

Report to:

# Council

Agenda  
Item

12(i)(b)

Meeting Date: 7th March 2017

Public/Private\*: Public

Title: **COSP Chairman's Report – Councillor Rob Burns**

### **Pilgrim's Progress**

My initial enthusiasm for writing the Chair's reports has, I confess, waned somewhat over the years, as it becomes increasingly difficult to find more positive words to eulogise (\*\*sychophancy alert!) on the impressive way the Council continues to deal proactively with the demands of decreased budgets, reduced staffing and diminishing public confidence in most things political.

Suffice to say that, as a Body Corporate, we should commend ourselves on the expertise, perseverance and diligence that have helped us to continue to make progress, like Pilgrim, on the straight and narrow path, through the toils and snares of the Trough of Despondence (better known to us as 'austerity') to Paradise (better known to us as a balanced budget).

### **Just a minute**

It is difficult too, unless you're Kenneth Williams, Nicholas Parsons or Derek Nimmo, (or their modern equivalents) to report without deviation, repetition or hesitation, on issues that appear frequently on our agendas, without the accusation of plagiarising your own previous work, particularly when the 'official' minutes of meetings provide all the detail and information required in an eminently readable digest.

### **Safety in Numbers**

And so it is this month, (yes, I know it's grammatically incorrect to start a sentence with 'And') with the last couple of meetings being dominated by Community Safety, Housing and Welfare Reform issues which are clearly, hugely important and which prompted some robust and searching debate, all of which is outlined in the relevant minutes.

What I would add however, is my thanks, not only to officers from within our own organisation who prepared and presented thorough, thought provoking and sometimes challenging reports, but to those representatives from other agencies who, although there was no real imperative for them to do so, presented themselves for challenge and scrutiny and gave Panel Members some cause for optimism, particularly in the progress being made in these areas of service, through partnership working.

I generally verge on the side of cynicism in my view of partnerships, but there is no doubt that, in the case of the Welfare Reform Board and the Community Safety Partnership, there is indeed an added end value in pooling the knowledge and expertise of a number of different agencies.

The Panel also increased its knowledge and awareness of the current social housing scene, receiving updates from Riverside, Impact and Two Castles, as a result of which, COSP will host a workshop, open to all Members, to scope and discuss the nature of our future relationships with them, particularly Riverside, in the light of the conclusion of our original transfer agreement.

Be there or be square!