

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 17 JANUARY 2013 AT 10.00 AM

PRESENT: Councillor Layden (Chairman), Councillors Mrs Atkinson (as substitute for Councillor Whalen), Bainbridge, Bowditch, Mrs Franklin (as substitute for Councillor McDevitt), Graham, and Scarborough (as substitute for Councillor Watson).

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor Allison – Observer Agenda Item A.6
Councillor Bloxham - Observer
Councillor Glover – Economy and Enterprise Portfolio Holder
Councillor Hendry – Observer – Agenda Item 6
Councillor Mrs Martlew – Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder
Dr Stephen Bulman, University of Cumbria

OFFICERS: Deputy Chief Executive
Director of Economic Development
Director of Local Environment
Neighbourhoods and Green Space Manager
Overview and Scrutiny Manager
Safety, Health and Environmental Manager

EEOSP.01/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors McDevitt, Nedved, Watson and Whalen

EEOSP.02/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Graham declared a registrable interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of minutes of the last meeting. The interest related to the fact that his son in law was the former manager of the Carlisle Enterprise Centre.

EEOSP.03/13 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED – (1) That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2012 be agreed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

(2) That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2012 be noted.

Councillor Layden advised that, with regard to the Enterprise Centre section of the Review of Charges item, some Members had visited the Carlisle Enterprise Centre and highlighted some of the issues raised by the tenants. Councillor Layden queried whether it would be possible to have some presence at the Centre in the form of a receptionist or Officer possibly 3 mornings per week as some of the tenants believed that it would be useful to have someone to take deliveries, answer general queries and provide some business support.

Councillor Glover explained that the decision had been made on those issues some time ago and it would need to be clear exactly what the role would be although he was not sure how the position would be financed.

The Deputy Chief Executive reminded Members that there had been robust debate on the issues in the past that had led to the Executive's decision to withdraw business support from the Centre. However tenants had voiced concerns and while Members and Officers acknowledged those concerns, caution was needed that issues were not considered on which a decision had been made previously.

RESOLVED: That consideration be given to the reinstatement of some reception support for the Enterprise Centre.

EEOSP.04/13 CALL IN OF DECISIONS

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

EEOSP.05/13 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman advised that Agenda item A.6 – Business Interaction Centre – would be considered as the first item on the agenda in order to avoid delaying Dr Stephen Bulman, University of Cumbria, who was attending the meeting for that item.

EEOSP.06/13 BUSINESS INTERACTION CENTRE

The Director of Economic Development submitted Report ED.04/13 that provided details on the proposal to set up a Business Interaction Centre (BIC) and the proposed contribution from Carlisle City Council of £100,000 towards capital costs.

Report ED.37/12 on the Business interaction Centre had been considered by the Executive at their meeting on 17 December 2012. The Executive had resolved:

“That the Executive approved:

1. A programme of works agreed with the University to deal with the dilapidations identified at Paternoster Row and Castle Street.
2. That the City Council should contribute a maximum of £100,000 as partnership funding towards the Business Interaction Centre, subject to:
3. The BIC being delivered within a timescale agreed with the Portfolio Holder in conjunction with the Director of Economic Development.
4. That the Portfolio Holder, in conjunction with the Director of Economic Development and the Director of Resources, be given delegated authority to approve the works necessary to deliver the BIC.”

The Director of Economic Development outlined the background to the matter, and emphasised that supporting economic growth was a key priority for the Council. In order to do that, Carlisle needed to attract new investment to the City, develop an enterprising culture and raise skills levels. She added that the Carlisle Economic Partnership had identified skills as a particular issue which needed to be addressed if the City was to attract inward investment.

The University of Cumbria was a key partner. The University's Corporate Strategy had four core themes: Sustainability, Creativity, Employability and Enterprise, and the University wished to establish a BIC as part of that Strategy.

The Economy and Enterprise Portfolio Holder explained that the University was proposing that a BIC should be established in the City which would form the base of the University of Cumbria Business School in Carlisle, details of which were provided. It was projected as a high profile entry point for businesses and employees seeking to access University expertise, particularly Business School and Arts, and Business and Science. He explained that the University was working with a number of partners to deliver the BIC.

The University had also been in discussion with the Council for some time as to where the BIC should be located and had given consideration to one of its campuses i.e. Fusehill Street or Brampton Road. However, a base in the city centre would be more advantageous and it was proposed that the BIC should be located at Paternoster Row which the University currently leased from the City Council. Paternoster Row was considered to be an ideal location as it would bring the BIC closer to its customers, enabling the business and student worlds to merge, raise its visibility, provide an attractive venue for business start-ups and contribute to the regeneration of the "cultural quarter".

If the building was to provide a modern, fit for purpose facility necessary for a BIC approximately £160,000 capital expenditure would be required. That would include the refurbishment of the building and provision of IT software and infrastructure. The University had asked for a contribution from the City council of £100,000 towards the capital costs of the refurbishment of the building.

