

COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the County Council held on Thursday, 28 April 2022 at 10.00 am at Council Chamber - County Offices, Kendal

PRESENT:

Councillor Mr A Connell (Chairman)

Mr T Allison	Mr D English	Mr M Mitchelson
Mr AL Barry	Mrs S Evans	Mr FI Morgan
Ms C Bell	Miss HJ Fearon	Mrs M Rae
Mr J Bell	Miss D Garton	Mrs S Sanderson
Mrs PA Bell	Mr D Gawne	Mr P Thornton
Mr RW Betton	Mr KR Hamilton	Mrs C Tibble
Mr RK Bingham	Dr S Haraldsen	Mr CP Turner
Mr J Bland	Mr M Hawkins	Mrs H Wall
Mrs C Bowditch	Mr C Hogg	Mr R Watson
Mr A Bowness	Mr N Hughes	Mr WJ Wearing
Mr M Brereton	Mr A Kennon	Mr C Weber
Mrs A Burns	Mr J Lister	Mr CJ Whiteside
Mrs HF Carrick	Mr KA Little	Mrs EL Williamson
Mr F Cassidy	Dr K Lockney	Mrs J Willis
Mr W Clark	Mr T Lywood	Mr D Wilson
Mr SB Collins	Mr J Mallinson	Mr M Wilson
Mr GD Cook	Mr AJ Markley	Mr AW Wonnacott
Mr N Cotton	Ms C McCarron-Holmes	Mr MH Worth
Mr P Dew	Mr W McEwan (Vice-Chair)	Mr R Worthington
Mr R Dobson	Mr A McGuckin	Mr SF Young
Mr GM Ellis	Mr P McSweeney	

There were 63 members present at the start of the meeting.

1 ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Mr MS Barbour, Mr B Berry, Ms C Driver, Ms D Earl, Ms J Filmore, Mr HGG Graham, Mrs BC Gray, Mr K Hitchen, Mr MA Johnson, Mr AWC Lamb, Lord R Liddle, Mrs EA Mallinson, Mr NH Marriner, Mr GRPM Roberts, Mr B Shirley, Mr DE Southward, Mr S Stoddart, Mr D Whipp, Mr T Wentworth Waites and Mr S Wielkopolski

2 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

The Chairman asked for nominations for the Office of Chair of the Council. Mr Thornton moved that Mr Connell be elected as Chairman for the ensuing year. This was seconded by Mr Young.

With only one nomination being received and with the agreement of the Council, it was

RESOLVED that Mr A Connell be elected as Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year

There then followed a swapping of the Badge of Office and chains, and the Declaration of Acceptance of Office was signed by Mr Connell, and he then took the Chair.

Mr Connell in the Chair.

After thanking the outgoing Chairman, Mr Connell spoke about his pride and honour at being elected as Chairman of Cumbria County Council.

The Group Leaders congratulated Mr Connell on his election.

3 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman sought nominations for the Office of Vice Chair of the County Council.

With Mr Hamilton proposing and Mr Thornton seconding Mr McEwan as Vice Chair, and there being no other nominations, it was

RESOLVED that Mr W McEwan be appointed as Vice Chair of the County Council for the ensuing year

Mr McEwan signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr T Allison declared a pecuniary interest in Agenda Item No 18 – Notice of Motion, as he has a holiday home located within the Lake District National Park.

Mr K Little declared a pecuniary interest in Agenda Item No 13 – Update report of the Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board 2021/22, as he was in receipt of a Fire Service Pension.

5 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED, that the press and public be not excluded from discussions on any items on the agenda today.

6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no public questions, statements or petitions on this occasion.

7 MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 February 2022 be agreed with the following amendment:-

Minute No 73 – Draft Revenue Budget 2022/23 and Medium Term Financial Plan 2022-27 and Draft Capital Programme 2022-27 – add Mr G Roberts into the list of names of the members that voted ‘for’.

8 ANNOUNCEMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair started his announcements by mentioning how deeply shocked and saddened he was by the situation in Ukraine. The thoughts of all of the members remained with the people of Ukraine and all those impacted.

