

Report to: Council

Agenda
Item

11(i)(b)

Meeting Date: 30 April 2013

Public/Private*: Public

Title: Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel - Chairman's Report – Councillor Luckley

A report on the Partnership between the City Council and the Riverside Housing Association in February produced wide ranging questions on the work of the Partnership. The development plans of Riverside were examined, plus the results of the changes in their policy in regard to disabled adaptations to some of their housing.

The forthcoming changes in welfare benefits will have its affect on both organisations' responsibilities and the Panel were keen to hear what preparations were being made.

The Panel was satisfied that the good working relationship between the Council and Riverside continues and updates and outcomes on all that was discussed should be provided for the Panel's meeting in July.

Also at the February meeting, the Panel examined the draft Carlisle Plan.

Members were concerned that there was no separate priority in the Plan for the responsibility the Council shoulders for public health and well being.

It was resolved that a recommendation be put to the Executive that health and well being objectives be identified and reported separately within the Plan.

In March, the possibilities and advantages of Locality Working were studied by the Panel through a report presented by the Chairman of Carlisle Parish Councils' Association, Councillor Auld.

He detailed a number of successful projects carried out through Locality Working in nearby District Councils. Proposals for a Carlisle Locality Working Plan drawn up

by the C.P.C.A, are now ready for consultation and the Panel, grateful for the report, will be interested to hear the outcome of the consultation.

At the same meeting, a report on the draft Parish Charter for Carlisle and District was scrutinized and comments from Councillor Auld gave further information.

However, the Panel did not feel able to give their approval to the draft Charter, as the Planning Agreement, which will form part of the Charter, was not available for scrutiny. Planning proposals often are the subjects of strong local interest in rural communities and the Panel wished to examine the Planning Agreement before giving its view.

Earlier in the Municipal Year, due to concerns expressed by a number of Members, the Panel had set up a Task and Finish Group to examine the relationship between the Council and the Community Centres. The Group had put forward five recommendations.

At our March sitting, we discussed with the Port Folio Holder, Council Officers and two Community Centre Managers the outcomes.

Disappointingly, relations after initially improving had then deteriorated and it was clear to the Panel that further work was required to restore a good working partnership. The Panel I'm sure will wish to return to this subject in the new municipal year and assist in whatever way it can as the Council and the Community Centres need to work harmoniously together for the benefit of our communities.

Two items on the Agendas that were considered in Part B were Transformation Proposals and the Home Improvement Agency.

After some robust questioning, the Panel agreed that the Transformation proposals, if implemented, should return for further scrutiny later in the year and welcomed the report on the Home Improvement Agency.

There have been some challenging subjects and plans before the Panel this year, but I believe that they have been scrutinized with fairness and persistence by Members, for which I thank them.

Cllr. Olwyn Luckley