

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 DECEMBER 2014 AT 10:00AM

Present: Councillors David Banks; George Clements; Allan Forster; Ian Hill; Sam Pollen; Gilbert Scurrah; Dave Smith; Felicity Wilson; Carole Woodman and Henry Wormstrup.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors John Kane, Jackie Bowman and Eileen Eastwood.

Officers: Andrea Smith; Policy and Scrutiny Officer and Clive Willoughby, Member Services Technical Support Officer.
Ann Treble, Financial Management & Treasury Accountant, Fiona Rooney, Interim Director of Resources and Strategic Commissioning and Julie Betteridge, Head of Customer and Community Services.

Also Present: Councillors Elaine Woodburn, Peter Stephenson, Allan Holliday, Michael McVeigh, William Southward, Peter Tyson and Gillian Troughton. Geoff Garrity (for item 9 only).

OSC 44/14

Appointment of Chair

Due to the absence of both the Chair and Deputy Chair, it was moved by Councillor Henry Wormstrup, duly seconded and

RESOLVED – that Councillor George Clements be appointed Chair for this meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

OSC 45/14

Minutes

The Minutes of the meetings held on 11 November 2014 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

OSC 46/14

Arrangement of Agenda

Due to Councillor Garrity requiring to leave for another meeting it was agreed that Item 9 be taken first.

With the permission of the Chair, an additional item was added to the agenda, being the Budget for Parishes.

OSC 47/14

Report of the Member representative to the Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee

The Member representative, Councillor Geoff Garrity provided committee with a verbal update on meetings he had attended since the last Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.

Councillor Garrity stated that a Member Briefing on the West Cumberland Hospital was held on 24 November where concern was expressed regarding the possible transfer of services from Whitehaven to Carlisle. An update was due in January 2015.

During the discussion that followed, Members expressed their concerns over the possible loss of Maternity and Stroke care to Carlisle. Members were also disappointed with the number of Councillors who attended the Member Briefing and urged all Members to work with the public to ensure the voice of West Cumbria was heard.

It was suggested that a Health Forum be held in the near future.

RESOLVED – that

- a) the update from the Member representative to the Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee be noted, and
- b) a Health Forum be arranged.

OSC 48/14

Budget for Parishes

The Financial Management & Treasury Accountant provided Committee with a short background to the 2012 Local Council Tax Scheme and the effect this has had on Parish Councils.

Members stated that it could not be underestimated how much work the Parish Councils do in their areas and that the compensation being paid to them was not Copeland being generous, but paying compensation for the extra work Parishes had picked up when Copeland stopped.

RESOLVED – that the update be received.

OSC 48/14

Accommodation and ICT Strategy

The Interim Director of Resources and Strategic Commissioning introduced the Accommodation and ICT Strategy with the aim of saving £0.5m in 2015-16.

During the discussion that followed, Members asked what the intention was with the Atrium and whether the Irish St entrance would remain. Members also enquired if there was any progress regarding the future of the Civic Hall.

It was suggested that staff be challenged more to reduce the amount of storage they have and to work in a more agile way, through home working.

Members were keen to stress that their needs also needed to be met, but that all Councillors would need to move forward with their IT.

It was suggested that as the Copeland Centre would remain the Council's main office, that Copeland Borough Council leave its signature on the building.

The Interim Director of Resources and Strategic Commissioning was thanked for her update.

RESOLVED – that the update be received.

OSC 49/14

Executive Forward Plan

Committee considered the Forward Plan of the Council's Executive.

RESOLVED – That Executive Forward Plan be noted.

OSC 50/14

Progress Reports/Final Reports from Task & Finish Groups and Work Programme

Members were advised that the Health Task and Finish Group had met and had also met with local General Practitioners. A report was to be produced and proposed that this may be an agenda item for the January Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, pending progress of the report.

RESOLVED – that progress report be noted.

OSC 51/14

Partnerships

Members received a verbal update from the Head of Customer and Community Services on both Strategic and Operational Partnerships.

Members raised questions on the partnership with the Nuclear industry, the Planning impact of the DONG Offshore Wind Farm, the fear of education benefits from Sellafield being cut and a general question regarding what benefits the area is entitled to.

RESOLVED – that the update be noted.

Directly Elected Mayor

Members received a written update on the Directly Elected Mayor provided by the Democratic Services Manager and Monitoring Officer, delivered by the Policy and Scrutiny Officer.

“Work is continuing on preparations for the elected mayor.

A small group of officers and councillors have visited Bedford Borough Council and Mansfield District Council to meet with councillors and officers who have been through the transition to an elected mayor, to discuss how best to plan and manage the change. These visits have been incredibly helpful.

The CLT sub group meets regularly and has focussed recently on finalising the communications plan which will ensure that all residents, councillors, staff and other stakeholders are kept fully informed about the impending changes, what it will mean for them, clarification about the duties and powers of the elected mayor as well as information about the voting process for the mayoral election and the other 3 elections taking place on 7 May 2015. A website “landing page” will be available shortly.

Work is already well under way in planning for the May 2015 elections. As well as the mayoral election there will also be the parliamentary general election, the Copeland Borough Council elections and parish council elections. Information will be made available for all residents on the different voting systems that will be used and the various deadlines for the elections. Briefings will be held in the new year for potential candidates for the electoral and Copeland borough council elections.

The LGA has drafted a programme of development events for councillors and the details of these will be shared with the Member Development Panel and then all councillors once they have been finalised.

The events will include a heavy focus on developing Overview and Scrutiny in response to the additional challenge that will be needed with the elected mayor model.

Executive on 25 November agreed to authorise the Leader, in consultation with the Leader of the main opposition group to set up a Constitution Working Group. The Group will meet weekly from mid-December through the March and all recommended changes to the constitution will go to full council for approval.

A new Independent Remuneration Panel has now been appointed and their work will commence shortly on looking at an indicative salary for the elected mayor as well as a review of all member allowances.

An email will be sent to all councillors later this week with details about the new IRP members.”

RESOLVED – that the update on the Directly Elected Mayor be noted.

The meeting closed at 11:55am

Chairman

Date