

## **Lancashire County Council**

### **Internal Scrutiny Committee**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday, 20th July, 2018 at 10.30 am in Committee Room 'B' (The Diamond Jubilee Room) - County Hall, Preston**

#### **Present:**

County Councillor David O'Toole (Chair)

#### **County Councillors**

J Rear	P Rigby
J Fillis	A Riggott
S Holgate	M Salter
M Iqbal	D Whipp
E Lewis	G Wilkins
E Nash	

#### **1. Apologies**

There were no apologies.

#### **2. Constitution: Membership; Chair and Deputy Chair; and Terms of Reference of the Internal Scrutiny Committee**

The report presented set out the constitution, membership, Chair and Deputy Chair and Terms of Reference of the Internal Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2018/19.

**Resolved:** That;

- i. The appointment of County Councillors David O'Toole and Jayne Rear as Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee for the remainder of the 2018/19 municipal year be noted.
- ii. The new Membership of the Committee following the County Council's Annual Meeting on 24 May 2018 be noted; and
- iii. The Terms of Reference of the Committee be noted.

#### **3. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

None were disclosed.

#### **4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 May 2018**

**Resolved:** That the minutes from the meeting held on 18 May 2018 be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

## **5. Highways Winter Service Plan update**

The Chair welcomed to the meeting County Councillor Keith Iddon, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport; Phil Barrett, Director of Community Services; Ridwan Musa, Highways Manager West; Paul Binks, Highways Asset Manager; Ingrid Bidle, Core Business Support Manager (HAMS Project); and County Councillor Joe Cooney representing the Winter Gritting Service – Grit Bin Provision Task and Finish Group.

County Councillor Cooney informed the Committee that the task group had met twice and was looking at the provision of grit bins and also the service of gritting secondary routes. The review of existing grit bin provision was looking to see what condition the grit bins were in and if they were in the right location.

At the Internal Scrutiny Committee in November 2017 some actions were raised regarding the Highways Winter Service Plan.

Members had requested access to the gritter tracking system for all county councillors. Members were informed that the tracking system complied with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and was therefore only available for essential users and operational purposes, so access was not available to county councillors.

Members had requested that the Highways Team's twitter feeds on gritting events included more information. They were informed that there was a limited amount of characters that could be included in the twitter feeds and the Highways Team was legally advised about the information it provided. Members requested to view the legal advice that had been given to the Highways Team.

Regarding the Winter Service Review 2017/2018 it was noted that the Winter Maintenance Service was provided in line with the Winter Service Plan. Rotas were managed to ensure there was full coverage. Preparations for 2018/2019 were already in place. Rotas were being developed and vehicles were being serviced.

The Committee was advised that there was a proposal to change the gritting trigger level from plus 1 degree to plus 0.5 degree. This would be detailed in a report to go to Cabinet in August. If it was approved, this would be the only change to the Winter Service Plan for the 2018/2019 season. Members raised concerns as to whether this would cause delays to gritting on the primary routes which would then impact on the potential to grit secondary routes that feed on to the primary routes.

**Resolved:** That;

- i. The content of the report presented be noted.
- ii. The task and finish group relating to grit bin assessment and provision is currently in progress and will report back to the service be noted.

- iii. The treatment intervention level proposal be reviewed by the Grit Bin task and finish group.
- iv. Legal advice be sought on the gritter tracking system and twitter feed.
- v. Thanks be given to the Highways Team for the work done over the winter 2017/2018.

## **6. Progress Report on Potholes**

Regarding potholes the Committee had requested an update on progress, the impact of additional funding and new equipment. Members had also requested an update on response times, repeat visits and an update on the HAMS project and the 'Report It' website.

The Highways Team was recovering from the huge backlog of defects as a result of the harsh winter. At the peak the team had up to 45 two person teams fixing potholes this winter and spring. These teams were district based but were a county wide resource.

The use of funding was reported to members to fix potholes that met intervention levels and to undertake minor repair works, using spray injection patching in areas which may not have reached intervention levels but were likely to deteriorate in the foreseeable future. Members felt that the intervention levels should be revisited as they did not seem appropriate.

