

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 25 SEPTEMBER 2014 AT 10.00 AM

PRESENT: Councillor Nedved (Chairman), Councillors Burns (as substitute for Councillor Dodd), Caig, Graham, Mrs McKerrell (as substitute for Councillor Mrs Bowman), Mrs Mallinson (as substitute for Councillor Mitchelson), Watson and Wilson

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Bradley – Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder
Councillor J Mallinson - Observer

OFFICERS: Deputy Chief Executive
Director of Economic Development
Director of Local Environment
Housing Development Officer
Investment and Policy Manager
Policy and Performance Officer
Waste Services Technical Manager
Neighbourhood Services Operations Manager
Overview and Scrutiny Officer

EEOSP.56/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Bowman, Dodd and Mitchelson. Apologies were also submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs Martlew – Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder.

EEOSP.57/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Caig and Mrs Mallinson declared an interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of Item A4 – Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update. The interest related to the fact that they were representatives of the City Council on the Divisional Board of Riverside Cumbria.

EEOSP.58/14 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Director of Local Environment advised that in respect of the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2014 the memorandum of claimed rights had still not been signed. The issue would be raised at the next meeting of the Highways and Transport Working Group scheduled to be held on 26 September 2014.

RESOLVED – 1. That the minutes of the meetings held on 3 July 2014 be agreed as a correct record of the meetings and signed by the Chairman.

2. That the Minutes of the meetings held on 14 August 2014 and 8 September 2014 be noted.

EEOSP.59/14 CALL IN OF DECISIONS

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

EEOSP. 60/14 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman advised that the order of items on the agenda would be changed to allow more effective Officer time.

EEOSP.61/14 RE-THINKING WASTE PROJECT

The Director of Economic Development gave a presentation to Members of the Panel that explained the Re-Thinking Waste Project.

The Director of Local Environment outlined the pressures on waste services, the budget pressures, the time-line and key decisions and considerations. The Director of Local Environment reminded Members of the current position of the Council in respect of waste services and also the consultation currently taking place and modelling exercises which had been undertaken. A consultant had been employed by the Council who had determined that the Council was generally very efficient operationally and suggested a number of options with regard to waste collection. The Director of Local Environment explained the cost variances of the different options. The Director advised that a number of authorities were now using refuse and recycling vehicles which had had a number of advantages to those authorities.

There were a number of issues that would be referred back to the Executive before the final approval in early 2015 of either a new contract in respect of recycling or whether to bring recycling collection in-house.

The Chairman reminded Members that a full report on Waste Services would be presented to the Panel at their meeting in November.

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

- *How were the current staffing levels as some individuals who had been involved with recycling had left the authority?*

The Director of Local Environment advised that staffing was strong within Local Environment and although some members of staff had left due to age issues there had been no redundancies.

- *How would food waste be disposed of?*

The Director of Local Environment explained that there was currently no disposal method for food waste although the County Council were looking at the issue.

- *Procurement for the collection and disposal of waste was a county wide issue. Had the facility at Rockcliffe been considered?*

The Director of Local Environment advised that the capacity at the facility at Rockcliffe had not been looked at but the impact of any contract in respect of the disposal of waste on the county as a whole would be taken into account. The facility had been discussed the previous day at a meeting of the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership and Officers would work in partnership with other districts to address the issues.

- *It had been suggested by Mr Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, that there should be weekly refuse collections. The consultants, Eunomia had advised against that. Why?*

The Director of Local Environment confirmed that Eunomia had advised against weekly collections as it could lead to lower recycling rates and higher costs.

The Director of Local Environment left the meeting. Questions were directed to the Deputy Chief Executive.

- *How would refuse and recycling from new housing estates be collected when rounds were at capacity? Where would that be covered in the budget?*

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the Government had undertaken some work with the LGA to assess housing growth and the impact on waste costs. Carlisle was below the suggested threshold where there would be a problem. Refuse and recycling collection rounds were reviewed approximately twelve months ago and it was anticipated that another review would be required in the coming months. The Deputy Chief Executive acknowledged that the issue would raise challenges.

