

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2014 AT 10.00 AM

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

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Bradley, Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder
Councillor Mrs Martlew – Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder
Councillor Bloxham – Lead Member of the Litter Bin Task and Finish Group
Councillor J Mallinson - Observer

OFFICERS: Deputy Chief Executive
Director of Resources
Director of Economic Development
Director of Local Environment
Policy and Performance Officer
Overview and Scrutiny Officer

EEOSP.75/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Caig and Councillor Mitchelson.

The Panel were informed that Councillor Caig was currently suffering a period of ill health and would not be attending meetings for the next four months.

RESOLVED – That the Panel wished Councillor Caig a speedy recovery and that a card be sent to Councillor Caig on behalf of the Panel.

EEOSP.76/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Graham, Mrs Mallinson and Watson declared a registrable interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of the following agenda items:

- A.3 – Budget 2015/16 – 2019/20
- A.4 – Waste and Recycling
- A.5 – Food Digesters

Their interest related to the fact that they were all Members of Cumbria County Council.

EEOSP.77/14 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED – 1. That the minutes of the meetings held on 14 August 2014, 8 September 2014 and 25 September 2014 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meetings.

2. That the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2014 be noted.

EEOSP.78/14 CALL IN OF DECISIONS

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

EEOSP.79/14 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented report OS.28/14 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 14 November 2014, included the following items which fell within the remit of this Panel.

KD.25/14 – Budget Process 2015/16 – the budget proposals would be considered by the Panel later in the meeting.

KD.29/14 – The Future of On-Street Parking Enforcement – the Executive would be asked to decide when the On-Street Parking Agreement with Cumbria County Council should be terminated. The report would be considered by the Executive in private at their meeting on 15 December 2014.

KD.30/14 – Carlisle Plan – the draft Carlisle Plan would be considered by the Executive at their meetings on 14 January 2015 and 7 April 2015 and would be available for the Panel to consider at its meeting on 12 March 2015.

KD.31/14 – Carlisle and District Local Plan (2015-2030) Proposed Submission – the report would be considered by the Executive on 15 December 2014 and 26 January 2015 and would be available for the Panel to consider at its meeting on 22 January 2015.

The Overview Report had included KD.28/14 – Energy Company Obligation as a matter for the Environment and Economy Panel, the matter fell within the remit of Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel and would not be considered by this Panel.

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

- Minute Excerpts EX.112/14 – EX.120/14 Budget 2015/16 – 2019/20, EX.121/14& EX.133/14 Talkin Tarn Business Plan, from the Executive held on 10 November 2014 had been circulated to the Panel.
- Following the meeting of the Panel on 21 October 2014 Councillors Allison, Bowditch, Higgs, Mrs Mallinson, Mrs McKerrell and Watson were appointed to the Business Support Task and Finish Group and the first meeting to scope the review would be held on 9 December 2014.
- The notes of the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group held on 4 November 2014 were circulated to the Panel. The Scrutiny Officer drew Members' attention to the LGA Future Review and the Group's discussion regarding potential change to Scrutiny. A facilitated session for all Scrutiny Members would take place in January.
- The Work Programme for the Panel had been circulated as appendix 1 of the report.

RESOLVED – 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.80/14 LITTER BIN TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Lead Member of the Litter Bin Task and Finish Group presented Report OS.30/14 summarising the work undertaken by the Group to date in order to update Panel Members on the issues arising. The Lead Member summarised the background to the Group and advised that the first meeting was held on 24 July 2014.

The Lead Member explained that the review of litter bins within the wards of Carlisle, of which there were 684 throughout the borough, began in 2011. Historically litter bins were installed at the request and needs of the local wards as identified by the local Councillor with the agreement of Officers.

The main evidence of the review would be the mapping of the locations of all street litter bins within wards to determine whether they were correctly located according to certain criteria including footfall and litter accumulation. The work of the Group would also include the various designs of litter bins and new technology in the field such as solar powered compressor bins.

Bins were available on the market which compressed litter and would generate an e-mail to the Council when capacity had been reached. A pilot had been arranged and three Big Belly bins were placed in the City Centre. The full information on the pilot would be included in the final report but it was evident that fewer collections were needed during the pilot period. More work was needed on potential savings, which would be included in the final report, alongside evidence from other authorities who had installed that type of bin.

