

COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL COMMITTEE FOR EDEN

Minutes of a Meeting of the County Council Local Committee for Eden held on Friday, 11 December 2020 at 10.30 am at

PRESENT:

Mr P Dew (Chair)

Mrs PA Bell
Mrs HF Carrick
Mr A Connell
Ms C Driver

Mr N Hughes
Mr T Wentworth Waites
Mr D Whipp (Vice-Chair)

Also in Attendance:-

Mr N Butcher	-	Local Area Network Manager (Eden)
Mr K Crawley	-	Traffic Management Team Leader (East)
Mr N Wright	-	Area Manager - Eden
Ms C Beckett	-	Public Health Locality Manager
Mr O David	-	Project Manager
Ms F Wallis	-	Project Lead

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

44 ROLL CALL AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Miss H Fearon.

45 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of Interest made at the meeting.

46 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

47 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no public questions, petitions or statements made at the meeting.

48 MINUTES

Corrections

Page 7- Officer attendance – Mr J Banks' full name to be recorded.

Page 16, Minute 38 Highways Programme Progress Report 2020/21:

Resolution 2 add in 'revenue' between 'approves' and virement'

Resolution 3 add in 'revenue' between 'approves' and virement'

Resolution 3 add in 'the 2020/2021' between 'from' and 'Appleby Fair Fund'

Resolution 4 add in in 'revenue' between 'approves' and virement'

RESOLVED, that subject to the corrections above, the minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2020 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

A member asked for clarification on the costs for extra staff to support an additional gully cleansing machine. The Local Area Network Manager advised that information circulated by the Network Engineer after the previous meeting included the costs for the vehicle and its operatives.

49 PRESENTATION: DFT ROAD SAFETY FUND A592

A presentation was delivered by the Project Lead - Capital Programmes on the DfT Road Safety Fund A592.

The presentation covered the following:

- The background
- A map showing the Road Assessment Programme Risk Rating
- Why the roads had been chosen
- The outcome
- Funding status
- What the measures were likely to include
- Next steps
- Communications
- Officer contact details

After explaining that the vast majority of the A592 was in his division, a member stated that the road was of great concern to local residents, particularly in tourist areas. He considered that improved public transport could help with taking vehicular pressure off the road. He explained that residents living along the road were already tolerant of road closures but asked that adequate warnings of future road closures were given to residents and this included identifying where diversion roads were and what times roads would be closed.

The member and local residents welcomed that there would be a proactive approach to upgrading road safety measures. He asked that all resident suggestions for improvements were given due consideration. In terms of communication and in relation to the sub groups which would discuss proposals, the member queried the boundary of the group which bordered with South Lakeland and asked that it be reviewed. The member referred to challenging local weather conditions and highlighted that work could not always be undertaken in bad weather. He asked if the Government was aware that works could be delayed and queried how long the County Council could retain the funding for if there were delays, before it would have to be returned to the Government.

In terms of communication, the Project Lead - Capital Programmes advised that there was a communications plan in place using experience gained from another large project in the county. This would help with conveying information relating to disruption for example. With regard to the sub group boundary, the member's point was taken on board and members were informed that all would receive the same information. It was noted that there was no time limit on spending the Fund and it had been recognised that all the work would not take place in one year.

A member thanked the officer for the presentation. He looked forward to working with officers on the part of the road which was in his division.

The Programme Lead informed members that the project would take a number of years to complete given the nature of the tourist area and weather conditions. He confirmed that there was no timescale on spending the money from the Fund. He referred to the views of Parish Councils and confirmed that they had all been logged and officers would take all responses into consideration.

RESOLVED, that the position be noted.

50 AREA PLANNING IN EDEN

A report was considered from the Executive Director – Corporate, Community and Customer Services regarding Area Planning in Eden. The report brought together information from across the community teams including community development and services as well as public health. The report provided Local Committee with an update on the work of each area, identified activity against priorities, highlighted current issues and provided an overview of the budget position.

