

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 10.00AM

PRESENT: Councillor Nedved (Chairman), Councillors Bowditch (until 11.30am), Caig (until 12.30pm), Christian, Dodd, Ms Franklin and Mitchelson.

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Martlew – Deputy Leader, and Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder
Councillor Mrs Bradley – Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder
Councillor Mrs McKerrell – Member of Business Support Task and Finish Group
Councillor Ms Patrick – Member of the Rethinking Waste Cross Party Working Group
Councillor Burns - Observer

OFFICERS: Deputy Chief Executive
Director of Economic Development (for part of the meeting)
Director of Local Environment
Environmental Health Manager
Policy and Communications Manager
Overview and Scrutiny Officer

EEOSP.47/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Betton.

EEOSP.48/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

EEOSP.49/15 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.50/15 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the meetings held on 25 June and 23 July 2015 were circulated for the Panels approval. In considering the minutes the Chairman raised the issue of poor weed control in the City Centre, in particular around the Citadel. He understood that weed control was no longer the City Council's responsibility but asked that the issue be raised as part of the Memorandum of Understanding with the County Council.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder agreed that the County Council's weed spraying programme was not effective but informed the Panel that weed control was not part of the Memorandum of Understanding. She added that she was arranging a meeting to discuss the Memorandum of Understanding with the Chair of the Highways Committee and she would report back to the Panel after the meeting.

RESOLVED – 1) That the minutes of the meetings held on 25 June 2015 and 23 July 2015 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.

2) That the Panel look forward to an update at a future meeting from the Environment and Transport Portfolio on the Memorandum of Understanding with Cumbria County Council.

EEOSP.51/15 AGENDA

RESOLVED – That agenda item A.2 – Overview and Report Work Programme be considered at the end of the agenda.

EEOSP.52/15 CALL IN OF DECISIONS

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

EEOSP.53/15 BUSINESS SUPPORT TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Councillor Mrs McKerrell presented the draft Business Support Task and Finish Group report.

Councillor Mrs McKerrell reported that the Task and Finish Group consulted with a wide range of providers in Carlisle which offered business support and found that although there was a lot of support and advice available there was no correlation or signposting to find the support. The Task and Finish Group felt that the Council could act as a signpost to support via their website. Mrs McKerrell outlined the four recommendations as set out in the report.

The Chairman reminded the Panel that the Task and Finish Group had been commissioned because the Panel had concerns with regard to the available support in the District. He felt that the consultation had been excellent and the report provided background information to the support in Carlisle.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder thanked the Task and Finish Group for the work and commented that the issue was cross cutting for the whole Council.

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

- A Member suggested that the draft report be circulated to the consultees who had contributed to the Task and Finish work to gather their views on the report. When their final contributions had been included the report could then come back to Scrutiny for approval before being referred to the Executive.
- Members asked for clarification with regard recommendation 2: Rebranding the Enterprise Centre. The Enterprise Centre had initially been established to provide low cost start up premises for businesses to give them the opportunity to grow before expanding and moving on. It was felt that a rebranding of the Enterprise Centre would mean that a business incubation centre would be lost for new businesses.

Councillor Mrs McKerrell responded that the Task and Finish Group had felt that the Enterprise Centre was not being used for new businesses and had become low cost workspace.

The Chairman suggested that the recommendation should have more substance to it and that the role and future of the Enterprise Centre be considered as a separate issue at a future point in time.

- Recommendation 3(b) finished with 'to enable local scrutiny of outputs and outcomes.' Members asked for more clarity with regard the sentence and for the use of simpler text.

- A Member felt that 'signposting' was passive and asked what 'active' promotion would take place.

The Policy and Communication Manager responded that information would be sent to all businesses with the first business rates letter.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Members of the Business Support Task and Finish Group be thanked for their considerable work and detailed report.

2) That the Panels amendments with regard to recommendations 2 and 3(b) as set out above be incorporated into the draft report.

3) That the draft report be circulated to the consultees who had contributed to the work of the Task and Finish Group for their input before being approved by the Panel.

EEOSP.54/15 CARLISLE PLAN 2015-18

The Policy and Communications Managers submitted report PC.17/15 presenting the draft Carlisle Plan. Attention was drawn to the draft Carlisle Plan 2015-18 (attached as Appendix 1) which set out the Council's overall vision for Carlisle, supported by five priorities. The vision gave a clear direction and context for all of the Council's activities. Opportunities to improve health, wellbeing and economic prosperity would be maximized through the five priorities that supported the vision.