To date a full audit of litter bins had been undertaken with the assistance of the Street Cleaning Team. The work of mapping and detailing the condition of every bin in the area was ongoing by Officers and the Task Group were kept updated on progress. Task Group Members had suggested that Ward Members could be contacted to request that they give consideration to using some of their Small Scale Budget to assist in the financial burden of replacing bins.

Members were not aware of whether the Council had a prescriptive Litter Bin policy which detailed the aims of the policy, the type of bins available, the locations of bins and what the criteria and implications of issuing new bins and the process for maintenance and replacements of existing bins.

The review also detailed the amount of litter in each bin and whether there was evidence of trade, household or garden waste.

Each of the Councillors on the Task Group had joined the Street Cleaning Team for a morning covering both urban and rural rounds. The Lead Member summarised the observations and concerns of the Councillors and added that the Group were extremely impressed by the work carried out by the Street Cleaning Team.

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

- *Members re-iterated the importance of including Ward Members in any discussion regarding the location or removal of litter bins, some rural areas were happy to contribute to the purchase of litter bins but understood that there was no capacity to then empty the bins.*

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder responded that hotspots would be identified and litter bins would be relocated. She reminded the Panel that the Small Scale Budget could not be used if there would be revenue consequences. She asked that the information contained within paragraph 2.3 of the report be investigated for accuracy. The Portfolio Holder welcomed the review and the litter bin mapping and added that the Council had to be pragmatic and get the best out of the resources available.

- *Had any financial work been undertaken with regard the compressor bins or renewal of existing litter bins?*

The Lead Member confirmed that limited financial work had been carried out as the Group were waiting on feedback from other authorities where the compressor bins were in use. He added that the primary objective of the review had not been financial but wanted to ensure that available resources were used in the most efficient way. He explained that it was difficult for the authority to add new bins as there was no power to empty them.

- *A Member commented that there needed to be more education regarding littering and dog fouling.*

The Lead Member felt that further work was needed on the existing bins and how they were being used, for example litter bins in the City Centre were divided for recycling purposes but they were not being used correctly.

RESOLVED: 1. That report OS.30/14, Litter Bin Task and Finish Group, be noted.

2. That the Members of the Litter Bin Task and Finish Group and Tina MacDonald, Technical Clerk, be thanked for their detailed work on the review.

EEOSP.81/14 BUDGET 2015/16 – 2019/20

Revenue Budget Reports

(a) Summary of New Revenue Spending Pressures

The Director of Resources submitted report RD.37/14 which provided a summary of the Council's revised revenue base estimates for 2014/15 together with base estimates for 2015/16 and updated reserve projections to 2019/20.

The Executive had on 19 November 2014 (EX.112/14) received the report and forwarded it to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for consideration as part of the 2016/16 budget process.

The report set out known revisions to the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) although there were a number of significant factors affecting the budget that were currently unresolved. Decisions would need to be taken to limit budget increases to unavoidable and high priority issues, together with maximising savings and efficiencies, and probable

use of reserves, to enable a balanced budget position to be recommended to Council in February 2015.

The Director of Resources explained that, in light of the current forecast deficits, proposals for new spending pressures had been kept to a minimum. The pressures identified in Section 5 of the report were regarded as unavoidable or were the highest priority in meeting the Council's corporate objectives.

With regard to savings, the Director of Resources stated that the current MTFP included a savings requirement to be found by 2018/19 of £3.939 million. Further savings/additional income had been identified in the budget process for 2015/16, details of which were set out in Section 6 of the report. Also summarised were the movements in base budgets, the updated MTFP projections, the outstanding key issues, the projected impact on revenue balances, together with a summary of the financial outlook and budget discipline 2015/16 to 2019/20.

Members then considered the following new priority for revenue spending and reduced income which fell within the areas of responsibility of this Panel.

Car Parking Income and On-Street Parking Income

The Charges Report (LE.03/14) considered elsewhere on the agenda highlighted the continuing decline in car parking income and the lost income (Net) of the County Council taking control of Cecil Street and William Street car parks and On-Street parking. As well as a recurring pressure of £313,800 a £100,000 non-recurring pressure for two years was anticipated in order to try and improve car parking management and attract additional income.

