



## **Business and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Date:** Tuesday, 16 April 2024

**Time:** 4.00 pm

**Location:** Allerdale House, Workington, CA14 3YJ

**Present:** Cllr J Ghayouba (Chair), Cllr D Moore (Vice-Chair), Cllr J Gridale, Cllr B Pegram, Cllr A Semple (substitute for Cllr A Harid) and Cllr K Thurlow

**Also Present:** Cllr B Cannon (Portfolio Holder for Financial Planning and Assets)

**In Attendance** Assistant Chief Executive, Assistant Director Strategy and Policy, Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer), Group Accountant (x2), Democratic Services Manager, Corporate Decarbonisation Manager, Interim Service Manager for Climate and Natural Environment, Policy and Scrutiny Officer and Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny)

### **BROS63/23 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Abdul Harid (Councillor Andrew Semple substituted), Lucy Patrick and Brian Wernham.

### **BROS64/23 Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were received.

### **BROS65/23 Exclusion of Press and Public**

**RESOLVED** that the press and public not be excluded from the meeting for any items of business on this occasion.

### **BROS66/23 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

A Member queried the status of the proposed Staffing Considerations Task & Finish Group proposed at the previous meeting, with the Chair highlighting that the Group would start after the AGM and the ownership of the Group had been agreed as Business and Resources, with members of other Committees invited to join as and when required.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting held on 20 February 2024. The minutes were signed by the Chair.

### **BROS67/23 Carbon and Energy Management Plan**

The Corporate Decarbonisation Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the Carbon and Energy Management Plan, highlighting key drivers such as the Climate Change Act mandating the UK Government to Net Zero by 2050, the Council's own need to have a Plan for its own Net Zero journey, the aim to lead by example and the reputational advantage by having such a Plan in place. The Corporate Decarbonisation Manager confirmed that, as the Plan was

in draft format, there was time to make additions, influence and update the facts and figures with further detail on mitigation measures.

Members asked numerous questions regarding the budget available for decarbonisation and the cost of moving towards Net Zero. The Corporate Decarbonisation Manager highlighted that there were a mixture of funding streams available, including a small decarbonisation budget for pilot schemes, consultations and project inceptions, plus more substantial public funding opportunities such as the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. Conversations were ongoing regarding strategies and plans to address budget challenges. The Corporate Decarbonisation Manager and Interim Service Manager for Climate and Natural Environment noted that there is a balance to be struck when considering the cost of moving towards Net Zero, assessing the cost of mitigation now, against the impact and cost of adaptation later. Ideally, mitigation measures proposed would offer carbon emissions reductions and be supported by a good business case for savings.

Members discussed the proposed pilot scheme for boiler optimisation, which aimed to make quick energy and carbon savings with a modest investment of £3,000 per boiler. If successful, boiler optimisation may be used more widely to reduce our emissions ahead of the use of Air Source Heat Pumps which the Corporate Decarbonisation Manager noted would be one of the last steps in decarbonisation after improving the fabric of building first. The Portfolio Holder for Financial Planning and Assets noted that such investments to save, improve and reduce the cost of gas would be beneficial. The Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer (MO)) clarified that the cost of projects being undertaken would be reviewed closely.

A Member queried the achievability of the targets and the long-term thinking regarding battery costs for electric vehicles. The Corporate Decarbonisation Manager noted that the Council had every opportunity to succeed and achieve the target set, with the target being reviewed and updated on a five-year cycle to recognise the current technology, funding and partnerships available. The Corporate Decarbonisation Manager also noted that all options were being considered within the fleet strategy, including electric and alternative fuel options.

A Member asked about solar and wind power within the aim for Net Zero, with the Corporate Decarbonisation Manager noted that solar power was a key part of decarbonisation, and although the focus on wind power had slowed down its inclusion would be reviewed periodically.

A Member queried Scope 3 emissions discussed within the draft Plan and the plans in place for waste and the re-use of materials. The Corporate Decarbonisation Manager noted that the Assistant Director of Climate and Waste was reviewing the waste service generally, highlighting the Council's current lengthy waste contracts. It was also noted that the Portfolio Holder for Cumberland Policy and Regulatory Services had set up a Climate and Nature Advisory Group which considered agenda items such as the re-use of surplus materials and other opportunities regarding Scope 3 waste emissions.

**RESOLVED** that the working draft of Cumberland Council's first Carbon and Energy Management Plan included with Appendix B of the report, and all comments regarding the Plan, be noted.

*[The Corporate Decarbonisation Manager and Interim Service Manager for Climate and Natural Environment left at 16:36]*

### **BROS68/23 Quarterly Budget Monitoring Report**

The Group Accountant provided the Committee with an overview of the Quarterly Budget Monitoring Report, highlighting the key points of the Revenue Budget, the Capital Budget and

Treasury Management. He drew attention to some of the issues directorates faced, the transformation plan and programme regarding agency staff and Externally Provided Workforce (EPWs) and a £3million improvement on Quarter 2.

A Member queried the external funding received, savings and the pressures on the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The Group Accountants responded that Table 7 within the report showed the external funding within the capital budget, then highlighted the work being carried out on budget mitigations with a focus on 2024/25 going forward. The Group Accountants also recognised the MTFP pressures and noted the savings that had been identified to address them.

