

## **ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

**THURSDAY 3 JULY 2014 AT 10.00 AM**

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

**ALSO**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Mrs Martlew – Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder  
Councillor Mrs Bradley – Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder  
Councillor Mrs Mallinson – Observer  
Councillor J Mallinson – Observer  
Councillor Mrs Prest - Observer

**OFFICERS:** Deputy Chief Executive  
Director of Local Environment  
Highways Manager  
Overview and Scrutiny Officer  
Policy and Performance Officer  
Investment and Policy Manager

### **EEOSP.34/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

### **EEOSP.35/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Graham declared a registrable interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of agenda item A.2 Claimed Rights Update. The interest related to the fact that he was a member of Cumbria County Council.

### **EEOSP.36/14 ANNOUNCEMENT BY CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman opened the meeting by thank Councillor Mrs Bowman for her hard work and contribution to the scrutiny process as Chairman in 2013/14 and would welcome her contribution to scrutiny in the future..

He also paid tribute to the late Councillor Whalen who had made a substantial contribution to the work of the Panel as Vice Chairman and Lead Member on the Scrutiny Chairs Group.

### **EEOSP.37/14 CALL IN OF DECISIONS**

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

### **EEOSP.38/14 CLAIMED RIGHTS UPDATE**

The Director of Local Environment submitted Report LE.11/14 which advised and updated Members on issues related to the former Claimed Rights Highways Maintenance service. The Director reminded Members that the service had been handed back to Cumbria

County Council on 31 March 2013 following endorsement by the Executive in November 2012.

The transfer of the Claimed Rights service had been carried out with little, if any, impact on the residents of Carlisle. Most issues had now been satisfactorily addressed but work was still ongoing on a number of issues including the residual agreement and weed control.

The Highways Manager had met with officers from Cumbria County Council on 2 July 2014 and he updated the Panel, as follows, on the issues set out in appendix 1 of the report:

#### *Residual Agreement*

Despite initially working with the City Council to prepare a residual agreement the County Council had decided such an agreement was not necessary. They had since agreed that a memorandum of agreement would be preferable and the existing draft agreement would be amended accordingly.

#### *Grass Cutting*

The County Council had given verbal confirmation that a contribution of £13,050 would be allocated for the grass cutting which the City Council carried out on their behalf. The contribution was less than in the previous year due to a County wide cut. The City Council cut the verges 12 times per year and the allocation from the County Council covered 2 of the cuts.

The Director of Local Environment clarified that the County allocation covered 2 metres from the roadside of the two cuts and the rest of the cuts were amenity cuts.

#### *Work Agreements*

Officers from the City and County Councils were working to finalise Works Agreements. Under the terms of the Works Agreements the County Council would carry out work for the City Council to an agreed specification with the City Council being invoiced for relevant costs.

#### *Quarterly Liaison Meetings*

Regular meetings were taking place between relevant officers to discuss highway related issues/problems of mutual interest; the next meeting was scheduled for 1 October 2014.

#### *Tree Maintenance*

The County Council had prepared a draft strategy for the maintenance of street trees and a budget for the work had been established. The draft strategy was due to be presented to a future meeting of the Highways and Transport Working Group.

#### *Winter Maintenance*

The weather conditions in winter 2013 so were so mild that it had not been possible to carry out a trial of the use of brine solution to replace the use of salt in the pedestrian area. When the trial could go ahead and if it was effective it may enable City operators to be deployed to other areas to assist with gritting of footways during severe weather when they could not carry out their normal duties.

#### *Bus Shelter Maintenance*

In 2013/14 the County Council provided £5,000 to cover the cost of repairs to bus shelters. The City agreed to clean the shelters as their contribution towards the joint working. The

£5,000 had not been fully expended and a carry forward had been requested to fund any repairs needed to shelters in 2014/15. The City would look for further contribution from the County Council when this money ended.

#### *Weed Control*

The County Council had completed the first spray of the City and a second spray would take place later in the summer. A number of issues had been reported with weeds growing in cuts and lanes, these had been highlighted with the County but some of the complaints related to unadopted lanes which the County Council had no responsibility for. The Highway Services Manager felt that some problem areas would benefit from a third spray.

