

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the proceedings at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the District Council Chamber, South Lakeland House, Kendal, on Friday, 25 October 2019, at 10.30 a.m.

Present

Councillors

Vicky Hughes (Chairman)
Helen Chaffey (Vice-Chairman)

Brian Cooper
Eamonn Hennessy
Hazel Hodgson

Anne Hutton
Janette Jenkinson
Susanne Long

Doug Rathbone
Mark Wilson

An apology for absence was received from Councillors Pat Bell.

Officers

John Davies	Case Management Officer
Dan Hudson	Strategy Lead Specialist
Adam Moffatt	Case Management Officer
Claire Read	Finance Specialist
Simon Rowley	Director of Customer and Commercial Services
Helen Smith	Finance Lead Specialist (Section 151 Officer)
David Sykes	Director of Strategy, Innovation and Resources

Also in attendance were Councillors Giles Archibald (Leader and Promoting South Lakeland Portfolio Holder), Robin Ashcroft (Economy, Culture and Leisure Portfolio Holder), Andrew Jarvis (Finance and Resources Portfolio Holder) and Dyan Jones (Climate Emergency and Localism Portfolio Holder).

O&S/25 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the Chairman be authorised to sign, as a record, the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16 August 2019.

O&S/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED – That it be noted that no declarations of interest were raised.

O&S/27 DECLARATION OF THE PARTY WHIP

RESOLVED – That it be noted that no declarations of the party whip were raised.

O&S/28 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXCLUDED ITEMS

RESOLVED – That it be noted that there are no excluded items on the agenda.

O&S/29 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

RESOLVED – That it be noted that no questions, representations, deputations or petitions have been received in respect of this meeting.

O&S/30 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROGRESS REPORT

The Legal, Governance and Democracy Lead Specialist (Monitoring Officer) presented a report including the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's 2018/19 Work Programme, an update on progress made by Cabinet and officers in implementing the recommendations of the Committee and the latest Forward Plan, published on 1 October 2019. She began by informing Members that the first meeting of the Developing Locality Working through Customer Connect Task and Finish Group had been successful and that two further sessions had been provisionally agreed for November 2019. Furthermore, she informed Members that the Strategic Review of the Council's Health and Wellbeing Priority Task and Finish Group and the Implementation of SLDC's Climate Change Policy Workshop had both been provisionally scheduled for December 2019.

The Legal, Governance and Democracy Lead Specialist (Monitoring Officer) informed the Committee that the Morecambe Bay Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust were not able to attend the meeting due to a prior commitment, but that their attendance at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been rescheduled for the January 2020 meeting.

Finally the Legal, Governance and Democracy Lead Specialist (Monitoring Officer) proposed that the Economic Growth Strategy Task and Finish Group be cancelled and instead feature as a report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. However she encouraged Members to discuss the Strategy with the relevant officers for more information.

The Director of Strategy, Innovation and Resources responded to a question on the potential for a workshop or questionnaire for Members, in order to gauge Members' workload as the Council moved forwards with the Locality Working model. He undertook to present opportunities for Members to discuss these issues which would assist in the development of the Members' role within Locality Working.

Concern was expressed over an upward trend in crimes such as domestic abuse and child sexual exploitation within the district and a question raised over what the Council could do to empower victims and prevent violence. As a result Councillor Hughes undertook to write to the Chair of the Community Safety Partnership to request data on various crimes in order to help the Council look at methods of monitoring and preventing this upward trend.

RESOLVED – That

(1) the following be noted:-

- (a) the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme 2018/19;
- (b) the progress made by Cabinet and officers in implementing the recommendations of the Committee;
- (c) the contents of the latest Forward Plan published on 1 October 2019; and

- (2) the Economic Growth Strategy Task and Finish Group be replaced by a report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

O&S/31 NORTHERN RAIL UPDATE

Councillor Doug Rathbone, provided a verbal update with regard to Northern Rail services. He began by informing Members that Northern Rail was scheduled to attend the January 2020 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He added that, since the last meeting of the Committee, new trains had been used on both the Lakes and Furness lines but that the same issues remained with the service provided, with cancellations and regularity of trains remaining as major issues.

