

AGENDA

Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 31 March 2016 AT 10:00
In the Flensburg Room, Civic Centre, Carlisle, CA3 8QG

Please note: Members should allocate at least 2 hours for Scrutiny Meetings

****Briefing meeting for Members will be at 9.30 am in the Flensburg Room****

Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies for absence and notification of substitutions

Declarations of Interest

Members are invited to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests, other registrable interests and any interests, relating to any item on the agenda at this stage.

Public and Press

To agree that the items of business within Part A of the agenda should be dealt with in public and that the items of business within Part B of the agenda should be dealt with in private.

Minutes of Previous Meeting

5 - 12

To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 14 January 2016
[Copy Minutes in Minute Book 42(5)]

To note the minutes of the meeting held on 18 February 2016.
(Copy Minutes herewith)

PART A

To be considered when the Public and Press are present

A.1 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS

To consider any matter which has been the subject of call-in.

A.2 YOUTH COUNCIL

(Culture, Leisure and Young People Portfolio)

The Partnership Manager to give a presentation on the role and programme of the Youth Council.

(Copy Presentation to follow)

A.3 FLOOD UPDATE REPORT

13 - 22

(Cross Cutting)

The Deputy Chief Executive to submit an update on the flood recovery programme of the Council's assets.

(Copy Report SD.04/16 herewith)

A.4 CUSTOMER SERVICES

23 - 34

(Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio)

The Customer Services Manager to deliver a presentation on the performance of the new website, the effects of the flood and the future of CRM and customer services.

(Copy presentation herewith)

A.5 HOUSING STRATEGY UPDATE

35 - 46

(Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio)

The Housing and Health Manager to submit a report updating the Panel on the progress of the 2012-16 Housing Strategy.

(Copy ED.14/16 Report herewith)

A.6 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

47 - 66

To consider a report providing an overview of matters related to the work of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel, together with the latest version of the Work Programme and details of the Key Decisions items relevant to this Panel as set out in the Notice of Executive Key Decisions.

(Copy Report OS.07 /16 herewith)

PART B

To be considered when the Public and Press are excluded from the meeting

NIL

Members of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Conservative – Ellis, Mrs McKerrell (Vice Chairman), Mrs Vasey, Bainbridge (sub), Bloxham (sub), Mrs Mallinson (sub)

Labour – Burns (Chairman), Ms Franklin, Osgood, Mrs Warwick, Ms Williams, Mrs Atkinson (sub), Caig (sub), Harid (sub)

**Enquiries, requests for reports, background papers,
etc to Committee Clerk: Jacqui Issatt - 817557**

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2016 AT 10.00AM

PRESENT: Councillor Burns (Chairman), Councillors Bloxham (as substitute for Councillor Mrs Vasey), Caig (as substitute for Councillor Ms Williams), Ellis, Ms Franklin, Mrs McKerrell (until 11.40am) and Osgood.

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Riddle – Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder
Councillor Mrs Bradley – Economy and Enterprise Portfolio Holder
Councillor Glover - Leader

OFFICERS: Deputy Chief Executive
Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Manager
Customer Services Manager
Shared RBS Partnership Manager
Policy and Performance Officer x2
Overview and Scrutiny Officer

COSP.09/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs Vasey, Councillor Ms Williams and Councillor Ms Quilter, Culture, Leisure and Young People Portfolio Holder.

COSP.10/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

COSP.11/16 PUBLIC AND PRESS

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

COSP.12/16 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meetings held on 14 January 2016 be noted.

COSP.13/16 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS

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

COSP.14/16 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented report OS.04/16 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 5 February 2016, included the followings item which fell within the remit of this Panel. Both items would be considered by the Executive on 7 March 2016:

KD.01/16 Updated Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy – The Executive would be asked to confirm the changes to the updated policy.

KD.02/16 Housing Repair Grant (repayable) – The Executive would be asked to approve the use of the Capital pot in Homelife's budget for a repayable grant product (secured on property) to older and vulnerable householders who needed essential repairs to their home but had difficulty in accessing commercial or other loan products.

Members did not raise any questions or comments on the items contained within the Notice of Key Decisions.

The Panel's Work Programme had been attached to the report and Members were asked note and/or amend the Panel's Work Programmes and in particular consider the framework for the next meeting.

The following items had been scheduled for the next meeting on 31 March 2016:

- Scrutiny Annual Report
- Customer Services
- Youth Council

The Scrutiny Chairs Group on 4 February had resolved that each Panel would have a standing Flood Update report added to their agenda to receive updates on issues within the remit of that Panel.

The Chairman asked that update on the Leisure Contract be brought to the next meeting of the Panel if any progress had been made.

RESOLVED –1) That the Overview Report (OS.04/16) incorporating the Work Programme and Notice of Executive Decisions items relevant to this Panel be noted.

2) That the following items be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel:

- Scrutiny Annual Report
- Customer Services
- Youth Council
- Flood Update Report
- Leisure Contract Update

COSP.15/16 RESPONSE TO WELFARE REFORM

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted report SD.02/16 which provided an overview of the partnership work which had been developed in response to the Government's welfare reform agenda, Welfare reform Act 2012 and the Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015/16.

The Deputy Chief Executive reminded the Panel of the key elements of the Welfare Reform Act and reported that the implementation of the Act had had a major impact on the work and practice of all those associated with directly delivering benefits; those who operated in the 'benefits chain'; organisations supporting benefit claimants and the claimants themselves.

In response to the implementation of the Act many local authorities had formed partnerships to explore the impact of the changes and to assist each other as the new arrangements took shape. At a County wide level the County Council formed a Welfare Reform Board and tasked Cumbria Observatory with monitoring the impact by gathering and analysing data from

our local areas. At the District level a number of District Councils had taken the decision to form Welfare Reform groups or boards. The Carlisle Welfare Reform Board took shape in late 2012.

The Carlisle Welfare Reform Board originally convened to focus on the key immediate changes that would affect residents in the district, more recently the Board had considered the potential impact of the Welfare Reform and Work Bill 2015-16 which led the Board to reconsider its purpose, membership and terms of reference. The key changes to the work of the Board were:

- a move towards identifying key gaps in local services that required joint work to ensure a better service delivery
- a targeted approach to delivering projects and actions that could assist residents to seek and obtain permanent work that was safe, fair and productive.
- align the work of the Board with other key Carlisle Partnership group such as the Carlisle Economic Partnership and Healthy City Partnership.

A copy of the draft Carlisle Welfare reform Board Terms of reference 2015 had been attached to the report for the Panel's consideration.

The Deputy Chief Executive took the Panel through the timeline for Welfare Reform and local response drawing attention to the introduction of local authority led Universal Credit, Local Housing Allowances changes, localised support for Council Tax, Benefit Cap and the removal of the spare room subsidy. The Board considered the changes as they were introduced and the impact they had on the local area.

Appendix 2 of the report provided a summary of data and headline analysis about the potential impact of welfare reform in Carlisle and the area of most concern was the 6,812 households in Carlisle that had an annual income of less than £10,000, which was above the national level.

The Communities Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder reiterated the need for sharing information and the barriers organisations faced when trying to share information. The Board was useful as a sounding board and to gather information and showed that the Council could not deal with Welfare Reform alone.

In considering the report and presentation from the Deputy Chief Executive Members raised the following comments and questions:

- Was there a compulsion to have a Welfare Reform Board and did the Council take prominence within the Board as the Local Authority?

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that there was no requirement for the Council to have a Welfare reform Board. The City Council had established the Board to have local input on the impact of the Welfare Reform as well as encourage partners to improve services.

The Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Manager commented that the Board enabled preventative measures to be put in place before long term issues arose. The Board allowed for an open discussion to take place on cases and attendees had found the ability to challenge in an open forum incredibly useful.

The Customer Services Manager added that the Board had changed the relationship between the City Council and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) from a process driven, restricted relationship to a customer based relationship which put the customer journey first.

- The data in the report had not included any information with regard to people over the age of 65.

The Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder responded that information regarding people over the age of 65 had been included in the Health and Wellbeing Board.

- Would it be possible for the Panel to see a case study to understand the customer journey and processes involved?

The Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder agreed that case studies could be circulated to Members and that they would show clearly how effective the work of the Board had been.

