COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the County Council held on Thursday, 16 November 2017 at 10.00 am at the County Offices, Kendal

PRESENT:

Councillor Mr J Bell (Chair)

Mr J Airey  Miss HJ Fearon  Mr FI Morgan
Mr T Allison  Mr LN Fisher  Mrs M Rae
Mr MS Barbour  Mr D Gawne  Mr GRPM Roberts
Mr AL Barry  Mr W Graham  Mrs S Sanderson
Mrs PA Bell  Mrs BC Gray  Mr DE Southward
Mr B Berry  Mr KR Hamilton  Mr I Stewart
Mr RW Betton  Mrs RC Hanson  Mrs V Tarbitt
Mr RK Bingham  Mr S Haraldsen  Mr P Thornton
Mr J Bland  Mr M Hawkins  Mrs C Tibble
Mrs C Bowditch  Mr K Hitchen  Mr CP Turner
Mr A Bowness  Mr C Hogg  Mr T Wentworth Waites
Mr M Brereton  Mr JS Holliday  
Mrs A Burns  Mr N Hughes  Mrs H Wall
Mrs HF Carrick  Mr A Kennon  Mr R Watson
Mr F Cassidy  Mr AWC Lamb  Mr WJ Wearing
Mr W Clark  Lord R Liddle  Mr C Weber
Mr SB Collins  Mr J Lister  Mr D Whipp
Mr A Connell  Mr KA Little  Mr CJ Whiteside
Mr GD Cook  Mr T Lywood  Mr S Wielkopolski
Mr N Cotton  Mrs EA Mallinson (Vice-Chair)  Mrs EL Williamson
Mr P Dew  
Ms C Driver  Mr J Mallinson  Mrs J Willis
Ms D Earl  Mr AJ Markley  Mr D Wilson
Mr GM Ellis  Mr NH Marriner  Mr M Wilson
Mr D English  Ms C McCarron-Holmes  Mr AW Wonnacott
Mrs S Evans  Mr H McDevitt  Mr MH Worth
Mr DS Fairbairn  Mr W McEwan  Mr SF Young

44 ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

There were 78 members present at the start of the meeting.

Lord RJ Liddle arrived at the meeting at 10.45 am.
Mr D Fairbairn arrived at the meeting at 11.00 am.

Apologies were received from Mr H Graham, Mr B Shirley, Mr S Stoddart and Mr R Worthington.

45 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No members declared interests at this meeting.

46 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Council on 6 September 2017 were approved subject to the following corrections -

Minute 29, Page 9 – it was noted that apologies for absence had been recorded twice.

Minute 38, page 13 – correction of the minutes from (paragraph 3 line 2) “and to undertake to provide funding for transport costs for children” to “and to undertake to offer some financial support to the school in lieu of the subsequent saving to the Council in transport costs”. (Mr P Dew)

Minute 38, page 14 (paragraph 1) correction of the whole paragraph from “Mr Shirley asked the Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning to work with the Conservative Group in obtaining a share for Cumbria of the £1.3bn of extra school funding, which had recently been announced by the Education Secretary. The Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning welcomed the opportunity to work with the Conservative Group in order to raise standards in Cumbria” to “Mr Shirley asked the Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning if she would be writing to Justine Greening, Education Minister, to thank her for the additional school funding announced during the school holidays. Mrs Sanderson, Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning declined on the grounds that having been an experienced head teacher she had learned to wait until the exact funding had arrived in the school budget before any celebrations took place especially when announcements were made in the school holidays.” (Mrs S Sanderson)

Minute 43, page 15 – Mr A Connell made a speech on public transport in which he argued that in the wake of the 2014 decision to cease subsidies of bus routes, the policy of restricting BSOG monies to community (i.e. volunteer) operations had not worked. He asked all political groups to reconsider their approach to public transport and individual councillors to improve their knowledge of the subject. (Mr A Connell)

The Chair clarified for members that the minutes of the previous meeting are not changed, but the corrections approved by members will be recorded in the minutes of this meeting.
47 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items on the Agenda from which the Press and Public were excluded.