The operating costs of the BIC, which would be covered by the University, would be £180,000 in the first year, rising 5% per annum as indicated in Appendix 2.

Both buildings required maintenance improvement work to remediate the impact of dilapidations at the end of the current lease period, and it was anticipated that a programme of remedial improvement works would be prepared, funded and implemented throughout the remainder of the lease period.

The Economy and Enterprise Portfolio Holder also highlighted the comments of the Director of Resources, as detailed within the report.

He stressed that the development of a BIC was fundamental to a City with 'growth' aspirations. It would send a clear message to businesses both in the area and those looking to invest that Carlisle supported business. In addition, a BIC would help to address an identified need in the area, by helping to raise skill levels and supporting small and medium sized businesses (SMEs), as well as providing opportunities for large businesses to liaise with the University on research and development.

The properties on Paternoster Row and Castle Street were situated in the Heritage and Cultural quarter of the City Centre and the development of the BIC in the area would make a valuable contribution to the vitality of the area.

The Director of Economic Development introduced Dr Stephen Bulman from the University of Cumbria who advised that the University had been in discussions with the Council and partners and were taking the study into the economic potential of Carlisle into account. The proposed building would provide a multi-dimensional space and courses for business,

higher skills and work placements would be provided as well as consultancy and research. The Business Interaction Centre would also provide incubation for new businesses. The centre would provide advice and guidance and there would be access to expertise. It was anticipated that the businesses would be in the media/creative area.

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

Where did the initial idea for the Business Interaction Centre come from?

Dr Bulman explained that the idea followed discussions between John Stevenson MP, the Chamber of Commerce and some private companies who were in the area of offering incubation support and advice as well as the Carlisle Economic Partnership. The idea had been tested on partners. The Director of Economic Development advised that there were similar facilities in other areas such as Preston and Lancaster. The project would be an indication to other areas that the Council was working with the University to support businesses in the area.

There had been issues in the past with partner bodies including the University. What diligence had been taken on the project so far and how could the Scrutiny Panel have input?

The Director of Economic Development acknowledged that there had been difficulties in the past but confirmed that the University had looked at those issues and believed that they were now able to work with partners. She had spoken with the Senior Management Team of the University who assured her that things were now in place to ensure they were now on a sound footing.

The Economy and Enterprise Portfolio Holder explained that the Council would ensure that the risk management was good and believed that the risk was relatively low. He believed that if the Business Interaction Centre was not developed the worst case scenario would be that the Council would left with a building that was in a better condition than at present with IT equipment that could be used by other partners. The University had given a clear commitment to business growth and the retention of graduates.

The Portfolio Holder advised that he would wish to see input from the Scrutiny Panel and point out potential pitfalls.

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that as a result of the recommendations made to the Executive the Council had had a survey carried out on the buildings and a programme of works had been agreed to improve the facilities. With regard to revenue the Council had not asked for revenue with regard to the activities of the Centre as that would be the responsibility of the university. The Council had agreed a sum of £100,000 to ensure that the project would be delivered on time and progress made. With regard to the Council's reputation the Deputy Chief Executive believed that the project was a robust partnership, both of whom were keen that the project was successful.

Could the Panel have an assurance that the Council's £100,000 would not be used to offset the cost of dilapidation repairs for which the University was liable under the terms of the lease?

The Director of Economic Development confirmed that the money would be used to upgrade the building but it was the Universities responsibility to deal with the dilapidation

of the buildings in Paternoster Row and Castle Street. She stated that there would be a contract and the recommendations from the Executive would be incorporated. The Director confirmed that at present there was no City Council representative on the University's Board. Dr Bulman agreed to take the matter back to the University.

If the proposed works amounted to less than the £185,000 which was the University's outstanding liability for disrepair, would the City Council receive the difference?

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the recommendation stated "...to a maximum of £100,000..." and it was not expected that the University would need to pay the full amount if the costs were lower than that sum.

What were the timescales for the project?

The Director of Economic Development advised that discussions had been ongoing for 18 months and that it had been hoped to open the Centre in September 2012. However it was now anticipated that the Centre would open in the late spring of 2013.

The report refers to the Centre being in the cultural quarter. Had the title of the area been changed from historical quarter?

The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the area would be known as the historic quarter.

The University had moved the Business School to Lancaster. Would that cause difficulty or would the Centre work in another way?

Dr Bulman advised that only the full-time undergraduate business courses had been re-located to Lancaster. The Business Interaction Centre would be used for businesses in Carlisle in response to discussions regarding resources in the City. The Centre would focus on business support and start-up in Carlisle.

How would the Council monitor the process to ensure their reputation was sound?

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the University had a Business Plan with stated outcomes, as well as business partners. The University would inform the Carlisle Economic Partnerships on progress and could report back to the Council periodically if required.

When was approval given for the £100,000 towards capital costs?

The Deputy Chief Executive reminded Members that the Executive had approved the recommendations before Christmas 2012 and gave approval for the Portfolio Holder to take the project forward. The lease with the University was active until 2017 and it was hoped that, if the Centre was successful, that could be extended into the future.

