

## Report from Michael Hanley, Eden District Councillor to Alston Moor Parish Council, 7<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

### Eden District Council Meeting 12<sup>th</sup> September.

There were 19 questions to the leader, 18 from the Conservative councillors. These questions were mostly directed at the way the new executive were doing things, eg the target of being carbon neutral by 2030. Mike Eyles brought a motion asking for an extraordinary meeting in October to look at the impact of Brexit on Eden. This was amended so that the meeting will take place after we know when Brexit is definite. John Owen talked about the situation with Heart of Cumbria (HoC) Housing, where he had been told not to hold an AGM or any other meetings.

### Eden Health and Wellbeing Forum 13<sup>th</sup> September.

Present: county councillors, Eden district counsellors (3), Housing reps and a local lead GP, Dr Ashley Liston.

Purpose: To improve health and wellbeing and in Eden and reduce health inequalities. There are low levels of unemployment in Eden but also low rates of pay. Eden has the highest need for face to face debt counselling in the North-West, mostly credit card debt. One third of the population has an income of less than £10,000. We discussed how we could fund an adviser. Dr Liston talked about a scheme to employ youth mental health councillors in partnership between the local Primary Care Network and Barnardo's as the responsiveness of the local CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service) was so poor. CAMHS is already improving since came under the control of NTW (Northumbria, Tyne and Wear NHS Trust).

### Scrutiny Co-ordinating Board 19<sup>th</sup> September.

1. We discussed the employment of outside consultants. Chief executive, Rose Rowse, said that they are highly knowledgeable and effective and able to hit the ground running. She would not employ them for more than 5 months at a time.
2. We discussed the resignation of several Heart of Cumbria directors. Matthew Neal (Director of Corporate Services) said that there were enough other directors to keep it running.
3. Performance: a new traffic lights system showing how various areas of the council is performing was discussed. Rose said that this is very useful as one could see this at a glance. Areas needing attention are: IT, Service Quality, Business Growth Programme, attracting digital and technology businesses, superfast broadband and the Events Programme.
4. Review of polling stations: only 2 do not have disabled access. I asked whether this could be remedied and Matthew said he would look into this.

### Accounts and Governance Committee 26<sup>th</sup> September.

Mr Kelly, external auditor, discussed the audit. Financial sustainability is very important. His overall conclusion was the council had put in place proper

arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2019. He talked about the fact that the Audit Commission was abolished in 2015 and its work was taken over by the Ministry for Housing, Community and Local Government. This department has not caught up and is not providing effective leadership to local government systems.

Annual fraud: Mostly concerned with benefit fraud. Only £1600 was identified and most of this is thought to be errors in Housing Benefits and not necessarily fraud carried out by the individual.

Complaints: 8 received, 1 upheld. Most of these were to do with planning and governance.