

Lancashire County Council

Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday, 13th April, 2017 at 10.00 am in Cabinet Room 'B' - The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Bill Winlow (Chair)

County Councillors

Ms L Collinge	R Shewan
C Crompton	V Taylor
S Holgate	D Watts
D O'Toole	G Wilkins
J Shedwick	B Yates

County Councillor Steven Holgate replaced County Councillor Alyson Barnes for this meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from County Councillors Liz Oades and Miles Parkinson.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Interests

None were disclosed.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 March 2017

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

4. Flood Risk Management Works Programme in Lancashire

The Chair welcomed Rachel Crompton, Flood Risk Manager, and, Jim Walker from the Environment Agency, to the meeting.

A report was presented on the Flood Risk Management Works Programme in Lancashire. At its meeting on 13 May 2016, the Scrutiny Committee received a report outlining the County Council's involvement in response and recovery to the widespread floods in December 2015, and the subsequent flood risk management activities delivered in partnership with the Lancashire Resilience Forum, the Environment Agency and other partner organisations.

The report updated the Committee as requested on progress with repairs and diagnostics for longer term repairs and programmes of works, and informed on how work was progressing to increase the resilience of communities and improve communications.

Questions and comments by the Committee in relation to the report were as follows:

- Since the flooding various funds had come into Lancashire of which the following had been paid. There had been direct grants to households which totalled £6.264m and direct grants to businesses which totalled £8.542m
- £1.7m had been spent in 2016 on basic maintenance to protect against flooding. £5.5m had been spent in Lancashire on repairing main river flood defences damaged by the storms.
- Regarding the capital programme across all the risk management authorities, £127m was looking to be spent on the flood risk infrastructure up to 2021.
- The Committee enquired what responsibility lay with the Environment Agency (EA) around advising local authorities about the areas that were at risk from flooding. It was pointed out that the EA had limited responsibilities to advising local authorities. The EA would give advice to planning authorities in certain areas i.e. close to main river areas or where the flood map had been revised since 2015.
- LCC worked jointly with the EA on advice for local authorities where there were river implications.
- From this financial year LCC could offer pre application advice to developers about historic flood risks recorded in the areas where they wanted to build houses. LCC's remit under the Planning Policy Guidance was to support sustainable development.
- In terms of the EA remedial works for flood damaged assets this was now complete and the defence assets were back up to standard. Regarding LCC's remedial works programme its immediate actions was to make sure highways gullies were free flowing again. LCC's improvement programme was underway and it was accessing funds from Defra for major projects. LCC had also its own capital of £1m a year for highways drainage improvements.
- There was a historic urban drainage system around the Burscough area which needed looking at by LCC so that localised improvements could be made. There had been consultations with Parish Councils and local Flood Groups and there were also catchment challenges around this area of West Lancashire where fields and villages relied on pumping.

- It was pointed out to Members that the EA had no intention of turning off Alt Crossens Pumping Station in West Lancashire.
- In terms of investment the Local Levy, the EA was looking at a few locations where there could be changes in land use management in order to provide flood risk management benefits.
- The gully cleaning regime was finely balanced between the demands placed on it by residents, the work needed on gullies to make the drainage function effective, and, the resources available.
- The EA was not funded for land drainage of agricultural land. A Drainage Board had previously been set up in West Lancashire to undertake this very purpose but this had been annulled in 1983. The EA had been working with its partners over a number of years to bring back Drainage Boards but funding for this was proving to be a problem.
- The Committee was informed that LCC was a statutory consultee and had to wait for planning authorities to contact LCC. LCC then had 21 days to respond to the development proposals with its advice. A number of the developments had very little flood risk appraisal at which point LCC would object to the proposals.
- Regarding the sewage network United Utilities were not a statutory consultee in terms of the planning process for development control purposes. They were invited to engage in local planning development as part of their own forward planning process so as to know what investment they need to make as part of their sewage treatment.
- Local plans across Lancashire were in the process of being refreshed and revised. Some of the Local Planning Authorities were keen to develop robust surface water management policies.
- Information on partnership contributions on all flood risk and investment in Lancashire were all available in the public domain.
- United Utilities would deal with urgent flood damage repairs to their assets and had a 6 yearly Asset Investment Programme which they were currently refreshing. Ofwat had recently instructed the water companies to give higher priority to areas of public concern.
- Discussions were taking place about the reopening of the flood plain at Brockholes and the EA was hopeful of a resolution soon.
- The EA had strong dialogue with insurance companies around flood risk.
- Members felt it would be to have independent organisations as consultees on flood issues on new developments.

