

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 13 OCTOBER 2016 AT 10.00AM

PRESENT: Councillor Burns (Chairman), Councillors Betton, Ellis, Mrs McKerrell, McNulty, Mrs Riddle and Ms Williams.

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor Glover – The Leader
Councillor Mrs Bradley – Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder
Councillor Miss Lee Sherriff – Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder
Mr Allan - Chairman, Carlisle and District Federation of Community Organisations.
Ms Fisher – Liaison Officer, Carlisle and District Federation of Community Organisations

OFFICERS: Deputy Chief Executive
Contracts and Community Services Manager
Overview and Scrutiny Officer

COSP.61/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillors, Franklin, Layden and Paton.

The Chairman noted that Councillor Paton was unable to attend the meeting due to being in hospital, he extended the Panel's sympathies to Councillor Paton.

COSP.62/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Burns declared an interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of Item A.2 – Community Centre and Federation Update. The interest related to the fact that he was a former Community Services Manager at the Council.

Councillor Mrs Riddle declared an interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of Item A.2 – Community Centre and Federation Update. The interest related to the fact she was a former Executive Member with responsibility for Community Centres in her portfolio.

COSP.63/16 PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – That the Agenda be agreed as circulated.

COSP.64/16 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2016 were approved and signed. The minutes of the meeting held on the 1 September 2016 were noted.

COSP.65/16 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS

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

COSP.66/16 COMMUNITY CENTRE & FEDERATION UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed Mr Allen and Ms Fisher, Chairman of Carlisle and District Federation of Community Organisations to the meeting.

Pursuant to minute COSP.60/16 the Deputy Chief Executive submitted the Community Centre & Federation Update (SD.21/16).

The Deputy Chief Executive described how the Council supported eleven Community Associations in the running and management of individual centres, and how the performance of the Associations along with the Council's relationship with the Association was monitored by a Service Level Agreement. The report outlined the in-kind and other types of support the Council provided to the Community Associations as a result of their being registered charities.

The Council provided direct / devolved funding support to Association run Community Centres, based on the submission of an annual Business Plan. Additionally, the Council owned seven Community Centres to which it provided reactive and planned maintenance, and insurance.

The Deputy Chief Executive stated the two main issues in relation to Community Centres were the: budgets and the most effective way to utilise the available finances and; facilitating the independent sustainability of the centres.

Mr Allan, Chairman of Carlisle and District Federation of Community Organisations (the Federation) addressed the Panel, and noted that funding was an important factor in Community Centre Management. The Federation recognised the Council's budgetary position, but was concerned at the extent of the Council's cuts to Community Centres and the timescale in which they had been implemented.

The three year funding and annual Service Level Agreements provided significant security to the Community Centres and aided their resource planning. The Centres were happy to move to a financial model that did not require Council grant funding, however, the transition towards financial independence needed to be effectively managed to mitigate any impact on the viability of the centres.

Mr Allan advised the Panel that the Federation sought to enable the Community Centres to realise a stronger trading position, and the capacity to offer additional services to their communities. Funding bids had been submitted to charitable organisations by the Federation to assist it in supporting the Centres in improving their governance arrangements, it was hoped that a Development Manager could be engaged to provide training and development to Centres on this matter.

In considering the update, Members raised the following comments and questions:

- *Was it the Council's aim to move to a zero grant provision to Community Centres?*

The Deputy Chief Executive replied that moving away from the Council's current core funding model to a standalone approach was a sensible strategy which would increase the Centres' control over their spending. He stressed that no policy decision had been taken on the matter.

- *What is the current membership of the Federation, and was the organisation considering expanding?*

Mr Allan explained that currently, the membership of the Federation was made up from the eleven Council supported Community Centres. The Federation recognised that other community organisations may be interested in engaging in Federal activity and this was an area the Federation intended to explore in the coming year.

Ms Fisher explained that the Community Centres were keen to assist the Council in delivering the Carlisle Plan, and hoped to have discussions with the Council to progress this.

The Contracts and Community Services Manager informed the Panel that in the preceding two and a half years, the Service Level Agreements between the Council and the Community Centres had been focussed on the Carlisle Plan with the Centre's annual Business Plans being based on the Carlisle Plan. He felt that over the coming years there was a need to develop greater cohesiveness between the Community Centres' Business Plan and the Carlisle Plan to help strengthen the Centres' delivery of Carlisle Plan.

- *Given the Community Centres current constitution and management arrangements, was it feasible for them to be able to deliver the Carlisle Plan?*

The Contracts and Community Services Manager responded that in terms of delivering positive outcomes and the Carlisle Plan, Community Centres were already doing effective work. The technical skills associated with business planning was an important factor in enabling Community Centres to deliver the Carlisle Plan, and was an area where training was continuing to ensure Centres were able to link outcomes of the activities delivered to outcomes identified in the Carlisle Plan.

The Contracts and Community Services Manager understood that the Federation felt there was scope for the Council to provide Community Centres with greater specificity in relation to how the Carlisle Plan outcomes were to be met, without overly prescribing what activity the Centres were to undertake.

Mr Allan responded that the Federation was keen to develop dialogue with the Council to identify further ways of working together to help the Council deliver its Carlisle Plan objectives.

- *A Member commented that the governance of the Community Centres was not limited to the Centre Managers, but included Board members, Committee members and Trustees. Each Community Centre was independent of the Council and it was down to the Centres to develop work that met the required outcomes for the Council and added benefit to the Community.*

Mr Allan agreed that governance was an important factor in Community Centres being able to deliver outcomes, Centres needed to recruit as Trustees, people who were interested in developing their communities. The Federation hoped to provide training that would assist the Centres in strengthening their governance arrangements, which would enable them to offer more services to their communities.

