

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 3 MARCH 2016 AT 10.00AM

PRESENT: Councillor Nedved (Chairman), Betton, Burns (as substitute for Councillor Dodd (until 12.20pm) Bowditch, Christian, Mitchelson, and Ms Patrick (as substitute for Councillor Caig).

ALSO PRESENT Councillor Glover – Leader (from 10.25am until 12.20pm)
Councillor Mrs Martlew – Deputy Leader, and Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder (until 11.25pm)
Councillor Mrs Bradley – Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder (until 12.20pm)

OFFICERS: Director of Local Environment
Director of Economic Development
Neighbourhood Services Manager
Investment and Policy Manager
Policy and Performance Officer
Overview and Scrutiny Officer

EEOSP.10/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Caig, Dodd and Ms Franklin.

EEOSP.11/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

EEOSP.12/16 PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – That the Agenda be agreed as circulated.

EEOSP.13/16 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED – The minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2016 were noted.

EEOSP.14/16 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS

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

EEOSP.15/16 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented report OS.06/16 providing an overview of matters relative to the work of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reported that the last Notice of Executive Key Decisions, which had been published on 5 February 2016, included the 2016/17 Budget Process (KD.33/15) which had been considered by the Panel at their November meeting. Members did not raise any questions or comments on the items contained within the Notice of Executive Key Decisions.

The Panel's Work Programme was attached to the report and Members were asked to note and/or amend the Programme as they saw fit.

The Scrutiny Chairs Group, on 4 February, resolved that each Panel have a standing Flood Update report added to their agenda, to receive an update on issues within the remit of that Panel. The Panel was to receive a report at its April 2016 meeting regarding the Council's asset recovery following the flood.

The Chairman welcomed the production of regular flood reports to the Panel and added that initial work towards a Task and Finish Group on the subject of the flood would be useful, he felt it was important to understand resident's experience of the flood, in particular issues related to insurance and contractors. He added reports from other agencies who had been involved the flood recovery work, for example the Environment Agency and Cumbria County Council, would not be available until sometime in the future, and suggested that a workshop might be held to consider the flood recovery work.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder felt that holding a workshop and Task and Finish Group on the subject of the flood was a good idea, however, they needed to be able to offer tangible outcomes that could influence flood response work in the future. She felt that the focus of the work should be to consider what work could be taken in relation to flood defence enhancement as a means of increasing the protection offered to residents and the city.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder suggested that an Informal Council meeting be held on the subject of the flood with officers from external organisations being invited to speak, this would provide Members with information that they could disseminate within their Wards.

The Director of Local Environment added that the Environment Agency was leading a Cumbria Flood Partnership which was a cross county initiative examining flood issues, and suggested that they be approached to attend the briefing.

The Scrutiny Officer noted that the first scheduled meeting in the new Civic Year coincided with that of the national referendum regarding Britain membership of the European Union. The Panel agreed the meeting should be moved to the following week and that the meeting would take place on 30 June 2016.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Overview Report (OS.06/16) incorporating the Work Programme and Notice of Executive Key Decision items relevant to this Panel be noted.

(2) That a workshop and Informal Council Briefing be arranged for Members with agencies involved in the flood.

(3) That the June meeting of the Panel be rescheduled to take place on 30 June 2016.

EEOSP.16/16 RETHINKING WASTE PROJECT

The Director of Local Environment submitted report LE.03/16 which updated the Panel on the progress of the Rethinking Waste Project and highlighted key issues for the project going forward.

The Director of Local Environment gave a presentation on the Rethinking Waste project that included the following areas; the impact of the flood on the Waste Team; updates on new refuse and recycling vehicle trials, recycling receptacles and the depot; the design principles of the new collection service; what markers indicated that the project had been successful; and what questions remained to be answered regarding the delivery of waste and recycling services in the city.

The trialling of new vehicles had produced variable results, the Rotapress refuse wagons had proved to be effective in terms of improving access and increasing payload. Trials of resource recycling vehicles had been conducted with all three market suppliers but results had been mixed, it was hoped that using the experience of other authorities and the soft market testing exercise, which would include feedback from staff, would allow the Council to identify the adaptations required to ensure they were fit for use in the city.

Emphasis was placed on the importance of regular communications with Members, staff, and residents regarding the progress of the project. A service improvement group had been established to seek the views of staff across neighbourhood services in general day to day service issues with a view to making ongoing adjustments where necessary to improve service standards and working conditions.

Two important meetings relating to the project were scheduled in March 2016; the Soft Market testing which would inform the redesign and specification of vehicles and receptacle types; and the Project Board meeting which would agree the detailed timetable for project completion. The Director of Local Environment summed up by detailing the project timescale, noting that a target date for April 2017 had been set for the project's implementation, although consideration would need to be given to the phasing of some changes.

