COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2019

Present: Councillor Joan Hully (Chair), Mayor Mike Starkie, Councillors David Banks, Hugh Branney, Graham Calvin, James Date, Gwynneth Everett, Allan Forster, Jeanette Forster, Fred Gleaves, Mike Hawkins, Linda Jones-Bulman, John Kane, Ged McGrath, Michael McVeigh, Sam Meteer, Graham Minshaw, David Moore, Steven Morgan, Brian O’Kane, Sam Pollen, Andy Pratt, Peter Tyson, Carl Walmsley, Doug Wilson and Felicity Wilson

Officers: Pat Graham (Chief Executive), Julie Betteridge (Director of Growth and Inclusive Communities), Sarah Pemberton (Director of Corporate Services and Commercial Strategy (Monitoring Officer)), Steven Brown (Director of Financial Resources), Stephanie Shaw (Electoral and Democratic Services Manager), Mike Graham (Political Advisor), Clive Willoughby (Democratic Services Officer), Lesley Taylor (PA to the Mayor), Michaela Peet (Assistant Solicitor), James Young (Scrutiny Officer), Christina Cremins (Senior Communications and Engagement Officer) and Nick Hayhurst (Planning Development Manager) (for Agenda Items 1 to 12 only).

C 19/26 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors: Jackie Bowman, Jeffrey Hailes, Tom Higgins, Charles Maudling, Russell Studholme and Eileen Weir.

Officers: Clinton Boyce (Solicitor).

C 19/27 Minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2019

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2019 be signed by the Chair as a correct record.

C 19/28 Declarations of Interest in Agenda Items

Councillor Steven Morgan declared a non-pecuniary interest in the Agenda due to being Chairman of Time for Change and further stated that he would be resigning from that role in October.

C 19/29 Chairman’s Announcements

The Chair made the following announcements:

“Members are reminded that if they are going on holiday or will be unavailable, please let Democratic Services know.

At the request of Members, a copy of the current Constitution is on the table for each Councillor. This should be used when consideration is being given to reviewing sections of the Constitution. Please take this with you at the end of the meeting.
IT are working hard to get members iPads set up, however, the process is taking much longer than anyone anticipated. We will continue to keep you updated and thank you all for your patience.

From 30th September there will be a change to the parking arrangements at the Copeland Centre. Each Member will receive a plastic Parking disc to display on their windscreens and will be able to park in bays 72 to 78 on a first come, first served basis when attending meetings. Further details will be provided when the discs are given out.

I was invited to and attended the Citizen Advice Bureau’s 80th Anniversary celebration.”

C 19/30  **Petitions**

It was noted that no petitions had been received from members of the public.

C 19/31  **Questions from Members of the Public**

The following question was asked by Mr David Billing:

“As you will be aware, Millom Recreation Centre has now served Millom for nearly 30 years. The asset is owned by the Council and operated by a Management team comprising mainly Millom residents who provide their services as volunteers.

The facility has gone from strength to strength and has now out grown the current building space largely due to the thriving gymnastics participation.

Broadly the local catchment area for Millom is of the order of 8,000 people.

The Council (CBC) currently support the annual operation with a sum of £15k. This has broadly been the degree of support for the whole lifetime of the facility.

Could you state what are the other recreational facilities in the Borough (eg Whitehaven Sports Centre, Hensingham Swimming Pool etc) and give a broad outline how these facilities are funded and the individual annual operational costs.(supported by the Borough).

Could you comment as to whether there is a reasonable degree of parity in support for each of these facilities and where there is a significant disparity resolve to correct it.”

Councillor Gwynneth Everett responded:

“The Council recognises and welcomes the great work of the Millom Recreation Centre in supporting and improving the health and wellbeing of Copeland residents in the south of our borough. We receive annual reports on the outcomes from Millom Recs work and recognise the strong delivery against our annual grant.

The Council has maintained a grant to the Millom Recreation Centre over many years which is currently £15,000 per year. This has been kept at this figure for the past three years having previously been £7,790 in 2012/13 and £11,447 in 2015/16.
Alongside this, the Council provides a peppercorn lease to the Centre, the last lease term agreed in August 2014. This was for a 30-year term to assist the Centre Management Committee in applying for grants for their development plans.

The Council has a leisure contract with Greenwich Leisure Ltd, which began in 2006 and is due to finish on 31st March 2021. Three of our assets are included within this contract: Whitehaven Sports Centre, Copeland Pool and Fitness Centre and Cleator Moor Activity Centre. The Council has a contract management fee as part of the contract which has been negotiated to less than half its original value as part of our contract negotiations. These negotiations being held at periods over the past six years in line with the reduction in our core funding. This contract fee ensures services are available to residents throughout the borough but mostly from the North Copeland area where around 75% of our residents live.

The question asks for a broad outline of how these facilities are funded. The contract is resourced through external funding, no Council resources are used except staff time. The contract is targeted to enable access from our low income families and residents through the BeActivePlus card. Our contractors have engaged with outreach activity, our health and wellbeing priorities across the borough and been able to offer information and advice to a range of voluntary and community groups in the borough.

