

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 15 SEPTEMBER 2016 AT 10.00 AM

PRESENT: Councillor Bowditch (Vice Chairman), Councillors Bloxham (as substitute for Councillor Nedved), Burns (as substitute for Councillor Coleman), Christian, Dodd, McDonald and Mitchelson.

ALSO PRESENT Councillor Mrs Bradley – Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder
Councillor Glover - Leader

OFFICERS: Deputy Chief Executive
Director of Economic Development
Investment and Policy Manager
Green Spaces and Bereavement Manager
Site Management Team Leader
Green Spaces Officer
Policy and Performance Officer
Overview and Scrutiny Officer

EEOSP.48/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Nedved and Councillor Coleman.

EEOSP.49/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

EEOSP.50/16 PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – That the Agenda be agreed as circulated.

EEOSP.51/16 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meetings of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel held on 30 June 2016 and 28 July 2016 be agreed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

EEOSP.52/16 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS

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

EEOSP.53/16 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented report OS.19/16 providing an overview of matters relating to the work of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reported that the most recent Notices of Executive Key Decisions, copies of which had been circulated to all Members, had been published on 29 July 2016 and 26 August 2016. The undernoted items fell within the remit of the Panel:

KD.13/16 – Approval of Updated Local Development Scheme – The Executive had been asked, at their meeting on 30 August 2016, to approve the City Council's updated Local Development Scheme.

KD.18/16 – Vehicle and Plant Replacement provision 2016/17 and re-profiling of vehicle replacement budgets – The Executive had been asked, at their meeting on 30 August 2016, to release Capital budget provision for 2016/17 of £1,221,000 to purchase vehicles in accordance with the 5 year plan and re-profile existing budgets to accurately reflect the vehicle purchase requirements.

In addition item KD.15/16 – North West Coast Connections project S42 Consultation Response had been added to the Notice of Key Decisions for consideration by the Executive on 19 December 2016. The consultation period would run from 28 October to 23 December 2016 and the Chairman had asked that the item be included on the Environment and Economy Panel's work programme for 1 December 2016, this was agreed.

A Member informed the Panel that he had been made aware of concerns from local landowners with regard to the location of the pylons and asked how those affected would be consulted with. Members also asked whether an Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting could take place in the Parishes that were affected by the Connections Project.

The Director of Economic Development explained that all of the landowners that would be affected by the new pylons would be consulted and their thoughts could be fed back to the Panel as part of their consultation if they so wished.

Following discussion it was agreed that the Director of Economic Development would give some consideration to the best way to involve parishes in the consultation process and discuss reporting methods to the Panel with the Chairman.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer drew attention to the Panel's current work programme attached as Appendix 1 to the report. Members were asked to note and/or amend the programme.

The following items were scheduled for the next meeting on 27 October 2016, and Members were asked to give particular consideration to the framework for that meeting:

- Public Realm / Green Market / Bandstand
- Clean Carlisle
- Car Parking Developments
- Rethinking Waste

RESOLVED – 1) That the Overview Report (OS.19/16) incorporating the Work Programme and Notice of Executive Key Decision items relevant to this Panel be noted.

2) That the following items be included on the Panel's agenda for the meeting on 27 October 2016:

- Public Realm / Green Market / Bandstand
- Clean Carlisle
- Car Parking Developments
- Rethinking Waste

3) That the North West Coast Connections Project S42 Consultations Response be added to the Panel's Work Programme for 1 December 2016.

4) That the Director of Economic Development ensures that Parishes and landowners are involved in the consultation process for the North West Coast Connections Project S42.

EEOSP.54/16 CARLISLE DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN (2015 – 2030) PROPOSED ADOPTION

The Investment and Policy Manager presented report ED.32/16 concerning the proposed adoption of the Carlisle District Local Plan (2015-2030). In so doing, he provided an overview of the background position as set out within the report (Section 1 referred).

