

CUMBRIA ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes

In line with government guidance regarding the Covid-19 pandemic announced on 23rd March 2020, the scheduled meeting of the CALC Executive Meeting on 23rd July 2022 was held remotely via the internet.

Minutes of a meeting of CALC's Executive Committee held on **Saturday 23rd July 2022 at 10am.**

Present:

Sue Castle-Clarke - Chair

Bryan Craig – Vice-Chair

Mary Bradley

David Graham

Mike Higginbotham

Bev Pink

Andy Pratt

Doug Sim

Peter Smillie

Jane Tea

David Wilson

In attendance: Sonia Hutchinson Chief Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Jonathan Davies, Mark Kidd. Councillors Leith Hallatsch and Mike Cummings did not attend and did not submit apologies.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

David Graham declared a personal interest in item 16 (nomination of Honorary Officers) and said he would leave the meeting prior to that agenda item.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19th MAY 2022

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 19th May 2022.

As Kathryn was delayed the chair asked if the Executive Committee would be happy to take the next Agenda item the Training update first.

4. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Training and Development update was noted with the following comments.

Cllr. Andy Pratt asked if Clerk training could be made mandatory for new Clerks. S. Hutchinson explained that although CALC cannot make Clerk Induction training mandatory for new Clerks, we can recommend to councils that they include the need to attend training in the Clerks contract of employment. S. Hutchinson to look at the contract for employment template.

Cllr. Sue Castle-Clarke thanked Rachael for her presentation and the work she is doing on training.

5. CUMBERLAND AND WESTMORLAND AND FURNESS COUNCILS - BLUEPRINT BRIEFING BY KATHRYN GRIFFITHS (SENIOR MANAGER – LOCAL GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANISATION PROGRAMME)

Cllr. Sue Castle-Clarke asked Kathryn Griffiths if she was ready to talk about the blueprints and the mobilization program, and she hoped that she is going to confirm that nothing is going to happen all of a sudden on the 1st of April 2023.

Please see appendix 1 for a summary of the presentation and questions.

6. ANNUAL REVIEW OF 2023/24 CALC MEMBERSHIP FEES

The recommendation from the Staffing and Governance Committee to raise the CALC portion of the membership fees for 2023/2024 by £5,373 and increase the fee paid to CALC by parish meetings to £37.00/annum was unanimously approved.

7. LEGAL STRUCTURE OF CALC – CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION APPLICATION

The revised CIO Constitution version 9 as recommended by the Staffing and Governance Committee was unanimously approved.

8. RESILIENCE PROJECT

The update on the Resilience project was noted.

9. BALANCED SCORECARD REPORTS (APPENDIX 7A AND 7B)

The balanced scorecard report for the period from 1st April 2022 to 30th June 2022 was approved and the Resilience Project Plan was noted.

10. FINANCE MATTERS

- I. The updated budget monitoring statement to 30th June was noted.
- II. Payments and Receipts from 1st April to 30th June 2022 were noted.

- III. It was agreed to extend the Resilience Project Officer contract to 31st March 2023.
- IV. It was agreed to move the HSBC account to the Unity Trust Bank to enable online banking such as BACS transfers.
- V. The end of year audited accounts was noted.

11. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY ACTION PLAN INCLUDING CALC WEBSITE UPDATE

Cllr. Doug Sim gave the Executive Committee an overview of the current position. Following the briefing the Executive Committee discussed the quotes that had been provided for the development of a new website and also considered CALC's position with regards to current IT service provision through an SLA with Cumbria County Council and changes which may occur as a result of LGR. It was agreed to defer developing a new website until more information is available on whether or not one of the new Unitary Authorities will host the delivery of IT services to CALC.

12. FORWARD PLANNING' EVENT

It was agreed to hold a Forward Planning Event on 8th October 2022. S Hutchinson to book Newbiggin Village Hall for a face-to-face event.

13. TERMS OF REFERENCE

- I. It was agreed to approve the proposed terms of reference for the Local Government Reorganisation working group.
- II. It was agreed to defer the proposal to establish a subscription fee working group to review the mechanism for determining the level of CALC subscriptions per member until 2023.
- III. The terms of reference for the subscription fees working group were not approved at the present time.

14. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT ASSOCIATIONS

The reports from District Associations were noted. Councillor Mary Bradley also asked for it to be noted that she was disappointed with the Allerdale and Copeland report compared with what the other districts are doing.

15. REPORTS FROM CALC REPRESENTATIVES

The reports from CALC Representatives were noted. It was also agreed unanimously that all members who represent CALC on external bodies must provide a written report for any meetings they have attended to update the Executive Committee.

David Graham left the meeting.

16. CALC AGM AND CONFERENCE 24TH SEPTEMBER 2022

It was agreed that the theme for the CALC AGM will be the “Cost of Living” and the two guest speakers will be Speakers Steve Shaw (Power for People – The Local Electricity Bill) and Howard Cox (FairFuelUK)

The Executive Committee also confirmed that at the AGM it wishes to

Nominate the following to be the Association's Honorary Officers, namely:

President David Graham MBE

Treasurer: Mrs J Hartley

And recommend the following District Association nominations.