Members discussed the pressures and struggles of the Childrens Service. The Group Accountants and Portfolio Holder for Financial Planning and Assets informed the Committee of additional budget which had been brought in to reflect the current costs which were consistent across the country. They added that work was being done to address staffing issues and the demand on the budget, to try and improve the service by working in different ways to address the complex issues around the service.

Members also commented on the struggles that the finance and assets team were facing due staffing issues and having multiple IT systems being in place rather than one, the Portfolio Holder for Financial Planning and Assets explained that the Council had recognised the issues and the impact they had on the services.

**RESOLVED** that the contents of the Quarterly Budget Monitoring Report be noted.

*[The Committee adjourned at 17:05 and reconvened at 17:15]*

### **BROS69/23 Quarterly Performance Update**

The Assistant Chief Executive provided the Committee with the Quarterly Performance update, he highlighted the Corporate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which were being used to monitor the Council's performance, were themed along the Council Plan priorities, and were linked to the Council Delivery Plan. The Assistant Chief Executive also noted that the update provided a strong baseline from which to assess future performance and reflected a strong position in terms of initial delivery against the Delivery Plan.

The Assistant Director of Strategy and Policy added that definitions and tolerances were included within the report for further information.

Members queried the process for targets being set and how the Council was ensuring that the targets being set were appropriate. The Assistant Chief Executive and Assistant Director of Strategy and Policy set out the process for setting targets, which included individual discussions with Service Managers and Directors before they were brought to the Senior Leadership Team and the Executive for approval, each KPI was a combination of internal and national standards. The officers explained that the process would become more refined over time and more understanding and data around the service would be available. They also explained that targets would be reviewed annually to ensure that they were appropriate, not too ambitious but still pushed the service to be the best that it would be whilst taking into account the outside pressure.

A Member asked about the KPI on health visitor checks on two and two and a half year old children, which were being provided by an external service, he commented that they were not meeting the current targets and were on a downward trend, he questioned the consequences for not delivering the contract. The Assistant Chief Executive and Assistant Director of Strategy

and Policy reported that the appropriate Directors were aware and appropriate action was being undertaken. Regarding the consequences of not delivering the contract the Assistant Director of Strategy and Policy agreed to request further detail from the Director of Business Transformation and Change and would provide a written response to the Committee.

A Member noted that the KPI on building control, was on a downward trend, commenting that it was a legacy issue that sovereign councils also struggled with, he queried what was being undertaken to improve the situation. The Assistant Director of Strategy and Policy responded that recruitment was being undertaken to try to help solve the issue.

Members requested that future reports included further information within the description/comments on KPIs regarding improvement plans for those with red ratings and that areas with green ratings also receive comments, to help ensure that the targets were appropriate.

**RESOLVED** that,

- a) The overall performance relating to delivery of the Cumberland Council Plan priorities as measured by the activities and key performance indicators set out in the Quarterly Performance Update be noted;
- b) The Assistant Director provide the Committee with further information on the consequences of the external provider not meeting the requirements of the contract for health visitor checks for 2 / 2 and half year olds;
- b) Future performance reports include further information on how KPIs would be improved and further information on KPIs that were rated green.

### **BROS70/23 Representatives on Outside Bodies**

The Chief Legal Officer (MO) provided the Committee with an overview of the work of the representatives on Outside Bodies officer working group, highlighting the six appendices which the Committee were asked to consider and review.

A Member asked for clarification regarding the representative for the North West Reserve Forces and Cadets Association, the Democratic Services Manager explained that they were still waiting to receive a response from the Association after writing to them for clarification. The association had been included in the list to ensure an appointment was made in the future.

Members queried the need for a representative on the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (CLEP), considering that the CLEP responsibilities were being transferred to the Council. The Chief Legal Officer (MO) explained that there was still a legal requirement for the Council to appoint a representative during the current 'sunset period' until CLEP ceased to exist in September.

A Member asked for further information regarding the 'pay and grant' section of the tables in the appendices and regarding the Industrial Solutions Hub (iSH) Limited. The Chief Legal Officer (MO) explained that the 'pay and grant' section highlighted those bodies which the Council paid a grant or membership to. The Chief Legal Officer (MO) and Assistant Chief Executive also explained that iSH was a trading company that the Council legally had to appoint an officer to as part of their board and worked to enhance the supply chain in West Cumbria, the Assistant Chief Executive set out the benefits to the Council as a result of the membership of.

A Member queried if the Carlisle Educational Charity would only be able to focus on Carlisle, which the Democratic Services Manager confirmed to be the case as it was part of the Charity's terms of reference.

Members discussed the Phoenix Enterprise Centre, noting that the focus of the Centre was on Cleator Moor and that the board of directors on Company House was not up to date. Members also noted that there were three options regarding the impact of having a council representative on an outside body, it could either be an advantage for the Council, an advantage for the outside body or an advantage for both.

