

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 22 NOVEMBER 2012 AT 10.00 AM

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Luckley (Chairman) Councillors Mrs Bradley, Lishman (as substitute for Councillor Collier) Mrs Prest, Miss Sherriff, Mrs Stevenson and Whalen (as substitute for Cllr Scarborough) (until 12.05pm)

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor Ms Quilter – Culture, Health, Leisure and Young People Portfolio Holder
Hilary Wade - Director of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust
Roger Cook - Chair of the Tullie House Trust
Councillor Forrester – Representing the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel
Councillor Ellis – Observer
Councillor Bloxham - Observer

OFFICERS: Community Development Officer
Director of Local Environment
Director of Resources
Homelessness Co-ordinator
Housing Development Officer
Director of Community Engagement
Policy and Performance Officer
Scrutiny Officer

COSP.74/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Collier, Scarborough and Mrs Vasey and the Communities and Housing Portfolio Holder.

COSP.75/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Miss Sherriff declared a registrable interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of agenda item 4(d) Capital Budget Report. The interest related to the fact that she was the City Council's representative on the Harraby Community Centre Management Committee.

COSP.76/12 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meetings held on 6 September 2012 and 11 October 2012 be agreed as a correct record of the meetings and signed by the Chairman.

COSP.77/12 AGENDA

RESOLVED – It was agreed that Agenda Item A4. Budget 2012/13 would be considered as item A.3 followed by Agenda item A.6 Proposals for implementation of Council technical reforms to discounts and exemption.

COSP.78/12 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS

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

COSP.79/12 TULLIE HOUSE MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY TRUST BUSINESS PLAN 2013/14 – 2015/16

The Chairman welcomed the Chair of the Tullie House Trust and the Director of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust to the meeting.

The Director of Community Engagement submitted report CD.57/12 introducing the Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust 2013/14 – 2015/16 Business Plan.

He explained that the purpose of the report was to facilitate consideration of the Business Plan in order that the Council may, in due course, agree core funding for the Trust. That was in line with Section 5 of the Partnership Agreement signed at the establishment of the Trust, that the Business Plan submitted by the Trust to the City Council should be used as the basis for agreeing funding.

The Chair of the Tullie House Trust thanked the Panel for the opportunity to discuss the Business Plan and some of the issues and challenges that Tullie House faced. The Plan raised a number of financial and non financial issues including the admission charging policy, a fundraising strategy, the Trust's reserve position and partnership working.

The Director of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust added that it had been a demanding 18 months for the Trust which had produced many achievements such as the opening of the Roman Frontier Gallery in partnership with the City Council. Tullie House had also received project based funding from the Arts Council which would be focused on young people and would last for three years. Tullie House had received a Business Award from Cumbria News for Tourism and Hospitality which was also achieved through partnership working.

She highlighted the admission charges review which would introduce a charge of £7 to visitors who did not have the Tullie Card, concessions and children under 16 would be free and the Tullie Card fee would remain at £1 per annum to Carlisle residents. The new entry charge would provide unlimited admission for a year when the visitor signed up for Gift Aid. The Policy also recommended that there was an additional charge for major exhibitions. The new charges would be introduced in March 2013.

The Director of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust drew Members attention to the work being undertaken on the Development Plan including the feasibility of acquiring Herbert Atkinson House which was situated next to the Museum and would help meet the physical capacity requirements of the Trust.

The Chair of the Tullie House Trust reminded the Panel that the transfer of Tullie House to a Trust opened up the possibility to attract funding from new sources. A Fundraising Strategy was being prepared and would help the organisation focus on both existing and new sources of funding from public, quasi public and private sources. Some new funding had been achieved by giving visitors the option to Gift Aid their admission fee for an additional 10% and it was hoped this would grow further.

He added that the Trust now had a full Trust Board which brought a degree of challenge and scrutiny to the work of Tullie House and injected new ideas.

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

- In response to a Member's question the Director of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust confirmed that Tullie House used social media but felt that the website needed to be updated and the use of social media could be developed further.
- Members raised concerns regarding the lack of detail in the proposed budget for 2013/14 to 2015/16 and felt that the Panel had not been provided with adequate details to scrutinise the proposed budget sufficiently.

The Chair of the Tullie House Trust responded that the budget held the same amount of detail as the previous year. The capital expenditure had been removed because the Trust had almost no capital expenditure. Capital repairs to the building were the responsibility of the City Council not the Trust. The budget in the Business Plan was at the outline and headline stage and the Trust would continue to work on the budget up to April 2013.

