

COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL COMMITTEE FOR BARROW

Minutes of a Meeting of the County Council Local Committee for Barrow held on Monday, 18 November 2019 at 10.30 am at Conference Room, Nan Tait Centre, Barrow-in-Furness, LA14 1LG

PRESENT:

Mr KR Hamilton (Chair)

Mrs A Burns
Mr F Cassidy
Mr D English
Mr D Gawne

Mr W McEwan (Vice-Chair)
Mr B Shirley
Mrs H Wall
Mr MH Worth

Also in Attendance:-

Mr C Broadbent	-	Road Safety Co-ordinator
Ms E Broadbent	-	Community Development Officer
Mrs L Harker	-	Senior Democratic Services Officer
Ms T Ingham	-	Area Manager - Barrow
Mrs A Meadows	-	Community Development Officer
Mr K Melville	-	Senior Manager - Highways Delivery
Mr K Tetchner	-	Highways Network Manager

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

41 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr S Wielkopolski and Mr R Worthington.

42 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Mr W McEwan declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6 – Barrow Citizens Advice Report – Money Advice Service (minute 46 refers) as he was a Board Member of the Barrow Citizens Advice Bureau.

43 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED, that the press and public be not excluded from the meeting during consideration of any item of business.

44 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no questions, statements or petitions relating to the business of the Committee on this occasion.

45 MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

46 BARROW CITIZENS ADVICE REPORT - MONEY ADVICE SERVICE

The Committee considered a report from the Chief Officer, Barrow Citizens Advice Bureau which gave an overview of personal debt in the UK, together with information specifically concerning the Barrow area.

Members were informed that Barrow Citizens Advice Moneywise Team had helped 528 people with a total debt of £3,404,832. It was explained that analysis of the type of debts in Barrow illustrated the shift from consumer credit to essential living costs, including meeting debts to Government. It was highlighted that 48% of those helped had priority debts where serious action could be taken against a person if the debt was not paid.

The Committee was informed that Barrow Citizens Advice had met the targets as set by the grant agreement despite increased bureaucratic requirements introduced by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), some of which were not well received by those seeking advice. It was explained that feedback from those helped evidenced continued high levels of user satisfaction and a likeliness to recommend the service to others; scoring over 93% this was 7% higher than scores given to other FCA debt advice services.

Members raised their concerns regarding the data in relation to debts for each individual Ward in the Barrow area highlighting the three inner wards as being the most deprived in the area.

The Committee received information on a Government initiative 'Breathing Space' and it was anticipated this, along with the pressures on income and rising costs of living could mean the need for high quality expert debt advice would remain and potentially grow.

A discussion took place regarding how the data compared year on year. Members were informed that fewer people were being helped than in previous years but highlighted the increase in priority debt. It was explained that one concern for the reduction in those seeking advice was that people were leaving this too late and were being forced into the recovery and enforcement process. The Committee raised their concerns regarding the effects debt had on the mental wellbeing of people.

During the course of discussion concerns were raised regarding the number of clients seeking advice who were in employment on zero hours contracts and in receipt of minimum wage.

Members highlighted investment in the Barrow area and the promise of the benefits this would bring to the local people emphasising the need for reassurance that this would come to fruition.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, acknowledged the importance of the Money Advice Service and thanked the officers for their continued support to residents of the Barrow area.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

47 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORKING GROUP

The Committee received a report from the Executive Director – Corporate, Customer and Community Services which provided an update on the Children and Young People's Working Group.

Members were informed the Working Group had been undertaking a review and looking at a new approach for its operations. It was explained this was to enable the Group to work in a more strategic, co-ordinated way with Children's Services and partners. The Committee noted that by prioritising key issues in the local area and working as a partnership to address those issues it should assist the way partners could work on the ground directly with children, young people and families.

The Committee thanked Alison Meadows, Community Development Officer for her continued support.

RESOLVED, that

- (1) the work of the Barrow Children and Young People's Working Group (detailed at Appendix A to the report) be noted;
- (2) the new approach of the Children and Young People's Working Group be approved;
- (3) the re-naming of the Children and Young People's Working Group to 'Supporting Children and Strengthening Families' be approved;
- (4) the Terms of Reference (detailed at Appendix B to the report) be approved;
- (5) the Children and Young People's Working Group refreshes the membership;

- (6) a grant of £8,250 to Walney Community Trust for Universal Services provision from Universal Services Funding Budget be approved.