- Was the impact of the Welfare Reform in Carlisle known?

The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that data was collected but it did not reflect the impact on individual families or households. Case studies showed the customer journey and the impact on those customers. There was concern regarding the number of households with an income of under £10,000 and consideration of how the Board could relate to local employers the need for good terms and conditions, contracts and transport to improve the chances of keeping people in work. Carlisle had a lot of people who were on the hard line of poverty and there was a problem with debt and retaining long standing work.

The Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Manager added that the group's agenda had been amended to include a standard item for customer journeys and representatives from the Troubled Family Programme would be attending the meetings.

- Recent press articles had discussed the possibility of the removal of free school meals, how did the Board encompass all of the issues that were arising?

The Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder explained that the Board received regular information from the Food Bank and there had been evidence of an increase in the usage of the food bank during school holidays when children did not have access to a school meal. This was an issue Board members would monitor.

- A Member suggested that officer names be removed from the Terms of Reference and replaced with job titles.
- Would the action plans that were referred to in the Terms of Reference be made available for scrutiny and how would the effectiveness of actions be measured?

The Deputy Chief Executive advised the Panel that they had the ability to scrutinise partners and agencies and it was within their remit to review the progress of the Board. He explained that the Board would focus on 3-4 projects areas which would have clear targets for monitoring purposes. The projects progress would be available for scrutiny.

- Did the Board address the loss of services from partners and were potential changes to services discussed?

The Deputy Chief Executive responded that the purpose of the Board was not to deal with individual agency budgetary issues but it would discuss the impact of the reduction or removal of services

- Homelessness had been reducing did the local figures for homelessness match the national trend?

The Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Manager explained that the focus of the Council had been the prevention of homelessness. The Council saw the same number of people who required support annually but how they were being assisted with had changed. The number households where the City council had accepted statutory homeless duty had reduced but the prevention figures had increased.

A Member commented that it was not known if the reduction in homelessness was a result of local preventative measures or the impact of Welfare Reform.

The Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Manager added that how the Council assisted households was different and focused on early intervention and preventative initiatives to assist so that the household did not reach the crisis levels in relation to homelessness.

- A Member commented that at the start of the Welfare Reform the Council had been informed that there would be an increase in homelessness but it had not been the case. He felt that the view of Welfare Reform had been negative and the Panel should consider the positives that had been a result of Welfare Reform and the Reform should be viewed as an opportunity not a challenge.

The Deputy Chief Executive responded that there had been an 18% increase in the presentation of people who required housing advice and assistance and it was an issue for the authority. Prevention was the key and with the wider trend of low income for families it had to be the focus of the Board. He accepted that the figures for homelessness had reduced but the Panel had to understand the reason why.

- The impact of the benefit cap had been low, had there been any problems?

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the issue of benefits cap raised a lot of anxiety along with under occupancy but the data collected showed that the number of actual issues was much lower than the level of anxiety.

- How had the Revenues and Benefits section dealt with the changes to benefits and was fraud prevention being better managed?

The Shared RBS Partnership Manager explained that the extent of the changes had yet to be seen, the impact of the introduction of Universal Credit had been very slow and the implementation and migration of data would take a long time. He added that the City Council would provide the housing benefit service for several more years. In relation to the fraud section, City Council officers had been TUPEd over to DWP but they remained in the building, although their work was slightly different they had the same focus, skill set and intent as the City Council fraud section.

- A Member raised concerns that people would think that Riverside Carlisle was the only housing provider in Carlisle. All the housing providers in Carlisle collected data that could be shared with the Board and partners.

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that all housing providers within the district were invited to the Board and all had attended, participated and provided data. Riverside did tend to be talked about more as they were the biggest housing provider in the district.

- Had all the legislative changes had an impact on the Benefits Advice Service (BAS)?

The Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Manager responded that there had been few cases related to Universal Credit, however, the BAS had seen an increase in cases where people claiming sickness benefit or with mental health issues had been without money for an extended period of time. This had previously been an uncommon occurrence but it, unfortunately had become much more common.

- Why had Social Services not been included in the Board membership?

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that it had been very difficult to gain the right representative from Cumbria County Council and this had been an ongoing issue for a number of the districts.

- Would the shared platforms/collective source of software packages be jointly funded?

The Deputy Chief Executive stated that the goal was to try and get to a stage where all the partners were using the same technology which enabled them to share information without any additional costs.

RESOLVED – 1) That report SD.02/16 Response to Welfare Reform be welcomed:

2) That the Terms of Reference for the Welfare Reform Board be amended to include job titles instead of officer names;

3) That Board members from different organisations be invited to attend the Panel when the next Welfare Reform Update report was considered.

COSP.16/16 EQUALITY POLICY AND EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

The Policy and Performance Officer submitted report PC.02/16 which set out the draft Equality Policy and equality objectives.

The Policy and Performance Officer reminded the Panel of the Council's duty under the Equality Act 2010. Attached to the report, for the Panel's consideration, was the Annual Equality Report 2014/15 which provided an overview of equality work, the Equality Policy which set out the revised approach to equality including new objectives for 2016-19 and the Equality Action Plan 2016/17 which set out action on how the Council would continue to work towards achieving objectives.

The Policy and Performance Officer added that the Council must provide information about how equality was considered in decision making, policy development and engagement. The information would be published within the annual equality report and reported to Senior Management Team, the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny.

At the request of the Panel the Policy and Performance Officer highlighted the differences between the new Policy and the previous Policy. She explained that the new Policy brought all aspects of equality into one document which was shorter and clearer about the

responsibilities of the Council. The previous Policy had not included objectives or a requirement to publish an annual progress report.

The Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder informed the Panel that the Policy had been out to consultation and only one response had been received so far. North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust had provided a very positive response to the Policy.

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

- What had the change been to the policy on local knowledge tests for taxi drivers?

The Policy and Performance Officer explained that the licensing section had received complaints that some drivers had been unable to communicate with passengers due to language barriers. The licensing section had investigated other Councils and found that many required drivers to pass a language test; as a result the City Council had introduced a language test to the local knowledge test for new drivers and improve the service for customers.

- The objective 'Improve health, wellbeing and economic prosperity in Carlisle' was very broad, was there a way to narrow it down to areas the City Council could contribute to?

The Policy and Performance Officer responded that it would be difficult to measure the Council's contribution exactly as there were many determinants of health and economic prosperity. Consideration had been given to the Carlisle Plan and the vision of the Council when establishing the objectives, and it was felt that the objective could support the Plan in reducing inequalities

- Did the Council keep information on hard to reach groups and what measures were taken to engage with them?

The Policy and Performance Officer confirmed that information was held across the authority on hard to reach groups as some Directorates worked with those groups on a daily basis, in addition the Council held events in the City Centre which encouraged communities to come together.

The Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder commented that it was the Council's responsibility to make all information and services available to as many people as possible. If the Council thought that a group was not accessing services then work would be undertaken to find out why and what could be done to encourage them to access the services.

RESOLVED –That report PC.02/16 Equality Policy and Equality Objectives be noted.

COSP.17/16 3RD QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT 2015/16

The Policy Officer presented report PC.04/16 updating the Panel on the Council's service standards that helped measure performance. The report also included an update on key actions contained within the Carlisle Plan 2013-16.

RESOLVED – That report PC.04/16 be welcomed.

(Meeting ended at 12.08pm)

Report to Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:

A.3

Meeting Date: 31 March 2016
Portfolio: All
Key Decision: No
Within Policy and
Budget Framework NO
Public / Private Public

Title: December 2015 Flood Update Report
Report of: The Deputy Chief Executive
Report Number: SD0.04/16

Purpose / Summary:

This report is part of a series of update reports prepared for Overview and Scrutiny Committees on flood recovery activities and future programmed work.

The reports contain a generic section designed to give all Committees an overview of flood recovery work and a more specific section tailored to the work areas of each Committee.

This Community Overview and Scrutiny Report provides specific updates relating to:

- Customer Services (including web, phone and face to face)
- Housing support
- Sport and leisure facilities and partnership activity
- Arts activity (focused on the Old Fire Station)
- Parks and open spaces
- Community Centres
- Resident support via the Carlisle Flood Partnership (led by Cumbria County Council)

Recommendations:

1. That members of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee review this report and give consideration to the progress made to date and the recovery plans going forward.