48 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no items of Public Participation at this meeting.

49 ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair made the following announcements –

The County was privileged to welcome three royal visits in September 2017, these were:

1) HRH The Prince of Wales – 14 September 2017 – to the Westmorland Agricultural Show.

2) HRH The Princess Royal – 20 September 2017 – to the University of Cumbria to celebrate their 10th anniversary and open Stem Laboratories.

3) HRH The Duchess of Gloucester – 26 September 2017 – to the Workington Academy, the Hospice at Home Carlisle and North Lakeland and Stead McAlpin and Co. Ltd

The Chair was honoured to cut a ribbon to mark the completion of the Glebe improvements on the 20 October 2017 in Bowness on Windermere. Approximately £2 million has been invested in a package of improvements, making it much easier and safer for people to access one of Cumbria’s most popular destinations.

Will Clark, of Grasmere (the Member for Lakes Division) was commended with a special award from the Prime Minister on 26 October 2017 for his fundraising efforts for Back Up – a UK charity that helps people rebuild their confidence and independence following a devastating spinal cord injury – and the Great North Air Ambulance.

Mr Thornton (Cabinet Member for Health and Care Services) announced that a small market was being held in the foyer outside the Council Chamber selling produce of the Lightburn, Chatsworth, Horticare and Carlisle Arts Day Services Workshops.
Mrs Willis (Cabinet Member for Customers, Transformation, Fire and Rescue) made an announcement about the Government’s new programme in respect of apprentices, which sets annual targets and requires the Council to reform recruitment, training and management of apprentices. The Council is likely to see an increase from around 50 to 200 apprentices, with opportunities for existing staff and a levy on payroll to pay for training. In addition, the Council has a duty to manage the programme in voluntary aided and community schools. Despite the challenges, significant progress has been made and the Council is on track to meet its targets. Mrs Willis commented on the Council’s successful track record and the enthusiasm and contribution made to the Council by its apprentices.

Mrs Burns (Cabinet Member for Children’s Services) highlighted the recent Children in Care Awards, an event organised by children leaving care to reflect on their experience and celebrate. One hundred and twenty nominations for awards were made, including Most Influential Young Person and Most Influential Social Worker.

The Chief Executive announced the appointment of Fiona Miller, Senior Manager - Pensions and Financial Services to the post of Chief Operating Officer at the Border to Coast Pensions Partnership.

The Chief Executive informed members that the Ofsted inspection of Children’s Services was in its second week. She informed members that the findings of the inspection would be presented to them, once received.

50 MINUTES OF THE CABINET

Mr S Young, Leader of the Council, presented the minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 21 September and 19 October 2017.

Members asked the following questions.

Cabinet Meeting 21 September 2017

Minute 21 Corporate Performance Monitoring Report – Quarter 1 2017/18

Mr Ellis referred to the improvement in sickness absence in Quarter 1 and asked if the Cabinet were confident about its sustainability.

Mrs Willis, Cabinet Member for Customers, Resources and Transformation and Fire and Rescue, replied that considerable work had been undertaken in relation to sickness absence. The work is “people-focused” and aims to return employees to work and support them when they return. She confirmed her confidence that the Council has procedures in place to tackle sickness.

Minute 22 – Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring Report to 30 June 2017
Mr Airey asked, with reference to the capital programme, which communities will be affected and which will benefit from the slippage in the capital programme in 2017/2018.

Mr Stewart, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, undertook to provide a detailed answer.

**Minute 24 Health and Care Integration**

Mr Hughes asked the Cabinet Member for Health and Care Services to comment on impact of the UK’s exit from the European Union on the supply of NHS and care staff and the impact on other sectors of the economy such as hospitality.

Mr Thornton responded by highlighting that three main sectors of the Cumbrian economy rely on workers from the European Union: health and care, agriculture and food and hospitality. He called upon the Government to provide early certainty on the employment of EU citizens and to look into exceptions for the health and care sector. He undertook to write to the Secretary of State for Health to ask him to pursue this.