Unlike previously, the examination of the Local Plan was not an inquiry into objections and, as such, the Inspector's report did not summarise the cases of individual parties. It contained no direct references to specific representations and did not describe discussions at the hearing sessions. Instead, the report concisely explained why the Inspector, based on consideration of all the evidence including representations, had reached a particular view on soundness and legal compliance including the duty to cooperate.

The Investment and Policy Manager highlighted the Inspector's report (Appendix 1) which was subdivided into sections corresponding to the key issues which had been the focus of the examination. In brief the Inspector concluded that, subject to a number of modifications, the Local Plan provided an appropriate basis for the planning of the District.

The Main Modifications (MMs) identified as necessary by the Inspector were changes that were required in order for the Local Plan to be found 'sound'. In the main they consisted of redrafted text or policies. The need for and nature of those changes was discussed at the hearings stage of the Local Plan examination. The Council formally requested the Inspector to make MMs under section 20 (7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. The identification of MMs was a routine part of the process and could be seen to strengthen the Plan.

The proposed MMs were subject to public consultation which took place between 14 March and 25 April 2016. The responses to the consultation were forwarded to the Inspector and considered as part of the examination process.

Turning to Section 3, the Investment and Policy Manager commented that the Plan had been informed throughout its evolution by the Local Plan Members' Working Group and the team were most grateful for their contribution.

Having considered legal compliance and each of the key issues, the Inspector ultimately concluded that the Local Plan was sound, subject to the recommended main modifications, and therefore capable of adoption.

The Director of Economic Development added that the cross party working had been very successful and a similar cross party group would be established for the preparation of the Carlisle South Masterplan.

The Executive had, at their meeting on 30 August 2016, considered the matter (EX.72/16 refers) and decided:

“That the Executive:

1. Had considered the Inspector’s ‘Report on the Examination into the Carlisle District Local Plan’, attached as Appendix one to Report ED.31/16, and the recommendation that the Local Plan be adopted.
2. Made the Inspector’s report available for consideration by the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel and, subject to any additional information arising from the Scrutiny Panel being reported back, the Executive on 26 September consider referral to Council on 8 November 2016 for the Local Plan to be adopted.”

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

- A Member highlighted the redevelopment opportunities at the Citadel, although he understood the challenges that were presented he felt that the City Council, County Council and other interested bodies owed it to the citizens of Carlisle to fully consult on the development to ensure that the redevelopment was in the best interest of the City.

The Director of Economic development agreed that there had to be careful consideration for the redevelopment of the Citadel and surrounding area to ensure it was for the benefit of the citizens. It was important that the City Council engaged in the project and worked with the County Council. She added that the development brief and planning application would be the deciding factors.

Overview and Scrutiny would have the opportunity to scrutinise the proposals and make suggestions. The Local Enterprise Partnership had submitted a Growth Fund application and this would influence the redevelopment as would negotiations with the development industry.

- The Inspector noted the lower population growth for the 2013-20 period and therefore recognised the need for a stepped approach to housing.

The Investment and Policy Manager explained the rationale behind the stepped approach to housing and that it was necessary to ensure that the City could demonstrate a five year supply of housing land, being preferable to the other options considered. It was further explained that whilst the Local Plan’s overall objective was c.10,000 new homes to be delivered between 2013 and 2030, that actual need fluctuated year on year and was much lower in the early part of the plan period. The stepped approach therefore aligned clearly with the evidence.

- The City Council monitored any shortfall in houses but there was no monitoring for any over build in housing which could potentially cause concerns for the Council. Was there any reason to monitor the situation and report back to the Panel?

The Investment and Policy Manager explained that the Government had moved away from monitoring over builds as the market tended to regulate itself with developers building

homes which they knew they could sell. Monitoring would, however, take place as there was a requirement to produce and publish an annual monitoring report and present it to the Local Plan Working Group.

- Growth figures had been lower than projected, what would happen if the projected growth did not happen?

The Investment and Policy Manager reported that the Council was required to keep figures up to date and keep the evidence under review. The mid-year estimate had been higher and figures were trend based and would be kept under review.

- There had been no evidence of growth only evidence of house building and selling but there had been an increase in empty properties.

