

**BUSINESS AND TRANSFORMATION SCRUTINY PANEL**

**THURSDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2017 AT 2.00PM**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Mrs Riddle (Chairman), Councillors Allison, Mrs Birks, Mrs Bowman, Mrs Glendinning, Mallinson J, Shepherd (as substitute for Councillor Robson), and Sidgwick S (as substitute for Councillor Watson).

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor Dr Tickner – Deputy Leader, and Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder

**OFFICERS:** Town Clerk and Chief Executive  
Deputy Chief Executive  
Deputy Chief Finance Officer  
Strategic Asset Investment Services Manager  
Policy and Communications Manager  
Policy and Performance Officer

**BTSP.18/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Robson and Councillor Watson.

**BTSP.19/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**BTSP.20/17 PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED** - It was agreed that the items of business in Part A be dealt with in public and Part B be dealt with in private.

**BTSP.21/17 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 August 2017, which had been approved by Council on 11 September 2017, be signed by the Chairman.

**BTSP.22/17 CALL - IN OF DECISIONS**

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

**BTSP.23/17 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME**

The Policy and Communications Manager presented report OS.20/17 providing an overview of matters relating to the work of the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel.

The Notice of Executive Key Decisions had been published on 25 August 2017 and the item which fell within the Panel's remit had been included on the agenda (KD.21/17 – Bitts Park Lodge Flood Reinstatement).

The Panel's work programme was attached to the report as appendix 1 and the Chairman asked for a brief update on the work being undertaken on the Community Asset Transfer Policy.

The Policy and Performance Officer reported that development work for the Policy had begun and included comparison work with other authorities and consideration of the requests that the City Council had received to date.

The Chairman proposed that the Panel undertake a small task and Finish Group comprised of the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Councillor Allison to support officers in shaping and developing the Community Asset Transfer Policy with a view to providing the Panel with an update on their work in October.

In reviewing the work programme the Chairman asked that a report from the Transformation and Business Management Development SMT Sub Groups, which gave an overview of their work, be submitted to the October meeting of the Panel.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Overview Report incorporating the Work Programme and Key Decision items relevant to the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel (OS.20/17) be noted.

2) That a Community Asset Transfer Policy Task and Finish Group be established comprising of the chairman and Vice Chairman of the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel and Councillor Allison That the Task and Finish Group provide an update on their work to the Panel in October.

3) That a report from the Transformation and Business Management Development SMT Sub Groups, which gave an overview of their work, be submitted to the October meeting of the Panel.

#### **BTSP.24/17            REVENUE BUDGET OVERVIEW AND MONITORING REPORT – APRIL TO JUNE 2017**

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer presented report RD.18/17 which provided an overview of the Council's overall budgetary position for the period April to June 2017 for revenue schemes only. The revenue report included details of balance sheet management issues, bad debts written off in the period and progress against the transformation savings was also provided.

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer drew the Panel's attention to section 3 of the report which summarised the budgetary position as at June 2017 and highlighted the main income and expenditure variances as summarised at Section 3.3 of the report.

The matter had been considered by the Executive on 29 August 2017 (EX.86/17 refers) and they decided:

“That the Executive:

1. Noted the budgetary performance position of the Council to June 2017.
2. Noted the action by the Chief Finance Officer to write-off bad debts as detailed in paragraph 6 of Report RD.18/17.
3. Noted the virements and release of reserves as set out in paragraph 2.1 and Appendix A.”

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

- How confident were officers that the £1million additional income from the Council's assets would be achieved from 2018/19?

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer explained that the £1million additional income would be in the budget from 1 April 2018 and almost half of the additional income had been already been achieved.

The Panel asked that an update on the progress being made with rent reviews be circulated to the Members.

- How would Chancerygate be paid and what affect would it have on the income from rent reviews?

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer explained that Chancerygate were paid on a fee basis which had been covered from the reserves this year but it was anticipated that the future fee would be covered from the increase in income as a result of their work.

- Had the backdating of shortfall in the Lanes income been dealt with and had the budget for the Lanes income been reduced to reflect the reduction in income?

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer confirmed that the backdating of the shortfall in the Lanes income had been completed and the budget had been reduced to take account of the lower level of income received, however, the income was still not achieving the lower target.

- What were the implications of the ICT Strategy and the reported overspend?

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer explained that work was being undertaken to realign the profiles of expenditure budgets for the implementation of the ICT Strategy and it was not envisaged that there would be an overspend by the end of the year.

- Had the increase in Garden Waste income come from the expansion of the service?

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer responded that the increase had been the result of additional recycling credits from Cumbria County Council.

- What were the contractual arrangements for the garden waste service and when were the rates last agreed?

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer agreed to circulate a written response to Members.

- A Member had concerns that the debtors balance was very high and asked how this would be reduced and monitored.

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer reported that the majority of the figure was made up of overpayments to housing benefits and officers would look to recover the monies as part of their ongoing work. He added that the debtors figure remained constant throughout the year. Some of the amount would be written off but the debt was not forgotten and could be written back on.

- What was the reason for the reduction in the investment balance?

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer reminded the Panel that the Council had made the decision to pay the pension costs up front as a one off payment and the investment balance would be back up by the end of the three years.

- Was the Council looking to recover all of the shortfall in income from the closure of John Street Accommodation from the insurers?

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer confirmed that the Council was looking to recover all of the lost income and the final settlement would not be agreed until the final accounts had been received.

- The Panel congratulated officers for the work that had been undertaken to receive the “write on” credits.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Panel note the overall budgetary position for the period April to June 2017 (RD.18/17).

2) That an update on the progress being made with rent reviews be circulated to all Members of the Panel.

3) That details of contractual arrangements for the garden waste service be circulated to all Members of the Panel.

## **BTSP.25/17            CAPITAL BUDGET OVERVIEW AND MONITORING REPORT – APRIL TO JUNE 2017**

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer presented report RD.19/17 which provided an overview of the budgetary position of the City Council's capital programme for the period April to June 2017.

Members' attention was drawn to the Capital Budget Overview and details of the budget monitoring position as set out in sections 2 and 3 of the report.

The matter had been considered by the Executive on 29 August 2017 (EX.87/17 refers) and they decided:

“That the Executive:

1. Noted the budgetary position and performance aspects of the capital programme for the period April to June 2017.
2. Noted adjustments to the 2017/18 capital programme for ICT Strategy (£49,600), Harraby Cycle Track (£41,500) and Public Realm (£25,000) to account for all external funding available towards the projects as detailed in paragraph 2.1 of Report RD.19/17.”

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

- What was the reason for the underspend on Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)?

