

## CABINET

10.00 A.M.

4TH DECEMBER 2012

**PRESENT:-** Councillors Eileen Blamire (Chairman), Janice Hanson (Vice-Chairman), Jon Barry, Abbott Bryning, Tim Hamilton-Cox, Karen Leytham, Ron Sands and David Smith

Officers in attendance:-

Mark Cullinan	Chief Executive
Nadine Muschamp	Head of Resources and Section 151 Officer
Richard Tulej	Head of Community Engagement Service
Andrew Dobson	Head of Regeneration and Planning Service
Suzanne Lodge	Head of Health and Housing
Mark Davies	Head of Environmental Services
Thomas Brown	Regeneration Officer (Minute 82)
Adrian Robinson	Head of Revenues and Benefits (Minute 88)
Kathy Sinclair	Housing Strategy Officer (Minute 93)
Liz Bateson	Principal Democratic Support Officer

### 78 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 6 November 2012 were approved as a correct record.

### 79 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS AUTHORISED BY THE LEADER

The Chairman advised that there were no items of urgent business.

### 80 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hanson declared an interest with regard to the Ryelands Park Bandstand report, as a member of Morecambe Town Council (Minute 91 refers).

### 81 PUBLIC SPEAKING

Members were advised that there had been two requests to speak at the meeting from members of the public in accordance with Cabinet's agreed procedure, as set out in Cabinet Procedure Rule 2.7, with regard to Chatsworth Gardens and Clusters of Empty Homes Funding (Minute 82 refers) and Service Level Agreement Storey Gallery (Minute 83 refers).

### 82 CHATSWORTH GARDENS AND CLUSTERS OF EMPTY HOMES FUNDING

**(Cabinet Members with Special Responsibility Councillors Hanson & Leytham)**

***Mr Stephen Swithin, who had registered to speak on this item in accordance with the City Council's agreed procedure and Cabinet procedure Rule 2.7, spoke in support of the regeneration proposals.***

Cabinet received a report from the Head of Regeneration and Planning to seek approval to deliver a viable solution to the stalled Chatsworth Gardens project through the acceptance of the Clusters of Empty Homes Funding offer of £1.9M.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

	<b>Option 1: Do Nothing and reject £1.9M CEHF and withdraw from project</b>	<b>Option 2: Accept £1.9M CEHF to deliver Chatsworth Gardens initially bar one Regent Road terrace</b>	<b>Option 3: Accept £1.9M CEHF and request Council funds resources to complete full Chatsworth Gardens scheme</b>
<b>Advantages</b>	Avoids project delivery risks. No further direct capital cost to the council. Removes uncertainty.	Provides a positive and viable solution to Chatsworth Gardens. Utilises existing regeneration funding and poses no further budget costs on the council. Brings empty homes back into use. Clearly sets out council's commitment to local residents and owners in the area. Demonstrates delivery to HCA boosting chances for future funding.	Provides a comprehensive and positive solution to Chatsworth Gardens. Brings empty homes back into use. Clearly sets out council's commitment to local residents and owners in the area. Demonstrates delivery to HCA boosting chances for future funding.
<b>Disadvantages</b>	Risk of exacerbating local housing market failure. Disposal may take several years to realise. Ongoing management costs and staff resources. Adverse impacts likely to be caused resulting in negative regeneration effect. Does not allow take up of Clusters of Empty Homes Funding opportunity.	Ideally requires co-operation from owner occupiers & landlords to avoid costly legal action. Uncertainty of delivery remains for the Regent Road terrace in the Eastern block.	The budget required could not be implemented within the existing MTFs. The challenging and uncertain financial prospects mean that it is difficult to see this position improving. Ideally requires co-operation from owner occupiers & landlords to avoid costly legal action. Reduces opportunity for external funding.
<b>Risks</b>	This was calculated as the highest overall 'all risk.' The potential impact of this approach is a high negative regeneration effect.	Involves the council taking the delivery risks on a capital housing development project. The council will face a sales risk on the direct refurbishment	Involves the council taking the delivery risks on a capital housing development project. The council will face a sales risk on the direct refurbishment

	<p>There are reputational risks to the council and HCA being seen to 'pull out' of the project and the impact on West End. But in financial risk terms withdrawal is the least risky option. Reputational risk with the HCA would make future bids less credible. Long sales period presents health and safety risk from dilapidations.</p>	<p>properties that needs to be mitigated by some form of mortgage assistance scheme. Limited control over private sector match required to access part of HCA funding. Build costs and sales date/value can adversely impact project. However the appraisal indicates a £370K contingency balance to mitigate the financial risks.</p>	<p>properties that needs to be mitigated by some form of mortgage assistance scheme. Limited control over private sector match required to access part of HCA funding. Build costs and sales date/value can adversely impact project.</p>
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Option 1 disposal of all properties with sales receipts covering disposal fees was discounted due to member's consistent positive support for finding a positive solution to Chatsworth Gardens. This option presented considerable risk in every way other than financial. This option declined a HCA sponsored rescue package of £1.9M CEHF and might damage future council HCA resource bids and partnership working.

Option 3 presented the lowest delivery risk and brought maximum benefits through the realisation of a comprehensive scheme. However, the additional cost to the Council could not be implemented within the existing MTFs and negates the opportunity to secure further external resources to complete the scheme.

Option 2 was the affordable route to achieve a viable outcome. It enabled full acceptance of the £1.9M HCA funding offer. Due to cost and funding constraints it left out elements of Regent Road but officers considered the position to be manageable and would continue to work with the HCA to secure a solution. Option 2 was therefore the preferred option as the best and most affordable route forward identified for the project since it stalled in 2008.

It was noted that engagement of interest from private developers for refurbishment would be challenging. The Council would be taking on a substantial refurbishment element if positive intervention was to be successfully realised and private investment encouraged. The preferred option brought contingent risks associated with construction, refurbishment, project management and end sales. These risks would fall to a great extent on the Council. However, the preferred Option 2 did allow for a significant contingency balance of £370K which could either meet unforeseen cost increases or lower sales values or even contribute towards the cost of the second Regent Road terrace.

However the Council had recent experience of refurbishment on Bold Street where its refurbished properties were sold successfully on the open market. The cost structure and assumptions would also be reviewed through the Council's project management approval systems.