The Deputy Leader, and Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder explained that a programme of 'Listening Council' events had been held from 24 August 2015 to give residents the opportunity to comment on the draft plans for Carlisle's future. In addition to consultation with partners, community and voluntary groups' consultation had also been carried out the Youth Council to seek their views on the plan.

In considering the Carlisle Plan Members raised the following comments and questions:

- A Member felt strongly that the priorities did not reflect the City's rich heritage and history and felt that there should be a separate priority in the Carlisle Plan to ensure the Council made more of the heritage or the wording of the last priority to be amended to include the wording 'and heritage' at the end of it.
- A Member commented that Carlisle could not be promoted as a regional centre with the existing road and rail links. He suggested that lobbying take place to improve the road and rail infrastructure to the east and west and that the airport links be included.

The Deputy Leader, and Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder agreed that the transport links were vital to the economic wellbeing of the City and agreed that they needed to be upgraded. She added that any improvement works had to dovetail with links in Scotland to ensure connectivity to the North as well.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder informed the Panel that that some lobbying was being undertaken for the A595 which was in need of upgrading. If Carlisle was to benefit from the Moorhouse Development it would need better transport links. She added that transport links were included in the Local Plan.

- How many people had provided feedback on the Carlisle Plan and how much of the feedback had been included in the Plan?

The Policy and Communications Manager explained that, at the end of the consultation period, the feedback would be incorporated into the Plan and the changes would be identified. The Plan would be circulated to all consultees who left their contact details; if the suggestion had not been incorporated the consultee would receive acknowledgment of the feedback.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Carlisle Plan 2015-16 (PC.18/15) be welcomed;

2) That the Panel receive quarterly updates on the actions and impact of the Carlisle Plan.

3) That the Government be lobbied for improved transport links in Cumbria, in particular east to west.

EEOSP.55/15 1ST QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT 2015-16

The Policy and Communications Manager submitted report PC.14/15 updating the Panel on the Council's service standards that helped measure performance. The report also included an update on key actions contained within the Carlisle Plan 2013-16.

The Policy and Communications Manager reported that the revised priorities contained within the Carlisle Plan 2015-18 would be reported from the 3rd quarter onwards following full Council in November. Details of each service standard were included in the report in section 1. To coincide with the introduction of a new Complaints Policy, Corporate Complaints had been included in the report as a new service standard.

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

- The 'Percentage of household waste sent for recycling' standard was very precise, was it sensible to have such an exact measure?

The Policy and Communications Manager explained that the standard was precise as this was the way the information was collated and submitted for the standard.

- A Member asked how many service standards were in place and whether it was possible for Members to receive a copy of all the performance figures for information.

The Policy and Communications Manager reported that there were five corporate Service Standards which had all been included in the report. The Service Standards were viewed to be the most important standards for customers.

The Deputy Chief Executive suggested that the Panel wait until after the finalisation of the new Carlisle Plan to look at performance as the service standards would be refreshed and Members would then have the opportunity to inform and influence the standards recorded.

- Why were business planning applications not recorded in the report?

The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that business planning applications were recorded by the Directorate but were not included as a corporate service standard.

- How did the missed waste or recycling collections percentage tie in with the figures given in the rethinking waste report?

The Policy and Communications Manager responded that the figure in the performance report was for the quarter and the lower figure in the rethinking waste report was the annual figure.

The Director of Local Environment explained that recycling was seasonal and the 43% annual figure matched the national average. She added that there would need to be more investment on a national level to increase the figures.

RESOLVED – 1) That the 1st Quarter Performance Report 2015/16 (PC.14/15) be welcomed.

2) That the Service Standards and Performance Indicators of the Council be considered following the approval of the Carlisle Plan 2015-18.

EEOSP.56/15 CLEAN UP CARLISLE UPDATE

The Environmental Health Manager submitted report LE.23/15 reminding Members that Clean Up Carlisle had been a Corporate priority since 2012 because people were noticing and complaining about the deterioration in the tidiness of Carlisle's street and parks. Temporary additional funding was found for two years to improve enforcement and education and cleaning of the street.

Over the last two years many of the planned processes had come to fruition; the coming on line of improved mechanisation; new programmes of street cleansing; the development of the Enforcement and Education Team, and partnerships and procedures with groups such as the Police and Housing Associations. The Neighbourhood Enforcement Team was fully staffed and levels of enforcement had continued, details of which were set out in section 2 of the report. The report detailed a number of case studies relating to the three successful prosecutions which were in addition to fixed penalty notices.