The Investment and Policy Manager reported that 2015 had been the highest level of net completions the Council had ever had. Evidence showing where people were moving from and why into new properties would be interesting but very difficult to obtain. The empty property rate in Carlisle was lower than the national average and although the City Council was pro-active in dealing with empty properties it still did monitor the issue to identify any trends which could be addressed.

- Air Quality Management was not addressed in the Local Plan, how could it be addressed by the Council?

The Investment and Policy Manager responded that the Local Plan contained policies to ensure regard was given to air quality in determining planning applications. It was also confirmed that Environmental Services were consulted where proposals gave rise to air quality concerns. The Investment and Policy Manager also confirmed regard had been given to designated Air Quality Management Areas as key evidence informing the allocations within the Plan, as well as through the process of Appropriate Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal.

The Deputy Chief Executive added that senior managers received monitoring information on air quality management and the information was available for Members.

A Member asked what the Council could do if a planning application was presented to them that could increase the traffic and affect the air quality.

The Director of Economic Development stated that it was a difficult question as there were many factors that had to be considered when looking at planning applications. Ultimately it would be an issue for the Development Control Committee to look at. She explained that the City Council worked with the County Council as the Highways Authority on traffic management and infrastructure plans and considered the air quality for the whole district.

Members asked if the Air Quality Management information could be included in the performance monitoring reports. The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the information could be included in the reports and suggested that an update report be considered by the Panel before deciding how to move forward.

- A Member asked for more information on the 'Garden City' expression of interest.

The Director of Economic Development explained that the DCLG had asked for expressions of interest to be submitted for new villages or urban developments. The Council had submitted the expression of interest and, if successful, the first stage would help fund the masterplanning of the Carlisle South area. A 'Garden City' must include green spaces and have a quality environment, these principles fit in with the Council's plans for Carlisle South; it would not be an urban extension but would be a master planned development including green spaces.

Members suggested that a presentation on the subject be given to an Informal Council Briefing when the outcome of the expression of interest was known.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Carlisle District Local Plan (2015-2030) Proposed Adoption report (ED.32/16) be welcomed;

2) That the Panel supports the establishment of a Cross Party Working Group to consider the Carlisle South Masterplan and Community Infrastructure Levy.

3) That the Panel receive reports on various aspects of the Local Development Scheme at the appropriate time;

4) That an Air Quality Management monitoring report be submitted to the next meeting of the Panel;

5) That a presentation on the DCLG Garden City Expression of Interest be given at Informal Council Briefing when the outcome of the bid is known;

6) That the Director of Economic Development and all staff in the Local Plan team be thanked for their invaluable work on the Local Plan.

7) That the Panel recommends stakeholder involvement in consideration of Citadel redevelopment, and that the proposals are considered by this Panel.

EEOSP.55/16 FLOOD UPDATE REPORT

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted report SD.18/16 which was part of a series of update reports prepared for Overview and Scrutiny Panels on flood recovery activities and future programmed work.

The Deputy Chief Executive outlined the City Council's Asset Recovery Programme which had a final target date for all completion of all assets as March 2017 and a detailed overview of progress on the Civic Centre and Customer Contact Centre, The Sheepmount and Green Spaces recovery.

He updated the Panel on developments with regard to the recovery of assets since the publication of the report as follows:

Property	Work due to begin	End date
Warwick St properties	29 September 2016	7 December 2016
Adriano's	26 October 2016	January 2017
Sands Centre and Swifts	The Sands Centre had been completed following minor works by GLL.	
Stoney Holme	The golf course was being used and the work on the club house was due to be included in the work programme	

