

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 29 OCTOBER 2015 AT 10.00AM

PRESENT: Councillor Nedved (Chairman), Councillors Bowditch, Burns (as substitute for Councillor Ms Franklin), Caig, Christian, Dodd and Mitchelson.

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor Colin Glover – The Leader
Councillor Mrs Bradley – Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder
Councillor Mrs McKerrell (Observer)

OFFICERS: Deputy Chief Executive
Director of Economic Development
Director of Local Environment
Environmental Health Manager
Policy and Communications Manager
Neighbourhood Enforcement Team Leader
Overview and Scrutiny Officer

EEOSP.60/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Betton, Councillor Ms Franklin, and Councillor Mrs Martlew – Deputy Leader and Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder.

EEOSP.61/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest in respect of the business to be conducted.

EEOSP.62/15 PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was agreed that the items of business in Part A be dealt with in public and the items of business in Part B be dealt with when the public and press had left the meeting.

EEOSP.63/15 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2015 be noted.

EEOSP.64/15 CALL IN OF DECISIONS

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

EEOSP.65/15 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented report OS.22/15 which provided an overview of matters that related to the work of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reported that the Notice of Executive Key Decisions had been published on 18 September and 16 October 2015.

The following key decisions fell within the remit of the Panel:

KD.35/15 – Purchase of ex demonstration vehicles – the Executive had considered this at their meeting on 19 October 2015.

KD.33/15 – Budget Process 2016/17 – the Budget Process would be considered by the Panel on 26 November 2015.

KD.32/15 – Clean Neighbourhood Enforcement Policy – the matter had been included on the agenda for this meeting.

Members did not raise any questions or comments on the items contained within the Notice of Key Decisions.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer advised the Panel that in the absence of the Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder, an update on discussions with the Chairman of the County Council's Local Committee regarding the Memorandum of Understanding relating to weed control in Carlisle.

A Member asked for an update on progress regarding the Council's plans for replacing signage in the city, following the County Council's refusal of the proposals. The Director of Economic Development replied that the City Council had expressed its concerns to Cumbria County Council and they had begun work to move forward on the issue. The next meeting of the Panel would receive an update on this matter as part of the update on the Public Realm.

The Panel's work programme had been circulated as part of the report and Members were asked to consider the work programme and the framework for Panel's next meeting.

The Policy and Communications Manager gave a verbal update on the Business Support Task and Finish Group. He reminded Members that the draft report had been considered by the Panel on 17 September 2015. Following the Panel's request the draft report had been circulated to those who had given evidence to the Task and Finish Group requesting their comments. The feedback comprised one email which had identified secretarial errors in the report; no substantive changes had been put forward.

The Policy and Communications Manager noted the Panel's recommendations from the previous meeting regarding recommendations 2 and 3b and updated the Panel on the outcomes:

- Recommendation 2: Rebranding the Enterprise Centre

"The Enterprise Centre is renamed and rebranded to represent its current use as managed workspace. The centre is no longer the epicentre of business support in Carlisle; it does however continue to offer a range of affordable workshops, studio and office units in a City Centre location. To continue to present the space as an Enterprise Centre risks ongoing confusion about its role in the business support offer available in Carlisle."

The Task & Finish Group remained satisfied with recommendation 2 and no changes had been suggested by them to this recommendation.

- Recommendation 3(b): Business support and devolution

(b) "The group seek reassurance that any new deal that includes business support will be structured in such a way to enable local scrutiny of outputs and outcomes."

The Panel had suggested the removal of the words 'outputs and outcomes' and the Task and Finish Group had removed the words. Recommendation 3(b) read: 'The group seek

reassurance that any new deal that includes business support will be structured in such a way to enable local scrutiny.'

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

- *What was the Council's policy regarding the Enterprise Centre?*

The Director of Economic Development responded that the Enterprise Centre was currently being reviewed by the Council. The purpose of the review was to ensure that the Enterprise Centre was offering the support which businesses needed, and it was acting as an effective growth hub. The Council was working with tenants at the Centre to develop an agreed and effective way forward.

