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## **EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 28 MARCH 2013**

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### **COSP.27/13 PARISH CHARTER**

The Director of Community Engagement submitted report CD.21/13 presenting the Parish Charter for Carlisle and District, and its Formal Agreements, copies of which were attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

He outlined the background to the matter reminding Members that the City Council and the Parishes had, in 2012, agreed a draft Charter which was consulted on. However, that document could not be formally agreed and was consequently revised to reflect both the comments from the Parishes and the need for further changes reflecting reorganisation within the City Council.

The revised Charter and its Formal Agreements had been agreed at the joint meeting between the City Council and representatives of the Parish Councils on 5 December 2012. They were then sent out for formal consultation which concluded on 20 February 2013.

The Director of Community Engagement informed the meeting that the Parishes had responded positively and no revisions had been made to the original agreed draft.

It had further been agreed that the Planning Agreement would remain in its current form, but would be subject to an ongoing review process due to the large number of significant changes in legislation and also locally (such as the agreement of a Local Plan), which would shortly be going out to consultation.

He added that a formal response to the comments made by the Parishes during the consultation period had been drafted and was attached at Appendix 2 to the report.

The Chairman of the CPCA thanked officers for their involvement and work in the Charter. It had been a complex piece of work that included a lot of views from a number of people. The previous tri-partite Charter had been too long and had been fixed. The new Charter had a light touch with agreements which could be amended and updated. Cumbria County Council had not been included in the new Charter as a County wide Charter was being prepared.

The Executive had on 11 March 2013 (EX.23/13) considered the report and decided:

“That the Executive:

1. Noted and approved the Parish Charter and its Formal Agreements for sign off jointly with the Parish Councils on 8 April 2013.

2. Noted and approved the City Council response to Parishes, following the consultation period which ended on 20 February 2013.”

In considering the Parish Charter Members raised the following comments and questions:

- The Panel agreed that the planning agreement was a vital component in the Charter and felt strongly that they could not support the Charter until the planning agreement had been included and scrutinised.
- Why had Cumbria County Council not be included in the new Charter?

The Chairman of CPCA explained that the initial move towards the new Charter had begun with the previous administration when it had been agreed that the new Charter would be between the City Council and Parishes. He added that the planning agreement had taken longer than anticipated because it was complicated, the Charter did reflect the issues raised by the Parishes and they had been responded to positively by City Council officers.

A Member felt that the County Council should have been included in the process and he agreed that the Panel could not support the document until it was completed.

- The Panel asked that a proper evaluation of outcomes be carried out when the Charter was completed.

The Chairman of CPCA agreed that a proper evaluation would be carried out and the intention of the new Charter was for it to be a flexible ‘living’ document that could be renewed and refreshed regularly.

- How many formal replies had been received from Parishes?

The DFG Coordinator – Cumbria responded that the number of formal replies received had been low but the Charter had been to each parish and everyone had been supportive.

**RESOLVED** – The Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel feel that they cannot fully support the Parish Charter until the Planning Agreement had been included and scrutinised.

The Panel urge the Executive to take into consideration the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel when making their decision.