

At a meeting of the Council held in Wallace Suite - Hundith Hill Hotel, Cockermouth on Wednesday 8 December 2021 at 7.00 pm

Members

Councillor Malcolm Grainger (Chair)	Councillor Allan Daniels (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Tony Annison	Councillor Carole Armstrong
Councillor Carmel Bell	Councillor Markus Campbell-Savours
Councillor John Crouch	Councillor Janet Farebrother
Councillor Marion Fitzgerald	Councillor Peter Gaston
Councillor Patrick Gorrill	Councillor Iain Greaney
Councillor Hilary Harrington	Councillor Michael Heaslip
Councillor Alan Hedworth	Councillor Vaughan Hodgson
Councillor Daniel Horsley	Councillor Mike Johnson
Councillor George Kemp	Councillor Peter Kendall
Councillor Alan Kennon	Councillor Sally Lansbury
Councillor Jim Lister	Councillor Elaine Lynch
Councillor Owen Martin	Councillor Carni McCarron-Holmes
Councillor Antony McGuckin	Councillor Ron Munby MBE
Councillor William Pegram	Councillor Paul Scott
Councillor Andrew Semple	Councillor Colin Sharpe
Councillor Alan Smith	Councillor Kevin Thurlow
Councillor Alan Tyson	Councillor Will Wilkinson

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mary Bainbridge, Councillor Herbert Briggs, Councillor Nicky Cockburn, Councillor John Cook, Councillor Janet King, Councillor Adrian Kirkbride, Councillor Louise Maguire, Councillor Anthony Markley, Councillor Alan Pitcher, Councillor Joe Sandwith, Councillor Blain Sansom, Councillor Stephen Stoddart and Councillor Lynda Williams

Staff Present

B Carlin, A Gilbert, N Hardy, K Magnay, C Nicholson, A Seekings, S Sewell and L Tomlinson

288. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 22 September 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

289. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

290. Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no items on the agenda for which the press and public should be excluded.

291. Questions and Petitions

Mr Ian Stockdale asked the question –

“The group, Friends of Keswick Leisure, recently carried out a survey on their Facebook page which showed 81% of residents who responded, have stopped swimming completely following the closure of the Keswick Pool.

“Firstly, did the council conduct an impact assessment of the effects of the closure on the community?

“Secondly, how did the council assess the capacity at other Allerdale facilities, after Keswick’s closure, including the impact on other communities trying to access pool time?”

Councillor M Johnson provided the following response -

“Thank you for your question Mr Stockdale. Firstly, I think it’s important to recall that the closure of the pool was made for health and safety reasons. But yes, an impact assessment was undertaken at the time of the closure. It looked at all of the members, clubs and casual users (for information – current users 140 swim school pupils, 4 schools, 13 swim-only members and on average casual swimmers of 10 per day) and an assessment was made that there is sufficient capacity at the other pools in Allerdale to accommodate those previously using the Keswick pool. We have been proactive in trying to accommodate everyone with alternative provision. We have been more innovative in our use of our facilities and taken steps to re-programme existing activity and changed timetables to accommodate users with minimum impact on our wider customer base.”

Councillor Markus Campbell-Savours asked the question –

“Following the announcement that Allerdale Council would be closing Keswick Leisure Pool, Keswick councillors asked that we help support existing users in accessing alternative provision. One user group discussed at the time was local schools, who despite the limitations of the existing pool were using the facility to support children meet their keys stage 2 swimming needs. It therefor came as a surprised to hear in recent days that Keswick's main junior school had received no offers of support and that when looking at how they could access provision in Cockermouth and Penrith, the transport costs for a single year group was more than £2000. On this basis the cost to provide the same exposure to swimming, which children in years 2 through to 6 were enjoying pre covid, would be at least £10,000 per year. This cost comes on top of the additional staffing requirements and disruption caused to the school day.

“Can Allerdale Borough Council reconfirm its commitment to help support Keswick residents, not least our children, access alternative provision? Can this also include reasonable financial assistance to schools and clubs with transport costs?”

Councillor M Johnson confirmed Allerdale Borough Council’s commitment on both counts.

