

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 16 JANUARY 2014 AT 10.00 AM

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Bowman (Chairman), Councillors Bowditch, Graham, Harid (as substitute for Councillor Whalen), Mitchelson, Nedved and Ms Sherriff (as substitute for Councillor Watson)

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Martlew – Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder

OFFICERS: Deputy Chief Executive
Director of Economic Development
Director of Local Environment
Neighbourhoods and Green Spaces Manager
Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Planning Officer (Policy) x 2
Safety, Health and Environment Manager

EEOSP.01/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors McDevitt, Watson and Whalen.

An apology of absence was also submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs Bradley, Economy and Enterprise Portfolio Holder.

EEOSP.02/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

EEOSP.03/14 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2013 and 21 November 2013 be agreed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

EEOSP.04/14 CALL IN OF DECISIONS

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

EEOSP.05/14 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented report OS.03/14 which provided an overview of matters related to the work of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Details of the latest version of the work programme and Key Decision items relevant to the Panel were also included.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reported that:

- The Notice of Executive Key Decisions had been published on 16 December 2013. The following issues fell within the remit of this Panel:

KD.034/13 – Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation – Stage Two - the item was on the agenda for consideration later in the meeting.

KD.035/13 – HCA funding Offer Durranhill Industrial Estate – the decision was to be taken by the Executive at their meeting on 15 January 2014.

- Since publication of the Agenda a further Notice of Key Decisions had been published on 10 January 2014. Only one item fell within the remit of this Panel:

KD.01/14 – Environmental Health – Business Support Strategy. Members agreed that the item should be included in the Work Programme for consideration at their meeting on 27 February 2014.

- The following minute excerpt was from the Executive's meeting held on 9 December 2013:

EX.150/13 – Budget 2014/15 – Feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Panels on the Draft Budget Reports. The Executive had decided:

“That the Overview and Scrutiny Panels be thanked for their consideration of the draft Budget reports; and their comments, as detailed within the Minutes submitted, would be taken into account as part of the Executive's deliberations on the 2014/15 Budget.”

- The minutes of the Scrutiny Chairs Group held on 12 December 2013 had been included in the report. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer informed the Panel that it was intended to increase public awareness of Overview and Scrutiny by using social media such as Twitter and Facebook.

The Chairman of the Group had suggested that it was his view that it was timely to review the structure of the Scrutiny Panels. Members of the Scrutiny Chairs Group agreed to discuss the matter with their relevant political Groups for feedback on reviewing the structure. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer asked that any other suggestions could also be made to the Chair of the Group or herself. All feedback would be discussed at the next Scrutiny Chairs Group in February.

- The Recycling Task and Finish Group had organised a visit to the MBT plant at the end of January 2014. Members of the Group were undertaking a door to door survey and hope to hold a focus group in Harraby in February to try to determine why people do not recycle as much as they could. A report on those findings would be brought to Panel in April 2014.
- Work Programme – The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented the current work programme.

A Member queried whether the arrangements for the LEP's attendance at a meeting were in hand. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer advised that the Environmental Health – Business Support Strategy would be considered at the meeting in February and suggested that it may be advisable to move the LEP item to the meeting in April but a special meeting could be arranged if a meeting was required sooner. The Director of Economic Development would discuss that with the Chair of the Panel and a decision would be made on when it would be timely to hold the meeting.

A Member suggested that the Panel could look at Section 106 Agreements as Members were interested to know what Section 106 Agreements were in place and the process for the imposition of Section 106 Agreements. The Director of Economic Development advised that a lot of work had been undertaken lately and it would be a good opportunity for Members to see how the recommendations fit with the Council's priorities and the negotiations that were undertaken on Section 106 Agreements. It was agreed that the matter would be included on the Work Programme for the meeting in February and would include a short description of the legislation regarding Section 106 Agreements and an update on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

RESOLVED – 1) That, subject to the issues raised above, the Overview Report incorporating the Work Programme and Forward Plan items relevant to this Panel be noted.

2) That the decision of the Executive (EX.150/13) be received.

3) That the minutes of the Scrutiny Chairs Group held on 12 December 2013 be noted.

4) That the items on LEP and CEP be moved on the Work Programme and the Director of Economic Development would discuss with the Chair of the Panel as to a suitable date for that meeting.

