

## **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

### **RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

**THURSDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2016 AT 10.00AM**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Allison, Bowditch, Mrs Bowman, Mallinson J, McDonald, Robson and Wilson (as substitute for Councillor Mrs Riddle).

**OFFICERS:** Town Clerk and Chief Executive  
Director of Resources  
Policy and Performance Officer  
Overview and Scrutiny Officer

#### **ROSP.64/16 CHAIRMAN**

In the absence of the Chairman and Vice Chairman it was agreed that the Panel would appoint a Chairman for the meeting.

**RESOLVED** – That Councillor Bowditch be appointed as Chairman for the meeting.

#### **ROSP.65/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs Riddle and Councillor Dr Tickner, Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder.

#### **ROSP.66/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

#### **ROSP.67/16 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.68/16 CALL - IN OF DECISIONS**

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

#### **ROSP.69/16 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented report OS.18/16 which provided an overview of matters that related to the work of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reported that the Notice of Executive Key Decisions which had been published on 26 August 2016 contained the following item which fell within the remit of the Panel and would be available for the Panel at their meeting in October:

KD.19/16 - The Market Hall - Capital Contribution to Roof Repair Works - The Executive will be asked to agree to the release of a capital sum of money to contribute to the roof repair works at the Market Hall before making a recommendation to Council in November.

Members agreed that the report would be brought to the Panel at their October meeting. In discussing the Key Decision Members also raised concerns regarding the number of empty stalls in the Market Hall and the feedback that Members had received from tenants regarding

the management and promotion of the Market Hall. The Panel asked for an update at the next meeting on the Market Hall from the Portfolio Holder and Market Management Group.

The Panel's Work Programme for the current year had been circulated and Members were asked to consider the framework for the meeting on 20 October 2016. In addition to the items listed in the report the Scrutiny Officer informed the Panel that a report on the 4 year Efficiency Plan and Budget Monitoring Reports would be available for consideration by the Panel in October.

In discussing the Work Programme a Member reminded the Panel that previous discussion had taken place with regard to the new management arrangements of Kingstown Industrial Estate. There had been some concerns raised regarding the consultation which had taken place with tenants and the Panel discussed how the matter should be taken forward. The Panel agreed that a report should be brought to the Panel when the new management company had been appointed. Representatives of the management team should also be invited to attend to enable Members to put forward any concerns and to receive an update on the consultation with tenants.

A Member commented that she would accept the view of the Panel but felt that the tenants of Kingstown Industrial Estate had not been fairly consulted.

**RESOLVED – (1)** That the Overview Report incorporating the Work programme and Key decision items relevant to this Panel (OS.18/16) be noted.

**(2)** That the following items be included on the agenda for next meeting on 20 October 2016:

- The Market Hall - Capital Contribution to Roof Repair Works
- Employee Opinion Survey 2016
- Corporate Risk Register
- 4 year Efficiency Plan
- Budget Monitoring Reports

**(3)** That the Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder provide an update on the Market Hall including information on the tenancies, management and promotion of the Market Hall and the work of the Market Management Group;

**(4)** That a report be submitted following the appointment of the new management team, giving details on the new arrangements at Kingstown Industrial Estate and the consultation that had been undertake with tenants. Representatives of the new management team would also be invited to attend the Panel.

## **ROSP.70/16 2016/17 SICKNESS ABSENCE QUARTER 1**

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented report CE.09/16 which set out the authority's sickness absence levels for the period April 2016 to June 2016 and other sickness absence information.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive reported that sickness absence levels for 2015/16 had decreased by approximately 30% to 8.6 days lost per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employee compared to the previous year. The percentage of sickness which had been long term had also decreased as managers ensured the support for their staff was available and accessible. It was noted that spikes in absenteeism would become more prevalent as the organisation's workforce shrunk.

