

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 2 MARCH 2017 AT 10.00AM

PRESENT: Councillor Nedved (Chairman), Councillors Betton, Bowditch, Burns (as substitute for Councillor Dodd) Christian, Mrs Coleman, McDonald, Mitchelson.

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Bradley – Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder
Mr Nicol – Regeneris Consultancy

OFFICERS: Corporate Director of Economic Development
Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Manager
Investment and Policy Manager
Economy & Enterprise Officer
Policy and Performance Officer
Overview and Scrutiny Officer

EEOSP.13/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Dodd and Councillor Southward, Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder.

EEOSP.14/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

EEOSP.15/17 PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – That the Agenda be agreed as circulated.

EEOSP.16/17 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2017 be noted.

EEOSP.17/17 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented report OS.03/17 providing an overview of matters relating to the work of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reported that the most recent Notice of Executive Key Decisions, copies of which had been circulated to all Members, had been published on 10 February 2017; no items had been referred to the Panel.

The Panel's current work programme was attached as Appendix 1 to the report. Members were asked to note and/or amend the programme. The following items were to be considered by the Panel at its meeting on 20 April 2017: Statement of Community Involvement; Flood Update Report; Carlisle South Masterplan; Update on Clean Carlisle; Rethinking Waste Project (tentative).

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer drew Members attention to the area of the report which detailed the arrangements for the production of the Annual Scrutiny report which would be circulated to Members for comment via email.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Overview Report (OS.03/17) incorporating the Work Programme and Notice of Executive Key Decision items relevant to this Panel be noted.

2) That the following items be included on the agenda for the Panel's meeting scheduled for 20April 2017:

- Statement of Community Involvement
- Flood Update Report
- Carlisle South Masterplan
- Update on Clean Carlisle
- Rethinking Waste Project (tentative)

EEOSP.18/17 AN ECONOMIC STRATEGY FOR CARLISLE DISTRICT

The Economy and Enterprise Officer submitted report ED.09/17 An Economic Strategy for Carlisle District which set out the background against which the Economic Strategy for Carlisle District was being developed. The Council had commissioned Regeneris Consultants to provide a Growth Sectors Study to indicate the areas of the local economy most likely to experience growth and to identify the requirements of those sectors in terms of land and location.

The Economy and Enterprise Officer outlined the scope of the Economic Strategy, along with the key contributors to Carlisle's Economy, which would be analysed to identify actions to be taken forward by the Council to support the economic activity of the city. A draft timetable for the development of the strategy was included in the report.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Nicol to the meeting.

Mr Nicol delivered a presentation on the emerging findings of the Growth Sector Study covering the context of Carlisle's economic activity and a number of sectors identified by the study as having potential for growth, along with an analysis of those sectors.

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

- Had the University impacted on the economic growth and economic profile of the city?

Mr Nicol responded that workforce statistics indicated that the proportion of the population within the district with a degree level qualification was below the national average, therefore it was difficult to measure the impact of the University on the local economy.

The Corporate Director of Economic Development added that the University had recently appointed a new Vice-Chancellor, and the organisation had developed plans to attract higher student numbers to the organisation. The Council was keen to work with the University in its efforts to increase retention.

- A Member expressed concerns in relation to the impact of an ageing population and lower than average wages on the potential for economic growth within the city.

Mr Nicol agreed with the concerns regarding the increasing age of the population in the District, however, he noted that the issue was a factor in many areas across the country and therefore was not necessarily a bar to economic growth. He noted that the Council was taking action to address this issue through its housing plans which sought to increase housing provision with a view to expanding the working age population. This approach was seen as a far-sighted mechanism for addressing the issues relating to an aging population.

In terms of wage levels, Mr Nicol considered that the nature of skills and qualifications within the working population, along with the employment opportunities available had created an environment where wages were lower than the national average. The Growth Sector Study had indicated that the areas in which the city was most likely to see economic growth were not primarily in high paid sectors. In order to increase average wages, the city would need to attract different types of employment than those currently available.

- Why had Whitehaven not been included in the catchment area map illustrated in the presentation?

Mr Nicol advised that the red-line of the catchment area shown on the map was based on a one hour drive time to the city.

The Policy and Investment Manager added that the map would not be included in the Economic Strategy. Carlisle was the administrative capital of its sub-regional area which people travelled to for employment opportunities.