Tracking

Executive:	-
Overview and Scrutiny:	31.03.16
Council:	-

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In December 2015 Carlisle, other places in Cumbria and number of other areas in the North of England and Scotland suffered widespread and severe flood damage as a result of Storm Desmond and the subsequent storms during the Christmas and New Year period.
- 1.2 From Friday 4th December onwards a multi-agency emergency response was required to deal with the initial and on-going stages of the event. The City Council, amongst others, significantly contributed to Gold, Silver and Bronze command centres at Penrith Police HQ and in the Durranshill police station in Carlisle.
- 1.3 On Monday 7th December the City Council set up its own Crisis Management Team (CMT) at Bousteads Grassing Depot. The Civic Centre was severely damaged by the floods and at this point in time was still under water (to the first floor level), without power or other key services. Bousteads Grassing was used as a temporary centre for Council activity. The Crisis Management team consisted of Senior Officers and a full range of other key staff, all of whom played a vital role in coordinating the City Council response to the flood and our on-going recovery activity.
- 1.4 The initial work arising from this CMT focused on:
- enabling our Business Continuity Plans for service recovery (customer contact, access to services, delivery of key services, re-starting ICT infrastructure, communications, asset recovery)
 - ensuring clear communication with residents, staff, members, press and media of the key issues arising and our multi-agency responses
 - liaison with emerging County wide recovery groups for housing, infrastructure and community issues
 - handling offers of assistance and donations for flood victims
 - Developing plans for assets and wide spread service recovery
- 1.5 The CMT continued to meet on a daily basis in the run up to the Christmas break and frequently during the early part of January 2016. After this initial crisis period the recovery work was then taken on by a range of other focused groups relating to property, services, finance, insurance and legal issues.

- 1.6 Whilst the impact of the floods and the on-going implications continue to be a major concern for residents, businesses, visitors and public sector providers the purpose of this report is to focus on the recovery efforts of the City Council and its constituent services. The rest of this report will focus on these areas of work.

2. FLOOD RECOVERY ACTIVITY: DECEMBER – MARCH 2016

2.1 Local Environment:

The clean-up of Carlisle started as soon as the flood waters receded. Due to the heavy rain in previous months the rivers had been full of sediment which meant thick deposits of mud were left behind by the flood waters. Some of the mud had to be cleared by hand with shovels before the street cleaning machines could go in.

Skips were provided in flood affected areas for residents and emptying these was made more difficult by the temporary closure of Eden Bridge which meant getting to the drop-off sites took much longer than usual.

Overnight road closures were put in place for several nights on Warwick Road to enable local streets to be cleared while minimising disruption and avoiding danger to the public.

Up to 18th December, in excess of 1,064 tonnes of flood material was disposed of from flood affected streets in Carlisle. A further 75 tonnes was collected from Bousteads HWRC and 17 tonnes from Brampton HWRC. Around 350 skips were provided across the flood affected areas to deal with the initial volume of flood damaged contents.

These works were carried out in addition to the normal services still being provided across the rest of the District. Staff from Local Environment also provided tremendous assistance in emptying the ground floor of the Civic Centre and a range of other flood damaged properties.

2.2 Customer Contact and access to services:

Following the flood the Civic Centre was initially inaccessible to staff and members of the public. The Council was temporarily left without IT systems, phone and web services and has no facilities for meeting and assisting residents and customers.

The recovery of key customer services was one of the first priorities for the CMT. A temporary Customer Services Centre was operational in the Old Town Hall on Monday 7th December (complete with phone lines and functioning web service). The team continued to operate from this site until access to the Civic Centre was

secured and arrangements were made for the relocation of this service to Committee Rooms A, B and C on 21st December. Telephone services had also then been fully restored (14th December) in the first floor IT Training Room.

Since this point a more appropriate facility has been secured via the temporary contact centre and Civic reception in the members' car park to the side of the Civic Centre, this facility opened 29th February. This provides all of the services we normally provide and is accommodating some of our partners such as the DWP and passport office. The Customers Services team will continue to occupy these facilities whilst a full recovery of the ground floor and basement of the Civic Centre takes place.

2.3 Flood grants and household payments (Figures as of 4th March 2016)

Community Support Grant -£500 household scheme:

Further to the floods the Government announced an immediate assistance scheme targeted to support households affected by the event. This offered a one off Community Support Grant payment of £500 to each household.

Up to 4th March, 1,648 households have been confirmed as flooded by Storm Desmond, of these 1,625 are eligible for the £500 community support grant. Of these, 1,484 properties have so far received a payment of £500 each, equating to £742,000 of grant. This is being recovered from the County Council upon submission of fortnightly grant claims.

£5,000 flood resilience grant:

This Government scheme covers both residential and commercial properties (204 businesses were affected by the flood) and is being administered by the Housing Department.

99 applications have been received and payments made to 3 applicants (as of 4th March). 53 applications have been approved equating to approx. £239,213. This is recoverable from the County Council.

Council Tax & NNDR discount schemes:

County wide schemes have now been approved with the DCLG paying £400,000 to the County Council to fund the local discretions (second homes/empty properties/flood affected businesses) contained within the County wide schemes.

Districts are submitting monthly claims to recover the costs incurred. Funding for discounts offered in line with the Government Scheme will be paid through a S31 grant directly to us. To date Council tax discounts have been awarded to 1,661 householders which amounts to £648,987.17 up until 31st March 2016.

Business Rates discount has been awarded to 84 businesses, amounting to £230,417.81 to 31st March 2016.

2.4 City Council property assets recovery

The 2015 flood inflicted widespread and severe damaged to City Council property assets. Since the flood significant effort and expense has been incurred in making safe, assessing, stripping, drying and preparing facilities for full recovery. During this period the Council has been actively involved with our insurance brokers, loss adjusters and insurers to develop our claim for property and contents.

The Council (guided by our insurers) have also employed WYG as programme managers for the first phase of our property recovery.

WYG have assisted the Council to develop a property recovery plan and tackle immediate recovery issues such as making safe and stripping / drying our assets.

A central part of this work to date has been the surveying exercise to establish the post flood condition and reinstatement costs of over 60 assets ranging from the Civic Centre to minor items such as walls and open spaces. The completion of these surveys is now imminent and the next phase of works procurement has begun. This will be the focus of attention during the next month as contractors are secured for key recovery projects.

2.5 Housing and Homelessness

In the aftermath of the flood the Homelessness service has assisted 256 households to find temporary accommodation. This includes accommodating and supporting 18 households within the hostel service.

Of these 256 households:

- 32% rehoused with friends / family
- 23% rehoused with private sector landlords
- 8% rehoused by Carlisle City Council
- 19% supported with temporary accommodation including residential care
- 12% into hotel / bed and breakfast
- 6% chose to remain in their own property

Further to these efforts the service team is now also working with those male clients who were previously accommodated in the John Street Hostel. This facility was severely damaged by the flood and the Council is currently preparing a specification for the full recovery of the site. The residents of this facility are currently being housed in the Council's array of dispersed temporary accommodation. This is adding further demands on staff that now need to support clients at arms-length

whilst our normal service is recovered. The reinstatement of the John Street facility is a primary action for the Assets Recovery Group.

2.6 Sport and leisure facilities and partnership activity

Of all the assets damaged by Storm Desmond the City Council's sport and leisure facilities suffered the most severe impact.

The following facilities have been severely damaged:

- Sheepmount Athletics and Football facilities
- Stoney Holme and Swifts Golf facilities
- Bitts Park Tennis and associated leisure facilities

Additionally the Sands Centre also suffered widespread damage across the ground floor and the Pools also had plant room damage as a result of drainage water rising.

Immediately prior to the flood the Council had been engaged in the early stages of a new procurement process for the long term management of all these facilities. This exercise has been paused during the initial recovery period and will now be re-started early April.

Condition and reinstatement surveys for all these facilities are now almost complete with costs expected to run into several million pounds. A full and on-going negotiation is now underway with insurers to establish claim levels at each facility.

