

**COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

**THURSDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2017 AT 10.00AM**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Burns (Chairman), Councillors Burns, Ellis (until 12.05pm), Layden, Mrs McKerrell, McNulty, Paton, Mrs Riddle (as substitute for Councillor Ms Franklin) (until 12.05pm) and Ms Williams.

**ALSO**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Mrs Bradley, Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder  
Councillor Miss Sherriff, Communities, health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder  
Ms C White, Senior Analyst, Performance and intelligence Unit, Cumbria County Council

Ms A Willmott, Development Manager, Impact Housing Association  
Mr D Armstrong, Housing Services Director, Two Castles Housing Association  
Mr P Moran, Centre Manager, Cumbria Law Centre  
Ms J Wilkinson, Partner Support Manager, Department for Work and Pensions  
Mr S Byrne, Employer and Partnership Manager, Department for Work and Pensions

**OFFICERS:** Deputy Chief Executive  
Corporate Director of Governance and Regulatory Services  
Corporate Director of Economic Development  
Contracts and Community Services Manager  
Housing Development Officer  
Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager  
Policy and Performance Officer  
Overview and Scrutiny Officer

**COSP.08/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Ms Franklin.

**COSP.09/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**COSP.10/17 PUBLIC AND PRESS**

RESOLVED – That the Agenda be agreed as circulated.

**COSP.11/17 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2017 be noted.

**COSP.12/17 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS**

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

**COSP.13/17 CRIME AND DISORDER STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT**

The Chairman welcomed Ms White, Senior Analyst, Performance and intelligence Unit, Cumbria County Council to the meeting.

The Contracts and Community Services Manager presented report CS.03/17 which contained the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for Cumbria.

The Contracts and Community Services Manager reported that through the Carlisle and Eden Community Safety Partnership, Carlisle City Council developed an Annual Plan for addressing crime and antisocial behaviour in the District. The Plan formed part of the City Council's policy framework and was reviewed annually by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel. A refreshed Plan for 2017/18 would be available for scrutiny in the spring.

The Annual Plan was based on the JSNA and emerging intelligence and trends identified through Police data. The JSNA provided an overall assessment of the issues that impacted on the safety of Cumbria's communities. Research, evidence and intelligence had been gathered from local, regional and national sources and analysis undertaken to understand which communities had the greatest need for support to stay safe in Cumbria. The JSNA was attached to the report as appendix A.

Ms White gave a presentation on the JSNA which detailed the purpose of the JSNA along with information which was covered in the assessment. She reported on the data gaps in the assessment and gave detailed statistics on crime and anti-social behaviour in Carlisle and Cumbria with local and national comparison information.

Ms White summed up by asking the Panel what information they would find useful for scrutiny in the future and any areas where Members felt information was missing or not right.

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

- The presentation referenced areas where the community had concerns, how was this assessed?

Ms White explained that the information came from the Police Annual Public Consultation Survey. The response rate for the survey had been very low, around 1,400 from a population of over 500,000, but it was the best information available to gauge public opinion.

Members questioned where the consultation was published as they were concerned that the response rate was so low. Ms White responded that the consultation was on line and advertised to Neighbour Forums. Members clarified that Neighbourhood Forums no longer operated in Carlisle so the consultation was not widely publicised.

Castle Ward came top of a number of the statistics for high crime and anti-social behaviour. Members felt that this was an unfair representation of the Ward as it was not just a residential area but also covered the City Centre area.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder commented that a number of the Wards which had been identified as high crime rates in the report were all part of the pedestrian route from the city centre. She felt strongly that this should be clearly recognised in any public documents as an explanation of crime reported in specific Wards.

Members asked that future public reports included clear information on the reasoning behind high statistics in Wards such as the Castle Ward as a result of the City Centre and evening economy.

- Was there a way of drilling down the statistics to show specific areas, such as the impact of the City Centre, in Wards?

Ms White had been aware of the impact on the crime levels in the City Centre which was picked up in the Castle Ward statistics and agreed to pass Members comments through the CSP to the Police to see if the impact of areas such as Botchergate could be separated in the Castle Ward statistics.

The Contracts and Community Services Manager reminded the Panel that, although the JNSA was very important to the Partnership Plan, the Plan was more than just statistics and had a more holistic approach.

- A Member felt that more emphasis should be placed on the fact that young people were more at risk especially in areas where there was a night time economy
- Members were concerned about the increase in reoffending and asked what approach was being taken in the Plan to reduce reoffending.

The Contracts and Community Services Manager explained that reoffending had been a priority for the Partnership Plan and it was expected to continue to be a priority in the future. He agreed to provide further information on the work that had been undertaken and the work that was planned with regard to reducing reoffending.

