

# **ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

## ***Panel Report***

### **Public**

**Date of Meeting:** 20<sup>th</sup> January 2011

**Title:** Overview Report and Work Programme

**Report of:** Overview and Scrutiny Officer

**Report reference:** OS03/11

### **Summary:**

This report provides an overview of matters related to the Environment & Economy O&S Panel's work. It also includes the latest version of the work programme.

### **Recommendations:**

Members are asked to:

- Agree and/or amend current Work Programme (para 1)
- Consider Forward Plan items (para 2) and agree whether the Panel wish to include in their Work Programme
- Note developments following workshop for Members on Policy Framework (para 3)

**Contact Officer:** Nicola Edwards

**Ext:** 7122

## 1. Work Programme

The Panel's current work programme is attached at Appendix 1 for Members to amend and/or approve.

## 2. Forward Plan Items

The Forward Plan of the Executive covering the period 1<sup>st</sup> January – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2011 was published on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2010.

The issues which fall within the remit of this Panel are as follows. Full details can be found at Appendix 2.

**KD031/101 Parking Connect – Joined up on/off Car Parking Enforcement for Cumbria** – *considered at meeting of the Panel on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2010.*

**KD.001/11 Local Development Scheme 2011-2014** – *in agreement with the Chair this report is not to be considered by scrutiny as a decision was made on the report at the meeting of the Executive on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2011*

## 3. Policy Framework

Members will recall that a report detailing suggested changes to the Policy Framework was considered by all three Scrutiny Panels in November and December. Following in depth discussion, the Resources O&S Panel resolved: *That a workshop for all Members is arranged to consider the policies to be included within the Policy Framework.*

The Assistant Director, Governance arranged a workshop which was held on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2010. An invite was sent to all Members to attend and opportunity was given to Members who were unable to attend to submit any comments to the Assistant Director.

At the session which was relatively well attended, Members agreed that the following policies should also be included within the Council's Revised Policy Framework along with those policies suggested in Appendix 2 of Report GD61/10:

- Economic Development Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy
- Discretionary Relief Rate Policy

It was also agreed that the following policy should be included in the definition of policies inside the Budget:

- Corporate Charging Policy

The report will be further considered by the Executive at their meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2011 before being referred to Full Council in March 2011.

# ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11

Date last revised: 10 January 2011

Issue  Portfolio Holder & Lead officer	Type of Scrutiny					Comments/status	Meeting Dates							
	Performance Management	Forward Plan Item/Referred from Executive	Policy Review/Development	Scrutiny of Partnership/ External Agency	Monitoring		24 Jun 10	22 Jul 10	9 Sep 10	21 Oct 10	2 Dec 10	20 Jan 11	24 Feb 11	7 Apr 11
THIS MEETING 20 <sup>th</sup> January 2011														
Tullie House Cllr Bowman Keith Gerrard						To consider report on impact that Tullie House has on the Carlisle economy (Cllr Hendry to lead)						✓		
City Centre Partnership Cllr Bowman Darren Crossley				✓		To inform the Panel of the proposed changes to the Partnership						✓		
TASK AND FINISH GROUPS														
Control of Seagulls			✓			Cllr Bainbridge to undertake some initial enquiries and report back to Panel					✓			
Area Working			✓			Evidence Gathering							✓	
Car Parking			✓			Response from Executive on Task Group Recommendations			✓		✓			

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UPCOMING MEETINGS														
Performance Monitoring Reports (PIs) Cllr Ellis Steven O'Keefe	✓				✓	Monitoring of PI's – year to date	✓	✓			✓		✓	
Transformation Programme of Carlisle City Council		✓				Consider proposals to enable Panel to prioritise specific areas of Transformation work for more detailed scrutiny	✓				✓			
Carlisle Tourism Partnership Cllr Bowman Marie Whitehead				✓		6 monthly review of Action Plan				✓				✓
Scrutiny Annual Report			✓		✓	Draft report for comment before Chairs Group								✓
Making Space for Water Cllr Bloxham Angela Culleton			✓	✓	✓	6-monthly monitoring.			✓					✓

# ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL WORK PROGRAME 2010/11

Date last revised:10 January 2011

Issue  Portfolio Holder & Lead officer	Type of Scrutiny					Comments/status	Meeting Dates							
	Performance Management	Forward Plan Item/Referred from Executive	Policy Review/Development	Scrutiny of Partnership/ External Agency	Monitoring		24 Jun 10	22 Jul 10	9 Sep 10	21 Oct 10	2 Dec 10	20 Jan 11	24 Feb 11	7 Apr 11
<b>Waste Services</b> Cllr Bloxham Angela Culleton			✓	✓	✓	Six monthly update Referral made to Cumbria Joint Scrutiny Committee on concerns of Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership April 2010			✓					✓
<b>COMPLETED ITEMS</b>														
<b>ParkingConnect</b>		✓	✓			Consideration of report into shared service arrangement. Task Group to meet 23/11/10 to consider and respond to report at the meeting of the Panel.					✓			
<b>Core Strategy</b> Cllr Bowman Chris Hardman		✓	✓			Workshop session held 26/11/10. Report to consider the range of issues and options for the Core Strategy.	✓				✓			
<b>Policy Framework</b> Cllr M Mitchelson Mark Lambert						To consider proposed changes to the Policy Framework					✓			

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Date last revised: 10 January 2011

Issue  Portfolio Holder & Lead officer	Type of Scrutiny					Comments/status	Meeting Dates							
	Performance Management	Forward Plan Item/Referred from Executive	Policy Review/Development	Scrutiny of Partnership/ External Agency	Monitoring		24 Jun 10	22 Jul 10	9 Sep 10	21 Oct 10	2 Dec 10	20 Jan 11	24 Feb 11	7 Apr 11
<b>Budget</b> Cllrs Mallinson /Bloxham/Bowman Peter Mason/Darren Crossley		✓	✓			To consider budget proposals for 2011/12					✓			
<b>Environmental Performance of the Council</b> Cllr Bloxham Arup Majhi			✓		✓	Regular monitoring of performance, including progress updates on Climate Change Strategy, Carbon Trust and Green Travel Plan.					✓			
<b>Local Enterprise Partnership/Regional Growth Fund</b> Cllr Mitchelson Maggie Mooney		✓				To consider The 'Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership' outline proposal and the consultation response on the Regional Growth Fund				✓				
<b>Economic Development</b> Cllr Bowman Darren Crossley		✓	✓			Presentation from Strategic Director				✓				

# ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11

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<b>Fly Tipping</b> Cllr Bloxham/Ellis Angela Culleton/Steven O'Keefe						Exception report on fly tipping and prosecutions (Cllr Bowditch to lead)				✓				
Energy Efficiency						Draft Supplementary Planning Document	✓							
Garlands Hospital						To consider the responses to consultant on draft Supplementary Planning Document	✓							

**FORWARD PLAN**  
**Index of Active Executive Key Decisions relevant to:**  
**Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

<b>Key Decision Ref Nos:</b>	<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Date of Executive Meeting</b>
KD.029/10	Budget Process 2011/12 (EX.180/10, EX.181/10, EX.182/10, EX.183/10, EX.184/10, EX.185/10, EX.186/10, EX.187/10, EX.188/10, EX.189/10 on 22 November 2010 and EX.214/10 on 13 December 2010)	(a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g) on 22 November 2010  (h) on 13 December 2010 (i), (j), and (k) on 20 December 2010 (l), (m), (n) (o) and (p) on 19 January 2011
KD.031/10	Parking Connect - Joined up on/off Car Parking Enforcement for Cumbria (EX.211/10 on 22 November 2010)	22 November 2010  19 January 2011
KD.033/10	Policy Framework (EX.171/10 on 25 October 2010)	25 October 2010 19 January 2011
KD.001/11	Local Development Scheme 2011-2014	19 January 2011
KD.003/11	Housing Design Supplementary Planning Document	14 February 2011 14 March 2011