The Council has sought to keep facility partners GLL fully engaged in this on-going process and likewise our partners have also maintained good communications on service recovery and reinstatement works on facilities such as the Pools, Sands and Stoney Holme.

Together the Council and GLL have also sought to keep customers fully briefed on joint recovery work and delivery temporary facilities and services were possible. A new temporary athletics facility (with £25k financial support from Sport England) will soon be open at Caldew School, Dalston and tennis coaching services are also now back operating at Bitts Park.

Finally the Council and GLL have also held discussions with a range of sports governing bodies (Tennis, Athletics, Football) and Sport England. These bodies are helpfully assisting the Council will recovery plans for our facilities and a number of voluntary sports clubs in the City.

2.7 Arts activity (Old Fire Station)

Like the Cities sports facilities the Old Fire Station (OFS) was severely damaged by the flood. Initial estimates suggested that the facility may be re-opened in May 2016, however it is now expected that the OFS will not be available until August.

Council officers are liaising with the Arts Council and performing artists to put together a comprehensive programme for late summer onwards. The Council has also sought to protect some bookings by relocating them to the theatre at the new Harraby Community Centre.

2.8 Parks and open spaces

As in the paragraphs above the impact of the flood on our key parks and green infrastructure has been severe.

Bitts Park and Rickerby Park have both been damaged by the flood and whilst green open space is now naturally recovering to some extent, play equipment, paths, lighting, fencing, monuments and depot buildings have all been affected.

Survey work (as part of the WYG commission above) is now almost complete and early, safe removal of damaged equipment has begun. However it will still be some months before new play equipment and reinstatement of key paths such as the Hadrian's Wall trail are fully recovered.

2.9 Community Centres

Community Centres played an important role during the immediate aftermath of the flood. Greystone Community Centre was the key reception centre following the first 24 hours of the emergency and acted a beacon of support and community activity during the whole emergency period.

Botcherby Community Centre was severely damaged by flood waters and remains closed for the moment. Survey work has been completed on the site and stripping and drying activities are complete. Alongside John Street Hostel and the Civic Centre this building is a top priority for recovery works.

In addition Downagate Community Centre (not a building owned by the City Council) at Warwick Bridge was also significantly affected by flood damage. The management committee of this centre are currently appraising their options and working with insurers to recover the facility.

2.10 Resident support via the Carlisle Flood Partnership (led by Cumbria County Council)

During the initial (emergency) stages of the flood Carlisle City Council and other partners such as the University of Cumbria, Greystone Community Centre, Round Table, Carlisle Food Bank and a long list of other charitable organisations worked together to try and assist those affected by the storm.

The City Council working with these groups organised a distribution centre for donated goods and services via Fusehill Street campus and Greystone Community Centre. This exercise was operational in the run up to Christmas and involved a huge effort to manage, store and deliver donated items. The NHS supported this effort by providing the City Council with a 20,000 sqft warehouse facility at Kingmoor Park to store donations.

As the emergency period passed the County Council organised and continue to lead a community focused flood recovery group.

This group contains a range of partners (The City and County Councils, British Red Cross, Carlisle Parish Councils Association, Environment Agency, Greystone Community Centre, CVS, Rotary, Cumbria Community Foundation) who are all focused on delivering joined up support service to local residents.

Paul Hendy (a member of this group) is also leading on delivering support services from the Flood Advice Centre based in the Nisi Prius building adjacent to the Courts in the City centre.

Finally in addition to this County led work a member of the local community Stephen Higgs has also organised a Community Flood Action Group. This group is made up of residents and businesses who have been affected by the flood. Liaison between these two groups is now taking place to ensure a coordinated response to key issues and individual requirements.

3.0 RECOVERY PROGRAMME – FUTURE ACTIONS

- 3.1 Further to the above initial information, views are requested from Scrutiny members on the future format and content of recovery programme updates.

As the programme develops it is clear that key areas such as costs of recovery, community issues, facility reinstatement will all be of interest to members however to avoid unnecessary work a guide to future areas of interest would assist officers to prepare a useful set of updates.

- 3.2 In addition to this request it should also be noted that an Informal Council session is planned for April 2016 (dates still to be determined) where representatives from key

agencies such as the Environment Agency will be invited to present their flood reports and position / direction on future resilience projects and programmes.

Contact Officer: Darren Crossley

Ext: 7004

Appendices

attached to report:

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- **None**

Customer Services

31st March 2016



Temporary Contact Centre v0.1



Set up phones and face to face in the TIC Monday 7th December.

Oh dear!!



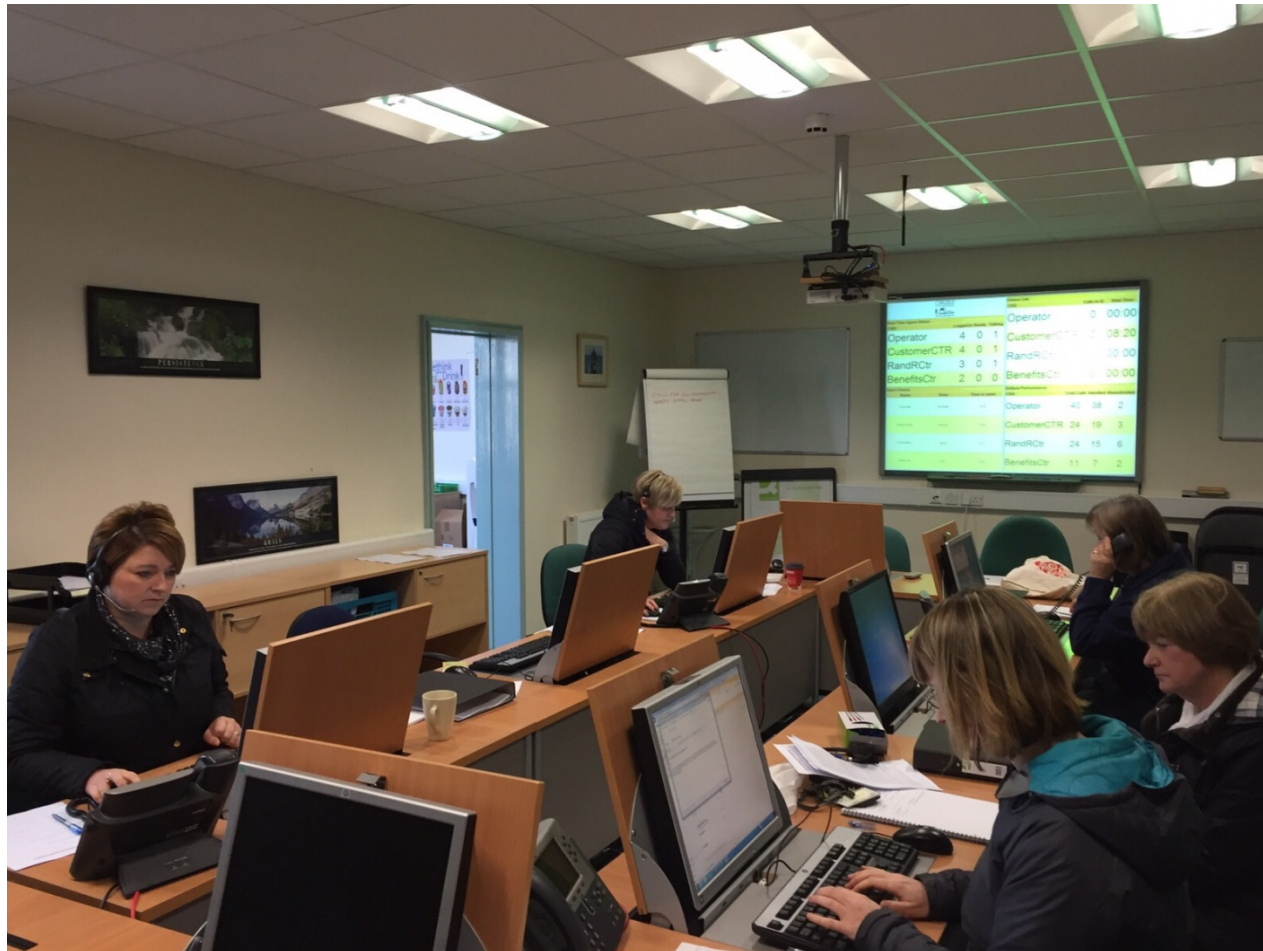
My shoes!!



