whether to re-tender or negotiate an extension to the housing repairs contract and the housing heating contract.

Councillor Hopley referred to the minute of the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) held on 7 June 2011 which endorsed the recommendations to Cabinet.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the feedback from the Working Group and the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

- RESOLVED:
- A. That the Central Heating Maintenance contract - HTG08, currently 'Heat 2000', be extended for a further 3 years from 1/4/2012 to 31/3/2015 for a single increase of 2.15% for that period to be applied to the prices and rates applicable.
 - B. That the Response Maintenance contract - D2DV08 for Contract Areas A and B, be retendered for a period of 3 years commencing 1/4/2012 and ending 31/3/2015 with an option to extend by a further 3 years if required.
 - C. That the Assistant Director Housing and Property Maintenance Services to review the contract specification at A. and B. above and subject to consultation with Tenants, be authorised to extend or retender the contracts.

23. HOUSING SELF-FINANCING - STOCK CONDITION EVALUATION AND RE-TENDERING EXERCISE

Councillor Hopley introduced the report of the Director of Transformation which advised of the need to carry out addition stock condition surveys in preparation for self-financing and sought approval to commission consultants to carry out a new stock condition survey of Council housing, incorporating existing stock condition data.

Councillor Hopley referred to the minute of the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) held on 7 June 2011 which endorsed the recommendations to Cabinet.

Cabinet discussed the importance of using surveyors with local knowledge to undertake the work.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the feedback from the Working Group and the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

RESOLVED: A. That the approach outlined in paragraph 5 of the report be endorsed.

B. That the Assistant Director Housing and Property Maintenance Services commission Savilles, utilising the Professional Services Hub which is a national framework, to undertake a sample survey of 25% of the housing stock during the summer to give up-to-date and robust data in readiness for self-financing.

24. HOME CARE LINK - RESULTS OF MARKET TESTING AND FUTURE OPTIONS

Councillor Hopley introduced the report of the Director of Transformation which advised of the outcome of the Market test exercise for Home Care Link, considered the future options for the delivery of the service and the broader financial impact.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained in it.

RESOLVED: A. That Home Care Link continue to be operated by the Council.

B. That the Assistant Director Housing and Property Maintenance Services:

- (i) Discontinue membership of Telecare Services Association.
- (ii) Actively explore and implement all methods of reducing operational costs.
- (iii) Submit a further report to Cabinet in September 2011 on how Home Care Link could migrate to a business unit, which should include an option of relocating the service to the Council offices, 52 Derby Street.

25. BROOKSIDE - IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Councillor Hopley introduced the report of the Director of Transformation which considered the impact of the construction of the Brookside Development on any of the Council's Sheltered Housing Schemes.

Cabinet considered Minute 13 of the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) held on 7 June 2011 which recommended that the Queens Court Sheltered Housing Scheme be retained and that the remodelling of the accommodation be considered as part of the HRA Business Plan.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details set out in the report before it and Minute 13 of the Working Group and accepted the reasons contained therein.

- RESOLVED:
- A. That the current position be noted.
 - B. That the Assistant Director of Housing and Property Maintenance Services continue to monitor the situation and submit a report to Cabinet at the appropriate time with an appraisal of options if necessary.
 - C. That the future of Queen's Court as a Sheltered Housing Scheme be confirmed.
 - D. That the remodelling of all sheltered housing schemes be considered as part of the HRA Business Plan.

26. CCTV MONITORING SUITE LOCATION

Councillor Hopley introduced the report of the Director of People and Places which sought approval for the future location of the Council's CCTV monitoring suite and the process to be utilised to ensure a smooth transition and future monitoring.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained in it.

- RESOLVED:
- A. That the decision of Cabinet on 15th December 2010 be modified to provide that:
 - (a) the tender process be simplified as set out in paragraph 4.2 below and the space available for expansion be not included in the current tender exercise; and
 - (b) that the Council's CCTV Monitoring Suite is moved to the location identified in Option A of paragraph 5 of this Report.
 - B. That Call In is not appropriate for this item as there is an urgent need to commence the tender processes.

(Note: Cabinet resolved that the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration this item of business under paragraphs 3 and 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of that Act.)

27. SHOPMOBILITY UNIT TWO SAINTS CAR PARK, ORMSKIRK

Councillor Grant introduced the report of the Director of Transformation which detailed issues arising from the proposed terms for the lease renewal of the Shopmobility Unit, Ormskirk.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was circulated along with correspondence between the Director of Transformation and West Lancashire Shopmobility Ltd.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the EIA, the correspondence circulated and the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained therein.

- RESOLVED:
- A. That the Assistant Director Regeneration and Estates continue to negotiate with Shopmobility to set terms for the lease renewal at Two Saints Car Park at market rent under her delegated authority.
 - B. That the option of the service relocating to the bus station in Ormskirk (the bus/rail interchange) be explored as shown hatched on Plan 2, attached as an appendix to the report, and set terms for the lease at market rent under her delegated authority.
 - C. The Assistant Director Regeneration and Estates will report back to Cabinet detailing progress in November.
 - D. That Shopmobility be permitted to hold over on the existing terms and conditions for a period of up to 6 months from the expiry date of the Section 25 Notice.

28. 1-11 & 29-39 FIRBECK

Councillor Owens introduced the report of the Director of Transformation which sought approval to purchase two blocks of flats which are 1-11 and 29-39 Firbeck as shown at Appendix A to the report.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained in it.

- RESOLVED:
- A. That the purchase of 1-11 and 29-39 Firbeck be approved.
 - B. That the Assistant Director of Housing and Property Maintenance Services organise re-housing of the Tenants living in these properties.
 - C. That when the properties are vacated these flats be demolished.

