

Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Agenda Item:

A.2

Meeting Date: 3rd April 2014
 Portfolio: Cross Cutting
 Key Decision: No
 Within Policy and Budget Framework
 Public / Private Public

Title: OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME
 Report of: Overview and Scrutiny Officer
 Report Number: OS 09/14

Summary:

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

Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

- Decide whether the items on the Notice of Key Executive Decisions should be included in the Panel's Work Programme for consideration.
- Give comment on the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2013/14
- Note and/or amend the Panel's work programme

Tracking

Executive:	Not applicable
Overview and Scrutiny:	3rd April 2014
Council:	29th April 2014 O&S Annual Report only

1. Notice of Key Executive Decisions

The most recent Notice of Key Executive Decisions was published on 7th March 2014. The following issues fall into the remit of this Panel and are attached at **Appendix 1**.

KD.06/14 Asset Review Business Plan – Refresh of Disposal Programme – the report was scheduled to be considered by the Executive on 7th April 2014. The matter will be the subject of further review and, as such, is not ready for publication. It is therefore deferred.

KD.07/14 2013/14 Provisional Outturn Reports – The outturn reports are scheduled to be considered by the Executive on 23rd June 2014. The reports will be on the agenda of this Panel on 26th June 2014.

2. References from the Executive

There are no references from the Executive following their meeting on 10th March 2014:

3. Scrutiny Annual Report

The Scrutiny Annual Report has been drafted and is attached at **Appendix 2**. Panel Members are asked to comment on the draft which is being considered by all three O&S Panels. The report will then be formally approved by the Scrutiny Chairs Group at their meeting on 17th April 2014.

4. Work Programme

The Panel's current work programme is attached at **Appendix 3** for comment/amendment.

Contact Officer:	Nicola Edwards	Ext: 7122
Appendices attached to report:	1. Notice of Key Decisions	
	2. Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2013/14	
	3. Community O&S Work Programme 2013/14	

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

Items relevant to the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel:

Notice of Key Decisions to be taken by the Executive

The following key decision is to be made on behalf of Carlisle City Council:

Key Decision Reference:	KD.06/14
Decision Title:	Asset Review Business Plan - Refresh of Disposal Programme
Decision to be taken:	The Executive will be asked to re consider and approve changes to the Disposal Programme following referral from Council on 7 January 2014 (C.18/14(i)).
Date Decision to be considered:	7 April 2014 consultation period to include Overview and Scrutiny as appropriate
Date Decision to be taken:	23 June 2014
Is the Decision Public or Private?:	The decision will be taken in public.
Documents submitted for consideration in relation to the Decision:	The report of the Director of Governance will be available five working days before the meeting
Contact Officer for this Decision:	Director of Governance, Carlisle City Council, Civic Centre, Carlisle, CA3 8QG
Relevant Portfolio Area:	Finance, Governance and Resources (Councillor Dr Tickner)
Relevant or Lead Overview and Scrutiny Panel:	Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel

All public reports can be viewed in the Customer Contact centre of the Civic Centre, Carlisle, the Public Library and on the Council's website www.carlisle.gov.uk.

Other documents relevant to the matter may be submitted to the decision maker.

These, if available, may be obtained by contacting the named contact officer.

Items relevant to the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel:

Notice of Key Decisions to be taken by the Executive

The following key decision is to be made on behalf of Carlisle City Council:

Key Decision Reference:	KD.07/14
Decision Title:	2013/14 Provisional Outturn Reports
Decision to be taken:	The Executive will be asked to consider and approve the 2013/14 Provisional Outturn reports and make recommendations on any carry forward requests to Council on 15 July 2014. - Provisional Revenue Outturn - Provisional Capital Outturn - Elected Members Allowances - Provisional Outturn - Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates - Provisional Outturn - Treasury Management Provisional Outturn
Date Decision to be considered:	
Date Decision to be taken:	23 June 2014
Is the Decision Public or Private?:	The decision will be taken in public,
Documents submitted for consideration in relation to the Decision:	The report of the Director of Resources will be available five working days before the meeting
Contact Officer for this Decision:	Director of Resources, Carlisle City Council, Civic Centre, Carlisle, CA3 8QG
Relevant Portfolio Area:	Finance, Governance and Resources (Councillor Dr Tickner)
Relevant or Lead Overview and Scrutiny Panel:	Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel

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Draft Scrutiny Annual Report 2013/14

Introduction

Scrutiny is considered to be the main balance to the power of the Executive and involves many of the Councillors who are not on the Executive. Individual Councillors are selected by their political parties to sit on the scrutiny panels.

