

Pre-Scrutiny questions and answers on reports being considered by Executive on 17 November 2020

(Forms part of the considerations at Group Meetings before a decision is made on which Executive reports will be called in for scrutiny by Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee)

Item 4 – Sherbourne Resource Park – Proposal to become a Partner Council – Report Authors: Bill Hunt and Julie Lewis

Questions asked by Councillor Syson:

1. Will this require additional staffing resources from Neighbourhood Services in both the near and longer term future?

Response:

No, Julie Lewis attends relevant meetings on behalf of both SDC and WDC, a benefit of the new shared Head of Service and there are no additional staffing requirements.

Questions asked by Councillor J Dearing on behalf of the Green Group:

1. The partnership makes organisational and economic sense but only with guarantees of the highest recycling standards. What are the scheme's plans for recycling specific elements - metals, different plastics etc?

Response:

The recycling facility has been specified to produce a complete range of recyclable materials from the sorting process, including glass, metals and plastics. It has also been specified to sort low grade plastics (carrier bags, etc.) which traditionally are not acceptable in sorting plants of this nature. This is the benefit of developing a new, state of the art plant at this time in the global recycling market.

Quality has been a key consideration, not only of the volume of materials extracted, but also their purity levels. We have specified purity levels well above 'normal' for UK recycling plants, in the 97% to 99% range for most products. Achieving these levels provides us with the most flexibility when it comes to sourcing outlets for the material as the UK and wider markets are seeking high quality products.

Item 6 – Creative Quarter – Spencer Yard Proposals – Report Author: Philip Clarke

Questions from the Green Group sent by Councillor Davison:

1. We are in favour of development of these unused buildings to help regenerate the area and support local creatives. However, we are concerned that the rent prices of, and the design scheme for, this development will be cost prohibitive to the establishment of artist studios. Are these proposed offices going to be let at market rate and so unaffordable to artists?

Response:

The details of the proposed rent prices have not yet been developed or shared at this early stage.

2. Would you agree that a variety of artists' studios would *infuse the area with energy, build social and business networks and contribute to its vibrancy and distinctiveness?*

Response:

Providing a range of space for a diverse mix of creative businesses is key to the proposals. The aspiration of the wider Creative Quarter is to provide innovative and creative work spaces for all aspects of the creative sector in Leamington Spa and beyond. This includes the performing arts and creative arts industries as well as the digital creative and gaming sector.

3. Rather than simply attempting to create a business district for digital creatives, did the Council cost long term, affordable space for artists and other creatives in some of these properties? Note that this has happened in London with The Creative Land Trust.

Response:

Again the details of the pricing is not yet available and will be part of CDP's work going forward. But as stated in the previous answer, the Creative Quarter Big Picture is not limited to the provision of work space for digital creatives and will encompass space for the wide range of creatives in the sector in future developments as part of the wider vision for the Creative Quarter.

4. Why is CDP conducting a public consultation at the same time as this report is going to Executive for sign off? See [Leamington Creative Quarter: Public Consultation](#) Note that a previous consultation indicated that business space was not viewed positively by the public:
See question 10a of [Leamington Creative Quarter: Customer Feedback](#)

Response:

The Executive Report process is not directly linked to the Planning Application process and is not sequential therefore these tasks can happen in parallel to maintain the momentum building behind this project. An extensive public consultation exercise has already taken place in preparation for the Phase One report which was approved at the meeting of the Executive in November 2019. The responses to the consultation were considered carefully in the preparation of the Big Picture document, and as such the Creative Quarter will not consist of purely commercial office space but a mixed range of uses to accommodate a wide range of creative industries.

5. Are there Safety issues were raised about the narrow access point to Spencer Yard for any larger events? How will these be managed?

Response:

WDC are leading on the events space in the Yard and a proposal for how to maximise the use of the Yard for events is being prepared by the officers to set this out. The main access for events would be the larger Spencer Yard access off Spencer Street. Part of the overall development will be to improve the existing access point on Spencer Street.

6. 3.5 We are delighted with the aspiration for these buildings to be "carbon neutral". Will this be a condition of the lease? Will these properties be included in the Council's assets when determining our carbon footprint?

Response:

The details of the legal documents in relation to the developments at Spencer Yard are being drafted and the Council remains committed to working with our development partner around the outcomes set out in the Climate Change Action Plan. Where appropriate, these requirements will be considered as part of the Heads of Terms, Development Appraisals and the overarching Development Agreement.

