

Minutes of Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date Tuesday, 11 October 2022

Committee members present: Councillors Angela Turner (Chair), Michael Green (Vice-Chair), Will Adams, Julie Buttery, Matt Campbell, Colin Coulton, Lou Jackson, Colin Sharples, Stephen Thurlbourn, Kath Unsworth and Karen Walton

Officers present: Jonathan Noad (Director of Planning and Development), Darren Cranshaw (Shared Services Lead - Democratic, Scrutiny & Electoral Services), Steven Brown (Head of Development Management) and Ben Storey (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

Other attendees: Councillors James Flannery, David Howarth, Keith Martin, Phil Smith, Anson Forrester (GL Hearn), Tony Crook and Chris West (Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service) and (attended virtually) Councillors David Shaw, Harry Hancock, Margaret Smith and Mary Green.

Public: 3

A video recording of the public session of this meeting is available to view on [YouTube here](#)

63 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mal Donoghue and Matthew Trafford.

64 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Will Adams declared a personal interest on item 5 - Penwortham Masterplan and item 6 - Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service Emergency Cover Review Consultation as a ward member in Penwortham.

Councillor Michael Green declared a personal interest in item 8a - Lancashire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee Update as a County Council Cabinet Member.

65 Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 12 July 2022 of Scrutiny Committee

The Committee requested an update on the following points raised under item 56- Community Wealth Building at the last meeting:

- Pension contributions for the waste colleagues transferring over to the Council.

- An indication of the areas in which waste colleagues transferring over to the Council live.

Resolved: (Unanimously)

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Scrutiny Committee, held on Tuesday, 12 July 2022, be approved as a correct record for signing by the Chair.

66 Matters Arising from previous Scrutiny Committee meetings

Members received an update on recommendations made at previous meetings of the Scrutiny Committee.

Members noted progress on previous recommendations and unanimously resolved to remove any completed actions from the Matters Arising Sheet.

67 Penwortham Masterplan

The Chair welcomed Councillor James Flannery, Cabinet Member for Planning, Business Support and Regeneration, Jonathan Noad, Director of Planning and Development, Steven Brown, Head of Development Management and Anson Forrester from consultants GL Hearn to the meeting.

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Business Support and Regeneration provided an overview of the masterplan and the history around the plans.

Originally part of the City Deal going back to 2013, plans to progress the masterplan had been reviewed and paused some years ago, partly to allow for the construction of the bypass in Penwortham to be completed.

Following the elections in 2019 the new administration identified a budget to progress and develop the Penwortham Masterplan design concepts and undertake consultation. A tender was won by Hemingway Design who have undertaken the work and produced the masterplan included within the report.

In response to a query, it was confirmed that the original scope of work when the masterplan was part of the City Deal was centered around the Liverpool Road corridor but with the construction of the bypass in Penwortham a lot of traffic had been directed away. The project had been re-scoped by the new administration and expanded to incorporate the two additional local centres of Middleforth and Kingsfold.

Members were advised that this stage of the masterplan process had largely been completed with officers now just applying final touches following the consultation period earlier in the year. The next step would be for approval from Cabinet which was expected to be discussed at the next meeting in November. If there was any additional decisions around the final budget this would be for Full Council to decide.

Asked when residents may see the projects come to fruition, the Committee were advised that this was dependent on budgets or other funding streams. Members heard that the concept plans were currently at RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) stage two. More work was needed to complete stages three and four, consisting of further consultation, surveys, detailed designs and other agreements

such as with local landowners. The masterplan could then advance to a stage where planning approval and subsequent construction could commence. In line with the next steps included within the report, construction was anticipated to begin in 2024.

At the request of Committee, clarification on the different RIBA stages was provided. RIBA stage two, where the Penwortham masterplan is currently at is a concept design, RIBA stage three a more detailed outline design and RIBA stage four was the final stage with a full technical design including all the detail a contractor requires to complete the work.

The Director of Planning and Development confirmed that the project had been managed throughout by both himself and the Head of Development Management. The Committee heard that he was more than happy with the work of Hemingway Design and GL Hearn and noted the vision and ideas they had contributed, including a strong commitment to comprehensive consultation with residents.

Further procurement processes would be undertaken for the next stages on the masterplan as Hemingway Design and GL Hearn had completed the scope of the work they had been commissioned to undertake.

With a significant gap in the budget allocated for the scheme and the likely cost of delivering the project, the Committee asked how this shortfall would be met and if it couldn't, how areas of delivery would be prioritised. In response, Members heard that the consultants had delivered a holistic vision for three of the centres following extensive public engagement which included a phasing plan where elements could be selected independently and additional funding streams could be applied for.

Queries were raised over how representative the views acquired through the public engagement process were given the population of the area. Members heard that it was the industry standard approach to the consultation process and whilst they would always want more a lot of effort had gone into reaching out in terms of door knocking, letter drops, social media campaigns and drop-in events.

When asked about the split of responses between residents and businesses received through online drop-ins and online surveys, it was noted that whilst they did not have this information to hand this could be provided after the meeting.

