

## **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

### **COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

**THURSDAY 31 MARCH 2016 AT 10.00AM**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Burns (Chairman), Councillors Ellis, Ms Franklin, Mrs McKerrell, Osgood (until 12.35pm), Mrs Vasey, Mrs Warwick (until 11.35), and Ms Williams.

**ALSO**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Glover – The Leader  
Councillor Mrs Bradley – Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder  
Councillor Mrs Riddle – Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder  
Mr Barry – Participation Project Worker, Cumbria County Council  
Miss Bulman – Chairman, Carlisle Youth Council  
Miss Coulthard – Member, Carlisle Youth Council

**OFFICERS:** Director of Resources  
Contracts and Community Services Manager  
Property Services Manager  
Partnership Manager  
Customer Services Manager  
Housing and Health Manager  
Overview and Scrutiny Officer

#### **COSP.18/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of the Deputy Chief Executive.

#### **COSP.19/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest affecting the business to be transacted at the meeting.

#### **COSP.20/16 PUBLIC AND PRESS**

It was agreed that the items of business in Part A be dealt with in public.

#### **COSP.21/16 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2016 be agreed as a correct record of the meetings and signed by the Chairman and that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 February 2016 be noted.

#### **COSP.22/16 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS**

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

#### **COSP.23/16 AGENDA**

**RESOLVED** – That Item A.6 be moved to the first item of the agenda.

## **COSP.24/16    OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented report OS.07/16 which provided an overview of matters relating to the work of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel and included the latest version of the work programme and Key Decisions of the Executive which related to the Panel.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reported that the Notice of Key Executive Decisions, published on 4 March 2016, included the following items which fell within the remit of this Panel:

### **KD.03/16 Homeless Hostel Service Structure – Release of Funding**

The Executive would be asked to approve the release of funding in line with report recommendations, to support the implementation of a new staffing structure and refocused service following the end of the Supporting People Contract. The decision would be taken in private on 4 April.

### **KD.04/16 Homelife Carlisle funding options / Business Plan 2016/17**

The Executive would be asked to release non-recurrent revenue funding of £73,000 to enable Homelife Carlisle to continue to deliver staying put services to older, disabled and / or vulnerable people living in the District. The decision would be taken in public and private on 4 April.

### **KD.05/16 Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2016/17**

The Executive would be asked to decide the Environmental Health Section's inspection and educational priorities for improving food safety in Carlisle during 2016/17. The decision would be considered on 6 June and a decision made on 4 July following a consultation period that included Overview and Scrutiny.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer advised Members that an addendum to report ED.15/16 Homeless Hostel Service Structure had been submitted for the Executive to consider at its meeting 4 April meeting.

A Member requested that the Panel scrutinise Key Decision KD.03/16 Homeless Hostel Service Structure – Release of Funding. It was agreed that a report on this item be included on the agenda of the next meeting of the Panel.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer drew Member's attention to Appendix 1 - Overview and Scrutiny Annual report, which was to be formally approved by the Scrutiny Chairs Group, after which it would be presented to Council on 26 April 2016. Members raised no comments or questions on the Overview and Scrutiny Annual report.

Councillor Bowditch gave the Panel a verbal update, on the Cumbria Police and Crime Panel as the Council's representative. He had submitted a report to Members which had been circulated to the Panel as an addendum to the Overview Report and Work Programme.

In addition to his report, Councillor Bowditch outlined the Cumbria Police and Crime Panel structure which comprised representatives from each of the six districts, a County Council representative, and two lay members. The Police and Crime Commissioner, who chaired the Panel, had adopted a collegiate approach and had allowed input from the Panel to adapt the Police and Crime Plan. The Panel was not involved in operational Policing matters, but any such issues raised with Members of the Police and Crime Panel were passed on to the relevant persons to be dealt with.

Councillor Bowditch extended an invitation to the members of Carlisle Youth Panel to attend a meeting of the Cumbria Police and Crime Panel.

In considering Councillor Bowditch's report Members raised the following comments and questions:

- *Had the Cumbria Police and Crime Panel received any feedback on the roll-out of Restorative Justice?*

Councillor Bowditch responded that there had not been a meeting of the Police and Crime Panel following the roll-out of the approach. He asked the Member to email him regarding this matter, which he would take up with the Police and Crime Commissioner.

