

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 31 JULY 2014 AT 10.00 AM

PRESENT: Councillor Burns (Chairman), Councillors Ellis (until 11.20), Gee, Harid (from 10.15), McDevitt, Mrs Mallinson (as substitute for Councillor Mrs Vasey), Mrs Prest and Mrs Stevenson.

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor Glover – Leader
Councillor Mrs Martlew – Deputy Leader, and Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder
Councillor Mrs Riddle – Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder
Councillor Allison – Vice Chairman, Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel
Councillor Watson – Chairman, Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel
Councillor Mrs Atkinson – Member of Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel
Councillor Mrs Parsons – Substitute Member of Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel (substitute for Councillor S Bowman)

OFFICERS: Town Clerk and Chief Executive
Communities, Housing and Health Manager
Arts Officer
Housing Development Officer
Neighbourhood and Green Spaces Manager
Overview and Scrutiny Officer

COSP.39/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Bowman (Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel), Mrs Vasey, Mrs Bradley – Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder and Ms Quilter – Culture, Leisure and Young People Portfolio Holder

COSP.40/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

COSP.41/14 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2014 were noted.

COSP.42/14 AMENDMENT TO THE AGENDA

With the consent of the Chairman it was agreed that Agenda Item A.4 (Arts Centre Business Plan) would be taken as the first item as Members of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel were in attendance at the meeting in respect of that item, followed by Agenda Items A.2 (Riverside), A.5 (Playing Pitch Strategy) and A.3 (Overview Report and Work Programme).

COSP.43/14 ARTS CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

The Chairman, on behalf of the Panel, expressed his disappointment that the authors of the report were not in attendance at the meeting.

The Chairman welcomed those Members from the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel who had been invited to take part in a joint scrutiny of that Agenda Item.

The Chief Executive presented report SD.14/14 that included the proposed Business and Operating Plan for the Old Fire Station from 2014-17 which had been presented to the Executive at their meeting on 23 June 2014 when it was decided:

“That the Executive:

1. Had considered the proposed Business and Operating Plan for the Old Fire Station, as attached to Report SD.12/14.
2. Referred to Plan for consideration by both the Community and the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panels.”

The reason for that decision was:

“The pilot programme at the Old Fire Station had demonstrated real market demand for a mid-size Arts Centre within Carlisle. It had shown that the Arts Community themselves could proactively offer support for such a facility, if they were provided with the right platform. In doing so, they also offered a significant boost to the long term sustainability of such an Arts Centre.

By necessity the pilot programme saw a low cost, flexible operating model emerge which had proven to be successful and sustainable within limited budgetary provision.

The principles of that approach had been refined within the business and operating plan presented in the report, and used to make financial projections based on known market data and take up and usage during the pilot programme. Those financial projections had been deliberately conservative but still showed that the Arts Centre could sustainably operate within proposed budgetary provision.

The proposed business and operating plan for the Old Fire Station therefore presented a low-cost start up proposal for an Arts Centre, operating within proposed budgetary provision.”

The Plan had been produced to reflect the lessons learned from the pilot programme (undertaken throughout autumn and winter 2013/14) and was designed to provide a viable model to operate the Old Fire Station as an Arts Centre within existing budgetary projections.

The Report explained that the proposed Business and Operating Plan made a range of proposals and assumptions which were detailed fully within the Plan itself. The key proposals could be summarised by the operating principles, which stated that the Old Fire Station Arts Centre should:

- Maximise opportunities for local promoters and artists to stage performance, exhibitions and events via licence and booking procedures
- Directly promote commercially viable content to maximise revenue return
- Ensure a balanced and varied programme giving support to less commercially viable art forms (via subsidised access agreements, increased support ‘in kind’, or limited direct subsidy / loss absorption)
- Minimise the City Council’s direct costs and overheads to ensure sustainability
- Let (via concession) functions that the Council was not well placed to deliver (e.g. catering). But ensure any such package also helped support the wider operation of the Old Fire Station (i.e. ticket sales, front of house etc) and provided an incoming revenue stream for the Old Fire Station

- Develop a bank of qualified part time and casual stewards, front of house, and technical staff, which could be drawn upon by all promoters including the Council
- Support the creative industries and deliver incoming revenue via letting office, workshop or studio lets
- Give consideration to developing externally grant funded arts programming while not becoming reliant on such entities or external support and subsidy
- Work with other key partners such as Carlisle College and the University of Cumbria to provide work training and development opportunities

The Business and Operating Plan had been developed following ongoing discussion and consultation with a range of artists and arts groups as part of the pilot programme held over the autumn and winter of 2013/14. Informal discussion and consultation had also been ongoing with a wide range of other existing and potential Old Fire Station users and stakeholders during the period of the pilot programme and had been reflected in the operating principles outlined above.

