

LOCAL COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND LEADERSHIP

Minutes of a Meeting of the Local Committee Chairs and Leadership held on Monday, 27 September 2021 at 9.00 am held virtually on Microsoft Teams.

PRESENT:

Mr SF Young (Chair)

Mr AL Barry
Mr N Cotton
Mr P Dew
Mr KR Hamilton
Mr K Hitchen

Mr W McEwan
Mr AJ Markley
Mr P Thornton
Mr C Weber
Mr D Wilson

Also in Attendance:-

Ms G Elliott	-	Area Manager - Copeland
Ms A Hatcher	-	Assistant Director Growth and Infrastructure
Ms A Jones	-	Executive Director - Economy and Infrastructure
Mrs K Johnson	-	Area Manager - South Lakeland
Mr P Musgrave	-	Area Manager - Carlisle
Dr D Roberts	-	Executive Director - Corporate, Customer and Community Services
Ms L Shaw	-	Area Manager - Allerdale
Mr N Wright	-	Area Manager - Eden

70 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr G Cook and Ms D Earl.

71 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 July 2021 be agreed as a true and accurate record.

72 UPDATE ON PLACE BASED SCHEMES

The Assistant Director Growth and Infrastructure provided members with an update on Place Based Schemes specifically in relation to:-

- Future High Street Fund
- Town Deal

The Chair of South Lakeland Local Committee commented that there had been a delay in the response to the first round bids of the Levelling Up Fund and wondered if any deadlines for the second round bids were known.

The Assistant Director Growth and Infrastructure commented that it was very difficult to obtain information regarding the second round and speculated that it would be in the Spending Review at the end of October.

The Chair commented on the progress made on the Borderlands Place Programme. He remarked that he had offered assistance to Carlisle City Council on their Place Programme. He asked if the Chair of Carlisle Local Committee and the Area Manager (Carlisle) could follow this up.

The Chair of Carlisle Local Committee advised that he had a meeting with Carlisle City Council soon and would raise the matter then.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director Growth and Infrastructure for her update.

73 BORDERLANDS UPDATE

The Assistant Director Growth and Infrastructure provided members with an update on the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal. She remarked that good progress was being made. She highlighted the Place Programme and noted that final approval of the Programme business case had not yet been received from Government. Due to the recent change in Secretary of State, delays were anticipated. She remarked that Cumbria was progressing well with all 5 of the Place Plans and noted that they were still at a high level and have not yet identified specific projects or schemes to be taken forward. The approach being taken was to understand what each town needed rather than the alternative approach of asking for existing projects. The Assistant Director Growth and Infrastructure also highlighted the following areas :-

- Carlisle Station & Citadel
- Destination Borderlands
- Energy Masterplan
- Borders Railway

The Chair of Allerdale Local Committee remarked on recent supply chain issues nationally and asked if there was enough contingency built into the costings.

The Assistant Director Growth and Infrastructure commented that each project was taken on a case by case basis. She assured that risk and contingency were built in and that flexibility had been factored into design. She noted that the University was leading on the Citadels project and therefore the risk of cost overrun was with them and that the Digital Voucher Scheme had been fully delivered.

The Chair remarked that Cumbria County Council would need to tailor projects for the Place Plans to match available resources.

The Chair of South Lakeland Local Committee commented on the energy plan and queried if the plan was flexible to offer something that had not been previously available and if nuclear on the West Coast was considered in the plan.

The Assistant Director Growth and Infrastructure commented that the masterplan was at a high level so there was flexibility and that the plan was focussed on energy generation across the Borderlands area. Whilst the plan would reflect the nuclear opportunities, in terms of Borderlands investment this would most likely be focused on areas where national funding was not available or where there was market failure.

The Chair hoped that the focus would be on Community Renewables. He noted that the entire Borderlands area had in common the potential for hydro power.

The Area Manager (Copeland) gave an update on the Town Team meeting in Copeland. She remarked that the Town Team felt frustrated and that no progress had been made in 6 months. The frustration was that consultants had only been seen at 1 meeting and that the Place Programme had not been approved. The Town Team were not sure what direction they needed.

The Assistant Director Growth and Infrastructure noted that the Place Plan was to be Town Team led not consultant led and that the Town Teams had to shape what they wanted for their town.

The Vice Chair of Allerdale Local Committee commented about the Solway Barrage and asked if any progress had been made.

The Assistant Director Growth and Infrastructure had not heard of any recent progress on the Solway Barrage.

The Vice Chair remarked about the proposed 2 new unitary authorities and asked if they would just inherit the Borderlands initiative. He commented on the STEP fusion proposal and queried if it was a Government or private decision.