**Cabinet Meeting 19 October 2017**

**Minute 35 Time to Change Pledge**

Mr Haraldsen asked the Leader of the Council about the information on the Champions Fund which was to be circulated to members.

The Leader of the Council undertook to ensure that the information was circulated.

**Minute 36 Award of Contract – Construction of a New Special Education Needs School in Ulverston**

Members across the Council Chamber welcomed the construction of the new school.

Mr M Wilson asked the Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning about parking at Sandside School. He observed that there were issues with many vehicles parking at the school.

Mrs S Sanderson, Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning, responded that parking had been a key area for consideration from the beginning. She advised that a meeting was to be held on Monday 20 November 2017 to look at the detailed planning, including parking.
Mr I Stewart, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, introduced a report detailing treasury management activities during the first half of the 2017/18 financial year, explaining the context and highlighting key points. The report confirmed that all treasury management activities undertaken during the period complied with the Annual Strategy agreed by the Council in February 2017. The report highlighted that the Treasury Management Strategy had been reviewed and no amendments were recommended at this time.

Members acknowledged the work of the treasury management officer team, congratulating it on its excellent performance.

In response to questions the Deputy Leader confirmed that the Council is satisfied that it is maximising its investment returns while investing prudently.

Members discussed the meaning of the terms “retail” and “professional” in the context of treasury management, clarifying that these are terms used by the financial industry and being classified, as the Council is, as a “professional” investor, opened up a wider range of advice and investment opportunities.

Mrs E Williamson indicated that she would find a conversation with the Deputy Leader about treasury management helpful, as a new member. The Deputy Leader agreed to arrange this.

RESOLVED That

1) Council notes that following a half yearly review, no amendments are required to the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and the Annual Investment Strategy.

2) Council notes that following a half yearly review Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Indicators have been fully complied with and that no amendments are required to these indicators.

3) Council notes that the Treasury Management function is forecasting a £3.0 million underspend after the first quarter of 2017/18 due to the expectation that no internal borrowing will be externalised during the year, albeit that this will be kept under review given various uncertainties, including interest rate movements and day to day cash flow requirements, etc.

52 MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME

Mr S Young, Leader of the Council, introduced a report, together with the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel, which made recommendations for a scheme of members allowances from 1 April 2018.

The Leader thanked the Independent Remuneration Panel for report, which informed members’ consideration of the scheme and for their dedication and
hard work during the time they have served the Council. He noted that the appointments of Mary Dowling, Len Gleed, Daniel Hartley, Janice Wilson and the Chair John Lyons are due to expire on 31st March 2018 and the Council was therefore considering their final report. He noted that the Council had not always agreed with the Independent Remuneration Panel’s recommendations, but acknowledged the Council’s gratitude at their commitment and continued diligence.

The Leader acknowledged that members’ allowances are potentially controversial at any time, but even more so during a time of public sector pay restraint and budget reductions.

Outlining the Panel’s recommendations which were set out in their report, the Leader indicated that he would be recommending a 1% increase across all allowances in 2018/2019, which was in line with the pay increase for staff.

The Panel had also recommended the indexing of the members’ allowances scheme for 2019/2020 with reference to the pay award for Council employees. If approved this would result in members receiving the same percentage increase as staff in 2019/2020.

The Leader moved the following recommendation, which was tabled at the meeting and seconded by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance.

The Council resolves:

1. To place on record the Council’s appreciation for the work carried out in the recent review of the members allowance scheme.
2. To amend the scheme agreed by council on 7th September 2016 by increasing the basic and special responsibility allowances by 1% from 1st April 2018.
3. From 1st April 2019 to increase the basic and special responsibility allowances by a rate equivalent to the National Joint Council for Local Government Services pay award for 2019/20.
4. That the Constitution be amended accordingly to reflect these amendments.

