



## LATE REPORTS, URGENT BUSINESS and SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Cabinet

Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> July 2008

*The following reports were received too late to be included on the main agenda for this meeting and were marked 'to follow'. They are now enclosed, as follows:*

<b>Agenda Item Number</b>	<b>Page</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Reason for Late Report</b>	<b>Officer Responsible for Report</b>
7	1 - 8	LANCASTER SCIENCE PARK	Received after publication of the Agenda.	Head of Economic Development and Tourism.
10	9 - 13	CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING	Received after publication of the Agenda.	Corporate Director (Community Services).
11	14 - 48	HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY	Received after publication of the Agenda.	Corporate Director (Community Services).
12	49 - 57	REVIEW OF STAFF AND MEMBER PERMITS AND CHARGES	Received after publication of the Agenda.	Chief Executive.

**CABINET**

**Lancaster Science Park  
8<sup>th</sup> July 2008**

**Report of Head of Economic Development & Tourism**

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
Further to a previous reports to Cabinet on 25th July 2006 and 20th February 2007, to report on progress with project development work for Lancaster Science Park and to confirm that the Council should lead the next stages of project development, including the submission of outline planning application and recruitment of a development partner.				
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Non-Key Decision</b>		<b>Referral from Cabinet Member</b>
<b>Date Included in Forward Plan</b>		<b>June 2008</b>		
This report is public				

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCILLOR BRYNING**

- (1) That, subject to release of sufficient project development funding from NWDA, the Corporate Director ( Regeneration) is authorised to proceed with the next phases of project development, including the recruitment of a development partner on the basis outlined in this report, and commissioning of relevant specialist consultancy support
- (2) That a further report is made back to Cabinet on the outcome of the developer recruitment and to agree the detailed terms and conditions of the development agreement
- (3) That the Head of Financial Services is authorised to make the appropriate adjustments to the revenue and capital budgets
- (4) That the Corporate Director (Regeneration) is authorised to make any amendments to the Memorandum of Understanding with Lancaster University if these are required to reflect the revised approach to the project, in consultation with the Head of Legal and HR and the Head of Financial Services

## 1.0 Introduction

On 25<sup>th</sup> July 2006, Cabinet considered a report outlining proposals for development of land at Bailrigg Lane, adjacent to Lancaster University, as a Science Park. The project is a joint initiative between the City Council, Lancaster University, and North West Regional Development Agency (NWDA). Cabinet agreed details of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the City and University, covering their respective roles in the project, and also that the City Council would act as applicant for NWDA funding for the initial phases of the project, including site acquisition and infrastructure development.

On 20<sup>th</sup> February 2007, Cabinet received a further report which sought authority to proceed with site acquisition and to proceed with further phases of project development, leading up to a full submission to NWDA for funding for the main project, at an estimated cost of around £11 million.

At that time, it was not clear what responsibilities might fall back on the Council for operational management of the science park, and it was resolved that a further report would be needed prior to committing the Council to implementing the main scheme.

Subsequent to that report, the Council has entered into an agreement with the landowners to purchase the land for the science park, which is conditional on obtaining outline planning consent. At the time, the planning application was being progressed directly by Northwest Development Agency

Significant work took place during the latter half of 2007 to progress the project, including the first stage of recruiting a suitable private sector development partner. However the project ran into difficulties in November 2007 when NWDA withdrew the planning application before it went to Planning Committee, due to unresolved highways issues. In essence, these related to an existing problem of peak hour traffic congestion in Galgate, causing queuing back towards M6 junction 33.

A series of meetings have been held at high level between the City and County Councils, University, NWDA, and Highways Agency to seek a solution to this issue, and NWDA have commissioned further specialist highways consultancy work.

Following a meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> June, there is now agreement between these organisations on a way forward and it will be possible for a revised planning application to be submitted.

This report is to update Cabinet on the position with this key strategic project and to confirm the Council's role in taking it forward.

## 2.0 Proposal Details

The key elements of the project, as presently envisaged, will be as follows:

- Submission of a revised application for outline planning consent for the science park
- Completion of land acquisition by the City Council (NWDA funded)

- Construction of initial site infrastructure, comprising a new A6 road junction, spine access road, and main services. This will also include structural landscaping around the perimeter of the site and any cycleways or other additional infrastructure that might be required as a condition of the planning consent.
- Implementation of any off-site highways improvements (see below)
- A first phase development comprising an Innovation Centre, likely to be a minimum of 3000 sq m gross floor area. This will provide flexible managed workspace in a range of sizes to suit start-up and early growth businesses. It will play a key role in the formation and development of the science park as a business community, supporting the development of new business enterprises, developing links with facilities and expertise at the University, and providing a focal point for the whole development with meeting rooms and other common facilities.
- Based on experience in other UK science parks, subsequent phases are expected to take the form of further buildings or groups of buildings to provide flexible managed workspace, similar to the Innovation Centre but with larger unit sizes and fewer common facilities, to act primarily as “grow-on” space for businesses moving out of the Innovation Centre or from other off-site locations such as Infolab, CityLab, or elsewhere.
- The rate of development of the grow-on space would be dependent on demand and is expected to take place over several years.
- Additional sites would be made available for larger single user businesses requiring their own “bespoke” premises, subject to demand.

### **Off-site highways improvements**

The work recently undertaken on behalf of NWDA to identify potential solutions to the problem of queuing between Galgate and the M6 has produced two alternative options. One would involve a package of physical measures and traffic signals management within Galgate itself, and the other is a possible longer term solution. Both of these require further work and the outcome will be used to support the re-submitted planning application. NWDA have indicated that they would be prepared to fund the former of these to allow the Science Park to proceed, and it is intended that this will be taken forward and implemented as a separate project by Lancashire County Council.

### **Funding**

NWDA have already stated that they are committed to funding the initial development of the science park (subject to considering a full project application) and that this would cover land acquisition, access roads and core infrastructure, and the development of the Innovation Centre. They have also indicated that they would provide some initial revenue subsidy for the operation of the Innovation Centre whilst it becomes established.

The scheme is also likely to attract European Funding through the new ERDF programme, and this will help the project provide value for money and increase the prospects of an NWDA approval.

It is expected that, once the Innovation Centre becomes established, demand for future phases and grow-on space will be strong enough to be commercially viable for a private developer to finance without further public subsidy.

Whilst NWDA are prepared to fund the capital costs of the Innovation Centre, they require this to be “market tested” through an open competitive developer selection process to minimise the level of public funding required. This will have to take place prior to the full NWDA project application.

The biggest area of potential risk in the project is the management and operation of the Innovation Centre. Once established this is expected to be self-financing through rental income, but there would still be a degree of ongoing risk for whoever has responsibility for owning and managing it.

Whilst initially it had been expected that either the City Council or University might need to take on responsibility for the operation of the Innovation Centre, it is now proposed that this risk is transferred to the private sector development partner. To achieve this, the terms of the developer competition would require them to construct and operate the innovation centre, with a specified minimum level of service, and enforced through an underlying development agreement.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

Over the past few months NWDA have been asking the City and University to review their respective roles in delivery of this project. Specifically, NWDA have asked whether the University could take on the lead role and act as the applicant for NWDA funding. Discussions have taken place to explore this possibility, but have not led to agreement over a suitable structure that would allow this to take place. The University have also commented that it is not part of their core activity to undertake physical development projects outside their main campus, and that they need to concentrate their resources on implementation of their own campus redevelopment (which is also of key significance for the wider economic regeneration of the District).

The conclusion from this work is that the best way of progressing the project is for the City Council to continue to take the lead role, as originally envisaged in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the City and University. Members should note that this will also now include the re-submission of the outline planning application for the scheme.

As noted above, however, the requirement of the NWDA that the project is fully “market tested” provides the Council with the opportunity to engage with a private sector development partner at an early stage and to effectively transfer much of the risk and responsibility for delivery to them, through a new and revised competitive selection process. (An initial developer competition had commenced last year but had to be suspended due to the withdrawal of the planning application and the uncertainty this would have presented to potential bidders).

This means that the main responsibilities for the Council would be as follows:

- Applying for outline planning consent for the overall development
- Completing land acquisition (this follows automatically from the planning consent and is already funded by NWDA)

- Recruiting a private sector development partner who would:
  - Design and implement the phase 1 infrastructure works on behalf of the Council
  - Construct and operate the Innovation Centre in accordance with an agreed specification
  - Undertake to bring forward further phases of grow-on space as required
  - Manage and maintain all completed phases of the development

This would be underpinned by a formal Development Agreement under which the Council would release land for each phase of development on long term leasehold to the developer.

It is anticipated that the developer selection would be done through a 2 stage OJEU process and the final decision would be brought back to Cabinet.
- Monitoring the performance of the development partner and taking action to deal with any potential default
- In conjunction with the University, establishing a Science Park Management Board which would assist in the above process. This would have advisory status only, but would engage the City, University, and possibly NWDA in overseeing the operation of the development

A critical factor in the success of this approach will be the level of response from the private sector to the developer selection competition. It is therefore proposed that a further report is made back to Cabinet on the outcome of this process. It will also be essential to engage specialist external advice in devising the specification for the competition, evaluating bids, and drafting the subsequent development agreement. These costs will be incorporated in a revised funding proposal to NWDA for the project development work.

### 3.0 Details of Consultation

A separate process of public consultation will be undertaken through the statutory planning process as a result of the outline planning application. This will concern the land use planning issues which are not within the scope of this report, and will be reported to Planning Committee.

### 4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages	Risk assessment
1: Do nothing – do not proceed with the project		<p>The opportunity to secure a regionally significant strategic employment site will be lost.</p> <p>Adverse impact on the Council's relationship with NWDA and Lancaster University</p>	<p>The Council would be in default of its funding agreement with NWDA and its contract with the current landowner, and may face action for breach of contract with the latter. (These are primarily reputational issues)</p>

			rather than significant financial ones)
2: Proceed with the project as outlined in this report, seeking to transfer risk associated with the Innovation Centre to a development partner	Secures a major strategic project for the District, leading to the anticipated release of £10+ million NWDA funding	A private sector operator may take a more commercial approach towards operation of the Innovation Centre and this may reduce the level of advice and support given to tenant businesses compared with a non profit operation	Achieves the strategic benefits from the project whilst minimising ongoing operational costs and risks for the Council  Possibility that the private sector may not respond
3: Develop the Innovation Centre as a public sector project and manage it either directly or via the University	May provide the most supportive form of management for tenant businesses	NWDA would not support this approach unless option (2) has failed to attract developer interest	Leaves the Council with the risk of meeting any operational deficit in future years. Note this option would need to be the subject of a full appraisal before being considered in any detail.

