



## **Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Hosted Services**

**Date:** Monday, 26 February 2024

**Time:** 10.30 am

**Location:** Conference Rooms A and B, Cumbria House, Botchergate, Carlisle, CA1 1RD

**Present:** Cllr C McCarron-Holmes (Chair for the Meeting), Cllr J Battye, Cllr M Harris, Cllr H Hodgson, Cllr H Ladhams, Cllr R Dobson, Cllr B Pegram, Cllr M Mitchelson (substitute for Cllr D Moore) and Cllr S Evans (substitute for Cllr M Rudhall)

**In Attendance** Assistant Chief Executive (Westmorland & Furness), Director of Business Transformation and Change (Cumberland), Director of Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport (Cumberland), Director of Thriving Places (Westmorland & Furness), Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer (Westmorland & Furness), Assistant Director of Climate and Waste (Cumberland), Programme Manager (Westmorland & Furness) and Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny)

### **17 Election of Chair**

Due to apologies being received from both the Chair and Vice Chair, the Committee's first order of business was to appoint a Chair for the meeting. A nomination was put forward, which was seconded and:

**RESOLVED** that Councillor McCarron-Holmes would assume the position of Chair for the meeting.

### **18 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors David Moore (Councillor Mike Mitchelson substituted), Mark Rudhall (Councillor Shirley Evans substituted), Cyril Weber, Matt Brereton and Beverley Morgan.

### **19 Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest received.

### **20 Exclusion of Press and Public**

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

## **21 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The Committee reviewed the minutes of the previous Joint Overview & Scrutiny (JOSC) meeting and a Member requested that the title heading for Adult Social Services be amended to include 'Mental Health' to highlight the focus of the topic.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 14 December 2023 be agreed as a true and accurate record.

## **22 Minutes of the Joint Executive Meeting**

The Committee reviewed the minutes of the Joint Executive Committee (JEC) meeting.

A Member asked if there were any updates regarding the dates for disaggregation delivery which the Director of Business Transformation and Change (Cumberland) noted would be covered under agenda item 7 but would be happy to supply any additional information upon request.

A Member requested additional information regarding the Social Work Academy to understand its structure which the Director of Business Transformation and Change (Cumberland) noted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Joint Executive Committee held on 25 January 2024 be noted and the Committees comments be noted and actioned accordingly.

## **23 Update Report - Adult Services**

The Scrutiny Officer highlighted the report to the Committee, noting that it provided the answers to questions raised at the previous committee meeting which the officers had been unable to answer without further research.

A Member asked for clarification on the difference between Rural and Extra Rural which the Director of Business Transformation and Change (Cumberland) explained as relating to the distance from the closest urban area.

A Member requested confirmation as to what CAMHS T4 referred to, which the Director of Business Transformation and Change (Cumberland) commented regarded inpatient detention.

A Member asked for clarification on the link between the reduction in requests for MHA Assessments and lack of access to pubs during the pandemic regarding social isolation. The Director of Business Transformation and Change (Cumberland) clarified that there had been reduction in requests due to lower numbers of alcohol contributing to deterioration rather than social isolation, which is why there had been a reduction rather than an increase.

Members asked for further information regarding pattern for demand for social work and care in urban and rural areas outside of Mental Health issues which the Director of Business Transformation and Change (Cumberland) agreed to discuss with the relevant officers to provide the committee with a written response for the requested information.

**RESOLVED** that the update report be noted.

## **24 Programme for Proposed Disaggregation**

The Director of Business Transformation and Change provided the Committee with an overview of the report, highlighting the disaggregation which has been completed, is currently ongoing

and those planned. It was also noted that some of the disaggregation had been completed ahead of the planned date, which was a testament to the hard work done by the relevant teams.

A Member asked why there was no disaggregation date for the Children's Emergency Duty Team which the Programme Manager (Westmorland & Furness) explained as being due to initial discussions still taking place, though there was hope that there would be more clarity available for the next meeting.

A Member requested a definition of those services which are classes as "long-term hosted" which the Assistant Chief Executive (Westmorland & Furness) and Director of Business Transformation and Change explained as being services with no immediate plan to disaggregate. Services that, would either be impossible or highly unlikely to disaggregate, would potentially have an adverse impact or suffer a potential dip in being able to deliver the service should they disaggregate. It was also noted that all services would go through an annual review, but if there was no business case for justification of disaggregation then they would remain a long-term hosted service.