- *A Member expressed concern that a rebranding of the Enterprise Centre would be conducted on the basis of the Task and Finish Group report.*

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder replied that the Enterprise Centre had evolved over time into its current operation. A review of the Enterprise Centre was being undertaken and would look at all aspects of the Centre's operation, this was a difficult piece of work based on many factors. Due to the complex nature of the review, she felt that the outcome of the review would not be completed for some months.

- *How would the report be progressed?*

The Chairman responded that the next phase for the report was for it to be considered by the Executive, who would then provide feedback to the Panel. This would enable the Panel to decide if it wished to monitor the progress of actions related to the report, going forward. He added that Business Support was an important area and he felt monitoring the progress of the recommendations would be a useful activity for the Panel.

The Leader agreed that Business Support was important and the Council had a role to play in bringing together the business community to address issues such as growth and employment in the city. He appreciated Members concerns regarding the re-branding of the Enterprise Centre and that there would be no immediate action on recommendation 2 until the conclusion of the review. The Executive would consider and discuss the Task and Finish Group's report and make decisions regarding the recommendations.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Overview Report incorporating the Work Programme and Key Decision items relevant to this Panel (OS.22/15) be noted.

2) That the amended recommendations as set out above be agreed and Business Support Task and Finish Group report be referred to the Executive.

3) That a further report on the progress of the Business Support Task and Finish Group recommendations be presented to the Panel at a future meeting.

EEOSP.66/15 MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IN CUMBRIA – IMPLICATIONS FOR CARLISLE

The Director of Economic Development gave a presentation on the implications for Carlisle with regard to the Major Infrastructure Projects in Cumbria, the purpose of which was to provide Members with an overview of the major projects, and provide an opportunity for discussion.

The Director of Economic Development advised Members that the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) had produced a strategy titled "The Four Pronged Attack". The strategy was underpinned by a number of documents each of which focussed on business growth and development. The prong with greatest relevance to Carlisle, in terms of job creation and transport, was the strategic connectivity on the M6 corridor.

The Director of Economic Development outlined the current major infrastructure projects in Cumbria including; Centre of Nuclear Excellence – NuGen and Sellafield; BAE Systems; GSK; National Grid; Tidal Barrage, along with the anticipated increase in workers required to meet the needs of these employers. She advised that in Carlisle, major infrastructure projects covered four principle areas; housing, retail, Airport and Enterprise Zone. She added that housing was a key factor in ensuring that workers were available in appropriate locations. Slides were shown which illustrated the projected number of new jobs in Cumbria, projected employer requirements, and daily commutes for workers in the coming years.

The Director of Economic Development explained that the Local Plan process had addressed some of these issues spatially however; there was a need to ensure that the city was preparing adequately to meet the skills required in the economy in coming years. The Director of Economic Development identified the key issues facing Carlisle; population, skills, infrastructure, education, and employment. She commented that Carlisle was a low wage economy so may be at risk of losing skilled workers to other areas of the county. She added that the Carlisle Partnership would be holding a skills event in January where employers and businesses would seek to develop strategies to prevent the loss of skilled workers from the city.

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

- *A University of Cumbria report had indicated that the County's population would not decline for a further five years, were measures in place to address this?*

The Director of Economic Development replied that attracting new people into Cumbria was an important method of restricting population decline. Carlisle Ambassadors Group continued to work hard to push the awareness of the City's offer outside the area in an attempt to attract new people.

- *A Member felt that the reduction in grants for further education would have a great impact on the number of students in the city.*

The Director of Economic Development responded that colleges were under pressure due to new funding arrangements, however, they were looking to support business and economic growth. She noted that the University of Cumbria was looking to increase its Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) course offering to students to meet economic demand.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder commented that former Technical Colleges had had their funding cut in recent years, along with sixth forms. She added that the removal of the Education Maintenance Allowance which had supported students' travel costs had also had a negative impact on student numbers. She added the Further Education courses needed to be self supporting in terms of funding, yet some of the courses which delivered the skills needed by the economy did not attract enough students.

- *It appeared that much of the anticipated economic growth was focussed on the west coast of the county; how would the opportunities for Carlisle be realised and what was the city's unique selling point?*

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder advised that more than ninety businesses in the city were supporting or in the supply chain for Sellafield, so the city already had established links with the industry. This meant that developing infrastructure, especially in relation to transport was particularly important to support sustained growth and development in the city.

