

AGENDA

Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 15 October 2020 AT 16:00

This meeting will be a virtual meeting and therefore will not take place in a physical location.

Members of the Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel

Councillor Bainbridge (Chair) , Councillors Alcroft, Allison, Mrs Birks (Vice Chair), Mrs Bowman, Mitchelson, Paton, Dr Tickner

Substitutes:

Councillors Mrs Atkinson, Betton, Bomford, Mrs Brown, Collier, Ms Ellis-Williams, Mrs Finlayson, Mrs Glendinning, Glover, Mrs McKerrell, McNulty, Meller, Morton, Patrick, Robson, Rodgerson, Shepherd, Miss Sherriff, Southward, Tarbitt, Tinnion, Miss Whalen.

PART A

To be considered when the Public and Press are present

Register of Attendance and Declarations of Interest

A roll call of persons in attendance will be taken and Members are invited to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests, other registrable interests and any interests, relating to any item on the agenda at this stage.

Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies for absence and notification of substitutions

Public and Press

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

Minutes of Previous Meetings

7 - 16

To note that Council, at its meeting on 8 September 2020, received and adopted the minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2020. The Chair will sign the minutes at the first practicable opportunity. [Copy Minutes Minute Book 47(2)]

The Chair will move the minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2020 as a correct record. The only part of the minutes that may be discussed is their accuracy.

(Copy minutes herewith).

A.1 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS

To consider any matter which has been the subject of call-in.

A.2 UPDATE ON ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT TASK AND FINISH GROUP

**17 -
20**

Portfolio:	Finance, Governance and Resources
Directorate:	Finance and Resources
Officer:	Sue Kaveney, HR Manager
Report:	RD.31/20 herewith

Background:

The HR Manager to provide an update on the Task and Finish Group established to review the Council's Attendance Management Policy.

Why is this item on the agenda?

Agreed by the Panel at its meeting 3 September 2020 (BTSP.52/20)

What is the Panel being asked to do?

Consider and comment on the update.

A.3 CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE - FOCUS ON SCRUTINY**21 -
42**

Portfolio: Cross Cutting
Directorate: Cross Cutting
Officers: Rowan Jones, Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Report: OS.21/20 herewith

Background:

The Deputy Chief Executive to submit a report highlighting the key findings from the Corporate Peer Challenge with regard to scrutiny activity and outlining the steps that have been taken so far to respond to these findings.

Why is this item on the agenda?

Agreed by the Panel at its meeting 3 September 2020 (BTSP.52/20)

What is the Panel being asked to do?

Consider and agree a list of strategic priorities for Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel.

Consider initial steps taken, in the context of comments in the Corporate Peer Challenge and comment or make further recommendations.

A.4 ALLOCATION OF SECTION 106 FUNDS**43 -
48**

Portfolio: Economy, Enterprise and Housing
Directorate: Economic Development
Officer: Christopher Hardman, Development Manager
Report: ED.35/20 herewith

Background:

The Corporate Director of Economic Development to submit a report regarding the Section 106 process.

Why is this item on the agenda?

The Panel requested this item at their meeting on 13 February 2020 (BTSP.15/20)

What is the Panel being asked to do?

Members are asked to consider the report in order to have clarity around the allocation of Section 106 money.

A.5 PLANNING FOR A NO DEAL BREXIT

Portfolio: Cross Cutting
Directorate: Economic Development
Officer: Jane Meek, Corporate Director of Economic Development

Background:

The Corporate Director of Economic Development to provide the Panel with a verbal update on planning for a no deal Brexit.

Why is this item on the agenda?

The matter was requested by Members and agreed by the Chair.

What is the Panel being asked to do?

To note the update.

A.6 OVERVIEW REPORT

49 -
52

Portfolio: Cross Cutting
Directorate: Cross Cutting
Officer: Rowan Jones, Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Report: OS.23/20 herewith

Background:

To consider a report providing an overview of matters related to the work of the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel.

Why is this item on the agenda?

The Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel operates within a work plan which has been set for the 2020/21 municipal year. The Plan will be reviewed at every meeting so that it can be adjusted to reflect the wishes of the Panel and take into account items relevant to this Panel in the latest Notice of Executive Key Decisions.

What is the Panel being asked to do?

Note the items (within Panel remit) on the most recent Notice of Executive Key Decisions
Discuss the work programme and prioritise if necessary

PART B

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

- NIL -

Enquiries, requests for reports, background papers etc to:

Rachel Plant, Democratic Services Officer - rachel.plant@carlisle.gov.uk

BUSINESS AND TRANSFORMATION SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 4.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor Bainbridge (Chair), Councillors Alcroft, Allison, Mrs Birks, Bomford (as substitute for Councillor Paton), Mrs Bowman, Dr Tickner and Mitchelson.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Ellis, Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder

OFFICERS: Town Clerk and Chief Executive
Deputy Chief Executive
Corporate Director of Finance and Resources
HR Manager
Policy and Performance Officer
Overview and Scrutiny Officer

BTSP.42/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Paton.

BTSP.43/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Allison declared an interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in relation to agenda item A.5 Corporate Risk Register. The interest related to the fact that his son in law worked for Story Construction.

BTSP.44/20 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.45/20 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED – The minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2020 were agreed.

BTSP.46/20 CALL – IN OF DECISIONS

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

BTSP.47/20 REVENUE BUDGET OVERVIEW AND MONITORING REPORT APRIL TO JUNE 2020

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources submitted report RD.20/20 (amended) which provided an overview of the Council's overall budgetary position for the period April to June 2020 for revenue schemes only, together with details of the impact of COVID-19 on the revenue budget. The budgetary position as at June 2020 showed an updated annual Budget totalling £17,427,800 with an underspend of £535,478 at the end of June. The report also included details of balance sheet management issues, bad debts written off in the period and progress against budget savings.

The Executive had considered the report at their meeting on 17 August 2020 (EX.96/20 refers) and decided:

“That the Executive:

1. Noted the budgetary performance position of the Council to June 2020;
2. Noted the action by the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources to write-off bad debts as detailed in paragraph 6 of Report RD.20/20;
3. Noted the release of reserves as set out in the table at paragraph 2.2, and noted the virements approved as detailed in Appendix A.
4. Make recommendations to Council to approve virements of £640,000 as detailed in paragraph 2.4 to fund the Leisure Contract variation."

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

- The Panel expressed their gratitude towards the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources and the finance team for their continued work on the Council budget during a particularly difficult and busy time.
- A Member asked for clarity regarding the co-payment mechanism for irrecoverable Sales, Fees and Charges income.

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources explained that the City Council had submitted a monthly return to MHCLG which showed the Council's additional expense incurred and shortfalls in income. The Government would cover 75% of losses over 5% with the Council covering the remaining 25%. Work had started to consider the variance to the set budget and budget managers had been asked to confirm the shortfall to income and the reasons for any shortfalls.

- There was concern that the impact on business rate collection would not be fully known until the furlough scheme ended and therefore the impact on the budget would not be known until 2021/22. Had there been any indication that the Government would continue to recompense the Council into the next financial year?

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources reminded the Panel that government had announced that any deficit on the Collection Fund (i.e Council tax and Business Rates) could be recovered over a three year period and would be considered as part of the 2021/22 budget process. As previously reported the Council had undertaken a 'soft reminder' process, the impact of that on collection rates was not yet known and detailed guidance had not yet been received from government. She added that it was key that the situation was closely monitored and reported to MHCLG each month.

- Did the Sales, Fees and Charges Government scheme support a deficit in Council Tax and Business Rate income?

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources clarified that the scheme did not cover Council Tax, Business Rates or commercial rent shortfall. The main risk of the shortfall was the impact on the Council's cash flow, she reminded the Panel that part of the Council Tax and Business Rate income went to Cumbria County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner. Usual practice saw year end deficit recovered from the main preceptors in the following year, however, government had given the Council three years to recover the debt. She added that a separate exercise to look at commercial income would be undertaken but it was hoped any shortfall could be met from the £1.3m received from government.

- A Member asked for an update on the impact of Covid 19 to GLLs finances and the support the Council could provide.

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources assured the Panel that the Council had ongoing discussions with GLL regarding their financial position. The Council could not receive

any direct emergency funding to support GLL because it was an outsourced service, however, the Council had followed government guidance and adopted an 'open book' approach to support GLL financially due to the impact of Covid-19.

- A Member asked for clarity with regard to the uninsured and reinstatement costs overspend.

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources responded that the Council had a full and comprehensive insurance policy, however, some areas such as bare land was deemed uninsurable.

- How was the Council preparing to meet the £1m savings target and had work on the commercialisation strategy moved forward?

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources explained that work on the savings strategy had begun and the commercialisation strategy would feed into it. Work would be carried out with the LGA to investigate the options open to the Council to become more commercial and to define the meaning of becoming more commercial.

- It was suggested that the Panel establish a Task and Finish Group to support the production of a commercialisation strategy.
- The report showed a shortfall in income for homeless accommodation as a direct result of Covid-19, why was there a shortfall when government funds had been released to support homelessness and rough sleepers?

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources clarified that the income shortfall was the impact on the Council's revenue budget, the funding from the Government had not yet been amalgamated in the budget. She agreed to ask the Homeless Prevention and Accommodation Manager for more information for the Panel.

- How would the inflation savings be met?

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources reported that, in the long term, the inflation savings would be considered as part of the £1m savings, however, there was scope in the revenue budget for a virement to bridge the shortfall in 2020/21.

- How did the Government's Hardship Scheme fit into the Council's budget?