Self Service



Phone Room – 14th Dec





Smarter Services Delivery Project (phase 1)

- Overview
- Work to date – New website

Website

- Live Sept 2015
- Transaction based site with deep integration
- Pages cut down from 3,000 to under 300



SMARTER SERVICES DELIVERY .1 OVERVIEW

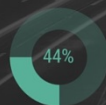
MARCH 2016



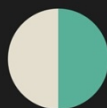
8700 MYACCOUNT USERS



29% OF CUSTOMER CONTACT ONLINE



DECREASE IN EMAILS



53% of small containers now collected
by customers



**NEW CARLISLE.GOV.UK
PLUS 5 MINI SITES LAUNCHED SEPT 15**

1014

Increase in Council
Tax Direct Debit
Payments



63%

Of Allotment
applications made
online



2188

Online forms
received for waste
services. 25% of
transactions



27 NEW ONLINE TRANSACTIONS



E-billing

6470 sign ups - 4000 live accounts
10.2% of bills now sent via email.



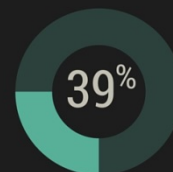
Online Change Of Address

8176 Online Change of addresses taken



Appropriate Technology

A new responsive carlisle.gov.uk
platform for future development



Of Pest Control bookings
made Online

Smarter Services Delivery (phase 2)

- CRM built “in-house” with salesforce.
- Leaner service processes
- More on-line service requests
- More done in the contact centre

Report to Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:

A.5

Meeting Date: 31 March 2016
Portfolio: Economy, Enterprise and Housing
Key Decision: No
Within Policy and Budget Framework: Yes
Public / Private: Public

Title: HOUSING STRATEGY UPDATE
Report of: The Director of Economic Development
Report Number: ED 14/16

Purpose / Summary: This report provides an update on the progress of the Housing Strategy, as well as identifying current challenges to delivery. The Action Plan is included at *Appendix 1*, relating to strategic, operational, and project work delivered between 2012 and 2016, including performance data.

Recommendations: that Members of the Panel consider the updated Action Plan and provide relevant feedback and guidance.

Tracking

Executive:	N/A
Overview and Scrutiny:	N/A
Council:	N/A

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Housing Strategy Requirements

The Deregulation Act 2015 removed the requirement on Council's to have a Housing Strategy, although Local Authorities can still maintain a Strategy if they so wish. Current and pipeline Strategic Housing documents are:-

- The Homelessness Strategy – an inter-agency strategy for Carlisle and District (2015);
- The Housing Delivery Action Plan is currently being jointly developed by the Housing and Planning teams;
- A Private Sector Housing Strategy is proposed for 2017;
- The Cumbria Housing Statement is due to be signed off imminently. The Statement has been prepared by the Cumbria Housing Group and represents a combined vision for the Cumbrian Local Authorities, replacing the Cumbria Housing Strategy (2011-15).

2. Action Plan Progress

The Action Plan provides updates on the progress in respect of the three priority areas:-

1. Balancing the Housing Market
2. Decent and Healthy Homes
3. Supporting Vulnerable People.

The more significant policy elements are summarised below (additional detail is provided in the attached Action Plan).

2.1 Balancing the Housing Market

Key milestones include:-

- Demonstration Project – students from Carlisle College will receive training and learn new skills developing 40 new homes for affordable rent on a Council owned site at Beverley Rise, Harraby. Riverside were appointed as the preferred Housing delivery partner in March 2016 following a major tendering exercise.
- Affordable development on Council owned sites – 58 new homes for affordable rent (a mix of houses and bungalows) were completed by Riverside over two sites at Raffles in early 2015.

- The 'Cumbria Choice' choice based lettings scheme (the allocation policy of all 6 Cumbrian District Councils and the 8 largest Housing Associations) was reviewed and updated in 2013 and is due to be updated again in 2016 following the latest review. This ensures the policy is kept up to date with the most recent legislation.
- Low Cost Home Ownership policy adopted by Council in July 2015 – the Housing team now manages the initial sales and re-sales of over 300 'Discounted Sale' properties. The new policy gives priority to those households with a greater priority for a particular type of housing (e.g. families for larger properties and households including an elderly or disabled persons for bungalows or ground-floor accommodation).
- The Council's Housing team has worked closely with Impact Housing Association; Cumbria County Council; the Homes and Communities Agency; and Brampton and Beyond Community Trust to help facilitate the delivery of the new Extra Care scheme at the Irthing Centre, Brampton. The new development will open in summer 2016, providing 38 apartments to help older residents (and some younger disabled people) to live independently within a supported environment.

2.2 Decent and Healthy Homes

Significant achievements include:-

- Improved standards in the private rented sector – a range of initiatives have been introduced, including the updated Landlord Accreditation Scheme, which was reviewed jointly with the other Districts and the National Landlord's Association.
- Empty properties – 54 properties were brought back into use for an affordable rent using approximately £250,000 of external grant funding from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The Council's Empty Property Officer received a commendation in the Empty Property Practitioner of the Year event in May 2015.
- Reducing anti-social behaviour – a number of successful partnerships have been established, including a funding award from the Police and Crime Commissioner to develop the Countywide Keep Safe/ Sanctuary scheme.
- A significant range of measures had been introduced to reduce fuel poverty, including:-
 - 589 lofts insulated;
 - 103 solid walls insulated;
 - 457 boilers replaced.
- Disabled Facilities Grants – a number of initiatives have been developed, including the introduction of a procurement framework to enable the Council to deliver better services despite reduced funding.
- Gypsy and Traveller provision – a countywide Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) was completed in 2013, which has influenced site provision within the Council's emerging Local Plan. The

number of permanent pitches doubled between the previous GTAA in 2008 and 2013.

2.3 Supporting Vulnerable People

- The updated Homelessness Strategy was adopted by the Council and key local stakeholders in 2015. The same year the Peer Review for Gold Standard confirmed Carlisle's Homelessness Services as among the top 5% nationally.
- The new family hostel at Water Street opened in July 2013, providing 10 flexible family units of accommodation. The scheme won an award for community engagement activities at the Northern Housing Consortium's Northern Screen Awards in November 2014.
- The 'Community Neighbours' scheme has helped to improve access to services for vulnerable people from hard to reach groups – 65 partnerships are currently in place with volunteers managed through the Community Neighbours coordinator.
- A multi-agency Welfare Reform Board has been established, helping vulnerable people adjust to the impact of welfare reform.
- The lease and management agreement with the YMCA to manage frontline services at Cumbria Gateway was terminated by the YMCA in late 2015. However, there is currently significant interest from the third sector in taking over the lease of the building.

2.5 Emerging Government Policy

2.5.1 Balancing the Housing Market: the Government is committed to developing more housing, but in respect of affordable housing, the emphasis is now solely on home ownership, with new or re-branded initiatives including Starter Homes; Shared Ownership; the extension of Right to Buy to Housing Association stock; Rent to Purchase; as well as the extension of the Help to Buy programme, funded by a tax on buy-to-lets and second homes.. Although new initiatives to help people onto the housing ladder are to be welcomed, there is no more funding for affordable or social rented homes. This is problematic as 70% of the 295 households per annum identified as being in need of affordable housing in Carlisle's most recent Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) from September 2014 required affordable rented homes.

2.5.2 Decent and Healthy Homes: the Government have announced that there will be no further grants to bring Empty Properties back into use, and due to changes to the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and Green Deal it is difficult to access funding for local households on low incomes to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty through delivery of affordable warmth schemes. The way that government funding for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) is disseminated is also changing. In the June 2013 Spending Review the government announced a pooled budget intended to enable the National Health Service and local authorities to jointly commission health and social care services. From 2015-16 DFG funding is un-ring fenced and part of the Better Care Fund, paid to Cumbria County Council, while the

districts retain statutory responsibility for delivering DFGs. In future, Carlisle and District may be expected to evidence the level of funding we require.