Members were told that speaking to land and business owners in the area was a fundamental part of the consultation process but did acknowledge that more could have been done to contact landowners who may not reside in the area, though more thorough engagement is undertaken at later stages of the overall masterplan process. RIBA stage three, members were told, involved more in depth negotiations with landowners.

The Director of Planning and Development confirmed that the report before the Scrutiny Committee, pending some final amendments, would be the report that will go Cabinet in November.

In response to queries around the scope of work commissioned by the Council it was clarified that the consultants were to deliver a RIBA stage two ready masterplan for Liverpool Road, Kingsfold and Middleforth including community engagement. RIBA stage two was the design brief that facilitated engagement with residents, businesses and landowners in order to shape further development.

Questions were raised over communication of the timescales of delivery of the project to residents who believed the masterplan would come to fruition much sooner than was suggested within the report.

On progressing the masterplan it was acknowledged that there could be value in bringing the plan before the Planning Committee, as had happened with a number of other masterplan projects in the past.

Members enquired about the level of engagement with Penwortham Town Council to which it was noted that contact had been made on a number of occasions, at the aforementioned drop-in events and throughout the consultation process. Ward, and neighbouring ward, members were also consulted and meetings took place throughout the consultation process.

The Committee sought reassurance that given the expanded scope of the masterplan, landlords and landowners at this stage not being on board with the project and costs well above the initial budget whether the project was achievable and deliverable.

The Cabinet Member - Planning, Business Support and Regeneration and the Director of Planning and Development felt that whilst ambitious, the masterplan was realistic and deliverable at this early stage despite challenges around the budget for the scheme. It was noted that at the heart of the plans was a commitment to invest in local communities at a time of economic uncertainty.

The Scrutiny Committee requested that a focus on greater connectivity and local transport needs of residents be reflected in the document.

It was confirmed that there were options and means to prevent a disconnect between shop frontages agreeing to development and those that didn't, one such suggestion was a supplementary planning document.

It was subsequently

Resolved: (Unanimously)

that the Scrutiny Committee:

1. thanks the Cabinet Member, officers and consultant for attending and answering questions;
2. welcomes the offer of further information of the split in consultation responses between residents and businesses;
3. expresses concern that landowners have not been engaged earlier in the masterplan process;
4. is disappointed at the delay in finalising the masterplan and asks that residents receive communications to help manage their expectations on timescales for delivery;

5. does not feel that draft masterplan is realistic or achievable and that the document be reviewed further in light of the financial and economic challenges we face; and
6. requests that the masterplan consider public transport and connectivity between the three district centres.

68 Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service Emergency Cover Review Consultation

The Chair welcomed Tony Crook, Head of Service Development and Chris West, Station Manager at Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service to the meeting.

The Head of Service Development provided an overview of the consultation with the key themes and with specific reference to aspects that would affect Penwortham Fire Station. This largely centered around the proposed change from the day crew plus duty system to the flexi day crewing system. The twelve week consultation was drawing to a close with over a thousand responses received so far. It was stressed that the changes within the review were proposals and whilst still open to feedback were driven by data and statistics around attendance times and targets, areas of risk, incident frequency and staffing levels with the goal of identifying how best to deploy resources within a limited budget.

In summing up, the Head of Service Development highlighted why Penwortham and St Anne's Fire Stations had been identified for a change in duty system, namely lower activity and lower critical fires. There were also considerations around the resilience of the day crew plus system in responding to large or multi-pump incidents where crews required recovery time. This impacted on the service's ability to recycle and keep sending appliances to these critical incidents- with a shift system fresh crews could be sent out.

Councillor James Flannery, who referred the consultation to the Scrutiny Committee highlighted concerns over response times not only for Penwortham but for the wider area and the huge impact just one significant fire could have.

Members queried how Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service had undertaken the consultation process, the Committee heard that key stakeholders had been identified in previous community engagement activities and mapped out by areas and wards. These stakeholders had been contacted directly. In line with the services' consultation strategy, staff have been consulted, Lancashire Resilience Forum contacted, campaigns on the website and social media, notices in libraries and attending neighborhood forums had been undertaken to engage with a wide demographic.

Following the close of the consultation period on 14 October, a report including feedback will be produced culminating in final approval by the Combined Fire Authority Committee meeting in December 2022.

Referring back to comments about Preston Fire Station's ability to meet attendance targets and with the proposed downgrade of Penwortham Fire Station, members sought clarity on whether Preston had been upgraded. In response, it was noted that there had not been any changes in staffing or appliances at Preston but that the risk in the area to the south had reduced with the closure of several factories. Improvements in equipment and technology had also made the service more

efficient, in addition the modern station at Bamber Bridge also provided increased coverage in the area.

Members queried whether future housing and business developments across the borough had been factored into the risk assessment for South Ribble. It was confirmed that risk was calculated using a Fire Risk Methodology formula that considers demographic data, deprivation and numbers of fires. As part of this, future developments over a five year period were incorporated into the formula.