The appendices to the report provided sickness absence levels split by directorate in 2016/17 and showed that 2016/17 levels had decreased by nearly 27% to 1.6 days lost per FTE employee. All but one directorate had experienced a reduction in sickness absence and the percentage of long term sickness had also reduced. The appendices also showed comparisons between 2015/16 and 2014/15 and the reasons for the sickness absences.

2015/16 benchmarking information included in the report had been compiled by the North West Employers and showed Carlisle City Council as fifth in the table out of thirteen districts. This had been a marked improvement from 2014/15 when Carlisle had been twelfth out of fourteen districts. In addition Carlisle's sickness absence was considerably better than the overall average of nearly 10 days.

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

- A Member suggested that future reports should include information on the percentage of employees in each Directorate to enable easy comparison.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive agreed that it would be helpful to Members to have staff numbers included in the report along with the percentages.

- It was suggested that a reduction in the size of the organisation may actually have a negative impact on the number of days lost as remaining employee's workload would increase.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive agreed that it could be a possibility and was worth monitoring. He drew Members attention to the table in section 2.3 of the report which showed 'stress, depression, mental health, fatigue syndromes' as one of the biggest contributors to sickness absence and this was being monitored closely. The organisation was becoming smaller and long term sickness would have a bigger impact on service delivery and sickness absence performance figures.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive added that there had been a significant reduction in long term sickness and he continued to support line managers in ensuring staff were receiving the required advice and support.

RESOLVED – 1) That the 2016/17 Sickness Absence Quarter 1 report (CE.09/16) be welcomed;

2) That the Town Clerk and Chief Executive convey the Panel's thanks to all managers for the completion of Return to Work interviews and for the work they have done in helping to reduce the Council's sickness absence;

3) That future sickness absence reports to the Panel contain figures on the number of staff in each directorate as well as the percentages.

## **ROSP.71/16 1<sup>st</sup> QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT 2016/17**

The Policy and Performance Officer presented report PC.17/16 updating the Panel on the Council's service standard relevant to the Panel and key actions contained within the new Carlisle Plan.

The Policy and Performance Officer reported that details of the service standards were set out in the tables at section 1 of the report. The tables illustrated the cumulative year to date figure and an actual service standard baseline that had been established either locally or nationally.

The updates against the actions in the Carlisle Plan followed on from the service standard information in section 2 of the report.

In considering the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Performance Report Members raised the following comments and questions:

- The Panel congratulated officers on the performance of service standard: Percentage of Household Planning Applications Processed within eight weeks and service standard: Average number of days to process new benefits claims.
- A Member asked for information on the achievements of the Carlisle Partnership and the Economic Partnership, what the costs of them are and the benefits that they brought to the City.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive reported that the Carlisle Partnership AGM would be taking place on 30 September 2016 and there would be a number of reports and presentations about what the Partnership delivered. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive stated that Members were welcome to attend the AGM and agreed to circulate information from the AGM to Members.

The Director of Resources reminded the Panel that they received a six monthly report on significant partnerships and agreed to include more detailed information on the Carlisle Partnership and the Economic Partnership in the next report.

- A Member asked if there was a penalty to the Council for not achieving the service standard: Percentage of household waste sent for recycling.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive responded that there was not a penalty but the rewards were included in the cost of not recycling. The Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel were involved in the Rethinking Waste project but there could be scope for Resources to look at the finances within the Project in the future.

RESOLVED – 1) That the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Performance Report 2016/17 (PC.17/16) be welcomed;

2) That the next Significant Partnership report submitted to the Panel include details of the achievements, costs and benefits to the City of the Carlisle Partnership and Economic Partnership;

3) That the Town Clerk and Chief Executive circulate information from the Carlisle Partnership AGM to be held on 30 September 2016 to Members.

## **ROSP.72/16 CHARIMAN'S COMMENTS**

The Panel noted that it was the last meeting of the Resources Panel for the Director of Resources and the Overview and Scrutiny Officer and placed on record their considerable thanks for the support and work which they had provided to Scrutiny and to the Council and the Panel wished them well for the future.

(The meeting ended at 10.52am)