## FORWARD PLAN

### Active Executive Key Decisions relevant to: Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel

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**Ref:** KD.029/10

**Portfolio Area** Governance and Resources

**Subject** Budget Process 2011/12 (EX.180/10, EX.181/10, EX.182/10, EX.183/10, EX.184/10, EX.185/10, EX.186/10, EX.187/10, EX.188/10, EX.189/10 on 22 November 2010 and EX.214/10 on 13 December 2010)

#### Key Decisions:

To consider strategic financial issues arising from the budget setting process:

- (a) Budget Update - Revenue Estimates
- (b) Individual Charges Reviews (Local Environment, Community Engagement, Economic Development, Governance)
- (c) New Revenue Spending Proposals
- (d) New Savings Proposals
- (e) New Capital Spending Proposals and Provisional Capital Programme
- (f) Treasury Management and Prudential Borrowing Implications
- (g) Draft Revenue Support Grant Settlement (if available)
- (h) Consideration of Overview and Scrutiny Consultation feedback
- (i) Summary Overall Revenue and Capital Position
- (j) Draft Treasury Management and Investment Strategy including MRP Strategy
- (k) Executive Draft Budget Proposals for consultation
- (l) Final Revenue Support Grant and Final Revenue Budget Summary
- (m) Provisional Capital Programme
- (n) Treasury Management and Investment Strategy including MRP Strategy
- (o) Consideration of Final Budget Consultation
- (p) Executive's Final Budget Proposals

**To be considered initially by Executive:** (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g) on 22 November 2010

**Decision to be taken at Executive on:** (h) on 13 December 2010  
(i), (j), and (k) on 20 December 2010  
(l), (m), (n) (o) and (p) on 19 January 2011

#### Responsible or Lead Overview and Scrutiny Panel:

Resources Overview & Scrutiny Panel for all budget issues except the detailed service estimates.

Community and Environment & Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panels for New Spending Proposals, Savings and Charges pertaining to their individual areas of responsibility)

#### Date when the matter will be available for consideration by Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Policy and Budget Framework matter which will available for consideration by:

- (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g) - Community O&S Panel on 25 November 2010, Environment and Economy O&S Panel on 2 December 2010
- (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f) , (g) (i), (j) and (k) - Resources O&S Panel on 7 December 2010

**Consultees:** Overview and Scrutiny Panels, Business Community, Trade Unions, Citizens and staff

**Date for Consultees' comments:** Consultation period 20 December 2010 to 17 January 2011

#### Relevant reports/background papers which are available:

Report RD.55/10 - Treasury Management July - September 2010 and Forecasts for

2011/12 to 2015/16 (at Executive 22 November 2010)  
Report RD.53/10 - Revised Capital Programme 2010/11 and Provisional Capital Programme 2011/12 to 2015/16 (at Executive 22 November 2010)  
Report RD.57/10 - Budget 2011/12 to 2015/16 - Summary of Savings Delivered and New Proposals (at Executive 22 November 2010)  
Report RD.56/10 - Budget 2011/12 to 2015/16 - Summary of New Revenue Spending Pressures (at Executive 22 November 2010)  
Report GD.51/10 - Review of Charges 2011/12 - Governance Directorate - Licensing (at Executive 22 November 2010)  
Report GD.62/10 - Review of Charges 2011/12 - Governance Directorate (at Executive 22 November 2010)  
Report ED.37/10 - Charges Review Report 2011/12 - Economic Development (at Executive 22 November 2010)  
Report CD.21/10 - Review of Charges - Community Engagement (at Executive 22 November 2010)  
Report CS.28/10 - Review of Charges 2011/12 - Local Environment (at Executive 22 November 2010)  
Report RD.54/10 - 2010/11 Revised Revenue Base Estimates and Updated Medium Term Financial Plan Projections:2011/12 to 2015/16 (at Executive 22 November 2010)  
The Assistant Director (Resources) report will be available five working days before the meeting

