

## **EXECUTIVE**

**MONDAY 31 OCTOBER 2011 AT 11.30 AM**

### **PRESENT:**

Councillor Mitchelson (Leader's Portfolio)  
Councillor J Mallinson (Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder)  
Councillor Bloxham (Environment and Housing 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 Layden (Chairman of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel)  
Councillor Mrs Luckley (Chairman of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel)  
Councillor Mrs Rutherford (Chairman of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel)  
Councillor Mrs Mallinson (Chairman of the Audit Committee)

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

### **CALL-IN**

The Chairman reported that the Mayor had agreed that the following items should be exempt from call-in as call-in procedures would overlap the City Council Meeting on 8 November 2011 when the matters would be considered:

- Draft Botchergate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan
- Discretionary Rate Relief Policy
- Sustainable Energy Project at Civic Centre, Carlisle
- Review of Polling Arrangements

**EX.127/11 BOTCHERGATE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN (DRAFT)**  
(Key Decision)

(In accordance with Paragraph 15(i) of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the Mayor had agreed that call-in procedures should not be applied to this item)

**Portfolio** Economic Development

**Subject Matter**

Pursuant to Minute EX.123/11, the Assistant Director (Economic Development) submitted report ED.37/11 setting out a draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Botchergate. She reminded Members that the report examined the quality and character that existed within the Conservation Area; a review of the present boundary, together with its adjacent areas; and measures that could be taken to preserve and enhance its character. In addition, the appraisal included a recommendation to modify the boundary of the Conservation Area and therefore proposed consultations on the proposals.

The Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel had considered the matter on 20 October 2011 (EEOSP.68/11) and resolved that the proposed boundary be moved to include all of the buildings on the right hand side of Collier Street. A copy of the Minute Excerpt had been circulated.

The Assistant Director (Economic Development) informed Members that, following discussions, it had been determined that Collier Lane was already included within the Conservation Area. In conclusion, she asked the Executive to consider referral of the paper to Council on 8 November 2011 for approval for public consultation.

The Chairman of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel stated that the Panel had broadly welcomed the report. She drew attention to the recommendation as set out above, adding that a Member had asked that the use of phrases such as "enhance" and "improve" be clarified since people's perception thereof may vary. Botchergate was a main route into the City and often featured in the Press. It was therefore important to be exact in terms of what was meant by enhance and improve within the paper.

The Environment and Housing Portfolio Holder questioned whether the reference to Collier Street should in fact have been Collier Lane.

The Chairman of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel responded that the recommendation related to the whole of Collier Lane.

The Economic Development Portfolio Holder thanked the Chairman of the Panel for the scrutiny undertaken. She further commended Officers for what was a very interesting and detailed report. The Portfolio Holder further

referred to a comment made at the Panel meeting "that there were no buildings of architectural significance" within the area. She emphasised for the record that that was not her view.

**Summary of options rejected**    None

## **DECISION**

That the Executive had considered the draft Botchergate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, appended to Report ED.37/11, and recommended the paper to Council on 8 November 2011 for approval for public consultation.

## **Reasons for Decision**

The Council had a statutory duty to review its Conservation Areas, together with the existing boundaries and publish proposals for their preservation and enhancement. An up-to-date appraisal of the character of Botchergate Conservation Area would provide a stronger framework with which to inform Development Management decisions and with which to direct efforts towards regeneration of the area.

## **EX.128/11    DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY** (Key Decision)

(In accordance with Paragraph 15(i) of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the Mayor had agreed that call-in procedures should not be applied to this item)

**Portfolio**    Community Engagement

## **Subject Matter**

Pursuant to Minute EX.102/11, the Assistant Director (Community Engagement) submitted report CD.17/11 concerning the City Council's Discretionary Rate Relief Policy. He outlined the background to the matter, reminding Members that the Policy approved by Council on 11 January 2011 had phased in the capping of rate relief at 80% over two financial years from April 2011 in line with approved budget provision. Subsequently, on 13 September 2011 Council had granted 100% rate relief to the Eden Valley Hospice on the grounds that, by exception, it provided a remarkable and unique service to Carlisle's communities that was not replicated through alternative provision within the District. The policy amendment provided transitional arrangements for organisations which may have lost relief with effect from April 2011.