The Area Manager presented the report, drawing members' attention to the COVID 19 response and recovery in Eden. He was pleased to report that the work of the team and partners in terms of supporting the community remained effective and strong. He welcomed that since the publication of the report, the rate of infection had dropped significantly and was below the regional and national average. Requests for help to the County Council support line had reduced in number so it seemed that local residents were managing well during the pandemic restrictions.

The Area Manager advised on the COVID 19 Winter Support Grant which would give food vouchers to households in receipt of free school meals. Utilities support would be available through the Citizens Advice Bureau. The team was in discussion with partners about how to spend an allocation of £21,000 to support local need for food, utilities and essentials. The Chair and Area Manager had recently raised this issue with Eden District Council and it was keen to collaborate with the County Council on this.

Members were informed about how COVID 19 activity was transitioning into area planning work. Members' attention was drawn to work being driven by Penrith Town Council to maximise the opportunities for the arts and cultural sector in Penrith. Members were asked to nominate a member to sit on the Penrith Town Council Cultural Strategy Focus Group which was the group undertaking this work. All Penrith local members would be updated on this work going forward. The work undertaken to date was outlined for members.

The Area Manager referred to wider action planning work being undertaken in Eden and made a request for £2,500 each for area planning groups in Alston Appleby, Kirkby Stephen and Penrith. This money would help with achieving any short term priorities. He proposed that he, in liaison with the Local Member approved this funding. He highlighted that once other areas were in a similar area planning position, the same levels of funding would be requested.

Members' attention was drawn to the Local Committee's working groups and committee issues. The Area Manager commented on the time pressures on members and officers and proposed that the number of public meetings be reduced from eight to six per year. He was comfortable that Executive business could be conducted at six meetings per year.

In terms of public health, members were advised about an officer who had been appointed on a temporary basis to replace the current Public Health Locality Manager.

After stating his support for 2 fewer meetings per year, a member referred to the unallocated resources in the 2020/21 Communities Revenue Budget as at 30 November 2020. He queried whether some of the budget could be allocated to bus services in Eden. He asked if any progress had been made on clarifying whether constitutionally the Local Committee could financially support bus provision. The Area Manager advised that this matter was still to be resolved. The member noted the length of time it was taking to obtain an answer and highlighted that it had taken a long time for him to receive a response as to whether he could use his Member Allowance to support voluntary bus services in his division. He asked that officers resolved this matter as soon as possible.

The same member referred to the preparation of food parcels. He noted that they had not been required and asked what had happened to them and asked for assurance that the food was not wasted and had been given to deserving people in Eden. The Area Manager stated that no food would be wasted and they were all ambient food parcels which had a long shelf life. These would be distributed to food banks in due course if not required.

The member referred to the number of area working groups in Eden, some of which were being established in localities without the knowledge of the Local Member. He wanted the Local Committee to have oversight of the area working groups. He considered that there was inconsistency between the area working groups. He explained that not all had to have their Terms of Reference agreed by the Local Committee. He referred to Eden Lakes Working Group in his division. He did not think that this Group was representing everyone across the area. He asked that resources be held back from area working groups who had not yet been fully established. The Area Manager reassured the Local Committee that a lot of area working groups were doing excellent work and although there was not yet a comprehensive picture of all the established groups, officers were endeavouring to draw everything together in order to produce a local strategy. He talked about how priority was being given to service centres initially but reassured members that officers were working with many groups in the wider Eden area.

The same member welcomed that the number of smokers in Eden had reduced to a rate of 8.73% of the population. He asked that up to date figures be provided. This information would be circulated after the meeting.

A member referred to the Eden Children and Young People Partnership's three Task and Finish Groups. She was keen to understand whether these Groups would include the implications for children with a disability. Additionally, she was not happy with the flow of information from the Eden Health and Wellbeing Forum. She wished to know what it talked about, what its actions were and what progress was being made. She asked for a written response on this matter.

