

AGENDA

Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Tuesday, 21 October 2014 AT 10:00

In the Business Interaction Centre, Paternoster Row, Carlisle

A preparatory/briefing for Members of the Panel will be held at 9.15am in the Board Room of the Business Interaction Centre, Paternoster Row, Carlisle

****The meetings will adjourn at approximately 12:30 and reconvene at 1:00 in the Flensburg Room of the Civic Centre, Carlisle. Members may therefore wish to consider making their own arrangements for lunch****

Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies for absence.

Public and Press

To agree that the items of business within part A of the agenda should be dealt with in public and the items of business within Part B of the agenda should be dealt with in private.

Declarations of Interest

Members are invited to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests, other registrable interests and any interests, relating to any items on the agenda at this stage.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

5 - 14

To note the minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2014
(Copy Minutes herewith)

PART A

To be considered when the Public and Press are present

A.2 BUSINESS SUPPORT - BACKGROUND PAPER 15 - 20

(Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio)

The Director of Economic Development to submit a report that briefs Members of the Panel on business support, background, how it was delivered in the past and the changes introduced by the Government following the abolition of the Regional Development Agencies with a specific focus on Carlisle.

Representatives from the Chamber of Commerce - Growth Hub, the Federation of Small Businesses and the University of Cumbria will also be in attendance at the meeting.

(Copy Report ED.43/14 herewith)

A.3 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME 21 - 26

To consider a report providing an overview of matters related to the work of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel, together with the latest version of the Work Programme and details of the Key Decisions items relevant to this Panel as set out in the Notice of Executive Key Decisions.

(Copy Report OS.24/14 herewith)

A.4 TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE 27 - 32

(Culture, Leisure and Young People Portfolio)

The Director of Economic Development to submit a report that provides Members with an update on Phase 2 of the Old Town Hall Scheme, Carlisle
(Copy Report ED.41/14 herewith)

A.5 PUBLIC REALM

(Culture, Leisure and Young People Portfolio)

The Strategic Property Manager to give a presentation to Members which provides an update on the Public Realm

A.6 TALKIN TARN COUNTRY PARK

**33 -
48**

(Environment and Transport Portfolio)

The Director of Local Environment to submit a report that provides the Business Plan which aims to increase the revenue generated to Talkin Tarn by exploring the opportunities for new activities and by improving the presentation of the catering offer at the Tarn.

(Copy Report LE.22/14A herewith)

PART B

To be considered when the Public and Press are excluded from the meeting

B.1 TALKIN TARN COUNTRY PARK

- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information);

**Not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972*

The Director Local Environment to submit a report that includes the Business Plan which aims to increase the revenue generated at Talkin Tarn by exploring the opportunities for new activities and by improving the presentation of the catering offer at the Tarn

(Copy Report LE.22/14B herewith)

Members of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Conservative – Mrs Bowman, Mitchelson, Nedved (Chairman), Mrs Mallinson (sub), Mrs McKerrell (sub) Mrs Vasey (sub)

Labour – Caig (Vice Chairman), Dodd, Watson, Wilson, Bowditch (sub), Burns (sub), Harid (sub)

Independent – Graham, Betton (sub)

**Enquiries, requests for reports, background papers,
etc to Committee Clerk: Sheila Norton - 817557**

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2014 AT 10.00 AM

PRESENT: Councillor Nedved (Chairman), Councillors Burns (as substitute for Councillor Dodd), Caig, Graham, Mrs McKerrell (as substitute for Councillor Mrs Bowman), Mrs Mallinson (as substitute four Councillor Mitchelson), Watson and Wilson

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Bradley – Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder
Councillor J Mallinson - Observer

OFFICERS: Deputy Chief Executive
Director of Economic Development
Director of Local Environment
Housing Development Officer
Investment and Policy Manager
Policy and Performance Officer
Waste Services Technical Manager
Neighbourhood Services Operations Manager
Overview and Scrutiny Officer

EEOSP.56/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Bowman, Dodd and Mitchelson. Apologies were also submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs Martlew – Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder.

EEOSP.57/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Caig and Mrs Mallinson declared an interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of Item A4 – Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update. The interest related to the fact that they were representatives of the City Council on the Divisional Board of Riverside Cumbria.

EEOSP.58/14 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Director of Local Environment advised that ion respect of the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2014 the memorandum of claimed rights had still not been signed. The issue would be raised at the next meeting of the Highways and Transport Working Group scheduled to be held on 26 September 2014.

RESOLVED – 1. That the minutes of the meetings held on 3 July 2014 be agreed as a correct record of the meetings and signed by the Chairman.

2. That the Minutes of the meetings held on 14 August 2014 and 8 September 2014 be noted.

EEOSP.59/14 CALL IN OF DECISIONS

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

EEOSP. 60/14 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman advised that the order of items on the agenda would be changed to allow more effective Officer time.

EEOSP.61/14 RE-THINKING WASTE PROJECT

The Director of Economic Development gave a presentation to Members of the Panel that explained the Re-Thinking Waste Project.

The Director of Local Environment outlined the pressures on waste services, the budget pressures, the time-line and key decisions and considerations. The Director of Local Environment reminded Members of the current position of the Council in respect of waste services and also the consultation currently taking place and modelling exercises which had been undertaken. A consultant had been employed by the Council who had determined that the Council was generally very efficient operationally and suggested a number of options with regard to waste collection. The Director of Local Environment explained the cost variances of the different options. The Director advised that a number of authorities were now using refuse and recycling vehicles which had had a number of advantages to those authorities.

There were a number of issues that would be referred back to the Executive before the final approval in early 2015 of either a new contract in respect of recycling or whether to bring recycling collection in-house.

The Chairman reminded Members that a full report on Waste Services would be presented to the Panel at their meeting in November.

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

- *How were the current staffing levels as some individuals who had been involved with recycling had left the authority?*

The Director of Local Environment advised that staffing was strong within Local Environment and although some members of staff had left due to age issues there had been no redundancies.

- *How would food waste be disposed of?*

The Director of Local Environment explained that there was currently no disposal method for food waste although the County Council were looking at the issue.

- *Procurement for the collection and disposal of waste was a county wide issue. Had the facility at Rockcliffe been considered?*

The Director of Local Environment advised that the capacity at the facility at Rockcliffe had not been looked at but the impact of any contract in respect of the disposal of waste on the county as a whole would be taken into account. The facility had been discussed the previous day at a meeting of the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership and Officers would work in partnership with other districts to address the issues.

- *It had been suggested by Mr Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, that there should be weekly refuse collections. The consultants, Eunomia had advised against that. Why?*

The Director of Local Environment confirmed that Eunomia had advised against weekly collections as it could lead to lower recycling rates and higher costs.

The Director of Local Environment left the meeting. Questions were directed to the Deputy Chief Executive.

