

**ACTION NOTES FROM STAR CHAMBER  
HELD ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2007**

**PRESENT:** Councillors R Mace (Chair), J Barry, A Bryning, J Gilbert and D Kerr  
(substituting for Councillor E Archer)

M Cullinan, P Loker, N Muschamp and S Lucas (Notes)

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies received from Roger Muckle and John Donnellon

2. **NOTES OF MEETING HELD 29 AUGUST 2007**

No matters arising

**BASE BUDGET REVIEW AND VALUE FOR MONEY ASSESSMENT**

3. **COUNCIL HOUSING**

It was noted that the HRA is a ring fenced budget, but does have some impact on General Fund, mainly through the services it contracts, e.g. grounds maintenance and its contribution to overheads.

**Policy and Management**

It was proposed to look at options for reduction in future management capacity. Options to be produced and considered.

**Repairs and Maintenance**

No options taken forward. Proposals for efficiency savings noted.

**Special Services**

No options taken forward

**Welfare Services**

No savings as activity 100% recharged

4. **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

**Environmental Protection**

Report to be brought back to Star Chamber on costs of ECOS, including advantages/disadvantages of ceasing the service and defined criteria for use of ECOS.

Reports on future pressures, i.e. possible transfer of stray dogs from Police to Local Authorities and outcome of Rogers report will be brought back to future Star Chamber when more detail is available.

**Food Safety/Health and Safety**

Report back to Star Chamber on detailed costs for Health and Safety function and possibility of reducing to a minimum service. Report to include benchmarking on "direct" costs.

**Cemeteries**

Savings offered were mainly Gershon efficiencies and would impact on CC(D)S overheads. Report requested for Star Chamber on the aggregate position to see if effective savings can be made.

**Civil Contingencies**

Report back to Star Chamber on opportunity to share Service/expertise with Wyre Borough Council.

**5. STRATEGIC HOUSING****Housing Standards**

Correction on page 5 under Key Drivers section – number of HMOs is 500+ not 5000+.

Agreed that the suitability of a Regional Accredited Property Scheme be explored and reported to Service PRT.

Report back to Star Chamber on cost comparison with private sector for HMO inspection work.

Investigate if we can publicise the extent of enforcement activities by naming landlords subject to enforcement actions.

**Enabling (Home Improvement Team)**

Request for more information on the potential increase in demand due to release of backlog of Paediatric referrals and how we can manage that demand.

Councillor J Barry left the meeting (12.10)

**Homelessness**

Detailed report requested on possible savings on medical advice costs and potential funding/contributions from other agencies.

Further work requested on benchmarking to include Preston and West Lancashire as more representative than Wyre and Fylde.

**6. CITY COUNCIL (DIRECT) SERVICES**

This item was deferred until the next Star Chamber meeting

## **ACTION NOTES FROM STAR CHAMBER HELD ON 19 SEPTEMBER 2007**

**PRESENT:** Councillors R Mace (Chair), J Barry, A Bryning, J Gilbert,  
J Donnellon, P Loker, N Muschamp, J Barlow (Notes)

### **1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mark Cullinan and Roger Muckle.

### **2 NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The notes were accepted as a correct record.

### **3 BASE BUDGET REVIEW AND VALUE FOR MONEY ASSESSMENT COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTORATE CONT'D**

#### **City Council (Direct) Services (CC(D)S)**

##### Waste Collection

It was noted that that cost-sharing with County should generate more income than originally budgeted and this should be quantified within the revised budget exercise (December).

Any savings once phase 5 and 6 were complete were not quantifiable at this stage.

##### Grounds Maintenance

Carry out full review of maintenance standards, map onto GIS, compare through APSE performance network. Invest to save but within existing budget initially.

One potential area for increased income was trade contracts.

##### Finance and Admin.

Savings already made, nothing further to offer.

##### Vehicle Maintenance

Efficiency savings had been achieved through improved fleet management. The Corporate Director to provide the cost/savings comparative figures at revised budget time.

A further report was requested on informal discussions with adjacent Districts for shared services.

##### Building Cleaning

This service was a straightforward fulfilment of a contract with Property Services. Savings would only be achieved when the number of Council buildings was reduced as part of the Access To Services Review.

##### Highways Maintenance

This operated as a contracted service and made a surplus.

#### **4 BASE BUDGET REVIEW AND VALUE FOR MONEY ASSESSMENT REGENERATION DIRECTORATE**

##### **Economic Development and Tourism**

Four options were considered.

Option 1 – Decide not to support the implementation of Lancaster and Morecambe Vision. This option was not considered to be viable.

Option 2 – Cease to operate one or both TICs. This option was not supported. Corporate Director to find out who owned the lease of the Morecambe building.

Option 3 – Further cutbacks to Marketing budgets. Corporate Director to provide a breakdown of the budgets for marketing and tourism detailing what mechanisms were in use.

Option 4 – Cease to provide grant aid under the Business Development Grant Scheme. A report was requested, after liaising with the University, to show alternative options.

#### **5 AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN**

The report was noted.

#### **5 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Cllr Mace was not available for the next scheduled meeting on 3 October and it was agreed to cancel this and move items to 10 October. Cllr Barry could not attend on 10 October and would send his substitute, Cllr M Whitelegg.

**JEB/20 September 2007**