

**MINUTES OF TOURISM, ECONOMY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING -
WEDNESDAY, 25 APRIL 2018**

Present:

Councillor Hunter (in the Chair)

Councillors

Mrs Callow JP	Galley	Mitchell
G Coleman	Matthews	Ryan

In Attendance:

Councillor Gillian Campbell
Alan Cavill, Director of Place
Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager
Councillor Mark Smith
Steve Thompson, Director of Resources
Councillor Mrs Christine Wright, Cabinet Member for Housing

Mr Steven Wong, Area Stakeholder Manager, United Utilities
Mr Rob Tiswell, Fylde Coast Waste Water Asset Manager, United Utilities
Mr Steven Kenyan, Network Manager, United Utilities
Ms Rachel Crompton, Flood Risk Manager, Lancashire County Council
Mr Paul Bond, Flood Resilience Adviser, Environmental Agency

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 21 FEBRUARY 2018

The Committee agreed that the minutes of the last meeting of the Tourism, Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee held on 21 February 2018 be signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record subject to amending Councillor Gary Coleman's declaration of interest from 'licensed hackney carriage driver' to 'private hire licence holder.'

3 PUBLIC SPEAKING

The Committee noted that there were no applications to speak by members of the public on this occasion.

4 EXECUTIVE AND CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

The Committee considered the Executive and Cabinet Member decisions, within its remit, taken since the last meeting of the Committee on 21 February 2018 and asked a number of questions pertaining to decision PH10/2018 'Provision of a Loan to Force Technology Ltd'. In response, Mr Steve Thompson, Director of Resources advised that the company had no direct connection to the Council. He had been previously appointed as a Director in a monitoring capacity but had since stepped down from the position.

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Mr Alan Cavill, Director of Places reported that the Business Loans Fund was advertised on the Council's website and that approximately seven loans had been provided to date to companies with no links to the Council. He added that often, as a condition of the loan, a director position was sought on the companies' board in a monitoring capacity. It was noted that establishing a small loan fund for up to £50,000 was being considered and that larger loans to larger companies were less risky and more likely to provide a good return for the Council. It was important to balance the risk of lending money to smaller companies with the aim of stimulating the economy and creating jobs.

Members noted that a further decision had been taken regarding the business loans fund but that the detail relating to the decision was confidential. Mr Cavill advised that the details of the decision would be made public once the company had signed the deal as, until that point, the Council was in negotiation with the company.

The Committee also queried the reasons for taking decision PH11/2018, the 'Purchase of 6 Central Drive, Blackpool'. In response, Councillor Mark Smith, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Economic Development advised that the purchase had not been made due to the deal becoming unviable.

5 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the items within the Forward Plan, May 2018 to August 2018, relating to the portfolios of the Cabinet Members whose responsibilities fell within the remit of the Committee.

In response to questioning, Mr Alan Cavill, Director of Places advised that the Blackpool Airport Business Plan could potentially include the establishment of a maintenance facility. Councillor Mark Smith, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Enterprise and Economic Development advised that consultation would be undertaken on the business plan and it was a key aim to ensure the best return and investment for the airport.

The Committee also requested further information regarding the development of the Local Transport Plan 2018-2023 and noted that it was an interim plan until the long term plan with Lancashire County Council had been developed. Councillor Gillian Campbell, Deputy Leader added that extending the tramway to St Anne's and re-opening the train line between Fleetwood and Poulton-le-Fylde were aspirations but were not currently in the Local Transport Plan. She also advised that the extension of the tramway was included in the Fylde Coast Transport Plan.

6 FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

Mrs Clare Nolan-Barnes, Head of Coastal and Environmental Partnership Investments presented the annual report on Flood Risk Management received by the Tourism, Economy and Resources Scrutiny Committee to Members and highlighted that, in addition, the draft report on the investigation undertaken into the flooding event in Blackpool in November 2017 had been included.

She advised that the Council had a number of statutory duties in respect of flood risk

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management including a duty to investigate flooding incidents to the extent that it considers appropriate and necessary.