- *How would refuse and recycling from new housing estates be collected when rounds were at capacity? Where would that be covered in the budget?*

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the Government had undertaken some work with the LGA to assess housing growth and the impact on waste costs. Carlisle was below the suggested threshold where there would be a problem. Refuse and recycling collection rounds were reviewed approximately twelve months ago and it was anticipated that another review would be required in the coming months. The Deputy Chief Executive acknowledged that the issue would raise challenges.

The Director of Economic Development advised that Planning Officers consulted with Officers in Waste Services when designing potential new housing estates in respect of rounds, vehicle sizes, etc and Section 106 Agreements provided funding for new waste bins, etc.

- *The Director of Local Environment advised in the presentation that there would be a shortfall of £450,000. How would that shortfall and the costs of servicing new estates be incorporated into the budget?*

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the cost to the Council would be for the replacement of refuse vehicles and some of that was contained within the capital budget. However, the replacement of vehicles was not expected for some time so Officer had time to re-think waste services and build in costs of replacement vehicles, and new housing estates, accordingly.

- *Some of the refuse vehicles are very heavy and are causing damage to back lanes.*

The Neighbourhood Services Operations Manager advised that Officers had considered using narrower vehicles but they were cost prohibitive as they carried a smaller payload. However Officers were aware of the problem. The Deputy Chief Executive believed that the issue was wider than refuse disposal and that collaboration between the County Council was vital.

- *If the rounds were at capacity how would new housing estates be serviced?*

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that new rounds would need to be created. Some smaller developments could possibly be incorporated into existing rounds but it would be necessary within the next 12-18 months to review the rounds. It would be useful to pass information on changes to rounds on to Ward Councillors and communicate better with residents.

- *How many companies would tender for the new contract?*

The Deputy Chief Executive believed that there would be significant interest in the contract with a move towards collection and disposal. The Neighbourhood Services Operations Manager added that Carlisle was isolated geographically and that could reduce the interest in the contract.

- *Was the Council legally obliged to put the contract to tender?*

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that when the review was completed and it had been determined what would be best for Carlisle there was a possibility that not all of the services would be brought in-house. The Deputy Chief Executive acknowledged that there would be some challenges and that the views of Members would need to be considered.

- *Would it not be more cost effective to lease refuse vehicles rather than buying them?*

The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that leasing of vehicles would be looked at as well as costs of purchasing new vehicles. There was also the possibility that a new provider may be able to supply vehicles at a lower cost due to bulk buying across the whole country.

- *Were the City Council planning to close any of their bring sites?*

The Neighbourhood Services Operations Manager explained that some had been closed. The Deputy Chief Executive reminded Members that a list of bring sites was considered by the Panel at a previous meeting and it was decided that some proposed for closure should remain. Officers would look again at those sites and determine whether it would be better financially for more to close. Overall it had been a good move to close some of the bring sites.

- *Would the loss of individuals within the organisation have any impact on waste services?*

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the loss of members of staff would not impact on the waste services programme.

The Chairman stated that Waste Services would be considered by the Panel in November and the findings of a cross party working group would be brought back to the Panel by the Director of Local Environment.

RESOLVED: 1) That the matter would be considered in more detail at the meeting of the Panel in November.

EEOSP.62/14 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented report OS.23/14 which provided an overview of matters relating to the work of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel and included the latest version of the work programme and Key Decisions of the Executive which related to the Panel.

- The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reported that the Notice of Key Executive Decisions, published on 12 September 2014, included the following items which fell within the remit of this Panel.

KD.20/14 – Talkin Tarn Business Plan – the item will be considered at the meeting of the Panel on 21 October 2014.

- The minutes excerpt from the meeting of the Executive on 17 September 2014 was circulated.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reminded Members that the next meeting of the Panel would be held on Tuesday 21 October 2014 in the Business Interaction Centre and would focus on business support. There would be a short break for lunch and the meeting would re-convene at the Civic Centre for consideration of the remaining items. Final details would be circulated to Members of the Panel by the Overview and Scrutiny Officer.
- Work Programme – The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented the current work programme and advised Members that

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

EEOSP.63/14 QUARTER ONE PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Policy and Performance Officer presented report PC.11/14 that updated the Panel on the Council's service standards that helped measure performance and customer satisfaction, and included updates on key actions contained within the Carlisle Plan.

Details of each service standard were included in a table appended to the report. The table illustrated the cumulative year to date figure, a month-by-month breakdown of performance and, where possible, an actual service standard baseline that had been established either locally or nationally. The updates against actions in the Carlisle Plan followed on from the service standard information which was attached to the report.

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

- *One of the Service Standards was the percentage of household waste sent for recycling. Sent by whom?*

The Deputy Chief Executive advised the standard related to percentage of waste sent for recycling by the disposal authority.

- *The report does now show any direction of travel of the standards and there were no RAG reports.*

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the format of the reports had been changed to the current format some time ago. The graphs indicated the direction of travel.

The Director of Economic Development advised that the items were set up to reflect those issues that were of interest to residents. Behind this lay further information. It was believed that the format would be easier for customers to deal with.

- *How was customer satisfaction measured? And how many people had responded?*

The Policy and Performance Officer explained that customer satisfaction was measured through a website survey. Sending out questionnaires to all residents would not be cost effective. It was also intended to include a further survey in the Carlisle Focus magazine.

With regard to street cleanliness, 246 people had responded to the survey. The Officer did not have the figures relating to waste services available but would provide a written response to the Member.

The Deputy Chief Executive stated that the format would depend upon what was required by the Panel for scrutiny. Other data sets were available and more information could be obtained on specific services through the CRM system.

- *A Member explained that the format had been discussed by the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel and had been changed several times until this format had been agreed. The figures were intended as a guide only and further information was available to Members if required. Not everyone had access to the website and therefore they could not submit their views in that way.*
- *Why produce the figures if there is no standard for customer satisfaction?*

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the figures gave a snapshot of customer satisfaction. The figures were considered by the SMT before coming to the relevant Panels and if any issues were flagged up for further enquiry they could be looked at. The figures allowed a comparison between neighbouring councils and against set benchmarks. The Deputy Chief Executive added that it would be useful for more people to be involved in surveys and invited the Policy and Performance Officer to include the source of the information provided in future reports.

- *More narrative would add context to the information.*

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder advised that the figures were reported quarterly and, for example, with regard to the information in respect of planning applications, the issue had been dealt with.

RESOLVED: 1. That report PC.13/14 – Quarter One Performance Report – be noted.

2. That more narrative be included in the reports to indicate the source of the information and explanation of the figures.

EEOSP.64/14 STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT UPDATE

The Investment and Policy Manager presented report ED.34/14 that updated Members of the Panel on the key findings and recommendations within an update of the Council's Strategic Housing market Assessment (SHMA).

The Investment and Policy Manager explained the background to the SHMA and advised that it was anticipated that the report would be finalised prior to the end of September and published as a key component of the Local Plan evidence base shortly thereafter.