5) That Section 106 Agreements be added to the Work Programme for the meeting in February 2014.

EEOSP.06/14 WASTE SERVICES

The Director of Local Environment gave a presentation regarding the review of Waste Services. The Director explained the pressures on the Council's budget, the options and issues regarding waste, the extent of working with the County Council and outsourcing and the timescales and key decisions. The review would also consider how customers could do more in the way in which they recycled waste at home ready for collection.

The Director outlined the current pressures on waste services and advised that some rounds were currently at capacity and to introduce a new round would cost the Council £150,000 per annum. Health and safety standards were increasing which added pressures on the service as did environmental standards of vehicles which cost more than current vehicles. There was also a higher expectation from residents on the quality of service provided. The Director outlined the budget pressures which was estimated to be in the region of £450,000 per annum.

As part of the review an options and issues for Carlisle study had been commissioned with the Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) who were joint funding the study with the City Council. Sixteen options would be modelled and the report was expected to be finalised in March 2014.

As part of the study Officers from the City and County Councils had visited councils in Cheshire West and Chester and saw a new vehicle which recycled ten types of recyclate at kerbside. As a result recycling had increased to 65% in those areas. Source separated recycling produced better quality recyclates which would realise a better market value.

The Director of Local Environment explained that consideration should be given to technical and procurement issues as well as political issues. There were also several budget considerations and discussions were ongoing with the County Council.

The Director outlined the current and potential extent of outsourcing and the various options one of which was a full in-house service. The Director stated that there was more that the customer could do and indicated the optimum position for the Council and how that position could be achieved.

In conclusion the Director explained the time-line and key decisions which would take the review up to 2016.

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

- *Members were encouraged by the information provided in the presentation as it enabled them to respond to queries on waste and recycling from residents.*
- *It was suggested that a cross-party working group could be set up to look at, and feed into, the review of waste services as it would be an important issue for the City and residents. It was important that the public have more information on how and why the Council were doing what they did.*
- *Working Groups worked well at ironing out the issues and therefore eased the transition to a new system. It was suggested that the group could be made up of a wide range of Members with different areas of expertise.*

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder believed that to be a good suggestion as the review needed cross party support due to the extensive implications that changes could have.

RESOLVED: 1) That the Portfolio Holder and Director make necessary arrangements for a cross-party working group be set up to look at the Waste Service Review.

2) That a report be brought back to the Panel to update on progress.

EEOSP.07/14 LOCAL PLAN PREFERRED OPTIONS CONSULTATION – STAGE TWO

The Director of Economic Development presented Report ED.04/14 regarding Stage Two of the Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation. The Director gave the background to the preparation of the Carlisle District Local Plan which began in March 2012 and explained that during that time there had been extensive engagement with local communities and stakeholders and three consultation exercises on the Key Issues, Issues and Options and the Preferred Options – Stage One. Consultation on the Preferred Options – Stage One resulted in 1138 comments that had been recorded and assessed. From those comments there were a number of suggested changes to the Local Plan, some of which had been incorporated and therefore the Local Plan had been updated. It was now intended to allow the public to view and comment on the updated Local Plan Preferred Options – Stage Two before progressing towards publication of the Plan in the summer.

The Director of Economic Development advised that one of the key outcomes from the previous consultation was the opinion that the housing target for the District should be raised to 665 dwellings per annum over the Plan period, matching the growth projections from the Housing Needs and Demands Study. Suitable new housing sites submitted through the consultation process had been assessed and included in the Local Plan Preferred Options – Stage Two along with existing sites allocated for a range of developments including housing, employment and community uses. The allocations would help to meet the objectives of the strategic housing and employment policies. The sites included in the Local Plan Preferred Options – Stage Two had been assessed against a range of factors and those allocations would be shown on the Local Plan Policies map which would also show existing established land uses such as areas of housing.

1. Introduction

This was an update on the original Local Plan.

- *Have Members seen the Affordable Housing Economic Viability Assessment?*

The Director of Economic Development advised that the Affordable Housing Economic Viability Assessment was completed in January 2013. A consultant, commissioned by the City Council, was currently working on a viability assessment of the Local Plan.

- *Would Members have access to the various studies that had been and were being undertaken?*

There were a number of studies including the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment which the Director of Economic Development agreed to circulate to Members of the Panel.