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources reported that the Council had received £989,736 from the £500m Hardship Fund. The Government had asked Councils to provide £150 to working age recipients of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS), however, the City Council's scheme provided £300 to reduce council tax liability as close to 0 as possible. The remainder of the Fund would be used for the Council's own Local Hardship Scheme which would provide support to households which were not eligible for CTRS but were experiencing hardship, and this support would be provided on a case by case basis.

- Were there any areas of income shortfall that the Government would not support or provide funding for?

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources reiterated that the main risk to the budget was Council Tax and NNDR receipts, the only support given for those areas had been the extension to the debt recovery period. One area that the Council really needed to be mindful of was the impact on commercial income and shortfalls on the budget.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Panel had scrutinised the overall budgetary position for the period April to June 2020 as set out in the Revenue Budget Overview and Monitoring report (RD.20/20 (amended)).

2) That the Homeless Prevention and Accommodation Manager provide the Panel with a written response giving further details on the income shortfall for homeless accommodation due to Covid-19.

3) That a Task and Finish Group be established to support the development of the Commercialisation Strategy and the invitation to join the Task Group be circulated to all Members.

BTSP.48/20 CAPITAL BUDGET OVERVIEW AND MONITORING REPORT: APRIL TO JUNE 2020

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources presented report RD.21/20 providing an overview of the budgetary position of the City Council's capital programme for the period April to June 2020.

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources reported that the position statement recorded that, as at the end of June 2020, expenditure of £2,834,243 had been incurred on the Council's core capital programme. When considered against the profiled budget of £3,305,574 that equated to an underspend of £471,331.

The unspent balance remaining of the revised annual budget of £29,607,700 was £26,773,457. A review of the 2020/21 capital programme would be undertaken to identify accurate project profiles for the remainder of the financial year and any potential slippage into future years. A number of schemes were included in the capital programme for 2020/21 that required reports to be presented to the Executive for the release of funding before the project could go ahead.

The Executive had considered the report at their meeting on 17 August 2020 (EX.97/20 refers) and decided:

“That the Executive:

1. Noted and had commented upon the budgetary position and performance aspects of the capital programme for the period April to June 2020.
2. Noted adjustments to the 2020/21 capital programme as detailed in paragraph 2.1 of Report RD.21/20.”

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

- At the request of the Panel the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources agreed to circulate a breakdown of the asset review sales and general sales receipts.
- The Panel was concerned that there was a backlog in the provision of essential adaptations through the Disabled Facilities Grants and questioned how the Council would address the backlog and if any monies would be lost or rolled into the next financial year.

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources confirmed that, should it be required, funds could roll into the next financial year. She agreed that it was important that those who needed the adaptations received them as soon as possible and agreed to circulate timescales and methods which the Council would use to deal with the Disabled Facilities Grants backlog as a result of Covid-19. She also agreed to include an update in the next quarter report.

- The Central Plaza Scheme showed some costs for emergency works still required, the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources agreed to seek clarification on the matter and report back to the Panel.

- A Member asked for an update on the appointment of the new Head of Digital and Technology.

The Deputy Chief Executive informed the Panel that the new Head of Digital and Technology had been appointed and would begin work at the Council in November, until then the management of ICT would remain under the Town Clerk and Chief Executive.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Panel had scrutinised the overall budgetary position for the period April to June 2020 as set out in the Capital Budget Overview and Monitoring report (RD.21/20).

2) That the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources provides the Panel with written responses with regard to the following:

- a breakdown of the asset review sales and general sales receipts
- an update on the emergency works that were outstanding on the Central Plaza Scheme.

3) That the Panel receive information on the timescales and methods which the Council will use to deal with the Disabled Facilities Grants backlog as a result of Covid-19.

BTSP.49/20 SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORT 2019/20 AND Q1 2020/21

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources presented the authority's sickness absence levels for the period April 2019 to June 2020 and other sickness absence information (RD.24/20).

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources highlighted the current sickness statistics as detailed in section 2 of the report along with the absence levels split by directorates with comparison years. She reported that 2019/20 saw a 16% increase in overall days lost per employee compared to 2018/19 along with an increase in long term absences. The report set out comparison data, trends, sickness absence reasons and an update on return to work interviews. The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources gave an overview of the key activities which the City Council undertook to support attendance management.

The HR Manager reminded the Panel that a Task and Finish Group had been established to review the Attendance Management Policy which would enable Managers to more effectively manage absence. The Task and Finish Group had contributed to the development of new trigger points and a flow chart which would be circulated to Trade Unions for their feedback. The focus on whole review was to make the Attendance Management Policy clearer, have better detailed trigger points to manage sickness in a proactive way and have more clarity for staff and managers.

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

- There had been a significant rise in sickness absence under 'Stress, depression, mental health , fatigue syndromes' between April and June, was there anything additional that the Council could do to support staff during this time?

The HR Manager explained that the absence was a mixture of Covid-19 related anxiety and long term sickness where the individual had to remain out of work for a variety of reasons. The Council had changed its occupational health provider and work was being carried out to work closely with staff who had been referred to them to assess their situation and how to move forward.

- The Panel understood that working from home could be very stressful for some people and asked how staff could be encouraged to return to work safely.

The HR Manager reported that the Civic Centre reopened to those staff that wanted to return to the building on 17 August. The Health and Safety Team had made the building Covid-19 secure and each floor was treated as a bubble. The option was there for staff to return and equally there was no pressure on staff to return if they wished to remain working from home.

- Prior to Covid-19 there had been a consistent increase in working days lost due to stress, was this work related stress?

The HR Manager responded that there had been a mixture of work related stress along with other categories. Unfortunately there had been a number of people off with very serious long term illnesses, often as treatment progressed the absence changed to stress related. The updated Attendance Management Policy would allow clearer categories and triggers to be reported in future.

- Was there a mechanism which enabled staff to raise anxiety or stress issues so that matters could be addressed before the individual became ill?

The HR Manager confirmed that managers held one to ones and appraisals where issues could be raised. Additionally individuals could contact HR for formal or informal support and equally the Council had good relationships with Trade Unions who could also offer support..

- It was very important that managers led the way with attendance management, had they been consulted on the new Policy?

The HR Manager confirmed that managers were aware that the Policy was being reviewed. The Trade Unions had been consulted as the trigger points were a significant change. Other work was being undertaken to make the process simpler included more use of the payroll and HR system iTrent. When the new Attendance Management Policy was finalised a training programme for managers would be rolled out.

- How had staff felt about being referred to occupational health?

The HR Manager clarified that the 70 referrals to Occupational Health had all been related to those absent from work due to Covid-19. The majority of staff had seen the referral as positive as they had wanted to return to work.

- A Member had concerns that absences due to back, neck and musculo-skeletal problems may increase because those working from home may not have the correct equipment and facilities to do so.

The HR Manager agreed that work needed to be undertaken to ensure those working from home had the correct equipment, she agreed to raise the matter at the next safety meeting.

A Member commented that it was expected that all staff would have completed a self assessment regarding their work space at home and she sought reassurance that this matter would be taken forward.

The Deputy Chief Executive reassured the Panel that the Council were serious about staff wellbeing. Self assessments were carried out at the start of the lockdown but what was deemed satisfactory at the time may not be for longer term use. Longer term assessments needed to be undertaken and timescales needed to be formalised.

- How did the Council ensure that the wellbeing message was being received by staff?

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources explained that Learning and Development sent out fortnightly newsletters to all staff including those not on email. In addition training continued to be provided by virtual means.

RESOLVED – That the Panel had scrutinised the information on sickness absence provided in report RD.24/20.

BTSP.50/20 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

The Deputy Chief Executive presented an update on the management of the Council's Corporate Risk register (CS.21/20).

The Deputy Chief Executive reported that the Corporate Risk Register had been reviewed by the Corporate Risk Management Group at its meeting on 3 August 2020, following the meeting the control strategy narrative, the assessment dates and target risk scores had been updated and were attached to the report as appendix one.

Members were asked to note two additional corporate risks. The first related to the potential financial implications on the Council's revenue and capital budgets due to the impact of the Covid-19. The threat the virus continued to present warranted escalating to the Corporate Risk Register. The second risk related to the Carlisle Southern Link Road. In July 2020 the City Council and Cumbria County Council signed a grants Agreement with Homes England for £134m funding for the Southern relief Road. In addition, the City Council entered into a Collaboration Agreement with Cumbria County Council, as a result the City Council were obliged to achieve certain milestones which were set out in appendix one of the report.

The Deputy Chief Executive summed up by informing the Panel that none of the corporate risks had been escalated in their RAG rating since the last report to the Panel.

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

- What were the implications for the Carlisle Southern Relief should the proposed change to local government structures in Cumbria go ahead?

The Deputy Chief Executive responded that any change to local government structure was a very detailed piece of work and part of the work would be to prioritise projects. It was difficult to predict what the outcome would be but the nature, size and importance of the project to Carlisle would influence any decisions.

- A Member requested an update on the Civic Centre ground floor reinstatement works.

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that Story Construction had prepared a secure entrance and exit to the building for staff, secured the site and made some fire safety improvement works. The main 60 week contract work would begin as soon as the final contract was agreed.

- The Panel sought assurance that the IT risks were being addressed as a priority.

The Deputy Chief Executive assured the Panel that progress was being monitored closely. Covid-19 had tested the authority and the City Council had been lucky that IT had had the foresight to roll out the full microsoft package which had enabled the Council to move quickly with Teams and continue service. The risks in the register related to legacy systems which were at risk of no longer being supported.

The Panel thanked the IT section for their quick response in issuing laptops, equipment, support and advice during the pandemic. They also noted their ongoing work in ensuring the Council's IT systems were safe and protected from phishing and scam emails.