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer reminded the Panel that the City Council received a higher grant allocation from the Better Care Fund and as a result there was more money available to the authority. A discretionary scheme had been introduced to allow some of the additional monies to be spent in different ways and work was being undertaken to look at County wide schemes.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive added that the City Council had approved the Discretionary Policy which gave the Council the discretion to pay additional money above the statutory limit for DFGs. If the money allocated was not spent it would be carried over to future years.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive reported that he was leading on collaborative work across the six districts for better use of the monies beyond DFGs. Senior officers were keen to work together but there were issues with different processes on how DFGs were awarded across the districts. It would be a continuing piece of work but there was other work being carried out using the funding in the meantime.

In response to a Member's question the Chief Executive confirmed that one option being looked at was the employment of Occupation Health officers to speed the DFG process up. The Regulatory Services Manager had a timetable of work that would use the funding which would

be circulated to Members to enable them to determine if any of the projects required further scrutiny.

RESOLVED – 1) To note the overall budgetary position for the period April to June 2017 (RD.19/17)

2) That the timetable of works using the Better Care Funding be circulated to Members of the Panel to enable them to identify any potential areas for Scrutiny.

## **BTSP.26/17            QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2017/18**

The Policy and Communications Manager presented the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter performance by exception list against the current Services Standards and a summary of the Carlisle Plan 2015-18 actions as defined in the 'plan on a page'. Proposed new Service Standards and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were also included (PC.16/17).

Details of the current standards were set out in section 1 of the report and a set of proposed new Service Standards and KPIs were presented in section 2 of the report. Section 3 detailed updates against actions in the Carlisle Plan.

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

- The Panel supported the new report layout, new services standards and agreed that they would have service standards reported to them on an exception only basis.
- In response to a Member's request the Deputy Chief Executive agreed to circulate the proposed timeframe for the new leisure contract to Members of the Panel.
- Would the cycle track at Harraby be operational by October 2017 as originally planned?

The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the track would not be operational by October, a revised timescale for the track was being developed.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Panel supported the new layout of the Performance report (PC.16/17) and the proposed new service standards and agreed that services standards would be reported to the Panel on an exception only basis.

2) That the Deputy Chief Executive circulate the timescales for the new leisure contract to Members of the Panel.

## **BTSP.27/17            BITTS PARK – FLOOD REINSTATEMENT**

The Strategic Asset Investment Services Manager presented report GD.54/17 which outlined proposals for the reinstatement of flood affected assets in Bitts Park.

The Strategic Asset Investment Services Manager played a short flythrough of the proposals for Bitts Park and reminded the Panel of the damage which had occurred to Councils buildings in Bitts Park during the 2015 flood. He explained that officers had worked closely with WYG to review all flood affected assets in the park and it was established that the Pavilion was beyond repair. The depot and public toilets had suffered substantial damage and the park keepers lodge had escaped with only minor flooding to the basement areas.

It became clear that the flood presented an opportunity to redevelop the park facilities to provide an enhanced offer. Consultations with service users allowed plan and proposals to be developed and they were presented in section 2 of the report.

The Strategic Asset Investment Services Manager reported that having considered the location and user requirements of the previous Pavilion and the former lodge plans were devised to redevelop the lodge into a new pavilion facility. The plans included a new single storey addition, enhanced café area with decked area and integrated toilet facility.

The new pavilion would deal with all bookings for the tennis courts and provide basic changing rooms with back office accommodation and storage. Flood resilience measures would be incorporated into the design along with security measures.

In addition to the pavilion the Strategic Asset Investment Services Manager reported that a basic reinstatement of the ground floor of the depot was proposed to reflect the current use of the facility.

The report detailed the proposed timescales along with the financing proposals and the Panel was asked to consider the proposals and provide observations and comments for consideration by the Executive on 25 September. The Strategic Asset Investment Services Manager added that further reports would be considered by Members to gain approvals as necessary throughout the project.

The Chairman commended officers for using the unfortunate circumstances as an opportunity to rebuild in an imaginative way.

The Panel had a detailed and in depth discussion with regard to the security arrangements for the building and, in particular, the toilet facilities. They were concerned that the toilet facilities would only have limited opening hours and leave the Park without facilities early evening or when other activities were taking place. The old toilets had suffered from anti-social behaviour and there were concerns that the Lodge would not be secure at night.

The Deputy Chief Executive agreed that there had been issues with the previous toilets and the Lodge would be designed with flood resilience and security included. He added that the proposals were the first step in the process and the final design and details would go back through the Executive process. There were many details that needed to be addressed in more detail and these included the toilet facilities, who would run the proposed facilities, opening hours, access to the toilets and changing rooms and the final design of the building.

Members highlighted issues with opening hours at the facilities at Talkin Tarn and Hammonds Pond and were concerned that similar issues would arise in Bitts Park especially during the winter months. They wanted to see the income from the facilities maximised and suggested that officers investigate the facilities other authorities offered in their parks and consider evening corporate events.

The Chairman asked who the stakeholders were with regard to consultation and whether the final design would be available for the Panel to scrutinise. The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the stakeholders included the Parks and Greenspaces Team, the Leisure Contract provider and Planning Services. The final design and request for release of monies would go through the Executive process.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Panel note report GD.54/17 Bitts Park Flood Reinstatement;

2) That the Panel support the proposed design in particular the re-use of the Lodge and look forward to see the final designs at a future meeting;

3) That the comments and concerns of the Panel as detailed above be forwarded to the Executive.

(The meeting ended at 3.25pm)



## **BUSINESS AND TRANSFORMATION SCRUTINY PANEL**

**THURSDAY 26 OCTOBER 2017 AT 10.00AM**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Mrs Riddle (Chairman), Councillors Allison, Mrs Birks, Mrs Bowman, Mrs Glendinning, Mallinson J, Robson and Watson.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor Dr Tickner – Deputy Leader, and Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder

**OFFICERS:** Deputy Chief Executive  
Corporate Director of Governance and Regulatory Services  
Chief Finance Officer  
Policy and Communications Manager

### **BTSP.28/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of the Town Clerk and Chief Executive.

### **BTSP.29/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

### **BTSP.30/17 PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED** - It was agreed that the items of business in Part A be dealt with in public and Part B be dealt with in private.

### **BTSP.31/17 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of meeting held on 14 September 2017 be approved.

### **BTSP.32/17 CALL - IN OF DECISIONS**

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

### **BTSP.33/17 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME**

The Policy and Communications Manager presented report OS.20/17 providing an overview of matters relating to the work of the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel.