The Director of Resources advised the Panel that the finance team met regularly with the Trust to discuss the budget. A balance sheet was currently being discussed and would be included when the Plan was considered by the Executive on 17 December 2012.

The Culture, Health, Leisure and Young People Portfolio Holder shared the Panels concerns and agreed that they should receive all of the available information to allow them to help the Executive make an informed decision.

- The report stated that the Trust had a target of attracting 300,000 visitors which would not be achieved until there was a major investment in the museum. Would this target be reached if there was an investment as the target had not been achieved with the investment of £1.4m in the Roman Frontier Gallery.

The Director of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust explained that the target was an aspirational target and was a challenge for the Trust. The Roman Frontier Gallery had increased the number of fee paying visitors to Tullie House and she believed that the aspirational target could be achieved in the future.

The Chair of the Tullie House Trust reminded the Panel that the target had been agreed by the City Council as part of the negotiations for funding from the European Union and led to the Roman Frontier Gallery. The current climate was harsher than when the target was agreed but it was an aspiration for the Trust to steadily grow visitors to Tullie House and he was also confident that the target could be met.

- The staff structure no longer had a dedicated fundraiser, how successful had the Trust been in completing bids by using existing staff?

The Chair of the Tullie House Trust responded that the Fundraising Strategy envisaged a permanent member of staff for fundraising this, however, would be a large investment for the Trust and they would only be able to move forward with it when the budget enabled it. The Trust did not want to stretch the cash flow more than they ought to but did understand that any major projects would require a dedicated fundraising capability in house. Tullie

House staff had been putting together bids for funding and had attended training both externally and internally to help them with the process.

- How was the Trust hoping to enhance the learning programme following the reduction in the staff structure?

The Director of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust explained that the Cumbria Museums Consortium would be funding the Adult Engagement Officer until 2015 and then consideration would have to be given to the programme after that.

- Did Tullie House make any charges to schools?

The Director of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust informed the Panel that there was a membership fee for schools to engage with Tullie House and this fee had not been included in the review of the admission charges.

- A Member asked for clarification with regard to the number and type of visitors to Tullie House.

The Director of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust clarified that there was 20,000 Tullie Card holders. Last year there had been 6,000 new applications for the Tullie Card and there had been 48,000 fee paying visitors to Tullie House. The total figure for visitors to Tullie House included people who visited the restaurant and old Tullie House; they also included any one who just made a pit stop in Tullie House.

The Chair of the Tullie House Trust added that old Tullie House had been free to visit but it would be included in the new charges for Tullie House.

- The aim of the Trust was to encourage visitors to return to Tullie House, what was being done to keep the experience fresh and how often were the exhibits changed?

The Director of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust explained that the Trust were keen to make changes to the Border Gallery and hoped to find additional funding to display a Viking exhibition. A variety of exhibitions was key to ensuring visitors returned. She informed the Panel that there was a lot of material in storage and some of the material was not interesting for display purposes but held a lot of research value.

The Chair of the Tullie House Trust added that there was a whole costume display that had not been seen and it was a major objective to increase the gallery space. He highlighted an issue regarding storage and explained that the largest gallery in Tullie House given over entirely to storage. Shaddon Mill also provided storage for Tullie House and it was hoped one day that Tullie House could build accessible storage which would be open to the public to browse.

- How would Tullie House link with English Heritage and the new Alma exhibition?

The Director of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust confirmed that Tullie House would be working closely with English Heritage for the opening of the new exhibition in 2013. They would also work closely for the preparations of the 100 year anniversary of the First World War.

- Would the City Council's funding for Tullie House be affected by the Budget proposals?

The Culture, Health, Leisure and Young People Portfolio Holder responded that the Executive had to consider the two large contracts and the grants as part of the budget process. She assured Members that the Executive had no aspirations to stop the grants.

RESOLVED – That the Tullie House Trust Business Plan 2013/14 – 2015/16 be welcomed.

COSP.80/12 BUDGET 2013/14 – 2017/18

Revenue Budget Reports

(a) Summary of New Revenue Spending Pressures

The Director of Resources submitted report RD.44/12 summarising the new revenue spending pressures and reduced income projections which needed to be considered as part of the 2013/14 budget process. The issues were to be considered in the light of the Council's corporate priorities.