Refuse and Recycling Income

The value of recyclates had dropped and the pressure covered income from plastics and card recycling income and Green Box recycling income as well as additional costs of servicing new homes with a refuse and recycling scheme and a garden waste scheme.

Development Control Income

The Charges Report (ED.42/14) considered elsewhere on the agenda highlighted the fact that Development Control income would not achieve the MTFP target for 2015/16 due to the charges being set by Central Government.

Local Plans Income

The Charges Report (ED.42/14) considered elsewhere on the agenda indicated a small shortfall of £1,100 against income targets.

Rapid Response Team

This represented the costs of continuing to fund the Team that was established under the Clean-Up-Carlisle initiative.

Enterprise Centre Income Shortfalls

The Charges Report (ED.42/14) considered elsewhere on the agenda highlighted the fact that service charge income from the Enterprise Centre would be achieved. However rental income from the service was currently below targets and the MTFP target for 2015/16 would not be achieved.

Temporary Posts in Economic Development

This pressure represented the funding to allow the continuation of two temporary posts in Economic Development.

Funding Officer

It was proposed to create a Funding Officer post, initially on a temporary 12 month contract, that would concentrate on identifying grant funding that the Council could utilise from various sources to support service delivery and improvements. It was further proposed that the post be funded by top slicing any grant awards successfully achieved and as such that funding was shown in the table within Section 6.

Proposals for Transformation Savings

Proposals to achieve the £3.939 million transformational savings required were included in Appendix D attached to the report.

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

- *A Member commented that it was positive to see consumables savings and felt that this should be looked at carefully throughout the authority.*
- *The Business Support – Regeneration Officer was listed as a saving. This was an important role within the authority, who would pick up this function?*

The Director of Economic Development reported that the post was vacant and would be revisited following completion of the Local Plan work.

- *A Member asked for a brief overview of the Rethinking Waste proposed savings.*

The Director of Local Environment reminded the Panel that the Rethinking Waste project was a significant piece of work which redesigned the waste and recycling services.

RESOLVED – That Report RD.37/14 be noted.

(b) Summary of Charges review

Chief Executive's Team and Deputy Chief Executive's Team

The Deputy Chief Executive presented report PC.16/14 that set out the proposed fees and charges for 2015/16 relating to those services falling within the responsibility of the Chief Executive's Team and the Deputy Chief Executive's Team.

The Deputy Chief Executive highlighted the proposed charges, which included the use of Event Assets by external organisations, promotion and marketing, and the use of the Old Fire Station which was a key priority within the Carlisle Plan and a major project for the City Council throughout 2014/15 and 2015/16. Details of the forecast levels of income for 2015/16 based upon the charging structure were also provided within the report.

Of particular note was Section 4.2 which recorded that a number of additional assets were being developed through project work, many of which were dependent upon planning permission. At their meeting on 10 November 2014, the Executive were asked to delegate the setting of those charges to the Deputy Chief Executive.

Events Assets

A number of assets were available to organisations for use in events. In the case of community events, agreed by the Community Event Panel, the charges could be reduced and the value of the charges would be considered as additional support in kind for the event.

Promotion and Marketing

The City Council had a number of assets that can be used for promotion and marketing which could be used as part of a value in kind arrangements for an event partner. A number of additional assets were being developed through project work many of which were dependent upon planning permissions. In the interim the charges would be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive. It was anticipated that the new charges would generate £10,000 in new income for the Council in 2015/16 which would offset the costs of supporting events.

Summary of Income

The 2015/16 forecast levels of income based upon the charging structure was outlined in the report.

In response to questions the Deputy Chief Executive explained that arrangement for the charges for the stalls and tables and the collection of the charges was organised by the Senior Engineering Technician and he confirmed that the charges for the stalls and tables were cost effective.

RESOLVED – That report PC.16/14 be noted.

Local Environment

The Director of Local Environment submitted report LE.03/14, setting out the proposed fees and charges for the services falling within the remit of the Local Environment Directorate.

Details of the proposed charges in respect of City Centre usage by external organisations, car parking, allotments, sports pitches, environmental quality, food safety, waste services and bereavement services were provided.

City Centre Events Charges

In 2014/15 a new charge for large commercial promotions and markets had been introduced but had been unsuccessful as there had been a reluctance to pay the charge of £400 per day. It was the view of officer that income levels and the range of events would be better served by having a charge £60.00 per day for each individual item placed in the area. Table 1 of the report set out the existing and proposed charges.