The Notice of Executive Key Decisions had been published on 22 September 2017. The following items included in the Notice fell within the Panel's remit:

*Items which have been included in the Panel's Work Programme:*

KD.23/17 – Budget Process 2018/19 (December meeting)

*Items which have not been included in the Panel's Work Programme:*

KD.22/17 – ICT Replacement Programme 2017/18 – Release of Capital Scheme Monies

KD.28/17 – Polling Station Review 2017/18

KD.29/17 – Land and Property Transaction – Land at Low Harker Dene



The Chairman gave a verbal update on the progress made through the Community Asset Transfer Policy Task and Finish Group. She explained that the Group had met with the Policy and Performance Officer and had compared various policies from other authorities. It was felt that a simpler, plain English policy was the best way forward.

The Chairman proposed that a draft Policy be submitted to the Panel at their meeting on 5 December with recommendations from the Panel being made to the Executive on 18 December. It was recognised that the Community Asset Transfer was a cross cutting matter and it was proposed that the Task and Finish Group be opened up to the other Scrutiny Panels and membership would be sought through the November meeting of the Scrutiny Chairs Group.

The Panel's work programme was attached to the report as appendix 1. The Panel discussed the heavy agenda for the December meeting and agreed to move the Customer Services report and the Flood Update report to January 2018. They also agreed that the Community Asset Transfer Policy be added to the work programme for December.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Overview Report incorporating the Work Programme and Key Decision items relevant to the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel (OS.20/17) be noted.

2) That the update on the Community Asset Transfer Policy Task and Finish Group be welcomed and that the Task and Finish Group be opened up to Members of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel and the Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel.

3) That the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel's work programme be amended as follows:

- Community Asset Transfer Policy be added on the 5 December 2017
- Customer Services moved from 5 December 2017 to 4 January 2018
- Flood Update report moved from 5 December 2017 to 4 January 2018

## **BTSP.34/17      SMT SUB GROUPS**

### **(a) Transformation**

The Deputy Chief Executive presented report CE.14/17 which detailed the work of the Business and Transformation Board which was a sub group of the Senior Management Team (SMT).

The Deputy Chief Executive informed the Panel that the purpose of the Business and Transformation Board was to oversee corporate programme management, corporate standards for project management, the progress of Smarter Service Delivery, ICT projects and other related works as determined by SMT.

The Board was chaired by the Town Clerk and Chief Executive and the terms of reference and membership had been attached to the report for Members' information. The report set out the work which was being undertaken by the Board and information on which projects were due to be scrutinised by the Panel at a future date.

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

- When would the new Corporate Plan and the Competency Framework be available for scrutiny by the Panel?

The Deputy Chief Executive responded that both areas of work were at an early stage and a timescale had not yet been established.

- Members felt that the report was difficult to understand, had too much jargon, was complicated and there was concern that the core membership was top heavy. Members asked for clarity with regard to the Corporate Programme Board and the Smarter Services Delivery Board.

The Deputy Chief Executive clarified that the two Boards had been replaced with the Business and Transformation Board. He took on board comments regarding the use of jargon language in the document. The intention of the new SMT Sub Groups was to include service managers and draw together work so opportunities were not missed and work was not duplicated.

- How would the Management Competency Framework be used and monitored?

The Deputy Chief Executive responded that the Framework was already monitored through performance appraisals and used by managers to identify opportunities and training needs. The Framework provided Managers with a variety of skills for good leadership, motivation and to equip them in dealing with change within the organisation.

- Would it be possible for the Council's Project Managers Handbook to be scrutinised by the Panel in December alongside the Corporate Programme report.

The Policy and Communications Manager reported that the Handbook was being updated and if a draft of the document was ready in time for the December meeting it would be submitted to the Panel. If it was not ready it would be included in the Panel's Work Programme for a future meeting.

- The report stated that a Targeting Operating Model (TOM) was not suitable for the authority; however the Terms of Reference for the Transformation Board included designing a TOM as one of their initial tasks.

This observation was gratefully received and the terms of the reference will be amended.

RESOLVED – 1) That the SMT Sub Group – Transformation report (CE.14/17) be noted;

2) That the following matters be added to the Panel's work Programme:

- Council's Project Handbook on 5 December 2017 if available
- Customer Services Charter on 4 January 2018

## **(b) Business Management and Development**

The Corporate Director of Governance and Regulatory Services presented report GD.70/17 which detailed the work of the Business Management and Development Senior Management Team (SMT) Sub Group.

The Corporate Director reported that he chaired the Sub Group which was primarily tasked with taking care of operational matters, looking for improvements where possible and considering commercial opportunities for the Council. The report set out the membership of the Sub-Group, the Task Groups and their remits which came under the sub group and the work areas which were being undertaken.

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

- The Panel thanked the Corporate Director for his clear, well set out report which had given the Panel the information they needed to consider their future work programming.

- A Member asked for further information with regard to the electronic voting system and how it would deal with recorded votes. He felt that any system should allow those watching Council meetings to be able to see clearly, as they do now, who had voted.

The Corporate Director responded that there were many options available for voting systems and they could be tailored to the Council's requirements. Any system which was considered would have to be able to deal with recorded votes as it was a legislative requirement for the budget meeting.

- It had been previously recommended that a review of the budget process be undertaken to simplify the process where possible and make the information easier to understand, Members asked for an update on this work.

The Chief Finance Officer responded that work had been undertaken with the Communications Team on the consultation documents to make them easier to understand how money comes into the authority and where money was spent. It was hoped that a presentation would be given to the Panel in December utilising the work that had been carried out. Officers were still working on the budget monitoring process.

- A Member asked for further information regarding the potential for Crowd Funding.

The Corporate Director explained that the SMT Sub Group was encouraged to be free thinking and make suggestions for further investigation. The feasibility of Crowd Funding would be considered and if there was the potential for a project it would be brought to the Panel for Members scrutiny and input.

- Members understood that income from Building Control was ring fenced but it had been included in the Commercial Strategy/Income/Savings section of the table.

The Corporate Director confirmed that the income from Building Control was ring fenced but there were opportunities for the Service to increase their income and grow the service they delivered and move to becoming self-funding.

In discussing the tasks in the report the Panel agreed that it would be most beneficial for Officers to submit reports on tasks and projects at the point that they were ready for Members input and would not be scheduled into the Work Programme at this time.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Corporate Director of Governance and Regulatory Services be thanked for his clear, well-structured and informative report on the SMT Sub Group – Business Management and Development (GD.70/17);

2) That reports on individual projects from the Business Management and Development Sub Group be submitted to the Panel at the appropriate time for Members input.

## **BTSP.35/17      CORPORATE RISK REGISTER**

The Deputy Chief Executive presented report CS.39/17 which provided an update on the Corporate Risk Register.

The Deputy Chief Executive reminded the Panel that the Corporate Risk Management Group (CRMG) was responsible for delivering and reviewing the Risk Management Strategy, maintaining and improving risk management processes and monitoring and advising on the Council's Corporate Risk Register.

