

Report to:

Council

Agenda
Item

12(i)(b)

Meeting Date: 3 March 2015

Public/Private*: Public

Title: **Community Overview and Scrutiny Chairman's Report – Councillor
Rob Burns**

No news is good news... for some!

News from the trenches this month is thin on the ground I'm afraid, as there have been few meetings or events of note due to cancellations or postponements for various reasons

However, every cloud has a silver lining and this may come as good news to some colleagues as, following presentation of my last report, I was disappointed to learn, via the Twitterati grapevine, that apparently, not everyone seems to be as enamoured with my six weekly digest as I am!

To a still fledgling councillor, with an ego clearly as fragile as my own(!), this was very distressing news, as I had pre-supposed that a propensity to recognise irony and a predisposition to prick pomposity, was a prerequisite to the predilection of any prospective protagonist proposing to become a party politician.

Having displayed such elementary lack of judgement, I have decided therefore that it would probably be in the country's best interests for me to abandon my post retirement plans to become future Prime Minister!

Clearly I had forgotten that to some, Chubby Brown is the big cheese, while for others, it is Monty Python that cuts the mustard.

And now for something completely different.....

One important casualty of postponement, was the proposed externally facilitated session for Scrutiny Members on how the scrutiny function might be developed in future.

It was anticipated that this session would have produced some useful pointers to inform and enhance the work carried out to date by the Members' Involvement Working Group, which hoped to be in a position to report back before the end of the current municipal year.

At the time of writing, no new date has been arranged for this session and unfortunately, it is now unlikely that any recommendations from the group will be forthcoming within that period.

'The best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley' as a distant relative once said.

000,111, 101, 999,112, 999, 118500?

No, not the beginnings of another Stephen Hawking formula trying to explain the theory of everything, but the dilemma facing many people when trying to figure out which of those, or indeed other numbers, they should dial when they're taken ill.

This dilemma has been one of the reasons cited for the unfeasibly long waiting times for A&E, particularly over the Christmas period and was one of the issues likely to be discussed at the last meeting of the Cumbria Health Scrutiny Panel held in Workington.

Unfortunately I was unable to attend that meeting due to the inebriate like state that motorists seem inevitably to find themselves in following a wee drop of the hard stuff (Jack Frost that is, as opposed to Jack Daniels, although the effects seem to be the same).

It took me an hour and forty minutes to get to Peter Lane from Scotby, at which point I turned back, as with each passing yard and a few Torvill and Dean moments, the odds lessened on me eventually having to face the same dilemma long before I got to my destination!

Also on that Agenda were presentations from the Cumbria Partnership Trust and the Clinical Commissioning Group, highlighting important upcoming changes which will have implications for services, albeit mainly in West Cumbria.

When the minutes of the meeting are available, I will as usual, direct Members to the appropriate website, should your interest or curiosity require it.

Home is Where the Heart is!

‘There is a lot that happens in this world that we cannot control – we cannot stop earthquakes, we cannot prevent droughts, we cannot prevent all conflict, but when we know where the homeless, the hungry and the sick exist, we **can** do something about it’. So said Jan Schakowsky, a prominent member of the US Congress.

At its meeting on 19th January, the COSP were introduced to the latest draft of the Inter Agency Homelessness Strategy for Carlisle, which outlines how we’re ‘doing something about it’ in Carlisle.

It was encouraging to hear that all of the key agencies concerned with ensuring there was adequate housing accommodation for everyone in Carlisle who required it, (some of whom were represented at the meeting) had worked together to produce the Strategy and were committed to continuing to work together to put the recommendations from it into practice.

It is this continuing commitment that will be important if the Strategy is to be more than a paper on the shelf and whilst there are minor concerns around funding for some partners, there is evidence to suggest that the principle of co-ordinating services in order to maximise resources is one which partners are coming to terms with.

It is high time that inter-agency working generally was embedded into the culture of organisations, rather than be considered a bit of a bonus if it happens!!

Members will find the Strategy and the attendant minutes of the COSP meeting, an interesting and uplifting read.