- *At what stage were the City Centre Masterplan and the Carlisle South Masterplan?*

The Director of Economic Development explained that a number of workshops had been arranged in respect of the City Centre Masterplan and comments from there could be incorporated into the Local Plan. There would be more detail included in the City Centre Masterplan that was outwith the remit of the Local Plan.

With regard to the Carlisle South Masterplan the Director of Economic Development explained that there was no requirement to allocate sites in that area as there were already sufficient sites to meet targets. However the policy allowed Officers to look towards the end of the Local Plan period. Talks were taking place with members of the LEP regarding bidding for funding from the Government in respect of the Carlisle South Masterplan.

- *The South of the City was a very important area but there had to be a balance between the North and South of the City. How would the area fit into a southern relief road?*

The Director of Economic Development advised that there had to be evidence to back up all information included in the Local Plan. That evidence was achieved by pulling a number of strands together.

2. Vision and Objectives

- *The Hadrian's Wall heritage Site had been renamed in the document. Members stated that they would prefer the name to remain and to provide an explanation in line with recommendations from English Heritage at the back of the document.*

The Director of Economic Development agreed to amend the document accordingly.

- *The Local Plan Working Group had been awaiting information from the County Council in respect of education in the City. The report stated that education levels within the District had been historically low. A Member agreed that that was the case in some areas but not all and suggested that the relevant line be removed from the report.*

The Director of Economic Development agreed to amend the report accordingly.

- *The vision to link the City with its historic heritage should be developed. Discussions had taken place regarding parts of Hadrian's Wall in two parts of the City which had been covered. Many people visited the City as part of the Hadrian's Path walk.*

The Director of Economic Development agreed to look at the matter further and added that it could be included in other parts of the document.

- *How was Carlisle being promoted? The Local Plan did not state how the City was perceived. The City had a catchment area of over 400,000 people and the Council should promote itself more.*

The Director of Economic Development again agreed to look at the issues and amend the policy accordingly. However she advised that everything that was included in the Plan had to be evidenced and justified.

3. Spatial Strategy and Strategic Policies

The Planning Officer (Policy) advised that not much in the policy had changed but it had been amended in line with advice from the Planning Inspector. The annual housing target had been amended and Officers were looking at land to allocate to housing to meet the Council's targets.

- *The report stated that all primary schools were now at capacity yet the County Council appeared to show no urgency in resolving the issue. The application for a new development at Crindledyke required a new school when 199 units had been completed. However the application was for 195 units in the first phase. There appeared to be little democratic input into the matter.*

The Planning Officer (Policy) explained that the policy related to Carlisle South and that education could be planned and incorporated into the policy. The Director of Economic Development advised that discussions were ongoing with the County Council who were aware of the situation. The issue was being addressed by the inclusion of Section 106 Agreements on various sites. More clarity would be provided in the Local Plan regarding education in Carlisle South.

- *Members were concerned that they had not seen the Carlisle South Masterplan. Any such Masterplan would need to include education/shopping/etc. How did the report define the market housing area?*

The Housing Market Areas (HMAs) had been identified in the Housing Need and Demand Study. HMAs had been agreed on a county wide basis. Within Carlisle there were three HMAs, as defined in the November 2011 SHMA. Those areas were Carlisle Urban, Rural West and Rural East. They did not cross boundaries into adjacent districts.

- *There had to be a link between Carlisle and Allerdale's Plans as many people who lived in Allerdale worked in Carlisle.*

Under the Duty to Cooperate requirements there had been regular meetings with Allerdale planners concerning strategic cross boundary issues including housing, the Solway Coast AONB, renewable energy, Hadrian's Wall, etc.

Policy S6 (Regeneration and Strategic Retail in the City Centre and Botchergate) had been updated in respect of the City Centre Masterplan. Consultation had taken place at the end of 2013 and the results of the Masterplan were linked to the retail study. Three areas had been identified for future development. The Citadel area was also included but that was dependent upon the County Council plans to move to the William Street site. The policy also highlighted the Caldew Riverside site for mixed use.

- *If the Caldew Riverside site was developed could it be designed with parking on the ground floor and flats/retail above? That would allow cars to be moved more easily than accommodation/shops should flooding occur.*

The Director of Economic Development informed Members that the area could be used for mixed use developments and that Officers were looking to be flexible in that area.