- *How effective was the Police and Crime Panel and was the Council's representation on the Panel worthwhile?*

Councillor Bowditch explained that he felt the Police and Crime Panel had been very effective and had brought to light county-wide Policing issues. The lay members of the Panel had attended committees in the houses of parliament where the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner was being assessed. Feedback from those committees suggested that the main focus of the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Police and Crime Panel in the future would be ensuring the Police adhered to their force's policies.

- *Had the increase in the precept for the Police and Crime Commissioner been justified?*

Councillor Bowditch replied that the Police and Crime Commissioner's request to increase the precept was the result of a change to the funding formula for Police authorities and had made national headline news. Cumbria had a sparse population spread over a wide geographical area, however, the population level fluctuated due to the large influx of tourists during the holiday season, and therefore the requested increase had been necessary.

A Member expressed concern regarding the closure of the Women's Refuge and how it would impact support for victims in the future; she had contacted the Police and Crime Commissioner regarding this, but had yet to receive a response.

Councillor Bowditch asked the Member to forward the correspondence to himself and he would pursue this with the Police and Crime Commissioner.

RESOLVED – (1) That report OS.07/16 be noted.

(2) That a report be on KD.03/16 Homeless Hostel Service Structure – Release of Funding be considered by the Panel.

(3) That the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report be noted.

(4) That Councillor Bowditch for be thanked for his report

## **COSP.25/16 YOUTH COUNCIL**

The Chairman welcomed and introduced Miss Bulman, Miss Coulthard, and Mr Barry to the meeting.

Misses Bulman and Coulthard gave a presentation on the work of Carlisle Youth Council which covered: the Youth Council's priorities for 2015/16; the group's achievements over the preceding year; the group's community profile and work with other organisations; the group's campaigns, consultations, and workshop activity and the group's plans for the future. The Panel warmly congratulated Miss Bulman and Miss Coulthard for their presentation.

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

In response to a Member's request for further information on "Make Your Mark" which had been referred to in the presentation, Miss Bulman explained that it was the largest consultation facility in the UK and the data the Youth Council gained from it was used to feed into the national Youth Parliament.

- *Why had the Youth Council chosen mental health as priority in the previous year?*

Miss Bulman explained that mental health had been selected as a result of the "Make Your Mark" results, and the Youth Council felt that it was an important area of work.

Miss Coulthard added that mental health was an area that the Youth Council felt it could have an impact on locally and make a difference to young people's lives.

Mr Barry explained that the group had developed the "So What" workshop to promote self-empowerment amongst young people whilst raising awareness of mental health issues, the workshop had four activities based around: body image, prejudice, acceptance and mindfulness. The Youth Council intended to deliver the workshop to youth groups and for it to become a resource for schools to use.

The Partnership Manager added that the Youth Council sought to influence policy and decision making at all levels through a variety of media, and that the group had been involved in policy shaping and projects at a national level.

- *What support had Youth Council members had in relation to their work on mental health?*

Mr Barry explained that when the group had set up a stall in the Lanes to raise awareness of the issue they had been supported by staff from Carlisle and Eden Mind and Headstarts. The Youth Council's role in raising awareness of the issues did not involve its members addressing the issues raised directly, but to provide signposting to relevant organisations who could offer appropriate support.

Miss Bulman added that the workshop was currently in development, and the next meeting of the Youth Council would be advised of the progress made in respect of this.

- *What priorities was the Youth Council considering working on in the future?*

Mr Barry replied that the Youth Council was to look at the issue of the national living wage which had been identified as main issue in the last two years of the "Make Your Mark" consultation.

Miss Bulman reported that a previous campaign of the Youth Parliament relating to help with travel costs had involved members of the Youth Council meeting with staff from Stagecoach to discuss the issue and this had resulted in reduced travel costs for young people in Carlisle and Barrow.

- *Was the support given by the City Council to the Youth Council enough?*

The Partnership Manager responded that the City Council was keen to assist the Youth Council to influence and shape decisions, and the city Council made available as much support as it could within its resources. The last issue of the Focus magazine had contained an article about the Youth Council which sought to raise its profile and awareness of the group across the city. The City Council also gave the Youth Council rooms at Community Centres and within the Civic Centre to use for its formal meetings. The Partnership Manager was asked to continue support to Carlisle Youth Council in appropriate ways.

In response to a Member's suggestion that the Youth Council have a standing invitation to attend future meetings of the Panel, Miss Coulthard explained that members of the Youth Council still attended school, therefore it was difficult for them to attend daytime meetings.

Miss Bulman stated that Youth Council Members, in order to enhance their understanding of the political process, would appreciate the opportunity to shadow Members of the Council.