The Committee was informed that the Flood Risk Management Strategy was being refreshed and ongoing action was being taken to learn from flooding events. The outcomes would be used to inform the strategy. Mrs Barnes advised that it was also important to consider resilience to flooding and measures that could be put in place to increase the resilience of residents.

The Chairman opened the meeting to questions and Mr Paul Bond, Flood Resilience Adviser, Environment Agency, Mr Rob Tiswell, Fylde Coast Waste Water Asset Manager, United Utilities, Mr Steve Wong, Area Stakeholder Manager, Unities Utilities, Mr Steven Kenyan, Network Manager, United Utilities and Ms Rachel Crompton, Flood Risk Manager, Lancashire County Council were invited to respond.

The Committee questioned the detail relating to the flooding event on 22 November 2017 and a number of key points were noted:

- The sewer system, pipes and gullies had already been full prior to the event due to previous heavy rainfall and had remained full for five days following the flood.
- Data recorded suggested that the level of rain had been the highest in 15 years.
- The Anchorsholme pumping station had been in use. Prior to the flooding the pumping station had not been receiving enough water to utilise all five pumps. On the evening of the flood, there had been a time when all five pumps were required, however, the fifth pump had not worked. Engineers had been on site to repair it and to ensure the remaining four pumps continued to work.
- The new pumping station at Anchorsholme had not been completed. When finished, it would provide a small increase in capacity. More importantly it would provide greater inlet pipes and outflow pumps. However, the reason for the new pump had been related to bathing water quality and not flood risk.
- The Manchester Square, Anchorsholme and Fleetwood pumping stations had been all pumping out to sea. To discharge water to sea required consent from the Environment Agency due to the impact on bathing waters.
- The additional pumping station in Skippool had been turned off to prevent further flooding of Warren Drive.

Members highlighted that the flooding on the evening of 22 November 2017 was not the first flooding incident in the area and raised concerns that previous flooding incidents had not been learned from and no improvements had been made. Further concern was raised that future housing developments had been proposed on green spaces that had been flooded and the Committee queried why United Utilities had not provided an objection to the proposals. In response, Mr Wong advised that United Utilities was not a statutory consultee, but was working with the Head of Development Management to improve knowledge and links.

Mr Kenyan advised that United Utilities had visited the sites that had been flooded and undertaken measures to drain water more quickly. He added that work was being undertaken with local councils in order to understand the full extent of the flood and that

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it was important to ensure appropriate maintenance was carried out. The importance of aligning flood strategies was highlighted.

Members queried why the telemetric data required had not yet been provided by United Utilities and Mr Tiswell advised that he had not received a formal request for the data and would provide the information to Mrs Barnes within two weeks of the formal request being made. He advised that Unities Utilities had not had reviewed the draft Section 19 report.

The Committee asked a number of further questions and was advised that if the fifth pump had been working it might have prevented flooding in some areas, however, there were multiple causes of flooding and the high levels of surface water had a significant impact. Mr Tiswell advised that the Anchorsholme pumping station was two kilometres away from some roads that had been flooded and that the sewer systems in the area had been full. He added that there were also a number of unknown watercourses in the flooded areas.

Ms Crompton reported that flooding had also been experienced in Lancashire on 22 November 2017. She advised that there had been no Met Office warning of rain and therefore advance preparation had been limited. She added that flood insurance could be obtained by residents who had experienced flooding and that Mrs Barnes had provided a very comprehensive Section 19 report. It was considered that flooding incidents were becoming more frequent and additional resilience was required.

In response to a question, Mrs Barnes advised that there had been no reports of any health problems related to the flood event and that any claims should be directed towards United Utilities. Mr Wong added that United Utilities had provided financial assistance and help with property clean up. Loss adjusters were available immediately after the event and payments to residents were given without investigation.

Members noted that it had previously been suggested by United Utilities that blocked gullies had been to blame for the flooding and highlighted that Blackpool Council had a thorough cleaning policy and therefore the Committee considered that that was not the case. In response, Mr Wong advised that a standard response had been provided to the flooding incident that covered an area greater than Blackpool.

A number of concerns were also raised relating to provision of information solely online and that no sandbag policy was in place. The Committee was advised that the issue of sandbags was being considered as a pressing concern. Mr Wong added that United Utilities had ensured their phone number had been widely available and also had a list of vulnerable people or those with additional needs to ensure help could be tailored where required.