The Chief Executive explained that Officers had not been clear enough with regard to the differences between the Business Case and the Business Plan in respect of the Arts Centre. He advised that the Business Case provided the justification for making the decisions to proceed with the project while the Business Plan outlined what the Council intended to do in that respect. The Business Plan demonstrated the benefits associated with the Arts Centre that could be delivered with the resources allocated. Members had to be satisfied with the assumptions that had been made, with regard to the Arts Centre operating within allocated resources, that the Council could deliver the benefits that Members expected to see and that the thinking behind those decisions was sound. The Chief Executive acknowledged that Officers had interchanged the use of the terms Business Case and Business Plan and that had caused confusion.

The Chief Executive reminded Members that the Arts Centre was the result of a pledge undertaken by the current administration but that the project had to be deliverable within available resources.

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

- *Was there any intention to expand on the details of the report?*

The Leader explained that the decision to develop an Arts Centre in Carlisle was made last year and he reassured Members that the decision was the result of research prior to making the pledge and requests over many years to support arts and the theatre. The Council would struggle to provide an 850 seat theatre but that may be an option in the future. The decision to develop an Arts Centre had been carefully thought out and the Executive wanted it to be successful and asked Members of the Panel to take the Executive's comments into account. The Leader believed the project could deliver a revenue return and would be a balanced and varied project. There could be minimum direct costs. The most important factor would be sustainability of the project and the pilot programme was intended to show that the Arts Centre would be successful and within budget. The view of the Executive was that it would be necessary to have a close focus on how the Arts Centre would work and advised that the Business Plan set that out as a means to move forward.

- *The true staffing costs would be far higher than shown in the report. Salaries and associated overheads including pension, etc and central charges should be included in the budget under staffing costs.*

The Chief Executive explained that the structure chart included in the report indicated that there would be two currently employed City Council Officers involved in the setting up and running of the Arts Centre. They would be spending part of their time on Arts Centre activities and therefore there would be a proportion of that cost to the Arts Centre. That did not mean that additional resources would be needed to cover that cost as they were already employed by the Council as full time employees and it was anticipated that as the Arts Centre became established they would spend less of their time working on it directly.

- *The Council had swapped a car park (Cecil Street) with a projected income of £59,000 for the Fire Station where rates alone were shown as £25,000. That difference would have to be accommodated in the budget for the coming year.*

The Chief Executive explained that there would be a loss of income from the Cecil Street car park but added that there was an agreement with the County Council to receive income for a certain period of time. That was not dependent upon the County Council proceeding with building on the site. The cost was included in the Business Plan as it had been agreed that the Council would no longer receive income from the car park. That may be a matter for consideration elsewhere.

- *Has the Council been successful in its bid to the Arts Council for a grant?*

The Arts Officer advised that the Council were in the process of applying and that there had been positive comments and encouragement from the Arts Council about Carlisle applying for funding.

- *It seems hard to believe that the Business Plan would be accepted by the District Auditor as a true reflection of the cost of running the Arts Centre.*

The Chief Executive advised that the cost for the delivery of the Arts Centre would be recharged to the relevant activities and it would be possible to trace those recharges through the budget. However that did not mean that additional revenue would be required.

An argument could be put forward that if an Officer was using part of his time on other activities there was a cost involved and that could be identified through a recharging regime. It would be more practical to allow Officers to get on and do what was required. Whilst it was technically correct that there was a cost involved the revenue had been identified in the budget that would be sufficient to deliver the project.

- *It seems incredulous that a scheme of such complexity could be done on the resources specified.*

The Chief Executive stated that the Council had reduced net revenue spending by £5million over the last five years which had inevitably resulted in fewer things being done. However real money had been saved within the authority and that led to complicated recharges on people's time that would need to be sorted out by the proper accounting activities of the Authority. That was not always a direct cost.