**Further Information From:**

Assistant Director (Resources), Carlisle City Council, Civic Centre, Carlisle, CA3 8QG

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**Ref:** KD.031/10

**Portfolio Area** Local Environment

**Subject** Parking Connect - Joined up on/off Car Parking Enforcement for Cumbria  
(EX.211/10 on 22 November 2010)

**Key Decisions:**

Decision to enter into a shared service arrangement with the County for on street enforcement and potentially off street enforcement with a number of Cumbria District Authorities

**To be considered initially by Executive:** 22 November 2010

**Decision to be taken at Executive on:** 19 January 2011

**Responsible or Lead Overview and Scrutiny Panel:**

Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel

**Date when the matter will be available for consideration by Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

Policy and Budget Framework matter which will be available for consideration by Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 2 December 2010

**Consultees:**

Executive Portfolio Holders for Local Environment, Economic Development and Governance and Resources, Cumbria County Council officers, Senior Management Team, Joint Management Team

**Date for Consultees' comments:** 30 September 2010

**Relevant reports/background papers which are available:**

PRIVATE Report CS.27/10 - Parking Connect - Joined up on/off street car parking enforcement for Cumbria (at Executive 22 November 2010)  
The Assistant Director (Local Environment) report will be available five working days before the meeting

**Further Information From:**

Assistant Director (Local Environment), Carlisle City Council, Civic Centre, Carlisle, CA3 8QG

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**Ref:** KD.033/10

**Portfolio Area** Cross-cutting

**Subject** Policy Framework (EX.171/10 on 25 October 2010)

**Key Decisions:**

Decision to recommend to Council that the Council's Policy Framework be amended.

**To be considered initially by Executive:** 25 October 2010

**Decision to be taken at Executive on:** 19 January 2011

**Responsible or Lead Overview and Scrutiny Panel:**

Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel, Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel

**Date when the matter will be available for consideration by Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

Policy and Budget Framework matter which will available for consideration by:  
Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 25 November 2010, Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 2 December ,  
Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 7 December 2010

**Consultees:** Officers and Members

**Date for Consultees' comments:**

**Relevant reports/background papers which are available:**

Report GD.54/10 - Policy Framework (at Executive 25 October 2010)  
The Assistant Director (Governance) report will be available five working days before the meeting

**Further Information From:**

Assistant Director (Governance), Carlisle City Council, Civic Centre, Carlisle, CA3 8QG

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**Ref:** KD.001/11

**Portfolio Area** Economic Development

**Subject** Local Development Scheme 2011-2014

**Key Decisions:**

To approve the Local Development Scheme

**To be considered initially by Executive:**

**Decision to be taken at Executive on:** 19 January 2011

**Responsible or Lead Overview and Scrutiny Panel:**

Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny

**Date when the matter will be available for consideration by Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

Will be available for consideration on 20 January 2011 by Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel

**Consultees:**

**Date for Consultees' comments:**

**Relevant reports/background papers which are available:**

Planning Policy Statement 12 Local Spatial Planning

Assistant Director (Economic Development) report will be available five working days before the meeting

**Further Information From:**

Assistant Director (Economic Development), Carlisle City Council, Civic Centre, Carlisle, CA3 8QG

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**Ref:** KD.003/11

**Portfolio Area** Economic Development

**Subject** Housing Design Supplementary Planning Document

**Key Decisions:**

To refer the Housing Supplementary Planning Document to Council for adoption as part of the Local Development Framework

**To be considered initially by Executive:** 14 February 2011

**Decision to be taken at Executive on:** 14 March 2011

**Responsible or Lead Overview and Scrutiny Panel:**

Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel

**Date when the matter will be available for consideration by Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

Policy and Budget Framework matter which will available for consideration on 24 February 2011 by Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

