

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting: Thursday, 15th September, 2022
at 2.00 pm.

Present: Councillors Shirley (Chairman), Cassidy (Vice-Chair), Assouad, McEwan, and C. Thomson.

Officers Present: Debbie Storr (Head of Legal and Governance), Paula Westwood (Scrutiny and Democratic Services Team Leader) and Katie Pepper (Democratic and Electoral Services Officer).

15 Apologies for Absence/Attendance of Substitute Members

Apologies for absence had been submitted from Councillors Johnston, McClure and Robson.

Councillor Assouad had attended the meeting as substitute for Councillor Johnston.

16 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7th July, 2022 were taken as read and confirmed.

17 Public Participation

RESOLVED:- To note that no questions, representations, deputations or petitions had been received in respect of the meeting.

18 Work Programme Update

The Scrutiny and Democratic Services Team Leader had submitted a report outlining a summary of the progress made in respect of each topic as follows:-

Flooding on Walney Promenade

In October 2021, representatives from United Utilities had addressed the Committee and provided an update on the plans being made for the sewer network to prevent flooding on Walney Promenade. They had agreed to provide updates to the Committee as appropriate in the future as works progressed.

At a previous meeting, the Committee had requested the Scrutiny and Democratic Services Team Leader to make contact with United Utilities to establish if they were in a position to provide an update. United Utilities had advised that with the area being a SSSI (Site of Specific Scientific Interest) site, they were not able to start the work until permits had been issued from Natural England and the Marine Maritime Industry. They would be in touch once permits had been received and works had started, in order to attend the next available meeting.

The Scrutiny and Democratic Services Team Leader added that she had made contact with United Utilities back in March and they had informed her that they had no update as they still hadn't received their permits.

The Committee had requested that further contact be made with United Utilities with the potential of inviting them back to the Committee to provide an update.

The Chair had requested that the scope of this review be extended to look at wider flooding of the entire coast.

Discretionary Housing Fund and Supported Housing Payments

At a previous meeting, the Committee had requested that contact be made with the Chair of the Executive Committee to obtain an update on the issue. The review had been paused at that time, whilst further discussions took place regarding the scope of the review.

At the meeting on 24th March the Committee agreed that the review should continue and Councillor Morgan be appointed Lead Member on the Work Group.

The Director of Resources had attended the meeting on 7th July to present the confidential Supported Accommodation report which explained how the matter had been dealt with through the Executive Committee.

The remit of the review needed to be confirmed to enable it to be taken forward.

The Committee had agreed to change the focus of this review to cover looking into the national legislation and potential loopholes and asked that the Director of Resources be invited to present an update report at the next Committee meeting.

Impact of Covid-19 Going Forward

The Work Group had met on 7th February. Information had been noted including: -

- The number of cases in Cumbria throughout January had reduced, with the most significant reduction seen in the second week of January, then a steady decline thereafter;
- The rolling seven day average number of cases in Barrow at the time had been around 500 cases per 100,000 population which was similar to the other Districts in Cumbria. It was envisaged that case numbers would likely remain at that level as the Omicron variant was highly transmissible;
- It was anticipated that by the end of March, isolation rules would be lifted, although it was envisaged that PCR testing would remain in some form to test for new variants;
- The Council's Contact Tracing Team continue to assist the NHS Test and Trace System by contacting 'hard to reach' cases;
- Covid Marshalls had reduced to one session per fortnight on a Saturday morning at the Alfred Barrow Health Centre with around 500 vaccinations each session plus walk-ins.

At the meeting on 7th July Councillor McEwan had provided the Committee with an update on the most recent Covid Figures, in the week beginning 27th June Barrow had 162 cases. The Committee noted the case numbers and agreed the Work Group would continue to meet regularly.

It was agreed that this review would continue.

Crellin Street

At a previous meeting, the Committee had agreed that a Work Group be established to look further into ongoing issues in the Crellin Street vicinity emanating from food takeaway delivery services including parking on double yellow lines, obstructing delivery wagons and other road users, as well as reports of residents feeling intimidated walking past crowds of Uber Eats Drivers.

Following the initial meeting of the Work Group on 8th February, Members of the Work Group had requested for additional representatives to be invited to meet with them including Graham Barker (Head of Public Protection, Barrow Borough Council), as well as a representative from the Police and Cumbria County Council.

At a previous meeting Councillor McEwan provided an update to the Committee stating that Barrow Local Committee had presented the issue to Cumbria County Council's Cabinet the previous week where the Cabinet had agreed to support Barrow Local Committee's request and explore the process and feasibility of adopting the DVLA devolved powers from the Secretary of State for Transport to take enforcement action on untaxed vehicles. In view of that, the Committee agreed that this review should be paused.

It was agreed that the review remain paused.

In respect of the following items, which had been added to the Work Programme for 2022/2023 in March, the Scrutiny and Democratic Services Team Leader stated that, in view of the number of ongoing items on the Work Programme and with only six months left in which to complete the reviews, that it may be appropriate for the Committee re-consider and re-prioritise items for review.

Customer Strategy and Action Plan

At the Committee meeting on 24th March it had been agreed that a review of Customer Strategy and Action Plan be included in the Work Programme for 2022/23.

It was agreed that this review be paused.

Growing Forward Report and Action Plan

At the Committee meeting on 24th March it had been agreed that a review of the Growing Forward Report and Action Plan be included in the Work Programme for 2022/23.

The Head of Legal and Governance advised the group that the Director of Resources had planned to present a report to the Committee at the November meeting regarding this review.

It was agreed that this review by paused.

Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy

At the Committee meeting on 24th March it had been agreed that a review of the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy be included in the Work Programme for 2022/23.

Thursday, 15th September, 2022

At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7th July the Head of People and Communities presented a report on the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy.

The Chair had asked if Senior Management Team could be requested to provide a press release to communicate to Council Tax payers, details of ongoing or planned works in relation to the anti-social behaviour strategy.

It was agreed that Gareth Sargent of Cumbria Police and the Head of People and Communities be invited to the next meeting of the Committee to provide an update.

Equality Strategy and Action Plan

At the Committee meeting on 24th March it had been agreed that a review of Equality Strategy and Action Plan be included in the Work Programme for 2022/23.

It was agreed that this review be paused.

Changes to the Work Programme

The Chair had suggested that a review into the BID be added to the programme. This had been agreed by the Committee.

The Committee had discussed reviewing the priorities of the work programme and it was,

RESOLVED:-

1. To note the updates on progress in respect of each of the Work Groups;
2. To agree that the following reviews be paused:-
 - Review of Customer Strategy and Action Plan;
 - Review of the Growing Forward Report and Action Plan;
 - Review of Equality Strategy and Action Plan; and
 - Crellin Street;
3. To agree that the following reviews remained on the Work Programme:-
 - Discretionary Housing Payments (with amended scope outlined above);
 - Review of Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy and Action Plan;
 - Flooding on Walney Promenade (with amended scope outlined above);
 - Impact of Covid-19 Going Forward; and
4. To agree that a review into the BID be added to the Work Programme.

The meeting closed at 2.21 pm.