#### *Gully Cleaning*

The County Council had appointed a contractor to clean gullies. A copy of the gully cleaning programme had been promised but had not yet been received.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder and Members of the Panel expressed their disappointment that, despite an invite, Cumbria County Council had not sent representation to the meeting to discuss the outstanding issues.

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

- *Was there a timescale for the completion of the memorandum of understanding?*

The Highways Manager responded that the draft residual agreement needed to be amended to memorandum of understanding and then it would be ready to sign. He thought that it would only be the name of the document that would have to be changed.

- *Did the bus shelter maintenance cover rural bus shelters?*

The Highways Manager explained that rural shelters were a little more complicated as many of them were owned by Parish Councils.

- *How much did the City Council pay for grass cutting?*

The Director of Local Environment said that the contribution from the City Council had to increase as the contribution from the County Council decreased.

- *Were costings for work included in the memorandum of understanding?*

The Director of Local Environment confirmed that the costings had been included but there had been issues with the raising of invoices in the past.

- *What work did the City Council now undertake in respect of Highways?*

The Director of Local Environment agreed to provide Members with the draft schedule of works which was included in the agreement.

- *Was the festive lighting included in the memorandum?*

The Highways Manager informed the Panel that the festive lighting had not been included in the memorandum as it had gone out to tender. The City Council had signed a three year contract with an external contractor as the County Council did not have the resources to provide the festive lighting. The Director of Local Environment added that the new external contractor had been able to provide a better display in the City Centre last Christmas.

- *The report stated that the gulley cleaning had been sub contracted, what had happened to the staff that had been transferred to the County under TUPE arrangements?*

The Highways Manager reported that one individual had taken voluntary redundancy and one individual had moved to the highways gang.

- *Had the transfer of the Highways Claimed Rights generated the expected savings and had it resulted in value for money for the authority?*

The Director of Local Environment reminded the Panel that there had been a very clear business case for transfer and it had been the right decision to make. Having one authority responsible for all gave a more efficient service for residents and under the 'Better Highways' project the County Council had been able to maintain standards as a whole within budget.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder added that the City Council had been one of very few within the Country to still have Highways Claimed Rights and the transfer had taken out the requirement for the City to find the necessary £400,000 - £600,000 contribution to the service.

- *Why had the City Council retained some of the services?*

The Director of Local Environment explained that it made sense for the City to carry out some of the services such as grass cutting because the City had the equipment and for the County to do some on the City's behalf such as lighting because they had the expertise.

RESOLVED: 1) That the Claimed Rights Update report (LE.11/14) and verbal update be welcomed;

2) That a further update on the memorandum of understanding be submitted to the Panel via the Overview Report in August;

3) That the Director of Local Environment circulate the draft schedule of works to all Members of the Panel.

## **EEOSP.39/14 RECYCLING TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

The Director of Local Environment submitted report LE.12/14 on the Neighbourhood Services response to the Recycling Task and Finish report. The Report outlined the reasons for the Task and Finish Group and the initial response. It was noted that the Rethinking Waste project was just beginning at that time and all findings from the Task and Finish Group would be fed into that project.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder congratulated the Task and Finish Group on a practical, positive and detailed report. It had been clear that the Task Group had understood the issues and had carried out an excellent piece of work. The Executive had supported each of the recommendations set out in the report and they would be used in the future Rethinking Waste Project.

In considering the Task and Finish Group report Members raised the following comments and questions:

- *Did the 'no side waste' policy relate to litter bins?*

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder informed the Panel that the Policy was for household bins only.

- *How did householders who had overflowing bins get further bins?*

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder explained that there was a correlation between waste and recycling and felt that there should be a campaign to encourage people to recycle and therefore reduce their household waste rather than providing more bins for residual waste.