- A Member felt that the Economic Strategy for Carlisle District needed to incorporate the economic opportunities associated with the Nu-Gen new build nuclear facility at Moorside, particularly in relation to engineering and technical support.

Mr Nicol agreed that the Nu-Gen facility did potentially present a number of economic opportunities for the District in terms of the construction and supply chain activities, however, the timing and profile of those opportunities was not certain.

The Economy and Enterprise Officer considered that it was an opportune time for the Council to develop its Economic Strategy as it would support the district in realising benefits from the creation of the Nu-Gen facility.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder commented that businesses in Carlisle were already involved in the nuclear industry with 90 firms being in the supply chain. She considered that the Council needed to focus its energies on improving the road and rail infrastructure between Carlisle and the Nu-Gen site to improve the connectivity between the two areas.

- Had the Council planned to risk assess the Strategy in relation to the Nu-Gen site?

The Policy and Investment Manager explained that as the city operated in a competitive economic market, the Strategy would seek to build on economic strengths through a targeting of the Council's resources. The Strategy would provide focus to the Council's economic support activity in an attempt to ensure that the maximum benefits were realised.

In relation to the Nu-gen project, it was anticipated that some works would need to be undertaken in a city location which Carlisle was able to provide.

The Corporate Director of Economic Development added that there were a number of factors outwith the Council's control in relation to the Nu-Gen project, for example the number of workers required to carry out the construction, and the associated housing. Allerdale Borough Council's Economic Strategy identified Carlisle as the centre within Cumbria, and as the main driver for economic growth.

- Was the impact of Brexit likely to affect the development of a skilled workforce in Carlisle?

The Corporate Director of Economic Development responded that the impact of Brexit was an issue which would affect the whole District and its businesses. Although the implications of Brexit were not clear, the Director advised that she was maintaining a watching brief on the developing political debate in relation to the matter.

- How did the Council plan to engage with the local MP to support economic growth?

The Corporate Director of Economic Development replied that the Council worked with the MP on a range of matters which supported the city's economic growth. For example, the success of the Council's Garden Village bid had been predicated on gaining the MP's support.

The Policy and Investment Manager added that the success of the Garden Village had generated a lot of interest from government agencies and consequently had raised the profile of the city at a national level.

- How would the Strategy align with the Carlisle District Local Plan 2015 – 30 and the Local Development Scheme?

The Policy and Investment Manager advised that the Carlisle District Local Plan provided certainty to developers and increased confidence. It was envisaged that a central aspect of the Strategy would be an action plan identifying appropriate areas where works would be permitted.

- How would the Council address any areas of conflict between the Strategy and the Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) agenda?

The Corporate Director of Economic Development stated that she did not anticipate areas of conflict between the Strategy and the Local Enterprise Partnership agenda, however, in the event that any conflict occurred, she anticipated that discussions would be held to address the issues.

The Member noted that the LEP had been relatively unsuccessful in its recent bids for government funding for economic projects in the county, in this context he asked how the Council expected to be successful.

The Corporate Director of Economic Development responded that the Council was clear on the benefits that it was able to bring to the economic growth of the city; she felt that it was important for the Council to support the LEP.

Another Member commented that whilst it was important for the Council and LEP to work in partnership, there would be occasions when they engaged in independent projects and in such cases the Council would need to strongly promote its own activities.

- Would the Strategy highlight areas of weakness in the economy?

The Corporate Director of Economic Development advised that this aspect of the Strategy was to be developed.

- A Member requested that the following be added to the list of “Key Contributors to Carlisle’s Economy” as detailed in the report:
 - Broadband;
 - Carlisle Airport.
- The Chairman asked how the Panel was able to contribute to the developing Strategy and on what timescale.

The Corporate Director of Economic Development referred Members to the draft timetable for the development of the strategy contained in the report and indicated that Members may wish to scrutinise the developing Strategy following the consultation phase.

The Chairman noted that the draft timetable indicated that consultation activity and Strategy amendment would be completed in June/July, therefore, he expected a report detailing the consultation responses to be submitted to the Panel at the earliest opportunity.

The Chairman asked if the findings of the Growth Sector Study would be provided to Members.

The Policy and Investment Manager advised that the findings of the Growth Sector Study would be publicly available.