He thanked Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service crews who had hosted several car washes in aid of the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal to help raise vital funds for the people of Ukraine, and said that currently the Service had raised over £10,000 for the appeal.

Secondly, he formally welcomed the new Chief Executive, John Metcalfe, to his first meeting of Full Council here in Cumbria. He also took this opportunity to thank John Readman for all his hard work whilst undertaking the role in the interim period.

Lastly, he reminded members that Dawn Roberts, the Executive Director of Corporate Customer and Community Services, had been appointed as the new Chief Executive of Dumfries and Galloway Council, and would leave the Council in June.

The Cabinet Member for Highway and Transport made an announcement about the Bus Improvement Bid. Cumbria had been notified recently that the bid had been unsuccessful. There had been 41 unsuccessful councils and only 31 successful.

9 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR OF SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

RESOLVED, that Mr W Wearing be elected as Chairman of Scrutiny Management Board, with Mr M Wilson elected as Vice Chair.

10 CONSTITUTION OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Members considered a report which dealt with the constitution of the Council's committees and other member bodies and asked members to appoint chairs and vice chairs of various committees and other bodies. In addition, the Council was asked to confirm the Scheme of Delegation as set out in the Constitution.

The Leader of the Council presented a report which dealt with the constitution of the Council's committees and other member bodies and asked members to appoint chairs and vice chairs of various committees and other bodies. In addition the Council was asked to confirm the Scheme of Delegation as set out in the Constitution. The schedule of appointments had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting.

The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 made provision for the allocation by the Council of places on its committees to political groups represented on the Council.

Appendix 1 set out the committees and sub-committees to which these principles applied and the proposed allocations to each group based on those principles.

Members noted that there was currently 1 vacancy in the Longtown division which was previously held by the Conservatives. As this vacancy arose before the Structural Changes Order came into effect there was no provision for a by-election to be held to fill this vacancy and it would remain vacant until 1 April 2023 when the County Council would cease to exist.

At its Annual Meeting, the Council must appoint at least one scrutiny committee. Scrutiny committees were required to be politically balanced. The Constitution provides for the appointment of three Scrutiny Advisory Boards, a Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee, an overarching Scrutiny Management Board and a committee to scrutinise the Local Enterprise Partnership. It was the intention that County Council members appointed to the LEP scrutiny Committee shall be the same members as those appointed to the Scrutiny Management Board.

Certain Council bodies were not ordinary committees of the Council and not subject to the requirements of political proportionality. Under the Constitution the full Council made appointments to these bodies and Members were recommended to make appointments to these bodies as indicated in Appendix 1.

The Council appoints the Chair and Vice Chair of each Scrutiny Advisory Board. Appointments were subject to specific rules set out in the Constitution. Under the Council's Rules of Procedure, nominations were based on the principle of an allocation which was proportionate to the number of seats each political group had on the Council as a whole and in accordance with a weighting system described in the Constitution.

The Council was asked to approve the recommendations in this report so that its committees and sub-committees and other bodies were constituted for the municipal year 2021/22, so that the Council was represented on the outside bodies to which the Council appoints and that the Council had in place an approved Scheme of Delegation to Officers.

Members asked for an explanation about the nominations for the Cumbria Police and Crime Panel, which was provided by the Interim Chief Legal Officer.

The Leader moved that all of the recommendations be agreed 'en bloc' with the exception of the appointment to the Cumbria Police and Crime Panel, as there were 2 nominations which would be put to a vote. This was AGREED.

There then took place a vote for the nominations Mr Bill McEwan and Mr Mike Johnson. The votes were cast as follows:-

Bill McEwan	36
Mike Johnson	22

Therefore it was agreed that Mr McEwan be the County Council appointee on the Cumbria Police and Crime Panel.