The Chief Executive was confident that the two full time Officers would be able to spend the required amount of their time on the Arts Centre and they had been doing that for the past eighteen months as the project plan and the pilot programme was being developed.

The Arts Officer stated that he saw the Arts Centre as an asset to his work in community engagement and believed that it would enhance his role within the Council. 3,500 people had visited the Arts Centre during the pilot period and that had provided excellent consultation.

- *The Council should be honest about the true cost of staffing and if an Officer was spending a significant amount of time on the Arts Centre the cost of that should be clear, particularly if it meant that they were not able to fulfil other functions of their job description.*
- *The report stated that the Council's input would not be overwhelming and complete and that they would be involved in some activities and not in others. There had been an unfortunate incident during a recent performance and Members believed that there was a reputational risk to the Council. There should be an assurance that less savoury acts would not be tolerated and a mechanism put in place to monitor performances.*

The Chief Executive advised that the Council would have some control over acts that may appear at the Arts Centre and if the performance was inappropriate steps would be taken. The Chief Executive explained the situation regarding the incident referred to. He acknowledged that there could be a reputational risk to the Council but that risk would be managed as it was in other areas of the Council's services.

- *The Council has a duty of care under the Equality and Diversity Act. If anything is said in public whether it offends anyone or not it is against the law. Legal advice should be sought on the Equality and Diversity Act.*

The Chief Executive stated that he was confident that no laws had been broken and any such acts would be held accountable.

- *One of the operating principles was to ensure a balanced and varied programme giving support to less commercially viable art forms. Would the Council subsidise those art forms?*

One of the reasons the Arts Council approve grants is to exhibit less commercial art forms. To be sure of obtaining such a grant the Council would have to agree to the inclusion of such activities in the Centre's programme.

- *It is in the nature of some artistic activity to be cutting edge and create discussion and the Council would deal with and manage that.*
- *Why had provision to fund cleaning of the Arts Centre been included in the Business Plan when it had been stated earlier that staff costs were already part of the budget?*

The Chief Executive explained that it was due to the nature of the work required. The cleaning staff at the Civic Centre had a set number of hours to clean the building and it would not be possible for those staff to incorporate the cleaning of the Arts Centre into that work. Therefore there would be a cost as staff would be required to work additional hours and there could also be specialist cleaning required. Such costs would be included in the year end accounts.

- *If Officers were spending more time in the Arts Centre, and that work was not on the horizon when Officers were appointed, what work had been lost at the Civic Centre?*

The Arts Officer explained that his post was a new post following transformation and that the work in respect of the Arts Centre was taken into account at that time. The Old Fire Station was being used as an additional 'tool' for his community engagement/development work. The Officer was also looking at outreach work.

- *There was a concern that resources were being pulled from the Council and Officers would become overworked.*
- *Why was there a difference in staffing costs in year one compared to years two and three?*

The Arts Officer explained that time would also be needed in the setting up of the Arts Centre. The pilot had been an ideal opportunity to engage with the community and he saw the Old Fire Station almost like community centre. Over the course of the pilot the Arts Officer had sourced a lot of the services and information and now that could be passed to other people. He acknowledged that more of his time would be spent during the initial stages of the Arts Centre than later.

- *It is important to keep a critical eye on the project.*
- *With regard to the governance of the Arts Centre who sat on the stakeholder board and working group and what position did they hold?*

The Arts Officer advised that a stakeholder group had not yet been established.

The Chief Executive referred to that section of the report that outlined the establishment of a stakeholder board and its makeup.

- *A Member was disappointed with the calibre of the report and hoped that Officers had learned from past experience and would look at the Business Case and how it linked to the Business Plan. It was important that the Business Case and Business Plan were transparent. Staffing issues and cost centres would need to be addressed. Rechargeable cost centres should be included and elements of the day jobs quantified.*

The Chief Executive confirmed that there would be proper accounting of Officers' time and central overheads. The Chief Executive added that if Members wished the figures could be revised to show those costs but it would not change the net costs. Members had highlighted the need to show that the cost of Officers' time spent on working on the Arts Centre were not additional costs.