It was recognised that the City Council's Risk Management Policy and Risk Management Strategy both needed to be reviewed and updated. The review was underway and was being

considered alongside work being led by internal audit which focused on the Council's approach to assurance.

The Deputy Chief Executive informed the Panel that there was a Risk Management sub group of the Business Management Board which met monthly and focused on risks at an operational/directorate level. Issues raised at the sub group could be escalated to the CRMG when deemed appropriate. Following discussions at the Risk Management sub group additional training had been arranged for officers, through the City Council insurers and the training would take place in October and November.

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

- The Panel asked that amendments to the Register, within the previous quarter, be clearly identified in each report.
- Was the Regeneration Strategy being aligned with the Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget? If so would this take place before or after the approval of the Strategy?

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the Regeneration Strategy was under development and would not be fully aligned with the forthcoming Budget. The MTFP was updated on an annual basis and it would be aligned with the Strategy once it was agreed.

- The Panel asked for an update on the Economic Strategy and its process through the committee structure and the withdrawal of the University of Cumbria from the Business Interaction Centre.

The Deputy Chief Executive responded that the Economic Strategy had been substantially refreshed and the committee process for the adoption of the Strategy would be a matter for Members determination.

With regard to the Business Interaction Centre (BIC), the Corporate Director informed the Panel that the University of Cumbria would cease to operate within the BIC in December and the Council would, in the short term, lease space to the existing tenants. Work was being undertaken on the future of the BIC and information was being gathered on the operating costs and potential income. There had been significant interest in the BIC and it was an important part of the economic growth of Carlisle. The matter was being closely scrutinised and monitored by the Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel.

- Was the new Leisure Contract tied to the development of new facilities at the Sands Centre or was there room for negotiations?

The Deputy Chief Executive clarified the current status as set out in the report explaining that the previous contract with GLL ended in November 2017 and the new contract took full account of the Sands project and closure of the Pools. The matter had been discussed in some detail at the previous meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel and had centred on the new Leisure Contract. Further work on the proposals and design would need to be undertaken and then considered by the Executive. Full costings and designs would go through the committee process at the appropriate time.

The Chairman asked if the risks, as set out in the Risk Register, had been considered by the Health and Wellbeing Panel. The Deputy Chief Executive explained that all of the information within the risk had been included in the Health and Wellbeing report but it had not been set out in the same format as the Risk Register report.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Corporate Risk Register (CS.39/17) be noted;

- 2) That future Corporate Risk Register reports clearly identified amendments to the Register which had happened within the previous quarter.
- 3) That future reports to all Scrutiny Panels include the relevant risk register information in the same format as presented in the Risk register report where appropriate.

(The meeting ended at 11.01am)

## **BUSINESS AND TRANSFORMATION SCRUTINY PANEL**

**TUESDAY 5 DECEMBER 2017 AT 10.05AM**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Mrs Riddle (Chairman), Councillors Allison, Bainbridge (as substitute for Councillor Robson), Mrs Bowman, McDonald (as substitute for Councillor Mrs Birks), McNulty (as substitute for Councillor Mrs Glendinning), Shepherd (as substitute for Councillor J Mallinson).

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor Dr Tickner – Deputy Leader, and Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder

**OFFICERS:** Town Clerk and Chief Executive  
Corporate Director of Governance and Regulatory Services  
Chief Finance Officer  
Deputy Chief Finance Officer  
Policy and Performance Officer x2  
Policy and Communications Manager

### **BTSP.36/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Birks, Mrs Glendinning, J Mallinson, Robson and Watson.

### **BTSP.37/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

### **BTSP.38/17 PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED** - It was agreed that the items of business in Part A be dealt with in public and Part B be dealt with in private.

### **BTSP.39/17 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

**RESOLVED** – 1) That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2017, which had been approved by Council on 7 November 2017, be signed by the Chairman.

2) That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 October 2017 be approved.

### **BTSP.40/17 CALL - IN OF DECISIONS**

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

### **BTSP.41/17 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME**

The Policy and Communications Manager presented report OS.24/17 providing an overview of matters relating to the work of the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel.

The Notice of Executive Key Decisions had been published on 17 November 2017. The following items included in the Notice fell within the Panel's remit:

*Items which had been included in the Panel's Work Programme:*  
KD.23/17 – Budget Process 2018/19



## KD.33/17 – Sands Centre Redevelopment (January 2018)

*Items which had not been included in the Panel's Work Programme:*

KD.28/17 – Polling Station Review 2017/18

The Chairman reminded the Panel a special joint Scrutiny Panel with Health and Wellbeing, would take place on Monday 29 January 2018 to scrutinise the Sands centre Redevelopment.

The Policy and Communications Manager reported that the Scrutiny Chairs Group had agreed that the Overview Reports for all Panels would include tracking information on Scrutiny resolutions. Section 3 of the report set out the Business and Transformation Panel's resolutions and status. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive noted that the first action stated pending, this was no longer a pending action as it would be normal practice to bring such reports to the Panel.

The Panel's Work Programme had been attached as appendix 1 to the report for the Panel's consideration.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Overview Report incorporating the Work Programme and Key Decision items relevant to the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel (OS.24/17) be noted.

2) That the status for action 1, in section 3 of the report, be changed to ongoing.

## **BTSP.42/17      BUDGET 2018/19**

### **(a)      Minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel and Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel**

The excerpts of the minutes of the meetings of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel and Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel held on 23 November 2017 and 30 November 2017 respectively were submitted for consideration.

### **(b)      Budget Update - Revenue Estimates 2017/18 to 2021/22**

The Chief Finance Officer submitted report RD.31/17 providing a summary of the Council's revised revenue base estimates for 2017/18, together with base estimates for 2018/19 and forecasts up to 2022/23 for illustrative purposes. The base estimates had been prepared in accordance with the guiding principles for the formulation of the budget over the next five year planning period as set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Charging Policy; Capital Strategy; and Asset Management Plan approved by Council on 12 September 2017.

The report set out known revisions to the MTFP projections, although there were a number of significant factors affecting the budget that were currently unresolved, details of which were recorded at Section 1.3. A summary of the outstanding key issues, together with the resource assumptions was also provided at Section 4.

Turning to the issue of savings and additional income proposals, the Chief Finance Officer added that the current MTFP included a savings requirement to be found by 2018/19 of £3.475 million. Further savings / additional income had already been identified in the budget process for 2018/19, details of which were set out at Section 6 of the report.

The Executive had on 20 November 2017 (EX.117/17) received the report and resolved:



“That the Executive:

1. Noted the revised base estimates for 2017/18 and base estimates for 2018/19.
2. Noted the current Medium Term Financial Plan projections, which would continue to be updated throughout the budget process as key issues became clearer and decisions were taken.
3. Noted the initial budget pressures / savings needing to be taken into account as part of the 2018/19 budget process.
4. Noted the review of the earmarked reserves as outlined in paragraph 9 and Appendix G to Report RD.31/17”

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

- A Member asked for further information regarding the Apprenticeship Levy and the £60,000 recurring pressure.

