

AGENDA

Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 30 June 2016 AT 10:00
In the Flensburg Room, Civic Centre, Carlisle, CA3 8QG

A preparatory/briefing meeting for the Members of the Panel will be held
at **9.15am** in the Flensburg Room.

Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies for absence and notification of substitutions

Declarations of Interest

Members are invited to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests, other registrable interests and any interests, relating to any item on the agenda at this stage.

Public and Press

To agree that the items of business within Part A of the agenda should be dealt with in public and that the items of business within Part B of the agenda should be dealt with in private.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

5 - 16

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2016.
[Copy Minutes in Minute Book Volume 42(6)]

To note the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2016
(Copy Minutes herewith)

PART A

To be considered when the Public and Press are present

A.1 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS

To consider any matter which has been the subject of call-in.

A.2 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

17 - 28

To consider a report providing an overview of matters related to the work of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel, together with the latest version of the Work Programme and details of the Key Decisions items relevant to this Panel as set out in the Notice of Executive Key Decisions.

(Copy Report OS.13/16 herewith)

A.3 FLOOD UPDATE REPORT

29 - 36

(Cross Cutting)

The Deputy Chief Executive to submit a report updating the Panel on the progress of ongoing flood recovery work.

(Copy SD.10/16 herewith).

A.4 DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY - Large Empty 'Hard to Let' Business Premises

37 - 46

(Finance, Governance and Resources)

The Director of Resources to submit a report on the proposed amendments to the City Council's Discretionary Rate Relief Policy. The matter was included in the Notice of Executive Key Decisions and was considered by the Executive on 4 April 2016.

(Copy Report RD.11/16 and Minute Excerpt herewith)

A.5 END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT 2015/16

47 - 66

(Finance, Governance and Resources)

The Policy and Communications Manager to update the Panel on the Council's service standards that help measure performance provide an update on key actions contained within the new Carlisle Plan.

(Copy report PC.10/16 herewith)

PART B

To be considered when the Public and Press are excluded from the meeting

- NIL -

Members of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Conservative – Christian, Mitchelson, Nedved (Chairman), Bloxham (sub), Mrs Parsons (sub), Mrs Mallinson (sub)

Labour – Bowditch (Vice Chairman), Mrs Coleman, Dodd, McDonald, Burns (sub), McNulty, Ms Patrick (sub)

Independent – Betton, Paton(sub)

Enquiries, requests for reports, background papers, etc to Committee Clerk: Jacqui Issatt - 817557

Minutes of Previous Meeting

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 14 APRIL 2016 AT 10.00AM

PRESENT: Councillor Nedved (Chairman), Councillors Betton (from 10.15am), Bloxham (as substitute for Councillor Mitchelson), Bowditch, Christian, Dodd, Ms Franklin and Ms Patrick (as substitute for Councillor Caig).

ALSO PRESENT Councillor Glover – Leader
Councillor Mrs Martlew – Deputy Leader, and Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder
Councillor Mrs Bradley – Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder
Councillor Burns (as an observer for part of the meeting)
Councillor J Mallinson (as an observer for part of the meeting)

OFFICERS: Deputy Chief Executive
Director of Local Environment
Director of Economic Development
Neighbourhood Services Manager
Investment and Policy Manager
Tourist Information Centre Manager
Principal Planning Officer Local Plans
Overview and Scrutiny Officer

EEOSP.19/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Caig, Mitchelson and Quilter.

The Deputy Leader, and Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder advised the Panel that Councillor Caig had been unable to attend the meeting as he was undergoing surgery.

RESOLVED – That the Panel's best wishes for a speedy recovery be conveyed to Councillor Caig.

EEOSP.20/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ms Patrick declared a registrable interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of Item A.3 December 2015 Flood Update Report. The interest related to the fact that she was the Chairman of Trustees of Botcherby Community Centre.

Councillor Dodd declared a pecuniary interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of Item A.6 Carlisle City Centre Development Framework. The interest related to his being employed by the company which conducted the feasibility study on the Central Plaza Hotel. Councillor Dodd undertook to remove himself from the room should the Panel's discussions cover the Central Plaza Hotel.

EEOSP.21/16 PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – That the Agenda be agreed as circulated.

EEOSP.22/16 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Chairman referred to EEOSP.16/16 (3) Rethinking Waste which stated a resume covering the agreed project timescale be circulated to Members following that the next meeting of the Rethinking Waste Project Board, and asked when this was to be provided to Members.

The Deputy Leader, and Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder explained that the Rethinking Waste Project Board had not met, once the meeting had occurred the resume would be circulated to Members.

The Chairman noted that the Deputy Leader, and Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder was stepping down from the Council at the upcoming election, on behalf of the Panel he thanked her for her work and support of the Panel.

The Deputy Leader, and Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder thanked the Chairman for his comments. She felt that Scrutiny was an important function within the Council, and she was pleased to see it operated robustly.

RESOLVED – (1)The minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2016 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

(2) The minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2016be noted.

(3) That the Deputy Leader, and Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder be thanked for her work and support of the Panel.

EEOSP.23/16 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS

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

EEOSP.24/16 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented report OS.09/16 providing an overview of matters related to the work of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reported that the most recent Notice of Key Executive Decisions had been published on 4 March 2016. This was circulated to all Members. No items fell into the remit of the Panel.

There were no references from the Executive's meeting on 7 March 2016. At the 4 April meeting of the Executive report RD.60/15 Discretionary Rate Relief had been submitted under General Exception Rules, the Executive referred the report to the Resources and Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panels (EX.25/16) for their consideration and comment. The report would be included as an item on the June meeting of the Panel.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer drew Member's attention to Appendix 1 - Overview and Scrutiny Annual report, which was to be formally approved by the Scrutiny Chairs Group, after which it would be presented to Council on 26 April 2016; she invited Members to comment on the report.

The Deputy Leader and Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder noted a typographical error on page 28 of the agenda document pack which should have read that the "...Council was run *on* a cabinet style..."

A Member asked if the conclusion section, which was blank, was to remain in the report or be removed. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer responded that as the Panels had noted the Annual Report, but given no other feedback, she would remove this section of the report.

The Chairman thanked the members and substitutes of the Panel for their hard work and support during the year in delivering the work of the Panel.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Overview Report (OS.09/16) incorporating the Work Programme and Notice of Executive Key Decision items relevant to this Panel be noted.

(2) That the conclusion section of the Overview and Scrutiny Annual report be removed.

(3) That the amended Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report be noted.

(4) That the members and substitutes of the Panel for their hard work and support during the year in delivering the work of the Panel.

EEOSP.25/16 DECEMBER 2015 FLOOD UPDATE REPORT

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted report SD.07/16 which was part of a series of update reports prepared for Overview and Scrutiny Panels on flood recovery activities and future programmed work.

The reports contained a generic section designed to give all Panels an overview of flood recovery work and a more specific section tailored to the work areas of each Committee, included in the report were specific updates relating to:

- Local Environment - initial clean-up operations The Council had disposed of more than 3,000 tonnes of flood damaged materials from affected residents and businesses and had provided 520 skips throughout the city.
- Flood grants and household payments: 1,536 households within the district had received the Community Support Grant of £500 amounting to £768,000, which equated to 96% of the households eligible to receive the grant. The Flood Resilience Grants of up to £5,000 was being administered by the Housing Department, 197 applications had been received, 112 had been approved, with payments made to 10 applicants totalling £44,680.70. The Grant had relatively low take up within the district and nationally, there was concern that residents were not aware of the benefits of claiming the grant. Two grants were available to local business; the Flood Resilience Grant and a grant from Cumbria Chamber of Commerce of up to £5,000 was also available. Council Tax and NNDR discounts: Up to 31 March 2016 the following discounts had been issued: Council Tax discounts had been awarded to 1,729 householders totalling £735,354.64; NNDR discount had been awarded to 92 businesses amounting to £230,926.45.
- City Council property and asset recovery: All Council assets (with the exception of the Sheepmount) had been stripped of flooded material and dried out. Condition

surveys had been carried by WYG and the Council was aware of the value and costs of the works required to reinstate the assets.

- Financial considerations and activities: The Council had activated the Bellwin scheme which covered local authorities for costs incurred with actions to safeguard life and property or to prevent suffering or severe inconvenience as a result of a disaster or emergency. The scheme did not cover all the Council's expenditure on the disaster and the authority would have to meet £26,000 of costs related to the emergency response. The deadline for submission of the claim was June 2016.
- Car Park recovery: All of the Council's car parks had been affected by the flood and as a result the Council had not been able to charge for their use, however, it was felt that the removal of the charge had been useful for both residents and business that had used the facilities during that period. Recovery work had been completed at the sites and new payment machines had been ordered, the new machines would provide enhanced systems of card and contactless payment methods.
- Liaison with Environment Agency: The Council was working closely with the Environment Agency and Cumbria County Council assessing future prevention and alleviation schemes. The County Council was preparing the Section 19 report, a statutory document, to government on the flood response in the county, along with input from the Environment Agency. The government had announced £25M of funding for flood prevention for the district, and the City Council was well placed to play a strong role in the investment of this funding.
- Resident support via the Carlisle Flood Partnership (led by Cumbria County Council). Cumbria County Council had formed a number of groups from partners including the University of Cumbria, Greystone Community Centre, The Round Table and Carlisle Food Bank, amongst others, and in the initial response to the flood they had taken part in various aspects of the flood response. The City Council had managed donations made for victims at three sites; Fusehill Street Campus, Greystone Community Centre, and a 20,000 sq.ft warehouse at Kingmoor Park. The level of donations received had been remarkable and was an indication of the public support for the victims of the floods.
- Recovery Programme – Future Actions: In terms of the Council's own assets, recovery of the Leisure estate and the ground floor of the Civic Centre, including decisions regarding design and service provision and increasing resilience were areas that the Council was considering as part of the future actions of the recovery programme.

The Deputy Leader and Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder thanked the staff for their invaluable and tremendous efforts during the difficult period following the flood. The city had been affected by the flood on 5 December 2015, and the Council had been open for business again on the 7 December 2015.

The report had clearly highlighted the extent of the problems caused by the flood and the damage which had been caused to the infrastructure of Carlisle. Referring to paragraph 4.1 of the report, she considered that staff communication with residents affected by the flood had been very professional and warmly appreciated.

In addition to the support provided by public authorities to flood victims, a group of Young Farmers from the district had provided assistance to victims using their own tractors and machinery to remove flood materials from affected streets. The individuals involved had been nominated, by a flood victim, for a Community Award and an article on the group had been screened recently on the BBC's Countryfile programme.

The Chairman reiterated the Deputy Leader and Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder's comments praising the efforts of the Council's staff in responding to the flood. The Informal Briefing for Members on the flood had also been a useful session for Members, giving them the opportunity to ask questions and access information from other agencies involved in the flood recovery work.

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

- *How had the Council disposed of the flood damaged materials which had been collected?*

The Neighbourhood Services Manager explained that because the material was deemed to be contaminated it had not been possible for it to be recycled therefore it had been deposited in landfill.

The Deputy Chief Executive added that the recycling industry's focus was on the processing of clean materials, therefore it was not readily able to process flood damaged materials. He hoped that this was an area of flood recovery that the government and industry would look at in the future with a view to making the recycling of flood damaged materials possible.

- *A Member noted the replacement payment machines for the Council's car parks, were described in the report as card and cashless payment facilities, he asked if cash payments would remain an option for those using the Council's car parks.*

The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed the replacement machines would still process cash payments, but would also allow users to pay for car park use via card and contactless payment methods. The replacement machines had been ordered, but each of the Council's car parks currently had at least one operational fee collection machine.