In response to a question from a Member regarding the provision of performance indicators relating to the Strategy, the Corporate Director of Economic Development advised that performance information would be generated in areas where appropriate data could be collated.

RESOLVED – (1) That Mr Nicol be thanked for his presentation.

(2) That report ED.09/17 An Economic Strategy for Carlisle District be noted.

(3) That a report detailing the responses received during the consultation on the Strategy be presented to the Panel at its June/July meeting.

The Panel adjourned at 11:10am and reconvened at 11:20am

EEOSP.19/17 BUSINESS PLAN DEVELOPMENT FOR CARLISLE PARKS

The Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Managers submitted report CS.05/17 Business Plan Development for Carlisle Parks which provided an update on the Talkin Tarn Business Plan and put forward a number of options for consideration in relation to the development of a Business Plan for Bitts Park.

The Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Manager stated that Talkin Tarn had demonstrated the benefits of applying a Business Plan approach to the Council’s Parks. The number of visitors, expressed as the number of car parking tickets sold, had increased by thirty-three percent in the last two years. Further development of the facility was planned with the replacement of the children’s play equipment which was a key visitor attraction.

As detailed in the report, trials of opening of the Boat House Tearoom to 7:30pm had indicated that evening opening was not viable due to staffing costs not being covered by the sales generated.

Regarding section 1.2 of the report, the Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Manager cautioned Members that the options for Bitts Park contained therein were potential ways of developing the Park's Business Plan, however, none of the options were being actively pursued at the time, and were points for discussion.

The Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Manager reminded Members that in terms of the Bitts Park Facility, the Council managed and maintained the site, but it did not operate the income generating aspects of the facility, for example, the Kiosk which was operated by Greenwich Leisure Limited.

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

- A Member agreed that it was not viable for the Tearoom to open regularly in the evening, however, he felt there should be flexibility during busier times of the year to extend the opening hours as necessary to cater for customers using the Tarn facilities.
Turning to the issue of car parking permits, the Member sought clarification that the number of permits issued was limited.

The Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Manager responded that the number of car parking permits available was to 40. The policy of restricting the number of permits was intentional to ensure that the car parking facilities remained viable. Permit holders were able to use the car park as they wished at a cost of one pound per week, were permits to be issued without limits car parking income would decrease significantly.

He reminded Members that the Charges Review 2017/18 which had been scrutinised by the Panel at its 1 December 2016 meeting had proposed an increase in the cost of the parking permit. At its meeting of 18 January 2017 the Executive had agreed to remove the increased charge from its budget proposal.

Responding to a further question from the Member regarding the renewal of permits, the Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Manager confirmed that permit holders were able to apply to renew their permits, but the terms and conditions did not guarantee a renewed permit would be issued.

A number of Members expressed concern in relation to the restricted number of car park permits available.

The Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Manager acknowledged the concerns and advised that the Council did not wish to be in a position where it was required to turn people down, however, it was essential that the car park at Talkin Tarn remained cost effective.

In response to a question from a Member, the Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Manager confirmed that car park permits for Talkin Tarn, as with all other Council car park permits were issued on a first come first serve basis.

The Chairman asked if the situation with the permits at Talkin Tarn, which had elicited a large number of responses to the Council's Budget consultation, would be kept under review.

The Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Manager advised that as part of the Council's Charges Review process, he would be required to report on the matter later on in the year.

- The Chairman asked what actions had been delivered from the Talkin Tarn Marketing Strategy.

The Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Manager advised that Talkin Tarn now operated a facebook page and had a small budget for advertising. He undertook to follow up on identifying what work had been undertaken to advertise the facility at Brampton Railway Station.

- Was it the Council's intention to stage further drama productions at Talkin Tarn?

The Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Manager confirmed that the Council was prepared to put on further performances, however, he cautioned that the success of such events was weather dependent.

- Were there plans for transport from Carlisle to Talkin Tarn to be introduced.

The Bereavement Services Manager explained that the Council did not have the resources to support the provision of transport services to the Tarn, therefore the provision of any future services would be from a private provider.

- A Member requested that as part of the Council's Leisure Contract Retender exercise, consideration be given to the bringing the operation of the income generating aspects of Bitts Park back in house

Another Member advised that he understood tenders had already been submitted to the Council in respect of the Leisure Contract and therefore the time for such considerations may have passed.

The Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Manager undertook to discuss the matter with the relevant Officers.