The Assistant Director (Community Engagement) indicated that, from 2012/13 and subject to approval by Council, it was proposed to award 20% discretionary 'top up' rate relief to all local charities and non profit making

enterprises with a Rateable Value of below £18,000. (That figure was the ceiling applied by Central Government for small business rate relief and as such acted as an appropriate delineation point). He added that, with the proviso that the total available budget be £54,500, the recommendation was brought forward on the basis of consideration of a number of options, namely:

Option 1 - recommended option of 100% relief to small and local charities. It was felt that this option provided the highest level of support for the widest grouping in a practical and consistent framework. The policy change would mean 132 out of 153 local enterprises would receive 100% rate relief, including most community centres, village halls, sports clubs and local charities.

Option 2 - provide 100% to all 182 charitable and not for profit organisations operating out of Carlisle - including whether registered in the City or through a National Office at a cost of £139,526. That option was outside of the available budget.

Option 3 - provide some additional discretionary relief to all organisations. Calculations were based on:

(a) providing 90% to all charitable and not for profit organisations at a cost of £778,037. That option was outside of the available budget.

(b) providing 90% to all small charitable and not for profit organisations at a cost of £26,040. That option was within the available budget.

(c) providing 90% to all local and small charitable and not for profit organisations at a cost of £223,979. That option was within the available budget.

Appendix 2 to the report listed all charities and not for profit organisations, and considered the cost to the Council of providing rate relief against those alternatives.

Option 4 - provide additional discretionary relief based on an organisation's contribution to Corporate Plan aims and objectives. That option was not included as the recommended option because of the likely difficulties in achieving, within budget, clear transparency and consistency. The analysis of current level of relief (Appendix 1) showed that for the majority of organisations the award would be relatively low, whilst the administration thereof was likely to be complex.

Regulations provided that there be a statutory right of Appeal in relation to any decision that the Council may make pursuant to its Discretionary Rate Relief Policy. Once the Council had established its policy in that area, a report dealing with the Appeals Procedure would be presented to the Executive at the earliest opportunity.

In conclusion, the Assistant Director (Community Engagement) recommended that the Executive approved the following amendments to the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy to full Council, to the effect that the Council:

1. provided 100% rate relief to small, local charities and not for profit making organisations as detailed in Option 1 above; and
2. that the Council confirm the authority's Discretionary Rate Relief Policy as shown in Appendix 1 to his report.

The Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel had on 1 September 2011 (Minute COSP.64/11) considered the matter and resolved:

"1) That a further Discretionary Rate Relief Policy report, including a full breakdown of the charities and not for profit organisations and a breakdown of costs, be submitted to the Panel on 6 October 2011.

2) That the same report be submitted to the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 13 October 2011."

In addition, the Panel had on 6 October 2011 (COSP.79/11) resolved to recommend to the Executive that financial provisions should be found to enable the three Community Centres, who had not been eligible, to receive the full 100% Discretionary Rate Relief.

The Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel had on 13 October 2011 (ROSP.77/11) resolved to support recommendation 1 as set out in Report CD.15/11 to give 100% rate relief to small and local charities.

Copies of the Minute Excerpts had been circulated.

The Chairman of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel had little further to add other than to outline the Panel's recommendations as set out above.

The Chairman of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel reported that the Panel had welcomed the very full report and, following discussion, supported recommendation 1 (100% rate relief to small and local charities) as the fairest course of action.

The Community Engagement Portfolio Holder referred the meeting to Sections 1.5 and 1.6 of Report CD.17/11 emphasising that the Council's Policy phased in the capping of rate relief at 80% over two financial years; and that on 13 September 2011 the City Council had granted 100% rate relief to the Eden Valley Hospice by way of an exception. She stressed that the Council's budget was limited and a great deal of work had been undertaken on the development of the criteria.