- *Why had twenty-three households not been eligible to receive the Community Support Grant?*

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that those households had been deemed not eligible for the Community Support Grant as flood waters had not actually breached the property.

The Member responded that a number of flood victims felt the grant application form was complex which made completing the form challenging and added to the stress of the victims. She was aware that some insurance companies were assisting claimants with their forms, as well as providing guidance on resilience measure to be implemented.

The Deputy Leader and Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder commented that the recovery of properties operated on varying timescales with drying works commencing at different times. Residents would find it awkward to add extra resilience after reinstatement works had been completed, she felt that the Flood Resilience Grants were not dovetailed to the process of property reconstruction.

The Director of Economic Development added that the Council was trying to increase awareness of the Grant by promoting it through a range of methods, including social media. The Council had received more than 400 enquiries about the grant which had been addressed by the Housing Team. The deadline for grant application was 31 December 2016, it was hoped the timeframe would allow residents time to consider any resilience measures they wished to include in their properties. Some insurance

companies were working with groups of residents to deliver resilience measure aimed at protecting a number of properties.

- *What steps did the Council plan to take next in the recovery of its assets?*

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the Council was bound by European Union rules regarding procurement, and therefore had a responsibility to act responsibly when procuring goods and services. A procurement framework had been developed and officers were working on identifying the most appropriate groups of assets to commission works to get good value for money. The immediate priorities were the reinstatement of the affected Community Centres and the Civic Centre.

Discussions would need to be held with Members in relation to the future use of the flood affected areas of the Civic Centre and the leisure estate, particularly the Sheepmount which had suffered flood damage on a number of occasions. The Council's insurance claim was awaiting final settlement and negotiations were ongoing.

- *Had the Council provided information to the Flood Minister on the impact of the flood?*

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the Council did not have the capacity to provide an additional tranche of data to the Flood Minister regarding the impact of the flood, however, the grant applications received by the authority did contain relevant information. Gathering information on the effect of the flood on businesses in the city was difficult as only a small number had applied for grants.

The Deputy Leader and Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder considered that a scheme for businesses similar to the FloodRe which was now in operation for residential properties was needed. An arrangement to provide flooded business properties with access to affordable insurance was essential as Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs) profit margins would be affected by increasing premium levels. If a scheme was not put forward there was potential for areas previously impacted by flooding to be devoid of commercial activity.

- *A Member felt that the Council's response to the flood had been faultless; he recognised the importance of the support to residents who had received Council Tax and NNDR discounts. He asked if Officers were aware that residents who rented allotments from the Council which had been flooded were still charged full rent for the allotment?*

The Deputy Chief Executive replied that he had not been aware of this issue and agreed to look into the matter.

- *How did the Council plan to address the issue of riverbank erosion?*

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that prior to the floods erosion of riverbanks was an ongoing issue. Following the floods the Environment Agency intended to develop plans in three areas; riverbank erosion, repair and maintenance of flood defences. The City Council would contribute to this work as it owned a proportion of the land which made up the riverbanks in the district.

The Member replied that willow planting had been used in the past to help maintain riverbanks, and this method had also helped to prevent flooding by reducing the flow rate of the river water.

The Deputy Leader and Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder commented that the Environment Agency had a statutory duty to publish a report on the flood along with a consultation relating to new plans for flood defence, she advised the Member that responding to the consultation with suggestions to minimise riverbank erosion would be a useful way to have the proposal considered.

The Director of Local Environment added that a number of agencies were involved in developing new methods to minimise flood risk, including the Environment Agency and the Natural England. The process would involve the instatement of improved flood defence measures and consultation with the public.

The Chairman commented that the format of the Flood Update report had been workable and requested that the Panel received future updates on that basis.

RESOLVED –(1) That report SD.07/16 be noted.

(2) That a further report be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Panel.

(3) That the Panel's thanks be conveyed to the staff for their work in response to the flood.

EEOSP.26/16 UPDATE ON CLEAN CARLISLE

The Director of Local Environment submitted report LE.07/16 which considered the educational, enforcement and operational work carried out by the Neighbourhood Services Team.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager delivered a presentation on the work of the Neat Street initiative which was a pilot clean up initiative for the city. The presentation covered the aim of the initiative which was to tackle flytipping, litter and dog fouling; the action taken by the Council as part of the initiative, which sought to improve areas with clean-up activities involving residents; the monitoring of areas and where necessary undertaking legal action against those who created problems relating to litter, fouling, and flytipping.

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

- *How did the initiative address the issue of landownership?*

The Neighbourhood Services Manager advised that the pilot initiative had been carried out in back lanes and letters had been sent to the properties adjacent to the lane advising them that a clean-up of the lane was to take place. Ownership of the lanes was not always clear, which made taking enforcement action more difficult, it was hoped by engaging all the residents adjacent to the lane that they would buy into keeping the area clean.

The Neighbourhood Services Manager felt that Members would be aware of areas in their Wards that had problems with litter, flytipping, and dog fouling and encouraged them to report the issues to his team.

The Director of Local Environment added that landownership in the rural area was often more readily identifiable which made enforcement action easier to take. The Council was

happy to work with landowners to develop solutions to flytipping, but the responsibility for the removal of flytipping from private land remained with the landowner.

The Council was restricted in the methods it could use to monitor areas with, for example, CCTV. When litter or flytipping were reported to the Council, Officers searched the detritus to see if any documents identifying the perpetrator had been included. Any information found in the rubbish allowed the Officers to take enforcement action against those identified.

In response to a Member's request the Director of Local Environment agreed to distribute "We Are Watching You" posters in the rural area.

A Member felt that the project had been very well received by residents in the pilot areas, not only in the streets which had been cleaned up but also the surrounding ones, it had increased the residents' sense of enjoyment of the area. The Council planned to create Community Champions in areas which took part in the initiative to monitor and enable enforcement action.

- *Had there been requests for clean-up actions outside the pilot area?*

The Neighbourhood Services Manager advised that there were some areas which were regularly identified by residents as having problems, and that the Council would seek to address these first, he reiterated his invitation for Members to report areas in their wards where problems were experienced.

- *What was the cost of prosecution action, and did it take funds away from the Neat Streets initiative?*

The Director of Local Environment responded that prosecution action was a culmination of a process of attempting to address issues in an area that was experiencing litter, flytipping, and fouling, recurrently. The Council engaged in education activities with the aim of reducing incidences of litter, flytipping, and dog fouling in the city, it also issued warnings and Fixed Penalty Notices. Prosecution was costly but important, if the Council repeatedly cleaned areas without taking enforcement actions the number of incidences would increase and a culture of dependency would be created, prosecution was a very important deterrent action for the Council.

- *What impact would the requirement for dogs to be microchipped have on the service?*

The Director of Local Environment advised Members that staff in the Enforcement and Education Team would assess how this technology could assist Officers in their efforts to minimise dog fouling in the District. She added that the Enforcement and Education Team was merging with the Neighbourhood Services Team and it was hoped that this would strengthen the work of the two teams.

- *Dog fouling was a recurring problem, it was suggested that an Officer team needed to look at the reasons why the problem repeatedly occurred in the same areas.*

The Director of Local Environment responded that Officers already assessed the reasons why dog fouling recurred in particular areas and aimed to address this. The Council's approach to the problem was a mixture of education and enforcement action.

The Chairman welcomed the Neat Streets initiative and thanked the Officers for their report and presentation.

RESOLVED (1) That report LE.07/16 be welcomed.

(2) That a further update report on Clean Carlisle be considered by the Panel in six months.

EEOSP.27/16 TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE

The Investment and Policy Manager submitted report ED.19/16 which provided an update on the progress of the operation of the Tourist Information Centre (TIC) and the Assembly Rooms.

The recent completion of significant works at the Old Town Hall had enabled the Council to give the TIC and Assembly Rooms a more commercial focus, whilst retaining the information service. The retail offer in the TIC was now centred on local, seasonal products which it was hoped would help it to meet ambitious income targets.

The Assembly Rooms had been extensively restored, and additional facilities such as IT had been included. Officers were considering how best to make the rooms accessible and increase usage of the space. The Assembly Rooms had been granted a wedding licence and work was underway to market the site as a wedding venue. Consideration was being given as to how to best use social media as a tool to market the both the TIC and the Assembly Rooms.

The Investment and Policy Manager concluded by stating the new business model for the TIC was to be monitored to identify which areas of the products and services offered contributed to the meeting of income targets.

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

- *What feedback had staff at the TIC received following the refurbishment works?*

The Tourist Information Centre Manager advised that the feedback had been very positive; customers felt that the space was open and welcoming, but that it retained the character that it had previously exhibited.

- *How had the new income targets been set?*

The Investment and Policy Manager explained that the income targets were set through the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and were ambitious, and understandably challenging. He expected that some revision of the targets may be required following ongoing monitoring and review. The relevance of the past year's performance was limited given the disruption during the previous three years as the physical refurbishment occurred. The broader focus of the new service was not comparable in a like for like sense to the service which had existed previously.

The Tourist Information Centre Manager added that the emphasis of the Centre had changed in recent years, for example, the internet meant that fewer customers used the TIC for accommodation bookings.

- *A Member noted that The Carlisle Tourist Information Centre Task and Finish Group 2012/13 had wanted to increase the sales area in the TIC, but the new layout had actually decreased it. It had been agreed that the Task and Finish Group would continue to allow the TIC to raise issues, why had it not been reconvened?*

The Economy, Enterprise, and Housing Portfolio Holder reminded Members that Task and Finish Groups were in the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels, therefore the onus was on the relevant panel to reconvene a Task and Finish Group.

The Chairman stated that he had been a Member of the Task and Finish Group, which had worked during the planning stages of the TIC redevelopment. He felt reconvening the Task and Finish Group was an item the Panel could consider in the new civic year.

The Tourist Information Centre Manager explained that the loss of retail space had resulted from the installation of the "Discovery Wall", which was a useful tool in signposting visitors to activities, but it needed to be balanced against the retail provision. The new retail display units were moveable so the space in the TIC could be reconfigured to keep it fresh and responsive to the needs of customers.

Monitoring the performance of the retail area was an important piece of work going forward, the centre was coming into its busy summer period which would highlight what aspects were working well in the new centre, if required the retail area could be expanded.

- *Why did the Old Town Hall have its own website, as well as being hosted on the Discover Carlisle website?*

The Tourist Information Centre Manager advised that a separate site for the TIC and Assembly Rooms had been created to enable the facilities to be marketed, it was planned to set up an online shop on the website, which would not have been possible on the Discover Carlisle website. The separate site gave the TIC and the Assembly Rooms increased flexibility and control, and it was intended to link the site to Facebook and Twitter to increase its online presence.

- *A Member felt it was clear that the TIC was responding to changing customer needs, how did the service receive feedback from customers?*

The Tourist Information Centre Manager informed Members that the TIC conducted visitor surveys, the last of which had taken place prior to the Old Town Hall refurbishment. A further survey was planned for later this year, when feedback on the new centre would be sought. Work on the survey design had already commenced

The Investment and Policy Manager explained that at a strategic level, Cumbria Tourism produced an annual report which was considered by Officers and included information such as trends in duration of stay and factors that would make visitors extend their stay. The city was also being advertised in two separate campaigns by Visit England.

A Member suggested that feedback from visitors on what factors would encourage them to extend their stay in the city could be fed back to Officers working on the Local Plan for their consideration, he asked if this information could also be included in the next Tourist Information Centre report to the Panel.

