

INFRASTRUCTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Committee Report

Public

Date of Meeting: 31 July 2008

Title: Review of Corporate Improvement Plan, 2007-2010

Report of: Head of Policy & Performance Services

Report reference: PPP 65/08

Summary:

The report is the first review of Carlisle City Council's Corporate Improvement Plan produced in 2007 and presents progress with the priorities as set out in the Plan. It identifies a number of drivers, nationally and locally, that will impact upon future priorities and the spending plans of the Council (appendix 1). It is being reviewed alongside the Medium Term Financial Plan, Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan which will link the priorities of the Council to the allocation of resources. The documents together set out the policy and financial planning framework for the Council.

Questions for / input required from Scrutiny:

For the service areas covered by this Committee please consider:

1. Current performance and satisfaction with Council services and how this informs future priorities
2. Local and national drivers identified and how these influence future Council business
3. Are there other drivers or influences that you can identify that we should consider?
4. In the context of identifying future priorities for the Council, and bearing in mind the constraints, what is most important to your local communities that impacts on their quality of life?
 - Are these issues already reflected in the Corporate Plan?
5. Is there anything that is no longer a priority for the Council or anything we should do less of?

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1. BACKGROUND

The Corporate Improvement Plan is a key policy document for the Council and sets out a number of priorities that reflected what was most important to our local communities and that would promote well-being and quality of life for our area.

The review of the Plan reports the progress made in the last year and considers changes in the internal and external environment that will influence future priorities. More detailed performance information against Best Value and Local Performance Indicators was contained in the end of year performance report (PPP 53/08, Executive, 29 May 2008).

The review of the Corporate Plan should consider how the Council can fulfil its Community Leadership role and bring together local partners to develop more responsive, local services that matter most to local people, as set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act. The Plan should continue to align with and support delivery of the Community Plan for Carlisle and the new Local Area Agreement for Cumbria.

2. CONTENT

The review reports progress on:

Cleaner, greener & safer



- The corporate health of the organisation, and
- Satisfaction with the Council overall and with Council services.

Progress on Carlisle Renaissance will be subject to separate, more detailed reporting.

A number of factors that the Council should consider when determining future priorities have been identified including:

- Finances and other resources available to the Council including people and property
- Current performance
- Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act and the duty to involve local communities in developing more responsive, local services
- The Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement for Cumbria
- Comprehensive Area Assessment that replaces Comprehensive Performance Assessment from April 2009
- Carlisle Community Plan

Priorities for the coming years will be determined taking all these factors into account and following consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and other stakeholders.

2. CONSULTATION

To date: Senior Management Team
Strategic Planning Group

Planned: Community, Corporate Resources and Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committees
Employees
Local residents
Carlisle Partnership
Cumbria Disability Network
AWAZ¹

3. IMPLICATIONS

- Staffing / Resources – The Corporate Plan is being reviewed alongside the Medium Term Financial Plan, Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan which will link the priorities of the Council to the allocation of resources.
- Equality and disability – The review will be subject to equality impact assessment and further scrutiny through Cumbria Disability Network and AWAZ as part of the consultation process. The Council's target is to achieve Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government by March 2008. Resources required to achieve this will be considered along with other priorities.
- Financial – As Staffing / Resources
- Legal – When considering its priorities, the Council should consider how it will address the new duty to involve local people as contained in The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, 2007.
- Corporate – The Corporate Plan and subsequent reviews form a substantive part of the Council's policy and performance management framework. Monitoring our performance means our stakeholders, including local people, are able to form a judgement about how effective the Council is in achieving its priorities and providing value for money.
- Risk Management – The review will help us to manage any potential financial and reputational risk to the Council by ensuring its priorities take account of all the major factors that influence whether or not they are likely to be delivered.
- Environmental – The review reports progress on this priority to date including carbon emissions and energy use.
- Crime and Disorder – The review reports progress on this priority to date.
- Impact on Customers – The review will assess progress so far in delivering the priorities, including current performance and customer satisfaction. The Council's ability to determine priorities and develop services that meet the needs of its different local communities will improve as our understanding of the needs of local people improves.