The Director of Economic Development further advised that the University development fit in with the Council's vision of Carlisle being a University City. Having a specific policy was a positive step and a good part of the Local Plan. New signage had been installed at the City's railway station directing people to the University.

4. Economy

The policy clarified the land uses at Kingmoor Park and Morton and drew attention to land allocation at junction 44 of the M6. The Plan was linked to the LEP and highlighted aspirations for Carlisle South as part of the M6 corridor for employment development. Officers had tried to be more commercially minded in the new Local Plan but allocations would have to be justified. Longtown was also highlighted as an important part of the City.

More flexibility had been built into this policy as the current policy may be considered too restrictive, for example where leisure users would like to locate outside of the City Centre and require larger buildings, the current policy would not allow that type of use in that area. Where there was justification for a leisure site outside of the City Centre Officers would now be able to be more flexible through the policy.

The Director of Economic Development advised that the site at Durranshill had been considered by the Executive on 15 January 2014 and had been allocated as an employment site. Any new developments would be considered as part of the existing Local Plan but would be covered by the new Local Plan.

- *Why had “retail” been changed to shopping within the Local Plan? Members believed that something had been lost in the change as retail was more than shopping and included restaurants and cafes.*

The Director of Economic Development explained that the change had come from the terminology within the City Centre Masterplan. She agreed to look at the matter further.

The policy relating to Arts, Culture and Tourism had been combined with the policy relating to Leisure Development as the criteria was similar. The revised policy added in the City Council’s offer and better promoted the District. Officers acknowledged that retail, tourism and leisure were changing and that they were becoming part of the same thing.

Policies relating to Farm Shops and Advertisements had been removed as they were covered by other policies.

5. Housing

Policy 16 explained how the Council could achieve its housing target of 665 houses per year and sought to achieve a 70/30 urban/rural split. The figures in the report related to the delivery of houses and any backlog. Sites for housing allocations were also included in the report as an appendix.

In response to a query from a Member the Planning Officer (Policy) explained that the target figure had been between 550 and 650. The new figure in the Preferred Options – Stage 2 was 665 and that was consistent throughout the document.

In response to a further query from a Member the Planning Officer (Policy) agreed to check the hectare and yield of land between Carlton Road and Cumwhinton Road.

- *Did the land allocations ensure that recreation areas and playing pitches were not included? Some areas that had been allocated for housing could only be accessed by crossing recreational land some of which had been designated as recreation for many years.*

The Planning Officer (Policy) advised that sites could be removed if they were not right but a replacement site would have to be found to reach the Council’s housing target. The Director of Economic Development explained that other parts of the Local Plan would help to ensure that green spaces were protected on developments.

- *Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) were increasing particularly in areas around the St Aidans Ward. There were also a number in the Stanwix area and therefore Stanwix should be included in the policy.*

The Director of Economic Development agreed that HMOs would be an ongoing issue as Carlisle developed as a University City. The policies would ensure that the areas were protected but recognised the need for HMOs as part of the facilities for the University. A

lot of HMOs were privately rented and there was a need for a policy relating to privately rented HMOs within the Housing team to determine how they would be managed.

- *Could Policy 27 (Housing to Meet Special Needs) be amended to include people with physical and learning disabilities as well as the elderly?*

The Director of Economic Development explained that that would be included in other areas of the Local Plan.

The Planning Officer (Policy) advised that Policy 28 (Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Provision) had been developed in response to the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment which had identified that an additional fifteen pitches would be needed across the district by 2030. The Local Plan identified sites where they could be developed which were generally attached to existing sites.

The Director of Economic Development agreed to circulate the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Survey at the request of Members of the Panel.

6. Infrastructure

The policies in the section relating to Infrastructure ensured that the relevant infrastructure was in place for new developments. There had been no major change to the policies. It was recognised that infrastructure was the key to development and was essential to attract new businesses to the City. Housing, retail, transport and infrastructure were the building blocks for development. The Director advised that the airport had not been included in the section on Infrastructure as it was a special case and was included in other parts of the Plan.

It was agreed that broadband was essential for the development of Carlisle.