- Where in the risk register did the Council include the risk of funding not coming forward to progress with the projects or schemes?

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the projects and schemes had to be ready so that they were eligible to be supported by government. The risks did not address what happens if the funding did not come forward, he agreed to undertake some work to improve the control strategy in the next report.

RESOLVED - That the Panel had scrutinised current Corporate Risk Register, as set out in appendix one of report CS.21/20.

BTSP.51/20 QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020/21

The Policy and Performance Officer submitted the Quarter 1 2020/21 performance against the current Service Standards and a summary of the Carlisle Plan 2015-18 actions as defined in the 'plan on a page'. Performance against the Panel's 2020/21 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were also included.

The Policy and Performance Officer drew the panel's attention to the summary of exceptions which included measures CSe14 Actual car parking revenue as a percentage of car parking expenditure and SS05 Proportion of corporate complaints dealt with on time, both of which had been due to the impact of Covid-19. The report included the results of the Customer Services Satisfaction survey.

In considering the report the Panel sought clarity on the recharges for Measure CSe14 car parking revenue and hoped that the reduction in car parking at Castle car park was not considered negatively due to the test centre, which was important to the community.

The Corporate Director of Finance and Resources explained that the recharges included building costs, support services, staffing costs and internal recharges.

The Panel had concerns that the performance targets were not aiming for the highest quartiles or were being stretched enough and asked that more comparison data be included in future reports.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive commented that officers needed to improve the Member engagement in setting targets and needed to be clearer about what kind of targets were being set and the reason for the targets.

RESOLVED -1) That the Panel had scrutinised the performance of the City Council with a view to seeking continuous improvement in how the Council delivers its priorities (PC.21/20).

2) That the Panel be involved in setting the future performance indicators and targets that would be reported to the Panel.

BTSP.52/20 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented report OS.18/20 providing an overview of matters relating to the work of the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reminded the Panel that a special meeting had been scheduled for 17 September 2020 to consider a report on the Sands Centre redevelopment project. She set out the items in the work programme for 15 October 2020 and reported that the Civic Centre reinstatement and development report had been moved from October to December or January.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Overview Report incorporating the Work Programme and Key Decision items relevant to the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel be noted (OS.18/20).

2) That the following items be submitted to the Panel on 15 October 2020:

- Review of Attendance Management Policy – Task and Finish Group Report
- Corporate Peer Review
- Allocation of Section 106 funds
- Planning for no deal Brexit

3) That the following item be moved in the Panel's work programme from 15 October to December 2020 or January 2021:

- Civic Centre reinstatement and development

(The meeting ended at 6.20pm)

Report to Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:

A.2

Meeting Date: 15th October 2020
Portfolio: Finance, Governance and Resources
Key Decision: No
Within Policy and Budget Framework: Yes
Public / Private: Public

Title: Update on Attendance Management Task and Finish Group
Report of: HR Manager
Report Number: RD.31/20

Purpose / Summary:

This report provides an update on the Task and Finish group established to review the Council's Attendance Management Policy.

Recommendations:

- 1) Consider and comment on the update

Tracking

Executive:	Not applicable
Scrutiny: BTSP	15 October 2020
Council:	Not applicable

1. BACKGROUND

The Council has an Attendance Management procedure which was written and implemented in 2004.

At Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel on 13th February 2020, it was resolved that a Task and Finish Group would be established to assist the HR Manager in reviewing the Attendance Management Policy with the aim of more effectively managing absence.

Aims of the Task and Finish Group:

- Review existing policy, seek advice from HR team on strengths and challenges of existing policy
- Research examples of good practice
- Develop recommendations to share with Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel (BTSP)

Members of the Task and Finish Group are:

Members:

Cllr Bainbridge (Chair)
Cllr Allison,
Cllr Mrs Bowman,
Cllr Mrs Birks,
Cllr Tickner

Co-opted Members:

Antonette Cullen (HR Adviser)
Sue Kaveney (HR Manager)
Sophie Nixon (HR Adviser)

2. MEETINGS

Three meetings have been held to date – 17th June 2020; 8th July 2020 and 19th August 2020. The meetings have been really positive and engaging; the first two focussed on the review of the current policy, areas HR would like to improve, benchmarking sickness rates and costs of absence against private and public sector, discussions around training and management support and capability, discussions around systems and how we can make efficiencies in reporting, the role of occupational health, redeployment and trigger points.

An online shared One Drive area was setup for all members to access, share information and to publish notes and thoughts.

A target deadline of a new policy and associated toolkit was agreed for the end of December 2020 (subject to required approval routes).

The third meeting on 19th August resulted in agreement of the proposed trigger points and flowcharts for managing both long-term and short-term absence.

At this meeting it was also discussed and agreed that we would like to rename the policy Improving Attendance – this feels like a more supportive title and something which has been adopted by other local authorities.

It was agreed that following the approval of the flowcharts and key trigger points, that these be shared with the Trade Union representatives prior to work starting on the actual policy rewrite. This was to ensure the Trade Unions were fully informed of the intention to implement new triggers and a new process for managing them.

The flowcharts were circulated and subsequently discussed with the Trade Unions at an informal Union meeting on Friday 11th September 2020. Some minor suggestions were made from the GMB, predominantly additional detail that can be considered as part of the actual policy rewrite. The Trade Unions have expressed an interest to continue providing feedback as the HR team develops more material i.e. the policy and associated manager's toolkit.

During September and October 2020, the HR team will work on the new policy and toolkit and the Task and Finish Group are scheduled to meet again to discuss these late October/early November.

Sue Kaveney
HR Manager

3. PROPOSALS

None

4. RISKS

None

5. CONSULTATION

The new policy and toolkit will need consulted on with staff and the Trade Unions and will also require approval from SMT and Employment Panel.

6. CONCLUSION

The Panel are asked to review and comment on the progress of the Task and Finish Group. The HR team would like to thank the members involved for their invaluable input to date and look forward to continuing to work with them.

7. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

Improved sickness monitoring and management to help maximise efficiency and ensure the required level of staff resource is available to help deliver the Carlisle Plan.

Contact Officer: Sue Kaveney

Ext: 7071

**Appendices
attached to report:**

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government Act 1972 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- **None**

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL - This report raises no explicit legal issues.

FINANCE – This report raises no explicit financial issues

EQUALITY – This report highlights the positive interventions taken around mental health in the workplace. This work demonstrates our commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty and is consistent with the Equality Policy and Action Plan.

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE – This report raises no explicit issues relating to Information Governance.

Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:

A.3

Meeting Date: 15 October 2020

Portfolio: Cross-cutting

Key Decision: No

Within Policy and
Budget Framework

Private/Public Public

Title: Corporate Peer Challenge – Focus on Scrutiny

Report of: Overview and Scrutiny Officer

Report Number: OS.24/20

Purpose / Summary:

The Panel requested a report to consider the Scrutiny specific implications of the corporate Peer Challenge at their meeting of 28 May 2020.

This report highlights the key findings from the Corporate Peer Challenge with regard to scrutiny activity and outlines the steps that have been taken so far to respond to these findings.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

- Consider and agree a list of strategic priorities for Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel.
- Consider initial steps taken, in the context of comments in the Corporate Peer Challenge and comment or make further recommendations.

Tracking

Executive:	Not applicable
Scrutiny:	BTSP 15/10/20
Council:	Not applicable

1. Background

- 1.1 A Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) is designed to complement and add value to a council's performance and improvement through a Local Government Association (LGA) sector-led improvement review. The Peer Challenge's core components focus on leadership, governance, corporate capacity and financial resilience, in addition to specific requirements tailored to the local needs of an authority.
- 1.2 The Council's previous CPC was undertaken in September 2014. The Leader and Chief Executive agreed that it was a good time to undertake the challenge following the move to revised ward boundaries and new administration in May 2019. It was envisaged that the CPC findings would inform the future planning for the authority and afford the opportunity to set out a new agenda for the 2020/21 financial year. In addition to the standard lines of inquiry, the CPC were asked to provide observations and feedback on the Council's approach to commercialisation and the effectiveness of the performance management arrangements.
- 1.3 The CPC report was published in April 2020 and included a series of recommendations for improvement. It is acknowledged within the report that, "the peer challenge on which this report is based took place before the Coronavirus pandemic was declared..... and does not anticipate or reflect on the significant additional challenges and demands this is placing on Carlisle City Council". The Council aims to develop an action plan to pick up on the issues identified in the report within the context of the priorities, timescales and resources of the ongoing response and recovery phases. This should also assist the Council in strengthening its capacity to respond in the longer term.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is requested that:
 - The Panel consider and agree a list of strategic priorities for Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel.
 - The Panel consider initial steps taken, in the context of comments in the Corporate Peer Challenge and comment or make further recommendations.

3. Summary of Corporate Peer Challenge findings on scrutiny

- 3.1 The main recommendation from the Corporate Peer Challenge with regard to scrutiny was:

"Review current arrangements for scrutiny and consider alternative options. This should enable more focused scrutiny of performance, implementation of

decisions and contribution to the development of policy in priority areas. It should consider how to support more timely decision making and take account of the reduction in the number of councillors since the 2018 boundary review.” (page 3, CPC)

- 3.2 Further detail from within the report suggested that:
“Scrutiny activity should be re-focused on major issues and areas where input into policy development is being particularly sought or where scrutiny can make a positive difference to communities and the delivery of Council priorities.” (page 10, CPC)
- 3.3 Scrutiny of budget proposals and performance were both highlighted as areas where scrutiny had the potential to add greater value. There were also comments around process driven consideration of reports leading to missed opportunities for influence and added value.

