



MINUTES

Internal Affairs Scrutiny Committee

Date:	Tuesday, 21 November 2023
Venue:	Reception Room, Town Hall, St Annes
Committee Members Present:	Councillor Susan Fazackerley MBE (Chairman) Councillor John Kirkham (Vice-Chairman) Councillors Damian Buckley, Joanne Gardner, Cheryl Little, Ed Nash, Sandra Pitman, Richard Redcliffe, Andrew Redfearn, Bill Taylor, Viv Willder
Other Councillors Present:	Councillors Karen Buckley, Ellie Gaunt, Michelle Morris.
Officers Present:	Allan Oldfield, Tracy Manning, Paul O'Donoghue, Paul Walker, Ian Curtis, Ian Williamson, Charlie Richards, Mark Wilde, Clare Blyth, Lyndsey Lacey-Simone

The Vice- Chairman, Councillor John Kirkham was in the Chair for items 1, 2 and 3 below.

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. Substitute Members

There were no substitute members on this occasion.

3. Confirmation of Minutes

It was RESOLVED: to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 September 2023 (previously circulated).

Scrutiny Items

Variation of Business

The Chairman, Councillor Sue Fazackerley varied the business on the agenda as detailed below.

4. Information Rights Overview and Statistics

The Chairman invited Ian Curtis (Head of Governance) to present the report. In doing so, he advised that as part of the Council's commitment to openness and transparency, the Committee receive a yearly report about how the Council meets its obligations in relation to information rights. The report covered Freedom of Information, Environmental Information and Subject Access requests. Mr Curtis explained that the report was intended to help councillors understand the duties that the council has, its performance against statutory and other metrics and to set a benchmark for future comparison.

Clarification was sought on the increase in the number of requests since 2007 and whether this trend was replicated in other local authorities. The impact on resources was also raised. Mr Curtis addressed these points.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report and request that a similar report be brought to the committee each year.

5. Climate Neutral Action Plan

The Chairman invited Ian Williamson, Head of Environmental and Housing Services to introduce the report.

Members were advised that a Climate Neutral Action Plan had been prepared in response to ambitions set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-24. The report and plan reviewed the delivery and progress against the actions detailed in the document. Mr Williamson stated with the formation of a new Corporate Plan on the horizon, it was timely that members of the scrutiny committee review the ambitions and actions set within the current Corporate Plan.

Included as appendices to the report were: (i) Climate Change Action Planning document and (ii) Fylde Council Carbon Emissions Report.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the Chairman invited questions from members of the committee. Clarification was sought on paragraph 3.7 of the Action Plan relating to the timeline for the transition to electric fleet (currently listed for 2030). In addressing this point, Mr Williamson stated that whilst it was a live document and subject to change, he would confirm the position to members by way of email.

In commending the progress and ambitions listed, the Committee **RESOLVED** (i) to note the report and (ii) to establish a Task and Finish group comprising councillors Sue Fazackerley, Damian Buckley, Joanne Gardner, Bill Taylor, Viv Willder and Sandra Pitman to undertake a spotlight review on the topic with a view to reporting its findings to the Executive Committee.

6. Corporate Plan 2020-2024: Progress Review

Alex Scrivens, Corporate Performance and Engagement Officer was invited by the Chairman to present the report.

The report provided an update on progress against the actions in the Corporate Plan up to October 31st, 2023, with commentary on progress and performance status. Members were advised that the Corporate Plan formed part of the strategic planning framework which determines resource allocation across the council.

Members were asked to note that the COVID pandemic led to significant changes in resource allocation, responsibilities, and priorities for at least two years of the Corporate Plan period 2020 to 2024.

In presenting his report, Mr Scrivens highlighted a few updates since the publication of the agenda. Paragraph 5 of the report stated that the plan contained 82 actions, of which 73% (60) have been completed. Mr Scrivens explained that this had subsequently been amended to 82% being completed and 12 (not 13) had yet to reach the target date. In addition, 7 (not 9) actions were on track to be completed and 3 were to be removed.

Included as appendices to the report were (i) a copy of the Corporate Plan 2020 -2024 and (ii) Corporate Plan 2020-24: Progress to October 2023.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the Chairman invited questions from members of the committee. Further information was sought regarding the concept/vision and robustness the Corporate Plan and the ongoing monitoring/maintenance of the document. Mr Scrivens addressed these points.

In addition to the above, further information was sought on the proposal to implement a code of conduct scheme for professional/multiple dog walkers (developed by the Kennel Club) to receive Council accreditation. An update on the car parking options action with particular reference to the damaged barrier at Stannah Bank (Grannies Bay Car Park) was also sought. Mr Oldfield provided an update on both matters.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to note the progress made against the Corporate Plan actions outlined in Appendix 2 of the report for the period up to the end of October 2023.

7. Mid-Year Performance 2023/24

The report provided details of the key performance outcomes for the mid-year 2022/23. Performance was reported against the targets set for the year and commentary was also provided by performance exceptions covering indicators that are exceeding the target to date and those underperforming against the target to date. Alex Scrivens, Corporate Performance and Engagement Officer expanded on the details contained in the report.

Members were asked to note that the determination regarding the status of the performance is the measure against the current in-year target, not the previous year's out turn.

