

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

### **COMMUNITY**

#### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

**October 2011.**

Two meetings of the Panel have been held since the last report and there is considerable work to report upon.

Updates were received at both meetings on this year's Task and Finish Groups. One group is to study Housing Issues and the other to examine the Disabled Facilities Grants Scheme.

The Group studying Housing Issues will focus on Homelessness and will produce a report for the March 2012 meeting of the Panel.

The Group examining the DFG's Scheme will report to the Panel at its November meeting.

At the September meeting, the Panel responded to questions put by a member of the public, details of which can be found in the Minutes.

The Panel, both at the September and the October meeting, received reports on the Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme.

Scrutiny of the report submitted to the September meeting drew forth a lengthy discussion between members and the three members of the Executive who attended. The Panel, wanting further details on the charities and not for profit organisations involved, requested that that information, together with a breakdown of costs, be provided for the October meeting and that it should also be provided for the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel. This took place and the Community Panel, whilst recognising it was not an option for all the organisations to receive 100% rate relief, requested that consideration should be given to the three community centres who did not qualify due to the properties being above the £18,000 rateable value limit.

A wide and useful discussion was engendered by the submission of the Play Strategy Report. Examining the Big Lottery End of Grant report enabled the Panel to investigate what provisions remain or will come into being following this successful programme. The establishment of the Youth Council, will enable the Panel to forge links with them which will inform the Panel's wish to provide input into policy development for the

future. Panel members' concern regarding play areas, their maintenance and future provision for new areas were discussed with the Green Spaces Manager and the Port Folio Holder.

An update on play areas will be provided by Mr Gray at a future meeting. The Young Person's Champion informed the Panel that the Mayor of Carlisle is developing a proposal to introduce a Young Mayor.

The interest of all members in the future play provision for the young people of our district was evident and it was agreed that the Play Strategy will continue to be monitored on a six monthly basis.

The Panel received the first monitoring report on the revised Corporate Plan and were grateful for the Policy and Performance Officer's explanation of the new style of format. The majority of the Key Actions showed good progress, key achievements were outlined, together with an update on Transformation.

The Carlisle and Eden Crime and Disorder Reduction Plan for 2011-12 had been scrutinised and approved by the Joint Carlisle and Eden Scrutiny Panel. The Community Panel added its approval but both panels expressed their concern regarding funding for the next year's Plan particularly in regard to Eden District's contribution. This concern was passed on the Executive.

The Panel continued its scrutiny on the development of the Replacement Women and Family Accommodation Project. A Workshop held in September enabled those members who attended to examine and comment on the proposed design of the building. The Panel thanked all the officers for their outstanding work on this project and intend to receive an update later in the municipal year.

At the October meeting the Panel welcomed the attendance of the Chairman of the Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust, Mr. Roger Cook, along with its Director, Ms. Hilary Wade. The Trust Board is presently drawing up its first Three Year Plan and Ms Wade explained the Trust's vision for the Museum and its five strategic themes. With a series of questions the Panel outlined the challenges and needs they saw could face the Trust in the coming years. Both representatives gave detailed responses to these views. The Panel was pleased to hear the Chairman confirm that he saw a continuing dialogue with the Panel as a beneficial support for the Trust's work. The Panel recommended that the comments made by them be considered by the Trust in their discussions of the Business Plan.

Finally, the Panel received a report on the changes in Public Duty in regard to reporting on equalities brought about by the 2011 Equality Act. The Panel made two requests in regard to this work. One was to receive the Minutes of the meetings of the Council's Corporate Equality Group and secondly, that the economic well being of local communities be included as a consideration in the Council's approach to equality. These were both agreed.

Councillor Olwyn Luckley.