Car Parking

By way of background, Members were reminded that a new charging structure had been introduced to the City Council pay and display in March 2012 to try and reverse the long term trend of falling car park usage and income. In order to establish the latest situation with car park usage and examine how that could be increased, a consultant had been engaged to report on options

In advance of his final report the consultant had prepared a dynamic model of car park income and usage over the last five years which could be used to predict the likely impact of future changes to car park charges. City Council Officers had used that model and their knowledge of the City to prepare the current charges report and make initial proposals for future car park charges. When the final report from the consultant became available those proposals may need to be refined in line with the consultant's recommendations.

The Director of Local Environment gave an overview of car park usage and income, including pay by phone usage. In terms of the proposed charging structure for 2015/16 the Director explained that, although the changes set out could potentially increase income by £131,000, much would depend on successful marketing, the economic climate and the reaction of competitors in providing this service. Members were asked to note that, with effect from the 25 September 2014, the income from Cecil Street car park had been handed to the County Council as owners of the car park. That would result in an expenditure pressure of £75,400 in car park income thus reducing the potential increase in income to £55,600.

Attention was further drawn to Section 3.2 of the report which set out the existing pay and display charges, together with details of:

- proposed amendments to the car park charges for 2015/16 (including a number of reductions in charges, and the reaction of a new charging category to be used in Devonshire Walk and Lower Viaduct car parks which were underused);
- the proposed creation of a new car park category and amendment of some of the existing car park categories;
- the proposed revision of contract parking charges (saver permits); special event charges and granting of individual licences to car park traders where Officers considered that to be appropriate.

Parks and Green Spaces

Charging for the use of parks and green spaces was introduced in 2012/13, with a category for low key commercial use being introduced in 2013/14. It was proposed that the charges be increased in line with the requirement to achieve an overall increase in income of 3.8% in line with the MTFP.

With regard to low key commercial use, the intention was that Council Officers should have discretion to waive or reduce charges in circumstances where a commercial operator was needed in order to provide a catering service as part of a City Council run event. That responsibility was currently delegated to the Director of Local Environment. A sliding scale of charges was recommended for fun fairs.

Section 4.3.2 recorded a proposal to implement a "dirty pitch penalty" system where litter was left following matches. Litter included, but was not limited to, plastic bottles, cans, sock tape and plastic bags.

Talkin Tarn Car Park

The income from car parking was an important funding stream from Talkin Tarn and greatly helped to reduce the annual revenue costs of the facility. The year 2013/14 showed a much improved performance against that of 2012/13 and was currently running approximately £5,000 ahead of target. The charging structure implemented in 2013/14 would remain for 2015/16.

For 2013/14 the annual parking permit was re-branded as the Talkin Tarn Membership with the inclusion of other services in addition to car parking. AS a product the Talkin Tarn Membership was still in a development phase and it was proposed that the charge should remain at £52.00 per year.

The Business Plan for Talkin Tarn sought to generate income wherever feasible and safe to do so. Charges had been increased in line with the MTFP requirement other than for fishing permits and swimming registration.

Waste Services and Street Cleaning

For Waste Services and Street Cleaning, proposals included:

- to promote minimisation of waste, the charge would be kept at £18 but the number of items would be reduced from five to three;
- the charge for a 240 litre refuse or garden waste bin should increase to £35;
- the option to purchase a second garden waste bin for extra recycling was withdrawn as rounds were at capacity and the Council could no longer guarantee new properties a garden waste collection for garden waste recycling.

Summary of Income

The charges highlighted within the report would result in an anticipated level of income of £2,575,400 against the MTFP target of £2,885,600. That represented a shortfall of £310,200 against the MTFP target.

In considering report LE.03/14 Members raised the following comments and questions:

- *The introduction of the evening charges was estimated to generate £18,000 of additional income, was it cost effective to levy this charge?*

The Director of Local Environment responded that the majority of the evening charges would be generated in the Sands Centre Car Park and the enforcement of this would tie in with existing enforcement.

