

CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the **Cabinet** held on **Thursday, 21 October 2021 at 10.00 am at Council Chamber, County Offices, Kendal**

PRESENT:

Mr SF Young (Leader)
Mrs PA Bell
Mrs A Burns
Ms D Earl
Mr KA Little
Mrs S Sanderson
Mr DE Southward
Mr P Thornton
Mrs C Tibble
Mrs J Willis

Mr A Connell – Cabinet Working Group Transport in Cumbria (Item 9)

Officers in attendance:

Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director - People, Executive Director - Corporate, Customer and Community Services, Executive Director - Economy and Infrastructure, Chief Fire Officer, Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer), Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer), Leadership Support Officer - Labour Group, Leadership Support Officer - Liberal Democrat Group, Professional Lead - Democratic Services and Communications Manager

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

146 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

147 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Mrs C Tibble declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item No 14 – Cumbria’s Children and Young People Plan, as she is a Board Member at West House and her daughter works there.

148 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED, that the press and public be not excluded from any items on the agenda today.

149 MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2021 be agreed and signed by the Chair.

The Leader informed members that the minutes of the special meeting held on 14 October 2021 would be presented at the next meeting.

150 STATEMENTS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND CABINET MEMBERS

There were no statements made by the Leader or any Cabinet Members on this occasion.

151 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

There were no referrals from Local Committees or Scrutiny to this meeting.

152 NEW WAYS OF WORKING

Members had before them a report from the Executive Director – Corporate, Customer and Community Services which outlined the future direction of travel for New Ways of Working across the Council.

As a result of Better Places for Work the Council was already embracing more agile working approaches, including home working. COVID had accelerated this change and given a unifying focus for change, now and in the future. 'New Ways of Working' was about how the learning from COVID was used to keep momentum for change and align with the strategies and ambitions for Cumbria.

In April 2010, Cumbria County Council had 9,622 Council based employees with a high number of office buildings, hierarchical structures, and many traditional administration processes. Workspaces were very

traditional and made up of many smaller separate offices, with very little homeworking or open plan spaces.

The Better Places for Work programme, which was rolled out over a number of years started to address this, changing the culture, and seeing a reduction in traditional workspaces and an increase to open place workspaces, increased welfare facilities and supported homeworking.

Now the County Council had a much smaller workforce with 6,065 Council based employees, fewer layers of management, a reduced Council estate and improved and more efficient processes with digital, customer focused solutions.

The outbreak of COVID fast-tracked a change in the ways of working with many staff having no option other than to work from home. For homeworkers there was an almost seamless transition of thousands of employees from the office to the home for a long and sustained period. This was supported by new and innovative ICT solutions, equipment and infrastructure.

COVID had significantly accelerated the Council's ambitions for more agile working arrangements for both officers and members and as a result there had been an evolution of the workstyles and workspaces originally introduced under the Better Places for Work programme.

In March 2021, the Council Management Team (CMT) sponsored a strategic organisational transformation programme, 'New Ways of Working programme' with an objective for the first phase to step up and out of national restrictions safely whilst consciously: creating a better way of working and acknowledging that one size does not fit all acknowledging that connectivity and alignment across organisational boundaries would lead to better outcomes and overall success investing in real time learning across the organisation creating innovation.

Cabinet members asked for their thanks be recorded to the IT department for the efficient and effective way officers handled the need to move to new ways of working in a very short period of time.

RESOLVED, that Cabinet

- (1) notes the report and endorses the overall direction of travel;
- (2) records that the work programme may require decisions of Cabinet as the work progresses.

153 NATIONAL BUS STRATEGY FOR ENGLAND: BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Members considered a report from the Executive Director – Economy and Infrastructure which set out the proposals for Cumbria County Council’s Bus Service Improvement Plan.

The National Bus Strategy for England was published by Government in March 2021. The Strategy set out an ambitious vision to dramatically improve bus services in England outside London through greater local leadership, to reverse the recent shift in journeys away from public transport and encourage passengers back to buses.

Alongside the strategy, the Government had earmarked £3 billion towards improving bus services throughout England. All Local Transport Authorities were expected to work with bus operators, local businesses and communities to develop a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). It was through these plans that Government would decide how any new funding was allocated.

