



## JOINT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting of the **Joint Executive Committee** held on Thursday, 25 January 2024 at 10.30 am at Committee Room 1, County Hall, Kendal

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### **PRESENT:**

Cllr P Bell  
Cllr J Brook  
Cllr B Cannon  
Cllr M Fryer  
Cllr A Jarvis  
Cllr S Sanderson

### **Officers in attendance:**

Chief Executive (Cumberland Council)  
Chief Executive (Westmorland and Furness Council)  
Assistant Chief Executive (Cumberland Council)  
Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer (Westmorland and Furness Council)  
Director of Resources (Westmorland and Furness Council)  
Director of Business, Transformation and Change (Cumberland Council)  
Director of Enabler Services (Westmorland and Furness Council)

### **PART I ITEMS CONSIDERED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

#### **12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brown and Williamson – Cumberland Council and Alison Hatcher – Assistant Chief Executive (Westmorland and Furness Council).

#### **13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

#### **14. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:** - That the press and public not be excluded during consideration of any items on the agenda.

## **15. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting of the Joint Executive Committee held on 13 November 2023 be approved and signed by the Co-Chair (Westmorland and Furness Council).

## **16. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Chair reported that a question had been received from Mr Jonathan Davies.

Mr Davies stated that on 1 April 2023 the government imposed structural change orders took effect in Cumbria creating the new Councils of Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness Councils.

Replacing the former District Councils and the County Council and effectively scrapping with no wider social or economic impact assessment the county of Cumbria in all but ceremonial name.

The two new Councils created through the change order represented today had established this Joint Executive Committee to oversee what was effectively the carving up of the services across Cumbria taking up valuable time and finances and in many cases creating duplication of services and roles across both Councils.

The Joint Executive Committee at its meeting in November had resolved that this Committee was the best governance structure to take on responsibility for the transition of LEP functions to the two Authorities to continue on a Cumbria geographical footprint and the delivery of those functions across Cumbria and recommended to the Cumberland Executive and the Westmorland and Furness Cabinet that they agree a change to the terms of reference of the Joint Executive Committee.

Although his own views on failures of Cumbria LEP were no secret, he fully agreed with the move by this Committee to commit to delivery of economic and growth services on the geographical footprint of Cumbria.

He believed that this showed a way forward to help both councils address the mess created by the local government reorganisation. Rather than continuing with disaggregation of wider services with the costs and duplication this created at a time both councils face financial difficulties like many other councils across the UK.

He asked that the Joint Executive Committee look to consider the potential for the residents and communities across Cumbria served by Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council of the creation of a Combined Authority to deliver services and combined resources from Highways to schools and social care across Cumbria along with the opportunity this could provide for a devolution deal for Cumbria with or without the requirement for a Mayor as the recent devolution deal for Lancaster has shown with a deal without the need for a mayor something that has historically been a sticking issue for such a deal in Cumbria.

He also asked the leadership of both Councils would agree to look at the potential of creating a combined authority for Cumbria and build on the joint working this Committee was already undertaking as a foundation for Combined Authority for Cumbria.

The Chair thanked Jonathan Davies for his question and responded as follows:-

On 4 August 2023, following an information gathering exercise, government had confirmed a 'minded to' decision to withdraw central government support (core funding) for Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) meaning that government's sponsorship and funding of LEPs would cease from April 2024.

From April government would support local authorities to deliver the core functions currently delivered by LEPs. Government expected local authorities to work together to deliver these strategic economic functions within whole county geographies or functional economic areas with a minimum population of 500,000. These functions would be exercised by one of the local authorities (working in collaboration with others), where they were not already delivered by a combined authority, or in areas where a devolution deal was not yet agreed.

Following the Government guidance, Cumberland Council and Westmorland and Furness Council would work together across the functional economic area of Cumbria to carry out strategic economic planning, in partnership with local leaders to clearly articulate the areas economic priorities and sectoral strengths. Together with partners an Economic Growth Board would be created made up of local business leaders and relevant representative bodies and create a broad economic strategy for the area. We will ensure the seamless transition of Growth Hub and Careers Hub provision across Cumbria and delivery of existing funded Cumbria wide programmes.

In respect of devolution, it had been made clear that Local Government Reorganisation must be concluded before considering devolution. The Councils were still in the process of disaggregating and integrating functions and services from the legacy authorities and shaping the two new unitary Councils. An open door had been maintained with the Government and were open to dialogue on how new powers could be unlocked, opportunities and funding for our residents, our communities and our businesses. The current Government had made it clear that any area wanting access to level three powers and funding must have a directly elected leader. We now need to understand what the forthcoming general election means for devolution of powers and funding for Local Government.

## **17. BORDERLANDS 5G INNOVATION REGION PROGRAMME**

A presentation was given by Catherine Weldon, Connecting Cumbria on the Borderlands 5G Innovation Regions programme.

The presentation provided an Overview and Background of the Digital Infrastructure Strategy, Borderlands 5G Innovation Regions Programme, Windermere 5G Ferry and Broadband and Mobile Coverage.

A copy of the presentation was attached to the minutes.

The Chair thanked Catherine Weldon, Connecting Cumbria for the presentation and asked that an update be given to a future meeting when further progress had been made.

## **18. HOSTED SERVICES PERFORMANCE**

The Committee considered a report from The Assistant Chief Executive (Westmorland and Furness Council) and the Assistant Chief Executive (Cumberland Council) regarding Hosted Service Performance.

