

Filming debate on change to council

By REBECCA DRAPER
South Fylde Reporter

A COMMUNITY hopes to be the first to force a referendum into the structure of its local government.

And their battle is being recorded for a feature on BBC's Politics Show.

The cameras rolled into the Glendower Hotel on St Annes' North Promenade yesterday to interview some of the key players in bringing about change in the current way Fylde Council is run. It will return to film a localism seminar hosted by Fylde Civic Awareness Group at the hotel tomorrow.

The group is bidding to change the current leader and cabinet system into a cross-party committee model which it says will promote fairer decision making on issues affecting the borough.



ON FILM: The BBC's Politics Show interviews councillors and residents about the push for change in how Fylde Council is run PICTURE: Rob Lock

Chairman Jon Harrison said the campaign had been brought following the Localism Act 2011, which empowers people to bring about

change to local government.

Mr Harrison added: "What some members of the public don't fully realise is that if a councillor is not on the

cabinet they have very little chance to influence what happens in their ward. Under the committee system, Fylde's 51 councillors would have the

ability to influence anything which happens in Fylde."

But council leader David Eaves said the referendum, which would be forced if the group collects 4,000 signatures, would cost the tax payer £120,000 and be detrimental to the council.

He added: "Some years ago, before the leader and cabinet system was introduced into Fylde, the council was described as a poorly performing authority.

The leader and cabinet system has transformed Fylde into one of the best performing councils in Lancashire with one of the lowest council tax rates."

Coun Eaves said if a committee system was introduced, there would not be the resources available to support it because of cuts to meet a reduction in Government funding.

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