- *It was suggested that a recommendation be made to the Executive that the Business Plan should include the staffing implications for the Arts Officer and the Contract and Community Service Manager.*
- *The issues with regard to the Business Case and Business Plan had been clarified. The Arts Officer had also clarified the issues with regard to additional staffing costs.*
- *Is the project included in the Council's Risk Register? Will it be available for scrutiny in future?*

The Chief Executive explained the different Risk Registers and added that the risks in relation to the Arts Centre would be operational risks. However if those risks reached a prescribed threshold they would then move onto the Corporate Risk Register. The Chief Executive gave an assurance that the risks would be evaluated to determine whether the project needed to be included in the Corporate Risk Register.

- *When recruiting for volunteers there is no problem if they are genuine volunteers. However if they were Council staff who would receive time off in lieu that would be a cost to the Council.*

Volunteers would work in their own time and there would be no cost to the Council. If members of staff were employed in special events on a "time off in lieu" basis there would be a cost and that would need to be reflected in the financial accounts for the particular event they had worked on.

- *There will be a financial burden on the Arts Centre from recharges in respect of legal/HR etc. Would the Arts Centre be charged in a similar manner to Community Centres? How would Officers proportion their time? What is included in the support package for Officers?*

The Chief Executive explained that the recharges were reflected in the Business Plan. There had been a reasonable estimate of the time Officers would need to allocate to the Arts Centre which would, in effect, make the cost of other services provided by those Officers cheaper.

The Leader stated that the Arts Centre was not an entity on its own but would be an integral contributor and driver to what the City Council already provided. Community development could be managed from the Civic Centre or in the Arts Centre and would contribute to art development and health and wellbeing projects. Officers and Members had looked at other venues such as the Brewery Arts Centre in Kendal and were sure that people would attend similar events at the Arts Centre. Some well known acts who would not normally perform in Carlisle used the City as a sounding board to present new material and it is good that the City were part of that. The resource would enable the expansion of arts development in the City as well as creating an outreach aspect.

With regard to less commercially viable arts projects it had been understood from feedback that some groups/organisations were unable to use larger venues like the Sands Centre to hold events/training as the costs were too high. However it was anticipated that they would be able to afford to use the Arts Centre.

With regard to recharges Officers' work would be undertaken at the Civic Centre if not elsewhere and the Arts Centre would be an integral part of that work.

The Leader believed that the Arts Centre would be integral to enhancing the City's cultural offer.

- *It was anticipated that catering staff would also be involved in the sale of tickets and offering advice, etc. Was there any evidence of that happening elsewhere?*

The Arts Officer advised that he had visited other areas and had spoken to people who carried out such tasks. He believed it was a big opportunity for people to get involved with the City Council on the project. Potential partners accepted that staff would be doing more than just serving food and there had been a great deal of interest from local businesses.

- *Would Carlisle Leisure Limited be approached with regard to using the bank of casual staff that they have available?*

The Arts Officer advised that that would be one of the opportunities available to the Arts Centre but new people would also be encourage to participate.

- *Would the funding from the Arts Council be on a yearly basis and if so for how many years?*

The Arts Officer explained that there had been four meetings with the Arts Council which had all been positive. An initial bid for £30,000 had been placed and it was anticipated that it would be recurring but no timescale had yet been agreed. The Arts Officer was also working with local organisations to support the bid.

The Chief Executive confirmed that it would not be necessary for the report to go back to Council for approval.

- *It was important that accurate revenue costs were included in the Business Plan as soon as possible.*

The Chief Executive confirmed that an estimated cost of the activity undertaken by Officers in respect of the Arts Centre would be reflected in a revision of the Business Plan.

RESOLVED: 1. That report SD.14/14 be noted.

2. That the Business Plan be updated to include the cost of Officers' time in respect of the Arts Centre.

3. That the risks associated with the Arts Centre be evaluated to determine whether they should be on the Corporate Risk Register.

The meeting adjourned at 11.20 and reconvened at 11.30.

Members of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel left the meeting.

COSP.44/14 RIVERSIDE

The Chairman welcomed Mr Taylor and Ms Earl from Riverside Carlisle.

The Housing Development Officer presented Report ED.27/14 which provided Members of the Panel with an update from Riverside Cumbria in respect of a number of issues raised by Members of the Panel, and a response to a question from the Secretary to the Carlisle and Rural Tenants' Federation in respect of protecting and catering for tenants' interests, raised at the meeting of the Panel in March 2014.