The Director of Economic Development replied that the requirements of the west coast was different in nature, as it required a short term spike of jobs to create and build the infrastructure associated with the new nuclear facility. The Enterprise Zone at Kingmoor Park offered an area to develop a wider range of businesses and placed the city in a much stronger position. She added that improvement to transport links, particularly the A595 and the A69 would need to be addressed, but Carlisle would be able to develop in a sustainable way for a long term future.

- *How did the District and County Council and LEP work with the MP's in Cumbria to ensure that issues were raised with Government?*

The Director of Economic Development responded that the LEP's held regular meetings with their MPs, and that the Department of Business Innovation and Skills had a good awareness of the issues, particularly those relating to skills.

The Deputy Chief Executive informed Members that the current level of job density for 16 – 64 year old was 0.94, which meant that there were adequate job opportunities. The problems underpinning upskilling were poor education attainment and a lack of skills, which were large issues to address. He suggested that Members may wish to consider engaging with the University as a focal for the Panel's work in this area.

- *Had a methodology for identifying and addressing the skills gap been developed?*

The Director of Economic Development replied that Work Force Planning for Cumbria had been undertaken by the LEP to identify the skills required and how those needs would be met. Timing was a key issue to ensure that there were enough workers to meet the spike in demand related to the building of the new nuclear facility. The Chairman noted that the Skills Audit scheduled for the new year would provide Members with an opportunity to scrutinise the issue further.

RESOLVED – That the presentation be welcomed.

EEOSP.67/15 CLEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD ENFORCEMENT POLICY

The Environmental Health Manager submitted report LE.27/15 introducing a revised Enforcement Policy for tackling environmental crimes, including dog fouling, fly tipping, littering and graffiti.

The Environmental Health Manager explained that a good enforcement policy benefitted both the regulator and those subject to potential enforcement. He emphasised that proportional, fair and consistent enforcement was important in terms of ensuring that the Council retained the support of the community in undertaking its regulatory responsibilities.

The revised Enforcement Policy (attached at Appendix 1) incorporated the Community Protection Notice options brought in through the Anti-Social Behaviour and Policing Act 2014. It further outlined the principles of good enforcement and considered appropriate enforcement options. The issue of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) was covered and special consideration given to action against juvenile offenders. The key change in that version of the Enforcement Policy was the use of the Community Protection Notice process to deal with offenders in the 16 and 17 age range.

The Executive had on 19 October 2015 consider the matter (EX.112/15) and resolved

“That the Executive:

1. Had considered the revised Clean Neighbourhood Enforcement Policy and Appendix 1.
2. Referred the Policy to the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel for scrutiny.”

In considering the Policy members raised the following comments and questions:

- *What was the extent of the litter problem with under 18 years old?*

The Environmental Health Manager replied that he did not consider this age category to cause a disproportionate problem with regard to litter. The Community Protection Notice gave Officers another tool to assist them in addressing problems, particularly litter in specific areas. In response to a Member’s question, the Environmental Health Manager advised that the Council was not able to conduct CCTV covert surveillance to monitor the dropping of litter, should others provide CCTV images to the Council it will be their evidence, witness statements would be required from them should the evidence be sufficient for formal action. He added that the appropriate level of Enforcement was an important factor in keeping the support of the community and scrutiny had an important role to play in this.

- *How does a Community Protection Notice differ from a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)*

The Environmental Health Manager responded that the Community Protection Notice was not limited in the areas in which it could be applied. Legislation was usually specific in the areas to which it was applied, whereas the Community Protection Notice was generic and so had a boarder scope. This meant that Officers would be able to apply the Community Protection Notice to address problems such, spitting, which was not an offence in itself and so posed a difficulties in terms of enforcement.

The Environmental Health Manager added that for FPNs the fine or prosecution was the final stage of the process, Community Protection Notice gave Officers a process with a warning letter before a fine or prosecution.

- *How much of the regulations the Officers work with is local By-law?*

The Environmental Health Manager responded that the majority of the regulations were stipulated in national legislation. A number of powers however, for example, in relation dog fouling were made under Carlisle Orders, these had been allowed for under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.