Resolved: The Committee receive the report and note its contents.

5. Public Health Savings Update

The Chair welcomed Clare Platt, Head of Service Health, Equity, Welfare and Partnerships, to the meeting.

A report was presented informing the Committee that as part of the savings within the Public Health Service a number of externally procured services had been highlighted as areas where savings could be made. The report provided an update on progress toward achieving those savings and set out the steps being taken to deliver the savings which were yet to be delivered.

A cumulative savings of £11.792m was included in the current plans to be delivered by March 2018. The savings would be delivered by a mixture of re-procurement of whole services, contract variations and through decommissioning a number of historic Public Health Services which were part of the Primary Care Trust (PCT) legacy prior to 2014 when the responsibility for Public Health transferred to LCC.

The Substance Misuse, Tobacco, Sexual Health and Healthy Lifestyles contracts had all been re-procured within a reduced financial envelope, budget monitoring showed a pressure in 2016/17 of approximately £0.911m due to delays in the Substance Misuse re-procurement, however this would be achieved in full in 2017/18.

Regarding the Healthy Child Programme, due to a number of issues relating to the services for children, young people and families, there had been a delay in being able to carry out this full procurement exercise.

In February 2017 a decision was taken by the Deputy Leader, the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, and the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People to offer a 1 year contract extension to the current providers. A full procurement exercise, including the achievement of remaining savings of £1.7m would be completed by April 2018.

There was a risk to LCC being able to deliver the savings of £1.7m in 2017/18 if the current provider was unwilling or unable to work within the new reduced financial envelope.

Questions and comments by the Committee in relation to the report were as follows:

- The Committee was informed that the team of Public Health officers within the commissioning element of contracts was 16 altogether, responsible for around £60m of commissioned services.
- Regarding re-procurement under the new financial envelope there were concerns that in trying to make the £11.792m savings, the Public Health

team would lose ground on the objectives it was trying to achieve. Difficult decisions were being made by officers as to where work priorities were. There were opportunities to make efficiency savings. Decisions made were on the basis of supporting Health and Wellbeing outcomes.

- The issues around the delay of the Substance Misuse re-procurement was to do with the fact it was a complex area of work and the volume of activity.
- The main area for finding savings going forward was the Healthy Child Programme. This was another complex piece of work due to trying to fit in with the provision LCC provided at the front line.
- Delivery of savings had not been comprised by the delay in the Substance Misuse re-procurement and the Public Health team was now ahead of target on the delivery of savings.

Resolved:

1. The Committee note the contents of the report
2. An update report come to the Scrutiny Committee later in the year.

6. Work Plan and Task Group Update

The Work Plan was presented to the Committee regarding upcoming topics and future topics not yet scheduled as well as an update on ongoing Task Groups.

Members were informed that there was going to be a TAMP event at County Hall in June. This was to explain how the TAMP works,

Future recommended topics for the Work Plan were around Flood Risk Management. These included:

- Gully cleaning
- United Utilities Asset Management Plan
- Representatives from insurance companies.

Also for the Work Plan was an update on Public Health contracts.

Resolved: The Committee approve the 2016/17 work plan

7. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee will take place on Friday 23 June at 10.00am in Cabinet Room B (The Diamond Jubilee Room) at the County Hall, Preston.

I Young
Director of Governance, Finance
and Public Services

County Hall
Preston