At the request of the Chair, the Monitoring Officer advised that members had to agree a scheme for members allowances in respect of each financial year, but may index link the rate of increase in allowances for a limited period.

Mr Betton spoke against any increase in members’ allowances.

On a show of hands, two members voting against it was RESOLVED

1) To place on record the Council’s appreciation for the work carried out in the recent review of the members allowance scheme.
2) To amend the scheme agreed by Council on 7th September 2016 by increasing the basic and special responsibility allowances by 1% from 1st April 2018.

3) From 1st April 2019 to increase the basic and special responsibility allowances by a rate equivalent to the National Joint Council for Local Government Services pay award for 2019/20.

4) That the Constitution be amended accordingly to reflect these amendments.

53 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Mr S Young, Leader of the Council, introduced a report which included recommendations to fill vacancies for independent members on the Standards Committee. Appointments were needed to meet the requirements set out in the Council’s Constitution for two independent members on the Standards Committee.

A Panel of members had been set up to consider applications supported by the Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer. The Panel comprised Mr F Cassidy (Mr K Hamilton, mentioned in error in the report, had not been a member of the Panel), Mr L Fisher and Mr I Stewart.

The recommended appointee was Mr Stephen Sim, who had served on the Standards Committee since 2012 in the role of Vice Chair. A short biography of Mr Sim had been circulated to members and was available at the meeting.

During the debate, the question was raised as to whether the Chair of the Standards Committee should be required to report to the Council. The Leader explained that this would need careful consideration. Owing to the nature of the role, it was important that the Chair of the Standards Committee remained independent from the Council.

RESOLVED that

1) Mr Stephen Sim be appointed as an independent member of the Standards Committee until 15 November 2021.

2) Mr Stephen Sim be appointed as Chair of the Standards Committee until 15 November 2021.

54 REALLOCATION OF FUNCTIONS

Mr S Young, Leader of the Council, introduced a report relating to a delegation of authority to the Assistant Director – Finance. The Chief Executive had allocated certain functions to the Assistant Director – Finance in 2016 and on the expiry of 6 months, the Council had confirmed the allocation as a change to the Scheme of
Delegation in the Constitution for the period up to 31 January 2018. A continued temporary extension was now sought pending a review of staffing by the Chief Executive.

RESOLVED That

The Council approves the continuation of the allocation to the Assistant Director – Finance in the Scheme of Delegation, of authority to give approval under the Contract Procedure Rules in respect of certain specific matters, acting in accordance with the Contract Procedure Rules, until 30 September 2018.

55 QUESTIONS

Mr C Whiteside asked the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport about progress made by the Council since 29 June 2017 in preparing “shovel ready” schemes for repair and maintenance of the A595.

Mr K Little replied that the Council was working with Highways England and had been in contact with central government seeking approval of further schemes. However, following a meeting with central government the Council had been informed that while further schemes for the A595 would be welcome, no more central funding would be available. The Council has highlighted the issues and Mr Little confirmed that he would be discussing the matter further with the Leader of the Council and the Local Enterprise Partnership.

Mr L Fisher asked the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Property about the delay in the Council transferring the former Brampton Primary School subject to an approved Community Asset Transfer. He referred to recent fire damage to the building and asked about ongoing maintenance costs to the Council.

Mr D Southward replied that this was a longstanding issue. The Cabinet’s decision had been subject to the resolution of property and legal issues. These had proved to be complex and were still being resolved to the transferee trust’s satisfaction. Mr Southward stated that he did not believe that the recent break in and fire at the building would have a significant impact on the development value of the property. He agreed to respond to Mr Fisher with information about the ongoing costs to the Council.

Mr N Hughes asked the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport if he would join him in seeking central government funding for the shortfall between the funding for the temporary footbridge to reach the Ullswater Ferry.

Mr Little replied that he would be happy to work with the community and make Council officers available to provide advice and assistance in seeking funding. He indicated that the ferry company and businesses were keen to work with the Council on this.
Mr J Airey asked the Deputy Leader about a media announcement about the Cabinet's budget proposals which was made ahead of sharing the proposals with members or consultation.