The policy relating to Waste Minimisation and the Recycling of Waste was important due to the amount of development taking place across the City. The key change had been that Section 106 Agreements would be imposed on applications that would require developers to provide waste bins in accordance with Local Environment guidance. The figures relating to Eurobins had been included in consultation with the Waste Services Team and were standard across the country.

With regard to drainage the Director of Economic Development advised that the Development Control Committee considered drainage issues regularly. She explained that drainage ponds and attenuation tanks were dealt with as the part of the SUDs policy.

The Director of Economic Development further advised that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) would be covered in a future presentation on the Plan.

7. Climate Change and Flood Risk

The objective was to ensure that the district would be more resilient and less vulnerable to climate change and policies had been included to achieve that. A separate policy on wind energy had been included and would take account of the effect on recreational facilities. The policy also covered areas such as Spadeadam and Eskdalemuir and objections from the Ministry of Defence were often received in respect of applications for wind turbines in

the area. As a result Carlisle did not have the same pressures as Allerdale for wind energy development.

Policy 39 (Development, Energy Conservation and Efficiency) had seen only minor changes. Developers had previously been asked to build to a higher level than those set out in building regulations. Planning Officers had spoken to Officers within Building Control who had advised that they could only check to standard levels and therefore that part of the policy would be removed. Standards could be enforced through Building Control and therefore it was not necessary to include it in the Local Plan.

The Policy relating to Flood Risk and Development had been updated to include comments from the Environment Agency who advised that the policy should be more specific to Carlisle.

8. Health, Education and Community

The Healthy City Steering Group had been consulted and had gone through the plan and highlighted that some applications for development may be the subject of health impact assessments.

In response to a query from a Member the Director of Economic Development advised that car parking at doctors' surgeries and health centres was covered as part of Policy 42.

Policy 43 (Educational Needs) highlighted issues that had been raised earlier in the meeting regarding capacity and Officers would continue to work with the County Council on the issue.

- *Input from local Councillors was being removed under the Changes to the System of Schools Organisation.*

The Director of Economic Development explained that a Section 106 Agreement had to be justified and be reasonable and it would be unreasonable for a developer to build a school at the start of a housing development. The compromise was that a number of houses would be built before a school was built. In the case of the development at Crindledyke that had been agreed at 199 units and Officers were working with the developer on the issue.

- *Eight years ago a site next to James Rennie School had been allocated for housing. That was not included in the Plan.*

The Director of Economic Development agreed to look at that further.

The main change in relation to Policy 44 (Sustaining Rural Facilities and Services) related to assets listed on a community asset of value register. It was anticipated that that list would increase in future.

Policy 46 (Planning Out Crime) highlighted what was required to be included based on advice from the police.

There had not been much change to Policy 48 (Pollution) as it was largely put together with input by Environmental Health colleagues.

The Director of Economic Development informed Members that the City Council would be included in consultation by the County Council on fracking in future. Such applications would be brought to the City Council's Development Control Committee for consideration.

9. Heritage Historic Environment

Issues relating to the renaming of the Hadrian's Wall Heritage Site and the uncovering of those accessible parts of Hadrian's Wall within the City had been discussed earlier in the meeting. The Director of Economic Development informed Members that the latter would be subject to approval by English Heritage.

10. Green Infrastructure

A lot of work had been undertaken in respect of Green Infrastructure eighteen months previously therefore there was not a lot that required amendment.

11. Monitoring and Implementation

Not a lot had been changed in the policy. In response to a meeting with the Planning Inspector the Planning Officer (Policy) had included how the policy had been prepared. Officers would ensure that the policies were doing what they were meant to do and were meeting the objectives of the Local Plan. Officers would look at policies when trigger points were reached to ensure that they were working effectively.

The Director of Economic Development explained that the Plan would change again as a result of further consultation and the Local Plan Working Group would hold a meeting to look at the Plan in greater detail. The Director welcomed the input from the Panel and thanked the Officers for their hard work in producing the Plan.

The Chairman also thanked the Officers for their hard work and reiterated that Members would welcome sight of the City Centre Masterplan and Carlisle South Masterplan when available and the Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment.

RESOLVED: 1) That Report ED.04/14 – Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation – Stage Two be noted.

2) That the Director of Economic Development circulates copies of the Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment.

3) That the Director of Economic Development circulates copies of the City Centre Masterplan and Carlisle South Masterplan when available.

