

At a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in Zoom Virtual Meeting on Friday 26 February 2021 at 1.30 pm

## **Members**

Councillor Michael Heaslip (Chair)  
Councillor Tony Annison  
Councillor Allan Daniels  
Councillor Alan Hedworth

Councillor Iain Greaney (Co-Chair)  
Councillor John Crouch  
Councillor Malcolm Grainger  
Councillor Daniel Horsley

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Carmel Bell, Councillor Adrian Kirkbride, Councillor Carni McCarron-Holmes and Councillor Paul Scott

## **Staff Present**

B Carlin, A FitzGerald, N Hardy, I Hinde and L Jardine

### **333. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2021 were signed as a correct record.

### **334. Declaration of Interests**

None declared

### **335. Questions**

None received

### **336. Public Participation**

None received

## **Update on Procurement Task and Finish Group**

Councillor Greaney provided an update to members following his attendance at an informal meeting of the Executive.

The Executive agreed to all 17 recommendations and some were discussed in detail.

Councillor Greaney proposed that Overview and Scrutiny follow continue to work with Executive to ensure the recommendations are implemented, this will be potentially added to the Work Programme for 2021/22.

Councillor Heaslip confirmed that the Co-Chairs have met with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Audit Committee to discuss collaborative working and the Audit Committee will also be auditing the recommendations made to the Executive from the Procurement Task and Finish Group.

### **337. Project Management System**

The Assistant Chief Executive (Innovation and Commercial) delivered a presentation to members which included,

- Why the Programme Office was set up
- The Role of the Programme Management Office (PMO)
- Current Programmes
- Governance of Programmes and Projects
- Criteria for defining projects

Members were then advised that there are 21 ongoing projects within the transformation programme and that 7 of these are completed.

In the regeneration programme, 29 projects are ongoing, 12 projects each for the Workington and Maryport and 5 general projects, such as the Allonby to Silloth Coastal Cycle Path.

The next steps for the Programme Office are to implement the agreed Capital Strategy and to enhance the local assurance framework to deliver functions as accountable body, as the programme office move to the delivery of grant funded regeneration programmes.

Members then asked questions in relation to training and development and on the current situation in respect of officers working from home.

It was clarified to members that the project boards within the PMO are simply officer steering groups and also the council is accountable to itself but also in the case of the Workington and Maryport projects to the Minister of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Discussion then followed in relation to sports and leisure as the current contract for leisure centres ends in 2024. The PMO are beginning to look at all future options and will engage with all stakeholders when assessing the future of sports provision.

### **338. Economic Recovery and Growth Strategy**

The Assistant Chief Executive (Policy, Performance and Economic Strategy) provided an update to members, reminding them that a session is scheduled on 01 March 2021 to discuss the policy in detail.

The Economic Recovery and Growth Strategy will address the Council plan themes and in particular 'Create thriving towns and villages' and 'Invest to grow'. The strategy will also serve as a pandemic recovery plan, looking at long term recovery opportunities. This is in addition to the interim recovery plan which focused short term on facilitating grants for businesses and preparing them for lockdowns and business interruptions.

The strategy will assist the council adapt to the changing nature of the high street, support businesses, use assets, stimulate economic growth and build on the Councils destination management work.

Members were then provided a timeline of the process and that the origins of the new strategy were from the 2016 business growth strategy which primarily focused on supporting businesses through austerity. In March 2020, commissioning for the new strategy focused on three key areas, economic investment, Workington Town Fund and Economic Strategy/Implementation plans, the pandemic however changes the brief and the commission also had to consider economic recovery.