Mr I Stewart, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance replied that he believed the Council needed as wide a process of engagement as possible and that he considered the steps taken to communicate the budget position to be appropriate.

Mr Ellis asked the Cabinet Member for Customers, Transformation and Fire and Rescue when the Council had last carried out a simulated recover from a cyber-attack. Mrs Willis replied that she would provide a written answer to this question.

Mr Collins asked the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport about works to renew services at the Duke William public house, where traffic lights had been situated for 6 weeks. He asked what the Council could do to encourage utility companies to co-operate with each other and complete work in a timely manner. He asked a further question about when Ford Bridge, Burneside, would be restored.

Mr Little replied that there had been further scouring at Ford Bridge, following recent flooding. This is being remedied. He stated that he shared the questioner’s frustration at seeing utilities work which did not seem to be progressing and that this was monitored by the Street Works Team. He considered that the move from the Council being a consenting authority to a permitting authority in respect of street works should assist in ensuring street works are progressed in a timely manner.

Mr Bingham asked the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Property about the whereabouts and value of heritage assets from the former Council Offices at the Courts.

Mr Southward replied that attempts to offer portraits and assets to families who had some connection with them had proved fruitless. The assets were being held in the Courts pending decisions about its future use. He undertook to provide Cllr Bingham with a revised copy of the inventory.

Mr Brereton asked the Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning if she would join him in congratulating John Ruskin School on its GCSE results.

Mrs Sanderson replied that she was pleased to join him and highlighted that results overall are improving in Cumbria. She stated that she would be visiting as many schools of different types with officers to find out about their issues, one of which was the requirement for clarity in the national funding formula.
Mr Dew asked the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport if he would join him in congratulating the community of Kirby Stephen in setting up a new community bus service, and if he could provide assurances of the Council's support to sustain it.

Mr Little replied that he would be happy to support the service, which was dependent on volunteer drivers. Mr Little observed that the initiative demonstrated how solutions could be found in difficult time and he confirmed that he would be happy to work with communities and members who wish to progress services.

Mr Markley asked the Leader of the Council for his support for the cycle path in the Solway Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which had received Coastal Communities Funding.

The Leader replied that he was disappointed that the scheme had not received full Coastal Communities Funding and would have to be developed within the resources available. He expressed admiration for the work being carried in the area including the cycle path which would be a great asset. He confirmed that officers would assist in its delivery.

Mr D Wilson asked the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Property about funding available for repairs to the swimming pool at Millom school and the library building and the strategic long term future of these buildings.

Mr Southward replied that he will provide a full written answer to this question.

56 SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Mr W Wearing, Chair of Scrutiny Management Board introduced his report updating the Council on the work of scrutiny since the last meeting of full Council 6 September 2017.

He highlighted key aspects of the report including the development of a scrutiny work programme with non-executive members which had been considered by Scrutiny Management Board in September 2017, and areas of scrutiny activity, detailed in the report. Mr Wearing reported on the meeting of the Performance Working Group on 2nd October which considered the Quarter 1 performance report, a report from the Chief Fire Officer on operational performance, recycling performance, delayed transfers of care and fostering and adoption.

Mr Wearing advised members that a full day Scrutiny Strategic Planning session would take place on 28 November to which all non-executive members had been invited, to hear from the Deputy Leader and senior officers about proposals being consulted on by the Cabinet.
Mr Wearing reported that no call ins had been received since the last meeting of Council.

57 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

a Audit and Assurance Committee

Mrs H Carrick, Chair of Audit and Assurance Committee presented the minutes of the Audit and Assurance Committee on 12 and 25 September 2017.

She reported that the meeting on the 12 September had considered a report on lessons learned from the legal proceedings taken by Amey against the Council. This had included advice from the Monitoring Officer on the role of the Committee, a statement from the Chief Executive of Halton Borough Council on the robustness of the lessons learned exercise and an independent view from the internal auditor. The committee had concluded that the review method was rigorous, comprehensive and independent. The committee had been satisfied that the lessons had been identified, documented and appropriate recommendations made.