The contract is commercially confidential in terms of operational figures. We nominate Council Members to the Copeland Board of GLL who oversee the contract. This community membership board meets quarterly and receives performance and monitoring information and informs strategy and developments.

We have protected our commitment to Millom Recreation Centre through the annual grant and the uplift over the past three years alongside a less than best value arrangement on the Community Asset Lease of 30 years to ensure community benefit from the use of the building.

Mr Billing a member of the Millom Recreation Centre Management team asked a Supplementary Question:
The question still stands. The money provided as the Service Level Agreement £15k minus £5k for rates. No comparison to others we provide for in the borough, can you look at that please.

The Portfolio Holder undertook to send a written response to Mr Billing with a copy to Director Marion Giles of the Millom Recreation Centre Management Team.

C 19/32 Questions by Members

a) Written Questions

Councillor Eileen Weir had submitted the following question to the Mayor: -

"Peter McCall, the Police and Crime Commissioner for the County, has signed off on funding for the second phase of adding 80 extra cameras to local communities...
1) Has Copeland Borough Council applied to be included in this County distribution of new CCTV cameras?
   In March 2014, as County Councillor for Bransty, I participated in the decision for CCTV cameras to be installed in Whitehaven."
Especially the large camera pole outside Whittles furniture store, enabling coverage opposite the John Paul Jones pub at the harbour front and also along Tangier Street. The fact that the camera was installed opposite the John Paul Jones pub, was a contributory factor in Police being able to identify criminal activity in this area. We now are experiencing another wave of disorderly behaviour in this area, which is likely to be exacerbated due to the recent successful application of another drinking establishment on the corner of King Street, previously a betting shop.

2) Would it be possible, if an application is being made, for additional cameras in Whitehaven, that the existing camera on the corner of Duke Street/Tangier Street be extended by cable to cover Duke Street up to the junction of Joe Bananas/Church Street, with an additional extension to navigate the speeding activity from the said junction, along the remainder of Duke Street before the turn into Scotch Street.

3) Or – Would it be necessary to have a separate speeding camera to cover the unmonitored speed track which Duke Street is becoming late at night, when there are no police patrols?

4) Can we work in unison with Cumbria County Council in order to find a solution to this exceptionally dangerous section of Whitehaven which it is becoming a racing track in the evenings to take advantage of these additional cameras on offer?

The funding which the Police Commissioner has identified, which he intends to make available to assist local councils, is likely to be in areas currently without CCTV coverage. There is an argument to be made however, due to the increase in night life drinking businesses, within the said area, that it would also assist police to identify missing persons, who use crowd protection at weekends, in Whitehaven, to hide their identity."

In response, it was stated that as Councillor Wier was not present, the written reply that was available would be circulated outside of the meeting.

Councillor Jackie Bowman’s had submitted the following question to the Mayor: -

"On Wednesday 21st August l attended a meeting as a member of the Copeland Disability Forum.
It was brought to my attention by the Deputy Chair Mrs Linda Wilson that the comments requested in consultation for the Accessible Information Policy would appear to have been at the very least overlooked or at worst omitted.
Mrs Wilson is also deeply involved with the RNIB being visually impaired. This means she has first hand knowledge of the issues involved.

For this Council to be totally accessible to our constituents I feel this Policy should be revisited with a view to dealing with these discrepancies.

I was also very disappointed to learn that Mrs Wilson had emailed Julie Betteridge, with a cc to Mayor Starkie with regards to this problem on 27 July 2019 and that to date she has not had an acknowledgement let alone a reply.

To paraphrase Mrs Wilson, this Council fails to meet the needs of ALL people who access Council documents which in my opinion breaches our duty of equality.

I look forward to your response”
In response, The Head of Paid Service stated:-

“It’s very important to say we take equalities very seriously, we have a very strong relationship both with Copeland Disability Forum and the RNIB, we have strong operational and strategic relationships with them.

I think it’s therefore quite poor form that when one e-mail is missed by way of response the member of staff is then outing in the Full Council arena. This is not necessarily representative of our values. That officer wasn’t given any opportunity to follow up on an e-mail which hadn’t arrived in the inbox – we have had an IT check on that.

Since this question came in, the Officer has been in full contact with Mrs Wilson, our partner who we have worked with for a number of years. We also confirmed with the Head of Scrutiny at the time when the documentation was produced.

All points discussed and scrutinised, and incorporated into our policy. Many amendments to our documentation were made as a result of comments from Mrs Wilson.

Mrs Wilson fully engaged with us. We will refer back to OSC if Mrs Wilson raises any further points.

Note: Councillor Joan Hully declared an interest at this point due to being visually impaired and knowing Mrs Wilson.

b) Oral Questions

Question from Councillor Linda Jones-Bulman

With the recent closure of Mind in West Cumbria, what are the council doing to support our residents with mental ill health?