### 5.0 Officer Preferred Option

The preferred option is Option 2.

### 6.0 Conclusion

Lancaster Science Park is a key strategic project for the City Council, Lancaster University, Lancashire Sub Region and North West Regional Development Agency. Now that a way forward has been identified for the highways issues, the Council is the most appropriate organisation to take the lead in taking it forward.

It is very much in the Council's interest to secure the involvement of a private sector development partner at an early stage. If successful, this will allow the Council to minimise the operational risks associated with the ongoing operation of the project.

**RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The project will directly contribute to Corporate Plan Priority “To lead the regeneration of our District” and Priority Outcome 12 “Improve economic prosperity throughout Lancaster District”. The Science Park is one of the key activities included in the economic vision and strategy.

**CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT  
(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)**

Development of the Science Park will involve the loss of 20 acres of greenfield land adjacent to the University. This is a necessary consequence of this project because there is no alternative site within the existing University campus and it is an essential requirement of the project that the site should be sufficiently close to the campus to allow for commercial/academic interaction to take place.

This will be offset by the aspiration of the project to showcase low carbon / environmentally sound build construction technology, and this is expected to feature strongly in the design of the proposed Innovation Centre.

The development will also promote sustainable modes of transport through access to the cycling and walking network between the city centre and university and through a business travel plan.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The City Council's costs in taking this project forward to a full NWDA funding application are being covered 100% by NWDA. A formal funding agreement is already in place covering the cost of land acquisition and initial design work, but this will need to be varied to take account of the additional costs associated with the resubmission of the planning application, and other specialist consultancy that may be required to support the developer recruitment. The 2008/09 revenue and capital budgets will need to be adjusted to reflect both the expenditure and external funding associated with the resubmitted planning application and developer recruitment costs once a revised formal funding proposal has been agreed with NWDA subject to the adjustment having a nil impact on the Council's budget. At this stage it is not possible to comment further on the amounts involved, however, as details of the associated costs have yet to be provided.

A further report will need to be brought back to Cabinet to cover the outcome of the developer competition and to consider any financial implications arising from the proposed development agreement and future management of the scheme.

**SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The s151 officer has been consulted and has no comments to add.



**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Legal Services will assist in the negotiating and drafting of the terms of the underlying development agreement with the chosen private sector development partner. The development agreement will be required to incorporate provisions for monitoring the performance of the developer and the ability to grant leases in a phased manner. If deemed appropriate specialist legal advice will be engaged to assist in the preparation of this agreement.

**MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Deputy Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Previous Cabinet Reports, July 2006 and February 2007
- Innovation centre draft development brief
- Innovation centre architects' "Stage B" report and illustrative site masterplan options, BDP.

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<b>CABINET</b>
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## Capital Programme for Private Sector Housing 8 July 2008

### Report of Corporate Director (Community Services)

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
To seek the approval of Cabinet for the allocation of the Regional Housing Board funding between the Winning Back Morecambe's West End, Poulton Renewal Area and Disabled Facilities Grants.				
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Non-Key Decision</b>		<b>Referral from Cabinet Member</b>
<b>Date Included in Forward Plan</b>		23 May 2008		
<b>This report is public</b>				

#### RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCILLOR DAVID KERR

- (1) **That Cabinet approve Option 3 and the Disabled Facilities Grant funding from the capital allocation of the Regional Housing Board, and that the Capital Programme be updated accordingly.**

#### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Regional Housing Board's allocation is usually received by the Authority in late December / early January of the preceding year. This year's allocation was only received in April 2008. Consequently, it was not included in the Council's Capital Programme which was presented to Cabinet earlier in the year.
- 1.2 It was anticipated that this year's allocation would be approximately £1,800,000. Unfortunately, this has been reduced to £1,281,000. The North West's allocation from the Single Housing Allocation has been reduced from £127m to £92m for 2008/09. The Government's thinking behind this decision is that more funding will be allocated to the Housing Corporation's National Affordable Housing Programme to deliver greater numbers of affordable housing units to meet increased national targets.
- 1.3 The Regional Housing Board allocation in previous years has been split between Winning Back Morecambe's West End, Poulton Renewal Area and the Disabled Facilities Grants.

## 2.0 Proposal Details

2.1 To continue with the Council's commitment to providing Disabled Facilities Grants it is suggested that in 2008/09 £323,333 (mandatory) and £39,667 (discretionary) grant be 'top-sliced' from the Regional Housing Board allocation. The remaining £918,000 is to be split between Winning Back Morecambe's West End and the Poulton Renewal Area. In future years, the discretionary element of the DFG's would cease to be provided from this source.

2.2

		2008/09 £'000	2009/10 £'000	2010/11 £'000
Allocation (assumed continuation at 08/09 level)		1,281	1,281	1,281
DFG Proposed Budget		363	323	323
Available for Housing Regeneration		918	958	958
<b>Option 1</b> (as Existing – 60% WE 40% Poulton)	West End Poulton	551 367	575 383	575 383
<b>Option 2</b> (70% WE 30% Poulton)	West End Poulton	643 275	670 287	670 287
<b>Option 3</b> (recommended proposal) 75% WE 25% Poulton. The Poulton allocation reducing to reflect programme completion.	West End Poulton	689 230	718 239	718 239

## 3.0 Details of Consultation

3.1 The proposed investment programmes for the Winning Back Morecambe's West End and Poulton Renewal Area has been developed in conjunction with the West End Partnership and the Poulton Housing and Built Environment Group. Both these groups comprise of residents, community representatives, elected members and other interested parties.

3.2 The governance arrangements for allocating the capital funding are described in the Constitution and Memorandum of Agreements of both the Poulton Neighbourhood Management Partnership and the West End Partnership Board. The Boards have responsibility for the approval of grants to projects with budget responsibility delegated to the appropriate Project Directors (i.e. Executives). The attached appendix gives an indication of the proposed priority allocation of these capital grants.

3.3 It can be seen from the appendix, however, that as yet, costings for individual schemes have not yet been finalised, and therefore it is not clear to what extent the proposed programmes can be progressed and delivered within the funding made available. Once finalised, the costings would be reported through to the relevant Partnership Boards, as part of gaining the necessary project approvals, and also this information would be fed through the Council's own capital programme monitoring and update arrangements, with progress being included within Performance Review

Team (PRT) meetings. In essence, this means that prioritisation and allocation of funds to individual projects would remain delegated to the relevant Partnership Boards, in line with their existing Constitutions, but also information on actual project approval and progress would be incorporated into the Council's existing performance management framework, in order to keep all other relevant members and officers informed.

- 3.4 With reference to the Disabled Facilities Grants, these are governed by the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. These grants are mandatory and as such are central to Strategic Housing's approach to ensure that elderly, vulnerable and disabled residents are able to adapt and live independently in their homes.
- 3.5 Disabled Facilities Grants awarded in accordance with Lancaster City Council's adopted "Private Sector Housing Renewal Assistance Policy" and the above legislation, which was initially agreed by Cabinet on the 1 July 2003 (Minute No 46).

#### **4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)**

- 4.1 A process of comprehensive analysis and community consultation was used to formulate the Winning Back Morecambe's West End Masterplan which was adopted by the Council in February 2005 (minute 149). As a result of the Masterplan, a number of schemes / projects came into fruition and have been partly financed by the funding made available from the Regional Housing Board.
- 4.2 The Poulton Renewal area received Renewal Area Status in June 2000. The conditions laid down by Government Office are that the Authority adopt a realistic programme of renovation for the area over a ten year period. The Regional Housing Board funding, albeit reduced for future years, will continue to support the renewal area work and provide confidence for the community as a whole to completion of the ten year programme.
- 4.3 Disabled Facilities Grants are mandatory and made available to all qualifying residents throughout the district. They provide facilities for access to dwellings whilst making them safe and also includes the provision of suitable kitchen, bathroom and bedroom facilities.

#### **5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)**

- 5.1 The preferred option is Option 3. This is consistent with previous Cabinet decisions and continues to support the Winning Back Morecambe's West End, Poulton Renewal Area and Disabled Facilities Grants.

#### **6.0 Conclusion**

- 6.1 The proposed allocation of this capital from the Regional Housing Board will support the Council's statutory responsibility for Disabled Facilities Grants and its corporate priorities to support housing led regeneration in Poulton and the West End of Morecambe.

#### **RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The proposals support the Corporate Plan Priorities and the Housing Strategy.

**CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)**

The proposed allocation of funding will continue to support the two regeneration schemes in the West End and Poulton areas of Morecambe and will also continue to support other town-wide policies of regeneration. The continued support of the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant budget will provide better accommodation for the elderly, vulnerable and disabled residents within the community.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The report seeks to adjust planned levels of spending in line with notified Government allocations. There are therefore, no additional financial implications arising and there is no variation in the demand made on the Council's internal resources. The Capital Programme needs updating to reflect the reductions in planned spending and funding, however.

**SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The s151 officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

**MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

West End Masterplan, Poulton Renewal Area Declaration Document Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (as amended)

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## **Proposed Capital Programme for 2008/09**

### **Winning Back Morecambe's West End**

1. Develop Shared Ownership Scheme (lateral conversions).
2. Demolish and re-develop pre-purchased Houses in Multiple Occupation and commercial properties on Marlborough Road.
3. External works to Clarendon Road.
4. Group Repair Schemes on Bold Street.
5. Creation of landscaped schemes on acquired sites.
6. Gateway improvements to Heysham Road.

**Sub Total: £689k**

### **Poulton Renewal Area**

1. Group Repair Schemes to Primrose Street.
2. Individual Renovation Grants in target areas.
3. Facelift schemes in target areas.
4. Creation of landscape schemes on Edward/Union Street.

**Sub Total: £230k**

**CABINET**

**Homelessness Strategy 2008 - 2013  
Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2008**

**Report of Corporate Director (Community Services)**

<b>PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>				
To request Members to approve the Homelessness Strategy 2008 - 2013				
<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Non-Key Decision</b>		<b>Referral from Cabinet Member</b>
<b>Date Included in Forward Plan</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> March 2008			
<b>This report is public</b>				

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCILLOR JOHN GILBERT**

**(1) That Members approve the Homelessness Strategy**

**1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This is the City Council's second Homelessness Strategy since the Homelessness Act 2002 placed a statutory duty on housing authorities to produce such strategies every five years.