- Why had newly created parks not been supplied with litter bins?

The Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Manager explained that the Council had conducted a bin audit to identify hotspots where bins were required. The supply of additional bins added to the maintenance burden of the Council which was required to service the bins, therefore in order to minimise additional costs the Council aimed to provide new bins in hotspot areas which would be well used. He added that education which encouraged people to dispose of their litter responsibly was another important aspect of minimising litter in the city.

- What consideration had Officers given to Sport Pitches as part of the development of Business Plans for Carlisle Parks?

The Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Manager informed Members that the Council operated 27 pitches in the District (not including Sheepmount or the Tennis Courts at Bitts Park which were operated by Greenwich Leisure Limited), which it hired out to local sports

clubs. The Council took responsibility for maintaining the pitches at a cost of £60,000, the income generated from the hiring of pitches was £8,500, which amounted to the Council providing a good deal of support to local sports clubs.

- How did the development of the Business Plan for Carlisle Parks align with the Green Infrastructure Strategy?

The Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Manager explained that the Green Infrastructure Strategy had been developed in conjunction with the Carlisle and District Local Plan. The Strategy outlined the contribution green infrastructure was able to make to the health and wellbeing of the city and tied in with the work to develop Business Plans for the parks in the District which also sought to improve public health outcomes in the city. The Council in conjunction with partner agencies was looking to identify new ways of managing its green spaces and improving public health outcomes.

- Was the Council able to consider providing individual park's budgets?

The Green Spaces and Bereavement Service Manager advised that it would be feasible to attribute some aspects of the overall budget for parks to individual facilities, however, some costs such as grass cutting would be more problematic to identify the cost per park.

The Member responded that he felt it would aid scrutiny if budget information was provided on a park by park basis.

Another Member agreed that it would be useful for Members to have individual budget information on those parks with Business Plans to aid their scrutiny, he questioned the usefulness of separating the entire parks budget into individual facilities he felt that doing so may reduce the flexibility of the Council to deploy its resources effectively. He suggested Officers considered creating budgets for the parks based on groups of parks.

The Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Manager responded that the approach proposed above was more workable than operating individual budgets and would enable the Council to give greater consideration to the public health agenda.

- Did the Council intend to develop individual Business Plans for each of the parks in the District?

The Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Manager responded that he did not feel a Business Plan was appropriate for all parks, as a number of the Council's parks were small and did not operate income generating facilities. For the larger facilities such as Talkin Tarn and Bitts Park a Business Plan method of management was appropriate and helped support activities such as the provision of concerts and dramatic productions.

He added that the Council operated a Management Plan for each of its parks which were a tool used by Officers to oversee and maintain the facilities and were reviewed on a regular basis.

- What action was the Council taking to address problems of fly-tipping and river bank erosion in its park facilities.

The Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Manager advised that he understood that responses to reports of flytipping were actioned as soon as practicable. In terms of river

bank erosion responsibility for undertaking remedial works lay with the Lead Local Flood Authority (Cumbria County Council) and the Environment Agency.

Responding to a further question from the Member, the Green Spaces and Bereavement Services Manager explained that the Council was keen to undertake its role in relation to flood prevention activity. He acknowledged the Council had riparian rights in relation to rivers in the District, however, the responsibility for management and maintenance of water ways remained with the Lead Local Flood Authority and the Environment Agency.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Business Plan development for Carlisle Parks report (CS.05/17) be noted.

(2) That the cost of parking permits for Talkin Tarn be kept under review;

(3) That options for extending the opening hours of the Tearoom at Talkin Tarn be kept under review;

(4) That the Panel felt there was scope to develop the Marketing Strategy for Talkin Tarn;

(5) That the Panel wished to see a more fully developed parks plan incorporating a Business Plan for Bitts Park and a more overarching strategy for the remaining parks, at a future meeting of the Panel.

EEOSP.20/17 3rd QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT 2016/17

The Policy and Performance Officer presented report PC.04/17 which updated the Panel on the Council's service standards relevant to the Panel and included updates on key actions contained within the new Carlisle Plan.

The Policy and Performance Officer reported that the table at Section 1 of the report illustrated the cumulative year to date figure, a month by month breakdown of performance and, where possible, an actual service standard baseline that had been established either locally or nationally.

