

## **Lancashire County Council**

### **Scrutiny Committee**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday, 13th May, 2016 at 10.00 am in Cabinet Room 'B' - The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston**

#### **Present:**

County Councillor Bill Winlow (Chair)

#### **County Councillors**

C Crompton	C Pritchard
G Driver	J Shedwick
S Holgate	R Shewan
Mrs L Oades	D Watts
D O'Toole	G Wilkins
M Parkinson	

County Councillor Geoff Driver replaced County Councillor Vivien Taylor and County Councillor Steven Holgate replaced County Councillor Alyson Barnes for this meeting.

#### **1. Apologies**

None were received

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

None were disclosed

#### **3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 April 2016**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

#### **4. EP&R and FRM Joint Report Winter Floods 2015**

The Chair welcomed Alan Wilton, Head of Service Emergency Planning and Resilience; Rachel Crompton, Flood Risk Manager; and Jim Walker from the Environment Agency to the meeting. A report was presented outlining the County Council's involvement in response and recovery, and the subsequent flood risk management activities, to the wide-spread floods in December 2015. The report included reference to the engagement with affected parties, organisational

parties, central government and the Environment Agency and the longer-term measures that might be required to improve flood risk management.

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

- The Committee wished to have their thanks and appreciation recorded to all those involved in any way in response to the floods.
- Members were informed Emergency Planning was looking to improve training to senior staff.
- Evidence was being compiled in order to make bids to Defra regarding flood risk management.
- It was pointed out to the Committee that during the crucial period of the floods the Environment Agency had drawn in 350 plus additional staff from around the country.
- Members stated the main problem on Boxing Day 2015 was communication and enquired how many people had tried to contact LCC.
- The issue of the secondary pumps at Alt Crossens was raised and discussed. It was agreed to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Planning and Cultural Services that the County Council worked with the Environment Agency and other partners to resurrect the Internal Drainage Board.
- Committee Members were asked to flag up specific examples where they felt the Environment Agency had not been robust enough in challenging planning applications for developments on flood plains and pass them on to Jim Walker of the Environment Agency.
- The North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee had made great steps in improving community resilience.
- Members felt there should be a protocol in place and stronger links between the Communications Service and the Emergency Planning Team to raise the profile and visibility of the County Council's response to flooding events. It was confirmed that the intention was to pick this up as part of the de-brief process.
- County Councillor Dereli attended as an observer but spoke with the Committee's consent. She asked if the Committee would consider the impact of canals, their maintenance and how they affected flooding events. The Chair noted this and said it would be considered as a potential future issue for consideration.

- Members enquired if the Environment Agency (EA) had identified where the problems were regarding the flooding in Whalley. They were informed that the EA was working closely with LCC and other partners about what had occurred in Whalley. Whalley was a complicated area when it came to flooding due to the geography of the area. The EA was identifying a number of actions to take in the near future and a flood action group had been developed in the area. On the subject of the flood damage in St. Michael's, the temporary work on flood damage had been completed but there was still more work to do on long term repairs and to consider future developments.
- All drainage authorities had stepped up their efforts since the December floods.
- The Committee was informed that LCC was principally looking to Defra for funding and £6 million had been earmarked for Lancashire schemes.
- The Committee requested a report back in October to update on progress with repairs, diagnostics for longer term repairs and programmes of works identified and how work was progressing to increase the resilience of communities and improve communication.
- Alan Wilton, Head of Service Emergency Planning, informed the Committee he would be taking a paper to Management Team in the next few weeks on the de-brief process. The Committee requested that this paper be shared with Members as soon as possible.

**Resolved:**

1. That the response to date be noted and the Committee's advice on further appropriate response activities be expressed.
2. That a progress update report be brought back to the Scrutiny Committee in October.
3. That the Committee's thanks and appreciation to all those involved in response to the flooding be recorded.

**5. Work Plan and Task Group Update**

Andrew Mullaney, Head of Planning and Environment, attended the meeting regarding the letter drafted by the Planning Matters Task Group to the Secretary of State. He suggested that it would be helpful to gather more robust evidence, to support the Task Group's conclusions, for inclusion in the letter before sending it to the Secretary of State. It was agreed that Members would send concrete

examples of specific instances of development issues to Andy and he would explore these with colleagues in Highways and Education. A revised letter to the Secretary of State would then be drafted.

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 and Task Groups that had recently been established.

**Resolved:**

1. That the Committee note the report
2. That the Committee agree to a revised letter to the Secretary of State from the Planning Matters Task Group being drafted.

**6. Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

**7. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee will take place on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2016 at 10.00 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