Mrs Carrick reported that the committee had also considered a report from the Chief Executive on the management response and the committee had agreed the response and action plan. The committee had been satisfied that this provided the necessary assurance that improvements needed would be made.

Mrs Carrick reported that at the same meeting, the committee had received the Internal Audit Annual Report on outcomes of Internal Audit work undertaken during the year. The overall conclusion was that the Head of Audit had received partial assurance. The Committee had been satisfied this was a result of the Council adopting a “risk based” approach to audit with the consequence that the outcome was not directly comparable to previous years. Internal Audit had focused on areas of highest risk, which improves effectiveness but may result in more audits showing lower results. The Committee had been satisfied that this did not reflect a decline in the Council’s arrangements.

Mrs Carrick reported that at the 25 September meeting the committee had considered the final draft Annual Governance Statement. The statement had highlighted two significant governance issues: Amey and Children’s Services. The committee had approved the Statement and Action Plan and would monitor the implementation of the Action Plan.

The committee had also received a report on the Accounts 2016/17 Overview. Mrs Carrick reported that the Council had received an “except for” value for money conclusion which was based on the ongoing impact of the May 2015 Ofsted inspection and the impact of the Amey litigation.

The Overview had been “unqualified” in respect of the County Council and Local Government Pension Scheme Accounts reflecting high quality financial reporting
and working papers of the appropriate standard. The committee had been satisfied that this was an outstanding outcome reflecting a high standard of financial reporting and technical competence in the Council.

Mr P Dew asked Mrs Carrick if she was confident, with reference to the Amey lessons learned, that the Council’s commitment to excellent standards of corporate governance could be achieved.

Mrs Carrick replied that it had been the purpose of the lessons learned exercise to ensure that what had happened would never happen again. She was confident that if the Council delivered on the Action Plan which responded to the lessons learned report, which was to be implemented under the scrutiny of the Corporate Management Team and Audit and Assurance Committee, that the Council would not make the same mistakes in the future.

58 CUMBRIA PENSIONS COMMITTEE

Mr M Worth, Chair of the Pensions Committee presented the minutes of the Pensions Committee on 19 September 2017.

Mr Worth highlighted the items considered by the Committee at this meeting including –

1) An update from the Assistant Director – Finance on the work of the Cumbria Local Government Pensions Board.

2) An update on progress on the review of the investment strategy and were informed that Mercer Limited had been appointed to undertake the review and provide an independent opinion as to whether the strategy remains fit for purpose following the triennial valuation. Mercer Limited had concluded that no material changes were required.

3) An update on the triennial valuation of the Pension Fund.

4) A monitoring report for the period January to June 2017.


6) The Minutes of the Border to Coast Pension Partnership held on 6 June 2017 and an update on the pooling of assets across the Local Government Pension Scheme.

7) An update on emerging issues.

8) A report on investment sub-group activity up to September 2017 and

9) A presentation on the annual performance review by Mr Mark Philip of State Street.
There were no questions from members on these minutes.

59  URGENCY PROVISIONS

Mr S Young, Leader of the Council introduced a report which informed the Council of urgent decisions taken in line with the Council’s Constitution since the Council meeting on 6 September 2017.

RESOLVED

To note the report.

At 12.15 pm, at the conclusion of this item, the Council adjourned for 1 hour for lunch.

60  NOTICES OF MOTION

Mr M Brereton moved his motion as set out in the agenda:

“This Council notes the recent announcements by Chris Grayling MP, Secretary of State for Transport in respect of funding to improve local roads and public transport. Whilst we welcome the funds pledged to Whitehaven alongside the previous investments that have come into Cumbria, we are also keen to see that the prevailing need across our County is realised to ensure that our infrastructure is fit for purpose.

This Council calls upon all political groups and stakeholders to agree a concerted plan of action to promote and escalate the case for investing in our County.

