

VOTE FOR CHANGE

CHOOSE

COMMITTEES X

YOUR CHANCE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

In the local referendum on 22 May, your vote will decide which councillors have the right to speak, and the right to vote, when Fylde Council takes a decision on your behalf.

WHAT'S THE PRESENT SYSTEM?

In 2005 Fylde changed the way it made decisions. It adopted the *Leader and Cabinet system*, where the Council Leader handpicks six people to become their Cabinet. Under this system, only the Leader and the 6 councillors have the right to speak and to vote on most of the day-to-day decisions made in the Council's name.

WHY DOES IT NEED TO CHANGE?

In 2008, a large public meeting said this change had been undemocratic and wrong. People wanted to go back to the tried and tested *Committee System* where all councillors have the right to speak and vote on all the Council's decisions.

WHY IS THERE GOING TO BE A REFERENDUM?

We took up the call for more democracy, and have campaigned for a return to Committees - so the Councillor you elect has the right to speak, and the right to vote on your behalf in all the Council's decisions. We asked people for their views, and more than 4,600 signed a petition calling for a referendum. That public demand is why the referendum is being held.

WHAT'S THE BENEFIT OF CHANGE TO ME?

- **Changing to the Committee System means the councillor you elect will once again be able to speak up and vote on your behalf on all decisions. They are prevented from doing this this under the present Leader and Cabinet system.**
- **We believe this will result in better decisions being made, because the Committee System brings a broader vision, and a greater depth of experience to decision making.**
- **Instead of thriving on secrecy, exercising power by the few, and generating conflict, the Committee system is about working together to find common solutions to problems.** (See overleaf for more information)



DEMOCRACY AND LOCALISM SEMINAR REPORT

We held an open seminar about the options, and the pros and cons of each system. We heard from...

- the Parliamentary Outreach Service who explained their work in community engagement with Parliament.
- Former Fylde Council Leader Paul Hayhurst - who spoke strongly in support of using Committees.
- Former Councillor Chris Hulton from Ribble Valley Council - where they still use the Committee System.
- Former Fylde Council Leader John Tavernor - who operated the Committee System at Fylde
- John Bainbridge - who outlined the new Localism powers to petition for change.



SEMINAR OUTCOME

The meeting agreed we should ask people if they supported the idea of a local referendum to change the way our council works back to the tried and tested Committee System



A video of the seminar is available on request, and a report of its proceedings, together with more details about the petition, the referendum and the various governance options are all available on our website at

www.fylde.biz

MYTH BUSTERS

"FYLDE IS NOW WELL RUN - SO DON'T CHANGE IT."

The present Council, like those elected before it, has made both good and bad decisions.

It has made great strides to improve what had been its disastrous financial position, but it closed swimming pools then re-opened them. Our Tourist Information Centre moved to Blackpool. The Cabinet voted to sell Heeley Road Depot for a Homeless Hostel for £250k (and to give the developer the £250k back as a grant) - when the site was worth £400k.

In 2010 Fylde was the worst council in Lancashire and the fourth most expensive, and only recently, it has narrowly escaped being put into 'Special Measures' for Planning - so we believe there have been more than enough bad decisions to warrant us having more than just seven councillors taking them.

"THIS WASN'T AN ELECTION ISSUE"

The Localism Act empowering communities to restore the Committee system was not implemented until after the last election, so it couldn't have been a realistic issue before then.

"THIS CHANGE IS POLITICALLY MOTIVATED"

Absolutely not. Its about representation and administration. It's about HOW decisions are made. It's not about policy or about party politics. Decisions should be taken by all our elected councillors, not just seven of them.

"THE COMMITTEE SYSTEM WILL COST MORE"

Wrong. There need be no cost increase (unless the present administration sets out to make it appear to cost more in order to persuade people not to change back to Committees).

Some Councils have made significant savings by changing back to committees, and the Government itself says that apart from some transitional costs it "does not envisage that those councils choosing to operate the committee system will be subject to any additional operational or administrative costs to those operating one of the executive models"

FYLDE'S HAS HAD ZERO COUNCIL TAX INCREASES

True, but it's not the whole story. Fylde's zero rate increases were possible because Government paid Fylde's increases out of national taxation, so it didn't appear on the Council Tax bills.

HASN'T THIS BEEN CONSIDERED BEFORE?

Yes. Back in 2001, Fylde Council leafleted all 34,000 households to ask whether people would prefer to have a Committee system, or an Elected Mayor or a Leader and Cabinet executive system.

65% said they preferred Committees, and only 9% preferred the Leader and Cabinet, but Fylde's majority party chose to change to a Leader and Cabinet system anyway, and we've been stuck with it since then.

Fylde Civic Awareness Group

The Fylde Civic Awareness Group is a non-party-political, open membership community group run by volunteers.

We help people understand how local, government works, how our money is spent, and who makes the decisions.

Our 2013/14 Localism in Action project is supported by



REFERENDUM COST:

A stand-alone referendum would have cost £110k. However, we changed the date to coincide with the European Elections. This halved the estimated cost. Fylde Council is obliged hold the European elections, so in real terms, the cost of incorporating the referendum should only add the printing of extra voting slips and their counting. But election law says Fylde must allocate half the cost to the European Elections and half to the referendum as far as its accounting is concerned.

If you support our campaign, please cut out the slip below or overleaf and use it as a window or a car sticker with some blue-tack.

TO FIND OUT MORE....

about the referendum and the various governance options that are available please visit our website at www.fylde.biz

Fylde Local Referendum - 22 May 2014

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