RESOLVED – 1) That Report ED.04/13 - Business Interaction Centre be noted.

2) That the Panel ask the Executive to ensure that the £100,000 was used to develop the Business Interaction Centre and not to offset the cost of dilapidation repairs for which the University was liable under the terms of the lease.

3) That to enable closer working with the Council a formal request be made to the University for a City Council representative to sit on the University's Board.

EEOSP.07/13 OVERVIEW REPORT INCORPORATING THE WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN ITEMS

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented report OS.03/13 which provided an overview of matters related to the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel's work. Details of the latest version of the work programme were also included.

The Officer reported that:

- The Notice of Key Executive Decisions had been published on 14 December 2012. The items that related to the work of this Panel were:
 - KD.037/12 – Carlisle Plan – to be considered by the Panel at their meeting to be held on 28 February 2013.

A new Plan had been published on 11 January 2013 following distribution of the papers but there were no other matters that related to the work of the Panel.

- References from the Executive
 - Minute Excerpt EX.161/12 – Charges Reviews had been received from the Executive
- The report of the Carlisle Tourist Information Task Group had been considered by the Executive on 17 December 2012. Minute Excerpt EX.172/13 indicated that the Executive had resolved that:

“The Executive had considered the final report of the Carlisle Tourist Information Centre Task and Finish Group attached to Report OS.36/12 and would respond to the recommendations contained therein at the next Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting on 17 January 2013.”

The Culture, Health, Leisure and Young People Portfolio Holder apologised that she was unable to attend the meeting but had submitted the Executive's response to each of the Task and Finish Group's recommendations. The recommendations and responses are attached to the minutes as Appendix 1.

It was confirmed that the options paper would be submitted to the Panel once a decision had been made on future plans.

The response from the Executive referred to a Working Group to monitor the ongoing project development work. The recommendation from the Task and Finish Group was for an ongoing Sub Committee consisting of employees of the Tourist Information Centre, representatives from a user group and representatives from the Council to meet 3-4 times per year to deal with issues as they arise to avoid a similar problems arising in future.

The Economy and Enterprise Portfolio Holder advised that the Executive welcomed the report and confirmed that some of the issues raised had been built into the project

development work. At present the work was around the structure of the building and the internal decoration to ensure the inside of the building maximised the heritage of the building as well as the outside. Funding for the larger piece was not currently available but the Panel could influence that work at a future point. He advised that the Culture, Health, Leisure and Young People Portfolio Holder was happy to engage with the Panel.

It would be useful to have a group similar to that which monitored the Market Hall who would have representation from the City Council and who could monitor Tourist Information Centre and meet to deal with issues as they arose.

- The initial meeting of the Talkin Tarn Task and Finish Group was held on 8 January 2013. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer circulated the scoping document and draft terms of reference to the Panel for approval.

There was a good cross section of Members on the Group and the possible witnesses would include Ward Councillors.

- Work Programme – The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented the current work programme and advised that she had been advised that it was unlikely that the Local Plan would be ready to be submitted to the Panel in time for the next meeting. The Officer agreed to keep the Panel updated on progress before the next meeting.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder suggested that the Panel may wish to consider the designation of the Kingmoor Nature reserve at the next meeting of the Panel, before it was submitted to the Executive for their consideration.

RESOLVED –1) That, subject to the issues raised above, the Overview Report incorporating the Work Programme and Forward Plan items relevant to this Panel be noted.

2) That the Terms of Reference of the Talkin Tarn Task and Finish Group be approved

3) That the Panel note the response from the Executive to the recommendations of the Task Group and continue to monitor progress as the project develops.

3) That the designation of the Kingmoor Nature Reserve be added to the Work programme for the meeting to be held on 28 February 2013.

EEOSP.08/13 CUMBRIA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP WORKING PROJECT UPDATE

The Director of Local Environment submitted Report LE.02/13 that provided a summary and update of the proposed Enhanced Partnership Working Project. The Director of Local Environment gave the background to the partnership and advised that whilst significant progress had been made against some of the 7 key objectives, progress across all 7 objectives had been uneven. Of particular concern was the lack of progress made against the key objective of adopting 'common methods of collection' for recyclable and residual wastes. That was significant because of the opportunities to achieve real savings if consistent methods of collection were to be adopted by the 6 Waste Collection Authorities. Common methods of collection required a greater level of partnership working than had been the case so far with the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership. Experience in other

areas of the UK indicated that enhanced partnership working had the potential to generate real cashable savings whilst at the same time successfully enabling Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme quotas to be met. The Director of Local Environment outlined a number of different models that had been employed by other authorities and the actual savings that 5 successful partnerships had realised by adopting different models of enhanced partnership working.

The Director of Local Environment advised that a presentation and workshop had been given to Members of the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership on 12 October 2011 in order for them to approve the final version of stage 2 of the Enhanced partnership working project. The outcome from recommendations made at the meeting were that members accepted the final stage 2 and that the Council continued as a district council to pursue collectively project element 3 – maximising the income from the sale of recyclate.