292. Notices of Motion

Councillor Iain Greaney moved the following motion –

As someone who believes that nuclear energy generation should and probably will need to have a place in a new greener energy policy for the country and also as someone who has an in-depth understanding of the need to build the UK's long term nuclear Geological Disposal Facility. The submission of this motion to defer GDF appraisal process in the borough of Allerdale, is not taken easily.

I have had a meeting with the NDA representative Steve Reece and also the Independent Chair of the Allerdale GDF working group Jocelyn Manners-Armstrong, who I believe to be genuine participants in the process, however this did not alleviate my concerns. As a result, I believe the current decision on the proposed designated GDF search area being proposed by the Allerdale working group is flawed / unsound and needs to be re-appraised as a result of failures in the decision-making process.

The justification for the motion is the significant technical omissions from the assessment which renders approximately 50% of the proposed designated search area completely out of scope, lack of community participation in the decision-making process and a political driven agenda by the conservative Allerdale executive committee.

The real crux of the issue is the newly defined Allerdale GDF designated search area includes 50% of the exclusion zone as determined in the British Geological Survey (BGS) report; Initial Geological Unsuitability Screening of West Cumbria (2010), which concludes that this exclusion area is an area not suitable for consideration for the siting of a Nuclear Geological Disposal Facility.

Therefore, how can the public have confidence in this first phase, if the Allerdale GDF working group have selected an area that comprises 50% of which has already been classified as unsuitable by the BGS. This seems to be the most basic of errors and indicates the working group have not done their homework correctly.

It seems the Allerdale working group are getting the significant basic decisions wrong at such an early stage, without being held accountable. The concern is, they will inevitably continue in this vein as a direct result of these poor early decisions becoming embedded in the process which in turn will have an effect on all future decisions. Irrespective of the £1 million payments the council will receive for continuing to the next phase in the GDF assessment, as councillors we have a moral responsibility to ensure this process is checked if concerns are highlighted and this motion will provide an opportunity to do this.

We have to take an impartial but objective approach when it comes to the siting of a Nuclear Geological Disposal Facility and our aim should be; not to get 'a site' but to get the 'safest site'

Therefore I would like to ask :-

Allerdale Borough Council agrees to request Executive that it withdraws all council members and officers from participating in the Allerdale Nuclear Geological Disposal Facility working group/ Community Partnership and any processes associated with the assessment /selection of a viable site for the UK'S Geological Disposal Facility in the Borough of Allerdale. This recall should be with immediate effect and continue until that time a more agreeable democratic, technical and community involved process for determining the designated GDF Search Area is proposed / guaranteed by the UK government and their representatives within the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA).

The motion was seconded by Councillor G Kemp.

Councillor M Fitzgerald stated that she took issue with many of the comments made and that while she appreciated Cllr Greaney's knowledge the comments did not accurately reflect the stage the process was at. It was important for Allerdale to be part of the community partnership from an early stage and to be involved in detailed discussions. The process could take many years to complete but it was important to get that process underway. Elected members from the affected wards had been given the opportunity to attend briefings and the issue had been discussed at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to the decision being made.

Councillors M Johnson, C Sharpe, M Heaslip and A Smith all spoke to reiterate and support the comments made by Councillor Fitzgerald.

In exercising his right to reply Councillor Greaney asserted his belief that 50% of the search area was out of scope and stated that in his opinion it would be better to take more time to get the process right rather than pushing ahead with it.

A vote was taken: 6 in favour, 30 against, 0 abstentions.
The motion was lost.

293. Councillor Speeches

Councillor I Greaney made a speech concerning an incident of fly tipping within his ward and the action taken against the resident responsible. Councillor Greaney gave an explanation of the circumstances of the incident and stated his view the action taken was unfair on the resident.

Councillor S Lansbury spoke about the Community Climate Grant fund launched by Cumbria Action for Sustainability and encouraged all elected members to get projects going within their wards.

294. Announcements from the Mayor, Leader or Head of Paid Service

The Mayor presented his list of engagements undertaken since the last meeting of Council.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor M Johnson, presented a verbal update on the work on Local Government Reorganisation for Cumbria including an update on the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) arrangements. Councillor Johnson also provided a summary of the work done across the council over the previous 12 months, thanking officers and elected members for their efforts and hard work and wishing everyone a Happy Christmas and New Year.