¹ A group of representatives of black and ethnic minorities in our local communities

The review of the Corporate Plan and associated budget consultation is part of this process.

Appendix 1

Annual Review, Carlisle City Council, Corporate Improvement Plan, 2007-2010

1. Introduction

The Corporate Improvement Plan, 2007-2010¹ set out Carlisle City Council's priorities that reflected our ambitious plans for Carlisle and for improving quality of life for all our residents. Within the Plan is a commitment to report on our progress every year so our local communities are better able to judge the difference we are making. This annual review also offers local people opportunity to get more involved in Council business and in helping us to improve the services we deliver.

The review identifies the differences we think we have made over the last year and areas where progress still needs to be made. It will help us, with you, to agree our priorities for the coming year, taking into account the many factors that are currently influencing local councils and their ability to continue to develop and deliver quality local services.

2. The Profile of Carlisle

There have been some significant changes in the headline facts that help to paint a portrait of Carlisle:

- Population is forecast to rise over the next three years from the revised estimate of 103,300 to 104,900
- The revised figures for the Indices of Multiple Deprivation have revealed a range of changes across Carlisle. The following urban areas are in the top 10% nationally:
 - Belle Vue (Raffles)
 - Botcherby
 - Upperby
- Longtown is the only rural area that appears in the top 20% of the Index
- Income data from Acorn suggests that Carlisle is the second lowest average income in the County, narrowly behind Barrow, which has an average income of £22,378

¹ www.carlisle.gov.uk

3. Performance against the priorities

The Corporate Improvement Plan set out a smaller number of priorities that would help us to focus our limited resources on the areas where we felt we could achieve the biggest benefits for our urban and rural communities. We agreed our priorities would be

Carlisle
renaissance

Cleaner, greener & safer

and



3.1 Cleaner, Greener, Safer

Many services that the Council has identified as priorities and that local people say are important to their local communities are improving. Notably the improvements in satisfaction with the waste recycling service.

PI No	Brief Description of Indicator	2006/07 Value	2007/08 Value	Target 2007/8	Quartile Position 2006/7 Data
BV90b	Satisfaction with waste recycling	73.00%	74.00%	73.00%	2nd

Table 1: Best Value Performance Indicator 90b

Satisfaction with waste recycling is above target and an improvement on last years performance. Carlisle remains above national average.

3.1.1. Neighbourhood working

Levels of street cleanliness have fallen, coinciding with introduction of the new waste collection service and recycling schemes, although satisfaction has increased slightly (table 6). We achieved good levels of performance for removing graffiti and fly posting and for abandoned vehicles although just failed to meet our targets for abandoned vehicles.

3.1.2 Leading by example, reduce our carbon footprint

The Council is committed to tackling environmental improvement and responding to climate change through the Nottingham Declaration and has

significantly reduced carbon emissions from many of its own activities (table 2).

In October 2007 the City Council received the Silver Cumbria Business Environment Network award (CBEN) for its environmental practices, an improvement on the previous year's Bronze award. Bousteads Grassing retained its Gold Award status for the fifth year running. The awards are based on internationally recognised standards and each organisation undergoes a visit from an auditor that assesses how they are continually striving to improve.

Also in 2007, the City Council received Green Flag Award status for the Tullie House garden, Bitts Park, Hammonds Pond, Richardson Street Cemetery and the Crematorium. A Green Flag awards environmental sustainability and conservation. Our Cemetery received the inaugural award for Environmental Awareness from the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management. The Cemetery was the first in the UK to offer a woodland burial option, in 1993. The Crematorium also accepts home-made and biodegradable coffins and shrouds. The design, management and installation of new cremators in 2007 has also improved the efficiency of gas consumption. In 2007 we were also shortlisted for a national award for sustainable improvements made to Talkin Tarn including use of renewable energies.