The Director of Economic Development advised that Planning Officers consulted with Officers in Waste Services when designing potential new housing estates in respect of rounds, vehicle sizes, etc and Section 106 Agreements provided funding for new waste bins, etc.

- *The Director of Local Environment advised in the presentation that there would be a shortfall of £450,000. How would that shortfall and the costs of servicing new estates be incorporated into the budget?*

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the cost to the Council would be for the replacement of refuse vehicles and some of that was contained within the capital budget. However, the replacement of vehicles was not expected for some time so Officer had time to re-think waste services and build in costs of replacement vehicles, and new housing estates, accordingly.

- *Some of the refuse vehicles are very heavy and are causing damage to back lanes.*

The Neighbourhood Services Operations Manager advised that Officers had considered using narrower vehicles but they were cost prohibitive as they carried a smaller payload. However Officers were aware of the problem. The Deputy Chief Executive believed that the issue was wider than refuse disposal and that collaboration between the County Council was vital.

- *If the rounds were at capacity how would new housing estates be serviced?*

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that new rounds would need to be created. Some smaller developments could possibly be incorporated into existing rounds but it would be necessary within the next 12-18 months to review the rounds. It would be useful to pass information on changes to rounds on to Ward Councillors and communicate better with residents.

- *How many companies would tender for the new contract?*

The Deputy Chief Executive believed that there would be significant interest in the contract with a move towards collection and disposal. The Neighbourhood Services Operations Manager added that Carlisle was isolated geographically and that could reduce the interest in the contract.

- *Was the Council legally obliged to put the contract to tender?*

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that when the review was completed and it had been determined what would be best for Carlisle there was a possibility that not all of the services would be brought in-house. The Deputy Chief Executive acknowledged that there would be some challenges and that the views of Members would need to be considered.

- *Would it not be more cost effective to lease refuse vehicles rather than buying them?*

The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that leasing of vehicles would be looked at as well as costs of purchasing new vehicles. There was also the possibility that a new provider may be able to supply vehicles at a lower cost due to bulk buying across the whole country.

- *Were the City Council planning to close any of their bring sites?*

The Neighbourhood Services Operations Manager explained that some had been closed. The Deputy Chief Executive reminded Members that a list of bring sites was considered by the Panel at a previous meeting and it was decided that some proposed for closure should remain. Officers would look again at those sites and determine whether it would be better financially for more to close. Overall it had been a good move to close some of the bring sites.

- *Would the loss of individuals within the organisation have any impact on waste services?*

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the loss of members of staff would not impact on the waste services programme.

The Chairman stated that Waste Services would be considered by the Panel in November and the findings of a cross party working group would be brought back to the Panel by the Director of Local Environment.

RESOLVED: 1) That the matter would be considered in more detail at the meeting of the Panel in November.

EEOSP.62/14 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented report OS.23/14 which provided an overview of matters relating to the work of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel and included the latest version of the work programme and Key Decisions of the Executive which related to the Panel.

- The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reported that the Notice of Key Executive Decisions, published on 12 September 2014, included the following items which fell within the remit of this Panel.

KD.20/14 – Talkin Tarn Business Plan – the item will be considered at the meeting of the Panel on 21 October 2014.

- The minutes excerpt from the meeting of the Executive on 17 September 2014 was circulated.
- The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reminded Members that the next meeting of the Panel would be held on Tuesday 21 October 2014 in the Business Interaction Centre and would focus on business support. There would be a short break for lunch and the meeting would re-convene at the Civic Centre for consideration of the remaining items. Final details would be circulated to Members of the Panel by the Overview and Scrutiny Officer.
- Work Programme – The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented the current work programme and advised Members that

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

EEOSP.63/14 QUARTER ONE PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Policy and Performance Officer presented report PC.11/14 that updated the Panel on the Council's service standards that helped measure performance and customer satisfaction, and included updates on key actions contained within the Carlisle Plan.

