

## LOCAL COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND LEADERSHIP

Minutes of a virtual meeting of the Local Committee Chairs and Leadership held on Friday, 29 January 2021 at 10.00 am

### PRESENT:

Mr SF Young (Chair)

Mr AL Barry	Mr AJ Markley
Mr N Cotton	Mr J Mallinson
Mr GD Cook	Mr P Thornton
Mr P Dew	Mr C Weber
Mr KR Hamilton	Mr D Whipp
Mr K Hitchen	Mr D Wilson
Mr W McEwan	

Also in Attendance:-

Ms K Fairclough	-	Chief Executive
Mr J Beard	-	Chief Fire Officer
Ms G Elliott	-	Area Manager - Copeland
Mr A Farrar	-	Democratic Services Officer
Ms T Ingham	-	Area Manager - Barrow
Mr P Musgrave	-	Area Manager - Carlisle
Ms L Shaw	-	Area Manager - Allerdale
Mr P Greenup	-	Acting Assistant Director for Highways and Transport
Ms A Hatcher	-	Major Programmes Director
Mr P Turney	-	Senior Manager - Accountancy (Deputy s151 Officer)
Ms C Beckett	-	Public Health Locality Manager

#### 44 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

#### 45 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

**RESOLVED**, that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 December 2020 be agreed.

#### 46 BORDERLANDS UPDATE

The Major Programmes Director provided members with an update on the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal. It was a £350 million investment over 10 years with strategy led projects and programmes that complemented each other. There had been progress made in recent months and Cabinet had agreed to enter the Deal Agreement for the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal at its meeting on 4 February 2021. The public signing of the Deal was anticipated in early March 2021.

The Major Programmes Director also provided members with updates on previously reported projects, including

- Digital Voucher Scheme
- Carlisle Station
- Carlisle Citadel
- Place Programme
- See More Lake District Cycling
- Hadrian's Wall & the wider Roman frontier

The Major Programmes Director provided members with an outline of the next steps on See More Lake District Cycling and Hadrian's Wall & the wider Roman frontier.

The Chair of South Lakeland Local Committee asked if hyperlinks could be included to the projects as detailed in the report with more information provided on the website on the individual projects within the Deal. The Major Programmes Director agreed that hyperlinks would be included in future reports and would liaise with the Borderlands PMO to update the Borderlands website. **(ACTION: AH)**

The Vice Chair of Allerdale Local Committee asked for clarification of the risk to the County Council if projects were to overrun and costs increased as a result.

The Chief Executive reassured members that the County Council had assessed the risks as part of the assessment of the Deal Agreement. She also assured members that individual business cases would be considered by Cabinet at each stage of the project and the risks would be assessed for each case.

The Deputy Leader reassured members that Cabinet had considered the risks carefully and understood them, and whilst there were risks associated with the Deal there were also rewards, and this was considered as part of the assessment.

The Chair of Allerdale Local Committee asked how much money would be coming into Cumbria as a result of the Borderlands Deal.

The Major Programmes Director outlined that there was the potential for up to £200 million of funding coming into Cumbria and Northumberland with Cumbria's share to reflect the population of Cumbria relative to Northumberland's population.

The Chair of Eden Local Committee had raised concerns at the last meeting about the Digital Voucher Scheme, and he noted that to date there had still only been £1.85 million allocated from the £4 million available. He was concerned that despite the Digital Voucher Scheme being available some of his residents were still unable to gain access to suitable broadband delivery. This was affecting businesses and also students in his division.

The Major Programmes Director understood the concerns regarding the Digital Voucher Scheme and reminded members that the County Council was not able to directly deliver broadband for residents. Discussions were currently taking place with Government to see if the deadlines for the digital voucher scheme could be extended.

There was also a national commitment to undertake the deployment of full fibre through the Government's F20 programme.

The Chair of Barrow Local Committee provided an update to members on progress with the Place Programme for Dalton.

The Chair of Copeland Local Committee asked for an update on Hadrian's Wall. The Major Programme Director informed members that an application had been submitted to the Nuclear Decommissioning Agency for funding to develop the business case for the Hadrian's Wall cycle corridor but a decision was still awaited.

A discussion took place regarding the Levelling Up Fund that was announced in the Spending Review. It was AGREED that this be added to the agenda for further discussion at the next meeting. The Major Programmes Director informed members that the prospectus for the fund was due to be launched in the near future.

**RESOLVED**, that members

- (1) noted the progress on the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal as outlined in the report;
- (2) note that the Levelling Up Fund would be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

#### **47 LOCAL COMMITTEE BUDGET ALLOCATIONS 2021/22**

Members considered a Briefing Note from the Director of Finance which provided an update on the development of the Budget for 2021/22 set within the context of the Medium Term Financial Plan (2021-2026) with particular reference to the Local Committees.

The Senior Manager - Accountancy took members through the report. He explained that in preparation for the Council Budget for 2021/22, Cabinet would consider increasing the Highways Budget for a specific allocation of funding of £1.2million for 2021/22 only for Environmental Improvements to support the highways revenue maintenance activities. £0.200m would be allocated to each Local Committee.