John St properties and Shaddongate Resource Centre	Both properties had gone out under one tender and the work on both would happen together. 2 November 2016 February 2017
Botcherby Community Centre	9 November 2016 January 2017
Bitts Park	The play area and water park would be completed mid October and would result in a bigger better play area
Bitts Park Pavilion	The Pavilion contained all of the services for the area and had been badly damaged. WYG had been asked to look at the Pavilion and Lodge and report back proposals for their development and future use. Details would be brought back to the Panel and the work would be included in the work programme.
Caldew Riverside Properties	Ecology and bat surveys had been completed. WYG had developed a tender for the demolition of empty properties.
Old Fire Station	Work was completed and the Old Fire Station would re-open on 17 September 2016. There were 39 events booked in before Christmas.
Sheepmount	Preliminary work had been undertaken and the athletics club was making use of the track, however, the buildings were still out of use. Discussions were underway on how best to programme the recovery and maintain operational use of the facilities.
Civic Centre	The ground floor had been stripped and dried and the electricity supply had been moved to the first floor. A feasibility report would explore the potential use of the basement and ground floor, resilience adaptations, possible re-design of the first floor and future use and costs of the tower. The report would be discussed by the Joint Management Team then a comprehensive programme would be devised for implementation.
Green Spaces	The 3 play areas that were affected have been reinstated. The Council received weekly updates from the Environment Agency on their work on the riverbanks. The Green Spaces Team had inspected the areas of the riverbanks that were the Council's responsibility and had found no issues. Three of the bridges had public rights of way on them and fell under the responsibility of the County Council; a local engineering company had inspected the bridges and had identified minor works to carry out to two of them, while the third was more seriously damaged and may require major restoration or closure. The Deputy Chief Executive agreed to circulate further information on the riverbanks and bridges to Members.

The Deputy Chief Executive gave an update on Flood Grants and Household Payments:

Community Support Grant - 1,560 households within the district had received the Community Support Grant of £500 amounting to £780,000 of grant. The money was being recovered from Cumbria County Council upon submission of fortnightly claims.

Flood Resilience Grants - 490 grant applications had been received and granted funded measurers to 403 properties (7 were not eligible and 80 were incomplete), totalling £1,637,757. Of these the Council had paid out 180 grants totalling £605,010 which was recoverable from Cumbria County Council.

Council Tax & NNDR Discount Schemes - Council tax discounts had been awarded to 2,130 householders which amounted to £2,661,269. Business Rates discount had been awarded to 104 businesses amounting to £489,831. The total number of businesses affected was 205, with 110 properties now being re-occupied.

Section 5 of the report detailed the responsibilities of the organisations involved in the flood recovery in a legislative context.

In considering the first part of the report Members raised the following comments and questions:

- Had consideration been given to putting refreshment or retail outlets in the ground floor of the Civic centre which would bring people into the building and be useful for those already visiting?

The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that this was being considered along with a range of options, he added that any development had to have cost benefits to the authority due to the investment that would be required.

A Member commented that an option for the ground floor could be a multi-functional space that allowed meetings to take place in a friendly manner for members of the public.

- A Member asked for clarity with regard to the future of the Sheepmount for athletics.

The Leader informed the Panel that advice had indicated that should the athletics facilities be relocated the facilities would be downgraded to a training facility. The Sheepmount was currently a grade 1 competition facility and the Council wanted to retain this. The replacement track would be more resilient as would the materials used in the pavilion.

- The football season had begun but the changing facilities at the Sheepmount had not been reinstated, when would this happen?

The Deputy Chief Executive responded that the Council was working with the football leagues and temporary accommodation had been provided on site. The buildings would be reinstated and would be made as resilient as possible.

- The lack of car parking for the Sheepmount had been causing issues, could the car park be reinstated as a priority?

The Deputy Chief Executive agreed to seek advice on the reinstatement of the car park. The Council and WYG would work to do what they could to alleviate issues, manage the reinstatement of the site and keep it as operational as possible.

- When did the contract with GLL end?

The Deputy Chief Executive reported that the contract was due to end in November 2017. The tender process had been paused following the floods and was now being restarted.

Early market testing had shown that big suppliers were not interested in providing the golf facilities but smaller suppliers had been interested in providing golf facilities explicitly. The tender would be in two parts, one part for all the leisure provision apart from the golf and one for the golf only. Providers were welcome to tender for all if they so wished.