The preferred Option 2 enabled the Council to maximise an external funding opportunity to deliver on a long standing but stalled regeneration project. The CEHF proposal

remained true to the original objectives of the Chatsworth Gardens project and the West End Masterplan in removing unsustainable HMO accommodation and replacing with family housing and a wider range of sustainable housing tenure. The proposal £1.9M funding offer would also achieve outcomes for the Council's priority to tackle empty homes in the wider West End area.

Councillor Leytham proposed, seconded by Councillor Hanson:-

"(1) That the recommendations, as set out in the report, be approved."

Councillors then voted:-

***Resolved unanimously:***

- (1) That Option 2 be approved and the Head of Regeneration and Planning be authorised to accept the £1.9M Clusters of Empty Homes Funding and deliver the Chatsworth Gardens project through the approach as set out.
- (2) That the Head of Resources be authorised to update the Capital Programme and Revenue Budget accordingly to allow progression of the project under (1) above.
- (3) That the Head of Resources investigate the viability of finance schemes that might assist prospective home buyers in the Chatsworth Gardens area, through means such as the lend a hand scheme or other deposit guarantee schemes and government initiatives, for consideration as part of future years' budgets.

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Head of Regeneration and Planning  
Head of Resources

**Reasons for making the decision:**

In January 2011 Council resolved that housing regeneration be included as a corporate priority and this was reaffirmed in the 2012-2015 Corporate Plan. The Chatsworth Gardens Project was a key element of the West End Masterplan and was ranked as a high priority by Cabinet as part of review and refresh exercise carried out on the Masterplan in 2009. Empty property reuse was a significant element of providing for the District's housing needs and this project would help reduce homelessness, correct housing supply imbalances and help stabilise a transient community.

*The Chairman informed the meeting of a revision to the order of the agenda in view of the request to speak by a member of the public on the following item.*

**83 SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT STOREY GALLERY 2012-13**

**(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Sands)**

***Mr John Angus, Director of the Storey Gallery, who had registered to speak on this item in accordance with the City Council's agreed procedure and Cabinet Procedure Rule 2.7, spoke on behalf of the Storey Gallery.***

Cabinet received a report from the Head of Community Engagement to seek members' views as to future arrangements regarding the Council's Service Level Agreement with the Storey Gallery.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

The options were to:

- (1) Accept the proposals put forward by the Storey Gallery Company, subject to gaining clarity on the funding of its future 'infrastructure' costs (see financial implications).
- (2) Reject or amend in some way the proposals put forward.

No specific officer recommendation was put forward, but attention was drawn to the comments in section 2 of the report summarised as follows:

Since the October meeting of Cabinet there has been ongoing correspondence including proposals by the Storey Gallery Company set out in Appendix A to the report. No further information was available to assist Cabinet regarding the company's new direction, other than to quote from the company's consultant's report that was presented to Cabinet on 9 October, contained in paragraph 2.3 of the report on the agenda. In terms of the third part of the company's request, Officer's views were that it is for the company to decide whether it wished to apply to the Arts Council for funding, rather than it being a matter for the Council.

The City Council has had in place a longstanding SLA with the Storey Gallery Company. The current financial and operational difficulty the company was facing had led to the closure of the gallery space and a review of its current operational and financial arrangements. The proposal put forward by the Storey Gallery Company attempted to find an interim solution to the company's current difficulties, to give it time to determine its future.

Councillor Leytham proposed, seconded by Councillor Sands:-

- "(1) That Cabinet agrees to underwrite the rent and service charges on the office currently occupied in the Storey Institute until the end of February 2013 to allow sufficient time for an application to be made to the Arts Council.
- (2) That Cabinet agrees to support in principle the proposed new direction (noting the existence of such support from County Council and Arts Council)
- (3) That Cabinet reaffirms its decision taken on the 9 October 2012 to keep the £10,700 grant held back until detailed proposals regarding any specific project are brought forward by the company for consideration by Cabinet."

Councillors then voted:-

***Resolved unanimously:***

- (1) That Cabinet agrees to underwrite the rent and service charges on the office

currently occupied in the Storey Institute until the end of February 2013 to allow sufficient time for an application to be made to the Arts Council.

- (2) That Cabinet agrees to support in principle the proposed new direction (noting the existence of such support from County Council and Arts Council)
- (3) That Cabinet reaffirms its decision taken on the 9 October 2012 to keep the £10,700 grant held back until detailed proposals regarding any specific project are brought forward by the company for consideration by Cabinet.

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Head of Community Engagement  
Head of Resources

**Reasons for making the decision:**

The decision fits with the Corporate Plan Economic Growth priority: Support arts in the district working with the Arts Partnership. Underwriting the rent and services charges could be perceived as in-kind matched funding and proposals to the Arts Council required an element of match funding. The decision allows for a further report back to Cabinet regarding specific projects.

**84 COMMISSIONING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR**

**(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Barry)**

Cabinet received a report from the Head of Community Engagement to advise members of progress to date in developing a Commissioning Plan to support the voluntary, community and faith sector in delivering services to meet current and emerging local needs.

A detailed options analysis and risk assessment was developed as part of the November report to Cabinet (Minute 71 refers). This report provided information relevant to Resolution 8:

*“That the Commissioning Plan and service specification be approved at the December Cabinet meeting, prior to publication of the plan.”*

The Council had taken steps towards introducing the commissioning arrangements proposed in this report over the last two years. Detailed reviews of current SLA's, an assessment of local needs and opportunities and communications and engagement work with the VCFS had been undertaken, leading to these proposals. The recommendations provided a means of steering the council's investment in VCFS services to achieve the maximum impact linked to current needs and opportunities in the district. In addition, they would provide clear, transparent arrangements that focused on value for money and impact and supported the principle already agreed by Cabinet at earlier meetings. Specific steps had been taken to work with Lancashire County Council with the potential to invest jointly providing a more strategic investment in some services.

The preferred officer option was to approve the Commissioning Plan and funding allocations as per Appendix A and B of the report.