The Chief Finance Officer explained that the Council paid a percentage of its payroll into the Apprenticeship Levy and could then access the Levy for the training of apprenticeships. The £60,000 recurring pressure supported the recruitment for apprenticeships to fund salary costs.

- The Land Charges income showed a recurring £30,000 pressure, would it be possible to review the charges to make the service more competitive against other providers?

The Corporate Director of Governance and Regulatory Services confirmed that the charges were reviewed but there were regulations that had to be considered regarding the provision of the service. It was difficult to be competitive as the Council were obligated to provide free access to the databases which the authority maintained; this meant that the Council carried the cost of competitors business. In addition, in 2021, the Land Charges function would transfer to the Land Registry and it was unclear at this point what services, if any, would remain with the Council.

- A Member highlighted the proposed Leisure Contract Subsidy and asked how the new facility would be funded.

The Chief Finance Officer explained that the borrowing figures were indicative figures of the likely cost and were for illustrative purposes. She reminded the Panel that the decision process for the Sands Centre Redevelopment had not yet been made.

- The report had detailed a potential £300,000 savings to the subsidy the Council gave to the Tullie House Trust, what scope would the Council have for achieving this saving if the service came back in house?

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive reported that the Tullie House Productivity Review had been commissioned jointly by the City Council and Tullie House and had identified potential savings. Discussions were ongoing with the Tullie House regarding the potential savings and there was no indication that the Board no longer wanted to run the Trust.

- Who monitored how the grant for the Sexual Assault Referral Service was used?

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive informed the Panel that he and the Leader had received a letter from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) asking if the City Council would be prepared to continue their contribution to support the Service. The Chief Executive had responded by requesting details on how the grant was used. The budget was allocated in principle subject to the details from the PCC.

The Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel had requested details of the Service for scrutiny and the Chief Executive agreed to circulate the information to the Business and Transformation Panel for information.

- How would the proposed changes to Universal Credit arrangements affect the Council's budget?

The Chief Finance Officer explained that recent guidance had delayed the roll out date for the City Council to July 2018. There was no information on the Housing Benefit Admin Grant at this stage. In response to a further question she reported that due to the uncertainty of TUPE arrangements as a result of the introduction of the Universal Credit, a Welfare Reform reserve had been retained within the budget.

- Why would the Project Reserve, as detailed in appendix F, increase so significantly by 2021?

The Chief Finance Officer responded that the information had been included in the Medium Term Financial Plan which had been approved by Council in September. Appendix F showed the current position before the consideration of any 2018/19 pressures but was based upon making the transformation savings highlighted in the report.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Budget Update – Revenue Estimates 2018/19 to 2022/23 (RD.37/17) be received.

2) That information on the use of the grant to the Sexual Assault Referral Service be circulated to the Panel Members for information.

### **(c) Review of Charges**

The Chief Finance Officer presented the Review of Charges reports informing the Panel that there was a 3% increase on the overall level of income in line with the Corporate Charging Policy.

### **Community Services**

Report CS.33/17 was submitted setting out the proposed fees and charges for 2018/19 relating to those services falling within the Community Services Directorate.

The charges highlighted within the report would result in an anticipated income level of £2,903,300 against the MTFP target of £2,903,300 which represented the income target being met. The Panel were asked to consider the areas which were in their remit as set out on the agenda.

The Executive had on 20 November 2017 (EX.113/17) received the report and resolved:

“That the Executive agreed for consultation the changes, as set out in the body of Report CS.33/17 and relevant appendices with effect from 1 April 2018; noting the impact those would have on income generation within the report”.

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

- A Member asked if it would be possible to increase the charges to reduce the cost of supporting the Old Fire Station.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive responded that the proposed charges had been detailed in appendix 1 of the report and reflected the use of the building. The Panel were free to scrutinise the commercial running of the Old Fire Station if they so wished.

A Member felt uncomfortable that the budget proposed a reduction to charges for the Old Fire Station and proposed an increase in the charges for Bereavement Service. She felt it would be useful for the Panel to receive information on the commercial use of the Old Fire Station which had informed the Executive's decision.

The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder assured Members that all of the charges were considered individually. It was hoped that the proposed reduction to some charges at the Old Fire Station would increase footfall to meet income targets.

- Why had the proposed charges against the Dog Fouling Order stated N/A for 2018/19?

The Corporate Director explained that the Dog Fouling Order would be subsumed by the new Public Space Protection Order and therefore would be charged in a different way in 2018/19.

- The Chairman asked officers to consider providing charging reports on an exception approach in future to enable Panels to only scrutinise the charges which were above or below the 3% increase.

The Chief Finance Officer reminded the Panel that formerly a summary report was circulated as part of the budget process and she would reconsider this going forward.

- The Panel had considered the minutes of the Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel and supported the recommendation to remove the proposed reduction in the level of charge levied for the 4 – 9.5 hour period in the Civic Centre Car Park.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Review of Charges 2018/19 – Community Services (CS.33/17) be received.

2) That the Panel support the recommendation made to the Executive by the Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel and recommend to the Executive that the proposed reduction in the level of charge levied for the 4 – 9.5 hour period in the Civic Centre car Park be removed from the Executive Budget proposals.

3) That information on the commercial use of the Old Fire Station be circulated to Panel Members for information.

4) That the Panel recommend that the Chief Finance Officer consider changing the Charges Reports to an exception approach in future budget processes.

## **Economic Development**

Report ED.38/17 was submitted setting out the proposed fees and charges for areas falling within the responsibility of the Economic Development Directorate.

The proposed charges in relation to Planning Services included Development Control income; Building Control income; and Local Plan income.

Acceptance of the charges highlighted within the report, with the exception of Building Control which was self-financing, would result in an anticipated level of income of £705,500 against the Medium Term Financial Plan target of £682,500.

The Executive had on 20 November 2017 (EX.114) received the report and resolved:

“That the Executive agreed for consultation the charges, as set out in Report ED.38/17 and accompanying Appendices, with effect from 1 April 2018; noting the impact those would have on income generation as detailed within the report.”

A Member commented that, although she understood that the remits for Directorates had changed, she had missed the details in the reports on some areas such as the Enterprise Centre and Assembly Rooms.

RESOLVED – That Charges Review Report 2018/19 – Economic Development (ED.38/17) be noted.

## **Governance and Regulatory Services**

Report GD.66/17 was submitted concerning the proposed fees and charges for areas falling within the responsibility of the Governance and Regulatory Services Directorate.

