



## **Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Date:** Monday 10 February 2025

**Time:** 10.30 am

**Location:** Conference Room A&B - Cumbria House, 107-117 Botchergate, Carlisle, CA1 1RD

**Present:** Cllr B Pegram (Chair), Cllr T Biggins, Cllr S Evans, Cllr H Hodgson, Cllr H Ladhams, Cllr M Rudhall (Vice Chair), Cllr R Dobson, Cllr C McCarron-Holmes, Cllr M Mitchelson, Cllr M Hawkins, Cllr J McDermott and Cllr H Carrick (as substitute for Cllr M Brereton)

**In Attendance** Director of Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport (Cumberland)  
Senior Manager - Children Looked After (CLA) Provider Services (Cumberland)  
Assistant Director Quality and Safeguarding  
Assistant Director of Commissioning and Procurement  
Group Lawyer, Corporate and Governance (Westmorland and Furness)  
Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) (Cumberland)

### **53 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Matt Brereton (Westmorland and Furness), Assistant Chief Executive (Westmorland and Furness) Director of Business Transformation and Change (Cumberland), Director of Children and Family Wellbeing (Cumberland), Director of Thriving Places (Westmorland and Furness) and Programme Director, Enterprising Cumbria.

Apologies were also received from Director of Children's Services (Westmorland and Furness) who attempted to join virtually but was unable to due to IT issues.

### **54 Declarations of Interest**

No Declarations of Interest were received.

### **55 Exclusion of Press and Public**

#### **RESOLVED:**

- 1) That items listed on the agenda in Part A be dealt with in public / when the public is present.
- 2) That the item listed on the agenda in Part B, as set out below, be considered when the public were excluded on the grounds that they would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the 1972 Local Government Act:
  - Agenda item 9. Appendices 1-4 Children's Services Report

The report's appendices were not for publication by virtue of paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the 1972 Local Government Act as they contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person including the authority holding that information.

## **56 Minutes of Joint Executive Committee**

A Member queried whether there were an equal number of Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness members on the Joint Executive Committee as there were only two Cumberland members in attendance compared to four Westmorland and Furness members at the previous Joint Executive Committee meeting. The Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) confirmed that that there the membership of the Joint Executive Committee was an equal split and the number of members in attendance was due to exceptional circumstances and was not the norm.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Joint of Executive Committee held on 22 November 2024 be noted.

## **57 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

A Member queried whether an answer had been received concerning the missing question regarding disaggregation on mines and quarries. The Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) explained that the question had been asked and they were hoping for an answer by the next meeting.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be agreed as a true and accurate record of the Joint Overview of Scrutiny Committee held on 2 December 2024.

## **58 Enterprising Cumbria - Economic Growth Update**

The Director of Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport (Cumberland) provided an overview of the report on behalf of Enterprising Cumbria (EC). He highlighted the current timescales, with the final document due to be presented to Joint Executive Committee for agreement on 3 March 2025, the impact of the devolution accelerated programme announcement, the work still to be one and the opportunities available through both devolution and the Economic Strategy.

*[Councillor J McDermott arrived at 10:38]*

A Member queried whether the final approval for the EC Economic Strategy would be from Joint Executive Committee or the individual local authorities and his concern regarding the timeline not including an opportunity for the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide their comments and feedback. The Director of Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport (Cumberland) explained that the EC Economic Strategy would be agreed by the Joint Executive Committee, with Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness responsible for agreeing their own individual Economic Strategies. He also shared the Councillor's concerns around the Committee being able to provide their comments and the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) suggested setting up a workshop to provide their comments on the final EC Economic Strategy before it was presented to the Joint Executive Committee for agreement.

A Member questioned whether the tasks set out at the end of the Economic Summit had been completed. The Director of Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport (Cumberland) assured the Committee that all of the tasks from the Summit had been addressed with the expectation that, if and when devolution was agreed, the Economic Strategy be handed over to the Combined Authority as a blueprint to help lay the groundwork for their own strategy.