Riverside Cumbria had responded to the question from the Carlisle and Rural Tenants' Federation by listing a number of groups and projects currently operating in which Riverside tenants were involved. Riverside Cumbria also provided an annual report and a newsletter three times per year to keep tenants informed and up to date. Copies of those documents were circulated for information.

The report outlined information in respect of heating systems in Longtown, the impact of the Welfare Reform and the Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy and Homelessness and Choice Based Lettings.

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

- *A Member had been informed by some residents that they found it difficult to get through to the right person when contacting Riverside and that answers to their questions were often left unanswered. It had been stated that there was some cultural problems within Riverside that were being resolved. However further discussions with residents had determined that was not the case. Was there any evidence of a culture change within Riverside over the last few months?*

Mr Taylor advised that Riverside Carlisle had a dedicated Leaseholder Officer who should be able to answer most questions that residents may put forward. There was also a complaints procedure and residents were encouraged to exercise their right to complain. The complaint policy had recently been reviewed. If staff at Riverside became aware that a resident was not happy about its services they would act and take up their complaint. Mr Taylor confirmed that it would be appropriate for a Member to submit a question or complaint on behalf of a resident. If a number of people submitted complaints about the leasehold services provided by Riverside the Director would be made aware.

- *How many people were involved in the problems associated with the heating systems in Longtown? Has work started on advising residents about the heating systems?*

Mr Taylor advised that leaflets had been circulated from CAfS (Cumbria Action for Sustainability). Riverside had been keen to involve an independent organisation to show their procedures were open and transparent. CAfS had started work with Riverside and that work would continue over the next few months. Their advice would be impartial in respect of the investment made by Riverside who were open to suggestions on how to improve their services. Mr Taylor further advised that he did not have the actual figures to hand but that Riverside had received a small number of specific complaints and they were keen to engage with residents to ensure they get the best out of the systems and how to access the best tariff and provider. A report had also been commissioned from BRE who were undertaking a separate survey with regard to customer satisfaction. A number of different systems had been installed in properties and it was important that people got used to the type of systems installed to ensure they were getting the best out of that system.

Ms Earl explained that there was not only one problem but a combination of factors. To get the right solution Officers had been visiting residents to determine where the problems were.

Mr Taylor stated that some of the problems were due to general utility price increases but due to the timing of the installation of the heating systems it was perceived that that had caused the cost increases.

In response to a query from a Member Mr Taylor advised that the report from BRE would be made available to the public and he would forward a copy to the Council for distribution to interested parties.

- *A member suggested recording incoming telephone calls as some people may not be able to put their complaint in writing.*

- *When and how was the 16-30 pilot undertaken and would the result of the pilot be fed back to the Scrutiny Panel?*

Mr Taylor explained that Riverside headquarters had done some analysis on tenancy sustainability across the board and had identified Carlisle as having one of the highest turnovers of tenancies particularly among residents under the age of 25. The charitable arm of Riverside were funding two projects to enable support in the area where it was most needed. As a result a full time post had been created for twelve months targeting new tenants in the younger age group. Riverside were keen to measure the output and outcomes of that pilot and if it proved successful it was hoped that there would be an improvement in the turnover figures. However feedback on the success of the project would not be available until nearer the end of the twelve month pilot and that information would be brought back to a future meeting of the Panel.

- *How successful have the tenancy panels been? Was there one on each estate?*

Ms Earl confirmed that the panels had been very successful and had provided different opportunities for people to participate. Information from the panels was passed to the Riverside scrutiny group. Ms Earl was pleased to inform that the panels had attracted a number of younger people through the tenancy resources centre which was housed within the offices on Botchergate. Each of the estates had a panel and had been in place for approximately eight months. A survey had indicated that the panels were working well and Officers were currently collating the responses from the survey which would be included in the report on customer satisfaction.

- *It was suggested that members of the panels could be invited to attend a future Overview and Scrutiny Panel.*

Mr Taylor agreed that would be useful and advised that a visit to the Civic Centre had already been arranged. Attending a Scrutiny Panel would allow members to talk about their experiences.

