

LOCAL COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND LEADERSHIP

Minutes of a Meeting of the Local Committee Chairs and Leadership held on Friday, 15 November 2019 at Council Chamber - County Offices, Kendal, LA9 4RQ at 10.00 am

PRESENT:

Mr SF Young (Chair)

Mr AL Barry	Mr K Hitchen
Mr GD Cook	Mr W McEwan
Mr P Dew	Mr AJ Markley
Ms D Earl	Mr C Weber
Mr LN Fisher	Mr D Whipp
Mr KR Hamilton	Mr D Wilson

Also in Attendance:-

Ms K Alty	- Leadership Support Officer - Labour Group
Ms H Blake	- Senior Manager - Customer, Policy and Scrutiny
Mrs L Davis	- Democratic Services Officer
Ms A Hatcher	- Senior Manager - Economy, Enterprise and Place
Mr S Higgins	- Assistant Director - Customer and Community Services
Ms T Ingham	- Area Manager - Barrow
Mrs K Johnson	- Area Manager - South Lakeland
Mr P Musgrave	- Area Manager - Carlisle
Dr D Roberts	- Executive Director - Corporate, Customer and Community Services
Ms L Shaw	- Area Manager - Allerdale
Mr N Wright	- Area Manager - Eden

15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr N Cotton and Mr P Thornton.

16 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 July 2019 be agreed as an accurate record.

17 BORDERLANDS INCLUSIVE GROWTH DEAL - PLACE PROGRAMME

Members received a presentation from the Senior Manager - Economy, Enterprise and Place (the officer) on the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal - Place Programme, town selection methodology and selected towns for Cumbria.

The officer outlined that the Heads of Terms for the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal included a Place Programme that would allow for investment across a number of towns in the Borderlands region. The funding through the Borderlands Deal was however subject to business case approval. To inform the business case, the towns for inclusion in the programme were being selected using a methodology that took account of quantitative and qualitative criteria. It was also noted that this programme would add value to, but not duplicate, other funding sources such as the Future High Street Fund and Towns Fund investment. If the Borderlands Place Programme business case was agreed with Government, there would then need to be individual Place Plans prepared for the towns in the programme that would require approvals. For Cumbria, six towns were to be selected for the programme, one in each district.

The Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Area Managers for each district area updated members on their individual selection of a priority town and the rationale for this. It was acknowledged that in some areas, the selection of the town was proving challenging. The Chair emphasised to members that the town selection, apart from Carlisle, because Carlisle City Council was a member of the Borderlands Partnership Board, was a County Council decision. Local Committees had been asked, having local knowledge, to make their selection in consultation with the District and Borough Councils with a view to reaching consensus on the selected town. The Chair informed members that if a consensus could not be reached, the decision would be made centrally.

Members were given an explanation of the funding and likely governance of the Borderlands Place programme. The Borderlands Partnership Board was requesting £30m from Government for England and £20m for Scotland, with a £18m allocation for Cumbria. In answer to a question on the prioritisation of the funding for smaller town projects, the Leader said that Government would feedback on the direction of spending but hoped it would make a significant difference to the selected towns in Cumbria.

The Chair informed members that a meeting of the Borderlands Partnership Board was scheduled for mid January and urged members to have finalised their town selection by early in the New Year.

RESOLVED, the presentation be noted.

18 FEEDBACK FROM AREA SESSIONS ON LIBRARIES

Members received a presentation from the Senior Manager – Customer, Policy and Scrutiny on area working and the library service. Local members had been consulted on library services and the presentation concentrated on identified common themes for future focus, maximising opportunities to create libraries fit for future purpose that linked into the council's customer strategy and corporate objectives.

Members welcomed the work and recognised that local committees did have an influencing role in the further development of the library service as part of their area planning. The continued development of community hubs to support communities and extension of available services was discussed. The Cabinet Portfolio Holder requested officers to undertake a resident consultation exercise as recommended in the LGA Peer Review report to hear customer and community voices. An increase in the use of volunteers was suggested and welcomed by members.

In answer to a question on library usage, the Assistant Director – Customer and Community Services reported that approximately 15% of the Cumbrian population used the libraries to borrow books but that figure did not take into account other groups using the alternative services available.

RESOLVED, that the presentation be noted.

19 EDEN TRANSPORT TOOLKIT

The Chair of Eden Local Committee, together with Amy Frith, Community Development Assistant provided members with an overview of the new Eden Transport Toolkit. Members were informed that the toolkit had been developed after the Eden Local Committee Committee's Rural Issues Working Group had, based on feedback, identified transport as a key issue impacting rural communities in Eden as one of its priorities.

The toolkit was designed to encourage and support communities to come together to identify transport needs, identify sources of funding and then choose the most appropriate means of meeting needs from a variety of options available. A public launch of the toolkit was planned for the end of the year.

Members welcomed the report and congratulated the officer on the work undertaken. It was recognised that the toolkit could be adapted for use in other areas. Copies were made available for members at the meeting.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

20 UPDATE ON BUDGET FOR 2020/21 AND MTFP

A report was received from the Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) providing members with an update on the development of the Budget for next year (2020/21) set within the context of the development of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) (2020-2025) with particular reference to Local Committees.

The Executive Director – Corporate, Customer and Community Services informed members that cabinet had launched the 2020-21 budget consultation, with the assumption that government set out in the Spending Round 2019 that Councils will increase general Council Tax by 1.99% and for Councils with social care responsibilities, apply the Adult Social Care Precept at 2% for 2020/21.

Members attention was drawn to fact that there were no savings proposed that related to local committee budgets and the assumption was budget planning for 2020/21 could continue with the expectation of funding being in line with the MTFP.

Members noted that the MTFP approved by Council in February included a reduction in the non-principal road network allocation due to an increase to the Highways Incentive Fund – Strategic Asset Maintenance Fund. Members were advised that the Local Committee allocations for 20/21 were subject to further discussion, and may be increased.

In the meantime Members were urged to have “shovel ready” highways schemes in place for delivery in the new financial year, and not wait for the funding allocations to be confirmed.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

21 SCHOOL GOVERNOR NOMINATIONS

Members received a paper by the Executive Director – Corporate, Customer and Community Services on the process for the nomination/appointment of local authority governors. The process related to all Cumbria maintained schools.

The Executive Director – Corporate, Customer and Community Services informed members that a new process for the appointments/nominations was shared with Area Managers in October 2019. Subsequently the process had been amended following communication with the Governor Support Team and the key changes were listed in the report.

The discussion focussed on being proactive in the process to progress nominations where there were vacancies. It was agreed that Area Managers receive a monthly spreadsheet listing LA governors' terms of office end dates. Members would be notified in advance of the vacancy arising and whether the existing LA governor was interested in reappointment to the position. Members were urged to contact the school to discuss suggestions if they were unable to identify an individual to be nominated. The new process was welcomed.

The Executive Director – Corporate, Customer and Community Services agreed to circulate an updated spreadsheet identifying start dates of the current vacancies.

RESOLVED, that

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) an updated LA governor spreadsheet be circulated to members showing start dates of current vacancies.

22 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Monday 2 March 2019 at 10.00 am at County Offices, Kendal.

The meeting ended at 12.00 pm