The Portfolio Holder heard the comments submitted by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels, but pointed out that the three Community Centres referred to already received substantial grants from the Council. Accordingly, the Executive believed that Option 1 was the best way forward in providing the highest level of support to small and local charities. She therefore moved the recommendations set out within the Assistant Director's report.

**Summary of options rejected** Other options as detailed within Report CD.17/11 – Discretionary Rate Relief Policy

## **DECISION**

That the Executive recommended the following amendments to the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy to full Council, to the effect that the Council:

1. provided 100% rate relief to small, local charities and not for profit making organisations as detailed in Option 1 of Report CD.17/11; and
2. confirmed the Authority's Discretionary Rate Relief Policy as shown in Appendix 1 to the report.

## **Reasons for Decision**

The Executive is required to consider how to target its limited resources and achieve a positive outcome for Carlisle and District's communities.

## **EX.129/11 HOUSING STRATEGY 2011-15 AND ACTION PLAN** (Key Decision)

**Portfolio** Environment and Housing

## **Subject Matter**

The Assistant Director (Community Engagement) submitted report CD.16/11 presenting the Housing Strategy which would provide the principles for housing development in Carlisle during the period 2011 - 15. He informed Members that the Housing Strategy superseded the previous Strategy and was a key document in identifying the housing needs, challenges and solutions to be taken forward for the Carlisle district area. The Strategy comprised two elements:

- (i) the Strategy Vision which included the Council's vision, priorities and key actions (Appendix 1); and
- (ii) the Delivery Plan (Appendix 2)

The Assistant Director (Community Engagement) advised that a Housing Needs and Demand Study had been commissioned in March 2011 with a view to providing a robust assessment of current and future housing need.

He added that the City Council had a vision for Carlisle as 'Cumbria's historic, dynamic and successful University City, creating growth opportunities in a sustainable environment with skilled people and international connections in a stunning location'. In addition, the Council had two corporate priorities (local environment and economy), together with a clear and well defined corporate objective to achieve economic growth and development. The Strategy and the Housing Needs and Demand Study would support key elements of the Local Development Framework and the City's Economic Strategy.

He further outlined the Strategy's thematic priorities and issues emerging from the Housing Needs and Demand Study, details of which were provided.

The Environment and Housing Portfolio Holder said that the report would be made available for consideration by Overview and Scrutiny, and he would be interested to receive their views and direction on both the Strategy and the Action Plan for delivery. He therefore moved the recommendations as detailed within the report.

**Summary of options rejected**    None

## **DECISION**

That the Executive had considered and approved Report CD.16/11 to go forward:

1. to be used in consultation on the Housing Strategy (2011 - 2015) and Action Plan; and
2. to be made available to Overview and Scrutiny Panels for comment.

## **Reasons for Decision**

To enable the Housing Strategy (2011-15) and Action Plan to be consulted upon.

**EX.130/11    SUSTAINABLE ENERGY PROJECT AT CIVIC CENTRE, CARLISLE**  
(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)

(In accordance with Paragraph 15(i) of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the Mayor had agreed that call-in procedures should not be applied to this item)

**Portfolio**    Environment and Housing

## **Subject Matter**

Pursuant to Minute EX.087/11, the Assistant Director (Resources) submitted a joint report with the Assistant Director (Local Environment) (LE.26/11) concerning a sustainable energy project at the Civic Centre, Carlisle.

The Assistant Director (Resources) reminded Members that they had on 26 July 2011, considered and approved report LE.12/11 proposing various options for investment in renewable energy including solar photo voltaic modules, the criteria for approval being a return on investment of at least 9%. He added that a specialist renewable energy and climate change consultant had visited the Civic Centre earlier in the year and delivered a presentation to Officers on how Councils could take advantage of the Feed-in-Tariff. Capita Symonds were then appointed to undertake a feasibility study for the City Council. The principle of sustainable energy projects had also been discussed and supported by the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel,

The feasibility study on the Civic Centre indicated that a solar PV array of 25kWp could be accommodated on the roof and would provide a return of 9% on investment from the Government's feed in tariff and the generation of electricity on site.