- *Some young people under 25 remained the responsibility of the Social Services Department. Were Riverside working with other agencies as problems would potentially be known to other agencies?*

Mr Taylor advised that he had been in correspondence this week with the County Council with regard to meeting to discuss the options for access for young people. That work would be part of the work of the new member of staff. With regard to the current scheme officers would focus on tenancy sustainability. People within Riverside were working with young people with regard to employment opportunities and providing access to accommodation but it was also important to involve other agencies.

Staff in the support services of Riverside work with the most vulnerable tenants and inter-agency work was already in place.

- *What was the sequence when a person presented as homeless to the Civic Centre?*

The Communities, Housing and Health Manager advised that following research it had been determined that 30 individuals in Carlisle were known to all services. They could be either male or female and many would have a history of institutions, either care or prison, mental health issues, addictions and/or substance abuse. Some would have a history of begging,

prostitution or serial shoplifting. There was a lot of work to be done in respect of accommodation and support pathways for people who have been excluded on several occasions. Those people were generally most in need of services but most difficult to access. The focus would be on the family agenda. In Carlisle people were occasionally accommodated then experienced difficulties. They were moved on because the relevant pathways were not in place. The agencies would do an assessment of need and in some cases the people would end up back at the Civic Centre. That was a problem nationally but efforts were being made to realign services. Some Riverside initiatives were helpful.

Mr Taylor agreed that it was an issue for all housing providers. Young people often did not have the skills to sustain a tenancy and it fell on the homeless team to signpost and help them. The Cumbria Based Letting scheme provided a visible opportunity for people to know what housing was available and people could become familiar with the system. It was the responsibility of all agencies to be part of the process and to ensure accessibility was available for all.

As a local authority the Council had a safety net responsibility to assess the eligibility of potential tenants and the City Council had powers that they could use to prevent people from having to sleep rough and ensure they had a home. The City Council have an extensive profile of accommodation which was outlined by the Communities, Housing and Health Manager.

- *When a problem family applied for housing were they placed in a particular area?*

Mr Taylor explained that the allocation procedure followed the principles of the Choice Based Letting system and therefore people could bid for housing in whichever neighbourhood they wished. The principle behind that was that if a person moved into an area chosen by them they were more likely to stay than if they had had a property allocated to them. Most housing providers now used the Choice Based Letting system although some had moved away from it.

With regard to checks Riverside had a process to investigate whether a potential tenant had a history of anti-social behaviour or eviction. There was no policy to re-house families who had demonstrated as being vulnerable or difficult in any particular neighbourhood. It was often the case that Riverside did not know how successful a tenancy was going to be until the tenant was in place. Riverside have a robust policy with regard to neighbourhood nuisance and anti-social behaviour. All new tenants are offered a new tenants starter programme as many problems come to light within the first year and it was easier for a landlord to consider repossession within the first year. However Riverside would not always repossess but would look to support the tenant and possibly offer an alternative type of accommodation.

- *What percentage of tenants gets the tenancy in the area they have requested?*

Mr Taylor advised that Riverside had a 10% turnover of properties and that the number of empty properties had reduced. The Choice Based Letting system allocated housing according to priority of need. A banding system was in place and someone on a lower banding would be less likely to be successful in getting housing in the area they preferred.

- *Would Riverside consider building houses on brownfield sites that were available close to town?*

Mr Taylor confirmed that Riverside were looking at sites around the city including brownfield sites.

The Chairman thanked Mr Taylor and Ms Earl for their input into the meeting.

RESOLVED: 1. That Report ED.27/14 be noted.

2. That the findings of the BRE survey be circulated to Members of the Panel when available and reported to a future meeting of the Panel.

COSP.45/14 PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

The Chairman, on behalf of the Panel, expressed his disappointment that the authors of the report were not in attendance at the meeting.

The Neighbourhood and Green Spaces Manager presented Report SD.13/14 that included the proposed Playing Pitch Strategy which had been considered by the Executive at their meeting on 23 June 2014 when it was decided:

“That the Executive had considered and approved the Playing Pitch Strategy as a framework for prioritising and steering playing pitch development and improvement across Carlisle.”

The reason for that decision was:

“The Playing Pitch Strategy would support sustained participation in sports and physical activity across the district and the well documented health and well being benefits that brought to all communities.”

