

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT TEAM
HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, NELSON
ON 21ST NOVEMBER, 2017**

PRESENT –

The Worship the Mayor (Councillor D. Whalley)

Councillor K. Turner – Chairman (In the Chair)

Councillors

*W. Blackburn
S. Cockburn-Price
D. Lord*

*B. Newman
K. Shore
S. Wicks*

Also present

Councillor D. Whipp Council's representative on the Lancashire Police and Crime Panel

Officers in attendance

*P. Mousdale Corporate Director
L. Rowland Committee Administrator*

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N. Ahmed and N. McCollum.)



34. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded of the legal requirements concerning the declaration of interests and that whipping declarations were also required.

35. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Mrs. Heaps of Old Laund Booth raised concerns over the removal of a tree that had been protected by a Tree Preservation Order. It was her understanding that a private contractor had declared the tree diseased and had proceeded to remove the tree, following authorisation by the Council. It was her belief that this had been the wrong decision and asked for confirmation that the Council had a qualified tree officer in post.

The Corporate Director confirmed that a qualified tree officer was in post. He advised that any concerns should be reported to the Service Manager. In this instance, the Chairman agreed to do this on Mrs. Heaps' behalf.

36. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 19th September, 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

37.

REVIEWS

(a) Monitoring the Council's Paper Usage

At its May 2017 meeting, the Team agreed to carry out a piece of work to establish whether the Council could do more to reduce the amount of paper it used and whether it did all it could to re-use and recycle the paper it did use.

The Corporate Director submitted a briefing note which provided an update on the work carried out so far. This included a snapshot of the average cost of sending committee papers.

It was noted with disappointment that only three councillors had indicated that they would be happy to receive all committee agendas and reports by email and links to the council website as an alternative to paper copies delivered by post. A further 19 Councillors had said that they wanted to continue with paper copies.

However, it was accepted that this could change on conclusion of a trial of Microsoft Office 365 about to be undertaken by 12 volunteer councillors.

RESOLVED

That the Corporate Director be asked to report the outcome of the Microsoft Office 365 trial to a future meeting of this Team.

(b) Council Tax Enforcement Agent Fees and Charges

The Team was invited to comment on proposed revisions to the Council Tax Reminder Notice.

Copies of the current reminder notice and proposed version were circulated for consideration. It was noted that following consultation, a few amendments were due to be made. This included changing the wording of 'most people' to 'the majority of people'; the addition of a sentence relating to Pendle Citizens Advice; and an extension to the payment deadline from 7 to 14 days.

The Team agreed that the proposed notice was much better than the previous version as it was much clearer and easier to read.

A discussion was held regarding the additional amendments to be made. Although it was agreed that it was important to provide contact details for the Citizens Advice Bureau, opinions on the positioning of the text on the notice differed. Some felt that a three line sentence on the front of the document would result in too little white space. It was therefore suggested that a few words be used to direct people over the page to the information. This view was not held by all.

There was also some doubt over the decision to extend the payment deadline. It was felt that allowing 14 days would lessen the urgency, meaning that people would be more likely to put it aside. It was suggested that 10 days would be more appropriate.

RESOLVED

That the Team's comments be submitted to the Revenues Manager for consideration.

38.

ANNUAL EMISSIONS REPORT

Further to a request at the last meeting, the Strategic Director submitted further information in

relation to the Council's annual emissions report.

The report highlighted that fuel consumption from building stock had increased over the reporting period. Possible reasons had been identified and work would take place to attempt to reverse the pattern over 2017/18.

Further action would be considered if next year's annual report indicated that energy consumption had continued to increase.

39. PROMOTING PENDLE ACTION PLAN

An update on progress with the Promoting Pendle Action Plan was submitted for information.

Reference was made to the various 'In Bloom' initiatives throughout the borough and the fact that these were not referenced in the Action Plan.

At the Team's request, it was agreed that arrangements would be made for such information to be included.

40. POLICE AND CRIME PANEL UPDATE

Councillor D. Whipp, the Council's representative on the Lancashire Police and Crime Panel provided an update on the work of the Panel.

He reported on two upcoming reviews in which he would be involved. The first was around front line policing and the second review related to ongoing problems with 101 response times.

He also reported on the possibility of creating a local operating centre from which all officers in the area would work from. This would likely be located in the vicinity of junction 13 of the M65 motorway.

Reference was also made to the cross duties of the Community Beat Managers. It was explained that, as they had a response role in addition to their local community policing, they now patrolled in cars.

41. SCRUTINY IMPROVEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The Team considered progress against actions in the Overview and Scrutiny Improvement and Communications Plan.

42. EQUALITIES UPDATE

The Housing Needs Manager submitted an update report on the work of the Corporate Equalities Steering Group (CESG) towards meeting the Equality Objectives as set out in appendix 1 to the report.

43. HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY PANEL

The draft minutes of a meeting of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Panel held on 17th October, 2017 were submitted for information.

44. WORK PLAN

The Team's work plan 2017/18 was submitted for information.

45. EXECUTIVE WORK PROGRAMME/FORWARD PLAN

The Executive Work Programme and Forward Plan for the four month period commencing 17th November, 2017 was submitted for consideration.

CHAIRMAN_____