
Meeting	Corporate Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee
Date	16 October 2023
Present	Councillors Fenton (Chair), Merrett (Vice-Chair), Ayre, Baxter, J Burton, Healey, Kelly, D Myers, Rowley, Steels-Walshaw, K Taylor, Waller and Widdowson
In Attendance	Cllrs Kent and Ravilious, Joint Executive Members for Environment and Climate Change Cllr Lomas, Executive Member, Finance and Major Projects.
Officers Present	Debbie Mitchell, Chief Finance Officer Ian Cunningham, Head of Business Intelligence Shaun Gibbons Head of Carbon Reduction Pauline Stuchfield Director of Customer and Corporate Services Bryn Roberts, Director of Governance & Monitoring Officer Dawn Steel, Head of Democratic and Scrutiny Services Lindsay Tomlinson, Head of Democratic Governance

7. Declarations of Interest (5.35 pm)

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

In relation to Item 6 (The Blue Badge Application Process) Cllr Rowley noted that he had assisted a resident with their application. On the same item, Cllr Ayre noted that his partner was a blue badge holder.

Cllr Merrett noted, in relation to Item 5 (Intermediate Carbon Reduction Targets), that he was a member of a climate action group.

8. Minutes (5.36 pm)

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting held on 25 September 2023 were approved as a correct record.

9. Public Participation (5.38 pm)

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

Flick Williams spoke on agenda Item 6 (The Blue Badge Application Process) and noted that she had participated in a positive co-production meeting with officers. However, she highlighted that one of the discussion points, regarding the language used to describe disabled people, had not been rectified in the report to the committee. She also noted that due to an ageing population, there was likely to be an increase in the number of applications for Blue Badges.

Gwen Swinburn spoke in relation to agenda items and the remit of the committee. She requested that all Members be given access to 'pink papers', suggested that 'citizens' could be employed to undertake elections work. She also asked that the protocol for flag flying at the Mansion House be reviewed.

Helen Jones, Chair of York Disability Rights Forum, also spoke in relation to Item 6 on the agenda. She made some recommendations to improve the Blue Badge application process and noted that, for renewal applications, the information is already held on the system. It would therefore save time for both residents and CYC if this data collection exercise did not have to be repeated. She also noted that paper copies of the application forms would be beneficial for some users.

10. 2023/24 Finance and Performance Monitor 1 (5.48 pm)

The Chief Finance Officer and the Head of Business Intelligence presented the Finance and Performance Quarter 1 report to Members. The forecast overspend of £11m was attributed to the costs associated with social care and it was noted that this was a national issue. Positive performance indicators in sickness reduction, complaint handling and FOI (freedom of information requests) responses were highlighted as improvements.

Officers responded to a range of questions from Members which covered alternative funding sources, capacity for letting office space, vacancy

management, public awareness through corporate communications, efficiency improvements, work with other councils and the use of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

It was agreed that the Chief Finance Officer would investigate if funding had been secured against the £650k for one off items (paragraph 10, bullet point 4 of the report referred).

Resolved: That the finance and performance information be noted.

Reason: To ensure expenditure is kept within the approved budget.

11. Intermediate Carbon Reduction Targets (6.06 pm)

The Head of Carbon Reduction and the Assistant Director of Policy and Strategy presented a report which set out the council approach to monitoring progress against the carbon reduction pathway.

Officers responded to a number of questions which covered the following: the purpose of the Climate Change Scorecard, scope 3 emissions and the requirement for suppliers to report on emissions, the constraints and timetable for this, the accuracy of reporting and the resource required to report effectively, capital costs for decarbonising CYC sites, funding bids and remaining shortfalls, CYC targets, performance indicators and scorecards.

[6:34 pm Cllr Rowley left the meeting.]

There followed a discussion between Members which covered the merits of setting intermediate targets that measured progress towards the reduction of GCC02 emissions (citywide emissions) and GCC03 emissions (council emissions). This included suggestions from Members on what the targets would look like.

It was agreed that officers would work to develop intermediate targets that would form the basis of future scrutiny reports.

Resolved:

- i. That the report be noted.
- ii. A set of intermediate targets be developed and brought back to scrutiny.

Reason: To ensure that progress towards net zero is scrutinised by the committee.

[7.10 – 7.15pm, the meeting was adjourned for a comfort break.]

12. The Blue Badge Application Process (7.17 pm)

The Director of Customer and Corporate Services and the Business Support Manager, presented a report on the blue badge application process. They highlighted the two stage appeal process and confirmed that they were in the process of investigating the suggestions that had been received following recent consultation with user groups and stakeholders; there was an ambition to make some changes to the renewal process.

Officers noted that they continued to learn and improve; they responded to the public speaker and apologised for some of the language used in the report.

Members discussed a number of points, this included improvements to the renewal process., assessor recruitment, GP evidence,

Following the discussion, the Chair confirmed that the Committee would maintain a watching brief on the item.

Resolved:

- i. That the report be noted.
- ii. That the item be added to work plan for future consideration.

Reason: To understand and consider any improvements that could be made to the Blue badge application process to assist disabled and other affected residents of York.

13. Election Act 2022 and City of York Council Elections 2023 (7.43 pm)

The Director of Governance introduced a report on the delivery of the City Council elections 2023. He noted that the introduction of voter ID was the first substantive change in 10-15 years, and credited the Communications team for improving resident awareness of the requirement for voter ID.

A number of questions and comments were made by Members relating to the accessibility of polling stations, the use of greeters at polling booths, student voting and the postal vote system.

It was reported that greeters had not been employed for the election. Members noted their experience on election day, was that staff had been outside polling stations and had advised on the voter ID requirement. It was therefore likely that the number of voters without ID had been underreported.

Officers reported that the system for postal voting would be more complex in future, and that there would be a requirement to provide a national insurance number to register.

[8pm Cllr Myers left the meeting.]

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To keep the Committee updated.

14. Work Plan (8.10 pm)

Members considered the Scrutiny Work Plan for the scrutiny committees.

Resolved: That the Work Plan be noted.

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

Cllr S Fenton, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.32 pm and finished at 8.11 pm].