Councillor Barry proposed, seconded by Councillor Hamilton-Cox:-

- “(1) That the timetable and process for development of a Commissioning Plan be noted and the Plan approved for publication following the inclusion of ‘Disabilities’ within the Delivery Plan Advice and Information Services (commissioned services).
- (2) That the General Fund Budget assumptions for future years be noted.
- (3) That the portfolio holder and Leader meet with relevant officers to agree the allocations of funding for each of the services to be commissioned subject to final confirmation as part of the budget process.”

Councillors then voted:-

***Resolved unanimously:***

- (1) That the timetable and process for development of a Commissioning Plan be noted and the Plan approved for publication following the inclusion of ‘Disabilities’ within the Delivery Plan Advice and Information Services (commissioned services).
- (2) That the General Fund Budget assumptions for future years be noted.
- (3) That the portfolio holder and Leader meet with relevant officers to agree the allocations of funding for each of the services to be commissioned subject to final confirmation as part of the budget process.

**Officer responsible for effecting the decision:**

Head of Community Engagement

**Reasons for making the decision:**

Proposed commissioning arrangements fit with Corporate Plan priorities and outcomes as follows:

- The voluntary, community and faith sector has capacity to deliver services for the district
- Local communities are actively working with partners to improve where they live in ways that matter to them
- Efficiency savings and service improvements achieved through joint working and shared services
- Impact of welfare reforms managed well to avoid any unnecessary impact on local communities

**85 STOREY CREATIVE INDUSTRIES CENTRE: PROGRESS UPDATE**

**(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Hanson)**

Cabinet received a report from the Head of Resources to provide an update on the position regarding the Storey Creative Industries Centre (CIC).

As the report was presented primarily for information no options were presented. Cabinet Members and Officers visited the Storey on Wednesday 14 November and had an informal meeting with tenants and gained a broad appreciation of what the building and gardens could offer.

The Storey operation would need to support Council's priorities and be sustainable and the report outlined the work being undertaken by officers within Regeneration and Planning, Communications, ICT and Property to fit with the Council's theme of managing the Council's resources to deliver value for money.

Councillor Leytham proposed, seconded by Councillor Sands:-

"(1) That Cabinet notes that time will be needed to develop a clear strategy to support proposals to take the Storey forward and confirms that the SCIC now sits within the portfolio of the Cabinet Member responsible for Regeneration."

Councillors then voted:-

***Resolved unanimously:***

(1) That Cabinet notes that time will be needed to develop a clear strategy to support proposals to take the Storey forward and confirms that the SCIC now sits within the portfolio of the Cabinet Member responsible for Regeneration.

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Head of Resources

**Reasons for making the decision:**

At its meeting on 9 October 2012 Cabinet requested written updated on the Storey Creative Industries Centre be tabled at each meeting. (Minute 61 refers).

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**BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK 2013/16: REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE**

**(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Bryning)**

Cabinet received a report from the Head of Resources which provided an update on the Council's financial position to help inform development of Cabinet's budget proposals. Given that the Local Government settlement had not yet been received, the report was primarily for information, rather than seeking any specific decisions.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

**GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET – CURRENT YEAR**

An in-depth analysis of all current year budgets had been undertaken and a summary of the budget and variance analysis was attached at Appendix A to the report. There was still time for the revised budget position to change further over the coming weeks and therefore Cabinet was simply requested to note the overall position at this stage. In

terms of earmarked reserves and provisions, a full review had not yet been completed. This would be undertaken in time to report to January's Cabinet meeting.

### **2013/14 DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET**

The first draft of the 2013/14 budget had been produced, in accordance with Financial Regulations and the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Further information would be provided for the January meeting. Currently the draft budget for 2013/14 stood at £20.196M, as shown in Appendix A to the report, which also showed the provisional variance analysis undertaken so far.

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT**

The provisional Local Government Finance Settlement was not expected to be announced until later this month and therefore the impact would be reported formally into January's Cabinet meeting. The MTFS approved in February assumed that Government support would reduce by 2% in 2013/14 (over 4% in real terms) compared with 2012/13, and 0% (about 2% in real terms) the year after.

### **COUNCIL TAX**

In addition to the change in the referendum trigger threshold being reduced to 2%, the Government had also announced proposals for a continuation of the Council Tax Freeze Grant. Under this proposal, the Council would receive the equivalent of a 1% tax rise (£84K) for 2013/14 and 2014/15, should it choose to freeze or reduce council tax for 2013/14. Take up of this arrangement was voluntary.

### **SAVINGS REQUIREMENTS: SCENARIOS**

At this stage it was impossible to give any reasonably accurate picture of what the Council would need to save next year to continue with existing services, depending on its council tax targets. This was mainly because of the uncertainties over Government funding and other legislative changes. Some scenarios were set out in the report.

### **RE-DIRECTION OF RESOURCES (SAVINGS & GROWTH OPTIONS)**

The Council's financial prospects could change significantly as a result of the Government funding settlement. In view of this position, Cabinet was advised once again to focus its attention on identifying and prioritising areas for making recurring savings and this linked to the Corporate Priorities report elsewhere on the agenda. It was reiterated that without such an approach, Cabinet ran the risk of:

- not being able to formulate a set of balanced budget proposals for consideration by Council in February, or
- resorting to drawing heavily on reserves and balances, and storing up pressures and difficulties for the following year; and / or
- presenting an unaffordable and undeliverable medium term Corporate Plan to Council, leading to unmanageable expectations of stakeholders.

A further update was set out below on the themes for achieving savings in line with the

MTFS:

**Efficiencies**

Sessions with Service Heads and Portfolio Holders to review their own detailed budgets were currently being arranged. This would provide a useful forum in which to recognise the efficiencies already gained and identify any new areas.

**Invest to Save Schemes**

At present the reserve established to fund such schemes had provisionally been fully allocated against completing the Lancaster Market leasehold surrender. If this did not change, then there will be a need to address capacity for providing up front funding for any new invest to save proposals. A report elsewhere on the agenda sought direction regarding the adoption of an Energy Strategy and this was one potential area in which new schemes might be developed.

**Income Generation**

A report elsewhere on this agenda set out proposals for a range of increases to fees and charges for a number of key service areas, and sought views on any other potential areas.

**Service Reductions**

It was still expected that the Council would need to reduce the level and/or range of services provided, in order to establish sustainable balanced budgets for the medium term.

