

Overview & Scrutiny Co-ordination & Finance Committee

Monday, 11 March 2024

Present: Councillor J Montague (Chair)
Councillors D Cox, L Bartoli, L Bones, D Drummond,
T Mulvenna, M Murphy, A Newman, P Oliver,
W Samuel, M Thirlaway and Rev M Vine

Apologies: Councillors M Wilson, Burton and C Davis

OV47/23 Apologies

Apologies were received for Councillor Cath Davis, Councillor Matt Wilson and Ms Fiona Burton.

OV48/23 Appointment of Substitute Members

There were no substitute members reported.

OV49/23 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Councillor Tommy Mulvenna declared a Non-Registerable Personal in Item 6, they have a number of family members who are employed by North Tyneside Council.

OV50/23 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2024 be agreed.

OV51/23 Annual Scrutiny Report

The Head of Governance advised the Committee that as of the date of this meeting that six of the 35 total Sub-Committee meetings had not yet taken place. Therefore, it would be necessary to call an Extraordinary O&S meeting on Wednesday 3 April to receive the Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/24.

As this report would be a purely factual recounting of the different committee's work, it was deemed that this would not fall within the purview of purdah.

Officers confirmed that this report would be circulated to members prior to the meeting.

OV52/23 Highways / Capita Update

The Chair stated that the report containing the breakdown of the locations reported by members would be sent separately before the end of that week; this would be so the meeting could concentrate more on wider processes and ways or working. This would also give the committee more information about how the system worked in practice and the opportunity to look more closely at how to manage expectations for residents. The members who had suggested the issues that concerned them would get a deeper dive and fuller explanation of the problems they had suggested in this report to follow.

The Head of Highways and Transportation talked the committee through reporting, timescales and quality and went through the full process of how repairs are dealt with and what Capita is contracted to do. It was discussed how the Authority compare favourably with other authorities, and how North Tyneside operate a risk-based approach to maintenance and repair. Six real-life historical cases of pothole or pavement defects were presented in order to show members how long they took to pass through each stage of the full end-to-end process.

Officers explained that using a risk-based approach to maintenance and repair meant that each case would be looked at in terms of safety in order to prioritise the necessary works. This meant that a potential pothole in different locations would be classified differently in terms of possible risk to road users and pedestrians.

Officers gave an update on quality issues and that all materials are to British Standard, it was also discussed how different methods of dealing with pavement repairs can vary widely in cost. The recently developed reporting facility on the Council's website was noted and it was hoped that this would help members and residents to identify the exact location of a potential defect.

A question was asked why the 20% sample size was selected, and it was discussed how this is larger than the usual sample sizes selected and that this work is jointly done by Capita and the Authority. The Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP) does show that the authority is aware of the need to

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invest in maintaining roads on a network which is only getting older, and that this is a national issue for Councils.

In response to the issue of reported defects having to be re-reported for the work to be redone, the officer stated that getting the work done right first time was a strong principle of the Authority's asset management strategy. Members were reminded that they could go direct to the Head of Highways and Transportation if they felt that an issue had not been resolved correctly or in a timely manner.

A member followed up on the possibility of forming a sub group that could look more closely into how works were completed, and it was agreed that a draft Terms of Reference document should be drawn up prior to the first post-election meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Co-ordination & Finance Committee.

Officers stated that they would take forward the suggestion about amending the 20% roads / 80% pavements sample split and see if this was possible to amend going forward.

It was confirmed by officers that there were three and a half years left on the contract with the Authority.