The Strategy required that Local Transport Authorities publish a Bus Service Improvement Plan by 31 October 2021. Local Authorities must enter into a statutory “Enhanced Partnership” with operators or franchising agreements to receive new funding and deliver the improvements identified in the plan.

The Council had already committed to entering into an Enhanced Partnership with bus operators, and this must be completed no later than 31 March 2022.

The plan must focus on the improvements that Local Transport Authorities and bus operators want to see delivered, including topics such as addressing the under provision and over provision of bus services, buses integrating with other modes of transport, the provision of simple multi-modal tickets, more bus priority measures, decarbonisation, high-quality information for all passengers in more places and better turn-up-and-go frequencies that would keep running into the evenings and at weekends and bus services were safe and perceived to be safe.

The Council had conducted an engagement exercise with local operators, elected Members, community groups and other interested stakeholders between June and August 2021.

Publication of a Bus Service Improvement Plan would fulfil the Council’s obligations as stipulated by the Department for Transport, and assist in enhancing the Council’s relationship with local operators to the benefit of the wider community.

The Leader asked for clarification on the funding streams for bus services and whether the announcement yesterday from the Department of Transport of £2bn of investment for the gear change plan was additional funding to that for bus services. The Executive Director thought the funding streams were separate, but would confirm and let Cabinet members know.

Cabinet members raised concerns about the lack of understanding by Government of the issues being faced by bus services in rural areas.

RESOLVED, that Cabinet approve the publication of Cumbria County Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan as set out in Appendix 1 of this report and the Bus Service Improvement Plan Outline Funding Template as set out in Appendix 2 of this report.

154 CABINET WORKING GROUP: TRANSPORT IN CUMBRIA

In the absence of the Chair of the Cabinet Working Group – Transport in Cumbria Mr A Connell attended to present the report, which was based on witness sessions held by the group, national and local policy context, and research.

In March 2021 Cabinet approved the establishment of a cross party Member working group and agreed the Terms of Reference for the group. The establishment of the group evidenced the commitment of the Council to ensure places in Cumbria were well connected and thriving and provided a valuable opportunity to draw on knowledge and a range of interested parties, experts and stakeholders

Transport played an important role in removing barriers for communities through tackling social isolation, maintaining well-being and enabling people access to health, education, employment and other key services. Many older people, particularly in the County's rural areas and for those that don't have access to a car, relied on local transport services for health, wellbeing and social connection.

As a sparsely populated rural county, many communities were a long distance from their nearest key service centres. Many smaller communities had little or no access to bus services which could increase levels of social isolation. In addition, the railway network generally serviced the outer edges of Cumbria which precluded convenient access for many residents. This was compounded by the fact that the population was ageing more rapidly, and for many people without access to cars, transport provision was limited.

Mr Connell took Cabinet through an overview of the findings of the Cabinet Working Group, and also the options.

The group acknowledged the opportunities that the development of the CTIP and LGR both presented in ensuring that there was high level strategic ambitions and intent that could drive and provide a framework for localised solutions.

The options included could contribute to the lifting of barriers such as access to services, employment and education and to all Council Plan priorities.

Mr Connell ended by saying that he did not underestimate the difficulties faced in resolving the issues for Transport in Cumbria, but he hoped that Cabinet found the exercise to be worthwhile.

RESOLVED, that Cabinet members consider the findings and options presented by the Working Group.

The Leader thanked Mr Connell for presenting the report on behalf of the Cabinet Working Group.

155 RESPONSE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - CABINET WORKING GROUP: TRANSPORT IN CUMBRIA

Cabinet members considered a response from the Executive Director to the report of the Cabinet Working Group for Transport in Cumbria.

The Cabinet Working Group had produced a report setting out options to enhance local sustainable transport provision for consideration by Cabinet, based on the evidence obtained and evaluated by the Working Group.

