

CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the **Cabinet** held on **Thursday, 23 July 2020**
at 10.00 am. This meeting was held virtually.

PRESENT:

Mr SF Young (Leader)
Mrs PA Bell
Mrs A Burns
Ms D Earl
Mr KA Little
Mrs S Sanderson
Mr DE Southward
Mr P Thornton
Mrs C Tibble
Mrs J Willis

Officers in attendance:

Chief Executive, Executive Director - Corporate, Customer and Community Services, Executive Director - Economy and Infrastructure, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director - People, Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer), Chief Fire Officer, Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer), Leadership Support Officer - Labour Group, Leadership Support Officer - Liberal Democrat Group, Professional Lead - Democratic Services and Communications Manager

PART 1 ITEMS CONSIDERED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

1 ROLL CALL FOR MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no apologies for absence.

2 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest made on this occasion.

3 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that, the press and public be excluded from the meeting should any discussion arise in relation to Appendix 2 and Appendix 4 of Agenda Item No 12 – Carlisle Southern Link Road Housing Infrastructure Fund Grant Determination Agreement.

Appendix 2 is not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972, as this appendix contains exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person,(including the authority holding that information).

Appendix 4 is not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 5 of Part I of Schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972, as this appendix contains exempt information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

4 STATEMENTS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND CABINET MEMBERS

The Leader of the Council made a statement on behalf of the Carlisle United Official Supporters Club in support of their most recent campaign, called Carlisle REUnited. He raised the issue today in the hope that Cumbria County Council could help spread news of the campaign more widely.

The Leader also mentioned some of the other teams in Cumbria and encouraged all fans to check in with their local clubs, not only football clubs, these organisations might not necessarily be in need of funds, but might need the help of volunteers to maintain the grounds, or simply knowing there are people out there willing them to continue could provide vital support at this time.

Being involved in sport, in any way, was good for people, whether it was exercise via participation, or fresh air and company for a few hours on a Saturday afternoon, these rituals were important to people's health and wellbeing.

The Cabinet Member for Environment was delighted to announce that Cumbria had been identified as one of the 5 Local Nature Recovery Strategy pilot areas nationally.

Local Nature Recovery Strategies were one of the new flagship measures in the Environment Bill. They would combine local knowledge with expert information and advice to plan for more coordinated, practical and

focused action to support nature recovery and the Nature Recovery Network across the country.

This was an exciting opportunity for Cumbria County Council to lead this important initiative in the County, and work on the pilot would now start in earnest.

5 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no public questions, petitions or statements made on this occasion.

6 MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2020 be agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

7 COVID-19 RECOVERY

Cabinet considered a report by the Executive Director – Economy & Infrastructure, which provided members with an update on the developing recovery arrangements being progressed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The report provided an update in relation to Multi agency recovery arrangements and the recovery of County Council services.

The Leader welcomed the report, and was encouraged to see how the Council had begun its work with partners to implement recovery arrangements. In addition to this the council also had its own organisational recovery work, restarting services in a safe way for customers and staff. This was a significant piece of work and would take some time, and expense to complete.

On a positive note there had been an acceleration of the Council's digital strategy, where methods to bring services to people in different ways had been found, and the recovery process could focus on reviewing the balance between online and face to face services.

In late May the Government also issued guidance on the creation of local outbreak control plans, including the requirement for Health Protection Boards and outbreak engagement arrangements to be established.

Cumbria had extensive experience of recovering from major incidents. In the case of Covid-19 the disruption was extensive, and recovery was going to be long and complex, and unusually running concurrent for some time with the response phase.

The Leader took Cabinet through the report and then moved the recommendation.

RESOLVED, that Cabinet note the content of this report and seek further updates as recovery progresses.

8 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT – QUARTER 4 2019/20

Cabinet considered a report from the Director of Finance, which provided members with an overview of corporate performance for 2019/20, incorporating progress on the Council Plan Delivery Plan 2019/20 for the three month period from 1 January 2020 to 31 March 2020.

Each quarter throughout the year Cabinet received progress reports on the delivery of the Council Plan. This report provided an overview of progress at the end of the year.