**GENERAL FUND CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

The capital programme had been updated for slippage in a number of schemes, mainly resulting from the delay in the South Lancaster capital receipt, and a number of new Information and Communications Technology (ICT) schemes. Full details were contained within Appendix B in the report.

All of the Council's capital investment plans needed to be affordable, sustainable and prudent. As with revenue, the big risk regarding capital investment was affordability, but prudence also needed particular consideration – this was more about ensuring that the Council did not take on too much at one time, in capital terms.

Members were reminded that when combined, all the potential pressures on borrowing could make it inadvisable to take forward all capital investment options at the same time, even if they were affordable (though clearly this latter point had not yet been addressed). In view of Council's stance on Lancaster Market, this still represented the first priority for additional capital resources. Cabinet was advised to reflect this accordingly, in developing its draft priorities further.

**COUNCIL HOUSING (HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT- HRA)**

In September, Cabinet adopted a HRA medium term financial strategy and rent policy that supported the future investment needs of the HRA housing stock, whilst enabling the Council to consider using HRA funding in a wider regeneration context.

As part of the current budget process both revenue and capital estimates had been updated. The HRA capital programme has been updated for the items previously

referred to in the September Cabinet report and included:

- Provision for additional fire precaution works
- Provision for remodelling of sheltered schemes
- Provision for improvements to communal areas to flats.
- Increase the boiler replacements
- Renewable technologies
- Increase the environmental budget.

Full details of the programme, together with a detailed review of provisions and reserves would be presented to Cabinet in January. This would also include proposals for rent increases and the impact they had on reserves and investment opportunities.

### **TREASURY MANAGEMENT**

In accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management Members were presented with regular monitoring reports on treasury activities. The report for the first half of the year was attached at Appendix C to the report and provided Members with the latest position on Icelandic investments as well as investment and borrowing activities. Cabinet was requested to note the treasury management update report and refer it onto Council.

At this stage Cabinet was requested to note the budgetary position but more importantly, take forward a number of actions to help develop a balanced set of budget proposals. In particular, direction was sought for areas in which savings options should be developed. The Officer preferred options were reflected in the recommendations.

Once the Settlement has been received, the Council's financial outlook should become much clearer, although generally local authorities were expecting that further significant savings would need to be made in future years.

Councillor Bryning proposed, seconded by Councillor Sands:-

“That the recommendations, as set out in the report, be approved.”

Councillors then voted:-

#### ***Resolved unanimously:***

- (1) That the draft budgetary position for current and future years be noted.
- (2) That the mid-year treasury management progress report set out at Appendix C to the report be noted and referred on to Council.
- (3) That as part of identifying services areas for review linked to corporate priorities, Cabinet indicates the lower priority areas within General Fund for which service reductions should be developed and progress against the above actions be reported to the January Cabinet meeting.

#### **Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Head of Resources

**Reasons for making the decision:**

To note the latest position.

**87 CORPORATE FEES AND CHARGES****(Cabinet Members with Special Responsibility Councillors Bryning, Hamilton-Cox, Hanson, Leytham and Sands)**

Cabinet received a report from the Head of Resources to consider the annual review of fees and charges for 2013/14.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

In order to assist the decision making process the report was structured into four main areas as follows:

- Environmental Services - Car Parking
- Health & Housing
- Wellbeing
- Regeneration & Planning – Cycle Parking Lockers

These set out the key considerations for Members in context of the latest budget projections and listed the relevant options, options appraisal and officer recommendations either in the body of the report or in the appendices. It was important to remember that income budgets had been set based on the best information available at this time, but also that the impact of the current economic climate could continue to adversely affect income generation.

**ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES – CAR PARKING**

It was agreed that consideration of proposals regarding car parking fees and charges be deferred until the January Cabinet meeting when it was hoped the county council would have confirmed their proposals regarding on-street parking charges. If this was the case it would still allow for implementation in April 2013.

**HEALTH AND HOUSING**

Appendix D to the report set out the current charges and options for increases for 2013/14.

**Pest Control Fees**

The pest control fees were increased last year by 5% on the previous year. Any further large increase could deter the public from seeking expert advice. This could lead to people carrying out their own DIY treatments, which might have serious health and safety implications. It also allowed pest problems to escalate to a point at which the Council would be forced to intervene, by which time treatment was more difficult, more labour-intensive and more costly.

### Cemetery Fees

*Neptune Baby and Young Child Memorial Garden.*

As in previous years, uptake of memorial options in this area had been limited. It was again proposed therefore that the fees for burial options, cremated remains, memorial plaques and associated extras be retained at the same level as last year.

### General Fees & Charges

Most of the fees and charges covered in the report related to the provision of statutory services but the council did have flexibility in setting fees for these services.

For the discretionary services, the council was at discretion to set its own level of fee provided that the fees remained competitive and affordable to retain customers. The pest control service was estimated to operate at a loss of £89,600 inclusive of recharges, and £20,800 excluding recharge in 2013/14, based on the latest draft budget which included an inflationary increase of 2%. If Option 2 (5% increase) was approved the deficit would be reduced by £3,300.

	<b>Option 1 To approve an inflationary increase of 2% in fees.</b>	<b>Option 2 To approve a 5% increase.</b>	<b>Option 3 To do nothing and retain the existing fees and charges.</b>
Advantages	This option allows for increased fee revenue of £8,200 in line with the current budget projections whilst retaining fees at competitive levels.  The increase in pest control fees reduces the council's subsidy of this service by a substantial amount whilst retaining pest control fees affordable compared to some private sector providers.	This option would generate additional income of £12,800.	This option would mean no price increases for customers.
Disadvantages		Any increase in fees is likely to be unpopular with customers.	No opportunity to raise additional revenue through fees and charges. There would be a budget shortfall of £8,300 which would need to be met from savings elsewhere.
Risks	There is always a risk that customers will choose not to access services if fees are too	There is always a risk that customers will choose not to access services if fees are	This option increases the difficulties of securing a viable budget at a time when

	high.  However, evidence gathered shows core fees and charges are comparable to other nearby local authorities.	too high.  There is a risk that even current income levels will fail to be achieved if fees are perceived to be too high.	additional income and savings are required.
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Option 1 was the officer preferred option. Last year fees were increased by more than inflation and it was felt inappropriate to do so for a second year, therefore the basic inflationary increase of 2% was being proposed.

