

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2004 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Councillor Boaden (Chairman), Councillor Aldersey (as substitute for Councillor Mrs Farmer), Councillors Bowman (S), Earp, Hendry, Mrs Parsons, Rutherford (K) and Scarborough

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Bloxham, Mrs Bowman and Firth as Portfolio Holders

COS.178/04 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor N Farmer.

COS.179/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Earp and Hendry declared a personal interest which was also prejudicial in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of agenda item A3(d) Summary of New Revenue Spending Proposals – Advice Agencies. They stated that their interest was as trustees of the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Councillor Aldersey declared a personal interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in the agenda items relating to Talkin Tarn which were included as part of the Budget 2005/06 Summary of New Revenue Spending Proposals and Provisional Capital Programme 2004/05 to 2007/08. He stated that his interest was in respect of his membership of the Cumbria County Council.

COS.180/04 CALL IN OF DECISIONS

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

COS.181/04 GENERAL FUND – REVENUE BUDGET 2005/06 TO 2007/08

The Head of Finance reported (FS.31/04) on the General Fund Revenue Budget 2005/06 to 2007/08. She summarised for Members the revised base revenue estimates for 2004/05, together with the estimates for 2005/06. She updated Members on the Government's Spending Review for 2004 and reminded Members of the Council's projected budget deficit which needed to be funded for the 3-year period prior to the consideration of any savings and new bids. The Head of Finance added that the figures and projections in the report were currently estimated as there were a number of issues which could

not be finalised until later in the budget process, in particular the Revenue Support Grant announcement which was now expected on the 2nd December and on which she would update the Executive on 6th December, but added that she would also feedback to Chairs of Overview & Scrutiny Committees on how that settlement would effect the Council's budget.

The Head of Finance further added that it was proposed that the Executive Director would give a presentation to the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the implications of the Gershon Review. The Acting Town Clerk and Chief Executive added that it may be that that presentation could be extended to all Members, but would nonetheless be circulating a letter to inform Members of the publication which had been received from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on that matter.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted as background information in the Committee's considerations of the savings and new bid proposals to be considered elsewhere on the agenda.

COS.182/04 BUDGET 2005/06 – SUMMARY OF NEW REVENUE SPENDING PROPOSALS

The Committee was circulated with a copy of the report from the Head of Finance (FS.30/04) which summarised requests for new Revenue Spending Bids to be considered as part of the Council's 2005/06 budget process. The individual spending bids, which fell within the area of responsibility of the Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee had been highlighted.

i) Bid R5 - Artefacts Storage, Shaddon Mill Lease

The Head of Culture Leisure & Sport reported on a bid for additional funding in respect of the extension of the lease to use Shaddon Mill for the storage of artefacts up to 31st January 2007. He informed Members that there was currently funding in the Council's Capital Programme for the storage, but alternative storage arrangements will be necessary when the lease expired in January 2007. Additional funding of £12,000 in 2006/07 and up to £45,000 in 2007/08 was required to fund alternative storage arrangements.

Members in considering the report questioned whether the funding included actually moving the artefacts or whether it was the cost of the lease. Members also noted that there were likely to be changes in accommodation at the Castle and questioned officers on the investigations which had been made into the use of surplus space either at the Castle or elsewhere in the city.

The Head of Culture, Leisure & Sport informed Members that there had been discussions with the Council's Property Unit to define the storage requirements given that the lease at Shaddon Mill was not expected to be extended. He also updated Members on discussions between the Kings Own Royal Border Regiment and English Heritage with regard to developments and accommodation requirements in the Castle. He further added that many artefacts stored at Shaddon Mill were of archaeological interest but were not

necessarily of interest to the general public. He also confirmed that with regard to the costs of moving the artefacts, the developers of Shaddon Mill had paid for the movement of the artefacts between the 5th floor and the ground floor of Shaddon Mill. However, a move to a different location would need to be costed and the details would be reported back to Members as part of a fuller report when further details were known.

In response to further questions from Members, the Head of Culture, Leisure & Sport commented that he was in discussions with English Heritage with regard to the status of the artefacts stored at Shaddon Mill. Many of the articles which were deposited in Shaddon Mill were artefacts from various places and different digs and went back some 20-25 years. He was discussing the matter with English Heritage but, whilst many of those pieces would need to be stored, some of them could be disposed of once their historical value had been recorded.

ii) R7 – Talkin Tarn Estate Transfer

The Acting Town Clerk and Chief Executive reported that following the decision at the meeting of the City Council on 23rd November, officers were looking into a number of issues relating to the inclusion of the Tarn End Hotel in the transfer and the condition of The Tarn and, therefore, until such time as the City Council received confirmation with regard to the inclusion of the Hotel in the transfer, then the matter could not be progressed.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

iii) R8 – Heysham Park

The Head of Culture, Leisure & Sport reported on the Revenue Bid for £17,000 to be included in the Council's Budget from 2006/07 in respect of the maintenance costs for Heysham Park. In response to a question from a Member, the Head of Culture, Leisure & Sport confirmed that the bid covered the maintenance cost of the various elements of the scheme.