In response the Mayor said: “We’ve come to Millom tonight and one of the residents has asked about Admiral Nurses and the work they do in mental health. We take a real interest in all areas involving social issues and have various programmes running. I am aware of what is happening with MIND and will be looking at putting funding programmes together. Looking at the great work Admiral Nurses do, we will follow that up to see if we can work with them to help people in that situation. It will be a priority.”

Note: Councillor Joan Hully declared an interest at this point due to running a group that helps people with mental health issues and also had worked in mental health for a long time.

Note: Councillor Mike Hawkins declared an interest due to working for a mental health charity.

The Mayor continued, that he recognised the work Councillor Jones-Bulman did in the community and would welcome her help and input.

Question from Councillor Doug Wilson: Regarding the Towns Fund, are any plans for Millom and Cleator Moor to be involved in the decision making and the structural processes that will be needed to manage the fund?
In response the Mayor said “there are 100 towns across the country selected for the Stronger Town Fund and earlier in the year I spoke about the Future High Street Fund. I have several meetings putting the case for Copeland forward. Whitehaven came through in the Future High Street Fund and we’ve just submitted to Government last week the indicative value of that bid, which was in the region of about £21 million.

Cleator Moor and Millom, I am delighted that this could be up to £25 million. It is still very early stages. We are understanding the process and will keep people involved every step of the way.

We will take on board all suggestions.”

Councillor Doug Wilson thanked the Mayor and all those involved in putting the bid together.

Note: At this point Councillor Joan Hully declared an interest due to being town councillor for Cleator Moor.

Question from Councillor Andy Pratt: Thank you for the response I received regarding the five year land supply. The response was wishy-washy we still have no fine line of when we will get it. What is the hold up?

My second question is regarding the Beacon Portal, Councillor Everett was going to provide me with information what we are doing to promote the best use of the facility, but that information hasn’t come through yet.

In response Councillor Michael McVeigh stated that regarding the five year land supply, a briefing had been arranged for 16th September by Chris Hoban to which all members are invited.

Question from Councillor Sam Pollen: Regarding the Stronger Towns Fund, he welcomed the news for Millom and Cleator Moor, is there any fantastic news for Egremont?

The Mayor responded: Stronger Towns Fund and High Street Fund are Government initiatives. We have seen what has happened in Whitehaven, Cleator Moor and Millom. The funding in Egremont for the environmental scheme has been raised to £10 million. The work has started on that programme addressing a 40 year old issue of flooding. Town Centre Regeneration is a key theme of what we are trying to do in this authority since I got elected. There are various ways we are looking to achieve funding, now instead of sharing any other funding across the four towns we have ticked the boxes for Whitehaven, Millom and Cleator Moor and I’m confident there will be good news for Egremont soon.

I know as well as anyone what Egremont needs and I’m committed during the term of this council that we will deliver big style in Egremont as well as all the other towns.

Question from Councillor Sam Pollen: regarding the Crab Fair, there are problems with buildings on the Main Street. There is temporary scaffold up, the barriers on the walkways are unstable and cause hazards to the public and traffic. Can the Mayor speak to Cumbria
County Council and get stable, suitable barriers in place? We appreciate the support we are getting from Copeland Council for the event.

Response Mayor: Already spoken to Cumbria County Council and asked for those barriers to be put in place

The Mayor offered a meeting with all Egremont councillors to update with progress regarding the building on the Main Street. This is being addressed from several different angles.

Question from Councillor Felicity Wilson: Regarding the Mr Billing question, At the August Overview and Scrutiny Committee, we had a discussion about recreational provision. I did ask if we could analyse the leisure provision throughout Copeland, to get an understanding of what our Council can do to help Town and Parish Councils. We are going to put on our task and finish programme to look at and allow members of the public to take part. I just wanted to bring you up to date with that Chair.

In response the Mayor said that a Sports and Leisure Strategy is imminent and will go to tender in the next few days. Once we have that Sports Strategy, it puts us in a far better place to support the initiatives we have planned.

Question from Councillor Sam Meteer: We have received a copy of the old Constitution on the table tonight, it would be better if we had a copy of the new one.

In response, the Monitoring Officer stated that we are currently working on updating the constitution. We agreed that all members would have a copy of the current constitution. Several member had asked for a copy. When the new constitution updates are done you will receive a new one.

Councillor Joan Hully asked if we have a constitution Working Group and suggested we do have one.

C 19/33  Mayor's Executive Report

In asking the Mayor, Mike Starkie to introduce his Executive Report, Members were advised that questions would be taken at the end of each portfolio report.

The Mayor then made the following statement:
High Street Fund - The town deals are designed to promote investment into things like transport, digital, skills and culture and help to transform towns. Boost productivity and raise living standards. When you have towns the size of Millom and Cleator Moor, £25 million is going to make a big difference and have a real significant impact. Town Centre Regeneration has been a key pillar of our Corporate Strategy for the past four years. I was thrilled when the news came in. Some of things we have done at local level like the Pride of Place Scheme which has kicked the whole thing going and the investment in street cleaning has provided a platform of an authority that has got a clear plan. They have bought into what we are trying to do and are now providing the investment to do it.