- *The Panel was concerned that they were being asked to scrutinise changes to the car parking charges without the final consultants report. They asked how they would scrutinise the charges if they changed as a result of the consultants report.*

The Director of Local Environment explained that any changes to the charges report would be circulated as an amendment in line with existing procedures. She re-assured Members that it was unlikely that there would be any significant changes to the charges unless there was a fundamental rethink following the changes to on street enforcement. The consultant's model had been finalised and the information had informed the charges report.

- *Would the consultant's report on car parking be available to the Panel for scrutiny?*

The Director of Local Environment clarified that the consultant had produced a dynamic model. If the charge was modified it would show the effect of the change on car park usage.

The Deputy Chief Executive reiterated that the consultants report had not been a formal process and the Panel had the option of considering car parking charges further at a future meeting if they so wished.

- *A Member highlighted areas of Carlisle which were congested with parking but were not enforced.*

The Director of Local Environment responded that the City Council did not receive any subsistence to enforce residents parking and carried out enforcement within their available budget, any enhanced service should be raised with Cumbria County Council when the service transferred back to them.

- *Had the car park traders caused any environmental impact?*

The Director of Local Environment reported that the Council had piloted a new income stream by looking at alternative uses for car parks which were not filled to capacity. The pilot had been a mobile Thai food van and it had been successful. There had been no adverse impact and it had increased the use of the car park. Other proposals had been received included a cycle hire company who wanted to rent cycles to encourage park and cycle, there had been an emerging demand for this and it was a good opportunity to increase income. The Director agreed to bring a more detailed report on the matter to a future meeting of the Panel.

RESOLVED – 1. That report LE.03/14 be noted.

2. That the observations of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel, as outlined above, be conveyed to the Executive

3. That the Director of Local Environment submit a report on Car Park Traders to a future meeting of the Panel.

Economic Development

The Director of Economic Development present report ED.42/14 setting out the proposed fees and charges for areas falling within the responsibility of the Economic Development Directorate. The proposed charges related to Economic Development and Tourism, planning services, housing and hostel services.

Planning Services

Income from planning fees was dependent on both the number of applications and the type of applications. The planning fees were increased in 2013/14 and there were no further increases proposed. The Government set the fee for planning applications and tried to encourage development by reducing fees in some areas, this impacted on the income and the amount of work being undertaken. Building Control fees were ring fenced and were not allowed to make a profit or a loss.

Tourism and City Centre Management

Although it was considered that there was little scope for increasing charges for other organisations across the country, a wider range of tickets together with other items such as fishing licences continued to be sold to try to maintain income. Following the refurbishment of the Old Town Hall the buying / sales strategy had been revised to stock a higher quality of merchandise with higher margins. Phase 2 of the refurbishment which was due to be completed in July 2015 would provide the Council with an excellent opportunity to advertise services and retail goods to people passing by on the ground floor level via screens in the new improved access area of the building.

Assembly Rooms

As part of the internal refurbishment of the Tourist Information Centre Officers were exploring other opportunities to increase income. A full review will be carried out during January to March 2015 whilst the Tourist Information Centre is located elsewhere exploring all possibilities for the use of the room. A marketing plan will also be written on how best to promote the Assembly Rooms.

Enterprise Centre

Following the review of the Enterprise Centre management of the facility was undertaken from the Civic Centre, as a result of which any income received was solely derived from the rental and service charge of the occupied units. It was proposed to increase the rent and the service charge for 2015/16 by 3.8% in line with inflation.

Summary of Income

Acceptance of the charges highlighted within the report, with the exception of Building Control which was self financing, would result in an anticipated level of income of £1,236,900 against the MTFP target of £1,282,200.

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

- *Was the proposed income from the Assembly Rooms achievable given that that it would be closed for part of the year for refurbishment?*

The Director of Economic Development responded that the income was aspirational and it was hoped that following the refurbishment there would be additional interest in hiring the Rooms.

- *The roof of the Enterprise Centre had been repaired at a cost of £50,000, what was the current rate of occupancy of the Enterprise Centre and how was it promoted?*

The Director of Economic Development reported that the Enterprise Centre had a 60% level of occupancy. The Enterprise Centre was promoted when people contacted the City Council for space. It had varied accommodation but it was basic and businesses required more modern facilities. She added that the rental charges for the building were fixed.

The Director of Resources explained that the roof had not yet been repaired, the budget had been set aside but on closer investigation more work was required than had been anticipated.