Allerdale	Chair	Mary Bradley	Broughton PC
	Vice Chair	David Wilson	Brigham PC
	Calc Representative on GDF Partnership		
	David Wilson	Brigham PC	
Barrow	To be confirmed		
Carlisle	Chair	Mike Higginbotham	Wetheral PC
	Vice Chair	Bryan Craig	Dalston PC
Copeland	Chair	Andrew Pratt	Drigg and Carleton PC
	Vice Chair	Doug Sim	St. Bees PC
	Calc Representative on South Copeland GDF Partnership		
		David Savage	Millom Without PC
	Calc Representative on Mid Copeland GDF Partnership		
Eden		Keith Hitchen	Drigg and Carleton PC
	Chair	Sue Castle-Clarke	Ousby PC
	Vice Chair	Jane Tea	Kirkoswald PC
South Lakeland	Chair	Leith Hallatsch	Windermere TC
	Vice Chair	To be confirmed	

17. NEXT MEETING DATE

CALC AGM SATURDAY 24TH SEPTEMBER 2022

Appendix 1

Summary of Kathryn Griffiths presentation and questions re the LGR Programme.

Kathryn Griffiths opened the discussion by confirming that there would not be any huge radical changes to services on the 1st April next year, nor hopefully to people's experiences of those services.

Kathryn then gave the following overview of where the programme board is with regards to the blueprint documents.

I will just talk through where we're at with individual services and what comes next and then I'm more than happy to take any questions.

As part of the design process for the LGR program, officers that are involved across services and across all the Councils have been looking at what they think might be possible to deliver on day one. So the proposals are essentially what those services would look like on vesting day and it's very much been based on a consideration of what would be safe and legal on that day and as you said, we don't want any disruption and we don't want any significant radical shifts when the councils move from seven into the two.

Delivery model for day one is that wherever possible, there will be separate services for each of the unitary councils.

The number of services in the second appendix in the report helpfully summarises the vast majority of services we are proposing to separate. So these reports went to all members for them to make decisions on but the areas where we don't think it's feasible to separate from day one, for a variety of reasons, such as waste or social care services might take about a 12 or 18 month transition.

Services that are suggested as being hosted will be given more consideration over the next two or three months around whether Hosting's are the right thing and if that's the case then which of the two councils would be hosting. So there are informal discussions planned with the program SRO's, the leaders, the two shadow Councils and their portfolio holders over the coming weeks and months. When they make a decision around a hosted service, it will be going back to their executive boards and the in principle decisions that we've made with them especially around separate services will allow officers then to work with members to move through the design stage into implementation.

Looking at the financial position, they are looking in more detail around how we are going to allocate staff across the councils. Looking at the contracts and a variety of other things and so this is just the start really and there will be significant engagement over the coming months as we look at all the kinds of factors that you would take into account when planning services.

But again to go back to Sues point the key thing is to have a safe, legal and smooth transition from the seven councils into the two councils at the beginning of April next year and to ensure that this doesn't have any negative impact on the communities, customers etcetera that use those services. The focus is very much on being safe and legal and getting the requirements that we need to have in place for day one to ensure those services run smoothly.

So I'm happy to take any questions anybody's got and I might not know the detail around specific services, but if I don't, I'll try and find out and get back to you.

Cllr. Sue Castle-Clarke

Just before we get into questions, can I just clarify with you, Catherine, just so everybody's clear about this, obviously one of the key concerns for many town and parish councils in our membership is devolution of assets and services. Can we just be clear that from the 1st of April next year, devolution of assets and services to town and parish councils will not be a priority issue like we've just said, it's about being safe, legal and having a smooth seamless transition of existing services. I think we need to understand that.

Kathryn Griffiths

Yes.

Cllr. Sue Castle-Clarke

One of the big things you've got to deal with over the next few months is the TUPE of thousands of existing staff members. And once that's done, then you can be fairly sure that services will have a seamless transition. But devolution of assets and services such as toilets, parks, footway lighting and everything else will be low down the priority list for the new councils. Will it not?

Kathryn Griffiths

I would imagine so I'm not that close to the detail, but I would imagine so. One of our key work streams in the program is looking at it and the advice going back into those shadow councils is that there will be minimal, if any change other than the legal shift from the seven Councils into two with regards to the ownership of assets. As staff separate, we won't be moving them around to the different headquarters they will remain where they are for several months, potentially up to two years so you could have Westmorland and Furnace staff working in Cumberland offices. Over that first year they will start to think about what their strategy is around assets and there'll be some proposals in the next month or two around, you know, sort of how they are going to manage their accommodation. But yes, it will initially be trying to maintain a steady safe transition and then those two councils once they're stabilized will have to take a view of what they want to do and how they want to manage their assets, and I know they're both in the process of developing their corporate plans and they'll be coming back to engage with you on that, but yes there won't be any sort of significant activity around what you're talking about for quite some time.

