

At a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in Council Chamber - Allerdale House, Workington on Thursday 6 December 2018 at 2.00 pm

Members

Councillor Alan Pitcher (Chair)
Councillor John Cook
Councillor Hilary Harrington
Councillor Jim Osborn

Councillor Janet Farebrother (Co-Chair)
Councillor Joseph Cowell
Councillor Joe Holliday
Councillor Bill Pegram

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Malcolm Grainger, Councillor Frank Johnston, Councillor Billy Miskelly and Councillor Martin Wood

Staff Present

R Carr, K Eccles, A FitzGerald, I Hinde, C Holmes, J Ward and G Wilson

Also Present

Councillor M Heaslip (Executive Member: Environmental Quality), Councillor C McCarron-Holmes (Executive Member: Housing, Health and Wellbeing) and S Stoddart

269. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 5th October were signed as a correct record.

270. Declaration of Interests

None declared

271. Questions

None received

272. Public Participation

None received

273. Request to consider a petition in respect of Salterbeck Cemetery

Councillor Stephen Stoddart spoke in support of his petition in respect of Salterbeck Cemetery, summarising that he wanted the panel to consider that the gates be reopened to the public to enable motor vehicle access for disabled cemetery users.

The Committee was asked to consider;

- That the procedures followed which lead to locking the cemetery gates were appropriate

- That the actions taken were appropriate
- That the petition requires further review

Debate ensued; Councillor Michael Heaslip clarified the situation regarding the locking of gates in Allerdale cemeteries.

The panel discussed the use of collapsible bollards and assistance for disabled users.

Councillor Janet Farebrother moved to recommend that the procedures were followed and that the actions taken which led to locking the cemetery gates were appropriate. This was seconded by Councillor Bill Pegram.

A vote was taken, 7 voted in favour, 1 against and 0 abstentions.

The motion was carried.

Agreed

That the procedures followed and actions taken which led to locking the cemetery gates were appropriate.

274. Portfolio presentation by the Executive Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing, to include -

Councillor Carni McCarron – Holmes (Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Wellbeing) provided an update on the housing enforcement policy and how the Council are working with social landlords.

Officers then clarified with members specific aspects of the policy including how Allerdale can enforce and prosecute.

Discussion continued between members and officers on the topic of housing. Members were concerned with the upkeep and state of private rented properties as well as the issue of affordable homes.

In relation to funding for new homes, officers explained that the Council are trying to obtain funding on top of grants received already and advised members on the potential grants that could be available for housing and infrastructure.

Members agreed to invite Paul Taylor (Community Housing Development Officer) to a future meeting; officers to arrange.

275. Forward Plan

The only new addition to the published forward plan is the 'Allerdale Polling Review'

Members discussed the disposal of assets as well as the new Allonby to Silloth cycle path and were advised that Councillor Bill Jefferson will attend the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in April 2019 to provide further information.

Members noted the forward plan of Key and Non – Key Decisions.

276. Task and Finish Group/Working Group Updates

Members were given a verbal update on the task and finish group/working groups.

Councillor Cowell provided an update on the on the current work of the Budget Standing Group which has requested that members of the group attend the Star Chamber meetings.

Members shared concerns over future council budgets and with the proposed shared stadium. The Monitoring Officer clarified options available to the committee in relation to 'call in'.

Recommendations from the 'Councillor Training Task and Finish' group were presented to members; the panel agreed the recommendations and these will be forwarded onto the Member Development Group.

277. Work Programme and Outcomes Monitoring

Members noted the committees work programme for 18/19.

A discussion ensued in relation to staff sickness absences with officers clarifying that long term absences have had a significant impact upon the figures. The absences are for a variety of reasons

The officers then advised the members of the policies and the assistance available to encourage an efficient and effective return to work.

Members were satisfied with the procedures in place to manage sickness absence.

Members agreed to consider adding a work plan item relating to a potential unitary authority.

The meeting closed at 4.06 pm