The report set out the proposed charges relative to Environmental Health and Housing; Homeless, Prevention and Accommodation Services; and Legal Services. The introduction of the proposed charges was forecast to generate income of £909,700 in 2018/19 as summarised in the table at Section 5.10 of the report.

The Executive had on 20 November 2017 (EX.115/17) received the report and resolved:

“That the Executive agreed for consultation the charges as detailed within Report GD.66/17 and accompanying appendices, with effect from 1 April 2018; and noted the impact thereof on income generation as detailed within the report.”

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

- Why had the Homelife charge for key safes and the Homelife hourly rate risen?

The Corporate Director explained that the changes to the Homelife charges brought all charges for minor measures in line. The service was discretionary and the Council had to cover its costs to retain the service. He assured Members that applicants did not receive a reduction in their grant as a result of the changes. With regard to the hourly rate he explained that some of the Homelife work was carried out by different teams within the same department, the change to the rate meant that the same charge was being applied across the teams.

- How would the proposed changes to cap the rent for benefit claimants impact on the budget with regards to homeless accommodation?

The Chief Finance Officer responded that the Homeless Accommodation rental charges had been increased by 2.5% because any figure higher would not be covered by housing benefit as the charges would be above the Local Housing Allowance.

The Chief Executive informed the Panel that he had requested a piece of work be undertaken that analysed the impact of John Street Homeless Accommodation's closure for the two years following the flood. The matter was complicated and had to balance the social impact and the wish to provide the service against the business considerations for the Council. When the work had been completed it would be reported to Scrutiny.

- The Panel thanked the Corporate Director and all of the services involved for producing a well written and clear report.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Review of Charges 2018/19 – Governance and Regulatory Services (GD.66/17) be noted.

2) That a report detailing the impact of the closure of John Street Homeless Accommodation following the flood be added to the Panel's future Work Programme.

### **Governance and Regulatory Services - Licensing**

Report GD.68/17 was submitted setting out the proposed fees and charges for areas falling within the responsibility of the Licensing Section of the Governance and Regulatory Services Directorate. The Corporate Director of Governance and Regulatory Services advised Members that the Regulatory Panel had responsibility for determining the licence fees, with the exception of those under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013, which fell to the Executive.

The Executive had on 20 November 2017 (EX.116/17) received the report and agreed:

“That the Executive:

1. Noted the charges which were considered by the Regulatory Panel on 15 November 2017.
2. Noted that the fees under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 had been determined by the Executive for a three year period on 1 August 2016.”

RESOLVED – That the Governance and Regulatory Services - Licensing Review of Charges 2018/19 report (GD.58/17) be noted.

### **(d) Revised Capital Programme 2017/18 and Provisional Capital Programme 2018/19 to 2022/23**

The Chief Finance Officer submitted report RD.32/17 detailing the revised Capital Programme for 2017/18, now totalling £9,010,700, together with the proposed method of financing. The report summarised the proposed programme for 2018/19 to 2022/23 in light of the new capital proposals identified, together with the estimated capital resources available to fund the programme.

Section 4 provided details of the current commitments and new spending proposals. Any capital scheme for which funding had been approved by Council may only proceed after a full report, including business case and financial appraisal, had been approved.

A summary of the estimated resources compared to the proposed programme year on year was also provided.

The Executive had on 20 November 2017 (EX.117/17) received the report and resolved:

“That the Executive:

- (i) Noted the revised capital programme and relevant financing for 2017/18 as set out in Appendices A and B to Report RD.32/17;
- (ii) Had given initial consideration and views on the proposed capital spending for 2018/19 to 2022/23 given in the report in the light of the estimated available resources;
- (ii) Noted that any capital scheme for which funding had been approved by Council may only proceed after a full report, including business case and financial appraisal, had been approved.”



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

- How would the Business Interaction Centre proposed capital spending be used?

The Chief Finance Officer responded that the capital would be used for the refurbishment and development of the building following the expiry of the lease to the University of Cumbria. The expenditure would be partly funded from an application to the European Regional Development Fund and dilapidation settlement.

In response to a Member's question the Corporate Director reminded the Panel that the Enterprise Centre was no longer a business incubation facility and had been moved into the Council's property portfolio as a commercial asset.

- A number of the capital scheme projects were reliant on external funding, how would the projects and budget be impacted if the applications were not successful?

The Chief Finance Officer responded that projects would be reviewed should applications for external grants be unsuccessful and most cases the projects would not progress.

Members asked for a list of grant/funding applications which the Council had submitted and information on their success.

- In response to a question the Chief Finance Officer confirmed that the capital scheme for the work at Fairy Beck within Carlisle Cemetery was in addition to other budget pressures within the budget pack.
- The Panel discussed the wording in section 6.2 of the report which suggested that no new major one-off schemes unless fully funded from grants or external funding be considered as part of the budget process. The Panel felt that this line should be removed as any additional expenditure outside of the budget framework would have to go to full Council for a decision.
- The Disabled Facilities Grants had been underspent, was there any flexibility as to how the money could be spent?

The Corporate Director reminded the Panel that the Disabled Facilities grant allocation was awarded via the County Council's Better Care Fund and the City Council had an obligation to work with partners to produce a programme of work for the grant. Full Council had approved a discretionary policy which afforded the Council some flexibility. In addition Central Government had circulated information regarding the availability of an additional grant which would not be covered by Better Care Funding; the additional grant could only be accepted if the Council could spend it before March 2018.

The Panel noted that the Disabled Facilities Action Plan had been completed and requested that it be added to their work programme.

- The available Capital Resources indicated a deficit for 2017/18, how would this be addressed?

The Chief Finance Officer responded that the level of deficit was manageable and could be funded from internal borrowing from cash resources with minimum impact on the level of investment income.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Revised Capital Programme 2017/18 and Provisional Capital Programme 2018/19 to 2022/23 (RD.32/17) be noted.

2) That an update on grant/funding applications which the Council had submitted and information on their success be circulated to Members of the Panel;

3) That the Disabled Facilities Action Plan be added to the Panel's work programme.

4) The Panel recommend that the following line be removed from Section 6.2 of the Revised Capital Programme 2017/18 and Provisional Capital Programme 2018/19 to 2022/23:

No major one-off schemes unless fully funded from grants or external funding

#### **(e) Corporate Assets – 3 Year Repair and Maintenance Programme 2018/19 – 2020/21**

The Corporate Director of Governance and Regulatory Services presented report GD.72/17 setting out the repair and maintenance programme budget proposals for the Council's corporate property assets for the three year period 2018/19 -2020/21, required to ensure that the legal responsibilities of the City Council were met.

The Corporate Director reminded Members that local authorities had a duty to manage their property assets, particularly operational assets, in a safe and efficient manner which contributed to the quality of service delivery. The maintenance strategy was fully integrated with the Asset Management Plan and environmental policy. In addition, the Council followed good practice by, where practical, allocating its budget 70% planned maintenance and 30% reactive maintenance.