Following the presentation, the Chairman invited questions from members of the committee. Clarification was sought on the process for dealing with under performance and target setting. Some examples were given including the section within the document relating to food inspections/interventions. Tracy Manning and Alex Scrivens addressed these points as appropriate.

A further question was raised about the appropriateness of including a performance target within the suite of indicators relating to customer services. A particular example of a poor experience was given at the meeting. In response, Mr Scrivens explained the process involved for including key performance data in the suite of indicators and at the same time, he gave an undertaking to investigate the matter highlighted and report back to the councillor concerned.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** To note the report with a view to the performance measures being reviewed on an annual basis by the committee.

8. Planning Peer Review Action Plan - Monitoring Delivery

Paul Walker (Interim Scrutiny Manager) presented the updated report.

Members were advised that further to the request of the Executive Committee at its meeting on 17 October, the monitoring of the Planning Peer Review Action Plan would be included as a standing item for consideration at each meeting of the Internal Affairs Scrutiny Committee.

Mr Walker explained that the report was the first in a series of monitoring reports that would provide updates on the delivery of the individual actions contained in the plan. It was reported that each report would provide an update on the actions indicated for completion by the committee date and, in the event that a target date not been achieved, an explanation of why would be detailed in the report.

Clarification was sought on progress with regard to Section 9.8 of the Action Plan relating to the roll out of laptops to the planning team. Mr Walker stated that whilst the Plan suggested that this was behind schedule, it was expected that these devices would be operational by December 2023, which was proposed as a revised target date.

Following consideration of this matter, the Committee **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the progress made to date in delivering the action plan to date.
2. That the monitoring of the Planning Peer Review Action Plan be included as a standing item for consideration at each Internal Affairs Scrutiny Committee for the foreseeable future in line with the request of the Executive Committee.

9. Waste and Recycling Policy 2023

Clare Blyth, Waste and Fleet Manager was invited by the Chairman to introduce the report. In doing so, she provided an overview of the background/ rationale behind the policy. She then went on to explain that the report provided an update on the Waste and Recycling policy which was approved by Operational Management Committee in November 2021 to address carbon reduction issues as outlined in the Corporate Plan priorities.

It was reported that following the adoption and introduction of the Waste and Recycling Policy, several operational changes had since taken place, which needed to be reflected within the policy.

The updated Waste and Recycling Policy was attached as an appendix to the report.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the Chairman invited questions from members of the committee. These related to the following areas: Fylde's recycling rate; annual doorstep collections; Christmas tree collections; fly tipping and arrangements for battery collections. These were addressed in turn by Ms Blyth.

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

10. General Fund Revenue Budget Monitoring Report - Position as at 30th September 2023

Paul O'Donoghue, Chief Financial Officer presented an updated report on the General Fund Revenue Budget of the Council as at 30th September 2023.

One of the key challenges highlighted by Mr O'Donoghue was the impact of inflationary pressures. He explained that this had resulted in an increased number of adverse variances.

A copy of the General Fund Revenue Budget Monitoring Report - Position as at 30th September 2023 was included as an appendix to the report.

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

11. Capital Programme Monitoring Report - Position as at 30th September 2023

Paul O'Donoghue, Chief Financial Officer, presented an updated report on the approved Capital Programme of the Council as at 30th September 2023.

The report provided an in-year progress update in respect of those schemes within the Capital Programme that had been approved for delivery in 2023/24, together with an update on the overall five-year Capital Programme of the Council.

Mr O'Donoghue stated that inflation continued to exert significant upward pressure on prices for utilities and on supplies and services across all sectors of the economy, which in turn increased the base costs for both revenue and capital budget items. He added that this was likely to be a continuing issue for the Council throughout 2023/24 which had resulted in current scheme delays and reviews on scheme costings.

Included as appendices were (i) Capital Programme 2023/24 in-year scheme monitoring report as at 30/09/2023; (ii) the updated Capital Programme 2023/24 -By scheme; (iii) the updated Capital Programme 2023/24 - Financing and (iv) the updated Capital Programme 2023/24 -summary.

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

12. In-Depth Review - Regeneration

Paul Walker (Interim Scrutiny Manager) presented the report.

Further to the resolution of the Committee on 5 September 2023 to commence an in-depth scrutiny review on Regeneration, members were invited to consider/agree the proposed Scoping Document attached to the report and nominate members to be appointed to a Task and Finish Group to undertake the review.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that:

1. To agree to the detail of the proposed Scoping Document as set out in the report.
2. That the Task and Finish group comprising councillors Sue Fazackerley, John Kirkham, Richard Redcliffe, Damian Buckley, Cheryl Little, Joanne Gardner and Councillor Karen Buckley (Lead Member for Corporate & Economic Development) be appointed to undertake an in -depth review on Regeneration.

13. Ongoing Scrutiny Workplans - 2023/24

The Committee was provided with an update on the current work programme of the two scrutiny committees. Members were advised that going forward, this would be a standing item on the scrutiny agendas.

An update on the various amendments made to the workplan since the publication of the agenda was given at the meeting. Members were also reminded of the new arrangements for adding information items to the Councillor Hub.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to note the report and the amendments to the workplan as outlined at the meeting.

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