**Consultees:**

**Date for Consultees' comments:**

**Relevant reports/background papers which are available:**

The Assistant Director (Economic Development) report will be available five working days before the meeting

**Further Information From:**

Assistant Director (Economic Development), Carlisle City Council, Civic Centre, Carlisle, CA3 8QG

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## **ITEM A3 – Overview Report and Work Programme Appendix 3**

### **Control of Seagulls**

#### **Briefing Note on Research Undertaken**

##### **1. Background**

Members may recall that the Panel decided at the Development Session held in July that Cllr Bainbridge would undertake some research on the control of Seagulls and bring any conclusions back to the Panel. Cllr Bainbridge resigned from the Panel in December following his appointment to the Executive. The research undertaken is detailed below and Members are requested to either:

- (a) Continue with this work
- (b) Cease the work
- (c) Make recommendations to the Executive

##### **2. History of the Seagull population and factors that have led to a rise in the urban Seagull.**

The concept of an 'urban seagull' as we would recognise it, was rarely seen before the Second World War. After this time the rise in larger scale landfill for refuse was a deciding factor. In addition many urban areas are between 3-5c warmer than coastal breeding grounds, and as a consequence more attractive to gulls. The increasing street lighting in all cities have enabled gulls to feed and remain active for longer, than nature would allow. Cities like Worcester often recorded their first City Centre breeding gulls in the mid to late 1970's, indicating the rapid population increase gulls have undergone since then as being a result of a combination of factors favouring urban colonization, rather than just due to one factor.

Increasing food waste and catering businesses have proved to be an attractive incentive to gulls breeding in town centres. The rise of the large industrial and retail estates also attracts gulls to breed, as they best fit the natural habitat that gulls would use in the wild. This often results in gulls proving more problematic in City centres and industrial estates. However they can establish themselves to lesser levels in any part of the city.

Studies in the breeding rates of Gulls in the 1970's highlighted that whilst in nature the Herring Gulls fledged on average between 0.6 and 1.2 chicks per breeding pair, in urban areas this rate rose to between 1.2 and 1.6 fledges. In 1990 a study of Sunderland estimated that the fledging rate in urban areas was 1.86 chicks per pair.

Gulls in nature tend to populate existing and successful colonies, therefore once an area has acquired a successful breeding colony, the area will attract further interest and this will result in an increased concentration of gull activity.

### **3. Gulls and the law.**

A concise summary of the Seagulls in relation to the law is taken from Lewes Council's website:

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 protects all wild birds. It is an offence to kill or injure any birds or their nests or eggs unless acting under a licence and only in compliance with the conditions of that licence. A General Licence allows "authorised persons" to undertake certain actions which would otherwise be illegal under the Wildlife and Countryside Act but only to certain birds in certain circumstances.

"Authorised person" means the owner or occupier or any person authorised by the owner or occupier of the land on which the action authorised is taken". All non-lethal methods must be considered first, and only if none are thought suitable can lethal measures then be considered.

The General Licences will allow Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*), Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) and Great Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*) to be killed and their eggs and nests to be damaged or destroyed, but only for the following reasons:

1. Preserving public health or public or air safety.
2. Preventing the spread of disease.
3. Preventing serious damage to livestock, foodstuffs for livestock, crops, vegetables, fruit, growing timber, fisheries or inland waters.

Noise from birds, that they leave droppings or the fact that they open rubbish bags are NOT reasons under the Act and, therefore, killing or injuring birds for these reasons is an offence and offenders can be prosecuted

### **4. Breeding Cycle of seagulls.**

Gulls have a breeding cycle that starts in April to May and produces one clutch, which can contain between one to three eggs. A clutch will take from 24 to 27 days to incubate and after that a further 35 to 40 days until fledging.

The table below (from Hereford Council) highlights the spread of breeding throughout the Spring and Summer of 2008. The majority of egg laying being between May and mid June, with the majority of fledging having concluded by the end of September.



