

At a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in Council Chamber - Allerdale House, Workington on Wednesday 30 January 2019 at 9.30 am

Members

Councillor Alan Pitcher (Chair)
Councillor John Cook
Councillor Hilary Harrington
Councillor Bill Pegram

Councillor Janet Farebrother (Co-Chair)
Councillor Joseph Cowell
Councillor Billy Miskelly

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Malcolm Grainger, Councillor Joe Holliday, Councillor Frank Johnston, Councillor Jim Osborn and Councillor Martin Wood

Staff Present

B Carlin, I Hinde, L Jardine, K Kerrigan, C Nicholson, G Roach, A Seekings and S Sewell

Also Present

Councillors B Cannon (Executive Member: Corporate Resources (Finance and Property)), N Cockburn, B Finlay (Leader of the Independent Group), M Fryer (Executive Member: Deputy Leader - Economic Growth), M Jenkinson and A Smith (Executive Member: Leader of the Council)

327. Declaration of Interests

3. Call In - Consideration of proposals for the development of a new community stadium for Workington.
Councillor Alan Smith; Other Interest; Due to being a shareholder of Workington Association Football Club.
3. Call In - Consideration of proposals for the development of a new community stadium for Workington.
Councillor Mark Fryer; Other Interest; Due to being a shareholder of Workington Town R.L.F.C.
4. Call In - Future Plans for Borough Park and Derwent Park.
Councillor Alan Smith; Other Interest; Due to being a shareholder in Workington Association Football Club.
4. Call In - Future Plans for Borough Park and Derwent Park.
Councillor Mark Fryer; Other Interest; Due to being a shareholder in Workington Town R.L.F.C.

328. Call In - Consideration of proposals for the development of a new community stadium for Workington

At a meeting of the Executive on 16 January 2019, a decision was taken to proceed with proposals to develop a new community stadium on the site of Lonsdale Park/Borough Park, to extend the appointment of the design team and

the appointment of consultants to undertake intrusive ground investigative works. The decision also agreed to a spend of £373,955 from the Strategic Priorities budget and to delegate approval of heads of terms with NHS and Sellafield to the Head of Place Development and to delegate approval of heads of terms with Workington Town and Workington Reds to Head of Place Development.

On 24th January 2019 a 'call-in' form was submitted to the Councils Monitoring Officer. The Monitoring Officer accepted the call in.

The Call In was presented by Councillor Nicky Cockburn, Councillor Bill Finlay and Councillor Mark Jenkinson.

Councillor Finlay had submitted the call in and also provided his representations, commenting that the venture was risky and that the proposal was not for the whole of Allerdale. Councillor Finlay also questioned the sustainability of the proposal, advising he produced his own sustainability appraisal.

Councillor Jenkinson then provided his representations. He advised that the decision to proceed with the stadium proposal should have not have been made in a closed meeting, that the full un redacted report should have been circulated to members and that the planning stage of the proposal should be used as a hold point. He went on to state that the report was based on assumptions and that the proposal could have an adverse effect on the clubs involved.

In response to the call in, Councillor Alan Smith advised that the proposal would be a 24/7 venture, not just for the 2021 Rugby League World Cup. He also clarified that it was the sports teams that approached Allerdale Borough Council for support with a new stadium, and highlighted the success of a similar project that was by implemented by Allerdale Borough Council, the new Workington Leisure Centre

Councillor Fryer as portfolio holder then provided his response to the call in. He advised that the decision made on 16 January was based on an outline business case and to obtain further funding to ensure further work was completed before the final business case is presented. Councillor Fryer also commented that the stadium needs to have long term sustainability and that development will contribute to the Council meeting its corporate objectives, as detailed in the Council Plan, particularly those relating to economic development and regeneration.

Councillor Cannon also clarified that the executive only considered an outline business case on 16th January 2019, and that the proposal has to be in the best financial interests of the authority. She also explained that Allerdale Borough Council's finances are well managed, even in the difficult financial climate.

The 'call-in' representatives then asked questions to the members of the Executive.

In response to Councillor Finlay's questions about alternative projects, the Executive explained that Allerdale has a capital investment strategy based on

the Council plan which aims to meet Allerdale's corporate objectives. Catherine Nicholson, Head of Finance and Estates supported the Executive and clarified that the Council approved the Capital Investment Strategy and that projects in other areas of Allerdale were under way such as the Maryport Regeneration and creation of a new Housing Company.

Councillor Jenkinson felt that the council were 'jumping the gun' and that the council were 'hurrying' decisions through. In response, Councillor Fryer reaffirmed that this was only an outline business case and Corporate Director Andrew Seekings advised that the requested funds are necessary to get to the next stage of the development, and to maintain pace of the project, alluding to the similarities with the Workington Leisure Centre development.

In response to Councillor Finlay's question relating to the site appraisals, Head of Place Development, Kevin Kerrigan advised that a project board steering group is in place and they set the criteria and scored the potential sites, this was then internally moderated.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee then moved that under Section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting.

The public returned and Councillor Farebrother commented that it felt the Stadium was only for Workington. Councillor Smith advised that although the Stadium will be in Workington, it will be a facility for Allerdale, an area that needs facilities for its wealth of sporting talent.

Councillor Cook stated that from the results of an independent social media survey, 84% of North Allerdale was not happy with the Stadium proposal and its financial viability. In response Councillor Fryer advised that several finance options are available, some without costs to the taxpayer, but that this is only the initial outline business case, not the final business case.

In response to further questions from the committee, Councillor Fryer clarified that the proposed 8000 capacity of the Stadium followed consultation with the two sports clubs and that all options for Stadium use are being considered, including Music Events.

Debate followed the questions to the Executive Committee. The Monitoring Officer then clarified the decision making process.

Following an adjournment Councillor Jenkinson then summarised his representations, stating the decision on 16th January 2019 was made too early and that the decision should be sent back to the Executive.

Councillor Finlay echoed Councillor Jenkinson and advised that the Executive decision was premature.

Clarification was then provided by the Monitoring Officer in relation to the 'Call-in' procedure.

Councillor Farebrother then moved the motion to let the decisions made by the Executive on 16th January 2019 stand. This was seconded by Councillor Pegram.

For clarification, the Monitoring Officer confirmed that the motion was for all the decisions to stand.

A vote then followed, 4 voted in favour of the motion, 1 against and 2 abstentions.

The motion was carried

329. Call In - Future Plans for Borough Park and Derwent Park

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee then moved that under Section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting.

At a meeting of the Executive on 16 January 2019, a decision was made on the future plans for Borough Park and Derwent Park.

On 24th January 2019 a 'call-in' form was submitted to the Councils Monitoring Officer. The Monitoring Officer accepted the call in.

The Call In was presented by Councillor Bill Finlay, Councillor Mark Jenkinson and Councillor Nicky Cockburn.

Councillors Jenkinson and Finlay advised that the reports relating to this decision were excessively redacted.

Debate followed in relation to the redacting of documentation with Councillor Fryer clarifying the decisions to redact items was made by the Legal and Finance Departments.

Councillor Farebrother moved the motion to let the decisions made by the Executive on 16th January 2019 stand. This was seconded by Councillor Cook.

A vote then followed, 7 voted in favour of the motion, 0 against and 0 abstentions.

The Motion was carried

The meeting closed at 12.50 pm