It follows the production of a Homelessness Review which was carried out during 2007/8 and which includes both quantitative and qualitative information on homelessness in the District. This is available in full on the Council's website. The strategy summarises the main findings of the Review and details strategic priorities and an action plan. It is affixed at Appendix A

**2.0 Proposal Details**

2.1 The Strategy includes six strategic priorities

- Prevention of homelessness through timely advice, intervention and support

- Prevention of homelessness by developing further the range of good quality temporary and emergency accommodation available
- Reducing homelessness among young people, those affected by domestic violence, and offenders/ rough sleepers
- Reducing the use of temporary accommodation and Bed and Breakfast by the statutorily homeless
- Increasing the supply of good quality affordable housing
- Ensuring effective monitoring of levels of homelessness throughout the life of the strategy

The Council's total budgeted expenditure on Homelessness, excluding internal recharges is £354.7k in 2008-09 (£272.4k net of income), rising to £373.7k (£289.4k net of income) by 2010-11.

### **3.0 Details of Consultation**

3.1 The development of the Homelessness Review included widespread consultation with a range of agencies and service users. This is summarised in the Strategy. The draft Strategy itself has been produced by the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group, chaired by Cllr John Gilbert. The Group includes representation from Health, County Council, Probation and the voluntary sector as well as City Council officers.

The draft was formally consulted upon during May 2008. A presentation on the draft was given to the Homelessness Forum (a group convened by the City Council and with representation from both statutory and voluntary sectors): a press release was issued about the consultation and people were invited to respond either directly to the relevant council officer or through Consultationmaster on the Council's website.

Only one response was received through Consultationmaster. A further 8 were received by the Neighbourhood Task Force. Responses were broadly favourable. The Steering Group have considered all of the responses and made amendments to the draft where proposals were accepted. The remaining contentious areas are:

- CAB would like the action plan to include commissioning specialist housing advice, paid for through an SLA, and the Steering Group do not support this
- The implementation of this proposal would have implications in terms of either reductions
  - a) in other aspects of the service, or
  - b) additional payments to providers under SLA's

and this would have to be addressed within the 2009-10 budget round.

- Lancaster and District Homeless Action Service and Signposts both opposed the proposal that the City Council should not form service level agreements with voluntary sector agencies that provide free food. The Steering Group has amended



the proposal so that the City Council would not form service level agreements with agencies that provide free food for those in tenancies. This continues to be opposed.

#### **4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)**

##### **4.1 Cabinet could approve the Strategy recommended by the Steering Group.**

This would allow the Council to meet the requirement to produce a Strategy by the end of July 2008 and implementation could commence. CAB would be free to tender for advice and support services.

##### **4.2 Cabinet could approve the Strategy subject to one or both of the following**

1. Add commissioning specialist housing advice
2. Delete the reference to free food for people in tenancies (so the current practice of free food for both the homeless and those in tenancies would remain)

OR

Revert to the original Steering Group proposal that no free food at all should be on offer from those with Service Level Agreements

This would allow the Council to meet the requirement to produce a Strategy by July 2008 and implementation could commence.

**Commissioning specialist housing advice** - the action plan includes tendering contracts for Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with voluntary organisations : the total budget for such SLAs is £85,600 in 2008/9 (this does not include the funding for Portland St which comes from a separate and time limited stream of funding, though administered through an SLA with YMCA). There is no planned provision for increasing the SLA budget.

If specialist housing advice was to be commissioned, as proposed by CAB, then this will have to be addressed within the tendering exercise. As noted above, the implication is for either a reduction in other aspects of the service, or an increase in costs. The following points should be noted

- The specialist housing advice that CAB propose providing is already provided by them to those on low enough incomes to qualify for Legal Aid. CAB receive funding from the Legal Services Commission (LSC) to provide this service.
- Those on slightly higher incomes are ruled out by the LSC.
- CAB see this specialist advice as particularly assisting those struggling with mortgage arrears.
- Less money would be available for the provision of general housing advice and support services through other SLAs – the current SLA contracts cover services such as helping people access private sector accommodation which prevents homelessness.
- There are also no other local organisations that could compete for the specialist work that CAB propose.

**Free food** - the reference to free food for those in tenancies could be deleted. The following points should be noted

- Council Housing Services are experiencing problems with tenants housed from Homeless Action Service's Edward St centre when the link with the centre is maintained. This causes problems for neighbours, particularly in sheltered schemes, or when the tenant is vulnerable and unable to control the behaviour of their visitors from the Centre. Floating support is available to tenants and those from Edward St should be accessing this to learn independence.
- Similar problems have been experienced in RSL supported housing schemes (hostels) such as Carr Gomm and Stonham. In addition, those living in this type of accommodation have support available to them to learn how to be independent and it is difficult to get residents to engage if the option of free food is available.
- A counter argument from the Homeless Action Service is that the continued contact helps people get through a transitional stage.
- It is also argued that the provision of free food helps substance misusers to remain healthier than they would otherwise be: they would not otherwise spend their benefit money on food.
- The City Council do not directly fund the free food service, which is provided through donations of money and in kind from shops and harvest festivals.
- If free food is provided to those who are homeless but not when housed, this may act as a disincentive to rough sleepers to move into accommodation – this argument can be used to either argue for continuing with free food for those in tenancies, or an argument for why no free food at all should be on offer.

4.3 Cabinet could approve the Strategy subject to further amendments required by Members

4.4 Cabinet could reject the Strategy

The City Council has a statutory requirement to produce a Strategy by the end of July 2008. There is a further Cabinet meeting at the end of July and a revised Strategy could be put to that meeting.

## **5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)**

5.1 That Cabinet approve the Strategy recommended by the Steering Group.

The specialist housing advice that CAB propose providing is already provided by them to those on low enough incomes to qualify for Legal Aid. CAB receive funding from the Legal Services Commission to provide this service. Those on slightly higher incomes are ruled out by the LSC. There may be an argument that the Legal Aid rules need to be changed, but it is not sensible for the City Council to pick up these costs when this group (ie those in employment but on low incomes) do not feature heavily amongst those presenting as homeless.

The thrust of the whole Strategy is about preventing homelessness and providing free food acts as a positive disincentive for people to engage with the other forms of help on offer. Resettlement work is heavily emphasised in the Strategy and ensuring that people keep tenancies is a high priority. Continuing to lead a rough sleepers lifestyle when no longer homeless causes major problems for neighbours and can contribute towards losing a tenancy.

**6.0 Conclusion**

6.1 The Strategy attached is recommended for approval.

**RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The Strategy takes into account government policies, the Lancaster District Housing Strategy and LAA priorities. The Homelessness Review on which it is based lays out the strategic links.

**CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)**

The implementation of the Strategy should help those who are vulnerable and socially excluded. It contains actions to address the needs of specific disadvantaged groups. It also addresses community safety issues and should contribute towards ensuring social cohesion. The Homelessness Review considered rural proofing in its consultation and did not find that there were specific rural issues to address.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The approach recommended by the report represents in the main a continuation of existing service levels and as such has no direct financial implications beyond existing budgetary provision. Paragraph 3.1 (and the attached proposed Strategy) draws attention to the fact that the adoption of certain variant options or proposed developments may have implications which would have to be addressed within the 2009-10 budget round, although this would probably be in the context of the redeployment of resources within homelessness budgets rather than as a growth item. In any event, appropriate approvals would need to be gained prior to progressing any items that are not currently included within approved budgets (including items that may be subject to external funding bids).

**SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The s151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments to add.

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Legal Services are to advise and assist with clearly documenting the housing options process to clients and introducing a review process

**MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and her comments incorporated in the report

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**2008 Homelessness Review  
Homelessness Strategy file**

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**Ref:** Homelessness Strategy 2008-09\_NTF



**Lancaster District Homelessness Strategy 2008 – 2013**

**Final draft June 2008**

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## 1. Introduction

The development of the Homelessness Strategy follows the undertaking of a wide ranging homelessness review which looked at

- the levels and likely future levels of homelessness in the district
- the activities and services provided to prevent homelessness, help find accommodation for homeless and potentially homeless people, or provide support for them, including support to prevent them becoming homeless again
- the resources available to the authority and to Social Services, other public authorities, voluntary organisations and other agencies for providing these services

The results of the review have been published on the Council's website.

The Strategy also looks at

- the Council's overall housing priorities so that the Homelessness Strategy contributes to meeting the Council's objectives in its Housing Strategy
- priorities identified by the Government's Communities and Local Government Department so that national priorities are taken into account
- the emerging priorities of the Lancashire Local Area Agreement.

The Homelessness Strategy must include plans for

- the prevention of homelessness
- ensuring that sufficient accommodation is and will be available for people who are or may become homeless
- ensuring the satisfactory provision of support for people who are, or who may become homeless and need support to prevent them becoming homeless again

Both the Review and the Strategy consider all people who are homeless as defined in part VII of the 1996 Housing Act, not only those for whom the Council have a statutory duty.

## 2. Outcomes of the 2003 – 2008 Homelessness Strategy

The main achievements of the 2003 – 2008 Strategy are as follows

- Housing Advice Service in the City Council moved from Council Housing Services to Strategic Housing Services
- Location of Housing Advice moved from Lancaster to Morecambe
- Advice drop in surgeries set up around the District within external agencies
- Surgeries at prisons to assist Lancaster residents
- Joint protocol implemented for care leavers
- Ceased using B&B for families except in an emergency
- Developed dispersed housing scheme through RSLs to provide temporary accommodation, including 5 properties for those experiencing domestic violence
- Secured funding for sanctuary scheme
- Reduced the number of homeless presentations and acceptances
- Increased the number of households for whom homelessness was prevented
- Homeless prevention fund set up
- Mediation for families introduced
- Rent deposit scheme set up
- Schools programme on homelessness set up
- Opened 6 bed hostel for young homeless people
- Worked with Supporting People to secure long term revenue funding commitment to supported housing for single people and the rolling out of supported lodgings in the District
- Successful bid to CLG for Places of Change monies
- Set up multi agency monitoring (MAM)
- Set up an Integrated Support Team to prevent vulnerable hard to reach households from becoming homeless



### 3 Homelessness Review 2008 – Summary

#### 3.1 Review Findings

The 2007 Housing Needs Survey update shows that:

- The need for affordable housing has risen since 2004.
- The backlog of existing households in need continues to grow.
- The number of social housing re lets has reduced substantially.
- New affordable supply has increased but numbers are still very small in comparison with the identified need.
- There is now an annual shortfall of 417 affordable units per annum.
- The area has high levels of in migrants on low incomes (an in migrant is defined as someone who has lived in the district for less than a year) and the survey data identified 253 in migrant households over the last three years who live in social rented accommodation.