## SEAGULLS IN HEREFORD CITY 2008

DATE	NESTS	EGGS
10/04/2008	20	0
28/04/2008	12	2
08/05/2008	48	85
22/05/2008	105	273
03/06/2008	103	286
05/06/2008	86	143
19/06/2008	80	179
03/07/2008	35	57
17/07/2008	10	10
31/07/2008	18	10
14/08/2008	0	0
28/08/2008	0	0
TOTAL	517	1045

### 5. Impact of Sea Gulls.

The problems associated with a growing gull population in the City are many, and include: -

- Pollution from excreta, on buildings, windows, washing, footpaths Vehicles, and even resident population.
- Noise pollution from calling. (esp., during the breeding season)
- Dive bombing assaults on adults, children and pets in the breeding Season.
- Roof damage from nests blocking gully's gutters and down-pipes, also leading to potential insect and mite infestations if not cleared
- Torn refuse bags and consequential littering of streets, with subsequent costs in cleaning up mess.

### 6. How many seagulls are there in Carlisle?

Peter Rock' 2003 study estimates that there are 130,000 to 150,000 breeding pairs of Gulls in Urban and Suburban areas. This equates to about one breeding pair per 333 residents in urban areas. Official Defray figures from 2000 put the entire urban population of Gulls at 30,000 breeding pairs.

In areas similar in size and nature to Carlisle the following levels of breeding pairs of Gulls have been stated.

- **Gloucester** has 2,800 pairs of breeding seagulls (in a human population of 123,000 this equate to one pair of gulls per 44 residents).
- **Hereford** has about 450 breeding pairs (in a human population of 55700 this equates to one pair per 123 residents).

- **Bath** stated a Gull population of about 458 breeding pairs (in a population of 84,000 this equates to one pair per 183 residents)
- **Worcester** has 277 pairs of breeding gulls (in a population of 94,000 this equates to 339 residents).

Exact numbers of breeding pairs of seagulls in Carlisle cannot be easily established. Using the figures reached by other local authorities, and the rates of gulls to human population expressed above it is an educated guess that in Urban Carlisle with a population of 72,000 there are between 212 and 1,636 breeding pairs of gulls. When the additional 29,000 population of the district area is included, this figure rises to between 297 and 2,295 in total. Using the figures from the Rock study this would equate to 216 breeding pairs in urban Carlisle and 303 breeding pairs in combined urban and rural district.

Given the favourable conditions of City living it is estimated elsewhere in the UK that gull population rates in the city increase between 5% and 10% each year. It takes four years for a Herring Gull to reach maturity and they can breed for up to 30 years.

## **7. Studies of Seagull control methods.**

There are a wide range of Gull control methods available to Councils, businesses and the public. They fall into two broad areas. The first relates to design and building upkeep, and the second to operational pest control.

### Design and building upkeep

In the initial design of the building in areas which are prone to gull colonisation, pitched roofs above an angle of 25 degrees have been used to prevent gull nesting. However interruptions in the slope of the roof such as Velux windows and vents can cause enough of a break to allow nests to be formed.

Spikes can be used on such interruptions to help tackle nest building, however spikes need to be bent at an angle to have an effect. There also needs to be of a sufficient density in order to prevent nesting in-between the spaces.

Problems have arisen in being able to control nests by operational means such as egg oiling/replacement where roof spaces have poor access. Contactors may not undertake such work on roofs that have poor access and which may require additional equipment to undertake such work.

On pitched roofs, wires can be used at the top to prevent birds not from nesting but from perching.

One of the most common methods used is netting, which has the advantage of being able to be fitted retrospectively, and relatively cheaply. However on historic buildings the use of netting can prove controversial and would often

require LBC. The nets will trap rubbish and birdlife in general leading to potential adverse comment. Overtime they will also require upkeep and replacement. A mesh of 75mm is generally considered acceptable for preventing nesting.

