

CUMBERLAND SHADOW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Shadow Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 1 February 2023 at 10.30 am at Council Chamber, Allerdale House, Workington, CA14 3YJ

PRESENT:

Cllr T Allison
Cllr J Ghayouba
Cllr J Gridale
Cllr M Hawkins (Chair)
Cllr L Jones-Bulman
Cllr J Mallinson
Cllr L Patrick
Cllr S Pollen
Cllr S Stoddart

Also present Councillor Lisa Brown (Deputy Leader Statutory) Portfolio Holder for Governance and Thriving Communities

Officers in attendance:

Ms H Younger	LGR Programme Manager (Cumbria County Council)
Ms A Madden	HR/OD (Cumbria County Council)
Mr P Robinson	AD Organisational Change (Cumbria County Council)
Mr I Smith	ICT Security Manager (Cumbria County Council)
Mr J Rasbash	Policy and Scrutiny Officer (Cumbria County Council)
Ms R Jones	Policy and Scrutiny Officer Carlisle City Council)
Ms G Roach	Democratic Services Officer (Allerdale Borough Council)

PART 1 ITEMS CONSIDERED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Betton, Davison, Eldon, Troughton and Tucker.

25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest received.

26. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

27. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 December 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

It was noted that the draft Calendar of Meetings as referenced in Minute Number 22 would be circulated to members as soon as it was available.

28. SCRUTINY OVERVIEW AND WORK PLAN REPORT

The Scrutiny Officers provided the Committee with an overview of matters related to the Committees work, along with the current version of the Scrutiny Work Programme.

The Committee considered and noted the current Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

With regards to the Draft Budget 2023/24 it was noted that discussions were taking place with the Finance team around the budget setting timetable with a view to hopefully arranging a Scrutiny consultation session before the draft budget went before the Council for approval. If a session was looking possible the group would be contacted by Democratic Services for their availability in the coming days. Members expressed the importance of Scrutiny's involvement in the draft budget setting process and suggested a Teams session may assist if timescales were to be tight.

Members then discussed the information provided on the cost of living crisis as requested at a previous meeting.

Making reference to the Cost of Living motion approved at the full Council meeting on 11 October 2022, detailed on page 24 of the report, one member highlighted the importance of the motion for the sake of supporting the local communities and expressed it would require support from both the Scrutiny Committee and Executive.

Councillor M Hawkins proposed a motion to request that the Executive update the Scrutiny Committee on the plans to address the cost of living crisis and how they intend to support what was already taking place and available.

This was seconded by Councillor S Pollen. The motion was agreed.

RESOLVED That:

- a) The items on the most recent Forward Plan of Key Decisions be noted;
- b) The update on Scrutiny Arrangements for Cumberland Council be noted;
- c) The current Work Programme, work planning activity and comment on the programme, in particular on items for the next Committee meeting be noted;
- d) The update report on Scrutiny activity undertaken by Sovereign Councils on the Cost of Living Crisis and wider activity being undertaken to address the Cost of Living Crisis be noted;
- e) The Executive update the Scrutiny Committee on the plans to address the cost of living crisis and how they intend to support what was already taking place and available.

Councillors J Mallinson and T Allison joined the meeting

29. LOCAL GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANISATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

The LGR Programme Manager provided the Committee with an overview of the report and highlighted the main points to note.

Now 48.6% of the programmes milestones had now been fully completed, equating to 648 milestones, with 29 of the 227 Day 1 Requirements fulfilled and 34 near completion.

The Chief Officer and Assistant Director roles and structures were now complete and recruitment was well underway.

From the staff allocation process only 192 roles out of near 8,000 were remaining of the more complex cases.

From the list of 20 key milestones detailed in the attached Programme Dashboard, 14 had now been completed and 6 were in progress, those being Numbers 4, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 20.

An update was also provided on the Key Strategic Risks.