48 ROAD SAFETY UPDATE

The Committee received a report from the Acting Executive Director – Economy and Infrastructure to raise awareness of the current road safety management arrangements that the Cumbria Road Safety Partnership had in place.

The importance of making full use of the available road safety data was highlighted. Members were informed that the Road Safety Co-ordinator, Highways England and Cumbria Police worked in partnership to ensure that high quality data was shared and that the public had access to road safety data. Members were given an update on the Cumbria Road Safety Partnership which operated mainly through its monthly tasking meeting, highlighting that concerns could be raised through the Local Committee's representative.

The Committee discussed the additional activities undertaken for safer road users. During the course of discussion members raised concerns regarding the use of mobility scooters and suggested that routine visits should include the Disability Association, Barrow-in-Furness to raise road safety awareness.

Members then received a short presentation from PC Kevin Jackson regarding the Road Awareness Training which was delivered to schools and colleges. The Committee was given a positive update on the reduction in drink-driving related accidents but concerns were highlighted regarding the increase in drug-driving related incidents.

A discussion took place regarding the main causes of road traffic accidents and members were informed that due to the use of generic terminology it would be difficult to break down the statistics.

The Committee drew attention to the Institute of Advanced Motorists and felt this should be promoted through the Road Safety Management. Officers confirmed that they attended educational events to promote their courses.

The local Member for Dalton North raised the concerns of residents regarding perceived speeding of larger vehicles in his Division and rural areas in general. It was agreed that the Police would undertake a survey of the A595 through Ireth to ascertain whether the perception was correct.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the officers for an informative presentation.

RESOVLED, that the report be noted.

49 HIGHWAYS ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY REPORT

The Committee received a report from the Acting Executive Director – Economy and Infrastructure which detailed the refreshed Highway Asset Management Strategy.

Members were informed the Highways Asset Management Strategy 2020-2025 would align to the Council Plan with a vision for a customer focused, resilient and cost effective service that delivered a safe and well managed highways asset. The need to work together with partner organisations and communities to achieve shared aspirations was highlighted together with the exploration of new ways to deliver services and maximise available resources. The importance of prevention and early intervention to achieve better outcomes was emphasised as well as digital transformation to give customers choice and easy access to online services.

During the course of discussion the importance of logging faults on the highway through the Authority's HIMS System was highlighted. Whilst members acknowledged not all residents had access to IT equipment suggested that the County Council's website should promote HIMS to the public.

A discussion took place regarding the use of recycled plastic for road surfacing. Officers explained that although this had not been used to date this was also being considered as resurfacing materials for footways in the county.

The Committee discussed the Five Year Winter Maintenance Programme. During the course of discussion concerns were raised regarding the lack of gritting on Holbeck Park Avenue, Barrow and blocked drains on Market Street. It was agreed officers would investigate those matters further.

A detailed discussion then took place regarding the number of back streets in the Barrow area. The Committee felt that if resources were being maximised they needed to be recognised, highlighting how they were utilised by residents and should be funded. Officers drew attention to the 'Private Streetworks Agreement' which could potentially be used for this. It was agreed that this would be considered at a future meeting of the Barrow Highways Sub-Group. During the course of discussion a general concern was raised regarding the problems encountered with unadopted roads in rural areas.

The importance of engagement with elected members was acknowledged by officers and any comments were welcomed.

The Committee welcomed the update and expressed their appreciation for the positive development.

RESOLVED, that

- (1) the process for refreshing the Highway Asset Management Strategy be noted;
- (2) the Delivery Plan that has been developed in support of the refreshed Highway Asset Management Strategy be noted;

- (3) a report on the maintenance of back streets in the Barrow area be considered at a future meeting of Barrow Highways Sub-Group.

50 2019/20 HIGHWAYS DEVOLVED REVENUE AND CAPITAL UPDATE

Members considered a report by the Acting Executive Director – Economy and Infrastructure which detailed the Highways Revenue and Devolved Capital and Non-Devolved Capital budget finance reports and updated members as to current progress on those budget lines.

RESOLVED, to

- (1) note that the revenue and capital budget allocations for 2019/20 and the commitments and expenditure recorded to the end of September 2019 (referred to in appendices 1, 2 and 3 of the report);
- (2) reallocate £38,883 Devolved Highways Revenue budget underspending brought forward from 2018/19 currently held on the Other line of the Devolved Highways Revenue budget for 2019/20 to the Better Highways line within the Devolved Highways Revenue budget for 2019/20.