RESOLVED, that the Council:

- (1) Approve the size (where optional) and terms of reference of ordinary committees of the Council and the allocation of committee places to political groups. The size and allocation of committee places to political groups as set out in Appendix 1. No changes are recommended to the terms of reference.
- (2) Approve nominations to sit on each committee and other Council bodies, as indicated in Appendix 1 of the report;
- (3) Appoint the Chair and Vice Chair of the member bodies set out in Appendix 2 of the report;
- (4) Appoint the Chair and Vice Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Advisory Boards as set out in Appendix 3 of the report;
- (5) Approve appointments to certain bodies for the period until 1 April 2023, in accordance with the allocations set out in Appendix 4 of the report, including Mr B McEwan as the appointed member of the Cumbria Police and Crime Panel;
- (6) Approve the appointment of the Leader of the Council to the Cumbria Leadership Board and the appointment of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance as the named substitute;
- (7) Appoint the Chair of the Pensions Committee (and the Vice Chair to act in the absence of the Chair) to represent the Council on behalf of the Cumbria Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS) on the Border to Coast Pension Partnership Joint Committee;
- (8) Confirm the Council's Scheme of Delegation to Officers (Part 3 of the Constitution) (as attached at Appendix 5).

11 MINUTES OF THE CABINET

(A) Cabinet Minutes - 3 February 2022

RESOLVED, that the minutes of Cabinet held on 3 February 2023 be noted.

(B) Cabinet Minutes - 17 March 2022

On Minute No 213 – Response to the Police and Crime Commissioner’s Public Consultation on the Potential Transfer of Fire Governance Mr Whiteside asked the Leader if he would give clarification regarding the financial argument. If it was not possible to identify the overheads involved, how was the Council able to say that it would be financially worse if the fire service was rolled in with the police and crime commissioner than if it formed into an independent fire authority.

The Leader responded to say that Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) was an integral part of Cumbria County Council, and full Council was the ‘Fire Authority’. With this came the ability to spread the central overheads and so CFRS benefitted from buying in to all the back office services. One of the difficulties with the proposal from the Police and Crime Commissioner was that the Fire Service would lose the ability to take advantage of this going forward. This would have an effect on the budget as to buy these services in would be costly.

On the same minute Mr Turner asked the Leader why the Cabinet’s consideration of the consultation had been left so late that no proper scrutiny could take place or call in, if needed.

The Leader replied to say he would need to investigate this and said a written response would be provided.

On the same minute Dr Haraldsen asked the Leader what Cabinet’s intention was on the question of different brands and cultures. If it was not accepted that there was a close association with fire and police, was the County Council wrong to invest in the blue light hub. He asked whether the Leader believed the fire service had more in common with police than libraries?

The Leader responded to say that the Blue Light Hub was an efficient use of resources as the location of emergency services was in a shared location. The hub was only about sharing the operation of services and not the governance behind the organisations involved, which all operated under different governance regimes.

The Cabinet Member said that currently CFRS were welcomed in homes in the communities to install fire alarms and other trusted services, and the officers were trusted by the public. Sadly, she felt people often had a different view when a Police Officer knocked on the door. However, the Police were working hard on changing this perception.

Also on this minute Mr Morgan asked the Cabinet Member for Customers, Transformation and the Fire Services whether she shared his concerns about the proposal of the PCC to take over our Fire and Rescue Service, for the implications for wider council services – given the integral part CFRS played within Cumbria

County Council, and the vital and trusted role it had within communities: contributing to everything from emergency planning and response, to safeguarding some of our most vulnerable residents.

The Cabinet Member replied to say that CFRS was an integral part of Cumbria County Council and played a vital role in the communities. It has a trusted brand within these and she felt this brand may change if the services moved under the umbrella of the Police and Crime Commissioner. She felt that the two new unitary authorities would be the right place for this decision to be made.

With reference to Minute No 222 – Award of a Framework Contract for Supported Living for People with a Learning Disability, Mental Health Issues, Autism or a Physical or Sensory Impairment Mrs Bowditch asked the Cabinet Member for Health and Care Services what assurances there were to ensure social care support for people with neurodiversity issues, in the light of increased costs and continued social care cuts by the Government.

The Cabinet Member replied to say that Cumbria County Council would continue to support and assess needs for people with neurodiversity issues and would work with the agencies that supported these people. Cumbria County Council would also continue to press the Government for funding.

RESOLVED, that the minutes of Cabinet held on 17 March 2022 be noted.

