
Amendments to meet Community Overview and Scrutiny Comments

EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 30 MARCH 2006

COS.41/06 BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN 2006/07

The Head of Policy and Performance Services submitted report SP.10/06 enclosing an initial draft of the text of the Best Value Performance Plan for 2006/7. The Plan had been considered by the Executive on 20 March 2006 (EX.050/06) and had been referred to the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees for consultation.

The Policy and Performance Officer advised that the performance indicator information would be added to the Plan at the end of May 2006 when it had been quality assured. Special meetings of the Executive had been arranged for 25 May and 26 June 2006 prior to the finalised Performance Plan and performance indicator information going to the Council for approval at a special meeting on 29 June 2006.

In considering the draft Best Value Performance Plan Text Members made the following comments and observations: -

- (a) Page 11 – The penultimate paragraph states that “Carlisle is unlikely to see the levels of investment in regeneration that other areas in the North West have and will continue to experience in coming years”. Members felt that this was a negative and defeatist statement and should be rewritten.

Page 6, replaced with following:

This is one of the central challenges of the renaissance agenda, which encompasses the activities of a wide range of organisations. Central Government is encouraging public sector organisations to make better use of existing expenditure and assets to fund regeneration. We and our partner organisations will need to address this issue but at the same time we will must also focus on maximising mainstream regeneration funding from both regional and national sources. The new LSP will have a crucial role to play in supporting this challenge.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the Statement could be set in context, particularly with regard to European support.

- (b) Page 15 – The section on “Future challenges for community safety” – Members felt that there could be a more robust statement developed around the “Stretching targets on volume crime”.

Page 11, replaced with following:

- **Stretching targets on volume crime**

The partnership has a target of reducing crime in Carlisle by 17.5% from a 2003/2004 baseline by 2007/2008.

The partnership has taken the opportunity of this stretching to refocus its priorities on the major crime categories contributing to poor performance.

The have done this be reorganising the partnership's task groups around the volume crime groups. The task groups for 2006/2007 will be:

Violent Crime

Acquisitive Crime

Criminal Damage and Anti Social Behaviour

The Drug and Alcohol Task Group will work across all these areas focusing on substance misuse issues.

These task groups will be charged with the reduction of their crime categories in Carlisle. The chairs of the task groups will be held accountable for performance by the Leadership Group of the Carlisle and Eden CDRP. It is the prospect of vigorous activity with the task groups that offers the greatest hope for improved performance for the CDRP.

- (c) The section on details of performance – performance against Carlisle City Council Service Standards 2005/06 – Members commented that there was a great amount of detail in this section, some of which would be fairly meaningless to the public and would not make it an appealing document.

The Deputy Chief Executive responded that there was a level of information which the Council was required to include within the Best Value Performance Plan. However, work was being carried out on outward focusing Service Standards and future developments would include rationalising this section to look more like a Customer Charter, which would hopefully be of more interest to the public.

Page 17, Service standards for 2006/07

- (d) The glossary needs to be developed further to ensure that all the acronyms referred to in the report are fully explained.

Page 56, Completed

- (e) There were some grammatical errors particularly relating to the use of the word “too”.
- (f) Members welcomed the opportunity to comment on the text of the draft Performance Plan at this stage, as it was an earlier stage than in previous years.
- (g) A Member referred to two of the following Service Standards on page 48 of the document, namely: “The Council will determine any claim for benefit within 10 working days of receipt of completed claim”; and “The Council’s Website will be available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day and there will be less than 4 hours per month of down time due to planned maintenance”. The Plan stated that these had both been achieved, but a Member stated that they did not believe that these had been achieved. The Deputy Chief Executive undertook to examine these matters and revise as necessary.

Relevant officer responses:

Page 52

The Council determines all claims where all information received within an average of 2 days of the last piece of information being received. This is not a good measure of performance as Councils could delay in sending out for evidence(and then turning the claims around quickly when all information received). Therefore the DWP measures performance from the date of original claim to the date determined after all required evidence received. The top quartile turnaround targets(from initial claim) for new claims is 29 days, Carlisle is achieving 23 days and change of circumstances 10 days, Carlisle is achieving 11 days. It is due to this good performance that Carlisle is judged to be an excellent Council.

There might be situations outside of the Council's control when individuals can't access the Carlisle website. The web site service standard is meant addresses the overall web service which has proven robust. If the Member can provide details of when they found the service was not available to them then the log records can be checked to establish the state of the service at that exact time and date. Members are also reminded that if they encounter difficulties with the service they should log these with the IT Help Desk (817265) as this will help highlight problems and lead to a quicker resolution.

- (h) The foreword of the draft Performance Plan included the use of the word “loose” instead of the word “lose”.

Amended

- (i) Page 13 refers to a Multi Sports Area in “Bothergate” but this should be changed to “Botcherby”.

Amended

- (j) A Member referred to pages 28 and onwards where Directors are reporting on different aspects of work. There was concern that these were presented in different formats and styles of information and the document was not coherent.

The Policy and Performance Officer responded that this aspect of the document was being amended and it would look quite different when it came to the finalised version.