It should be noted that unfortunately further studies of Council owned buildings, but let to partner organisations, did not give the required rate of return on the Council's capital investment unless all (or most) of the feed in tariffs and electricity offset value (NPV and IRR) were retained by the Council. Discussions would, however, be held with Carlisle Leisure Ltd to establish whether a joint scheme could be progressed. Other Council buildings did not give the required rate of return.

The Assistant Director (Resources) then outlined details of additional issues which required to be borne in mind, including roof assessments and timing issues, together with the implications thereof.

In conclusion, he reported that the assessments and supporting financial assessment clearly supported the installation of the Solar PV panels on the Civic Centre Octagon roof and suggested that option be progressed as a matter of urgency to meet the tight installation deadline. With regard to Carlisle Leisure Ltd, he set out details of a joint option with both partners providing some of the capital investment required to enable Carlisle Leisure to benefit from the off set tariff, whilst the Council maintained its required return on investment.

The Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel had on 28 July 2011 (EEOSP.47/11) considered the Sustainable Energy Strategy and resolved:

"1) That Report LE.18/11 be noted and the recommendations as set out in the report approved.

2) That a further report be brought back to the Panel when the feasibility study had been completed on condition that that did not delay the project."

The Chairman of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel explained that the Panel had considered the full Sustainable Energy Strategy and were particularly keen that some water schemes were considered e.g. the Holme Head Bay Scheme. Members were aware of the tight timescales and, whilst they welcomed progress with regard to the Civic Centre and Sands Centre, hoped that water initiatives would not be shelved completely.

The Environment and Housing Portfolio Holder welcomed the very full and good debate undertaken by the Panel. He reiterated that unfortunately it was not opportune to progress a number of the schemes for the reasons referred to at the current time. In conclusion, the Portfolio Holder moved the recommendations detailed within the report and thanked the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel for their support and assistance throughout the process.

**Summary of options rejected** Other options detailed in Report LE.26/11 – Sustainable Energy Project at Civic Centre, Carlisle

## **DECISION**

That the Executive:

1. Had considered the feasibility assessments of the viability of Solar PV installations to various Council buildings and determined that the Civic Centre and the Sands Centre met the criteria to have such an installation.
2. Subject to recommendation 3., approved installation of Solar PV at the sites identified at recommendation 1. above, subject to the required agreements, planning permissions and consents.
3. Recommended to full Council that the release of capital funding from the receipts of the sales identified in the Asset Business Plan to fund the installations up to a maximum of £200,000 be approved.
4. Delegated authority to the Assistant Director (Resources) in consultation with the Executive Member for Resources and Executive Member for Local Environment and Housing, to tender the work (which, for the avoidance of doubt, may include any design, build and installation work) and award the tender to the most economically advantageous bidder.
5. Delegated authority to the Assistant Director (Resources) in consultation with the Executive Member for Resources and Executive Member for Local Environment to stop any particular installation project should it become apparent that the required timescales or returns would not be achieved.

## **Reasons for Decision**

The feasibility studies demonstrated that the recommended sites would achieve the required return on investment of at least 9% as set out in the asset business case and was an investment opportunity which would not be available to the same extent after 31 March 2012.

The Project was time constrained and therefore delegations of authority were required to progress the project without delay within the deadline of 31 March 2012.

The project would contribute to the Council's sustainability use of energy and would help to mitigate the impact of rising energy costs for the Council.

The project would help to meet the Council's targets for the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions and climate change (25% reduction over five years).

### **EX.131/11 FORWARD PLAN** (Non Key Decision)

**Portfolio** Cross-Cutting

#### **Subject Matter**

The Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1 October 2011 to 31 January 2012 was submitted.

**Summary of options rejected** None

## **DECISION**

That the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1 October 2011 to 31 January 2012 be received.

## **Reasons for Decision**

Not applicable.

### **EX.132/11 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 as Appendix A, be noted.

## **Reasons for Decision**

Not applicable.

