



Report of:	To:	Date	Item No.
Cllr. Barry Birch, Economy Portfolio Holder	Council	8 September 2011	9(d)

## EXECUTIVE REPORT: ECONOMY PORTFOLIO HOLDER

### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform Council of progress on key objectives and the current position on issues within the Economy portfolio.

### 2. Current and Future Issues

- 2.1 Summary information is attached in Appendix 1 on recent activities relating to the following desired outcomes.

- Regeneration of Fleetwood
- Revitalisation of the rural economy
- Affordable homes for local people
- Revitalisation of Poulton-le-Fylde
- A clear policy framework for future development
- Transport Matters

- 2.2 Information is also included in Appendix 1 on recent discussions on improvements to the local transport infrastructure which, if realised, would contribute significantly to a number of these desired outcomes.

3. In accordance with procedure rule 11.3 any member of Council will be able to ask me a question or make a comment on the contents of my report or on any issue, which falls within my area of responsibility. I will respond to any such questions or comments in accordance with Procedure Rule 11.5.

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**ECONOMY PORTFOLIO HOLDER PROGRESS UPDATE**

**September 2011**

**1. Regeneration of Fleetwood**

- 1.1** Fish & Food Park in Fleetwood – the further evaluation of the needs of the industry has been completed and work has commenced on the development of a detailed project plan. Progress has been slower than anticipated this is due mainly to reduced availability of Government funding.

**Sea Change Project:**

- 1.2** Marine Hall Gardens – Work is continuing at a pace and completion is still on track for November.
- 1.3** Rossall Point – At the 3 August Cabinet meeting the contract for the Rossall Point project was approved and I am delighted to report that one of our local contractors Parkinson have been appointed to undertake the £566,955 development.
- 1.4** Public Art Programme - The contract for these artworks is currently being advertised via the CHEST. It is evident from some responses received so far that prices vary widely and so they will be subject to detailed evaluation and appraisal. This will produce options to consider presented against a defined budget and quality assessment, details of which will follow once the tendering process is complete.
- 1.5** Mythic Coastline- The first phase which has recently been completed involved the creation of an illustrated book for children based on a mythical tale of the coastline. The book has now been launched and circulated to all of Wyre's seven year old schoolchildren.

**2. Revitalisation of the Rural Economy**

- 2.1** On the 16 June 2011 planning permission was granted to Natural Retreats for the alteration and extension of existing buildings to form a trailhead, visitor centre with cafe, conference facilities, bike hire centre with ancillary facilities, 9 accommodation units, 43 detached holiday lodges and formation of wildlife lakes and habitat at South Planks Farm Garstang Road, Myerscough. The development is an investment value of approximately £6 million and will provide opportunities for local employment and the local business supply chain. In addition, it should be noted that there is greater emphasis on rural matters within the proposed Business Plan and I am looking forward to working closely with the Lead Member for Rural matters Councillor McCann to maximise and develop opportunities within the rural areas.

- 2.2** As the Get Started scheme gains momentum, we expect the 2011/12 target of 55 new starts to be achieved and passed, regaining the levels that were being achieved prior to the beginning of the recession. Discussions with Orvia (formerly Business Venture Group) have been very positive, with a combined programme of work around both general business new starts and social enterprise. Orvia Group has a proven track record of delivery and the extended work with social enterprise, linking up with Social Enterprise Solutions, should make a considerable difference to how local people gain advantage from this work. The company will have a presence in Garstang, for improved access to Rural Wyre residents in the near future.
- 2.3** A key factor in new start delivery is the sustainability of enterprises over an initial two year period, as many new enterprises fail at this early stage. Wyre's track record has always surpassed the national average of 82% survivability by some 10% or more, due to the number of intending businesses that follow the advice and mentoring route we advocate. Wyre's 92% survivability rate is unique and is the reason for the number of high quality small to medium enterprises in this area (approximately 3,700 in 2010/11).
- 2.4** Of the 29 new starts in Wyre, 5 were in the rural area, creating 12 new jobs. In the main, these were in diversified agriculture and farming activities, with a dominant retailing flavour to the type of enterprise. Other rural enterprises have grown since inception or redevelopment, with a consequent increase in employment. There are the obvious examples of Booths in Garstang, Barton Grange at Myerscough, Glasdons at Poulton, Dewlay at Garstang and Preston Plastics at Preesall, in total some 130 additional jobs have been created. This bucks the trend of the recession, which has dominated the business landscape since the middle of 2008.

### **3. Affordable Homes for Local People**

- 3.1** Following a number of successful funding bids to the Homes & Communities Agency, work has commenced on a number of sites within both the urban and rural areas and I am pleased to report we are on track to deliver 101 affordable homes by the end of this financial year (2011/12) year, a significant increase on 2010/11 (39).

### **4. Revitalisation of Poulton-le-Fylde**

- 4.1** At the last meeting I reported that negotiations were continuing between the current owners of the Teanlowe Centre and a prospective purchaser. I am advised that contracts have been exchanged and I am hopeful that I will be able to provide members with a verbal update at the meeting. As I have stated previously I and my Officers will continue to evaluate and explore opportunities to secure appropriate investment in Poulton and the surrounding area.

## **5. A Clear Policy Framework for Future Development**

- 5.1** My officers are continuing to work on our Core Strategy. The Core Strategy is the most important planning document that the Council will produce and will form the main consideration when deciding planning applications. The Core Strategy will establish the planning framework for the Borough and Members of the Planning Policy Group are providing invaluable input into the shaping of draft policies. I anticipate the document will be in a draft form for public consultation by the end of this year.

## **6. Transport Infrastructure**

- 6.1** As I stated previously, I and my Officers continue to work with Members and Officers at Lancashire County Council (LCC) and the Highways Agency to maximise resources to deliver both sustainable and physical highway and transport improvements. LCC have recently produced an Environmental Directorate Progress Plan for capital improvement works in Wyre including road safety programme measures to introduce 20 mph speed limit areas. LCC will consult with us on each project and we will ensure Ward Members are informed of any proposal within their area.