The City Council's records show that the number of homelessness presentations in Lancaster District increased yearly from 2002/03 to a peak of 760 in the year 2005/06, since then there has been a decline in the number of presentations. The number of homeless acceptances peaked at 431 in 2003/04 but has been decreasing year on year since then.

The main reasons for the homelessness of accepted households are:-

- End of assured shorthold tenancy
- Parental eviction
- Relationship breakdown – violent (domestic violence)
- Friends/ relatives no longer willing to accommodate
- Relationship breakdown – other

The greatest number of accepted applications are for households with dependent children as their reason for being in priority need. Bed and breakfast for families is only being used in an emergency, for periods of less than 6 weeks.

The emphasis has moved from that of providing a service when someone has become homeless, to a housing option service aimed at preventing someone from becoming homeless. This approach has been successful in reducing the numbers presenting as homeless, but there is no robust hard data on the outcomes of housing options interviews and this needs to be addressed.

An analysis of trends in the homelessness data shows a striking link between homelessness and the district's most deprived areas. Between them, Poulton and the West End account for 41% of all homelessness presentations. This appears to show that having a pool of cheap, poor quality rented accommodation does not help solve a homelessness problem, but exacerbates it, and this links with the findings in the Housing Needs Survey update about the number of in migrant households moving rapidly into the social rented sector.

Homeless presentations and acceptances relate solely to those applying to be accepted as statutorily homeless. The Council and a range of voluntary agencies are also undertaking multi agency monitoring (MAM), which records individuals to whom the Council would not owe a statutory duty, and those who are unlikely to approach a statutory organisation. The MAM data shows:

- Between April and December 2007 a total of 534 different people visited the participating agencies.
- The two largest groups are those considered to be homeless (30%) or at risk of homelessness as a result of domestic violence (22%).
- 63 people had slept rough at least once.
- The main contributory factor cited was domestic violence; others were family breakdown, medical or health problems, drug issues, and relationship breakdown.

The Council has agreements with registered social landlords (RSLs) to provide units of dispersed temporary accommodation for those accepted as statutorily homeless, or whose cases are under review. The government has a target of asking Local Authorities to reduce the use of this type of temporary accommodation by 50% from their 2004 baseline, by 2010. Because of the relatively small numbers in temporary accommodation to begin with (the 2004 baseline was 24 households), it is not feasible for the Local Authority to reduce numbers by half by 2010, but expects to do so by 2011.

CAB figures show that over the last two years, the number of cases for rent arrears dealt with overall (including the private sector) has risen from 13 to 17, but the number of cases for mortgage arrears has nearly doubled (from 12 in 2006 to 22 in 2007). Advice services are also concerned that the Local Housing Allowance to be introduced as part of the housing benefits system will also lead to higher numbers of evictions. The review identified a shortage of appropriate applications for discretionary housing payment and this needs to be addressed.

### **3.2 Housing Advice Services**

The team has moved to a practice of dealing with all enquires by starting with a housing options interview, which gives the opportunity to provide housing advice to all who present about their options, regardless of whether, should they be assessed under the homelessness legislation, they would or wouldn't be found to be in priority need, unintentionally homeless etc. The City Council, in line with other housing authorities, hold there is no right to make a homelessness application; staff need to be satisfied that there is reason to suppose that someone is already homeless, or likely to become so within 28 days. This normally can't be determined without a housing options interview. A different understanding of the legislation here by partner agencies may be contributing to the number of presentations which are subsequently not accepted and this is an area which needs to be addressed in the strategy. A concern has been raised in the course of a review about confusion that those presenting may feel about whether a formal application has been taken or not: better documentation is being developed

An agency questionnaire about the strengths and weaknesses of the service showed that the friendliness and professional knowledge of the staff was highly regarded and so were the drop ins provided at different venues. But getting access to staff, in particular getting phones answered was a major problem and this needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Prevention work involves not only the housing advice service, but other Council services such as the Housing Standards Team and the Integrated Support Team in the Neighbourhood Task Force. The housing standards team deal with enforcement action against landlords where properties are in disrepair, anti social behaviour is

taking place, or an illegal eviction has taken place and the integrated support team provides assistance to vulnerable households particularly in the West End. Strategic housing staff also provide a service similar to a home improvement agency service primarily assisting elderly owner occupiers to remain in their homes. Few elderly people currently experience homelessness but with projected increases in numbers of elderly, enabling people to remain in their own homes rather than seeking a move will be important.

### **3.3 Accommodation, Support and Prevention Advice for Homeless People**

There is little direct access accommodation in the district, but a number of supported housing schemes. A problem with all of this accommodation is that people sometimes stay longer than they need to because of difficulty in accessing good quality permanent accommodation.

Support and prevention advice services for homeless people in the district are provided by voluntary organisations as well as the City Council. The City Council has five homeless service level agreements with different organisations. Funding is provided to these organisations to provide advice, support and practical assistance. They are

- Lancaster YMCA
- Lancaster and District Homeless Action Service
- Morecambe Homeless Action
- Lancaster and District Womens Aid
- Signposts

In addition, other statutory agencies and voluntary agencies that are not directly funded out of housing budgets are also involved in assisting and providing support for people who are homeless or in danger of homelessness.

### **3.4 Consultation**

A variety of different methods of consultation were used in the course of the review. The Homelessness Forum convened a homelessness strategy workshop from which the overarching themes were:

- A need for prevention to drive the strategy.
- A need for a range of options in an emergency.
- Better use of existing temporary accommodation, hostels and supported housing provision.
- An increase in move on (permanent accommodation) is needed.

A snapshot of service users was taken through questionnaires filled in by respondents. The main findings were:

- A majority of respondents found it hard to know where to go to find information when they were homeless or experiencing housing problems.
- Respondents could not find everything they needed in one place.
- The best sort of temporary accommodation was seen to be supported accommodation.

- A majority felt that there were other homelessness services needed in the district with a hostel/ direct access accommodation getting the highest number of responses.

The Homelessness in the Lancaster District Task Group, set up by the City Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, reported to Cabinet in 2007. Its view was that:

- Young people and single adults within the Lancaster district remain the most vulnerable group.
- Statistics show that tenants in the private rented sector are most vulnerable to loss of tenancy (for a number of reasons) and this is where young people and single adults have been historically directed.
- Work with vulnerable tenants in the west end of Morecambe has uncovered single adults and younger people in the private rented sector who have not been receiving any, or at best inadequate support from the relevant support agencies.
- The recommendations of the task group focus on the need for adequate support for vulnerable tenants, with the emphasis firmly on prevention. It is this theme of prevention that the task group see as part of the "spend to save" initiatives which cut across all aspects of budgetary considerations. Where prevention is not the outcome then funding ought to be reviewed.

### **3.5 Strategic Links**

The following strategies all clearly link into the homelessness agenda and need to be considered as part of the Homeless Strategy development process

- Lancaster District Housing Strategy 2005/6 to 2008/9
- Lancaster District Housing Needs Survey Update 2007
- Lancaster Community Safety Strategy 2005 – 2008
- Every Child Matters
- Lancaster District Community Strategy and LSP
- Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy
- Local Area Agreement
- Public Health Strategies
- Domestic Violence Strategy

#### 4. Future Levels of Homelessness

The review process and consultation has highlighted the following potential areas that could lead to a future increase in homeless levels

- Increases in house prices leading to increased numbers unable to purchase homes
- Growth in new households on low incomes not being met by increased affordable housing supply – overall annual shortage of 417 units: If proposals to substantially increase the supply of affordable housing are unsuccessful, this will impact negatively on homelessness levels
- Recent substantial rise in population of 20 – 29 year olds which will translate into a large increase in single person households
- Very substantial rise in numbers of 65+ expected – if needs not adequately met, could impact on homelessness even though this group currently do not experience major homelessness problems
- Seaside areas with inexpensive rental stock attract in-migrants on low incomes or in receipt of benefit
- Mortgage arrears are a growing problem
- Evictions for anti-social behaviour need to be monitored
- Introduction of Local Housing Allowance needs to be monitored
- Position of Asylum Seekers and Refugees needs to be kept under review – Home Office don't currently have local contracts

#### 5. Gaps in Provision

The Homelessness Review identified over 60 separate gaps/problems. For some, the hard data was clearer than for others, and some issues raised more serious problems than others. Many overlapped. The Homelessness Strategy Steering Group has considered which issues identified in the review should be priority actions for addressing in the Strategy and these are

- Accessing affordable permanent housing
- Addressing the needs of client groups, particularly those experiencing domestic violence and those who are offenders
- Developing clear procedures and understanding of the housing options approach
- Further developing data collection
- Developing more temporary and direct access accommodation

It was further noted that the place shaping agenda is important and that issues concerning older people are relevant here.

The outcomes of the Review now need to be put in the context of the Council's overall Housing Strategy, the Lancashire Local Area Agreement and the Government's national priorities.

## 6. Developing Strategic Priorities

### 6.1 Government Priorities

The CLG's Homelessness Strategy "Sustainable Communities: settled homes; changing lives" aims to

- reduce the number of statutorily homeless households living in temporary accommodation by half by 2010
- Ensure that homelessness is prevented wherever possible
- Ensure that no 16 or 17 year olds or families are placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation, except in an emergency for no more than 6 weeks
- Help more people move away from rough sleeping

In 2007, the government launched its National Youth Homelessness Scheme. Through working with local authorities and the voluntary sector it aims to

- prevent vulnerable young people becoming homeless, through early identification and intervention
- support homeless young people and those living in temporary accommodation
- ensure their housing and wider support needs are met
- manage the transition of young people between temporary and settled accommodation to ensure continued access to the services they need
- reduce homelessness among young people

The links between homelessness and worklessness and the social exclusion that this gives rise to are well documented. The government is looking to ensure that the worklessness agenda is brought more closely in line with the housing agenda and that agencies provide a joined up approach. So those presenting with housing problems should receive assistance with employment issues as well.

The government has also made it clear that it wishes to see local authorities and RSLs giving more priority in housing allocations to those who are overcrowded and targets are likely to be set in the lifetime of this Strategy. The Housing Strategy will need to address this rather than the Homelessness Strategy but this may have an impact on accessibility to social housing.