This Council acknowledges that progress to date has been slow and that now is the time to put aside party politics and work together in order to evidence the true need which exists across our County.

This Council therefore resolves to;

- Collectively work together to lobby and secure further investment from Central Government, in order to support infrastructure improvements across the County’s key road networks.
• Ensure Members of all groups use their political influence and links, building upon existing relationships with central government to ensure that our case is evidenced and robust.”

Mr Brereton explained that his motion arose from issues in his division relation to the A595, which had been a source of frustration over a number of years and required a broader platform. He proposed that members should share ideas and have constructive debate, seeking political consensus to achieve results.

Mr D Whipp seconded the motion, calling on members to work together to secure funding from central government.

Mr I Stewart, Deputy Leader of the Council, said that he recognised the sentiment behind the motion. He welcomed it but felt that it was insufficient in some respects and considered it appropriate to move an amendment to the proposed resolution:

“The Council therefore resolves to:

Collectively work together to lobby and secure further investments from Central Government, in order to provide infrastructure improvements across Cumbria’s road and rail networks.

Following the recent letter from the Leader welcome the commitment from Cumbria’s MPs to use their influence to secure Central Government support for infrastructure and now call on them to promote our efforts to get more Central Government funding for our County.

Urge all Members to continue to use their political influence and links to promote Cumbria and to ensure that our cases for funding are heard and understood.”

Mrs A Burns, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, seconded the amendment.
The Council then debated the amended resolution.

Mr Stewart highlighted the Council’s efforts to bring investment into the County, including lobbying in central government, the Growth Deal bid and Business Rate Retention Pilot bid. He called on MPs to support the Council and urged government ministers to visit Cumbria.

Members from administration and opposition groups advocated working together and indicated their willingness to lobby central government to promote Cumbria to achieve a strengthened economy and improved infrastructure, in particular access to the west coast. It was highlighted during the debate that all members have opportunities to influence government ministers.
Mr P Dew opposed the amendment. He felt it did not add anything to the original but it confused what was a clear motion. Other members observed that the amendment added rail networks to the original resolution but felt that it was otherwise unnecessary.

Mrs Burns supported the amendment as important in recognising the role of MPs as advocates on behalf of the County. She referred to areas of the country where she said all MPs speak with one voice. She urged members to join forces to speak on behalf of the County.

Mr S Wielkopolski, opposing the amendment regretted that the original motion had not been seen as a genuine attempt to work cross-party and indicated his willingness to work cross party. Other members agreed that it was vital to speak with one voice on behalf of the County and would support the motion as amended if it became the main motion.

Mr S Young, Leader of the Council, supported the amendment, which widened the original motion. He gave examples of work being undertaken to bring investment into the County including the forthcoming submission to the Highways England Road Investment Strategy No. 2 through the Local Enterprise Partnership and highlighted the importance of seeking the support of MPs for the submission. He welcomed the support of opposition members, using their routes of access and influence.

Mr J Airey said that areas that do well in seeking investment speak with one voice and his group had tried to come up with a motion that the Council as a whole could agree. He expressed the view that the LEP is not working and that businesses are frustrated by this.

Mr Stewart summing up his amendment said that the essential difference was that the amendment widened the motion beyond infrastructure and recognised the need for the support of MPs collectively.

Responding, Mr Brereton agreed that the amendment had value in incorporating elements that had been omitted from the original motion. His motion was intended to encourage a broad consensus across all members to promote Cumbria to maximise funding.

The amendment was put to a vote and CARRIED with 38 members voting for the amendment, 24 voting against and 2 abstentions.

As a consequence of the vote, the amendment became the substantive motion. The Leader of the Council moved that the vote be taken.

RESOLVED unanimously That
The Council will -

1) Collectively work together to lobby and secure further investments from Central Government, in order to provide infrastructure improvements across Cumbria’s road and rail networks.

2) Following the recent letter from the Leader welcome the commitment from Cumbria’s MPs to use their influence to secure Central Government support for infrastructure and now calls on them to promote our efforts to get more Central Government funding for our County.