## **EX.133/11    REFERENCE FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE: CARLISLE AIRPORT – AUDIT COMMISSION REPORT** (Non Key Decision)

**Portfolio**    Governance and Resources

## **Subject Matter**

Pursuant to Minute AUC.61/11, consideration was given to a reference from the Audit Committee in relation to the Audit Commission's report on Carlisle Airport. The Audit Committee had resolved:

"1) That the District Auditor be thanked for her advice and input into the meeting;

2) That the following recommendations from the Audit Commission report (GD.55/11) be agreed:

That recommendation 1 be accepted and evidence be included in the Action Plan which showed how officers had implemented the recommendation;

That recommendation 2 be accepted and the Action Plan contain the District Auditors comments that it was better for the Council to make the correct decision rather than the incorrect decision in the right timescale, if an application has to be deferred the reasons should be made public where possible;

That recommendation 3 be accepted and the Action Plan should include evidence of how the legal section intended to action the recommendation and a report should be provided on the matter at the next meeting of the Audit Committee;

That recommendation 4 be accepted and reports to committee should include a audit trail of legal advice given and any action taken in response to legal advice;

That recommendation 5 be accepted and an Officers Planning Code of Practice or an amended Officer Code of Conduct be developed for the City Council;

That recommendation 6 be accepted;

That recommendation 7 be accepted and written evidence be produced to show that Members on all regulatory committees had undertaken training before they take part in the decision making process of regulatory committees. That it also be noted that Members had the opportunity to ask officers for advice if and when required;

That recommendation 8 be accepted;

That recommendation 9 be accepted;

That recommendation 10 be accepted;

3) That an update on the Action Plan be submitted to the Audit Committee in three months;

4) That the full minute of the Audit Committee regarding the Audit Commission report be submitted to the Executive.

A copy of the Minute Excerpt had been circulated.

The Chairman of the Audit Committee explained that the entire Minute was submitted to the Executive because of the importance of the matter and to ensure a complete audit trail. The District Auditor had presented the report, stating that there was no unlawful item of account. The Audit Committee had considered each of the recommendations in turn as detailed within Minute AUC.61/11, and would receive an update on the Action Plan in three months time.

The Leader was pleased to note the considerable amount of work already undertaken and thanked the Audit Committee for keeping the Executive informed.

The Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder was pleased to note that there had been no unlawful item of account. He welcomed the Audit Committee's recommendations and ongoing interest in the matter.

**Summary of options rejected**    None

## **DECISION**

That the Executive welcomed the submission of Minute Excerpt AUC.61/11, together with the Audit Committee's ongoing interest in the Carlisle Airport: Audit Commission Report and Action Plan.

## **Reasons for Decision**

To respond to a reference from the Audit Committee.

**EX.134/11 REFERENCE FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE: FUTURE  
WORK OF AUDIT PRACTICE**  
(Non Key Decision)

**Portfolio** Governance and Resources

**Subject Matter**

Pursuant to Minute AUC.62/11, consideration was given to a reference from the Audit Committee concerning the future work of the Audit Practice. The Audit Committee had resolved:

"1) That the Audit Committee welcomed the verbal report provided by the District Auditor.

2) That the Executive be asked to feedback to the Audit Committee if the matter had been raised with the Cumbria Leadership Board as requested."

A copy of the Minute Excerpt had been circulated.

The Chairman of the Audit Committee was present at the meeting, but had nothing further to add.

The Leader reiterated that the Executive had asked that the matter be raised at the Cumbrian Chief Executives' Group who would progress it.

**Summary of options rejected** None

**DECISION**

That the Audit Committee be informed that the issue would be raised at a future meeting of the Cumbrian Chief Executives' Group.

**Reasons for Decision**

To respond to a reference from the Audit Committee.

**EX.135/11 JOINT MANAGEMENT TEAM MINUTES**  
(Non Key Decision)

**Portfolio** Various

**Subject Matter**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Management Team held on 1 September 2011 were submitted for information.