29. PARTNERSHIP PROPOSALS WITH LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL / ONE CONNECT LTD

Councillor Grant introduced the report of the Chief Executive which, subject to the Business Plan Working Group finalising detailed contractual matters, sought to authorise the Council (after its meeting on the 20th July 2011) to enter into arrangements with Lancashire County Council through which One Connect Limited (the partnership created by BT and LCC) to deliver services and significant financial savings. The report advised that the partnership would provide a platform to markedly reduce the Council's costs without significantly compromising on quality and at the same time sought to be fair to both taxpayers and staff. Details in the report encouraged the initiative from LCC and One Connect Limited to invest in West Lancashire which aimed to safeguard employment and offer the possibility of creating a substantial number of new jobs in the Borough.

In reaching the decision below, Cabinet considered the details set out in the report before it and accepted the reasons contained in it.

- RESOLVED: A. That, subject to the Business Plan Working Group finalising detailed contractual matters, Council (on 20 July 2011) enter into a shared services arrangement with Lancashire County Council through which One Connect Limited will become responsible for ICT services, Revenues and Benefits (including Council Tax, NNDR, Housing and Council Tax Benefits, Cashiers, Debtors and Creditors) and deliver significant financial savings.
- B. That the Director of Transformation and Director of People and Places, in consultation with the Business Plan Working Group, prepare an appropriate Service Provision Agreement for ICT services, Revenues and Benefits (including Council Tax, NNDR, Housing and Council Tax Benefits, Cashiers, Debtors and Creditors).
- C. That the Director of Transformation and the Director of People and Places, in consultation with the Business Plan Working Group, develop and consult on an appropriate secondment agreement(s).
- D. That the staff affected by the proposed secondment arrangement(s) are consulted in accordance with the Council's normal staff consultation processes.

THE LEADER



AGENDA ITEM: 11

CABINET: 14 June 2011

**EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW &
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
30 June 2011**

Report of: Director of Transformation

Relevant Head of Service: Housing and Property Maintenance Services

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor A Owens

**Contact for further information: Mr Bob Livermore (Extn. 5200)
(E-mail: bob.livermore @westlancs.gov.uk)**

SUBJECT: IMPLEMENTING SELF-FINANCING FOR COUNCIL HOUSING

RVL/CC2972cab

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Members and Tenants regarding the Governments intention to move to a system of self-financing for Council Housing and consider a timetable of what actions are necessary to meet the requirements of self-financing for Council Housing, which will be part of the Localism Act when enacted.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

- 2.1 That the information contained in this report be noted.
- 2.2 That the outline timetable for implementing self-financing by 2012, at appendix A to the report be agreed and implemented.
- 2.3 That the contents of the letter to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) at appendix B be noted and endorsed.
- 2.4 That the contents of the letter to CIPFA at appendix C be noted and endorsed.
- 2.5 That the draft HRA Business Plan Indicative Debt Profile at appendix D be noted and the Assistant Director of Housing and Property Maintenance Services and Borough Treasurer, prepare further draft Business Plans based on a range of options and situations.

- 2.6 That the potential adverse financial impact of this new system on the General Fund is factored into the budget setting process for 2012-13.
- 2.7 That a communication strategy for Members, Staff and Tenants be prepared and implemented by the Assistant Director Housing and Property Maintenance Services after consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing finance.
- 2.8 That this report be referred to the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee,
- 2.9 That call in is not appropriate as the matter is to be considered by the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- 3.1 That the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the report.
 - 3.2 That any comments of the Committee be reported to Cabinet.
-

4.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Background to this report is that a consultation exercise was undertaken by the previous Government regarding a voluntary scheme which would allow Councils to move out of the National Housing Revenue Account Subsidy System and would be able to move into a financial arrangement which would be self financing for the provision of Housing Services.
- 4.2 The previous Government did not have sufficient time within their period of Government to move this matter to conclusion.
- 4.3 The Coalition Government had looked at the consultation that has been undertaken and have indicated that they broadly support the concept of moving away from the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy System and move towards a self-financing mechanism, which gives Councils greater freedom and flexibility.
- 4.4 The Government proposals are contained within a document issued in February 2011, entitled implementing self-financing for Council Housing.
- 4.5 Copies of this can be made readily available for Members. This report attempts to highlight the salient points that will be included within the Localism Act and produce a timetable for allowing implementation of this legislation by April 2012.

5.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 The current position is that the Government are expecting feedback on a number of points raised within the paper "Implementing Self-Financing for Council Housing". Officers have been reviewing the position in this regard and a letter to meet the deadline of 31st March 2011 has already been sent to the Communities and Local Government. This is attached at appendix B. We have indicated within the letter that further comments may be made by West Lancashire Borough

Council and submission of this does not preclude further comments being made if it is felt to be appropriate.

6.0 PROPOSALS

- 6.1 In abolishing the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy System and moving to an arrangement for self-finance for Council Housing the Government will allocate each Local Authority debt from the system. Councils in accepting the debt may find that this has increased or decreased their real debt position.
- 6.2 The position for West Lancashire Borough Council is that as we are debt free, we will be inheriting debt. The Government have carried out and exercise looking at the National Housing Revenue Account and have made adjustments to this, which reflect the income, which will be generated over a period in line with the Governments Rent Policy. Assumed spending on Management Maintenance and Repairs including:
- Disabled adaptations.
 - Private Finance Initiative Subsidy Settlement.
 - The Discount Rate. Settlement payments.
 - Limits on borrowing.
 - Circumstances under which the settlement might be reopened.
- 6.3 Further information can be provided on exactly how the debt has been allocated using this mechanism.
- 6.4 The net result of this is that the Council are assumed to have a notional debt of £3.6million.
- 6.5 The calculation indicates that the Council will take on a further debt of £93million. Therefore the total credit ceiling that this Local Authority will have and the assumed debt given to it by Government will be £96.6 M.
- 6.6 The Council will be able to keep its existing rental income rather than pay subsidy each year. This will mean that the subsidy paid in 2011/12 of £6.3 M will be able to be retained by this Council. This revenue will be able to be used to support the debt, which we have been allocated. The Business Plan at appendix D demonstrates that based on our existing priorities and spending profile that we are able to meet the interest payments on debt and have a surplus to enhance and improve the service offer to Tenants.
- 6.7 However this initial result will need to be rigorously tested to ensure that it is robust given different assumptions on factors such as interest rates and inflation. The results will also need to be updated to reflect the outcome of stock condition survey and asset management plan work that will be carried out this year.