Several meetings of members of the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership had been held in 2011 and 2012 the last of which was in June 2012.

The Director of Local Environment explained that the main drivers for waste diversion had changed and the Government had announced the ending of Landfill Allowance Trading Schemes in 2012/13. As a result of that change Cumbria County Council had entered into a 25 year contract with Shanks-MBT to divert all residual waste, not including recyclables, from landfill in order for them to meet their goals under the Landfill directive.

Another significant change had been the payment mechanism from the County Council to the districts for recycling. Apart from South Lakeland District Council and Carlisle City Council the other districts had their recyclates tied up in existing contracts. A soft marketing exercise resulted in only 2 proposals which led to the withdrawal of South Lakeland District Council's input. Due to the difficulty in the recycling market and the reduction in the market payment per tonne, it had been decided that that project element should be delayed until the market improved.

In conclusion the Director of Local Environment advised that it was accepted that the partnership was in a very different place that it was two years ago and due to the current economic climate the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership was not working at a strategic level. There had also been an increasing pressure on all officer time also due to the current economic climate. The Director of Local Environment believed that it was necessary for the meetings to continue between the district Councils at Officer level to ensure that partnership between Shanks, the County Council and the district Councils work on an operational level. Officers were also continuing to explore ways in which to work together to reduce costs.

It was proposed that a letter would be sent to the Chairman of the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership to make the suggestion that, due to time constraints and the increased demand on time of the members, as well as Officers, that the members meet every 6 months or on an annual basis to enable officers to present an annual review of waste services operations and discuss and agree any major proposals for the following year.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder advised that she was the City Council's representative on the Partnership and that the one meeting to which she had been invited was subsequently cancelled, no other meeting had been arranged and she did not know when the next meeting was due to take place. For that reason she had been unable to have any input into the Partnership.

The Director of Local Environment explained that the Partnership had not been successful due to the lack of consensus between the Districts and the County Council. It was difficult for Councils to deliver efficiencies across the board when they were under pressure to deliver efficiencies within their own councils.

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

Why were some new estates cut out of recycling collections?

New housing estates generate more Council Tax income and they should be entitled the same services?

The Director of Local Environment advised that Carlisle recycling service was well within the statutory requirements. Round reviews were being undertaken and there were plans for further reviews to improve efficiencies. There was a cost for additional services and they could not be provided unless efficiencies were found or additional funding was provided.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder explained that when the Development Control Committee granted planning permission consideration should be given to Council services as they had a capital cost. It may be possible to use a Section 106 Agreement to provide capital input from the developers. With regard to revenue costs the Portfolio Holder believed that the Council should look at large developments corporately and be aware of budget cycles.

Would the New Homes Bonus provide revenue?

The Director of Local Environment advised that all new estates received refuse collections and recycling collections have been provided where it has been possible with current resources and agreed to provide the figures. The Council had difficult decisions to make regarding waste services and she advised that across the country some authorities had ceased providing recycling services. Carlisle City Council had so far maintained the services currently being provided. Officers would continue to look at reviewing the rounds and ensure that any savings would be invested back into the services. The Director explained that the information in respect of the New Homes Bonus was included in the budget reports.

The Deputy Chief Executive, in response to a query, confirmed that the breakdown of the New Homes Bonus could be provided. The Council were monitoring issues regarding new estates and housing and would provide information on the costs generated by new housing estates.

Was anything being done to ensure those considerations were taken into account?

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder explained that the Director of Economic Development was aware of potential problems in the future regarding additional services. She confirmed that the Local Environment team were reviewing refuse rounds to enable them to be as efficient as possible and the results of those reviews were starting to take effect. The Portfolio Holder added that Section 106 Agreements could not be used for revenue costs such as delivery of the service but could be used as a capital cost for the purchase of refuse bins and recycling boxes. One of the problems encountered on new

estates was the width of the roads which were narrow and therefore it was difficult for refuse wagons to access the properties.

When the benefits of partnership working were noted in other authorities the lack of partnership working encountered by the City Council became more apparent.

The report referred to "...a reduction of £7,000 per annum in recycling payments from the County Council." Could the service be moved in house and further savings made?

The Director of Local Environment explained that there were 2 payments one of which was the recycling award grant for which the County Council offset the difference in costs with the districts. In Carlisle that payment was almost the same as the cost but in other districts there were big differences. With regard to income from recyclates that was tied up with the current contract that the Council had with Foxa. The market for recyclates had dropped so there was less income. Other districts were tied into lengthy contracts which reduced the opportunities for partnership working.

Where does the partnership go from here?

In the past Carlisle was placed 11th in the country and 2nd in the north for waste services. Carlisle was currently 45.9th. Was there the potential for the Council to put themselves first and provide good quality services?

The Director of Local Environment advised that the City Council would need to look at its own services and continue to press to work with other districts and the County Council. Although it was a partnership it was not as strong as it could be. Officers were looking at the issues such as delivery of the service and the contracts with Shanks for the disposal of waste but strategically there was still work to be done.