Carbon emissions and energy use in buildings

Energy use in Council buildings continues to be a significant source of CO₂ emissions accounting for 2,647 tonnes in 2007/08. Results show that in 2007/08 our total gas consumption decreased by 1,298,883 kw/h compared to 2006/07. Our electricity consumption increased by 59,644 k/wh compared to 2006/07. This equates to a total reduction in CO₂ emissions of 209 tonnes from our buildings (table 2).

Reductions have been achieved through green design measures, maintenance management, staff awareness and training. Through these determined actions we have improved energy efficiency of buildings and equipment, for example heating controls, lighting controls and increased monitoring, all of which have had a major effect on energy consumption. Although more than half of our buildings are now using 'green' electricity we have discounted this for now when calculating our carbon emissions until there is clearer guidance on green tariffs.

Guidance from DEFRA has been used to calculate carbon emissions (CO₂) or 'carbon footprint' of City Council operations (table 2).

Carbon Footprint:

Carbon emissions from City Council activities			
Sector	2007/08	2006/07	Change

Buildings (Electricity)	1,766	1,735	+ 1.8%
Buildings (Gas)	881 ²	1,121	- 21.4%
Street Lights	239	241	-1%
Fleet Transport	1,234	1,215	+ 1.5%
Business Travel	106	113	- 6.3%
Oil (Non-fleet)	4	6	- 28.6%
Total	4,230	4,430	-4.5%

Table 2: Carbon emissions from City Council activities

Travel

To address the environmental impact of the City Council's travel and transport related activities, a Green Travel Plan was produced and approved by Council (April 2008). During 2007/08, City Council staff and Members travelled 25,082 less miles for City Council business than in 2006/07, equal to a reduction of 7.2 tonnes of CO₂. A system is now in place to monitor the fuel used in hire cars and further work is required in capturing data on business journeys made on foot and by bicycle.

3.1.3 Managing waste and recycling

During 2007/08, the City Council implemented an alternate weekly waste collection service and extended plastic and cardboard recycling collection. These initiatives have produced a number of clear benefits; recycling rates have significantly exceeded target levels and the amount of waste going to landfill has reduced. The amount of household waste collected has fallen but remains comparatively high, although this measure includes waste recycled. The new National Indicator (NI191) will be a measure of residual household waste collected, a better reflection of an authority's success at recycling.

3.1.4 Housing

The quality of design and construction of housing has a big impact on the health and well-being of our local communities. Access to affordable, appropriate, good quality housing and accommodation has been a priority for the City Council for some time. So far we have:

- Used our surplus land to promote a more balanced housing market. Land has been leased at nil value for an Extra Care development; working in partnership with Cumbria County Council and Eden Housing Association to develop scheme for elderly people that will provide health care services from a centre within the community. A number of sites have been identified for sale at below market value to be used for rented and low cost housing (refer report DS 120/07, Executive, 17 December 2007).

² Largely due to reduction in gas consumption at the Crematorium and Civic Centre

- Investment in privately owned housing so property occupied by the most vulnerable people achieves the 'decent homes' standard. Investment through the City Council's Housing Strategy, 5 year programme of £2,250,000 has meant the Government's previous target for decent homes in the private sector was achieved in 2007, ahead of the 2010 target. Up to 2008/9 the Council invested an additional £400,000 annually, through renovation grants for privately owned homes
- Registered social landlords have invested in their housing stock in order to meet the 'decent homes' standard for 100% of their property by 2010
- The City Council had invested over £250,000 annually on Disabled Facilities Grants, increasing this to over £600,000 from 2003 and to over £1 million in 2008/9. These grants provide adaptations to those that require them the most, the elderly and disabled, regardless of tenure, and enable independent living
- Carlisle is recognised by the Regional Assembly as a Council that is focusing its housing development programme in support of priority 4 of the Regional Housing Strategy - supported service and accommodation development. These services are targeted at a number of disadvantaged groups and will directly improve quality of life, including health outcomes, of the most vulnerable. These developments include:
 - Improving access to accommodation for young people through a multi agency Young Persons Panel
 - Working in partnership with the YMCA to provide a Foyer for homeless young people to include accommodation and other support services. A planning application for the Foyer is being re-submitted
 - Extra Care Scheme
 - Significant investment into development of a 'Centre of Excellence' for the accommodation and support of homeless people. Life skills, employment training, health services and other support services will be provided.
 - A bid to Government is currently being prepared for funding to provide a site for our Gypsy and Traveller community, where support to access education and health care would be provided.
- Circa £3million of funding over 3 years has been secured from external sources to address fuel poverty and to improve the thermal efficiency of homes³
- Six empty houses on the Raffles estate were leased at nil cost to a housing association (2007) to be refurbished and brought back into use as

