

**Community Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee.**

**Chair's report**

**Cllr Olwyn Luckley**

The Committee has met twice during the present cycle and attended a CDRP Strategic Assessment Workshop in September.

At the August Meeting, the Committee received the first Corporate Performance Monitoring Report of 2007/8, examining those areas of activity that come under their scrutiny.

Continuing our overview and scrutiny of housing supply, the Committee noted the performance indicator on the length of stay in hostels, evidenced that the stays were lengthening due to the lack of ready to let properties.

Regarding conditions in the London Road Hostel and members concerns about those conditions, it was welcomed that a report is to come to the Committee in November, which will set out the results of the feasibility study and plans for a replacement hostel.

Also, in November, the Policy and Budget Framework for Private Sector Housing Grants, a scheme that plays a significant part in providing suitably adapted and improved housing, will come before the Committee.

We will be examining to, the result of the intention of CHA to shorten re-letting times by September. At our July meeting, CHA confirmed that more people in the district need accommodation than the numbers available.

In a presentation to the Committee by the Chief Executive of CHA, outlines were given of the proposals for resident involvement to answer the priority need to enhance the tenants' voice giving the tenants greater empowerment and involvement in the Association.

The Committee looks forward to monitoring the progress of these proposals.

Members received a report on the Health and Safety Service Plan for 2007/8. As was repeated in a question at the last Council Meeting, there were concerns in regard to the inspection of high-risk food outlets. The Committee was informed that software programmes were being procured and staff resources examined, in order that these essential resources are in place by Spring, 2008 to achieve the inspections required. The Committee will re examine this matter at a later date.

In examining the Acquisitive Crime Action Plan, (April 2007 to September 2007), the Committee was pleased to see the successes achieved in this period. It was noted that domestic violence, which in the past had been grossly under reported, was, under 'Outcome No.4', one of three actions for the CDRP in the Plan. This is an issue that the Committee will examine further through later reports from the CDRP.

Having received a report on the Flood affected properties still not occupied, the Committee praised the extensive hard work of the Housing Officers which had established there were only five unoccupied properties.

The Committee asked for a final report once all matters were complete.

In the final item of the Meeting, the Committee agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group to conduct a subject review on Migrant Workers in Carlisle and District.

This, it is hoped, will provide useful information to aid the Council's various policies and action plans, particularly in relation to Equality and Diversity.

The second Meeting of the Committee was held on 11<sup>th</sup> October.

The Committee examined the Annual Equality Report and the priorities set out in it for the Council to achieve Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government.

Whilst welcoming the Report, the Committee pressed that members should be encouraged to take up the Equality Awareness training, the view being expressed that not enough members had taken advantage of the training. Together with this need, members felt that there was insufficient information coming out of the performance indicators and were assured that full performance indicators would be included in future reports on delivery of the Council's Equality and Diversity Agenda.

Again, when scrutinising the Race Equality Scheme, the same concerns were expressed as to member involvement and training. As a result of the ensuing discussion, a member of the Committee will attend the working group meetings. Once the Race Equality Scheme has been reviewed and the process completed the Committee would wish to regularly assess the scheme's effectiveness.

The Committee approved a very comprehensive report on the implementation of Rural Policy and Programmes in the rural areas and accepted that the Committee would be the monitoring and review body on a 6 monthly basis, of the effectiveness of the Parish Charter.

The Anti Social Behaviour Review by the Committee in 2006, returned to us in a report on the successful progress of its recommendations. The Committee was satisfied that no further updates were required but that they would continue to monitor the recommendation that is not yet achieved, for a dedicated telephone number to report anti social behaviour.

Finally, discussion on the Draft Economic Strategy for the Carlisle Region was foreshortened by the desire of members to fully scrutinise the draft Strategy with those aspects presently considered missing, including the Action Plan, before them. It was agreed that the wish of the Committee was to call a Special Meeting when these were made available.

Cllr Olwyn Luckley.  
Chairman.