

Lancashire County Council

Internal Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday, 13th March, 2020 at 10.00 am in Cabinet Room 'B' - The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Matthew Salter (Chair)

County Councillors

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| T Ashton | E Nash |
| L Beavers | P Rigby |
| J Fillis | P Steen |
| S Holgate | D Whipp |
| E Lewis | G Wilkins |

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from County Councillor David O'Toole.

County Councillor Matthew Salter chaired the meeting in the absence of County Councillor David O'Toole.

County Councillor Lorraine Beavers replaced County Councillor Carl Crompton for this meeting.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None were disclosed.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 January 2020

Resolved: That the minutes from the meeting held on 17 January 2020 be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. Gully Cleaning Policy and Attendance

The Chair welcomed County Councillor Keith Iddon, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport; John Davies, Head of Service Highways; Paul Binks, Highways Asset Manager; and Rob Wilson, Area Highways Manager, to the meeting.

The report and presentation shared detailed information in regards to gully repairs including the policies and performance around gully cleaning, budget headline figures, Code of Practice and the Capital Drainage Programme and how members of the public could report issues. The Highway Team were thanked for all the excellent work that they did.

The Capital Highway Drainage Schemes was raised and it was questioned how long it had been since the budget for the scheme had been increased. The committee was informed that this was an issue and had been brought to the attention of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, it was hoped that more funds would be put into the scheme.

Members enquired about what was being done in areas where gullies were completely covered by vegetation. It was noted that the county council was now sourcing these jobs out to sub-contractors to do, the Highways Team would still go out once a year to clean gullies. Regarding the use of sub-contractors the committee was informed that they had performance targets within the contracts for sub-contractors to ensure the work was completed to the necessary standards. With the new contract, members enquired if there would be an improvement in the cyclical cleaning of gullies. It was pointed out that the new contract would be closely monitored.

The committee raised the issue of vehicles being parked over gullies covering them and felt residents should be informed about when the gully cleaning vehicles were due to come out so they could move their cars. The Highways Team noted this was a problem and had already had discussions with the new contractor regarding this. They would try and use appropriate methods to ensure residents were informed in advance.

In relation to determining how roads were categorised, Priority 1, Priority 2 or Reactive, the committee was informed that the policy for these categories would be reviewed annually.

In regards to reporting a number of gully problems in close proximity to each other, members highlighted that each gully problem had to be reported individually and this was time consuming and frustrating.

The committee suggested that there should be more about prevention in the policy and that the county council should be working with others as part of an active program on prevention that would take the county forward. Members were reassured that the county council was working on this.

Resolved: That;

- i. The Internal Scrutiny Committee note the report and presentation.
- ii. The Internal Scrutiny Committee thanked the Highways Team for the work they do.

5. Pothole Policy and Repair Methods

The Chair welcomed County Councillor Keith Iddon, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport; John Davies, Head of Service Highways; Paul Binks, Highways Asset Manager; and Harvey Danson, Area Highways Manager.

The report and presentation shared detailed information in regards to the pothole policy and repair methods and included information on performance trends, the National Highways and Transportation Survey, budget headlines, the communication campaign and how members of the public could report issues. The committee was informed that there had been a considerable decline in the number of potholes.

Members welcomed the new full mechanical repair system and the quality of work it did, the issue of no sealing around the edges of repaired potholes was raised. It was noted that the Highways Team was looking to expand this process across the county.

One technique which the committee did not feel was always suitable was spray injection patching. It was pointed out that spray injection patching had been a learning process for the Highways Team. In some locations, like rural roads, it was the right repair process to use. It was about using the right treatment in the right place.

The committee enquired about how many roads were having patching repairs done instead of being resurfaced. It was pointed out to the committee that the Highways Team did not have sufficient funds to resurface all roads needing repair. The funds had to go into repairing of A, B and C roads. The Highways Team had requested further funding to help with this and it was hoped that this would be granted.

Members stated that on occasions residents reporting defects, had difficulties getting through to the contact centre. It was highlighted that the best way to report defects was through the Lancashire County Council Report It website and these would be looked at as soon as possible. The Highways Team wanted to encourage people to use the 'Report It' website but stated that the majority of the defects were picked up by the Highways Team's own inspectors.

Resolved: That:

- i. The Internal Scrutiny Committee note the report and presentation.

6. ICT and the Relationship with Members

The Chair welcomed County Councillor Peter Buckley, Cabinet Member for Community and Cultural Services; Glyn Peach, Chief Digital Officer; and Josh Mynott, Democratic and Member Services Manager, to the meeting.

The report presented provided an update to the Internal Scrutiny Committee on the current and forthcoming work relating to Member Development, the Digital Strategy and the BTLS Transition of ICT services back to Lancashire County Council.

The Member Development Working Group monitored and reviewed the member development programme. It ensured that training and development met

councillors' needs and also ensured that training was commissioned appropriately and effectively.

Lancashire County Council's Digital Strategy was approved by councillors in October 2019. The strategy set out the principles on how the county council would move towards a digital delivery model. The emerging priorities supplementing the digital strategy came from the Improvement Journey Programme. The priorities focused on customer experience, employee experience and strong foundation platforms.

Regarding the BTLS transition back to the county council, the committee was informed that the contract with BTLS would come to an end by March 2021. Once the transition programme was completed there were ten vision statements (programme outcomes) that the county council would aim to adhere to:

1. Be able to fully support the business from an IT perspective
2. Be able to look at potential cost savings across the business
3. Be able to procure new IT services
4. Be able to put plans in place to continue to improve the quality of the IT service we provide
5. Be in a position to provide commercially viable services to external third parties
6. Have a smooth Transition for our in-flight projects from BTLS to LCC (including all external projects with WLBC, LANCON, LCC initiated and BTLS initiated)
7. Have no licensing liabilities (under licenced software)
8. Have no unresolved compliancy issues
9. Have the management structure to run the service
10. Understand the cost of providing IT support at a business level & fully understand the breakdown of the cost and value of the returned services.

It was suggested that a Bite Size Briefing could be held in six months' time where the above ten vision statements could be looked at in more detail by county councillors.

It was noted that the level of IT skills varied hugely across all county councillors. It was vital and a challenge to provide a tailored solution for all county councillors. Lancashire County Council would continue to pilot and run schemes through the Member Development Working Group. This would mean member involvement in finding solutions.

Regarding the policy, members stated any policy should have clear targets for reducing the amount of paper the county council used and also the policy should have reference to disabilities. Reducing the amount of paperwork was an aspiration for the county council and it was looking at providing something for disabilities in the policy. Members who had a disability were encouraged to contact the Member Development Working Group.

Resolved: The Internal Scrutiny Committee note the report presented.

7. Internal Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2019/20

The Internal Scrutiny Committee work programme was presented to members along with the work programmes for the other scrutiny committees.

The topics included were identified at work planning workshops held during June and July 2019.

Resolved: 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 May 2020 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