The Development Control Committee were aware of the importance of waste management on new housing estates and would look closely at application in the future.

The report suggested that a letter could be written to the Chairman of the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership. Members agreed to that suggestion.

What savings had been made in Waste Services in the last 2 years?

The Director of Local Environment advised that savings had been made and Officers had maintained the level of service by reviewing and reducing rounds. That had been possible by the purchase of a larger refuse vehicle that had replaced 2 smaller vehicles. She confirmed that Officers would continue to attend partnership meetings and that she would support the Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder at any partnership meetings. She would continue to work with the districts and the County Council to encourage all parties to work together.

RESOLVED: 1) That Report LE.02/13 - Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership be noted.

2) That the Panel suggests that the City Council investigates the use of Section 106 Agreements regarding offsetting increased costs to the Council such as refuse/recycling arising from planning application for new housing estates

3) That the Panel supports the suggestion of a letter to the Chairman encouraging the continuation of partnership working

EEOSP.09/13 USE OF GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The Director of Local Environment submitted Report LE.03/13 that defined the term “green infrastructure” and related it to the City of Carlisle. The report also contained a brief summary of the recently published Green Infrastructure Strategy for Carlisle (Carlisle – Big Green City) and included a description of Carlisle’s green infrastructure assets and consideration of its uses and benefits. The report also considered the future of green infrastructure.

Green infrastructure was the term used to describe the living network of green spaces, vegetation, water and other environmental features that brought benefits to people in both urban and rural areas. Apart from the direct benefits to health and wellbeing those green assets represented a range of natural resources for Carlisle in the form of air and water purification, climate regulation and wildlife conservation. As Carlisle was at the centre of a rural hinterland a wider range of non-market benefits was achieved such as flood protection and storage and carbon storage.

The Neighbourhoods and Green Spaces Manager summarised the Carlisle Green Infrastructure Strategy and advised that it would be incorporated into the Local Plan. As an asset, it was necessary to manage and maintain the green infrastructure if it was to continue to provide benefit to health and wellbeing. Studies had shown that the presence of a well managed green infrastructure could be a major factor in attracting economic development.

The presence of green space could have a direct economic impact on the value of residential properties and quality of life indicators supported the idea that green infrastructure was a key factor. The 10 most deprived wards in Carlisle had, on average, 27% less green infrastructure cover than the 10 least deprived wards. Lack of physical exercise was a contributing factor in a number of public health issues and green infrastructure was a vital resource in providing the venues for a range of physical activities from simple walking and cycling to organised sports and games, play and recreation. It was estimated that an annual saving off the cost of public health services of £2.1 billion could be achieved in England if access to green space was equitable and universal.

The value of carbon storage within Carlisle’s stock of woodland and street trees was estimated at £249million over the next 50 years.

In Carlisle 57 local football teams were registered as playing on pitches provided by the City Council while the Council’s allotments provided healthy food, exercise and social benefits for 750 local residents at very low cost. The Council’s parks provided a range of uses including sports, informal recreation, wildlife conservation and mental wellbeing. An e-mail had been received from the organiser of the Carlisle Schools Orienteering event which, after reading the e-mail, would leave no doubt that the parks were hugely valuable to local communities and therefore were worthy of receiving appropriate investment.

Monitoring park usage was difficult but a single ‘people counter’ installed at Chances Park had shown that 175,000 visitors per annum although that must be an underestimate as there were 4 other entrances with no counter.

Safe, off-road routes to school and work were a thread of the Movement Strategy of Carlisle published by Cumbria County Council. A number of important links had been established with a new link planned for the north of the City. With fuel prices rising the demand for non-vehicular transportation options was likely to grow and therefore routes for cyclists and pedestrians that connected residential and industrial areas would be an important factor in Carlisle's economy.

The Neighbourhoods and Green Spaces Manager explained that in December 2012 the horticulture industry was announcing the plans for the first new park to be created in the city of Birmingham for 130 years. Carlisle had been more forward thinking than that and throughout the 20th century Councillors had created Heysham Park, Chances Park, Rickerby Park and Melbourne Park. Residents of Carlisle benefitted directly from the excellent provision of green space within the City with the current estimate being 9 acres of open space per 1,000 residents which was 50% higher than the recommended level.

The future of the parks seems to be tied up with the new developments planned in the next 20-30 years. While the Council did not have the resources to purchase the land and lay out a new park on the scale of Bitts Park or Hammonds Pond, by careful planning and allocation of land that could be achieved in partnership with developers. While there may be resistance from house builders to forfeit valuable development land there must also be the realisation that the purchasers of new homes would want access to green space of all the reasons outlined in the report and would be willing to pay the premium in order to secure prime locations.

The Morton Masterplan included space for allotments, sports pitch, cycling and walking routes, play space and wildlife conservation within the plan. The developer would set up a management company to carry out maintenance on that green infrastructure once the development was complete; therefore no additional burden would be placed on the City Council.