The options recommended by the Cabinet Working Group were:-

- Option 1: Consider the usefulness of and develop a County-wide Transport Strategy that includes and addresses the following areas identified through options 2 – 5.
- Option 2: Use the opportunities presented through national strategies and policy direction to consider and develop proposals for the integration of transport modes, to enable a network across the county that ensures public transport is a viable option for journeys. Encompassing multi modal ticketing, timetable alignment community provision, commercial providers, and demand responsive transport.
- Option 3: Consider the key role physical infrastructure can have in increasing the accessibility of public transport and

develop proposals that enable integration of modes of transport

- Option 4: Explore and analyse the appropriateness of road charging as an approach for Cumbria and monitor the impact of national road pricing strategies and how both could contribute to the sustainability of transport provision in Cumbria. It is proposed that this be undertaken through a working group being established to analyse the approach.
- Option 5: Re-consider the decision that Cumbria County Council will provide scheduled transport solutions due to the negative impact on local providers who provide private hire seven days a week.

The Options presented were timely as Government had recently published *Bus Back Better*, the long-term national bus strategy for England outside London. The Strategy required that Local Transport Authorities worked with their local bus operators to produce and publish a Bus Service Improvement Plan by 31 October 2021.

The Council had recognised the importance that physical infrastructure could have in increasing the accessibility of public transport and transport integration.

The Council had sought to be proactive in securing investment for the development and delivery of transport integration in road, rail, cycling and walking and public transport; with work progressing on a new rural mobility bus pilot centred on Egremont, Penrith, Ulverston and Wigton. It had also sought to ensure transport was central in the planning and regeneration of places and communities, developing effective synergies with initiatives like the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, Levelling Up Fund, Town Deals and Local Plans.

Acknowledging the importance of inclusive transport and active travel, the Cumbria Transport Infrastructure Plan (CTIP) was being progressed, which sought to present an integrated approach to the delivery of infrastructure priorities shaped by three broad objectives:

- Clean and Healthy Cumbria - Promoting the role of active travel and digital infrastructure as enablers of inclusive economic growth and supporting the health and well-being of our communities and the decarbonisation of transport networks.
- Connected Cumbria - Promoting improved transport networks across and into Cumbria to connect our places and support economic growth and opportunities for businesses and communities.

- Community Cumbria - Promoting integrated approaches to transport, supporting opportunity and renewal within towns and communities across Cumbria with better transport used to improve social inclusion.

The Plan was now subject to a public consultation closing on 25 October 2021. The views of the public and wider stakeholders would support the finalising of the plan.

Supporting the Council's agreed priorities and outcomes the Council continued to work closely with Transport for the North, in the development of their plans to integrate transport modes and their draft decarbonisation strategy, together with National Highways, Network Rail, Train Operating Companies and bus operators as they plan their priorities and services.

The work of the Council was set in a context of evolving national transport priorities, including the clear drive towards inclusive growth and the decarbonisation of transport networks, but also more structural changes like the establishment of Great British Railways. This process of change required the council to remain agile and responsive in the development and delivery of its transport strategy, and to position itself to respond to competitive funding streams from Government.

In relation to road pricing no substantive proposals had been produced by the Government for National Road Pricing, and the Council would continue to monitor for any legislative or policy changes.

The Cabinet Member ended by informing members that the Fellrunner Bus had been given the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. The Fellrunner Village Bus delivered an essential service to its local community, and connected many small villages and isolated hamlets in Eden district to Penrith and Carlisle. Cabinet was delighted to hear this.

Cabinet felt that some of the difficulties to be faced when looking at introducing additional bus services, especially in rural locations, was that the bus operators were answerable to shareholders, and therefore were not keen on providing new services unless they were likely to be profitable. The provision of Rail Services was also affected by the same issue.

One of the other factors that affected the sustainability of bus services was that the Government only provided short term funding for these. Members felt that long term planning would benefit the sustainability of bus services.

Cabinet members acknowledged the importance of the information presented from the Cabinet Working Group and agreed it was a

worthwhile exercise. It was hoped that the findings of the Working Group would inform the thinking of the two unitary authorities going forward.

RESOLVED, that Cabinet notes and supports the proposed response.

156 RESPONSE TO NATIONAL HIGHWAYS' STATUTORY CONSULTATION - A66 NORTHERN TRANS PENNINE PROJECT

Cabinet had before it a report from the Executive Director – Economy and Infrastructure which detailed the National Highways' (NH) (formerly Highways England) A66 Northern Trans-Pennine Project (A66 NTP) project.