A Member asked how the EC Economic Strategy would help with the planning process. The Director of Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport (Cumberland) explained that there were still more details to be provided, especially with the upcoming changes to the national planning process coming in, but noted that the strategy would help to improve Cumbria's ability to work with providers, developers and land trusts across all major planning sites in Cumbria. He also commented on the Spending Review recently submitted and the request for further support from the government moving forward and further potential changes with devolution.

A Member queried what the EC underspend was being used for and the Director of Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport (Cumberland) explained that all reserves were being monitored by the EC and both local authorities with an agreement in place to identify reserves which could be used to support devolution while waiting for government funding. He also noted that the programme for 2025/26 had not been agreed yet, though ongoing projects were expected to continue on from 2024/25 with confirmation to be received in the next few months.

A Member questioned who ensured that the three economic strategies, from EC, Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness, aims and objectives aligned appropriately and whether the strategic planning targets were Cumbria-wide or for each authority. The Director of Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport (Cumberland) clarified that the EC economic strategy would be Cumbria-wide and allow for opportunities to promote and seek support and investment into Cumbria, while being used as evidence for the need of Cumbria. Both the Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness economic strategies would reflect the political priorities of each authority with a local focus. The Director of Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport (Cumberland) also noted that the strategic planning targets were at a local authority level though there were ongoing conversations to consider what vehicles would work better for a wider level, the development of each authority's new local plan and the impact a Combined Authority Mayor would have on Cumbria.

A Member questioned whether the grid connections mentioned referred to transport or electricity, which the Director of Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport (Cumberland) confirmed was electricity, and noted the current poor connectivity. The Director of Place, Sustainable Growth and Transport (Cumberland) agreed that the current connectivity needed improvement but that conversations with Electricity North West and DNO National Grid to understand the current position as well as the potential to develop a local area energy plan to provide further understanding of the grid system, the opportunities and the vulnerabilities for further grid resilience.

**RESOLVED** that,

- a) The actions take to co-design the Economic Strategy and comments made by the Committee be noted.
- b) The timelines for publishing of the Economic Strategy and comments made by the Committee be noted.
- c) A workshop be organised for the Committee to provide their comments on the final Enterprising Cumbria Economic Strategy before it was presented to the Joint Executive Committee for agreement.

## **59 Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme**

The Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) provided the Committee with an overview of the current Work Programme before inviting Members to ask any questions or propose any amendments. This included a note on the organisation of workshops on both the final Enterprising Cumbria Economic Strategy, as mentioned in agenda item 6, and on the future work programme.

A Member noted that cyber training had taken place, at least for Cumberland, and suggested that another session take place for those who were unable to attend which the Democratic Services Office (Scrutiny) agreed to follow up on.

**RESOLVED** that,

- a) The progress on resolutions from previous meetings be noted.
- b) Any changes to the work programme for 2024/25 be noted and agreed.
- c) 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.
- d) The Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) highlight the suggestion for an additional cyber security training session to the appropriate Director and Assistant Director.

*[The Committee took a break to try and resolve IT issues from 11:12 to 11:30]*

## **60 Children's Services Report**

The Senior Manager – Children Looked After (CLA) Provider Services (Cumberland) provided the Committee with an overview of the report on residential care, fostering and adoption. She highlighted the current situation, the plan for the future through service reviews, the plans for disaggregation and the funding provided from both Government and Mockingbird.

The Committee decided to move the meeting into Part B before questions were raised, to ensure that there were no possibilities for a question to be asked which related to the appendices.

**RESOLVED** that the contents of the update report be noted

## **61 Press and Public**

**RESOLVED** – That in accordance with Section 4(b), Part 2 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 the Public and Press were excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they likely involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the 1972 Local Government Act.

## **62 Appendices 1-4 of Children's Services Report**

The appendices 1-4 for agenda item 8 Children's Services Report were considered and discussed by the Joint Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee asked numerous questions to understand and expand on the information provided within the update report and the appendices related to the report.

**RESOLVED** that the contents of the appendices related to agenda item 8 be noted.

## **63 Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items raised at the meeting.

The meeting finished at 11.52 am