- Were there any drug and alcohol services that supported people under the age of 18?

Ms White agreed to investigate the matter and provide Members with a response.

- How would any data gaps be identified and how would they be filled?

Ms White commented that this was difficult as a lot of information came from partners who did not always have the resources to provide more detailed information. Her team would continue to identify gaps and ask for the information where possible.

- How effective had the Partnership been?

Ms White responded that the JSNA was useful in helping to identify the needs of communities and the Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder added that it was very useful to have representatives of the different member organisations all together to discuss issues and it had allowed relationships to be built and improve communications. In addition the Problem Solving Group had proved a very effective way of addressing issues.

- Hate Crime was not identified as a priority, could it be highlighted in the Plan?

A Member clarified that, although it was called Hate Crime, it was actually an incident and could be criminal or non-criminal.

Ms White explained that Hate Crime was reported separately to Anti-Social Behaviour.

- A Member commented that the JSNA was very detailed and useful but Carlisle was a safe place, compared to other areas statistically, and it should be clear in the report.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Crime and Disorder Strategic Assessment (CS.03/17) be welcomed;

2) That Ms White, Cumbria County Council be thanked for her detailed presentation;

3) That the Carlisle and Eden Community Safety Partnership Plan clarify that some Wards in Carlisle covered the City Centre and Botchergate and as a result statistics for those Wards may not be a true reflection of the whole Ward;

4) That the next report on the Carlisle and Eden CDRP make clear what work is being undertaken to help reduce the re-offending rate in Carlisle.

## **COSP.14/17 IMPACT AND TWO CASTLES HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS**

The Chairman welcomed Ms A Willmott, Development Manager, Impact Housing Association and Mr D Armstrong, Housing Services Director, Two Castles Housing Association to the meeting.

The Housing Development Officer submitted report ED.07/17 which provided the Panel with updates from Impact Housing Association and Two Castles Housing Association.

Ms Willmott and Mr Armstrong both outlined work being undertaken by Impact Housing Association and Two Castle Association, as set out in detail in the report. Members asked questions on each section as they were being presented:

### *Flood recovery work*

#### *Potential impact of Right to Buy (RTB) extension on properties in Carlisle*

- Had either Housing Association carried out market testing with regard to potential demand for Right to Buy?

Mr Armstrong explained that it was difficult for Housing Associations to carry out market testing until the outcome of the pilot exercises, which had been carried out in 2016, were known. In addition the Government had made an announcement that they were going to undertake further pilot exercises prior to any legislative provision for the extension of RTB to Registered Providers.

Ms Willmott agreed that it was difficult to judge the potential uptake as there had not been a consistent approach. She added that Impact had tried to keep tenants updated on the situation.

### *Impact of rent reduction on operations and services for tenants*

- In response to a comment Ms Willmott explained that the rent reduction had placed significant pressures on Housing Association finances and it was difficult for Housing Associations to try and deliver their services without the revenue.

### *Use of Fixed Term Tenancies*

#### *Key performance indicators and benchmarking with other Housing Associations*

- A Member suggested that Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) from Impact, Two Castles and Riverside would be a useful comparison tool for Scrutiny and asked if this could be investigated further.

The Corporate Director of Economic Development suggested that KPIs from Housing Associations as a comparison tool could be reviewed through the new Housing Strategy which was currently being prepared.

- Did the Housing Associations have tenants groups?

Mr Armstrong responded that Two Castles had a Residents Panel and a Residents Scrutiny Panel as part of the consultation and monitoring process.

Ms Willmott confirmed that Impact had a Tenant Board and Residents Tenant Group for consultation

#### *Supported Housing funding*

This was a key issue for both Housing Associations especially with regard to the Local Housing Allowance cap and the effect it would have on Extra Care Housing. The Panel discussed the different models available for Extra Care provision and the changes to funding and were concerned about future provision of services for the elderly and most vulnerable.

Ms Willmott and Mr Armstrong explained that there were several groups that Housing Associations were part of that allowed for ideas to be shared and allowed for developments to be discussed so Associations were not competing for the same funding. Housing Associations had to accept that they could not continue as they were and had to consider more creative ways to provide the services that they wanted.

A Member asked how creative the Housing Associations were being in dealing with the LHA cap to young people and older people and Ms Willmott informed the Panel that Impact were looking at the Platform for Life programme which would give young people in employment or training an ensuite room in a shared house, each tenant would have their own tenancy and would share the bills. If the programme proved successful then Impact would roll the programme out. She explained that each area and client area would require different answers and it was a very challenging time.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder expressed her appreciation for the Housing Associations in attempting to cope with the cuts to funding, introduction of Universal Credit and LHA cap which were being forced on them. The majority of Associations had been established with the ethos of providing decent homes for general needs along with supported accommodation. Associations were trying to continue with the ethos through innovative ways and should be congratulated for trying to continue to provide the services they wanted to.