The Chairman welcomed the report stating it provided a very clear update on the project, especially the changes regarding bringing in house the recyclates collection.

The Director of Local Environment thanked the Chairman for his comments and explained that the main factor in not bringing the collection of recyclates in house had been the reduction in the price received for collected recyclates which was related to the drop in fuel price. The depreciation in recyclate price meant expending capital sums on developing Bousteads Grassing as a bulk up recycling centre was not currently feasible; consequently, this aspect of the project had been shelved, however, should the price of recyclates return to previous levels, the proposal to develop Bousteads Grassing could be re-visited.

The Chairman felt that the report had not provided a defined timetable of the work required to meet the project implementation deadline, he asked when the Panel would see concrete proposals relating to the work timetable.

The Deputy Leader and Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder responded that the Rethinking Waste Cross Party Working Group had been involved in considering the detail

of the project up to its present stage, which had worked well, that was an approach she wished to see continued.

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

- *Was the April 2017 a realistic deliverable date for the project?*

The Director of Local Environment reminded Members that the current contract for green box recycling ended in June 2016 and that an extension to the contract could be negotiated for a further 12 months to June 2017. The project team felt that the project could be delivered earlier than this and so a shorted extension was being sought to take the contract to end March 2017. The new service had been timetable to commence in April 2017 and was to be taken for approval by the project board. The Director of Local Environment was confident that this date would be met.

- *Had co-mingling of recyclates been considered as an option for the recycling collection?*

The Director of Local Environment replied that the Council could incur charges in collections if recyclable materials were co-mingled, as they would require processing to separate the materials, either at the collection point or depot facility, and there may be costs related to the disposal of the material.

The Deputy Leader and Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder added that co-mingled recyclates may not meet the TEEP (Technically, Environmentally and Economically Practicable) requirements; therefore the project had made a decision to remain with source separated collections.

- *Had measures used by other Local Authorities to address problems with collection vehicles accessing back lanes been looked into?*

The Director of Local Environment explained that many of Carlisle's backlanes were unusual as they were often long which ruled out muster points, had only one entrance, and often did not have an adequate turning circle. Therefore, the selection of the vehicle to service the collections in back lanes was crucial as it needed to be able to operate effectively, efficiently and safely.

- *A Member felt that April 2017 was a long time to wait for residents who did not receive recycling collections to begin receiving them. He asked if the Council was meeting its legal requirement regarding the collection of recyclable materials.*

The Director of Local Environment replied that the Council collected at least two types of recyclable materials, from each household where the service was delivered, which was the minimum legal requirement. The green boxes receptacles collected paper and glass, and green bags were used to collect both plastic and card; there were only a small number of properties within the collection area that received no collection.

- *What plans had been developed to include new estates into the recycling collections?*

The Director of Local Environment explained that the Council was investigating ways of increasing the recycling collections to new estates, with green box collections being identified as a potential method which could be used; however, this area of work was still being progressed.

- *Did the Council have the resources to deliver the whole project by the implementation date, and had a two stage delivery process been considered?*

The Director of Local Environment explained that the vehicle replacement aspect of the project had been well considered, officers had an understanding of the vehicle design requirement, and project milestone dates had been agreed regarding procurement to enable the Council to meet the project implementation date of April 2017. The initial roll out of the new vehicles would be commenced in April 2017 with the new fleet being fully in place a few months later. She added that the deadline was useful to maintain momentum within the project, and she considered twelve months to be a reasonable timescale.

- *Had the decision regarding outsourcing of collections been reviewed to ensure it offered the best value for the service?*

The Director of Local Environment explained that getting best value for the Council had been an important consideration in the development of the project. Evidence supplied by the consultant engaged to benchmark the Council's collection services had indicated that the Council delivered a very efficient service and there would be no benefit to the authority in outsourcing the service. An in house collection and disposal service had been identified as offering the best value for money to the authority; the evidence provided by the consultant had informed this aspect of the project's decision making.

The Deputy Leader and Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder stated that the consultants had praised the efficiency and competence of the collection service delivered by the Council, adding that she felt the service was robust. At the time of the consultants assessment of the service setting up an in house disposal service had been deemed beneficial, and consideration had been given to developing Bousteads Grassing as a depot for process, but in addition to the reduced price for the sale of disposed recyclates, there had also been concerns about the depot's location near to a residential area. Therefore this aspect of the project had not been progressed; however, she reiterated that the Council could revisit this aspect of the project at a future time.

The Deputy Chief Executive added that another factor in reaching the decision to have an in house collection service was pressure on local government finances, outsourcing the service had been considered, but the in house option had been selected for a number of reasons, outlined in the report, and in financial terms it offered the Council a degree of flexibility for its Medium Term Financial Plan.