A Member asked for further information regarding digital innovation and customer experience and whether Children's Services Integrations and Partnerships still existed as a service. The Director of Business Transformation and Change confirmed that Children's Services Integrations and Partnerships disaggregated on 31 December 2023 but still existed as a service for each council. Regarding digital innovation and customer experience, the Director of Business Transformation and Change explained that this was part of the council which dealt with automation of processes and functions, the website and digital access for services.

A Member queried whether work was being done on business cases for areas such as children's care, adoption, fostering and edge of care taking into account their performance and emerging needs. They also asked if JOSC would see the annual reviews which were scheduled to take place. The Director of Business Transformation and Change and Assistant Chief Executive (Westmorland & Furness) confirmed that all services would be reviewed appropriately, annually, with the first review due to start in April/May and would be coming to future JOSC meetings when appropriate.

**RESOLVED** that,

- a) The update on progress of the disaggregation of hosted services provided in the report be noted.
- b) Any proposed amendments to the disaggregation programme to the Joint Executive Committee be referred for consideration.

## **25 Long-Term Hosted Services Review Process**

The Assistant Chief Executive (Westmorland & Furness) provided the Committee with an overview of the report, highlighting that it was based on the indicators, which had been shown to the Committee at a previous meeting, to show how the long-term disaggregation process was performing. It was noted that the officers were looking for comments and feedback on the performance to present to the JEC.

Members thanked the Assistant Chief Executive (Westmorland & Furness) and the other officers for the information provided within the report.

A Member asked for clarification around the direction of the direction of travel arrow and RAG rating for point A8wf. The Assistant Chief Executive (Westmorland & Furness) explained that

the RAG rating was green because it was a positive change and the arrow was pointed down because it was indicating that the risk was going down.

A Member asked for further information regarding the difference between Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness percentages for gigabit capable broadband coverage. The Assistant Chief Executive (Westmorland & Furness) noted that the reason for disparity is due to Westmorland and Furness starting with poorer provision of infrastructure compared to Cumberland, with Eden one of the most poorly served, so they received more help to improve at the start of Connecting Cumbria.

Members had a discussion around the use telephone poles rather than underground cables for improving connectivity throughout Cumbria, the work being conducted by Fibrus and whether the number of properties with superfast broadband coverage noted within the report was accurate and whether it included both commercial properties and households. The Assistant Chief Executive (Westmorland & Furness) and Director of Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport (Cumberland) both explained that the work being done was through specialists working with a government contract, so the two Councils were only primarily aware of the work being done through permits. Although it was acknowledged that Highways Management had already been required to issue fines to Fibrus. Both acknowledged that more information would be required for the Members' queries to be addressed sufficiently and would provide the Committee with the additional information by the next Committee meeting.

A Member queried the variation between the two authorities on the number of children trained through Active Travel which the Assistant Chief Executive (Westmorland & Furness) explained as being based on the percentage of children in the population and the number of schools engaged.

A Member queried the difference between the number of Emergency Key Plans for Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness. The Assistant Chief Executive (Westmorland & Furness) explained that the key plans refer to the assets within the local areas, with Cumberland having more plans for nuclear, and noted that a full list could be provided.

A Member asked if key plans for risks included aircraft accidents. The Assistant Chief Executive (Westmorland & Furness) noted that they would check with the relevant officers but that assessments on the impact and likelihood of events are conducted to include instances such as pandemics, climate change and cyber-attacks.

A Member inquired about edge of care arrangements and the lack of information included within the report and about external placements and the reporting on those placements. The Director of Business Transformation and Change (Cumberland) explained that reporting on in-house placements was monthly due to it being in the gift of the council to do so, however, assured the Committee that frequent reviews were taking place to monitor the arrangements for both the children and the external provider with an acknowledgement of the cost and expense of using an external provider and the need to find the safest most appropriate place for the child in question. The Director of Business Transformation and Change (Cumberland) also explained that edge of care referred to the shorter-term arrangements for those who planned to be returned more swiftly, but that further specifics could be included going forward within the review reports to highlight the full edge of care picture with issues regarding finance, capacity and external factors included.

A Member queried if there was any further engagement planned to help improve the number of volunteers which the Director of Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport (Cumberland) noted that they would speak to the relevant officer and provide the Committee with further information.