In terms of the key messages, the overall position at the end of the year was that 35 of the 54 actions had been delivered and rated green, 16, or 30%, were in progress and rated amber, and 3, or 6%, of our actions were rated red and had not been fully delivered as intended.

In terms of the measures used to track performance, the overall position for Quarter 2 was that 26 of 38 measures, or 68%, demonstrated a positive outcome or within 10% of the target.

The Leader then highlighted a number of positive elements in the report, and then moved the recommendation.

RESOLVED, that Cabinet note overall performance relating to delivery of the three Council Plan outcomes and implementation of new ways of working, focusing on progress against the actions and metrics identified in the Council Plan Delivery Plan 2019/20 for Quarter 4 ending 31 March 2020.

9 GLOBAL RESETTLEMENT SCHEME

Cabinet Members considered a report from the Executive Director - Corporate, Customer and Community Services, which sought agreement on the future arrangements for co-ordinating and managing the Global Resettlement Scheme in Cumbria, and also sought agreement for the County Council to act as lead authority for the Scheme.

The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Community Services said Cumbria had a long and proud tradition of supporting those who find themselves, through no fault of their own, having to leave a country they

once called home. Refugees had been welcomed from the camps of World War 2, Vietnamese Boat People in the 1970s, Kosovans in the late 1990s, and more recently Syrian families.

This report sought agreement on the future arrangements for co-ordinating and managing the Global Resettlement Scheme in Cumbria, and for the County Council to act as the lead authority.

Since December 2016, 244 refugees of the 285 originally placed had been resettled in Cumbria.

It was exciting to see their influence appear around us, and the Cabinet Member spoke about her delight and privilege in being able to meet some of the families, along with the Leader of the Council, last year. The reception and hospitality they had experienced was exceptional.

It was hoped the resumption of resettlement would recommence soon, following the Covid-19 pandemic. The Resettlement Team had been engaging closely with the Home Office and RSMP to assess implications and when a potential restart was possible. The Team was discussing local implications with partners, and together were taking steps to provide assurance that risks would be controlled and mitigated. Resumption of resettlement would only take place when it was safe to do so.

RESOLVED, that Cabinet agrees that the County Council act as the lead authority for the provision of resettlement support in Cumbria for refugees under the Global Resettlement Scheme in 2020/21 and future years, subject to appropriate funding being confirmed for 2021/22 onwards.

10 CUMBRIA'S HIGHWAYS ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (2020 - 2025)

Cabinet considered a report from the Executive Director – Economy & Highways, which presented the Cumbria Highways Asset Management Strategy.

The strategy had been developed to improve the management of the Council's highways assets and allowed for the longer term planning taking into consideration customer needs, local priorities and asset condition whilst making the best use of the available resources.

The Highways Asset Management Strategy detailed how the Council would deliver a Highways Service over the next five years and would drive decisions about investment in the highway network and the direction for future models of service delivery.

The Council submitted a self-assessment questionnaire to the DfT in March 2020, to determine the level of Incentive Fund it received for 2020/21. There were 3 potential "Bands" and the Council's self-assessment currently placed the Council as being a "Band" 3 authority. The Highway Service aimed to review its systems and procedures and deliver an asset management approach with the ambition of remaining a "Band" 3 authority.

If Cabinet approve the Highways Asset Management Strategy the Council would continue to be assessed as a Band 3 Authority, the highest banding available.

Through the Highways Asset Management Strategy the Council would be able to deliver a modern efficient and customer focussed Highway Service within the resources available. The adoption of an asset management approach for its highway network was in line with the codes of practice and was a key ingredient in this process.

RESOLVED, that Cabinet approve the Cumbria Highways Asset Management Strategy (2020-2025).

11 AWARD OF FRAMEWORK FOR PROPERTY MAINTENANCE MINOR WORKS

Cabinet had before it a report from the Executive Director – Economy and Infrastructure which asked them to consider awarding a framework to deliver property maintenance minor works schemes as part of the delivery of the County's capital works programme.

The Council has a programme of capital maintenance, new build and extensions for all its property. Many of these schemes were delivered through the Capital Works Framework (CWF), which was established to deliver schemes generally within the range of £50k to £5m. However, for a number of lower value schemes (up to £100k in value) the contractors on the CWF were not the most appropriate or would not offer best value.

