

Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 13 APRIL 2017 AT 10.00AM

PRESENT: Councillor Watson (Chairman), Councillors Allison, Bowditch, Mrs Bowman, Mallinson J, McDonald, Mrs Riddle and Robson.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Glover - Leader
Councillor Dr Tickner – Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder
Councillor Miss Sherriff – Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder

OFFICERS: Town Clerk and Chief Executive
Corporate Director of Economic Development
Deputy Chief Finance Officer
Customer Services Manager
Service Improvement Manager
Overview and Scrutiny Officer

ROSP.22/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence submitted.

ROSP.23/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest affecting the business to be transacted at the meeting.

ROSP.24/17 PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was agreed that the items of business in Part A be dealt with in public and Part B be dealt with in private.

ROSP.25/17 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – 1) That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 January 2017 be agreed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman

2) That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2017 be noted.

ROSP.26/17 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS

There were no items which had been the subject of call-in.

ROSP.27/17 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented report OS.09/17 and provided an overview of matters that related to the work of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

The Notice of Executive Key Decisions had been published on 10 March 2017 and the following items fell within the remit of the Panel:

KD.06/17 – 2016/17 Provisional Outturn Reports

KD.07/17 – The Medium term Financial Plan (including the Corporate Charging Policy) and the Capital Strategy 2018/19 to 2022/23

KD.08/17 – The Asset Management Plan 2017 to 2022

The Panel's current Work Programme was attached to the report and Members were asked to begin thinking about the focus for the Panel's work in the next municipal year.

RESOLVED – That the Overview Report incorporating the Work Programme and Key Decision items relevant to this Panel (OS.09/17) be noted.

ROSP.28/17 CARLISLE AMBASSADORS

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive submitted report CE.05/17 which briefed the Panel on the Carlisle Ambassadors' initiative.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive reminded the Panel that Carlisle Ambassadors was set up in 2013 following the Economic review which had identified the need for Carlisle to grow in population and business terms to achieve its economic potential. Carlisle Ambassadors was established to help enable the Council to work in partnership with businesses to raise the profile of Carlisle.

Carlisle Ambassadors brought together a range of businesses and organisations to meet on a regular basis to show case the businesses and provide a powerful business networking opportunity.

Carlisle Ambassadors defined themselves as a proactive community of passionate individuals, businesses and organisations who participate in projects to raise the profile of Carlisle to make it a better place to live, work and visit. In addition to networking events members had access to a range of resources including Carlisle Story, Carlisle Prospectus and a Design toolkit.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive explained that it had initially been proposed that a Place Manager should be employed to lead the Carlisle Story and Carlisle Ambassadors. Unfortunately, due to the wide range of skills required it was not possible to appoint someone within the resources available. The work was divided with some activity being carried out by Council officers and the marketing and administration being carried out by external contractors. The external contractors had increased the membership from 50 in 2014 to 154 which generated £18,500 from membership fees. The cost of running the Carlisle Ambassador programme was £38,500 with the Council contributing £20,000. In addition the Ambassadors had received £11,500 in kind from venues, catering, photography, speakers and training.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive drew Members attention to section 4 of the report which detailed the benefits and outcomes of the initiative which included networking, training, resources, GP recruitment events, representation at the Northern Powerhouse event and media coverage.

In considering the report Members raised the following comments and questions:

- What did Carlisle Ambassadors bring as a partnership that would not happen if it did not exist and did it add value?

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive responded that Carlisle Ambassadors added value and there was nothing like it in the City before. When the Carlisle Ambassadors were first established the City Council covered the entire cost now there are 154 Members who paid subscriptions and covered half of the cost.

- A Member sought clarification that a review was being carried out on the partnership.

The Corporate Director of Economic Development explained that a workshop had taken place at the last meeting of Carlisle Ambassadors to discuss roles within the partnership and the balance of business networking and promotion of the City.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive reminded the Panel that the main priority for the partnership was to promote Carlisle regionally and nationally as a good place to live, work and invest in. A by-product of the partnership was the opportunity for businesses to network and form relationships and this included the City Council. Carlisle Ambassadors had enabled Carlisle's story to be communicated in a clear and consistent way at a national level and gave real added value to the City via projects such as Give a Day which would run again in June. He felt that the City Council was right to invest in the partnership to ensure it developed but emphasised that it was not about the promotion of the Council its focus was the promotion of Carlisle widely and effectively.