The Leader added that the Youth Council had responded to the City Council's consultation on the Local Plan, and their views had been very useful and it had been helpful to have their perspective.

The Panel along with Miss Bulman and Miss Coulthard agreed to the Executive being asked to consider including a Member of the Youth Council as part of the Civic Procession.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Panel thanked Miss Bulman and Miss Coulthard for their attendance at the meeting and expressed the wish that the city and Youth Council were able to work more closely together in the future.

RESOLVED –(1) That Miss Bulman and Miss Coulthard be thanked and congratulated for their presentation.

(2) That the Executive be asked to consider including a Member of the Youth Council in the Civic Procession.

(3) That the Partnership Manager should to continue support to Carlisle Youth Council as appropriate.

## **COSP.26/16 FLOOD UPDATE REPORT**

The Contracts and Community Services Manager, and the Property Services Manager presented report SD.04/16 which updated the Panel on the flood recovery work that had been undertaken and that which was programmed for the future.

The Property Services Manager outlined the impact of the flood on the Council's assets and the remedial work undertaken to date, a central aspect of which had been the undertaking of a surveying exercise to establish the post flood condition and reinstatement costs of the Council's assets. Twenty Council buildings across a number of sites had been affected to varying degrees which had made the recovery work a large scale task.

WYG had been employed as programme managers for the first phase of property recovery and they had assisted in the development of a recovery plan and the addressing of immediate

issues regarding assets for example, making safe and stripping and drying the assets. Having identified the scale of damage at the majority of sites, consideration was needed as to how the facilities would be reconfigured to underpin the construction and tender processes that would be needed to carry out the required work.

The next step in the flood recovery work was to establish priorities and a programme of work, which was currently expected would cost in the region of £10M. As part of the procurement process a strategy for contractors conducting works on site was to be developed. The Council would also engage with service providers and users of the affected site to help identify ways in which the reinstated facilities could be made more resilient to the risk of future flooding, and if there were ways that the reinstatement could improve the facilities offered at sites. Following the procurement process, it was anticipated that the reinstatement works may take up to six months, with the works then needing to be signed off resultantly; some facilities would be out of action for a significant amount of time.

The Director of Resources advised Members that around 1,600 residential properties had been affected by the flood, with 96% of those households having received the £500 Community Grant, the majority prior to Christmas 2015. The Flood Resilience Grants had proved challenging to administer and take up had been slow with only 98 grants having been approved so far, and 75 being processed. Empty Homes Officers had promoted the Grants to affected residents and businesses and it was hoped that take up would reach 25%.

The Council would need to identify the cost to the Council of flood recovery not covered under the Bellwin scheme; this information would be contained in a future report to the Panel.

The Contracts and Community Services Manager gave an overview of the impact of the flood on leisure and art facilities and Community Centres in the city  
Community Centres:

- Greystone Community Centre - had been the first and main reception centre which had assisted in the flood had its work had been recognised by the Prime Minister and HRH The Prince of Wales.
- Botcherby – Officers were still working with staff at the facility to assist its recovery from the flood, its activities were currently being hosted in another Centre.
- Down-a-Gate – a meeting had been held between staff from the Centre and Council Officers to discuss the reinstatement or potential for relocating the building on a different area of its current site. As yet no decision had been taken, and the Contracts and Community Services Manager undertook to update the Panel of any developments relating to the Centre's reinstatement.

Old Fire Station:

Estimates relating to the reopening of the Old Fire Station had initially indicated the facility would be able to reopen in May 2016, however, it was now anticipated that the venue would not reopen to the public until August 2016. As an interim measure some events had been relocated to the new theatre at Harraby Community Centre and Officers were liaising with artists and the Arts Council to develop a comprehensive programme for the Old Fire Station from the late summer onwards.

- The Cenotaph - A survey had revealed only minor structural damage, therefore the monument would be ready for the commemoration of the first day of the Somme in June 2016.