The Executive had on 19 November 2012 (EX.138/12) received the report and forwarded it to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for consideration as part of the 2013/14 budget process.

The Director of Resources advised that it was clear that all of the pressures could not be accommodated within existing resources (including use of reserves) and decisions would be needed throughout the budget process to limit pressures to high priority and unavoidable issues to ensure that a balanced budget position was recommended to Council February 2013.

Members then considered the following new priority for revenue spending and reduced income which fell within the areas of responsibility of this Panel.

- **Localisation of Council Tax Support**

The Council Tax Benefit would be abolished from 1 April 2013 and would be replaced by Localised Support for Council Tax (LSCT). It was the responsibility of each Council to set its own scheme which would see council tax benefit changing to a legal discount. The Government was reducing funding by 10% at the same time as the localisation. It was anticipated that the pressure identified would be as a result of losing the 10% of funding as well as additional take up of the scheme.

- **New Homes Bonus – 2011/12**

The New Homes Bonus allocations were for a period of 6 years and the pressure reflected the 2011/12 allocation which would cease in 2017/18.

- **Homelessness**

An additional non-recurring government grant to support homelessness was included in Report RD.45/12 – Summary of New Saving Proposals and Additional Income and the pressure utilised the grant to provide additional homelessness support.

Members asked if the cost of the Elections Individual Registration was known yet and what impact the Living Wage had on the budget.

The Director of Resources responded that the Elections Individual Registration costs were not yet known and the Living Wage would be a recurring cost of £30,000. Any increase to the Living Wage would become part of the salary budget.

RESOLVED – That Report RD.44/12 be noted.

(b) Summary of New Savings Proposals and Additional Income

Report RD.45/12 had been circulated to the Panel by way of background information.

The Director of Resources summarised the proposed savings relating to Pay Award Savings 2012/13, Council Tax discount review, Leisure Contract Savings, Asset Review, Housing Benefit Admin Grant and the reprofiling of Transformation savings.

A Member asked how the savings would be achieved with regard to the Leisure Contract and Herbert Atkinson House. The Director of Resources explained that, subject to negotiations, the Council would not charge rent for Herbert Atkinson House and the grant to Tullie House would be reduced to cover the costs over a staggered period.

RESOLVED – That Report RD.45/12 be noted.

(c) Review of Charges 2013/2014

• Local Environment

Report LE.34/12 was submitted, setting out the proposed fees and charges for the services falling within the remit of the Local Environment Directorate.

The Executive had on 19 November 2012 (EX.133/12) considered the report and agreed for consultation the proposed charges (including the amended charges for Talkin Tarn car park), as set out in Report LE.34/12 and relevant appendices with effect from 1 April 2013; noting the impact of those charges on income generation, as detailed within the report.

The Director of Local Environment reported that the increase made within the charges report was in line with the Medium Term Financial Plan increase of 3.8%. Charging for the use of parks and green spaces had been introduced in 2012/13 to ensure there was a more formal arrangement for the use of parks and allowed for a more planned approach. There had also been an introduction of a bond which would be used if damage was caused to the area by an event organiser and would be used to reinstate the area.

A Member was extremely disappointed to see the increase in charging for car parking and activities at Talkin Tarn. She felt that the increases were discriminatory and unfair towards rural areas as the Council did not charge for parking at urban parks; she also felt that the increase contravened the City Council's equality policy. Additionally she felt that the increase would discourage visitors to the Tarn.

The Director of Local Environment responded that the agreement when the City Council took over the running of Talkin Tarn had been that Talkin Tarn would be cost neutral for the City Council and that had not happened; the proposed charges would offset the net cost of £87,100 that was currently met by the Council. She added that the Council was keen to retain the current standards at the Tarn but would require additional income to do so.

Speaking in his capacity as former Portfolio Holder a Member clarified that part of the negotiations for the transfer of Talkin Tarn ensured that money raised from charges made at the Tarn had to be ring fenced for Talkin Tarn. The County Council had given £40,000 per annum to the City Council for five years for the Tarn as part of the agreement and this arrangement had now ended.

A Member commented that Talkin Tarn was different in many ways to municipal parks in urban areas as it was not part of an obvious community that fed into the park.

A Member asked if any consideration had been given to the effect the charges may potentially have on the surrounding roads, if visitors did not want to pay the parking charge they may park on the roads into the Tarn and this had been an issue for the Police previously.