The Tourist Information Centre Manager felt that it would be more useful for Members to compare the two surveys of the TIC, and this would enable them to have input in the newly developing service.

RESOLVED – (1) That report ED.19/16 be noted.

(2) That the Panel considered reinstating the Carlisle Tourist Information Centre in the new Civic Year.

(3) That a further report on the Tourist Information Centre, with an emphasis on the developing Business Plan, be considered by the Panel in six months.

EEOSP.28/16 CARLISLE CITY CENTRE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – UPDATE

The Investment and Policy Manager submitted report ED.18/16 which updated the Panel on the progress of the implementation of the City Centre Development Framework (CCDF). The CCDF was a long term plan and vision for the city which would be completed in 2030, and formed key evidence upon which the Local Plan was founded.

The Investment and Policy Manager reminded Members that the Council's retail study had indicated that there was a need for an additional 200,000 sq.ft of retail space. The report updated Members on the number of key character areas in the city which were categorised by their potential for future change.

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

- *What action did the Council plan to take following the removal of the public toilets in The Lanes?*

The Economy, Economy and Housing Portfolio Holder explained that the provision of public toilets in The Lanes was not within the Council's remit although she understood that replacement toilets would be provided on the first floor of The Lanes.

- *What involvement would the City Council have in plans for the redevelopment of the Citadel area?*

The Investment and Policy Manager advised Members that the City Council would have a significant say in the redevelopment of the Citadel area as any proposal would need to meet the requirements of the Council's Local Plan. The Local Enterprise Partnership was very interested in the development of the area which was an important transport gateway not only to the city, but the county as a whole.

- *The Chairman noted that Cumbria County Council's Local Committee was meeting that day, had Officers from the City Council been involved in joint working with County Council Officers in relation to the Citadel?*

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder advised that appropriate Officers were talking to County Council Officers but the Citadel area was very complicated and discussions were at a very early stage.

- *Had the recent flood affected Rickergate's status as the preferred retail site in the city?*

The Investment and Policy Manager explained that the Local Plan sought to be flexible, and had to demonstrate that the extra retail floor space required could be provided in the city. The flood had likely given rise to a confidence issue part of the area, however, the Rickergate / Lowther Street area was much broader than those parts of it which had flooded and therefore remained appropriate.

- *A Member commented that the city needed to be better at exposing its historical offer to visitors, for example the country's first postbox was situated in the city, but this was not well publicised.*
- *The Botchergate Masterplan was not referred to in the report, Members had been involved and this work had contributed to the Local Plan, what plans did officers have for involving Members in the CCDF in the future?*

The Investment and Policy Manager agreed that interpretation of history and the city's historical artefacts were important to the city, he was confident the Local Plan would reverse the trend of not making the most of its heritage including archaeological remains.

In response to a Member's question regarding funding to develop the railway station, the Investment and Policy Manager explained that around £14M of funding had been given to the railway station for repairs to the roof and resurfacing of the platforms and courseway, but these were like for like repairs.

- *Did the City Centre Development Framework have any initiatives for bringing money into the city?*

The Investment and Policy Manager responded that the Council had a broad strategy to bring money into the city including the Arts Centre, Tourist Information Centre, and a programme of events for both visitors and residents. It was hoped the new Primark store in The Lanes would increase footfall into the city, although he recognised that the retail offer needed to be a mixture of both independent and large chain stores.

RESOLVED –(1) That report ED.18/16 be noted.

(2) That a further report providing an update on the implementation of the Framework be considered in the new civic year.

(The meeting ended at 13:00)

Environment & Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:

A.2

Meeting Date: 30 June 2016
Portfolio: Cross Cutting
Key Decision: No
Within Policy and
Budget Framework
Public / Private Public

Title: OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME
Report of: Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Report Number: OS 13/16

Summary:

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

Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

- Decide whether the items on the Notice of Key Executive Decisions should be included in the Panel's Work Programme for consideration.
- Develop the Panel's work programme for the 2016/17 Civic Year

Contact Officer: Sarah Mason

Ext: 7053

Appendices attached
to report:

1. Environment & Economy O&S Panel Work Programme 2016/17
2. Guidance on Agenda Planning

1. Notice of Key Executive Decisions

The most recent Notice of Key Executive Decisions was published on 03 June 2016. This was circulated to all Members. No new items fall into the remit of this Panel.

2. References from the Executive

There are no references from the Executive's meeting on 06 June 2016.

3. Work Programme

The Panel's current work programme is attached at **Appendix 1** for comment/amendment. The Panel need to discuss and develop the work programme for 2016/17. Members of the Panels, Portfolio Holders and Senior Officers are asked to give some thought to issues which scrutiny could add value to during the current Civic Year and should consider adding to their Work Programme. Guidance on Scrutiny Agenda Planning is attached at **Appendix 2** and Members are encouraged to use the prioritisation aid contained in the guidance to ensure that items placed on the work programme are those that scrutiny can add value to.

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

Appendix 1

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17



Issue	Type of Scrutiny					Comments/status	Meeting Dates							
	Performance Management	Key decision Item/Referred from Executive	Policy Review/Development	Scrutiny of Partnership/ External Agency	Monitoring		30 Jun 16	28 Jul 16	15 Sep 16	27 Oct 16	1 Dec 16	19 Jan 17	2 Mar 17	20 Apr 17
Contact Officer														
CURRENT MEETING - 30 June 2016														
Flood Update Report Darren Crossley					✓		✓							
Discretionary Rate Relief Policy Peter Mason		✓				Consultation regarding discretionary rate relief for difficult to let commercial properties	✓							
Performance Monitoring Reports Gary Oliver	✓					Monitoring of performance relevant to the remit of Panel	✓		✓		✓		✓	
TASK AND FINISH GROUPS														
Flood 2015						Discussed at Scrutiny Chairs Group: Flood update items to each Panel. Workshop (cross Panel) to look at issues.								
PROVISIONAL FUTURE ITEMS														

Appendix 1

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17



Issue	Type of Scrutiny					Comments/status	Meeting Dates							
	Performance Management	Key decision Item/Referred from Executive	Policy Review/Development	Scrutiny of Partnership/External Agency	Monitoring		30 Jun 16	28 Jul 16	15 Sep 16	27 Oct 16	1 Dec 16	19 Jan 17	2 Mar 17	20 Apr 17
Update on Public Realm Mark Walshe					✓	Update on the proposed city centre orientation improvements (including signage and car park renaming).			?					
Local Enterprise Partnership Jane Meek				✓		Update on LEP projects including the Enterprise Zone	Next key phase and best timing for this item?							
Budget Peter Mason		✓	✓			To consider budget proposals for 2016/17				✓				
City Centre Development Framework Garry Legg						Annual update of implementation of City Centre Development Framework				?				
Rethinking Waste Colin Bowley					✓	Update on business case and detailed project plan		✓		✓		✓		✓

Appendix 1

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17



Issue	Type of Scrutiny					Comments/status	Meeting Dates							
	Performance Management	Key decision Item/Referred from Executive	Policy Review/Development	Scrutiny of Partnership/ External Agency	Monitoring		30 Jun 16	28 Jul 16	15 Sep 16	27 Oct 16	1 Dec 16	19 Jan 17	2 Mar 17	20 Apr 17
Business Support Task and Finish Group Steven O'Keeffe						Review progress of recommendations made by the T&F group				✓				
Update on Clean Carlisle Colin Bowley	✓				✓	6 monthly updates				✓				✓
Tourist Information Centre					✓	Update on business plan development and performance monitoring of the TIC				?				
Tourism Draft Plan						Development of plan to promote tourism				?				
Local Plan / Local Development Scheme						Consider emerging work programme (including Community Infrastructure Levy - CIL)		?						
Nuclear New Builds														

Appendix 1

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL WORK PROGRAMME 2016/17



Issue	Type of Scrutiny						Comments/status	Meeting Dates							
	Performance Management	Key decision Item/Referred from Executive	Policy Review/Development	Scrutiny of Partnership/External Agency	Monitoring			30 Jun 16	28 Jul 16	15 Sep 16	27 Oct 16	1 Dec 16	19 Jan 17	2 Mar 17	20 Apr 17
Car Parking Darren Crossley						Update of car parking developments and strategy going forward				✓					
Carlisle Economic Potential											✓				
Carlisle South Masterplan Garry Legg														✓	
Economic Strategy Jane Meek															
Commercialisation of Parks Phil Gray						Progress of Talkin Tarn Business Plan and possible commercialisation of other Parks			✓				✓		
Skills Action Plan						To coincide with Carlisle Skills Fair									
COMPLETED ITEMS															

Appendix 2

Overview and Scrutiny

Guidance on Scrutiny Agenda Planning

SCRUTINY AGENDA PLANNING

INTRODUCTION

Scrutiny meetings should have manageable focused agendas which result in meaningful outcomes. It is better to do fewer things well than more things superficially. Whilst the responsibility for agenda planning lies with the Chair of the Panel, all Scrutiny Members can be involved in the process and this guidance is therefore provided to assist all Scrutiny Members in ensuring that items on a scrutiny meeting agenda are worthwhile and timely. Guidance is also provided for Chairs of Scrutiny Panels on their role and tips on making appropriate, realistic and clear resolutions.

PRIORITISING OVER LONG AGENDAS

No item which simply provides information should appear on an Overview and Scrutiny agenda. If there is no substantive work for the Panel to do on that item then the information should be conveyed to Members in a suitable format outside of the Panel process. An acid test would be that any item where a report is likely to be noted, received or similarly dealt with without a substantive resolution from the Panel should not appear on the agenda at all.

An over arching criteria for including an item on the agenda is that the Panel must be able to **add value** or **make a difference** to the issue; if it cannot make a difference it should not waste valuable time and effort considering it.

Successful O&S Panels will wish to include issues that are forward looking in their nature and involve creative or highly innovative approaches. These criteria should also extend to the workshops, Task and Finish Groups and other participative approaches over traditional reports where appropriate.

The Chair is responsible for drawing up the agenda for each meeting in advance. Ideally the framework for the next meeting should be set at the end of the last meeting. In this way the Chair can make sure that all Members have an opportunity to contribute to the agenda and to the identification of guest speakers or witnesses.

If all Members contribute to the agenda beforehand, it will encourage them to have ownership of the meeting, and as a result will have a vested interest in getting through the agenda and achieving a positive outcome. Examples of positive outcomes might include:

- ✓ Reviewing a topic /service of public interest
- ✓ Getting general consensus concerning recommendations for the Executive
- ✓ Good debates which result in conclusions being drawn

Some issues will self-evidently be of high priority, for example, policy framework proposals and policy development sessions. Subject Reviews should be of high priority as they are both of the Panel's own choosing and also should be looking at issues which are topical. Other items would be

of low priority, for example, an officer report which does not highlight potential scrutiny opportunities or seek views on various points or present options for scrutiny's evaluation.

A prioritisation aid is included at the back of this guidance to assist Members in their agenda planning.

