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Meeting	Corporate Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee
Date	12 May 2025
Present	Councillors Fenton (Chair), Merrett (Vice-Chair), Ayre, B Burton, Coles, Healey, Melly, Rose, K Taylor, Waller, Steward (Substitute) and Wann (Substitute)
In attendance	Cllr K Lomas, Executive Member, Finance, Performance, Major Projects, Human Rights, Equality and Inclusion
Officers Present	Laura Williams, Assistant Director, Customer, Communities and Inclusion Laura Swiszczowski, Head of Equity, Diversion and Inclusion Lindsay Tomlinson, Head of Democratic Governance Guy Close, Democratic Services Manager

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#### **68. Apologies for Absence (5.32 pm)**

Apologies were received and noted from Cllrs Rowley, Widdowson and Myers. Cllr Steward substituted for Cllr Rowley, and Cllr Wann substituted for Cllr Widdowson.

#### **69. Declarations of Interest (5.33 pm)**

Members were asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest, or other registerable interest, they might have in respect of business on the agenda, if they have not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests.

Cllr Coles noted for transparency, in relation to Item 6, Council Motions (Return to Community Policing Motion), that she had responsibility for Policing, Fire and Crime as the Deputy Mayor at the Combined Authority.

#### **70. Minutes (5.33 pm)**

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meetings held on 10 March 2025 and 14 April 2025 were approved as a correct record.

## **71. Public Participation (5.36 pm)**

It was reported that there had been one registration to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Cllr Runciman, Ward Cllr for Huntington and New Earswick, spoke in relation to Item 7, the petitions schedule. She raised concerns that a petition submitted in November 2024, relating to a request to install a pedestrian crossing at the Folk Hall in New Earswick (Petition 232) had no action against it. She asked the Committee to look into this.

## **72. Pre-Decision Scrutiny: Equity, Diversity and, Inclusion and Strategy (5.40 pm)**

The Assistant Director, Customer, Communities and Inclusion, together with the Head of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, presented the draft Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy and outlined their aim for a clear approach ensuring continual engagement with all stakeholders.

Members asked a range of questions covering the language used in the strategy, the purpose of the strategy, how the protected characteristics were agreed, who would be involved in contributing to the strategy, the resources required to implement the strategy, the method of implementation, the consultation process, investigating negative responses, the role of the Communications team, recruitment and retention, access to services, monitoring and training and funding distribution.

In response, officers agreed to review the wording relating to the identified protected characteristics, explaining they had been identified by looking at examples of best practice and by taking into account all relevant equalities legislation. They clarified the intention of the strategy, explaining the aim was to ensure that EDI was built into the Council's core identity, both in the services provided and as an employer; the strategy was intended to also meaningfully evidence the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Officers confirmed that resources were limited within the team and there was an expectation for heads of service to nominate champions who would receive training to be able to work through the delivery implications. They planned to consult with groups such as York Disability Rights Forum and the York Older People's Forum to further investigate negative experiences. Recruitment was based on merit and roles were advertised widely to ensure broad coverage. Ways to reach more seldom heard groups continued to be explored. They were looking to use the neighbourhood model to provide access to services close to home and to ensure funding was allocated to the right groups. There were plans for the Head of EDI to

attend team meetings to share experiences. HR were monitoring training, and the aim was to ensure that EDI is embedded in all training. Officers acknowledged the request for more detailed data to be provided within the report.

The Executive Member thanked Members for their feedback and confirmed that officers would take the time necessary to further develop the strategy ahead of a reporting to Executive.

Resolved: That further work on the Equity, Diversity and, Inclusion and Strategy be undertaken to take into account Member comments prior to being presented to Executive.

Reason: To demonstrate City of York Council's core commitment to becoming a more equal, diverse and inclusive council.

### **73. Monitoring and Tracking of Approved Council Motions (6.55 pm)**

Members considered the most recent Motions tracker and noted updates.

Resolved: That the report be noted and the Chair and Vice-Chair to determine which Motions can be closed and removed from the tracker.

Reason: To ensure that processes for monitoring approved Council Motions remain sufficiently robust.

### **74. Schedule of Petitions (7.10 pm)**

Members considered the current Petitions Schedule which was last received by the Committee in November 2024. Members noted actions and requested further information from officers, with particular reference to the petition raised by Cllr Runciman in public participation.

Resolved:

- i. That the report be noted and that
- ii. Further information be requested from officers in relation to petition 232 and an updated report be distributed to Members.

Reason: To ensure the Committee carries out its constitutional role in relation to petitions.

## **75. Preparing for proposed changes to long-term sickness and disability benefits, Task and Finish Group Review (7.25 pm)**

Members considered the Task and Finish Group proposal to prepare for changes to sickness and disability benefits. During the discussion, Cllr Coles expressed an interest to be a group member. It was also noted that officers may have already started on a policy paper related to this item.

Resolved:

- i. That the Terms of Reference be agreed.
- ii. Membership of the group should consist of two Labour, two Liberal Democrats and one Conservative or Independent.
- iii. Expressions of interest in participating should be sent to the Chair and Democratic Services.

Reason: To enable the Task and Finish Group to proceed with work on the review in line with scrutiny procedures.

## **76. Work Plan (7.35 pm)**

Members considered the draft work plan for the committee and the overview scrutiny work plan for all the scrutiny committees.

During the discussion, officers confirmed that the revised terms of reference for the Corporate, People and Place scrutiny committees, as well as the public meeting dates, would be brought to Annual Council; a working group consisting of the existing Chairs and Vice-Chairs were developing the new arrangements for scrutiny.

Resolved: That the work plan be noted.

Reason: To ensure an overview of the scrutiny work programme.

Cllr S Fenton, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.31 pm and finished at 7.55 pm].