The Director of Local Environment that, in response to those concerns, the Executive had amended the proposed charges at their meeting on 19 November 2012 so that parking was free before 10.00am and after 6.00pm.

RESOLVED – That the observations of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel, as outlined above, be conveyed to the Executive

- **Community Engagement**

Report CD.53/12 was submitted, setting out the proposed fees and charges for the services falling within the remit of the Community Engagement Directorate.

The Executive had on 19 November 2012 (EX.134/12) agreed for consultation the increase in charges, as set out in Report CD.53/12, with effect from 1 January 2013; and noted the impact thereof on income generation as detailed within the report.

The Director of Community Engagement reported that there had been an increase in the administrative charges for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) and an increase in the charge for Hostel Services. The increase to the DFG charge had brought the revenue cost of delivering DFG up to national levels.

The increase in the Hostel Services charge had been in response to the changes to the provision of Hostel Services, the £5 increase to the Homeshare rate made up the shortfall in the Housing Benefit.

In response to a question regarding the support provided by Riverside Carlisle for DFGs, the Director of Community Engagement agreed to bring more details back to the next Panel meeting.

RESOLVED – That report CD.53/12 be noted.

Capital Budget Reports

(d) Revised Capital Programme 2012/13 and Provisional Capital Programme 2013/14 to 2017/18

The Director of Resources submitted report RD.46/12 detailing the revised capital programme for 2012/13, together with the proposed method of financing as set out in Appendices A and B. The report also summarised the proposed programme for 2013/14 to 2017/18 in the light of the new capital pressures identified, and summarised the estimated and much reduced capital resources available to fund the programme.

The Executive had on 19 November 2012 (EX.140/12) considered the report and decided:

That the Executive :

1. Noted the revised capital programme and relevant financing for 2012/13 as set out in Appendices A and B of Report RD.46/12;
2. Recommended that the City Council approve reprofiling of £3,000,000 and savings of £2,080,300 from 2012/13 identified in the review;
3. Made recommendations to Council to approve virements from underspends from Kingstown Industrial Estate (£150,100) and Families Accommodation Replacement (£100,000) to fund additional expenditure at the Resource Centre;
4. Had given initial consideration to the capital spending requests for 2013/14 to 2017/18 contained in Report RD.46/12 in the light of the estimated available resources; and
5. Noted that any capital scheme for which funding had been approved by the Council may only proceed after a full report, including business case and financial appraisal, had been approved.”

Details of the new capital spending proposals which fell within the area of responsibility of the Panel were as detailed on the Agenda for the meeting.

- **Disabled Facilities Grants** – The Disabled Facilities Grant allocation would not be announced until January 2013, it had been indicated that the grant would be protected at the 2012/13 levels. A further report would be presented to the Executive once the 2013/14 allocation had been received.
- **Methodist Arts Centre** – A 3 year programme of works to develop a sustainable Arts Centre in the Methodist Hall. If the scheme was approved there may be a requirement to utilise some of the funding in 2012/13.
- **Harraby School and Community Campus** – The Harraby School and Community Project was a capita new build scheme designed to deliver a three form entry primary school, community centre, library, theatre and other sports facilities in the former North Cumbria Technology College site.
- **Leisure Facilities** – Sports and leisure facilities would be significantly improved through a capital scheme which would address the need of appropriate wet and dry facilities servicing the whole of the district. It would be informed by a ports facility strategy which was in production.

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

- Did the Harraby School and Community Campus project fall within the remit of Carlisle City Council?

The Director of Resources confirmed that the project was a community project opposed to an educational project, the project would affect the whole ward and would link into the City's Sports Strategy. The figure set out in the report was not final and would be subject to negotiations.

The Director of Community Engagement reminded the Panel that work on the Sports Strategy was underway and the full document would be available in early December.

- Would the location of the proposed swimming pool go out to consultation with the public?

The Director of Community Engagement responded that consultation had taken place with key stakeholders on the site appraisal. The recommendations from the consultants report would be used as advice for the Council. It would be the Council's decision if they wanted to hold a public consultation.

- Did the Council plan to buy the Methodist Hall on Fisher Street?

The Director of Community Engagement stated that it was the Council's aspiration to gain access to the Methodist Hall without purchasing it; it was hoped that a third party would purchase the Hall and have an agreement to allow the City Council access. If this did not happen then other options would be explored further.