RESOLVED – That the Committee support the bid for £17,000 to be included in the Council's Budget from 2006/07 in respect of the maintenance costs for Heysham Park.

iv) R9 – Advice Agencies

The Head of Economic and Community Development reported on the proposal to reinstate the saving of £60,000 which the Council had previously proposed to save from the Advice Services budgets. She informed Members that the review of the Council's own Benefits Advice Services had now been completed and that review had involved detailed consultation with the Law Centre and the Citizens Advice Bureau. The review had identified strengths and weaknesses of the provision of advice services in the city but had not identified any potential for budget savings and, in view of the outcome of that review and the Council's own internal audit investigation, together with the

value for money which the Council's contribution made to the provision of advice services, it was felt that the proposed budget reduction of £60,000 should be reinstated.

Members in welcoming the proposal also highlighted the money which advice agencies were able to bring in to the local economy.

RESOLVED – That the Committee endorse the bid for the reinstatement of the budget reduction of £60,000 which had been proposed from 2005/06 in respect of advice agencies.

v) NR2 – Rural Support and Longtown Market Town Initiative

The Head of Economic and Community Development reported that the Council's Rural Community Support Officer had been seconded under a 3-year agreement to the Longtown Market Town Initiative. The secondment was originally due to end in September 2005, but was now expected to continue until March 2008. The temporary arrangements to cover the work of the previous postholder were linked to the initial term of the secondment and were also due to end in September 2005. The Head of Economic & Community Development outlined a budget bid to continue to provide full-time cover for the Rural Support Officer from April 2006 to March 2008 of £29,500 broken down over a 2-year period.

In response to Members' questions, the Head of Community and Economic Development confirmed that the member of staff presently covering the post was due to go on maternity leave, but the bid would continue to fund the post up until March 2008.

RESOLVED – That support be given in respect of this bid.

vi) NR3 – Tullie House Base Budget

The Head of Culture, Leisure & Sport reported on a budget bid to make up the shortfall in income at Tullie House of £40,000 per annum. Members commented that the bid was submitted as a one year bid and questioned whether the funding would also be required in future years.

The Head of Culture Leisure and Sport commented that the Committee would be looking later in the meeting at the Development Plan for Tullie House and its future plans hence the reason why the bid was only submitted as a one year bid.

RESOLVED - That the Committee endorse and support the bid.

vii) NR6 - Events Budget

The Head of Economic and Community Development submitted a bid for £25,000 to help consolidate the Pop to the Park event in 2005/06. In response to Members questions, the Head of Economic and Community

Development informed the meeting that the Carnival Budget from which it was hoped to utilise funds to finance the bid was part of the Community and Economic Development Business Unit's Base Budget and was used to fund community events. She further commented that although in the preamble to the Bid it was described as a recurring bid, it had following consideration through the Executive and Officer Groups been agreed that it would be put forward as a one-off bid in respect of 2005/06 only.

In response to further questions from Members with regards to the availability and reliability of artists the Head of Economic and Community Development maintained that Carlisle was building a reputation as being able to organise such events and that events would attract a good audience reception. Recently, Carlisle has been successful in attracting the Children in Need concert.

Members further commented on the difficulty in ensuring that artists would turn up as promised, particularly if they suddenly became more popular. To some extent the Council was speculating on the success of the event and the goodwill of potential audiences in ignoring the fact that on occasion booked artists had not attended.

viii) Integrated Service Delivery – Area Working

The Head of Commercial and Technical Services reported on a bid for £25,000 to develop Area Based Teams to deliver frontline street scene services thereby enabling closer community links, more efficient responses and a focus on local priorities. He added that the proposed service arrangements were to be delivered on a pilot basis for 2005/06 and amended/developed subsequently.

The funding was to meet the set up costs including training of employees in multi-skilling, customer care, etc.

A Member commented that in the past the frontline street scene services had worked well and questioned the need to alter those services. The Head of Commercial and Technical Services commented on instances where grass has been growing on footways on a council estate and three different teams had been asked to look at the complaint. He added that this proposal would help to deliver an improved service. The bid was for £25,000 and, whilst many of the services would be monitored by the Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee as the relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee, the proposal would have an impact on the community and he was happy to receive feedback from the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members commented that they were aware of instances where complaints/issues had fallen between various teams and it would be better if one team dealt with a variety of street scene problems.

A Member further commented that the unit was to be commended for the work which had been carried out in catching up on the summer programme

but was apprehensive that when making workers multi-skilled there would be proposals to reduce the numbers of staff. The Head of Commercial and Technical Services felt that the proposal would produce efficiencies and enable the teams to carry out more work rather than the same level of work with fewer people.

A Member further commented on the move of senior staff within the Commercial and Technical Services Unit away from the Civic Centre to Bousteads Grassing and felt that was not of benefit to senior officers and councillors and questioned whether any of the officers in Commercial and Technical Services would be returning to the Civic Centre?