He added that the maintenance budgets for the year and those for the next 3 years (as set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan) were included as Appendix A. Whilst that allocation was necessary for budget purposes the Building Maintenance and Projects Manager (authorised by the Corporate Director of Governance and Regulatory Services) could re-distribute those funds to meet specific or emergency needs. That flexibility was essential to avoid any service disruption.

The Executive had on 20 November 2017 (EX.118) received the report and resolved:

"That the Executive approved:

1. The three year revenue maintenance programme set out in Appendix A to Report GD.72/17 as part of the budget process.
2. The 2018/19 capital budget of £150,000 as part of the budget process.
3. The list of capital projects selected to meet the allocated capital budget of £150,000."

RESOLVED – That the Corporate Assets – 3 Year Repair and Maintenance Programme 2018/19 – 2020/21 be noted.

#### **(f) Treasury Management Quarter 2 2017 and Forecasts for 2018/19 to 2022/23**

The Chief Finance Officer submitted report RD.30/17 providing the regular quarterly report on Treasury Transactions, together with an interim report on Treasury Management as required under the Financial Procedure Rules. The report also discussed the City Council's Treasury Management estimates for 2018/19 with projections to 2022/23, and set out information regarding the requirements of the Prudential Code on local authority capital finance.



The base Treasury Management estimates for 2018/19 with projections for 2022/23 were set out at Appendix C.

The Executive had on 20 November 2017 (EX.119/17) received the report and resolved that Report RD.30/17 be received and the projections for 2018/19 to 2022/23 be incorporated into the Budget reports considered elsewhere on the Agenda.

A Member commented that the figures set out in a previous report would take the Council above the Authorised Borrowing Limit as set out in Appendix B2 of the report. The Chief Finance Officer explained that the limit in Appendix B2 was the 2017/18 limit and the revised figure 2018/19 would be submitted to the Panel for scrutiny in January.

RESOLVED – That the Treasury Management Quarter 2 2017 and Forecasts for 2018/19 to 2022/23 (RD.30/17) be noted.

### **(g) Local Taxation 2018/19 – 2022/23**

The Chief Finance Officer submitted report RD.33/17 considering aspects of Local Taxation decisions which needed to be made as part of the Budget process for 2018/19 onwards.

The Chief Finance Officer outlined the various considerations, including the levels of Council Tax for the City Council (including Parish Precepts), Council Tax Surplus calculations, Council Tax Base calculations, Local Support for Council Tax (LSCT), and Business Rate Retention (including Pooling arrangements). A summary of the assumptions made was also provided at Section 4.

The Executive had on 20 November 2017 (EX.120/17) received the report and resolved:

“ That the Executive:

- (i) Noted the contents of Report RD.33/17 including the current assumptions built into the MTFP with regard to local taxation issues;
- (ii) Approved, for recommendation to Council as part of the budget process, the 2018/19 Local Support for Council tax Scheme as set out in paragraph 2.4.
- (iii) Approved the continuation of involvement in the Cumbria Business Rate Pool arrangements for 2018/19, subject to the continuing involvement of the other partners which would be formally agreed in January 2018 with the final decision on participation being delegated to the Chief Finance Officer; that being subject to the outcome of the Business Rate Retention pilot bid for 100% retention in 2018/19.”

A Member asked when the care leavers discretion would be considered by the Executive and Chief Finance Officer responded that it was hoped to be ready for consideration in January.

RESOLVED – That the Local Taxation 2018/19 – 2022/23 report (RD.33/17) be noted.

*The Panel adjourned for a short break at 11.25am and reconvened at 11.30am.*

### **(h) Budget Monitoring Reports**

The following reports had been circulated to the Panel by way of background information:

- RD.28/17 – Revenue Budget Overview and Monitoring Report: April to September 2017
- RD.29/17 – Capital Budget Overview and Monitoring Report: April to September 2017

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

### *Revenue Budget Overview and Monitoring Report: April to September 2017*

- Was the shortfall in income from the Lanes set against the reduced estimate?

The Chief Finance Officer confirmed that the shortfall had been set against the reduced estimate and reminded the Panel that the report was up to September and the figures could change as part of the outturn position.

- Had the improved levels of income for car parking been taken into account when the car parking charges were being reviewed?

The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder confirmed that the increase had been considered as part of the charges review adding that previously car park charges only changed once a year, now with the aid of new technology, the Council was able to be reactive to trends when setting the charges.

- The ICT Strategy regularly showed an overspend, why was this and could the Panel see the ICT Strategy?

The Chief Executive reported that the overspend was a re-profiling issue rather than a forecast of overspend. A new ICT Strategy was being drafted along with a review of the mobile technology within the Council. The Strategy would be submitted for scrutiny when it had been drafted.

- Why did the Rethinking Waste have such a large shortfall in savings?

The Chief Executive reminded the Panel that the proposals for charging for Garden Waste Collections had been removed and had resulted in the £400,000 shortfall.

RESOLVED –That the Revenue Budget Overview and Monitoring Report, RD.28/17, be received;

2) That the new ICT Strategy be added to the Panel's Work Programme.

### *Capital Budget Overview and Monitoring report: April to September 2017*

A Member sought assurance that the Harraby Cycle Track was at the end of the project and no further issues would arise. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive responded that there were still outstanding issues with the contractor and therefore he was unable to give such assurances until the project was signed off and completed. He agreed to provide the Panel with an update on the project.

A Member asked for information on the use of the additional contributions to the Public Realm Scheme and Chief Finance Officer agreed to circulate information to the Panel.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Capital Budget Overview and Monitoring report, RD.29/17, be received;

2) That the Town Clerk and Chief Executive provide the Panel with an update on the Harraby Cycle Track project.

3) That the Chief Finance Officer provide Panel Members with information on the use of additional contributions to the Public Realm Scheme

## **BTSP.43/17      COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER**

The Policy and Performance Officer submitted report OS.21/17 which presented the work of the Community Asset Transfer Task Group.

The Policy and Performance Officer reminded the Panel that a task and finish group had been established to support officers in shaping and developing the Community Asset Transfer Policy. The Group was comprised of Councillor Mrs Riddle, Councillor Mrs Bowman and Councillor Allison.

The Policy and Performance Officer informed the Panel that Community Asset Transfer (CAT) was the transfer of management and/or ownership of public land and buildings from its owner to a community organisation for less than market value to achieve a local social, economic or environmental benefit. The report detailed the current position at the City Council including the Asset Management Plan which was supportive of the potential for development in this area.