- *What would happen to the Enterprise Centre if the Council could not afford to fund the roof repairs?*

The Director of Resources responded that a fundamental review of the Enterprise Centre would need to be carried out, however, funding for the roof repairs was still available. The Director of Economic Development added that there were a number of issues with the building and discussions were taking place with Property Services as to how the issues could be addressed. A report would be prepared for Members but it would not be in the current Civic year.

RESOLVED – 1. That report ED.42/14 be noted.

2. That the observations of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel, as outlined above, be conveyed to the Executive

(c) Revised Capital Programme 2014/15 and Provisional Capital Programme 2015/16 to 2019/20

The Director of Resources submitted report RD.38/14 detailing the revised capital programme for 2014/15, together with the proposed method of financing. The report also summarised the proposed programme for 2015/16 to 2019/20 in the light of the new capital pressures identified, and summarised the estimated and much reduced capital resources available to fund the programme.

The Director of Resources drew Members' attention to Section 4 which provided details of the current commitments and explained that many of the new spending proposals had not yet been considered by the Corporate Programme Board. Accordingly, should they be approved for inclusion in the Council's Capital Programme as part of the budget process, the release of any earmarked reserve would be subject to verification of the business case by the Corporate Programme Board and a report to the Executive as appropriate.

The Director of Resources highlighted the summary of the estimated resources available to finance the capital programme for 2015/16 to 2019/20. A summary of the estimated resources compared to the proposed programme year on year was also provided.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations as set out in report RD.38/14be accepted.

EEOSP.82/14 WASTE AND RECYCLING

The Director of Local Environment submitted report LE.24/14A which reviewed the various recent service changes and improvements in waste services and updated Members on progress towards implementing the recommendations made by the recent Task and Finish exercise on recycling undertaken by the Panel.

The Director of Local Environment gave a detailed overview of each of the sections in the report drawing particular attention to the following:

Waste Services Performance Indicators

The table in section 1.2 showed an increase in waste collected that the work to promote recycling was starting to make in impact.

Bring Site Review

Responsibility for Bring Sites had been brought in-house in April 2014 and the transfer had been carried out smoothly and had ensured continuity of service. The Review resulted in 70 (40%) of the poorest performing sites being removed whilst ensuring that provision in rural areas was maintained and that residents who did not receive a kerbside recycling collection had somewhere nearby to take their recycling.

Collections were being monitored and whilst there had been a 40% reduction in the number of sites, overall tonnage had decreased by only 12%. The transfer had achieved savings in revenue and improvements in income as previously the only income was from Recycling Credits from the County Council. Bringing the bring site back in-house had addressed the budget pressure on unachieved income from falling performance, improved confidence in the service, reduced costs, improved income, minimised contamination and reduced complaints.

Gull Sacks

The Gull Sacks had worked well despite some initial problems. The waste team had been out with crews and targeted properties who were not using the sacks or not using them correctly and there had been a dramatic reduction in problems and loose waste was no longer a problem. Smaller gull sacks had been ordered for residents who requested them. The overall aim of moving properties on purple sack collections to gull sack or wheeled bin had been to successfully reduce levels of litter, to improve cleanliness of streets and reduce complaints about seagulls all of which had been achieved within existing budgets.

Waste Policy Framework

The Recycling Task and Finish Group made a number of recommendations to improve customer experience and ensure a consistent service delivery. In response to that report supervision and monitoring had improved. All staff involved with service delivery including staff from the Customer Contact Centre and collection crews would be trained on existing procedures and policies. The remaining recommendations regarding the future delivery of the service would be taken into account as part of the Re-Thinking Waste Project.

Green Box Tender

The current arrangements for collecting the green box recycling was due to end in June 2015 and did not provide the option to extend. That being the case, and in view of the value of the contract, the procurement did not permit Officers to simply extend the current arrangements.

The closing date for the submission of tender documents was 5 December 2014 after which an evaluation process would begin.

The Director of Local Environment explained that the contract period had been advertised for twelve months with the option to extend for a further twelve months. That additional time would allow the Council the opportunity to look into the options and issues for the long term delivery of the service.

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

- *The Neighbourhood Services Manager was an important role within the authority; had the post been filled?*

The Director of Local Environment agreed that the post was a key role. The post had been vacant since October and a very experienced interim Manager had been appointed until a replacement could be recruited. The role was a difficult one and consideration needed to be given to how best to fill the role in the future.