### 6.2 Local Area Agreement Priorities

The next three year agreement is being finalised as this Strategy is being developed. Each LAA is expected to pick a total of 35 indicators from a national list of 200 that

agencies will work together to support. In Lancashire, the 35 include the following which are relevant to the homelessness agenda

- number of affordable homes delivered
- number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living
- people over 65 who say they receive the information, assistance and support needed to exercise choice and control to live independently

In addition, a local indicator is being agreed

- number of households living in temporary accommodation

### **6.3 Housing Strategy Priorities**

The priorities agreed in the Council's current Housing Strategy are

- Restructure the low demand housing market in the West End and Poulton.
- Increase opportunities and improve access to affordable housing.
- Improve stock condition and meet the Decent Homes Standard.
- Meet supported housing need and prevent homelessness.

As the Review demonstrated, there are clear links between the scale of homelessness in the District and the existence of a pool of cheap poorly managed private rented accommodation in the most deprived parts of Morecambe.

## 7. Homelessness Strategic Priorities

7.1 So the Homelessness Review and the government and local authority priorities have informed the following strategic priorities.

- **Prevention of homelessness through timely advice, intervention and support**
- **Prevention of homelessness by developing further the range of good quality temporary and emergency accommodation available**
- **Reducing homelessness among young people, those affected by domestic violence, and offenders/ rough sleepers**
- **Reducing the use of temporary accommodation and Bed and Breakfast by the statutorily homeless<sup>1</sup>**
- **Increasing the supply of good quality affordable housing**
- **Ensuring effective monitoring of levels of homelessness throughout the life of the strategy**

The Review has looked at which services are effective and need to be maintained. And it has identified gaps in service/provision that need to be filled – these have been used to identify the actions in the action plan. Each part of the Strategy is summarised at the end of each of the following paragraphs.

### 7.2 Prevention of Homelessness through Timely Advice, Intervention and Support

The emphasis on prevention by the housing advice service has resulted in a considerable reduction in the numbers presenting and being accepted as statutorily homeless. The housing options approach and the availability of services such as the rent deposit scheme, mediation, floating support, integrated support, debt work, domestic violence prevention work have all contributed towards this. The strategy needs to build on this success and to extend services provided to include action to address worklessness.

North Lancashire Teaching PCT commissions mental health and drug and alcohol services across the District which contributes to preventing homelessness. It plans to review and improve drug and alcohol services and introduce a social prescribing programme to support people with mental health needs.

The housing options service is not widely understood and actions are included that should help clarify processes. It will be important that this approach to prevention forms a clear part of any new service level agreements with voluntary sector

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to distinguish between making available easily accessible temporary accommodation for those with housing problems, in order to prevent homelessness, which is supported by the government, and the use of temporary accommodation for those who have been accepted as statutorily homeless and are awaiting offers of permanent accommodation: the government are keen to see a major reduction in this sector.



agencies. The City Council will only form service level agreements with agencies that wish to contribute towards the further success of this approach.

A high percentage of those presenting as homeless come from the West End / Poulton areas. Long term, the City Council's Housing Strategy, with its highest priority being the regeneration of these areas, will tackle the root causes of homelessness in these areas. While the regeneration is in progress, it is crucial that those affected by regeneration receive the advice, intervention and support that they need in order to prevent them from becoming homeless. Many of those currently living in these areas have multiple problems and have in the past been hard to reach and resistant to addressing their problems. Services that proactively engage such clients, persuade them into changing their behaviour and provide support tailored specifically to their needs are crucial.

The same issues apply to those with alcohol/drug/mental health/offending issues elsewhere in the District. People with multiple problems need resettlement services that assist them to move on from dependency to an independent lifestyle that will include meaningful occupation/employment. A free food service for those with tenancies has no place in this approach because it encourages dependency. Again, service level agreements with voluntary sector agencies will need to make this explicit

Floating support services need to be accessed at the appropriate time and successful maintenance of tenancies checked so that repeat homelessness does not occur.

Improving the information available about where to go for advice, and making sure that advice services are accessible are a high priority.

In brief, the Strategy will

- Continue to give high priority to the following services
  - rent deposit scheme,
  - family mediation,
  - home visits in all cases of threatened homelessness
  - floating support,
  - debt work
  - provision of advice and support
  - prevention of homelessness for domestic violence survivors
  - educational work in schools
- Further develop the housing options approach, link with worklessness, and only form funding agreements with agencies that wish to contribute towards this
- Further develop proactive engagement with those in the West End who have multiple problems, persuade them to change their behaviour and provide tailored support
- Proactively engage with those elsewhere in the District who have alcohol/drug/mental health/offending issues to resettle and move to an independent lifestyle – a free food service for those with tenancies has no place in this approach because it encourages dependency and funding agreements will make this explicit
- Make sure advice services are accessible
- Review and improve drug and alcohol services
- Ensure floating support services are fully accessible and people are helped to maintain tenancies

### **7.3 Prevention of Homelessness by Developing Further the Range of Good Quality Temporary and Emergency Accommodation Available**

In the course of the review and strategy development, CLG have allocated £1.5m from the Places of Change budget to the development of the Doorstep Accommodation Scheme at YMCA. Supporting People have confirmed revenue finance for staffing, and the final piece of the jigsaw is funding from the Housing Corporation, which still awaits decision. CLG have also confirmed that the bid to assist older homeless people that the City Council submitted in partnership with Recycling Lives is on a reserve list: this project will continue to be worked up.

An important part of the strategy will therefore be taking forward these developments and ensuring that other provision dovetails with them and provide the services needed locally.

The lack of a refuge for those affected by domestic violence has been identified as a priority. With the emphasis firmly on prevention, and high numbers of people experiencing domestic violence with housing problems, refuge places could lower the numbers accepted as statutorily homeless by the local authority. It would also provide a better service to those whose alternative is otherwise moving to a refuge

elsewhere in the country. The neighbouring authority, Wyre, is identifying similar issues and a joint initiative may be the best way forward.

There is little provision for offenders, given the large numbers with housing problems in the district. Stonham Housing are interested in moving from their current premises, where 6 places are provided, to developing a larger scheme. Future expansion needs to be offender focussed and geared towards successful reintegration into the community. This in turn needs to link with the rest of the provision being developed for single homeless people.

In brief, the Strategy aims to develop

- the Doorstep Accommodation Scheme in partnership with YMCA
- a refuge for those affected by domestic violence
- a larger hostel for offenders

#### **7.4 Reduce Homelessness amongst Young People, those affected by Domestic Violence, and Offenders / Rough Sleepers**

This strategic priority looks specifically at the other actions that need to be put in place, apart from bricks and mortar, to reduce homelessness amongst these groups. A number of initiatives that have been successful to date with young people need to be further developed, the supported lodgings scheme starting up in the district needs to be monitored and the development of independence skills needs to be highlighted.

It will also be important to continue with the initiatives in place since the last Strategy that have been successful – these include work in schools on homelessness issues and a holistic approach enabling access to wider support services (eg mental health, sexual health services, connexions service) through YMCA. This will be built upon by the development of the Doorstep Supported Accommodation Scheme.

For those affected by domestic violence, co-ordination of services is important and agencies working in partnership is crucial here. The recent appointment of a Domestic Violence Co-Ordinator by the City Council will assist here.

Lancaster has two prisons in the District. The Probation Service are committed to ensuring that offenders being released from prison establishments in Lancaster District are, wherever possible, re-located to their area of origin and the City council will work with the service in this.

Offenders and rough sleepers tend to overlap as a group with those who have multiple and complex problems – involving alcohol / drugs / mental health issues. Again, interagency working is a high priority. Importantly, the district now has some excellent examples from its work in the West End of how such individuals can be helped not just into accommodation, but into a change of lifestyle that ultimately leads to employment. Funding needs to be secured to allow this proactive re-settlement to continue and to take place in other parts of the district as well as the West End.

In brief, the Strategy aims to

- maintain develop successful initiatives with young people, such as work in schools
- further develop the supported lodgings scheme and set up a nightstop scheme
- promote independence skills
- co-ordinate services and developing partnership working for those affected by domestic violence
- proactively engage with offenders and rough sleepers to ensure a change of lifestyle that ultimately leads to meaningful occupation/employment

### **7.5 Reduce the Use of Temporary Accommodation and Bed and Breakfast**

Whilst the Government's target is to reduce the use of temporary accommodation for those accepted as statutorily homeless by 50% by 2010, this presents challenges in Lancaster District because the authority had been very successful by 2004 (when the baseline is set) in keeping the numbers low. The authority plans to reach the target by 2011, but to have achieved a 25% reduction by 2009. Actions are already underway and need to be reinforced by the action plan.

Likewise actions are needed to ensure that the current achievement of not using bed and breakfast for families for more than six weeks is maintained, and ensuring that the same target is achieved for 16 and 17 year olds by 2010.

The Strategy aims to

- achieve a 25% reduction by 2009
- achieve a 50% reduction by 2011
- maintain the current achievement of not using B&B for families for more than six weeks
- achieve the same target for 16 and 17 year olds by 2010

### **7.6 Increase the Supply of Good Quality Affordable Housing**

As with the first priority about prevention of homelessness, this priority fits very clearly with the other aspects of the City Council's Housing Strategy. Actions that aren't specific to the Homelessness Agenda are already being undertaken by the City Council to increase the percentage of affordable housing secured through s106 Agreements where private developments are undertaken.

It is clear that in the immediate future, the supply of social rented housing will continue to be much lower than the demand for it. So the action plan looks not only at how to access existing social rented housing, but also how to increase access to the private rented sector.

The Strategy aims to

- Increase the percentage of affordable housing secured through S 106 agreements
- Increase access to the private rented sector

### **7.7 Ensure effective monitoring of levels of homelessness throughout the life of the strategy**

The Review identified trends that may affect future levels of homelessness and these need to be monitored on a regular basis so that the strategy can be adjusted as necessary in the course of its five years.

Of particular concern is the current credit squeeze, which may make it difficult for first time buyers to obtain mortgages. If interest rates rise, or employment levels fall, existing home owners may find themselves unable to keep up mortgage payments and be unable to move to cheaper properties because a drop in house prices could leave them in negative equity. Assistance from CABs may be crucial here and ensuring people get excellent advice at an early stage will be essential.