The Head of Commercial and Technical Services felt that there needed to be a balance between managing teams within the Commercial and Technical Service Unit and the corporate input into the authority. He was presently preparing an office on the 8th floor which senior members of his unit would be able to use.

Councillor Bloxham, Portfolio Holder, commended the bid and added that a fuller report on the proposal was being worked on a present.

The Head of Commercial and Technical Services added that subject to a report being considered by Members it was hoped to commence a pilot scheme in five areas which would each have their own dedicated resources of a team leader and a blend of manual staff. It was envisaged that the team leader would meet with Ward Councillors on a regular basis and look at local priorities in the areas to agree the best way for the teams to be able to respond. This would make the teams responsive to Councillors and the local community.

The Head of Commercial and Technical Services added that there would be 40 employees in the initial proposal and to ensure that they were able to respond to highway emergency repairs and ground maintenance issues. training would be needed to develop and multi-skill the employees and raise their customer awareness.

The Head of Commercial and Technical Services added that in terms of evaluating the process he was presently working through the APSE Performance Indicators and would develop these indicators over the next twelve months. He was also hoping to carry out a survey of effectiveness now and in twelve months time and in that way he would be able to evaluate the success of a programme both through public perceptions and attitudes and by performance indicators.

RESOLVED – That the Committee support the budget bid and the proposed pilot scheme with a further recommendation that this Overview and Scrutiny Committee should also be involved in monitoring the outcome of the area working pilot scheme.

ix) NR8 – Housing Strategy 2005-2010

The Housing Services and Health Partnership Manager reported on a budget bid to finance the Council's priorities within the draft Housing Strategy within the period 2005-2010 with revenue expenditure over that period of £600,000 broken down in:

Homelessness Hostels - £10,000 per annum over five years.
Homelessness Support - £50,000 per annum over five years
Housing Strategy Support - £60,000 per annum over five years

In response to questions from Members the Housing Services & Health Partnership Manager commented that the funding would be used to support the Housing Strategy Action Plan but he was not able to identify specific spends at the present time.

RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee support the bid but would wish to ensure that if the bid was successful, that the funding was targeted at the action plan and the monitoring of the spending against the action plan would need to be carefully monitored.

x) Talkin Tarn Estate

The Head of Property Services' report PS.21/04 regarding the proposed transfer of Talkin Tarn Estate Corporate Business Case and Budget Setting, was circulated for Members information.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

COS.183/04 BUDGET 2005/06 SUMMARY OF SAVINGS AND ADDITIONAL INCOME PROPOSALS

The Head of Finance reported FS.33/04 on proposals for savings and additional income generation to be considered as part of the Council's 2005/06 budget process. She added that the paper was submitted to give Members a context of the background against which the Council's budget was being set but that none of the saving proposals fell within the remit of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee. However, there were elements of the review of charges, which were considered as separate items on the agenda.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

COS.184/04 CHARGES REVIEW

(a) Economic and Community Development

The Head of Economic and Community Development submitted report ECD.19/04 on Proposed Fees and Charges for areas within the responsibility of the Economic and Community Development Unit. The Head of Economic

and Community Development added that the increases proposed were all inflationary increases, in accordance with agreed Corporate Charging principles, but she drew Members attention to a review which had been undertaken by Internal Audit which had highlighted potential for amended charges which could be looked at in future years.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

(b) Environmental Protection Services

The Acting Executive Director presented report EPS.70/04 setting out the proposed fees and charges for areas falling within the responsibility of the Environmental Protection Services Unit. She added that the special collections of household waste which was included in the report was now a matter for the Head of Commercial and Technical Services.

The Portfolio Holder for Infrastructure Environment and Transport commented that arrangements were being made to set up a Cross Party Group to collect information and set out options on the way forward in respect of Special Collections and he hoped that the first meeting would be arranged before the end of January 2005.

The Head of Commercial and Technical Services added that the timescale for the meeting was linked to the County Council's Strategic Overview of Waste Disposal and there were a raft of associated issues which would need to be considered including Special Collections. The financial implications of the discussions would however not form part of the current year's budget.

In response to further questions from Members, the Acting Executive Director commented that a review of the Environmental Protection Services Unit had now started and meetings would be held over the next month, the Pest Control Service would be involved in those meetings, but consideration would need to be given early in the New Year as to the outcomes from those meetings and the way forward on the Action Plan.

In response to further questions with regard to the cost of Bereavement Services, the Acting Executive Director agreed to provide information which would support the comment that the lowering death rate over the past few years had led to a reduction in the level of income being generated. She added that the increase in charges proposed for Bereavement Services were to provide value for money and to provide the Council with additional income.

In response to further Member's questions, the Portfolio Holder commented that as from 2008 there would be no more landfill sites to deposit rubbish and authorities would need to look at alternative technology for the disposal of waste. He further added that whilst it was good news that people were living longer, the lowering death rate did impact on the Council's budget. He reminded Members of the Audit Commission's document "the Price is Right" and the actions which had been taken over the last 3 years to try to bring the

various charges for Bereavement Services in line with other parts of the Country.