7. 3.13. It is suggested that funding is require to improve Spencers Yard as an event space. How is this going to work? Which organisation will be leading on this? If it isn't CDP, why are they being given preferential choice of dates, when they are not making any investment in it? "WDC grants it the right to hold a certain number of events on key days." Can you be more specific? What is the logic behind this?

Response:

WDC's Events Team will be leading on the events space in the Yard. Once the type of events is established, the level of infrastructure will be set out and implementation method established. This could be as little as 2 or 3 power points to start with.

8. 3.14. Which buildings are being proposed to be 'leased back'? Surely if CDP are not going to manage the buildings, then it would be better for the council to pay them to undertake the redevelopment, and retain control (i.e. no lease to CDP)?

Response:

A Leasehold arrangement is being proposed for all three buildings being re-developed in Spencer Yard. WDC are working with CDP as their development partner. Leasehold ensures that WDC does not loose full ownership of the asset in the long term.

9. 3.16 Please explain “The current indications are that the emerging Business Cases will not demonstrate a need for freehold disposals.”

Response:

WDC has requested to CDP that a Leasehold disposal is progressed in order to retain some ownership of the asset in the long term. Development Appraisals are being produced by CDP to test the valuations and lease arrangements and their effect on the viability of the project. At this stage, this is assuming that a Freehold disposal will not be needed to improve this viability.

10. 3.17. What happens if CDP does not agree with these independent evaluations?

Response:

Discussions and negotiations are ongoing between WDC and CDP including agreeing the content of the independent evaluations.

Item 10 – Waste Contract Renewal – Update Report – Report Author: Julie Lewis

Questions asked by Councillor J Dearing on behalf of the Green Group:

1. In the new scheme, will residents use existing bins wherever possible or will all bins be provided anew? How do the existing red boxes and bags (and green bins from those who no longer pay) that are surplus to requirements get recycled? Is there an agreement in place with one of the wheelie bin recycling companies? Whatever recycling system is chosen, can it be confirmed that it will anticipate the collection criteria/needs adopted by the proposed Sherbourne Recycling Scheme and source all new bins from suppliers using recycled plastic.

Response:

Existing bins will be used wherever possible. People will be encouraged to reuse their current boxes and bags, but if they really don't want them they will be collected and recycled. We will look to secure an agreement with a plastics recycling company at the time, but this is nearly two years away and it is difficult to anticipate what the demand for recycled plastic will be at that time.

The new waste service design has been suggested to incorporate the proposed Sherbourne Recycling Scheme, that is one of the drivers for co-mingled dry recycling. Procurement of the new bins has not yet started but the possibility of using recycled plastic will be considered as part of the process.

Questions from the Liberal Democrat Group:

1. Why is the CEAP PAB not listed as one of the PABs to be involved? The way that residents manage and dispose of resources has significant impact on the environment of our district.

Response:

As it is such a big contract there will be many areas of overlap. As things develop other PABs will be involved as needed.

2. In terms of the three-week turnaround - what consideration has been given to difficult items (e.g. nappies) which will be problematic over time?

Response:

Separate food waste collections have been suggested to remove food waste from. Residents will be given advice as to how to deal with nappies, e.g. by double bagging them and tying the bag which has proved to be effective advice elsewhere. We will of course be advising people that if they used reusable nappies this would not be an issue. We will look to promote campaigns such as real nappy campaigns throughout the process.

3. We are assuming that proposed reorganisation of Local Government will have no impact on this project as in all scenarios envisaged SDC and WDC will either sit in the same entity or be free to collaborate. Can you please confirm?

Response:

Yes, this is correct.

4. There appears to be little mention of 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' and the paper seems to deal exclusively with the 'Recycle' element. Later in the paper it indicates that the residual waste allowance will reduce from 90l per week to 60l per week. Can officers confirm what the actual average usage of this allowance currently is and what will be done to encourage residents to 'Reduce and Reuse' in order to bring down the amount of waste that is collected and what resources will be devoted to this?

Response:

We don't measure individual waste produced per tonnage as this isn't possible but we do know that a lot of waste but in general waste is actually recyclable. By making recycling simpler and offering greater capacity it will encourage people to recycle wherever possible. We will run various communication campaigns encouraging people to reduce waste as the first principal of the waste hierarchy. This will particularly apply to reduce food waste but we will implement a full communications plan covering the various messages of reduce, reuse and recycle.

5. What exemptions are being considered for green bin waste charges and are there any plans to offer residents compost bins as well as caddies as an alternative to a charged collection?

Response:

Chargeable garden waste proposals are not part of this report. WCC already offer discounted compost bins to residents and this will be continued.