3) Urge all Members to continue to use their political influence and links to promote Cumbria and to ensure that our cases for funding are heard and understood.

Lord RJ Liddle moved his motion as set out in the agenda:

“This council expresses grave concern at the manner and pace with which the Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust is pressing ahead with plans to close the beds at Wigton Hospital.

In December 2016 Cabinet agreed the County Council’s response to the Success Regime proposals. The response confirmed the Council’s support for the concept of Integrated Care Communities on an area by area basis, with the aim of bringing together the NHS community, Adult Social Care and GP Provision in order to deliver a better service for patients in a more cost effective way.

However, the response also made clear that this Council is opposed to the removal of inpatient community hospital beds at Wigton, Maryport and Alston without costed alternative arrangements being put in place, and considers that any savings realised from changes in provision will need to be reinvested in community services.

If North Cumbria CCG wishes to maintain the confidence of the local community, and the full co-operation of the County Council in making these necessary changes in provision, it must listen to concerns that adequate alternative provision must be fully in place before any existing beds are closed or relocated, particularly whilst bed blocking remains a principal concern impeding high quality service delivery at the Cumberland Infirmary and the West Cumberland Hospital.”

Introducing the motion Lord Liddle stated that the issue raised affected the County as a whole. He supported integration but felt that the best approach is “bottom up”. He agreed that services needed to modernise and that the issue was not about
saving buildings, but service outcomes. Integration involves substantial challenges for the Council at a time of extreme financial stress on social care services and this would only be solved through close partnership working between the Council and the NHS to achieve a better resolution of the issues. Lord Liddle highlighted his concern about closure of beds at Wigton Hospital without concrete plans in place for alternative services and while some plans are attractive, such as reinvestment of nursing care in the community, how these and other ideas would be realised is unclear. Lord Liddle felt the issue should be of concern to all councillors who want to see proper integration.

Mr K Little, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport seconded the motion. In his speech he called for scrutiny by the Health and Wellbeing Board and testing of plans to remove beds before implementation.

Members across the Council Chamber supported the motion, speaking about the need for involvement of and consultation with local elected members, and expressing concern that the loss of beds without alternatives would lead to greater pressures on the Council. Members strongly supported the proposal that alternative services should be in place before beds are lost.

Mr Young, Leader of the Council supported the motion, saying that the Council had advised the NHS to engage with the community first, in preference to putting forward proposals and then engaging with the community following opposition. He expressed the view that there are many difficulty issues to resolve, including reconciling services free at the point of deliver with means tested services. He called for greater clarity from the NHS on its plans and work to get people “on side” so that issues can be resolved.

Lord Liddle thanks members for their unanimous support for the motion. He summed up by saying that he was not seeking conflict with the NHS but to represent his constituents on an issue of great concern, where the NHS’s plans are still not clear.

Members agreed by assent to support the motion without amendment and it was

RESOLVED That

1) This Council expresses grave concern at the manner and pace with which the Cumbria Partnership NHS Foundation Trust is pressing ahead with plans to close the beds at Wigton Hospital.

2) This Council supports the concept of Integrated Care Communities on an area by area basis, with the aim of bringing together the NHS community, Adult Social Care and GP Provision in order to deliver a better service for patients in a more cost effective way.
3) This Council is opposed to the removal of inpatient community hospital beds at Wigton, Maryport and Alston without costed alternative arrangements being put in place, and considers that any savings realised from changes in provision will need to be reinvested in community services.

4) If North Cumbria CCG wishes to maintain the confidence of the local community, and the full co-operation of the County Council in making these necessary changes in provision, it must listen to concerns that adequate alternative provision must be fully in place before any existing beds are closed or relocated, particularly whilst bed blocking remains a principal concern impeding high quality service delivery at the Cumberland Infirmary and the West Cumberland Hospital.

61 SPEECHES

There were no speeches at this meeting of the Council.

The meeting ended at 3.15 pm