The report outlined the background position, informing Members that the Playing Pitch Strategy provided a comprehensive overview of current and future demand for outdoor natural and artificial playing pitch space. The Strategy also provided the Council and its partners with a clear strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing playing pitches and ancillary facilities over the next twelve year period (up to 2025).

Four strategic objectives had been developed and it was suggested that those should be adopted by the City Council.

Delivery of the objectives could be achieved through implementation of the Action Plan set out in the Playing Pitch Strategy.

The Report stated that the production of the Strategy should be regarded as the beginning of the planning process, the success and benefits to be gained being dependent upon regular engagement between all partners involved and the adoption of a strategic approach.

A Steering Group had overseen the development of the Strategy. The core members would remain in place, with new members becoming part of the Steering Group to ensure the ongoing delivery and monitoring of the Strategy. A yearly monitoring process would be implemented. In addition, cross working with Planning, Green Spaces departments, sport governing bodies and local leagues and clubs would be necessary to support the delivery of those objectives.

The Neighbourhood and Green Spaces Manager advised that the City Council were currently responsible for 27 football pitches in Carlisle, one bowling green and no cricket or rugby pitches. When applying for grant funding it was essential that the Council had a strategy in place.

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

- *There is an imbalance in sports provision across the District. Officers should think differently about how funding was used. It would be useful for each Ward Councillor to sit with Officers to be involved in the future strategy.*

Work had been undertaken on the MUGA in St James Park and some of the issues addressed. Where there was concern by residents Officers tried to ensure resources would be placed where there was greatest need.

- *Would there be an action plan from the strategy to move forward?*

The Neighbourhood and Green Spaces Manager explained that the strategy offered suggestions for each site where there were pitches on how to move forward but agreed that it would be useful to condense that information.

- *Links with other national initiatives were not obvious in the strategy. There were links with obesity and health and wellbeing. The strategy should be available for scrutiny by the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Board.*
- *There should be an update on the MUGA programme with regard to the consolidation of existing stock.*
- *There is no mention in the report of the Youth Zone. They have play facilities and an outreach to rugby and tennis clubs. It needs to be tied up with the strategy.*
- *The report referred to a bowling club at Holme Head. That no longer exists and should be removed from the list.*

RESOLVED: 1. That Report ED.27/14 be noted.

2. That an update on the MUGA programme be undertaken.

COSP.46/14 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented report OS.18/14 which provided an overview of matters relating to the work of the Community 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 18 July 2014, included the following items which fell within the remit of this Panel.

KD.04/14 – Playing Pitch Strategy – which had been considered earlier in the meeting.

KD.05/14 – Food Law Enforcement Service Plan – the Plan was circulated with the papers for this meeting for information. Members were invited to contact the Scrutiny Officer should they wish for a briefing with the Environmental Health Manager on the detail of the report.

KD.10/14 – Business Plan – Arts Centre – which had been considered earlier in the meeting.

- The following minute excerpts were submitted from the meeting of the Executive held on 23 June 2014.

EX.53/14 – Business Plan – Arts Centre

EX.56/14 – Playing Pitch Strategy

EX.57/14 – Food Law Enforcement Service Plan – the Panel had agreed at their meeting on 19 June 2014 that this item would be circulated for information only.

- The Overview and Scrutiny Officer drew Members attention to the Work Programme and the reports which were scheduled for the September meeting. Attached to the Agenda was a list of potential topics for the Work Programme for 2014/15. It was agreed that a Task and Finish Group would be set up to look at the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD). Councillors Burns, McDevitt, Mrs Mallinson and Mrs Stevenson agreed to be part of the Task and Finish Group.

A Member suggested that a Task and Finish Group could be set up to look at the off road routes around the City. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer advised that that would be a matter for the Environment and Economy Panel to look at.

A Member suggested that other issues for consideration could be the Customer Contact Centre, YMCA Resource Centre and the Gypsy and Traveller Site provision. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer advised that reports on those issues could be submitted to the Panel to determine whether further consideration should be undertaken.

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 a Task and Finish Group be set up to look at the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) with Councillors Burns, McDevitt, Mrs Mallinson and Mrs Stevenson being part of the Task and Finish Group

COSP.47/14 FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICE PLAN

The Food Law Enforcement Service Plan had been circulated for information.

[The meeting ended at 12.45pm]