4. Scrutiny Chairs Group view

- 4.1 Scrutiny Chairs Group held a special meeting to focus on the findings of the Corporate Peer Challenge. Key points were:
- Work to strengthen Scrutiny activity in Carlisle will focus on developing strong, Member led work programmes.
 - The Panels will not discuss the number of Panels, the make-up of Panels or meeting start times as these are all issues that have been subject to significant scrutiny discussion and consideration without a mutually satisfactory resolution in recent years. The possibility of local Government re-organisation in Cumbria was also a factor in the Chairs taking this view.

Scrutiny Chairs Group are due to meet in October and will discuss feedback from the Panels on this issue and to review progress so far.

5. Comments from the Chair on Business and Transformation Priorities

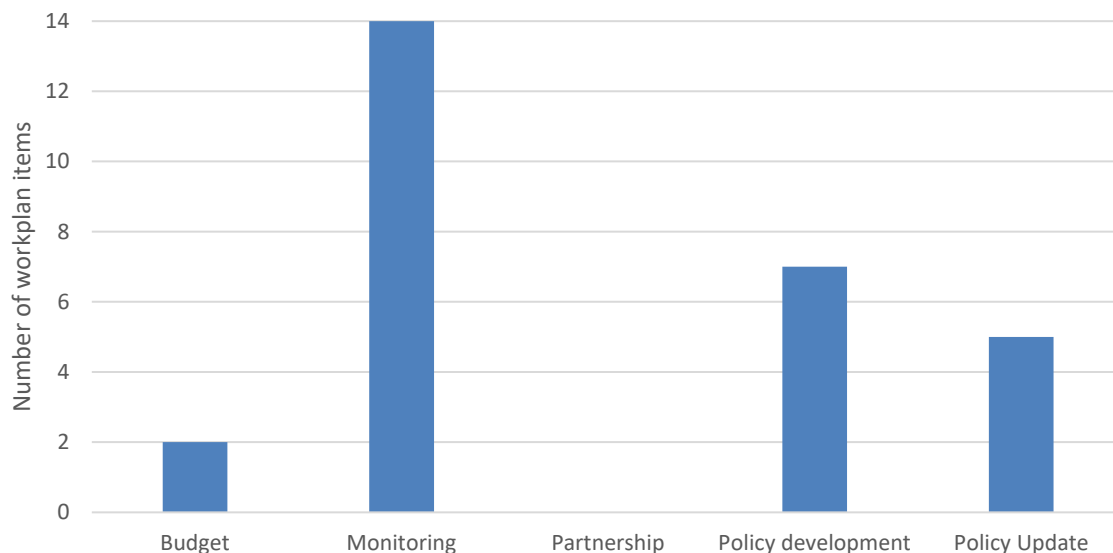
- 5.1 Business and a Transformation, of all the Panels, is perhaps the most ‘hidden’ from the public view. In the main we scrutinise the internal services of the Council and it’s financial performance against the intended budgetary plans.
- 5.2 Our importance however lies in this area. Without a financial input and assessment by members, there is a risk that variances against intended budgets could go untouched, unquestioned or unchallenged. This could result in potential impacts on other services and facilities which the Council operate.

- 5.3 Our broad priority is to ensure that whatever action a Council leadership of any political hue may wish to undertake, that we question and assess whether this represents an acceptable, timely, and purposeful use of the income (commercial and grants), Council Tax, NNDR, or financial reserves.
- 5.4 We also have the role to evaluate and assess how our tangible, financial, services and non-financial assets perform. Whether this is through evaluating our building condition, rental leases, treasury management through to sickness absence. An opportunity not taken or a issue allowed to go unchecked represents an additional cost to the Council, that may either prevent it either from undertaking another project or ambition, or having to achieve an additional service from another area.
- 5.5 In summary, priorities that could most benefit from Scrutiny by this Panel are:
- Budget plans and financial performance against these
 - Critical friend on planned use of income by Council Leadership
 - Performance of resources (financial and assets) and services
- 5.6 The Panel are asked to consider these priorities and provide recommendations that will help to shape their work programme to reflect strategic priorities and the priorities of local communities.

6. Initial steps taken

- 6.1 The way that workplans are presented to the Panel has been adapted to show the type of scrutiny that each item will entail. This will help Chairs and Panel Members to focus Scrutiny on items where it can have a greater impact.
- 6.2 Scrutiny Chairs are undertaking more pre-meeting planning with the Overview and Scrutiny Officer and report writers to ensure that reports support the aims of scrutiny. Chairs pre-meeting planning also involves identifying any advice for the Panel to ensure that they operate as a team to focus scrutiny on key points and issues where scrutiny can have the greatest impact.
- 6.3 Work planning activity by the Panel will take place in their pre-meeting briefings. This will avoid taking up meeting time that could be spent on scrutiny and will allow a less formal discussion in order to produce an effective workplan.
- 6.4 The Panel are asked to consider initial steps taken, in the context of comments in the Peer Review and comment or make further recommendations.

Graph to show current BTSP workplan by broad type of scrutiny



Key to scrutiny types

Budget – scrutiny of budget proposals

Monitoring – monitoring performance

Partnership – information and discussion with external partner

Policy development – scrutiny with potential to influence/ develop policy (includes Scrutiny Annual Report and this report)

Policy update – receiving information about existing policy or ongoing work

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Appendices

Corporate Peer Challenge Report

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:

LEGAL -

FINANCE –

EQUALITY –

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE –

Corporate Peer Challenge **Carlisle City Council**

28th to 30th January 2020

Feedback Report

1. Executive Summary

In Carlisle there is a clear sense of pride of place, both for the city and wider district. Staff are proud to work for the Council and of its work for the area. The Council's ambition to be a regional centre and focus for investment is exciting and dynamic, and has the potential to be truly transformative for Carlisle and the region as a whole. The Council wants all its residents to be able to share the benefits of this, through increased opportunities - a greater choice of jobs, better housing and an enhanced environment through the Carlisle Plan. Delivery of that ambition is being enabled by excellent partnership working and relationships. One of the key partnerships is that for the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, a unique deal including both the UK and Scottish Governments and councils on both sides of the border. Through this and other work, a wide range of partners consider that Carlisle is being "put on the map".

The Council benefits from a stable and experienced management and workforce, with both the political and managerial leadership being well regarded within the council and externally. There are good working relationships between officers and councillors – and strong cross party working. This has been valuable during a period of no overall control, with a Conservative minority administration. This followed all-out elections in May 2019 following a major Boundary review and a significant reduction in the number of councillors from 52 to 39.

The Council currently enjoys a relatively healthy financial position. A strong property asset base has also served the Council well, generating an income stream contributing around £4.3 million per annum to the net revenue account. Among the principal sources of rental income are The Lanes shopping centre and industrial estates, generating £1.1 million and £2.8 million respectively in 2018-19. Prudent financial management has led to underspends over a number of years, but the next step is to realign existing funding to a clear set of priorities to ensure the best use is made of the Council's resources.

The Council is therefore well placed to meet future challenges, including uncertainty around local government funding. But the Council should also look to change a number of elements of how it does business to best meet these challenges and take advantages of the opportunities which arise. The outward facing partnership work of the organisation is impressive and forward thinking, however aspects of governance, support services and the service delivery organisation require modernisation.

The Carlisle Plan 2015-18 needs to be updated. Agreeing the new Carlisle Plan will give a real opportunity to provide clarity on the priorities for the Council, as well as the desired outcomes for the district and to make sure resources follow these in the form of an aligned Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). Currently the approach to performance management appears process heavy and impact light. This should be streamlined and refocused around the priorities of the new Carlisle Plan at the corporate level and consideration given to how increase ownership of performance management at service and Directorate level.

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Governance and decision making arrangements across the Council need to be reviewed so that these are timely and provide the necessary transparency and accountability. Such a review would also provide the opportunity to take account of the significant reduction in the number of Councillors following the Boundary review. There is a growing recognition that decision making in Carlisle is in some respects cumbersome. For example, scrutiny is not as well targeted as it could be. Overview & Scrutiny panels request reports on a range of matters under consideration by the Executive beyond those which form part of the Policy & Budget framework. Scrutiny activity should be re-focused on major issues and areas where input into policy development is being particularly sought or where scrutiny can make a positive difference to communities and the delivery of Council priorities. These refreshed arrangements should enable the organisation to be 'fleet of foot' and not tied down in process. In the member domain this should include consideration of the relationship between the Executive and scrutiny and how scrutiny can most effectively add value to decision making. In the officer domain this should include the value added by the Transformation Board and other boards. The Council's constitution should also be reviewed as part of this updating of governance arrangements. Simplifying decision making and other processes has the potential to make significant efficiency gains and release capacity that can be directed towards Council priorities.

To ensure the continuing health of the Council's finances, in the face of future uncertainties and to enable more resource to be directed towards priority areas, there is need for a clear and robust corporate savings plan which is implemented. Previously there has been a lack of urgency in actioning financial contingency plans, which if continued could lead to further pressure on reserves and missed opportunities to re-direct resources towards agreed priorities.

The Council has made progress in developing a more commercial approach to income generation and raising awareness of this aim. A clear definition and common understanding of what commercialisation means for Carlisle is required to take this agenda forward, underpinned by a strategy that establishes the organisation's risk appetite and the parameters for such commercial activity.