The same member asked that details be widely circulated about winter welfare and school holidays' support. This would allow community groups to be kept informed and so avoid duplication and allow them to be able to fill gaps in provision. The member referred to a resident who had issues with the Government's heating payment and wondered how many people in Eden had the same problem.

Mrs Bell proposed that Dawn Hurton continued to represent the Local Committee on the Penrith Town Council Cultural Strategy Focus Group as she was an expert in her field and had performed well. The member supported a reduction in the number of public Local Committee meetings. The Area Manager referred to the request that had been made that people in Eden were made aware of the support that was available to them. He advised that work was taking place with community partners on delivering locally focussed information about the support available over the Christmas period. The Chair advised on the work of the Eden Community Resilience Group and highlighted that people in the community may need to have more information on what was available to them.

In supporting the previous member's proposal that Dawn Hurton remained as the Local Committee's representative Penrith Town Council Cultural Strategy Focus Group and the reduction in the number of public meetings, a member referred to the delay in response to bus service support which he attributed to officer sickness. He highlighted that there was now a report drafted on rural bus services which he

welcomed as services in his division had reduced. He considered that current bus service provision was unacceptable.

The Chair highlighted his interest in bus service provision. He referred to the ambiguity of financing bus service provision in the county and noted that service provision was inadequate in some areas of the county.

A member detailed area planning work in Alston. In referencing the point made earlier that not all groups were involved in area planning, the member stated that there was not a one size fits all approach to area planning. She commented on the approach to area planning in the area, advising that it was not badged as being County Council led. Governance of the local group was rotated on a regular basis to allow shared ownership and the Terms of Reference reflected the shared governance structure. She considered that the devolution of power worked well in Alston and she was optimistic for the future of the group.

The Chair referred to the Eden Locality Children and Family Partnership which had recently been established. He referred to the proliferation of local groups as mentioned earlier in the meeting and highlighted the matters of duplication and overlap of work in the different groups. He considered it important to work efficiently and collaboratively in the localities. He expected that increase collaboration in future would ensure children and young people would be well served.

The Chair invited a seconder to Mrs Bell's proposal that Dawn Hurton remained the Local Committee's representative on the Penrith Town Council Cultural Strategy Focus Group. Ms Driver seconded the proposal. Thanks would be given to Dawn Hurton for the work she had undertaken to date and she would be advised that she had been nominated again due to her excellent work record.

Mr Hughes moved that the following additional words be added to Resolution 2: 'and endeavour to see that it is responsibly spent within the allocated time frame, following full consultation with the Committee'. This was seconded by Mrs Bell. A member highlighted that the implication of having the amendment to the motion could be that the money would otherwise be spent irresponsibly. She considered that there was undue emphasis on the fact that the money was spent responsibly and highlighted that members and officers endeavoured to spend funding prior to the financial year end. She highlighted that the £74,007 left in the Communities Revenue Budget was not for one budget line therefore a number of decisions would have to be taken to allocate the money. A budget line included in this figure was the members' Community Budget. She considered the amendment unnecessary and would not support it.

Mrs Bell advised that seconding the motion was about the importance of the whole Local Committee discussing and deciding together where the money was at the year-end. Mrs Bell asked Mr Hughes for an interpretation of the word 'responsibly' in the amendment in order to clarify whether it related to decisions on funding being made as a whole Local Committee. She added that there was no suggestion that officers had acted irresponsibly financially.

Mr Hughes gave a clarification on the motion. The Area Manager advised that all budgets would be spent responsibly and in complete consultation with local members and the wider Local Committee.

The Chair commented on the inference of adding the word 'responsibly' into Resolution 2 as it inferred that the money would be spent irresponsibly where the money was spent at the year-end and therefore would not support the amendment.

A roll call vote was taken on the amendment. The vote was cast as follows: 4 in favour of the amendment and 4 against the amendment. As this was equal votes for and against, the Chair had a casting vote and voted against the amendment. The amendment was lost.