- *Would Control Orders be implemented on a case by case basis?*

The Environmental Health Manager replied that the Council had adopted three dog control orders, the offences under which would be moved on to the Public Space Protection Order he added that, Council would have the discretion to add other offenses to the Orders (for example, spitting).

- *How many Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) had been issued by the Council in 2015?*

The Environmental Health Manager replied that since April 2015 the following Fixed Penalty Notices had been issued; 16 related to dog fouling; 31 related to littering; 7 related to stray dogs; 5 related to refuse bins being put out at the incorrect time; and 1 Community Protection Order related to refuse in a rear lane. He added that the dog fouling FPNs had improved on last year, with only 17 having been issued in the whole of the preceding year.

The Neighbourhood Enforcement Team Leader responded to complaints from the public about dog fouling issues, she advised Members that FPNs for dog fouling required the offence to be witnessed, which made them difficult to apply. She explained the surveillance methods used by the team and stressed that, getting the balance right between covert and overt surveillance was important to ensure that offenders were caught.

- *What proportion of juvenile offending was environmental crime?*

The Environmental Health Manager responded that the Council did not record figures in relation to this, but he did not feel that environmental crime was caused disproportionately by young people.

The Neighbourhood Enforcement Team Leader added that perception was an important factor; groups of school children in the city centre at lunchtime would be perceived to be contributing most to the litter problem. Education was an equally important aspect of the team's work alongside enforcement, and the team regularly undertook education sessions in schools to ensure young people were aware of the problem, and their responsibilities as well as outlining the actions that could be taken against those caught littering.

The Chairman thanked the officers for the presentation of the report.

RESOLVED – The Panel did not add any further recommendations to report LE.27/15.

EEOSP.68/15 PUBLIC AND PRESS

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

EEOSP.69/15 CAR PARK BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2015-17

(Public and Press excluded by virtue of Paragraph 3)

The Director of Local Environment submitted report LE.28/15 which introduced the outline Car Park Business Development Plan.

The Director of Local Environment reminded the Panel that car park income and usage performance had declined in recent years and proposals had been made in a Business Development Plan which aimed to address the issues that had contributed to the decline

and make improvements to the business and develop a commercially viable asset for the Council.

A consultant had been brought in to assess the service and had submitted an outline plan. The service was still under consideration and the outline business development plan had not yet been agreed or adopted.

The Director of Local Environment outlined the proposals included in the outline business plan and asked the Panel to consider the proposals within the document to assist with the development of the car parking business to optimise income to the Council.

In considering the outline business development plan Members raised the following comments and questions:

- *Had any evidence been gathered by Officers regarding the findings and suggestions outlined in the plan?*

The Director of Local Environment responded that the document highlighted areas in need of attention, and that members of the team had been carrying assessments out in areas specified in the report to develop work streams. The purpose of the assessments was to shift the work of the team from reactively responding to issues to a proactive way of working. The team had undergone significant change in the preceding twelve months and the document would provide shape and direction to the team's future work.

The Director of Local Environment added that a number of changes recommended in the report had been developed into proposals which Members would have the opportunity to scrutinise through the budget process later in the year.

- *Had any of the Plan's recommendations regarding the assets been agreed?*

The Director of Local Environment replied that the plan had identified a number of options in relation to the Council's assets, none of which had been agreed. Further consideration and assessment of those recommendations would be needed prior to any decision being reached in relation to them.

- *A Member commented that some of the areas of work suggested in the report had already begun.*

The Director of Local Environment replied that some areas of work had been undertaken and completed including those relating to; performance monitoring and Penalty Charge Notices.

- *Did the plan's recommendations address environmental issues?*

The Director of Local Environment responded that the Plan did not contradict the County Council's Transport Plan which addressed environmental issues via the promotion of schemes such as Park and Ride. She added that City Council car parks tended to be located in the outer ring, parking in those car parks would reduce congestion as it would reduce drivers circling to find free car parking spaces or spaces in the inner city centre car parks.

RESOLVED - The Panel welcomed the opportunity to discuss and comment upon report LE.28/15.

(the meeting ended at 12.26 pm)