12 PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

Members had before them a report from the Director of Public Health, which was the seventh Annual Report to be presented to council following the transition of Public Health responsibilities to the Council from NHS Cumbria.

The statutory responsibilities of the DPH were designed to match exactly the corporate public health duties of their local authority. The exception is the annual report on the health of the local population where the DPH had a duty to write a report, whereas the authority's duty was to publish it.

The Director of Public Health's Annual Report was therefore intended to give an independent, expert view of the key issues affecting Public Health in the area with recommendations as to how these may be tackled.

The Director of Public Health then gave members a presentation, which inevitably focused on Covid 19, and included:-

- Key statistics
- Excess deaths
- Cumulative case rates
- Age standardised mortality
- Mortality by deprivation
- Wider health impacts
- Community response and resilience

- Track and trace
- Vaccinations
- What next.....

The Chair thanked the Director of Public Health for his informative presentation and opened the floor up to questions.

Mr Whiteside commented that hospitals were still under extreme pressure and only last week one of the hospitals serving Cumbria had to declare OPEL 4, indicating the highest level of system pressure, partly due to covid and partly due to the public delaying contact with health services because of the situation which resulted in more serious health conditions. He asked the Director of Public Health whether people were still being encouraged to take up vaccinations.

The Director of Public Health said yes people were still being encouraged to take up the vaccine.

Mrs Williamson thanked the Director of Public Health for his leadership during the pandemic, which was exemplary. She asked the Director to join her in thanking all of the volunteers that helped during the crisis.

The Director paid tribute to all the volunteers that had helped during the pandemic.

Mr Hughes asked what effect the ending of free lateral flow testing had on the health of the population, and also the effect on NHS staff, and also what the effect might be now free lateral tests were no longer available.

The Director responded to say that inevitably when free testing was no longer available the number of people taking the tests would decline. The cost of free testing was huge and had to stop at some point as it was unsustainable. However, testing was still taking place in hospitals and care homes.

Mr Hawkins asked the Director for his view on the resilience of the county if another pandemic came along.

The Director responded to say that there would be lessons learned from the covid pandemic and this process was still underway. However, his view was that Cumbria was in a much better place to be able to rapidly mobilise should another pandemic happen.

Mr Brereton said the availability of the vaccine had been the major factor in bringing down the number of covid related deaths. What message should members be giving to the residents and colleagues about vaccines now. Young people were the most resistant to getting vaccinated, how do we encourage them to take it up.

The Director said encouraging young people to take up the challenge was extremely challenging. There were still over 50,000 people that had not yet had a first vaccine, and it was difficult to encourage them to take this up. Although young people were not as vulnerable it was still important to keep trying to encourage them.

Mr McGuckin asked whether any review would be carried out into the impact of the pandemic on health inequalities.

The Director noted that this would be likely to be covered by the Inquiry that had been announced and that many public health researchers would be likely to investigate this in the coming years.

Mr Collins asked the Director about disinformation that circulated during the pandemic, and felt that all organisations involved needed to be better able to critique data to counteract the disinformation.

The Director of Public Health replied to say that the County Council tried to counteract this disinformation continually by being open and honest with the public, but it is difficult to stop when social media was involved.

Dr Haraldsen felt the pandemic may have a huge effect on youngsters going forward and he was aware that speech and language services seemed to have suffered greatly with the effect of covid. He was also concerned about the take up of vaccines, not just covid but other preventable diseases too. He asked the Director whether there were any lessons to be learned about the uptake of vaccines.

The Director said that vaccine scepticism had always existed and would continue to exist and the County Council would continue to speak in support of vaccinations.

Mr Morgan said there had been so many deaths in areas of deprivation and he asked if all the information gathered during the pandemic, and its aftermath, would be forwarded on to the public enquiry.

Many members spoke about the inequalities of health in areas of deprivation and their concerns about how the pandemic had affected these communities, and hoped there would be lessons learned from this.

Finally, members thanked the Director of Public Health for the work he, and his team, had done during the pandemic. The Director had become a 'trusted brand' for Cumbria, and everyone knew his name. The work undertaken had been exemplary, under extreme pressure, and asked that their thanks be recorded to the Director for this.