Members highlighted the strategic location of Penwortham Fire Station in responding to incidents to the south and west of Preston and given high profile concerns of fires in high rise building questioned whether reducing provision of fire cover at Penwortham, particularly at night, was the correct course. The Committee heard that looking at the risk map and response standards the least impacted scenario proposed as part of the Emergency Cover Review included the changes at Penwortham and St. Annes Fire Stations due to a lower level of activity at those stations.

Questions were asked whether the data reflected the work of appliances at Penwortham Fire Station in attending incidents in the wider Lancashire area. Consequently, members sought reassurance that the data represented a true picture on which to base proposed changes to the duty system.

Members heard that the data measured activity and attendance to critical fires where somebody was present and did not measure casualties resulting from the incident. The Committee was advised that with modern building standards new build properties were not considered a higher level of risk, although it was noted that properties during the construction phase were more susceptible to fire.

The Committee heard that Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service were committed to continuing prevention and protection work in local schools and communities which would be unaffected by any proposed changes to emergency cover.

Queries were raised over the number of staff living in close proximity to Penwortham Fire Station and the maximum travel time would plan for under the new proposals. Some of the existing staff do live close enough to the station travel time but currently not enough to meet the five minute travel time target. Work would need to be undertaken to provide relocation packages to be able to achieve this which has been factored into the timescales of the proposed changes.

An overall percentage impact of the proposed changes for Penwortham, Preston and the area to the south-west of Preston was requested. Whilst the officers did not have the information to hand it was agreed that this could be provided.

When questioned on funding, Members heard that it was a big consideration with the aim of the emergency cover review to maximise efficiency across the county within the current budget. The proposals before the Committee, however, would result in an increase of around £200,000, partly in a staffing increase of 25 whole time firefighter posts across the County.

The strategic importance of Penwortham Fire Station was raised with queries over whether any changes would impact on the special units such as the SWIFT water rescue boat responding to incidents. With regards to coverage, whilst there was now

an additional boat stationed at Preston, it was acknowledged that the proposals would mean a delayed mobilisation during the night from Penwortham.

Members were keen for further scrutiny on this topic but given the timescales of the consultation it was acknowledged this was difficult to facilitate. Tony agreed to pass on a request from members to arrange a meeting with the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Steve Healey to discuss the proposals and any concerns further with him.

Officers were asked whether any impact on COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards) and REPPiR (Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations) regulations given the proximity of Springfield Nuclear Fuels. In response, all top-tier sites had been contacted directly for consultation on the proposals in addition to engaging with the Lancashire Resilience Forum - in short the service was comfortable that there was no additional risk if the proposals were implemented.

A question was asked by a member of the public, a current serving crew manager at Penwortham Fire Station. Members heard that activity levels at the station were increasing which were not accurately represented in the data, false alarms or secondary fires still required attendance and crews would often prevent escalation into a critical fire. Other points were also highlighted to the Committee including, increasing house prices and availability of properties close to Penwortham Fire Station, the extent of consultation in the community and whether the additional costs of retraining officers in all the special skillsets had been fully considered.

The Chair thanked the Head of Service Development and Station Manager for their attendance and answering all of the Committee's questions.

It was subsequently

Resolved: (Unanimously)

That the Scrutiny Committee:

1. thanks the Head of Service Development and Station Manager for their presentation and answering questions;
2. welcomes the opportunity to contribute towards the consultation;
3. responds to the consultation with its strong opposition to the replacing of day crewing plus for the following reasons:
 - a) the increased response times to incidents and potential impact on fire safety and saving lives;
 - b) the wider impact of the proposals on Preston and central Lancashire which isn't reflected in the data;
 - c) queries over the validity of the data associated with the proposals;
 - d) concern that not enough crew members live within a 5-minute radius of Penwortham Fire Station and the logistics involved such as training;

e) the strategic importance of Penwortham Fire Station with regards climate and other emergencies across the county and regionally has not been reflected and;

4. the wording of the final response be delegated to the Chair for submission by 14 October 2022.

69 Urgent Decisions

The Committee noted the report.

70 Scrutiny Matters

70a Lancashire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee Update

The Council's representative on Lancashire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Lou Jackson, agreed to provide a written update and circulate to Scrutiny Committee members after the meeting.

71 Meetings and training attended by Scrutiny Committee members

Councillor Kath Unsworth reported on the last meeting of the North West Strategic Scrutiny Network and undertook to share key points raised during the session.

72 Cabinet Forward Plan

Given the number of questions and time spent on item 5 - Penwortham Masterplan and item 6 - Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service Emergency Cover Review Consultation it was agreed to consider the Cabinet Forward Plan at the next meeting.

73 Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan

The Committee agreed to schedule an additional meeting before Christmas in order to consider two items that were rearranged to accommodate the Lancashire Fire and Rescue Emergency Cover Review Consultation on this meeting's agenda.

A date and time will be arranged with items on Employee Survey Results and the Leisure Company Progress Report to be included on the agenda.

The Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan was noted.

Chair

Date