

Lancashire County Council

Internal Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting Held on Friday 4 March 2022 at 10.00am in Committee Room 'B' - The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor David O'Toole (Chair)

County Councillors

J Berry	T Hurn
G Dowding	E Lewis
J Fillis	P Rigby
S Hind	S Smith
A Hindle	

County Councillor Gina Dowding replaced County Councillor Andy Fewings for this meeting only.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from County Councillor John Shedwick.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

No interests were declared.

3. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 21 January 2022

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on Friday 21 January 2022 be confirmed as an accurate record.

4. Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles

The Chair welcomed to the meeting County Councillor Rob Bailey, Lead Member for Highways and Transport, Andrew Burrows, Fleet Services Manager, and Phil Durnell, Director of Highways.

The committee received a report which provided an update on the county council's move to ultra-low and zero tailpipe emission vehicles. This contributed to county council objectives to reduce harmful emissions from its own fleet of vehicles, and to improve the environment and public health within Lancashire.

The report detailed measures to introduce ultra-low emission vehicles into the fleet, the challenge this presented, how this could be overcome, and what technology and options were available to the fleet in the future.

Comments and queries from the committee were as follows:

- The committee was concerned about the plan to meet the county council's target to transition the Lancashire economy away from carbon by 2030. It was clarified that the majority of the fleet vehicles were within the Highways Service, where the decarbonisation plan was to reduce the service's carbon footprint by 25% by 2025, 50% by 2030, and 100% by 2035. It was further queried why there was a discrepancy between the Highway Service's operational plan and the county council's target; officers would investigate the discrepancy and feedback to the committee.
- On the capacity of public charging points to charge fleet service vehicles, it was noted that the charging infrastructure was underpowered and public charging stations did not always work or work at their full capacity. The county council would need to fund its own charging stations to ensure reliability. It was suggested by the committee that the county council could make arrangements with district councils to provide an extended network of charging stations.
- The committee was informed that a tank of hydrogen fuel would reach similar distances as a tank of petrol or diesel. Whilst the hydrogen infrastructure was anticipated to follow demand, there was the possibility of the county council installing hydrogen tanks at fleet depots in the future.
- There were concerns about the combustibility of hydrogen. It was expected that the technology to deliver and store hydrogen safely would arrive in the next few years and it was considered a viable alternative to fossil fuels.
- In response to members' queries about the county council initiating partnership work in Lancashire to progress electric vehicle infrastructure, the committee were assured that officers had met partners such as Cadent and BP to discuss developing fleet and domestic infrastructure.

It was noted that the 2030 target was to transition the Lancashire economy away from carbon, but that the county council was unlikely to be completely carbon-free. To achieve net zero, some of the carbon produced could be offset.

Resolved: That the report on progress to introduce ultra-low emissions vehicles to Lancashire County Council's fleet be noted.

5. Update on the Proposal for a Task Group regarding Public Realm Agreements

The committee considered the scoping document for a Task Group on Public Realm Agreements, which had been drafted in consultation with officers in the

Highways Service following the Internal Scrutiny Committee meeting on 21 January 2022.

Comments from the committee were as follows:

- The task group could be used as an opportunity to share good practice and solutions between the county council, district councils, and community groups.
- Clarification could be provided for members regarding the roles and remits set out by the Public Realm Agreements between district councils and the county council.
- Regarding the focus of the task group, it was suggested that improvement could be made to Public Realm Agreements in terms of seamless service delivery and customer experience for residents. Both the county council and district council could take more ownership when queries were received from members of the public in order to shape the service provided for residents.
- Members recognised that the task group needed to balance the needs and wants of residents, whilst taking into consideration financial limitations and supporting biodiversity.

It was noted that the Highways Service welcomed the task group, which would help to bring clarity and an opportunity to refresh the agreements with the district councils. Meetings between officers had also been put in place to aid this task.

Resolved: That a Task Group on Public Realm Agreements be established, as set out by the scoping document at Appendix 'A'.

6. Report of the Budget Scrutiny Review Panel

The committee received a report from the Budget Scrutiny Review Panel, which presented a brief overview of matters at its meeting held on 2 February 2022.

Resolved: That the report of the Budget Scrutiny Review Panel be noted.

7. Work Programme 2021/22

The committee considered the work programmes for the Internal Scrutiny Committee and other scrutiny committees.

It was noted that, at its meeting on 31 January 2022, the Audit, Risk, and Governance Committee received an Internal Audit Progress report which highlighted the importance of effective scrutiny and the county council's 'Think Scrutiny' guidance.

Members also highlighted the importance of 'Think Councillor' and expressed their hope that officers joining the county council were briefed to keep elected members informed.

The Chair agreed to raise the committee's views on scrutiny and 'Think Councillor' with the Executive.

Resolved: That the scrutiny committee work programmes 2021/22 be noted.

8. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

9. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Internal Scrutiny Committee would take place on Friday 22 April 2022 at 10:00am in Committee Room 'B' – The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston.

L Sales
Director of Corporate Services

County Hall
Preston