(c) Culture, Leisure and Sport

The Head of Culture, Leisure and Sport presented Report CLS.14/04 setting out the proposed fees and charges for areas falling within the responsibility of the Culture, Leisure and Sport Unit. He added that the report did not contain any proposals for Tullie House as the issue of Tullie House would be the subject of a separate report later in the agenda.

Members commented on the level of charges for senior football and rugby clubs, and the proposal to increase the hire charge for a pitch to £33.70. He commented that with the addition of £16 per referee a football match now costs £50. Members questioned whether, in view of the current discussion nationally regarding young people not playing sport, there was anything which the Council could do to encourage clubs and offer them more support, particularly in view of the number of under 18 and under 16 clubs which were folding up because of the difficulties in raising money.

The Head of Culture, Leisure and Sport commented on grants which were available for coaches and grants for equipment together with the Sports for All Grants. The Council were also working with Development Officers and were working with clubs and Cumbria Sport to provide a Community Football Officer. He did however note the comments regarding the running costs of clubs and whilst there was provisions in place to make grants available for equipment and coaching qualifications, there were no grants available to help with general running costs of clubs.

Members further commented on whether there was any liaison with the Cumbria FA to discuss how clubs might apply for grants or whether there was a possibility of reducing the level of grant with a consequential reduction being made to the costs of clubs hiring pitches. The Head of Culture, Leisure and Sport confirmed that the Council did liaise and discuss matters with the Cumbria FA and the Rugby Authorities, and with regards to the completion of forms, he felt it would be a major part of the Development Officer's role to assist with the development of clubs, and part of that would be to assist with processing grant applications.

He further added that with regards to the development of sport, there was an ongoing dialogue with the governing bodies of football and rugby both locally and countywide and funding was also provided for community coaches to help develop coaches for teams. With regard to the cost of running clubs, it was a problem which was faced across the country.

He further commented that whilst the Sheepmount would, following the redevelopment, have excellent facilities, the pitches throughout the rest of the city as yet were not of the same standard. He added that the Council was still represented on the Carlisle Sport's Council.

Members further commented that in addition to the problem of costs, a number of clubs were folding up because individuals weren't able to give up the necessary amount of time to run the clubs and raise the funding which was required.

COS.185/04 PROVISIONAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2004/05 TO 2007/08

The Head of Finance circulated Report FS.34/04 setting out the revised Capital Programme for 2004/05 together with the proposed method of financing the programme. She added that the report also summarised the proposed programme for 2005/06 to 2007/08 together with details of capital spending requests.

A Member sought confirmation that the list of capital schemes did not provide for any improvements to Hammonds Pond. The Head of Culture, Leisure and Sport responded that there was no problem with algae in Hammonds Pond but there was weed growth and this was being addressed as part of the normal base budget.

(a) C6 – Cremators

The Acting Executive Director presented a bid of £330,000 per Cremator, which was required over a 2-year period of 2006/07 and 2007/08 together with £120,000 for Mercury Arrestment building works, a total estimated cost of £780,000, although £200,000 funding had already been budgeted for in 2006/07.

The Portfolio Holder added that the Council were not able to finalise the proposals until the Government guidelines on emissions were published, although £19,000 was required this year to upgrade the Cremators. The major scheme to improve the Cremators would however need to wait until the Government guidelines were published.

In response to Member's questions, the Head of Finance reported on the previous principle of ongoing contributions towards replacements of plant and equipment and the present direction that capital replacements should not be funded from revenue spending.

RESOLVED – That the Committee were supportive of the proposals for the replacement of the Cremators, it being noted that the Cremators would be built to the appropriate specifications once the Government guidelines had been released.

(b) C7 – Housing Strategy 2005-2010

Mr Mallinson, Overview and Scrutiny Manager, commented on a reference from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with regards to disabled adaptations.

The Housing Services & Health Partnership Manager commented on capital expenditure identified in the Housing Strategy over the 5 year period 2005-2010 which amounted to £5,300,000 broken down as:

- Adaptations for the disabled £300,000 per annum x 5 years
- Investment in private sector property conditions £750,000 per annum over 4 financial years,
- Investment in bringing empty homes back into use £100,000 per annum over 4 financial years
- Support for provision of affordable housing £400,000 per annum over 4 financial years.

Members in considering the bid highlighted the position with regard to receipts from Right to Buy sales which amounted to £5.1m but noted that it was only proposed to use £1¼m of those receipts in the Capital Programme for 2005/06.

