

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board held on Monday, 13 June 2022 at 10.00 am at County Offices, Kendal

PRESENT:

Mr WJ Wearing (Chairman)

Mr SB Collins

Mr P Dew

Mrs S Evans

Mr KR Hamilton

Mr K Hitchen

Mr N Hughes

Mr J Lister

Ms C McCarron-Holmes

Mr CP Turner

Mr M Wilson (Vice-Chair)

Also in Attendance:-

- Ms H Blake - Senior Manager - Customer, Policy and Scrutiny
- Mrs L Davis - Democratic Services Officer
- Mr R Foster - Libraries and Archives Manager
- Mr S Higgins - Assistant Director - Customer and Community Services
- Ms C Killeen - Strategic Policy and Scrutiny Manager
- Mr J Metcalfe - Chief Executive
- Dr D Roberts - Executive Director - Corporate, Customer and Community Services

PART 1 – ITEMS CONSIDERED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Chair welcomed and introduced the Chief Executive who attended the meeting to give an update and outline his thoughts on his role for the next 8-9 months.

The Chief Executive gave a brief overview of priorities since his appointment including meeting staff, looking at the Council's objectives and achievements, the Corporate Plan and LGR reorganisation. Focus was also being given to the Children Looked After service, the Fire and Rescue Service during their period of change and the future Ofsted inspection. In discussion of the LGR process, the Chief Executive discussed staff engagement and was hopeful for a relatively seamless transition. Staff were encouraged to think years in advance and not just focus on vesting day on 1 April 2023.

A member questioned the seamless transition as it was the end of the County Council. Another member questioned whether there had been engagement with residents. The Chief Executive said meetings had been arranged with a number of voluntary, community and business sectors. It was acknowledged that there were a

lot of unknowns in the LGR process but work was taking place, within the tight deadlines, to ensure a smooth transition.

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for his attendance and informed the Board that members of the Shadow Authorities had been and would continue to be invited to observe the Board meetings.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr M Hawkins, Mr W McEwan and Mrs H Carrick.

2 MEMBERSHIP

There were no changes to membership of the Board to note.

3 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

4 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED, that the press and public be not excluded from the meeting during consideration of any item on the agenda.

5 MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2022 be agreed as a true record of the meeting.

Further to Minute 57, the Local Member for Eden Lakes raised a question with the Chair of the Communities and Place Board on the HIAMs system and the difficulties in identifying locations from rural postcodes. The Chair of the Board advised that other tracking systems, such as “What three words”, were now used.

6 CALL-IN ITEMS

The Chair advised that there were no call-in items for the Board to consider.

7 CUSTOMER SERVICES - TRANSFORMATION OF LIBRARIES

The Chair thanked the Executive Director – Corporate, Customer and Community Service for all her hard work and dedication given to Scrutiny, whilst wishing her well in her new post as Chief Executive of Dumfries and Galloway Council.

Members received a report and presentation that provided an update on the transformation of the library service since late 2019, that had included a full restructure of the workforce, improvements to a number of buildings, the

introduction of new technology system, and a refreshed focus on council priorities. The report also touched upon libraries in, during and after the pandemic.

The Senior Manager - Customer, Policy and Scrutiny outlined the transformation journey from 2019 to 2022, the current focus and future challenges and opportunities. Members noted that the full restructure of the workforce which had led to the recruitment of 70 plus replacement staff, the digital system introduced to improve customer service and the partnership working that was taking place with other council services and other partners to enhance services. Members were informed of the next focus for the service and the options that had been developed for Local Government Reform (LGR).

Members asked about the provision for children. The Senior Manager highlighted, amongst other provision, the existence of the school library service and summer reading challenge. Staff provision at smaller branch libraries was mentioned. Members discussed the need for physical books in addition to electronic versions. A discussion around partnership working that was taking place in libraries was held and an explanation of the proposed Intellectual Property Centres in Barrow and Carlisle was given by the Senior Manager. In answer to a member's question, the Library and Customer Manager outlined the proactive support and provision in place for inclusivity. The Local Member for Risedale commended the library and archive service at Barrow. A member asked about changing places toilets and it was confirmed that these were in place in Carlisle and Barrow. Officers were asked to consider installation of these in future building transformations. A member requested further details in future reports so that these could be circulated to groups and residents. It was confirmed that free wifi and quiet spaces were still available in libraries. The impact on libraries and other services of reductions in bus services was discussed.

The effect of the pandemic and the closure and reopening of libraries and facilities such as toilets were discussed. The officers confirmed that all libraries were back to their normal operating hours and facilities were available for public use. A member suggested celebration of this and it was noted that 70 plus members of staff were being appointed (to fill posts vacant after the restructure) to meet demand. The officers continued to outline joint working with the Council's property team to improve buildings/facilities and investments that had been made in digital services to enhance customer service. A member asked whether the public had been consulted in order to ensure a responsive service. Members noted that a customer survey had been undertaken at the beginning of the pandemic and regular meetings took place with different groups to help shape the service. It was agreed that a briefing note on customer engagement and feedback be made available for the next meeting of the Board.