The Director thanked members for their support and said this would not have been as successful without the assistance and support of all of the officers in his team.

The meeting then broke for lunch at 1pm and reconvened at 1.30pm.

13 UPDATE REPORT OF THE CUMBRIA FIRE LOCAL PENSION BOARD - 2021/22

Mr K Little declared a pecuniary interest in this item as he was a recipient of a Fire Service Pension. He took no part in the meeting during discussion of this item.

County Council considered a report from Cabinet Member for Customer, Transformation and Fire and Rescue, which presented an update on the Annual Report of the Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board 2021/22.

The Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board was required to report on its activities to the Council, and the Annual Report of the Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board 2021/22 detailed developments of the Board and its activities during the year.

Where the Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board was concerned that due consideration had not been given to matters of non-compliance, the Board may submit a report for consideration by the Audit and Assurance Committee as the body designated by the Scheme Manager with the capacity to investigate such matters on its behalf. There had been no matters raised with the Audit and Assurance Committee.

RESOLVED, that members note the 2021/22 Annual Report of the Cumbria Fire Local Pension Board.

14 SCRUTINY UPDATE REPORT

The Chair of Scrutiny Management Board presented a report which detailed the Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22 and updated members on the work of Scrutiny and any issues and developments that had occurred since the last meeting of Full Council.

The Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22 provided a summary of the Scrutiny activity carried out over the last 12 months including the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and its impacts, the beginning of the implementation of Local Government Reorganisation and the ongoing pressures and challenges faced by the Council's services. Alongside this, members retained a focus on other key issues important to the residents of Cumbria. Members were asked to note the Annual Report.

The current Scrutiny Work Programme, which Members were asked to note, was under ongoing review and regularly updated to reflect new and emerging issues.

The Chair of Scrutiny Management Board took members through matters which had been considered by the Scrutiny Boards since the last meeting of Council, and also detailed the recent Task and Finish reviews undertaken.

One of the members asked the Chair of Scrutiny Management Board whether he agreed that now was the time that the legal advice in relation to Local Government Reorganisation be released to all members.

The Chair of Scrutiny Management Board said it was not his decision to take on whether the information should be disclosed. However, he would welcome the full legal advice being released to all members.

RESOLVED, that

- (1) Members note the Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22 attached as Appendix 1 of the report;
- (2) Members note the work programme presented as Appendix 2 and recent activity undertaken by Scrutiny set out in the report.

15 QUESTIONS

Ms McCarron-Holmes asked the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport about the recent train stoppages from Carlisle down the coast line, particularly during the Easter holidays, with coach replacement services, and whether the Transport Minister had at any time recently given any indications that Government would address this important rail link.

The Cabinet Member replied to say that he was notified each week about cancellation of trains. Ongoing line maintenance was one of the major reasons for train cancellation. Cumbria County Council was working with Rail Northern to produce a programme of repairs on this line.

Mr Lister asked the Chair of the Communities and Place Scrutiny Advisory Board whether given the number of urgent cabinet meetings, he felt that a decision around the future of fire governance warranted an extra cabinet meeting, which would have allowed for the relevant scrutiny to have taken place.

The Chair of the Scrutiny Advisory Board responded to say that he was not responsible for arranging the Cabinet meetings. As soon as he became aware of the consultation he had called a Communities and Place Scrutiny Advisory Board meeting.

Mr Cotton asked the Leader of the Council how many Cumbrian homes had expressed an interest in sponsoring a Ukrainian person and/or family fleeing the war in their country, and how many Homes for Ukraine Scheme applications had been submitted by Cumbrian residents.

The Leader responded to say the Scheme for Homes for Ukraine was very different to the scheme for refugees. Members of the public had been asked to express an interest individually to the Government for the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, and not through the Council. This made it more difficult for Statutory Authorities to ensure services were in place to support these individuals. However, he understood there were approximately 190 Cumbrian sponsors for families under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, with 554 individuals and 208 children aged between 0-16, but he was not aware of how many of these had yet arrived in Cumbria.