The Strategy aims to

- Monitor trends regularly so that the strategy can be adjusted as necessary
- Ensure those in mortgage difficulties get excellent advice at an early stage

## **8. Implementing the Action Plan**

A single person has been given responsibility for leading on each of the actions in the plan. Most will require close working with partners. The Homelessness Forum will establish sub-groups to look at each of the 6 different areas.

The Homelessness Strategy Steering Group will meet bi annually to consider

- progress against the action plan
- reports on future trends in homelessness

It will ensure that the Strategy is regularly reviewed to take account of changing trends and that the action plan is updated every two years.

The Local Strategic Partnership is currently under review. A new structure should be in place shortly. It is proposed that the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group form a sub group of the relevant building block in order to embed it in partnership working.

## 1 Prevention of Homelessness Through Timely Advice, Intervention and Support

Action	Target and Target Date	Baseline	Start Date	Lead Responsibility	Resource Implications	Key Partners	Milestones
1 Increase the number of households for whom intervention helped prevent homelessness.	11.5 per 1000 households in 2010/11.	7.07 per 1000 households in 2007/8.	Apr-08	Principal Homelessness Officer	Existing resources	SLA Partners	2008/9 - 8.5 2009/10 - 10
2 Maintain the current record of no repeat homelessness over the life-span of the Strategy.	0% in 2010/11	0% in 2007/8	Apr-08	Principal Homelessness Officer	Existing resources	SLA Partners, Supporting People, Social Services	2008/9 - 0% 2009/10 - 0%
3 Clearly document the housing options process to clients and introduce a review process.	Documentation produced by September 2008. Review process in place by September 2008.	Not all housing options process is fully documented. No review process in place.	Apr-08	Principal Homelessness Officer	Existing resources	Legal Services Voluntary Sector Homeless Forum	
3a Provide training for relevant agencies on the housing options process	Provide four training sessions by April 2009	N/A	Sep-08	Principal Homelessness Officer	Existing resources	Homeless Forum	2 training sessions provided by January 2009

	Action	Target and Target Date	Baseline	Start Date	Lead Responsibility	Resource Implications	Key Partners	Milestones
3b	Review housing options data collection to ensure that it is robust, analyse and review annually.	Report on housing options data outcomes produced annually from April 2009.	No analysis of outcomes of housing options.	Apr-09	Principal Homelessness Officer	Existing resources	SLA Partners	Report produced April 2009, April 2010, April 2011
3c	Publicise "drop-in" sessions run by housing advice service more widely and set up sessions within Probation offices and mental health facilities.	List existing drop in sessions on website by July 2008. Produce posters for all agencies to use by September 2008.	N/A	Apr-08	Principal Homelessness Officer	Existing resources	National Probation Service Homeless Forum Lancashire Care Trust	
3d	Enhance housing options service to include specific information to tackle worklessness	Worklessness issues to be included in housing options approach by April 2009.	No information currently provided to tackle worklessness.	Apr-08	Principal Homelessness Officer	Existing Resources	Job Centre Connexions	
4	Improve access to Housing Advice Service staff with faster appointment times and efficient phone answering	Faster appointment times by April 2009. Phone answered within 5 rings by April 2009.	Baseline to be set Sep 08	Apr-08	Principal Homelessness Officer	Higher staffing levels required - proposal currently under consideration.	N/A	

	Action	Target and Target Date	Baseline	Start Date	Lead Responsibility	Resource Implications	Key Partners	Milestones
4a	Repeat survey of advice agencies.	Improved performance on 2007 by 2009	Survey undertaken 2007	Apr-09	Principal Homelessness Officer	Higher staffing levels required - proposal currently under consideration.	SLA partners	
5	Devise revised criteria for partner agencies working with the Council to address the prevention agenda and tender for contracts, with consideration given to National Compact guidelines.	Advertise prevention contracts by September 2008. Make decisions on partners by December 2008. Have new contracts in place by March 2009.	Existing SLA contracts	Jul-08	Housing Policy Officer	Existing SLA budget	N/A	Notice given on current contracts by September 2008
6	Accessibility of services to BME communities needs to be reviewed, following investigation of needs (see priority 6)	Ensure the Housing Options Service is accessible to minority communities by December 2009. Raise the percentage of BME customers using Housing Options service between December 2008 and December 2009.	Baseline to be determined Dec 2008.	Jul-08	Housing Policy Officer	Existing resources	CRE	Targeted leaflet and poster campaign by March 2009.



	Action	Target and Target Date	Baseline	Start Date	Lead Responsibility	Resource Implications	Key Partners	Milestones
7	Monitor joint working about social tenants subject to possession proceedings	Decrease evictions by 25% by 2010	40 evictions in 2006/7	Apr-08	Housing Policy Officer	Existing Resources	RSLs Council Housing CABx	2009 - 35 evictions
8	Develop a social prescribing programme and reduce homelessness through mental ill-health.	Establish a programme by 2010	No current provision	Apr-08	Senior Public Health improvement specialist (Public Mental Health)	PCT funding	Lancashire Care Community and voluntary organisations	
9	Ensure that floating support continues to be widely used to prevent homelessness	Ensure that Lancaster's allocation of floating support hours are fully utilised.	120%	Apr-08	Housing Policy Officer	Existing resources	Disc Supporting People	Quarterly Disc Steering Group Meetings
10	Present the case to Supporting People for further resources for both floating support and resettlement work	Ongoing meetings throughout 2008/9	120% of Lancaster allocation being used	Apr-08	Housing Policy Officer	Existing resources	Supporting People, Disc, City Council Integrated Support Scheme	

## 2 Prevention of Homelessness by Developing Further the Range of Good Quality Temporary and Emergency Accommodation Available

Action	Target and Target Date	Baseline	Start Date	Lead Responsibility	Resource Implications	Key Partners	Milestones
1 Plan and deliver the accommodation for single people at New Road	Accommodation and other facilities to be operational by April 2010	N/A	Apr-08	Housing Policy Officer. YMCA General Secretary	Places of Change and Supporting People money allocated. Housing Corporation Finance bid for.	YMCA, ADACTUS, Supporting People, City Council, CLG, Housing Corporation	
2 Work up detailed proposals for Recycling Lives project	Project plan in place by April 2009	No plan in place	Jul-08	Housing Policy Officer Recycling Lives Development Officer	Existing Resources	Recycling Lives	
2 Review and restructure existing homelessness services to dovetail with this new provision	Restructure plan in place by April 2009. Restructuring complete by April 2010.			Housing Policy Officer			

Action	Target and Target Date	Baseline	Start Date	Lead Responsibility	Resource Implications	Key Partners	Milestones
3	Develop refuge provision for those affected by domestic violence.	N/A	Apr-08	Housing Policy Officer	Existing resources. Bids to Supporting People, Housing Corporation.	LDWA, Supporting People, Housing Corporation, relevant RSL	
4	Produce a plan to ensure that provision dovetails with existing provision	5 dispersed DV units of temporary accommodation	Apr-09	Housing Policy Officer	Existing resources	LDWA, Domestic Violence Co-ordinator	
5	Develop new larger hostel to replace 6-bed offender unit.	6 units in offender accommodation	Apr-08	Housing Policy Officer	Existing resources. Bid to Housing Corporation.	Stonham Housing, Housing Corporation, Probation Service.	
6	Review access to permanent housing from Supported Accommodation, including mental health provision, and develop protocol for move on	N/A	Jul-08	Housing Policy Officer	Existing resources	RSLs, Council Housing, Private Sector Landlords	Draft Protocol in place February 2009.

### 3 Reducing Homelessness Among Young People, Those Affected by Domestic Violence, and Offenders/Rough Sleepers

Action	Target and Target Date	Baseline	Start Date	Lead Responsibility	Resource Implications	Key Partners	Milestones
1 Monitor development of supported lodgings in the district and make the case for expansion.	10 supported lodgings places in District by 2010	1 supported lodgings place in the district	Apr-08	Housing Policy Officer	Existing resources. Potential bid to Supporting People.	Supporting People, Barnardos Preston Nightstop	5 supported lodgings places by 2009
2 Explore development opportunities of a nightstop scheme to create emergency accommodation for young people	Implement a nightstop scheme by April 2010.	No night stop in the district	Apr-08	Housing Policy Officer	Existing resources. Possible Supporting People bid.	Social Services. Supporting People. City Council.	
3 Set up and monitor a sanctuary scheme for those affected by domestic violence	Sanctuary scheme set up by December 2008	N/A	Apr-08	Principal Homelessness Officer	Budget of £10,000 secured	Strategic Housing. LDWA. Council Housing. RSLs.	Pilot in place by September 2008
4 Review and revise protocol with Lancaster Castle and Lancaster Farms about offenders who are not from Lancaster district	Revised protocol in place by April 09	Existing protocol	Jul-08	Housing Policy Officer	Existing resources	National Probation Service. Lancaster Castle Lancaster Farms DISC Prison Housing Advisors	

Action	Target and Target Date	Baseline	Start Date	Lead Responsibility	Resource Implications	Key Partners	Milestones
5	Promote accredited independent living qualification in supported housing schemes and tie this to protocol with Council and RSL Landlords for move on accommodation. All offers of move-on accommodation to be dependent on securing qualifications by April 2010	Two supported schemes providing independent living qualifications	Jul-08	Housing Policy Officer	Existing resources	RSLs, Council Housing, Supported Housing providers.	

#### 4 Reducing the Use of Temporary Accommodation and Bed and Breakfast by the Statutorily Homeless

Action	Target and Target Date	Baseline	Start Date	Lead Responsibility	Resource Implications	Key Partners	Milestones
1	Reduce the number of temporary accommodation units for those being assessed as / accepted as statutorily homeless	24 units at December 2004, 28 units March 2007.	Apr-07	Principal Homelessness Officer	Higher staffing levels required - proposal currently under consideration	Adactus	21 units by 2009, 17 units by 2010, 12 unit by 2011.
2	Develop placement nomination agreement with Foyer, Portland Street	No agreement	Apr-08	Principal Homelessness Officer	Existing resources	SAHA YMCA.	