The Environmental Health Manager drew Members attention to the We're Watching You Campaign which would be launched in September. Keep Britain Tidy worked with 17 land manager partners, across 120 dog fouling hot spot sites, to trial innovative glow in the dark eye posters. Keep Britain Tidy monitored dog fouling incidents both at the target sites where posters were displayed and as displacement sites up to 100m away and found a 46% reduction in dog fouling incidents. Carlisle City Council in partnership with Keep Britain Tidy had recently launched the campaign and placed the glow in the dark posters onto litter bins, replaced the Love Where You Live message with the campaign and placed the message on recycling wagons.

The Environmental Health Manager updated the Panel on the recommendation from the Litter Bin Task and Finish Group and the success of the introduction of Gull Sacks.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder reported that, at full Council, Councillor Shepherd had highlighted the Wrigley Chewing Gum UK's school programme 'Bin It!' which was designed to educate secondary school children about responsible litter disposal. Discussions were now underway with Wrigley's to bring the scheme to Carlisle and the Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder thanked Councillor Shepherd for bringing the scheme to the Council's attention.

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

- Had the Neighbourhood Services Manager been appointed?

The Director of Local Environment confirmed that Neighbourhood Services Manager post had been appointed and would start on 5 October 2015.

- How was the data collated for the number of fixed penalty notices issued?

The Environmental Health Manager informed the Panel that each fixed penalty notice issue was inputted in a database. He explained that there had not been a reduction in the number of patrols but there had been targeted patrolling which had proved successful.

The Director of Local Environment reminded Members of the importance of education and enforcement and the impact they had on operational aspects. The litter statistics were confirmed with the street cleansing teams but any campaigns would raise the reporting of incidents and affect the data.

- A Member commented that she preferred the 'Love where you live' message as it was a more positive message and asked why the 'We're Watching You' campaign had been introduced.

The Environmental Health Manager responded that the 'We're Watching You' campaign was a Keep Britain Tidy Campaign which had proved very successful. Evidence showed that the educational message had been successful and people knew they had to pick up but they did not do it. He explained that the eyes in the campaign glowed in the dark so there was a perception of being watched that made people pick up.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder added that several discussions had taken place regarding the launch of the campaign as the team were aware it would not be to everyone's taste, however, they could not ignore the success rate of the campaign. She reiterated that the team relied on information to target dog fouling and urged Members to keep the team informed of problem areas.

The Director of Local Environment reported that the 'We're Watching You' campaign had been based on psychological research which showed that on a subconscious level people modified their behaviour if they felt like they were being watched.

- The introduction of gull sacks had been successful but there was some concern that they were not being placed close enough to the properties once they were emptied and could cause an accident.
- The report detailed the enforcement which had taken place but had little information about the education that was being undertaken. Members asked that more detailed education information be included in the next report.
- There was less visible dog fouling on the streets but there had been an increase in the number of bagged dog fouling, was this due to a lack of litter bins or litter bins being in the wrong place?

The Environmental Health Manager reported that the bagged dog fouling was still an offence.

A Member added that the Tidy Britain Group had undertaken some work on the issue and the findings may prove useful to help build a campaign on the issue.

RESOLVED – That the Clean Carlisle Update (LE.23/15) be noted.

EEOSP.57/15 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 item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph number (as indicated in brackets against the minute) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Local Government Act.

EEOSP.58/15 RETHINKING WASTE: BUSINESS CASE (Public and Press excluded by virtue of Paragraph 3)

The Chairman of the Panel highlighted differences between the report that had been submitted to the Panel and the report that would be considered by the Executive and was disappointed that they had not received the same report as the Executive which included options on procurement and financing the required new fleet of refuse and recycling vehicles.

The Director of Local Environment informed the Panel that the deadline for the Executive meeting was later and the report that was circulated to the Panel for consideration was the most up to date at the deadline for Overview and Scrutiny. The Executive report had been prepared later and was therefore more up to date.

The Director explained that the figures in the table were based on modelled figures and as such the figures for each option were relative to one another. A great deal of further work was needed to finalise actual budgets and they would be set I the annual Council budget process.

A Member asked that, in future, updated reports be circulated to the Panel as an addendum to the report they had initially received.

The Director of Local Environment presented report LE.24/15 setting out the detailed business case to support the proposals of the Rethinking Waste review.