## WELLBEING

Appendix E to the report set out the current charges and proposed increases for 2013/14.

	<b>Option 1 To increase fees as set out above.</b>	<b>Option 2 To approve a different increase (either in percentage of £ income terms).</b>	<b>Option 3 To do nothing and retain the existing fees and charges.</b>
Advantages	This option makes an additional contribution of £15,700 to the 2013/14 budget process, whilst retaining fees at competitive levels.	This option potentially allows for a greater increase in revenue, therefore making a greater contribution to the 2013/14 budget process.	This option would mean no price increases for customers (and so the 'subsidy' of associated services by all council tax payers would increase, irrespective of whether they use those services or not). This option could, potentially, have a positive effect on income generation should throughput increase significantly as a result of no increases, but there is no strong evidence to support this.
Disadvantages	Any increase in fees is likely to be unpopular with customers.	Alternatively, if an increase less than the 2.6% general inflation assumption is approved, it would not meet the current budget requirements, and revenue raising opportunities would be lost. An increase in fees above the recommended amount is likely to meet with	Lost opportunity to raise additional revenue through fees and charges in areas that may stand an increase. This option will not meet the current budget requirements by some £27,400, requiring additional income or savings to be generated from other activities / services undertaken by the council.

		customer resistance. This could result in reduction in income generation and as such customer dissatisfaction that may be difficult to respond to.	
Risks	There is always a risk that customers will choose not to access services especially with any increase in charges.	There is always a risk that customers will choose not to access services if fees are too high or move to one of the key competitors in the district. There is a risk that even current income levels will fail to be achieved if fees are perceived to be too high.	This option increases the difficulties of securing a viable budget at a time when additional income and savings are required. There is no compensating increase in throughput and the Council suffers loss of income. Perceived greater unfairness by tax payers generally.

The range of increases were based on officers knowledge of market demand and supply, factors such as inflation and VAT and the need for the Council to operate services which provide value for money. The prices were the maximum charge and officers retained the flexibility to reduce charges in line with market demand or specific schemes such as the £1 swim sessions at Salt Ayre Sports Centre. If the proposed increases were approved they would generate £13,200 more than the draft budget which equated to an average increase of almost 3%. The opportunity to increase prices above inflation for certain activities enabled officers to maximise the potential income generation on those activities and at the same time enabled price freezes on other activities that would otherwise see a drop in customer demand.

The proposed increases were set out in Appendix E to the report and were the officer preferred option. These would generate more than the overall 2% inflationary increase by some £13,200.

### **REGENERATION & PLANNING: CYCLE PARKING LOCKERS**

In 1999 Cabinet recommended that cycle lockers be provided free of charge in order to support cycling in the district. Details of the current cycle locker provision for the public, was attached at Appendix F together with the advantages and disadvantages. Further issues were that open access lockers had been tried in the public domain at various sites in Lancaster city centre and Carnforth station with little success. A variety of locking mechanisms were also tried without success - coin operated versions were vandalised, and use of the lockers was abused as they were not being used for their intended purpose. In addition, the alternative of Sheffield stands were readily available (capacity was saturated at Lancaster station but there was capacity in and around the city centre). However, cyclists often cited these as being barely adequate in terms of being theft or vandalism proof.

If such issues were to be overcome or at least improved then financial investment would

be required. As a starting point it would therefore seem appropriate to consider the introduction of charging for cycle lockers to generate income to contribute to the investment required. At present there was no officer preferred option other than to ask Members to consider whether charging for cycle lockers should be introduced, and if so officers be instructed to set out the investment requirements needed, to develop the process and fee structure and report back in due course.

Councillor Hanson proposed, seconded by Councillor Hamilton-Cox:-

- “(1) That consideration of car parking charges be deferred to the next meeting to enable the County Council to confirm their proposals with regard to on-street parking charges.
- (2) That the Environmental Health and Private Sector Housing fees as set out in Appendix D to the report be increased by 2%.
- (3) That the charges for Salt Ayre Sports Centre, Community Pools, Williamson Park, Parks and Recreation Grounds and the Platform be increased in line with the proposed percentages (rounded to nearest £0.10) and arrangements as set out in Appendix E to the report.
- (4) That consideration be given in principle to the introduction of charging for cycle lockers.”

Councillors then voted:-

***Resolved unanimously:***

- (1) That consideration of car parking charges be deferred to the next meeting to enable the County Council to confirm their proposals with regard to on-street parking charges.
- (2) That the Environmental Health and Private Sector Housing fees as set out in Appendix D to the report be increased by 2%.
- (3) That the charges for Salt Ayre Sports Centre, Community Pools, Williamson Park, Parks and Recreation Grounds and the Platform be increased in line with the proposed percentages (rounded to nearest £0.10) and arrangements as set out in Appendix E to the report.
- (4) That consideration be given in principle to the introduction of charging for cycle lockers.

**The meeting adjourned at 11.30 and reconvened at 11.45.**

It was proposed by Councillor Bryning and seconded by Councillor Smith and resolved unanimously:

“That recommendation 5, as set out in the report, be approved.”

***Resolved:***

- (5) That the Fees and Charges Policy as set out in Appendix A be approved with no further areas of income generation being identified.

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Head of Health & Housing  
Head of Environmental Services

Head of Community Engagement  
 Head of Regeneration & Planning  
 Head of Resources

**Reasons for making the decisions:**

**Environmental Services – Car Parking – Recommendation (1)**

Being aware of the county council's proposals will assist Cabinet in making their decision in January.

**Health & Housing – Recommendation (2)**

The proposals took account of the Council's stated intention to try to protect the most vulnerable in our community by keeping increases to a reasonable level and retaining the reductions for those in receipt of council tax /housing benefit. This had been balanced against the need to generate additional income.

**Wellbeing – Recommendation (3)**

The decision to increase prices above inflation for certain activities enabled officers to maximise potential income generation on those activities whilst enabling price freezes on other activities that would otherwise see a drop in customer demand.

**Regeneration & Planning: Cycle Parking Lockers (4)**

The in principle decision enables officers to set out the investment requirements needed to develop the process and fee structure and report back to Cabinet in due course.

