

SCRUTINY ADVISORY BOARD - COMMUNITIES AND PLACE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny Advisory Board - Communities and Place held on Thursday, 12 March 2020 at 10.00 am at Committee Room 1 - County Offices, Kendal, LA9 4RQ

PRESENT:

Mr SB Collins (Chair)

Mr F Cassidy
Mr D English
Mr D Gawne
Mr N Hughes
Mr KR Hamilton
Mr A Kennon

Mr J Lister (Vice-Chair)
Mr AJ Markley
Mr W McEwan
Mrs H Wall
Mr D Wilson

Also in Attendance:-

Mr J Beard	-	Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Mr A Brown	-	Senior Manager - Highways Assets and Strategy
Mr M Clement	-	Fire Strategy Reform Manager
Ms C Killeen	-	Strategic Policy and Scrutiny Advisor
Mr N Raymond	-	Highways Asset & Strategy Manager
Ms J Richardson	-	Business Manager, Fire and Rescue Service

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

34 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Mrs M Rae.

35 MEMBERSHIP

There were no changes to membership to note.

36 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest for the meeting.

37 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED, that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Agenda Item No 12 – Prevent on the grounds that it contained exempt information as defined under paragraph 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as it contained information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

38 MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2019 be agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

39 FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE INSPECTION OUTCOME AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Members received a report and accompanying presentation that provided an update on the outcome of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspection of Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service in 2019 and the improvement work underway to address the areas highlighted by the Inspectors.

The report also provided an update on the national context following the publication of the "State of Fire and Rescue: The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England 2019" by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer updated members on actions. Cumbria's report highlighted 8 out of 11 areas were good with 3 requiring improvement although there were no areas for concern that would warrant further action from HMI outside the normal inspection programme. The main areas requiring improvement were around "people" – promoting the right values and culture, ensuring fairness and promoting diversity and managing performance and developing leaders. A plan had been developed identifying areas for improvement, other feedback and wider learning.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer updated members on the national context in relation to the HMICFRS State of the Nation. Based on the first round of inspections in 2018 and 2019, four recommendations had been made. The recommendations were outlined in the presentation

To conclude, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed members that the next cycle of inspections would begin in 2020, with Cumbria's dates confirmed for March and April 2021.

The discussion focussed on gender balance and equality. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer said work was needed to change the environment, stereotyping and traditions of the service to encourage applications from underrepresented groups reflecting the local community. Further discussions were held around safeguarding, prevention work and staff training. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer said that legislation governed training needs, as risks continually changed and work was taken, in conjunction with Cumbria Constabulary, in schools.

Members discussed flooding and the work undertaken by the Service as this was not included in the inspection. Members congratulated the service for the work undertaken.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that new arrangements were now in place to monitor progress against the areas of improvement. Members were informed that although the first inspection had been labour intensive, it was hoped the measures put in place and the collation of the right data would aid further inspections. Good, continued communication was in place between the service and the Inspectorate.

Members agreed to establish a Working Group to engage with the Service for inspection preparation.

Members thanked the Deputy Chief Fire Officer for the very informative presentation and congratulated the service on all the work undertaken.

RESOLVED, that

- (1) the presentation be noted;
- (2) the Working Group be established to engage with the Fire and Rescue Service on inspection preparation.

40 HIGHWAYS ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Members received a presentation on the Highways Asset Management Strategy from the Senior Manager - Highways Assets and Strategy and the Highways Asset Manager. The presentation outlined the background to the development of the strategy and set out the asset management approach and foundation for incentive fund self-assessment.

Members heard that the strategy had been refreshed to align to the Council Plan and shaped the improvement plan. The vision was to deliver a customer focused resilient and cost effective service that delivered a safe and well managed highways asset. The proposed timetable for the refreshed Strategy and next steps to be taken were outlined to members.

Members highlighted highway related areas of concerns in their local divisions. Flooding and tree maintenance were highlighted. A detailed discussion took place around gully cleansing and drainage. In answer to a question on coastal erosion and the effects on the highway, members noted that a strategy on this issue would be presented to a future meeting of Cabinet.

A discussion then took place about areas of responsibility for lighting, which was shared between the County Council, District and Borough Councils and in some cases parish and town councils.

During the course of discussion, members raised concerns about the HIMS system. Officers acknowledged priority work was needed to improve the background work of the HIMS system. An accurate asset inventory was also confirmed to be a priority.

To conclude members noted that the Cabinet would be considering adoption of the refreshed Strategy in April. Members were invited to submit any further comments. Members noted that the delivery of the Strategy would be reported through the Highways Improvement Board and Local Committees

RESOLVED, that

- (1) the process for refreshing the Highways Asset Management Strategy be noted;
- (2) the Delivery Plan developed in support of the refreshed Highways Asset Management be noted.

41 IMPLEMENTATION OF HIGHWAYS PERMIT SCHEME

Members received a presentation from the Senior Manager - Highways Assets and Strategy and the Highways Asset Manager on the Highways Permit Scheme. The presentation outlined the objectives behind the Council's move to a Permit Scheme. The officers outlined completed actions and the next steps to be taken.

Members were informed that the permit scheme had been introduced to Utility companies with effect from 3 February 2019 although no charges were made for permits for the first month. Work was being undertaken on the procurement of additional software to display all works/road closures on the website to allow better co-ordination of works and better public information. The officers advised that the move to a permit scheme would allow better quality control and the enforcement of penalties for non-compliance.

In discussion, members asked to be notified of neighbouring divisional work that could have an impact in their area. It was noted that Cabinet would receive regular updates on the Permit Scheme.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

42 SCOPE FOR TASK AND FINISH GROUP

A report setting out a draft scope for a Task and Finish Group for Board members consideration was received. The proposed Task and Finish Group would focus on the impacts and needs of new development in respect of physical and social infrastructure.

It was noted that over the last year, Board members considered the Council's approach and performance in relation to a number of specified planning agreements. Members had agreed that the issue of ensuring that the appropriate infrastructure was secured to support new development required further exploration and considered in the wider context of the scale of new development planned in Cumbria over the next few years. Members had felt that the overall effectiveness of the county's planning system in mitigating the impact and meeting the needs resulting from new development needed scrutinised.

The draft scope would be subject to approval by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Management Board, and if agreed, it was proposed that the evidence gathering activity take place between April and September, with its findings and recommendations being considered by this Board in November, prior to presentation to Cabinet in December 2020.

It was suggested that Climate Change be incorporated in the Scope. The Chair asked to lead the Task and Finish Group and this was agreed by members.

RESOLVED, that the scope, with the inclusion of Climate Change, be agreed and submitted to the Chair and Vice Chair of Scrutiny Management Board for signoff.

43 BOARD BRIEFING

A report was received by members on the Board's current work programme, together with the current Forward Plan of decisions and the Council's current Council Plan Delivery Plan.

Members were asked to consider the Board's work programme as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, with reference to the Council Plan Delivery Plan attached as Appendix 2 and consider the Forward Plan of Key Decisions 1 April 2020 to 31 May 2020.

Members discussed future items for the Board's work programme.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

44 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Board will be held on 12 June 2020 at 10 am in Cumbria House, Carlisle.

**PART 2 - ITEM NOT CONSIDERED IN THE
PRESENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

45 PREVENT

Members received a presentation with an update on the delivery of the government's Prevent programme.

In discussion, members were advised that both internal and LGA training packages were available.

The officer was thanked for the informative presentation.

The meeting ended at 1.00 pm