The key roles of scrutiny are:

- ensuring that the Council and the Executive is accountable. This means questioning members of the Executive and senior officers about decisions that have been made or are about to be made. It also involves looking at how well the Council is doing against its policy objectives and targets for achievement.
- reviewing and developing policies. In this role, scrutiny can help the Council to develop its policy and budgetary framework. This might involve research and consultation with the community and other agencies on policy issues, good practice and looking at alternative ways of doing things.
- ensuring the continuous improvement of Council services. Scrutiny can make suggestions to the Executive for service reviews. Members of scrutiny panels are often involved in individual reviews where a particular service or function of the Council is thoroughly examined.

In Carlisle, scrutiny operates through three panels - Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel, Resources Overview and Scrutiny and Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny. The Scrutiny Chairs Group (Chairs and Vice Chairs of the three Scrutiny Panels) meets on an ad hoc basis to deal with any overarching scrutiny issues.

There are eight non-Executive members on each panel and each panel is politically balanced (ie the proportions of each political party on the panel are the same as on the Council as a whole).

This annual report provides an overview of the work of the scrutiny function during the 2013/14 civic year. The first part of the report provides brief details of the work of the individual panels and gives details of examples of Task Group work. The second part of the report considers current scrutiny practices and issues this year and looks to the future, considering areas where further development could be considered.

Does Cllr Whalen want to add anything here as lead Member of Scrutiny Chairs Group?

Contribution by Leader of the Council

Part 1: Work of the Individual Panels

The sections below give a personal commentary from the Chairs of the Panels on their view of their particular Panel's work over the last year.

Community Panel

Personal View from Cllr Olwyn Luckley, Chair of Community O&S Panel

In the Annual Scrutiny Report for 2012/13 the late Councillor Hendry confirmed his support for the Overview and Scrutiny Panels, describing them as a helpful vehicle in taking forward better local government for the city and its future. I agree with this judgment and consider the work carried out by this Panel through the latest municipal year has been a good demonstration of how this can be achieved.

The Panel has held nine meetings and commissioned work for two Task and Finish Groups.

During 2012/13 a Task and Finish Group examined the relationship between the Community Centres and the Council due to misgivings about it by members and made several recommendations. During 2013/14 the group carried out an examination into the current position and concluded that the relationship had considerably improved after their recommendations had been acted upon. A satisfactory outcome.

A Task and Finish Group was arranged to examine and review the Customer Access Strategy. An interview with the Customer Services Manager and the Director where the strategy and the timetable by which the changes would be made were outlined, was followed by each Member spending time in the Customer Contact Centre experiencing for themselves the service provided. Their conclusions were that the Strategy is proving successful and the changes are improving the service.

A second Task and Finish Group examined the measures taken by other agencies to combat Hate Crime plus the Council's policies and training towards awareness and elimination of such unacceptable behaviour. The Group presented their draft report to the Panel in March before being submitted to the Executive. I know in advance of that submission that a thorough investigation has taken place.

The Panel held two Call In sessions this year. The first subject was Representatives on Outside Bodies. The meeting was a useful examination of the subject and the Panel discussed the experience needed, the importance of regular attendance and the appropriate knowledge and interest of the nominees. As a result the Executive did consider the comments and observations of the Panel and what is a little aired but important subject was highlighted and examined.

The second Call In was concerns over the doubling of capital costs for the proposed Arts Centre Development. There was a rigorous discussion which Scrutiny can produce and ended with a decision not to refer the matter back to the Executive, but with an assurance from the Portfolio Holder that there would be further opportunities for the Panel to scrutinise the project as it develops.

Principle amongst the subjects for the Panel this year was the Council's policies and strategies for Sport, Play, Arts and Housing.

