

SCRUTINY ADVISORY BOARD - COMMUNITIES AND PLACE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny Advisory Board - Communities and Place held on Wednesday, 30 November 2022 at 10.00 am at Cumbria House Carlisle

PRESENT:

Mr SB Collins (Chair)

Mr F Cassidy
Mr R Dobson
Mr D English
Mr D Gawne
Mr KR Hamilton

Mr J Lister (Vice-Chair)
Mr AJ Markley
Mr W McEwan
Mr CP Turner

Also in Attendance:-

Mrs L Davis	-	Democratic Services Officer
Mr A Harty	-	Assistant Director - Environment and Enterprise
Ms T Ingham	-	Area Manager - Barrow
Mrs K Johnson	-	Area Manager - South Lakeland
Ms C Notman	-	Strategic Policy and Scrutiny Advisor
Mr R Ogden	-	Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Ms L Shaw	-	Area Manager - Allerdale/Copeland
Ms C Tringham	-	Senior Manager - Environment and Regulatory Services

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

20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr D Wilson and Mr M Hawkins.

21 MEMBERSHIP

There were no changes in membership to note.

22 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest made at the meeting.

23 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

24 MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 15 September 2022 be agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

Further to Minute 17, the Assistant Director - Environment & Enterprise agreed to investigate a HIAMs query raised by a member.

25 FUTURE OF FIRE SERVICE GOVERNANCE

A report was considered from the Assistant Chief Fire Officer updating members on progress on the future of Fire Service Governance since the last Board meeting in September. The report outlined the current position and future direction of travel. Under the Governance model chosen, the Police and Crime Commissioner would take on legal and overarching responsibility for the provision of fire and rescue services in Cumbria. The service was to retain its operational independence, budget, Chief Fire Officer and staff.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer informed members, as part of the programme of work, the day one requirements had been identified and had to be in place for the Service at the point of transition. The programme was considering the requirements in all the key areas, including people management, finance, fleet, property, ICT, partnerships, information governance, data and intelligence, governance and legal and communications and engagement.

Members noted that in order to help with the transition process, the LGR programme's strategic partner, KPMG had carried out an options appraisal of corporate services for CFRS, enabling work to begin on the design of a new corporate support structure under the new model. Progress had been made in several areas including the statutory process, disaggregation and hosting of functions and Day One readiness. Members were informed that the Statutory Instruments which would formally transfer the responsibility of the Fire Service to the PCC have been drafted and would be laid before Parliament at the end of November. Work was also underway on the Transfer Scheme which will legally transfer assets, staff and other items to the PCC from 1 April 2023.

To conclude, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer outlined discussions that were ongoing about the requirements around key functions and whether these could safely be disaggregated for Day One or whether there needed to be interim hosted arrangements to allow a managed transition. Members were informed that functions that would be hosted initially included Payroll, ICT and Records Management. The Service was confident from the 1st April 2023, it would be operating in a safe and legal way.

Members discussed recruitment, transference of Council staff and shared services. In answer to a member's question, the Assistant Chief Fire Officer assured Board members that a great deal of staff engagement was taking place and from a Fire and Rescue perspective, staff were happy with the transition. A member asked about vehicle maintenance and whether this would be in-house or contracted out.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer said ongoing discussions around this were taking place, but from a personal point of view, a standalone service was preferred. Further disaggregation discussions were needed on this issue.

The Chair asked about continued access to the Home Office Emergency Network. It was reported that this was an Emergency Planning and Resilience Service function and would be hosted by one of the two new Authorities. Assurance was given that arrangements would be in place on Day 1 for this.

The Assistant Chief Fire Officer was thanked for his attendance.

RESOLVED, that the report be noted.

26 WASTE ELECTRICAL & ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT

Members received a report and presentation from the Senior Manager - Environment and Regulatory Services outlining Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Regulations. The presentation also provided an overview of how waste electrical equipment was managed by the Council once WEEE was deposited by the public at the network of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) or collected by the Waste Collection Authorities (WCAs), how WEEE waste could be mitigated, therefore reducing handling and associated costs and finally identifying emerging policy and emphasis on producer responsibility, along with the implications this was likely to have on local authorities in terms of managing waste items separately, such as small waste electrical items.

