

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 (EXTERNAL)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 AUGUST 2010 AT 5:00PM

Present: Councillors G Garrity (Chairman); K Hitchen (Deputy Chairman); D Banks; Mrs E Eastwood;; Mrs W Metherell; C Whiteside; Mrs M Woodburn and H Wormstrup.

Officers: J Hall, Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer; M Jepson, Head of Legal and Democratic Services and C Willoughby, Member Services Technical Support Officer.

Apologies for absence: Councillor S Meter.

Also present: Mr R Reed & Ms J Crisp, West Cumberland Law Society.
Mr G Herbert & Mr I Smith, Fire Brigade Union.

OSC2 01/10 Chairman's Opening Remarks

The Chairman began the meeting by welcoming Councillors and Officers to the first meeting of the External Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

OSC2 02/10 Order of Agenda Items

Due to Members of the Fire Brigade Union being present it was agreed to take Item 10 (Progress Report on the Whitehaven Fire Station Improvement Group) after Item 6 (Ministry of Justice Consultation Paper – Proposal on the provision of Court Services in HMCS Cumbria and Lancashire).

OSC2 03/10 Ministry of Justice Consultation Paper – Proposal on the provision of Court Services in HMCS Cumbria and Lancashire

All Members were updated following the meeting with the Chair and Deputy Chair of Whitehaven Magistrates Bench and the visit to Whitehaven County and Magistrates Courts which took place earlier in the day by this Committee.

Ms J Crisp and Mr R Reed, members of the West Cumberland Law Society, then addressed the Committee giving their views on the proposals.

During discussion of this item Members raised concerns on the following issues:-

- Access - The geographical location of the borough, and poor transport links would make it virtually impossible for the public to travel from South of Whitehaven to Workington for a 10:00am Court appointment.
- A bench merger would lead to sitting magistrates not being 'local' to the Copeland area and would not have 'local' knowledge.
- The consultation process was queried as the proposal is for a Court 'Closure' rather than a 're-location' and the criteria for this is different.
- The proposal does not satisfy the Court Service's own Customer Charter.
- The proposal would have a detrimental effect on the economy of Whitehaven

Ms J Crisp and Mr R Reed were thanked for attending and providing their opinions and it was agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny support Officer would draft a response to the consultation..

RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer prepare a response on behalf of the Overview and Scrutiny External committee to oppose the proposed moving of the Magistrates and County Courts to the Workington Magistrate's court and recommend to Her Majesty's Court Service (HMCS) that Whitehaven County Court relocate into the Whitehaven Magistrates Court building. The draft response to be circulated to Members of this Committee and the Group Leaders by hard copy or email

OSC2 04/10 Progress report on the Whitehaven Fire Station Improvement Group

Members invited the Fire Brigade Union representatives to address the Committee and they provided an overview of the proposal to reduce the current 24 hour cover at Whitehaven Fire Station to overnight retained cover. It was suggested that the Whitehaven Fire Station Improvement Group meet as soon as possible to scope the work required.

Mr G Herbert and Mr I Smith were thanked for their input.

RESOLVED – That the Whitehaven Fire Station Improvement Group meet on Wednesday 25 August 2010 at 10:00am and Councillor C Whiteside be the Chair.

OSC2 05/10 Work Programme 2010-2011

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme for 2010-2011 which had been drafted by the OSC Chairs and Vice Chairs together with the Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer. It had also been measured against the Work Programme Prioritisation Protocol.

During the discussion that followed, Councillor Hitchen referred to the Forward Plan and the item relating to 'Strategic Partnerships – reviewing

all of our partnerships to assess value.' It was suggested that the item listed as 'Crime and Disorder – scrutinising the West Cumbria Safety Partnership' would reflect this and should be the subject of an Improvement Group. It was agreed that Councillor K Hitchen be the Lead Member for this group.

It was also suggested that an invitation be sent to all Members for volunteers to join this Improvement Group.

The Chair requested Lead Members for the other reviews listed.

It was further suggested that the item listed as 'Copeland Regeneration Plan' include specifically Albion Square, Pow Beck and the Transport Interchange. It was agreed that Councillor H Wormstrup be Lead Member for this group.

With regard the item listed as 'Health Inequalities' Members were advised that a report from Pam Booth had previously been circulated. Again an Improvement Group would be established and Councillor K Hitchen be Lead Member.

A further Improvement Group, 'Good Roads and Public Transport' would also take place with Councillor Mrs E Eastwood be Lead Member.

RESOLVED – That

- a) the Work Programme for 2010-2011 be received, and
- b) Improvement Groups be set up as follows:
 - 1) Crime and Disorder – scrutinising the West Cumbria Safety Partnership. Lead Member Councillor K Hitchen
 - 2) Copeland Regeneration Plan. Lead Member Councillor H Wormstrup, also Councillor D Banks.
 - 3) Health Inequalities. Lead Member Councillor K Hitchen
 - 4) Good roads and Public Transport. Lead Member Councillor Mrs E Eastwood, also Councillor D Banks.

OSC2 06/10 Harriet's Residential Care Home, Distington

At this point in the meeting, Committee considered a request from Councillor B Dixon for the Overview and Scrutiny External Committee to add Harriet's Residential Care Home to its Work Programme and was also advised of the letter sent in response by the Committee Chairman.

Following a discussion, it was suggested that the Care Quality Commission were best placed to undertake any investigation and that this Committee would be updated via the County Council's Health and Wellbeing Committee.

RESOLVED – That

- a) the request be noted, and
- b) the Overview and Scrutiny External Committee agree with the response already sent to Councillor B Dixon.

OSC2 07/10 Forward Plan

Committee considered the Forward Plan of the Council’s Executive

RESOLVED – That the Forward Plan be received.

OSC2 08/10 Report of the Informal Co-ordinating Board

The Chairman updated Committee on the meetings of the Informal Co-ordinating Board and advised that the Board would not be meeting as regularly as fortnightly but would do so as and when necessary.

RESOLVED – That the report be received.

The meeting closed at 6:50 pm

Chairman.....

Date.....