Details of each service standard were included in a table appended to 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. The updates against actions in the Carlisle Plan followed on from the service standard information which was attached to the report.

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

- *One of the Service Standards was the percentage of household waste sent for recycling. Sent by whom?*

The Deputy Chief Executive advised the standard related to percentage of waste sent for recycling by the disposal authority.

- *The report does now show any direction of travel of the standards and there were no RAG reports.*

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the format of the reports had been changed to the current format some time ago. The graphs indicated the direction of travel.

The Director of Economic Development advised that the items were set up to reflect those issues that were of interest to residents. Behind this lay further information. It was believed that the format would be easier for customers to deal with.

- *How was customer satisfaction measured? And how many people had responded?*

The Policy and Performance Officer explained that customer satisfaction was measured through a website survey. Sending out questionnaires to all residents would not be cost effective. It was also intended to include a further survey in the Carlisle Focus magazine.

With regard to street cleanliness, 246 people had responded to the survey. The Officer did not have the figures relating to waste services available but would provide a written response to the Member.

The Deputy Chief Executive stated that the format would depend upon what was required by the Panel for scrutiny. Other data sets were available and more information could be obtained on specific services through the CRM system.

- *A Member explained that the format had been discussed by the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel and had been changed several times until this format had been agreed. The figures were intended as a guide only and further information was available to Members if required. Not everyone had access to the website and therefore they could not submit their views in that way.*
- *Why produce the figures if there is no standard for customer satisfaction?*

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the figures gave a snapshot of customer satisfaction. The figures were considered by the SMT before coming to the relevant Panels and if any issues were flagged up for further enquiry they could be looked at. The figures allowed a comparison between neighbouring councils and against set benchmarks. The Deputy Chief Executive added that it would be useful for more people to be involved in surveys and invited the Policy and Performance Officer to include the source of the information provided in future reports.

- *More narrative would add context to the information.*

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder advised that the figures were reported quarterly and, for example, with regard to the information in respect of planning applications, the issue had been dealt with.

RESOLVED: 1. That report PC.13/14 – Quarter One Performance Report – be noted.

2. That more narrative be included in the reports to indicate the source of the information and explanation of the figures.

EEOSP.64/14 STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT UPDATE

The Investment and Policy Manager presented report ED.34/14 that updated Members of the Panel on the key findings and recommendations within an update of the Council's Strategic Housing market Assessment (SHMA).

The Investment and Policy Manager explained the background to the SHMA and advised that it was anticipated that the report would be finalised prior to the end of September and published as a key component of the Local Plan evidence base shortly thereafter.

The Investment and Policy Manager further explained the methodology used in the development of the SHMA and advised that the base date for the projections employed in the assessment was 2013 and estimates were therefore expressed between 2013 and 2030. The base date correlated with the base date of the available data sources whereas the end date correlated with that of the emerging Carlisle District Local Plan 2015-2030.

The Investment and Policy Manager informed Members that in terms of overall housing need the updated assessment identified that between 2013 and 2030 between 8,200 and 9,600 new homes would be required. If achieved that would represent an increase against the existing number of homes within the District to between 16% and 19%.

The assessment further estimated that within the specified period an additional 5,011 affordable homes would be required. The draft report recommended that the evidence on affordable housing need supported that policies within the emerging Local Plan should pursue between 25% and 30% of new homes on qualifying development sites as affordable. The draft report also recommended that 30% of the secured affordable housing should be for low cost home ownership/shared ownership and that 70% should be for social/affordable rent.

The Investment and Policy Manager explained the Wards within each housing market area, the annual housing requirement by area (per annum), the estimated level of housing need by type of affordable housing (per annum) and the housing mix by unit size across tenures during the period 2013 and 2030. The Investment and Policy Manager explained that 70% of new houses would be within the urban area with the remaining 30% within the rural area.