The Head of Finance commented that the £5.1m shown in the tables was in respect of Right to Buy receipts in the current year, but the Council could not be certain of the level of receipts in future years. She added that it was her view that there was no restriction on the usage of the Right to Buy income, but was waiting a response to confirm that from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Members further commented on the level of funding in respect of adaptations for the disabled and questioned whether any help was received from Housing Associations towards those costs. The Housing Services & Health Partnership Manager Environmental Protection Services added that the Council worked in partnership with Carlisle Housing Association and Social Services. The Assistant Manager Housing Services commented that the current budget for adaptations and disabled facilities amounted to £295,000 and it was over-committed by £25,000 in this current financial year, although it was anticipated that some works would run into the next financial year. He added that any additional funding from the City Council to this Budget would not be automatically matched but the Council could make a bid for matched funding. He added that £390,000 was also received from the Housing Association over and above what the Council provided, and that at the current time there was £660,000 worth of ongoing work in respect of disabled adaptations and this included some £400,000 worth of work from Carlisle Housing Association.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment Infrastructure and Transport commented that previously the Council as the Housing Authority had allocated money from the Housing Revenue Account towards disabled facility adaptations, but when the Council's housing stock had transferred that funding had ceased. The current bid was in addition to the funds currently provided and those which the Council received from the Government. He added that the Council were also working to develop a close working relationship with the Housing Association and the Occupational Therapists and would discuss the type of

adaptations which the Carlisle Housing Association was carrying out when it was carrying out works to its stock.

With regard to other Housing Associations and Registered Social Landlords, it was noted that they could receive grants from the Housing Corporation for adaptations, but in respect of transferred stock, the funding needed to come from the Local Authority.

The Assistant Manager Housing Services added that adaptations to disabled facilities was a mandatory grant which the Local Authority must pay.

In response to further questions, the Head of Finance reported on the level of receipts and the proposed Capital Programme, and that the projections showed a balance of £5,000,000 at the end of 2008 and felt this to be prudent given the possibility of a fall in income arising from the Right to Buy sales and future capital expenditure requirements, that in the future the Council might need to cater for a reduction in the level of capital income and consider prudential borrowing.

RESOLVED – The Overview & Scrutiny Committee welcome the commitment to fund a Housing Strategy and would also welcome receiving further reports on the details of the capital spends, as identified in the Housing Strategy budgets.

c) C8 – Talkin Tarn Estate Transfer

In the light of the Council's decision at a meeting on 23rd November, the item was noted.

d) C9 – Heysham Park

The Head of Culture, Leisure & Sport reported on a capital bid of £354,000 to refurbish existing landscapes at Heysham Park and incorporate within the park new landscape areas where housing demolition has taken place.

Members welcomed the funding proposals but questioned whether the project was being part funded by Lovells Carlisle Housing Association and the Council or whether it was entirely funded by the Council. The Head of Culture, Leisure & Sport agreed to come back to Members with further information on the funding for the scheme.

In response to further questions from Members, the Portfolio Holder for Environment Infrastructure & Transport added that the project had been designed to make it community friendly and local people had been consulted on the proposals.

RESOLVED – That the proposed funding be supported and that the Head of Culture, Leisure & Sport provide Members with further information with regard to the funding for the scheme.

e) C10 – Bitts Park Play Area

The Head of Culture, Leisure & Sport reported on proposals for the further development of the Bitts Park Play Area by providing new play equipment and appropriate surfacing for children, a sand play area, willow play hut, fencing and hard surfacing. The estimated cost of the project was £165,000 to be split over two financial years.

RESOLVED – That the proposals be welcomed as a positive development.

f) C11 – Hardwicke Circus Fountain

The Head of Culture, Leisure & Sport Services reported on proposals to upgrade the Hardwicke Circus Fountain at a total cost of £20,000.

Members welcomed the proposal and commented that the water feature at Hardwicke Circus should be retained if at all possible.

RESOLVED – That the proposal be supported.

g) C12 & C13 – California Road and Dale End Road Pitch Drainage

The Head of Culture, Leisure & Sport provided details of bids to drain the California Road pitch at an estimated cost of £10,000 and proposal to drain the Dale End Road pitch also at an estimated cost of £10,000 in order to extend the availability for play on both pitches during the winter months.

Members commented on the proposals and also highlighted the potential grant which might be available from the Football Foundation towards the cost of this work.

The Head of Culture, Leisure & Sport felt there was only a marginal chance of an application for a grant from the Football Foundation being successful, but confirmed that he would be submitting an application.

In response to further questions from Members, the Head of Culture, Leisure & Sport reported that he did not have the information to hand on the number of other pitches which would need to be drained and was not in a position to report on the scale of the current problems or the timescales, but he would circulate that information for Members.

RESOLVED – That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee support the proposals. The Head of Culture, Leisure & Sport to provide further information to Members on the review of playing pitches.

h) C14 – Fusehill Street Play Area

The Head of Culture, Leisure & Sport reported on proposals to refurbish the play area adjacent to the Fusehill Street Community Garden and the cost of the proposals was £62,000. Members commented that, taking into account

the funds released from the sale of the site and funding from the developer of the site, the works would be fully funded. The Portfolio Holder for Environment Infrastructure & Transport expressed a desire for this work to be completed as soon as possible, given that the play area at Rydal Street was no longer available.

In response to further questions from Members, the Acting Town Clerk and Chief Executive commented that senior officers had received training on the Prince2 project management and this would enable all the corporate projects to be managed and driven through in an identical way throughout the Council.