7.0 ISSUES

7.1 The letter to the department for Communities and Local Government (appendix B) highlights some areas where the Council wish the Government to reconsider its position. In broad terms, these are:

a. **Rents** - Within the settlement, the Government have assumed that the Council will achieve formula rents by 2015/16. In analysing our guideline rents and formula rents, the fact of the matter is that we will not achieve formula rents for all properties in line with Governments assumptions. In fact, the rents will fall short of the figures and therefore, the assumed income will not materialise. We have therefore advised the Government of this and asked them to take into account the actual figures that will be achieved for the formula rent in 2015/16, which if accepted will mean that the Government should reduce the level of debt within the settlement.

b. **Disabled Alterations** - The Government have currently allowed within the settlement £60 per property to allow for disabled alterations to be carried out to Council Tenants homes. We have analysed this and find that the allowance that we will be given for carrying out disabled alterations is circa £378k. In reality, this year our budget for disabled alterations is in excess of £1.2 M. We have therefore given the Government a schedule of expenditure over the last few years together with the estimated level of expenditure during this year. We hope that this will persuade the Government to allow an increased amount of allowance per property, which once again could reduce the overall settlement.

c. **Treasury Management** - The Government have indicated that they have made an allowance for increased Treasury Management costs within the Housing Account and we feel that this is a sensible approach and welcome this.

d. **Demolitions** – The Government have asked, by 31st March, to be advised of any planned demolitions within the Councils Housing Stock. Details within the letter to Governments Office highlight that there are plans of demolition of properties in Findon and Firbeck.

e. **Uncertain Prospects** - The future of Queens Court may be uncertain in the light of the opening of Brookside, which is the new Elderly Persons complex opening in Aughton Street and being developed by Arena Housing Association.

f. **Design Issues** - We have indicated that because of the layout of many of the estates within Skelmersdale based on the Radburn Principle, that remodelling and some small-scale demolition may need to occur in the future and that we would like the Government to give an allowance to us based on this.

g. **Right to Buy** – The Government have indicated, within the settlement that they do not plan to allow Local Authorities to retain 100% of the right to buy receipt as originally intended. The Government have indicated that they plan to retain the existing arrangements whereby the Council keep 25% and the remaining 75% is returned to Government to pool for national housing purposes. We have addressed this in the letter and feel that fundamentally, it is wrong that we can take on a debt for a property and when selling this property, we would

have to return money to Government. This principle appears inconsistent with the concept of Localism and does not accept that this Council has accepted the debt for the housing stock and that the asset is no longer owned at national level.

h. Redemption of Loans/Costs of leases – There is the ability to challenge the settlement if there is a cost to the Authority for redemption of loans or the cost of leases and we have addressed the technical issues with Government regarding this.

i. Discount Rate - The Government have indicated that the discount rate as part of the settlement will be 6.5% and in view of the fact that there is no requirement by Government for this Local Authority to build new properties, unless they so wish, we feel that this rate is appropriate.

j. Borrowing Limit – The Government have indicated that our overall settlement will be £96.3 M. The fact is we do not have a notional debt of £3.6 M gives us an opportunity to borrow this for investment purposes or only borrow and repay debt on £93M. A decision will need to be made on whether we go to our maximum borrowing limit at day one or use this borrowing potential in latter years. The only comment I would have regarding the limit is that I believe that this is an area that could be decided locally without National Prescription. I can understand why the Government have introduced this at this juncture because they would not wish public expenditure to significantly increase. However, I believe that the Government should review this regularly and remove national prescription in favour of local decision-making.

k. Local Authority New Build – Members and Tenants will remember that we were successful in bidding for funding from the Homes and Communities Agency under their National Affordable Housing Programme for a new build of seventeen properties at Elmstead. The Government have indicated that this borrowing should not count against the Council for the borrowing limit referred to above. We are reminding them of this within our letter.

l. Re-opening the debt settlement – The Government have indicated that they would look to re-open the debt settlement if there was a substantial and material impact on the value of the Landlords business. Once again there are concerns that if we make a success of our Landlord business, and we create a surplus for our Tenants, that the settlement could be re-opened to allow the Government “a second bite of the cherry”. We have indicated that this approach would not be helpful.

m. LSVT Levy – Currently the Council charges a levy to Local Authorities who wish to transfer their stock by way of stock transfer. The Government have indicated that they would wish to abolish this levy. This is a measure that should be supported.