TIPS ON FORMING O&S RESOLUTIONS

- Try to avoid a long 'summing up' at the end of each item – the minutes will provide a record of what Members said during discussion. A short summing up focussing on the resolutions to be made will be more useful and effective;
- A resolution should stem from the Panel's discussions;
- For the more straightforward items involving a formal report from an officer, use the officer's recommendations to develop the resolution;
- Be realistic – an O&S panel's resolutions should focus on achievable actions;
- Try and keep each resolution as short as possible – separate the decision out into several if it seems likely to become too long;
- Always think (a) who is this resolution/recommendation addressed to (b) what are we asking them to do (c) is the Panel expecting a response to the resolution. Make these things absolutely clear in the resolution.
- Language – the language used should reflect the panel's view – stronger words and emphasis should be used only when the Panel clearly feels strongly about an issue;

KEY OBJECTIVES FOR CHAIRMEN

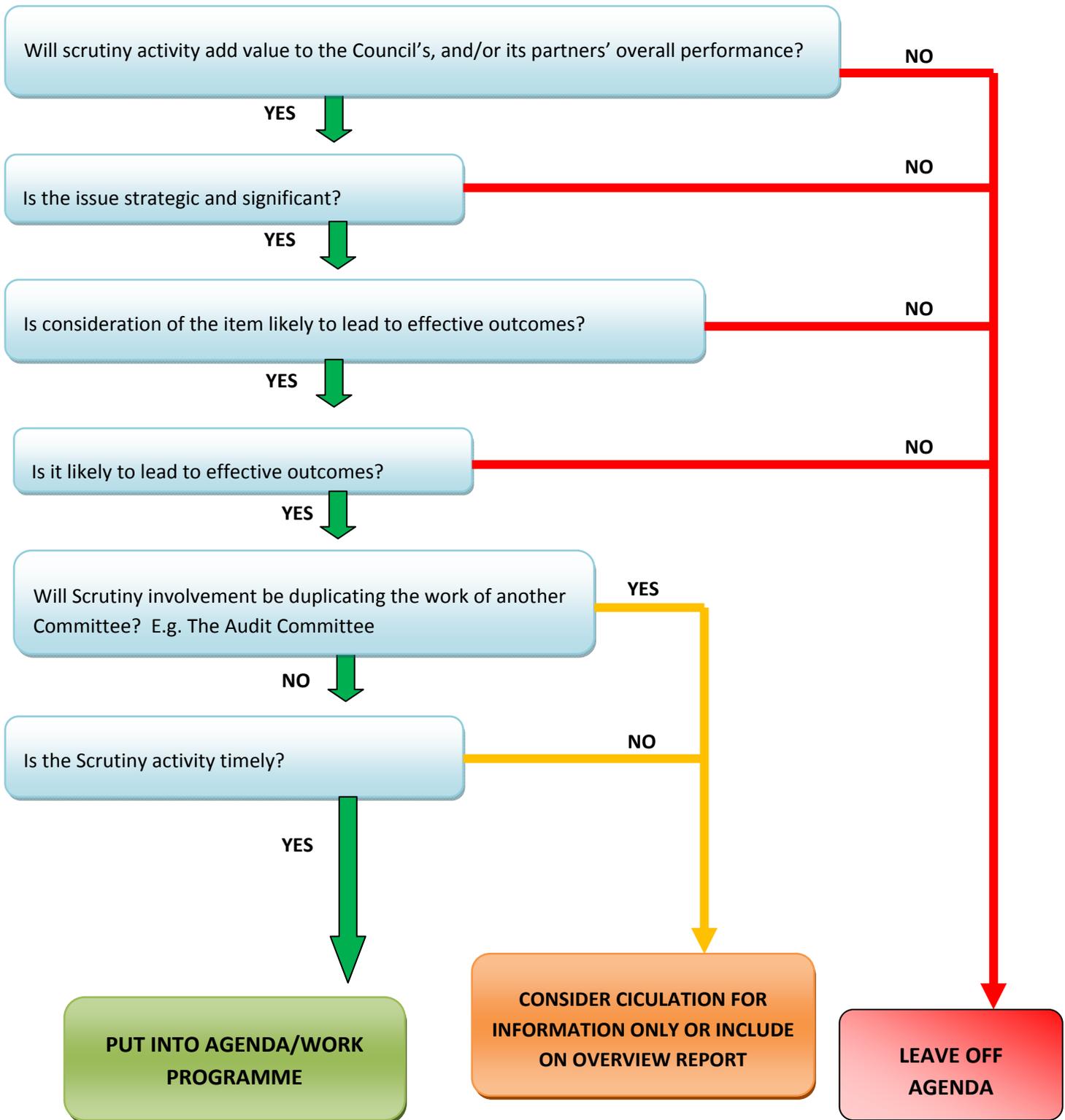
The Aims translate into the following which should be the key objectives for an O&S chairman to achieve best practise in meetings:-

- ✓ Manageable, focussed agendas
- ✓ Quality work with meaningful outcomes
- ✓ Do fewer things well rather than more things superficially
- ✓ Meetings approximately two hours long
- ✓ Agendas include a maximum of nine items in total
- ✓ No information items on agendas.
- ✓ Always a substantive resolution
- ✓ Promote equality and respect for all attendees

GENERAL TIPS FOR O&S CHAIRMEN

- ✓ Promote fairness and equality – make sure that all Members get a chance to speak and try and involve all Members. And make sure that those before the Panel are treated with respect;
- ✓ Sometimes, it may be worth reminding the Panel why an item is before them and what they are expected to do with it. If the discussion then strays away from the topic concerned, be firm and bring it back to the matter at hand;
- ✓ The meeting is owned by you and the Panel. Officers and Members are there to assist the Panel, not to direct it;
- ✓ As a result of the agenda planning, you should have a good idea how much time should be given to each item. Use this information to keep the meeting moving along but don't be too rigid – sometimes the discussion and debate may have revealed new information and the Panel may need a little longer to come to a view.

SCRUTINY AGENDA PRIORITISATION AID



Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:

A.3

Meeting Date: 30th June 2016
Portfolio: Cross Cutting
Key Decision: No
Within Policy and Budget Framework NO
Public / Private Public
Title: FLOOD UPDATE REPORT
Report of: Deputy Chief Executive
Report Number: SD.10/16

Purpose / Summary:

This report is part of a series of update reports prepared for Overview and Scrutiny Committees on flood recovery activities and future programmed work.

The reports contain a generic section designed to give all Committees an overview of flood recovery work and a more specific section tailored to the work areas of each Committee.

This Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Report will provide specific updates relating to:

- Local Environment
- Customer contact and access to services
- Flood grants and household payments (figures as of 3rd June)
- City Council property and asset recovery
- Financial claims / recovery
- Car Park recovery
- Liaison with Environment Agency, County Council and other appropriate bodies

Recommendations:

1. That members of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee review this report and give consideration to the progress made to date and the recovery plans going forward.

Tracking

Executive:	
Overview and Scrutiny:	30th June 2016
Council:	

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The full background to the flood event in December 2015 can be found in the first Flood Update report presented to Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny 14.04.16. This covered the emergency period and immediate aftermath of the floods.
- 1.2 Since the last report, members of the Council have received an update from leading flood agencies at the Informal Council (07.04.16). The County Council and Environment Agency have also published a number of Section 19 Flood Investigation reports, covering the whole county (late April 2016).
<http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/eLibrary/Content/Internet/536/6181/42494151257.pdf>
 These reports have been the subject of two public forums held in Carlisle during May.
- 1.3 Following on from the Section 19 reports the Environment Agency (EA) is working alongside other public and non-government organisations (e.g. Eden Rivers Trust) to establish plans for improving flood defences within the district. In March the Chancellor announced that £25m capital would be made available for improving defence systems in Carlisle once the EA had concluded a review of the needs of the district.
- 1.4 Further to all of the above the City Council continues to play a key role in supporting district and county wide groups who are focused on different aspects of flood recovery – transport infrastructure, housing, grants and community support. The City Council is also playing a full role in the development of a Winter Flood Plan 2016/17. This plan is focused on finding ways to improve the preparedness and resilience of the city region during the winter months.

2. FLOOD RECOVERY ACTIVITY: DECEMBER – MAY 2016

2.1 Local Environment:

Green Spaces: The new play area in Bitts Park has been ordered with improved flood resilient equipment and surfacing. The damaged equipment and surfacing has been removed, and work has started on repairing the splash park. The new equipment is due to be installed in July, which will be followed by re-surfacing the play area and splash park. The exact opening date is yet to be confirmed, but will be communicated as soon as it is established.

We are currently working with engineering consultants Bingham Yates to look at options regarding the damaged river banks in Bitts Park and the Sheepmount, and the damaged access track at the Sheepmount.

Charlotte Terrace play area in Botcherby, which was damaged in the floods is about to be replaced

The flooded allotments are now up and running, following help from the City Council providing skips, relocating washed away sheds and rubbish removal.

2.2 Customer Contact and access to services:

Following the flood the Civic Centre was initially inaccessible to staff and members of the public. The Council was temporarily left without IT systems, phone and web services and has no facilities for meeting and assisting residents and customers.

The recovery of key customer services was one of the first priorities for the CMT. A temporary Customer Services Centre was operational in the Old Town Hall on Monday 7th December (complete with phone lines and functioning web service). The team continued to operate from this site until access to the Civic Centre was secured and arrangements were made for the relocation of this service to Committee Rooms A, B and C on 21st December. Telephone services had also then been fully restored (14th December) in the first floor IT Training Room.

Since this point a more appropriate facility has been secured via the temporary contact centre and Civic reception in the members' car park to the side of the Civic Centre, this facility opened 29th February. This provides all of the services we normally provide and is accommodating some of our partners such as the DWP and passport office. The Customers Services team will continue to occupy these facilities whilst a full recovery of the ground floor and basement of the Civic Centre takes place.

The Call Centre is currently still located on the first floor. The facility is functioning well, efficiently maintaining access to the Council's front of house public services, and delivering other public sector partner services.

2.3 Flood Grants and Household Payments (Figures as Of 3rd June 2016)

Community Support Grant -£500 Household Scheme:

Further to the floods the Government announced an immediate assistance scheme targeted to support households affected by the event. This offered a one off Community Support Grant payment of £500 to each household.

Up to 3rd June 2016, 1,669 households have been confirmed as flooded by Storm Desmond, of these 1,600 are eligible for the £500 community support grant. Of these, 1,553 properties have so far received a payment of £500 each, equating to £776,500 of grant. This is being recovered from the County Council upon submission of fortnightly grant claims.

£5,000 Flood Resilience Grant:

This Government scheme covers both residential and commercial properties (205 businesses were affected by the flood) and is being administered by the Housing Department.

The Council has received 394 grant applications and granted funded measures to 295 properties (5 were not eligible and 94 were incomplete), totalling £1,312,068. Of these the Council has paid out 85 grants totalling £289,308. This is recoverable from the County Council.

Council Tax & NNDR Discount Schemes:

County wide schemes have now been approved with the DCLG paying £400,000 to the County Council to fund the local discretions (second homes/empty properties/flood affected businesses) contained within the County wide schemes.

Districts are submitting monthly claims to recover the costs incurred. Funding for discounts offered in line with the Government Scheme will be paid through a S31 grant directly to us. To date Council tax discounts have been awarded to 2,090 householders this amounts to £773,749.75 up until 31st March 2016; with a further £2.2million awarded in respect of 2016/17.

Business Rates discount has been awarded to 101 businesses, amounting to £239,046.01 to 31st March 2016; and a further £325,000 awarded in respect of 2016/17.

The total number of businesses affected was 205, with 90 properties now being re-occupied.

The total number of households still unable to return to their properties as a result of Storm Desmond is 991.

2.4 City Council Property Assets Recovery

The 2015 flood inflicted widespread and severe damaged to City Council property assets. Since the flood significant effort and expense has been incurred in making safe, assessing, stripping, drying and preparing facilities for full recovery. During this period the Council has been actively involved with our insurance brokers, loss adjusters and insurers to develop our claim for property and contents.