With regard to sport, in July the Panel scrutinised the key finding of the Sports Facilities Needs Assessment. The key findings of the Consultant's report were that there is a need for redevelopment and new provision in various areas of sport supported by the City Council. We later received the Sports and Physical Activity Strategy plus the Sports Facilities Strategy. Both were ambitious and approved.

Carlisle is an area where sport has been a major pastime for many and its contribution to improving health and wellbeing is important. There is a worrying increase in obesity and in some of the more deprived wards figures for illness such as cancer and respiratory problems are above the national average. A successful sports programme of activities and provision will contribute to address the area's health problems. However the sports strategies require large amounts of external funding and the Panel will wish to receive further reports to monitor progress on this aspect.

A report on Carlisle's Play Provision informed the Panel on the condition of the Council's Play Areas and the proposed plans for them. The concern of the Panel was particularly the lack of capital budget to sustain or introduce play equipment. The Panel passed on this concern to the Executive with a recommendation that a capital budget should be found for this work. However, our recommendation was not taken up. The Panel, nevertheless I'm sure will take an ongoing interest in the Play Provision, recognising its importance.

The Panel were very pleased with the annual report from the Tullie House Trust. Their activities have increased and their cooperation with national and international museums is bringing exciting exhibitions and exhibits to Carlisle. The challenge for the Trust is the reduction in funding from the Council proposed in the 2015/16 financial year. Members of the Panel were concerned the effect of the removal of £250,000 from the annual grant will have on the Museum work as the importance and quality of the activities it provides is a unique cultural contribution to the city and its visitors.

Housing and Homelessness is a core subject every year for the Panel and in 2013/14 Members examined reports on the schemes and groups in which the Council and its various partners lend support to local people in the area of housing needs. Too many to list in the annual report.

The Panel receives two reports each year on the Council's partnership with Riverside Cumbria which is an opportunity to gain a true picture of housing provision and requirements within the Social Housing sector and how these are addressed. The Panel has examined Welfare Reform and how both organisations have addressed the challenges and how each were mitigating the consequences for local people.

The Panel has had concerns the effect the changes have on the Revenue and Benefits Services and we were pleased that the service has coped well and remained in the second quartile each month, with the exception of the one for their performance in the time taken to process new Benefit Claims. This is a real achievement by the service and those who provide it.

Under the Council's Housing Assistance Policy the Council's Housing Section were successful in their bid for HCA funding of £273,700. This funding will provide for an estimated number of 45 empty homes that should be made ready for occupation by March 2015.

I hope this report sets out clearly that the Members of the Panel and the Officers who attend the Panel and participate in Task and Finish Groups devote considerable effort to providing satisfactory services for the people who live and work in our district. I would like to thank them all for their contribution with particular mention of the Scrutiny Officer.

Environment and Economy Panel

Personal View from Cllr Marilyn Bowman, Chair of Environment & Economy O&S Panel

My appointment as Chairman of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Panel for the Civic year 2013-14 brought a new challenge to my expertise. Following nine years as Portfolio Holder for Economy, it could be seen as Gamekeeper turned Poacher. I believe my experience on both side of the fence enables me to have a better understanding of how scrutiny can and should benefit the decision making process.

The Panel has embraced the detailed scrutiny of the Local Plan, making constructive and knowledge based recommendations, on a very important document, affecting the future of the Carlisle Economy.

With economic issues seen as a priority, the panel welcomed the Chairman of Carlisle Economic Partnership, questioned the progress and lack of information from the Local Enterprise Partnership, and await confirmation of the Chairman's attendance at a forthcoming meeting.

Following questions regarding the Business Interaction Centre the Panel visited the University of Cumbria premises and were given an introduction and tour of the facilities by Prof. Frank Peck.

Environmental issues were also high on the Agenda, with the Bring Sites Review and a Task and Finish Group set up to explore the Recycling Service.

The Waste Services Review has been identified as a major piece of work. The Panel resolved to form a cross party working group as this will enable the Elected Members to be well informed and have an input into what is a vital service for the residents of Carlisle.

I would like to thank the Members of the Panel and their substitutes, Chief Officers and many other Officers for their attendance and professional input to the meetings. The Portfolio Holders who have taken the time to partake and finally a special thank you to our Scrutiny Officer for the dedicated advice, guidance and support throughout the year.