Members were advised that some of the additional resources had been utilised to fund spray injection patching to repair potholes on a find and fix basis and to target areas where Highways had become aware of potholes through inspections and public reports. Up to 8 machines were in use on Lancashire's roads and this was the largest number compared with other authorities. The quality and productivity of the repairs was good. The process was now reducing the number of potholes that were being recorded during routine inspections and highway inspectors had noticed that the condition of the network had improved due to the implementation of spray injection patching works.

Regarding response times, it was reported that LCC had adopted a standard response time for repairs of 20 working days. Highway safety defects were regularly monitored. The Committee was informed that the percentage of repairs in the 17/18 financial year was down on the previous year. Members requested greater detail on response times especially around the geographical spread. The Highways Team informed the Committee that they would have a better picture when the pothole policy went into the HAMS system on 26 July 2018.

In terms of the drop in performance, Members were advised that this was partly a result of the prolonged wet and cold winter which had stretched resources. Difficulty was also experienced with the new HAMS system and some loss in functionality in organising work. Work needed to be done with the system and deployment of staff particularly to ensure the efficient allocation of defect repair work to repair teams and to avoid multiple reporting of the same defect falsely increasing the total recorded and having a negative impact on reported

performance. There was a new project underway to establish HAMS system process improvements. LCC was adapting the HAMS system to fit its own needs. Service performance was being closely monitored by highway service management and the ongoing training of highway operatives and office based staff and system improvements should improve performance for the current year. The implementation of the new Highway Safety Inspection policy, approved by Cabinet, would support improved performance.

Regarding repeat visits, Members stated that plugging was an unsatisfactory way of repairing potholes. They were informed that the Highways Team was now using a better quality binder for plugging and this would help the plugs adhere better. Analysis of areas of repeat visits were used to develop programmes of work to tackle these roads and funding had been allocated for this purpose in 2018/19.

The 'Report It' site had been redesigned as a result of feedback from county councillors and the public. Members agreed that the terminology on the 'Report It' website needed to be reconsidered.

Concerns were raised about the backlog of long term defects and the Committee was reassured that the Highways Team would follow these up. Regarding the delivery programme, the Highways Team stated that it planned to deliver a much bigger programme with its own resources and external resources for the financial year 2018/19. Modern technology and new materials meant works could be completed much quicker.

**Resolved:** That the report presented be noted.

## **7. Budget Scrutiny Review Panel Proposal**

The report presented set out a proposal to establish a Budget Scrutiny Review Panel to further enhance the scrutiny of budget proposals under consideration by Cabinet.

County Councillor George Wilkins voted against the proposal and requested his name be recorded in the minutes.

**Resolved:** That the Internal Scrutiny Committee approve the establishment of the Budget Scrutiny Review Panel.

## **8. Local Authority Funding and Income Generation Task Group - initial response**

County Councillor Jayne Rear presented an update from the Local Authority Funding and Income Generation Task Group.

Members were advised that the report from the task group had been received and each recommendation had been reviewed and assigned to an appropriate

senior officer at the council. A feasibility study would be carried out on each of the recommendations to identify the nature and scale of the opportunity to generate income, as well as the scale of any investment that might be needed and the timeframe required for implementation. The outcomes would be reported back to the task group. Where recommendations were not considered viable opportunities for income generation, details would be provided as to the reasons why this conclusion had been reached.

**Resolved:** That the verbal update provided be noted.

## **9. Work Programme 2018/19**

The work plan for the Internal Scrutiny Committee for the 2018/19 year was presented. The topics included were identified at the work planning workshop held on 2 July 2018.

A request was made for the Committee to look at the whole issue surrounding parking in Lancashire, especially around the transition from borough to county.

**Resolved:** That the report be noted.

## **10. Urgent Business**

There were no items of Urgent Business

## **11. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Internal Scrutiny Committee would take place on Friday 21 September 2018 at 10.00am in Cabinet Room B (The Diamond Jubilee Room) at the County Hall, Preston.

L Sales  
Director of Corporate Services

County Hall  
Preston