The Council (guided by our insurance brokers) have also employed WYG as programme managers for the first phase of our property recovery.

WYG have assisted the Council to develop a property recovery plan and tackle immediate recovery issues such as making safe and stripping / drying our assets.

A central part of this work to date has been the surveying exercise to establish the post flood condition and reinstatement costs of over 60 assets ranging from the Civic Centre to minor items such as walls and open spaces. The completion of these surveys is now imminent and the next phase of works procurement has begun. This will be the focus of attention during the next month as contractors are secured for key recovery projects.

2.5 Financial Considerations and Activities

Bellwin Claim

Further to the flood event the Government informed authorities affected that they would be entitled to seek financial assistance under the Bellwin scheme.

The Bellwin scheme was introduced in 1983 by Lord Bellwin of Leeds, the then Environment minister. This was later incorporated into Local Government and Housing Act 1989, section 155.

A Bellwin scheme may be activated, at the discretion of the environment secretary,

- when an emergency or disaster involving destruction of or danger to life or property occurs
- and, as a result, one or more local authorities incur expenditure on, or in connection with the taking of immediate action
- or to safeguard life or property or to prevent suffering or severe inconvenience in a local authority's area or among its inhabitants

The current Government has now circulated Bellwin scheme terms for this flood emergency (covering 5th – 28th December 2015).

The Bellwin claim has been submitted and the City Council's total eligible expenditure is £404,398 of which the Council has to meet the first £26,486 (this has been included in the 2015/16 outturn).

The claim also includes £14,984 submitted on behalf of Greystone Community Centre for costs they incurred during the response to the flood.

Along with the claim 257 copy invoices and spreadsheets of overtime claims and additional fuel costs have been submitted as supporting evidence. DCLG will now examine the claim and supporting information. No details are available regarding settlement timescales but hopefully the claim will be settled quickly.

2.6 Car Park recovery

As a result of the flood the following car parks have been damaged across the City Centre:

- Lower Viaduct
- Town Dyke Orchard
- Civic Centre
- Lowther Street
- The Sands
- Bitts Park
- Devonshire Walk
- Paddy's Market
- Swifts Bank

The damage to these sites has been significant with surfaces, lighting, fences and most ticket machines all being affected.

In the immediate aftermath of the event the Council sought to make clear to the public that although our capability to charge for parking had been damaged the city was still open for business and car parks could be used.

Our ability to recover the ticket machines has been hampered by a difficulty in obtaining maintenance support and repair parts from the suppliers. To alleviate this issue our officers have made short term repairs to ensure at least one machine per car park is operational.

A full survey of the car park machines has now been completed noting that 16 of the 27 car park ticket machines were flooded beyond repair. The City Council's Insurance Company have agreed to pay to replace the flood damaged machines. The current model we use the MP 104 has been superseded by the CWT-C. The ambition is to replace both the flood damaged machines and then phase in the replacement of the other 11 machines, to upgrade the 27 to card and cashless payment facilities

We are now procuring the 16 flood damaged machines, the remaining 11 that are out of action (having been scavenged for parts to make the other machines operational) and upgrade 13 of those machines to include card facilities to improve service for our customers.

In addition to the procurement of replacement (but updated) machines Council officers have also undertaken surveys of all car park surfaces, lighting and fences. Repair work has already been completed on a number of sites and a programme of repair and improvement is being prepared. This will come forward to members as part of the car parking business plans for the district.

2.7 Liaison with Environment Agency, County Council and other appropriate bodies

During this last period (March – May 2016) the City Council has played a full role in liaising with the Environment agency, County Council and other groups and bodies.

- Responses to the County Council/Environment Agency on the Section 19 report for Carlisle. The S.19 Report is a statutory report which sets out why Carlisle flooded. A further separate report is expected on the rural areas.
- Cumbria Housing Recovery Sub-Group – Chaired by the City Council's Director of Economic Development and is attended by representatives of all the District Council's; Chair of the Cumbria RSL Group; Environment Agency; DCLG; Cumbria Community Fund and the Development Agency. The group meets monthly and co-ordinates the delivery of the Property Resilience Grants and feeds back to the EA, DCLG and DEFRA on any issues relating to the grant.
- Cumbria Flood Group – led by the Environment Agency the group which has representatives from all organisations including Community groups, Districts and County is involved in developing an Action Plan which will include responding to the Section 19 report.
- Business and Economy Recovery Group led by the Chamber responsible for administering grants to businesses affected.
- Community Recovery Group – Carlisle Community Action Plan. The City Council are working with the EA and the County on a Community Action Plan.

3.0 RECOVERY PROGRAMME – FUTURE ACTIONS

- 3.1 Further to the above initial information, views are requested from Scrutiny members on the future format and content of recovery programme updates.

As the programme develops it is clear that key areas such as costs of recovery, community issues, facility reinstatement will all be of interest to members however to avoid unnecessary work a guide to future areas of interest would assist officers to prepare a useful set of updates.

- 3.2 In addition to this request it should also be noted that an Informal Council session is planned for April 2016 (dates still to be determined) where representatives from key agencies such as the Environment Agency will be invited to present their flood reports and position / direction on future resilience projects and programmes.

Contact Officer: Darren Crossley PA

Ext: 7003

**Appendices
attached to report:**

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- None

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS/RISKS:

Chief Executive's -

Deputy Chief Executive –

Economic Development –

Governance –

Local Environment –

Resources -

**Environment and Economy
Overview and Scrutiny
Panel**

Agenda
Item:
A.4

Meeting Date: 30 June 2016
Portfolio: Finance, Governance and Resources
Key Decision: YES
Within Policy and Budget Framework: YES
Public

Title: DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY - Large Empty 'Hard to Let' Business Premises
Report of: Director of Resources
Report Number: RD 11/16

Purpose / Summary:

The Discretionary Rate Relief proposed amendment would encourage occupation of large 'hard to let' empty business premises and would support the Council's Economic Development objectives set out in the Carlisle Plan.

It would also help the Council compete with other Local Authorities offering similar schemes in an attempt to attract new businesses to Carlisle and provide an appropriate and important counterbalance to Kingmoor Enterprise Zone.

Recommendations:

E&E O&S is asked to consider and comment on the proposed amendment to the City Council's Discretionary Rate Relief Policy as set out in appendix 2 section (4) for the reasons detailed in the report.

Tracking

Executive:	
Overview and Scrutiny:	30 June 2016
Council:	

DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY - Large Empty 'Hard to Let' Business Premises

1. Introduction:

- 1.1 Currently the council is allowing re-occupation relief in granting a 50% discount from business rates for new occupants of previously empty retail premises. This is allowed for 18 months with the cost of relief met by Government Grant. The scheme finishes on the 31st March 2016 (unless the Government extends the scheme in its 16th March Budget).
- 1.2 The scheme helped in getting hard to let retail premises occupied (particularly in Earls Lane). However it did/does nothing to assist in getting hard to let offices and other commercial premises occupied. The Council currently has 32 large commercial premises empty (see appendix 1).
- 1.3 Getting such hard to let commercial properties occupied will become more difficult with the introduction of the Enterprise Zone due to the rate free incentives offered to businesses moving into Kingmoor Park.
- 1.4 Other Authorities are now taking advantage of new discretions under section 69 (5) of the Localism Act 2011 to encourage new businesses into their districts by offering 'rate holidays' when occupying empty commercial premises.
- 1.5 Due to the fact that any decision to offer such discretionary rate relief can only be made if considered reasonable having regard to the interests of Council Tax payers the main beneficiaries would be firms bringing employment opportunities to Carlisle.

2 How Such a Rate Relief Scheme Might Work:

- 2.1 In the Carlisle Plan the Council actively promotes Economic Development. Under actions supporting the plan the Council could actively support businesses looking to relocate to Carlisle with a package of assistance including a rate free holiday, for occupying empty difficult to let commercial property and other incentives e.g. subsidised parking. The businesses would need to commit to Carlisle for a minimum of 5 years and create job opportunities and other benefits for the Carlisle economy.

3 How Much Would Such a Relief Scheme Cost and How Funded?

- 3.1 Discretionary Rate Relief for such a scheme would be met by the 'Collection Fund' i.e. 50% by Government, 10% by County and 40% by the City Council.
- 3.2 However due to the workings of the Localised Business Rates Scheme in many circumstances the scheme would be self-financing in the medium to long term. This

is because landlords of large empty commercial properties usually take advantage of empty rate rules to minimise business rate exposure. The worked example below demonstrates this.

3.3 Rates paid on property with RV of £100,000

	£ PA
- Empty Rate Payable (maximising relief)	17,200
- Two years rate holiday met by City Council	39,760
- Years three onwards rates payable by occupier	49,700

Share of Rates Income:

	Empty	Occupied	
City Council	6,880	19,880	*increased income 13,000
County Council	1,720	4,970	*increased income 3,250
Government	8,600	24,850	*increased income 16,250

* Under current pooling arrangements, City Council and County Council would receive a bigger share of occupied rates in the first year of any growth (new rates income). Thereafter, the new rates are built into the baseline and split in the proportions above.

In this example the cost to the Council of giving 2 years rates free relief is £39,760. However increased rates income to the Council from year three onwards is £13,000. The cost of the empty rate discretion is repaid in 3 years i.e. £39,760 ÷ £13,000.

3.4 The Council would fund its cost of granting discretionary relief via an invest to save arrangement on its NNDR collection fund arrangements.

3.5 These are some risks to the invest to save proposals:

- The business needs to occupy for more than 5 years for the Council to recoup its share of rate relief.
- Any change to the sharing arrangements between City and the County would mean it would take longer to recoup costs.

4. Scheme Details:

4.1 Subject to members agreeing this discretionary empty rate holiday initiative, the Council's discretionary rate relief needs to be drafted to cover

- Definition of hard to let empty commercial premises (see policy appendix 2)
- 5 year commitment of business to the City
- Jobs likely to be created
- Other benefits to Carlisle relocation

- Other assistance that can be offered in any relocation package (out with Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme)

4.2 Set out at appendix 2 is suggested draft amendments to the Council's discretionary rate relief scheme to enable the Executive to consider applications.

5. Summary:

5.1 The Discretionary Rate Relief proposal would encourage occupation of large 'hard to let' commercial premises and would support the Council's Economic Development objectives set out in the Carlisle Plan.

5.2 It would also help the Council compete with other Local Authorities offering similar schemes in an attempt to attract new businesses to Carlisle and provide an appropriate and important counterbalance to Kingmoor Enterprise Zone.

6. Recommendations:

6.1 The Executive is asked to consider the proposed amendment to the City Council's Discretionary Rate Relief Policy as set out in appendix 2 section (4) for the reasons detailed in the report before recommendations to the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel, Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel, and Council.

6.2 Members are asked to note that any applications for discretionary rate relief under the revised policy will be considered by the Executive on an individual basis who will determine, in considering a Business wanting to locate to Carlisle proposals, whether this is in the interests of Carlisle City Council Tax Payers before considering granting discretionary rate relief.

Contact Officer: Peter Mason

Ext: 7270

Appendices

attached to report:

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- None

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS/RISKS:

Chief Executive's – SMT are fully supportive of the proposals.

Economic Development – The proposed policy would act to significantly bolster efforts to secure inward investment through providing a direct incentive and therefore enhanced offer. Success in this regard would directly support the corporate priority to support business growth and economic prospects for the people of Carlisle. In a more local context the proposed policy would importantly act to guard against any unintended negative consequences of the Kingmoor Park Enterprise Zone through ensuring existing employment locations can reasonably compete with it and in doing so maintain their diversity and vibrancy.