The City Council employed external support, Ms Masters and Ms Wilson, to arrange the events, produce the newsletters and networking including social media and this had proved to be very effective. Carlisle Ambassador membership came from the region, Scotland and London and all members understood the City Council's role in the partnership.

- Who was the driving force within the partnership?

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive responded that he and the Corporate Director of Economic Development discussed the agendas for the meetings and the direction for the partnership with Ms Masters and Ms Wilson. Ideally the City Council would become another Ambassador and Carlisle Ambassadors would run itself.

The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder reminded the Panel that the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) would stop in 2020 and the Council would be reliant on business rates income, the partnership helped build a strong brand which would promote Carlisle and encourage new businesses to invest in the City and increase business rate income.

- Was the £11,500 a surplus made by the partnership?

The Corporate Director clarified that the £11,500 had been received in kind from venues, catering, photography, speakers and training.

- How much did the membership cost?

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive explained that the membership fees were on a sliding scale dependent on the size and type of business. Some businesses did not make a financial contribution but provided support and services. He added that, should the membership continue to increase, then the Council would look to scale back the contribution with the long term goal being that the partnership became self-financing.

- A Member had felt that new members to the partnership did not have a clear understanding of the partnership's priority.

The Corporate Director agreed that new members did have a different perspective but the majority of the members understood the purpose for the partnership. A marketing event was planned for May and would provide all members with the information and tools to promote Carlisle. Ambassadors had already taken promotion material to the Northern Powerhouse Event and to Cannes.

The Leader added that the partnership was there to promote Carlisle and not for the promotion of individual businesses. Ms Masters and Ms Wilson were clear in their presentation that the partnership was there to promote Carlisle. He commented that he was pleased to see the members coming from outside of the area and was excited to see Emirates had become a Carlisle Ambassador. They had new routes from Newcastle airport and saw Carlisle as part of the hinterland for the route. It gave the Carlisle Story the potential to be heard worldwide.

- Was there any evidence that the work of the Carlisle Ambassadors had brought new business into the area?

The Corporate Director responded that a tangible result of the work of the partnership was the recent success at a GP recruitment fair. The GP that promoted the area had used the information from Carlisle Ambassadors to promote Carlisle and as a result attracted newly qualified Doctors to the area.

The Town and Chief Executive added that a good portion of the promotion was based on good faith. The Council received regular enquires from businesses and developers but it was difficult to determine if their interest was due to the promotion of the Carlisle story.

- A Member asked if the Carlisle Ambassadors carried out networking and events that the Cumbria Chamber of Commerce used to and commented that she would like to see more businesses from outside of Carlisle coming in to the area.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive reminded the Panel that the purpose of the Carlisle Ambassadors was to present Carlisle as a place with a consistent theme.

- Was the Carlisle Ambassadors modelled on other systems?

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive confirmed that the Ambassadors initiative was modelled on initiatives that had been run in other areas, in particular those in Burnley and Coventry.

- Members felt that the Carlisle Ambassadors initiative was excellent and productive and worth the continuing support of the Council.

RESOLVED – That the Panel thanked the Town Clerk and Chief Executive and the Corporate Director of Economic Development for the detailed briefing on the Carlisle Ambassadors initiative (CE.05/17).

ROSP.29/17 SMARTER SERVICES DELIVERY PROJECT

The Customer Services Manager presented an update on the Smarter Service Delivery (SSD) Project (CE.03/17).

The Customer Services Manager reminded the Panel that the project had been set up initially to meet customer expectations in being able to access City Council services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on line. A new website had been written in plain English with a portal called 'my account'. The portal allowed customers to register and look at various elements of their council tax account, report environmental health problems, access refuse and recycling services, business rate accounts and submit enquiries to green spaces or planning. She added that there were plans to add other services to the 'my account' portal and currently there were over 14,000 signs up for 'my account'.