## Leisure Facilities:

- Stoneyholme - Had been significantly affected. It was hoped that a limited course of 9 – 10 holes would reopen in 3 - 4 weeks. It was recognised that some residents felt that the course appeared in its current condition to be playable however, all the equipment used to manage and maintain the course had been lost in the floods so the course was not able to be effectively maintained. The site was subject to an insurance claim and it was anticipated that the fuller recovery process would be lengthy.
- Swifts – The Council was to ask Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) to focus on the reinstatement of the “Pitch and Put” facility at the site, once the work to partially open Stoneyholme had been completed.
- Sands Centre – had suffered only minor damage with full services having been resumed in a short time following the flood. The main concern regarding the site was the potential for long term water impact to facilities such as the motorised seating. Checks had been carried out at the site, and would be repeated in future to ensure all aspects remained operational.
- Bitts Park – 4 upper tennis courts had been recovered with temporary floodlighting and fencing, it was hoped that those courts would reopen after Easter. Prior to the flood, the Lawn Tennis Association had agreed to fund a project at the lower courts, which was to go ahead and enable the reopening of the courts.
- The Kiosk required replacement and as an interim measure portacabins would be erected to provide vending and toilet facilities.
- Sheepmount – The facility had been the most heavily affected Council site, having been flooded to a depth of 18 feet. A survey report had been conducted and had returned an upper cost estimate for reinstatement works of £3M. The Astro-turf pitches and athletics and field track had been written off, and further drainage surveys were required in respect of the grass pitches. Sports England and UK Athletics had both visited the site and had recognised the need for financial support to reinstate the facility and increase its resilience against the risk of future flooding.
- Sport England and Caldey School were to increase the sporting facilities available in the city from mid-April with Caldey School hosting track and field facilities provided by Sport England which would be open to the public. Some of the facilities would be retained by the school following the reinstatement of Sheepmount, but that would not include the athletics track.

## Leisure Services Contract Retender Exercise:

The Council had been in the early stages of a new procurement process for the long term management of its leisure facilities, however the flood had paused this work, it was anticipated this would recommence in April 2016. It was important that those tendering for the contract felt confident about the reinstatement of the Council's assets and to assist this, a reinstatement plan would be in place prior to the tender being officially put on the market. The reinstatement plan would also allow the Council to understand the value of the facilities it was replacing and the programme of work required to return the facility to the agreed standard. It was expected that the providers in the market would also have ideas about adding resilience to the Council's facilities, as the provider that was awarded the Leisure Services Contract would incur its own insurance responsibilities.

The Contracts and Community Services Manager reminded Members that prior to the flood the Council had planned to tender the golf service as a separate bespoke provision, and the Soft Market Testing exercise had indicated some interest from service operators. At present it

was uncertain what impact the flood had on the willingness of operators to deliver golfing services.

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

- *What was the impact of the delay on the Leisure Services Contract to the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)?*

The Director of Resources advised that there was no immediate impact on the MTFP. The saving the retender process anticipated to deliver to the Council's budget were included in the MTFP from 2017/18, resultantly, he felt there was still sufficient time to carry out the retender process to realise those savings. He acknowledged that if the savings were not realised by the time they were recorded in the MTFP, then efficiencies would need to be made elsewhere in the Council in order for the budget to remain balanced.

- *When was the reinstatement works in Bitts Park to take place?*

The Director of Resources explained that the water feature was insured and its reinstatement had been agreed with the insurer. Play equipment was still subject to negotiation but the Council were keen to replace the asset soon to enable Bitts Park to fully operational. At the last meeting of the Executive emergency powers had been given to Officers to speed up the process of funding the equipment's reinstatement. The replacement equipment would be sourced from Europe and it was hoped that it would be installed in Bitts Park in the late summer time.

- *What plans did the Council have for building resilience into its assets to reduce flood risk in the future?*

The Contracts and Community Services Manager explained that there were a number of factors to be considered regarding the increasing of resilience in the Council's assets, some of which were reliant on information from other organisations which was not yet available, for example, the Environment Agency's plans for flood defences in the city in the future.

- *Why had the uptake of resilience grants by residents and businesses been so low?*

The Director of Resources responded that take up of the resilience grant had been poor across all areas in the country which had been affected by flooding in the winter. The process had been made as simple as possible for those applying for the grant, and Officers were offering advice and solutions regarding reinstatement works where possible. The grants were paid to applicants following the completion of any works, which was the standard practice for paying for building works.

In response to a further question from the Member, the Director of Resources advised that the grant scheme was government funded so the Council received funding when the grants had been paid out. The government funding was currently available to the Council for a year from the flood; however, the low take up of the scheme across the country may mean that the deadline would be extended.