The Chair moved the recommendations in the report and asked for any dissent to be raised. Mrs Bell asked the Chair that in light of his casting vote against the amendment, he gave personal assurance that he would make sure that the Committee met in a timely way to understand what balance was left at the end of the year and that all members of the Committee be involved in discussions about how remaining balances in the Communities Revenue Budget were spent. Mrs Bell referred to a historical proposal made at short notice at Local Committee regarding how the budget was spent and asked that this was not repeated.

The Chair gave his reassurances on the matters raised by Mrs Bell and stated that he worked on the assumption that money was always spent responsibly. Another member referred to budget lines in the Communities Revenue Budget, repeating that spending on some of the budget lines would not be a full Committee decision and therefore would be impractical. She added that the Local Committee had never acted irresponsibly with public money. Another member added that by voting against the amendment he was putting his faith in officers to act responsibly as a matter of course.

RESOLVED, that

- (1) Members note the budget allocations for 2020-21 and the commitments and expenditure recorded to date;
- (2) Members note the provisional unallocated resources in the 2020-21 Communities Revenue Budget of £74,007 as at 30 November 2020;
- (3) Members note the area planning update contained between 4.5 to 4.55 of the report;
- (4) Dawn Hurton remain the Local Committee's nominated representative for the Penrith Town Council Cultural Strategy Focus Group described at point 4.24 of the report;

- (5) Members agree to earmark £2,500 each to support initial plan development for area planning groups in Alston, Appleby, Kirkby Stephen and Penrith described at point 4.30 of the report;
- (6) Members agree to reduce the number of Local Committee meetings from eight to six for the next 12 month diary period described at point 4.35 of the report;
- (7) a written response giving updated figures on the number of smokers in Eden be circulated after the meeting;
- (8) Mrs Bell be provided with a written response on Eden Health Forum in terms of what business is discussed, actions taken and the progress being made.

51 HIGHWAYS DEVOLVED CAPITAL PROGRAMME FOR EDEN 2021/22

A report was considered from the Executive Director – Economy and Infrastructure regarding the Highways Devolved Capital Programme for Eden 2021/22. The report set out the proposed programme of works which it was anticipated could be delivered through the devolved highways capital funding expected to be available for 2021/22. The proposed capital programme allocations were summarised in paragraph 4.3.1 and detailed in Appendices 1, 2, 3, 4 & 4(a) of the report.

The Local Area Network Manager guided members through the report advising that the report had been considered by members in draft at the previous meeting. He highlighted some changes in budget allocations since the last meeting. Information on the current financial year's budget allocations had been included so members could make a comparison with what was proposed for 2021/22. An additional budget line had been added in for reported defects which members were asked to note.

Members were informed that spend against the Reported Defects budget line had been assessed and a financial forecast as to what the likely spend would be at the end of this financial year had been undertaken. This confirmed there would likely be a reduced spend against this year's budget heading therefore there would be less allocated for next financial year. This had helped demonstrate successful highway asset management in Eden as less money was being spent on repairing highway defects. Less reported defects were partly due to an increase in planned repairs and additional monies being spent on the highways asset in Eden.

Additional money was being spent on priority carriageway and drainage schemes and members were informed about the money being spent on surface treatment beds. Members were guided through the Appendices to the report which outlined the budget allocations for the Devolved Highways Capital Programme 2021/22 which covered the various schemes in Eden including carriageway and drainage schemes and footway maintenance schemes.

Members' attention was drawn to a scheme that would be adjusted at Grassgill Cross Roads to B6259 via Little Musgrave and a number of reserve schemes which would be funded in the next financial year should additional monies be received.