- *What strategy was in place for communicating the details of the plan to Members and the public?*

The Director of Local Environment replied that further work was needed in relation to the project, for example, the Soft Market Testing exercise and Project Board meeting, so that decisions could be taken which would shape the project. Following this work a meeting of the Rethinking Waste Cross Party Working would be arranged to develop a live communication plan to disseminate information to Members and residents.

- *A Member felt that it was important that Members were clear on the development and of the project and asked if an Informal Briefing for Members on the project was planned?*

The Deputy Leader and Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder felt that waste was a key Council Service and it was important that Members were briefed when substantial information on the project was available so they could share the information with residents. She reiterated the need for the Soft Market Testing exercise to be completed and the Project Board meeting to have taken place prior to any further communications being undertaken.

In response to a Member's request that Councillors be provided with a resume detailing the Project Board's agreed timetable for the project, the Deputy Leader and Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder agreed that a resume would be circulated to Members and the Project be included as a subject for an Informal Briefing to Members in the future.

The Chairman noted that the report indicated a rise in the Council's recycling rates as a result of the new service, from 45% currently, to 50% by 2020; he asked if the anticipated rise was due to the expansion of the collection to households which currently did not receive recycling collections?

The Director of Local Environment advised that the consultant report made a range of recommendations and with a weekly collection of recyclables, food waste collection and reduced waste capacity, there was potential to reach 65%. The current proposals for a fortnightly collection with the same refuse capacity was expected to achieve 50% by 2020, the increase would in part be realised by expanding the coverage of the service, along with improvements in service delivery. Additionally, in the future, the Council may consider expanding the type of recyclates collected to include textiles or other items; this would also increase the recycling collection rate.

- *A Member expressed concerns regarding the width of roads in new housing developments being too narrow and asked what steps the Council could take to ensure new roads were sufficiently wide to allow access to service vehicles?*

The Deputy Leader and Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder responded that this was an issue she hoped would be addressed as narrow roads made it difficult for the vehicles to access areas and increased the risk of damage being caused to the vehicles, as a result of colliding with street furniture or parked vehicles.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder advised that the County Council as the responsible highways authority were responsible for stipulating required road width, and as a statutory consultee on planning applications, they ensured that the minimum distances were met.

The Director of Economic Development added that the Local Plan also made stipulations regarding road width and agreed to take the Panel's comments back to Planning Services for them to be considered.

The Chairman asked when the Panel would receive the next update report on the Project. The Director of Local Environment advised that the first meeting in the new civic year would be most suitable as it would allow time for the Soft Market Testing exercise to

be conducted and for the Project Board and Cross Party Working Group meetings to take place.

RESOLVED –(1) That the Panel welcomed report LE.03/16 and noted the progress made on the project.

(2) That the Panel receive a report on the Project at its June meeting.

(3) That a resume covering the agreed project timescale be circulated to Members following the next meeting of the Rethinking Waste Project Board.

(4) That an Informal Briefing on the project be delivered to Members.

EEOSP.17/16 CARLISLE SOUTH MASTERPLAN

The Director of Economic Development introduced the presentation on the Carlisle South Masterplan, advising the Panel that it was a long term project that would take around twenty-five to thirty years deliver in its entirety, however, the early stages of the masterplanning were important as they formed the foundations of the project.

The Investment and Policy Manager delivered a presentation on the Carlisle South Masterplan detailing the background and purpose of the Masterplan; the indicative area covered by the Masterplan; the Planning Strategy; the progress to date on the Masterplan and the next steps. He explained that the Masterplan would guide decisions on issues such as the location of development and infrastructure, connectivity and phasing. The Masterplan process would mirror that of the Local Plan and would engage in extensive consultation as it sought to meet the development needs of the city.

The fixed extent of the area covered by the Masterplan would be defined through the process of masterplanning, but would comprise land between junction 42 of the M6 and the A595. The Masterplan sought to meet the development needs of the city in terms of housing supply, employment land, supporting infrastructure, and a new southern link road as well as seeking to improve connectivity to West Cumbria.

A team from the Homes and Communities Agency's Advisory Team for Large Applications and Sites (ATLAS) had been secured to assist and advise the Council on taking the Masterplan forward, and consultants had begin work on identifying potential options for the southern road link.

In conclusion the Investment and Policy Manager advised that the next steps in the development of the Masterplan included defining a clear project plan, agreement of governance arrangements which may include a cross party group of Members, and the continuation of evidence gathering.