We have the masterplans for all the towns and there is an awful lot of work gone into this. We now have the funds to reach our aspirations and deliver on those. We need to understand the content of the offer that the Government is making. High Street Fund detail
came through quickly and would expect the same with this funding. What I can say with some confidence is that this is not the last good announcement – there is more to come and we won’t have to wait long for the next one. We have a real opportunity to scale the heights. Cleator Moor and Millom feel they have been forgotten, this will change all this and for the better.

Communication Team, have been nominated for an award for the recycling campaign. The communications team do a fantastic job.

**Questions were then invited on the Mayor’s portfolio**

**Question Cllr Pratt: Latest News about the mine**

Response Mayor: I have the letter from West Cumbria Mining but it is marked private and confidential. Therefore, I would need permission to read it out but it is very positive in terms of the progress.

What is holding it up is the call in by Tim Farron MP for South Lakes.

**Question from Councillor Doug Wilson: In relation to Connecting Cumbria and the work Eric Barker has done in relation to Silecroft Café and the leisure area around there. I understand this has progressed to where the project is about to be delivered and wondered if there was any information from the Mayor re completion and long term delivery.**

Response from the Mayor: It’s part of the coastal communities work. We got £1.1 million funding from our bid to the Coastal communities Fund. In addition, Sellafield Ltd topped that up with a further £600,000.

We will give an update as soon as we have it.

**Question from Councillor Linda Jones-Bullman: Will Cleator Moor be receiving the public realm money in addition to the high street possible funding and stronger towns funding?**

Response from the Mayor, we also have a bid in for Heritage Status for Cleator Moor for £1.3 million, that bid is still in and we are expecting a response in the next week or so and would be additional to the stronger towns fund.

**Questions on Councillor David Moore’s portfolio were invited.**

Councillor David Moore began with a statement referring to a question raised by Councillor Dave Banks regarding Plutonium and the issue we have with the Ministry of Defence. He stated that he had written to the permanent secretary of defence to complain about the way we have been treated by the MoD and their engagement to discuss these things. Once a response is received, a copy will be sent to Councillor Banks.
Question from Councillor Sam Pollen, regarding the Council's response to Regulatory Asset Base (RAB) - concern re involvement of Councillors, or the lack of it. It was asked if this could be opened up to all members. We have a lot of nuclear briefs going forward, to open that up so all councillors can have an input would be appreciated.

Secondly regarding Nuclear Position Statements, can these meetings also be opened to all members?

Response Cllr Moore: The reason Regulatory Asset Base was delegated and agreed by Strategic Nuclear and Energy Board was because it needed a quick response. This is a high-level consultation RAB engaged is to find a new model for new nuclear. This creates an opportunity for investors to spread that investment over a longer period of time. It looks at spreading the cost of new build across tax payers, the government should be paying more to get big nuclear facilities built again and this is one of the methods of doing it. It would spread the cost across the consumer and across the tax payer.

We could be one of the key beneficiaries to this if we are going to develop Moorside. We will need a new finance model. The response has to be in in the next few days. Happy to share the response but because of timescales it won’t be possible to engage all members in that process.

Councillor Sam Pollen in a Supplementary, asked that in any future consultations, all members should be given the opportunity.

In response Councillor Moore: when time allows we will do that.

Geological Disposal Facility position, we are clear that is our position it is a holding statement. Radioactive Waste Management Briefing next week /member briefings COWRM/

Holding Statement allows us to negotiate forward with Government. We are still awaiting a transport plan. This is a long process. Government is allowing 20 years to get through the planning process.

Question from Councillor John Kane, regarding the Inventory for possible storage. We made a clear statement from this Council that we would not accept Plutonium going down the route of geological disposal and as far as I am aware we haven’t changed that yet. It’s obvious to me which way the Government are driving this, they want the waste to come here. 70/80% is already here but they have given us nothing as a community. This is our last chance to get anything out of them.

There is nothing wrong with the current storage, it is safe and does not bring a problem to this community.

In response Councillor Moore: On the subject of plutonium this Council’s position hasn’t changed.

Surface storage is currently stored in ageing facilities, some where planning consent is running out, something has to be done. There does need to be a solution. New surface stores would have to be built. Safety will always be the priority.
Councillor John Kane asked a supplementary, The life-blood of this community has been Sellafield, in the next year we will lose thousands of jobs.

Response from Councillor Moore: We do accept that there will be a loss in shift workers jobs. We get a lot out of the nuclear industry. We have a £30 million campus up the road. We do negotiate about what wastes come here, we have a different position and a different model. We are negotiating hard. We want to get the best for our communities and the best for the workforce.