The Neighbourhoods and Green Spaces Manager reminded Members that the Local Plan was currently under revision and developers would need to be encouraged to set aside significant areas for green infrastructure as an integral part of every major new development. It would be necessary to maintain existing assets to enable the continuation of the delivery of benefits and the Neighbourhoods and Green Spaces Manager outlined how that could be achieved.

The Council could also capitalise on the assets it held and Carlisle was unique as a city in the variety of wildlife species that lived among the human population and more could be done to attract visitors to experience some of those sights and sounds. Hadrian's Wall Heritage site ran through the heart of Carlisle and it was believed that more could be done to use it as an economic driver.

For the Green Infrastructure Strategy to be successful it must be championed in the city of Carlisle and beyond. There would need to be a wider understanding of the benefits of green infrastructure and enthusiasm for it to be included in the planning of the growing city. A partnership approach would be required that included a range of public, private and third sector organisations. An action plan was included in the Executive Summary of the 'Big Green City' document that would take forward the vision and would inform a number of strategies currently being developed within the City Council including the Local Plan and the Green Spaces Strategy.

In conclusion the Neighbourhoods and Green Spaces Manager requested Members to promote the Green Infrastructure Strategy whenever possible in meetings and forums, and when decisions were being considered in meetings such as Development Control Committee.

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

There were issues on new estates where things that had been agreed with developers had not been adopted. There were difficulties when a developer passed responsibility for green spaces to the residents as each resident was responsible for a percentage of the green space.

The Neighbourhoods and Green Spaces Manager advised that developers were currently in favour of setting up their own management of green spaces and setting up management committees to over see the work.

That could cause problems in the future if a building developer went out of business.

The Neighbourhoods and Green Spaces Manager agreed that it could be an issue in the long term but appeared to alleviate problems in the short term.

Would the Local Plan include issues of which the Council needed to be aware?

The Neighbourhoods and Green Spaces Manager advised that the Council were trying to address issues through contributions. The south central area of Carlisle had fewer green spaces than some other areas but there was no land available to create a green space. He believed that there should be safe walking routes for children to get to school and safe areas for children to play.

Were the football teams charged for the use of the Council's pitches?

The Neighbourhoods and Green Spaces Manager advised of the costs for junior and senior football teams. If a changing room was provided that cost was higher due to costs of water and cleaning. However, those charges did not cover the costs of making those facilities available but the Council took the view that if they charged the cost of the facilities many teams would not be able to operate and it was more beneficial for the players health and wellbeing to make use of the pitches.

Why did the Council fail to apply for an environmental award for the play area in California Road, Kingstown?

The Neighbourhoods and Green Spaces Manager explained that a lot of the pitches were waterlogged and he had consulted with a firm to drain the pitch and was quoted £38,000 which the Council was not able to fund. However Officers were looking into a partnership deal with the potential to fund the work.

An audit was currently underway on the Council's football pitches and a meeting had been held with the Cumberland Football Association who had hoped to improve changing rooms and pitches in the area. When the audit was published it was hoped that that would be the blueprint for a strategy to carry out the improvement work.

The new women's hostel has been built in an area where there are no green spaces. It should be crucial that such issues are taken into consideration in future when planning a facility such as the hostel that will house children as well as adults. It would be difficult for children to get to school as there were a number of busy roads to cross and also a lot of pollution from the vehicles on the roads.

Developers do give more consideration to play areas in new developments and it is essential to get the right location.

The Neighbourhoods and Green Spaces Manager stated that the Council could not insist on play areas with swings and slides as the way children played had changed over the years and they now preferred a more natural area in which to play.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder stated that the discussions around the use of green infrastructure and the previous item on the Carlisle Strategic Waste partnership demonstrated the value of Overview and Scrutiny Panels and emphasised the importance of the Development Control Committee being aware of potential practical problems.

RESOLVED – (1) That Report LE.03/13 - Use of Green Infrastructure – be noted.

EEOSP.10/13 ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE OF THE COUNCIL

The Safety, Health and Environmental Manager presented report GD.04/13 which provided progress on the environmental performance of Carlisle City Council and updated on the environmental performance indicators, current energy use within directly controlled City Council buildings and CO₂ reduction from local authority operations. The report also provided an update on work that had taken place within the Council to reduce the Council's energy use.

The Safety, Health and Environmental Manager stated that he did not take credit for the work referenced in the report as the work undertaken to improve the Council's environmental performance spanned across all Directorates and Portfolios. He made reference to some of the teams who ensured that renewals of equipment embraced new environmentally friendly technologies and sought to continue the "invest to save" ethos originally set out by the Carbon Trust, and those teams that ensured the green spaces within the City were to the highest standards.

The Environmental Policy Statement had been reviewed and updated in June 2012 and reflected the change in political structure and the signing of the policy by the new Leader of the Council.