**Fees and Charges Policy (5)**

Fees and charges formed an integral part of the budget setting process, which in turn related to the Council's priorities. Under the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), income generation was a specific initiative for helping to balance the budget. The proposed increases were considered to be fair and reasonable.

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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE ACT 2012 -REFORMS TO COUNCIL TAX: USE OF DISCRETIONARY POWERS**

**(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Bryning)**

Cabinet received a report from the Head of Resources to inform Members of various new discretionary powers available with regard to council tax discounts, premiums and exemptions, and seek Cabinet's recommendations on their adoption for referral on to Council.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

There were three options available for consideration. Appendix D to the report set out an equality impact assessment and this had informed development of the proposals. Inevitably, however, balancing the differing impact on stakeholders involved judgement and as such, any policy changes adopted would be kept under review after implementation.

**Option 1**

**To recommend the introduction of a charging policy in line with recommendations**

Would encourage owners to bring property back into occupation and provided flexibility where appropriate. The two month exemption period for Class "C" dwellings catered for short turnover periods between occupiers.

### **Option 2**

#### **To decide not to recommend any changes in charging policy to Council**

Would lose the opportunity to raise additional income for the Council and its precepting partners, as well as losing any associated impact on helping to bring empty homes back into use.

### **Option 3**

#### **To recommend an alternative, e.g. maximising charges by using the discretionary powers to their limit**

Whilst potentially such a policy might maximise income generation, it might provide a disincentive to repair property and bring back into use and would not cater for short empty periods between occupiers. Landlords would be liable for charges during all turnover periods and this may have knock on implications for the rental market.

Option 1 was the preferred option in line with the following comments:

(i) For Class "A" dwellings it was considered that the Council should provide a reasonable but not excessive exemption period to promote property development, particularly supporting major upgrading and improvement to poor quality housing stock.

(ii) For Class "C" dwellings it was considered that the Council should provide an initial two month exemption period to allow for the changeover of occupiers, particularly tenants, and 50% discount for an empty period for a further four months after which the full charge would be applied.

(iii) For Second Homes it was considered that the Council take advantage of this flexibility to levy an extra 10% charge to homeowners of second homes, who should contribute fully towards services and generally they had a choice in ownership.

(iv) For long-term empty homes it was considered that the Council should levy a 50% premium on homes that had been empty for more than 2 years. This initiative should encourage owners to return them to use, whilst providing additional income to the Council.

There was potential for the Council to raise additional revenue in adopting these discretionary powers. However, it was noted with caution that income relating to empty properties generally proved difficult to collect and staffing resources, collection performance and bad debt provisions would continue to be reviewed, should the Council choose to adopt these proposals.

Any "Empty Homes Premium" for properties empty for more than 2 years must be seen to operate fairly and be equitable to all owners, whilst also making sense in the context of the broader local strategy for dealing with empty homes

Councillor Bryning proposed, seconded by Councillor Hanson:-

"(1) That the recommendations, as set out in the report, be approved."

Councillors then voted:-

***(7 Members (Councillors Barry, Blamire, Bryning, Hanson, Leytham, Sands and Smith) voted in favour, and 1 Member (Councillor Hamilton-Cox) abstained.)***

**Resolved:**

- (1) That Council be recommended to adopt the following changes in council tax charging policy for 2013/14 onwards, for implementation by the Head of Resources under her delegated authority:
- i. replacement of the current exemption of up to twelve months for properties undergoing or in need of major repairs or structural alteration, with a discount of 50% for up to 12 months (Class A);
  - ii. replacement of the current six month exemption followed by a 50% discount for empty homes, with an exemption for two months followed by a discount of 50% for up to a further four months only (after which, a full charge would apply);
  - iii. removal of the 10% discount on second homes; and
  - iv. introduction of a premium of an additional 50% of council tax due on properties that have been empty for two or more years.

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Head of Resources

**Reasons for making the decision:**

The proposals have been developed in support of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, whilst also supporting corporate aims regarding the priority for health and wellbeing.

**89 BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK 2013/16 - CORPORATE PLAN: PRIORITIES REVIEW**

**(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Blamire)**

Cabinet received a report from the Chief Executive in order that Cabinet could highlight areas of service for review that could, in turn, affect the Council's future priorities. No options were listed in the report but Cabinet Members were advised that any review needed to be considered in the current financial context which required savings to outweigh growth.

Councillor Barry proposed, seconded by Councillor Leytham:-

- "(1) That the following be considered as areas for review:
- Energy sign up scheme
  - Empty homes officer
  - Renewable energy project"

Councillors then voted:-

***Resolved unanimously:***

- (1) That the following be considered as areas for review:
- Energy sign up scheme
  - Empty homes officer
  - Renewable energy project

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Head of Resources  
Head of Health & Housing  
Head of Environmental Services  
Head of Community Engagement

**Reasons for making the decision:**

At its meeting on 9 October 2012 Cabinet agreed that any new priorities would be reported at the December meeting (Minute 62) refers.

**90 LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL ENERGY STRATEGY**

**(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Hamilton-Cox)**

Cabinet received a report from the Head of Environmental Services to establish Cabinet's preferred approach to further delivering the outcomes of the Corporate Plan that relate to energy.

**Option 1-** Continue to deliver this aspect of the Council's corporate plan in the way that it had been delivered to date. The main risks of this were that there would be no real focus and when opportunities did arise the lack of underpinning strategy would create problems in terms of resourcing, staffing, consultation and ability to deliver real wins to the Council. It was also considered certain that ultimately energy costs would continue to rise, targets for reducing carbon emissions etc would continue to rise, commercially proven renewable technologies would improve and incentives for introduction of renewables would decrease. Not having any planned approach could act against the Council's best interests and there could be no guarantees that this approach would effectively deliver this aspect of the Corporate Plan.

**Option 2-** Seek to develop a Council energy strategy, subject to consideration as part of the budget. This would help to ensure the Council had in place a clear, agreed and realistic plan for the future that would allow us to protect ourselves against rising energy costs, meet emission targets, generate income and take advantage of available technologies at the opportune moments. It would require a budgetary allocation of around £20,000 to develop the actual strategy. Dependent on the approach chosen it could potentially cost millions to deliver, but potentially the benefits financially, economically and environmentally might far outweigh the initial costs.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

The development of an energy strategy would require significant officer time as well as the use of external expertise. If deemed a priority the officer time would be prioritised from existing budgets however it was estimated that the one-off cost of external expertise would be in the region of £20K. There was currently no specific budgetary provision for this and therefore it would need to be considered as part of the current revenue budget exercise.