The Panel endorsed the Portfolio Holder's comments.

#### *New development opportunities and aspirations.*

##### *Opportunities for closer working with Carlisle City Council*

Two Castles and Impact were both keen to continue with their relationship with the City Council and looked forward to being involved in the Garden Village which was being master planned. They valued the informal relationship with City Council officers which gave the Associations the ability to freely discuss issues.

RESOLVED -1) That the update report (ED.07/17) from Impact and Two Castles Housing Associations be welcomed;

2) That Ms Willmott, Impact Housing Association and Mr Armstrong, Two Castles Housing Association be thanked for their detailed presentations and for their professionalism in responding to the Panels questions so thoroughly.

3) That the Panel acknowledges the difficult circumstances that Housing Associations are working under and appreciates their dedication and ability to continue to provide support to those who need it most through creative and innovative programmes.

### **COSP.15/17    RESPONSE TO WELFARE REFORM**

The Chairman welcomed Mr P Moran, Centre Manager, Cumbria Law Centre, Ms J Wilkinson, Partner Support Manager, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

The Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager presented report GD.12/17 which provided an overview of the ongoing local partnership work developed in response to the Government's welfare reform agenda, Welfare Reform Act 2012, and the Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015/16.

The Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager outlined the background to the Carlisle Welfare Reform Board which was established in 2012 and reminded the Panel of its objectives and purposes as detailed in section 2 of the report. She drew Member's attention to section 3 of the report which set out the feedback from members of the Board including the Department for Work and Pensions, Carlisle Food Bank, Welfare Advice Service, Cumbria Law Centre.

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

- How effective was the partnership working through the Carlisle Welfare Reform Board?

Ms Wilkinson responded that from the DWP's perspective the partnership had provided real value. The DWP relied on the partnership to ensure that the most vulnerable people had the right help and support. It was important for organisations to work together to share information on key issues to enable clear support. The Board identified and addressed issues to ensure those who were struggling most did not fall through the net.

- If a claimant had been sanctioned how quick was the process to get that person back into the system so they did not go without income?

The Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager explained that the Board had helped to establish a single point of contact between the City Council and Jobcentre Plus which allowed for specific issues for claimants to be recorded with the DWP. Should a claimant with a recorded issue receive a sanction then there may be other options available to get the sanction lifted or changed to ensure that the claimant remained in the system.

Mr Moran added that the welfare reform had caused many intended and unintended consequences. The Welfare Reform Board allowed for less formal ways of remedying issues for clients which helped the clients and allowed the Law Centre to make the best use of their limited resources.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder was the Chair of the Welfare Reform Board and agreed that the work had proved very important. Partners worked together to identify actual and potential problems and created a network for informal and formal communication.

- Why did the Board not have a representative from Cumbria County Council on it?

Ms Wilkinson explained that the County Council had their own Welfare Reform task group which was a more strategic group than the Carlisle Welfare Reform Board which address practical issues.

RESOLVED –1) That the update on the Response to Welfare Reform (GD.12/17) be welcomed;

2) That Mr P Moran, Centre Manager, Cumbria Law Centre and Ms J Wilkinson, Partner Support Manager, Department for Work and Pensions be thanked for their contribution to the meeting;

3) That the Members of the Carlisle Welfare Reform Board be thanked for their ongoing contributions and making the board a valuable resource;

4) That the next update on the Welfare Reform Board contain details of specific outcomes identified by the Chairman, Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager and Overview and Scrutiny Officer.

### **COSP.16/17 3<sup>RD</sup> QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT 2016/17**

The Policy and Performance Officer presented report PC.02/17 which updated the Panel on the Council's service standards relevant to the Panel and included updates on key actions contained within the new Carlisle Plan.

The Policy and Performance Officer reported that the table at Section 1 of the report illustrated the cumulative year to date figure, a month by month breakdown of performance and, where possible, an actual service standard baseline that had been established either locally or nationally. Only the service standard relevant to the Panel had been included in the Report.

The updates against the actions in the Carlisle Plan followed on from service standard information in Section 2. Attention was drawn to Appendix A of the report which set out the Carlisle Plan Actions aligned to the revised Carlisle Plan on a Page.

RESOLVED – That the split and allocation of Carlisle Plan actions aligned with the Panel remits, as detailed in report PC.02/17, be agreed.

### **COSP.17/17 PERFORMANCE MONITORING OPTIONS**

The Policy and Performance Officer submitted report PC.01/17 which set out the options for the future presentation of performance information to the Panel.