It was suggested that the data on Northern Rail's performance produced by the Community Rail Partnership had been useful and that it could be invaluable in the Committee's scrutiny in this regard.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

O&S/32 CORPORATE FINANCIAL UPDATE QUARTER 2 2019/20

The Finance and Resources Portfolio Holder introduced the Corporate Financial Monitoring report for Quarter Two 2019/20. The report highlighted a £48,000 overspend to date, and a full-year forecast for a £264,000 overspend. He informed the Committee that these overspends had stemmed from shortfalls in income from Lake Windermere and Car Parks, as well as a shortfall linked to Street Scene. A projected deficit from Markets and additional people costs of Public Halls had also contributed to the projected overspend. He reminded Members that at the same stage last year there had been a £600,000 gap that had successfully been closed by the end of the year. Furthermore, he informed Members that there remained a need to deliver a further £158,000 in savings which he expected to come from the implementation Phase 2 of Customer Connect, due to begin 1 January 2020.

The Finance and Resources Portfolio Holder moved on to highlight the Capital Programme and inform Members of a significant re-profiling of capital spending over the coming years. He emphasised changes that had occurred during the year that had increased the Council's capital spend. However, he highlighted that the current year's projected spend had been reduced by £10.6m due to major shifts in housing loans, ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) funded flood defence works, Grange Lido, scheduling of work on South Lakeland House and Kendal Town Hall and a re-phasing of the vehicles budget. Furthermore, it had been recognised that significant expenditure previously considered as occurring in 2020/21 had now fallen in later years.

The Finance and Resources Portfolio Holder referred to Section 3.5 of the report which highlighted the use of Council reserves and Section 3.6 and Appendix 3 which focussed on Treasury Management. He highlighted that the Council's investments had continued to perform well despite an incident of an investment being made in excess of the counterparties lending limits but assured the Committee that he and the Section 151 Officer had taken appropriate action to minimise the exposure of the Council. He then referred to Section 3.7 which updated the Council Tax Collection position and Section 3.8, the debt collection position. Finally he drew attention to Appendix 5 which provided an updated procurement schedule.

Members raised questions on; the 2020/21 expenditure, which was confirmed as £14m, South Lakes Housing loans which had been agreed would only be payable upon

completion of house building and the possibility of regular briefings, in the future, on the Corporate Financial Update, led by the Finance and Resources Portfolio Holder in order to have a more detailed review of the report with Members.

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted.

O&S/33

COUNCIL PLAN PERFORMANCE MONITORING QUARTER 2 2019/20

The Leader of the Council introduced the Council Plan Performance Monitoring report for Quarter 2 2019/20. Councillor Archibald began by thanking the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its valuable work and moved on to highlight a number of benchmarks that had successfully been achieved, including bringing empty homes back into use, increased facilities for the homeless, the building of affordable homes, and a number of playgrounds that had been opened. He informed the Committee that the local economy had performed relatively well and that new business creation in South Lakeland had been the fastest in Cumbria, with a greater job density across the district than many others. He reminded the Committee that, while the district had been performing relatively well, there were some areas of concern that he wished to highlight, including domestic violence, child poverty, homelessness, biodiversity and climate change. Concluding his speech, Councillor Archibald emphasised the positives he had mentioned and thanked Officers and Portfolio Holders for their hard work.

Members raised questions on the operational carbon footprint and the time constraints of the investigations into the Carbon Footprint of Cumbria as well as that of SLDC itself, with both reports due to be presented at December's Council meeting. A further question was raised on the Strategic Risk Register for Quarter 2 2019/20, it was explained that the position of the major projects, which had been queried by the Committee, was to ensure that they were being monitored effectively and consistently.

RESOLVED – That the report and its contents be noted.

O&S/34

PORTFOLIO HOLDER REPORT - PROMOTING SOUTH LAKELAND

The Promoting South Lakeland Portfolio Holder introduced his Portfolio Holder Report. He began by updating the Committee on the progress being made with Lancaster and Barrow, aimed at building a strong and nationally recognised economic partnership. He moved on to highlight the urgency of climate change and biodiversity as well as deprivation and poverty. He informed the Committee that he had been asked to take a leading role on the Better Lives Project, which would enable him to work across districts on important issues of deprivation and poverty.

The Promoting South Lakeland Portfolio Holder thanked the Climate Change Emergency and Localism Portfolio Holder for her work, and highlighted their successful meetings with Parish Councils across the district, which were aimed at measuring their aspirations. He informed the Committee that the Council had been successful in meeting some of these aspirations and thanked Cabinet Members for their hard work and co-operation. In concluding his speech, the Promoting South Lakeland Portfolio Holder expressed his pleasure at the collaboration with Cumbria County Council, on various projects, including the Gooseholme Footbridge.

