

Lancashire County Council

Internal Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday, 18th January, 2019 at 10.00 am in Cabinet Room 'B' - The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor David O'Toole (Chair)

County Councillors

J Rear	P Rigby
J Fillis	A Riggott
S Holgate	M Salter
M Iqbal	D Whipp
E Lewis	G Wilkins
E Nash	

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 November 2018

Resolved: That the minutes from the meeting held on 16 November 2018 be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. Grit Bins and Non-Priority Routes - Response to Recommendations of the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group

The Chair welcomed County Councillor Keith Iddon, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport; Phil Durnell, Head of Service Highways; and Ridwan Musa, Highways Manager, to the meeting.

In September 2018 the Internal Scrutiny Committee published a task and finish group report on a review of grit bins and non-priority routes. In accordance with agreed protocols, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport had been asked to provide a response to the task and finish group's recommendations as detailed in the report.

Members thanked the Cabinet Member for the largely positive response and proactive stance taken.

Regarding data held on the location of grit bins in the Highways Asset Management System (HAMS), whilst the system was not perfect, much progress was being made. The committee was assured that data held on the old systems including paper copies and spreadsheets would not be lost and would match up with HAMS system.

It was highlighted that increasingly a number of new estates often did not have adopted roads and therefore no grit bins or other services were provided. It was noted that roads needed to be brought up to a certain standard before they could be adopted by the council, however LCC was working with developers to take this forward.

A question was raised about what the county council provided in terms of kit and equipment to recognised volunteer groups who could help fill the gaps, as it was recognised that the county council could not respond to every request. It was agreed that a pilot volunteer group would be set up in the Pendle Rural division which would also take into consideration the kit requirements.

The committee welcomed the opportunity to explore working with the Youth Offending Team and Safer Lancashire Community Payback Teams to assist with snow clearing and gritting. The legalities of implementing this were being looked at, but it was hoped that these recommendations could be implemented in time for next winter.

The Cabinet Member informed members that he would work with borough councils regarding Section 106 Agreement money in terms of engaging or diverting some of this money towards the winter service.

In reference to reviewing grit bin locations every two years it was suggested that the county council engage with Parish and Town Councils to see if this was a task they could assist with. It was agreed this proposal would be explored further.

In terms of contracts for snow clearing for farmers and local residents, there were concerns that the tendering process was quite complex and there might be value in simplifying the process and making it user friendly. The problem was that there were legalities with the contracts and certain questions had to be asked. The county council did offer help to people completing the tender forms if needed.

Members requested a Bite Size Briefing to be arranged on winter gritting and how county councillors could help more. It was noted that there was a printed document available on the Winter Service with various telephone contacts which would be circulated to members.

Resolved: The Internal Scrutiny Committee receive the report on the responses by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.

5. Report of the Reducing Single Use Plastics in Lancashire Task and Finish Group

The Chair welcomed County Councillor Gina Dowding, Chair of the Reducing Single Use Plastics (SUP) in Lancashire Task and Finish Group, to the meeting. The report presented provided the findings of task and finish group.

The committee noted that there had already been some successes across the County Hall complex. Plastic cups had been removed for staff and in public areas such as the Committee floor and replaced with glassware. A number of packaging items and the cutlery and hot drink cups and lids in the Reflections café had been replaced with new material that was fully biodegradable. Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) had now extended the types of plastics they collected to include pots, tubs and trays.

The recommendations from the task and finish group had been split into short, medium and long term recommendations as it was acknowledged that much of the desired change could only take place once existing contracts with suppliers had expired. The task and finish group now wanted the Heads of Service to look in more detail at the more difficult issues such as food packaging, cleaning materials etc. and introduce internal targets for the reduction of SUP use. Another important recommendation to get members up to speed on the whole issue of plastics, was No. 7: a Bite Size Briefing be held for County Councillors on the issues of plastic waste and what was being done to address this and what role county councillors could play. It was felt this should be arranged as soon as possible.

It was important to target families and child care facilities and ensure that people were aware of the significant issues that could be caused by baby wipes, often many of which contained plastic in them. Many of these wipes were being flushed away and causing blockages in the sewage systems.

In terms of posters being displayed in all county buildings to promote, educate and encourage the council's workforce to help with the reduction of SUP products, the committee felt social media graphics should also be incorporated which could then be shared with constituents and local businesses.

Regarding engaging with schools, it was important to use the School's Forum to push the ideas forward. There needed to be a budget found for educating all county staff, the public and other organisations.

Regarding plastic litter being disposed of on grass verges, the committee was informed that the collection of this litter lay with the borough councils and the county council cut the grass verges. There needed to be coordination between the borough councils and the county council as to when grass cutting took place to ensure that litter needed to be picked up before the cutting of the verges. The committee was in agreement regarding LCC to invest in moveable signs that could help deter the public from littering from their cars.

Resolved: The Internal Scrutiny Committee;

- i. Support the recommendations of the task and finish group.
- ii. Consider writing to Central Government in regards to setting out legislation for the banning of sky lanterns across Lancashire.
- iii. Receive an update report in six months' time.
- iv. Arrange a Bite Size Briefing for county councillors on the issues of plastic waste and what was being done to address this and what role county councillors could play.

6. Budget Savings Update 2018/19

The Chair welcomed Neil Kissock, Director of Finance, and Richard Hothersall, Head of Service Programme Office, to the meeting.

The report presented provided an update as requested by the Internal Scrutiny Committee on specific areas for savings identified from the 2018/19 budget.

The cuts from Local Member Grants, Central Gateway Grants and the Local Initiative Fund was raised. There were proposals that local voluntary and community groups were expected to help more and more with delivering services whilst grants to these groups had been cut. An update request was made to update Members on the impact of cuts to voluntary groups.

In terms of Street Light Maintenance and the ceasing of night time inspections, Highways were now entirely reliant on receiving reports from the public. It was felt that this was a cut in service as less repairs would be completed. There was a request that this situation be looked at on a regular basis as repairs were likely to back up. It was noted that due to the investment and the lifespan of the new lighting units, Highways were in a position where these lights did not have to be inspected as frequently. It was reported to committee that Highways workmen still went out at night to do other jobs but would report faulty lights. Councillors reported faults as well as the public. Things had improved.

Resolved: The Internal Scrutiny Committee;

- i. Note the report presented.
- ii. Include as part of the work programme an update on the impact on voluntary groups.
- iii. Request a further update on the budget savings at a future meeting.

7. Internal Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2018/19

The work plan for the Internal Scrutiny Committee for the 2018/19 year was presented. The topics included were identified at the work planning workshop held on 2 July 2018.

Resolved: That the report presented be noted.

8. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Internal Scrutiny Committee would take place on Friday 15 March 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