The Chairman invited a member of the public to address the Committee on his experience of the flood event. Mr Colin Wolfendale addressed the Committee on behalf of the residents in attendance. He highlighted his experience of the flood and the contact he and his family had had with United Utilities. He raised a number of key concerns including the attitude of some employees and that no real answers had been provided as to why the flooding had occurred. He added that the response provided by Blackpool Council had

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been excellent. Mr Wolfendale was requested to document the concerns raised in a written report, which would be considered at the next meeting of the Committee alongside a response from Mrs Barnes to the concerns raised.

The Committee summarised the concerns raised during the meeting and highlighted that the report did not adequately explain the reasons why the storm water tanks had been left full for five days when heavy rain had been predicted in advance. Members also questioned the claim that flooding had not occurred in the area for 15 years, when more recent events could be identified. Furthermore the Committee raised concerns that permission was required from the Environment Agency to release the waters from the tanks and queried why this had not happened when the weather warning had been given and if the decision had been based on financial considerations.

The Committee further concluded by raising concerns that at the time of the flooding only three pumps had been working and additionally queried an announcement made that work had been completed on the pumping station when all pumps were not working.

The Committee agreed to receive a report containing the concerns raised by residents and a response to the concerns provided by Mrs Barnes, liaising with partner agencies.

7 BATHING WATER MANAGEMENT

Mrs Clare Nolan-Barnes, Head of Coastal and Environmental Partnership Investments advised that the Bathing Water Regulations required signage to be erected at all bathing waters providing specific details of the bathing water, the quality of the water and how the public could make enquiries relating to the quality of the water. She added that the Turning Tides Partnership, chaired by Neil Jack, Chief Executive of the Council regularly monitored the quality of bathing water.

Mrs Barnes advised that the quality of the Blackpool bathing waters had exceeded expectations and there were three good bathing areas. She added that ongoing work continued to achieve better standards, but that a number of factors were outside of the Council's control such as levels of rainfall and the impact of farming further upstream.

In response to questions, Mrs Barnes reported that Project Fylde was working with schools to raise awareness of bathing water quality and there was an ambition on the Fylde Peninsula to increase awareness and engagement.

The Committee praised the work of Mrs Barnes and colleagues for achieving significant improvements to bathing water since 2011.

8 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE MONITORING AS AT MONTH 10 2017/2018

Mr Steve Thompson, Director of Resources advised that the month 10 Financial Performance Monitoring Report was the last of the financial year. He highlighted that there was a £2 million overspend and that the Council had achieved savings of £17 million. He added that improvements had been made to the collection rates of both Council Tax and Business Rates.

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Members queried whether using non ring-fenced basic needs funding for other ventures might prevent receipt of future funding. In response, Mr Thompson advised that he did not believe so. He highlighted that the Council had spent more over previous years than required and had already been notified of the funding to be received in 2018/2019.

9 PRIORITY ONE - KEY PRIORITY REPORT: INFRASTRUCTURE AND TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

Mr Mark Gillingham, Delivery Development Officer, Corporate Delivery Unit highlighted that the four key performance indicators pertaining to Infrastructure and Town Centre Regeneration were green which demonstrated good performance. He added that growth in rateable value within the Enterprise Zone had increased significantly and that variation over the next few years was expected.

Members queried whether the targets and indicators would remain the same for 2018/2019 and Mr Cavill, Director of Places advised that the key performance indicators were being reviewed. He added that the current data would continue to be collected and could therefore be provided to Committee if required, however, the key indicators might be different.

10 SCRUTINY WORKPLAN

Member considered the Scrutiny Review Checklist submitted by Councillor Kath Rowson relating to consideration of the Council's use of non-recyclable products and in particular single use plastics. It was commented that the review must consider any action the Council was already taking and the extent to which non-recyclable products were used.

The Committee agreed to establish a Scrutiny Review Panel to consider Council use of non-recyclable products.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee noted the date and time of the next meeting as Thursday, 6 June 2018, commencing at 6pm in Committee Room A, Blackpool Town Hall.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 8.05 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:
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