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

- *What proportion of the area shaded on the indicated map shown in the presentation would be needed to provide 10,000 homes?*

The Policy and Investment Manager replied that perhaps one third of the area indicated as potentially forming the Masterplan area would be required to build 10,000 homes. He cautioned Members that the Council had not agreed any plans to build 10,000 homes in

the area adding that the land which was shaded on the indicative map, the land in this area was of varying quality and as such would be suitable for a variety of uses.

- *A Member expressed concern that the area highlighted on the indicative map comprised a number of small villages, and he felt that it was important that the Council appreciated some residents wanted to live on the edge of the urban area, in a rural setting. He was concerned about the area proposed for development and asked why it was necessary that development took place on such a scale.*

The Deputy Chief Executive responded that as more people were living longer in their retirement, they were still contributing to the economy, but the increasing population numbers created issues of housing supply, the city's small size made it attractive to people, but it was also problematic in terms of provide for growth.

The Chairman noted that the M6 corridor was a significant part of the Local Enterprise Partnership development plans going forward, but he appreciated the concerns about striking the right balance between urban and rural areas.

- *Why had consultants been engaged to identify the southern relief route, what bidding process had been used, and when had this decision been taken place?*

The Policy and Investment Manager explained that the bidding process had been one of joint procurement with the County Council and had taken place the previous autumn using available infrastructure capacity funds. The decision to engage consultants had been taken as neither the city nor county councils had the capacity to undertake the work.

In response to a comment by a Member that work of this nature had been undertaken in the 1980's, the Investment and Policy Manager explained that the purpose of the work previously undertaken had been to identify the best route to bypass the city, whereas the function of the southern relief road was now focussed on open access to the city and connectivity between the east and west.

- *When would a substantive document on the Masterplan be available for Members?*

The Director of Economic Development responded that the development of the Masterplan was an iterative process, and therefore she anticipated 2 – 3 years would be needed before a substantive document was developed.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder added that she felt that a cross party working group could give consideration to individual issues prior to the development of a substantive document, as had been done with the development of the Local Plan, she hoped this could start as soon as possible.

A Member felt that the indicative area identified was an excellent strategic position to create employment opportunities within the city and for providing opportunities to connect to the opportunities on the West coast. He felt that masterplanning was important to protect the city from ad hoc developments and allowed for the planning of proper infrastructure to support housing and employment developments. Large village settlement may be included in the policy and as the completion of the plans was thirty years away, people did not need to feel frightened by the Masterplan.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder agreed, adding that she felt the Masterplan was an exciting opportunity to be involved in the growth and development of

the city, and that as political leaders in the city Members needed to be engaged in the process. The Council needed to deliver what it could to help the city's prosperity, by creating quality homes, leisure, work, and education provision.

Another Member applauded the ambition of the project and felt that the Masterplan would create many exciting opportunities for the next generation.

RESOLVED – That the Investment and Policy Manager be thanked for the presentation.

EEOSP.18/16 3RD QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT 2015/16

The Policy and Performance Officer presented report PC.06/16 which updated the Panel on the Council's service standards and gave a summary of the Carlisle Plan actions 2013-16.

The Policy and Performance Officer reported that the end of year report would include the new priorities/activities outlined in the new Carlisle Plan 2015-18. Details of each service standard had been included in table 1 of the report. The table illustrated the cumulative year to date figure, a month by month breakdown of performance and, where possible, an actual service standard baseline that had been established either locally or nationally.

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

- *How were the statistics covered in the report selected for inclusion?*

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the indicators reported to the Panel had been agreed by the Executive at the beginning of the previous Carlisle Plan, the indicators had had been selected on the grounds that they would be of interest to Members and the public, and that they were a manageable number to consider. He reminded Members that in the previous report format one hundred and twenty four national indicators were considered.

The statistics covered by the quarterly performance reports were linked to other performance indicators; they were also used by the Senior Management Team as a mechanism for ensuring that service standards were met.

In response the Member explained that he felt it would be useful for the Panel to be provided with qualitative data along with the statistics as that would assist in Member's understanding of the issues being covered by the report, for example, in addition to reporting the number of Corporate Complaints dealt with in the stipulated fifteen day timescale, it would be useful for Members to know the reasons for the complaints and how they were addressed. The Panel agreed that this would be taken forward.

A Member expressed concerns that he had previously raised issues relating to his Ward, which he felt had not been addressed. The issues raised included housing, highways, health and flood related issues.

Another Member took issue with this statement and felt that questions and comments made by Members needed to be relevant to the report which was currently being considered.

RESOLVED – (1) That report PC.06/16 be noted.

(2) That the Panel be consulted on the information provided in therevised performance information/service standards relating to the new Carlisle Plan which will be included in future quarterly performance reports to Panel.

(The meeting ended at 12.37pm)