Mr Allan felt that budgets were an on-going issue, he stated that revenue funding was key to allowing the Federation to develop processes with the Community Centres. He was optimistic that in the coming year the Community Centres would function as a strong central driver of Council activity.

- *Had any changes occurred in the relationship between the Council, the Federation and the Community Centres?*

Mr Allan replied that the formalisation of the relationship between the Council, the Federation and the Community Centres via the three year funding and Service Level Agreements had been beneficial. However, there was more work to be done to develop the capacity of the Community Centres.

The Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder reminded that a 2012 Task and Finish Group set up by the Panel to consider Community Centres had indicated that the relationship between Council, the Federation and the Community Centres was not working effectively. Efforts had subsequently been made by all parties to identify areas of work on common ground and the relationship had improved. She felt that in the long term, the sustainability of the Community Centres would be enhanced by their becoming more independent. The Council would facilitate the Centres and encourage joint working where appropriate, she hoped to see an increase in the services offered by the Centres.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Panel thanked Mr Allan and Ms Fisher for attending the meeting, and contributing their views.

RESOLVED – (1) That Mr Allan and Ms Fisher be thanked for their contribution to the meeting.

(2) That report SD.21/16 be noted.

COSP.67/16 YOUTH PROVISION IN CARLISLE AND DISTRICT

Councillor McNulty delivered a presentation on Youth Provision in Carlisle and District covering: the types of activities currently available; the distribution of activities across the district; and how involved young people were with the Council.

Councillor McNulty explained that Carlisle Youth Zone, the largest purpose built centre in the District was used by between three hundred and five hundred young people per week, however, the facility had been affected by the December 2015 flood and was not currently accessible to young people. Work undertaken to map youth provision in the District had been difficult as no single organisation held records of all activities provided for young people.

In terms of the Council's engagement with young people it was noted that consultations had been undertaken on the development of Carlisle Plan policies and play parks, Carlisle Partnership worked with the Youth Council, and the authority facilitated youth exchanges with its twinned cities in Flensburg and Slupsk.

The Chairman thanked Councillor McNulty for his presentation, which he felt had set the scene for the Panel to discuss the matter of youth provision in the district, he asked Members to consider how they wished to progress the issue.

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

- Were young people aware of all the activities going on in the District?

Councillor McNulty responded that young people may not be aware of the activities available for them as marketing and promotion was often patchy.

The Contracts and Community Services Manager noted in addition to the activities noted in the presentation, the Council also delivered "Summer Splash" and "Gifted and

Talented”schemes. He agreed that the promotion and marketing of activities and events for young people was important and undertook to discuss the matter with the Council’s Communications Team.

In response to a Member’s comment that the Council’s website did not hold a lot of information aimed at young people, the Contracts and Community Services Manager responded that the website was perhaps not the most effective tool for marketing events to young people. However, use of the Council’s social media platforms was an area that be more effectively utilised.

A Member replied that the website would be useful for parents looking for information on youth provision in their area of the district, and that may be a tool for disseminating the information.

- How would the Council identify what provision young people wanted, and how would it work with disengaged young people?

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder described a consultation with young people that had been held, jointly with the Police in a particular area of the city. The young people’s responses indicated they wished to have a safe place to be, without the imposition of supervision and rules, which was difficult for the Council to provide. She added that a proportion of young people were reluctant to conform and engage, and questioned how the Council could interact with such individuals.

A Member felt there was a risk that the Panel’s consideration of the issue of Youth Provision had not taken into account the fact that young people now socialised at home though use of social media and gaming. Social trends had changed in recent years and this was an issue the Panel needed to recognise.

The Chairman stated that at previous panel meetings a number of issues and problems in respect of Youth Provision had been highlighted, and he asked Members if they wished to set up a Task and Finish or Working Group to consider the matter.

A Member asked, given the Council’s limited resources, what the aim of such work would be? The Chairman felt it was incumbent on the Council to engage with young people in the district, and that work could be undertaken to ensure that the Council’s resources were being directed effectively.

The Leader considered the Council would benefit from enabling young people to increase their influence to feed into the planning and delivery of services. He agreed that interacting with disengaged young people was an issue that needed to be considered.

Councillors Burns, Mrs McKerrell, and McNulty each expressed an interest in taking part in a Task and Finish Group to consider Youth Provision in Carlisle and District. The Panel agreed to the Task and Finish Group being set up.

RESOLVED – (1) That a Task and Finish Group be set up to look at issues relating to Youth Provision in Carlisle and District.

(2) That the Contracts and Community Services Manager liaise with Officers in the Communications Team regarding the promotion and marketing of events for young people on the Council’s website.

(3) That Councillor McNulty be thanked for his presentation.

COSP.68/16 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer submitted report OS.20/16 which provided an overview of matters relating to the work of the Community 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 Executive Key Decisions were published on 23 September 2016 and KD.20/16 Tullie House Business Plan and KD.21/16 Budget Process 2017/18 had been included on the agenda for the Panel's 24 November 2016 meeting.

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

The Work Programme for the Panel had been circulated for comment / amendment, the Chairman advised Members that the report on the Housing Strategy would not be submitted at the 24 November meeting of the Panel. An additional report was to be presented to the Panel detailing proposals of revised remits for the Overview and Scrutiny Panels which had been developed in response to the Council's revised management structure.

The Chairman noted that

RESOLVED – (1) That the Overview Report incorporating the Work programme and Key decision items relevant to this Panel (OS.20/16) be noted.

COSP.69/16 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman advised the Panel that the Overview and Scrutiny Officer was leaving the authority. The Chairman, and the Panel, thanked the Officer for her work and considerable efforts on behalf of the Panel. Members wished the Overview and Scrutiny Officer good luck for the future.

(Meeting ended at 11:36am)