8.0 FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

- 8.1 The exact financial framework we will be working in is being worked upon by CIPFA. They have issued a consultation paper regarding the Housing Revenue Account Reform and options for Treasury Management and dealing with accountancy issues. A response has gone to CIPFA (appendix C), which is mainly a technical paper, but it could have serious implications for the Council.
- 8.2 The current rules need to be amended, in a sympathetic manner or the Council could find that the General Fund is disadvantaged because of the new arrangements. There are technical reasons for this, which I do not plan to go into detail within this paper, although a separate report can be produced if Tenants or Members would like to see this in more detail.
- 8.3 The General Fund could be disadvantaged by £625K per annum if the accountancy rules are not amended. This clearly would have a massive impact on the financial position of the General Fund at a time when it is already under severe pressure from reductions in government grant funding. This factor will need to be considered in the budget setting process for 2012-13 but it is possible that the rules of the new system may only become clear at a late stage in this process. Every effort will continue to be made to lobby the Government that the new system should have a neutral impact on the GRA.

9.0 Asset Management

- 9.1 The whole concept of self-financing will mean that the way that we think, operate and manage our Landlord Business will need to change. The Government, in moving away from the National Subsidy System, are giving Councils greater flexibility.
- 9.2 This flexibility will allow Councils to manage their stock in a very different way. The mindset of Members, Tenants and Staff will need to change as we move into a culture of running a business with a long term Business Plan and Strategy.
- 9.3 Currently the Subsidy System focuses on short timescales, normally to a maximum of three years and which are amended and refocused annually. The business plan will be a 30 year plan, which will give the Council greater opportunity to look at those properties, which are generating a surplus, and those properties, which are a drain on resources to our Tenants.
- 9.4 The Council may choose to look at disposal of some properties and the Government have indicated that if this is the case, and to give an incentive to Local Authorities to do so, any disposals, which are made with vacant possession, the Council will be able to utilise 100% of the asset value. (Provided that this is spent on provision of affordable housing, regeneration schemes or the repayment of housing revenue account debt).

10.0 The Way Forward

10.1 The timetable highlighted at appendix A shows the detailed work which is necessary to deliver the agenda by April 2012. It would be my intention to have a standing item on the agendas of:

- Cabinet
- Landlord Services Committee
- Tenants and Resident Forum
- Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Directorate Service Heads

10.2 This will enable sufficient focus to ensure that the deadline is kept and that the issues for both the Housing Account and the General Fund are satisfactorily resolved.

10.3 In preparing for self-financing, the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan will need to be re-modelled and reviewed to ensure that this is fit for purpose. The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan will need to be underpinned by several pieces of work and these are:

- Robust stock condition survey
- Robust asset management plan
- Tenant priorities
- Treasury Management
- Ensuring that the structure of the service is fit for purpose.

10.4 A Communication plan on how and when we let stakeholders know of developments will be helpful. If the timetable is approved a communication plan will be prepared to support and compliment this.

11.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

11.1 The response to the DCLG sets out the Councils concerns about the sustainability of the Governments proposals. We will await their comments and observations.

12.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The financial and resource implications have been highlighted within this report in terms that the debt settlement will mean that this Council, as a minimum, would need to take out borrowing of £93 M of debt.

12.2 The Council has the option of extending the debt provision up to a maximum of £96.6 M if they so choose.

12.3 The Council will need to ensure that the business plan is self-sufficient and that the debt can be serviced by the income generated through rents.

- 12.4 The Council will need to satisfy itself that the potential cost to the General Fund of £625K per annum, does not materialise and remind the Government of their commitment that there should be no adverse affect on the General Fund as a result of the changes to Housing Finance.
- 12.5 The cost of providing additional work on the Stock Condition Survey and the Asset Management Plan has been provided for in the budget. £30K has been allocated for this purpose. If during the course of the year this proves insufficient, then budgets will have to be reviewed in order that any essential work can be funded.

13.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 13.1 The rules of the new self financing system have not yet been fixed and Government decisions on how it will operate both now and in the future could have a significant financial impact on the Council.
- 13.2 There is a high level of risk to the General Fund and because of this; it is being monitored through the Councils risk management processes. The action taken to report regularly through to Members and Tenants, including the Senior Officers of this Council will ensure that this focus is not lost.
- 13.3 The action proposed will minimise the risks and will allow greater opportunity to scrutinise and develop the process for the benefit of West Lancashire Borough Council and its Tenants.

Background Documents

The following background documents (as defined in Section 100D (5) of the Local Government Act 1972) have been relied on to a material extent in preparing this Report.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Document</u>	<u>File Ref</u>
February 2011	Implementing Self-Financing for Council Housing	

Equality Impact Assessment

There is a significant direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report.

Appendices

- Appendix A – Timetable for Implementing Self-Financing by 2012
Appendix B – Letter to DCLG
Appendix C – Letter to CIPFA
Appendix D – HRA Business Plan Indicative Debt Profile
Appendix E - Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Appendix A

OUTLINE TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTING SELF-FINANCING BY 2012

Event	Key Date	Activity	Responsible Officer(s)	Progress
2011				
1	31 March	Advise CLG of proposed demolitions over the first 3 years of Self-Financing	EMHMS	Completed
2	31 March	HRA Subsidy 1 st Advance Claim 2011-2012	DM	completed
3	31 st March	Indicative Review Business Plan in light of current self-financing base assumptions	DM	completed
4	April to May	Produce Housing asset Management Plan	PH	In progress
5		Review and critically assess how we are to ensure the robustness the Council's Housing Stock condition survey and Investment Proposals	PH	Engagement of external surveyors being considered
6	April to August	WLBC consultation with stakeholders including LSC	EMPMS	Awaiting outcomes from item 5
7	June	CLG to issue forms to LA's for stock data collection	DM/PH	
8	June to August	Carry out stock condition surveys	PH	
9	August	WLBC to submit self-financing data to CLG	DM/PH	
10	September to October	Review outcomes of stock condition	PH/DM	