In discussion of LGR, members noted the various options that were being developed – separate, hosted or hybrid service. Members were informed that a decision on the blueprint for the service would be made by the Shadow Authorities. Members questioned, if the service was separated, would residents be able to use the other authority's services. The use of Borrowbox, a digital book borrowing service, was mentioned and members were informed that if the library service did split, two subscriptions for this service would be needed. Members hoped that there

would be no future library closures and recognised the importance of central locations, close to other facilities. The Chair reiterated the invitation sent to the Shadow Authority members to observe the Board's meetings.

The officers were thanked for their attendance and very informative presentation.

RESOLVED, that

(1) the report be noted;

(2) a briefing note on customer engagement and feedback be made available for the Board at the September meeting.

8 SCRUTINY CHAIRS UPDATE

(1) Scrutiny Advisory Board – Children and Young People

The Chair of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Advisory Board advised members of issues and developments that had occurred since the last meeting of SMB. It was noted that the last meeting of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Advisory Board took place on 24 May 2022 and the Board received reports and presentations on Children's Participation, Youth Justice, LGR and preparation of children's services. The next Board was scheduled for 21 September and members would receive an update on the Annual Ofsted Letter, SEND update and Child exploitation six monthly update.

(2) Scrutiny Advisory Board – Adults

Members received an update on the work of the Adults Scrutiny Advisory Board and any issues and developments that had occurred since the last meeting of SMB. Members received reports on the Adult Social Care Strategic Position, Discharge to Assess and Safeguarding Adults at risk from abuse and neglect. It was noted that the next meeting of the Adults Scrutiny Board would take place on 24 June 2022 and a number of issues were due to be considered at that meeting. It was noted that the Joint Health and Adult Social Care Task and Finish Group had been established.

(3) Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee

Members received an update report from the Chair of the Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee which had last met on 18 May. Members noted that at the Committee meeting reports had been received on Urology Services at the University Hospitals Of Morecambe Bay NHS Foundation Trust, Inpatient Mental Health Provision Across South Cumbria , Liberty Protection and North West Ambulance Service Provision in Cumbria. The next meeting would provide reports on an Update on the Health & Care Act and the impact on powers of Health Scrutiny, Mental Health Services at Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Foundation Trust (CNTW) and Dentistry Services in West Cumbria.

In discussion of the Health and Care Bill, members noted that part of the bill had been postponed and stressed the importance of retention of the scrutiny referral function.

(4) Scrutiny Advisory Board – Communities and Place

The Chair of the Communities and Place Board updated members on items received at March meeting which included a Strategic update from Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service, a Coastal Strategy report and the Independent Planning Review progress.

Members noted that a further meeting had been held on 10 June and the agenda included items on Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service – lessons learned from major incidents, Highways information management system and the draft local flood risk management strategy.

In answer to a member's question on the HIAMs system and the difficulty of finding locations using rural postcodes, the Chair confirmed officer use of other location services such as "What3words". Following a question on the Coastal Strategy, the Chair replied that flooding in coastal areas had been discussed but not in detail. The Chair agreed to raise any specific questions from members on this.

(5) Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Scrutiny Board

The Chair informed members that a meeting of the LEP Scrutiny Board had been held in March 2022 and the items on the agenda included Economic Overview, Journey to net zero, Levelling Up White Paper and implications for LEPs and Repurposing the Cumbria Infrastructure Fund. It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled in September 2022.

The changing status and funding level of the LEP was discussed.

(6) Cumbria Police and Crime Panel

A written update was received from the Chair of the Cumbria Police and Crime Panel. It was noted that the Panel meeting scheduled to take place on 5 April 2022 had been postponed. The next meeting was scheduled for 19 July 2022 and would include on its agenda consideration of the Cumbria Police and Crime Commissioner's Annual Report for 2021/22 and a presentation of the Panel Chair's Annual Report.

A member requested the attendance of the Chair of the Police and Crime Panel at the Board. The member raised a question why little funding was being made available for speed enforcement in Cumbria. A member outlined other avenues for exploration on this issue, such as submitting a report to the CRASH Group and Local Committee funding.

The Chairs were thanked for their updates.

9 SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD UPDATE REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

Members received a report that provided an update on issues and developments that have occurred since the last meeting of the Board in March 2022. Attached to the report at Appendix 1 was the Programme for 2022/23 and the current Forward Plan of Key Decisions 1 July 2022 – 31 August 2022, attached as Appendix 2.

The Chair of the Communities and Place Board highlighted that he had requested a report on the handling of electronic waste. A briefing note on this was to be circulated to the Board's members, and if necessary, a full report prepared for a future meeting.

RESOLVED, that

- (1) the activity set out in the report be noted;
- (2) the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2022/23 be noted;
- (3) the Forward Plan of Key Decisions 1 July 2022 – 31 August 2022 be noted.

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Board will be held on 8 September 2022 at 10 am at County Offices, Kendal.

The meeting ended at 12.25 pm