Governance – Awards such as rate relief are required to comply with the EU law on State Aid. State Aid is financial support which is provided by the State to business organisations and is generally prohibited and unlawful. There are, however, a number of exemptions and the relevant exemption in circumstances such as the one described is De Minimis Aid.

It will, therefore, be necessary for each ratepayer who is awarded relief to complete a declaration stating whether they have received any other De Minimis Aid in the current or two previous financial years, including any other Rate Relief they may have received on other property(s). The declaration will include confirmation that the award does not exceed the amount an undertaking can receive under the De Minimis Regulations EC 1407/2013.

The Discretionary Rate Relief Policy is a policy reserved to the Council under Article 4 of its Constitution. As such, any amendment must follow the Budget & Policy Framework procedure rules with any amendment, ultimately, being approved by Council.

Local Environment – NA

Resources - This report identifies changes to the Discretionary Rate Relief policy. Under previous arrangements the Council funded all discretionary reliefs out of its General Fund budget. However, since the introduction of Business Rate Retention and the Localism Act, all reliefs are funded through the Collection Fund and distributed under the proportions outlined therein between the City Council, County Council and Central Government. As any unfunded (not specifically met by Section 31 of the Localism Act) discretionary reliefs are split between the main preceptors, the cost of any new reliefs is limited to the 40% share of the Business Rate Collection Fund the Council benefits from. The report highlights that undertaking this new policy will be a cost to the Collection Fund in the period where a rate holiday is given, but will be recouped in following years should the new business stay in situ. There are wider economic growth considerations to be considered too, in that further business rate benefits may be gained by increasing capacity in areas through increased employment and footfall. This in turn may lead to additional businesses paying rates in the longer term.

The City Council's budget for 2016/17 anticipates additional income of £660,000 from business rates over and above the Government set funding baseline (£3.052m). Forecasts for business rate income in 2015/16 show that this will be achievable and would not be adversely affected by this policy.

Future changes to the Business Rate Retention system will need to be considered as and when they occur to ensure the policy remains fit for purpose. The implementation of a revaluation of business rates is scheduled for April 2017, and further changes to the retention scheme are planned with 100% retention locally anticipated by 2020.

**EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE
EXECUTIVE
HELD ON 4 APRIL 2016**

EX.25/16 DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY – LARGE EMPTY ‘HARD TO LET’ BUSINESS PREMISES
(Key Decision)

(With the consent of the Chairman, and in accordance with Rule 15 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules; and Regulation 10 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 this item was included on the Agenda as a Key decision, although not in the Notice of Executive Key Decisions)

Portfolio Finance, Governance and Resources

Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel Environment and Economy; and
Resources

Subject Matter

The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder submitted report RD.60/15 concerning the City Council’s Discretionary Rate Relief Policy. He informed Members that the matter was included on the Agenda as a Key Decision under the above mentioned Procedure Rules and with the permission of the Leader.

The Portfolio Holder indicated that, as Members were aware, currently the Council was allowing re-occupation relief in granting a 50% discount from business rates for new occupants of previously empty retail premises. That was allowed for 18 months with the cost of relief met by Government Grant. The scheme finished on 31 March 2016.

Whilst the scheme helped in getting hard to let retail premises occupied (particularly in Earls Lane), it did nothing to assist in terms of the occupation of hard to let offices and other commercial premises. Although the Council was bucking the trend in terms of vacant properties, 32 large commercial premises were currently empty (Appendix 1). The Executive wished to bring those premises back into use in order to attract jobs to the City and recoup relevant rates. The introduction of the Enterprise Zone would exacerbate difficulties in bringing such hard to let commercial properties into occupation due to the rate free incentives offered to businesses moving into Kingmoor Park.

Other authorities were now taking advantage of new discretions under Section 69 (5) of the Localism Act 2011 to encourage new businesses into their districts by offering ‘rate holidays’ when occupying empty commercial premises. The City Council needed to be in a position to offer similar incentives if it wished to compete with those authorities.

Due to the fact that any decision to offer such discretionary rate relief could only be made if considered reasonable having regard to the interests of Council Tax payers the main beneficiaries would be firms bringing employment opportunities to Carlisle.

The Portfolio Holder indicated that in the Carlisle Plan the Council actively promoted Economic Development. Under actions supporting the Plan the Council could actively support businesses looking to relocate to Carlisle with a package of assistance including a rate free holiday, for occupying empty difficult to let commercial property and other incentives e.g. subsidised parking. The businesses would need to commit to Carlisle for a minimum of 5 years and create job opportunities and other benefits for the Carlisle economy.

He further explained that Discretionary Rate Relief for such a scheme would be met by the 'Collection Fund' i.e. 50% by Government, 10% by the County Council and 40% by the City Council. However, due to the workings of the Localised Business Rates Scheme, in many circumstances the scheme would be self-financing in the medium to long term. The Council would fund its cost of granting discretionary relief via an invest to save arrangement on its NNDR collection fund arrangements. Details of the risks associated with invest to save proposals were highlighted for the benefit of Members.

The Portfolio Holder added that, subject to Members agreeing the discretionary empty rate holiday initiative, the Council's Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme needed to be drafted to cover:

- Definition of hard to let empty commercial premises
- 5 year commitment of business to the City
- Jobs likely to be created
- Other benefits to Carlisle relocation
- Other assistance that could be offered in any relocation package (outwith Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme)

Suggested draft amendments to the Council's Scheme were provided at Appendix 2.

The Portfolio Holder said that, in his view, the report constituted a very positive way forward and continued the Executive's efforts and ambitions to bring new business and economic growth to the City.

In conclusion the Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder moved the recommendations. In so doing, he emphasised that a key point of note was that any applications for discretionary rate relief under the revised Policy would be considered by the Executive on an individual basis.

The Leader formally seconded the report commenting that the proposal looked forward to growing the City and the provision of good quality jobs which were very much needed.

Summary of options rejected none

DECISION

That the Executive:

1. Had considered the proposed amendment to the City Council's Discretionary Rate Relief Policy as set out in Appendix 2 Section (4) for the reasons detailed in Report RD.60/15 before referring it to the Resources and Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panels for consideration and comment back to the Executive before a recommendation to Council.
2. Noted that any applications for discretionary rate relief under the revised Policy would be considered by the Executive on an individual basis who would determine, in considering a Business wanting to locate to Carlisle proposals, whether that was in the interests of Carlisle City Council Taxpayers before considering granting discretionary rate relief.

Reasons for Decision

The Discretionary Rate Relief proposal would encourage occupation of large 'hard to let' commercial premises and would support the Council's Economic Development objectives set out in the Carlisle Plan

It would also help the Council compete with other Local Authorities offering similar schemes in an attempt to attract new businesses to Carlisle and provide an appropriate and important counterbalance to Kingmoor Enterprise Zone

Report to Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Agenda Item:
A.5

Meeting Date: 30 June 2016
 Portfolio: Finance, Governance and Resources
 Key Decision: No
 Within Policy and Budget Framework YES
 Public / Private Public
 Title: END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT 2015/16
 Report of: Policy and Communications Manager
 Report Number: PC 10/16

Purpose / Summary:

This Performance Report updates the Panel on the Council’s service standards that help measure performance. It also includes updates on key actions contained within the new Carlisle Plan.

Details of each service standard are in the table in Section 1. The table illustrates the cumulative end of year figure, a month-by-month breakdown of performance and, where possible, an actual service standard baseline that has been established either locally or nationally. The updates against the actions in the Carlisle Plan follow on from the service standard information in Section 2. At the request of some Members at previous O&S Panels, Freedom of Information figures for the year have also been included as part of Section 1.

Recommendations:

1. Consider the performance of the City Council presented in the report with a view to seeking continuous improvement in how the Council delivers its priorities.

Tracking

Executive:	04 July 2016
Overview and Scrutiny:	Community – 09 June 2016 Resources – 16 June 2016 Economy and Environment – 30 June 2016
Council:	N/A

1. BACKGROUND

Service standards were introduced at the beginning of 2012/13. They provide a standard in service that our customers can expect from the City Council and a standard by which we can be held to account. The measures of the standard of services are based on timeliness, accuracy and quality of the service we provide in areas that have a high impact on our customers.

Regarding the information on the Carlisle Plan, the intention is to give the Panel a brief overview of the current position without duplicating the more detailed reporting that takes place within the Overview and Scrutiny agendas and Portfolio Holder reports.

The report is slightly different from those of earlier in the year as it contains information against the new priorities / activities contained in the new Carlisle Plan 2015-18.

At the request of some Members at previous O&S Panels, Freedom of Information figures for the year have also been included as part of Section 1.

2. PROPOSALS

None

3. CONSULTATION

The report was reviewed by the Senior Management Team on 10 May 2016 and will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels on the following dates:

Community – 09 June 2016

Resources – 16 June 2016

Economy and Environment – 30 June 2016

4. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel is asked to comment on the End of Year Performance Report prior to it being submitted to Executive.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

Detail in the report

Contact Officer:	Steven O’Keeffe	Ext: 7258
	Gary Oliver	7430
	Martin Daley	7508

Appendices attached to report: **None**

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- **None**

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS/RISKS:

Chief Executive’s – Responsible for monitoring and reporting on service standards, customer satisfaction and progress in delivering the Carlisle Plan whilst looking at new ways of gathering and reviewing customer information.

Economic Development – Responsible for managing high level projects and team level service standards on a day-to-day basis.

Governance – Responsible for corporate governance and managing team level service standards on a day-to-day basis.

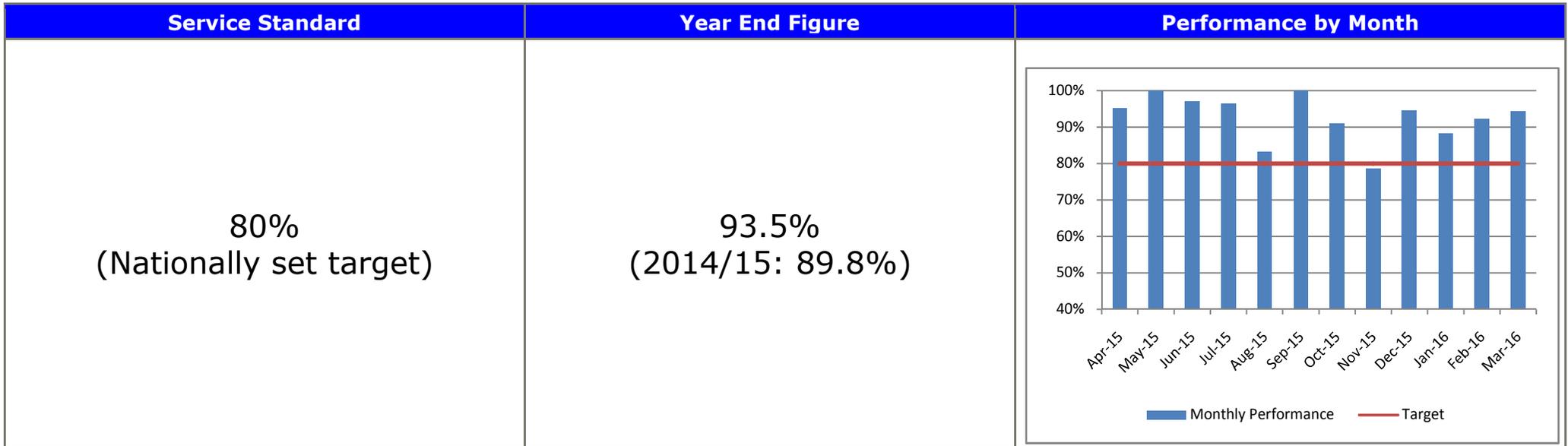
Local Environment – Responsible for managing high level projects and team level service standards on a day-to-day basis.