Question from Councillor Sam Pollen, there is a meeting on 30th September to discuss our nuclear position statements. The Council position is clearly to support a GDF. Loss of jobs over next few years, there have been lots of words about diversification, but no action. I don’t think the community gets what it should for housing the waste that it does.

Response from Councillor David Moore: We have not agreed that a GDF is the place for it and this does not commit us to this.

At this point, the Chair stopped the discussion as this was not on this agenda.

Question from Councillor Felicity Wilson, as Councillors we have never been as well informed or supported in the nuclear industry. I commend the Executive, we have a dedicated nuclear team and receive regular briefings. This compares with very little 5 years ago. Can we continue and have more of it and ask our members to support these briefings?

The Mayor in response stated that in the last 12 months the NDA estate have put £100 million of additional work into Sellafield. We spoke earlier about West Cumbria Mining which is a £150 million project, this is all over the press which talks about the positive impact that will have. The additional works sourced by Sellafield and brought to West Cumbria in the last 12 months is worth £100 million and funds a lot of jobs. We need to focus and build on the good stories. The Whitehaven Campus funded by Nuclear Money.

We are currently in negotiation for a long-term social impact programme where they will commit to a ten year contract. Positive negotiation gets you a positive outcome. There are no orders for reprocessing now. Let’s get real and focus on how we can get the maximum out of it.

Question from Councillor John Kane stated, this is actually on the agenda as it is in the report. My concerns are not about the council, they are about the paymasters, the NDA, the Government. They spend £2 billion per year at Sellafield. We get next to nothing out of that. The NDA mission and they have been here 13 years to create diversification. I have not seen any of it. We need to ask the NDA what they are doing for this community.

In response the Mayor stated that a fair chunk of the money they spend is wages for people who live here and pensions. West Cumbria Mining talked about wanting to source his supply chain locally and he couldn’t find those businesses because they didn’t exist. We need to work with the industry to make sure those businesses are here in the future, that’s why there is huge investment into the Buzz Station. Look and develop businesses that can become
tomorrow’s supply chain and make sure we have them throughout Copeland. We need to focus on how we can work with them so they are able to help.

Councillor Sam Pollen supported Councillor Kane in that we will lose thousands of jobs. Councillor Kane is quite right to point this out. That is a fact and we need to know. We welcome positive things. Diversification was promised, when will it be delivered?

In response Councillor Moore stated that extra clean up works committed to employ and spend down there.

Last week we visited to Cavendish Nuclear, they are looking at the technologies, they are developing in conjunction with Sellafield to export around the world. They are developing cutting edge technology. Developing University ideas, that’s what we want to get behind.

Councillor Steven Morgan, as Chair of SNEB, commented that when the NDA met I gave them a hard time, their mission is not only to clean up but to realise the assets. One of the things about Sellafield and the nuclear industry is that it is a gem, a national resource. We need to use that.

It is untrue to say that all the work in this industry is done at Sellafield. The chair of BEC Business Cluster just returned from Japan where he was working with them to get business in West Lakes and other places.

Sellafield are putting together teams to do maintenance activity overseas. In the SMR work too. We will not only build them in West Cumbria, but install them and the maintenance would be done by West Cumbrians going to them. There is an awful lot being done. When MoD closes a base or facility, there is a transition. There will be jobs in the future, they may not be the same, but there will be jobs.

We will be working very hard to influence NDA and Central Government to make sure they play their part but for our part as a business community is to be able to market what we have in terms of property and with the technology the National Laboratory has. We always forget to mention that we have the National Nuclear Laboratory here where Nuclear Research and Development are at the cutting edge in the world.

Question from Councillor Andy Pratt, the Transport Movement Strategy Plan is long overdue, I believe Sellafield Ltd have ditched the independent company that were doing that report. Can we make sure that this gets done as soon as possible and who will scrutinise it if it’s done in-house?

Response from Councillor Moore stated we have been pressing Sellafield Ltd for a number of years for the proper full Transport Movement Strategy Plan, it’s been promised. It’s been subject to planning conditions that are not currently discharged, they’ve been put under pressure. We will be expressing in the strongest terms we are not comfortable with. We are very unhappy about what they have done now this transport plan needs to be brought forward quickly.
Question from Councillor Ged McGrath, there is a Polling District Review currently underway, there is a general election imminent, will we be using new or old polling stations?

In response the Electoral and Democratic Services Manager clarified that if a General Election was called before 1st December 2019, it would run on the current polling districts and polling stations.

Questions on Councillor Michael McVeigh’s portfolio were invited.

Statement from Councillor Mike Hawkins stated he was impressed by the Housing team and their professionalism and working together with other authorities. He thanked the Executive member and the Housing Team.

Councillor Michael McVeigh agreed that we had excellent officers in the Housing Team, and also gave details of visits to empty homes in the area.

Question from Councillor Peter Tyson, How many places did you visit and do you have a report?

Response from Councillor McVeigh provided an overview of the visit and the reasons for the empty properties. He stated that absent landlords were a problem and everything is being done that can be done in a legal context to ensure every part of the borough was being looked at.