The Investment and Policy Manager further explained the methodology used in the development of the SHMA and advised that the base date for the projections employed in the assessment was 2013 and estimates were therefore expressed between 2013 and 2030. The base date correlated with the base date of the available data sources whereas the end date correlated with that of the emerging Carlisle District Local Plan 2015-2030.

The Investment and Policy Manager informed Members that in terms of overall housing need the updated assessment identified that between 2013 and 2030 between 8,200 and 9,600 new homes would be required. If achieved that would represent an increase against the existing number of homes within the District to between 16% and 19%.

The assessment further estimated that within the specified period an additional 5,011 affordable homes would be required. The draft report recommended that the evidence on affordable housing need supported that policies within the emerging Local Plan should pursue between 25% and 30% of new homes on qualifying development sites as affordable. The draft report also recommended that 30% of the secured affordable housing should be for low cost home ownership/shared ownership and that 70% should be for social/affordable rent.

The Investment and Policy Manager explained the Wards within each housing market area, the annual housing requirement by area (per annum), the estimated level of housing need by type of affordable housing (per annum) and the housing mix by unit size across tenures during the period 2013 and 2030. The Investment and Policy Manager explained that 70% of new houses would be within the urban area with the remaining 30% within the rural area.

Analysis within the 2011 assessment supported that in terms of overall housing need an annual average of between 545 to 665 net new dwellings were required. The updated SHMA indicated that the level of affordable housing need was much lower. The Investment and Policy Manager explained that it was important to acknowledge that the methodologies were not directly comparable and explained how they differed. However, in terms of the need for different sizes of accommodation the findings between the updated and previous assessment were broadly similar.

Having reviewed the draft document Officers had identified a need for a small number of minor amendments and sought to clarify a small number of aspects of the assessment and its findings. The appointed consultants were currently working to incorporate such amendments with a view to being able to issue a final report prior to the end of September.

Once the report was finalised regard would be given to the key findings and recommendations in acting to refine and evolve the emerging Local Plan towards the next stage of its preparation. The updated SHMA would be available on the Council's website alongside the remainder of the evidence base which was informing the development of the Local Plan.

The Housing Development Officer explained the different types of affordable housing and how the figures were calculated. The Officer advised that any discount was passed on at resale. A definition of affordable housing was included in the report with information that

was specific to Carlisle. As the information was technical the Officer agreed to circulate the information to Members of the Panel after the meeting.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the issues were technical and complex but that the report had summarised the issues well.

The Director of Economic Development reminded Members that the SHMA was only one part of the Local Plan evidence base. The Local Plan was too large to be considered in one session but the final Local Plan would be available for consideration by the Panel.

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

- *This was not the right forum to discuss such a complex issue. It was difficult to understand the complex issues and scrutinise the matter. It was suggested that a better way to deal with such issues be sought.*

The Director of Economic Development advised that there was a cross party working group that looked at all of the issues. It was good that Members were interested in the issues and Officers were happy to sit with Members and discuss specific issues if required.

- *There is nothing in the document in respect of Section 106 Agreements regarding schools, roads, shops, doctors' surgeries, etc. There will be pressure on schools with the development of new housing estates.*

The Director of Economic Development advised that the report was fundamental to show what infrastructure would be needed. Officers were currently working on an infrastructure deficit plan with the County Council. That would lead to an infrastructure delivery plan which could be issues to developers.

- *The document needs to link with other relevant documents, possibly by the use of hyperlinks.*

The Director of Economic Development stated that the document was a small part of the evidence base for the Local Plan which would pick up all of the issues.

- *There is a link between migration and housing need. That issue needs to be looked at. For example people living in Penrith and working in Carlisle drop their children off at school in High Hesket.*

The Director of Economic Development reminded Members that that was a function of the County Council but Officers were working with the County Council.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder advised that the Council had a duty of co-operation and the County Council were obliged to provide information and work with the City Council to provide solutions to those issues. The report was part of the supporting evidence of the Local Plan.

The Portfolio Holder acknowledged the document was highly technical that had been drawn up by specialists who had undertaken research and worked with a methodology and guidelines provided by the Government. Some of the issues were discussed at the cross party working group. The summary within the report had been useful but the Portfolio

Holder was unsure what level of detail was needed by the scrutiny Panel. It would be more useful and more productive to look at the document in context with the Local Plan.

- *How was the target for new houses calculated?*

The Investment and Policy Manager explained that it was complicated but that it looked at diminishing household size and divorce rate increases as well as longer term trends. The target also looks at migration and while population trends are fed into the information they are not the sole influence.

- *Who picks up the cost of the 20% reduction in the cost of properties for sale for affordable housing?*

The Housing Development Officer advised that the developer would pick up that cost as part of a Section 106 Agreement.

- *If a property was purchased as an affordable property and sold on would the owner have to sell at an affordable rate?*

The Housing Development Officer explained that if an affordable property was re-sold it would have to be sold at the same discount at which it was purchased.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for their input and advised that the Panel would work with the cross party working group on the development of the Local Plan.

RESOLVED: 1. That Report ED.34/14 – Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update – be noted.

2. That additional information in respect of affordable housing be circulated to Members of the Panel.

(The meeting ended at 12:00)

Report to Environment & Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:
A.2

Meeting Date: 21st October 2014
Portfolio: Economy and Enterprise
Key Decision: No
Within Policy and Budget Framework YES
Public / Private Public

Title: BUSINESS SUPPORT - BACKGROUND PAPER
Report of: Director of Economic Development
Report Number: ED 43 14

Purpose / Summary:

To brief Members of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel on business support, background, how it was delivered in the past and the changes introduced by the Government following the abolition of the Regional Development Agencies with a specific focus on Carlisle.

Recommendation Areas for Investigation:

- If the focus of Business Support is SME – What is their experience?
- Do Businesses understand what support experience is available?

Groups to be invited to give evidence to the Task & Finish Group

- Business Support Co-ordination Group - LEP
- Chamber of Commerce – Growth Hub
- Federation of Small Businesses
- University of Cumbria

Tracking

Executive:	
Overview and Scrutiny:	
Council:	

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Business support is a wide ranging topic however the objectives are to help businesses start, improve and grow.

The type and nature of business support can vary depending on the size and nature of the business and whether it is a business which is just starting out or a business which is well established. Over the last 10 years business support and how it is delivered has fundamentally changed with greater emphasis on small business performance and growth delivered mainly through an online information service.

The type of support which has been offered in the past can be split into a number of categories:-

- Business Finance including small loans for business
- Advice for new and high growth businesses this included free advice to help people start a business and advice and mentoring on all aspects of setting up and running a successful business, from an assessment of a business idea to advice on business planning and finance
- Innovation and Efficiency – Grants for Research and Development
 - Manufacturing Advisory Service – advice and funding to reduce costs and improve productivity
- Training and Development
 - Funding of accredited employee training and development
- International Trade
 - Advice and funding to support preparation, entry and expansion into overseas markets

This advice and support was accessed through Business Link Northwest which was run by the North West Development Agency (NWDA).