Members considered options for ensuring that there was tangible evidence for additional value being a representative on an outside body, including an annual report which included feedback from representatives and those who used the data provided by the bodies. The Chief Legal Officer (MO) explained that a training programme would also be rolled out to Councillors to help them understand their role as a representative and how to deal with any issues and/or concerns which arise. The Democratic Services Manager confirmed that all those outside bodies who had returned a response wished to still have a council representative.

Members discussed the Community Centres within Appendix 3, noting that a number of them received grants from the Community Panels. The Democratic Services Manager and Chief Legal Officer (MO) provided clarification on the funding, highlighting the report of the Executive which delegated the funding to some of the Community Panels. The Democratic Services Manager commented that a separate piece of work was being carried on grant funding to ensure that funds being provided were being used adequately.

A Member noted that the West Cumbria Site Stake Holder Group representatives had not been included by name within the report, highlighting that Councillors Pollen, Kelly and Cannon had been named as representatives by the Leader of the Council.

Members discussed the Copeland Community Fund, which due to socio economic arrangements was no longer considered an outside body and was therefore included in Appendix 4 to no longer have a representative appointed. A Member recommended that a request for one representative from Whitehaven and one representative from South Copeland be appointed/invited to Copeland Community Fund be sent. The Chief Legal Officer (MO) explained that representatives could not be appointed from the Community Panels, due to the legalities of the Fund straddling two Community Panel areas, but that the request would be possible due to the Council having nomination rights. The Committee agreed the proposed recommendation.

A Member queried whether it would be beneficial for the Council to continue to be part of the Industrial Communities Alliance (ICA), which had previously been used for grant funding. The Assistant Chief Executive noted that the Council received an advantage being part of the ICA, as it was a powerful advocate in Whitehall and provides an additional voice in issues on behalf of the Council.

Members noted that an Annual report would help highlight whether remaining part of the ICA would be beneficial for the council.

The Chief Legal Officer (MO) noted that the Committee's recommendations would go to the next Executive meeting on 23 April 2024 for agreement and approval by Full Council on 30 April. It was also noted that representatives would be appointed by Full Council at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in May and by the Executive in June.

**RESOLVED** that,

- a) The comments made regarding Appendices 1 (Statutory Bodies), 2 (Key Strategic Partnerships and Community Partnerships) and 3 (Community Partnerships) be noted and included as part of the recommendations of those outside bodies for the council to continue to appoint to.

- b) Appendix 4 be noted and recommended to Council as outside bodies which should no longer be appointed to.
- c) Appendix 5, the Guidance for Councillors on Membership of Outside Bodies, be agreed and referred to the Executive.
- d) The amended Outside Bodies Procedure Rules be agreed and referred to the Executive.
- e) The Business & Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommend the Council request for one representative from Whitehaven and one representative from South Copeland be appointed/invited to Copeland Community Fund via the nomination rights available to ensure adequate representation from the Council on the Fund.

### **BROS71/23 Equality Objectives**

The Assistant Director of Strategy and Policy provided the Committee with an overview of the Equality Objectives, which would be presented to the Executive at their next meeting. He highlighted the statutory obligation for Councils to set a minimum of one objective to be reviewed every four years. The Assistant Director of Strategy and Policy noted that the Council had created four cross cutting themes with a more detailed action plan to be put in place once the objectives had been adopted.

The Assistant Chief Executive highlighted an amendment to the wording of recommendation two within the report, to now read "To tackle discrimination and advance equality of outcomes" instead of "To tackle discrimination and advance equality of opportunity".

Members noted that the Equality Objectives (2024-28) were a good starting point but that there needed to be more work undertaken for long-term improvement and to demonstrate doing what was set out within the objectives.

Members discussed the improvement of communications and the need for visibility and promotion of all events happening within Cumberland, all councillors should be invited to events and not just those within the relevant target community.

Members requested that the annual monitoring report for the Equalities Objectives be brought to the appropriate Committee meetings going forward, which the officers agreed to provide.

**RESOLVED** that,

- a) The content of the Equality Objectives report to the Executive and the legal advice be noted.
- b) The annual review report be brought to the Business & Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee for scrutiny.
- c) The slightly amended wording highlighted above be noted.

*[Councillor Semple left the meeting at 18:39]*

### **BROS72/23 Scrutiny Overview and Work Programme Report**

The Scrutiny Officer presented the Scrutiny Overview and Work programme. He provided an update on the outstanding resolution, the Task & Finish Group update which was included within the report and the need to work on a 2024/25 work programme. The Scrutiny Officer agreed to send an email to all Members regarding possible items for the work programme.

A Member requested that IT be added to the future work programme, due to the recurring theme of issues being raised.

**RESOLVED** that,

- a) The items on the most recent Forward Plan of Key Decisions be noted.
- b) The progress on resolutions from previous meetings be noted.
- c) Any changes to the work programme be agreed and noted.
- d) The information presented within the report in relation to the development of the Committee's work programme and comment on the work programme, in particular on items for the next Committee meeting, be noted.

**BROS73/23 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

**RESOLVED** that the date and venue of the next scheduled meeting of the Business & Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee be confirmed following the confirmation of the 2024/25 Calendar of Meetings at the Annual General Meeting in May.

The meeting finished at 6.46 pm