The Task Group had developed a draft Community Asset Transfer Policy and supporting documents to enable the Council to implement the Policy. The documents were based on research and consultation undertaken by the Task Group. Members identified that that a CAT Policy should be clear and concise and flexible. They also recognised the need for a clear process for asset transfers to be considered within the Council, to ensure that an officer had responsibility for each stage of the process, Members were informed and decision making was transparent.

Members felt that an application form would assist groups in applying and would provide clarity in their understanding of what was required of them. The assessment matrix aligned to the application form enabled an initial assessment of an application to determine if it should proceed to be considered further. The CAT Policy and processes provided a clear framework for asset transfers, helped identify the resources required to implement the process and who would lead on each stage.

The Task Group had identified further work regarding the Council's asset list and opened up the Task Group to the other Scrutiny Panels.

The Chairman commented that there had been no clear process and the new policy clarified the whole process and provided a clear framework and criteria.

The Panel asked how CAT opportunities would be promoted to stakeholders in particular Parish Councils. The Policy and Performance Officer responded that opportunities would be advertised to all groups equally if the Policy was approved. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive added that the Deputy Chief Executive would be attending an Annual General Meeting of the Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC) in February and it would be a good opportunity to promote the Policy.

**RESOLVED** – That the Panel recommend to the Executive the approval and adoption of the Community Asset Transfer Policy (OS.21/17).

## **BTSP.44/17      CORPORATE PROJECT STATUS REPORT**

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented report CE.15/17 which provided an update on the work of the Transformation Board and projects being undertaken in the Council.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive reminded the Panel that the Transformation Board had subsumed the work of the Corporate Programme Board. The role of the Transformation board

was to ensure that there were effective governance arrangements in place for the projects that the Council undertook. A refresh of the Council's Project Managers' Handbook was also being carried out, the Handbook set out the corporate standards and methodology for project management in the Council. The Handbook had been attached to the report and Members were asked for their comments and input before it was finalised.

The report set out the status of current projects within the Council and the key achievements and achievements per project in the last six months.

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

- A Member was concerned that the Local Plan no longer reflected the changes to retail trading and asked if there was a process for reviewing parts of the Plan.

The Town Clerk and Chief executive responded that the Local Plan had been adopted and suggested that the Member discuss the matter with the Corporate Director of Economic Development.

- There was some concern that e-purchasing would be a barrier to local smaller businesses.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive agreed that there should a risk identified in the register which included the implications of e-purchasing on local suppliers and how the risk could be mitigated along with evidence of how the risk had been addressed.

- Where would the new public realm signage be placed?

The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder explained that the signage would replace existing finger posts and include more detail on attractions within the City.

- A Member commented that the Castle Way crossing had been very successful.
- The Panel asked for an update on the Community Infrastructure Levy and the Town Clerk and Chief Executive agreed to circulate a response to Members.
- Why had the Asset Recovery Programme not included details on John Street Homeless Accommodation and Adriano's?

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive reported that the physical work had been completed at the Homeless Accommodation and would re-open following staff recruitment and training. Adriano's had issues with the kitchen and a new contractor had to be appointed. Both projects had been delayed due to the contractors and both buildings were on their way to being completed.

With regard to the cost implications to the authority due to the closure of Adriano's the Chief Executive agreed to circulate a written response.

- The Panel thanked the Chief Executive for the Handbook and requested that Portfolio Holders were added to the progress reports for the management of projects.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Corporate Project Status report (CE.15/17) be welcomed;

2) That an update on the Community Infrastructure Levy be circulated to the Panel.

3) That the Town Clerk and Chief Executive provide the Panel with information on the cost implications to the authority due to the closure of Adriano's.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive submitted the authority's sickness absence levels for the period April 2017 to September 2017 and other sickness absence information (CE.16/17).

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive reported that the 2016/17 levels of sickness absence decreased by approximately 14% to 7.4 days lost per full time equivalent (FTE) employee compared to 2015/16. 2015/16 had also decreased by 29% so there had been an overall reduction of 39% over the last years. The percentage of sickness which was long term also decreased as HR continued to work with managers to ensure support for their staff was available and accessible.

The table in appendix 1 provided sickness absence levels split by the new directorates. Authority wide, compared to quarter 2 of 2016/17, 2017/18 levels had increased by nearly 9% to 3.7 days lost per FTE employee. The last four consecutive months had been higher than the corresponding months in the previous year mainly due to an increase in long term absences.

The report set out the sickness absence reasons split by directorate; it also reported that "Other musculo-skeletal problems" was the highest reason for absence. Quarter 2 also showed that 99% of return to work interviews had been completed.

He added that the sickness absence figures for the authority had become volatile as the Council size reduced, a small number of long term absences had a significant impact on the sickness absence figures.

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

- A Member noted the initiatives and training which was provided to improve health and wellbeing and asked if any of the initiatives could be targeted to address the top reasons for sickness absence.

The Chief Executive reminded the Panel that the health and wellbeing initiatives were funded in part from staff purchasing extra annual leave. The initiatives were deliberately mixed to ensure staff engagement. There was a training programme in place which targeted directorates; however, the Chief Executive would welcome any suggestions in this area.

- A Member asked what type of absences were covered by "Other" and if it had to remain in the reasons for absence.

The Policy and Performance Officer explained that the categories were defined by the Health and Safety Executive and 'Other' covered a variety of illnesses which included cancer.

- The second highest absence was caused by stress, depression, mental health and fatigue syndromes and it was noted that Doncaster Council had managed to reduce their absences in this category. Had the Council investigated how this had been achieved?

The Chief Executive had been aware of the reduction; however, their programme was similar to Carlisle's. He reminded the Panel that the City Council had recently signed the Time to Change pledge which was a commitment to change how the Council thought and acted about mental health at every level of the Council.

- How did the City Council benchmark against other authorities?

The Policy and Performance Officer responded that the most up to date benchmarking figures had not been received, however, previously the City Council had been better than the County

Council and half way compared to the other North West District Councils. There had been a vast improvement on sickness absence figures.

RESOLVED – That the 2017/18 Sickness Absence Quarter 2 report (CE.16/17) be noted.

#### **BTSP.46/17            QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2017/18**

The Policy and Performance Officer submitted the 2nd quarter performance against the current Service Standards and a summary of the Carlisle Plan 2015-18 actions as defined in the 'plan on a page'. The new Service Standards and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were also included (PC.18/17).

Details of the standards were set out in section 1 and section 2 contained the Council's delivery of the Carlisle Plan within the Panel's remit. A new dashboard showing performance against the new KPIs (also within the Panel's remit) was appended.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive informed the Panel that work had been undertaken with regard to Land Charges service standard and the next report would include details of the Land Charges performance.

RESOLVED – That the Quarter 2 Performance Report 2017/18 (PC.20/17) be welcomed.

(The meeting ended at 12.30pm)