Resources – Responsible for managing high level projects team level service standards on a day-to-day basis.

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SECTION 1: 2015/16 SERVICE STANDARDS

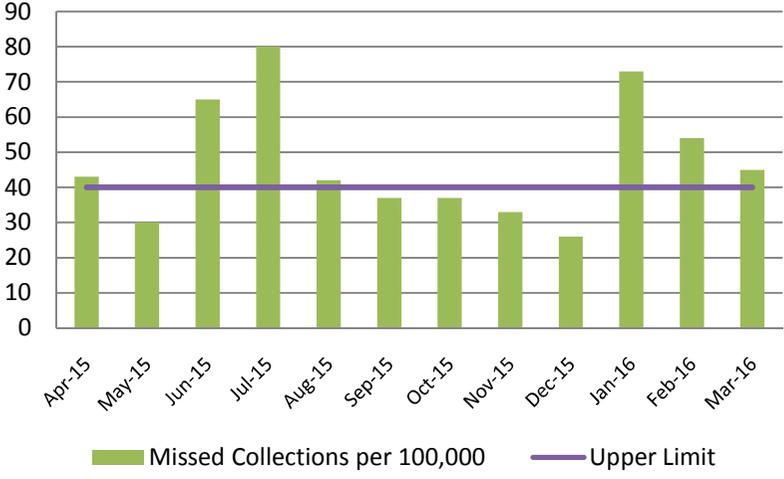
Service Standard: Percentage of Household Planning Applications processed within eight weeks



278 household planning applications were received during 2015/16. This compares with the following:

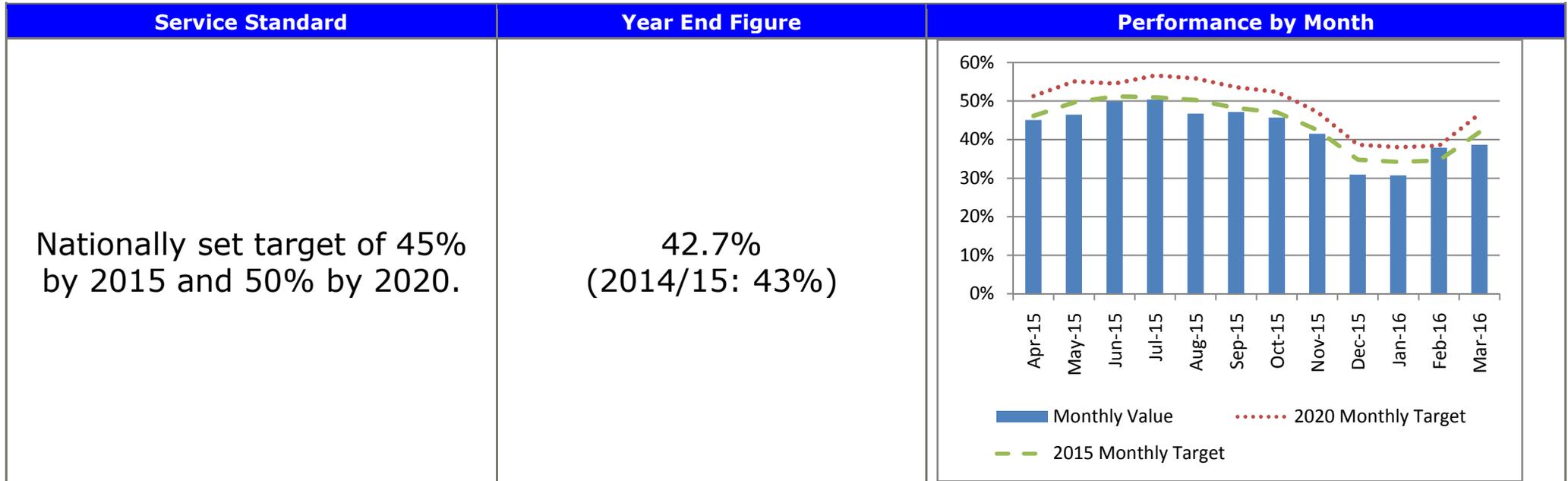
- 2014/15 = 235
- 2013/14 = 189

Service Standard: Number of missed waste or recycling collections

Service Standard	Year End Figure	Performance by Month																										
<p>40 missed collections per 100,000 (Industry standard)</p>	<p>Average of 49 misses per 100,000 collections per month (2014/15: 36)</p>	 <table border="1"> <caption>Performance by Month Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Month</th> <th>Missed Collections per 100,000</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Apr-15</td><td>43</td></tr> <tr><td>May-15</td><td>30</td></tr> <tr><td>Jun-15</td><td>65</td></tr> <tr><td>Jul-15</td><td>80</td></tr> <tr><td>Aug-15</td><td>42</td></tr> <tr><td>Sep-15</td><td>37</td></tr> <tr><td>Oct-15</td><td>37</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov-15</td><td>33</td></tr> <tr><td>Dec-15</td><td>26</td></tr> <tr><td>Jan-16</td><td>73</td></tr> <tr><td>Feb-16</td><td>54</td></tr> <tr><td>Mar-16</td><td>45</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Month	Missed Collections per 100,000	Apr-15	43	May-15	30	Jun-15	65	Jul-15	80	Aug-15	42	Sep-15	37	Oct-15	37	Nov-15	33	Dec-15	26	Jan-16	73	Feb-16	54	Mar-16	45
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Mar-16	45																											

The council was scheduled to make 4,679,649 collections over the year. All of the crews also worked on special collections during the flood clear up period in January which contributed to a higher than normal number of missed collections.

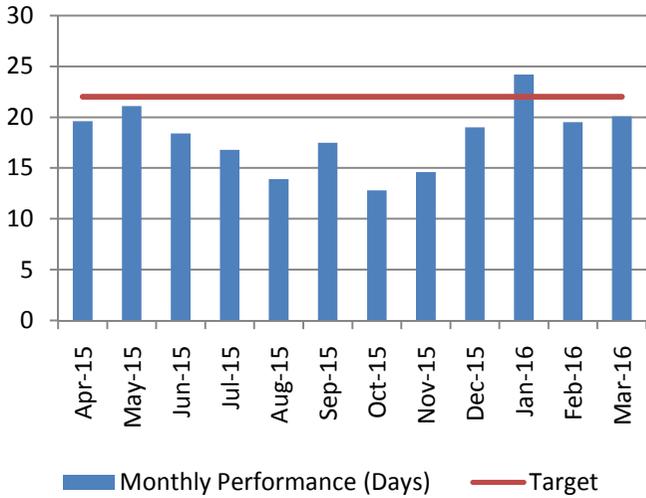
Service Standard: Percentage of household waste sent for recycling



The graph shows the individual months and indicates what was required to achieve the national 2015 target of 45% as well as the 2020 target of 50%. For context, the **estimated** results for other authorities who were affected by the flooding (at 19 May 2016):

- Allerdale 2015/16 = 37.2%
- Copeland 2015/16 = 32.6%

Service Standard: Average number of days to process new benefits claims

Service Standard	Year End Figure	Performance by Month																																							
<p>Average number of new claims should be processed within 22 days</p>	<p>18 days (2014/15 – 27.2 days)</p>	 <table border="1"> <caption>Monthly Performance Data</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Month</th> <th>Monthly Performance (Days)</th> <th>Target (Days)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Apr-15</td><td>19</td><td>22</td></tr> <tr><td>May-15</td><td>21</td><td>22</td></tr> <tr><td>Jun-15</td><td>18</td><td>22</td></tr> <tr><td>Jul-15</td><td>17</td><td>22</td></tr> <tr><td>Aug-15</td><td>14</td><td>22</td></tr> <tr><td>Sep-15</td><td>17</td><td>22</td></tr> <tr><td>Oct-15</td><td>13</td><td>22</td></tr> <tr><td>Nov-15</td><td>14</td><td>22</td></tr> <tr><td>Dec-15</td><td>19</td><td>22</td></tr> <tr><td>Jan-16</td><td>24</td><td>22</td></tr> <tr><td>Feb-16</td><td>19</td><td>22</td></tr> <tr><td>Mar-16</td><td>20</td><td>22</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Month	Monthly Performance (Days)	Target (Days)	Apr-15	19	22	May-15	21	22	Jun-15	18	22	Jul-15	17	22	Aug-15	14	22	Sep-15	17	22	Oct-15	13	22	Nov-15	14	22	Dec-15	19	22	Jan-16	24	22	Feb-16	19	22	Mar-16	20	22
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The blip in performance in January was as a direct result of the floods. Overall 2015/16 has seen a significant improvement in performance which now places the authority in the top two quartiles compared to other local authorities.

Service Standard: Percentage of Corporate Complaints dealt with within timescale

Service Standard	Year End Figure	Total Number of CCs per Directorate
A full response issued to the customer within 15 days of receipt at each stage.	70% (2014/15 – 71%)	Local Environment – 39 Governance – 4 Economic Development – 12 Resources – 10 Chief & Deputy Chief Exec’s Team – 5

The 21 ‘late’ responses were spread across a number of directorates and teams. The policy and processes around Corporate Complaints are currently being reviewed by senior management. A presentation on complaints is scheduled for June’s Management Briefing followed by mandatory training for service managers in the summer.

Freedom of Information Request Summary

Service Standard	Year End Figure	Total Requests 2015/16
20 working days to respond to requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004*	FoI - 91.4% EIR - 85.5%	FoI - 545 EIR - 62

* unless the request is particularly voluminous and complex, where an additional 20 working days may be requested

The FoI requests and responses are all published on the City Council website: <http://www.carlisle.gov.uk/Council/Consultations-and-Open-Data/Freedom-of-Information>

Section 2: Carlisle Plan 2015-18 Summary

PRIORITY – Support business growth and skills development to improve opportunities and economic prospects for the people of Carlisle

Local Plan

Major projects under this priority include the development of the Local Plan 2015-2030 which is an essential building block for future development, whether housing or business. The Local Plan is nearing completion following an independent examination in December and January and subsequent consultation which closed 25 April. Adoption is anticipated summer 2016.

The Local Plan is a key catalyst for growth; however work does not stop with its completion. Further activity to support growth and the economy will continue with:

- Carlisle South Master Plan
- Community Infrastructure Levy
- Supplementary Planning Documents

Durranhill

Major improvement works to Durranhill Industrial Estate are well underway. The Cumbria LEP / HCA funded road and infrastructure improvements bring £2.25m of investment in the estate. This includes new road access which will open up land and enable the development of 26 new industrial units. Environmental enhancements have also resulted in the sale of sites bringing new business to the estate.

Enterprise Zone

Following the successful bid and the Chancellor's announcement in November, the Carlisle Enterprise Zone was formally established on 1 April 2016. Having an Enterprise Zone shows that Carlisle is business friendly and up for growth. The aim is to attract new business to the area with a range of discounts and 100% enhanced capital allowance for plant and machinery. The Carlisle Enterprise Zone at Kingmoor Park offers 122ha ready for development and will potentially generate 2,590 jobs over its lifetime.

H & H

In April 2015, the disposal of Rosehill car park was completed to H&H who propose to redevelop the site to incorporate a new retail unit for Pioneer, 20,000sq ft. of new industrial units and a 350 space car park. Approximately 50 FTEs will be created by the £3.5m investment in this project.