### Operational Methods

A number of visual or sound based products can be bought to mimic predators, gunshot or seagulls in distress. Whilst popular they are frequently accepted by the Seagulls after a period of time. In addition if used too often the sound disturbance can be seen as worse than the noise from the gulls.

The use of falconry has increased in recent years. In Dumfries £50k was spent on contracted falconry with 6 birds of prey to reduce bird levels. Although the noise pollution from the Gulls was lower than in previous years, the Gull levels did not reduce in the Dumfries area, and there was a perception that the gulls moved from one place to another. Under stress Gulls also produce droppings with a higher acidic level than normal. This may have a detrimental effect in areas such as industrial or retail estates where a lot of vehicles are parked, in car dealerships, warehouse operations and public car parks.

Oiling eggs - dipping them in light paraffin oil - seals the shell and effectively sterilises them. The birds, however, are duped into thinking that the eggs are still viable and will continue to sit. At this time they are actually quite quiet and disturbance is significantly reduced. As no chicks hatch, the particularly noisy aspect of the breeding cycle is removed.

Eggs must be oiled as near the laying time as possible (preferably once a full clutch of 3 eggs has been laid). This will vary with the season but will normally be around the first week of May.

After about 4-6 weeks the eggs will start to deteriorate and they will be ejected from the nest. Mature birds will lay a second or even third clutch, and if the technique is to be successful these will need oiling as well, requiring repeated visits to the site.

The use of dummy Seagull eggs has been increasing over the last five years. Eggs are removed from the nest and swapped with plastic versions painted to resemble real gull eggs. Typically the eggs cost about £1.25 each so the cost of doing a wide area is not inconsiderable. The eggs are nested for longer than oiled eggs and in cases where access to the roof space is complex can prove to be a longer term solution. The gulls fail to produce young and over time will return to the site in fewer numbers as the colony slowly disperses. However this is a long term solution that can take several years and an ongoing financial cost to develop.

## **8. Use of Dummy Eggs versus Oiled Eggs (Gloucester Council)**

The first trial of the eggs took place on a neighbouring council building; Quay House which has a long history of roof nesting gulls, the trial was conducted by Meyrick Brentnall, Head of Planning Services for the Council.

A total of 17 nests were present on the roof, all containing a clutch of three eggs. On the 18th May 2006, the eggs in 8 nests were oiled; while a further 8 nests had their eggs replaced with plastic ones. The final nest acted as a control and was left untreated. Monitoring records were kept during the breeding season up until and including the 1st August 2006. The nests which contained dummy eggs still had all the eggs present within them and the adult gulls were still incubating when the trial finished. The eggs in the nests which had been oiled produced results which had been experienced in previous years. Eggs were rejected and new clutches laid in four out of the eight nests. The other four nests which were treated by egg oiling were abandoned within a few weeks of the treatment being applied. As expected, the control nest produces 3 fledglings.

All dummy eggs were successful in that the gulls were duped into thinking they were real and incubated them. Furthermore, the length of time that spent incubating the eggs surpassed all expectations. This has important implications for management, as when the gulls are incubating, there is less disruption and nuisance caused to the general public (Brentnall 2006).

The oiled eggs performed as expected, with relays of eggs occurring. Mr Brentnall concluding that the unsuccessful pairs could have remade nests elsewhere or just 'hang around causing nuisance to the remainder of the colony'. The real benefit of using dummy eggs is that it causes the gulls to incubate for longer, throughout the breeding season and beyond, and as such are less of a problem. In his final conclusion, Mr Brentnall suggested that the use dummy eggs as a full scale control method is plausible and this method could replace egg oiling.

In November of 2006 Mr Brentnall reported his finding to the Gloucester Gull Action Group and from this other Councils and individual became aware of the eggs and further trials have been completed to further prove the effectiveness of the egg as a means of controlling urban seagull populations.

A copy of the study can be found at:

<http://www.gloucester.gov.uk/Documents/councilservices/Planning/GreenTeam/Dummy%20Egg%20Trial%20September%202006.pdf>