It should be noted that once developed, the strategy was likely to highlight areas requiring significant financial investment (potentially into the £millions) and Members should be mindful that difficult financial decisions would need to be taken in order to support the strategy. However, as the results were unquantifiable at this moment in time, further reports would need to be prepared in order to outline options available including full financial appraisals to justify their support.

Councillor Hamilton-Cox proposed, seconded by Councillor Barry:-

“(1) That Option 2 be approved: *Seek to develop a Council energy strategy, subject to consideration as part of the budget.*

Councillors then voted:-

***Resolved unanimously:***

(1) That Option 2 be approved: *Seek to develop a Council energy strategy, subject to consideration as part of the budget.*

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Head of Environmental Services

**Reasons for making the decision:**

‘Managing the Council’s Resources’ and ‘Environmental Sustainability’ were two of the themes that the Council currently had underpinning the four stated Corporate Priorities. The development of an energy strategy would require significant officer time as well as the use of external expertise and there was currently no specific budgetary provision for this. The decision enables the Energy Strategy to be considered as part of the current revenue budget exercise.

**91 RYELANDS PARK BANDSTAND**

**(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Smith)**

Cabinet received a report from the Head of Environmental Services to seek Cabinet’s decision on a request from Morecambe Town Council with regards to the Ryelands Park bandstand.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

**Option 1- Agree / Not Agree to the relocation of the Ryelands Bandstand to Happy Mount Park.** Based on previous advice this option was not practically feasible and even if it were would require consultation with the users of Ryelands Park. The City Council has no resource currently available to undertake this consultation. Were Cabinet minded to consider this option it should consider requesting that Morecambe Town Council covered the costs of a consultation exercise.

**Option 2- Agree / Not agree to the principle of a bandstand in Happy Mount Park.** A permanent bandstand in Happy Mount Park would take up valuable space and would need to be properly maintained. At this stage there was no real evidence to show how a permanent bandstand would add to the visitor experience in Happy Mount Park and complement the existing range of activities, which already included concerts and bands who managed to perform without a permanent bandstand. Were Cabinet minded to consider this option consultation would need to take place to establish whether a permanent bandstand really was needed. The City Council has no resource currently available to undertake this consultation. Were Cabinet minded to consider this option it should consider requesting that Morecambe Town Council covered the costs of a consultation exercise.

Councillor Smith proposed, seconded by Councillor Sands:-

“(1) That the recommendations, as set out in the report, be approved.”

Councillors then voted:-

***(7 Members (Councillors Balmire, Barry, Bryning, Hamilton-Cox, Leytham, Sands and Smith) voted in favour, and 1 Member (Councillor Hanson) did not vote.)***

***Resolved:***

- (1) That Cabinet did not agree with the principle of Morecambe Town Council's proposed relocation of Ryelands Bandstand to Happy Mount Park.
- (2) That before Cabinet considered whether it would in principle allow Morecambe Town Council to locate a bandstand in Happy Mount Park a comprehensive consultation exercise, overseen by the City Council, but funded by Morecambe Town Council be undertaken with the results reported back to Cabinet.
- (3) That based on Cabinet's decision the Head of Environmental Services responds to Morecambe Town Council's letter.

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Head of Environmental Services

**Reasons for making the decision:**

Given the poor condition of the structure and potential costs of this exercise it was not considered appropriate to agree in principle to the request regarding the relocation of the bandstand. However, the decision enables Morecambe Town Council to undertake a

consultation exercise to ascertain the level of support for a new bandstand and report back to Cabinet in due course.

## 92 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

***The press and public were excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following item (Minute 93) when it became necessary to refer to the information in the exempt appendices.***

It was moved by Councillor Hanson and seconded by Councillor Barry:-

“That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business, on the grounds that it could involve the possible disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of that Act.”

Members then voted as follows:-

### ***Resolved unanimously:***

- (1) That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, on the grounds that it could involve the possible disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of that Act.

## 93 SUPPORTING PEOPLE PROGRAMME - BUDGET PROPOSALS

### **(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Leytham)**

Cabinet received a report from the Head of Health and Housing to provide details of the proposed changes to the distribution of the Supporting People Programme Grant across Lancashire.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the report as follows:

	<b>Option 1: 60/40 model</b>	<b>Option 2: 50% need:50 deprivation</b>	<b>Option 3: 75 % need; 25% deprivation</b>	<b>Option 4: 100% need</b>
Advantages	None	None	Lancaster district's current budget allocation would increase by 0.24% and is the preferred model that the county wish to implement.	Lancaster district's budget allocation would increase by 7.94% and by 0.38% even after the savings have been applied. Less savings to be achieved to commission the

				proposed homeless hostel.
Disadvantages	Lancaster district would see a current budget reduction of -10.31% increasing to -16.14% when the savings are applied.	Lancaster district would see a current budget reduction of -4.11% increasing to -10.61% when the savings are applied.	Lancaster district's future budget reduction would decrease by -5.11%.	This is not the county's preferred model.
Risks	Loss and/or reduction in services particularly when the savings are applied.	Loss and/or reduction in services particularly when the savings are applied.	Potential loss or reduction in some services when the savings are applied but to a lesser extent than Option 1 and 2. Some districts may not support this model as the 100% needs model presents better outcomes for 10 out of the 12 districts. Would require savings of £300k from 2015 to commission the new service. The reduction in existing services could place more pressure on the council meeting its statutory duties although the council is not thoroughly meeting its current statutory duties towards single homeless households in a satisfactory way at present.	If there is a majority vote from districts to adopt this model, the county are not likely to support and adopt it because of the budget implications upon a neighbouring district, which is exacerbated when this model is applied.