**Summary of options rejected** None

## **DECISION**

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Management Team held on 1 September 2011, attached as Appendix B, be received.

### **Reasons for Decision**

Not applicable.

## **EX.136/11 CUMBRIA STRATEGIC WASTE PARTNERSHIP (Non Key Decision)**

**Portfolio** Environment and Housing

### **Subject Matter**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership held on 22 June 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 22 June 2011 be received.

### **Reasons for Decision**

Not applicable.

## **EX.137/11 BUDGET SUMMARY AND TIMETABLE 2012/13 TO 2016/17 (Non Key Decision)**

**Portfolio** Governance and Resources

### **Subject Matter**

The Assistant Director (Resources) submitted report RD.45/11 on the Budget Summary and Timetable. He reminded Members that the Medium Term Financial Plan had been approved by Council on 13 September 2011 along with the Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan.

The Assistant Director (Resources) summarised the current budget projections for the five year period 2012/13 to 2016/17 and highlighted a number of issues which would impact upon the Council as the budget was developed. The timetable attached at Appendix 1 to the report provided a

rough guide through the process and the first budget reports would be considered by the Executive on 22 November 2011.

He further summarised the budget assumptions and the current budget revenue projections for the five year period 2012/13 to 2016/17. The figures and projections quoted in the report should be taken in the broad policy context, and not used as a substitute for the detailed budgets that would be prepared and presented later in the year. Referring to Section 4.1.9 (Council Tax Freeze), he informed Members that the implications of the Government Announcement regarding grant provision would be reflected in the Budget.

The Assistant Director (Resources) then summarised the Capital Programme Projections for 2012/13 to 2016/17, adding that the available resources had to be seen in the context of the emerging capital spending issues which were not included in the current programme. It was evident that there were insufficient internal capital resources currently available to support all of the emerging initiatives and the Council would therefore remain dependant upon attracting external funding and partnership arrangements to deliver its aspirations, which was extremely difficult in the current financial climate.

He outlined the Balances and Reserves, explaining that the majority of Council reserves could be used to fund capital or revenue expenditure, with the main exception of capital receipts which could only be used to fund capital expenditure. He added that the current medium term financial projections pointed to reserves recovering to a prudent level by 2014/15 (£3.8 million) due to the impact of the current transformational savings initiatives being progressed.

The Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder welcomed submission of the report which commenced the Council's budget process. The Executive was looking to work with Officers and the Council to conclude the Budget prior to the legal deadline.

The Leader indicated his agreement with the Portfolio Holder's comments. He added that there would be a freeze on Council Tax for the forthcoming year which he welcomed.

**Summary of options rejected**    None

## **DECISION**

That the Executive noted the issues contained within Report RD.45/11, the verbal update provided by the Assistant Director (Resources), and the budget timetable and actions required to be completed by the deadlines provided.

## **Reasons for Decision**

To enable the Budget to proceed.

## **EX.138/11 REVIEW OF POLLING ARRANGEMENTS**

(Non Key Decision)

(In accordance with Paragraph 15(i) of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the Mayor had agreed that call-in procedures should not be applied to this item)

**Portfolio** Governance and Resources

### **Subject Matter**

The Assistant Director (Governance) submitted report GD.61/11 presenting the results of the annual review of polling arrangements as required by the Representation of the People Act 1983. He informed Members that all City Councillors had been consulted on the polling arrangements in their particular wards; the two local MPs and persons appointed as Election Agents in recent elections had been consulted; and the views of the Carlisle Access Group had been sought with regard to polling arrangements. Details of the statutory provisions and the criteria which had been used in carrying out the review were provided.

As Members were also aware, a number of separate and unconnected reviews of electoral arrangements were ongoing, or requested, including the Review of the Cumbria County Council, which was being carried out by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and Review of Parliamentary Boundaries being carried out by the Boundary Commission for England. In addition, the City Council had in April 2011 requested the Local Boundary Commission for England to carry out an electoral review of current arrangements with a view to securing a significant reduction in the number of Councillors. The Commission had indicated that, due to the number of reviews currently ongoing or planned, it had been necessary to prioritise the requests and, as Carlisle did not meet the further electoral review criteria, it was unlikely that any review of the City Council electoral arrangements would take place in the current or the next financial year.