Cllr. Sue Castle-Clarke

Thank you for clarifying that Kathryn. Right colleagues, what have we got in terms of comments and questions for Kathryn?

Cllr. Sue Castle-Clarke

I've got a comment just to kick off obviously one of the things that we are focused on is CALC. I think we just need to be clear that CALC is definitely on your radar and we are mentioned alongside town and parish councils in both sets of documents for each of the councils, under place within localities and communities, aren't we?

Kathryn Griffiths

Yeah, yes.

Cllr. Sue Castle-Clarke

And it's reassuring that we are mentioned because obviously we are, we like to think, Kathryn the first tier of local government closest to the communities. So it's reassuring to know that we are on everybody's radar and I can tell people here today at the meeting that Sonia and I have been having informal discussions with various people in both the new councils and officers behind the scenes and everybody is very keen that CALC and our Members have a fully engaged role moving forward in developing policies and ideas and proposals. So that's really great news.

Kathryn Griffiths

Yes, definitely.

Sonia Hutchinson

Bev.

Cllr. Bev Pink

Hi thanks Kathryn for that. But clearly devolution of assets is a key thing for us so can I ask with this reorganization, is it likely then that a lot of existing policies are going to radically change?

Kathryn Griffiths

Well, the approach that's being taken at the moment is that each Constitution has been produced for each of the shadow authorities, and they've set out there a policy framework, and that includes like Council plans and their budget strategy. So obviously, they'll be developing those for the two new organizations and all the policies that sit across.

And within the services, they're just being reviewed at the moment and you can appreciate there is a significant number of them. One piece of work being done is to understand what actually needs to change from day one and which policies can roll on. The intention is to change the most necessary ones and where you know it's not a critical requirement to shift those policies, then they'll probably roll forward with each count new council having a pipeline of policies to review.

You'll probably see some changes obviously as each Council's going to develop its own Council plan anything radical across a lot of the policies, they'll just roll forward and then as this new organisations stabilize and determine the way they want to operate into the future, then changes will emerge and they will start to transform in the way that they want, which will take a number of years but I couldn't give you details around any specific policies or anything at the moment.

Cllr. Bev Pink

My main concern and I know you can't discuss this, is footway lighting. I'm not going to put you on the spot about it because you've made it clear, but that's obviously not a priority, and it just feels like we're adopting a wait and see policy, really seeing what comes out of the new local government arrangement. So just wait and see what happens I suppose.

Kathryn Griffiths

I don't know about that area anyway but I think there will be some sort of prioritization when you have got a number of councils coming together into two which might have slightly different policies. There is a piece of work going on in the areas that are supporting the two new shadow authorities to look at harmonisation and what's feasible in the time scales that we have got, but the areas that are going to be reviewed are critical areas which are going to have to ensure that the councils are safe and legal. But a significant proportion of policies will be rolled over into that pipeline of work which will be part of the transition and transformation in the new organisations.

Cllr. Bev Pink

That fine Kathryn, I appreciate your position, but thank you very much anyway.

Cllr. Sue Castle-Clarke

Mike, you had your hand up.

Cllr. Mike Higginbotham

Obviously, we know how parish councils are going to be represented in the new two councils from the 1st of April, but to complete the picture what will happen on the 1st of April when we go from seven to two districts how are the non-parish areas going to get adequate representation and communication? And obviously this is a long standing problem from the point of view that rural parish councils are seen to be an extra layer of actual representation. So for example, in Carlisle, the City Council will no longer exist from the 1st of April, and it's obviously at this stage not parished. How do you see that particular area being represented in the Cumberland area?

Kathryn Griffiths

I don't have an answer for you on that. I'm not that close to it, so I'd be more than happy to go away and speak to the Board and the team looking at that piece of work around. I will get back to you via Sonia.

Cllr. Mike Higginbotham

I'm sure things are going on in the background but come the 1st of April there are unlikely to be support mechanisms actually in-force. So I just wondered whether or not you had any information relating to possibilities.

Kathryn Griffiths

No. Sorry I don't but I'll I will go back and ask the question and come back via Sonia with a legal response.

Cllr. Mike Higginbotham

Many thanks for your time and advice.

Kathryn Griffiths

No problem.

Cllr. Sue Castle-Clarke (Guest)

Anybody else, any comments or questions for Catherine?

Cllr. Sue Castle-Clarke (Guest)

No, not at this stage. I think we're still taking in those heavy tomes of documents you sent. But thank you very much for coming and giving us an overview of what's happening so far and can we keep in contact with you and perhaps you can come and give us an update when we have our next meeting at the end of the year as this is obviously close to all our hearts and we need to keep up to speed on it. So thank you very much for what you've done this morning.

Kathryn Griffiths

It's a pleasure and yes happy to come along and again