

Lancashire County Council

Internal Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday, 17th November, 2017 at 10.00 am in Cabinet Room 'B' - The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Jayne Rear (Chair)

County Councillors

A Ali	P Rigby
J Fillis	A Riggott
S Holgate	A Schofield
E Lewis	D Whipp
E Nash	G Wilkins
D O'Toole	

County Councillor Alan Schofield replaced County Councillor John Shedwick for this meeting.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None were disclosed.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 September 2017

Regarding **Item 4 – The County Council's Expenditure on Statutory and Non-Statutory Services, and Income Generation Activities**, there was a request to add, "The Base Budget Review process completed in 2015 was a desktop exercise to identify the minimum statutory services required and where the County Council would stand in relation to any possible legal action".

Resolved: That the minutes from the meeting held on 21 July 2017 be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. Transport Asset Management Plan

The Chair welcomed Mel Ormesher, Head of Asset Management; and Paul Binks, Highway Asset Manager, to the meeting.

The report presented explained that the Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) was approved in 2014 and identified the key strategic priorities of the County Council, as highway authority for Lancashire, during the period 2015-16 to 2029-30.

The Committee was informed that the updating of the MARIO/Mapzone was an ongoing piece of work. Reassurance was given that the data used within the TAMP refresh was robust. Members requested an update on timescales for the completion of the asset data update and it was reported that the Highways Asset Management Team was still in the process of migrating highways data to MARIO. Members would be updated on when the migration would be completed.

It was confirmed that Customer Access now flagged queries from Parish Councillors so they could be tracked. A working group, which was in its early stages, had been set up to look at the flow of information from Customer Access linking with the HAMS system.

The website for the reporting process of complaints was felt to be not very efficient for phone use and worked much better on laptops. Members enquired if the website could be optimised for phone use with the possibility of a GPS app.

It was pointed out that United Utilities repair work was improving and LCC would continue to hold them to account through inspection of their works. In addition, ongoing meetings were being held with United Utilities. The Committee requested for the updated pothole policy to be brought back to a future meeting for review prior to formal approval.

In regards to street lighting there had been a £70m grant for LED replacements. Complaints had been received from the public that the new street lamps were not as good as the old ones especially in residential areas. Members requested further investigation into the complaints.

The Highways Asset Management Team was looking at making the reporting of highways issues more accessible. Members suggested links on district councils' websites to the MARIO system would be a help.

Regarding the issue of white lines painted around potholes and the delays in repairs, the Team would take this back and look at the time between the lines being painted and the repair.

Resolved: That the report presented and the progress on delivery of the TAMP be noted.

5. Winter Gritting Service

The Chair welcomed Phil Durnell, Head of Service Highways; Ridwan Musa, Highways Manager; Harvey Danson, Area Highways Manager; and Dwayne Lowe, Area Highways Manager to the meeting.

The report presented explained that LCC aimed to provide a winter gritting service which, as far as is reasonably practicable, would ensure that safe passage along a highway was not endangered by snow or ice.

Preparations for winter was an all year round process and Highways had a Winter Maintenance Group in place. The Group met every month and looked at current and future practices, and, what lessons could be learnt from the previous year. The Winter Service plan set out LCC's requirements and advice for the Winter Service on all highways for which LCC was the highway authority.

Regarding climate change, Members enquired if the Highways team had a contingency plan in place for the variety of weather issues. The gritters were on 24 hour standby for severe weather. There were resources in place for the different weather issues. Additional staff were on standby as gritter drivers were only allowed to drive for 12 hours.

There was a new draft guidance currently being looked at and it had been discussed with the National Winter Resilience Group. It had also been tabled at various service groups that the Highways Team attended. The Team was currently looking to understand the data provided to allow it to be implemented in the winter Maintenance Plan. It was felt that the revised guidance should come to the Internal Scrutiny Committee prior to going to the Cabinet Member so as to give Members a chance to comment.

A proposal was put forward for a Task and Finish Group to be established to review the amount of grit bins currently in place and where they are placed. It would also look to review the criteria used to agree grit bin placement.

In terms of Twitter information on gritting, the Highways Team would consult with the Communications Team to see if the information could be more finely tuned for the public to identify where gritting had been done.

Resolved: That;

- i. The preparations that are in place for the Winter Gritting Service 2017/18 be reviewed and scrutinised.
- ii. That the requirements to implement revised guidance for treatment when ice/hoar frost/snow is forecast be noted.
- iii. That the Implementation Navtrak guidance software to all gritters be noted.
- iv. That the requirement for the Installations of a weighbridge at Singleton depot over the forthcoming season be noted.
- v. That the requirement for the replacement of the weather stations be noted.

6. Highway Verges

Along with Ridwan Musa, Highways Manager; the Chair welcomed Rob Wilson, Senior Engineer, to the meeting.

The report presented stated that the Lancashire County Council Highway Maintenance Plan (HMP) provided a comprehensive Code of Practice in the form of guidance and operational standards for the maintenance and related management of the publicly maintainable highway infrastructure network. This included grass cutting and weed control.

The Committee was informed that from 2018/19, funding was to increase. As a result, LCC had distributed some of the extra funding to the district councils for their blanket weed clearing programmes. Members questioned the monitoring of the Service's work and compliance with the regulations. They also questioned if the additional funding to the Service was making a difference. It was confirmed that the item on Highway Verges and the extra funding would be added to the work plan for a future meeting.

Members enquired if there was guidance and assurance for people from local communities around the clearing of weeds and grass cutting in public areas. This action would be taken back to work with the Communications Team looking at updating the Highways website with self-help advice.

Resolved: That;

- i. The arrangements that are in place for highway verges - grass cutting and weed control be reviewed and scrutinised.
- ii. That the additional funding for 2017/18 and the additional work to be undertaken be noted.
- iii. That the additional funding for 2018/19 and the following two years and how that will be allocated to grass cutting and weed control be noted.
- iv. That the developments regarding future weed control be noted.

7. Internal Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2017/18

The work plan for the Internal Scrutiny Committee for the 2017/18 year was presented. The topics included were identified at the work planning workshop held on 23 June 2017.

The new Task and Finish Group (discussed under Item 5) was agreed to be set up to look at before April 2018 the next winter plan for the Committee's information.

It was confirmed that the subject of street lighting would stay on the work plan.

The Committee agreed the topics to be considered at the next scheduled meeting on 19 January 2018.

Resolved: That the work plan be noted.

8. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would take place on Friday 19 January 2018 at 10.00am 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