Action	Target and Target Date	Baseline	Start Date	Lead Responsibility	Resource Implications	Key Partners	Milestones
3 Create assured short hold tenancy scheme to discharge legal duty	Scheme in place by April 2010	No AST scheme in place	Apr-08	Principal Homelessness Officer	Existing resources	Private Landlords. RSLs. Strategic Housing.	Action plan by September 2008. Partners identified by December 2008. Pilot in place by September 2009.
4 Develop refuge provision (see action point 2.3)							
5 Develop provision for single people at New Road (see action point 2.1)							
6 Develop nightstop provision and more supported lodgings so that young people are not placed in B & B (see action points 3.1 and 3.2)							

## 5 Increase the Supply of Good Quality Affordable Housing

Action	Target and Target Date	Baseline	Start Date	Lead Responsibility	Resource Implications	Key Partners	Milestones
1 Increase the number of affordable homes in the district (gross)	189 additional units by 2011	N/A	Apr-08	Homeless Policy Officer	Existing resources	LSP, LAA, Planning, RSLs, Private developers.	2009 - 63 homes 2010 - 63 2011 - 63
2 Review access from supported accommodation to move-on RSL and Council properties (see also 3.5)	Review completed April 2009	No clear data	Apr-08	Housing Policy Officer	Existing resources	Council Housing, RSLs, Supported Housing providers, Lancashire Care Trust.	
3 Develop protocols for provision of move-on accommodation, using Homeless Link's Move-on Pathways Protocol (see also 3.5)	Protocol in place September 2009.	No protocols in place	Apr-09	Housing Policy Officer	Existing resources	RSLs, Council Housing, Supported Housing providers, Lancashire Care Trust.	
4 Develop agreements with private landlords to provide good quality properties for move-on (see also action 3.5)	Agreements in place March 2009	No agreements in place	Apr-08	Principal Homelessness Officer	Existing resources	Private Landlords, DISC, Lancashire Care Trust.	

Action	Target and Target Date	Baseline	Start Date	Lead Responsibility	Resource Implications	Key Partners	Milestones
5	Ensure full take up of Discretionary Housing Payment budget	81% in 2007/8	Apr-08	Principal Homelessness Officer	Existing resources	Housing Benefits Homelessness Forum	
6	Review the potential to redesignate one or more Council sheltered schemes as single persons accommodation	No full review undertaken	Apr-08	Housing Policy Officer	Existing resources	Council Housing Adult Social Care	

## 6 Ensure Effective Monitoring of Levels of Homelessness Throughout the Life of This Strategy

Action	Target and Target Date	Baseline	Start Date	Lead Responsibility	Resource Implications	Key Partners	Milestones
1	Identify relevant data for measuring future trends in homelessness for the issues identified in the Homelessness Strategy	Relevant data not identified	Apr-08	Housing Policy Officer	Existing resources	CAB. RSLs. Planning.	



Action	Target and Target Date	Baseline	Start Date	Lead Responsibility	Resource Implications	Key Partners	Milestones
2	Establish baselines and measure change for each identified issue	To be determined after establishment of baselines	Sep-08	Housing Policy Officer	Existing resources	As above	
3	Review issues concerning elderly people with alcohol abuse issues and establish if this impacts on homelessness	Review complete by April 2009	Apr-08	Housing Policy Officer	Existing resources	Social Services. Adult Social Care. NHS PCT. RSLs. Council Housing.	

<b>CABINET</b>
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## Employee and Elected Member Parking Permits

8<sup>th</sup> July 2008

### Report of Chief Executive

PURPOSE OF REPORT				
To consider proposals for a review of Employee and Elected Member permits and charges with a view to all permits being subsequently renewed on the same date and annually thereafter.				
Key Decision	X	Non-Key Decision		Referral from Cabinet Member
Date Included in Forward Plan	1 <sup>st</sup> July 2008			
This report is public				

#### RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCILLOR MACE

- 1 (1) That the Employee, Member and Public permit renewal dates be realigned to ensure that all parking charges be determined and introduced at the same time, namely at 1 April.
- (2) That charges for permits of each type be increased with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 by a percentage no higher than the rate of inflation since the previous setting of the charge for that permit.
- (3) That with an implementation date of 1 April 2009, an option of a separately priced 5-day permit [i.e 24-5] be introduced for all permit holders [at a cost lower than the equivalent 24-7 permit
- (4) That charges for the eight month period from 1 August 2008 to 31 March 2009 should be at the same monthly rate as for the permits expiring on 31 July that they replace.

## **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 Cabinet considered a report on the review of Employee and Elected Member Permits and Charges at their meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2007 and resolved:

(1) That the Staff Permit charges are increased from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008 to allow for inflation.

(2) That the permits be issued for a period to 1<sup>st</sup> August 2008, prior to which a further review will be undertaken to bring both Staff and Member Permits in line with each other by 1<sup>st</sup> August 2008 and with a view to all permits being subsequently renewed on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009, and annually thereafter.

1.2 Previously, Cabinet had considered a report in December 2006 and resolved:

1 (a) That Staff and Member permit renewal dates are realigned to ensure that all parking charges are determined and introduced at the same time.

2 (b) That the same arrangements for public permits apply to Staff and Member permits whereby permits can be used 24 hours, 7 days per week to avoid operational issues with staff working shifts and weekends and staff and Members attending evening meetings and vehicles being unavailable due to repair and servicing etc.

3 (a) Linking the reviews of staff parking and car user status that is being undertaken as part of the Fair Pay – Pay and Grading Review and a similar process being required with Members and the Independent Remuneration Panel.

4 To approve establishing the principle of differential charges for staff and Members based on user status, business need and the number of journeys undertaken.

5 To recognise that staff permit charges already agreed by Cabinet for 2007 may need to be reviewed during the year and to notify staff of these arrangements.

6 That subsequent proposals are considered by the Joint Consultative Committee and are the subject of consultation in accordance with the Consultation and Negotiation Protocol.

1.3 This report sets out information and proposals for Members' consideration.

## **2.0 Background Details**

2.1 The provision of universal, subsidised, long stay parking spaces has become increasingly a matter for review as it applies not only to employees who are required to bring their cars to work and are therefore essential users, but the scheme is open to all employees. The Council, as a large public service employer includes business travel planning as part of its Climate Change Strategy as issues of traffic congestion and carbon emissions are of concern. In addition long stay spaces will become more of a premium as development takes place in Lancaster, particularly as a result of the proposed canal corridor development which could affect parking provision during 2010.

2.2 Parking for employees and Elected Members is not just a localised issue but is one faced by authorities throughout the country. A number of practical issues exist in

dealing with permit provision and whilst price is important, so are issues that relate to the ability or otherwise to transfer permits and the validity of permits on different car parks. Accordingly, a survey of authorities has been undertaken and this has resulted in 41 responses. A summary of those responses is attached at **Appendix A**.

- 2.3 The survey shows that there is a very wide range of different situations and particular comment is set out below.
- 2.4 Approximately 75% of authorities who completed the questionnaire subsidise the staff parking and the amount of charge ranges from nil to £1,200 (compared to a maximum public permit charge being £1,750).
- 2.5 The majority of authorities (56%) do not allow transfer of permits between vehicles and 71% of respondents limit use of the permit to the permit holder for business use only.
- 2.6 Only 44% of authorities have a staff business travel plan whilst 51% of authorities indicate that they are discouraging staff travelling by car. Only 9.75% of authorities indicated that they had any sustainable initiatives in place and of those 9 authorities indicated that they had cycling and car share initiatives in place, 5 had subsidised bus/train travel whilst 2 restricted parking in town centres.

### **Elected Members' Permits**

- 2.7 Members' permits were considered by the Independent Remuneration Panel whose view is that the current Members Allowance Scheme makes adequate provision for Members to be appropriately reimbursed for travelling and car parking costs incurred in their role as City Councillor. The Panel believes that the matter of permits is a matter for the Council and its Members to resolve and that the Members Allowance Scheme should then be amended if necessary to reflect any change to the current position. Indeed, Council agreed in April 2006, on the recommendation of the Panel:

That, should the provision of subsidised annual car parking permits to Councillors be withdrawn, Appendix B (B)(iv) to the Members Allowance Scheme be amended with the addition of the words '*provided that the holder of a car park permit may be reimbursed the cost of parking that would have been incurred if that permit had not been held*'. (Minute 127(3)(c))

- 2.8 Whatever the decision in relation to the subsidy or otherwise of Parking Permits for Members, it would be possible to introduce the facility for Members to claim the equivalent daily cost of the permit through the Members Allowance Scheme whenever they use their car to attend Council business (on approved duties as set out in the Scheme) in the same way as is currently in place for staff.
- 2.9 The fee for any permit is a matter for the Council to decide. In cases where there is a differential between permit fees for Member and officers parking on the same car park(s), that again, the Panel believes, is for the Council to resolve.
- 2.10 The current fee for a Member Permit is £185 which was set in 2006.

### **Employee Permits**

- 2.11 The staff permit charges were set at £190 for a general permit and £320 for a specific permit, subject to a review being undertaken which is the subject of this report.

2.12 Proposals to move forward fall into three categories:

- Business use which requires staff to have their vehicles available for work, as an essential car user. There is also a classification of casual car user with less frequent car use.
- Commuting to and from the place of work which is similar to general public use
- Sustainable transport issues which encourage the use of alternative transport methods or the use of vehicles which substantially reduce carbon emissions

2.13 Currently mileage is paid on the basis of whether employees are categorised as an essential or casual car user. This user status was initially considered to be included as a link to the Fair Pay – Pay and Grading Review currently being undertaken, but a view was taken that this was closer to a review of Business Travel rather than a review of Pay.

2.14 One option would be for the Council to continue to issue subsidised parking permits to essential car users only and require other employees who wished to purchase a permit to pay the same amount as the general public. This then raises issues concerning the approach to be taken when a casual car user uses their car for business use. It is possible that the introduction of a Car Club scheme could assist with casual use.

2.15 It is clear from paragraph 2.4 above that most authorities limit the use of the permit to the permit holder for business use only, whilst a slight majority allow the transfer of the permit between vehicles. At present the staff permit allows use by the partner and immediate family and any change should be considered by Cabinet as part of this report.

2.16 The current arrangement for the allocation of permits shows no distinction for part time or job share staff. Having a separate form of permit would be a further operational issue for permit production and enforcement. Consideration should be given to making a full charge to those staff if the entitlement to park remains as flexible as at present with a charge at the level of public permits.

2.17 There is of course a very limited supply of specific permit parking spaces on the Wash at Lancaster Town Hall. Currently these spaces are not all allocated, and if there is to be a substantial increase in charge or change in eligibility, then the take up may reduce even further. Consideration could be given to removing this class of permit and handing the spaces over to visitors especially now that the Customer Service Centre facility is immediately adjacent to this facility. This would increase parking provision at Lancaster Town Hall bringing it more in line with the visitor parking provision at Morecambe Town Hall.