Mr M Wilson asked the Leader what impact the proposed changes to local Health Systems have on local democracy, and the ability to have a say in local health provision.

The Leader replied to say that current health reforms were the largest reforms of the NHS and the changes were significant. In the latest reform the Clinical Commissioning Groups would disappear to be replaced by the Integrated Care Partnerships. Along with the current local government reform the reform would be extremely complex. However, the effect on democracy was not yet known, but it was unlikely that the representative on the Boards would be from Cumbria, they were more likely to be from the North East.

Mr D Wilson asked the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport for an update on the progress of Millom and Haverigg flood alleviation project.

The Cabinet Member replied to say he would provide a written response.

Mrs Williamson asked the Leader of the Council whether he had any idea of the long-term plan of Government for the Household Support Grant.

The Leader replied to say the recent announcement made by the Chancellor was welcomed, with over £500m nationally devolved to local authorities. However, he did not feel this would be enough to resolve the scale of the cost of living crisis, and the County Council would be monitoring the use of the money and the demand for the funds.

Mr Dobson was concerned about the continuing uncertainty over the future of the Fire and Rescue Service consequent upon Local Government Reorganisation. The Police and Crime Commissioner carried out a public consultation about his proposal and the consultation ended on the 21 March. He asked the Cabinet Member for Customers, Transformation and Fire Services how many people expressed the view that this was an unwise and probably expensive proposal.

The Cabinet Member replied to say that the outcome of the consultation would be published after the local elections.

Mr Whiteside asked the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport about the instance where 20 pupils in St Bees were left wandering in the village when school bus contractors would not allow them onto the bus. Some walked from St Bees to Egremont and he asked the Cabinet Member whether he felt this was a failure of safeguarding, and whether he would be speaking to the contractor about this.

The Cabinet Member responded to say that those involved were between the ages of 11-17, and that 10 to 15 of those were not entitled to get onto the bus. However, a full investigation was taking place and he would provide a full copy of the report once available.

Mrs Bowditch asked the Leader what support the County Council could expect from Government to support communities in dire need of help with the costs of living which was increasing way beyond the means of many hard working people, families and pensioners.

The Leader replied to say that this was a worrying issue and linked directly with the question from Mrs Williamson about the Household Support Grant. He was concerned that there still seemed to be little understanding of what was about to

happen. The situation was very serious and he felt the Government would need to mobilise resources quickly to resolve this.

Mr Turner asked the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to investigate as a matter of urgency complaints about contract holders who supply SEND transport. There were allegations of dangerous and poor driving being made by parents. The parents had complained to the provider who had refused to take action against the driver. The County Council had a duty of care to these children.

The Cabinet Member replied to say he was aware of the incident and a full investigation was currently taking place. He would provide the member with a full copy of the report once it was available.

Mr Hughes asked the Chair of Communities and Place Scrutiny, what effect the successive funding reductions had had on Cumbrian roads.

The Chair said that the reductions in funding had had a big impact over a number of years. The Government had made a number of announcements over the past few years but these had to be spent on very specific things. The Chair wondered whether it was a valid reason to spend the Pot Hole funding announced recently on preventing potholes rather than repairing them. One of the main issues for Cumbria County Council was the formula used for allocating highways funding.

Mr McGuckin asked the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, given the failure to obtain any Bus Improvement Grant, whether it was likely the County Council would receive funding for successful bids into the Levelling Up Fund.

The Cabinet Member said the County Council's Cabinet had agreed to submit a bid for funding from the Government's Levelling Up Fund to help meet the shortfall in money needed to improve and maintain the county's network of roads.

The council had identified critical routes that the bid for funding was likely to be focussed on which if successful would be delivered before March 2025. This was likely to include structural maintenance on the A595 corridor, including surfacing, safety, and drainage improvements to improve connectivity.

Mr Brereton said everyone was disappointed not to receive any funding for rural bus services and he asked the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport whether there was a chance of other possible avenues of subsidy monies to help with bus services, following withdrawal of services in Bowness and Solway.