51 BARROW HIGHWAYS ADVISORY SUB-GROUP

The Committee considered a report from the Acting Executive Director – Economy and Infrastructure which gave details of the discussion and recommendations of the Highways Advisory Sub-Group for the Barrow area which met on 15 October 2019.

Members expressed their thanks and appreciation for the Summary of the Condition of Back Streets and Assessment of Maintenance Procedures in the Barrow Area report which had been provided by the Highways Network Manager. The Committee raised their concerns regarding the estimated cost of £12,646,510.01 which would be required to maintain all the back streets and felt this should be brought to the attention of the Authority's Cabinet.

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2019 be noted.

52 BARROW AREA PLANNING REPORT

Members considered a report by the Executive Director – Corporate, Customer and Community Services which detailed information from across the Community teams including Community Development, waste prevention, and libraries, and provided an update on work and agreed activity since the last meeting of the Committee.

The Committee received a positive update on the 'Establish a Love Barrow Running Festival'. It was noted this was a priority project identified by Barrow Local Committee, and aimed to build on the legacy of the Tour of Britain coming to Barrow in 2018/19. Members were informed that over 600 runners took part overall and was complemented by a Health Festival held in the Forum, developed in partnership with Mind, Barrow ICC & University Hospitals of Morecambe Bay Trust. It was emphasised that the event had been very successful and that plans were underway for a 2020 Festival.

The Committee was informed that through regular monitoring of the budget it had been noted that there were two outstanding commitments in General provisions dating back to March 2017. It was explained that one of those was for £50 to Cumbria CVS and the other for £1,549 to Barrow BID.

Members were informed that as Local Committee had funded the contributions up to and including 2019 and all agreed funding to Cumbria CVS had been paid, it was recommended that Local Committee decommit this funding enabling it to be brought back into the General Provisions budget for members to use as appropriate.

The Committee discussed the concerns raised previously by members regarding the installation of Speed Indication Devices (SIDs) on Greengate Street and the issues regarding traffic congestion around Hollywood Park roundabout and the access into Hindpool Retail Park.

Members felt strongly that there would be a significant benefit to the installation of a pair of SIDs on Greengate Street at a cost of £9,000. The Committee were informed that there was currently no available funding through the Highways budget in the 2019/20, therefore, it was suggested that this be funded from the General Provisions budget.

During the course of discussion members suggested that bollards be erected on the existing traffic island outside Greengate School.

The Committee had continued to raised their concerns in relation to traffic around Hollywood Park roundabout and the access into Hindpool retail Park. It was explained that in order to better consider any future options and potential works that could deliver improvements additional detailed work would need to be undertaken. It was, therefore, proposed a study was commissioned to investigate this further so that evidence would be available in readiness for any future funding.

It was explained that the Highways Network Manager had identified that carrying out a study would cost £9,000. The Local Committee was, therefore, asked to consider whether they wished to fund this study from the currently unallocated funds in the General Provisions budget or from a combination of the remaining Area Planning Allocation of £6,127 together with £2,873 from currently unallocated funds in General Provisions.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, expressed their thanks and appreciation to Emma Broadbent and the Community Development Team for the work they had undertaken to enable a successful 'Establish a Love Barrow Running Festival'.

RESOLVED, that

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the £1,599 previously committed to Cumbria CVS and Barrow BID (as detailed above) be de-committed and brought back into the General Provisions budget for members to use as appropriate;
- (3) two Speed Indication Devices at a cost of £9,000 (as detailed above) be funded from the General Provisions budget;
- (4) a traffic study in relation to traffic around Hollywood Park roundabout and the access into Hindpool retail Park at a cost of £9,000 be funded from the General Provisions budget;
- (5) the £4,590 previously allocated to the 2018/19 School Crossing SLA (paragraph 4.18) be reallocated to the General Provisions budget as a contribution towards the Speed Indication Devices and Traffic Study (as outlined in paragraphs 4.12-4.16 of the report).

53 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS SERVING ON OUTSIDE BODIES

The Committee drew attention to the lack of attendance of the Local Committee's Looked After Children Champion at meetings appropriate to the role. As the relevant Member had left the Local Committee meeting it was agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Local Committee would contact him regarding this position. During the course of discussion Mrs A Burns and Mrs H Wall expressed an interest in taking up the post in future if necessary.

54 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED, that the next scheduled meeting will take place on 20 January 2019 at 10.30 am in the Conference Room, Nan Tait Centre, Barrow-in-Furness, LA14 1LG.

The meeting ended at 12.55 pm