3. CONSULTATION

- 3.1** A wide range of stakeholders have been consulted on a number of key elements of the Housing Strategy, including the Homelessness Strategy, Cumbria Choice (choice based lettings scheme) and the Council's Low Cost Home Ownership policy. The Council continues to engage with partners through Cumbria Housing Group, Carlisle Partnership, the Homelessness Strategy implementation Group and the Welfare Reform Board.

4. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1** The Action Plan details the progress of the Housing Strategy since 2012, and Members of the Panel are requested to provide relevant feedback and guidance.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

- 5.1** "Address current and future housing needs to protect and improve residents' quality of life."

Contact Officer: **Jeremey Hewitson**

Ext: **7519**

Appendices

attached to report: ***Appendix 1: Housing Strategy Action Plan Achievements and Outcomes 2012-16***

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- **None**

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS/RISKS:

Chief Executive's -

Community Engagement –

Economic Development –

Governance –

Local Environment –

Resources –

Appendix 1

Housing Strategy Action Plan Achievements & Outcomes 2012-16

1. Balancing the Housing Market	Achievements
Deliver a sustainable mix of market and private sector housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordable housing completions: 134 delivered in 2014-15 (average 105 p.a. since 2009-10). Total completions: 419 in 2014/15 is best figure for several years, supporting Local Plan delivery aspirations. Extra Care Housing - 38 units due to be completed at the Irthing Centre, Brampton in summer 2016.
Identify innovative ways of funding and delivering affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overage agreement on public/ private partnership with Lovell to regenerate Raffles estate: long-term partnership to deliver almost 500 properties with over 260 units already delivered and over £19m invested. Demonstration Project – innovative partnership with Carlisle College to deliver affordable homes on Council-owned sites, while simultaneously providing skills to local trainees and apprentices. Riverside confirmed, March 2016, as preferred partner to deliver 40 home development at Beverley Rise.
Bring forward more land for housing development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sites brought forward through the emerging Local Plan meet 5-year land supply target. The Council has provided discounted land to provide affordable housing and Extra Care housing over the last few years – most recently for 58 units for affordable rent completed at Raffles in 2014-15. Proactive engagement with Local Housing Associations to bring forward new sites (joint Housing & Planning events held for Housing Associations in January & September 2015).

<p>Work closely with communities to address their housing needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with Brampton and Beyond Community Trust on Brampton Irthing Centre Extra Care scheme. • Consultation with a range of stakeholders: including new Local Plan; Low Cost Home Ownership policy; Tenancy Strategy; <i>Cumbria Choice</i> (countywide Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme) revised policy.
<p>Prioritise the delivery of affordable housing in rural areas, housing for older people and family sized housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison with Cumbria Rural Housing Trust (unfortunately due to close March 2016) to support affordable rural schemes and housing initiatives. • The Council's Low Cost Home Ownership policy was updated to prioritise elderly and disabled households for suitable or adaptable ground-floor accommodation and families for larger properties – the new policy was approved by Council in July 2015.
<p>Develop a strategic approach to the letting and accessing of housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cumbria Choice CBL scheme is a partnership across all six District Councils and the eight largest Housing Associations. This ensures a consistent Allocation Policy across Cumbria and a single application process for customers. The scheme is regularly reviewed to ensure it complies with the latest legislation and good practice. The policy was updated in August 2013 and will be updated again during 2016 following a full consultation. • Tenancy Strategy implemented January 2013.
<p>Reduce under and over occupation of homes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council has worked with local Housing Associations to help minimise the impact of the Removal of the Spare Room Subsidy ("Bedroom Tax"). • Families have been prioritised for larger homes through the Council's Low Cost Home Ownership policy, and properties are advertised to the appropriate size and type of households through Cumbria Choice.

2. Decent and Healthy Homes	
Improve standards in the private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed the Landlord Accreditation Scheme jointly with other Districts, and the National Landlord's Association. • Reviewed private sector enforcement policy to reflect changes in legislation. • Adopted risk based approach to licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation, reducing red tape and increasing efficiencies.
Bring empty properties back into use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 54 properties returned to use utilising external funding and let at affordable rents – the Council's Empty Property Officer received a commendation at the Empty Property Practitioner of the Year event in May 2015. • Empty Property Conference held at the Civic Centre 4 December 2015, raising awareness of potential sources of funding, attended by landlords, funders, National stakeholders, solicitors, auctions houses, and the Property Guardian Service.
Work in partnership to reduce antisocial behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot sanctuary scheme through Homelife Carlisle. • Bid for and awarded funding from Esh Foundation to enable Hoarders to improve conditions in their property and reduce the likelihood of crime and anti-social behaviour. • Funding award from the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner to develop Countywide Keep safe/sanctuary scheme.
Reduce fuel poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 589 lofts insulated; • 103 solid walls insulated; • 457 boilers replaced. • Warm at Home funding utilised by Homelife to carry out draught proofing and boiler repairs

Develop new ways of providing Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) while integrating services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In partnership with the County Council, developed a prioritisation framework to manage a 50% reduction in resources in 2011/2012. • Procurement framework for Disabled Facilities Grants in place to enable the City Council to do more with reduced funding. • Wrap around service provision through Homelife Carlisle. • Specialist Service provision in place for hospital discharge.
Review the needs of Gypsy Travellers and if necessary identify suitable land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Countywide Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) completed in 2013. • Permanent site provision doubled in the District between 2008 and 2013. • Site provision included within new Local Plan.

Private Sector Housing Team Performance Data

	2012/2013	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
DFG Service				
DFG's Completed	132	117	93	56
Private Sector Housing				
HMO licences issued	11	37	33	13
HMO inspections undertaken	45	78	195	94
Complaints	61	79	60	59
Accreditation Inspections	58	42	0	0
Caravan site licences	4	6	3	1
Caravan site inspections	6	6	18	18
Immigration/overcrowding Inspections	4	2	3	9
Rent in Advance inspections	43	54	19	32
Gypsy and Traveller Encampments	11	7	8	16
Empty Properties				
Complaints	9	16	10	4
Grants	0	16	47	0
Property visits	9	46	169	305
Advice and Guidance	25	61	111	193

3. Supporting Vulnerable People	
Review the City Council's Homelessness Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Strategy adopted by the Council and Key local stakeholders in 2015. • Interagency Local commitment in place. • Prevention cases doubled. • Peer Review for Gold Standard confirms Carlisle in the top 5% services, nationally, with a score of over 80%. • Carlisle is on its way to achieving the gold standard: bronze standard awarded in February 2016. • Young Persons Homelessness Protocol implemented.
Review the provision of interim and temporary accommodation in response to changes in the operating environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Women and Families Accommodation opened at Water Street, July 2013. • Sustainable Temporary Accommodation Plan delivered, following reduction in Supporting People funding.
Reduce pressure on our services by developing innovative preventative approaches to homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Silver Screen award for Community engagement activities on offer in Water Street. • Prevention cases have doubled. • Focused community based projects delivered, in partnership with local schools and churches. • 16/17 year old protocol implemented in partnership with Children's Services, Youth Offenders Team & other stakeholders. • Successful preventative work with schools to raise awareness of homelessness. • Pre action and early intervention plan actioned.
Actively work to reduce isolation in older people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelife Carlisle and a suite of staying put services targeted at older and disabled people put in place.

Improve access to service for vulnerable people from hard to reach groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Neighbours set up – 65 partnerships in place. • Welfare advice service delivering proactive preventative outreach work in a variety of community settings. • Successful teletalk systems established to enable remote face to face welfare advice from the welfare advice service in rural environments.
Coordinate and support front line services through Shaddon Gateway services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lease and management agreement was terminated by the YMCA in late 2015. • There is significant third sector interest in leasing the premises and developing service provision.
Help vulnerable groups adjust to impact of welfare reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-agency Welfare Reform Board in place. • Welfare Advice service part of local Advice Transition network supporting the delivery of Key Projects, campaigns and interventions along with local key partners. • Benefit gains in excess of £5m from 13/14; 14/15 and 15/16

Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:
A.6

Meeting Date: 31 March 2016
Portfolio: Cross Cutting
Key Decision: No
Within Policy and
Budget Framework
Public / Private Public

Title: OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME
Report of: Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Report Number: OS 07/16

Summary:

This report provides an overview of matters related to the CommunityO&SPanel's work. It also includes the latest version of the work programme.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to:

- Decide whether the items on the Notice of Key Executive Decisions should be included in the Panel's Work Programme for consideration.
- Comment on the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16
- Note and/or amend the Panel's work programme.
- Note the update from Council's representative on Cumbria Police and Crime Panel.