The updates against the actions in the Carlisle Plan followed on from service standard information in Section 2. Attention was drawn to Appendix A of the report which set out the Carlisle Plan Actions aligned to the revised Carlisle Plan on a Page.

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

- A Member commented that with regard to waste recycling it was important that the Council established targets in conjunction with Cumbria County Council to enable meaningful performance monitoring in the future.

The Policy and Performance Officer responded that all data relating to the service standard for waste recycling was now provided to the policy team, where as previously, only headline data had been gathered. Officers did not have access to the County Council's recycling data.

The Panel discussed the various means available to householders to recycle waste and the targets associated with both.

- A Member sought clarification as to how the Council's developing Economic Strategy for Carlisle District would work with the Carlisle Economic Partnership's Economic Action Plan.

The Policy and Performance Officer undertook to provide a written response to the Panel.

- A Member asked that Officers contact Cumbria Constabulary requesting pro-active enforcement of the 30mph speed limit on Castle Way following the installation of the new pedestrian crossing.

RESOLVED—(1) That the 3rd Quarter Performance report 2016/7 (PC.04/17) be noted;

(2) That the Policy and Performance Officer provide a written response on the relationship between the developing Economic Strategy for Carlisle District and the Carlisle Economic Partnership's Action Plan.

EEOSP.21/17 PERFORMANCE MONITORING OPTIONS

The Policy and Performance Officer submitted report PC.06/17 which set out the options for the future presentation of performance information to the Panel.

The Policy and Performance Officer reported that the Carlisle Plan actions had been completed and a suggested mapping of the 43 key actions and projects was submitted to the Panels.

The report proposed that a new reporting regime based on the following principles:

1. A clear programme of work to be presented to the Panels for consideration so that they could select some items for the Panels' work programmes, to include:
 - a. Carlisle Plan actions
 - b. A schedule of policies and strategies to be introduced or reviewed
 - c. Budgetary Framework
2. Overview & Scrutiny focusing on strategy and policy with operational issues being dealt with outside of Panel meetings, through individual Member contact with service managers or Directors.
3. Overview & Scrutiny consider service standards by exception only.

It was anticipated that the proposed approach would reduce the quantity of reports being scrutinised and shift the scrutiny of performance on to policies and strategies. There was still an overview role for the Panels to fulfil in relation to service standard indicators in terms of exceptions. An exception report would detail the interventions taken to bring the performance back into line with the accepted standard.

Improvements to the content of performance reports to Overview and Scrutiny Panels were also proposed. To assist in the preparation of report, relevant Officers would be sent a series of performance questions and key lines of enquiry as soon as the item was added to the Panel's Work Programme. The performance questions were to be drafted by Policy and performance Officers and reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Officer and relevant Chairman. The questions would be sent to the Portfolio Holder, Senior Manager and Lead Officer. The proposed approach would ensure that each report contained a clear section on how the item under scrutiny was performing, the context for the performance and the role the Council played in generating the outputs and outcomes.

The report recommended the following options for further exploration of performance information needs:

- A workshop open to all Scrutiny Members to consider the detail of the proposals Or;
- Work within the Panel to define the information and performance needs of the Annual Work Programme.

The Policy and Performance Officer advised that in considering performance monitoring options: Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel had resolved to undertake a joint workshop and; Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel had resolved to undertake a stand-alone workshop. He added that due to the external focus of both the Environment and Economy and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panels a joint workshop would be beneficial.

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

- A Member felt that in monitoring service standards, overarching information was not useful, he would like the new reporting regime to provide Members with greater detail in relation to specific service standards. He asked how much performance data was currently collated.

The Policy and Performance Officer advised that the level of data collated varied between the individual services standards, however, he was confident that should the Panel require particular information in relation to a specific standard that the necessary data could be collated and reported on.

The Chairman asked what the timescale was for implementing the new reporting system.

The Policy and Performance Officer responded that it was hoped that the new format would be in operation at the beginning of the new Civic Year.

The Panel agreed to hold a joint workshop with the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel to consider the detail of the proposals presented in the report, and that Members of Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel be invited to attend.

RESOLVED – (1) That the performance Monitoring Options(PC.06/17) be noted;

(2) That the Panel agree to a workshop, with the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel, to look at the detail in the proposals presented in report PC.06/17, and that Members of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel be invited to attend.

(The meeting ended at 12:43pm)