The Cabinet Member responded to say the County Council was aware that Stagecoach were planning changes to their bus services but have stated they will let those affected communities know about this. The County Council was looking to commence a pilot scheme for rural buses in Wigton and he would keep members informed about this. Unfortunately, during the covid pandemic many people stopped using bus services and have yet to return.

16 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

(A) Workington Harbour Management Committee

Mr Dobson asked the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport with reference to Para 46 Port Manager's report which stated "Members were informed of an incident that had taken place and where significant amount of learnings had come from the investigation. These learnings included a change in the decision making process in adverse weather conditions and the addition of a formalised dynamic risk assessment." He asked the Cabinet Member to for an explanation.

The Cabinet Member gave a detailed explanation about what had taken place.

RESOLVED, that the Minutes of the Workington Harbour Management Committee meeting held on 28 January 2022 be received and noted.

17 URGENCY PROVISIONS

The Leader of the Council presented a report, the purpose of which was to notify members of any urgent decisions taken in the period since the last County Council meeting.

Four relevant decisions had been taken since the last meeting and the details of those decisions were set out at Appendix 1. In all cases, the decisions were treated as urgent decisions as the requirements to advertise for at least 28 days prior to a key decision being taken could not be complied with.

With reference to the decision of the Award of Contract for Mobilisation Works on the Carlisle Southern Link Road, the Leader informed members that the decision taken by Russia to invade Ukraine had meant the decision to award a contract had been postponed.

RESOLVED, that the report be received and noted.

18 NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Mr T Allison declared a pecuniary interest in this item, as he has a holiday home located within the Lake District National Park. He left the room at this point.

Mr Lywood presented the following motion to Council:

Right now within the Lake District National Park some villages had only 20% of their dwellings occupied permanently. The other 80% were either holiday lets or second homes. Within my ward of Keswick the figure was now nearly 40%. One in two houses sold goes to owners who do not dwell in the house on a permanent basis. The guts of our communities were being ripped out. Holiday lets produced income

and brought tourists for our economy but the proportions had become so huge that our young people could no longer afford to live here and the community was fast dwindling.

One seemingly outrageous loophole was that where we all pay council tax roughly 90% of all holiday lets pay neither council tax nor business rates. Once a dwelling became a holiday let it changed its status into a business and should pay business rates.

Holiday lets automatically get 'small business rate relief' which took the business rates to zero so effectively subsidising holiday lets to the detriment of the local community and local rented accommodation.

The Lake District National Park had recently committed to a Partnership Plan, which would see them lobbying and influencing for the abolition of the 'small business rate relief' for furnished holiday lets. This would not entirely stop the proportional increase of holiday lets but it would at least ensure that they do not get a free ride in terms of rates as those who occupy them still use our roads, streetlights, police, fire service and all the services council tax and rates pay for. The small business rate relief system was intended for small shops and start-ups not for what was effectively an investment.

I call upon this council to support the lobbying that the Lake District National Park had already committed to, and in turn to:

1. Write to all Cumbrian MPs and elicit their support.
2. Write to the Chancellor asking him to close this loophole.
3. Write to the Local Government Minister to highlight the damage that disproportionate numbers of holiday lets bring onto our communities and
4. Contact all Cumbrian parish councils to lobby their support.

The people who live in the Lake District National Park were not an add on or like some quaint population of indigenous peoples to be seen as fodder for the economic imperatives of tourism – they were both a crucial part of each and every business and industry in the Lake District and form individual communities. Yet they were being wiped away, and all of us with opportunity should use it to speak up, before it is too late and our Lake District became a sterile holiday park, with workers transported in and no local community to speak of.

This change in small business rate relief will not stop the move to holiday lets but it will stop our rate system from actively encouraging it!

Mr Clark spoke to second the motion.

All members were supportive of the motion, with no members speaking against it.

Therefore, upon conclusion of the debate it was

RESOLVED, that the motion be unanimously **AGREED**.

19 SPEECHES

Mrs Williamson made a speech on 'To freeze or to starve'.

Mr M Wilson made a speech on 'Anti-social behaviour and role of the police'.

The meeting ended at 3.15 pm