



MINUTES

Internal Affairs Scrutiny Committee

Date:	Wednesday, 17 April 2024
Venue:	Council Chamber, Town Hall, St Annes
Committee Members Present:	Councillor Susan Fazackerley MBE (Chairman) Councillor John Kirkham (Vice-Chairman) Councillors Damian Buckley, Kelly Farrington, Cheryl Little, Ed Nash, Sandra Pitman, Richard Redcliffe, William Taylor, Viv Willder.
Other Councillors Present:	Councillor Karen Buckley (Leader of the Council) Councillor Michelle Morris (Lead Member - Customer and Operational Services)
Officers Present:	Tracy Manning, Mark Evans, Gemma Broadly, Maria Marcella, Cheryl Bennett, Lyndsey Lacey-Simone

Procedural Items

1. Declarations of Interest

Members were reminded that any disclosable pecuniary interests should be declared as required by the Localism Act 2011 and any personal or prejudicial interests should be declared as required by the Council's Code of Conduct for Members.

There were no Declarations of Interest on this occasion.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

It was RESOLVED: to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 February 2024 (previously circulated).

3. Substitute Members

There were no substitute members on this occasion.

Scrutiny Items

4. Wedding Service

Gemma Broadly (Head of Corporate Services) and Maria Marcella (Administrative Support and Facilities Manager) were invited by the Chairman to introduce the report. In doing so, they provided an overview of the Wedding Service (carried out at St Anne's Town Hall) and its performance since the service was introduced in 2018.

In summary, the report covered the following areas: background/ initial set up of the service, wedding ceremony operation; fees and charges; costs/income; licence arrangements; details of overall performance of the service and feedback together with details of the potential to grow the service further.

A copy of the Wedding Booking Form was included as an appendix to the report.

Following the presentation, the Chairman invited questions. Clarification was sought on matters associated with weekend/ bank holidays weddings; cancellation charges; comparative costs/charges; review of

charges; bookings/feedback; hospitality opportunities and designated car parking arrangements. Ms Broadley and Mrs Marcella addressed these points in turn.

Following consideration of this matter the Committee RESOLVED that the Wedding Service should continue as it is seen as a valuable service to the Council, however the Committee requested the Customer Services Support Team to consider and explore (i) opportunities to promote the service during the winter months (ii) increasing the number of designated car parking spaces at the Town Hall for the service and (iii) the feasibility of introducing a hospitality charge with a view to reporting back to Committee at a future date.

5. Updates and Amendments to the Disabled Facilities Grant, Adaptions Grant and Housing Assistance Policy

Cheryl Bennett (Principal Housing Officer) presented the report.

In summary, the report advised the Scrutiny Committee of the proposed amendments to the Housing Assistance Policy. This included updates on the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG); the Better Care Fund (BFC) adaptations grant; the addition of the Affordable Warmth Grant element to the Policy and the introduction of an extended warranty for customers on passported benefits.

The Chairman drew members attention to paragraph 1 of the report and indicated that the total figure relating to the Better Care Fund should read £1,345,187 and not £1,347, 120 as referred to in the report.

A copy of the updated Housing Assistance Policy was included as an appendix to the report. To enable the Scrutiny Committee to fully review the proposed amendments to the Policy, a track changed document was circulated at the meeting. Members were advised that any recommendations made would be reported to the Executive Committee at its meeting on 25 April.

Following the presentation, the Chairman invited questions. These related to the following areas: contract arrangements with lift providers; military compensation exemption; costs attached to removable items; repayment of grants and matters associated with demand/pattern of claims. The questions were addressed in turn by Ms Bennett.

It was RESOLVED to recommend to the Executive Committee approval of the updated Housing Assistance Policy as presented.

6. Update on Section 106 Monies currently held by Fylde Council

Further to the request of the Executive Committee on the 25th May 2023, Mark Evans (Head of Planning) provided the Committee with an update of the current position for Section 106 monies currently held with Fylde Council.

In summary, the report provided details of the funds currently held by Fylde Council and an overview of suitable schemes identified to ensure that the funds are spent ahead of any repayment deadline. Members were advised that each year, the Council also published an [Infrastructure-Funding-Statement-2022-23.pdf \(fylde.gov.uk\)](https://www.fylde.gov.uk/media/1000000/infrastructure-funding-statement-2022-23.pdf) which sets out how Section 106 funds had been spent to date.

Attached to the report was an appendix which detailed the following information:

- a. S106 Summary of balances to the 29th February 2024, including detailing the balance brought forward 1st April 2023, contributions received, expenditure to date, approved commitments.
- b. Approved Planned Schemes details planned schemes to the 29th February 2024 including the scheme name, budget holder, application reference the contribution was paid on, payment export and budget detail, with a scheme/budget holder comment.
- c. S106 Agreement Expiry further informs of the application and site location, current balance on that payment, commitments, the agreement expiry date and the status of the work. The expiry dates had been colour coded to reference how close the spend is to the expiry date.

By way of a further update, members were advised that the Council had recently procured the 'Legal Agreements' module that formed part of the MasterGov system which provides the back-office support for the Planning, Planning Enforcement, Building Regulations and Land Charges work of the council. Further details about this were highlighted in the report and at the meeting.

Following presentation of the report, the Chairman invited questions from the Committee. These related to the reminders regarding spend; phasing of the Heyhouses scheme/bus stops. Mr Evans addressed these points and in doing so, stated that he would confirm the position relating to the bus stop schemes at Phase 2 of the Heyhouses Site by email.

It was RESOLVED to note the contents of the report.

7. Planning Peer Review Action Plan - Monitoring Delivery

Mark Evans (Head of Planning) presented the updated report.

Further to the request of the Executive Committee that the Internal Affairs Scrutiny Committee oversee and monitor delivery of the approved Planning Peer Review Action Plan as a standing item on their agenda, Mr Evans presented the third in a series of monitoring reports that provided an update on the delivery of the individual actions contained in the plan.

A copy of the Planning Peer Review Action Plan Scrutiny Monitoring Report (March 2024) was included as an appendix to the report.

Mr Evans indicated that in terms of the town and parish councillor training (referred to in action 15.2 of the Action Plan), the training plan had been signed off on 16 April 2024 and as a result, this would be listed as complete on the Action Plan.

It was RESOLVED to note the progress made to date in delivering the action plan.

8. Ongoing Scrutiny Workplans - 2024

The Committee was provided with an update on the current work programme of the two scrutiny committees.

An extract of the current workplan was included as an appendix to the report.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

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