The Director of Economic Development then presented the Carlisle Flood Response Plan 2016/17. She explained that the Council had been working in partnership with the Environment Agency and County Council on a Flood Response Plan for 2016/17. The Plan summarised the work being undertaken and planned and drew upon and referenced the Cumbria Floods Partnership Action Plan and other relevant areas of work. The Plan emphasised preparation for the coming winter but equally applied to weather and events leading to and recovering from flooding at any time throughout the year. The overall objective directing the action in the Plan was set out in section 3 of the report.

She added that the most important step for the Plan was ensuring it was widely communicated to ensure people were aware of the Plan and had confidence in it and the planned response.

In considering the Flood Response Plan Members raised the following comments and questions:

- Some rural and urban areas had suffered from flash flooding which had been exacerbated by blocked grills and drains and by weeds. Another contributing factor had been agricultural land owners.

The Director of Economic Development recognised the issues raised and the Council's responsibilities. Part of remit of the Flood response Team was to identify areas that needed cleared or hot spot areas and have the relevant authority / agency respond to them.

- Had there been feedback from businesses or home owners with regard to insurance in areas that had been flooded?

The Director of Economic Development confirmed that there had been issues with regard insurance for business premises. The authority had already produced letters of support for tenants in Willowholme Industrial Estate with regard to their issues. DEFRA and the DCLG needed to understand the issues that businesses had and consider arrangements similar to the Flood RE for homes.

With regard to the Flood RE, if homeowners were still finding that their insurance provider was charging high premiums or excess and the insurers were registered with Flood RE then this needed to be addressed.

RESOLVED –1) That the Flood Update Report (SD.18/16) be welcomed and the Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Economic Development and all staff involved be thanked for their input into the detailed report which showed the strength of the Council.

2) That the Deputy Chief Executive circulated information on the work being undertaken on riverbanks and bridges following the floods to Members.

3) That a report on the options for the use of the ground floor of the Civic Centre be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel.

The Green Spaces and Bereavement Manager introduced the Site Management Team Leader and Green Spaces Officer to the Panel.

The Green Spaces and Bereavement Manager presented report LE.17/16 which provided an update on the progress of the business plan for Talkin Tarn which had been steered by the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel in 2014.

The Green Spaces and Bereavement Manager reminded the Panel that they had considered the first Business Plan for Talkin Tarn in July 2014 and it included proposals for diversifying and increasing the income generating potential of the Country Park. Car Park fees and sales at the Boat House Tearoom had increased significantly in the past 3 years and this may have been helped by better marketing and popular events along with dry spring weather. The May 2016 half term saw the Tarn's record weekly takings in 10 years of trading.

Other initiatives had yet to come into fruition due to issues with the recreation provider. The provider had been given notice and a temporary contract had been let with a local provider for the remainder of the season and a new tender would be issued over the winter to start at Easter 2017.

The proposals for taking forward the commercial opportunities presented by parks and green spaces were contained in the appendix to the report together with some analysis of the successful implementation of the Business Plan for Talkin Tarn Country Park.

The Green Spaces and Bereavement Manager reported that there was an opportunity for the Council to use a similar format for the development of Bitts Park. The Park presented different issues as there were already two operators on the site providing the sport, tennis and kiosk facilities and the high rope facility. Opportunities for the Council were limited but the play area was a huge draw for the Park and presented the two operators with a large customer base. Similar opportunities were also available at Hammond's Pond.

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

- Had the Council given Can You Experience? (CYE) enough time to bed down their ideas?

The Green Spaces and Bereavement Manager explained that the company had had several opportunities to deliver on their initiatives. The Council had also offered to release them early from their contract but the company had refused but had still not provided the services. The Site Management Team Leader added that CYE had made the decision to the end the contract.

- It would be useful to include details on car parking ticket sales in future reports to enable Members to compare visitor numbers.
- Members thanked officers for the work undertaken at Talkin Tarn which was an excellent, well looked after and well used asset.
- The Panel asked that future reports include more financial details including a breakdown of the rental income and details on the number of annual car park permits sold and relevant income/costs from that.