One member said that generally the update report had been very reassuring however asked for an opinion on what the three most important outstanding issues were causing the most concern for officers. The LGR Programme Manger offered in their opinion those were probably to be ICT, that area was to be covered in more detail later in the meeting, staffing issues and the budget, in that it all must be managed appropriately.

One member asked whether it was likely that much work for the new Cumberland Council could be undertaken in Year 1 or would time still be required dealing with legacy issues. The Portfolio Holder for Governance and Thriving Communities explained that it was likely to be a mixture, some areas would take many years to be fully transitioned and it would be the job of the Executive and Scrutiny to identify where they could begin to put their own stamp.

It was suggested it may be worthwhile for a piece of work to be carried out to compile a list of all legacy projects that may hang over from Day 1, which Scrutiny could monitor. The LGR Manager agreed to look in to whether that would be possible to undertake.

With regards to the Highways Information Asset Management System and the use of a 'Hotline' one member pointed out that it was generally a big issue for councillors and asked whether the service transition would be seamless. It was explained that there were to be two golden telephone numbers, one for each new authority customer services and the calls would be directed accordingly.

The Committee then received a verbal update on the HR and OD activities related to LGR.

The current priorities were highlighted to members as follows;

- Reviewing staff allocations against budget
- Completion of the remaining 192
- Agency workers – understanding the rights and how they fit in
- Development and principles
- Finalising the TUPE letter templates
- Design of HR Policies and Procedures for Day 1 onwards

Of the TUPE process, 97% of staff had been allocated. Staff were to receive their TUPE confirmation letter by the end of February and in March HR were to share the employee liability information to the new Head of Paid Service.

A Day 1 recruitment process was now in place for new roles, jobs, candidates and a HR delivery approach agreed. A core essential training programme had also been developed and agreed.

Members made the comment that the hope was to recruit and employ in house and avoid redundancies etc as opposed to using agency staff. The HR Manger confirmed that was the intention.

[The Committee took a ten minute break and the meeting resumed at 12.04pm]

The AD Organisational Change, Cumbria County Council provided an overview of the ICT continued progress.

Due to many recurring budget pressures in relation to the ICT the budget position had been reprofiled accordingly and factored in the Medium Term Financial Plan for members to consider with the budget, the main commitment being getting everything over the line in time for Day 1.

Lots of work was happening behind the scenes with regards to emails, with group emails generating more complex scenarios needing to be addressed, either through migrating emails or creating new ones.

A lot of work was also required around Microsoft licensing.

A number of member specific questions were raised around such as council provided equipment and access to legacy accounts. It was explained that a session would be arranged specifically for members to explain everything and provide an opportunity for questions.

The Committee then received a presentation on Cyber Security from ICT Security Manager from Cumbria County Council which covered the National Cyber Security Centre 10 steps to cyber security.

One member commented that training was going to be crucial going forward to assist with maintaining security and asked what the plans were for training elected members. The ICT Security Manager explained that due to the risks involved cyber security training was going to be mandatory with regular refreshers for all.

Members asked whether there would be an option to purchase old currently owned IT equipment and it was explained that wasn't going to be an option due to the risks but it was also commented that, once equipment had been cleaned and all Council related things removed the equipment wasn't then worth anything to the user.

It was noted that the Scrutiny Committee had a real opportunity to continue the scrutiny of cyber security by for example regular consideration of risk registers and assurances to ensure it remains a priority.

One member enquired as to whether old/currently owned printers could be purchased by members. The ICT managers agreed to take the request away to consider and debate and an answer would be provided in due course.

RESOLVED That:

- a) The report details and key points included within section 3 of the report be noted;
- b) It be considered whether it's possible to compile a list of all legacy projects that may hang over from Day 1, for Scrutiny to monitor;
- c) The update presentations provided on HR/OD, ICT and Cyber Security be noted;
- d) A decision be made on whether old/currently owned printers may be purchased by members.

30. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 22 March 2023 at 10.30 am at Cumbria House, Carlisle.

The meeting ended at 1.16 pm