The Property Maintenance Minor Works framework would facilitate the procurement of these low value schemes in a process compliant with procurement rules.

RESOLVED, that Cabinet award the framework agreements as follows:-

Lot 1 – General Building

BK Builders Ltd
Colin Briscoe Construction Ltd
Cubby Construction Ltd
Michael Thompson Ltd
Morris & Spottiswood Ltd

Postlethwaite Construction Ltd
PPM Ltd
Roland Hill Ltd

Lot 2 – Mechanical and Electrical

AFM Gas Services Ltd
Bay Building Services Ltd
CPL Heating and Plumbing Ltd
Cubby Construction Ltd
EE Thompson Ltd
J&J Electrical Ltd
Roland Hill Ltd
PK Engineering

Lot 3 – Roofing

Cubby Construction Ltd
DLP Services (Northern) Ltd
Jennings Roofing Ltd
M&J Group (Construction & Roofing) Ltd
Michael Thompson Ltd
Roland Hill Ltd
Stobbarts Ltd
Top Notch Contractors Ltd

Lot 4 – Painting and Decorating

Bell Decorating Group
Cubby Construction Ltd
Mitie Property Services (UK) Ltd
Morris & Spottiswood
Novus Property Solutions Ltd
Seddon Construction Ltd
Stobbarts Ltd
Trident Maintenance Services Ltd

Lot 5 – Asbestos Removal

Cubby Construction Ltd
Ductclean (UK) Ltd
Enviraz (Scotland) Ltd
Em1 Ltd
Enchia Asbestos Solutions
LAR Ltd
MDS Ltd
Rhodar Ltd

12 CARLISLE SOUTHERN LINK ROAD - HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND GRANT DETERMINATION AGREEMENT

Cabinet had before it a report from the Executive Director – Economy and Infrastructure, which sought approval to enter a grant determination agreement to receive £134m from Government to build the Carlisle Southern Link Road. This included the £102m previously approved, plus an additional £32m that was conditional on completion of the grant determination agreement before the end of July and delivery of the road by May 2024, with no additional funding to be provided.

Cumbria had ambitious plans for economic growth as set out in the LEP's Local Industrial Strategy. Following the global COVID-19 pandemic, CSLR would play a vital role in the economic recovery of the county. However, the biggest economic challenge for the county was addressing the current decline in the working age population. In this regard, St Cuthbert's Garden Village was the single most important project for Cumbria due to its ability to support growth in the local population and thereby contribute to reversing the declining working age population.

To facilitate this level of growth, a major infrastructure upgrade was essential. The proposed CSLR would provide a high quality link between Junction 42 on the M6 and the A595 connecting to the Carlisle Northern Development Route and thereby completing an outer ring road for Carlisle. This road was critical in unlocking the development of the Garden Village proposals; providing highway capacity and access to support the delivery of St Cuthbert's Garden Village and wider strategic connectivity from the M6 to the A595 and a more resilient network within the wider Carlisle highway network.

This was a partnership project with Carlisle City Council reflecting the respective roles as highway authority and housing authority. Although Carlisle City Council was party to the grant determination agreement with Homes England, there was also a separate collaboration agreement between Cumbria County Council and Carlisle City Council to reflect the respective roles in two-tier local government.

In simple terms, the rationale for the road was about the provision of enabling infrastructure to unlock 10,000 new homes in St Cuthbert's Garden Village. Fundamentally this was about creating new neighbourhoods and communities and a place where people would choose to live. In this way, the proposals were central to Cumbria attracting families to live and work here and thereby contribute to reversing the declining working age population.

The report reflected the benefits of this investment, but also outlined the risks to the Council in entering into the grant determination agreement. The report advised that the main risks were financial as the Council was agreeing to be responsible for cost over-run risk. The most significant

risk related to spending all of the grant before a longstop date of March 2024 after which Homes England was under no obligation to pay any further grant if the project was delayed. These financial risks do, however, need to be balanced against the implications of not proceeding. This was a complex project and there had been protracted negotiations with Homes England and the City Council. The result of these negotiations was the recommendations before Cabinet, for agreement.