A Member asked how the proposed Arts Centre in the Methodist Hall would work with Tullie House. The Director of Community Engagement felt that the proposals would be very positive for the historic quarter and projects for the area and would be in partnership with Tullie House. He was clear that it was important to ensure that the proposed Arts Centre would enhance the offer in the area and not replace any.

RESOLVED: To accept the recommendations as set out in Report RD.46/12.

COSP.81/12 PROPOSALS FOR IMPLEMENTATION COUNCIL TAX TECHNICAL REFORMS TO DISCOUNTS AND EXEMPTIONS

The Director of Resources reported (RD.48/12) that the Local Government Finance Bill contained a number of 'technical' changes giving Councils greater freedom to vary existing discounts and exemptions. The Government considered that to be a suitable means of helping to offset the cost of a Local Support for Council Tax Scheme (LSCT) as the additional income would be shared between the precepting authorities in the same proportions they were funding the LSCT.

The report set out the current position in terms of the Council's Localised Support for Council Tax Scheme (LSCT); Council Tax Technical Reforms; together with details of the considerations and proposals relating to detailed Council Tax Technical Reforms.

The Director of Resources informed Members that the Council Tax Technical reforms were due to take effect on 1 April 2013 and, under the new proposals, local authorities would have limited discretion to reduce the exemption / discounts (increase the Council Tax liability) on empty dwellings and second homes. He added that, based on 2012/13

figures, the estimated shortfall for Carlisle was estimated at £120,000 - £190,000. Details of the anticipated savings that might be made from the changes to Council Tax discounts were summarised at paragraph 5.1 of the report.

The decisions to be made around setting levels of discount and premium for the wider Council Tax Technical Reforms required careful consideration, particularly as regards the financial, economic and wider community impact. The changes to discount suggested in the report took the 'middle road' between making full use of the technical changes to maximise income and minimise the impact on Council Tax payers. It should be noted however that the owners of empty homes were unlikely to welcome any reduction in their current discounts.

The Executive had on 19 November 2012 (EX.145/12) considered the report and decided:

"1. That the Executive had considered the proposals set out in Report RD.48/12 and summarised in paragraph 5.1 as a means to fund in part the grant reductions to be introduced from 1 April 2013 in funding the cost of the localisation of Council Tax Benefits (discounts).

2. That the recommendation of the Executive be progressed to Council as part of the 2013/14 budget considerations.

3. That the Executive wished to place on record their recognition of the remarkable work undertaken by Officers on this matter."

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

- Were residents of care homes or members of the forces exempt if their home was empty?

The Director of Resources stated that he was unsure if there was an exemption for empty properties but if the residence was furnished the owner would have to pay as they currently did.

- Had there been any responses to the consultation?

The Director of Resources informed the Panel that there had been one response from a landlord which may turn into a petition.

- Was there an appeal process available?

The Director of Resources explained that there was system to challenge the banding but not an appeal process for these changes. The Council had an anti poverty strategy which enabled people to pay in instalments.

RESOLVED – That report RD.48/12 be noted.

COSP.82/12 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Officer presented report OS.31/12 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 decision of the Executive which related to the Panel.

The Scrutiny Officer reported that:

- The Notice of Executive Key Decisions had been published on 19 October 2012. The following issues fell within the remit of this Panel:

KD.029/12 – Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust Business Plan 2013/14, KD.033/12 – Budget Process 2012/13, KD.040/12 – Amendments to the Cumbria Choice Allocations Policy and KD.042/12 – Proposals for Implementation of Council Tax Technical Reforms to discounts and exemption, both were on the agenda for this meeting.

KD.036/12 – Review of CCTV Provision in Carlisle – this had been considered by the Executive on 19 November 2012.

KD.037/12 – Carlisle Plan 2012 – 13 – this item had been deferred from the previous meeting and would be considered by the Panel in the New Year.

KD.041/12 – Regulatory Reform Order Empty Property Policy Amendments would be considered by the Panel at its meeting in February 2013.

- Minute Excerpt EX.121/12 Future Management of Allotments had been received from the Executive.
- A meeting of the Scrutiny Chairs Group had taken place on 1 November 2012 and the minutes had been circulated for Members information.

RESOLVED – 1) That, subject to the issues raised above, the Overview Report incorporating the Work Programme and Forward Plan items relevant to this Panel be noted;

2) That Forward Plan items:

KD.036/12 – Review of CCTV Provision had been considered by the Executive on 19 November 2012.