1.2 Review of Business Support

Following the change in Government in 2010 and the abolition of RDA's the Government reviewed how business support was delivered. The key principles were:-

- Business Growth – resources focused on improving small business performance and growth
- Business Start ups – a package of measures including the New Enterprise Allowance to help the unemployed become self employed

- Modernise the provision of online information so all businesses can access what they need, when they need it
- Business advice to be provided by experienced business people
- Address the barriers to enterprise for all groups
- Greater use of private providers of business advice as well as business networks both online and offline and intervene only where there is evident market failure

In addition to the above the organisations and agencies delivering business support changed. The Regional Development Agency and Business Link were abolished and business support is led at a strategic level, through the Department of Business Innovation and Skills and the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP's)

1.3 Business Support – Carlisle

In Carlisle business support is delivered by the Cumbria Business Growth Hub which is run by the Chamber of Commerce. The Growth Hub encompasses a range of private and public sector partners and a range of activities supporting small and medium enterprises through a range of co-ordinated activity. The Growth Hub includes a range of local, regional and national partners for instance UKTI and the University of Cumbria.

In September 2012 the University of Cumbria's Business School was opened at the Business Interaction Centre (BIC) at Paternoster Row. It offers a range of activities and support for local businesses including:-

- (a) Courses e.g. MBA, HR and IT short courses and FdAs in professional practices for Business
- (b) Information and access to events and networks
- (c) Access to consultancy and research
- (d) Student enterprise and incubation

In addition to the above the City Council continues to support businesses with a series of focused events and individual business support. In particular as part of our "business account" management function we provide the link between businesses and the LEP and supporting any bids for funding. Local initiatives and support include:-

- Inward Investment Enquiries: Liaison with Invest in Cumbria, submission of BIDS (e.g. Alhere), identification of sites/premises

- Knowledge Transfer Partnership: Collaborating with the University, College to help the independent retailers in the City to develop an 'online ' independent retailer department' and store 'app'.
- Delivery of business related events: e.g. Small Business Saturday, Apprenticeship Event, Think Local, Business Boost, Start-Up Bus
- Exhibitor at partners events: e.g. numerous Chamber networking events, Skills Fair, Global Enterprise Week, Inspiring Youth Enterprise, GrowthTwenty14, CVS Funding Surgery
- Sense of Place; Carlisle Story, Prospectus, banners, marketing material (folders, postcards, e-banners etc)
- Business Organisations Supported; Centre Business Group, Brampton Economic Partnership, Brampton Business Association
- Young Enterprise; Financial and practical support
- Special projects: MOD Longtown, M6 Corridor
- Enterprise Centre: Management of centre

2. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

- We will support the growth of more high quality and sustainable business and employment opportunities
- We will work with partners to develop a skilled and prosperous workforce fit for the future

Contact Officer: Jane Meek

Ext: 7190

**Appendices
attached to report:**

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- None

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS/RISKS:

Chief Executive's -

Deputy Chief Executive –

Economic Development –

Governance –

Local Environment –

Resources -

Economy & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:
A.3

Meeting Date: 21st October 2014

Portfolio: Cross Cutting

Key Decision: No

Within Policy and
Budget Framework

Public / Private Public

Title: OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

Report of: Overview and Scrutiny Officer

Report Number: OS 24/14

Summary:

This report provides an overview of matters related to the Economy & Environment O&S Panel's work. It also includes the latest version of the work programme.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

- Decide whether the items on the Notice of Key Executive Decisions should be included in the Panel's Work Programme for consideration.
- Note and/or amend the Panel's work programme

1. Notice of Key Executive Decisions

The most recent Notice of Key Executive Decisions will be published on 10th October 2014 and circulated to all Members. As this date follows publication of this report Members will be updated of items that fall into the remit of this Panel at the meeting.

2. References from the Executive

The Executive will meet on 13th October 2014 which is after publication of this report. Relevant references will be brought to the attention of Members of the Panel.

3. Budget Scrutiny

A short training session for all scrutiny members covering Budget Scrutiny has been arranged for **Wednesday 12th November 2014 at 5pm** in the Flensburg Room, Civic Centre.

4. Work Programme

The Panel's current work programme is attached at **Appendix 1** for comment/amendment.

Contact Officer: Nicola Edwards **Ext:** 7122
Appendices attached to report: 1. Economy & Environment Work Programme 2014/15

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

Issue Portfolio Holder & Lead officer	Type of Scrutiny					Comments/status	Meeting Dates							
	Performance Management	Key decision Item/Referred from Executive	Policy Review/Development	Scrutiny of Partnership/ External Agency	Monitoring									
							3 Jul 14	14 Aug 14	25 Sep 14	21 Oct 14	27 Nov 14	22 Jan 15	12 Mar 15	23 Apr 15
CURRENT MEETING – 21 st October 2014														
TIC and Public Realm		✓			✓	Update on projects				✓				
Business Support				✓		Open session with partners at BIC				✓				
Talkin Tarn Cllr Martlew/Angel Culleton			✓			Interim report August. Business Plan in October	x	✓		✓				
TASK AND FINISH GROUPS														
Litter Bin Review			✓			Cllrs Bloxham, Dodd, Nedved and Wilson – evidence gathering		✓						
Business Support			✓			To commence in Oct 2014				✓				
FUTURE MEETINGS														
Re-thinking Waste Project Cllr Martlew/Angela Culleton		✓	✓	✓	✓	Sept – Presentation on project Nov – Meeting dedicated to waste issues			✓		✓			
Performance Monitoring Reports Steven O’Keefe/all PH	✓				✓	Monitoring of performance relevant to the remit of Panel	✓		✓		✓		✓	

Issue Portfolio Holder & Lead officer	Type of Scrutiny					Comments/status	Meeting Dates							
	Performance Management	Key decision Item/Referred from Executive	Policy Review/Development	Scrutiny of Partnership/ External Agency	Monitoring		3 Jul 14	14 Aug 14	25 Sep 14	21 Oct 14	27 Nov 14	22 Jan 15	12 Mar 15	23 Apr 15
Local Plan Cllr Bradley/Jane Meek		✓				August – City Centre Development Framework September – evidence base for the revised housing target and the SHMAA		✓	✓			✓		
Carlisle Story Cllr Bradley & Glover/Jane Meek				✓		Report to include prospectus for Carlisle and Sense of Place update		✓						✓
Section 106 Agreements Jane Meek/Cllr Bradley					✓	Panel requested report detailing outstanding Section 106 agreements – to receive annual report on monies spent							✓	
Environmental Performance of the Council Arup Majhi/Cllr Tickner			✓		✓	Annual Monitoring of performance. For information then within performance report in future years.						✓		
Budget Peter Mason/Darren Crossley/All Portfolio Holders		✓	✓			To consider budget proposals for 2015/16					✓			
Skills Audit			✓			To receive report detailing outcome of audit							✓	
Scrutiny Annual Report			✓		✓	Draft report for comment before Chairs Group								✓

