

At a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in Council Chamber, Allerdale House on Friday 18 March 2022 at 1.30 pm

Members

Councillor Allan Daniels
Councillor Iain Greaney
Councillor Paul Scott

Councillor Michael Heaslip (Co-Chair)
Councillor Patrick Gorrill
Councillor Daniel Horsley

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Carni McCarron-Holmes
Councillor Markus Campbell-Savours, Councillor Malcolm Grainger, Councillor Hilary Harrington and Councillor Sally Lansbury

Staff Present

A FitzGerald, N Hardy, G Roach and A Smith

425. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2022 were signed as a correct record.

426. Declaration of Interests

None declared.

427. Questions

None received.

428. Public Participation

None received.

429. Quarter 3 Performance Report 2021/22

Members considered the Quarter 3 performance report for 2021/22 which reported progress on the key projects and activities and corporate KPIs which are based on Council Strategy Delivery Plan.

Members raised comments in relation to auditing of grant allocations, the Otley Road Scheme in Keswick, the future of the AIP as part of the LGR process, disabled facilities grants and payments to local Cumbrian businesses.

Regarding the KPI 'Review the council's property and asset management strategy' members asked whether arrangements were still in place to make community asset transfers?.

It was explained that yes arrangements were still in place through the Councils Acquisitions and Disposals Policy.

In relation to the KPI 'Progress strategic green infrastructure and biodiversity projects and encourage environmental volunteering' members enquired about the status on the Northside non-statutory allotments. It was explained issues were still being worked through with the two remaining tenants.

Members also asked what was the plan for the Water Environment Grant?. Officers agreed to get a response from the relevant team on what options were available for moving forward.

In relation to the Maryport Regeneration Programme members asked for an update on the plans, in particular following the change around the Empire Yard project and on contingencies in relation to increasing costs.

Officers provided the following response 'although the scheme will not be progressing as originally planned it is proposed to continue with the planned acquisition of the land at the centre of the scheme with the aim of creating an open accessible space that can be used for parking, markets, and access. The council may need to resort to Compulsory Purchase to acquire the land. It is also important to say that the funding element for the Empire Yard will not be lost from the Maryport programme. Every Future High Street scheme in the country has been affected by an increase in construction costs. By amending the scope of the Empire Yard project this will release funding and ensure that key projects including, The Carlton, The Wave, Christchurch and public realm will still be delivered to a high standard'.

In relation to KPI 'Complete the commission for the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment and evaluate the outcome against the site allocation in Local Plan Part 2', members asked what the plan was now that the draft report had been received.

It was explained that from the Assessment report it was clear that a single site would not address the accommodation issues currently being experienced in Workington therefore, the Council had commissioned a further study from the same company to go back and look at what other solutions could work and be accepted in our area. It was hoped that piece of work could be completed in a couple of months and therefore Scrutiny asked for the item to be included in the next years' work programme for consideration.

Agreed

Members noted the contents of the report.

430. Quarter 3 Finance Update Report

The Finance update report for quarter three was noted.

431. Affordable Housing Scheme Policy

The Housing Manager provided the Committee with a verbal presentation on a review of the Councils Affordable Housing Scheme Policy documents.

A review had been carried out to streamline current policies, provide consistency and formalise the Council guidance as a policy document. All draft documents had been sent to key stakeholders for feedback.

Once the consultation exercise had closed on 25 March 2022 the draft documents were to be considered for adoption by the Executive on 20 April 2022.

Agreed

That the update presentation and draft documents be noted.

432. Feedback reports from Scrutiny Outside Bodies

The Committee noted update reports for the Council representatives who sat on the following outside bodies: Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee, Cumbria Police and Crime Panel Joint Committee and the West Cumbria Site Stakeholders Group.

It was noted that a report had not been received on the Local Enterprise Partnership Scrutiny Board.

433. Verbal Update on Local Government Reorganisation

The Assistant Chief Executive (Policy, Performance and Economic Strategy) provided an update on the current position in relation to Local Government Reorganisation.

The Structural Changes Order (SCO) had now passed through Parliament and had been signed by the Minister today 18 March 2022 which meant it was now in force.

The SCO sets out the process of creating the two new councils and provided the legal basis on which to implement the change to local government structures. It confirms the details and puts them into law.

It was also noted that the first meeting of the Cumberland Joint Committee was now confirmed to take place on 30 March 2022, with two further dates pencilled in if required on 14 April and 12 May.

434. Forward Plan

The forward plan was noted.

435. Work Programme and Outcomes Monitoring

The Chair reviewed the work programme and provided the following

- The Culture and Leisure Provision TFG was on track to report back to Committee in April,
- The Community Leadership and Engagement TFG also on track to report back in April,

- The Young People and Corporate Parenting TFG for various reasons had not been able to meet therefore this work was to be moved on to the work programme for 2022-23,
- The Public Value item was also to be moved on to the 2022-23 programme.

Members were reminded of an upcoming informal session arranged for 24 March to begin discussions on work programme items for the next year.

Following a request sent out to the wider Council membership for suggested items for consideration one suggestion had been made, which was to look at the issue around the shortage of GPs in Workington.

The Committee members agreed to include that item on the draft list and also to include dentists.

436. Task and Finish Group/Working Group Updates

An update on the current TFGs was provided in the previous item.

The meeting closed at 3.07 pm