EEOSP.08/14 TALKIN TARN TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer submitted report OS.04/14 that updated Members of the implementation of the recommendations of the Talkin Tarn Task and Finish Group. The Group's report was presented to the Executive on 31 May 2013. The Group had made six recommendations, outlined within the report, which were accepted by the Executive. The Panel had received a formal response and initial update at their meeting in July 2013 and this report was a further update.

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

- *A Member, who had been part of the Talkin Tarn Task and Finish Group, believed that the updated report had caught the fringes of the recommendations but not in any substantial detail. He reminded Members that part of the remit of the Group was to look at general returns and how income could be improved. That detail was not included.*

The Neighbourhood and Green Spaces Manager apologised that the information had not been included in the report and advised that work was ongoing. The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder had requested a business plan with input from someone from a business background.

The Neighbourhood and Green Spaces Manager informed Members that to the end of December 2013 income from the car park was ahead of target and was projected to be up on the previous year. One of the reasons for that could be the improved weather in 2013. Trading figures for the tea room to the end of December, not including overhead costs, showed a small surplus which was an improvement on the previous year.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder explained that there was no criticism of the Neighbourhood and Green Spaces Manager and his team and that the facility needed to be promoted and protected and that was the reason for the commissioning of a business plan. The Green Spaces Team were under a lot of pressure and while issues with Talkin Tarn were not where the Council would like them to be they were moving in the right direction.

- *Did the Council receive any income from the Rowing Club?*

The Neighbourhood and Green Spaces Manager advised that the club paid a licensing fee of £1,000 per year which was fixed in the charges review. The club brought people to the Tarn as part of events organised by them such as the regatta.

- *It was important for the Council to promote and protect the ethos of Talkin Tarn and there were a lot of revenue streams that could be invested. Was the Education Centre promoted? What was the take-up of annual permits?*

The Neighbourhood and Green Spaces Manager explained that the take-up of annual permits for the car park went down when the charges were increased. At present there were only approximately ten permit holders compared to 45-50 in the previous year which indicated a direct relationship to the increase in the charges. However income from the car park had increased.

The aim was to encourage more people to visit the Tarn and as resources were limited the Tarn was advertised in the Council's Focus magazine and in the Brampton Community magazine. The business plan would look at the promotion of the facility. The Neighbourhood and Green Spaces Manager acknowledged that the tea room had to be improved as it was a service provided by the Council.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder agreed with the comments regarding the tea room but believed that it had to be looked at afresh. There was no signage to the tea room in the car park and Officers should look to see what worked best in the tea room and concentrate on attracting more people.

- *There was a feeling among residents that Talkin Tarn had been neglected as there were no full-time members of staff from the Green Spaces Team on site. Bins were not emptied and paths were not cleared of leaves and therefore became muddy. Residents had stated that there was a lack of respect for the Tarn. The balcony of the tea room was currently out of use and people liked to sit on the balcony and look at the view. Was work ongoing to repair the balcony?*

The Neighbourhood and Green Spaces Manager advised that some work had been done on underpinning the end wall and that work was due to be completed in March 2014.

He added that Talkin Tarn was an important site for the Council and it was not being neglected or abandoned but that Officers were doing the best they could with the resources available. Officers would follow through the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group and the proposed business plan would provide focus for that work. It was agreed that the Panel would be able to see the business plan when it was completed.

The Director explained that the leaves would not be removed from the paths as Talkin Tarn was a woodland park and not a formal park. The Council needed to offer facilities and services for people to enjoy but that gave good value for money.

- *The Task and Finish Group understood the pressures that Officers were under but the recommendations were specific and had not been implemented. The business plan would look at the issues in a different way. Talkin Tarn would be included in the Work Programme for the meeting in April when a breakdown of costs and incomes as requested would be provided.*

The Portfolio Holder suggested that a report in June would be more appropriate as a detailed assessment could be provided at that time. The Portfolio Holder acknowledged that not all of the recommendations had been looked at in as much detail as expected but that was due to resources and work pressures. However the deficiencies would be addressed.

The Neighbourhood and Green Spaces Manager stated that people forget what the facility was like in the past and once improvements had been made they were forgotten about and people focussed on something else. Issues were prioritised and dealt with.