KD.037/12 – Carlisle Plan 2012-13 would be considered in the New Year by the Panel

KD.041/12 – Regulatory Reform Order Empty Property Policy Amendments would be considered in February 2013 by the Panel.

3) That the minutes of the Scrutiny Chairs Group held on 1 November 2012 be noted.

4) That Minute Excerpt EX.121/12 Future Management of Allotments be noted.

COSP.83/12 COMMUNITY CENTRES

The Director of Community Engagement submitted report CD.54/12 providing a response to the Community Centre Task and Finish Group recommendations.

The Community Centre Task and Finish Group recommendations had been considered by Executive on 29 October 2012 (EX.130/12) and they resolved to respond to the recommendations at this meeting.

Mr Gerrard reported that the Wellbeing Team had always and continued to offer advice and support to Community Centres with the aim of assisting them to become more effective, self sufficient and maximise their contribution to local communities.

He felt that the report was a useful tool to move forward and improve the relationship between Officers and Community Centres.

In November 2012 a meeting had been arranged, facilitated by the CVS and supported by the Communities and Housing Portfolio Holder to develop Service Level Agreements between the Centres and the City Council to maximise the outreach benefits of the Centres and to link Council services with local communities.

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

- Members felt that a toolkit was important for Community Centres and felt that the Council could do more to facilitate Community Centres using the Community Matters website.

The Director of Community Engagement agreed that the Community Matters website was an important tool for Community Centres and Officers should facilitate the use of the website by Community Centres.

- The Panel asked for an update on the progress of the criteria.

The Community Development Officer reported that the Communities and Housing Portfolio Holder had attended the last Community Centre Managers meeting to restart the process for the criteria. The meeting had been a positive step for the relationship between the Centres and Officers.

- A Member felt that the comments on page two of the report regarding the Carlisle and District Federation of Community Organisations (the Federation) and Managers meetings was unhelpful to the relationship between Centres and the Council.
- Members were concerned that information was been given to Centre Managers and not to the Centre Management Committee. They also felt that information should also be shared with the Federation.

The Community Development Officer agreed that there had been an issue with some Management Committees being detached from the work of the Centre Manager and it was hoped that the new Service Level Agreements would address some of the issues. The CVS had been important in facilitating the meeting with the Centre Managers and would continue to provide support. He also agreed that information should go to the Federation but this had been difficult as the organisation was not an open one.

The Task and Finish Group Members had found the work to be extremely interesting and very useful and wanted to continue to monitor the situation in the future.

RESOLVED – 1) That the update on the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group (report CD.54/12) be welcomed;

2) That the Community Centre Task and Finish Group meet with the Community Centre Managers in April 2013 to monitor the progress being made.

COSP.84/12 CUMBRIA CHOICE ALLOCATION POLICY – PROPOSED REVISIONS

The Director of Community Engagement submitted report CD.56/12 which provided an overview of the proposed revisions to the Cumbria Choice Allocation Policy.

The Housing Development Officer reminded the Panel that the Policy came into operation in March 2011 with the intention that the Cumbria Choice partnership would review the Policy after twelve months. The review was intended to take into account both the operational issues which had arisen and any national trends and reforms such as localism and welfare reform.

Following the review process the Partnership Board had concluded that the Allocation Policy had predominantly been functioning as anticipated and desired and did not believe that any wholesale overhaul of the Cumbria Choice Allocation was required.

He explained that there was, however, some proposed changes from the Partnership to improve the fairness of the Policy, to take into account changes to national policy or as administrative changes. The proposed changes were set out in report CD.56/12 alongside an amended version of the Allocation Policy.

A Member asked how the Cumbria Choice Based Letting could be accessed if people did not have access to the internet?

The Director of Community Engagement highlighted page 10 of the Allocations Policy attached to CD.56/12 which set out the accessibility for the Scheme. He added that accessibility was a key issue and he hoped to encourage community centres to help those in their community to use the Choice Based Letting Scheme.

RESOLVED – That report CD.56/12 be noted.

COSP.85/12 PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The Policy and Performance Officer presented report PPP.13/12 which updated the Panel on the latest position regarding the Service Standards that measured the Council's performance and customer satisfaction.

He reported that following the first quarter presentation to Overview and Scrutiny, comparisons with other authorities had been increased to include Nearest Neighbour authorities.

The Panel asked that consideration be given to including a target which the performance could be measured against in future reports.

RESOLVED – That report PPP.13/12 be noted.

(The meeting ended at 1.00pm)