The project involved the improvement of the A66 between J40 of the M6 at Penrith and J53 of the A1(M) at Scotch Corner, which was approximately 49.5 miles. The aim was to have the entire route as a dual carriageway, which at present still had more than 18 miles of single carriageway sections.

NH was carrying out a public consultation on the A66 NTP from 24 September to 6 November 2021. This was a statutory consultation with the public and local authorities and was the main opportunity to comment on the A66 NTP project before the DCO application was submitted to the Examining Authority. Submission of the DCO was currently scheduled for Spring 2022.

The draft executive summary response to NH's consultation on the A66 NTP project was included with this report together with the comments made by Eden Local Committee.

National Highways' A66 NTP covers the length of the A66 between J40 of the M6 at Penrith and J53 of the A1(M) at Scotch Corner. The A66 NTP seeks to improve journey times on the A66 by dualling the remaining 18 miles of single carriageway sections on the A66.

The County Council was a consultee in the DCO process and was classified as a 'host authority' and had an important role in the process in providing a local perspective and influencing the preparation of the DCO. The A66 NTP included the following elements:-

- Upgrading of the A66 between M6 J40 Penrith and A1(M) J53 at Scotch Corner to dual carriageway standard over its entire length; and
- Junction upgrades at the M6 J40 Penrith, Kemplay Bank roundabout and at A1(M) J53 at Scotch Corner.

Cabinet members commented that there were still issues with junction 40 of the M6 which was not fit for purpose and also the opportunities for cycling and walking also needed to be improved.

The Leader informed Cabinet that National Highways would be starting work on the Road Investment 3 project, and the County Council was continuing to press for improvements to east – west connections within the County, and this would include improvements to the A590.

RESOLVED, that Cabinet agree the content of the draft executive summary of the Council's response to the National Highways' consultation on the A66 NTP project (Appendix 1) and delegates responsibility to the Executive Director, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader, Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport and Portfolio Holder for the Environment, to agree the final executive summary and the full technical response prior to submission.

157 AWARD OF BLOCK CONTRACT FOR RESIDENTIAL WITH NURSING BEDS IN BARROW-IN-FURNESS

Cabinet considered a report from the Executive Director – People which sought approval to award a Block Contract for Residential care with Nursing Beds in Barrow-in-Furness to the successful provider from 1 January 2022.

Around a quarter of the people placed into care homes by the Council had been assessed as having nursing care needs by the NHS either at admission or as their needs had changed over time. Whilst the Council was not purchasing nursing care for these individuals, nursing care was intrinsic to their care needs which meant that these social care needs could only be met within a CQC registered Nursing Home. Therefore, to be able to meet people's needs the Council needed to secure residential beds with nursing care beds.

Barrow in Furness was a densely populated urban area and had a high demand for social care services for older people. There was also a large acute hospital. Operationally, Social Work practice recognised the importance of placing people within or close to their chosen community. There were recognised benefits to people's health and wellbeing of having frequent access to visits from family, friends and other community members. For people living in Barrow in Furness this local community was considered to be the Barrow in Furness area due to its peninsular nature and the transport limitations to other areas.

The Block Contract was for an initial period of 3 years, with the option to extend for two further periods of up to 12 months each (additional 24 months).

The award of the contract would enable the Council to meet the increasingly complex care needs of the people of Cumbria and support hospital discharges. The block contract arrangements gave both the provider and the Council surety of price and certainty of bed availability with suitable provision to flex contracting arrangements where needed.

RESOLVED, that Cabinet approve the award of a block contract of up to 130 residential care with nursing beds in Barrow-in-Furness to the successful provider: Risedale Estates Limited from 01 January 2021, for an initial period of 3 years, with the option to extend for two further periods of up to 12 months each.

158 ADULT SOCIAL CARE VISION AND STRATEGY 2021-23

Cabinet had before it a report from the Executive Director – People which asked them to approve the Adult Social Care Vision and Strategy 2021-23.

This was a critical time for social care. It had been at the forefront of the response to Covid; at a national level, the Government was proposing significant changes; and locally there were changes to local government and health organisations.