RESOLVED – That the Fusehill Street Play Area proposals be supported.

i) Retaining Wall between Grahams Croft and the A69 at Warwick-on-Eden

Members noted that, whilst the budget bid on the above had not been highlighted in the agenda, the Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee were referred to as the relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The Overview & Scrutiny Manager confirmed that this was not the case and the report would be amended.

j) C16 – Sheepmount Bridge

The Head of Commercial & Technical Services reported on a bid for improving access across the River Caldew to the refurbished facilities at the Sheepmount at an estimated capital expenditure of £500,000. He added that there would be further report in January with more details of the proposal. The later report would also set out the phasing and profiling for the proposal.

COS.186/04 HOUSING REVENUE AND ACCOUNT ESTIMATES 2005/05

The Head of Finance circulated Report FS.38/04 summarising the current position on the Housing Revenue Account in respect of 2003/04 and 2004/05 which included the forecast closure of the Housing Revenue Account at 31st March 2005. The report was circulated for Members' information.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

COS.187/04 MUSEUM AND ARTS SERVICE

a) Reference from the Infrastructure Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Pursuant to Minute IOS.123/04, the Chairman reported the receipt of an excerpt of the Minute IOS.123/04 from the meeting of the Infrastructure Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on 21st October 2004 and particularly the recommendation from the Committee that the Tullie House Business Plan should include a commitment and funding to highlight Hadrian's Wall from the city border to the Solway. The Infrastructure Overview & Scrutiny Committee would also welcome the opportunity of attending the Community Overview &

Scrutiny Committee when the Tullie House Business Plan was under discussion.

RESOLVED – That the reference from the Infrastructure Overview & Scrutiny Committee be noted as further background to the Committee's consideration of the Museum and Arts Service Development Plan.

b) Museum and Arts Service Development Plan

The Head of Culture, Leisure & Sport circulated Report CLS.20/04 which outlined progress with the Museum and Arts Service Development Plan. He reminded Members that the purpose of commissioning the Plan was to provide a means by which the future direction of the service could be set out in terms of capital investment, governance and organisationally allied to corporate objectives. He highlighted for Members a number of issues including:

- The Museum and Arts Service representing both a significant capital investment and revenue expenditure for the Council, but was also a service that needed to offer a product which people would pay to see.
- The fact that the Museum and Arts Service serves two distinct markets of residents and visitors and, whilst both are equally important, it tended to be the visitors who generated the bulk of admission income.
- That the Tullie House Museum did not have a distinctive brand, although there was substantial Roman heritage which would present such an opportunity.
- The income generating potential of Tullie House is bound up with Carlisle as a destination.

The Head of Culture, Leisure & Sport added that the draft Development Plan outlined options for capital investment which he cautioned should be used as a guide as to what might be achieved with different levels of investment and also added that the governance issues and the question of whether Tullie House should be a Trust were matters which the Council would need to consider, given the corporate implications of such a decision.

The Head of Culture, Leisure & Sport introduced Julia Holbury of ABL Cultural Consulting to lead Members through a presentation on the Development Plan for the City Council's Museum and Arts Service for the next 10 years.

Ms Holbury informed Members that the Consultants had produced an Option Appraisal which sets out the options for developing the Museum and Arts Service over the next 10 years, and which would be capable of being used in a Heritage Lottery Fund Bid. She added that the study had addressed issues relating to product, finance, management, marketing, operation, access, branding and collections management, and in particular the refurbishment of the main display areas, provision for a new gallery for art collections,

improved access to storage collections, new space for learning and access, outreach, commercial and retail activities including admission charges and new performance spaces. She set out a number of service recommendations. In respect of the displays, she suggested that the Museums mission should be to describe the story of Carlisle and its place in the world with exhibitions being people centred and story line driven. She suggested that there should be extensive use of interactive and multi media technologies and Hadrians Wall should principally be interpreted in the Millennium Gallery, with Old Tullie House being converted to a Fine Art Gallery.

Ms Holbury also set out comments with regard to the exhibitions and the need for the reserve collections to be accessed by the public, with the rest of the collections being accessed through stores. With regards to learning provision, she felt that the schools programme should be redeveloped so that it directly related to the Museums collection with the school provision being located adjacent to the Galleries and integrated with their content. She felt that consideration could also be given to schools being charged a small per capita fee for the schools service.

The Consultant also set out a number of recommendations in respect of the Café, Conferencing and Event Catering and in particular felt that the joint provision between Carlisle Castle should be explored. With regards to the shop it was noted that it only attracted 33,000 people who had paid to go into the galleries, but there were over a ¼ million visitors to Tullie House and it was felt that the shop needed to work harder to attract spend from visitors. It was also felt that the obsolete stock in the shop should be written off and an on-line shopping facility introduced together with a retail strategy which would see the shop market itself aggressively.

With regards to arts provision and the option to build a 300 seat performance space. The Consultants felt that this should not be undertaken on the Tullie House site as such a development required a landmark building of its own.

