

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Report of
Chairman

**COUNCILLOR
MICHAEL BOADEN**

In addition to a successful and useful workshop on Homelessness initiatives the Committee has met twice during the current cycle.

At its meeting at the end of August the Committee spent some time examining the strategy document of Carlisle Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. Members once again raised a number of issues in relation to the lack of a coherent and meaningful strategy for the CDRP as evidenced by the paper presented. Whilst much of the project work being supported by the Partnership is sound the Committee is concerned about overall direction and outcomes, particularly as the performance monitoring information that we see on a regular basis appears to show limited progress on a number of main crime indicators.

Members are hopeful that the constructive and positive approach adopted by the CDRP in response to previous suggestions from the Committee for improving governance arrangements will be matched by a similar approach to developing a fit for purpose strategy.

In relation to our continuing work in relation to Equalities there was great concern about the apparent lack of proper budgetary provision to support this work. It is to be hoped that this will be rectified as a matter of urgency. This is not only to ensure that the Council meets its statutory requirements but because of the developing local priority in relation to equality and diversity and the important role that the Council has in promoting best practice and taking a community leadership role.

Housing issues were at the Centre of our meeting in October. The Committee spent some time examining performance information from Carlisle Housing Association and it became evident through discussion that we need to review

the range and quality of information provided to ensure proper fulfilment of our monitoring role. It is to be hoped that this can be developed in time for our next monitoring in this area, when we would also anticipate that benchmarking information from the Housing Corporation regarding performance of other associations would be available to aid comparison of performance.

It is a matter of concern to the Committee that there appear to be significant difficulties between CHA and Tenants and Residents organisations. In view of the clear commitments made at the time of transfer to maintaining and indeed enhancing significant tenant involvement in the work of CHA, the Committee has strongly suggested that efforts must be made by all parties to resolve the current impasse.

Finally in relation to Housing the Committee noted the release of capital funds to aid implementation of the Housing Strategy. There were some concern expressed regarding the proposed reprofiling of expenditure to later years but assurances were received that the relevant Action Plan would be updated to ensure expenditure over the full period of the Strategy would match the total funds allocated. The Committee looks forward to receiving details of the projects being undertaken and necessary revision to the relevant implementation plan at an early future meeting.

Committee members concluded the meeting with a site visit to Talkin Tarn to examine progress on the improvement works.

In addition to our normal meetings over the next couple of months we have arranged workshop sessions, jointly with Infrastructure in respect of the Economic Strategy and also a session on Access to Sport.

Michael Boaden
Chair Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee
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