The Housing and Health Manager explained that the Private Sector Housing team had received enquiries from more than 300 people regarding the Flood Resilience Grant Scheme. Officers were talking to flood victims regarding the grants on a daily basis and progress in respect of the grant was as reasonable as could be considering the circumstances of those applying for the funding.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder added that many of the application forms which had been submitted to apply for the grant had not been filled in appropriately, and in order to receive a grant all the relevant parts of the form were required to be completed correctly. Officers in the Private Sector Housing team were checking forms and offering assistance where necessary. She considered that the low take up may also be a result of flood victims being away from their properties so therefore may not be able to access the relevant documentation which needed to be supplied with the application form.

Flood affected authorities across the country had put together a team of surveyors to help victims assess what work was needed, and the Cumbrian authorities had pooled resources and created a team of surveyors to provide information to residents as quickly as possible.

The Chairman thanked the Officer's for their comprehensive report and verbal update. He requested a further report updating the Panel on the flood recovery work at the next meeting of the Panel.

The Chairman noted that the Property Services Manager was leaving his role at the Council and expressed the Panel's thanks for work he had undertaken on behalf of the authority.

RESOLVED – (1) That report SD.04/16 be noted.

(2) That a further report be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Panel.

(3) That the Property Services Manager be thanked for the work he had undertaken on behalf of the authority.

## **COSP.27/16    CUSTOMER SERVICES**

The Customer Services Manager delivered a presentation on the affect of the flood, the performance of the Council's new website and the future of Customer Services and the Customer Relationship Management software (CRM).

The Customer Services Manager reminded Members that the significant damage sustained to the ground floor of the Civic Centre during the December flood had meant that the Customer Contact Centre had to be relocated, initially it was sited in the Old Town Hall from the 7<sup>th</sup> to 21 December 2015, and following a temporary period on the first floor of the Civic Centre was now housed in a facility adjacent to the Civic Centre car park. The recovery of customer services had been a key priority of the flood recovery action as it enabled the Council to support residents affected by the flood and deliver its routine face to face services.

Returning the Customer Contact Centre to the Civic Centre had enabled smoother service delivery as staff had access to all the necessary systems and were also able to access more phone lines allowing them to service a larger number of customers: on the first day of the Contact Centre being operational in the Civic Centre following the flood, staff received ten times the average number of emails from customers. As the building had not been fully equipped to support staff, i.e. there not being any heating, staff worked reduced hours in the Civic Centre, but had worked from home responding to emails to ensure customers' needs where met.

The Smarter Services Delivery project phase 1 had considered how to make improvements to the process of service delivery to customers from the point of the customer's request to the service being delivered. An aspect of this project had been the development of a new Council

website which had become live in September 2015 and offered a significantly streamlined service to users by reducing the number of webpages from 3,000 to fewer than 300.

The new website was designed with high levels of integration to improve the customer's ability to carry out transactions on the site, and the Customer Services Manager gave an overview of the types of transaction undertaken by customers on the website, and the amount of traffic received on the site. As well as improving customer experience, the new website had enabled efficiencies to be made; further development of the site was expected in the coming months.

Phase 2 of the Smarter Services Delivery project aimed to make the processing of services leaner and therefore more efficient. The new website had been developed by the Council's IT Officers, in the second phase of the project they would be working to develop a replacement to the in-house back office Customer Relationship Management system, which was the system used to log, report and monitor issues raised by customers.

Members felt it was important that Customer Services staff were thanked and praised for the service they had delivered to customers during the flood, in a challenging work environment with significantly increased workload.

The Customer Services Manager thanked the Panel and noted that members of the Senior Management Team and the Executive had visited the temporary Contact Centre, and staff appreciated the recognition, she undertook to pass on the thanks of the Panel.

RESOLVED –(1) That the staff in the Customer Contact Centre be thanked for their work during the flood recovery

(2) That the Customer Services presentation be noted.

## **COSP.28/16 HOUSING STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Housing and Health Manager submitted report ED.14/16 which updated the Panel on the progress of the Housing Strategy and identified current challenges to the delivery of the strategy.

The Housing and Health Manager informed Members of key milestones that had been reached in relation to Balancing the Housing Market which included the Demonstration Project where students from Carlisle College were to receive training and skills in developing forty new affordable homes for rent on a Council owned site at Beverly Rise, Harraby and; completion by Riverside Housing Association of affordable development, including a mix of bungalows and houses, on two Council owned sites.

In the coming year the new Extra Care Scheme which was aimed at helping older residents and a number of younger residents with disabilities to live independently within a supported environment was to open in the Irthing Centre, Brampton. The Council's Housing Team had worked closely with partner organisations to deliver this scheme.

