

Item 11(cii)

**Report of the
Corporate Resources
O & S Committee**

**Chairman
Cllr B. O. Earp**

My report initially marks the retirement of the Head of Scrutiny, John Mallinson, and then welcomes his replacement – Dr David Taylor and Mrs Becky Tibbs as joint Scrutiny Managers for Corporate Resources O & S Committee.

At our meeting on the 21st February 2008 members expressed their best wishes to John Mallinson. There were 14 Agenda Items but not all required scrutiny. (some Items, in effect, were for information only).

Reports presented : -

- i) The Pay and Workforce Strategy/Job Evaluation Appeals – Questions answered by the Deputy Chief Executive (Dr J. Gooding).
- ii) Corporate Performance Monitoring – 3rd Quarter – Head of Policy and Performance (Ms Curr).
- iii) Draft Pension Fund – Valuation – submitted by the Director of Corporate Services (Mrs Brown).
- iv) Revenue Budget Overview and Monitoring – April to Dec. 2007 – Head of Financial Services (Ms McGregor).
- v) Capital Budget Overview and Monitoring – April to Dec. 2007 (Ms McGregor)
- vi) Treasury Transactions 2007/8 – Director of Corporate Services.

Scrutiny was dealt with in relation to The Capital Projects Board and Capital Programmes Board which are to be widened and renamed “The Corporate Projects Board” and “The Corporate Programmes Board”. The Committee expressed concern at the lack of Member involvement/scrutiny so far and resolved that the Deputy Chief Executive submit a detailed report, including project monitoring information, to the next meeting followed by regular reports throughout the Municipal Year.

Also scrutinised was the Draft Corporate Partnership Policy, prior to its return to the Executive and approval by Council.

Mr Mason, Head of Revenues and Benefits Services presented the Housing Benefits Administration/ Local Housing Allowance "Safeguard" Policy. Members expressed their concern with regard to the consultation that had to take place with the external organisations which provided support to members of the public.

The Director of Development Services (Mrs Elliot) gave the Cumbria Wide Property Review, which updated Members on the progress of joint work between the County and other public sector agencies on operational property assets. Carlisle is the only District Council in Cumbria to sign up to the initial phase with Brampton and Longtown being the first two pilot projects. The Members had major concerns with the implementation of the Cumbria Wide Property Review as outlined. They felt there was a need for a clear strategic policy governing Member and Officer involvement in such initiatives. This matter to be addressed as a matter of urgency. The Director was requested to submit a detailed report to the April meeting of the Committee, followed by regular updates.

The 3rd April meeting of the Corporate Resources O & S Committee had 17 Agenda Items. In order for effective scrutiny to take place the meeting extended over 3 hours. The Action Plan of the Management O & S Committee included the proposal to reduce the number of Agenda Items at O & S Committee Meetings in order for in-depth Scrutiny to take place.

Regular updates regarding reports presented to the February meeting were tabled and included : -

- a) Pay and Workforce Strategy update – to be reported to each meeting until all the appeals have been actioned.
- b) Corporate Projects /Programmes Board Report – to provide more detail on the work of the Board.
- c) Cumbria Wide Property Review – verbal update on progress and timescale.

Additional reports updating Members included : -

- i) Corporate Risk Management.
- ii) I.C.T. Strategy
- iii) Customer Contact Centre

- iv) Negotiations for the new style L.A.A. (2008 – 2011)
- v) Shared Services, improvement and efficiency reviews
- vi) Member Training 2006/7 Report
- vii) Carlisle Renaissance Overview Report.

Members then considered a report detailing progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the Performance Monitoring Task and Finish Group. They were of the opinion that training for Officers and Members was imperative to understand the implications and developments of the new style of reporting.

The Community Plan for Carlisle 2007 needed to be refreshed for 2008 and the Carlisle Partnership Manager (Mr Kemp) submitted a report on progress. The revised plan is to be placed on the agenda of the three O & S Committees, as well as Carlisle Partnership Executive Priority Groups and Partners. Members made their recommendations and all the comments will be incorporated into the final draft.

The Head of Revenues and Benefits (Mr Mason) provided an analysis of the collection recovery trends for the Authority : -

- 1) How the targets were set and monitored.
- 2) The success rates of different types of recovery.
- 3) Costs associated relating to Income, Collection and Recovery.
- 4) Effectiveness of Debt Recovery Action.

The Council's aim was to meet Level 3 overall and for measures to be put in place to move towards Level 4 (excellent). Members were supportive of the measures being taken to facilitate continuous improvement.

Under Part B, Members considered the development of a new Corporate Business Continuity Management Strategy and supporting Business Continuity Management Plan. Members made a number of recommendations to the plan, which were well received by the Deputy Chief Executive.

This being the last meeting of the Corporate Resources O & S Committee during the current Municipal Year, the Chairman thanked the Members of the Committee for their input during the year.. He also thanked the Officers and Administration Staff for their diligence.

Cllr B. O. Earp
Chairman