The Leader said that this was a substantial and important scheme for the county. One of the reasons for the additional funding from Government was to accelerate completion of the scheme to help to aid economic recovery.

Work would commence in 2022 and be completed by the end of March 2024.

Although there were inherent risks in each stage of the scheme, which were articulated throughout the report, there were also risks associated with not proceeding with the scheme.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, although aware of the risks associated with the scheme, supported the recommendations.

RESOLVED, that Cabinet agrees to:

- a) Enter a Grant Determination Agreement with Homes England to receive £134m of grant funding towards the scheme costs of the Carlisle Southern Link Road in line with the agreement attached at Appendix 1 and 2.
- b) Delegate authority to the Executive Director Economy and Infrastructure in consultation with the S151 Officer, Monitoring Officer, Leader, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport to approve any necessary, minor amendments to the Grant Determination Agreement prior to its completion and to provide to Homes England the supporting documents for the Schedules and Annexures by the 11 September 2020.
- c) Enter a "Collaboration Agreement" with Carlisle City Council prior to completion of the Grant Determination Agreement confirming its £5m funding contribution to the project.
- d) Delegate authority to the Executive Director Economy and Infrastructure in consultation with the S151 Officer, Monitoring Officer, Leader, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport to approve any amendments to the draft "Collaboration Agreement" attached at Appendix 3.

13 PROPOSED CHANGE OF AGE RANGE AT WIGTON INFANT SCHOOL

Cabinet considered a report from the Executive Director – People which dealt with the outcome of the representation period on the proposed change of age range at Wigton Infant School and sought a final decision.

Longthwaite Road Pre-School was located on the site of Wigton Infant School, and was a popular voluntary sector nursery catering for 2, 3 and 4 year olds which had been struggling to recruit and retain volunteers for their management committee and was now in danger of closure.

Closure of Longthwaite Road Pre-School would leave a shortage of early years places in Wigton.

Following discussion between Cumbria County Council's Early Years Team, the management committee of Longthwaite Road Pre-School and the governors of Wigton Infant School, Wigton Infant School governors had agreed to take on the provision.

To accommodate this Wigton Infant School needed to change its existing age range from 4 to 7 years to a new range of 2 to 7 years, with a proposed implementation date of September 2020.

A consultation was carried out between 27 January and 6 March 2020. There were 350 letters sent out and 94% of responses received were in support of the proposal.

A notice detailing the proposal was published on 15 May and no responses were received during the representation period which ran until 12 June 2020.

The proposal would provide a sustainable and well subscribed early years' facility for children in the local area.

RESOLVED, that Cabinet agree to implement the proposed change of age range at Wigton Infant School.

14 POTENTIAL CLOSURE OF BRAM LONGSTAFFE NURSERY SCHOOL, BARROW

Members had before them a report which sought a final decision on the proposed closure of Bram Longstaffe Nursery School in Barrow.

Bram Longstaffe Nursery School had been inspected by Ofsted in December 2019 and received a 'Special Measures' rating, which meant that Ofsted judged the school to be "failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing were not demonstrating the capacity to secure

the necessary improvement in the school”.

The school had struggled to balance its budget for a number of years. And the County Council had continued to support the school to return to a balanced budget position. However, although costs had been reduced, the school’s deficit stood at £507,441 by the end of 2019/20.

Despite the best efforts of the county council and, in particular, the staff and governors at Bram Longstaffe, it had simply not been possible to return it to the thriving, successful school it once was.

On this basis, a public consultation exercise on closure was undertaken between 24 February and 3 April 2020. Taking into account the outcome of this consultation, the Leader of the Council, on 23 April, approved the publication of formal closure notices.

Notices were published on 15 May, triggering a ‘representation period’ which ended on 12 June. No representations were received.

The proposals were presented to Barrow Local Committee on 6 March 2020 as part of the consultation exercise, and local committee members had asked that Cabinet sought to retain the building to support the development of the community hub. Cabinet supported this proposal.

RESOLVED that,

- (1) Cabinet approves the school’s closure with effect from 31 August 2020.
- (2) The County Council commits to retaining the building for alternative community use, and the Bram Longstaffe name.

The meeting ended at 11.20am