

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2011 AT 10.00 AM

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Rutherford (Chairman) (until 11.05), Councillors Bowditch (until 10.40), Craig, Harid (substitute for Councillor Hendry), Mrs Luckley, Mrs Robson and Watson.

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor Bloxham – Local Environment Portfolio Holder
Councillor Mrs Bowman – Economic Development Portfolio Holder
Councillor Ellis – Performance and Development Portfolio Holder

EEOSP.09/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Hendry and Mrs Vasey.

EEOSP.10/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

EEOSP.11/11 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meetings held on 20 January 2011 be agreed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

EEOSP.12/11 CALL IN OF DECISIONS

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

EEOSP.13/11 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman advised Members that agenda Item A.3 – References from the Executive/Overview & Scrutiny had been incorporated into the Work Programme.

The Chairman further advised that agenda Item A.5 – Housing Design Supplementary Planning Document – would be taken after agenda item A.2.

EEOSP.14/11 OVERVIEW REPORT INCORPORATING THE WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN ITEMS

The Scrutiny Officer (Mrs Edwards) presented report OS.06/11 providing an overview of matters related to the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel's work. Details of the latest version of the work programme were also included.

Mrs Edwards reported that:

- The Forward Plan of the Executive covering the period 1 February 2011 to 31 May 2011 was published on 17 January 2011. The issues that fell within the remit of the Panel were:
 - KD.031/10 – Parking Connect – Joined up on/off Car Parking Enforcement for Cumbria. This item was considered by the Panel at their meeting on 2 December 2010.
 - KD.003/11 – Housing Design Supplementary Planning Document. This item was on the agenda for the meeting.
 - KD.006/11 – Energy Efficiency Supplementary Planning Document. In agreement with the Chair the Panel had decided that they did not wish to consider the item as it had been considered at a recent meeting of the Panel.

Since the publication of the report the Forward Plan covering the period 1 March to 31 July 2011 had been published. The Plan had 1 item relevant to the Panel – KD.009/11 – Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership – that would “consider the Council's participation in the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership ‘Enhanced Partnership Working’ Project and, if appropriate, to appoint representatives to sit on both the Project Delivery Board and the Project Delivery Team.” The report was scheduled to be considered by the Executive at their meeting on 14 March as part of the enhanced working programme. Further details would be available to the Panel in April as part of the Waste Services update.

- Parking Connect – a report was presented to the Executive on 14 February 2011. The Chairman requested an update on the position of the Parking Connect proposals and was informed by the Assistant Director (Local Environment) (Ms Culleton) that the County Council would not be discussing the issue until their meeting in March so it was unlikely that there would be any changes before April.

The Chairman reminded the Panel that the Car Parking Task and Finish Group had made a number of recommendations to the Executive. The Executive responded that several of those recommendations would be looked at alongside Parking Connect. Due to delays in that project the Chairman requested that the Executive provide an update for the Panel meeting in April with regard to the implementation of the recommendations from the Car Parking Task and Finish Group.

- Members agreed that the Carlisle Tourism Partnership should remain on the work programme.

A Member asked, as the Charges Review indicated that the provision of purple sacks would remain, where the Council the £30,000 identified as that saving would be found. She reminded Members of the Executive that the Panel had recommended a

review of the distribution of purple sacks and the possibility of the provision of bins where possible. The Local Environment Portfolio Holder assured Members that the matter was to be reviewed along with the recycling of cardboard and plastic.

RESOLVED: 1) That, subject to the issues raised above, the Overview Report incorporating the Work Programme and Forward Plan items relevant to this Panel be noted.

2) That the Executive be requested to provide an update on the recommendations from the Car Parking Task and Finish Group for the Panel meeting in April.

EEOSP.15/11 HOUSING DESIGN SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

The Assistant Director (Economic Development) (Mrs Meek) presented report ED.08/11 that covered feedback following two stages of consultation in 2007 and 2009 and proposed changes to the document in response to the consultation. The document had been amended in line with officer consideration of the comments received and any additional changes to national planning policy. Mrs Meek explained that the document would form part of the Local Development Framework and that the purpose of the document was to expand on key design policies within the local plan in the light of national guidance and local, regional and national best practice. It would apply to residential developments of varying scales, for individual household applications to large scale developments. She believed it was a helpful and useful document.

The Urban Designer (Mr Higgins) gave a presentation on the document that gave the background to the consultation and advised that the document was still a work in progress. He stated that the document showed examples of design both good and bad from local and other developments. Mr Higgins indicated that the document responded to new guidance and included movement, public realm and open space and landscape.

Mr Higgins advised that during the consultation in 2009 61 representations had been received, most of which had been incorporated into the current draft of the document.

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

- *How had the comments from the consultation been treated? Had the people who had made comments received a written response?*

Mrs Meek explained that officers would not normally respond directly to people who had responded to the consultation as the response was in the document.

Mr Higgins advised that a lot of the response was in the detail of the report. Comments from agencies such as English Heritage, Police and Cumbria County Council were included in the document, including all constructive suggestions received.

- *If a person had responded would that response appear on the Council's website?*

Mrs Meek confirmed that the final report would be available on the Council's website and that the Executive's report was also available that included the responses received.

- *If an application indicated a certain number of parking spaces per property could the Council make a decision to change that figure?*

Mrs Meek advised that the Council were able to set local policies as part of the Local Development Framework policy process. Previously parking was decided by the Highway Authority but now it was possible to be decided by Members as part of the Local Development Framework. Mrs Meek stated that it was important to develop policies and that they were key to development in all areas.

- *If a development came before the Development Control Committee now could Members specify a figure for parking spaces per property?*

Mrs Meek advised that there would have to be some justification for the figure but that it could be looked at. She confirmed that the Local Development Framework would be the overarching document.

- *The Development Control Committee needed the power to be able to make decisions without the threat of potentially high costs.*

Mr Higgins advised that the Supplementary Planning Document was an emerging document and advised that as such there may be errors and requested Members to advise if they found any errors in order to rectify them before the final document was produced.

- *The document referred to levels of parking spaces and suggested that there should be a maximum level. The Member believed that could render the document less flexible than it otherwise could be.*

Mr Higgins advised that the figure was governed by specifications within the Cumbria Design Guide but that national limits had now been removed and there was now no minimum or maximum. If Members wished to increase the figure to one above the Cumbria Design Guide standards, that would have to be done through the Local Development Framework. Mr Higgins explained that appropriate parking provision could be identified through pre-application/development briefs for a larger development.

The Economic Development Portfolio Holder advised that officers were attempting to establish a Local Development Framework group and suggested that Councillor Watson may wish to be part of that group.

- *Parts of the city have had trees and grassed areas removed to be tarmaced for parking purposes. Was there a mechanism in place that would prevent that happening in future developments?*

Mr Higgins advised that parking pressures could be looked at as part of the landscaping process and that permeable paving was available that allowed run off into a planted area. Developers could be asked to pay a commuted sum for landscape maintenance.

- *Members agreed that the document was very well presented with a lot of illustrations and limited use of jargon.*
- *There was a concern regarding density and parking issues in that Carlisle was a unique area as residents could access city centre facilities but needed a car to access anything outside the centre. Therefore parking spaces were required on properties to avoid parking on the street. Was there enough flexibility to allow innovative parking provision?*

Mrs Meek advised that density was included in the Local Plan but that had been superseded by the new Government policy PPS3. Mrs Meek stated that the Council would always be looking for new ideas and officers worked with developers to implement new ideas.

Mr Higgins advised that an urban site required a certain density to make parking, services, shops and public transport viable.

- *There were a number of Conservation Areas within Carlisle and it would be a shame if concerns about architecture prevented innovative design.*

Mrs Meek believed that Development Officers encouraged good design whether it be modern or a reflection of historic design.

- *The document stated that "Pursuit of Code 3 rating or above will be encouraged in all new residential developments." Was "encouraged" sufficiently strong wording?*

Mrs Meek advised that it would be difficult to insist on such measures as, particularly in historic areas, materials were expensive and while it was important to ensure the correct design, it was a matter of getting the balance between design and cost right and Development Control Officers would look at those issues with the developers.

- *The report stated that response from United Utilities referred to water harvesting. Sometimes green issues used more energy than they were attempting to save.*

Mr Higgins advised that in some cases it was uneconomical to recycle grey water. He believed that insulation was very important to conserve energy.

- *The report was a good step forward and would be useful to Members, Development Control officers and the public. A great deal of thought had gone into the report and Members of the Panel had learned a lot.*
- *Are all references to responses marked on the website?*

Mrs Meek advised that they should be and confirmed that she would check. Mr Higgins stated that there would be a link from the City Council's web page to the final document.

- *Will there be a relaxation for applications for extensions?*

Mrs Meek advised that that would not be known until the new legislation had been received. She expected that people would make enquiries whether planning permissions was needed and be advised accordingly.

RESOLVED: 1) That the report be noted.

EEOSP.16/11 SEAGULLS

The Assistant Director (Local Environment) (Ms Culleton) presented report LE.04/11 that covered data information on the scale of the issues with regard to seagulls within the City. Ms Culleton advised that from time to time the Council received complaints regarding seagulls. The majority of the complaints related to seagulls attacking individuals during the nesting/breeding season. Most of the complaints related to industrial estates although some concerned the City centre.

Ms Culleton explained that research indicated that there were a number of methods for controlling seagulls and added that any action must take account of legislation in place to protect wild birds. Only Herring Gulls, Lesser Black-backed Gulls and Greater Black-backed Gulls were treated as pest species.

Ms Culleton outlined the characteristics of seagulls and their behaviour and life-cycle. She highlighted a number of reasons why people found seagulls to be a nuisance and advised that seagulls were becoming more common in cities and tended to congregate in the City centre where there was a ready food source and on industrial estates where a lot of factory roofs provided ideal nesting locations. However, large open areas of farm land could also provide a food source for gulls, especially during ploughing.

Ms Culleton stated that Carlisle City Council did not provide any service for controlling gulls and there were various methods for controlling urban gull populations including disturbance methods, manipulation of nesting areas, manipulation of food sources restriction of breeding success and removal of adult birds. Ms Culleton explained the various options available within each of the methods.

Ms Culleton explained the legislation to protect wild birds in England and advised that, given the legislation and control methods there were three options available for consideration:

- for the Council to provide a public service to control seagulls
- maintain the current position in relation to the Pest Control Service, or
- employ reactive City centre control measures,

and suggested that the effectiveness of the measures should be kept under observation and the number of enquiries regarding seagulls should be logged.

Ms Culleton advised that if the situation relating to seagulls significantly deteriorated then consideration could be given to disturbance techniques.

While the Council did not hold records on gull populations and complaints made by telephone regarding gulls, customers were currently advised that removing gulls was not a service that the Council currently provided. Ms Culleton explained there had been a few complaints made by companies on the industrial estates regarding seagulls attacking members of staff. Officers reported that the only complaints made by the public in relation to seagulls were when individuals had been attacked by seagulls. Other complaints had arisen where people fed birds and neighbours complained about bird droppings on their windows, cars and washing.

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

- *Only 6 complaints had been recorded but there was some anecdotal evidence. How accurate was the figure if the recording system was not picking up the complaints?*

The Assistant Environment Quality Manager (Mrs Blair) advised that only official complaints were recorded and if a member of the public made a general enquiry that would not be logged.

- *Members stated that they would not have thought to contact the Council if they had a complaint about seagulls so it would be unlikely that a member of the public would.*
- *A Member was surprised that there had only been 5 complaints recorded over a 3 year period. It was felt that it would be interesting to note whether the number of complaints would rise as a result of an article that had appeared in the local press.*
- *Would it be possible to place advice about seagulls in the Carlisle Focus magazine?*

Ms Culleton believed that would be useful and that the main issue would be in educating the public and advising them not to feed the birds and also about ensuring that litter was placed in the litter bins provided.

- *The problem was worse in the City centre and particularly near food outlets. Would it be possible to attempt to educate the staff in the food outlets? Sunday mornings were particularly bad as the bins had not been emptied the day before.*

Ms Culleton advised that work was progressing in the city centre and the emptying of bins was being reviewed to determine how waste collection could be more efficient and effective but remain within budget. She believed that the education of the public and the staff of the food outlets would have to be part of that package.

- *Nests were often on high buildings and hidden from view. That could make it dangerous dealing with them and at times action would not be possible. It seemed apparent that there was no effective method available.*

Mrs Blair advised that it was a difficult situation and that all methods involved a 5 year programme to reduce the numbers of seagulls even if the finances and resources were available.

The Local Environment Portfolio Holder advised that Members should not take the situation out of context and that there had only been 5 complaints in the previous 3 years. He believed that it was also a problem in villages at certain times of the year and that the press had built the situation out of proportion. Many buildings had taken steps to reduce the number of birds on their property including netting and plastic spikes. He believed that if Members were aware of a situation within their ward they could possibly use some of the small scale money available to them. No council had found an answer to the problem and he believed that the City Council had to be careful how the situation was handled.

- *Prior to the piece of work it had never seemed to be a problem and the fact that there had only been 5 complaints made in 3 years indicated that it was not a big problem. The Member believed that the Council should not spend resources on the issue when there were greater priorities requiring those resources.*
- *While it was not a massive problem it was a problem and the Council should look to working with partners to try to resolve the issue. Many businesses had taken steps themselves to try to resolve the matter. Could the Council put up notices advising members of the public not to feed the birds?*

Mrs Blair advised that there had been a lot of 'spiking' and that a lot had been put in place prior to the seagulls in the city centre to prevent pigeons from settling on the edges of the buildings. She believed that the main problem was as a result of people feeding the birds and that the public needed to be better educated on the matter.

Miss Culleton believed that within the public realm there had to be a balance and indicated that the report recommended a number of options.

- *Could the Council ask the press to print advice on how to deal with seagulls?*

Ms Culleton believed it was important that the press got the proportionality of the situation correct.

- *Businesses should be encouraged to clean up better outside their premises. Officers could work with staff in the businesses and have additional bins provided either by the Council or the food outlets.*

The Economic Development Portfolio Holder advised that the City Centre partnership group were meeting next week and would be discussing the issue. She confirmed that she would report back at the meeting of the Panel in April.

- *Officers should ensure that there was no duplication of work with regard to picking up litter. Articles in the press advising members of the public not to feed the birds would be useful. The Council and businesses already had the situation regarding litter in hand. What more could the Council do?*

Ms Culleton believed that there was a lot more that could be done, particularly regarding litter. Mrs Blair stated that if skips containing food were not closed properly the birds would pull things out of the skip. She confirmed that the skips were inspected as part of the premises inspections.

In response to a Member's query Ms Culleton confirmed that the City Council did not collect trade waste and that could cause difficulties. The issue could be picked up during inspections.

Ms Culleton agreed to report back on progress as part of the Waste Services work programme next year.

RESOLVED: 1) That the report be noted.

2) That the Panel support option C in the report and that an update report is provided in 12 months time.

EEOSP.17/11 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORTS

The Policy and Performance Officer (Mr Daley) presented report PPP.06/11 that provided the Panel with an update on the revised approach to performance reporting, links to the Corporate Plan and Team Appraisals, exception reporting and the reporting dates.

Mr Daley reminded the Panel of the changes to performance monitoring and how performance would focus on local measures and the Corporate Plan key objectives and outcomes for communities.

He explained that the Corporate Plan actions were developed in September 2010 from the Corporate Plan 2010-13 which had been agreed by full Council in May 2010. In addition to ongoing monitoring of the actions, an annual review of the actions would be undertaken from February to March to incorporate feedback from the corporate planning process to ensure the actions were delivering the Council's key priorities.

Mr Daley explained how the Corporate Plan would be linked to the Directorate/Services Plans and the Team Appraisals. He outlined the time tables for the reviewing and refreshing of the Plan and for the end of year performance report.

He added that the Overview and Scrutiny Panels were asked to consider which Corporate Plan actions they would like to be reported in future performance reports, including the End of Year Performance report. He informed the Panel that, although the Place Survey had been abolished, the Council would still need to collect data about the perceptions and experiences of its customers. The Policy and Communications Team aimed to replace the Survey with an efficient, effective and economical survey focused on the distinctiveness of the district. The new survey would provide service managers with insights into the responsiveness of their services and would strengthen the Council's knowledge of its communities and help

prepare for a new set of community profiles once the Census 2011 data was released. Most importantly, the survey would make Members central to assessing the performance of the Council, an assessment based on Members' experiences and objective observations.

Mr Daley explained that it was proposed that a baseline Members' Survey would be undertaken in spring 2011 to feed into the End of Year Performance Report. He highlighted the initial question framework and proposed timetable for Members. The survey would replace the Place Survey and would be a deliberate attempt to move away from statistical information. The Members' Survey would be aimed at gathering Members' opinions on their own wards based on the information obtained by them from residents in the ward and the information would then be fed into the Corporate Plan. He added that it was hoped that all Members would respond to the survey.

Mr Daley reminded the Panel of the support for a self assessment approach following the abolition of the Audit Commission, Comprehensive Area Baseline/Organisation Assessment, Place Survey and National Indicator set. The self assessment would focus on district council services and functions, and avoid partnerships formed around themes over which the Council had little or no direct influence. Mr Daley added that information was regularly obtained through Carlisle Focus, Govmetric and face to face cards completed by people using the Customer Contact Centre. He believed that those were all good sources of feedback.

Mr Daley reminded the Panel that there was a workshop scheduled for 16 March for Members and it was proposed that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel allocation be discussed at that workshop.

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

- *The Government is to issue a single data set. Councils seem to collect information for no reason and that is costly to the authority. That information could also lead to 'mission creep' where more and more information is sought on the subject in question. Only inward and outward facing information should be gathered. The Council should ensure that the information being gathered is necessary.*

Mr Daley advised that the consultation on the single data set had just finished and that there were 463 rows of data. The removal of the National Indicators had given Councils more freedom to decide on which indicators were necessary.

The Performance and Development Portfolio Holder advised that he understood that the single data set would not add to the Council's indicators but that it was an attempt to gather information across the whole of Government to gather information. The Portfolio Holder hoped that Members would look at what information was required at the workshop on 16 March.

- *Members had requested evidence of personnel involvement and costs with regard to performance monitoring.*

Mr Daley advised that officers were working with staff in financial services and while there was currently no definitive answer work was in progress and should be available in the 2011/12 budget programme.

- *Do we know what information Central Government will require?*

Mr Daley advised that consultation had recently ended and that information should be available in the near future.

- *The questions for the Members' Survey had been discussed at Resources and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel meetings and there was some criticism of the questions.*
- *Structure to the questions was needed to bring out concerns rather than questions that could be answered with yes/no.*

Mr Daley reassured Members that the concerns of the Scrutiny Panels had been taken on board and that the questions were still being developed.

- *Would Members have the opportunity to suggest what had not been included for example Healthy City?*

The Strategic Director (Mr Crossley) advised that officers were currently drafting the work for the next financial year that would include work with partners.

- *There was possibly some duplication of work with the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Would that be looked at as part of the workshop?*

The Performance and Development Portfolio Holder advised that there would be a Scrutiny Chairs Group meeting following the workshop to discuss that issue.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Corporate Performance Monitoring Update be welcomed.

2) That Members had some concerns over the proposed format of questions for the Members' Survey but understood that that was to be revisited.

3) That Members looked forward to the opportunity to complete the Members' Survey and encouraged all Members to complete the survey at the relevant time.

EEOSP.018/11 TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

(a) Local Environment

The Assistant Director (Local Environment) (Ms Culleton) presented report LE.03/11 that provided an update on the outcome of staff consultation on phase 1 of transformation in Local Environment including a consultation timetable and summaries of the proposed changes in the structure within local environment.

Ms Culleton advised that it was proposed to make changes in a phased approach with Phase 1 concentrating on the top tier of management within the directorate and the reduction of discretionary spending. Phase 2 would take place in the next financial year and would deliver savings through an area based approach to neighbourhood service delivery and look at further discretionary spend.

Ms Culleton further advised that re-structuring had also taken place and teams had been consolidated from seven teams to four service delivery teams supported by a Local Environment Performance Improvement Team. As a result 2 management posts had been removed. Under Phase 1 it was proposed that a further 8.46 posts would be removed, 4 of which were vacant posts and 1 that would be removed when the current post-holder retired.

Ms Culleton explained that within Phase 2 it was proposed to move towards area based working for Streetscene and grounds maintenance work and it would be key to having strong community engagement in the new area teams through a range of community engagement mechanisms including Neighbourhood Forums and Parish Councils.

The re-structure proposals for Phase 1 went out to formal consultation with staff, Unions, elected Members and key stakeholders between 15 December 2010 and 31 January 2011. Comments and feedback had been considered and evaluated.

Ms Culleton advised that following consultation recent savings proposals had been made during the budget process and the Senior Management Team had been asked to consider a number of recommendations for changes to Local Environment services. A summary of the budget reductions proposed to deliver a balanced budget was provided and Ms Culleton advised that Phase 1, if agreed, would mainly be implemented by 1 April 2011 and Phase 2 within the next financial year and no later than 1 April 2012.

Ms Culleton stated that it was important to note that further savings must be identified following the recent RSG settlement and therefore additional savings in Phase 2 would be probably be required.

Ms Culleton explained that formal consultation had been completed and proposals approved by the Senior Management Team. The selection process for redundancy and interviews would be completed by March/April 2011.

Ms Culleton clarified the implications to staff and the Council of the proposed restructure. The proposals would affect the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Teams, Waste Services Efficiency Work and Area Maintenance Teams.

Ms Culleton explained the various options available and the changes in establishment, posts deleted and posts created as part of Phase 1.

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

- *What was the reason why CCTV and highways were being linked? There was a concern that the merger may lead to a reduced CCTV service.*

Ms Culleton explained that CCTV sat with highways and that the £30,000 saving from the purple sacks could possibly be used to enable that to be brought forward. Ms Culleton assured Members that there would be no reduction of the CCTV service and that officers were working with partners to ensure that all elements were included.

The Local Environment Portfolio Holder advised that the Council would not be reducing CCTV coverage, but that officers were looking at the services provided for other people who did not pay towards the service.

- *Would the reduction of £55,000 indicated regarding Clean Neighbourhood and the Environment service lead to a reduction in cleaning services?*

Ms Culleton assured Members that the saving had been as a result of merging the Green Spaces and Neighbourhood teams and that there would be no reduction in cleaning services. The Clean Neighbourhood and Environment team would be looking at enforcement for issue such as fly-tipping and that there would be 3 officers including the team leader. Reporting such matters was currently part of park control and area working but it was hoped that by working in a different way, and with partners from Riverside, officers would be able to issue fixed penalty notices for such incidents as fly-tipping and dog fouling.

- *Working with partners was effective and would make a big difference in the city centre.*

Ms Culleton believed that the work would be more efficient and that officers may also be able to use witness statements. Ms Culleton was currently looking at various enforcement tools available and how they could be used.

- *Who was responsible for removing waste from unadopted lanes that had been left by people who were not resident in the area?*

Ms Culleton advised that it was the landowner's responsibility but it was a complicated issue and not always appropriate. The Council were working with partners on the matter.

- *Could something be placed in the Carlisle Focus to educate residents on the consequences of dog fouling?*

Ms Culleton advised that she was looking at back office systems to deal with statements from the public and once the tools and training were in place it would then be possible to educate the public.

(b) Economic Development

Mrs Meek presented report ED.09/11 that updated members on Phase 2 of the Transformation Programme relating to the Economic Development Directorate. Mrs Meek advised that, following the report presented to the Panel in December 2010, Phase 1 was now complete and Phase 2 was in the process of being implemented.

Consultation with staff and Trades Unions on the re-structure was complete and the responses were being considered. Mrs Meek outlined the implementation programme for Phase 2. One to one meetings with affected staff were now being arranged. One issue that had been raised was the transfer of administration staff to a central team and issues regarding the loss of Heritage staff. It had been decided to retain the admin staff within the team as part of the business processes within planning and building control. She believed the move would be cost effective and a more efficient way of working.

With regard to Heritage staff Mrs Meek advised that there were currently two Conservation Officers and one Urban Designer. Those posts would be merged into one post. Mrs Meek explained that the roles overlapped and that they would look to employ someone who was not necessarily a planning officer but who had qualifications in planning. One of the Conservation Officers had requested voluntary redundancy and the two remaining posts post would be ring fenced for interview.

Mrs Meek confirmed that the transformation timetable for Local Environment was on target.

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

- *Would the role of Conservation Area Advisory Committee continue?*

Mrs Meek explained that although she was not certain she believed it would continue.

- *Would there be a more formal written report on the transformation ready for the meeting of the Panel in April?*

Mrs Meek advised that all interviews should be completed by April and a more detailed report would be submitted for that meeting.

The Strategic Director (Mr Crossley) advised that the Task and Finish group had requested more information on the structure and the effect of transformation on services. Once the recruitment stage was complete there would be further information available and the opportunity to clarify the situation.

- *Both reports have indicated 'No Impact' with regard to Equality Impact. Surely changes in roles and who takes up those roles will have an impact. Any impact should be reflected.*

Ms Culleton advised that the impact from Phase 1 was an efficiency saving and the impact was minimal. The merging of CCTV and highways may have an impact and that would have to be looked at. With regard to enforcement it was hoped that the changes would not be noticed from a customer point of view apart from there being a better and more efficient service.

Mrs Meek explained that she had thought about it but did not believe that it would be of use as the report was a general strategic report and that would have no impact.

RESOLVED: 1) That the report on transformation of Economic Development directorate be noted.

2) That a more detailed written report on the transformation of the Local Environment directorate be submitted for the meeting of the Panel in April.

[The meeting ended at 12:00]