		surveys and factor into Business / Asset Management / Investment Plans		
11	September to November	Data Validation of event 8 above by Audit Commission	DM/PH	
12	September. to November	Review Treasury Management and alternative lending options.	MK	
13	October	Firm up HRA Business Plan	DM	
14	November	CLG consultation with WLBC regarding self-financing settlement	EMPMS	
15	November	Report to cabinet, Overview and Council seeking scheme of delegation to sign up to self-financing within acceptable tolerances of business Plan	EMPMS	
16	December	CLG and PWLB to issue joint letter setting out arrangements for loans and debt redemption	N/A	
17.	December	Review Structure of service to ensure that it is fit for purpose within the new financial environment.		
2012				
18	January	CLG self-financing determinations published	N/A	
19	January	WLBC asked to tell PWLB of	MT/MK	

		amount to be borrowed		
20	February	Report to Council if self-financing settlement not within acceptable tolerances of Business Plan	EMHPMS	
21	April	Series of transactions between CLG, PWLB, other lenders and WLBC to enable the start of self-financing	MT/MK	
22	April 2012	Cut-off for final payments to end the HRA subsidy system	DM	

Appendix B



Bob Livermore FCIH
Executive Manager Housing and
Property Maintenance Services

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Date: 29th March 2011

Your ref:
Our ref: RVL/DMcC/CC
Please ask for: R V Livermore
Direct dial no: 01695 585200
Extension: 5200

Council Housing Finance
Department for Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU

Dear Sir,

Re: Implementing Self-Financing for Council Housing

A. Ensuring an accurate Valuation

Further to your request, West Lancashire Borough Council (WLBC) have three projects on the go at the moment which will require demolition, or redevelopment, which may include disposal to a developer at less than market value, details of which are given below:

1. Findon and Firbeck Housing Estates

Council have passed a resolution to demolish 120 dwellings in the ownership of the Council on these estates as part of a much larger Regeneration Schemes for the Town Centre at Skelmersdale. Although it is anticipated demolitions will take place within the next 3 to 5 years the exact timing of demolition has not yet been confirmed, as the funding arrangements with the developer have still to be agreed.

2. Queens Court

An Extra Care Home facility at Brookside started on site a couple of months ago and is jointly funded by Supporting People, Arena Housing, and the

Department of Heath. As a consequence of this Scheme, the Council is planning to carry out a stock option appraisal in respect of 16 sheltered dwellings located at Queens Court. The outcome of the appraisal is to be considered by the Council later in the municipal year. At this time it is likely that the decision will be demolish or redevelopment this site within the next 18- 24 months

However, we would like to take this opportunity to raise with you some concerns we have about the way the debt settlement has been arrived at.

3. Rent Restructuring and Rent Convergence

The Council passed a resolution to adhere to the Government's Rent and Service charge Reforms.

The Government's proposals assumed a commencement date for moving actual rents to formula rent in 2002. However, for technical reasons the actual commencement date for WLBC was not until 2004/5, resulting in a shorter period over which convergence is to take place and a much steeper increase in rents that needs to be applied.

However, within the Guidance there is a requirement not to increase rents by more than $RPI+0.5\%+\pounds2$. The financial modelling of the debt settlement has been predicated on the basis that overall average rents will converge with Government formula rent by 2015-16. The financial model also includes a compensatory adjustment for loss of income by staying within the caps and limits associated with annual rent increases up to 2015-16.

However, individual property rents may be higher or lower than the overall average. In practice staying within earlier Ministerial limits and staying within the Governments guidance of $RPI+0.5\%+\pounds2$ means that at an individual property level a number of dwellings will never achieve convergence over the life time of the Business Plan. We believe this requires reconsideration as it unfairly disadvantages the tenants of West Lancashire Borough Council.

4. Right to Buys (RTB's)

4.1 Number of RTB's

Within the financial modelling of the proposed debt settlement, the assumptions made in respect of RTB sales are very modest assuming for WLBC a total number of RTB's in year 1 of 19 and by Year 30, a total of 42.

At our peak WLBC were selling 450 dwellings per year, prior to the economic downturn we were selling around 120 per year. In 2009-10 RTB sales plummeted to 10 dwellings. Our enquiries suggested that this was attributable to prospective purchasers not being able to secure mortgage lending. However, in recent months we have seen a doubling in our RTB's with the result that we have completed 18 sales in 2010-11, 17 are in the process of being completed, and of 33 applications received, 7 are on offer with applicants.

For a 30 year business plan we believe the assumptions within the Government's financial modelling are too conservative and passes too much risk to the Local Authority about which we cannot control. We believe that local evidence should be taken into account in determining levels of RTB rather than national levels. On that basis, under normal economic conditions, WLBC RTB sales would be around 125 to 150 per year and would request that the Governments financial model for debt distribution be adjusted accordingly.

4.2 Capital Receipts Pooling

Very disappointingly the Government's proposals have indicated that the pooling of Capital Receipts will continue beyond the current Comprehensive Spending Review period. Under the existing pooling arrangements costs of disposal are netted off the proceeds before distribution to Communities and Local Government (CLG). There is currently no reference to deducting the cost of redeeming the debt. This simply cannot be sustained within a business plan based on the level of debt take on. This is best illustrated by way of simple example:

Typical value of property sold £39,000

Distribution:

CLG (75%) £29,250

WLBC (25%) £ 9,750

Indicative Debt per dwg £15,000

On this basis WLBC would, on top of allocating the full 25% of the receipt towards redeeming the debt, have to find an additional sum of £5,250 to settle the debt. Not only does this place a financial burden on the Council it also restricts reinvestment.

Compound this issue with an overly optimistic forecast on RTB's will almost certainly create an unsustainable position for the Council and has the potential to create a level of overhanging debt unsupportable by the revenue income stream in the longer term.