In a supplementary, Councillor Tyson asked if Ward Councillors could have more involvement, can they be included in communications.

In response Councillor McVeigh reminded Council of the Protocol for members when contacting Home Group, first go to Home Group and if you don’t get a response let us know. Relay any concerns you have to ‘contact us’.

The Mayor then reminded Council that the Housing Strategy for Copeland was launched recently and this document is available on the website. It’s a first class document which helps both Councillors and residents and important that every member downloads or prints off this document.

Questions on Councillor Gwynneth Everett’s portfolio were invited.

Question from Councillor Doug Wilson, with reference to the Copeland Work and Skills partnership, Millom Network Centre has gone through a transformation and that the building is back in the ownership of the County Council.

The Network Centre Ltd still exists and has relocated to Unit 3 on the Devonshire Road Estate and offers training for woodwork skills and mechanics. Last year we did speak to the previous portfolio holder about funding courses there, but this wasn’t carried through because of the change in portfolio member.

As a council, can we use this facility and help to make it sustainable?
In response Councillor Gwynneth Everett stated she would bring this to the attention of the appropriate officer and provide Councillor Wilson with a written response.

Question from Councillor Ged McGrath: Can you provide information on Copeland Borough Council’s apprenticeship programme. We heard lots of good things last year. Will we be taking more on?

In response Councillor Everett agreed to provide the information in a written answer to Councillor McGrath. Also the Beacon information to Councillor Pratt

Question from Councillor Peter Tyson, regarding Social Inclusion, does Well Whitehaven just include Mirehouse, or does it include the rest of the ward?

In response Councillor Everett agreed to provide a written response.

Question from Councillor Graham Minshaw, relating to the Cleator Moor sports pitch. I’m receiving questions from the hockey club who are going to lose that facility when the new pitch is laid, they are currently still using the facility. They have had no feedback as to when or how long that will be still usable for them. Can you find out and let me know what the position is?

In response Councillor Everett agreed to provide a written response.

Note: At this point, Councillor Joan Hully declared an interest due to being a Cleator Moor Town Councillor.

Statement from Councillor Felicity Wilson: Well Whitehaven is a superb model that we could emulate throughout Copeland, are we looking at this as an ambition to develop a Well Copeland?.

In Response the Mayor stated that we do a lot already that would come under the Well Copeland banner. Significant funding has gone into the Good Enough Start programme. The Well Whitehaven Project Is specific to Whitehaven and has been largely Government funded and was chosen with nine other areas across the North of England. Well Copeland is well underway, we are doing more as an authority than we have ever done.

We need to work together to bring these programmes together and bring in the funding together to make sure they all work and have the necessary impact.

Questions on Councillor Steven Morgan’s portfolio were invited.

Question from Councillor Sam Pollen: I welcome the news about Hensingham play park and hope this is a sign of things to come. We have had problems with play parks in the past. I hope this move reflects a future change in policy and we will prioritise the 13 or 14 play parks
we have across Copeland. There’s a real need to have excellent play parks for our kids. We have one in Egremont which sits outside the Copeland ones. I would like to hear the Portfolio holder’s view on that and would request a discussion with the Portfolio Holder with a view to getting support to getting that play park re-opened.

In response Councillor Morgan welcomed a meeting with Councillor Pollen and stated we are looking at the full range of play parks that are not within our maintenance. We must make sure our play parks are safe and we have the appropriate funding for them. There are a number of play parks that we want to talk about, but it’s important to understand that what might have been a play park years ago, the type of equipment and facilities are different nowadays. There have been questions why the rubber floor at the Hensingham Park has been replaced with wood chips. Modernising the old facilities are not as easy as we think. Let’s make sure we do right by the young people.

Question from Councillor Allan Forster: Would like to pass on the Gratitude of Council to James Hunter and the team. Can we look at the decision by council in 2015 not to replace play parks when they came to the end of the line. Is this something we can look at?

In response Councillor Morgan stated we were able to get a one time Government grant to replace what was torn down. If you’re talking about additional things at Hensingham, I’d be glad to take a look at that. Right now there is no more funding. At the end of this month, all of our play areas will be open.

Statement from Councillor Peter Tyson, Woodhouse play park belongs to Home Group, when something breaks they don’t repair it, they remove it. Are you aware of these situations?

In response Councillor Morgan stated he was aware, but the problem was that it was not a Copeland property. A completed list of play areas and who owns them has been requested. It is of great concern. We have a number of play parks that are degrading over time because Copeland Council doesn’t own them.

Note: At this point Councillor Joan Hully declared an interest, due to having opened Woodhouse Play Park.

In a supplementary Councillor Tyson stated that these play parks are well used and very important to the people in that area.

Question from Councillor Ged McGrath: Delighted to see that the Commercial Strategy has begun to move. Will this be rolled out to members in the near future?