The second phase of SSD focused on the installation of a Salesforce platform including the replacement of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system which required a subscription only and therefore shrank or grew with the required usage. The Salesforce CRM

was fully Cloud based and constantly developed at no additional cost; the expected annual savings compared to the current system were £45,000. The Salesforce CRM integrated with 'my account' functions as well as back office systems. This would allow a customer service advisor to access information available on customer requests for service.

A roadmap of the service migration from Capita CRM to Salesforce CRM had been attached to the report.

In considering the report Members raised the following comments and questions:

- Was the Council developing software in house?

The Service Improvement Manager clarified that the Council would not be developing the system but would be configuring it in house using Salesforce as a platform

- What were the risks with the Salesforce platform?

The Customer Services Manager stated that they were confident in the system and the Council would work closely with Salesforce to develop the system rather than using a development partner.

The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder added that the system was in proportion with the needs of the authority and would deliver significant savings and an enhanced service. The authority's IT staff were excellent and would develop the system in conjunction with Salesforce.

The Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder congratulated the Customer Services Manager and the Service Improvement Manager for their excellent work and reminded the Panel that the move to the Salesforce platform would also streamline the process for the work Councillors undertook in their Wards. She added that the Service Improvement Manager would take Councillors through the system if they so wished.

The Panel felt that a demonstration of the Salesforce system would be useful for all Members through an Informal Council briefing.

- Had the proposed saving of £45,000 been achieved?

The Customer Services Manager explained that the savings came from the IT budget and she would provide Members with a written response.

- What impact would the development have on the work of the IT staff?

The Customer Services Manager explained that there was a Project Group now led by the Town Clerk and Chief Executive which involved IT and allowed a clear plan to be developed to ensure resources were not overstretched. In addition, a roadmap had been developed to plan ahead any resources required from colleagues.

- How would the proposals change access for those who did not use IT?

The Customer Services Manager clarified that the system was an additional channel to make customer access easier and streamline the process, this would then free up customer service staff to deal with face to face and telephone customers. The goal was to have the same access available to everyone.

RESOLVED – 1) That the update on the Smarter Services Delivery Project (CE.03/17) be welcomed;

2) That the Customer Services Manager and the Service Improvement Manager be thanked for their excellent work;

3) That the Customer Services Manager would provide a written response regarding the proposed £45,000 savings as detailed above.

4) That a presentation on the Salesforce platform be given to all Members at a future Informal Council briefing.

ROSP.30/17 FLOOD UPDATE REPORT

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer presented report CS.13/17 which provided the Panel with an update on flood recovery activities and future programmed work.

The report outlined the City Council's Asset Recovery Programme which had a final target date for all completion of all assets as June 2017 and the Deputy Chief Finance Officer gave a detailed overview of progress on the Civic Centre and Customer Contact Centre, The Sheepmount and Bitts Park.

The figures for the flood grants and household payments were set out in section 3 of the report and section 4 of the report detailed the ongoing work of the organisations involved in the flood recovery.

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer reported that the insurance settlement figure had been agreed in principle and the final offer statement was due. When the final offer had been received recovery work on the Council sites could progress.

In considering the Flood Update Members raised the following comments and questions:

- What process would be in place to enable Members to take part in the debate for the future use of the ground floor of the Civic Centre, what was the timescale for the work and what were the plans?

The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder responded that the authority had been waiting on the settlement figure to draw up potential designs. He assured Members that the proposals would be available for scrutiny.

- When would the Sheepmount be accessible?

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer responded that tenders for the work were being evaluated by the loss adjuster. When that was completed the tender would be awarded to a contractor to start work.

- Did the emerging risks for the asset recovery programme include the possibility of a recurrence of flooding?

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer explained that the insurance company had risk assessed each of the properties and produced a report which detailed where future resilience could be built in and the type of resilience the insurance company expected to see built into the assets. The resilience measures had been built into the tender process where possible without being a cost to the authority.

- Some householders who had taken steps to prevent water entering their property had not been eligible to apply for the Flood Resilience Grant (FRG) even though their property was a flood risk.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive agreed that this was an issue which he raised whenever possible. Claims for the FRG could only be made if the property had been flooded and did not take into account the prevention measures taken by householders. He felt that properties in high risk areas should be identified and then grants should be made available to those properties. It was important that the Government provided support but individual resilience should be available to those at risk of flooding as well as those who had flooded.