The Assistant Director Growth and Infrastructure noted that the Borderlands programme would continue as is for the time being. However a decision would need to be made by the proposed new unitary authorities to join the Partnership and the collaboration agreement would need to be amended to reflect changes in membership in due course. She expected to hear in the autumn about the STEP proposal. The STEP siting is a Government decision and it was possible that Cumbria could be on the shortlist to proceed to the next stage for further consideration.

The Chair remarked that he hoped that the new unitary authorities would be Borderlands partners but the decision rested with them. The Chair noted that the work done on the STEP proposal was a result of a good piece of work by the CLEP. The Chair thanked the Assistant Director Growth and Infrastructure for her update.

74 COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP FUND

The Executive Director - Economy and Infrastructure provided members with an update on the Community Ownership Fund. The UK Community Ownership Fund was announced as part of the Chancellor's Budget in March 2021 and was launched in July. The Fund would comprise £150 million of investment across the United Kingdom to help communities take ownership of assets and amenities at risk of closure. It would run for 4 years. Voluntary and community organisations could bid for up to £250,000 match funding (or up to £1 million for sporting venues) on a pound-for-pound basis. Match could be from a range of sources including, public, private and charitable funds, and certain in-kind match funding could be included (for example, professional support or a discounted value of a lease). She reiterated that her team was happy to assist each Local Committee.

The Chair noted that this was for members to be aware of and to point local groups towards the fund where appropriate.

The Chair of Barrow Local Committee noted that the scheme seemed wonderful but was concerned about the need for match funding. He commented that Area Teams are overworked and he was not sure how much they could take on. He also wanted to congratulate Lesley Graham, Cumbria County Council Health Manager for Barrow and David Higham from the Well as they had won the National Municipal Journal Award of the Year for Suicide Prevention in Barrow in Furness.

The Chair commented that the scheme was not aimed at Councils. A problem was that communities that needed this funding were the least able to obtain the funding. The Chair acknowledged how much work each Area Team was doing especially with the Place Programme.

The Executive Director - Economy and Infrastructure noted that Martin Allman was Social Enterprise Manager to support Local Area Teams. She noted that match funding could be Lottery Funding, private funding or other charitable funding. The funding was on a pound for pound basis.

The Chair of South Lakeland Local Committee remarked that this was a good opportunity to demonstrate best practice. Where a scheme had been successful Cumbria County Council should bring it forward as a template.

The Chair thanked the Executive Director Economy and Infrastructure for her update.

75 UPDATE ON ENVIRONMENT FUND AND COMF

The Executive Director Economy and Infrastructure provided members with an update on the Environment Fund and COMF. This paper highlighted the progress made. At Full Council on 18 February 2021 Members agreed a £1.2m Environment Fund to enable further investment in our local environment. Each local committee area was allocated £200,000 from the Environment Fund. The report stated:

“the purpose of this ring-fenced fund will be to support a range of environmental improvements or enhancements, covering for example:- enhanced verge maintenance; tree maintenance and replacement; footpath maintenance; nature recovery; biodiversity improvements; and improving the environmental conditions and quality of life ‘on the doorstep’.

A further £200,000 from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) was allocated to each Local Committee to be spent on projects that would lead to improvements to outside space and facilities, including improvements to cycle ways, footpaths, parks, open spaces and provide better opportunities for exercise through active travel. Each Local Committee had a slightly different approach.

A round table discussion then took place where each Local Committee detailed their on-going projects.

The Chair then noted that the Environment Funding was entirely Cumbria County Council funds as it was put in the Council budget via Cabinet. He questioned if the funds could be carried forward into a new financial year.

The Executive Director Economy and Infrastructure and the Vice Chair understood that the money was to be spent by 31 March 2022. However, as long as the work was committed that would be acceptable. It was agreed that this would be confirmed with the Director of Finance.

The Chair asked if the Contain Outbreak Management Fund would need to be spent by 31 March 2022. The Executive Director Corporate Customer and Community Services remarked that the deadline would be 31 March 2022 but would confirm with the Director of Finance.

It was agreed that once clarification had been sought from the Director of Finance the answers would be circulated before the next meeting of Local Committee Chairs and Leadership.

The Chair thanked the Executive Director Economy and Infrastructure for her update.

76 FORWARD PLAN

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

- Borderlands

Any other items for the agenda could be included via CMT or the Chair and Vice Chair.

77 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held virtually on Microsoft Teams on 23 November 2021 at 10am.

The meeting ended at 10.14 am