Issue Portfolio Holder & Lead officer	Type of Scrutiny					Comments/status	Meeting Dates							
	Performance Management	Key decision Item/Referred from Executive	Policy Review/Development	Scrutiny of Partnership/ External Agency	Monitoring		3 Jul 14	14 Aug 14	25 Sep 14	21 Oct 14	27 Nov 14	22 Jan 15	12 Mar 15	23 Apr 15
COMPLETED ITEMS														
Claimed Rights Angel Culleton/Cllr Martlew		✓				Monitoring of Highways services following transfer to Cumbria CC	✓							
Recycling			✓			Executive response to Task Group Report	✓							

**REPORT TO ENVIRONMENT AND
ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY PANEL**

Agenda
Item:
A.4

Meeting Date: 21st October 2014
Portfolio: Economy, Enterprise and Housing
Key Decision: No
Within Policy and Budget Framework: Yes
Public / Private: Public

Title: TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE
Report of: DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Report Number: ED 41 14

Purpose / Summary:

To provide Members with an update on Phase 2 of the Old Town Hall Scheme, Carlisle.

Recommendations:

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

- 1. Note and support delivery of the Phase 2 upgrade works in line with ongoing actions, including the agreed delegation for the appointment of a Main Contractor to the Director of Economic Development, subject to delivery in accordance with Key Decision EX.108/13 dated 30th September 2013.**
- 2. To note the recent performance of the Tourist Information Centre following completion of Phase 1 repairs and restorations and to support ongoing proposals to develop its future role and performance.**

Tracking

Executive:	
Overview and Scrutiny:	
Council:	

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 To update the Overview and Scrutiny Panel on ongoing actions to appoint a main contractor with recognised conservation skills, to undertake alterations, repair, restoration and specialist fit-out works which will help develop the role of the Old Town Hall as a visitor attraction whilst offering the services and facilities associated with a high quality strategic Tourist Information Centre. The works will include comprehensive upgrading of the existing Tourist Information Centre including the installation of multi-media equipment, display fitments and desk installations with improved access from street level to the first floor and increased use of the adjacent Assembly Room.
- 1.2 The proposed works incorporate key decisions agreed at the Member / officer workshop on the 20th November 2013 with particular reference to access arrangements and use of the Assembly Room.
- 1.3 The Phase 2 project follows on from the Phase 1 restoration and repair works completed in June 2013 at a cost of circa £500,000 with the support of English Heritage grant funding through their PSICA Programme for Carlisle.
- 1.4 The completed project did not however include substantial features of the original project as drawn up in 2010, which now form the subject of this tender exercise.
- 1.5 In September 2013, the Council approved release of £797K capital funding to facilitate appointment of a main contractor to complete recommended site works, as agreed by the Project Steering Group and Members, under the leadership of the Director of Economic Development. The Group comprises officers from Tourism Support, Property Services, Economic Development, ICT and Building Facilities supported by an externally appointed specialist building conservation and fit-out team led by Johnston and Wright Chartered Architects.

2 PROPOSALS

- 2.1 Following a two stage tender exercise undertaken by Johnston and Wright using the City Council's CHEST system, three tenders were received before the tender return date of 30th September 2014.
- 2.2 The recommended contract award is based on a 50: 50 Price / Quality split.
- 2.3 Subject to the outcome of an ongoing arithmetical / compliance check against the specification, **the submitted tenders are within the approved capital budget** for the works. A recommendation for the 'Award of Contract' will be made upon completion of this appraisal exercise, subject to the scheme being viable in terms of delivery within the agreed budget.

- 2.4 The Project Steering Group will continue to monitor progress against the key activities as detailed below:

Programme Activities	Period
Tender Period – Fit Out. PQQ and Main Tender	July to September 2014
Tender evaluations	October to November 2014
Confirmation of Planning, Listed Buildings, Advertising and Building Regulations consents.	October 2014
Recommendation and appointment of Main Contractor.	November to December 2014
Decision and progression of temporary accommodation for relocation of the Tourist Information Centre.	November 2014
Contractor mobilisation period	December 2014
Tourist Information Centre relocate to alternative accommodation	January to July 2015
Site Works – Building Construction. Administration and Inspections.	January to April 2015
Site Works – Fit Out. Administration and Inspections	April to July 2015
Completion and Handover	July 2015
Tourist Information Centre and Assembly Room re-open to the public.	July 2015
Defects Resolution	July 2015 to June 2016
Release of Final Certificate	August 2016
Final Account – Target date	December 2016

- 2.5 In parallel with appointment of the main contractor, Property Services are assisting the Tourist Information Centre Manager on the sourcing of temporary alternative accommodation for the 6 month period of site works between January and July 2015. A final decision will be co-ordinated with a decision on the 'Award of Contract' in November 2014.
- 2.6 Post Phase 2 completion figures for visitor numbers and income are subject to ongoing review by the Tourist Information Centre Manager, to reflect a positive reversal against previously reducing baseline figures following completion of the Phase 1 works. This information together with feedback from the visitor survey and increased use of the Assembly Room will be reviewed to ensure that management and operational arrangements are put in place to build upon the high standards and good reviews of the Tourist Information Centre by developing its role as an information hub for Carlisle's historic, cultural and visitor assets.
- 2.7 In parallel with the above, progression of the Phase 2 project will also ensure that the City Council supports private sector growth in the visitor economy by maximising the use of the Old Town Hall following completion of the Phase 1

repair and restoration works in June 2013. This will be achieved by the targeted Improvement in the quality of the offer and service standards which will help Increase visitor numbers, spend and overnight stays by increasing the attractiveness of Carlisle as a visitor destination.

3. CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The Phase 2 works have been developed by the Project Steering Group to take account of recommended improvements not covered by the completed Phase 1 project. This has required further analysis and agreement with Members of options for access improvements and use of the Assembly Room. The agreed works now form the basis of main contractor tenders returned on 30th September 2014.
- 3.2 Following Pre-application consultations and submissions, statutory consents for Planning, Listed Building, Advertising and Building Regulations have been submitted for approval.

4. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 Members are asked to note the content of the report in order that they are aware of and understand ongoing actions to deliver the Phase 2 upgrade works, including appointment of a main contractor and progression of the project onto site.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES.

- 5.1 The project will directly support the priority to **‘develop vibrant sports, arts and Cultural facilities, showcasing the City of Carlisle’** by enhancing the attractiveness of the Old Town Hall to tenants, visitors and users.