The Assistant Director (Governance) drew Members' attention to the use of mobile polling stations and the use of houses / schools as polling places, commenting that Riverside Carlisle was no longer able to let their properties be used for election purposes due to the need to minimise the length of time properties were vacant between lettings.

He added that, in the light of concerns and in response to requests from School Governing Bodies and representations from the Local Education Authority, the number of schools used as polling places had been reduced in recent years, and now only eleven Schools within the Council's area were used as polling venues.

The large majority of polling places were satisfactory and had remained unchanged for many years. The choice of suitable buildings was limited and, in most cases, there was no alternative to the present arrangements.

The Assistant Director (Governance) then reported in more detail on suggested changes in voting arrangements for the Belle Vue, Burgh, Harraby, Morton and Stanwix Urban Wards. He further recommended that the Returning Officer be given authority, after consultation with the relevant Ward Councillors and the Portfolio Holder, to change polling place locations at the elections in 2011 if the usual premises proved to be unavailable due to unforeseen circumstances.

The Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder moved the recommendations contained within the report.

**Summary of options rejected** a number of options set out in Report GD.61/11 – Review of Polling Arrangements

## **DECISION**

That Report GD.61/11 and the recommendations therein be referred to Council for consideration, the recommendations being :

1. That no changes be made to current polling district boundaries.
2. It is recommended that the polling arrangements in the following wards remain unchanged:

Belah	Denton Holme	St Aidans
Brampton	Great Corby & Geltsdale	Stanwix Rural
Botcherby	Hayton	Upperby
Castle	Irthington	Wetheral
Currock	Longtown & Rockcliffe	Yewdale
Dalston	Lyne	

3. Belle Vue Primary School continue to be the polling place for districts MA and MB.
4. The newly renovated Village Hall at Burgh by Sands be designated as the polling place for polling district NB and a letter of thanks be sent to the Burgh by Sands School for their assistance with the 2011 election.
5. The Community Building Annexe at Inglewood Infant School be designated as the polling place for polling district EB.
6. The Stanwix Community Centre be designated as the polling place for polling districts BB, BC and BE and a letter of thanks be sent to the St Michael Parish Centre for their assistance over the last few years.

7. A portable cabin in the car park of the Border Terrier public house be designated as the polling place for polling district KC.

8. Officers continue to monitor the use of portable cabins as polling stations and continue to investigate potential alternatives. It be further recommended that Officers discuss with the supplier the use of a number of self contained units and improved units with a wider door as detailed in paragraph 23 above at a number of polling station locations where portable cabins are currently used.

9. The Returning Officer be given authority, after consultation with relevant Ward Councillors and Portfolio Holder, to change polling place locations at the City Council elections if the usual premises prove to be unavailable due to unforeseen circumstances.

### **Reasons for Decision**

To carry out a review of the Council's polling arrangements.

### **PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED** – That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Public and Press were excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph number (as indicated in brackets against the minute) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Local Government Act.

#### **EX.139/11 DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY** (Key Decision)

(Public and Press excluded by virtue of Paragraph 3)

(In accordance with Paragraph 15(i) of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the Mayor had agreed that call-in procedures should not be applied to this item)

**Portfolio** Community Engagement

### **Subject Matter**

The Assistant Director (Community Engagement) submitted private report CD.18/11 providing information concerning charities and not for profit organisations in receipt of National Non Domestic Rate Relief. The document modelled the options outlined in Report CD.17/11 considered earlier on the Agenda.

**Summary of options rejected**    None

**DECISION**

That the Executive received the content of Report CD.18/11 alongside Report CD.17/11.

**Reasons for Decision**

The Executive was required to consider how to target its limited resources and achieve a positive outcome for Carlisle and District's communities.

(The meeting ended at 12 noon)