³ Through the Cumbria Energy Efficiency Advice Centre

rented accommodation. A programme of works to part fund a landlord to bring up to seven privately owned, empty properties back into use as rented accommodation is underway, 2008

The number of dwellings returned to occupation or demolished has decreased on 2006/07, although we remain in the top quartile nationally. All disabled facility grants were dealt with within the statutory timescale. The Accreditation Scheme for student accommodation will be revised to reflect the change in definition to House of Multiple Occupation.

The planning service achieved performance above the national standards for the processing of planning applications across all categories.

3.1.5 Crime and anti-social behaviour

Although we have failed to meet the stretching national target for crime reduction, we have achieved significant reductions in many types of crime including criminal damage, domestic burglaries, robberies, vehicle crime, and a 19% reduction in anti-social behaviour on last year. Services to victims of domestic violence have improved significantly and this remains a priority within the Local Area Agreement for Cumbria. However, violent crime continues to increase, mainly associated with the night time economy and many initiatives are underway to address this, e.g. task group of the CDRP⁴ focused on the city centre; road closure order for Botchergate.

PI No	Brief Description of Indicator	2006/07 Value	2007/08 Value	Target 2007/8	Quartile Position 2006/7 Data
LP133	Number of acquisitive crimes per 1,000 population	15.27	11.96	17.06	N/AP
LP134	Recorded incidents of anti social behaviour per thousand population	145.40	118.67	136.10	N/AP

Table 3: Crime and anti social behaviour performance

3.2 Learning City

The recent Direction of Travel Report (Audit Commission, 2007/08) said the Council had shown vision and community leadership in directly promoting knowledge and skills development to support community aims. It said we recognised the local education and skill gaps and were contributing well to the Vision for a learning city. We are developing our own role as a major employer and delivering a skills for life agenda. Learning targets have been set for all employees, with the aim that all will have achieved a level 2 qualification by 2010. This commitment to the learning and development of our own

⁴ Carlisle and Eden Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

employees, and to skills levels within the city generally, have been recognised in the 'Go Award North West', the first such award to a council in the north west.

We are currently off target for a number of the local indicators that measure our progress against this priority including professional staff engaged in continuing professional development, employees with Level 1 qualifications, and those undertaking minimum 5 days learning and development activity.

Visits to Tullie House continue to exceed targets and are in the top quartile nationally. Museum Hub funding has been used to develop audiences and to provide free access for children. Tullie House was recently awarded the national accolade of Large Visitor Attraction of the year (Visit England).

The Multi Use Games areas at Melbourne Park, Dale End Road and Hammonds Pond have been very successful and the numbers of young people using these facilities continues to increase. It is through these positive activities that the council can play an active role in preventing ASB in the south of the city.

PI No	Brief Description of Indicator	2006/07 Value	2007/08 Value	Target 2007/8	Quartile Position 2006/7 Data
LP70a	Number of attendances of Young people using the Multi Use Games Area formal courses at:- a. Melbourne Park	793	1,183	850	N/AP
LP70b	Number of attendances of Young people using the Multi Use Games Area formal courses at:- b. Dale End Road	559	787	600	N/AP
LP70c	Number of attendances of Young people using the Multi Use Games Area formal courses at:- c. Hammonds Pond	563	803	600	N/AP

Table 4: Use of Multi Use Games Areas

3.3. Corporate Health

Many of the measures that indicate corporate health are within the top quartile of performance nationally including:

- Sickness absence

PI No	Brief Description of Indicator	2006/07 Value	2007/08 Value	Target 2007/8	Quartile Position 2006/7 Data
BV12	Working Days Lost Due to Sickness	7.96	7.78	7.76	Best

	Absence				
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Table 5: Best Value Performance Indicator 12, Sickness absence

- % invoices paid on time
- Racial incidents resulting in further action
- Speed of processing new housing benefit / council tax benefit claims
- Speed of processing changes in circumstances for housing benefit / council tax benefit claims
- Overpayments of housing benefit / council tax benefit recovered

The housing and council tax benefits service has sustained a high level of performance over the last three years and was recently judged to be excellent through a process of self assessment. This is despite a reduction in Benefits Administration Grant and subsequent staff reduction. The team is currently managing the service for Copeland Borough Council.

3.4 Equality and Diversity

The Council achieved its target of Level 2 of the Equality Standard through a process of self assessment. More detailed information on this will be included in the Annual Equality and Diversity report.

We struggle to meet our targets in other areas such as; top earners from ethnic minorities, top earners with a disability and percentage of employees with a disability. Equality impact assessments of our personnel policies and procedures are underway and will help us to address these issues.

3.5 Satisfaction with Council services

During 2007, five of the local authorities in Cumbria conducted a tracker survey, following on from the Best Value User Satisfaction Survey, 2006. Comparisons are shown in table 6.

PI Code	Question (Shortened)	Allerdale	Barrow	Carlisle	Copeland	Cumbria
BV3	Overall satisfaction with the authority	62%	58%	61%	53%	44%
BV4	Satisfaction with complaint handling	34%	40%	22%	25%	26%
BV89	Satisfaction with cleanliness of streets	68%	65%	68%	55%	N/AP
BV90a	Satisfaction with household waste collection	88%	91%	72%	64%	N/AP
BV90b	Satisfaction with waste recycling	67%	69%	74%	63%	N/AP
BV119a	% satisfied with sports/leisure facilities	47%	59%	60%	44%	56%
BV119c	% satisfied with museums and galleries	41%	53%	70%	34%	44%
BV119d	% satisfied with theatres and concert halls	37%	54%	37%	32%	40%
BV119e	% satisfied with parks and open spaces	63%	74%	75%	57%	72%

KEY:	Best	
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Table 6: Tracker survey results compared to other Cumbria Councils, 2007

Carlisle performs well for overall satisfaction and is the best in Cumbria (among those councils taking part) for satisfaction with recycling, sports and leisure facilities, museums and galleries, and parks and open spaces.

However, we do less well for complaint handling. The survey followed introduction of the alternate weekly waste collection service which, in its early implementation stage, generated an unprecedented number of requests for service and complaints. The way in which we deal with complaints and other feedback has been reviewed and a new policy adopted by Council in order to improve performance in this area (March, 2008).

4. Future Priorities

There are many factors, nationally and locally that we need to consider when determining Council business for the future.

4.1 Financial Position

In the future, the Council will face major financial challenges unless savings or ways in which we may increase our income can be identified. The Corporate Plan is being reviewed alongside the Medium Term Financial Plan, Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan which will link the priorities of the Council to the allocation of resources – and ensure that we can afford to deliver the priorities we identify.

There are significant financial pressures facing the Council including; the cost of implementing the Pay and Workforce Strategy (estimated at £1million

annually from 2008/09 to 2010/11), vacancy management savings of £500,000 for 2008/09, and no increase in Revenue Support Grant from the Government from 2011/12.

