
EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 24 MARCH 2011

COSP.33/11 NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING

The Scrutiny Officer (Mrs Edwards) submitted report OS.08/11 which included the draft report of the Neighbourhood Services Task and Finish Group.

Councillor Mrs Bradley, Lead Member on the Neighbourhood Working Task and Finish Group, presented the report and reminded the Panel that the Task and Finish Group was a joint Group between the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The Group had produced the draft report which set out a number of recommendations for action for the Executive.

Councillor Mrs Bradley took the Panel through the background and methodology of the Task and Finish Group and highlighted an update on Cumbria County Council's Task group on Locality Working.

Councillor Mrs Bradley thanked all the Members, officers and outside organisations and agencies who had taken part in the Task and Finish Group and thanked Members who had completed the enquiry form. She stated that the workshop for partners had been extremely useful for the Task and Finish Group.

Councillor Mrs Bradley informed the Panel that the County Council had also undertaken a review of Neighbourhood Working focussing on localities. The City Council Task and Finish Group invited a representative from the County Council to give a presentation to the Task and Finish Group on their work. The Task and Finish Group had suggested that it would be useful for the City and County Council to meet to discuss the outcomes but unfortunately this had not happened.

Councillor Mrs Bradley drew Members attention to the recommendations in the report and asked for their comments.

With regard to recommendation 4, a Member commented that some consideration had to be given to members of the community who did not have access to computers and so would not be able to access the community websites.

Mrs Edwards informed the Panel that recommendation 5 regarding the Carlisle Focus magazine had been added as the Group had understood that not everyone would have access to the internet.

A Member asked if the recommendations could include a way to improve the use of the Customer Contact Centre as a central information point for the community.

In response to a question Councillor Mrs Bradley clarified the reason for recommendation 6 and added that it was extremely important for Elected Members and members of the Community to know who to contact within the Council for various issues.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive agreed that it was important to have up to date contact information available. She informed the Panel that discussion had taken place with the Communications section to prepare an A-Z directory of staff and services. The directory would include a brief description of each directorate and the services it provided. She agreed that a staff structure could be included in the directory.

Members discussed the possibility of giving Community Centres and Parish Clerks access to the GRANTfinder database or a similar system if the terms of the subscription allowed it. A Member commented that Community Centres and Parish Councils had access to a Fund Finder package through the Cumbria Voluntary Service if they were a member.

A Member thanked Councillor Mrs Bradley for her work on such a tremendous piece of work and asked that the Panel monitor the outcome of the recommendations and the feedback from the Executive.

RESOLVED – 1) That the recommendations as set out in the Neighbourhood Working report be agreed;

2) That the Neighbourhood Working report be considered by the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel and with their agreement the report then be referred to the Executive for a formal response to the recommendations.