

Westmoreland and Furness Council 17.5.22.

Report by Michael Hanley (MH)

1. Election of chair: Councillor Severn (LD).

2. Election of vice-chair: Ali Jama (LD).

3. Code of Conduct: Cllr Shirley (C): seems to be multiple versions of this document. When will we see a final version?

Carried unanimously.

4. Constitution:

Originally there were to be 12 members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, this was increased to 14. There will be 3 committees: Overview and Scrutiny, Senior Appointments and Standards.

Phil Dew (C): Asked about the requirement to stand when speaking.

Jonathan Brook (Leader of LDs): It will be a matter of choice whether a member stands or not. We will be looking to an inclusive council.

Cllr Carrick (Leader of Conservatives): Asked about the date of the next election, it was not clear from the document.

Chair (Cllr Severn): The purpose of this meeting is not to go through the constitution line by line.

5. Interim Officers

Head Officer: Sam Plum, Monitoring Officer: Linda Fisher, Financial Officer: Helen Smith

Cllr Brereton (C): Do we know the salaries?

JB: No.

Cllr Shirley (C): The three officers will have two jobs, one in the current councils and one in the unitary authority.

JB: Yes they will have two roles.

Cllr Shirley: Careful consideration should be given to work/life balance.

Anne Burns (L): We are very lucky to have the quality of officers we have. It would have been good if the government had given some funding for these roles but they didn't.

PD: WAF has an implementation fund of £19 million. I think it's important to make the substantive appointments as soon as possible.

6. Election of Leader

Cllr Thornton: I propose Jonathan Brook as leader. He speaks with honesty and delivers what he says. He was a leader of a local homelessness charity.

Cllr Taylor: I support Jonathan Brook. Elected.

7. Deputy Leader: Pat Bell (LD) elected.

8. Leaders of other Groups: Labour: Anne Thomson, Conservatives: Hilary Carrick, Independents: Mary Robinson.

9. Political Balance:

Appointments to the three Committees: MH was appointed to Overview and Scrutiny.

PD: What constitutes a political group.

Linda Fisher (MO): A group is any group of two or more.

10. Implementation Plan: Kim Rennie (KR)

We are working with KPMG. Contributions from seven councils are £18.9 million. Eden's is £1.5 million.

Clr Taylor: The £19 million cannot be spent on transformation, how is this different from transition?

KR: It won't pay for transformation teams. Transition is the move from 7 to 2 councils.

Clr Thornton: This £19 million didn't come from the Conservative government, it's not for the government to tell us what to do with this money.

Clr Taylor: Can we decide whether it is up to us to decide?

Sam Plum: The job over the next 10 months is how to decide to transfer the current services to the two new authorities.

Clr Jarvis: There is a need to change but we have received little guidance. We can make decisions with the new council.

11. Members' Allowances

There is an independent LGR allowances panel.

For the shadow year (first) the allowances will be as follows. All Councillors: £6k per annum.

Leader: £10.5k per annum. Deputy leader: £5.6k per annum. Chair: £2.4k per annum. After April 23 these rates will double. Travel allowance: 45 pence per mile.

Clr Dixon: These are modest allowances. I am a working person and it is a cost for me to serve. In the past we had a fund for those councillors who felt they didn't need their allowances and could contribute to this fund to fight poverty.

LF: We have a scheme for members who want to forego their allowance.

Clr Archibald (LD): This fund could be extended to help the Ukrainians who are trying to come to this country.

Vote: All Conservatives voted against this motion, one Labour councillor abstained, all others voted for.