It would be our considered advice that, if the Government wishes to pursue the matter of pooling, such pooling should only take place after the costs of sale and redemption of debt including any debt repayment premia have been deducted from the proceeds. However, the Government appear to have lost sight that they are moving out of a National System and to one of local control. This Council has supported the principle of self financing BUT is strongly concerned over the Government's attempt to remove local resources that have been " purchased " by Local Authorities (we are Debt free and will inherit £96.6 M of Debt) and interfere in a matter that should be for local decision making.

5. Disabled Adaptations.

We thank the government for making allowance within the financial modelling for Disabled Adaptations. At the rate of £60 per dwelling this amounts to around to £379,000 in year one of the financial plan.

However, demand for disabled adaptations is widely recognised within the profession to be increasing as life expectancy is also increasing.

The actual expenditure with regard to Adaptations for WLBC for last three years is shown in the table below:

Detail	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
	£	£	£
Actual expenditure	438,210	599,411	691,145

At the commencement of 2010/11 there was a waiting list of 12 – 13 months, to address the backlog entirely would require approximately £708,000 of additional funding at the time the budget was set. In the main the work undertaken relates to adapting the bathrooms to provide walk in showers at an average unit cost of around £4,200. It is estimated that £1.248m will be required in 2011/12 to meet newly arising demand and meet target waiting times set by CLG and the Council have budgeted for this with the HRA.

Clearly, the allowance made in the settlement is welcomed but as can be seen it falls well short of what is required. Perhaps consideration needs to be given to weighting the distribution to local authorities based on local rather than national demand.

6. Radburn Design of Skelmersdale New Town

In 1961 Skelmersdale was designated a New Town with a mandate to house overspill population from the north Merseyside conurbation. The layout of the estates within Skelmersdale was based on the Radburn design used in the United States. The majority of properties were built in the 70's and consist of significant proportion of non-traditional construction types including Wimpy No-Fines, REEMA, and BISON design that have been obsolete for more than three decades. In 1985 Skelmersdale New Town was transferred to West Lancashire District Council.

Long before the turn of the century Skelmersdale New Town lost all its external funding streams to those New Towns designated as Growth Areas.

A Government Select Committee was convened to consider the progress of the New Towns. This Committee reported that West Lancashire District Council had been particularly proactive in investing in the properties in the New Town Estates of Skelmersdale, which had enabled the Authority to overcome many of the issues of poor construction / materials. However, the report added that the Council was facing high ongoing maintenance costs associated with the former New Town properties which were not adequately reflected in the Government's Housing Revenue Account Subsidy System, e.g. Council is required to spend in excess of £1m per annum on landscape maintenance of large open spaces in the former mining town of Skelmersdale as compared to an average landscaping costs for beacon authorities that are

less than £100,000 per annum. The Select Committee concluded that the Skelmersdale New Town estates had, broadly, issues with the Radburn design rather than one of materials. The high-density levels and the acknowledged failure of the Radburn design layout had not been overcome and were contributing to the “fear of crime”. Accordingly, residents were wanting the estates to be remodelled on more conventional lines to provide:

- 1) Defensible space so that the design issues which lend themselves to offset crime and disorder may be designed out;
- 2) Parking within the curtilage of their home; and
- 3) An integrated road/footpath system, and a reduction of general use areas which gave rise to anti social behaviour.

Successive Select Committees on the New Towns in 2002 and 2008 have echoed these sentiments concluding that local authorities with New Town stock are facing a major task with many estate areas requiring extensive renewal for which they do not have the financial capacity to tackle. These Committees have found that funds provided for management and maintenance is inadequate, bearing in mind the non-traditional housing design and infrastructure and intensive landscaping built by the Development Corporation which is more expensive and much of which required wholesale renewal.

Indeed, the Select Committee of 2008 expressed the view that the New Towns design is inappropriate to the 21st Century and that the New Towns had special and particular needs. The Committee reported that each New Town was built at around the same time, so the majority of the infrastructure was reaching the end of its design life at the same time, where other urban areas may have pockets of infrastructure needing renewal New Towns face the prospect of the entire infrastructure having to be renewed at the same time. MP's warned that these needs have not been properly recognized and there is a danger New Towns will fall into decay and physical dereliction.

As part of the Council's Stock Option appraisal for LSVT in 2004 the Council engaged Independent Surveyors, Taylor Hutchinson, to assess the investment requirements for the housing stock. This was revisited as part of the Council's consideration of the Government's initial proposals relating to HRA Finance Reforms and Self-Financing arrangements. In total the investment requirement is in the region of £324m, including new build. This requirement falls sharply to £230m if new build is excluded. Taking out both new build and Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) the investment requirement falls to £176m.

Based on the assumptions provided within the Government's HRA Finance Reforms, the Council's Business Plan **cannot** support this level of investment.

Given these facts the Council made application to the Homes and Communities Agency for Decent Homes Backlog Funding under paragraph 7.4 of the Invitation to bid on the grounds that unless significant investment is made the estates within Skelmersdale will become unsustainable. The

amounts sought were £48m in years 2014/15 and 2015-16. However, this bid was unsuccessful.

Given the scale of issue my Accountant has contacted Ann Williams and spoken to John Yates of your Department and Tom Warburton of the Homes and Communities Agency to arrange meetings to discuss this matter in more detail.

As we see it and subject to consideration and agreement there are a number of ways this could be moved forward including reducing the debt settlement, providing Grant funding through the auspices of the HCA, giving special dispensation to WLBC to retain all RTB proceeds, or a combination of these funding streams. An early dialogue on this matter would be most welcomed.

