

Lancashire County Council

External Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 15th October, 2019 at 10.00 am in Committee Room 'B' - The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Edward Nash PSC (Chair)

County Councillors

D Stansfield	D Foxcroft
L Beavers	T Martin
J Burrows	Oades
A Cheetham	G Oliver
S Clarke	J Shedwick
C Crompton	

County Councillor Lorraine Beavers replaced County Councillor Azhar Ali for this meeting. County Councillor Joan Burrows was welcomed to the committee as a permanent replacement for County Councillor Cosima Towneley.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None were disclosed.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 July 2019

Resolved: That the minutes from the meeting held on 16 July 2019, be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. Supporting vulnerable customers - Electricity North West

The Chair welcomed from Electricity North West, Jo Crinson, Head of Customer Contact; Jill Hendry, Welfare Engagement and Partnership Lead; and Helen Norris, Stakeholder Engagement and Responsibility Framework Manager, to the meeting.

Electricity North West (ENW) were looking to work with Lancashire County Council and local authorities in the region to promote the Priority Services Register (PSR) and raise awareness so vulnerable customers knew help was available and how to receive it. ENW had invested in a Social Data Mapping Tool to identify its most impoverished and impacted areas of its communities so as to work towards creating partnerships in those areas.

ENW had recently launched a separate PSR for Small and Medium Business Enterprises (SMEs). SMEs were affected by power cuts and this could have a big impact on them financially. SMEs who signed up would receive 30 days' notice of any planned power cuts, advice on the contingency arrangements and consultation over avoiding the most disruptive times for routine work.

Members were informed that ENW currently shared its Priority Services data with United Utilities. This would assist customers in getting all the help they needed. This had set the bar for all water and energy companies to share their data and create a single PSR.

ENW currently promoted the PSR through their partners. They also attended events across the region when possible. Information was also provided on ENW's website. ENW had just recently started working with job centres across the region.

Organisations and agencies suggested by the committee for ENW to contact and promote their Priority Services Register included:

- Food banks.
- Parish and Town Councils
- Housing associations such as the Progress Housing Group.
- Attending Safe Road Users 60+ workshop events
- Lancashire 50+ Assembly and its locality forums.
- Libraries and MPs surgeries.
- Lancashire Care Association.
- District councils as they issued Council Tax bills across the county.
- GP surgeries via NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups. A number of the surgeries had TV Screens displaying public information and ENW could use these to display information on PSRs.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner's victim services.

In formulating recommendations the Committee felt that Cabinet and Lancashire Leaders should be asked to review all areas of responsibility to identify opportunities to promote the register where vulnerable people might contact or engage with frontline services. In addition it was also suggested that Electricity North West should link in with the work being undertaken on social prescribing by the relevant partners within the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care System.

Resolved: That;

1. Cabinet and Lancashire Leaders review all areas of responsibility to identify opportunities to promote the Priority Services Register where vulnerable people might contact or engage with frontline services.
2. A Bite Size Briefing on Electricity North West's Priority Services Register be arranged for all members of the county council.
3. Electricity North West consider linking in with the Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care System and the organisations and agencies listed in the minutes above to promote their Priority Services Register.

5. Low Carbon Rapporteur Report and Chair's update

The Chair, County Councillor Ed Nash psc, updated the committee on rapporteur activities he undertook on the subject of Low Carbon. This included:

- Reviewing Lancashire policy from 2009.
- Attending a workshop held by Electricity North West in Preston.
- Visiting Lancaster City Council and Fylde Borough Council. He discovered that district councils were looking for guidance and leadership from Lancashire County Council on carbon reduction. They were also looking for a practical way of providing advice, guidance and incentives to house building.
- Meeting with Angie Ridgwell, the Chief Executive of Lancashire County Council.
- Visiting two local building firms, and one local heating and lighting company.
- Attending Lancaster City Council's Climate Action Day.

The Chair had concluded that district councils in Lancashire were looking for guidance and leadership from the county council on carbon reduction.

During this item County Councillor Michael Green, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Environment and Planning was invited to the table to answer any questions in connection with his written response to recommendations made by the External Scrutiny Committee meeting of 16 July 2019 when it considered a report from Electricity North West on Leading the North West to Zero Carbon. A copy of the written response which was received on 11 October 2019, is set out in the minutes.

The Cabinet Member reassured the committee he was committed to holding a Green Summit during 2020.

Regarding the establishment of a Cabinet Committee on carbon reduction it was felt that the programme should be overseen by the leaders of councils in Lancashire to provide the necessary municipal leadership and to ensure consistency with the Climate Emergency declarations of councils in the county, rather than being overseen by a committee of Lancashire County Council. It was reported that this work would be undertaken via one of the work streams as part of the Greater Lancashire Plan being prepared by Lancashire Leaders. It was suggested that the Committee could scrutinise the Plan.

It was noted that district councils and the unitary authorities in Lancashire were already required to make carbon reduction a consistent factor in all planning applications and local plans. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) set out the obligation to plan for new development that reduced greenhouse gas emissions and adapted to climate change. The NPPF went beyond the committee's recommendation by promoting development that reduced the need to travel or promoted sustainable travel. It also promoted site layout to reduce carbon emissions.

On Universal Credit the committee was informed that contact had been made with the Department for Work and Pensions and discussions were ongoing with a view to inviting them to attend a future meeting of the External Scrutiny Committee. The Chair had recently attended a Veterans Agency briefing which included a presentation by Professor Lisa Scullion of Salford University on the effects of Universal Credit. Professor Scullion would be invited to attend a future meeting of the committee to present her research findings.

It was hoped that the Strengthening Flood Risk Management and Preparedness in Lancashire Task and Finish Group would present its final report at the November meeting of the External Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved: That the Low Carbon Rapporteur Report, Chair's Update and the written response from the Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Environment and Planning be noted.

6. External Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2019/20

The report presented set out the External Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for the municipal year 2019/20.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

7. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the External Scrutiny Committee would take place on Tuesday 26 November 2019 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