- (k) There was concern about the statement on page 12 that “the City Council will take the lead in neighbourhood/area based regeneration”. Members were concerned about the strength of this statement. The Head of Policy and Performance Services undertook to review this with the relevant Director.

Page 6, replaced with following:

Will provide leadership in neighbourhood/area based regeneration

- (l) The previous year’s Best Value Performance Plan contained a large section on the Direction of Travel Review. Members suggested that this year’s plan should contain an update on progress with the Direction of Travel Review Action Plan.

The Deputy Chief Executive undertook to add this section on the Direction of Travel Action Plan and also commented that there would be other issues arising from the Annual Audit Letter which would also need to be included within the plan.

Page 28, inserted following extract from audit letter:

- **During 2005 the Council has continued to make progress in implementing the improvement plan developed following the Comprehensive Performance Review in 2003. The Council has considered its priorities, and has put plans in place to achieve its strategic aims alongside its partner organisations.**
- **Following the major flooding disaster in January 2005 the Council is successfully working with partner organisations to develop a major regeneration programme for the city area called Carlisle Renaissance. The Council is taking the opportunity arising from the flood to assess the way it provides services and the facilities that support services to identify potential for improvement rather than simply re-instate previous arrangements. Recent surveys have indicated strong resident support for the plans.**
- **The weaknesses in financial management and improvements required in governance and risk management reported as part of our annual Use of Resources assessment are expected to feed in to the overall performance assessment of the Council as part of proposals for CPA in future years.**

A copy of the Council Annual Audit and Inspection Letter 2004-5 is available on

our website.

RESOLVED – (1) The Committee welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Best Value Performance Plan at an earlier stage than in previous years.

(2) The Committee looks forward to receiving the next version of the Plan, including the Performance Indicator Information, at the meeting in June 2006.

(3) That the detailed comments of the Committee as outlined above be forwarded to the Executive for consideration in relation to the re-drafted Plan.

**Amendments to meet Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny
comments**

CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 6 APRIL 2006 AT 10.00 AM

CROS.37/06 DRAFT PERFORMANCE PLAN 2006/07

A report of the Head of Policy and Performance Services (SP.16/06) was submitted enclosing an initial draft of the text of the Best Value Performance Plan for 2006/07. The Plan had been considered by the Executive on 20 March 2006 (EX.050/06) and had been referred to the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees for consultation.

The Policy and Performance Officer advised that the Performance Indicator information would be added to the Plan at the end of May 2006 when it had been quality assured. Special meetings of the Executive had been arranged for 25 May and 26 June 2006 prior to the finalised Performance Plan and Performance Indicator information going to the City Council for approval at a special meeting on 29 June 2006.

Members made the following comments and observations :

- (a) The Chairman noted that the column “why performance did not reach our expectations” would need to be completed where appropriate.

Pages 34 to 55, amended into one column and completed

- (b) A Member considered that the document could be written in more user-friendly terms. He drew attention to the use of “we will” or “the Council will” and considered that this should be standardised using just one of these phrases.

Communications team have been through document and used appropriate wording in relation to context throughout the plan

- (c) A Member noted that in the entries under “Details of Performance,” a number of columns were blank.

This section has been incorporated into the performance information

The Policy and Performance Officer reported that the draft Plan was a working document and that this information would be included when available. The information related to Performance Indicators which was currently being compiled. Members would see a further revised draft of the Performance Plan in June 2006.

RESOLVED – (1) That the comments of this Committee be forwarded to the Executive.

(2) That this Committee is satisfied that the draft Performance Plan meets the requirements of the Local Government Act 1999.

Amendments to meet Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Comments

EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 20 APRIL 2006

IOS.36/06 DRAFT PERFORMANCE PLAN 2006/07

The Policy and Performance Officer presented Report SP.10/06 enclosing an initial draft of the text of the Best Value Performance Plan for 2006/7. The Plan had been considered by the Executive on 20 March 2006 (EX.050/06 refers) and had been referred to the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees for consultation.

The Policy and Performance Officer advised that the performance indicator information would be added to the Plan at the end of May 2006 when it had been quality assured. Special meetings of the Executive had been arranged for 25 May and 26 June 2006 prior to the finalised Performance Plan and performance indicator information going to the Council for approval at a special meeting on 29 June 2006.

In considering the text of the draft Best Value Performance Plan, Members made the following comments and observations: -

(a) Concern was expressed at the tight timescale for the Executive and the Council to take into account the comments of this Committee on the performance indicator information. The Committee would have an opportunity to comment on the information at their meeting on 22 June, with their comments then going to the Executive on 26 June 2006. However, at that stage the document will already have been sent out to City Council members for consideration at the Council meeting on 29 June 2006.

(b) Page 13 – Key Priorities – Cleaner, Greener, Safer

A Member queried why there was no mention in the “Achievements” section of the Council’s energy savings. The Head of Policy and Performance Services responded that there were performance indicators on energy, which would be included in the Best Value Performance Indicator information. After that information is available, she could assess what has been achieved and highlight it in the text of the Plan.