The Policy and Performance Officer reported that the Carlisle Plan actions had been completed and a suggested mapping of the 43 key actions and projects was submitted to the Panels.

He explained that work had been progressing on a new approach to management information. The success of the Smarter Service Delivery 2 Board (SSD2) meant that customer data was automatically linked through the Microsoft PowerBI tool. In addition the data for the five service standards had migrated across to PowerBI. This enabled an exception approach to performance reporting based on agreed thresholds and triggers. This approach would grow with the shift of services into the Salesforce Customer relationship Management System; additional data connectors and data migration and would build a bigger, more complete picture of demand and fulfilment across all the Council's services. It

would also remove the two tier system of service standards and management information by introducing a consistent set of measures to assess a wider range of customer calls for service.

Best practice in Overview and Scrutiny (Centre for Public Scrutiny) advocated the following:

- Prioritisation in what comes to Scrutiny (quality rather than quantity)
- Greater involvement in the Council's biggest challenges and priorities
- Greater scrutiny of critical issues
- Be more outcome focussed

Each Panel would be asked to consider a workshop, open to all Scrutiny Members, to look at the detail in the proposals presented below.

It was proposed that a simpler, clearer approach was taken based on the following principles:

1. A clear programme of work was presented to the Panels for consideration so that they could select some items for the Panels' work programmes, to include:
  - a. Carlisle Plan actions
  - b. A schedule of policies and strategies to be introduced or reviewed
  - c. Budgetary Framework
2. Overview & Scrutiny focuses on strategy and policy. Any operational issues were dealt with outside of the meeting by contacting service managers or directors directly.
3. Overview & Scrutiny consider service standards only by exception.

This approach would reduce the quantity of reports being scrutinised and shift the overview to the performance of policies and strategies. There would still be an overview role to fulfil in service standard indicators but only through exception. An exception report would include the interventions made to bring the performance back into line with the accepted standard.

It was also proposed that to improve performance content of reports presented to Overview and Scrutiny, report authors would be sent a series of performance questions and key lines of enquiry as soon as the item was added to the work programme. The performance questions would be drafted by Policy and performance Officers and reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Officer and relevant Chairman. The questions would be sent to the Portfolio Holder, Senior Manager and lead officer. The proposed approach would ensure that each report contained a clear section on how the item under scrutiny was performing, the context for the performance and the role the Council played in generating the outputs and outcomes.

RESOLVED –That the Panel agree to a workshop, open to all Scrutiny members, to look at the detail in the proposals presented in report PC.01/17.

## **COSP.18/17 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer submitted report OS.04/17 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 Notice of Executive Key Decisions had been published on 13 January 2017 and there were no items within the remit of the Panel.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reminded Members that a workshop had been arranged to take place on 2 March 2017 to consider the future relationship with Riverside.

The Chairman reminded the Panel that the proposed task group on youth issues had not moved forward and suggested that a workshop, open to all interested Members, be arranged to potentially scope a task group or to discuss if the task group should proceed.

The Panel's Work Programme for the current year had been circulated and Members were asked to consider the framework for the meeting on 6 April 2017. The following items had been included in the Work Programme for the next meeting of the Panel:

- New Leisure Contract Procurement
- Flood Update Report
- Arts Centre
- Housing Strategy
- Customer Services
- Scrutiny Annual report

The Contracts and Community Services Manager gave the Panel a brief update on the new leisure contract procurement process and suggested that a private report on the preferred bidder be scheduled in the Panel's Work Programme for July 2017. In addition the annual GLL report could be scheduled in but there would need to be clarity on the details of their presentation and the scope of Members questioning to avoid any discussion of the procurement process.

The Chairman requested on behalf of the Panel, that a report on the apparent increase in rough sleeping and begging in the City Centre, be included in the Work Programme for presentation at the earliest opportunity'.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reported that the Scrutiny Annual Report had been scheduled to come through Scrutiny in the next round of meetings, due to the timing of the meetings this would not be possible so the draft Report would be emailed to all Scrutiny Members with comments being fed back to the Scrutiny Chairs Group for approval before being submitted to full Council.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Overview Report incorporating the Work Programme and Key Decision items relevant to this Panel (OS.04/17) be noted.

2) That the following items be included on the agenda for next meeting on 6 April 2017:

- Flood Update Report
- Arts centre
- Housing Strategy
- Customer Services

3) That a Workshop, open to all interested members, be arranged to discuss the future of the Youth Task and Finish Group;

4) That the Leisure Contract Procurement be added to the Panel's Work Programme for July 2017;

5) That the following reports be added to the Panel's Work Programme for future scrutiny:

- GLL Annual Update
- Increase in begging and rough sleeping.

(Meeting ended at 12.28pm)