A member raised that the Askham to Barton Road had again deteriorated and asked that the road be added to the list for surface treatment. After being asked for clarification by the member, the Local Area Network Manager explained what 'haunching' was. The member hoped that in relation to 20mph speed limits, Penruddick and Patterdale Schools had been considered for traffic calming measures. The member questioned if the reduced allocation of funding for reported defects: planned works programme budget line was COVID 19 related. The member asked for clarification after the meeting about the road where works would be undertaken at Bolton Mill. He hoped that funding had been allocated for works in the Howtown Road area for yellow lines. Queries relating to the member's division would be answered after the meeting. The Local Area Network Manager explained how the two COVID 19 related lockdown periods had affected the number of defects that had been reported and how preventative measures had also led to less highway defects being reported.

A member asked that the method for assessing highways repairs be shared with the public in order to explain that the method was fair. In addition, she considered that sharing information in the media on how to report defects and how roads were assessed and budgeted for over subsequent years would be useful to explain to the public how the system worked. The member welcomed the scheme at Little Dockray but asked how robust the arrangements were for the road maintenance. The road was in a bad condition and had a number of trip hazards therefore, the member asked if an assessment of the road had taken place to see if the scheme was the right thing to do. She asked how it tied in with the money from the Borderlands project. The Local Area Network Manager explained that the very important role of officers was to share information with the public on the highways asset and how to report repairs and enquiries. He gave an update on the works to be undertaken on the scheme at Little Dockray and how officers reviewed and prioritised ongoing maintenance liability on roads.

The Chair talked about the role of local members in advising the public about highways defects reporting and the budgeting process.

The local member for Appleby highlighted his surprise that there were no schemes in his area but noted that when he had reported repairs, they had been undertaken in a timely manner.

The Local Area Network Manager explained how schemes were identified in an objective manner and officers used an asset management needs based approach to prioritise schemes. He talked about how some work had to be undertaken in better weather and that the completion of schemes was reliant on the budget being available to the highways service. The Chair stated that members would need to put faith in the officers' approach to prioritise schemes in an objective and fair manner.

A member highlighted that there were also no schemes in her division but stated that she had faith in the current method of scheme prioritisation and the system was robust.

Some minor changes would be made to the scheme lists by the Local Area Network Manager for clarification purposes. These related to some member divisions where schemes were located.

The Chair thanked the Local Area Network Manager for his work and asked that the Local Committee's thanks be conveyed to his team.

RESOLVED, that, Local Committee approves the apportionment of the devolved highways capital programme for 2021/22 as summarised in paragraph 4.3.1. and detailed in Appendices 1,2,3,4 and 4(a) of the report.

52 UPDATE FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Mr Dew gave an update on the following:

The MASCG Group had met on 23 November 2020. The 2021 Appleby Horse Fair had been discussed. Amendments to the TROs that would have taken place in 2020 but would now take place in 2021 should the Fair go ahead were considered. Representation on the MASCG Group had been considered. Mr Dew had been assured that the level of policing in 2021 would be the same as that in 2019.

Mr Dew had attended the Eden Health and Wellbeing Forum on 10 December 2020 where there had been a COVID 19 update, a presentation on suicide in Eden and the setting up of the Youth Hub in Penrith in 2021. Information had been presented on the Green Homes grants scheme and Active Cumbria.

A member welcomed that the Police were contacting the wider Traveller community and would appreciate further information on the progress made. The member asked for information on the actions taken by and the progress that had been made by the Eden Health and Wellbeing Forum.

53 ACTION LOG

Members reviewed the Action Log and were given an update by the Area Manager. Only the report on bus services in Eden remained a live issue on the Action Log with everything else being subsumed into 'business as usual'. It was suggested that everything else be removed from the Action Log.

A member referred to the invitation to the Leader and Chief Executive to Local Committee meetings asking what the purpose of this was. The Area Manager outlined what members would expect from their visits to Local Committee meetings.

A member asked that additional Highways communications which she raised earlier in the meeting be added as an Action on the Action Log.

RESOLVED, that the Action Log be updated by the Senior Democratic Services Officer.

54 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on 20 January 2021 at 10.30am.