The Housing and Health Manager advised Members that a review of the county wide choice based lettings scheme "Cumbria Choice" was scheduled to take place later in the year, the purpose of the review was to ensure that the policy was in line with the most recent legislative requirements. The Government remained committed to the development of affordable housing however, the emphasis of policy had solely become home ownership with initiatives being aimed in this direction.

In relation to Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs), the Council had introduced a procurement framework to enable improved services despite reduced levels of funding. The dissemination of government funds for DFGs was to become part of the Better Care Fund which would be paid to the County Council with District Councils retaining the statutory responsibility for delivering DFGs.

The Housing and Health Manager concluded by informing Members that the Homelessness Services team was awarded the Bronze Standard in 2015, following a diagnostic peer review carried out by Eden District Council. Nationally, the results of the diagnostic Peer Review placed Carlisle in the top 5% of authorities. Over the next 2 years the Homelessness team will be aspiring to reach the Gold Standard through achieving 10 good practice challenges.

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

- *What would the Council replace the Housing Strategy with, as it was no longer a statutory requirement to have one?*

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder explained that the Council had other plans and strategies relating to housing that included the Local Plan which identified future housing supply levels and locations; the Homelessness Strategy; the Housing Development Action Plan and; the Private Sector Housing Strategy. Maintaining a Housing Strategy meant that the Council was well prepared to meet its duties as a Strategic Housing Authority.

The Member responded that he felt the removal of the requirement to have a Housing Strategy was a diminishment of the role of local authorities at a time of rising complaints.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder reminded Members that the Council still had a duty to investigate housing complaints and take appropriate enforcement action.

The Housing and Health Manager reminded Members that following the transfer of the Council's housing stock a contract(partnership agreement) had been entered into with the housing association in which the Council had the capacity to hold the association to account. The partnership agreement which had been held with Riverside Cumbria (formerly Riverside Carlisle and Carlisle Housing Association) had now come to an end and the Council had no power to take action against the association.

- *What impact had the Council anticipated on its temporary accommodation facilities as a result of the closure of the County Council's Women's Refuge?*

The Housing and Health Manager explained that the Women's Refuge which had provided eleven units was a countywide facility. It was closing because Impact Housing Association had decided not to bid for the County Council's contract for the delivery of housing related support linked to accommodation. The government's removal of the Supporting People ring fenced budget had meant many local authorities had cut housing related support for vulnerable groups altogether. Although the County Council had cut its overall budget for housing related support linked to accommodation for victims of domestic violence. There had been no bidders for the countywide provision in Carlisle and the County Council in an effort to secure provision re-tendered, however, no provider had come forward

To maintain the provision of housing related support linked to accommodation for women fleeing from domestic violence, the County Council was liaising with each of the districts with a view to providing grant funding to enable them to provide the service within their area so

that the same number of units were available on a county wide basis. It was hoped that this more local service provision may be of greater assistance to those women using it as it meant that they would be able to remain closer to their locality and their support networks.

The City Council was well placed to deliver services to victims of domestic violence using its temporary accommodation portfolio. The Housing and Health Manager advised the victims of domestic violence were currently accommodated and both Water street were secure building staffed on a twenty-four hour basis.

- *What changes to the funding of the Women's Refuge had taken place?*

The Housing and Health Manager clarified that the targeting of the funding had been changed. Under the previous Supporting People budget there had been a general provision that had been used to employ staff. The new arrangements targeted the funding at the individual's support and housing related costs, resultantly the overall level of funding had reduced.

The Chairman felt that the Housing Strategy Action Plan was an impressive document which had taken a significant amount of work for Officers to put together, he asked that the Panel's thanks be conveyed to the staff involved.

He informed the Panel that the Housing and Health Manager was leaving her role at the Council and expressed the Panel's thanks for work she had undertaken on behalf of the authority. The Housing and Health Manager thanked the Chairman and replied that it had been a privilege and honour to work for the Council.

RESOLVED – (1) That report ED.14/16 be noted.

(2) That Officers be thanked for their work in achieving the Bronze Standard Award.

(3) That the Housing and Health Manager be thanked for the work she had undertaken on behalf of the authority.

## **COSP 29.16    SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

During discussion of the above item it was noted that the meeting had been in progress for 3 hours and it was moved, seconded and RESOLVED that Council Procedure Rule 9, in relation to the duration of meetings be suspended in order that the meeting could continue over the time limit of 3 hours.

The Chairman noted that this had been the last meeting of the Panel for the Civic Year; he thanked Members for their support throughout the year.

(Meeting ended at 1.13pm)