

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2011 AT 10.00 AM

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Luckley (Chairman) Councillors Mrs Bradley, Glover, McDevitt (until 1.10pm) Nedved (until 1.10pm), Mrs Parsons, Mrs Prest and Mrs Riddle (as substitute for Councillor Scarborough)

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Geddes, Community Engagement Portfolio Holder
Councillor Ellis, Performance and Development Portfolio Holder
Councillor Bloxham, Environment and Housing Portfolio Holder
Hilary Wade, Director of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust
Andrew Smith, Trustee on the Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust

COSP.81/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Scarborough and Mr Roger Cooke, Chairman of the Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust.

COSP.82/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ellis declared a personal and prejudicial interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of Agenda Item A.5 – Housing Strategy 2011-15 and Action Plan. The interest related to the fact that he was an existing beneficiary of the low cost housing scheme.

Councillor Mrs Bradley declared a personal interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of Agenda Item A.5 – Housing Strategy 2011-15 and Action Plan and Agenda Item B.1 – Tullie House Business Plan and Lease Arrangements. The interest related to the fact that she was a Member of Cumbria County Council.

Councillor McDevitt declared a personal interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of Agenda Item B.1 – Tullie House Business Plan and Lease Arrangements. The interest related to the fact that he was a Member of Cumbria County Council

COSP.83/11 AGENDA

RESOLVED – The running order of the agenda be revised to facilitate the attendance of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust and relevant Assistant Directors.

COSP.84/11 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meetings held on 1 September 2011 and 6 October 2011 be agreed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

COSP.85/11 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS

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

COSP.86/11 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Officer (Mrs Edwards) presented report OS.28/11 which provided an overview of matters relating to the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel's work and included the latest version of the work programme and Forward Plan items which related to the Panel.

Mrs Edwards reported that:

- the Forward Plan of Executive Key Decisions, covering the period 1 November 2011 to 29 February 2012 had been published on 18 October 2011 and the following issues fell into the remit of this Panel and would all be considered by the Panel at this meeting:

KD.023/11 (Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2011-15) and KD.024/11 (Budget Process 2012-12)

KD.024/11 Budget Process 2012-13

KD.029/11 Tullie House Business Plan and Lease Arrangements

KD.030/11 Mid Year Performance Report

- The Executive had considered the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy at its meeting on 31 October and Minute Excerpt EX.128/11 had been circulated.
- The Housing Task and Finish Group had met with the Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Manager on 17 October 2011 and intended to hold its first witness session on 28 November 2011.
- The Work Programme had been attached to the report for Members information. The Customer Shared Service Business Case did not have a date to be considered by the Panel as Cumbria County Council was in the

process of considering drawing up a proposal to provide an in house switchboard service.

Members asked for an update on Revenues and Benefits shared services within the authority to be brought to the January 2012 meeting.

The Panel noted that the Carlisle Youth Zone were scheduled in the Work Programme to be invited to the next meeting in January and asked for an update on the financial viability of the Youth Zone at that meeting.

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 a report updating the Panel on the Revenues and Benefits shared services be submitted to the next meeting of the Panel.

3) That a report updating the Panel on the financial viability of the Carlisle Youth Zone be submitted to the Panel at their January 2012 meeting to coincide with the invitation for the Carlisle Youth Zone to attend the meeting.

COSP.87/11 DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS

The Chairman of the Disabled Facilities Task and Finish Group (Councillor Glover) submitted the final report of the Task Group.

Councillor Glover gave an overview of the work of the Task and Finish Group and thanked all Members, officers and witnesses that had been involved in the work of the Group.

He reminded the Panel of the statutory requirement for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and highlighted the continuing increase in the demand for the DFGs and the reduction in the financial support from Government.

Councillor Glover explained the reasons behind the recommendations made by the Group and drew particular attention to the need for the ongoing discussions with the GP Consortia to acknowledge the contribution that DFGs made to preventing hospital admissions and allowing people to remain in their own home. He highlighted the need for a county wide procurement framework and the concerns the Group had regarding the carry forward of committed grants. The Group also raised the issue of Lifetime Homes and urged Planning Officers to highlight Lifetime Homes when discussing and considering planning applications.

The Environment and Housing Portfolio Holder welcomed the detailed report. He felt that all housing associations should be included in recommendation three and was pleased to hear that the Council had received a positive response from the GP Consortia and Health and Social Care. He supported

the recommendations as set out in the report and commented that Planning Officers already raised the issue of Lifetime Homes with developers.

Members congratulated the Task and Finish Group on the clear recommendations made in the report and acknowledged that DFGs had been a serious concern for the Panel for a number of years. They felt that the Lifetime Homes standard should be encouraged when possible but acknowledged that the standards were not statutory and would not be implemented properly until legislation was introduced.

The Assistant Director (Community Engagement) (Mr Gerrard) confirmed that he would submit a report to the Panel outlining how the recommendations could be moved forward.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Task and Finish Group and Overview and Scrutiny Officer be thanked for their input into the final report and the detailed recommendations.

2) That the final report of the Disabled Facilities Task and Finish Group be approved and referred to the Executive for a formal response to the recommendations.

COSP.88/11 HOUSING STRATEGY 2011-2015 AND ACTION PLAN

The Assistant Director (Community Engagement) (Mr Gerrard) submitted report CD.23/11 which detailed the City Council's draft Housing Strategy 2011/15 and associated Action Plan.

Mr Gerrard informed Members that the Housing Strategy superseded the previous Strategy and was a key document in identifying the housing needs, challenges and solutions to be taken forward for the Carlisle district area. The Strategy comprised two elements:

(i) the Strategy Vision which included the Council's vision, priorities and key actions (Appendix 1); and

(ii) the Delivery Plan (Appendix 2)

Mr Gerrard advised that a Housing Needs and Demand Study had been commissioned in March 2011 with a view to providing a robust assessment of current and future housing need. He added that the City Council had a vision for Carlisle as 'Cumbria's historic, dynamic and successful University City, creating growth opportunities in a sustainable environment with skilled people and international connections in a stunning location'. In addition, the Council had two corporate priorities (local environment and economy), together with a clear and well defined corporate objective to achieve economic growth and development. The Strategy and the Housing Needs and Demand Study would support key elements of the Local Development Framework and the City's Economic Strategy.

He further outlined the Strategy's thematic priorities and issues emerging from the Housing Needs and Demand Study, details of which were provided.

The Executive had, on 31 October 2011 (EX.129/11) considered the matter and resolved:

“That the Executive had considered and approved Report CD.16/11 to go forward:

1. to be used in consultation on the Housing Strategy (2011 - 2015) and Action Plan; and
2. to be made available to Overview and Scrutiny Panels for comment.”

Mr Gerrard updated the Panel on the Carlisle Partnership Forum event which focused on Housing and Development that had taken place on 22 November 2011. The event had been very successful and had over 60 people attending from all sectors.

The Environment and Housing Portfolio Holder agreed that the event had been very successful and informed the Panel that the information from the event would be collated and could form part of the discussions of the Panel.

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

- Would letting agents be able to advertise properties on the City Council's website alongside accredited landlords?

The Strategic and Private Sector Housing Manager (Mr Taylor) responded that consideration could be given to allowing letting agents to advertise on the website but further information on liability would have to be sought.

- A Member raised concerns that there was a danger that developers banked land until there was an upturn in the economic situation.

The Environment and Housing Portfolio Holder explained that any land that the City Council made available for affordable housing would be developed in line with the Homes and Communities Agency standards and would not be accumulated.

Having made a Personal and Prejudicial Interest the Performance and Development Portfolio Holder left the meeting whilst the following discussion took place:

- A Member asked for clarification with regard to the amendment to some of the legal agreements attached to low cost properties.

Mr Taylor assured the Panel that the legal agreements would still allow for affordable housing but would give owners slightly more freedom when they chose to sell the property.

- How could lenders be encouraged to join the low cost housing scheme?

Mr Taylor acknowledged that many lenders did not want to lend to people in low cost housing and there was a need for more engagement with lenders to make them aware of the benefits of low cost housing schemes.

The Performance and Development Portfolio Holder returned to the meeting.

- There had been a shortage of appropriate accommodation for students within the City, how would this issue be addressed?

The Environment and Housing Portfolio Holder explained that he was very conscience that students should be welcomed into the City but that there was not enough accommodation available for them. He understood that the influx of students into a community was a delicate issue in some areas and more discussion with the University was required. He agreed that the impact on a community of students arriving had to be acknowledged. He added that the accommodation for students was not the only issue and the University also had a shortage of suitable teaching accommodation too.

Mr Gerrard confirmed that the Council had opened a dialogue with the University regarding accommodation and other University towns would be used as best practice.

- A Member asked if the Council had been pro-active enough in applying for and securing funding from sources other than the Homes and Communities Agency.
- The report stated that 340 extra care places would be required by 2019, could the Panel have an update on how this would be achieved and the role the City Council would have as the strategic housing authority.

Mr Taylor responded that the new development at Heysham Gardens was a good example of new extra care places within the City; however, new extra care homes were very costly and took a considerable amount of time to develop so a more suitable answer to the issue may be to refurbish existing sheltered care homes and provide additional support.

The Environment and Housing Portfolio Holder agreed that the Heysham Gardens development had been very successful and it was a concern that extra care places took a considerable amount of time to develop. He added that Lifetime Homes would be a real advantage to the additional extra care places required.

A Member commented that there needed to be some emphasis on reinstating the 1400 empty properties that existed within the City.

- It was essential for the authority to consider housing and employment together to enable the economy to grow, what work was being undertaken to integrate the two?

The Environment and Housing Portfolio Holder agreed that employment and housing had to be considered together and it was vital that the City had the right infrastructure in place to encourage employment in the City.

- The Panel asked for an update on the Supporting People Contract tender process.

Mr Gerrard responded that two of the tenders for Supporting People contracts had been unsuccessful and one had been successful in moving into the next stage of 'mini' competitions. He explained that the Council would receive a debrief from the County Council on the outcome of the unsuccessful bids. He added that the Team were now considering the impact of the decisions on the Team and on the services they provided.

The Panel expressed their disappointment that the tenders had been unsuccessful and agreed to support the Assistant Director (Community Engagement) in any challenge that the authority made with regard to the outcome of the tenders.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Housing Strategy 2011-15 and Action Plan be welcomed and the comments of the Panel, as set out above, be referred to the Executive.

2) That the Strategic Director and the Assistant Director (Community Engagement) submit an update on the accommodation for the University of Cumbria to a future meeting of the Panel.

COSP.89/11 CORPORATE PLAN: MID YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Policy and Performance Officer (Mr Daley) submitted report PPP.17/11 which gave a summary of the progress made in the delivery of each of the Corporate Plan key Actions.

Mr Daley reported that the contents of the report had been determined by the Senior Management Team and the Key Action Red, Amber and Green (RAG) ratings had been assessed by the relevant Assistant Director.

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

- How could the Council measure the performance of the number of empty properties that the Council had brought back into use?

Mr Daley responded that the indicators and key actions for 2012/13 were currently being considered and empty properties could be included. He added that the information in the report had been taken from Covalent and was primarily a tracking system opposed to a performance indicator.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive (Dr Gooding) agreed to circulate further information regarding the collation of empty property information to the Panel.

The Panel understood that bringing empty properties back into use involved a long process and sometimes the Council were unable to intervene.

- The Panel asked that future reports included a list of the Council's recent achievements.
- A Member asked for clarification with regard to the comments made under Key Action 01:
 - Was the funding for 2012 in the current budget?
 - What had been reported to JMT regarding Your Community Matters?
 - What was the framework for partnerships meetings?

The Assistant Director (Resources) (Mr Mason) responded that the 2012 funding had been included in the 2011/12 budget.

Mr Gerrard responded that JMT had discussed the development of the community engagement work through the Community Wellbeing Team to ensure that the team worked in a way that complimented partnership working.

- Had the options paper for future engagement with the Community Safety Partnership been completed on time?

Mr Gerrard explained that there had been discussions with the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) regarding future contributions and the future of the CDRP. At the Leadership Group held on 11 November 2011 the partners confirmed that they wanted to continue and agreed to break down the tasks required and how the partners contributed. It was agreed that the Council would not continue to contribute the current £30,000 and there would no longer be full time staffing support. He reassured the Panel that Community Safety would remain a high priority for the authority.

RESOLVED – That the Mid Year Performance Report (PPP.17/11) be noted.

COSP.90/11 TULLIE HOUSE BUSINESS PLAN AND LEASE ARRANGEMENTS

The Panel welcomed Ms Wade, Director of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust and Mr Smith, Trustee on the Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust to the meeting.

The Assistant Director (Community Engagement) (Mr Gerrard) presented report CD.27/11 considering the Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust 2011 - 2014 Business Plan. He informed Members that the purpose of his report was to allow prompt consideration of the Business Plan in order that the Council may, in due course, agree core funding for the Trust.

Mr Gerrard then summarised the steps leading up to the establishment of the Trust in April 2011. He explained that the City Council's twelve month core funding grant to Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust in 2011/12 was £1,314,420. In line with the Partnership Agreement between Tullie House Trust and Carlisle City Council core funding for future years, and specifically in this context 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15, would be agreed by submission of the Trust Business Plan each year. In order to provide a secure and stable basis for medium term planning consideration would be made annually on core funding on a three year rolling cycle. He added that the Council's annual budget process required that approval of core funding for 2013/14 and 2014/15 would be "in principle".

In line with the Partnership Agreement signed at the establishment of the Trust, the Business Plan outlined the Trust proposals for developing its charitable and commercial operation in the coming years. The Partnership Agreement specified that the Business Plan would be considered promptly and in a collaborative fashion. Details of the key milestones outlined in the draft Business Plan, together with the financial and legal implications were provided. Members were requested to give consideration to the Business Plan (submitted in Part B of the Agenda) in light of the above and also seek the views of Overview and Scrutiny thereon.

Mr Gerrard also provided details of a proposed extension to the lease arrangements from the City Council for the property occupied by the Trust, so that the term be extended from twenty five years to a period of thirty years. He advised that extending the leases for a further five years so that all documents were co terminus made sound business sense for both parties. Adding a further five years to the leases would have an impact on the Council's museum assets by reducing the freehold values from the figures previously set out in Report RD.84/10. Although the precise effect of those changes was as yet unknown and valuation advice would be required to inform Members of the position, it was considered most unlikely that the impact on the Council's assets would be significant or that the undervalue would exceed the threshold (£2 million) set out under the Local Government Act 1972.

The Executive had on 22 November 2011 (EX.150/11) considered the report and approved the Business Plan and Lease arrangements for consideration by Overview and Scrutiny.

RESOLVED – That Report CD.27/11 be welcomed.

COSP.91/11 PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the Public and Press were excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph number (as indicated in brackets against the minutes) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Local Government Act.

COSP.92/11 TULLIE HOUSE BUSINESS PLAN AND LEASE ARRANGEMENTS

(Public and Press excluded by virtue of Paragraphs 3 and 4)

The Assistant Director (Community Engagement) (Mr Gerrard) submitted private report CD.26/11 attaching the draft Tullie House Business Plan. The report summarised the steps leading up to the establishment of the Trust in April 2011, the key milestones outlined in the draft Business Plan and financial and legal implications. The report detailed of a proposed extension to the lease arrangements from the City Council for the property occupied by the Trust.

The Executive had on 22 November 2011 (EX.162/11) considered the report and made the Plan available for consideration by Overview and Scrutiny.

Ms Wade outlined the business plan and highlighted the strategic themes which had been identified by the Trust's management team for the Plan. She explained what the key priorities would be and how the Trust intended to proceed into the future.

Mr Smith informed the Panel of his reasons for becoming a Trustee and felt that the Trust had a lot of potential.

In response to Members questions Ms Wade and Mr Smith reminded the Panel of the current funding situation and the impact of the loss of the Renaissance in the Regions (Hub) funding. They explained the proposals for the subsidiary trading company and the admissions charges review.

They reminded the Panel that the fund raising post which had been funded by the Hub money would continue until March 2012 then members of the team would take over the fundraising role. The team already had a vast range of experience in fundraising.

Ms Wade confirmed that the Trust was in touch with schools, colleges and universities with regard to the use of the Trust and the promotion of conference facilities and Tullie House as a wedding venue had increased.

The Panel were supportive of the exhibitions in Tullie House and hoped that other areas of Carlisle's history would be exhibited in the museum. Ms Wade

the Customer Contact staff were able provide a high level of advice and were able to identify when more detailed advice or a different agency was required.

In response to Members questions Mr Gerrard outlined the proposed structure for the Directorate and confirmed that there were no plans to amend the agreed three year reduction in grants to Community Centres. Mr Gerrard informed the Panel of how the proposed relocation of some members of the Directorate would work and the effects on the service provided.

Mr Gerrard took the Panel through the changes to the CDRP funding and highlighted the savings that would be made and the impact of those savings.

RESOLVED – That the update on the Transformation Programme in the Community Engagement Directorate be welcomed.

The Panel then moved into Public to consider the remaining items on the agenda.

COSP.95/11 BUDGET 2012/13

Revenue Budget Reports

(a) Summary of New Revenue Spending Pressures

The Assistant Director (Resources) (Mr Mason) submitted report RD.64/11 summarising the new revenue spending pressures and reduced income projections which needed to be considered as part of the 2012/13 budget process. The issues were to be considered in the light of the Council's corporate priorities.

The Executive had on 22 November 2011 (EX.146/11) received the report and forwarded it to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for consideration as part of the 2012/13 budget process.

Mr Mason 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 2012.

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

- **Olympic Torch Relay**

Carlisle would be hosting a leg of the Olympic Torch relay in June 2012 and there would be associated costs in hosting the event. The costs were still not finalised. Any costs, less sponsorship achieved, would be reported to a future meeting as part of the budget process.

- **Income below Target**

Shortfalls in income corporately had been identified within the budget reports and amounted to £115,000 in total and would be included as additional budget pressures. Some income budgets were expected to generate additional income however the major shortfalls were expected on Car Parking and Development Control fees.

Members had serious concerns regarding the impact of the Council Tax freeze on the 2013/14 budget. Mr Mason commented that the freeze would cost the Council £244,000 in 2013/14 and there was no indication at this moment regarding the Government's spending for next year.

RESOLVED – 1) That Report RD.64/11 be noted.

2) That an update on the cost of the Olympic Torch Relay be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel.

(b) Summary of Savings Delivered and New Proposals

Report RD.65/11 had been circulated to the Panel by way of background information.

Mr Mason summarised the proposed savings relating to additional Transformation Savings, recruitment Advertising and Non-Staffing Reduction, and also highlighted the new savings proposals and additional income projections.

RESOLVED – That Report RD.65/11 be noted.

(c) Review of Charges 2012/13

- **Local Environment**

Report LE.23/11 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 22 November 2011 (EX.141/11) decided that the report be noted and referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for their consideration.

Members asked for an update to be circulated on the water charges issues at the Council's allotments and for an explanation as to why the Talkin Tarn charges had not been increased.

RESOLVED – That report LE.23/11 be welcomed.

- **Community Engagement**

Report CD.25/11 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 22 November 2011 (EX.142/11) decided that the report be noted and referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for their consideration.

Hostel Service

Mr Gerrard explained that the charges detailed for hostels did not include a support element as it was funded through Cumbria Supporting People. The support service charge costs were being reviewed as part of the same exercise. The charges had been increased in line with the corporate charging policy reflecting an inflationary increase of 2%. This would result in an income of £445,800 in 2012/13.

Mr Gerrard explained that due to the changes in the Supporting People contract the Council could only levy a charge for basic rent and communal areas and not for care.

A Member asked if a new provider would be duty bound to use the Council's accommodation. There was concern that a change to the use in facilities would reduce the income from hostel charges.

Mr Gerrard responded that some services could be provided away from the accommodation to make a clear distinction between services. A new provider would not be duty bound to use the Council's facilities and the changes may be a good opportunity for the new resource centre as a hub for the supporting people contract.

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

Capital Budget Reports

(d) Revised Capital Programme 2011/12 and Provisional Capital Programme 2012/13 to 2016/17

The Assistant Director (Resources) (Mr Mason) submitted report RD.66/11 detailing the revised capital programme for 2011/12, together with the proposed method of financing as set out in Appendices A and B. The report also summarised the proposed programme for 2012/13 to 2016/17 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 22 November 2011 (EX.148/11) considered the report and decided:

- “1. Noted the revised capital programme and relevant financing for 2011/12 as set out in Appendices A and B of Report RD.66/11;
2. Recommended that the City Council approve slippage of £4,257,000 from 2011/12 into 2012/13;
3. Had given initial consideration to the capital spending requests for 2012/13 to 2016/17 contained in report RD.66/11 in the light of the estimated available resources; and
4. 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 Private Sector Housing Investment budget was to cover Disabled Adaptation Grants, Renovation grants and Minor Work grants. It was anticipated that there would be additional funding available from Central Government however, additional Council funding of £200,000 per annum was anticipated in order to meet the expected demand.

Disabled Facilities Grant allocation would not be announced until January 2012, although it had been indicated that the grant would be protected at the 2011/12 levels.

RESOLVED: To accept the recommendations as set out in Report RD.66/11.

(The meeting ended at 2.55pm)