Recycling Centre Task and Finish Group –box to be inserted with details of Task Group

Talkin Tarn Task and Finish Group - box to be inserted with details of Task Group

Cllr Elsie Martlew, Portfolio Holder for Environment & Transport

The past twelve months have been very productive. As Portfolio Holder I have ensured that major policies are discussed by O + S before the Executive takes the final decision.

This input by scrutiny members, across the political spectrum, strengthens the whole democratic process.

The robust questioning of the portfolio holder and officers leads to better and more informed decisions. The Task and Finish process is especially useful as it enables more in-depth examination of specific policy areas.

Resources Panel

Personal View from Cllr Reg Watson, Chair of Resources O&S Panel

Scrutiny is an important part of our local government system that aids the democratic structure of the Council and for the past year the Resources Panel has taken a close look at a number of areas. Routine monitoring and overview of the Council's Budget, Risk Register, Partnerships and Performance gives Members of the Panel an opportunity to identify areas of concern which require further scrutiny.

This good practice can be demonstrated in the scrutiny of sickness absence and how sickness is managed in the Authority. The Panel have been vocal in the promotion of back to work interviews and have seen a marked improvement in this area over the last two years. Short term absences have reduced and it was argued that return to work interviews pick up and deter repeated short absences..

The pressure on the Council's budget are currently the biggest this Council has ever faced and scrutiny must continue to challenge Members of the Executive. The Resources O&S Panel will continue to look for assurance that our staff are being supported through difficult times through continuing scrutiny of sickness absence, organisational development and employee surveys.

The Panel have looked at the refresh of the Asset Management Plan and will continue to monitor the disposal programme over the next year.

A big thank you to the Chief Officers, members of the Executive and all who added to our deliberations. Thank you to our Scrutiny Support Officer for the clear advice and support and thank you to members of the Panel who never failed to get to the heart of the matter before us.

We hope we have added value to the Councils deliberations.

Saving Paper Task and Finish Group – update of implementation of recommendations

Representation on Countywide Scrutiny Committees

Cumbria Police & Crime Panel

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 required local authorities to establish a Police and Crime Panel, as a Joint Committee, to scrutinise the directly elected Police and Crime Commissioner. Carlisle City Council nominated Councillor Bowditch, to sit on the Panel, which is administered by Cumbria County Council as the host authority.

The Panel scrutinise the Commissioner's budget and proposed precept and also have the responsibility of scrutinising the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan and monitoring his delivery against these priorities.

There have also been two major issues over the past year the Panel has kept an awareness of: The commissioner's expenses with regards to travel (chauffeur driven car) and the complaints that were received by the Panel in relation to this. Also the suspension of the temporary Chief Constable and the issues surrounding this.

Cumbria Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

The Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee is responsible for reviewing provision and operation of healthcare services in Cumbria and reviewing any relevant issues concerning health care. The membership of the Committee includes County Council and District/Borough Council members and Cllr Bowditch is the City Council's representative.

It has been a very busy year for the committee with a number of issues arising and being explored by the committee. These include: the results of the Koegh review in North Cumbria and scrutinising the Trust's performance. Looking at the proposed acquisition and Merger of North Cumbria Trust by Northumbria. Monitoring the development of the West Cumberland Hospital. Reviewing CQC Inspection Reports and issues relating to health services in the County. Scrutinising the high profile issues that have been raised in Furness re maternity services and oncology. Scrutinising the Better Care Together for the review of potential reconfiguration of services across the Morecombe Bay area. Scrutinising the vascular service reconfiguration and referring the outcome to the Secretary of State for Health.

Part 2: Development of Scrutiny & Summary of Progress

Call-in

There have been three Call-ins in 2013/14.

Decision Reference	Issue	Overview & Scrutiny Panel	Outcome of Call-in Meeting
EX.54/13	Bring Sites Review	Economy & Environment	Members of the Panel voted not to refer the decision back to the Executive
EX.60/13	Representatives on Outside Bodies	Community	That the matter be referred back to the Executive for reconsideration and that the Executive be asked to ensure that the observations and comments of the Panel be taken into consideration when appointments are being made to outside bodies.
EX.069/13	Arts Centre Development	Community	The Panel agreed not to refer decision back to the Executive under the proviso that they continue to monitor the progress of the project.