Following a request, the Promoting South Lakeland Portfolio Holder and the Climate Emergency and Localism Portfolio Holder agreed to attend an upcoming meeting of the Kendal Local Area Partnership (LAP) to discuss the Council's aims and actions with regards to climate change and answer any questions from the Kendal LAP. A further

request for co-operation with regard to the Arnside and Levens bus service between SLDC Members and Cumbria County Council was made.

RESOLVED – That the report and its contents be noted.

O&S/35 PORTFOLIO HOLDER REPORT - CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND LOCALISM

The Climate Emergency and Localism Portfolio Holder introduced her Portfolio Holder report. The report highlighted how the Council engaged with partners, ensuring that the Council 'acted locally and thought globally'. She informed Members that Council policy had demonstrated its' commitment to protect and enhance the environment and supported the proactive agenda being set on tackling climate change. She concluded her report by thanking Officers and Members for their hard work.

Following the Portfolio Holders report, Members discussed the need for a high-profile campaign to reinforce the necessity for recycling and for a co-ordinated approach to the climate change emergency from both Parish and District Councils. In addition, Members discussed the need to contact local schools in order to encourage a more environmentally friendly approach to the school run.

Following a question on the potential for community composting, the Climate Emergency and Localism Portfolio Holder requested that an Officer look into the viability of this suggestion.

Following a question on the need to lobby the government in order to gain reform of national planning regulations to ensure that more environmentally friendly homes were being built, the Promoting South Lakeland Portfolio Holder requested that his correspondence with the Government on this issue be circulated to Overview and Scrutiny Members.

RESOLVED – That the report and its contents be noted.

O&S/36 COUNCIL PLAN

The Leader of the Council introduced the draft Council Plan report. Those changes agreed by Council had been incorporated, including the Lancaster and South Cumbria Economic Region. He welcomed any comments or suggestions from Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

A suggestion was raised on the potential to add a section on the importance of transport with regard to local communities and climate change to the Council Plan. Examples of the Arnside and Levens route as well as the X70 in Ulverston were given as key services that serve as a vital part of the community. A further suggestion was raised on whether the Council could place more emphasis on health delivery.

RESOLVED – That the draft Council Plan be noted and the comments raised, be provided to Cabinet for consideration prior to its recommendation to Council.

O&S/37 BREXIT UPDATE

The Leader of the Council, introduced the Brexit Update. He highlighted the Council's role in identifying risks and working out ways of mitigating those risks and working with stakeholders and residents to inform them of the key details. He informed Members that there was the potential for medical supplies to be disrupted and workforces being

depleted which would be of concern to those involved in the agricultural, hospitality and food production sectors.

The Strategy Lead Specialist informed Members that a great deal of contingency planning had been undertaken at County level, with local forums being set up to discuss the plans.

Questions were raised on the increased risk to vulnerable people following Brexit and the potential for a hotline to be set up for residents. The Strategy Lead Specialist informed Members that it was an important part of the Brexit and No Deal contingency planning to ensure that vulnerable people had access to advice and assistance if needed.

A request was made to ensure the remit and scope for the Task and Finish Workshop on Brexit to be widened and moved forwards. The Strategy Lead Specialist undertook to provide a written response with regard to a request for clarification on ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) funding after Brexit.

RESOLVED – That

- (1) the update be noted; and
- (2) the next Brexit Workshop be arranged to be held three months after the UK leaves the European Union, with the remit and scope being widened to focus on the district of South Lakeland.

O&S/38

CUMBRIA HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE UPDATE

Councillor Mark Wilson provided a verbal update on the Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee. He informed Members that within South Cumbria and North Lancashire, there was to be a change in the service of renal dialysis that would mean patients would not have to travel for longer than 30 minutes in order to reach a facility. In addition he drew attention to a report which highlighted an internal standard at Morecambe Bay Hospital Trust of last minute cancellations which equated to no more than 0.8% of total theatre cases. In concluding his verbal update, he drew attention to new arrangements with regard to the distribution of community beds in hospitals, and a new Acute Stroke Care Unit in Carlisle.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

The meeting ended at 12.27 p.m.