The officer preferred option was Option 3, which was the County Council's preferred model. Whilst it did not represent the greatest financial gain for the Lancaster district, the county have to take into account the potential impact and any financial reductions imposed on all districts within the partnership by any model applied, and if districts were to vote against this model, it was highly likely that the county would refuse to implement

the 100% needs model, as before with the 60/40 model, which would result in delays in planning for and implementing the necessary savings by the end of 2014/15, or the county might be forced to implement Option 3 anyway. The preferred model meant that the resultant reductions in budget were below -20% of current budgets, which the county believe was a reasonable and rational approach. Although there would be a need to identify savings if option 3 was approved in order to commission the homeless hostel, officers would provide a range of options to achieve the necessary savings, and were of the view that the proposed new service was of sufficient strategic importance to take precedence over some of the existing services currently funded through the Supporting People Programme.

The report outlined the various options that Lancashire County Council had explored to ensure fair and transparent distribution of the Supporting People Programme Grant across the county, and had identified the most suitable option that would limit the impact of any proposed budget reductions in each district within the partnership. Members were therefore required to decide whether this was an acceptable approach and whether officers were permitted to vote in support of the county's preferred methodology at the next meeting of the Commissioning Body in December 2012. The report also made reference to the wider implications of implementing the county's preferred methodology which would result in a reduced budget once the savings were applied in 2015.

At December's meeting of the Commissioning Board, agreement would be sought from the county to adopt their preferred methodology to distribute the Supporting People grant in Lancashire. Assuming agreement was reached, the proposal would be referred to Lancashire Chief Executives in January 2013 for final endorsement and before being implemented by Lancashire County Council. If officers were authorised to proceed, a further report would be presented to Cabinet which would provide details of all the possible options to deliver the new service, and more specific recommendations about how the necessary savings could be achieved in the future.

Cabinet were informed that the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) had notified the council that the capital funding secured to provide a homeless hostel was at risk because of the limited progress made in bringing forward this development due to the uncertainty around the Supporting People (SP) revenue funding position. Any potential Registered Provider partners interested in developing a hostel were unwilling to commit until there was some certainty over the revenue funding position. Delays in introducing the new methodology for distributing SP funding coupled with spending review announcements had resulted in the SP commissioning body being reluctant to commission any new services until there was some clarity around the proposed new funding model. In addition, there was now a new requirement for those districts wanting to commission new services to be able to demonstrate affordability within the new funding model including making decisions on which services could be decommissioned or reconfigured to achieve any necessary savings. The homeless hostel was a priority for the district and fitted with the homeless strategy and the Government's "No second night out" policy. Furthermore, the homeless forum and the Health and Wellbeing partnership strongly supported the provision of a hostel.

The Head of Supporting People, conscious that SP funding delays had contributed to the potential withdrawal of funding from the HCA, had made an approach to the HCA requesting that they hold their decision to withdraw funding for the time being to enable an urgent decision to be made by the SP commissioning body to approve the revenue

funding of 200k for the hostel. In order to make this urgent decision, SP needed to be satisfied that compensatory savings could be achieved in other areas so as to maintain the overall SP budget for this area at the same level. SP required confirmation as soon as possible that 200k savings could be identified to fund the homeless hostel.

The Head of Supporting People had requested a letter signed by the Chief Executive stating that urgent approval was sought from the commissioning body to secure revenue funding for the homeless hostel detailing how the compensatory savings required could be achieved. This will allow progress to be made with identifying a suitable RP partner and identifying potential land/buildings for the scheme. A report could then be brought to January Cabinet detailing the options available to ensure this scheme had the best chance of proceeding within the time constraints imposed by the funding regimes.

Councillor Leytham proposed, seconded by Councillor Smith:-

- “(1) That the proposed changes relating to the distribution of the Supporting People Programme Grant be noted.
- (2) That Cabinet notes the impact and future implications of the proposed changes upon this district.
- (3) That Cabinet agrees that Option 4 be selected when Lancaster City Council exercises its voting rights at the Commissioning Board meeting.
- (4) That the Chief Executive writes to the Head of Supporting People requesting urgent approval of revenue funding for the homeless hostel and detailing where potential compensatory savings could be achieved.”

Councillors then voted:-

***Resolved unanimously:***

- (1) That the proposed changes relating to the distribution of the Supporting People Programme Grant be noted.
- (2) That Cabinet notes the impact and future implications of the proposed changes upon this district.
- (3) That Cabinet agrees that Option 4 be selected when Lancaster City Council exercises its voting rights at the Commissioning Board meeting.
- (4) That the Chief Executive writes to the Head of Supporting People requesting urgent approval of revenue funding for the homeless hostel and detailing where potential compensatory savings could be achieved.

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Chief Executive  
Head of Health & Housing

**Reasons for making the decision:**

Option 4 results in Lancaster district receiving the highest proportion of the SP grant

than any of the other options.

The decision fits with section 8 of the Council's Corporate Plan 2012-15 which seeks to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable people, reduce the number of homeless people in the district and reduce the number of people sleeping rough in the district and is consistent with the Lancaster District Homeless Strategy 2008-2013 which aims to reduce the number of vulnerable groups becoming homeless including young people, those affected by domestic violence and offenders/rough sleepers. A further report will be brought back to Cabinet in January setting out the range of options that exist for the new service along with more detailed savings about how the savings could be achieved.

**94 24, HALA GROVE, LANCASTER**

**(Cabinet Member with Special Responsibility Councillor Hamilton-Cox)**

Cabinet received a report from the Head of Resources with regard to the restrictive covenant on 24 Hala Grove, Lancaster. The report was exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 3, of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972.

The options, options analysis, including risk assessment and officer preferred option, were set out in the exempt report:

Councillor Hamilton-Cox proposed, seconded by Councillor Leytham:-

"That the recommendation, as set out in the exempt report, be approved."

Councillors then voted:-

***Resolved unanimously:***

- (1) That the proposal to remove the restrictive covenant on the property known as 24 Hala Grove, Lancaster be approved.

**Officers responsible for effecting the decision:**

Head of Resources

**Reasons for making the decision:**

The decision may assist with bringing empty properties back into use, in partnership with Lancashire County Council.

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Chairman

(The meeting ended at 12.50 p.m.)

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
Liz Bateson, Democratic Services - telephone (01524) 582047 or email  
ebateson@lancaster.gov.uk**

**MINUTES PUBLISHED ON FRIDAY 7 DECEMBER, 2012.**

**EFFECTIVE DATE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE DECISIONS CONTAINED IN THESE MINUTES:  
MONDAY 14 DECEMBER, 2012.**