In response Councillor Morgan stated, Yes, we will be asking you to participate. It’s not enough for just the officers to do it. It will be necessary for all the councillors too to help us. Commercial awareness is really important. The future for the borough is going to depend on how we make it a welcoming place to do business. To attract investment as well as business, the SMR is a good example. We need to have multiple industries, workshops to develop ideas. This won’t happen if we don’t collectively do things.
Question from Councillor Felicity Wilson: Delighted to hear a definitive list of parks is being compiled. It is important we know where funding can come from if needed.

In response Councillor Morgan agreed to circulate the list of play parks and who owns them to all members.

**RESOLVED**: That the Mayor’s Executive report be noted.

**C 19/34   Former Assembly Rooms, Howgill Street**

Consideration was given to a report requesting an extension to the offer agreed at Full Council in September 2018 of the Former Assembly Rooms, Howgill Street, Whitehaven.

Councillor David Moore moved the report, which was seconded by Councillor Andy Pratt.

Councillor Sam Meteer asked for an assurance that any Service Level Agreement would be monitored and met.

Councillor Moore stated he was not aware of any that were not.

Councillor Brian O’Kane: Congratulated Copeland on trying to use assets to help the community. Cumbria County Council seem opposed to this and not use their properties.

Councillor Moore stated he was happy with our track record and congratulated the officers involved.

Councillor Dave Banks: Supported this proposal. He stated that the Phoenix Enterprise Centre was a good example of working in partnership.

At this point, Councillor Banks declared an interest in Phoenix Enterprise Centre.

**RESOLVED**: that

a) The Council’s leadership role and partnership approach in ensuring women centred approaches through involving women’s access to services in Copeland and in particular the aim to develop safe spaces as part of the work to ensure women can access services safely and in a supportive environment be noted and supported;

b) The successful delivery of a Women Out West Women’s Centre through the partnership and the hard work of Rachel Holliday and accountable body role of Time to Change in receiving Ministry of Justice, PCC and Francis C Scott funding be noted, and

(c) The extension of the offer of 14-15 Howgill Street for Women Out West Women’s Centre development and confirm the proposal to pursue a peppercorn lease will be open for a further 24 months and subject, as previously agreed to the final sign off of best consideration, viability of the business plan and governance for this element of Women Out West and for this to be delegated to the Council Solicitor in liaison with the S151 Officer, Portfolio Holders and Director of Growth and Inclusive Communities be agreed.
C 19/35  **Code of Conduct Update**

Consideration was given to a report from the Standards and Ethics Committee requesting an amendment to the Procedure for Investigating Councillor Code of Conduct Complaints.

Councillor Dave Banks, as Chair of the Ethics and Standards Committee moved the report, which was seconded by Councillor Doug Wilson.

During consideration of this item, the Mayor commented that the number of Code of Conduct complaints has plummeted. He was delighted that the time has been freed up for officers to get on with their work.

**RESOLVED**: that the Procedure for Investigating Councillor Code of Conduct Complaints be amended to include the following additional paragraph:

“That where a member is the subject of a complaint against him/her which is received by the Principal Authority whilst still holding office, and subsequently resigns prior to the determination of that complaint, that no further action be taken against that member in respect of that complaint for a period of 24 months from the date of resignation. If within that period the subject is either re-elected or co-opted on to a council, that the complaint is resumed and will be referred back to the Standards and Ethics Committee for consideration; that if the subject is not so re-elected or co-opted within that period that no further action be taken on the complaint.”

C 19/36  **Bi-Annual Monitoring Officer Report**

Consideration was given to the Bi-Annual Monitoring Officer Report which had been recommended to Council by the Standards and Ethics Committee for noting.

Councillor David Moore moved the report.

Councillor Dave Banks, as Chair of the Ethics and Standards Committee commended the officers for their hard work.

During the discussion that followed, Councillor Ged McGrath commented that his mobile telephone number was not listed on the Copeland website.

Councillor McGrath also thanked Democratic Services for providing the excellent induction training that was offered to all Members and for the continued support.

**RESOLVED**: that the Bi-Annual Monitoring Officer Report be noted.
Consideration was given to a report from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, who were asked by Council at the 25 June 2019 meeting to scrutinise proposed changes to the Council’s Constitution relating to Planning.

Councillor John Kane as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee moved the report, which was seconded by Councillor Graham Calvin.

Councillor John Kane then put forward the proposals of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which were:

- To agree with the proposed changes to the Amendment to Scheme of Delegation section.
- To reject all changes to the Member’s Site Visit Section.
- To remove point 1 in the Public Speaking Procedure (Restricting the number of speakers to a maximum of five in support or five in objection to any planning application) and accept points 2 (The restriction of the opportunity to speak to one meeting only to prevent repetition) and 3 (A requirement for any information that a speaker wishes to circulate to the Planning Panel such as photographs or written statement to be submitted six working days prior to the meeting).
- To accept the Minded to Decisions section subject to a reference to site visits being added.
- To reject the Members Protocol and create a Members Protocol Task and Finish Group to give it further consideration.