In order to provide a framework for work within these changing times, Cabinet was asked to agree a Vision and Strategy for Adult Social Care until 2023. This would provide an overarching framework for social work and the commissioning and provision of services. Sitting under this framework there would be Commissioning Intentions, Cumbria Care Development Plan and the Adult Social Care Improvement and Development Plan.

The Vision and Strategy set out the context within which Adult Social Care operated, including the pressures currently facing the system. It also set out the visions, values and approach that the County Council would take to ensure that the people of Cumbria received the best possible care and support. Finally, it set out how the Council would know that that the Vision and Strategy had been successful.

In the Autumn the Government would be publishing the Autumn White Paper for Adult Social Care that would focus on proposals for system reform. The priority areas expected within the White Paper were:

- Professionalising and developing the workforce
- Mental health wellbeing support for staff
- Reforms to improve recruitment and retention
- Support for unpaid carers
- Invest in the Disabled Facilities Grant and supported housing, as well as exploring other innovative housing solutions to support more people to live independently at home;
- Information for service users to help them navigate the care system and understand the options available to them

The Cabinet Member for Health and Care Services said the Vision and Strategy would provide a framework for service operation and development for Adult Social Care until April 2023, and would ensure that there was alignment of activity within adult social care with a clear common purpose, agreed vision, values and approach.

The Vision would also ensure that the Council would be able to understand the impact of the services it is delivering and supporting, and help the County Council work with key partners to ensure that the people of Cumbria received the best possible care and support

Cabinet members felt that although there was no national plan or strategy for social care, the County Council should still have its own vision and strategy; and the Leader commented that it was timely to document the approach to Adult Social Care that CCC had been taking for a number of years now. This could also help new members elected for the new unitary authorities.

RESOLVED, that Cabinet agrees to adopt the Adult Social Care Vision and Strategy 2021-23.

159 CUMBRIA'S CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PLAN

Mrs C Tibble declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item No 14 – Cumbria’s Children and Young People Plan, as she is a Board Member at West House and her daughter works there. She left the room at this point.

Cabinet members considered a report from the Executive Director – People which provided an outline of the refreshed Cumbria Children and Young People’s Plan. This plan had been developed by Cumbria’s Children’s Trust Board (CTB), and sets the strategic direction and intended outcomes for services for all children, young people and families in Cumbria.

Cumbria’s Children Trust Board (CTB) set the strategic priorities for children and young people in Cumbria and oversaw the development and

implementation of the Children and Young People's plan. The CTB was the partnership board for the Think Family approach in Cumbria and for the delivery of the Early Help Strategy.

Over the last 18 months, children and their families have had to deal with the impacts of Covid-19, with some devastating effects on relationships, social contacts, education, employment, mental health, and increased risk of harm resulting in a shift in demand across the system.

The CTB had refreshed the Children and Young People's Plan to capture the activities the partnership would undertake going forward in its role in Covid Recovery, owning the actions set out in the Recovery Strategy Outcomes Framework.

The partnership considered the need to refresh the Plan in anticipation of the impending Local Government Reform decision, which had now been received. Partners wanted this plan to transcend the LGR outcome and be fit for purpose to take Cumbria through to the establishment of the new authorities to ensure a safe and secure system for which to operate to deliver services for Cumbrian Children, regardless of the decision.

The Children and Young People's Plan 2021-2023 had three overarching strategic priorities underpinned by several outcomes, to make Cumbria the best place for children, young people and families to be:

- Priority 1: Children and young people are happy and healthy
- Priority 2: Child and young people are safe
- Priority 3: Children and young people are achieving

The CTB would oversee the delivery of the Plan and would hold partners to account. Cabinet and the wider Council would receive regular updates going forward.

Cabinet noted that the Plan was reflective of The Council Plan and matched the ambition the Council had for children and young people in Cumbria.

RESOLVED, that Cabinet

- (1) endorse the Children & Young People's Plan (CYYP);
- (2) support the Council's commitment to the delivery of the CYPP through the Council's leadership of the partnership and through the Council Plan Delivery Plan;

- (3) make recommendations to the Children's Trust Board through the Executive Director People (CTB Chair).

The meeting ended at 11.40 am