Contact Officer: John Carr

Ext: 7424

Appendices

Attached to report: n/a

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- **None**

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS/RISKS

Chief Executive's -

Deputy Chief Executive –

Economic Development –

Governance –

Local Environment –

Resources –

Report to Environment & Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:
A.6

Meeting Date: Tuesday 21st October 2014

Portfolio: Environment and Transport

Key Decision: Not Applicable:

Within Policy and

Budget Framework YES

Public / Private Public

Title: TALKIN TARN COUNTRY PARK

Report of: The Director of Local Environment

Report Number: LE22/14A

Purpose / Summary:

The Business Plan aims to increase the revenue generated at Talkin Tarn by exploring the opportunities for new activities and by improving the presentation of the catering offer at the Tarn. New and improved facilities will attract new visitors and encourage them to stay longer. At the same time the natural beauty and wildlife value of Talkin Tarn will be protected.

Recommendations:

The panel is invited to give consideration and comment on the Business Plan as a blueprint for managing Talkin Tarn County Park within Local Environment for the coming 4 years.

Tracking

Executive:	13/10/14 & 10/11/14
Overview and Scrutiny:	21/10/14
Council:	

Report to Executive

Agenda
Item:

Meeting Date: 13th October 2014
Portfolio: Environment and Transport
Key Decision: Yes: Recorded in the Notice Ref:KD
Within Policy and Budget Framework NO
Public / Private Public

Title: TALKIN TARN BUSINESS PLAN
Report of: The Director of Local Environment
Report Number: LE19/14A

Purpose / Summary: This report introduces the draft business plan prepared for Talkin Tarn Country Park at the request of the Economy and Environment Portfolio Holder. The Business Plan aims to increase the revenue generated at Talkin Tarn by exploring the opportunities for new activities and by improving the presentation of the catering offer at the Tarn. New and improved facilities will attract new visitors and encourage them to stay longer. At the same time the natural beauty and wildlife value of Talkin Tarn will be protected.

Recommendations: The Executive refer the draft Talkin Tarn Business Plan to the next meeting of the Economy & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel for its consideration and comments.

Tracking

Executive:	
Overview and Scrutiny:	
Council:	

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** Talkin Tarn Country Park was acquired by Carlisle City Council in 2006 after being declared 'surplus to requirements' by Cumbria County Council. Since the transfer the City Council has invested over £1m in the park, replacing dilapidated buildings and infrastructure. The new toilet block, education cabin and workshop/office buildings all incorporate a number of energy-saving technologies, including an air-source heat exchanger, photo-voltaic solar panels, rainwater recycling and sun-tubes to provide natural light.
- 1.2** For the first 5 years following the transfer the County Council provided at 'dowry' of £40,000 per annum, which helped to offset annual revenue costs. With the period of funding having expired, the Tarn is now in the position of needing to generate sufficient annual income to cover the operating costs.
- 1.3** Visitor numbers have not been directly counted, but previous traffic counts and current sales of car-parking tickets would indicate about 120,000 – 150,000 per annum arriving by car, with an unknown number arriving by alternative means including on foot and by bicycle. While the majority of visitors originate from Carlisle post-code area there is a tradition of day-visitors coming from the Tyne Valley which seems to be continuing.
- 1.4** Looking forward, it will be increasingly important to explore all opportunities for generating income at Talkin Tarn in ways that are appropriate to its landscape setting and wildlife resources. The Tarn is a cherished local beauty spot and needs to be treated with necessary respect. The Draft Business Plan appended to this report and report number LE19/14B sets out some options for ways in which this balanced approach can be achieved.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1** The Draft Business Plan is appended to this report, but in summary the suggestions for generating additional income fall into the following categories:
- Attracting new visitors
 - Encouraging repeat visits
 - New income streams
 - Improving the visitor/spend ratio

3. CONSULTATION

3.1 The main effort of consultation has been directed towards customers, with a survey underway through out the summer of 2014 to discover their profile and preferences. Some early indications are available but the survey is ongoing, conducted via:

- 'Focus' magazine
- City Council website
- Face-to-face

Discussions with site staff and users have been held and included members of Economy & Environment O&S (who were part of a 'task & finish' group). The Panel received an update report and presentation from the Green Spaces Manager at its meeting on 14 August.

4. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The Executive refers the draft Talkin Tarn Business Plan to the next meeting of the Economy & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel for its consideration and comments.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

5.1 Aim 2: Talkin Tarn is a cultural facility that showcases the City of Carlisle to the many thousands of visitors who go there every year, including a large proportion who are from outside the district.

Contact Officer: Angela Culleton

Ext: 7325

Appendices

LE 19/14B

attached to report:

Appendix 1. Talkin Tarn Country Park Business Plan 2014-2017 (Draft)

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- None

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS/RISKS:

Chief Executive's –

Deputy Chief Executive –

Economic Development –

Governance – The Council has a duty to properly and efficiently manage the assets it holds on behalf of the public. A properly formulated business plan is a method of delivering upon such a responsibility. In addition, as occupier of the land, the Council has a statutory responsibility to ensure that all of those persons coming onto the land, whether by invitation or trespass, are reasonably safe. In addition, in providing services, we must ensure that as far as reasonably practicable, the facilities are available to all people in compliance with equality legislation

Local Environment –

Resources - There is a recurring budget provision of £55,900 allocated within the Council's revenue budget in 2014/15 onwards to fund the operational costs of running Talkin Tarn. The attached business plan sets out various proposals for initiatives within the country park with the aim of becoming self financing by 2020; however an element of capital investment may be required which will be subject to further reports and business cases as necessary.

Talkin Tarn Country Park

Business Plan 2014-2018

A great day out in the country!

(draft)

Talkin Tarn Business Plan (Draft)

Business Overview

Talkin Tarn Country Park is an established visitor attraction in north Cumbria, consisting of a small, glacial lake that has traditionally been used for watersports and recreation. It is surrounded by mixed woodland and pasture with accessible walking trails and wildlife observation opportunities.

There is a traditional tearoom contained within a Victorian boat-house beside the lake, with a take-away kiosk at ground level for sale of ice-creams, hot and cold drinks and snacks. A modest range of gift items and souvenirs are also offered for sale from the ground floor sales area.

We aim to provide a choice of refreshments to eat-in or take away, including items baked on the premises from fresh ingredients and using locally sourced products wherever possible including Lake District ice-cream. By focussing on local ingredients and home-made menu items across both catering outlets we aim to create a unique customer experience both for eat-in diners and those who prefer refreshments 'on the go' to be enjoyed whilst they explore the natural beauty of the Country Park.

The Tarn's unique selling point is the stunning landscape setting and wildlife habitats in which it sits. Any decisions relating to commercial activities will be taken in the light of the need to protect and conserve the natural features of the Tarn, including the water, woodland, and wildlife.

Other commercial activities include:

- watersports (boat and kayak hire and instruction; rowing and sailing clubs)
- craft fairs
- hire of meeting room
- car-park ticket sales

Financial Overview

The Country Park was acquired by Carlisle City Council in 2006 and for the first 5 years it received a £40,000 annual dowry from Cumbria County Council. This contribution ceased in 2011.

The primary objective of the initial Business Plan was to make the Country Park financially self-sufficient. With the financial realities having shifted considerably over the period, our revised business aim is to optimise the income (catering & sales, activities, paid events,

car park income) over the period of this plan, so that the Tarn is self-funding in entirety and could help to support green spaces in general by 2020.