Members commented that residents who lived in flats also had issues with their insurance especially if the property was run by a management committee or agents and asked if there were any mechanisms for feedback.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive responded that the Environment Agency carried out a lot of work following up with the community, businesses and public services as they understood there were lessons to be learned.

The Leader added that the issues householders had regarding FRGs and Flood RE was an important issue which required a change in legislation, it was up to the Council to keep the pressure on Government.

- There had been issues with support for businesses in flood risk areas and Flood RE had not been available for businesses, had this been resolved?

The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder confirmed that a resolution had not yet been reached.

- Was there any discussion regarding the likelihood of a recurrence of flooding?

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive responded that the Environment Agency considered the likelihood or probability of reoccurrence but it was very difficult for anyone outside of those experts to talk of probability or patterns. There needed to be some strategic national thinking with big investments to protect the economy and infrastructure. £56million had been allocated to flood defences in Cumbria and there needed to be proper national strategic plans to protect the area and the growth in the future.

RESOLVED – That the Flood Update report CS.13/17 be welcomed.

ROSP.31/17 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented report CS.09/17 which provided an update on the Corporate Risk Register.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive reported that in September 2016 it had been agreed that the Corporate Risk Management Group would meet twice a year with special meetings being called by the Chair should risks be escalated and require an intervention from the Group or Senior Management Team.

It was recognised that the City Council's Risk Management Policy and Risk Management Strategy both needed to be reviewed and, if appropriate, updated. The review would happen at the next Group meeting in April and an update would be available for the Panel. Since the development of the four Senior Management Team boards the Panel was asked to note that 'Risk Management' sat within the remit of the Business Management Board. The sub group

would be chaired by the Council's Section 151 Officer and would consider risks at an operational/directorate level. Issues raised could be escalated to the Group when deemed appropriate,

The Corporate Risk Register was reviewed by the Group in September 2016 and the report set out an update against each of the corporate risks and control strategies.

A Member asked what concerns the Council had with regard to the future of local government funding from 2019. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive reminded the Panel that the RSG would end in 2019 and the Government had originally planned for business rates to fill the gap. Details of the exact scheme had not been released and there had been changes to the proposals. The Council was lobbying through the District Councils Network to protect the authority where possible. It would be a challenging time but the Council was good at dealing with issues as they arose.

RESOLVED – That the Corporate Risk Register update (Cs.09/17) be noted.

ROSP.32/17 PROCUREMENT AND COMMISSIONING STRATEGY 2017/19

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer presented the updated Procurement and Commissioning Strategy covering the period 2017-2019 (RD.01/17).

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer reported that the Procurement and Commissioning Strategy set out the principles by which the Council would operate its Procurement and Commissioning activities. The Strategy included relevant governmental and legislative requirements with regard to Procurement, including requirements of European Procurement Legislation.

The Procurement and Commissioning Strategy was last updated in 2014 and in that time there had been some legislative and operational changes to the way Procurement activity was carried out within the Council. The Strategy had been updated to reflect the current position and activity to be undertaken in the following two years and detailed how the Council would operate its procurement function over the period 2017-19 and conform to the new legislation.

The Panel was asked to scrutinise the draft Procurement and Commissioning Strategy and make recommendations to the Executive.

In considering the draft Procurement and Commissioning Strategy Members raised the following comments and questions:

- Would the Strategy be considered and monitored by the Audit Committee?

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer explained that the amendment to Policy fell under the remit of the Resources Panel and Audit Committee would consider the Strategy as part of any procurement audit.

- Members raised issues with the Business Travel Management arrangements and the £80,000 allocated to the contract. They felt that the contract did not give the authority the best value for money and highlighted issues regarding the cost of rail tickets through the contract which were more expensive than a direct purchase.

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer confirmed that issues had been raised and there would be a review of the service prior to the contract renewal date.

RESOLVED – 1) That the draft Procurement and Commissioning Strategy 2017-2019 (RD.01/17) be noted.

2) That the Executive consider the issues raised by the Panel regarding rail travel through the Business Travel Management contract.

(The meeting ended at 11.58am)