

CUMBRIA BRANCH OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cumbria Branch of the Local Government Association held on Wednesday 1 June 2005 and Hundith Hill Hotel, Cockermouth at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT

Mr J Musgrave – Allerdale Borough Council (Chair)

Allerdale Borough Council

Mr J Mumberson
Mr D A P Thomas

Barrow In Furness Borough Council

Mr J E Joughin

Carlisle City Council

Mr J D Jefferson
Mr M Mitchelson

Copeland Borough Council

Miss E Woodburn
Mr H Wormstrup

Cumbria County Council

Mrs A Burns
Mr B Cannon
Mr T Heslop
Mr T J Knowles
Mr A P Richardson
Mrs J Stocker
Mr T C Stoddard
Mr S F Young

Eden District Council

Mr C Nineham

South Lakeland District Council

Mrs E M Braithwaite

Also in Attendance:-

Mr C Bamber	-	Government Office North West
Mr I Bruce	-	Eden District Council, Chief Executive
Mr S Broomhead	-	North West Development Agency, Chief Executive
Ms C Collier	-	Cumbria Vision, Chief Executive
Mrs J Currie	-	Member Services Unit (Secretary)
Mr R Howard	-	Cumbria County Council, Corporate Director – Economy, Culture & Environment
Ms M Mooney	-	Carlisle City Council, Chief Executive
Mr M Phillips	-	Allerdale Borough Council, Acting Chief Executive
Mr P Ridgeway	-	South Lakeland District Council, Planning Services Manager
Mr P Stybelski	-	Cumbria County Council, Chief Executive

**PART I – ITEMS CONSIDERED IN THE
PRESENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED, that Mr J Musgrave be elected as Chair of the Cumbria Branch of the LGA for the ensuing year.

2. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

RESOLVED, that Mr T Waiting be elected as Vice-Chair of the Cumbria Branch of the LGA for the ensuing year.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr R Bloxham – Carlisle City Council, Mr E Firth (substitute Mr J D Jefferson) – Carlisle City Council, Mrs J Ewing – South Lakeland District Council, Mr P Howard (substitute Mr A P Richardson) – Cumbria County Council and Mr T Waiting – Barrow Borough Council.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Mr T Heslop and Mrs J Stocker declared a personal interest in Agenda Item No.9, Cumbria Vision as they were both Board Members.

5. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED, that the press and public be admitted to the meeting for all items of business.

6. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED, that the Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 7 March 2005 be agreed as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair.

7. MATTERS OF URGENCY

In accordance with Section 100B Sub Section 4(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Chair reported that he had agreed to take the following item as a matter of urgency:-

Deputy Chair of the North West Regional Assembly 2005/06

He had agreed to take this item as urgent due to the fact that a nomination was required before the meeting of the NWRA in July 2005, and to leave it until the next meeting of this Branch would be too late.

8. DEPUTY CHAIR OF THE NORTH WEST REGIONAL ASSEMBLY 2005/06

RESOLVED, that Mr T C Stoddard, Cumbria County Council be the nomination from Cumbria to assume the role of Deputy Chair for the 2005/06 period.

9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION MATTERS

Mrs Braithwaite highlighted for Members items of interest from the Local Government Association digest of issues considered during May 2005.

New Cabinet Role

Following the election Mr D Milliband entered the Cabinet as the Minister of Communities and Local Government. This was a new position within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The LGA welcomed the creation of this post as a clear indication of successful engagement between central and local government.

Finance

The LGA was already lobbying on the 2006-07 funding settlement for local government and would be using the post election period as an opportunity to reinforce demands for reform of local government finance.

10. REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE AND HOUSING TARGETS IN CUMBRIA

The Branch received a presentation from Mr Christopher Bamber, Senior Spatial Development Manager from Government Office North West.