Talkin Tarn Country Park – Business Plan, 2014-2018

1. Vision: Safety Natural Beauty Fun Activities Quality

Talkin Tarn Country Park is one of the premier venues in north Cumbria for informal countryside leisure and watersports activity, with a safe and welcoming environment for visitors, first-class facilities and enticing refreshment offer.

- 2. Aim:** Talkin Tarn Country Park is a must-go destination for anyone living in or visiting Carlisle and north Cumbria, where the natural beauty and environmental capital is enhanced by a range of fun-to-do activities and adventures, all in the safe and special surroundings of the Country Park.
- 3. Unique selling proposition:** Talkin Tarn is fully accessible to visitors for informal recreation, wildlife watching and watersports.
- 4. Keys to success:** The following factors are the main reasons that this business plan will succeed in achieving its aims both in terms of commercial viability and in providing an outstanding service to customers:
 - **Excellent customer service**
The needs of our customers will drive the business objectives and ensure a first-class all round experience that will make them want to come back again and again
 - **Exciting recreational opportunities including land and water based**
Visitors will be able to hire a boat or inflatable to take on to the water for a safe and enjoyable experience and will be able to use, free of charge, our children's adventure trail in the Tarn woodlands
 - **Committed and experienced staff**
People who care about the future of the Tarn and who see their job as a personal commitment to its success
 - **Good quality products – home-made and locally sourced ingredients**
Using the best Cumbrian suppliers and ingredients and supporting local businesses
 - **Seasonally variable food and drink offer**
The tearoom offers a varied menu including home-made food with seasonal specialities
 - **High standards of care for the outdoor environment**
Talkin Tarn is a special place for wildlife and our management of the County Park will provide space for our rare species to thrive and be enjoyed by our visitors.

5. Products and Services:

Adventures in the country!

There is tremendous scope for adventurous watersports on the Tarn including kayaking, water zorbing, wild swimming, katakayak, sailboarding, and winch kitesurfing. All these activities should be available for casual visitors to take part in. Competitive rowing and sailing will continue to be offered by the amateur sports clubs based at the Tarn.

On land there is the potential for a different range of activities. Orienteering is already available, but adventure trails in the plantation woodland (of lower ecological value) would attract younger visitors and families who are currently under-represented in the visitor profiling. Grass skateboarding, zorbing, tree-climbing and other fun activities could be added to the mix of activities offered.

Water Fun for the Family

Gentler activities suitable for the whole family will be part of the mix – traditional rowing boats for hire, pedaloes and Indian canoes.

‘Home made’ hot and cold food.

The Boat House tearoom offers a range of hot and cold meals using locally sourced ingredients where possible.

Ambience

The tearoom is located in a Victorian building of charm and character and includes a real wood fire for crisp, winter days as well as a balcony overlooking the Tarn for outdoor eating during the lazy days of summer.

Quick snacks & refreshments

The Boat House kiosk offers an alternative type of refreshment, including hot and cold drinks ‘to go’, sandwiches, savoury snacks, confectionery and Lake District ice-cream.

Gifts & souvenirs

The Boat House also offers a range of gifts and souvenirs including craft products, as well as a small exhibition area showcasing local artists and photographers.

Arts & crafts

The Alex boat house is used as a space for exhibition and sales of art and crafts. (It has electricity supplied but no gas or plumbing so the uses of the building are limited). The building is in a prime location and should be promoted and rented out as a space for sales of quality goods compatible with the location.

Opening Hours (Provisional)

Opening hours for the tea-room and kiosk are seasonally variable – 10.00 – 18.00 every day in summer, later if an event is taking place. In winter the tearoom opens only at weekends, while the kiosk opens 10.30 – 18.00 daily for take-away snacks and drinks. The park itself is open 24/7 for informal recreation.

A Table 5.1 showing analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats is shown in Report LE 19 14B at Appendix 2

Key Staff

The catering team leader is assisted by a part-time cook/kitchen team leader and a group of casual staff. This gives the team flexibility while keeping costs down and allows them to respond to variations in visitor numbers (on quiet days the casual staff hours are reduced; on busy days extra staff can be called in at short notice).

A flexible staff team also allow the operator to respond to short-term fluctuations in demand, for example it makes sense for us to be able to offer a catering service during fine evenings in summer when the Country Park may have reasonable numbers of visitors on-site.

6. Key marketing advantages:

- Easy access and car-parking
- Safe visitor experience with level paths and staff on-site
- On-site refreshments including tearoom and separate kiosk selling home-made food and drink and locally produced ice-cream (no competitor on-site)
- Stunning landscape setting on the edge of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)
- Daily changing panorama of lake, woodland and surrounding fells
- Unique wildlife including red squirrels, otters and rare wildflowers
- Visitors have access to watersports and hire of various watercraft
- Rolling programme of art & craft exhibitions in the Alex Boathouse

7. Disadvantages: The weather is the greatest determinant of success for any outdoor attraction, especially one where the outdoor environment itself is the main draw. Poor weather in the summer has a dramatic impact on revenue. While the site itself is unique in North Cumbria, the tea room has competitors at Brampton in the form of a number of cafes, the tea room at Lanercost Priory and cafes at a number of local garden centres.

8. Market: Talkin Tarn lies 10 miles east of the city of Carlisle, close to the market town of Brampton. Approximately 150,000 people live within 30 minutes drive of Talkin Tarn and about 1.5 million (including the Tyne/Wear conurbations) within an hour's drive. Car park data suggests around 40,000 cars per annum visit the car-

park and this translates to about 120,000 visitors. Together with those who arrive by other transport the total number of visitors may be around 150,000 per annum.

9. Market analysis: The typical visitor to Talkin Tarn Country Park is attracted by the outdoor environment – a 1.5 mile walk around the lakeshore is seen as a manageable and enjoyable source of fresh air and exercise. A substantial proportion of visitors are from Carlisle district but a significant group come from the Tyne valley. Having enjoyed the outdoors, many visitors appreciate the chance to enjoy some refreshments, hot or cold according to the season, without having to leave the site. The typical visitor stays between 1 and 2 hours and travels to the site by car.

10. Market segmentation: Talkin Tarn is popular with dog-walkers from the local area as well as car-borne day visitors from Carlisle and surrounding area. There is also a considerable segment of day visitors from the Tyne Valley, who would have traditionally arrived by train to Brampton but now come by car. Most visitors fall into the 'young family' (25-40yrs with children under 10) or 40-70yrs, active middle aged brackets. 16-25yrs young singles are under-represented.

11. Visitor responses. Previous visitor surveys have focussed on the reasons given for visiting Talkin Tarn and the point of departure for the visit. Most visitors quoted a variation on the opportunity for safe, informal recreation in an attractive outdoor environment as the main reason for their visit, while the majority of visitors live within a 10 mile radius of the country park. There is a significant minority of visitors coming from the Tyne Valley, a tradition that continues to the present day.