2.18 Whilst proposals to increase permit prices may in themselves serve to have sustainability benefits, it would be possible to consider specific measures that reduce carbon emissions. As an example, Manchester City Council have a “Green Badge” parking policy whereby permit holders can receive a 25% reduction in permit charges if the car has CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 120 g/km or less and particulate levels of 0.02 or less.

2.19 As an alternative, public transport is showing a substantial increase in passenger numbers and there has been a significant increase in investment to improve the quality of the vehicles and their frequency. At present a 7 day “Bay Mega Rider”

ticket priced at £12 per week allows unlimited travel and at a cost of £624 per annum, would offer a cheaper alternative to the current price of a public parking permit. An initial discussion with stagecoach has indicated that there is a potential to offer staff a discount on this figure but further negotiations would be required if the Council favoured this alternative

### **3.0 Details of Consultation**

3.1 A survey of other local authorities in the region has been undertaken to provide guidance on the way forward.

In addition, consultation has been undertaken in accordance with the Council's Consultation and Negotiation Protocol.

3.2 The Joint Consultative Committee (JCC), at its meeting on the 16 June 2008, resolved to recommend to Cabinet:

- (1) That the employee, Member and public permit renewal dates be realigned to ensure that all parking charges be determined and introduced at the same time.
- (2) That permit charges be increased no higher than the rate of inflation, with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009.
- (3) That there be an option for employee and Member permits to be used 24 hours, 5 days, per business week.
- (4) That part-time staff be charged pro-rata.
- (5) That subsidised bus travel at sensible rates be looked at.

3.3 There was a limited response to the member consultation, but the majority of responses indicated that the existing system should be maintained.

### **4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)**

4.1 Option 1 is to approve the principle of an increase with a stepped increase over a number of years to reduce the gap with the full cost of the permit. This will give employees more time to adjust to the new arrangements and to find alternative methods of travel. It is likely to result in a reduction of permits sold to staff over time but whether there would be any effect on traffic congestion and carbon emissions depends on how those staff eventually decide to travel to work.

4.2 Option 2 is to provide an option as recommended by the JCC which would reduce employee and Elected Member permits from seven day a week use to a five day a week permit. Officers propose that this should be at the current staff permit cost. In most cases, this would involve a reduction to Monday to Friday use but would allow for use by staff who are required, for example, to work weekends as part of their 5 day working pattern. This could be combined with limiting the use of the permit to the permit holder only. Together this would reduce the maximum potential car parking usage by a significant amount but avoid the stepped increase set out in option 1.

- 4.3 A sub-option 2a would be in line with the JCC recommendation 4, to charge part time staff on a pro rata basis (number of hours worked per week divided by 37, and multiplied by the permit charge). The permit would then be valid only for use during their working hours. It is anticipated that such an arrangement could be difficult to enforce due to the range of part time hours worked by different staff across the authority. Consideration of how this could happen would need to be undertaken should this option be chosen.
- 4.4 Option 3 would be to retain the option of a seven day a week permit at a cost to be agreed that is in excess of the proposed five day permit. It should be noted that this would be in addition to the introduction of a five day permit.
- 4.5 Option 4 would be to review employee and Elected Member permit charges in line with the annual review of fees and charges in order to meet parking and budgetary commitments. This is effectively the “do nothing” option as it follows existing practice.
- 4.6 A further option (Option 5) could be combined with options 1, 2, 3 or 4, but would have further enhancements that include Green Badge parking and discounted bus travel. This may result in an increased number of fuel efficient vehicles being used by staff or a general move to public transport and is in line with the recommendations made by the JCC.
- 4.7 In all options there is also the opportunity to consider the parking practices that are currently in place. In particular there is an option to remove the specific parking permits that are available for The Wash at Lancaster Town Hall and make these spaces available to visitors to the Town Hall. In addition all permits could become personal to the permit holder and also during working hours only. This does have difficulties in enforcement as reflected in cabinet’s resolution in December 2006 when existing practices were maintained. Furthermore, should a decision be taken to subsidise permits for essential users only, it may be possible to consider alternative parking arrangements for the smaller group of staff that fall into this category and allow them to use short stay car parks which are nearer to their work base.
- 4.8 In all options, although particularly where there is a new form of permit being provided e.g. a five day permit, the lead in time to amend the Off-Street Parking Places Order would suggest that the implementation of the recommendations should be effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 so that the employee, Member and public permit renewal dates become aligned and to ensure that all parking charges be determined at the same time.

**5.0 Officer Preferred Option (and comments)**

- 5.1 Options 2 (with option 2a) and 5 with an implementation date of 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009.

**RELATIONSHIP TO POLICY FRAMEWORK**

Any reduction in miles travelled would have an impact on the Council’s priority outcome to reduce the impact of Climate Change within the District (Priority Outcome 14).

**CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)**

Any future increase in charges is likely to reduce the number of vehicle journeys made by staff on a daily basis, thereby reducing the carbons emitted during the travel to work period.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Income from parking permits will vary during the course of the year according to take up by individual employees and Members. An analysis of permit numbers has been made but there is no clear detail of the location of the permit holders to give a definitive split between those at Lancaster and Morecambe.

If Option 1 an in-principle stepped increase is agreed, then the take up rates may need to be adjusted as it is less likely that there will be an immediate reduction in numbers. Before this option can be implemented further detailed analysis of the financial implications would need to be undertaken by Financial Services in conjunction with the Head of Property Services and reported back to Cabinet.

If Option 2, a reduction from seven day a week to a five day a week permit at the current staff permit cost is chosen, there may be some increase in off-street pay and display income resulting from staff having to pay for parking "out of hours" but it is not possible specifically identify such income.

Option 3 would be to retain the option of a seven day a week permit at a cost to be agreed but in excess of the current permit price. Again, subject to whether this option is chosen and the cost agreed further analysis is required to determine the impact on the Council's General Fund Revenue Budget but it is expected to be limited.

Option 4 the 'do nothing' option is in line with current budget estimates, therefore has no further financial implications for the Council, i.e. income targets will be reviewed as part of the Council's annual budget process.

Option 5 a combination of Options 1-4 plus further enhancements, covers a number of potential variations to the current situation, therefore further detailed analysis would be required and would need to be reported back to Cabinet before being implemented.

Similarly, If there is any change to the permit system, consideration will also need to be given to how much staff can reclaim when they use their car for work purposes on any day, i.e the addition of the 7 day / 5 day permits could affect the current method for calculating this, though it is not expected that this would have too detrimental impact on the current budget.

In addition, as a result of the JCC recommendations 1 and 4 set out in Paragraph 3.2 of the report, if Cabinet recommend to implement these there is likely to be a resulting budget alteration required to take account of delayed inflationary increase of officer permits and a reduction in income resulting from pro-rata charging of permits for part time staff. This is not expected to be material, however and would be incorporated into the next budget process. Also, it is not anticipated that there will be any significant budget implications arising directly from JCC recommendation 2 as this is broadly in line with the current budget estimate as approved by Council 27<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

Finally, and in the same vein, there may be some marginal implications regarding JCC



recommendation 2 (and Member recommendation 3) but these could not be quantified with any accuracy and are also not expected to be material in any event.

**SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

**MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Contact Officer:** Graham Cox  
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**E-mail:** GCox@lancaster.gov.uk  
**Ref:** CE/GC/ES/Cttees/Cabinet/08.07.08

RESPONSES RECEIVED - 41		Yes	No	Don't Know	Comments
About Authorities Travel Policies					
Do you have a Staff Parking scheme		29	11		
Is it Subsidised		30	10		
Level of subsidy					Variable from free to 100%
Are Members eligible		24	16		
If not, please provide details					Casual/ Ess users 7, Town Centres only 5, Discretion of Director and car usage 2
More about your Authority					
Are you discouraging staff travelling by car		21	17	3	
If yes, please provide details					Cycling/Car Share 9, Travel Plans 3, Subsidised bus/train 5, Restrict Parking, 2
Do you have any sustainable initiatives car share etc		4	7		Cycle/ Car Share 9, Travel Plan 3, Sub Bus/Train Travel 5, Restrict Parking in Town 2
Do you have a staff travel plan		18	13	9	
Are there any other forms of subsidy for staff		13	25	2	
If yes, please provide details					Reduced cost Public Transport 9, Car Share 3, Free P&R 1, Train fares to meetings 1
Permit Charges					
Average charge for Annual Public Permit					Nil - £1,750.00
Charge for Staff Permit					Nil - £1,200.00
Permits charged Essential/Casual users		7	34		
If yes, please provide details					Don't Pay at work do at weekends 1, Charged to how near Bldg 1, Based on Journey 1
Any element of staff permit reimbursable		1	36		Dept have free permits/charged to dept 2, Daily Charges 1, based of where parked 1
If yes, please provide details					Permits provided for dept to attend meetings- Charged back to the Dept
Staff Permit types issued					
19a. Transferable between vehicles no VRM		16	23		
19b. Vehicle specific with VRM		26	12		
19c. Vehicle specific with two VRM's		15	20	1	
19d. Limited to permit holder for bus/ private use		2	34		
19e. Limited to permit holder for business use only		29	11		
19f. Limited to permit holder family/bus/private			36		
20. Do you have arrangements for part-time or job share staff?		10	27	1	
21. If Yes, please provide brief details					Pro Rata 4, Same as Full time 2, Part time 3 days + Sat 1, Reduced less than 18.5 hrs 1
Permit Use Staff permit issued valid in					
22a. All car parks 24/7		1	36		
22b. Most long stay car parks 24/7		7	29		
22c. Some short stay car parks 24/7		34	3		
22d. Most long stay car parks in office hours		12	21		
22e. Some short stay car parks in office hours		9	26		
22f. Staff car parks in office hours		21	13		
22g. Other - Please provide details					Specific Car Park during Office hours 7, One long stay multi storey only, 2
Other Parking Arrangements					
Staff who don't require a permit for place of work. Do you have arrangements when staff need to park at other location for work					Pay and Reclaim through expenses 26, free Visitor Pass 14, Charged Visitor Pass 2, 20 Min drop off only, 1
Members Parking Schemes					Casual user 1, Reserved Parking 1, No Scheme 3, Free on Council Business 10, FOC 2 Long Stay/Specific 2, Park Town Hall CP 2, Pay & Reclaim 2, P&D 2, Charged to Service 2