The Committee was reminded that under the Inter Authority Agreement entered between Westmorland and Furness Council and Cumberland Council governing the provision of hosted services, the Councils had agreed to establish a Joint Executive Committee.

The Terms of Reference set out within the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) stated that the Joint Executive Committee was responsible for reviewing the performance of hosted services against budget and indicators for service quality, performance and efficiency. The Committee also received an annual report on performance, finance and proposed service improvements.

On 13 November 2023 this Committee had agreed to formally monitor performance of long-term hosted services due to disaggregate after April 2025.

This Committee also agreed the performance measures for each of the long-term hosted services, with a further request to provide additional qualitative data where possible. The performance data collated for Quarters 1 and 2 of 2023/24 was detailed in Appendix 1.

The Chair asked a question on the Archives Service concerning service planning given the variations in demand. The Director of Enabler Services agreed to provide a written response regarding the Archives Service.

**RESOLVED:-** To note the performance update for long-term hosted services during Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 of 2023/24 and agree to receive an update on performance during Quarter 3 at the next Committee meeting on 28 March 2024, and on a quarterly basis thereafter.

## **19. UPDATE ON DISAGGREGATION PROGRAMME DELIVERY**

The Committee considered a report from The Assistant Chief Executive (Westmorland and Furness Council) and The Director of Business, Transformation and Change (Cumberland Council) regarding the Update on Disaggregation Programme Delivery.

The Committee was reminded that under the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) entered between Westmorland and Furness Council and Cumberland Council governing the provision of hosted services, the Councils had agreed to establish a Joint Executive Committee. This Committee was responsible for the oversight and management of the hosted services including the development and implementation of disaggregation plans for the hosted services.

At a previous meeting of this Committee on 17 July 2023, members had been provided with an overview of the hosted services and target dates for disaggregation set out in the IAA. Any changes to disaggregation dates must be approved by this Committee.

Plans for the following services had been reviewed by the Joint Officer Board on 4 December 2023 and it had been agreed that the services could, subject to this Committee's approval, disaggregate on different dates to the planned date in the IAA:

- Human Resources (HR) Payroll Administration: Recruitment and DBS Elements - 31 March 2024, or 31 July 2024 at the latest.
- Social Work Academy - 31 March 2024.
- Adults Urgent Care Team - 30 September 2024, or 31 March 2025 at the latest.

A review of the Payroll and HR Recruitment recommended separating the services out into two functions: DBS and Recruitment, and Payroll and HR Admin. The proposal recommended bringing forward the disaggregation of the Recruitment and DBS elements from 31 March 2025 to 31 March 2024, with built in flexibility to disaggregate by 31 July 2024 at the latest. Earlier disaggregation would result in each authority having dedicated recruitment and resourcing capacity.

The Payroll and HR Admin element of the service would continue to the agreed disaggregation date of 31 March 2025. Work was ongoing to consolidate the legacy systems and then to disaggregate the system prior to service disaggregation.

Following a review of the Social Work Academy, both authorities had developed future operating model proposals to deliver that function within Adults and Children's Social Care Services. It was recommended that the disaggregation date be brought forward from 31 March 2025 to 31 March 2024.

A review for the Adults Urgent Care Team had been set at 6 – 9 months into the disaggregation programme period to consider modelling options and to review data and demand on the service to determine the best way forward. It had been recommended that the disaggregation date for the Urgent Care Team be delayed from 31 March 2024 to 30 September 2024, or 31 March 2025 at the latest. That would provide additional time to work towards safe and legal disaggregation of the service.

On 13 November 2023 this Committee had previously received updates on the phased disaggregation of teams within Children's Services: Improvement/Quality Assurance Service (30 September 2023) and the Partnership Service (31 October

2023). The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) service had been disaggregated on 31 December 2023, with all three services now successfully disaggregated to the agreed timescale and in accordance with the safe and legal requirements for both authorities.

An overview of the progress of the Disaggregation Programme was considered by the Committee.

Councillor Brook proposed the recommendations which were seconded by Councillor Fryer.

Cllr Bell asked for the detail why the Adults Urgent Care Team disaggregation had been delayed. The Director of Business, Transformation and Change (Cumberland Council) commented that it was due to the size of the team and the majority were temporary staff rather than permanent staff.

**RESOLVED:-**

1.To unanimously note the update from the Joint Officer Board on progress of the Joint Disaggregation Programme and approve the following:-

- Bring forward the disaggregation of Human Resources Payroll Administration: Recruitment and DBS Elements from 31 March 2025 to 31 March 2024, or 31 July 2024 at the latest;
- Bring forward the disaggregation of the Social Work Academy from 31 March 2025 to 31 March 2024; and
- Postpone the disaggregation of the Adults Urgent Care Team from 31 March 2024 to 30 September 2024 or 31 March 2025 at the latest.

2.To note the successful disaggregation of the Children’s Partnership Support / Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) service on 31 December 2023.

**20. UPDATE ON CONTRACT AWARD DECISIONS FOR HOSTED SERVICES**

The Director of Resources (Westmorland and Furness Council) and the Director of Business, Transformation and Change (Cumberland Council) informed members of a decision that had been taken under delegated authority by Officers in respect of contracts associated with hosted services.

The Committee considered one decision that had been taken since the last meeting.

**RESOLVED,** To note the decision taken by officers since the last meeting of the Committee.

**21. URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items for this meeting.

The meeting ended at 11.13 am