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that thought was being given to new approaches for Talkin Tarn and that the assessment would be completed by May/June 2014.

The Portfolio Holder stated that Officers would look at efficiencies to give people what they wanted but a balance had to be maintained between bringing people into the facility but not so many that it spoiled the tranquillity and ambience of the Tarn.

- *Had the staffing issues impacted on service delivery at the site?*

The Neighbourhood and Green Spaces Manager explained that the majority of staff in the tea room were employed on a casual basis but that helped with costs. Many of those had worked in the tea room for some time and were committed to working there.

- *Was there any update on the consideration of franchising the tea room?*

That would be considered in more detail as part of the business plan. There had been one unsolicited offer. However if a franchise offer was accepted it would raise other issues such as costs for emptying bins/toilets and whether the Council would pick up those costs. The aim was to make Talkin Tarn cost neutral.

- *An important focus had been on the tea room but there had to be caution to ensure that the balance of the site was not upset and that the tea room did not become too commercial. It was suggested that people preferred home cooked food to pre-packaged.*

In preparation of the business plan Officers had started work on the brief and had identified that the site was mainly used by family groups who generally preferred home cooked food that was not too expensive.

- *A lot of people used Talkin Tarn for walking their dogs. Was there any provision in the tea room for dogs?*

The Portfolio Holder reminded Members that Talkin Tarn was a dog friendly area and suggested that heaters could be placed above tables outside the tea room for the comfort of dog walkers.

The Director of Local Environment advised that, when looking at the service as a whole, there was no permanent member of staff on any sites including Talkin Tarn. There was a vacancy in the structure for a Green Spaces post which had been filled temporarily in 2013 by someone on the redeployment register. That had led to a delay in filling the post but with the current appeal for voluntary redundancies there was the possibility that someone about to become redundant could fill that post. However someone with specialist skills was required but if the post was filled Talkin Tarn would benefit as well as other sites. When the post was filled some of the pressures would be alleviated and the situation would improve and the business plan would help to achieve that.

It was agreed that the business plan would look at the marketing strategy, part of which would be looking at the reinstatement of the Friends of Talkin Tarn Group.

RESOLVED: 1) That Report OS.04/14 –Talkin Tarn Task and Finish Group be noted.

2) The Panel looked forward to receiving a further update and business plan in June 2014.

EEOSP.09/14 ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE OF THE COUNCIL

The Safety, Health and Environment Manager presented Report GD.08/14 that provided a progress report on the environmental performance of Carlisle City Council and updated on the environmental performance indicators, current energy use within directly controlled City Council buildings and CO₂ reduction from local authority operations. The report also provided an update on work that had taken place within the Council to reduce the Council's energy use. The Environmental Policy Statement had been reviewed and updated in July 2013.

The Safety, Health and Environmental Manager stated that he did not take credit for the work referenced in the report as the work undertaken to improve the Council's environmental performance spanned across all Directorates and Portfolios. He made

reference to some of the teams who ensured that renewals of equipment embraced new environmentally friendly technologies and sought to continue the “invest to save” ethos originally set out by the Carbon Trust, and those teams that ensured the green spaces within the City were to the highest standards.

Carlisle City Council had made a large reduction in CO₂ emissions in 2011-12, but the aim of reducing emissions further in 2012-13 proved harder to achieve. However, further reductions were achieved in the street lighting sector and business travel which recorded a further 17% fall in emissions compared to the previous year.

In 2012-13 a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions of 14.5% was achieved in comparison to the 2007-08 baseline figures. However, that represented an increase of 5.8% from 2011-12, which could be directly attributed to the cold and prolonged winter which caused mains gas consumption to increase by almost 12%. Over the same period, electricity consumption in buildings increased by 1.4%. 2012-13 was the first full year that the Community Resource Centre was operational and the consumption in that building alone rose 30% more than the previous year. The cold weather significantly contributed to an increase in deaths resulting in an almost 10% increase in cremations which caused further increases there in both gas and electricity consumption.

With regard to gas consumption Bousteads Grassing had achieved the most success with more than a 52% reduction in consumption with the Civic Centre and Tullie House achieving 15% each. The halving of gas consumption at Bousteads Grassing reflected the decrease following the relocation of staff from the main building to the Civic Centre and the demolition of the main building. The Crematorium used almost 18% more gas in 2012-13 than in 2007-08 which reflected a 27% increase in cremations and so gas usage per cremation actually fell. There had been an overall reduction of more than 12% across the Council buildings in the same five year period.