Carlisle City Council had made a large reduction in CO₂ emissions in 2011-12. The actual reduction achieved was 19.1% compared with the 2007/08 baseline. The Council's aspiration of reducing emissions by 25% compared with the baseline year by March 2013 had become achievable and was close to being met. Reductions of more than 10% had been achieved in every sector in the last year, with the largest reductions being seen in terms of gas consumption and business travel.

With regard to gas consumption Bousteads Grassing had achieved the most success with more than a 56% reduction in consumption with the Civic Centre and Tullie House achieving over 35%. The halving of gas consumption at Bousteads Grassing in a single

year reflected the decrease following the relocation of staff from the main building to the Civic Centre and the demolition of that building. There had been an overall reduction of more than a quarter across the Council buildings in the four year period.

Electricity use had also been reduced at Bousteads Grassing, the Civic Centre and Tullie House but had risen at the crematorium. The decrease at Bousteads Grassing mirrored the decrease in gas consumption and the Civic Centre was now below the baseline figure for the first time. Across the City Council buildings there had been an overall reduction of -14% in the four year period.

The Green Travel Plan had been approved in April 2008. Business travel had reduced by 16% in 2011/12. In 2011/12 there had been another slight reduction in carbon dioxide emissions in diesel used of 3.5% and in petrol 1.9%. Since the baseline year diesel consumption had reduced by over 10% and petrol over 23%. The Safety, Health and Environmental Manager explained how the fleet vehicle carbon dioxide emissions were calculated.

In January 2012 the City Council retained the Gold level of the Cumbria Business Environment Network Awards. The Safety, Health and Environmental Team continued to update annual environmental performance plans and would be working with the Cumbria Business Environment Network with the aim of understanding how the Council could embrace the proposed changes in the awards and continue to work with the Network. In 2013 the Council would look to engage with the Network's "Green at heart" scheme which was a new addition to the Cumbria Business Environment Network awards and had been developed as an option for businesses seeking certification in recognition of their environmental awareness and practices.

In 2012/13 the City Council retained or achieved eight Green Flag awards for the Tullie House garden, Bitts Park, Hammonds Pond, Richardson Street Cemetery and the Crematorium, Kingmoor Nature Reserve, St Michael's churchyard Stanwix and Talkin Tarn Country Park and Chances Park.

As part of the "Invest to Save" programme solar panels were installed on the Civic Centre and the Sand Centre. At the Civic Centre the cost was £63,000 and the anticipated energy production had already been exceeded by 5%. The funds currently being generated from those installations were approximately £18,000 per annum, equating to a capital payback well within 5 years giving a rate of return on 15%. The project was scheduled to run for 25 years generating the Council potential revenue in excess of £360,000 based on current rates of return. It would also ensure that the Council was on course to reduce its carbon emissions by the 25% target by April 2013 against the baseline figures of 2007/08.

Although the feed in tariff rate had dropped by a significant amount, the cost of solar panels had also reduced and the business case for further investment remained strong. The initial solar panel feasibility study had identified other suitable buildings that could benefit carbon reduction and revenue income as well as assisting the building users with locally generated electricity. Tullie House had had a large amount of investment which had been completed in April 2012. It remained a challenge for the Council to achieve further savings but the significant progress already achieved reflected a large amount of effort undertaken in the last few years to monitor and reduce energy consumption and reduce carbon dioxide emissions.

With the Government's Energy Bill receiving Royal Assent and becoming the recognised Energy Act 2011 it remained to be seen what opportunities that may afford the Council. The Act introduced the Green Deal, a new financing framework to enable the provision of fixed improvements to the energy efficiency of households and non-domestic properties funded by a charge on energy bills that avoided the need for consumers to pay up front costs. The fine detail was still being provided on what benefits could be obtained and the Safety, Health and Environmental Team would ensure that it worked with key Officers in other Directorates to take advantage of any possible funding available. The Council's facilities team would continue to identify opportunities to invest money in environmental infrastructure through Invest to Save scheme opportunities and a further examination of potential sites and returns for more solar panels would be reviewed early in 2013.

The Chairman acknowledged that the new administration had signed up to the continuing programme of energy reductions and paid tribute to the work of the previous administration who had also endorsed the work that had led to the reductions in energy consumption.

With regard to the solar panel project the Director of Local Environment explained that discussions had taken place over a long period of time before the project was implemented.

The Safety, Health and Environmental Manager acknowledged the work of the Buildings and Facilities Team who had worked to ensure that the Council would receive the full feed-in tariff for the next 25 years but added that continued support would be required from Members and the Executive.

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

At present the internal set of doors at the entrance to the building were closed to reduce the flow of cold air and heat to escape when the doors were open.

The Safety, Health and Environmental Manager advised that there were plans to re-design the foyer area and that re-development could resolve some of those issues.

Was the energy created by the cremator used in any way?

The Safety, Health and Environmental Manager explained that when the crematorium was renovated in 2007/08 heat exchangers were fitted so heat was recovered and sent back through the system to heat the building. The continued increase in electricity usage at the crematorium was currently under investigation. It was pointed out that electricity usage at the crematorium only represented 1.8% of the Council's total consumption but every effort was being made to stem any further increases.