The Council's last corporate peer challenge in 2014 identified that the Council needed to better position itself as a partner. This would enable the Council to exert greater influence in delivering its priority of economic growth. The previous peer challenge also made a number of more internally focused recommendations to increase capacity to deliver the Carlisle Plan, including around performance management, delivering savings and more effective scrutiny. It is much to the Council's credit that it has made so much progress in its priority area of economic growth and regeneration and has significantly strengthened its partnership working. Continuing progress in this area needs to be balanced with some additional attention to modernising the Council's internal working arrangements to support this and sustain the standards of service delivery into the future.

It should be noted that the peer challenge on which this report is based took place before the Coronavirus pandemic was declared and councils became involved in the

emergency response to Covid-19. This report therefore does not anticipate or reflect on the significant additional challenges and demands this is placing on Carlisle City Council. However, the findings and recommendation presented here should assist the Council in strengthening its capacity to respond to the impacts of Covid-19 in the longer term.

2. Key recommendations

There are a range of suggestions and observations within the main section of the report that will inform some 'quick wins' and practical actions. The following are the peer team's key recommendations to the Council:

- a) **Develop and agree a new Carlisle Plan** to provide the Council's long term vision for the district and establish clear priorities to deliver this and give the framework for other strategic plans. Agreement on what is a priority or not a priority for the next three years and beyond will be important, underpinned by an aligned MTFP.
- b) **Undertake a comprehensive review of decision making processes, at both councillor and officer levels.** This should streamline decision-making, ensuring that all steps add value in terms of accountability and the quality of decision making. This should include the role and purpose of internal Boards and enable more timely decision making and release resources to be redirected at priority areas
- c) **Review current arrangements for scrutiny and consider alternative options.** This should enable more focused scrutiny of performance, implementation of decisions and contribution to the development of policy in priority areas. It should consider how to support more timely decision making and take account of the reduction in the number of councillors since the 2018 boundary review
- d) **Refresh and modernise the Council's Constitution, policies and procedures,** taking account of b) and c) above.
- e) **Develop and implement a robust savings and additional income plan** to close the funding gap. The gap is currently £1 million per annum and expected to rise. The plan should be supported by wider understanding of the financial challenges and enable resources to be better targeted at priorities and future investment plans
- f) **Undertake and implement the planned zero-based budget review** to enable resources to be better targeted at the priorities established by the new Carlisle Plan
- g) **Ensure that the review of IT service and development of the new IT strategy are completed and implemented.** ICT has been identified as a key capacity constraint and a capable and appropriately resourced IT function is required

- h) **Assess skills and capacity gaps and invest in corporate change and delivery capacity**, to ensure the delivery of key projects and corporate modernisation. Areas where additional investment may be required include digital, asset management, workforce development and project management
- i) **Develop a commercialisation strategy** which defines what commercialisation means in Carlisle, risk appetite and potential scope of commercial activity.
- j) **Refresh and streamline the approach to performance reporting and management** to give a clearer focus on Council priorities at corporate level and strengthen ownership of performance at service level, making more use of exception reporting.

3. Summary of the Peer Challenge approach

The peer team

Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflected your requirements and the focus of the peer challenge. Peers were selected on the basis of their relevant experience and expertise and agreed with you. The peers who delivered the peer challenge at Carlisle City Council were:

- **Patricia Hughes**, Joint Chief Executive - Hart DC (lead peer)
- **Duncan McGinty**, Leader - Sedgemoor DC (Conservative member peer)
- **Alyson Barnes**, Leader – Rossendale BC (Labour member peer)
- **James Howse**, Corporate Director of Resources - South Staffordshire DC
- **David Crowe**, Strategic Director - Local Partnerships
- **Olivia Lancaster**, Project Support Officer, LGA Productivity Team (shadow peer)
- **David Armin**, challenge manager, Local Government Association

Scope and focus

The peer team considered the following five questions which form the core components looked at by all Corporate Peer Challenges. These are the areas we believe are critical to councils' performance and improvement:

1. **Understanding of the local place and priority setting:** Does the council understand its local context and place and use that to inform a clear vision and set of priorities?
2. **Leadership of Place:** Does the council provide effective leadership of place through its elected members, officers and constructive relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders?
3. **Organisational leadership and governance:** Is there effective political and managerial leadership supported by good governance and decision-making arrangements that respond to key challenges and enable change and transformation to be implemented?
4. **Financial planning and viability:** Does the council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?
5. **Capacity to deliver:** Is organisational capacity aligned with priorities and does the council influence, enable and leverage external capacity to focus on agreed outcomes?

In addition to the core components, you asked the peer team to provide observations and feedback on the following:

- the council's approach to commercialisation
- the effectiveness of the council's performance management arrangements.

The peer challenge process

It is important to stress that this was not an inspection. Peer challenges are improvement focused and tailored to meet individual councils' needs. They are designed to complement and add value to a council's own performance and improvement. The process is not designed to provide an in-depth or technical assessment of plans and proposals. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read.

The current LGA sector-led improvement support offer includes an expectation that all councils will have a corporate peer challenge every 4 to 5 years. Carlisle City Council last had a corporate peer challenge in September 2014. Where relevant to do so, findings from that previous peer challenge have been referenced in this report.

The peer team prepared for the peer challenge by reviewing a range of documents and information in order to ensure they were familiar with the Council and the challenges it is facing. The team then spent three days onsite at Carlisle, during which they:

- Spoke to around 100 people including a range of council staff together with councillors and external partners and stakeholders.
- Gathered information and views from more than 30 meetings and additional research and reading.
- Collectively spent more than 240 hours to determine their findings – the equivalent of one person spending more than six weeks in Carlisle.

This report provides a summary of the peer team's findings. It builds on the feedback presentation provided by the peer team at the end of their on-site visit (28th – 30th January 2020). In presenting feedback to you, they have done so as fellow local government officers and members, not professional consultants or inspectors. By its nature, the peer challenge is a snapshot in time. We appreciate that some of the feedback may be about things you are already addressing and progressing.

4. Feedback

4.1 Understanding of the local place and priority setting

The Council has a good understanding of Carlisle's location and the opportunities and challenges this presents. Carlisle has good national transport links by road and rail and is located close to both the Lake District National Park and the Scottish border. The Council has supported the development of Carlisle Airport for passenger flights. But it is also remote from major centres of population. At the time of the last peer challenge in 2014 this challenge was characterised as becoming 'a destination as well as a gateway'. It is evident that the Council, working with a number of partners, has made significant effort and progress towards that goal since then.

The Council is clear that its top priority is its place making role. This is underpinned by its understanding of the importance of the economy, skills and health agendas for Carlisle and the strategic role of the city as a regional centre for Cumbria and beyond. There is also recognition of the need to provide more housing as a driver for economic growth and attracting new residents, but also to ensure that vulnerable people can access safe, warm and affordable housing. This understanding of place is informed by good working relations with a range of other partners through the Carlisle Partnership.

The Council's leadership are clear about the three key projects to deliver on the place agenda, with widespread recognition of these among staff and partners. These 'Big 3' projects are as follows: Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal (involving both the UK and Scottish governments and other major councils on both sides of the border); the Sands leisure centre redevelopment in Carlisle and development of the St Cuthbert's Garden Village (as part of the Government's Garden Village programme).

Carlisle remains vulnerable to flooding, although there are a number of schemes underway to reduce this risk. The last major flood event in the city was in 2015, and the impacts of this are still evident including to the ground floor of the Civic Centre which is still not available for use. In view of this, the Council has a specific financial reserve identified to reinstate Council owned flood affected assets (unfortunately there was further flooding in February 2020, shortly after this peer challenge took place).

Notwithstanding the clarity around the three key projects identified above, the Council's other priorities (and indeed non-priorities) are less clear. The Carlisle Plan 2015-18 sets out the previous administration's priorities for the place and Council and is yet to be updated. In part this is due to the change to a minority Conservative administration in May 2019 following the all-out elections after a major Boundary Review. The Council has a Corporate Plan 2018-21, which links together the key strategies and continues work on priorities from the old Carlisle Plan, but does not substitute for a refreshed vision for the area.

The development of the new Carlisle Plan provides a real opportunity to be clear about the Council's wider priorities and its long term vision. There has been some uncertainty about that vision for Carlisle in the context of Cumbria more generally, given the diminishing prospects for nuclear re-development in the west of the county. This would have had significant impact on the economy of Carlisle. It is now timely to review that vision, with the new Carlisle Plan providing the building blocks for a long term strategy.

The Council is beginning to consider the balance of focus between the urban and rural areas. Particular attention has been given to the City of Carlisle to date, given that it is the key economic driver. But it is now recognised that further attention should be given to the needs and potential of the rural areas of the district.

4.2 Leadership of Place

The Council is clearly now a strong leader of place and is driving a challenging and ambitious economic development agenda for Carlisle as a regional capital and for the wider Borderlands area. It has played a leading role in establishing a unique partnership – the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal. This has involved developing partnerships with UK and Scottish Governments and building on its relationships with Cumbria and Northumberland County Councils and with Dumfries and Galloway Council.

In this role it is well regarded by a number of external stakeholders across both the public and private sectors. The Council is seen as 'punching well above its weight', having developed significant influence and leverage for a district council. One person remarked 'over the last five years Carlisle has started acting like a city, not just a large town'. At the time of the last peer challenge one of the key themes emerging was for the Council to better position itself as a partner and exert greater influence over the economic growth agenda. It is evident that the Council and its leadership have made great strides in this area and Carlisle could well be regarded as an exemplar in this sphere.

This work as a leader of place is underpinned by strong and effective partnership working locally and across the region. This includes work with the local colleges including the University of Cumbria, public health and the CCG. The Carlisle Partnership, the district's Local Strategic Partnership, remains active. The Carlisle Ambassadors are noteworthy. They are people from business or other organisations with a stake in the area and who are interested in making a difference for the future growth and development of the City of Carlisle. They are seen as providing a strong and influential network for Carlisle.

The Council needs to ensure that it has sufficient capacity, including effective project management, for the delivery of major growth projects. Currently there is a reliance on a limited number of people to support the political and managerial leadership in the delivery of key projects. This gives rise to some risk around the resilience of project delivery. Effective partnership working to tap into specialist skills and

experience from other agencies for particular projects will continue to be part of the mix, but the Council needs to ensure that it has sufficient core project and financial management skills for project delivery.

With the Council's exceptional experience of building partnerships, there may now also be opportunities to use this to broker, unlock or explore improvements to joint working for the benefit of economic development across Cumbria, in conjunction with other districts and the County Council. This would provide a broadening of the Council's leadership role beyond the north of Cumbria and the borders area.

At the time of the peer challenge, local government re-organisation was becoming an active conversation again following the General Election in December 2019. In early February, a Government minister held discussions with councils across Cumbria about possible options for a unitary / combined authority structure. Carlisle should aim to be an influential but pragmatic participant in this debate, whilst not being distracted from its priority of delivering for the place and the provision of services to local residents.

4.3 Organisational leadership and governance

Carlisle had a major boundary review in 2018, leading to a significant reduction in the number of councillors (from 52 to 39). An all-out election was held in May 2019 on the new ward boundaries this created. This led to the establishment of a minority Conservative administration, in place of the previous Labour majority. Elections by thirds will again be held from May 2020 onwards. This tight political balance, with elections also happening again within 12 months has led to some uncertainty about the future longer term direction of the Council and on agreement to the next set of priorities for the Council in the medium term. The continuity in delivery of the major projects and the priorities for the area despite this is noteworthy. This is a tribute to the managerial and political leadership across the Council as noted below.

The Leader and Chief Executive are well regarded and respected within the Council and externally. They both have great credibility. There are good relationships between the different political groups, which is helpful to continuity in delivering key projects and is a real asset for an authority with no overall control. There are also strong and effective member-officer relationships, with councillors having confidence in senior officers and in turn being respected by officers. There is a clear understanding of the respective roles of councillors and officers.

The senior management team is well established, experienced and knowledgeable – all have been in their current role for a number of years. This gives deep organisational memory and the opportunity to develop good working relationships. But there is always a risk with this that an organisation can become less open to new ideas or different ways of doing things. The Council recognises this and should continue to give attention to opportunities to learn from experience elsewhere and encourage innovation from within.

The Council has made real progress in delivering its ambitious external agenda, which is its top priority. But in contrast it has more work to do on the internal modernisation agenda which, in turn, should strengthen its capacity to deliver on that growth agenda.

The Council's decision making processes, at councillor level and also at officer level too, appear complex and may lead to loss of pace, momentum and potential opportunities such as grant funding bids which are subject to tight timescales. Scrutiny is not as well targeted as it could be. Overview & Scrutiny panels request reports on a range of matters under consideration by the Executive beyond those which form part of the Policy & Budget framework. Scrutiny activity should be re-focused on major issues and areas where input into policy development is being particularly sought or where scrutiny can make a positive difference to communities and the delivery of Council priorities. There are some instances of scrutiny adding value and influencing decisions of the Executive, but in the main it appears to be process-driven and focused around the consideration of reports. Extensive consideration of budget proposals at the three Scrutiny Panels has not led to changes to address the savings gap identified and similarly consideration of performance reports does not appear to be helping to drive action to address under-performance.

Effective oversight and scrutiny can make a real contribution to both policy development and implementation and good decision making. Scrutiny in Carlisle should continue to be active, but it needs to be well targeted at the Council's priorities and major decisions. Currently Carlisle has three Scrutiny Panels (Business & Transformation; Community; Economic Growth). An alternative arrangement which the Council may wish to consider would be a single scrutiny Committee which could then set up task and finish groups to look at the development of new policy or the performance of particular aspects of the Council's business, drawing on the relevant skills, experience and interests of different councillors.

Following the reduction in the number of members of the Council, there is apparently now some difficulty in getting councillors to serve on Scrutiny Panels and other committees. In the light of this, and the questions raised above regarding the effectiveness of aspects of decision making and scrutiny, a review of member governance arrangements would be timely. This should include scrutiny and help to establish greater clarity of purpose. A refresh of the Council's constitution, policies and procedures is also required, to bring these up to date and more streamlined. Examples of constitutions which take a more modern approach include Winchester (a District council) and Herfordshire, Maidstone and Rochdale among unitary and metropolitan authorities. More efficient decision-making and other processes would not only increase pace for the organisation but also release capacity that could be directed towards the Council's priorities. It would also mean that the Council is better placed to respond to opportunities that arise as it moves to adopt a more commercial approach. Carlisle may need to adopt streamlined decision making arrangements for matters which fall within the scope of its commercialisation strategy, when agreed.

The Council appears to be a benevolent organisation that can struggle to make difficult choices. The relatively healthy financial position to date, underpinned by a good asset base, may have made such decisions less pressing but there may well also be a cultural element. Examples of where the Council has not made difficult choices include charging for services (such as garden waste collection) and making cost savings (where undelivered savings targets have been carried forward into subsequent years – the MTFP reports a cumulative total of £1.24 million savings not yet delivered over the three years to 2018-19). It has also not fully and consistently embedded HR policies such as managing individual performance. There is an opportunity to provide clarity around accountability for delivering key agendas across the Council, underpinned by more focused performance reporting and management arrangements, to gain real traction so that priorities are delivered across the organisation. Performance management is discussed further in section 4.7 of this report.

4.4 Financial planning and viability

The Council benefits from a relatively sound financial position. It had a net revenue budget of £13.6m and useable general fund reserves of £10.2m in 2019-20. This position is assisted by a track record of spend within budget and strong asset base which has provided additional income of around £4.3m per annum that makes the Council less dependent on Council Tax and central government funding. It has also been very successful in accessing a range of external funding streams. The Director of Finance (sec 151 officer) and her colleagues are well respected across the Council. External audit has a positive view about the Council, its control environment and finance team.

Leaders have a good understanding of the risks and uncertainties around future local government funding. As noted above, additional income streams and scope to take further advantage of commercial opportunities may mitigate against some of the potential risks of the Government's Fair Funding Review. However, there is no room for complacency.

The savings gap of circa £1 million and rising (estimated to be £2.4m in 2024-5) is identified and well known, but in previous years this has been met through a combination of underspends on other budgets and use of reserves. A proportion of the underspending is due to spend slipping into subsequent years. A Strategic Finance Group (consisting of the Senior Management Team, the Leader and Finance portfolio holder) has been set-up to work through options and to prepare for tough choices. However, these will need to be seen through to implementation with more rigour than has been the case previously. Of the targeted £5m of efficiency savings over the three years from 2016-17 to 2018-19, £1.2m remain outstanding. There has been a lack of urgency in actioning financial contingency plans. A clear and robust savings plan is needed. This should be linked to internal modernisation which has the scope to release efficiency savings.

Whilst key members and officers understand the scale of future financial challenges, this is not yet widely understood. General fund balances are adequate, although the Council has been drawing on these in recent years. The five year MTFP to 2024-25 envisages that the level of general fund reserves will reduce, but remain above what the Council considers the minimum prudent level. The budget forecast 2020-21 assumes that use of reserves will contribute about £1m to the budget requirement. Given the scale of Carlisle's ambition, this may bring some additional risks which lead to an increased need to draw on reserves. Such risk could arise from major projects such as the Sands Centre redevelopment; the possibility of further investment to yield a return (in terms of both financial and social value) and more commercialisation. The Council has plans that will lead to a substantial increase in long term borrowing to finance capital investment. The Council's reserves need to be maintained at a level commensurate with this. More vigorously pursuing savings will provide greater scope to do this.

The Council should progress its planned zero base-budget review to ensure that the budget is challenged across all services, linked to the need to re-prioritise and align resources to priorities. Agreeing and adopting a new Carlisle Plan will provide the framework of priorities for this. The pattern of consistent underspends against budget suggests that there is scope to make better use of existing resources in delivering the Council's priorities.

There is scope to further strengthen financial management of major projects, which given the scale of investment involved have the potential to present a risk to the Council's finances. The Council is considering opportunities to take a more commercial approach to generate additional income. This will need to be linked to its financial strategy. An agreed approach to drive commercialisation needs to be reflected in the Capital Investment Strategy and the Asset Management Plan. Further discussion of potential approaches to commercialisation can be found in section 4.6 of this report.

4.5 Capacity to deliver

The Council benefits from a committed, experienced and stable workforce, which is proud to work for Carlisle. It is able to resource key projects by pragmatic and effective use of capable people from across the service Directorates. It may now be timely for senior managers to re-engage with the workforce more generally to tap further into that commitment and experience. This could be used to give a clear indication of the future direction of the organisation (as determined by the new Carlisle Plan now in development) and the Council's priorities. There would also be scope to gain insight from staff on opportunities to modernise how the Council does business.

The Council's services are generally well performing. But they may be at risk in the future if the organisation does not modernise its approach to both the back office and service delivery.

The Council has recognised that it needs to strengthen its capacity to develop ICT systems and make better use of these to enable service delivery and customer access. It has bought in some consultancy support from another local authority to develop a new IT strategy and a new structure for the service. The draft IT Strategy is aligned to approaches being taken at other authorities and the organisation is eager to be part of this change. However, many people see ICT systems and the lack of capacity to develop them further as a significant constraint. The review of arrangements for the service and new IT strategy need to deliver a solution.

To be confident in delivering its ambitious growth agenda and sustain service performance more generally, the Council needs to assess skills and capacity gaps and invest in corporate change and delivery capacity. Areas where more capacity could well be required include ICT, digital, asset management, workforce development and project management. This will be required around both the 'Big 3' projects (ie. Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal; Sands Centre re-development and St Cuthbert's Garden Village) and corporate transformation more generally.

Internally, the Council operates in quite a traditional, process-heavy way that can soak up capacity, through decision making and similar processes. Viewed positively, this should give rise to opportunities to make efficiency gains relatively easily without impacting on front-line service delivery. When the new Carlisle Plan is agreed, there will be further scope to identify areas to de-prioritise and modernise through service reviews with an 'invest to save' approach.

A number of cross-cutting forums such as in respect of transformation and commercialisation have been established to help take forward a council-wide approach. However, views on the effectiveness of these groups are mixed, with a number of people thinking they are not as effective as they need to be. They should now be re-set with a clear remit and accountability to make sure they deliver the outcomes desired by the Council.

4.6 Commercialisation

The Council has a strong track record in exploiting its asset base to generate a revenue stream of £4.3 million per annum. There is a clear intention from the Senior Management Team to drive commercialisation further. This is empowering staff to consider relevant opportunities and to have more confidence to propose and implement these. Clearly there are opportunities to think creatively in relation to a long term commercial strategy.

However, there is currently no clear or consistent view of what the organisation means by commercialisation. This needs to be documented in a clear commercial position statement / strategy document. This documentation needs to describe risk appetite; and the scale and type of ventures in which the Council is prepared to invest. Carlisle will wish to consider the geographical area in which investments can be made. This may not be unlimited, but could be within the Cumbria LEP or Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal area to contribute to wider economic and social

development objectives. Examples of councils which have developed published commercialisation strategies include West Lindsay and South Somerset. The process of developing the strategy is as important as the document itself, as this gives the opportunity to develop thinking and reach agreement around the purpose, criteria and priorities for commercialisation.

Without endorsing or otherwise the particular investments and criteria for investment adopted by the [South Somerset commercial investment strategy](#), it does illustrate some of the key points which need to be resolved through the development of a strategy:

- A target rate of return for commercial investments
- A streamlined decision-making process for commercial investments
- Whether or not investments can go beyond property assets (e.g. renewable energy, housing developments for sale?)
- Projects which do not meet income generation criteria, but which do achieve a financial return along with other community benefits, should be considered under other appropriate strategy and policy (i.e. they are not treated as a commercial investment).

Mendip District Council developed its approach to commercialisation with support from the LGA's productivity experts programme. More information about this work is available at <https://www.local.gov.uk/commercialism-mendip-district-council>.

Bureaucracy is a barrier and the process of 'sign off' is putting the Council at a disadvantage when it comes to the market and wider commercial and funding opportunities. The wider review of the Council's decision making processes suggested elsewhere in this report should address this aspect of governance too, whilst ensuring that the relevant accountabilities and checks and balances concerning decision-making for potentially significant expenditure and / or long-term assets and liabilities are in place. Details of Sedgemoor District Council's approach to commercialisation can be found [here](#) including governance and decision-making arrangements.

There may be a need to establish a new Council-wide cross cutting commercialisation group to identify and prioritise opportunities, with clear leadership and accountability. This should have clear terms of reference (including contributing to the development of the commercialisation strategy) and have a higher profile than the previous group. This could provide the forum for staff to suggest commercialisation opportunities and enable guidelines around the Council's risk appetite and parameters for investment to be worked up on the basis of practical examples. It could also provide another forum for greater engagement between senior managers and the wider staff group.

4.7 Performance management

The Council's corporate policy team is making use of the Sharepoint suite of on-line tools to collate performance information. This gives the potential to share performance information more widely. Some data is uploaded automatically to the system, but most still needs to be provided by services and then keyed-in by the corporate team. Comprehensive guidance has been produced to help services in the development of performance indicators (PIs) and data quality. There is awareness of the potential of the system to make performance information more widely available and to engage people more in its use, and for further analysis of data including predictive analytics. However, it is acknowledged that this potential is largely unexploited at the moment. The recent appointment of a data analyst apprentice will provide additional capacity to do this.

A large volume of PIs are produced. These include Service Standards (first introduced in 2012) which relate to measures judged important to the public and likely to impact on satisfaction with the Council. There are also 'KPIs' which relate to service plans and updates on delivery of key corporate projects under the Carlisle Plan. Efforts are made to ensure that these are 'SMART' measures. A quarterly performance report is presented to SMT, the Scrutiny Panels and then the Executive. This includes some commentary and a brief covering report highlighting exceptions.

The approach to performance reporting and management is comprehensive and in many respects systematic, but it is not as effective or impactful as the Council would wish. It is also not fully owned by Directorates and services. The large volume of PIs mainly relate to 'business as usual' or are derived from the former national PI set, rather than priority projects and change agenda. This can make it difficult 'to see the wood for the trees'. The centrally driven process of collating and reporting performance is giving rise to a sense that services are feeding the 'corporate machine'. The cycle for reporting performance leads to delays, particularly for the Executive which receives reports after the three Scrutiny Panels (and so formally receive quarterly reports over two months after the quarter end). There is not a clear process for improvement actions in response to adverse performance and the peer team found limited evidence of service improvement being driven by reported performance. Individual performance management appears to be underdeveloped too.

The Council should take stock of its current approach to question if it is adding real value rather than simply following a process. Development of the new Carlisle Plan provides the opportunity to refocus corporate performance reporting around priority areas. The bulk of the existing PI set could be reported and managed at service / Directorate level, with exception only reporting at corporate level for PIs impacting on key service standards. The sharepoint application could be developed to enable inputting and reporting at service level to foster greater ownership of performance management across the organisation.

5. Next steps

Immediate next steps

We appreciate the senior managerial and political leadership will want to reflect on the findings within this report in order to determine how the organisation wishes to take things forward.

To support you in your improvement journey, the Peer Team have identified a number of key recommendations, some of which you may already have in hand. We welcome your response to these recommendations within the next three months through the development of an action plan.

Your Principal Adviser, Claire Hogan, claire.hogan@local.gov.uk, will be in contact to assist the council going forward and to provide additional support, advice and guidance on any areas for development and improvement and she will be happy to discuss this.

In the meantime, we are keen to continue the relationship we have formed with the Council throughout the peer challenge. We will endeavour to provide signposting to examples of practice and further information and guidance about the issues we have raised in this report to help inform ongoing consideration.

Follow up visit

The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge process includes a follow up visit. The purpose of the visit is to help the Council assess the impact of the peer challenge and demonstrate the progress it has made against the areas of improvement and development identified by the peer team. It is a lighter-touch version of the original visit and does not necessarily involve all members of the original peer team. The timing of the visit is determined by the Council. Our expectation is that it will occur within the next 2 years.

Next Corporate Peer Challenge

The current LGA sector-led improvement support offer includes an expectation that all councils will have a Corporate Peer Challenge or Finance Peer Review every 4 to 5 years. It is therefore anticipated that the Council will commission their next peer challenge before February 2025.

Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:
A.4

Meeting Date: 15th October 2020
Portfolio: Economy, Enterprise and Housing
Key Decision: No
Within Policy and Budget Framework: Yes
Public / Private: Public

Title: Allocation of S.106 Funds
Report of: Corporate Director of Economic Development
Report Number: ED 35/20

Purpose / Summary:

The purpose of this report sets out to provide the background on Section 106 Agreements.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to consider this report in order to have clarity around the allocation of S.106 money.

Tracking

Executive:	
Scrutiny:	
Council:	

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Planning obligations, also known as Section 106 agreements (based on that section of the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act) are private agreements made between local authorities and developers and can be attached to a planning permission to make acceptable development which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms. The land itself, rather than the person or organisation that develops the land, is bound by a Section 106 Agreement, something any future owners will need to take into account.

1.2 National Legislative and Policy Context

1.2.1 Town and Country Planning Act 1990

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 12(1) of the Planning Compensation Act 1991) planning obligations may:

- (a) restrict the development or use of the land;
- (b) require specified operations or activities to be carried out in, on, under or over the land;
- (c) require the land to be used in any specified way; or
- (d) require a sum or sums to be paid to the authority either in a single sum or periodically.

Planning obligations are usually entered into in the context of planning applications to ensure that developers address the additional community and infrastructure needs and mitigate the social, environmental and economic impacts of new development. Unless it is agreed otherwise, planning obligations run with the land in perpetuity and may be enforced against the original party and anyone else that acquires an interest in the land, until such time as they are discharged or otherwise modified.

1.2.2 Planning Obligations are used for three purposes:

- Prescribe the nature of development (for example, requiring a given portion of housing as affordable);
- Compensate for the loss or damage created by the development (for example, loss of open space);
- Mitigate a developments impact (for example through increased education facilities).

1.3 The Planning Act (2008)

- 1.3.1 Section 206 of the Planning Act 2008 (The Act) came into force on 6 April 2010. From that date it has been unlawful for a planning obligation to be taken into account when determining a planning application for a development, if the obligation does not meet all of the following tests:

- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms
- Directly related to the development; and
- Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development

- 1.4 The Act also limited the ability to fund infrastructure through the pooling of S106 agreements by introducing a limit of 5 individual agreements that could contribute to the same infrastructure. This limit was removed in September 2019.

1.5 **National Planning Policy Framework**

- 1.5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) introduced in March 2012 changed the emphasis that planning obligations should only be sought where they meet all the tests above and where planning conditions cannot be used. The NPPF also reconfirmed the legal tests set out in the Planning Act.

2. PROCESS

- 2.1 Planning Applications are assessed against the policies with the Carlisle District Local Plan 2015 to 2030. Policy IP 8 – Planning Obligations sets out the Council’s approach to seeking contributions. During any negotiations the three legal tests must always be borne in mind for example, contributions towards education facilities can only be asked for where a development will result on an increase in child places being required so would not be relevant to say a development for older persons.
- 2.2 A Legal Agreement is signed by all the parties involved for example, the City Council, and the Developer/Landowner but can include other parties such as Cumbria County Council. Each agreement is individually written to reflect the requirements of that particular development and sets out the terms relating to the obligations for all parties.
- 2.3 For the developer it sets out what on site obligations they are expected to deliver, for example affordable housing, and any financial contributions they are expected to make in respect of offsite mitigation and when they are expected to be made.
- 2.4 The agreement also binds Carlisle City Council to use any financial for the purpose that they have been given and cannot be used for any other purpose. Therefore, funds are not available for any other purpose. Also, there is normally a timescale in which the obligation must be fulfilled. Failure to comply with those terms may result in the funds being returned to the developer.
- 2.5 The timing of the obligation has to legally reflect the point at which the impacts are identified which is usually during the course of the development rather than at the signing of planning permission. This means that contributions may only be forthcoming several years after permission has been granted. Contributions should not be made to projects which have already commenced and therefore short-term local projects may not be eligible for the funding. Commencing a project without the funding can suggest that the funding was not necessary and therefore does not fill the legal requirements. Essential major infrastructure contributions/obligations through CIL methods can continue to be recovered.

- 2.6 The process also allows for obligations to be challenged on viability grounds. The level of contributions cannot make a development unviable. Each application site has to be treated on its own merits and not the viability of the overall developer. In recent times more challenges have been raised resulting in reductions to the amount of money available for planning obligations.

3. CONTRIBUTION

- 3.1 As part of the statutory processes, Parish Councils are consulted on planning applications and it is at this point that any potential requirement for contributions should be identified. This initial 21-day consultation on the application is also the point at which Members can raise contribution questions. All members are sent the weekly list of planning applications.
- 3.2 For larger applications some developers carry out consultation with the local community and will often hold exhibitions or drop-in sessions (currently much of this may be on-line). Developers are advised to use this approach, and this is the opportunity that Members or Parish Councils can raise potential contributions directly with the developer prior to the application being made.
- 3.3 The Council changed its procedures so that draft head of terms for S106 agreements form part of the planning documentation and can be seen on the City Council Website indicating what the potential contributions should be. Parish Councils and Members should also consider this information as part of their response to the application.
- 3.4 As the agreements often relate to affordable housing or education contributions, these are for the city or county to administer in line with the agreement. Where open space contributions are involved, the City Council consult with their Health and Well-being team (formerly Green Spaces) in the first instance and they would indicate additional provision or local issues which need addressing even if the City Council did not manage all the open spaces around (the situation carries throughout the district).

4. MONITORING

- 4.1 For transparency an [Annual Planning Obligations Report](#) has been published on the City Council's web site with full details of all current agreements and the obligations within them (what has been received and how the Council is fulfilling their obligations).
- 4.2 From the financial year 2019/2020 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) regulations and National Planning Policy Framework require all local planning authorities to publish their developer contribution data (known as the Infrastructure Funding Statement) on a regular basis and in an agreed format and will be published on the government's web site by the December following the year end.

5. RISKS

- 5.1 With any planning obligations the risk is that the obligation is not legally sound and may be challenged. The obligations must fulfil the legislative requirements and to minimise this risk the Council's legal team are involved in the drafting of the agreements to liaise between solicitors of all required parties.

6. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The report sets out the process involved in establishing planning obligations to provide clarity for Members.

7. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

- 7.1 Planning obligations seek to deliver housing, recreation, education and transport infrastructure in line with the Carlisle Plan Priorities.

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**Appendices
attached to report:**

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government Act 1972 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- None

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:

A.6

Meeting Date: 15 October 2020
Portfolio: Cross-cutting
Key Decision: No
Within Policy and
Budget Framework
Private/Public Public

Title: Overview Report
Report of: Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Report Number: OS.23/20

Purpose / Summary:

This report provides an overview of matters related to the Scrutiny Panel's work. It also includes the latest version of the work programme.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

- Note the items (within Panel remit) on the most recent Notice of Key Executive Decisions
- Review the current work programme and resolutions and make recommendations for the future work programme

Tracking

Executive:	Not applicable
Scrutiny:	BTSP 15/10/20
Council:	Not applicable

1. Notice of Key Decisions

1.1 The most recent Notice of Key Executive Decisions was published on 11th September 2020. This was circulated to all Members. The following items fall within the remit of this Panel:

Items which are included in the Panel's Work Programme:

- KD 25/20 – Budget Process 2021/22 – 2025/26

Items which are not included in the Panel's Work Programme:

- None

2. References from Executive

2.1 None

3. Progress on resolutions from previous meetings

3.1 The following table sets out the meeting date and resolution that requires following up. The status is presented as either “completed”, “pending” (date expected), or “outstanding”. An item is considered outstanding if no update or progress has been made after three panel meetings. All the completed actions will be removed from the list following the meeting.

	Meeting date	Minute reference	Action	Status
1	23/07/20	BTSP 33/20	6) That the Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder circulate a copy of the Council's Hardship Scheme to all Members.	Pending
2	23/07/20	BTSP 36/20	2) That the Policy and Performance Officer provide the Panel with further information on the Directorates, tools and resources which were lacking and reasons why staff felt they did not have the tools and resources needed to do their job.	Complete
3	03/09/20	BTSP 47/20	2) That the Homeless Prevention and Accommodation Manager provide the Panel with a written response giving further details on the income shortfall for homeless accommodation due to Covid-19.	Complete
4	03/09/20	BTSP 47/20	3) That a Task and Finish Group be established to support the development of the Commercialisation Strategy and the invitation to join the Task Group be circulated to all Members.	Pending

5	03/0920	BTSP 48/20	2) That the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources provides the Panel with written responses with regard to the following: - a breakdown of the asset review sales and general sales receipts - an update on the emergency works that were outstanding on the Central Plaza Scheme.	Pending
6	03/09/20	BTSP 48/20	3) That the Panel receive information on the timescales and methods which the Council will use to deal with the Disabled Facilities Grants backlog as a result of Covid-19.	Pending
7	03/09/20	BTSP 51/20	2) That the Panel be involved in setting the future performance indicators and targets that would be reported to the Panel.	Pending

5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

5.1 The overview and scrutiny of the Carlisle Plan items that match the panel remit contribute to ongoing policy development.

Contact Officer: Rowan Jones

Ext: rowan.jones@carlisle.gov.uk

Appendices

1. Draft Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2020-21

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:

LEGAL -

FINANCE –

EQUALITY – This report raises no explicit issues relating to the public sector Equality Duty.

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE –

APPENDIX 1: Draft Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2020-21

Title	Type of Scrutiny	Lead Officer	BTSP Date
Scrutiny Annual Report 2019/20	Policy development	Rowan Jones	28/05/2020
End of Year Performance Report - for info report	For info	Gary Oliver	May 2020
Outturn Reports	For info	Steven Tickner	July 2020
Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Strategy	Policy development	Alison Taylor	23/07/2020
Asset Management Plan and Annual Property Survey Report	Policy development	Mark Walshe	23/07/2020
Employee Opinion Survey	Monitoring	Gary Oliver	23/07/2020
End of year Performance Report	Monitoring	Gary Oliver	23/07/2020
Corporate projects	Policy update	Jason Gooding	23/07/2020
Asset Management of Kingstown Industrial Estate and Parkhouse Business Park - Update on Progress	Policy update	Mark Walshe	23/07/2020
Sickness Absence EOY 19/20 and Q1 20/21	Monitoring	Sue Kaveney	03/09/2020
Performance Report Q1	Monitoring	Gary Oliver	03/09/2020
Corporate Risk Register	Monitoring	Darren Crossley	03/09/2020
Budget monitoring Q1 20/21	Monitoring	Steven Tickner	03/09/2020
Annual Equality Report & Action Plan - for info report	For info	Rebecca Tibbs	Sept 2020
Sands Centre Redevelopment Project - special meeting	Policy update	Darren Crossley	17/09/2020
Review of Attendance Management Policy - T&F Group Report	Policy development	Sue Kaveney/ T&F Group	15/10/2020
Corporate Peer Review	Policy development	Darren Crossley	15/10/2020
Allocation of S.106 funds	Policy update	Chris Hardman	15/10/2020
Planning for a no Deal Brexit	Policy development	Jane Meek	15/10/2020
Performance Report Q2	Monitoring	Gary Oliver	01/12/2020
Budget setting	Budget	Alison Taylor	01/12/2020
Budget monitoring Q2 20/21	Monitoring	Steven Tickner	01/12/2020
Sickness Absence Q2 20/21	Monitoring	Sue Kaveney	01/12/2020
Civic centre reinstatement and development	Policy update	Darren Crossley	Dec/ Jan
Budget setting (including Treasury Management Strategy Statement)	Budget	Alison Taylor	07/01/2020
Performance Report Q3	Monitoring	Gary Oliver	18/02/2020
Budget monitoring Q3 20/21	Monitoring	Steven Tickner	18/02/2020
Sickness Absence Q3 20/21	Monitoring	Sue Kaveney	18/02/2020
Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21	Policy development	Rowan Jones	01/04/2020
Corporate projects	Monitoring	Jason Gooding	01/04/2020
Corporate Risk Register	Monitoring	Darren Crossley	01/04/2020