7. New Build

From previous correspondence with Ann Williams, you should be aware WLBC currently have a negative HRA CFR and a positive Council wide CFR and furthermore is debt free. Hence, if borrowing was undertaken to finance the following new build development it may result in a significant financial burden falling upon the GRA due to the machinations of the Item 8 calculation. This sum could be in the region of £0.5m dependant upon the interest rate charged at the time of undertaking. As a result, we have not been able to exercise external borrowing to meet the Council's funding requirement for 17 new affordable housing at the Elmstead Estate in Skelmersdale for which we were able to attract HCA funding.

The papers released to date make reference to increasing the borrowing cap for such schemes to the extent of the prudential borrowing used. For the reasons outlined we have used internal borrowing to fund our proportion of the Elmstead Development and would expect that this should be treated in the same way as for external prudential borrowing. An assurance to that affect would be much appreciated.

8. Borrowing Limit

Under normal circumstances the proposal is that Council's borrowing powers will be limited to the level of the debt allocation. We believe the prudential code for determining levels of borrowing are already in place to ensure prudent borrowing decisions and this constraint on local decision making is at odds with ethos expounded in the Localism Bill. We urge the Government to periodically review their position in regard to borrowing.

9. Re-Opening the Debt Settlement

We have reservations regarding the proposal that Government can re-open the debt settlement if there is a substantial and material impact on the landlords business. Whilst we acknowledge that we cannot fully estimate issues which a landlord service will face in the future and welcome the safety net this provision makes we do have concerns that it does open the door for successive administrations to review the landlord's service if they have been particularly successful. This latter point would not be helpful to the landlord

business. Perhaps the point needs clarification by a simple statement to the effect that it will only be exercised in the event of potential failure of the landlord business.

10. Leased Properties

WLBC welcome the suggestion that the Government will adjust the financial modelling to reflect costs related to leased properties. As WLBC currently leases 9 dwellings from Goldsbrough Estates we would welcome an adjustment to financial model for the annual costs incurred of around £11,000 per annum.

11. Treasury Management

WLBC would welcomes support for the extra treasury management costs associated with the management and administration of the allocated debt.

12. Mechanics of Local Authorities taking on Debt Allocation

Careful consideration needs to be given by central government as the mechanics of all the Authorities taking out debt at the same time as this will possibly have a detrimental affect to the financial market place which could result in their not being sufficient funds to meet Councils requirements and may also result in the financing costs associated with the debt being inflated above normal levels.

13. Management of Debt and Depreciation.

Earlier correspondence with Ann Williams of your Department highlighted two principle concerns for WLBC relating to the Capital Financing Requirements for HRA and GRA, and to the treatment of HRA depreciation. WLBC have prepared a response to the recent consultation issued by CIPFA entitled Capital Financing Arrangements under the New Housing Finance System, which broach these technical issues. Rather than simply repeat our case here I have attached a copy of our response to CIPFA for your information and consideration.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



**R V LIVERMORE
EXECUTIVE MANAGER
HOUSING AND PROPERTY MAINTENANCE SERVICES**

Chief Executive: William J Taylor MBE

Appendix C

RE: CIPFA CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CAPITAL FINANCE ARRANGEMENTS UNDER THE NEW HOUSING FINANCE SYSTEM

Dear Julian,

We welcome the opportunity to respond to the CIPFA Consultation document.

Management of debt:

West Lancashire Borough Council's main area of concern is the unusual position it finds itself in with regards to its Capital Financing Requirement. The Council, which is a debt free authority, has an overall CFR of some £5m. However, this consists of two elements, the HRA CFR, which is negative and is -£12.5m whilst the GRA CFR is positive and some £17.5m. Hence, upon commencement of the new housing finance system this could mean that the GRA may have extra charges from the MRP liability that would ensue of around £350,000. This is 2% of the GRA CFR, which is in line with our MRP Policy, as agreed by Council. The sum would be a heavy burden for this Council to accommodate; especially in light of the well-documented position Councils are facing over the coming months and years. We would propose that some mitigating calculation, akin to the adjustment 'A' principle, be introduced in order to negate any affect on the general fund moving forward. Alternatively, central government could allocate extra resources to Councils to neutralise this affect.

Under the self-financing proposals the Council would be allocated a debt in the region of £90m. Under current regulations this would mean that the interest costs on the GRA would be £3.6m if the debt was financed at 4%. However, we would only be able to allocate £3.1m to the HRA as a result of it being in a negative CFR position ($£90m - £12.5m * 4\%$) the remainder would stay within the GRA, this totalling 0.5m. It is our understanding that the two-pooled approach, as proposed in the documentation, would mitigate this affect. This would occur by the housing debt being fully financed and ring fenced within the HRA account, however confirmation and clarification upon this point would be welcomed as it is another significant issue for this Council.

General comments on the differing pool approaches are that it would appear better to have a two-pooled approach. This would facilitate more transparent business planning in the HRA over the coming several years.

In summary the Council broadly welcomes the self-financing initiative however it wishes to ensure that there is no detrimental affect on the GRA nor HRA upon the introduction of the new system.