Relationship with the Executive & Senior Management Team and the Development of the Work Programme

It was reported in the 2012/13 Annual Report that due to an improved relationship with the Executive there had been little requirement for formal Tripartite meetings which were planned to be held on a quarterly basis to allow dialogue between the two. However the Scrutiny Chairs Group have requested that this practice be reintroduced in 2014/15 as they wish to be better informed about key topics throughout the year so that their work programmes can be effective and add value.

It was further agreed by the Scrutiny Chairs Group that SMT Officers should be more pro-active in the development of the Panel's Work Programme and share more information with Members of their focus over the following 12 months and give suggestions how Overview and Scrutiny can be involved.

In the first instance the Scrutiny Officer will arrange to meet with each SMT Officer before the first round of Panels and a draft work programme for 2014/15 will be developed. Each Panel will then be requested to consider the draft at the first meeting of the year. The relevant Portfolio Holders and SMT Officers will be expected to attend these meeting to help assist the Panel in developing a valuable programme for the year ahead.

Scrutiny Members should also use the scoping tool (see Appendix 1) which will help them choose items for their work programme which are relevant.

Training for Scrutiny Members

The Scrutiny Chairs Group agreed that more training is required for Members on Scrutiny Panels to assist them in their role. Although informal induction is provided to new Scrutiny Members by the Scrutiny Officer it is questioned whether more formal training is required.

The following training will be made available for Scrutiny Members in 2014/15

Chairs - Training to be included in the Ethical Governance Programme and Scrutiny Chairs, regardless of their experience will be encouraged to attend.

A formal Induction Session for all new Scrutiny Members will be arranged for June 2014 following the appointment of Panels at Annual Council.

A half day training session will be arranged in June/July 2014 with the focus on

Members of the Panels are asked to discuss their training needs and the Chairs Group will decide the focus of the training

Do Scrutiny Members agree that this is an accurate reflection of the work undertaken this year and address concerns raised appropriately?

Are there any other issues which Members would like included within the report?

Are there any particular topics that Members would like to be considered for review in 2013/14?

RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14

Date last revised: 18 March 2014

Issue	Type of Scrutiny						Comments/Current Status	Meeting Dates							
	Performance Management	Notice of Key Decision /Referred from Executive	Policy Review or Development	Scrutiny of Partnership/ External Agency	Budget	Monitoring		6 Jun 13	18 Jul 13	29 Aug 13	10 Oct 13	28 Nov 13	6 Jan 14	20 Feb 14	3 Apr 14
Current Meeting – 3rd April 2014															
Corporate Risk Register						✓	Bi-annual Monitoring				✓				✓
Transformation Board						✓	To receive six monthly updates				✓				✓
Employee Opinion Survey							To inform Members of feedback and action plan								✓
Scrutiny Annual Report							Draft report for comment before Chairs Group								✓
Task & Finish Groups															
Saving Paper Task Group			✓				Completed			✓					
COMPLETED ITEMS															
Corporate Programme Board						✓	Bi-annual monitoring of significant projects	✓		✓		✓			

RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14

Date last revised: 18 March 2014

Issue	Type of Scrutiny						Comments/Current Status	Meeting Dates								
	Performance Management	Notice of Key Decision /Referred from Executive	Policy Review or Development	Scrutiny of Partnership/ External Agency	Budget	Monitoring		6 Jun 13	18 Jul 13	29 Aug 13	10 Oct 13	28 Nov 13	6 Jan 14	20 Feb 14	3 Apr 14	
Significant Partnerships				✓			Bi-Annual scrutiny			✓						June 14 Jan 15
Performance Monitoring						✓	Quarterly monitoring of performance within remit of Panel	✓		✓		✓		✓		
Organisational Development Plan	✓					✓	To consider review of Plan July - monitor performance in Nov & Feb		✓			✓		✓		
Sickness Absence	✓						To consider reports relating to the authority's sickness absence levels to invite OH		✓		✓			✓		
Budget Monitoring 13-14					✓	✓	Monitoring of budget			✓		✓		✓		
Budget					✓		Budget setting 2014/15-2018/19					✓	✓			