A Member asked for further information regarding performance deduction, which the Assistant Director of Climate and Waste (Cumberland) explained that performance is monitored monthly and when each contract is reviewed, depending on what the issue is, points are deducted as appropriate and mitigated implemented.

Members clarified that once the annual review is complete, the reports will go through the JEC and JOSC for review and scrutiny, with the comments and feedback given from the Committee included.

**RESOLVED** that,

- a) The report be noted.
- b) Requests for further information be provided by written response to the Committee prior to the next meeting.
- c) The JOSC propose the following to the Joint Executive Committee (JEC),
  - That an annual review of the long-term hosted services is undertaken based on performance against indicators agreed by the JEC.
  - That following the annual review, Senior Responsible Owners make recommendations on the findings via the Joint Officer Board (JOB) and JEC, and outline changes to the disaggregation schedule or updates to the Service Strategies.

## **26 Stronger Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Pilot Programme**

The Assistant Chief Executive (Westmorland & Furness) provided the committee with an overview of the report, highlighting that Cumbria are only one of eight Local Resilience Forum (LRF) pilot areas chosen with the pilot taking place over the Cumbria footprint and aiming to develop a resilience communication programme to help with prevention and improve preparedness for the area. It was also noted that another aim was to improve engagement across all partners and communities, not just the local authorities.

A Member queried the six month timeline within the report and if there was a Plan B for the funding. The Assistant Chief Executive (Westmorland & Furness) explained that there was no revised timeline provided beyond the initial December deadline and that without the funding there would be no pilot.

Members had a discussion regarding improving the distribution and sharing of information to cascade down from local authorities and relevant partners to parish councils and residents. The Assistant Chief Executive (Westmorland & Furness) thanked the Committee for their comments and agreed that better co-ordination between different partners was needed to allow for a more efficient information sharing system, with up-to-date records, contact information and data to be available. All of which would help improve understanding of communities and engagement.

A Member noted the previous issues that had occurred throughout Cumbria from previous storms and floods with internet failures and connection issues. The Assistant Chief Executive (Westmorland & Furness) noted those comments and agreed that a more efficient network would need to be created to include all those working on the ground, such as parish councils, to help when there are issues such as power outages.

**RESOLVED** that the information within the report regarding the Stronger LRF Pilot in Cumbria be reviewed and noted.

## 27 Waste

The Assistant Director of Climate and Waste (Cumberland) provided the committee with an overview of the report, highlighting the five key areas of Governance, Information Sharing, the Waste Inter-Authority Agreement (WIAA) Review, the WIAA Budget and National Policy. It was also noted that, should the Members wish to have a further report on a specific area, the Assistant Director of Climate and Waste would be happy to provide it.

A Member asked if, as the current contract with Renewi was signed until 2034, it would be a difficult process to change the contract regarding the changes to National policy. The Assistant Director of Climate and Waste (Cumberland) explained that special dispensation has been given to Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness as part of a transitional agreement due to recognition that National policy changes would have on the contract. With the Assistant Director of Climate and Waste (Cumberland) noting that while New Burdens Funding would be available for Food Waste, this only covers collection and not disposal, which would be a costly addition to the current contract. However, both Councils will only decide their preference once they have considered the pros and cons of making changes to collections with the contract in mind.

Members had a discussion regarding recycling within Cumbria, looking at where recycling rates currently are and where the WIAA would like to see them in the future and potential changes in the future. The Assistant Director of Climate and Waste (Cumberland) explained that Cumbria was currently at 48% recycling, which is mid-table for local authorities and reflected an average across all recycling sites in Cumbria, with work being done to maximise recycling and reduce waste. It was noted that the changes from government, through the 'Simpler Recycling' project, helped to simplify the recycling process with reduction of how many bins were required for each household and gave authorities the power to decide how to divide the recycling. Both the Assistant Director of Climate and Waste (Cumberland) and Director of Thriving Places (Westmorland & Furness) commented that both councils were looking to review and harmonise the waste services, to build one service for Cumbria which will be consistent for residents with the hope that there will be an update that could be provided later this year.

A Member asked about the impact of the inclusion of low-grade plastic packaging and whether other authorities were recycling that packaging. The Assistant Director of Climate and Waste (Cumberland) explained that the 'Simpler Recycling' project included flexible plastic such as cling film but that it would be dependent on the contract and plant about whether it would be possible, with trials ongoing with emerging technologies to help improve the process. Regarding other councils, it was noted that each council would be participating in different things, depending on their own contracts.