The purpose of the ring-fenced fund would be to support environmental improvements for enhanced verge maintenance, tree maintenance and replacement, and footpath maintenance. The funding would be time limited – to the 2021/22 financial year and would not be able to be carried forward. Local Committees were encouraged to work with their Districts, Parishes and Town Councils to make best use of the money, including identifying match funding where possible.

The Senior Manager - Accountancy informed members that short term additional capacity would be included in the Economy and Infrastructure Directorate to support complimentary local environmental and biodiversity activities.

He then took members through the rest of the detail continued in the report.

The Deputy Leader updated members on the current financial position of Cumbria County Council. He highlighted the Environment Fund and commented it was to be used to implement projects in their communities that had the support of residents but for which there was no capacity within the Highways Budget. He hoped that Parish and Town Councils would provide match funding.

The Chair highlighted that there were no proposed revenue savings in 2021/22 that would directly impact on the Local Committee allocations for 2021/22. The Environment Fund should be used on schemes to make small scale improvements to local areas. He also highlighted the additional £50,000 increase to the Community Services Budget for each Local Committee.

The Chief Executive reminded members of the uncertainty that possible Local Government Reform had on long-term budget planning for Cumbria County Council. She felt the additional funds were a positive way to devolve responsibility to a local level.

A discussion then took place on the types of possible scheme the additional Environment Fund could be spent on.

The Chair of Barrow Local Committee asked for clarification on what would happen to local committee underspends as part of the budget process. The Chair reassured members that there were no plans to claw back any money from local committees this year.

A discussion took place about the Appleby Horse Fair Traffic Management and the effect the cost of this had on budgets for Eden Local Committee. The Chair of Eden Local Committee informed members that Eden Local Committee was considering a referral to Cabinet on this.

**RESOLVED**, that Members noted the proposed Revenue and Capital allocations for Local Committees in 2021/22. Cabinet would consider its budget proposal to Council at its meeting on 4 February 2021.

#### **48 USE OF IN HOUSE TRANSPORT FOR COMMUNITY PROVISION**

The Assistant Director Highways and Transport gave members a presentation on the use of in-house transport for community provision which included :-

- Current Situation
- Bus Service Operators Grant
- Other Funding Bids
- Identification of routes
- Bus Support Grant
- Next Steps

The Vice Chair of South Lakeland Local Committee commented on the proposed implementation of Phase 1 of the Bus Support Grant, and noted that implementation was to begin in April 2021. He felt this timescale was challenging.

The Chair acknowledged that the timeframe for implementation was challenging but reassured members that everything was on track with the Traffic Commissioner submission to begin the implementation in April 2021.

The Chair of Eden Local Committee welcomed the engagement with local members for Phase 2. He noted there was no timescale for this and asked if the Assistant Director had a timescale for implementation for Phase 2.

The Assistant Director Highways and Transport responded that he wanted to commence consultation with members and Local Committees as soon as possible, and was hopeful of implementation in summer 2021.

The Vice Chair commented that it was important to do something and acknowledged that the present situation with the Covid pandemic did indeed present challenges. He also commented that it was important not to run empty buses. The buses would have to be used and not considered as an “insurance policy” by residents if the scheme were to be successful.

The Chair spoke of a financial viability test. He noted that Cumbria County Council had to meet the on-going cost for the project, and hoped the scheme would be successful. However, he also felt the scheme should be sustainable, and if there was no demand the buses should not carry on running if the service was not being used.

The Chair of Allerdale Local Committee noted that bus operators had tried and failed in the past with these routes, and wondered if there would be a better chance of success if the bus operators rather than Cumbria County Council ran the services.

The Chair of Copeland Local Committee commented on the engagement with local members on Phase 2, and asked if parish councils could be involved in Phase 2, and if so what type of engagement would be expected from them.

The Assistant Director Highways and Transport responded that parish councils should be involved as stakeholders, and he was hopeful they would be able to assist with information on viability and demand. He added that timetables for the buses would be key to the success of the Phase 2 implementation.

The Chair agreed with the sentiment that the County Council needed to implement the service first in order to assess the success. If it proved to be successful then the Council could look to expand the scheme to other locations.

## **49 REMOVAL OF ROADSIDE TREES**

The Chair of Barrow Local Committee provided members with an update on the work of a newly formed Tree Task and Finish Group in the Barrow area. This Group was a partnership group and included County Council, Borough Council, Rotary and Woodlands Trust. The new Environment funding aligns with this locality partnership working and aspiration, although the Chair of Barrow Local Committee expressed concern that after the funding ends in 1 year the good work stops.

The Chair remarked that with the Environment funding much can be achieved and he noted that the Council budget had a great degree of uncertainty in future years.

The Vice Chair noted that the Environment funding provided an opportunity for similar scheme and if there were evidence of schemes taken place with the Environment funding then Cumbria County Council would look to continue the funding.

The Chair mentioned that this was an ideal opportunity to seek funding from outside Cumbria County Council this would add value to projects and make the Environment fund more successful and would expand what the scheme would achieve.

## **50 FORWARD PLAN**

**AGREED**, that the following items be added to the agenda for the next meeting:-

- Borderlands Update
- Local Government Reform
- Covid Recovery
- Share A Smile
- Levelling up Fund

## **51 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on 27 April 2021 at 10am at a venue to be confirmed.

The meeting ended at 11.55 am