The Director of Local Environment advised that staff currently housed in the Richardson Street office would move into the crematorium extension next year. Officers were waiting to see the impact of the maintenance of the cremator linings.

Clarification on the Green Deal was required for Members and residents.

The Safety, Health and Environmental Manager explained that the extent of the opportunities afforded by the new Green Deal was limited to internal operations and that opportunities for the wider community was being reviewed by the Fuel Poverty Development Officer.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer explained that the Green Deal had been considered by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel as part of Affordable Warmth.

What future technology was on the horizon?

The Safety, Health and Environmental Manager advised that the cost of solar panels was reducing and would be explored in 2013. It remained to be seen what opportunities the new Green Deal may provide the Council but that depended on the fine details which were still being provided by the Government.

Over the last five years it was clear that a lot of work had been undertaken in Council buildings. With regard to residential properties the main improvement would continue to be insulation but it was difficult to install insulation in some older properties. Information could also be provided to residents to help them to reduce their own energy consumption and encourage them to take advantage of opportunities to insulate their homes whenever feasible.

RESOLVED – That Report GD.04/13 – Environmental Performance of the Council be noted.

(The meeting ended at 12:10pm)

Response from Executive to Recommendations of Carlisle Tourist Information Task Group

	Recommendation	Response from Executive
1	<p>Immediate action should be taken to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • replacing the aging cash register in the TIC enabling better monitoring of retail stock. • lowering of part of the counter within the TIC to accommodate the needs of disabled visitors • provide new and improved signage outside the TIC 	<p>As Members are aware the Tourist Information Centre is now temporarily relocated to The Lodge, adjacent to the Cathedral entrance to accommodate the works to the Old Town Hall. The TIC will return to the Old Town Hall on 22nd April.</p> <p>Upon its return the three items recommended for immediate action will have been attended to, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement of the aging cash register • Part of the counter will have been lowered to accommodate the needs of disabled visitors. • Better signage will have been provided outside the TIC •
2	<p>All means of modern technology should continue to be assessed to enable easy access to information and enhance the experience of visitors to both the TIC and the wider Carlisle city centre area.</p>	<p>The whole issue of using technology to provide ease of access to information to visitors to both the TIC and the City Centre is central to how we are looking to modernise the whole TIC offer. This includes continuing to develop the Discover Carlisle brand and website, assessment of touch screen points in the TIC, the development of a bespoke App, and / or development of mobile technology, including consideration of installation of City Centre Wi-Fi.</p>
3	<p>Appropriate support be given to Officers in their task of sourcing a higher quality of merchandising available within the TIC especially focusing on local supplier arrangements such as Made in Cumbria.</p>	<p>Improving the retail offer within the TIC is another major strand of improving the offer of the TIC and the Tourist Information Manager is currently compiling a new buying strategy for the merchandising to be sold. This will include further discussions through the Chamber about including Made in Cumbria, together with assessing what other locally produced higher quality goods/reasonably priced can be sourced.</p>
4	<p>Consideration be given to an alternative accommodation booking system in the light of the high cost of the Destination Management</p>	<p>The whole booking system is being considered as a wider review of the DMS system, and options are currently being considered that will bring the booking system more in line with the Discover Carlisle website, and</p>

	Recommendation	Response from Executive
	System(DMS) as currently operated by the TIC.	in doing so potentially greatly lessen the current high overhead cost for the TIC.
5	<p>That an Options Paper be drawn up to examine the alternative ways forward for use of the Assembly Rooms within the Town hall and the use of the office area at the western end of the Old Town hall at second floor level.</p>	<p>A more detailed Report is currently being drawn up for consideration, firstly by Senior Management Team in February, that will examine all aspects of modernisation of the TIC and that will include the future use of the Assembly Room. This paper will revisit the previous plans as drawn up for the grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2010 (which did not find favour at that time), and how those plans can be improved to promote a more inclusive and informative offer within the Old Town hall , acting as a gateway to the heritage of the city centre, a modernised and more accessible TIC offer, and opening up the Assembly Room to a much wider use than hitherto enjoyed. This Report will also set out the basis for short, medium and long term improvements for the TIC.</p> <p>The current Old Town Hall Repair & Restoration Project forms an excellent base for this future development phase, ensuring that the basic structure and the services to the building are all attended to and avoiding major repairs for the next 10 – 15 years.</p>
6	<p>That following the completion of this Report by this Task Group, a Working Group continues to sit within the Overview and Scrutiny framework to monitor the ongoing project development work to improve the Tourist Information Centre.</p> <p>Initially during 2013 this Working Group should meet quarterly and report to the Economy & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel accordingly. In tandem with this a Project Development Plan be developed setting out</p>	<p>The continued involvement of the Task and Finish Group within the Overview & Scrutiny Framework is welcomed</p>

	Recommendation	Response from Executive
	short, medium and longer term improvement plans for the TIC facility as a gateway to the wider heritage of Carlisle as a whole.	