A programme of service reviews contain financial savings targets of around 5% of the gross budget including:

- A saving of £53,000 from the Community Development service, 2008/09 and £153,000 recurring from 2009/10
- £25,000 from the Arts service 2008/09 and £50,000 recurring from 2009/10

4.2 The White Paper and Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, 2007

There are a number of commitments to community empowerment in the Local Government White Paper that promises more responsive local services⁵:

- More choice for local people in the way local services are designed and delivered
- A new duty for councils and other best value authorities to inform, consult, involve and devolve
- People to have more and better information about their local services and how their public authorities are performing
- People to have the right to an answer when they put forward suggestions to their councils or ask for action
- The Community Call for Action to be extended, giving Councillors more power to demand action on behalf of their communities
- More neighbourhood management
- More opportunities for communities to take on the management and ownership of local facilities and assets, with a new fund to encourage them to do so

A further White Paper on Community Empowerment is expected from Government in the summer.

4.3 Cumbria Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement⁶

The LAA supports the outcomes defined in the Cumbria Strategy:

- *... safe, strong and inclusive communities*
- *... health and well being throughout life*
- *... a sustainable and prosperous economy*
- *... effective connections between people and places*
- *... world class environmental quality*

⁵<http://www.communities.gov.uk/communities/communityempowerment/communityempowermentcommitments/>

⁶ www.cumbriastrategicpartnership.org.uk

Indicators (chosen from the National Indicator Set) to measure the above include:

- Reducing worklessness
- Encouraging existing businesses to grow
- Improving skills
- Improving the health and well being of children
- Improving life expectancy
- Strengthening community empowerment and community cohesion
- Reducing crime and fear of crime
- Improving sustainable access to services and facilities
- Providing balanced housing markets
- Maximising Cumbria's contribution to limiting climate change
- Minimising waste and improving waste management
- Ensuring high standards of street scene services and reducing the visual impact of litter and graffiti

4.4 Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)

The Audit Commission is currently consulting on proposals for CAA which will “provide local people with an independent and joint assessment of how well local public service providers are serving them and the prospects for their quality of life in the future.”

CAA will focus on local priorities in Sustainable Community Strategies, and related documents such as the Local Development Framework and those agreed with Government through the Local Area Agreements. CAA will be concerned with *outcomes*, particularly for vulnerable people. This is very different to Comprehensive Performance Assessment which was mainly about the systems / processes and performance of organisations.

Early proposals present some early, high level ideas about each of the elements:

- An annual joint inspectorate risk assessment for each area
- Use of resources judgements for councils, police authorities, primary care trusts and fire and rescue authorities
- Direction of travel judgements for each council and fire and rescue authority
- Local performance against the national indicator set

Area means the area covered by the Local Area Agreement and is an assessment of the prospects for that area and quality of life. The area risk assessment will take account of how well counties, districts and their partners, including the private and third sectors, are working together to address priorities for their communities. In line with the Government's review of sub-national economic development, consideration will be given to whether councils are taking into account the potential benefits of a sub-regional

approach to, for example, transport, housing, employment and skills. Area risk assessment is composed of the following:

- Progress towards LAA targets
- National indicator set
- Views of users and other stakeholders (for the public this will be primarily through the new place survey, every 2 years)
- Self-assessment
- Briefings from government office
- Inspection findings

The draft proposals stated that the annual Direction of Travel (DOT) assessment would continue and would make a significant contribution to the risk assessment. DOT will place more emphasis on the community leadership role of councils and on delivering improvements to the local area through the local strategic partnership.

It is proposed that the general approach to Use of Resources (UoR) continues but with a bigger focus on value for money, financial management, and whether councils use their resources sustainably. The definition of resources has been widened to include natural resources – whether councils have a strategic approach to managing and minimising their impact on the environment, and how sustainability is considered in commissioning and procurement. Resources will also include people and IT.

UoR will have 3 themes:

- Managing money
- Managing the business
- Managing other resources

A single scored judgement that reports on value for money will be reported.

More detailed consultation on CAA is expected in July.

4.5 Carlisle Community Plan⁷

The Carlisle Local Strategic Partnership refreshed the Community Plan for Carlisle, May 2008. Priorities for the coming year include:

- Climate change and the environment
- Children and young people
- Economic development and enterprise
- Healthy communities and older people, and
- Rural community planning

All of the above factors should be considered when determining Council priorities for the coming years.

⁷ www.carlisle.gov.uk