In response to a Member’s suggestion that there should be a definition of the phrase “Greener” and what the Council aims to achieve, the Head of Policy and Performance advised that she could include something under the Challenges section in relation to Improving the Environmental Performance of the Council.

Pages 10, lays how Cleaner, Greener, Safer Carlisle will be achieved.

Page 11, includes following:

We are aiming to achieve a bronze BEN Award by the end of 2007, silver by 2008 and gold by 2009.

Added following to section on how cleaner, greener, safer will be achieved:

We currently monitor our energy consumption and plan in future to measure CO2 emissions. We currently have a target of 1% year on year improvement at the Civic Centre in electricity consumption and 2% year on year improvement in fossil fuel consumption. We are aiming for a 3% reduction in CO2 emissions at Bousteads, the Civic Centre and the Crematorium over the next year. This will inform a council wide policy on CO2 reduction. We are currently developing an environmental policy statement for the Council which outlines how Carlisle City Council will act as the community leader in environmental improvement and promoting good environmental practice.

The bullet point at the end of the list on page 13 should be changed to “all purpose sports area” in “Upperby and Botcherby”.

Page 9, amended by Head of Community and Culture

(c) Page 17 – Learning City – There should be greater reference to adult learning under this Section.

Members expressed concern at the new funding arrangements for adult learning and the reduction in funding available. Under the Council's Priority of Learning City, the Council should be making representations to the Learning and Skills Council on the apparent reduction in funding for adult learning. The Scottish Learning and Skills Council appeared to have a higher profile and carry out more promotions than the local Learning and Skills Council. The City Council should also consider alternative funding sources and whether it has the capacity to become involved in funding. This could have a budgetary implication.

Page 13, included following:

Developing Carlisle as a Learning City will be pursued by the City Council and its partners through the Carlisle Local Strategic Partnership. Learning City will address the whole spectrum of learning, from young people to adults, and community based academic learning.

(d) Details of Performance – Performance against Carlisle City Council Services Standards 2005-06 Section.

There was discussion on whether all the service standards should be detailed or whether they should be highlighted on an exceptions basis, identifying only those which are not being achieved or those where performance is particularly good. Members

concluded that it was important to include all the service standards and indicate whether or not they had been achieved. The Head of Policy and Performance commented that in future years there would be a smaller number of more focussed service standards.

Concern was expressed that some of the service standards which were recorded as “achieved” had in reality not been achieved. Specific examples were given in relation to “faults on street lights” and “damaged street furniture”. The Head of Policy and Performance responded that she was reporting the information provided by Heads of Services. Members asked officers to establish if there was evidence to back up the claims that these service standards had been achieved.

New layout (pages 34 to 55) and new service standards (pages 17 to 21).

(e) Key Priorities – Cleaner, Greener, Safer – Waste Minimisation

An additional bullet point should be included on page 15 regarding reducing the overall volume of waste being generated in households and then collected by the local authority. The following was suggested, although the relevant officer should be consulted on the exact wording “We must aim to reduce the volume of waste entering the residual waste stream.”

In order to reinforce this point, an additional performance measure on “Total waste per household” should be added to page 52. The Head of Policy and Performance Services commented that there is a Performance Indicator 84 regarding waste per household, and this could be highlighted in the text of the Plan.

There was a suggestion that the text should include reference to the work on finding alternatives to landfill. The Head of Policy and Performance undertook to include an update on how the Council is working in partnership on alternatives to landfill.

A Member commented on the measures being undertaken in other authorities to reduce the amount of waste generated by households. The Environment, Housing, Infrastructure and Transport portfolio holder reminded Members of the recycling and waste reduction measures currently being considered by the Council, details of which had been considered by this Committee.

Page 11, included:

PI graphs for BV84a kg of waste collected per head and BV86 cost of waste collected per head

We must aim to reduce the amount of household waste the Council collects and sends to landfill, and increase the amount of household waste recycled.

As a Waste Collection Authority, the Council is a committed member of the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership. By working together, the members of the Partnership aim to develop and implement sustainable waste management solutions that maximise the economic, environmental and social benefits of managing Cumbria's municipal waste.

(f) Page 35 – What we said we would do - Second item - There should be a “.” after the word “including”.

Page 36, row taken out

RESOLVED – (1) The Committee welcomes the opportunity to comment on the draft text of the Best Value Performance Plan, but has some concerns about the timescales for commenting of the performance indicator information.

(2) That the detailed comments of the Committee on the draft text of the Best Value Performance Plan, as detailed above, be forwarded to the Executive, with the following being highlighted as particularly important:

- (i) the need for a definition of “Greener”;
- (ii) additional information to be included on waste minimisation;
- (iii) the concern over the lack of funding for adult education. The Executive should be asked to consider how the Council could influence this, and whether the Council has the capacity to become involved in funding, along with any associated budgetary implications.

(3) That the Head of Policy and Performance investigate the evidence for the achievement of the two service standards relating to “faults on street lights” and “damaged street furniture” and report back to the Committee on 22 June 2006.