A Member queried if Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness would remain in contact regarding waste which the Assistant Director of Climate and Waste (Cumberland) assured the Committee that the two councils worked closely together and would continue to do so on all things waste.

A Member asked for clarification regarding Cumbria Waste Group, which the Assistant Director of Climate and Waste (Cumberland) clarified had been sold by both councils in December 2023 and was part of a sub-contract to the main contract with Renewi. It was also noted that this contract does not affect waste collection as this is done through Cumbria Waste Management.

A Member requested further information regarding the disposal of larger appliances, multi-component items and soft furnishing. The Assistant Director of Climate and Waste (Cumberland) explained that white goods could be taken to household waste recycling centres within Cumbria and that bulky waste collections were still available, where they would be either disposed of, used for component parts or refurbished. Regarding soft furnishings, it was noted

that these could legally not be dismantled but instead required a separate contract with Energy from Waste Plants. The Assistant Director of Climate and Waste (Cumberland) highlighted that they would follow up with the Communications team to come up with an improved Communications plan to ensure that residents had the information and allow for all services to be accessible.

A Member queried whether contract renegotiations with Renewi were possible should they wish to. The Assistant Director of Climate and Waste (Cumberland) noted that while possible, this was not something that Renewi had wanted in the past, and the Councils needed to be mindful of procurement procedures.

**RESOLVED** that the information contained within the report regarding the hosted Waste Disposal Contract and Service be reviewed and the update noted.

## **28 Integration of LEP activities to Local Authorities**

The Director of Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport (Cumberland) provided the Committee with an overview of the report, highlighting the creation of the Economic Growth Board, the programme of integration and what the future will look like including the next steps in the process through the JEC to further provide governance.

A Member asked about the remaining funding for Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the timeline for providing the government with the required strategies. The Director of Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport (Cumberland) noted that, while the LEP do have some reserves, the requirements for the funding are being examined and the funding procured through grants has been allocated accordingly. Regarding the strategy, the government requirement is to provide something within six months, which the Director of Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport (Cumberland) highlighted would be possible as they are building upon the existing LEP strategy rather than starting from scratch.

A Member enquired whether the existing staff would be transferred under the Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment rights (TUPE) to Cumberland, which the Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer (Westmorland & Furness) confirmed.

A Member queried whether there would only be one economic growth plan produced on a Cumbria footprint or whether there would also be one for each council area. The Director of Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport (Cumberland) and Director of Thriving Places (Westmorland & Furness) confirmed that while the government does demand that every function area (Cumbria) has an economic growth plan, each Council will also produce a plan which will highlight nuances for each local area and compliment and feed into the Cumbria wide plan.

A Member asked how many employees would be transferred to Cumberland, where those employees would operate from and whether the operational costs had been included within the March 2024 budget. The Director of Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport (Cumberland) explained that 17 employees were transferring and that they would remain working out of their current office building. It was also noted that there would be no additional cost to Cumberland regarding the integration of LEP activities and any costs transferred had been included within the budget.

Members had a discussion regarding the transition of functions with it being highlighted by the Director of Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport (Cumberland) that while it would be challenging, the focus would be on maintaining and enhancing relationships with businesses and partners and

winding up current projects correctly once arrangements are finalised.

A Member asked for confirmation that the JOSC would be scrutinising delivery plan, which the Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer (Westmorland & Furness) confirmed.

**RESOLVED** that the report regarding the activity to integrate LEP activities to Local Authorities for Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness Councils and comments made by the JOSC on those activities be noted.

## **29 Scrutiny Officer Update**

The Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) provided the Committee with an overview of the Scrutiny Officer Update and the current Work Programme before inviting Members to ask any questions or propose any amendments.

A Member asked if an additional item could be added to receive an update on the LEP arrangements which the Committee agreed to add to the Work Programme for the next meeting.

A Member asked for clarification as to the venue of the next JOSC meeting in April, which was noted as Cumbria House, and queried when the JOSC would return to Westmorland & Furness. The Scrutiny Officer explained that, once each council had agreed their 2024/25 calendar of meetings at their Annual General Meetings in May, the next JOSC would be in Westmorland & Furness.

**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 for 2023/24 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.

## **30 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

**RESOLVED** that the next JOSC meeting be held on Friday 19 April 2024 at 10:30am in Cumbria House, Carlisle.

The meeting finished at 12.47 pm