The Director of Local Environment reminded Members that a review of the collection service had been carried out with the aim to improve efficiency of dry recycling collections and to enable the extension of the full kerbside service to new housing. The Executive, at their meeting on 29 June 2015, had agreed to proceed with Option 1 as was outlined in the review report subject to a full business case.

The Director summarised the details of Option 1 and drew Members attention to the Business Case attached to the report as appendix 1 which set out the expected benefits and dis-benefits of implementing Option 1.

The Director of Local Environment reported that a communication plan was being prepared for both internal and external audiences. The Cross Party Working Group had assisted greatly with the development of the Plan and would continue to work on the communication planning during the implementation of the project. Staff consultation would commence before Christmas on proposals and more detailed collection methodology.

In considering the Rethinking Waste Business Case Members raised the following comments and questions:

- Would all refuse vehicles be included the renewal of vehicles?

The Director of Local Environment responded that the modelling exercise had taken into account the whole service and as a result the whole fleet would be considered. She reminded the Panel that the Rethinking Waste Project had been established to fund replacement vehicles which were not currently financed through the revenue budget.

- Would the reconfiguration of rounds been carried out at the same time as the purchase of vehicles?

The Director of Local Environment confirmed that a round optimisation exercise would be undertaken in conjunction with the purchase of vehicles. Demonstration vehicles would be used on rounds to test and pilot rounds.

- The report stated that the roll out of the scheme would take place over 6 to 8 months, how would this happen and why would the changes be rolled out and not implemented together?

The Director of Local Environment explained that discussions had taken place as to how to implement the changes but due to the nature of the existing service providers it would not be possible to implement everything together. The roll out period of 6 to 8 months was due to the lead in period required for the purchase of vehicles. The changes would occur round by round and it was the intention that the impact on the public be kept to a minimum.

The Panel discussed the risks that were associated with option 1 and the benefits of working with contractors to phase the project in and the potential security which working with other District Councils could bring to the project.

Councillor Ms Patrick, Member of the Rethinking Waste Cross Party Working Group, informed the Panel that the Working Group had looked at the available options in some detail and felt that option 1 was the best option for the Council to maximise recycling and to provide the best service for the people of Carlisle. The Group wanted to ensure that the changes had the minimum impact on the public; she added that it was very important that members of the public were kept fully engaged in the changes and that Councillors were kept informed so they could provide advice to residents in their Wards.

- Would the project be included in the Corporate Risk Register?

The Director of Local Environment responded that Council would have to allow some 'buffering' in relation to risks from changes in market price and fuel prices. There were both opportunities and risks.

- A Member asked for confirmation that the new recycling vehicles enabled all residents to receive all recycling services.

The Director of Local Environment confirmed that residents would receive full dry recycling services as result of the new vehicles and collections. This was not in relation to green waste.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder commented that the Cross Party Working Group had been invaluable. She felt that, despite other options being considered, option 1 was the future proof and flexible option for the Council. She added that the Communications Policy had to be exact and that it was essential that all the relevant information as available to public along with details of their responsibilities.

The Director added that one of the responsibilities of users would be the need to separate recycling at home which would reduce the need for crew members to put themselves at risk of injury and enable safer faster collections.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Panel supported the proposals as detailed in report LE.24/15 – Rethinking Waste: Business Case.

2) That the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel receive regular updates on the progress of the Rethinking Waste project.

The meeting moved back into public.

EEOSP.59/15 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented report OS.19/15 which provided an overview of matters that related to the work of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reported that the Notice of Executive Key Decisions had been published on 21 August 2015. Key Decisions KD.28/15 - Carlisle Plan and KD.31/15 – Rethinking Waste: Business Case fell within the item in the remit of the Panel and had been included on the agenda.

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

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer highlighted the suggested Task and Finish Groups detailed in the Work Programme along with a suggestion from the Director of Economic Development for a joint piece of work with Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel on Housing Delivery and Challenges and asked Members to give consideration to the work they would like to move forward on. Members discussed in some detail each of the suggestions and felt that the Nuclear New Builds would be better as a presentation and regular agenda item rather than a Task and Finish Group. They discussed the potential of an Enterprise Zone Task and Finish Group but felt that this could be covered in the Skills Audit work.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Overview Report incorporating the Work Programme and Key Decision items relevant to this Panel (OS.19/15) be noted.

2) That a presentation on the Nuclear New Builds be given at a future meeting of the Panel.

3) That a scoping document be prepared on the Skills Audit Task and Finish Group to be considered at the next meeting of the Panel.

(the meeting ended at 12.30pm)