The discussion centred around the disposal of car batteries which were currently not handled through the HWRC network as they were out of the scope of the WEEE regulations. It was acknowledged that it was more difficult to recycle some electrical goods such as televisions and safe disposal started with responsible consumers. The Senior Manager outlined the Producer Compliance Scheme and agreed to circulate the statistics of recycled materials to the Chair.

The safe disposal of batteries and the promotion around this was discussed. It was agreed that promotional material be circulated to the members for dissemination. The Senior Manager advised members of close partnership working with District Councils on waste. Members discussed individual HWRC sites and district waste disposal was highlighted, commending these services. A member suggested recyclable material be given to colleges for student refurbishment.

Following a question from the Chair, it was acknowledged that any valuable waste belonged to the contractor. Landfill tax was outlined.

The Senior Manager was thanked for her very informative presentation and attendance.

RESOLVED, that the report and presentation be noted.

27 COMMUNITY POWER

The Board members received a briefing note on Community Power and the work underway in the county regarding localism and development of models for the future. Key messages from today's meeting would be taken forward for policy development.

It was noted that Community Power was defined by New Local as the belief that people should have a say over the places in which they live and the services they use. This included the ability to take over public buildings, concentrating on the strengths in a community and building on these to support change and improvements. The Strategic Policy and Scrutiny Advisor explained Community Asset transfers (CAT) and gave examples of these that had taken place in Cumbria.

It was noted that a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group had been undertaken to inform the development of localism models in Cumbria as the transition from 6 District Councils and 1 County Council to 2 local authorities. Members noted that, in addition to this under LGR, both Shadow Authorities were undertaking work under a Communities and Localism workstream, considering how they could build and develop Community Power/Community Wealth Building.

Members discussed successful community asset transfers that had taken place in their areas. In answer to a member's question, the Local Manager for Allerdale/Copeland informed the Board that an ongoing CAT in the Copeland division would not be completed before vesting day. In answer to a member's questions, the Assistant Director – Environment & Enterprise confirmed that there was a compiled list of existing County Council surplus land.

The discussion centred around the fantastic work of the Community Teams, their drive, enthusiasm and engagement at local level. The Team's work during Covid and their maintenance and involvement in local groups was recognised and a good working practice to carry forward. It was further recognised that the likes of "Warm hubs" set up would also assist with social isolation.

To conclude the Strategic Policy and Scrutiny Advisor outlined key messages to take forward:-

- Ownership and involvement
- Importance of the community teams
- Emergency response groups
- Social connection
- Maintaining close connections with local groups

RESOLVED, that the report be noted and the key messages, outlined above, be fed into policy development.

28 BOARD BRIEFING

A report from the Strategic Policy and Scrutiny Advisor was considered. This provided members with the Board's Work Programme and the County Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

A referral had been received from the Scrutiny Performance Working Group to "continue to develop opportunities to provide bus services to communities that face limited or no provision" and the commentary in relation to the launch of new scheduled bus services, and of a series of digital, demand responsive transport solutions for some rural areas throughout 2022/23. Members agreed to include this as an item on the next meeting's agenda.

It was agreed that briefing notes be circulated to Board members on the following Forward Plan items:-

- To award a contract for the Single Stage Design, Build and Launch of the new Windermere Electric Ferry
- Award of an approved list for Highways Road markings within the district areas of Barrow, Eden and South Lakeland (future Westmorland and Furness Unitary Authority)

RESOLVED, that

- (1) the Board's work programme, attached as Appendix 1, be agreed;
- (2) the referral from Performance Working Group – Bus Services – be an item on the agenda for the next Board meeting;
- (3) the Forward plan of Key Decisions be noted.

29 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Board was scheduled for 10 March 2022 at 10 am in County Offices, Kendal.

The meeting ended at 11.50 am