295. Portfolio Holder Updates

Councillor M Johnson moved the Portfolio Holders update report.

Questions were raised in connection with:

- the governance arrangements for the Maryport Programme
- road sweeping in Flimby to alleviate flooding risk
- Maryport Town Council funding for seating on the promenade at Maryport flood damage in Cockermouth
- Taste Cumbria events
- siting of a BMX track
- the approach to littering and fly tipping enforcement
- negotiations around a new stadium for Workington AFC
- Gypsy and Traveller needs assessment timescales
- progress on disabled facility grants
- low uptake of shop fronts grants

296. Executive Minutes

The minutes of the meetings of the Executive held on 21 July 2021 and 13 October 2021 were noted.

297. Reference from Executive 24/11/21 - Quarter 2 Finance Report and Revised Budget 2021-22

The Quarter 2 Finance Report and Revised Budget 2021-22 had been considered by the Executive at its meeting on 24 November 2021 and recommended to Council.

Members considered the report and the recommendation.

Councillor M Johnson moved the report as Leader of the Council.

The motion was seconded by Councillor C Sharpe.

A vote was taken and the and the motion was agreed unanimously.

Resolved

That

- i. The forecasted position against the original revenue and capital budgets at the end of quarter 2 be noted
- ii. The requirement for a county wide LGR Implementation Reserve be noted
- iii. The establishment of an implementation reserve/ budget provision of up to £1.6 million as Allerdale BC's contribution to the LGR implementation costs be approved, subject to contributions being approved by all the Cumbrian authorities
- iv. Responsibility be delegated to the Chief Officer – Assets (Section 151 officer) to identify a funding source for the Implementation Reserve from earmarked reserves, and to pay the contribution, or appropriate proportion thereof, to the County Council in January 2022
- v. The revised budget (inclusive of spend from earmarked reserves) of £19.691m be approved
- vi. The revised net revenue budget requirement of £15.911m be approved
- vii. The revised three-year capital budget (including proposed financing) of £42,193k, comprising £7,569k in 2021-22, £19,280k in 2022- 23 and £15,344k in 2023-24 be approved
- viii. The revised position on earmarked and un-earmarked general fund balances be noted
- ix. The updated forecast MTFP be noted.

298. Reference from Audit Committee 25/11/21 - Treasury Management Operations – Mid-year review 2021/22

The Treasury Management Mid-Year review 2021-2022 had been considered at Audit Committee on 25 November 2021 and recommended to Council for approval.

Members considered the report and the recommendation.

Councillor A Tyson moved the report as Chair of the Audit Committee.

The motion was seconded by Councillor C Sharpe.

A vote was taken and the motion was agreed unanimously.

Resolved

That the Treasury Management Mid-Year review 2021-2022 including the revised Prudential Indicators for 2021-22 be approved.

299. Reference from Licensing Committee 16/11/21 - Gambling Policy Review 2022-2025

The Gambling Policy Review 2022-2025 had been considered at Licensing Committee on 16 November 2021 and recommended to Council for acceptance following consideration of responses to the statutory consultation.

Members considered the report and the recommendation.

Councillor R Munby moved the report as Chair of the Licensing Committee.

The motion was seconded by Councillor T Annison.

A vote was taken and the and the motion was agreed unanimously.

Resolved

That the Gambling Policy 2022-25 be approved.

300. Update from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor M Heaslip, Co-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee moved the update report.

This was seconded by Councillor C McCarron-Holmes.

Resolved

That the report be noted.

301. Governance Updates

The Chief Officer, Place and Governance submitted a report updating member on political balance following some changes to group memberships and the result of the recent Maryport South by election.

Councillor M Fitzgerald moved the report; this was seconded by Councillor M Johnson

A vote was taken and the and the motion was agreed unanimously.

Resolved

That –

1. The appointment of Councillor Paul Scott for the Allerdale Independent Group to the Audit Committee in place of Councillor Janet King be noted
2. The distribution of seats across committees as set out in paragraph 4.8 of the report be approved, to accord with the rules on proportionality as far as practicable
3. The political group memberships be confirmed as set out in paragraph 4.11 of the report.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm