

EXECUTIVE

MONDAY 18 APRIL 2011 AT 1.00 PM

PRESENT:

Councillor Mitchelson (Chairman and Promoting Carlisle Portfolio Holder)
Councillor J Mallinson (Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder)
Councillor Bainbridge (Housing Portfolio Holder)
Councillor Bloxham (Local Environment Portfolio Holder)
Councillor Mrs Bowman (Economic Development Portfolio Holder)
Councillor Ellis (Performance and Development Portfolio Holder)
Councillor Mrs Geddes (Community Engagement Portfolio Holder)

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs Bradley (Chairman of the Neighbourhood Working Task and Finish Group)
Councillor Mrs Clarke (Chairman of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

CALL-IN

The Chairman reported that the Mayor had agreed that the following item should be exempt from call-in as call-in procedures would overlap the City Council Meeting on 26 April 2011 when the matter would be considered:

- Accommodation Review: Options for Vacated Bousteads Grassing Office Space

EX.049/11 REPLACEMENT PAVEMENT SWEEPERS – RELEASE OF CAPITAL
(Key Decision)

Portfolio Local Environment

Subject Matter

The Strategic Director presented report LE.09/11 informing Members that, in order to maintain and improve standards of street cleaning in Carlisle, both in the commercial area and in residential streets, replacement mechanical sweepers were required. He explained that, although manual methods were effective in the removal of litter, detritus accumulated to an unacceptable degree due to the time elapsed between mechanised cleansing, which issue was compounded by the use of salt mixed with gravel during winter gritting. A comparison of the mechanisation deployed by a sample of local authorities was provided for information.

The Strategic Director reminded Members that the budget resolution for 2011/12 included a capital allocation of £100,000 for the purpose of purchasing additional pavement sweepers. The Neighbourhoods and Green Spaces Team had tested the performance of a number of different machines. It was proposed that the payback period for the machines should be five years at £20,000 per annum, which sum plus the maintenance costs would be derived from savings in efficiency as a result of deployment thereof.

In conclusion, the Strategic Director invited Members to consider whether to reject the above recommendation and not purchase the mechanical sweepers; accept the principle, but allocate only a proportion of the funds; or accept the recommendation and allocate the full £100,000 of capital.

The Local Environment Portfolio Holder expressed the hope that Members of the Executive would support Option 3 (i.e. accept the recommendation and allocate the full £100,000 of capital) since the purchase of mechanical pavement sweepers was more cost effective than hiring the machines, and would enable Local Environment to continue to provide the service to the standard to which people within the Carlisle District had become accustomed. Accordingly he moved acceptance of that option.

The Community Engagement Portfolio Holder referred to the recent Big Tidy in Stanwix, commenting that the time it would have taken to hire in mechanical sweepers had prevented that aspect of the work being undertaken. She therefore welcomed the above recommendation.

Summary of options rejected Other options detailed within Report
LE.09/11

DECISION

That the Executive approved the release of capital funds for the purchase of mechanical pavement sweeping vehicles (Option 3 detailed within Report LE.09/11).

Reasons for Decision

1. To enable the capital programme to be implemented.
2. To enable the City Council to improve its performance in street cleaning.

**EX.050/11 ACCOMMODATION REVIEW: OPTIONS FOR VACATED
BOUSTEADS GRASSING OFFICE SPACE**
(Key Decision)

Portfolio Governance and Resources

Subject Matter

The Assistant Director (Resources) submitted report RD.81/10 concerning office space at Bousteads Grassing. He reminded Members that the Council's accommodation review, set up in two parts (office and depots) to investigate opportunities for efficiency savings achievable through the rationalisation of the City Council's operational properties, was progressing to timescale. As part of the review an accommodation standard had been agreed which, when applied to the Civic Centre, identified potential surplus space for around 60 staff throughout the building. Since approximately 60 office staff were based at Bousteads Grassing it was decided that those staff should move to the Civic Centre therefore fully utilising available office space. Accordingly, from early March 2011, the offices fronting the Bousteads Grassing site were vacant.

He further explained the issues which needed to be borne in mind with regard to the accommodation at Bousteads Grassing which was over one hundred years old, pointing out that the quality of the main office building (roadside building) was particularly poor and that the original buildings had been constructed with inadequate foundations on made-up ground. The transformation and accommodation review had therefore created an opportunity to take the building out of use without the need to provide alternative accommodation, thus saving the replacement cost.

The Assistant Director (Resources) then outlined for Members the following four potential options for the vacated office space, together with a provisional breakdown of the costs associated with each option and the potential for long term annual savings ranging from £41,500 for Option 1 to £120,900 for Option 4:

Option 1 - vacate and board up surplus buildings

Option 2 - lease surplus buildings

Option 3 - demolish surplus buildings

Option 4 - demolish all buildings

It was suggested that, bearing in mind the structural condition of the building, the Council should progress Option 3 – i.e. demolish the surplus offices fronting Bousteads Grassing. That course of action would not inhibit any long term proposals (set out in Option 4) if eventually a decision to demolish all Bousteads buildings was deemed to be in the Council's interests. A 1 metre high wall would be erected to secure the site and ensure that it was pleasing to the eye.

In response to a question, the Assistant Director (Resources) clarified the procedural position in making recommendations to full Council on the matter.

The Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder expressed the view that Option 3 was the only sensible way forward. He then moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

Summary of options rejected Options 1, 2 and 4 as set out in Report
RD.81/10

DECISION

That the Executive :

1. Had considered the various options for the vacated Bousteads Grassing office space set out in Report RD.81/10 and agreed Option 3 (the demolition of surplus offices fronting Bousteads Grassing).
2. Recommend to Council that the demolition costs identified in Option 3 of £166,500 be added to the Council's capital programme and be funded from capital receipts. Also, that a revenue contribution to the capital programme be made of £64,800 in 2011/12 and 2012/13; and £36,900 in 2013/14 to replenish the capital balances used to fund the demolition costs.
3. Recommend that the recurring revenue savings of £64,800 be allocated against the transformation savings target in 2014/15 (£27,900 in 2013/14).

Reasons for Decision

To agree a way forward on empty Bousteads Grassing office space.

EX.051/11 REVOCATION OF THE REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY
(Key Decision)

Portfolio Economic Development

Subject Matter

The Assistant Director (Economic Development) submitted report ED.17/11 updating Members on the current position following the Government's announcement in July 2010 to revoke the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), and the subsequent ongoing legal challenge by CALA Homes which had implications for current planning policy in Carlisle, details of which were provided.

She reminded Members that, when determining applications, local planning authorities must continue to have regard to the Development Plan unless material

planning considerations indicated otherwise. For Carlisle that comprised principally saved policies in the Carlisle Local Plan and RSS policies. The policies in the Carlisle Local Plan were saved until September 2011 and, should the Council wish to extend that timeframe, it required to give six months notice.

The Assistant Director (Economic Development) then outlined in some detail a suggested interim approach designed to fill the policy vacuum and provide some certainty to developers until such time as a new policy direction was established through the Carlisle Local Development Framework, details of which were set out in her report.

The Local Environment Portfolio Holder welcomed the suggested approach with regard to parking which had historically been a very difficult issue, particularly in the rural area. He further welcomed the guidance on gypsy and travellers sites which issue had also proved problematic, and expressed the hope that a firm figure would be identified.

In response, the Assistant Director (Economic Development) advised that further guidance would be forthcoming from the CLG on planning for gypsy and travellers sites.

The Economic Development Portfolio Holder commented upon the clarity of the report. She sought clarification with regard to the changes which had taken place since the previous Regional Spatial Strategy update report submitted in November 2010.

The Assistant Director (Economic Development) replied that a number of events had taken place over the past four / five months which had impacted upon the matter, including the CALA Appeal; Inspectors' Reports and the Localism Bill.

The Economic Development Portfolio Holder reported that 1,400 responses had been received in response to consultation on the Core Strategy. The Local Development Framework Working Group would be meeting that afternoon and would undertake further work on the matter. She then moved the recommendations set out in the Assistant Director's report.

The Leader added that the recommendations constituted a sensible approach and would enable the Council to achieve its growth ambitions.

Summary of options rejected None

DECISION

1. That the Executive agreed that the interim planning policy approach for Carlisle comprise:
 - (a) That for the purposes of calculating and maintaining a 5 year supply of housing sites, the RSS figure of (450) (net) dwellings per year be retained.

- (b) That for the purposes of determining the requirement for Gypsies and Travellers and travelling show people, the Cumbria Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment will be used for requirement to 2016.
 - (c) That the Parking Standards set out in the Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan be used as parking guidelines.
2. That the CLG be informed that the Carlisle Local Plan Policies contained in Appendix 1 to Report ED.17/11 will be saved pending the development of the Carlisle Local Development Framework.

Reasons for Decision

To update Members on the current position regarding the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy and to seek Member approval for an interim response

EX.052/11 OPTIONS FOR COLLABORATION WITH EDEN DISTRICT COUNCIL (Key Decision)

(With the consent of the Chairman, and in accordance with Rule 15 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules, this item was included on the Agenda as a Key Decision, although not in the Forward Plan)

Portfolio Cross Cutting

Subject Matter

There was submitted a report of the Leader of the Council setting out options for collaboration with Eden District Council.

The Leader reported that it had been anticipated that Eden District Council would on 14 April 2011 take a decision on their preferred partner to share services with. Eden District Council had, however, deferred that decision until June 2011 and accordingly his report was withdrawn from consideration by the Executive today.

The Leader emphasised that the City Council would continue to investigate opportunities to secure efficiencies and innovative methods of service delivery, including shared services with other local authorities when the opportunity arose.

Summary of options rejected None

DECISION

That the position be noted.

Reasons for Decision

Not applicable.

EX.053/11 FORWARD PLAN
(Non Key Decision)

Portfolio Cross-Cutting

Subject Matter

The Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1 April 2011 to 31 July 2011 was submitted.

Summary of options rejected None

DECISION

That the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1 April 2011 to 31 July 2011 be noted.

Reasons for Decision

Not applicable.

EX.054/11 SCHEDULE OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY PORTFOLIO HOLDERS
(Non Key Decision)

Portfolio Local Environment

Subject Matter

Details of a decision taken by the Local Environment Portfolio Holder under delegated powers were submitted.

Summary of options rejected None

DECISION

That the decision, attached at Appendix A, be received.

Reasons for Decision

Not applicable.

EX.055/11 SCHEDULE OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY OFFICERS
(Non Key Decision)

Portfolio Performance and Development

Subject Matter

Details of decisions taken by Officers under delegated powers were submitted.

Summary of options rejected None

DECISION

That the decisions, attached at Appendix B, be received.

Reasons for Decision

Not applicable.

EX.056/11 JOINT MANAGEMENT TEAM MINUTES
(Non Key Decision)

Portfolio Various

Subject Matter

The Minutes of the meetings of the Joint Management Team held on 17 February and 3 March 2011 were submitted for information.

Summary of options rejected None

DECISION

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Joint Management Team held on 17 February and 3 March 2011, attached at Appendix C, be received.

Reasons for Decision

Not applicable.

EX.057/11 CUMBRIA LEADERSHIP BOARD
(Non Key Decision)

Portfolio Cross-Cutting

Subject Matter

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cumbria Leadership Board held on 14 January 2011 were submitted for information.

Summary of options rejected None

DECISION

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cumbria Leadership Board held on 14 January 2011 be noted.

Reasons for Decision

Not applicable.

EX.058/11 CUMBRIA STRATEGIC WASTE PARTNERSHIP
(Non Key Decision)

Portfolio Local Environment

Subject Matter

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership held on 16 February 2011 were submitted for information.

Summary of options rejected None

DECISION

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership held on 16 February 2011 be noted.

Reasons for Decision

Not applicable.

EX.059/11 NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING
(Non Key Decision)

Portfolio Cross-Cutting

Subject Matter

There was submitted Report OS.12/11 providing the final report of the Neighbourhood Working Task and Finish Group, which had been endorsed by both the Community and Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panels at meetings held on 24 March and 7 April 2011 respectively. The Panels supported the recommendations of the Task Group, set out on pages 3 and 4 of the report.

In addition, a further meeting had taken place on 11 April 2011 at which time Task Group Members from the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel had agreed additional recommendations.

A copy of the final report; Extracts from the above mentioned meetings (COSP.33/11 and EEOSP.24/11); and the additional recommendations had been circulated.

The Chairman of the Neighbourhood Working Task and Finish Group outlined the background to the matter, commenting that both the Community and Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panels believed that the time was right to consider area working and neighbourhood based activities in a broad sense. That view was driven by the knowledge that government grants would be lost and recognition of the imperative need to work together to ensure that available funding was used in the most efficient and effective way.

She then explained the process followed in reaching the recommendations, which were very much informed by the individuals / bodies detailed in the appendices to the report, and ultimately agreed by the Community and Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

In conclusion, the Chairman of the Task and Finish Group expressed her thanks to Members, all those who had responded to the Questionnaire, and especially those who had attended the workshop session and provided very interesting information.

The Chairman of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel indicated that she fully supported the recommendations and asked that the Executive consider the same.

The Local Environment Portfolio Holder reported that neither the Assistant Director (Local Environment) nor himself had any problem with the recommendations relating to local environment. They were, however, slightly disappointed that the emphasis was on community engagement as opposed to in depth to service delivery.

The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group replied that it was her understanding that, when the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel first met, they were advised that the Assistant Director (Local Environment) was in the process of reorganising the area teams. It was therefore extremely difficult at that stage to make any comments since the existing structure was likely to change. She added that Members of the Environment and Economy Sub-Group had attended the partnership working meeting and had the opportunity to ask questions.

The Community Engagement Portfolio Holder thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for undertaking what was very important work. There were a number of aspects, particularly working with other groups / partners to engage and take certain projects forward, which she would pick up in her capacity as Portfolio Holder.

Referring to recommendation 13 (that the Council enter into talks with Riverside to explore sharing staff and resources in areas of Neighbourhood Working, Community Engagement and Development), she stressed that the Council also liaised with other Housing Associations e.g. Impact Housing Association.

The Community Engagement Portfolio Holder added that the Council was always looking to expand upon the services provided via its Customer Contact Centre, and hoped that would prove to be a two way process.

The Leader then thanked Overview and Scrutiny Members for the very interesting work they had undertaken in relation to neighbourhood working. The overall aims which were around maximisation of the Council's resources were quite valid. Portfolio Holders would attend the meetings of the Community and Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panels to be held on 9 and 23 June 2011 respectively. He added that the Executive was happy to address the recommendations.

The Chairman of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel commented upon the phased nature of the work going forward and asked whether there was a particular aspect which could be progressed as a starting point.

In response, the Leader said that informal discussions would take place with a view to moving matters forward. The Executive would seek the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels via two way discussions at the meetings in June.

Summary of options rejected None

DECISION

1. That the Executive received Report OS.12/11 and the amended recommendations circulated following the meeting of the Environment and Economy Sub-Group on 11 April 2011.
2. That the Executive agreed to accept the offer to meet with the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel at their meetings on 9 and 23 June 2011 respectively to discuss progress on the recommendations.

Reasons for Decision

To respond to recommendations of the Neighbourhood Working Task and Finish Group

(The meeting ended at 1.30 pm)