Depreciation:

The Council dwellings value contained within the statement of accounts is some £192.4m. The depreciation charge associated with these assets is

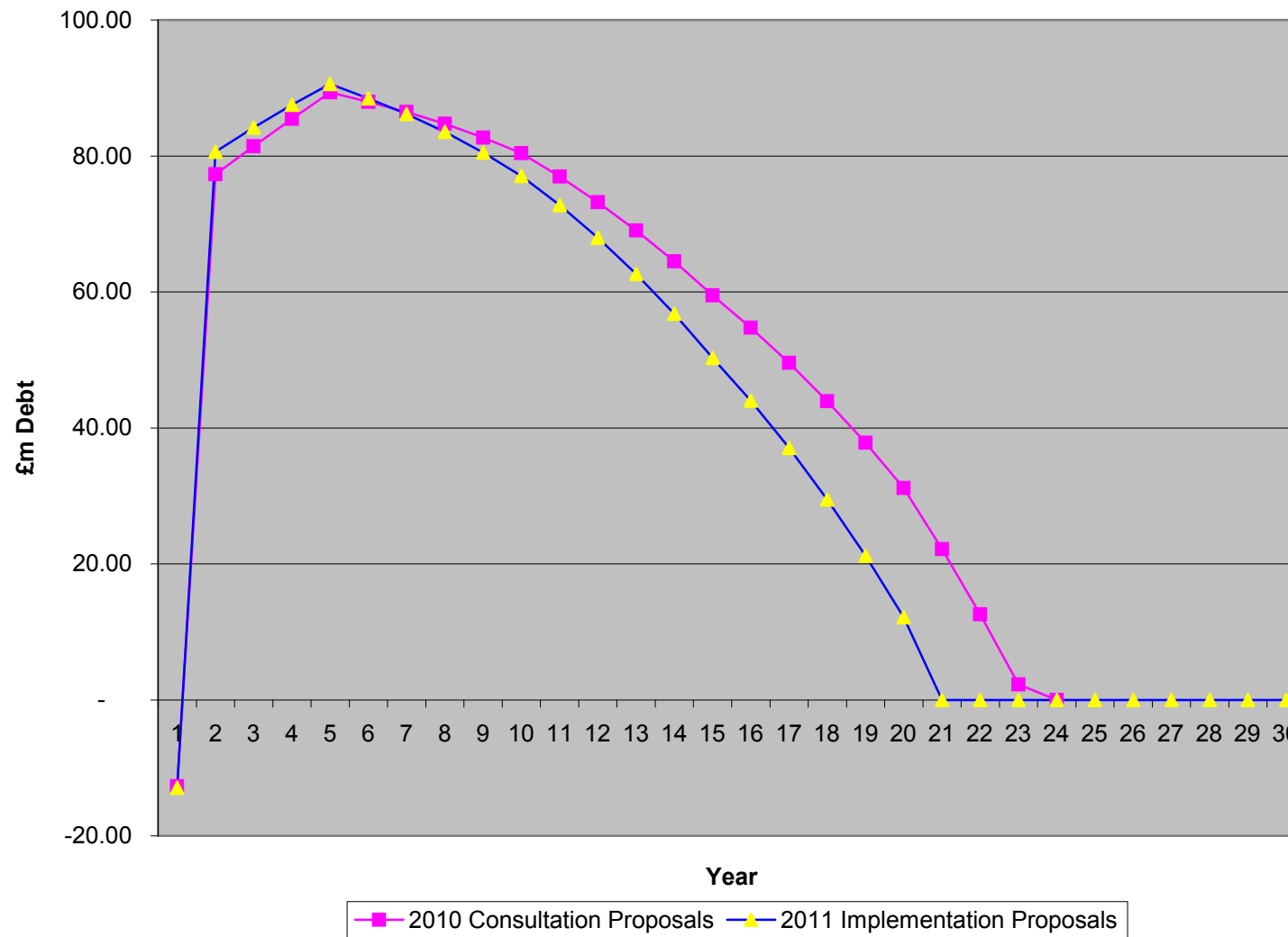
typically £2.3m p.a. Also, in the past impairment charges have been as high as £31.1m, this being due to a market price reduction during the 2008/09 financial year. Hence, it is considered important that new regulations take account of such issues in a similar manner as to the current arrangements i.e. no affect on the bottom line and hence rental levels. We would welcome some clearer guidance within this area.

Componentisation in the HRA area is currently being undertaken and will ensure improved asset management planning. Whilst this is quite a big task, currently it is not proving unwieldy and future processes will be adapted to streamline the information flows and to achieve operational benefits.

Mike Kostrzewski
Deputy Borough Treasurer

Appendix D:

HRA Business Plan Indicative Debt Profile



Appendix E – Implementing Self-Financing for Council Housing

West Lancashire Borough Council

EIA process for services, policies, projects and strategies

Question 1

Using information that you have gathered from service monitoring, surveys, consultation, and other sources such as anecdotal information fed back by members of staff, in your opinion, could your service/policy/strategy/decision (including decisions to cut or change a service or policy) disadvantage, or have a potentially disproportionately negative effect on, any of the following groups of people:

- People of different ages – including young and older people
- People with a disability ✓
- People of different races/ethnicities/nationalities
- Men
- Women
- People of different religions/beliefs
- People of different sexual orientations
- People who are or have identified as transgender
- People who are married or in a civil partnership
- Women who are pregnant or on maternity leave or men whose partners are pregnant or on maternity leave
- People living in areas of deprivation or who are financially disadvantaged

Question 2

What sources of information have you used to come to this decision?

Answer

The financial settlement based on £60 per property gives the Council around £378k to carry out work to alter houses for people with disabilities. This year, we are investing £1.2M in this work stream. The result could lead to less work being carried out for disabled people or other investment work not being undertaken.

Question 3

How have you tried to involve people/groups in developing your service/policy/strategy or in making your decision (including decisions to cut or change a service or policy)?

Answer

Yes, this report is going to Tenants, Politicians and Staff are also being made aware of it.

Question 4

Could your service/policy/strategy or decision (including decisions to cut or change a service or policy) help or hamper our ability to meet our duties under the Equality Act 2010? Duties are to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity (removing or minimising disadvantage, meeting the needs of people)
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it

Answer

Possibly

Question 5

What actions will you take to address any issues raised in your answers above?

Answer

We will make Government aware of this matter in the hope that the settlement will be changed so that funding is sufficient to meet needs.