Contact Officer: Sarah Mason Ext: 7053

Appendices attached
to report:

1. Draft Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16
2. Community O&S Panel Work Programme 2015/16

1. Notice of Key Executive Decisions

The most recent Notice of Key Executive Decisions was published on 4 March 2016.

This was circulated to all Members.

The following items fall into the remit of this Panel:

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

The Executive will 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 will be taken in private on 4 April.

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

The Executive will 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 will be taken in public and private on 4 April.

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

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

2. References from the Executive

There are no references from the Executive's meeting on 7 March.

3. Overview & Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16

The Scrutiny Annual Report has been drafted and is attached at **Appendix 1**. Panel Members are asked to comment on the draft which is being considered by all three O&S Panels. The report will then be formally approved by the Scrutiny Chairs Group prior to being presented at Council on 26 April 2015.

3. Work Programme

The Panel's current work programme is attached at **Appendix 2** for comment/amendment.

4. Representatives on Outside Bodies

A verbal update will be given by Cllr Steven Bowditch, the Council's representative on Cumbria Police and Crime Panel.

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

Appendix 1

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16

Annual report to full Council on the workings of the O&S Panels with recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.

April 2016



Cllr Reg Watson OBE
Lead Member, Scrutiny Chairs Group



I am pleased to present the 2015/16 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report to Carlisle City Council.

Even in times of austerity the Scrutiny panels continue to monitor and challenge the chief officers and Executive Members, trying to squeeze out the last drops of efficiency from a reducing budget.

This year all of the scrutiny panels have done well and I thank them for their efforts.

I would also like to thank the scrutiny support officer, chief officers and Members of the Executive for their help and openness throughout the year. I hope we can continue to add value during the following year.

Cllr Colin Glover, Leader of the Council (to follow)



Introduction

Scrutiny is considered to be the main check and balance to the power of the Executive and involves many of the Councillors who are not on the Executive. Individual Councillors are selected by their political parties to sit on the scrutiny panels.

The key roles of scrutiny are:

- ensuring the Executive is accountable. This means questioning members of the Executive and senior officers about decisions that have been made or are about to be made. It also involves looking at how well the Council is doing against its policy objectives and targets for achievement.
- reviewing and developing policies. In this role, scrutiny can help the Council to develop its policy and budgetary framework. This might involve research and consultation with the community and other agencies on policy issues, good practice and looking at alternative ways of doing things.
- ensuring the continuous improvement of Council services. Scrutiny can make suggestions to the Executive for service reviews. Members of scrutiny panels are often involved in individual reviews where a particular service or function of the Council is thoroughly examined.

In Carlisle, scrutiny operates through three panels - Community Overview and Scrutiny, Resources Overview and Scrutiny and Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny. The Scrutiny Chairs Group (Chairs and Vice Chairs of the three Scrutiny Panels) meets on an ad hoc basis to deal with any overarching scrutiny issues.

There are eight non-Executive members on each panel and each panel is politically balanced (ie the proportions of each political party on the panel are the same as on the Council as a whole).

This annual report provides an overview of the work of the scrutiny function during the 2015/16 civic year. The report provides brief details of the work of the individual panels and gives details of Task and Finish Group work.



Setting of Scrutiny work programmes

Scrutiny agenda planning

Consideration was given early in the civic year to decide the content of each Panel's work programme for the year ahead.

Consideration to forthcoming decisions and issues was given and where focus of scrutiny should lie in order to gain the maximum value. Panel Members, SMT officers and Portfolio Holders have been involved in developing each Panel's work programme for the year 2015/16. The following questions were asked when deciding what should be included in a work programme:

Will scrutiny activity add value to the Council's, and / or partners' overall performance?

Is the issue strategic and significant?

Is consideration of the item likely to lead to effective outcomes?

Will Scrutiny involvement be duplicating the work of another Committee?

Is the Scrutiny activity timely?

Regular meetings have continued throughout the year with SMT officers and Chairs of EEOSP and COSP to discuss forthcoming agendas in more details. This helps to ensure that access to appropriate information is available. Scrutiny Members need to be confident that the information provided is an accurate picture of the Council's (and it's partners) performance.



Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel



To quote Will Rogers, not to be confused with Roy, 'Last year we said 'Things can't go on like this' and true enough, they didn't, they got worse'. It is tempting to reflect that, at the end of another municipal year, things have got worse and in some ways they have, with more budget cuts, fewer staff delivering services, less room for optimism and growing disillusion in the community.

On the face of it, in the words of another old gunslinger, Cpl Fraser in Dad's Army 'We're doomed, we're doomed'

But actually, perhaps surprisingly given those circumstances, that's not strictly the case.

There is I believe a general sense of achievement in the Council at the end of this year and at COSP meetings, there have been many items which have been uplifting in some way, including:

- The presentation from the Carlisle Youth Council when some young people presented us with an encouraging view not only of some of their activities, but their enthusiasm and skill in presenting them. Clearly some of them had their minds set on filling some of the seats on the other side of the committee table in the not too distant future!
- Initial discussions about devolution and the Cumbria Deal (or no deal). If you thought the issues around membership of the EU were complicated....
- The exciting prospects emerging from the renewal of the Leisure Contract which hopefully will not only produce financial benefits, but will bring much needed upgrading to some tired old facilities.
- The development of the new Carlisle Plan which offers an intriguing vision of a vibrant, socially and economically viable city.

But of course there were also times when it seemed that things couldn't actually get any worse and the December floods were a reminder of how fickle life can be.

As usual in such circumstances, we saw extraordinary feats of human kindness, courage and resilience and COSP received reports detailing the Council's own exemplary response, which of course remains on going.

It sounds trite to say that we learn from our experiences, when there are so many personal tales of hardship and trauma which cannot be so easily dismissed, but it is a fact that we had learnt much from our previous response ten years ago, which made the initial and continuing recovery processes more timely, relevant and appropriate.

I have rarely found it greatly comforting when in the depths of despair, to know that someone is worse off than me, but there was a great sense of the whole Cumbrian community sharing the experience in December which was indeed comforting and positive.

It has been a great privilege to be Chair of this Panel again this year and I would like to thank fellow Panel Members for their forbearance and support.

We have not found too much to disagree about which is due in many ways, to the input from Officers who have presented the issues to us in a straightforward and open style which has encouraged positive exchanges.

The input from Portfolio Holders and representatives of other agencies has also been key in encouraging constructive debate.

But most of all, the efficiency and effectiveness of Scrutiny would almost certainly be diminished if it were not for the diligence and skills of the Scrutiny Support Officer and the Committee Clerks who perform possibly one of the most under-appreciated jobs on the Council, that of being able to read, write, listen and understand all at the same time (I hereby declare myself ineligible for any future vacancies), in order to produce minutes which are invariably accurate, informative and well written and are of inestimable value to the smooth running of the Council's democratic processes.

At the end of my second year, I have defied those naysayers who said I'd soon get fed up with being a Councillor, indeed my enthusiasm has grown.

Part of that has been due to my involvement with COSP and I hope I will be given the opportunity to continue to be a Member of the Panel in the new municipal year, which is sure to be 'full of things that have never been'!

Bring it on!

Cllr Jessica Riddle, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Health and Wellbeing (to follow)



Cllr Anne Quilter, Portfolio Holder for Culture, Health, Leisure and Young People



I fully appreciate the contribution of the Community O&S Panel to the decision making process of the Executive and Full Council. By attending the meetings as Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Young People I am able to appreciate the wider view of members thinking and thank all concerned for their valuable input.



Environment and Economy Overview & Scrutiny Panel

**Personal View from Cllr Paul Nedved, Chair of Environment and Economy O&S Panel
(to follow)**



Cllr Elsie Martlew, Portfolio Holder for Environment & Transport



Overview and Scrutiny is a vital piece in the democratic process.