Analysis within the 2011 assessment supported that in terms of overall housing need an annual average of between 545 to 665 net new dwellings were required. The updated SHMA indicated that the level of affordable housing need was much lower. The Investment and Policy Manager explained that it was important to acknowledge that the methodologies were not directly comparable and explained how they differed. However, in terms of the need for different sizes of accommodation the findings between the updated and previous assessment were broadly similar.

Having reviewed the draft document Officers had identified a need for a small number of minor amendments and sought to clarify a small number of aspects of the assessment and its findings. The appointed consultants were currently working to incorporate such amendments with a view to being able to issue a final report prior to the end of September.

Once the report was finalised regard would be given to the key findings and recommendations in acting to refine and evolve the emerging Local Plan towards the next stage of its preparation. The updated SHMA would be available on the Council's website alongside the remainder of the evidence base which was informing the development of the Local Plan.

The Housing Development Officer explained the different types of affordable housing and how the figures were calculated. The Officer advised that any discount was passed on at resale. A definition of affordable housing was included in the report with information that

was specific to Carlisle. As the information was technical the Officer agreed to circulate the information to Members of the Panel after the meeting.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the issues were technical and complex but that the report had summarised the issues well.

The Director of Economic Development reminded Members that the SHMA was only one part of the Local Plan evidence base. The Local Plan was too large to be considered in one session but the final Local Plan would be available for consideration by the Panel.

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

- *This was not the right forum to discuss such a complex issue. It was difficult to understand the complex issues and scrutinise the matter. It was suggested that a better way to deal with such issues be sought.*

The Director of Economic Development advised that there was a cross party working group that looked at all of the issues. It was good that Members were interested in the issues and Officers were happy to sit with Members and discuss specific issues if required.

- *There is nothing in the document in respect of Section 106 Agreements regarding schools, roads, shops, doctors' surgeries, etc. There will be pressure on schools with the development of new housing estates.*

The Director of Economic Development advised that the report was fundamental to show what infrastructure would be needed. Officers were currently working on an infrastructure deficit plan with the County Council. That would lead to an infrastructure delivery plan which could be issues to developers.

- *The document needs to link with other relevant documents, possibly by the use of hyperlinks.*

The Director of Economic Development stated that the document was a small part of the evidence base for the Local Plan which would pick up all of the issues.

- *There is a link between migration and housing need. That issue needs to be looked at. For example people living in Penrith and working in Carlisle drop their children off at school in High Hesket.*

The Director of Economic Development reminded Members that that was a function of the County Council but Officers were working with the County Council.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder advised that the Council had a duty of co-operation and the County Council were obliged to provide information and work with the City Council to provide solutions to those issues. The report was part of the supporting evidence of the Local Plan.

The Portfolio Holder acknowledged the document was highly technical that had been drawn up by specialists who had undertaken research and worked with a methodology and guidelines provided by the Government. Some of the issues were discussed at the cross party working group. The summary within the report had been useful but the Portfolio

Holder was unsure what level of detail was needed by the scrutiny Panel. It would be more useful and more productive to look at the document in context with the Local Plan.

- *How was the target for new houses calculated?*

The Investment and Policy Manager explained that it was complicated but that it looked at diminishing household size and divorce rate increases as well as longer term trends. The target also looks at migration and while population trends are fed into the information they are not the sole influence.

- *Who picks up the cost of the 20% reduction in the cost of properties for sale for affordable housing?*

The Housing Development Officer advised that the developer would pick up that cost as part of a Section 106 Agreement.

- *If a property was purchased as an affordable property and sold on would the owner have to sell at an affordable rate?*

The Housing Development Officer explained that if an affordable property was re-sold it would have to be sold at the same discount at which it was purchased.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for their input and advised that the Panel would work with the cross party working group on the development of the Local Plan.

RESOLVED: 1. That Report ED.34/14 – Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update – be noted.

2. That additional information in respect of affordable housing be circulated to Members of the Panel.

(The meeting ended at 12:00)