Carlisle Economic Partnership

The City Council continues to work closely with public and private sector partners through the Carlisle Economic Partnership (CEP). The two key themes identified in their action plan are skills and infrastructure.

Understanding the opportunities arising from BEC and other major infrastructure projects in West Cumbria has been a driver behind the focus on skills. The CEP held Carlisle's first Skills Summit (*28 January 2016*) to discuss the challenges facing Carlisle and Cumbria in addressing skills gaps to meet the needs of local businesses as well as those required to deliver these major projects.

The focus for the next 12 months will be to further develop an Economic Action Plan and a Skills Strategy for Carlisle which fits with the Cumbria Strategy and supports key economic opportunities for growth such as the Enterprise Zone and Carlisle Airport.

Local Enterprise Partnership

Engagement with Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (Cumbria LEP) and Centre of Nuclear Excellence (CoNE) continues to be vital in supporting the CEP key priorities for Carlisle of Infrastructure, Skills and Housing to help deliver growth.

PRIORITY - Further develop sports, arts and cultural facilities to support the health and wellbeing of our residents.

Sports Activation Fund

The flooding in December affected the City Council managed Community Sport Activation Fund (CSAF) programme for the last month of 2015 and the early period of 2016.

Further swimming sessions have commenced which are attracting variety of family members to engage on a weekly basis.

The boxing men's and women's sessions continue to be a great success. The boxing club we work with for this session have been instrumental in this a success. We have also complimented another funded programme through sport which is being delivered through a 'Health Bus'. As a result we have started a community session for those who have engaged and who requested physical activity as a real need.

6,799 participants have taken part in our projects over the last year.

We are in the last few months of the CSAF programmes. The funding from Sport England and Carlisle City Council finishes in June 2016. We are looking at how to make the key programmes and activities sustainable with the support of partners.

Tourism

The Old Town Hall / TIC Phase 2 refurbishment was completed summer 2015. The upgrade of the existing Tourist Information Centre (TIC) provides improved access from street level to the first floor and improvements to the internal fabric of the building has provided the facilities to enable the TIC to act as the gateway to Carlisle's Historic and Cultural attractions. The TIC plays an important role in orientating visitors, providing information on key historic assets and the wider offer, showcasing Carlisle.

The overall aim of phase 2 was to increase interpretation and modernise the service to be more customer friendly and fit for purpose. Given the breadth of the customer base, consideration given to the range of media used to communicate the information and interpretation to the widest possible audience. There are two information points which customers can use to browse at their leisure for up-to-date information on local attractions. The three screens incorporated within the discovery wall provide an opportunity for advertising and displaying information on events

which are taking place in the city. The projector screens on the six windows provide a unique opportunity to promote what is “GREAT” about Carlisle after hours.

The Assembly Room has been sympathetically restored back to its former glory by exposing the original fireplace, extending the panels on the ceiling, improving the lightening and refurbishing the window bays. The room now is a beautiful light and airy space that adapts itself well to any event that is taking place.

Old Fire Station

The Old Fire Station was flooded in December 2015 and remains closed. Initial clean up works are complete and it is anticipated the venue will reopen later in 2016. The majority of planned acts and shows have had to be cancelled but one act was successfully relocated to Harraby Community Centre.

Healthy City

This year has seen a variety of work and projects advance with support of our communities. Headline activities include:

- A restructure and refocus of the Healthy City Steering Group:
 - New terms of reference have been written for the Healthy City Steering Group and with that a refresh of the current membership. We welcome newly appointed members from North Cumbria University Hospital Trust, Adult Social Care, Children’s Services, Cumbria Partnership Foundation Trust and the Local Area Committee.
 - A number of workshops have taken place to identify an evidence based approach to key programmes of work within the Carlisle District.
 - Partners have been involved in a Health Impact Assessment on the Carlisle Health Plan to ensure it addresses the Health needs of the Carlisle
- Walking:
 - The development of two, 6 month walking for health programmes, with referrals from a number of organisations within the district.
 - Walk leader training courses to build capacity in the community and secure more volunteers,
 - The development of a several “next step” Tuesday Trundle walking programmes throughout the year
 - Funding to explore the reprint of the Carlisle Doorstep Walk Packs.

- The development of a Mental Health Project and consultation with Young people in Carlisle
- Influencing the Carlisle Plan to include a sub Health policy/section – embedding the
- The development of a number of Food projects via Carlisle Food City, including Fair Meals Direct – delivering freshly made meals to our most vulnerable populations, Fair Food Carlisle – supplying local fresh food to businesses and organisations throughout Carlisle
- New Local Healthy Option Award signatories – promoting the use of local and healthy menus in our independent food businesses.
- The development of data and intelligence profiles for the Carlisle district and contribution to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.
- The scoping of priorities for the Carlisle district, focusing on an evidence based approach, including small grant funded projects (focusing on health city priorities) and a larger project on the workplace and worklessness agenda.
- The scoping of how the District Councils contribute to the Public Health agenda
- A community led Health Mela in Carlisle City Centre featuring several organisations with a health focus
- An international Health conference held in Carlisle – The World Health Innovation Summit
- Acceptance of Carlisle Healthy City projects at the Annual Business and Technical Conference in Finland, promoting the work and district at an international level.
- Funding to pilot a Health and Social Care Coordinators project
- A City Council Health and wellbeing day / programme of activities and training to improve wellbeing

The Carlisle Partnership

The Carlisle Partnership continues to work with partners across public, private, voluntary and community sector, all of whom play an active role in supporting and developing projects and agendas across the city, as well as responding to challenges that the City face. We are grateful for the added value that each partner contributes to making this City greater and thankful for the positive contributions of partners during the floods.

The Partnership continues to focus on advancing the agendas of the 7 priority subgroups (Healthy City Steering Group, Carlisle Economic Partnership, Carlisle Housing Partnership, Community Safety Partnership, Carlisle Food City, Carlisle Youth Council and the Rural Support Group) to maximise outcomes for the Carlisle District.

PRIORITY - Continue to improve the quality of our local environment and green spaces so that everyone can enjoy living, working in and visiting Carlisle.

Successes to date have included a significant improvement in the reduction in dog fouling visible on the streets. The launch of the “We are Watching You” campaign and the continued programme on education and enforcement delivered by the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team is targeted to continue this improvement. February 2016 saw the start of the pilot ‘Neat Streets’ initiative focussing on engaging with residents with the aim of cleaning up un-adopted back lanes where there was a history of fly-tipping, littering and dog fouling. The areas will continue to be monitored and enforcement action taken as necessary.

A different approach to street cleaning this year with street cleaning staff visiting the streets adjacent to every primary school in the urban areas each day before the school day starts to pick up any litter, clear any dog fouling and remove broken glass before children arrive in the morning. Should patterns of littering or dog fouling emerge then the timing will be reviewed to ensure that our services remain intelligence led backed up with enforcement and education.

The ‘Rethinking Waste’ project continues to be developed with the aim of introducing service improvements from April 2017. This includes the development of a potential new two year apprenticeship programme to create employment and training opportunities for young people as well as enhancing service provision.

The clean-up and recovery activity continued into this quarter following the December flooding and additional resources were brought in to maintain acceptable cleansing standards across Carlisle. This involved using additional mechanical road sweepers and additional staffing.

Some of the highlights from the Green Spaces Team include:

Parks

- Talkin Tarn – various on site improvements including refurbishment of the tearoom, new furniture for the cabin, repairs to the waterfront after winter storms, woodland and hedgerow management.

- Rickerby Park – repairing storm damage to the park ahead of the new grazing season – removing flood debris, repairing fence lines, replacing tree cradles, new planting.
- Woodland management -notably work undertaken in Heysham Park, Etterby, Durranhill and Kingmoor Nature Reserve – making these sites safer for visitors

Play Areas

10 play areas improved with a combination of new equipment and/or safety surfacing under the Play Areas Review strategy:

- St James' park – see-saw & new climber
- Parkland Village – new rocker and surfacing
- Hammond's Pond – see-saw & roundabout
- Yewdale Park – springer
- Spider Park – wet pour repairs
- Briar Bank & Jubilee Road – redecoration of paintwork
- Irthing Park, Pasture Walk & Clarks Field play areas – wet pour repairs

Site Management:

- Bitts Park improvements including installation of access control gates and bollards, resurfacing of events area, car park
- Melbourne Park car park improvements
- Resurfacing around St James' Park bowling green

Allotments:

- Cleared Welsh Road as part of 'Give a Day to the City'
- Cleared Botcherby 3, 4 and 5
- Let approximately 20 unoccupied sites

Bereavement services:

- A total of 1458 cremations carried out during the year 2015-16
- A total of 367 burials carried out during 2015-16 (includes cremated remains)
- Headstone safety checking and remedial action completed for Stanwix cemetery (approx. 550 individual memorials)

PRIORITY - Address current and future housing needs to protect and improve residents' quality of life.

The "Demonstration Project" approved by Executive on 24 August will deliver approximately 40 new affordable homes on a Council owned site at Beverley Rise, Harraby. Riverside have been awarded the tender to develop and manage the scheme, which will provide onsite development training opportunities for students from Carlisle College.

Executive approved the new Low Cost Home Ownership policy on 14 July for the 300+ properties on the Council's register. This gives a greater priority to households in the greatest need for particular property types.

Active Promotion of Carlisle to the Development Industry has been ongoing in partnership with the adjoining Districts and Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, to showcase Cumbria (including Carlisle) to house builders and other related investors.

The City Council continues to work in partnership with local Housing Association partners to address housing need.

These and other housing related projects will continue in the new priority.

In the financial year 2015/2016, Carlisle City Council delivered Disabled Adaptations to 78 households. Total spend for the year was £487,147.18 from an allocated spend of £777,764. The team delivering the disabled adaptations have seen a reduction year on year in the number of DFG referrals from Cumbria County Council since 2012. The exact reasons for this trend is unknown and goes against the grain given that we know the population of Cumbria and the Carlisle district are ageing. It maybe that the referrals have slowed down following the introduction of the Care Act or the ageing population are more affluent and therefore fail the means test to qualify for a grant.

The allocation to Carlisle under the Better Care Fund, is 1.4 million for the financial year 2016/2017. The team are currently working on ways to encourage take up of the grant.

PRIORITY – Promote Carlisle regionally, nationally and internationally as a place with much to offer - full of opportunities and potential

This is best demonstrated by the many projects and initiatives worked on across the district as part of the Carlisle Partnership and Carlisle Ambassadors.

Carlisle Ambassadors can be defined as, 'A proactive community of passionate individuals, businesses and organisations who participate in projects to raise the profile of Carlisle and make it a better place to live, work and visit.' The Ambassadors have influence and directly 'give a voice' to Carlisle locally, within Cumbria and further afield.'

Meetings are held quarterly and regularly attended by over 220 business people. To date over 130 organisations have become members who are keen to collaborate on projects and support each other to help grow and improve the Carlisle offer.

As well as some of the cross-over work carried out with the Carlisle Partnership and the Ambassadors, the City Council continues to work closely with partners through the Carlisle Economic Partnership (CEP)(as mentioned above), the action plan from which sets out actions to address skills gaps by identifying skills needs for growth and encouraging provision which meets those needs.,

Engagement with Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (Cumbria LEP) and Centre of Nuclear Excellence (CoNE) continues to be vital in supporting the CEP key priorities for Carlisle of Infrastructure, Skills and Housing to help deliver growth.