- *Were the circumstances of bringing the Bring Site service in house unique or could it be used as a template to bring other services in house?*

The Director of Local Environment responded that each service had to be judged on its own merits but the Bring Site move had demonstrated that the Council had the skills and ability to successfully bring services in house. The current climate meant that there was a lot of change and it did not make sense to tie the authority to a fixed contract if the service could be carried out in house.

- *Carlisle had seen an increase in gulls, what had been done to educate the public on the effects of feeding the gulls?*

The Director of Local Environment reminded the Panel that Environmental Health had worked hard to educate businesses in the city centre and signs had been placed in key areas. Adverts had been placed in the Carlisle Focus magazine, on the website and via leaflets. In addition the introduction of gull sacks had removed a food source for gulls.

- *Was there any opportunity for the City Council to work with other District Councils with regard to the future Green Box contract?*

The Director of Local Environment explained that this would not be an option in the current climate. The services on offer throughout the County varied drastically, South Lakes District Council's service was the closest to the City Council's service and they did not intend to out source their service. She added that there was opportunity within the County but partnership working would not take place without strong leadership.

- *Would it be possible to consider extending the recyclates collected as part of the Re-Thinking Waste Review?*

The Director of Local Environment stated that the Council had ambitions to add to the recyclates collected but it was difficult due to the financial constraints on the service.

- *What was the loss rate of the gull sacks?*

The Director of Local Environment reported that the loss rate was expected to be similar to the green sack loss rate.

RESOLVED: That the detailed update on Waste and Recycling (LE.24/14) be noted.

EEOSP.83/14 FOOD DIGESTERS

The Director of Local Environment presented report LE.27/14 that provided the background information on the County Council's Food Digester project and explained the benefits to Carlisle residents. The purpose of the report was to establish a budget to enable the City Council to administer the grant funding to purchase and distribute 796 food digesters in Carlisle.

The Director advised that the County Council had funding available from the Department of Communities and Local Government to purchase food waste digesters as part of their waste minimisation programme. Carlisle City Council had made a successful application for funding from the grant to purchase and distribute 796 discounted food waste digesters.

Two types of food waste digesters were available for the public to purchase at a discounted rate. The Green Cone took all household food waste and came with a five litre kitchen caddy for collecting and carrying household food waste to the Green Cone. The Council had obtained funding for 400 Green Cones. The Green Johanna was a hot composter which recycled waste food into compost. The Council had obtained funding for 396 Green Johannas.

Householders would be able to purchase food digesters through Great Green Systems suppliers of the equipment, quoting their postcode when making the transaction. There

would be a link to the supplier from the City Council and County Council websites. The Green Cone would be available to households for £15.00; the Green Johanna would retail at £20.00, both including VAT and delivery.

Cumbria County Council estimated that up to 179 tonnes of food waste per year could be diverted from collection systems by the use of food digesters and the project to supply food digesters at a discounted rate would be completed by April 2017.

RESOLVED: 1. That Report LE.27/14 – Food Digesters – be noted.

2. That the Panel support the recommendation to take part in the food digester project.

EEOSP.84/14 SECOND QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT 2014-15

The Policy and Performance Officer submitted report PC.19/14 that updated the Panel on the Council's service standards that helped measure performance, and included updates on key actions contained within the Carlisle Plan.

With regard to the information on the Carlisle Plan the intention had been to provide the Panel with a brief overview of the current position without duplicating the more detailed reporting that had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels at earlier meetings.

The report had been reviewed by the Senior Management Team at their meeting on 11 November 2014 when it was decided that, as the sample size was too small, the service standards relating to customer satisfaction had been temporarily removed from the report. A more appropriate methodology to measure ongoing customer satisfaction was being developed.

The Panel asked that more narrative be included in the Service Standards in future reports.

A Member asked for an update on the Gypsy and Traveller Transit Site and the Policy and Performance Officer agreed to circulate details to the Panel.

RESOLVED – 1) That Report PC.19/14 – Second Quarter Performance Report 2014/15 be noted;

2) That future Performance reports include more detailed narrative with regard to the Service Standards;

3) That the Policy and Performance Officer supply a written update to all Members of the Panel on the Gypsy and Traveller Transit Site.

(The meeting ended at 12.25pm)