Regular visitor surveys are carried out to gain more up-to-date information as to visitor preferences, demographics and socio-economic factors.

Informal visitor feedback is available through social media on the internet. While this is not strictly representative and tends to emphasise the extremes of visitors' opinions, it is useful in highlighting current issues.

For example, a quick scan of current reviews on the TripAdvisor site - 'Talkin Tarn Park' – reveals that the majority of visitors are very enthusiastic about the environmental quality of the site, with the issue of dog mess generating the only negative comments. The existing catering offer also receives some very positive responses as well as some complaints.

The net effect of all this feedback is to help us to improve the service on offer throughout the park. We can influence the behaviour of dog owners to reduce the

problem of dog fouling and we can look at the operation of the catering outlets to make sure we are in-line with competitors on price and service.

- 12. Pricing:** Pricing is a key component of the marketing mix at the tea room. It needs to reflect the factors listed above (location, markets segments, quality) but also the additional costs of operating the business in a remote location and with extensive weekend opening hours (resulting in higher wage costs).

13. Financial information – results and projections

13.1 Financial targets: Talkin Tarn Country Park currently has a gross turnover of about £270,000 of which about £118,000 goes towards site management and the balance on the Boat House Tearoom. The tearoom is currently budgeted to make a net income of £11,000.

The Council's stated aim is for the Country Park to operate at a zero net cost – in other words, income generated at the Tarn should cover all running costs and overheads.

13.2 Income and Expenditure Account, 2013-14

Income & Expenditure Account 2013/14		
Income	£	£
Car Park ticket sales	38,000	
Sales of refreshments and gifts	132,000	
Grazing rents	2,000	
Agri-environmental grants	6,000	
Boat-hire and watersports	1,000	
Rowing Club, Sailing Club licences	2,000	
Sundry income	4,000	
Cabin Hire	5,000	
Sale of Vehicles	3,000	
TOTAL INCOME		193,000
Expenditure		
Employee costs	70,000	
Premises, inc heat and light	35,000	
Transport	1,000	
Equipment & materials	74,000	
Contractors	3,000	
Central recharge contribution	55,000	
Depreciation	5,000	
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		243,000
Contribution Required re Talkin Tarn		50,000
Budgeted Contribution re Talkin Tarn		54,500
Reduction in Contribution Required to Fund Talkin Tarn		(4,500)

Talkin Tarn exceeded income targets by £4,500 in 2013/14, which reduced the contribution from the City Council to £50,000.

14. Cash Flow – Boat House Tea-room and kiosk

The greatest single source of income at Talkin Tarn is the tea-room and kiosk. Additional marketing activity and promotion of the Tarn will bring in additional visitors who will make an indirect contribution to the by purchase of refreshments. The ratio of visitors to income at the tea-room would suggest that an additional 5,000 visitors per annum would add about £7,500 to the income.

15. Conclusions

Talkin Tarn Country Park is an asset for the people of Carlisle and is much cherished by those who go there regularly. It attracts visitors from outside the district and the improvements undertaken since 2006 have made a great difference to the quality of visitors' experience.

The business opportunities at the Tarn are divided into the catering and recreational sectors and are delivered by a combination of franchise (recreation) and direct provision (catering). There are opportunities to develop these segments that should be pursued by the Council in order to optimise the income-generating capacity of the site. At the same time the quality of the natural environment, which is the Tarn's unique attraction, should not be compromised.

The operation of the catering outlets generates significant revenue which could be increased by some careful marketing and promotion. The revenues help to cover the running costs of the sites and also make a contribution of £60,000 to the Council's general fund, which would have to be the minimum value of the contract if this part of the operation were to be franchised at any point in the future.

The catering operation is run with a tight control on costs but there is still the potential to increase income further. Opportunities to develop the income rely on increasing visitor numbers by introducing new attractions and conducting a targeted marketing campaign, based on the information derived from the customer surveys conducted during 2014.

The costs of managing the outdoor environment are partly offset by income from car-parking, grazing rents and agri-environment grants but the catering operation will always be the single most important source of income generation.

Further attention to cost-control and initiatives to draw in new customers will be adopted in order to achieve the position, by 2017, where all costs (including the contribution to the Council's central recharges) are covered by income generated at the Country Park.

Annex 1 – Extracted from TripAdvisor UK - Talkin Tarn Park

hillwalker555
Penrith, United Kingdom
Senior Contributor
23 reviews

[“Lovely setting.”](#)

Reviewed 9 June 2014

I remember coming here as a boy (a thousand years ago) before it was developed into an attraction. It was then a simple Cumbrian tarn used mainly by occasional swimmers and a small boating club. We once got up to a little mischief with the property of the said boating club and were physically chastised by the huge local constable... [More](#)

Anna P
Shepshed, United Kingdom
2 reviews

[“Following the Trails”](#)

Reviewed 7 June 2014

Good Place to walk with suitable accessible paths, a little too busy for us and our dogs. Lots to do for families and on the water for water sports.

mazz63
Newcastle
Senior Reviewer

[“Lovely location.”](#)

Reviewed 1 June 2014

We enjoyed a lovely day at Talkin Tarn Country Park. Lovely location for a nice walk with the dog. Excellent views around the water, we were lucky to see the two Swans and their 4 Cygnets simply superb. Enjoyed a nice ice cream in the sunshine after our walk. Plenty of parking and this location is Motorhome friendly.

hilary1447
Carlisle, United Kingdom
Reviewer

[“A real treasure”](#)

Reviewed 29 May 2014

It is so peaceful and yet there's lots of things to do. Woods to walk through, orchids and other wild flowers to see. Great for birding and also for sailing on the tarn. Boats for hire in the season. Most dog walkers are very good about picking up after their dogs and the cafe is well worth a visit. No... [More](#)

jonathan t
Senior Reviewer

[“Great but way to much dog mess”](#)

Reviewed 29 May 2014

Great walk even in bad weather but warning dog Mess everywhere dogs should have separate path as it. Is health hazard What out for traffic warden there awful

cracker40
england
Senior Contributor

[“walk”](#)

Reviewed 28 May 2014

enjoyed the walk and the pasties are to die for [yummy I wish the dog walkers would pick up the dog muck discussing for the walkers and children they could do with dog warden to fine them on the spot.

Mark H
Senior Reviewer

[“Lazy stroll”](#)

Reviewed 26 May 2014

If your stuck how to spend an hour or two you co do worse than to pay this a visit .A leisurely stroll round the tarn with wildlife close to hand fits the bill.tearoom ice cream and toilets on site covers all bases though one word to the wise the parking has recently changed from £1 for the day to... [More](#)

Leona91
Chester-le-Street, United Kingdom
Reviewer

[“awesome day every year”](#)

Reviewed 5 May 2014

talking tarn regatta every year is amazing the facilities are clean and looked after for a park. brilliant ice cream shop and café. awesome.