With regards to marketing, it was felt that the product and branding of Tullie House Museum should be clarified and updated and should focus on Hadrians Wall. It was felt that there was potential for Tullie House to develop as a regional centre with opportunities to piggy back on the Hadrians Wall tourism partnership shortbreak marketing, together with joint marketing of Carlisle's cultural quarter alongside the Castle and the Cathedral.

With regards to the admission price, it was recommended that the adult charge should be reduced to £4 and the opening hours simplified and harmonised with those of the Castle.

The Consultant further recommended that Tullie House should become a non profit distributing organisation with a charitable status, which would mean that the Management Team would need to include a Finance Director.

Ms Holbury felt that there were a number of options the first being to do nothing i.e. retain the status quo, the second option would be to refurbish the

Museum buildings and displays, options three to six being structured improvements to spaces accessible to the public and development of a two tier system for accommodating the collections. She set out information regarding the capital and revenue implications of the various options which assumed that Tullie House became a non profit distributing organisation with charitable status for options 2 to option 6, and also assumed that opening hours would be simplified and the adult admission charge would be reduced from £5.20 to £4.00. She added that the capital costs set out against the various options could be adjusted by picking elements of each of the various options which were required in order to reduce the capital costs to a smaller sum.

Ms Holbury further added that there were 2 potential sources of funding for any such development. One as a bid through the Heritage Lottery Fund, the second through the Hadrians Wall Tourism Partnership. She set out the timescales involved in the submission of a Heritage Lottery Fund Bid and the need to carry out an Option Appraisal Feasibility Study, and prepare a Business Plan and the costs involved in those requirements.

The Consultant added that if a Heritage Lottery Fund Bid was submitted in June 2005 it was likely to be decided in December 2005 with any works to the Tullie House building being commenced in the summer of 2007, with Tullie House re-opening in 2009.

The Head of Culture, Leisure and Sport commented on the present discussions which were being undertaken with regards to the County Council moving their record storage out of the Castle to free up space which could be used by the King's Own Royal Border Regiment. He added that both the proposals were subject to Heritage Lottery Funding Bids. He further added that Tullie House was part and parcel of Carlisle's culture and it was important for the City Council to consider the direction which it wanted to take, whether it wanted to apply for Trust status and the impact of such a proposal on the rest of the Council. He added that even without considering the issue of Trust status, the timescales were between 4-6 years for the completion of the project.

Members noted that the capital costs which had been circulated could be reduced depending on the elements which were included within the project. It was also felt that the development of Tullie House should be considered in the context of sustainable Cumbria and Carlisle's role as the sub-regional capital.

Members also in noting that the Museum attracted 33,000 paying visitors questioned whether the charges were counter productive and suggested that, as well as considering whether the admission charges should be reduced to £4.00, the Council should also consider an option of no charge or have a £1 charge. The Head of Culture, Leisure and Sport added that paying customers generated approximately £50,000 worth of income to the Museum and added that the number of Tullie Card holders using the Museum were monitored and each Tullie Card holder paid £2.50 for the production/issue of a Tullie Card.

Members further commented that apart from the City's roman history there were other large scale historical subjects, and it would be defeatist to think of Carlisle only as a Roman City. Carlisle had a unique and varied history which needed to be expanded. Ms Holbury added that the Consultant's view was that Carlisle did need a performance base and the City had the capacity to support a 300 to 400 seat venue, but she felt that there was a better site for the building than including it as part of Tullie House. She added that Carlisle had a fascinating history with many stories that should be told but it was the Consultant's view that some strands of history attracted people to visit Museums, and the history of the Romans was one such subject.

Members asked how the Capital & Revenue figures would differ if Tullie House did not become a Trust, the Consultant's commented that if Tullie House was continued to be run by the Council then the deficit/surplus figures would remain the same and the revenue would be neutral. She added however that some of the operating surpluses/deficits would be involved with new staff appointments and the Council would be able to consider whether to appoint staff or not, and hence control the operating surplus/deficit.

Members questioned the Consultants with regard to the timescales involved in both the Heritage Lottery Fund Bid and the Hadrians Wall Tourism Partnership. The Consultants indicated that they did not know the Hadrians Wall Tourism option timescales. The Head of Tullie House suggested that the report originally mentioned 2007/08 but a more precise timescale was awaited. The Consultants added that a Stage 2 Heritage Lottery Funding Bid would need all the elements of the funding tied up before the submission of a bid, and in that respect a decision on a Stage 2 Bid would be expected in 2007.

In response to further questions from Members, the Acting Town Clerk and Chief Executive added that there was some ambiguity about the deadlines and the funding scheme, in respect of the Hadrians Wall Tourism Partnership, but when more information became known about the study, it would be reported to the Executive and then to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Council would also need to consider a cultural strategy to asses where the city would be in 10 years time. Whilst the report set out some options to take forward, she didn't believe it was clear about the cultural strategy for the next 10 years.