- *There had been a reduction in recycling performance, how could the Council address the reduction?*

The Director of Local Environment responded that the reduction in recycling had been the result of a combination of factors including the change to packaging which had resulted in a reduction in the weight of some recyclable waste. Where households had overflowing waste the Council could carry out a waste audit on the household to identify recycling and help change behaviour.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio highlighted recommendation 3 of the Task Group and agreed that more needed to be done to ensure recycling was made as easy as possible for householders.

RESOLVED: That the Executive's response to the recommendations of the Recycling Task and Finish Group report (LE.12/14) be welcomed. The implementation of the recommendations would be monitored under the scrutiny of the Rethinking Waste Project.

## **EEOSP.40/14 END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT 2013/14**

The Policy and Performance Officer submitted report PC.07/14 that updated Members on the Council's service standards relevant to the Panel that helped measure performance and customer satisfaction. The report also included updates on relevant key actions contained within the Carlisle Plan.

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

- *Why had there been a significant reduction in the timescale of household planning applications in February 2014?*

The Policy and Performance Officer agreed to provide Members with a written response.

- *What was the percentage of recycling from amenity sites?*

The Director of Local Environment explained that the City Council provided bring sites but the amenity sites were operated by the County Council and as a result she did not have the required figures.

- *What involvement had the City Council had in the Prospectus for Carlisle and would it be made available to Members for scrutiny?*

The Deputy Chief Executive reported that the project had been led by the City Council in collaboration with businesses which included the University of Cumbria and Carlisle College. The City Council had been the accountable body and received the money but had taken a step back from the project. He encouraged Members to see the document and promote Carlisle.

- *Who set the maximum load limit in the Assembly Room?*

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that structural engineers had set the limit but they had been confident that the type of events and activities planned for the Assembly Room would not exceed the limit.

- *Was the programme of public realms projects an internal document or could it be scrutinised by Members?*

The Deputy Chief Executive stated that the Project Officer had appraised the projects and had been in dialogue with County officers to carry out a de-cluttering exercise at the same time. The details of the projects would be a decision for Members.

The Chairman stated that the Public Realm projects would be included in the Panel's work programme for October.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder added that the Public Realm project was a cross cutting project but the report referred specifically to the Historic Quarter. It was hoped that the project would improve the attraction of the Historic Quarter and there was a need to revitalise the signage. The signage would have to fit in with the Wi-Fi project and would need to attract visitors to the area. Carlisle had a retail catchment area of nearly half a million and the Portfolio Holder was keen to promote the area for local people and visitors.

A Member asked if the Public Realm project would cover Caldewgate and Botchergate.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder confirmed that a programme of work for Caldewgate had been submitted to the Highways and Transfer Working Group and included improvements to the street scheme in the area. The programme would have to be endorsed by the Local Committee but she was not aware of the relevant timescales. The work in Caldewgate would be covered by Section 106 monies but she was not aware of any funding available for Botchergate.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder felt that any work in Botchergate should wait until the project for the County Council's new headquarters was completed as this was a major scheme that would impact the surrounding area.

- *Who funded the Place Manager post?*

The Deputy Chief Executive responded that the post was funded by the City Council, with some contribution from Carlisle Ambassadors, for one year. He agreed to circulate more details with regard to the post to Members.

- *The Panel had previously agreed that a cross party working group be established to consider the Rethinking Waste project, the Panel asked for an update on the establishment of the group.*

The Director of Local Environment informed the Panel that the body of the work on the Rethinking Waste Project would not begin until 2015 and it would not be timely to establish the working group before then. A customer survey was being undertaken on the service provided and responses would need to be evaluated. The working group would be involved when there was a clear remit and the recommendations of the Recycling Task and Finish Group would inform that remit.

- *Did the street cleaners work throughout the weekend, there had been some occasions where street were untidy on a Saturday morning and it gave a bad impression to visitors.*

The Director of Local Environment confirmed that the street cleaners operated on a rota on a Saturday and Sunday to target areas which were affected by the night time economy.

A Member placed on record his compliments to the street cleaning teams who ensured that the streets were cleared promptly each weekend following busy Friday and Saturday evenings.