Councillor David Moore thanked the OSC for their report.

Councillor Moore was happy to accept the OSC recommendations, except those regarding Planning Panel Site Visits.

By way of an amendment the following was put forward:

“2.2 of the agenda report, Site Visits are carried out for the Planning Panel only, and subsequent site visits will be arranged for any Ward Member or any Parish or Town Councillors that wishes one”

We need to take on board the legal advice regarding lobbying.

Councillor Michael McVeigh agreed regarding 2.2 of the agenda report and cited his experiences as previous chair of the Panning Panel, where there had been conflicts on site visits.

Councillor Linda Jones-Bulman requested training for Town/Parish Councillors and Ward members on how to behave on site visits.

Councillor Andy Pratt asked for clarification on delegation and supported the proposal for separate site visits.
Councillor Doug Wilson has never known a site visit to be arranged for just a Parish or Town Council and the proposal makes no sense to him. Councillor Wilson asked what had changed?

In reply, Councillor Moore stated that the legal position had changed. Copeland was out of step with all other Councils in the country and to protect the council against legal challenge this change should go through.

Councillor Sam Meteer stated that Ward and Town/Parish Councillors were elected and entitled to attend.

In reply, Councillor Moore re-stated that Ward and Town/Parish Councillors would be welcome to attend a site visit arranged just for them.

Councillor Sam Meteer asked if a guarantee could be given that Ward and Town/Parish Councillors would receive the same information as the Planning Panel if they had a separate site visit.

In reply, Councillor Moore confirmed they would.

The Monitoring Officer then provided Council with evidence of case law and the exposure the council now has.
Due to the constitutional changes being made it is right to make these changes now.

Councillor Dave Banks gave his view regarding the value of having Ward and Parish/Town councillors present at site visits.

In reply, Councillor Moore confirmed that Ward Councillors and Parish/Town councillors would still be entitled to attend Planning Panel meetings to put their points across.

The Mayor stated that he can see no reason why this is causing a problem. No one will be denied any information. We will continue to give members all the information.

The Chief Executive clarified that the whole issue was about perception. Copeland would be open to legal challenge if changes to the site visits were not made. Nobody was being excluded from the process and now this issue had been aired, the risk of challenge had increased considerably.

Councillor Andy Pratt asked for and received clarification that there would be two separate visits.

Councillor Peter Tyson stated that whatever happens tonight, he would still attend a site visit if it’s in his ward, if he’s got something to say, invited or not.

Councillor Brian O’Kane stated that he has researched other Councils on the internet and can find no other council that holds site visits other than for Planning Panel members.

Councillor Mike Hawkins advised that as a County Councillor, he had been asked to attend in the past and thought it was courteous of the Borough Council to invite him, but he had never spoken at the Site Visit, just observed.
Councillor Felicity Wilson, believes this is an issue of trust.

The Mayor stated that this was not a matter of trust, it was a matter of perception.

Councillor Ged McGrath asked for clarification and stated he could not see what the problem was.

It was then moved by Councillor Joan Hully duly seconded and agreed that a 10 minute adjournment take place and the meeting stood ADJOURNED.

(Note: Councillors Fred Gleaves and Brian O’Kane left the meeting)

RECONVENE

Councillor David Moore by way of an amendment, the following was put forward to 2.2 “Site Visits are carried out for the Planning Panel only, and subsequent site visits will be arranged for any Ward Member or any Parish or Town Councillors that wishes one”

A vote on the amendment then took place and the result was:
9 For the Amendment, 14 Against the amendment and 1 Abstention.
The amendment fell.

It was agreed that 2.2 be returned to Standards and Ethics Committee for further discussion

RESOLVED – That with the exception of 2.2 which will be referred to the Ethics and Standards Committee for consideration, the remaining recommendations in the Agenda report be agreed.

C 19/38 2019 - 2023 Commercial Strategy

Consideration was given to the 2019-2023 Commercial Strategy.

Councillor Steven Morgan moved the report, which was seconded by Councillor David Moore.

RESOLVED: that the Commercial Strategy 2019-2023 as a means of enabling the Council to deliver a key ambition with strategic outcomes be agreed and approved.

C 19/39 Contract Standing Orders

Consideration was given to a Report proposing the adoption of new Contract Standing Orders to replace the previous 2012 version.

Councillor Steven Morgan moved the report, which was seconded by Councillor David Moore.

RESOLVED: that
a) Council adopt, as part of the Council’s constitution, and in accordance with section 135 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Contract Standing Orders forming the Appendix to the Agenda report; and

b) that any minor changes necessary to the said Contract Standing Orders, following implementation and in the interests of business efficacy, be delegated to the Director of Corporate Services and Commercial Strategy in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Commercial Development, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Chair of the Standards and Ethics Committee.

C 19/40 Date and Time of the Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of Council would be held at 2:00pm on Monday 2nd December 2019 at the Cleator Moor Civic Hall and Masonic Centre.

The Meeting closed at 9.00 pm

Chairman