The strategy will be underpinned by a 10-year vision which is for Allerdale to become a strong diversified, well connected economy with a growing highly skilled population. The vision includes several key themes

- Low Carbon, Green Economy
- Manufacturing
- Agriculture
- Harnessing changing working patterns
- Creating thriving towns and communities
- Sharing the proceeds of growth

The next steps of the process are to open the draft strategy up for consultation and then to develop implementation plans. A commission is also underway to look at the strengths and opportunities for the other towns in the Borough, (Keswick, Cockermouth, Silloth, Wigton, Aspatria) similar to the work already undertaken for Workington and Maryport, with focus also on large employer areas at Lillyhall and Oldside.

Members were advised that the final Economic and Growth Strategy will be published early in the 2021/22 financial year.

Debate ensued in relation town centre regeneration and the role agriculture and the rural industry can play in local economic growth and development.

### **339. Quarter 3 Performance Report 2020/21**

The Chair introduced the item and advised members that for information and reference, the Quarter 3 Financial Report for 2020/21 was included in the agenda report pack and will continue to be included going forward.

The Policy Manager (Corporate, Performance and Information) then introduced the Quarter 3 performance report for 2020/21 and provided an overview of the report including key projects and activities, corporate KPIs and strategic risks which are based on the interim delivery plan.

Members were informed that most of the activities/projects were performing as expected. In terms of KPIs, of the 40 indicators, 3 indicators were currently off target and 13 had 'no fixed target figure'.

The KPI target setting process was explained to members and is set by service areas based on past performance and influences which may affect targets. From the targets the RAG rating is set on a fixed basis, where variances will be based on 10%. Members will review the targets for 2021/22 as part of the delivery plan.

Following questions relating to the 'red' KPI indicators, it was explained to members that the social media indicator fluctuates but that the local spend has reduced due to a large number of payments made on capital projects. Although some of the suppliers are from outside the area, they did subcontract to local suppliers in accordance with Council procurement requirements.

The Assistant Chief Executive (Policy, Performance and Economic Strategy) explained to members that the revision of the performance management framework is ongoing, with delays due to the pandemic, detailed conversations are due will be held with members in relation to performance targets and data used.

Members asked questions in relation to fly tipping as it appears fly tipping has increased but the report states that the Council is meeting its targets. The Chair used this example to highlight to members that the performance report may not provide the information members need.

Members debated bin collections which were affected by adverse weather and recycling initiatives. It was noted that at peak times, recycling centres are at capacity and it was suggested to officers that communication around peak periods should be increased to advocate positive behaviours.

Debate then ensued in relation to the creation of a Housing company and grant application and distribution.

Members noted the contents of the report.

#### **340. Forward Plan**

Members noted the contents of the forward plan

#### **341. Work Programme 2020/21**

The Chair confirmed to members that he had consulted with the Co-Chair regarding the work programme and suggested that as the Economic Recovery and Growth Strategy is going to Executive Committee in April 2021, it should be included in the March 2021 meeting along with the Maryport and Workington Regeneration programmes. As the consultation on Local Government Reorganisation has opened, it was also suggested that this is included in March 2021. Members agreed and debate ensued in relation to Local Government Reorganisation including the proposals made by other authorities.

The Chair confirmed that officers will seek recommendations from all members of the council for the 2021/22 work programme.

Questions were asked in relation to staff welfare during the pandemic, it was confirmed that SMT, HR and line managers are constantly providing necessary support to staff whilst looking at new ways of working.

### **Councillor Grainger left the meeting**

#### **342. Task and Finish Group Updates**

##### **Pandemic Task and Finish Group**

Councillor Heaslip as Chair of this group advised that the group has highlighted its work in the Overview and Scrutiny Report for Council (03 March 2021). The group has focused on the pandemic impact on poverty, schooling, communities and the Councils operating model.

##### **Budget Task and Finish Group**

The group has finished its latest work on the budget setting process and how the budget is built.

A meeting was held on 25 February 2021 with officers and Executive to understand the decision-making process and why some items were included in the budgets and some were not, and to understand the rationale. Concerns were shared and the group will monitor the budget going forward. Discussions will continue and specifically will focus on staffing and resourcing.

**The meeting closed at 3.40 pm**