RESOLVED: 1) That the end of year Performance Report 2013/14 (PC.07/14) be welcomed;

2) That the Policy and Performance Officer provide the Panel with a written response giving the reasons for the reduction in household planning applications in February 2014

3) That the Deputy Chief Executive circulate details of the Place Manager post to all Members of the Panel.

## **EEOSP.41/14 TALKING TARN BUSINESS PLAN**

The Chairman informed the Panel that the Talkin Tarn report had been deferred from this meeting to a future meeting and that the Director of Local Environment had circulated a letter to all Members informing them of the reasons for the deferral.

The Director of Local Environment apologised for the delay in submitting the Business Plan for Talkin Tarn and assured Members that the team was working hard and monthly monitoring was taking place. Some improvements works had been undertaken and she was happy to provide the Panel with an interim report updating them on progress.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder also apologised to the Panel for the delay in the Business Plan but wanted to ensure that the Plan was robust and could stand up to scrutiny.

RESOLVED – That an interim report on Talkin Tarn be submitted to the Panel in August 2014 and the Talk Tarn Business Plan be submitted to the Panel in October 2014.

## **EEOSP.42/14 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented report OS.17/14 which provided an overview of matters relating to the work of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel and included the latest version of the work programme and Key Decisions of the Executive which related to the Panel.

- The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reported that the Notice of Key Executive Decisions, published on 20 June 2014, included the following items which fell within the remit of this Panel.

KD.13/14 – Development at Rosehill – the Executive would be asked at their meeting on 21 July 2014 to approve the release and leasehold disposal of the property on final terms to be agreed by the Director of Economic Development and the Property Services Manager.

A Member asked if the Executive would be taking a decision on the Development at Rosehill report at their meeting on 21 July or if it would be available for Scrutiny.

The Deputy Chief Executive responded that there was some issues with the report which may prevent it from being considered by the Executive on 21 July 2014.

KD.16/14 – Adoption of North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan – the Executive would be asked to consider the North Pennines AONB Management Plan and refer to Council for Adoption. The Executive would consider the report on 21 July 2014 and 18 August 2014.

The Panel discussed the matter and agreed that they would not scrutinise the Management Plan.

- The Overview and Scrutiny Officer informed Members that the meeting scheduled for 22 January 2015 clashed with a Cumbria County Council Carlisle Local Committee meeting. As there were two Members that would be affected by the clash it was agreed that substitutes could be arranged for that meeting.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Officer drew members attention to an email received from the Vice Chairman of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The Vice Chairman requested that a Task and Finish Group be established to consider Community Infrastructure Levies and their implications. Following discussions with officers and the Portfolio Holder it was confirmed that it would not be timely for this piece of work to be undertaken.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder commented that it would be difficult to undertake a Task Group until the Local Plan was completed and an evaluation of the infrastructure had been carried out.



- A number of issues that Members of the Panel may wish to include as potential topics for the work programme for the coming year had been circulated, following discussion the Panel

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

2) That KD.16/14 – Adoption of North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan would not be scrutinised by the Panel.

3) That the following subjects and dates be included in the Work Programme for 2014/15

Date	Subject	
14 <sup>th</sup> August 2014	City Centre Masterplan Talkin Tarn Business Plan Update Prospectus for Carlisle and Sense of Place Update	
25 <sup>th</sup> September 2014	Presentation Re-thinking Waste Project Local Plan Quarterly performance report	
21 <sup>st</sup> October 2014	Business Interaction Centre (possibly include Chamber of Commerce to hold session on business support ) Public Realm (and TIC Plans) Talkin Tarn Business Plan	Special meeting/workshop to look at Meeting Housing Targets including the consequences of new homes
27 <sup>th</sup> November 2014	Budget Waste agenda – session to be exclusive to waste items – bring sites and gull sacks update, possible report on Box Contract extension, update on Re-thinking Waste project Quarterly Performance Report	
22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2014	Skills Audit	
12 <sup>th</sup> March 2014	Section 106 Annual Report Quarterly Performance Report	
23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2014	Scrutiny Annual Report	

4) That a Litter Bin Review Task and Finish Group be established with Councillors Dodd, Nedved and Wilson.

(The meeting ended at 11.40am)