Mr Bamber explained that urban regeneration was the key priority in the Regional Spatial Strategy. Government Office North West were aware that this did not only affect Manchester/Liverpool but also affected Barrow and the West Cumbrian towns and therefore had a dimension internal to Cumbria. Meeting the needs for affordable housing was also a key regional priority, both in the RSS and the Regional Housing Strategy.

Mr Bamber said the RSS also highlighted sustainable rural regeneration, such as focusing most development of markets towns and local service centres, and fostering the development of the role of regionally significant 'key towns' in Cumbria – Barrow and Carlisle.

He emphasised to Members the need for the RSS policies to be read together, these documents did not contradict each other. However, when the pursuit of one policy risked impeding the achievement of other legitimate objectives, Government Office North West would listen.

Regional Spatial Strategy and House Build

Mr Bamber explained that strategic house building limits had been pursued to further urban regeneration by cutting oversupply in suburban and rural areas, so as to focus house building on towns and cities, including the towns in Western Cumbria.

Mr Bamber said Government Office North West would react sympathetically where circumstances of the rigid imposition of these limits would prevent the meeting of needs such as that for affordable housing. However they would not support indiscriminate relaxation of house build figures without clear evidence.

Members of the Branch were concerned about young people in their local areas who were not able to buy properties due to the lack of affordability, and a low wage economy. Within West Cumbria the NDA had recently located to the area, but due to the lack of suitable housing, staff were living outside of the area. This meant that Copeland was not benefiting from the economic spend.

Mr Bamber said the Government had acknowledged these problems and would be interested in considering a number of solutions including:-

- Shared equity
- Right to buy

The Chair thanked Mr Bamber for his presentation.

11. CUMBRIA VISION – CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

The CBLGA received a presentation from Chris Collier, Chief Executive of Cumbria Vision on the consultation currently being undertaken by the North West Development Agency and Cumbria Vision.

Ms Collier explained the objectives of Cumbria Vision which included:-

- Provide strategic leadership on the Cumbria economy
- Increase the benefits of external funding into Cumbria
- Achieve more effective integration of regeneration activity in Cumbria
- Promote the ambition of Cumbria regionally and nationally

Cumbria Vision had a mix of public and private sector Board Members including:-

Public Sector	Joan Stocker	Cumbria County Council
	Tim Heslop	Cumbria County Council
	Terry Waiting	Barrow Borough Council
	Jim Musgrave	Allerdale Borough Council
	Mike Mitchelson	Carlisle City Council

Private Sector	Dominic Allonby	eDirectory
	David Brockbank	Chairman
	Robin Burgess	CN Group
	Michael Hulme	West Lakes Renaissance
	Bill Lowther	Cumbria Strategic Partnership
	Richard Mrowicki	Nuclear Decommissioning Authority
	Alastair Wannop	Eden Agriculture
	Charles Woodhouse	Rural Regeneration Cumbria

In the consultation proposals Cumbria Vision would operate with a Strategy and Performance Management Group, which would include commissioning, procurement, intelligence and policy, and a Policy Advisory Group.

Ms Collier emphasised that existing programmes were protected and funding would still be available for these. She felt that in future opportunities would be available which would excite and engage the private sector and raise the profile of Cumbria.

Members were extremely concerned at the consultation process for these proposals and the timescales given for response. They did not feel that the process had been democratic and the short timescale allowed would prohibit a number of organisations from carrying out effective consultation.

Copeland Borough Council had drafted a motion for the CBLGA to agree in relation to these proposals and it was circulated to the Branch for consideration. This motion was that:-

- (1) Cumbria LGA writes to the Chairman of the North West Development Agency
 - (a) Objecting in very strong term to the way the proposals have been developed by NWDA;
 - (b) Calling on the NWDA to withdraw its proposals and commence a proper consultation process which includes a number of options;
 - (c) Confirming the view of Cumbria LGA that the most important factor in considering options should be the more effective delivery of regeneration in Cumbria;
 - (d) Seeking agreement of the Chair and Chief Executive of NWDA to an urgent meeting with Council leaders;
- (2) That Members of the LGA agree to a joint lobby of Ministers and Government officials to raise concerns about the proposal and in particular to seek assurances that proper consultation will be carried out before any decisions are taken.
- (3) That Cumbria LGA writes to local MPs, the Cumbria Strategic Partnership, English Partnerships and other bodies seeking support for the action being taken.

