

Lancashire County Council

External Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Monday, 4th June, 2018 at 10.30 am in Committee Room 'B' (The Diamond Jubilee Room) - County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Edward Nash psc (Chair)

County Councillors

D Stansfield	G Oliver
A Ali	M Salter
C Crompton	J Shedwick
D Foxcroft	P Steen
T Martin	C Towneley
Mrs L Oades	

County Councillors Matthew Salter and Peter Steen replaced County Councillors Anne Cheetham and Jayne Rear respectively.

County Councillor Erica Lewis attended the meeting under Standing Order D13(1).

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Constitution: Membership; Chair and Deputy Chair; and Terms of Reference of the External Scrutiny Committee

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

Resolved: That;

- i. The appointment of County Councillors Edward Nash psc and David Stansfield as Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee for the remainder of the municipal year 2018/19 be noted;
- ii. The 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 Meetings held on 6 March 2018 and 10 October 2017

Resolved: That the minutes from the meetings held on 6 March 2018 and 10 October 2017 be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

5. Flood Risk Management Partnership working

The Chair welcomed Rachel Crompton, LCC Flood Risk Manager; Tony Griffiths, United Utilities plc; and Tim Armour, United Utilities plc; to the meeting. A copy of the presentation delivered at the meeting is set out in the minutes.

The report gave a particular focus to the partnership working with United Utilities plc, the water company providing services to the majority of Lancashire's residents. During consideration of the item, it was noted that local water companies were not statutory consultees in regard to planning applications. Members felt that water companies should be at the forefront in regard to planning applications. United Utilities were the only Risk Management Authority who were not a statutory consultee but did work closely with local planning authorities and the lead local flood authority to identify what their requirements were. United Utilities recognised the need to work much earlier with property developers. The committee was informed that LCC would assess the flood risk assessments that accompanied planning applications.

It was expected that all Flood Risk Management Authorities maintain their asset base to reduce flood risk and make sufficient provision for this to be achieved.

It was noted that United Utilities were proposing, subject to approval from Ofwat, to more than treble their current levels of spend on flooding. United Utilities was also one of the water companies leading the way in the adoption of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

It was noted that United Utilities offered domestic support for people affected by floods. They also publicised information, advice and guidance on their website and mobile app to assist residents.

The committee was informed that when investigating a reported flood, the council applied a triage process. If the flooding had been caused by a river the council relied on the Environment Agency to respond. If it was in relation to sewers then the council relied on United Utilities to respond. If there was too much water in an area that was not designed to take it, the council would work with the community and where a flood action group would be beneficial in bridging the communication gap.

Members enquired about the efficiency of unblocking of culverts. It was reported that responsibility for cleaning the culverts depended on who owned the land where the culverts were. The Council's powers were limited by the Land Drainage Act and the responsibility was with the landowners for maintaining and repairing culverts. The council would need considerable evidence that there was a serious problem and flood was a real risk before it could intervene.

Members enquired how reliant United Utilities were on European funding and whether Brexit would affect existing projects. It was reported that there were some projects in place such as Natural Course (<http://naturalcourse.co.uk/>). A partnership project between Environment Agency, The Canal and Rivers Trust, Natural England and United Utilities building capacity to protect and improve the North West's water environment. This was a ten year project for which funding had already been agreed for this project.

On developing opportunities for natural flood risk management, members noted that the council as lead local flood authority would need to be more engaged with organisations for which the council had good but remote relationships with. It was suggested that natural flood risk management be added to the Committee's work programme for 2018/19.

Resolved: That;

- i. The report be noted;
- ii. The External Scrutiny Committee writes to the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to reconsider making water companies a statutory consultee on all planning applications; and
- iii. Natural flood risk management be added to the External Scrutiny Committee's work programme for 2018/19.

6. External Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2018/19

The report presented set out the External Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for the municipal year 2018/19.

Resolved: That;

- i. The External Scrutiny Work Programme 2018/19 be noted;
- ii. County Councillor Azhar Ali be appointed as a rapporteur on the issue of unlocking brownfield sites across Lancashire; and
- iii. County Councillor Carl Crompton be appointed as a rapporteur on the impact of Brexit and advanced manufacturing.

7. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

8. Date of Next Meeting and Future Meetings

The next meeting of the External Scrutiny Committee would take place on Tuesday 17 July 2018 at 10.30am in Cabinet Room B (The Diamond Jubilee Room) at the County Hall, Preston.

Future meetings of the Committee for 2018/19 municipal year were as follows:

- 16 October 2018
- 22 January 2019

- 16 April 2019

All meetings would commence at 10:30am

L Sales
Director of Corporate Services

County Hall
Preston