As the council is run on a "cabinet" style basis it is essential that the Executive can be held to account. As Portfolio Holder I welcome this safeguard and I value the input from O & S members prior to major policy decisions being taken by the Executive.

I believe by utilising the experience and expertise of O & S members the council ultimately creates better policies for the city.

Business Support Task Group

The Economy & Environment Scrutiny Panel commissioned a Task Group to look at Business Support as they had concerns about the provision of business support in the District. Members required more of an understanding of what role Carlisle City Council has, as this has changed over time. The Task Group were asked to look at the roles of the difference agencies and how they work in partnership.

The group evidenced that there is a great deal of advice and support on offer, however this is not presented in a simple way in a single location. It is clear that there is no expectation from local businesses that the Council provides business support, but we could facilitate access to support with smarter signposting. There are examples, from across the North West, where authorities have created webpages or supported the creation of websites dedicated to business support and growth.

The Council role is not to have all the answers; it can help business people find the right answers as easily as possible. To play this role effectively will require further work on mapping out the existing sources and networks offering business support and an ongoing commitment to keeping this mapping current and accurate.

A number of recommendations were made to Executive in November 2015.

Executive gave assurance that the close relationship with providers of business support would continue, that the Council's new web-site would include signposting to help businesses, and the review of the Enterprise Centre would look at all aspects of the Centre's operation including renaming and rebranding.

Cllr Heather Bradley, Portfolio Holder for Economy & Enterprise



As a former member of scrutiny panels, I view their role in scrutinising decisions and helping to develop policy as essential. As a Portfolio Holder, I have found the comments and questions of the Environment & Economy and of the Community Scrutiny Panels helpful and sometimes challenging.

I appreciate the work of Task & Finish Groups and the way in which their efforts can assist in developing policy and in informing future Council decisions. I should like to thank the Chairs and members of the panels for the contribution they make to the Council.

Resources Overview & Scrutiny Panel

Personal View from Cllr Reg Watson, Chair of Resources O&S Panel



Scrutiny has an important role to play in times of austerity to ensure efficiency and thrift.

The Panel probed a number of areas including:

Asset Management Plan – we must keep a close eye on this as it is the main part of our future funding

Performance monitoring – ensuring value for money

Sickness management – doing well despite the cuts and the floods

I would like to thank our Scrutiny Support Officer and Chief Officers for their advice and support and a big thank you to fellow Panel Members for their support over the last 12 months. I hope we can continue to add value to Council deliberations.

Cllr Dr Les Tickner, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Governance & Resources (to follow)



Pre-decision scrutiny

Pre-decision scrutiny

Throughout the year a number of items have been scrutinised by panels prior to an Executive decision. 'Pre-decision scrutiny' is where Overview and Scrutiny Panels look at a planned decision shortly before it is made by the Executive. This is often seen as a contrast with post-decision scrutiny through the Council's call-in arrangements, whereby the implementation of decisions can be delayed.

According to the Centre for Public Scrutiny¹, looking at decisions before they are made provides an important means to influence those decisions, and to improve them. It gives scrutineers an opportunity to challenge assumptions that may have been made as the decision was developed; it also gives them the chance to consider how decision-makers have considered what risks might arise from the implementation of the decision, and how those risks might be mitigated. Scrutiny councillors bring a different perspective to the decision-making process than that provided by Cabinet members or officers, which can help decisions to be more robust. Looking at a decision before it is made can often be seen as a more effective means of scrutiny than looking at a decision after it is made

¹*Pre-decision scrutiny, Practice Guide 2—Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) June 2014*

Pre-decision scrutiny items in the past year include:

- Low cost home ownership
- Carlisle Plan 2015-16
- Sports and Leisure new contract
- Rethinking Waste Business Case and Vehicle procurement
- Tullie House Business Plan
- Revised Equality Policy
- Tullie House Business Plan
- Contaminated Land Strategy
- Clean Neighbourhood Enforcement Policy
- Draft Budget 2016/17 (to all three panels)
- Asset Review Business Plan
- Asset Management Plan 2015-2020
- Digital Vision and Technology 5 year Strategy



Call-in

Call-in provides a mechanism for Councillors to intervene when they feel that a decision being made by the Executive needs to be revisited (or possibly changed). It provides a key check and balance in the leader / cabinet system of governance.

In the 2015/16 Civic year one request for Call-in was received.

Decision Ref	Issue	Overview & Scrutiny Panel	Outcome of Call-in Meeting
OD 184/15	Appointment of Leisure Contract Retender Advisor	Community	That the decision not be referred back to the decision making body.

Scrutiny of the 2015 Flood

Scrutiny of the 2015 Flood

Following the Floods in December 2015, Members of Environment and Economy O&S Panel have suggested that a Task and Finish Group be set up to consider any future response to the flood, investigate any possible ways that the Council could influence flood prevention measures and also look at the Council's first response to the flood and take away any lessons learned. The Scrutiny Chairs group on 4 April agreed that a workshop be set up in the current civic year. This would provide an overview of the issues and plans for recovery and future resilience. Further consideration would then be given to the scope of Flood scrutiny including the best timing of review work.

It has also been agreed that regular flood update reports would be provided to each Panel, to receive updates on issues within the remit of that Panel.

Conclusion

Conclusion to follow

Appendix 2: COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16

Issue Contact Officer	Type of Scrutiny						Comments/status	Meeting Dates							
	Performance Management	Key Decisions Item/Referred from Executive	Policy Review/Development	Scrutiny of Partnership/ External Agency	Monitoring	Budget		11 Jun 15	23 Jul 15	3 Sep 15	15 Oct 15	19 Nov 15	14 Jan 16	18 Feb 16	31 Mar 16
CURRENT MEETING 31 March 2016															
Youth Council Emma Dixon				✓			Role and programme of the Youth Council								✓
Customer Services Jill Gillespie	✓						Performance of the new web-site / coping with the flood / future of CRM and customer services (smarter services)								✓
Scrutiny Annual Report Sarah Mason			✓		✓		Draft report for comment before Chairs Group								✓
Housing Strategy 2012-16 Margaret Miller							Report to update the Panel on the achievements of 2012-16 Housing Strategy								✓
Flood Update Report Darren Crossley					✓		Update on flood recovery programme of the Council’s assets								✓
TASK AND FINISH GROUPS															
Health Issues in Carlisle							Possible topic for Task and Finish group.								

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FUTURE ITEMS															
CSP Strategic Assessment Gavin Capstick				✓			Presentation of the Strategic Assessment that informs that Partnership Plan. This will be April 2016.								
Community Safety Partnership Gavin Capstick		✓					Scrutiny of the Partnership Plan. This will be May / June 2016.		✓						
Completed Items															
Low Cost Home Ownership Policy		✓					Scrutiny of Executive Report	✓							
Leisure Facilities Development							Private report on options for future delivery	✓							
Carlisle Plan 2015-18		✓					Pre-decision consultation on the draft Carlisle Plan 2015-2018			✓					

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Private Rented Sector			✓				Presentation on the Private Rented Sector in Carlisle / relationship with Private Landlords			✓					
Arts Centre Gavin Capstick	✓						Performance of the Arts Centre (in the first months after opening)				✓				
Sports and Leisure new contract Gavin Capstick							Results of market engagement for new contract				✓				
Budget setting 2016/17-2020/21 Steven Tickner		✓	✓				Consideration of service implications					✓			
Greenwich Leisure Ltd Gavin Capstick				✓			Annual Performance Report					✓			
Tullie House Business Plan Gavin Capstick				✓			Annual scrutiny of Tullie House Business Plan					✓			

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Riverside Annual Report Jeremy Hewitson							Monitoring progress and developments of joint working. To include Impact and Two Castles Housing Associations.						✓		
Performance Monitoring Reports Gary Oliver	✓						Reporting of performance relevant to remit of Panel	✓		✓		✓		✓	
Equality Policy Becky Tibbs			✓				Consultation on revised Equality Policy. Deferred to 18 Feb.							✓	
Response to Welfare Reform Darren Crossley				✓			Overview of partnership working in response to the Welfare Reform agenda.							✓	
INFORMATION ONLY ITEMS															
Details								Date Circulated							
Food Law Enforcement Service Plan								1 st June 2015							