This motion was debated and a number of proposals for amendment were discussed. Following these discussions Mr T J Knowles proposed an amendment to the motion to say that:

Although we are in principle supportive of one strategic delivery body for regeneration in Cumbria we are:-

- (a) Objecting in very strong terms to the way the proposals have been development by NWDA;
- (b) Confirming that the most important factor in considering options should be more effective delivery of regeneration in Cumbria;
- (c) Welcoming the proposal that Carlisle will now be part of a regeneration company and that there will be no reduction of existing funding schemes.

The amendment was duly seconded by Mrs Burns. All Members agreed, in principle with the amendment, although Copeland Members did not wish to see any alteration to their original motion. On being put to the vote 14 Members voted IN FAVOUR of the amendment and 2 AGAINST and it was declared WON.

It was **AGREED** that,

Although we are in principle supportive of one strategic delivery body for regeneration in Cumbria we are:-

- (a) Objecting in very strong terms to the way the proposals have been development by NWDA;
- (b) Confirming that the most important factor in considering options should be more effective delivery of regeneration in Cumbria;
- (c) Welcome the proposal that Carlisle will now be part of a regeneration company and that there will be no reduction of existing funding schemes.

12. CUMBRIA JOINT PLANNING COMMITTEE FOR COUNTY WIDE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS/PROGRESS REPORT

The Branch considered a report by the County Council's Corporate Director – Economy, Culture & Environment, which reminded Members of the need for Councils to nominate representatives for the "Shadow Committee" to enable the preparation of the Supplementary Planning Document on wind energy to be progressed.

RESOLVED, that Councils submit the names of their representatives and substitutes as soon as possible.

13. SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Cumbria Branch considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive/Corporate Director – Finance & Central Services, Cumbria County Council, which asked the Branch to determine the subscriptions for the forthcoming financial year.

In accordance with the working arrangements all constituent Councils pay a subscription to the Branch. In 1999/2000 these were £2,000 for districts and £6,000 for the County Council.

Since the initial demand it had been agreed that no subscriptions be levied given the amount of unallocated resources. As at 31 March 2005 the unallocated resources stood at £3540.44.

RESOLVED, that

- (1) no subscriptions be levied for 2004/05
- (2) the expenses incurred by the Secretary for the cost of postage and consumables be met for the forthcoming year.

14. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES BY CUMBRIA BRANCH OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

The Branch considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive/Corporate Director – Finance & Central Services, Cumbria County Council which notified Members of appointments to Outside Bodies made by the CBLGA since 2001.

The Deputy Leader of Cumbria County Council notified the branch that the membership had changed for the Change for Children Partnership. The District Council would now be asked to nominate three representatives to the partnership. Cumbria Community Foundation also asked the Branch to make nominations to their body, but this had not been included in the report. The Secretary agreed to amend this.

It was **AGREED** that the report be received and noted.

15. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

The date of the Cumbria Branch of the Local Government Association meetings for the forthcoming year were as follows:-

DATE	VENUE	TIME
29 September 2005	Copeland	11.00 am
20 December 2005	Eden	11.00 am
28 March 2006	County	11.00 am
8 June 2006	Carlisle City	11.00 am

16. FORWARD PLANNER

The following were agreed as agenda items for the next meeting:-

- (a) Cumbria Vision – Detailed Responses
- (b) Equality and Diversity Progress Reports

17. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Cumbria Branch of the Local Government Association will be held on Thursday 29 September 2005 in Copeland.

18. PAPERS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

The following were received as items for information:-

18.1 Equality and Diversity Update Reports

The Meeting closed at 4.30 pm.