- The increase income from the tea room was commendable but Members felt there was still scope to improve the tea room offer with more flexible opening hours in summer months especially during school holidays.

The Green Spaces and Bereavement Manager agreed to investigate the tea room opening hours further and the potential of longer hours in the kiosk underneath the tea rooms. Any additional opening hours had to take consideration of additional staffing and overhead costs.

- Members asked for the projections in the original business plan to be circulated to enable them to make comparison to the information in the report.
- Was the income from Talkin Tarn still ring fenced to be used at Talkin Tarn?

The Green Spaces and Bereavement Manager confirmed that all income generated was ring fenced for investment into Talkin Tarn. He explained that Talkin Tarn made a contribution to in house recharges and this affected the profit made at Talkin Tarn. The Deputy Chief Executive commented that recharges was a complicated topic when looking at areas such as Talkin Tarn. The recharge comes back to the running of the Council and the net income was then ringfenced for the Tarn. He added that other organisations that had left the authority, such as Tullie House, had struggled to find the same value for money for central services away from the Council.

The Leader thanked all the team involved in Talkin Tarn informing the Panel that Talkin Tarn had won Carlisle Living's Best Place to Visit Award in 2015 and had been a finalist for the award in 2016. All of the green spaces in the City were important and contributed to the Council's priorities.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Business Plan Development for Carlisle Parks report (LE.17/16) be welcomed;

2) That the Green Spaces Team be thanked for their continuing hard work in ensuring that Talking Tarn remains an excellent facility;

3) That a further update report on the Talkin Tarn Business Plan be brought to the Panel in March 2017 including:

All financial information on net profit and loss, central service costs and comparison data from the original business plan

Details of car parking tickets sold and comparison data to enable the scrutiny of visitor numbers to Talkin Tarn

Information on the potential of increased opening hours in the tea room and kiosk

4) That details of options for a Bitts Park Business Plan be brought back to the Panel in March 2017.

EEOSP.57/16 1ST QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT 2016/17

The Policy and Performance Officer presented report PC.18/16 updating the Panel on the Council's service standard relevant to the Panel and key actions contained within the new Carlisle Plan.

The Policy and Performance Officer reported that details of the service standards were set out in the tables at section 1 of the report. The tables illustrated the cumulative year to date figure and an actual service standard baseline that had been established either locally or nationally. The updates against the actions in the Carlisle Plan followed on from the service standard information in section 2 of the report.

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

- Why had the percentage of household waste sent for recycling reduced? Could it be the result of the reduction in the campaign to increase recycling?

The Deputy Chief Executive responded that it was intended to use the Rethinking Waste project to reiterate the importance of recycling. The project would include new collections and rounds and was a good opportunity to encourage recycling. There had been nearly 600 new properties completed in 2015 and they were not yet receiving kerb side collections for recycling, when they were added there would be an impact on the recycling rates.

The Deputy Chief Executive reminded the Panel that there was less resources available to allocate to staff to deliver the recycling message and that was why it was important to use the Rethinking Waste project to promote recycling.

In response to a further question the Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the charges for recycling enabled the authority to identify the amount of recyclates that were being refused due to contamination.

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the Service Standard only had household collections as this was the service standard that had been selected as one of the useful service standards for members of the public. The Panel could have more detailed information on recycling for the whole City if it so wished,

RESOLVED – 1) That the 1st Quarter Performance Monitoring Report 2016/17 (PC.18/16) be noted;

2) That the next performance monitoring report to the Panel include information on the reasons for the reduction in kerbside recycling.

3) That the Panel be involved in discussions about further performance indicators for recycling, as related to the Rethinking Waste project.

4) That the Panel recommends that messages about recycling be conveyed to the public at the same time any changes to recycling are communicated.

EEOSP.58/16 CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

On behalf of the Panel the Chairman wished Councillor Dodd best wishes for his marriage in early October. He also thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Officer for all of her hard work and support to the Panel and wished her well for her future.

(The meeting ended at 12.38pm)