Members further noted that Liverpool was to be the City of Culture in the near future which would in itself attract many visitors to the North West, and Carlisle should be in a position to take advantage of those visitors.

The Head of Culture, Leisure and Sport added that the Development Plan was to be submitted to the Executive in January, for the Executive to consider the governance issues for Tullie House in greater detail and their implications for the Council.

RESOLVED – That Ms Holbury from ABL Consultants be thanked for her presentation.

COS.188/04 SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE

RESOLVED – That Council Procedure Rule 9 in relation to the duration of meetings be suspended in order that the meeting could continue over the time limit of three hours.

COS.189/04 SHEEPMOUNT PROJECT UPDATE

The Head of Culture, Leisure and Sport presented report CLS.19/04 which was the fourth update report on the Sheepmount project.

RESOLVED – That the Committee should move into the private part of the meeting for consideration of the Risk Register at the same time as the Sheepmount update report.

COS.190/04 PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED - That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Public and Press were excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves 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.

COS.191/04 SHEEPMOUNT PROJECT UPDATE AND RISK REGISTER (Public and Press excluded by virtue of paragraph 8)

The Head of Culture, Leisure and Sport updated Members on progress to date with the Sheepmount project (CLS.19/04 and supplementary appendix). He reported that the works to the football pitches and the track were substantially complete with some work to be carried out once the ground was firmer. The security fence around the track was currently being installed, and this was due to be completed by the end of December. He added that a planning application had been submitted for the coach turning and access road and it was a matter for Kiers to complete.

The Head of Culture, Leisure and Sport further added that with regard to the car park, the Environment Agency was seeking clarification on the surface water run-off into the water course and a licence was required to be issued from United Utilities to Kiers. The M and E work on the development was now 15-20% complete, but there remained a problem with United Utilities obtaining a licence from Railtrack to take the gas supply under the culvert which runs between the Sheepmount and Willowholme.

The Head of Culture Leisure & Sport added that there had been an amendment to the floor covering in the club room which had been changed from gran wood to a sprung wood floor, which would now be carpeted. He further added that the recruitment of the post of Football Athletics Development Officer was being advertised this week with appointment to that post being made early in the New Year.

The Head of Culture, Leisure and Sport also set out the updated Risk Register and highlighted the additional costs of providing alternative equipment until such time as the gas and water supply were completed and also drew attention to an application for increased costs which had been received from Kiers in this respect. He also highlighted for Members the position with regard to works to the Sheepmount bridge.

The Head of Culture, Leisure and Sport informed Members that Capita had been appointed to ensure compliance with funding bodies, technical specifications and site supervisory work which was a wider role than their original function and now included checking of mechanical and electrical designs and he set out the details of the usage of provisional sums that were included in the contract. He added that it was hoped to keep the sums within the £87,000. He further added that the Fire Officer had required additional expenditure on fire alarms and he was also discussing the track lighting with Carlisle Leisure Limited. He agreed to set out in a financial spreadsheet the current position and he would circulate this via the Overview and Scrutiny Manager.

The Head of Culture Leisure & Sport suggested that overall the project was approximately 2-3 weeks behind schedule and he was proposing to hold a users group meeting shortly to explore issues relating to athletes access and usage of the track. It was also suggested that prior to Christmas a further site meeting could be organised for the members of the committee to help Members see how the project had developed.

A Member highlighted the position with regard to Kiers and their application for additional funding with regard to the increased costs for incoming services and also the position with regard to the coach turning circle and the Sheepmount bridge.

Members also questioned whether consideration had been given to environmental schemes which might have provided power etc for the Sheepmount development. The Head of Culture, Leisure and Sport confirmed that the Council had investigated options for green energy in the Sheepmount development but the funders had not been willing to pay the additional cost. He added that the building met all the requirements of Building Regulations but the issues of solar panelling, windmills, use of water powered generators were not deemed to provide a good return and the Environment Agency were concerned with proposals which might interfere with water courses.

He also confirmed that it was proposed to renew the plaque in respect of John Robert Aldersey on the new building. The Head of Culture, Leisure and Sport further confirmed that the application in respect of coach turning and access road had been submitted and suggested that the M and E works should be finished shortly, but this might not be before the end of the year given the extended break which the building trade had over the christmas period.

With regards to the access for the pipework, the Head of Culture, Leisure and Sport reported that Kiers required United Utilities to obtain a licence from Railtrack to take the supply under the culvert which runs between the Sheepmount and Willowholme. Kiers had written to Railtrack at every level but were unable to make progress. He added that the Council would also write to Railtrack and would explore with Capita and Kiers if there were possibilities of submitting a claim in respect of the additional costs to the project caused by the delays.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Sheepmount project update including the updated Risk Register be noted.

(2) That the Head of Culture, Leisure and Sport circulate a financial spreadsheet setting out the current financial position on the project to members of the committee.

(3) That the Head of Culture, Leisure and Sport arrange a site visit by the committee to the Sheepmount prior to Christmas.

(The meeting ended at 1.20 pm)