Electricity use had also been reduced at Bousteads Grassing, the Civic Centre and Tullie House. The large decrease at Bousteads Grassing mirrored the decrease in gas consumption at the same site and for the same reasons. The Civic Centre usage was now below the 1 million KW/h threshold for the first time, aided by the installation of solar panels in March 2012. The solar panels were generating around 25,000 KW/h annually or 2.5% of the building's usage. Across the City Council buildings there had been an overall reduction of 13.5% in the five year period.

The Green Travel Plan had been approved in April 2008. Business travel had reduced by almost 19% in 2012-13. Over the five year period business travel had shown the largest reduction from the 2007-08 baseline year with just over 50% miles saved. That was equivalent to a journey around the circumference of the earth more than seven times over.

In 2012-13 there had been an 11.8% reduction in diesel consumption compared to the previous year but that was largely due to the ending of garden waste collections for Eden District Council which ceased on 30 June 2012. Overall emissions from the fleet transport sector was almost the same in 2012-13 as the previous year and remained around 16% below baseline level, achieved through more fuel efficient vehicles and more efficient refuse and recycling rounds.

In January 2013 the City Council retained the Gold level of the Cumbria Business Environment Network Awards. In 2013/14 the City Council achieved four Green Flag awards for Hammonds Pond, Rickerby Park and Eden Bridge Gardens, Talkin Tarn Country Park and Chances Park. The Green Flag Awards criteria included environmental sustainability and conservation.

The Health, Safety and Environment Manager explained that although the feed in tariff rate for solar PV panels had dropped by a significant amount, the cost of the solar panels had reduced and the business case for further investment remained viable. The initial feasibility study identified other suitable buildings in the Council's portfolio and they could further benefit carbon reduction and revenue income as well as assisting the building users with locally generated electricity. Following the asset management review suitable buildings that remained would have a "Solar PV" feasibility study carried out with a view to funding the installation as part of the Council's "Invest to Save" scheme.

Further investment in the Sands Centre to improve its facilities including potentially incorporating the city's main swimming pool from its current James Street site was still being considered. The James Street site used almost three times as much gas as the Civic Centre each year and it was very difficult to retrofit devices to further reduce consumption. Therefore investment in new facilities was the only realistic option of substantially improving efficiencies and reducing energy consumption particularly in terms of gas usage. External cladding of the Civic Centre had been investigated as that would significantly reduce the heat loss from the building. However, the costs and lack of external funding meant that that was not currently a feasible Invest to Save option.

Over the years many initiatives had been undertaken in many of the Council's buildings and it became more difficult each year to achieve further savings in reducing carbon emissions and energy costs. To maintain to same reductions from projects undertaken over the years compared with the original baseline year was providing continuous savings.

Since 2007-08 a huge amount of effort had been undertaken to monitor and deliver projects to reduce the Council's energy consumption within its own sites. Carbon dioxide emissions had been successfully reduced and the Council would continue to review and, where applicable, invest in technological advances that could provide efficiencies to reduce the Council's energy consumption. In conclusion the Safety, Health and Environment Manager informed Members of some of the planned work to Council buildings that had taken place and other work which was planned.

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

- *What was the reason for the high gas consumption in Tullie House?*

The Safety, Health and Environment Manager explained that it was essential to keep Tullie House at a set temperature and humidity due to the exhibits housed there.

The Director of Local Environment explained that due to the demographics of the City it was anticipated that there would be a 5% increase in deaths year on year. For that reason the Director suggested that it may be more useful if figures for the crematorium were given as per unit.

The Safety, Health and Environment Manager advised that gas consumption for each cremation had dropped from 733 KW/h to 679 KW/h and energy consumption at the crematorium was lower than the previous year.

- *It was agreed that arrangements should be made for Member of the Panel to visit the crematorium to see how recent improvements on the site have helped to improve energy consumption.*

RESOLVED – 1) That Report GD.08/14 – Environmental Performance of the Council be noted.

2) That a visit to the crematorium to arranged for Members of the Panel.

(The meeting ended at 12.50pm)