

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2010 AT 10.00AM

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Clarke (Chairman) Councillors Bowman S, Mrs Bradley, Cape, Mrs Farmer, Glover, Nedved, Mrs Riddle

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor Bainbridge – Observer
Councillor Ellis – Performance and Development Portfolio Holder
Councillor Mrs Geddes – Observer
Councillor J Mallinson – Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder
Roger Cooke – Chair of the Tullie House Trust Shadow Board
Hilary Wade – Arts and Museums Manager
Alison Watts – Armstrong Watson
Adam Wellings – Adam Wellings Consulting Limited

COSP.79/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence submitted.

COSP.80/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Councillor Cape declared a personal interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of item A.8 - Budget. The interest related to the fact that he was an allotment holder.
- Councillor Mrs Riddle declared a personal interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of item A.3 – Tullie House Governance Arrangements. The interest related to the fact that she was a member of the Friends of Tullie House.

COSP.81/10 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meetings held on 26 August, 7 October and 12 October 2010 be agreed as a correct record of the meetings and signed by the Chairman.

COSP.82/10 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS

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

COSP.83/10 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman announced that Councillor Mrs Parson had left the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel as a full Member, but would remain as a substitute. Councillor Nedved had been nominated by the Executive to replace Councillor Mrs Parsons. The Chairman welcomed Councillor Nedved.

COSP.84/10 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Officer (Mrs Edwards) presented report OS.27/10 which provided an overview of matters relating to the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel's work and included the latest version of the work programme and Forward Plan items which related to the Panel.

Mrs Edwards reported that:

- The Forward Plan of Executive key decisions, covering the period 1 November 2010 to 28 February 2011 had been published on 18 October 2010. All items in the Forward Plan within the remit of the Panel would be considered at this meeting apart from KD.038/10 – Play Strategy: release of Capital funding for 2010/11 Play Area Programme which the Chairman of the Panel determined that the Panel would not consider the matter as the Executive had made their decision on 22 November 2010.
- An induction session for the Carlisle and Eden Joint CDRP Scrutiny Committee had been held on 16 November and was well attended. The first meeting will take place at the end of January to scrutinise the CDRP Partnership Plan.
- The Task Group for the Shared Service Business Case – Customer Contact Service was due to meet for the first time on 17 November. However, that meeting did not take place and is to be rearranged.
- Councillor Mrs Parsons is currently the City Council representative on the Cumbria Joint Health and Well-Being Scrutiny Committee. Under the Terms of Reference the representative is required to be a member of Overview and Scrutiny. The Panel will request the Executive to approve the nomination of Councillor Mrs Riddle to replace Councillor Mrs Parsons for the remainder of the Municipal year.
- Plat Strategy and Play Areas was to be discussed at the meeting but due to the volume of work on the agenda it was agreed with the Chair to move consideration to the January meeting.

RESOLVED – 1) That, subject to the issues raised above, the Overview Report incorporating the Work Programme and Forward Plan items relevant to this Panel be noted.

2) That the Executive be requested to approve the nomination of Councillor Mrs Riddle to replace Councillor Mrs Parsons as the City Council's representative on the Cumbria Joint Health and Well-Being Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the Municipal year.

COSP.85/10 TULLIE HOUSE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

The Strategic Director (Mr Crossley) submitted report GD.43/10 concerning the project currently in place to transfer Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery to a Trust which emanated from a decision taken by the Executive on 14 April 2009 (EX.068/09). The City Council had, on 14 July 2009, approved a budget of £150,000 to support the work programme.

Mr Crossley outlined the background to the Council's deliberations regarding the establishment of a Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust, reminding Members that a Project Group had been established; various work streams initiated; and a 'critical friend' appointed with relevant experience to offer advice and assistance to the Council in relation to the project. Key to those work streams was the preparation of a Business Case to support the Trust proposal and, following a tendering process, Armstrong Watson were engaged to produce the document, a copy of which was set out at Appendix 2 to his report. He then outlined the rationale for the Business Case, pointing out that the establishment of a Trust also brought financial and structural benefits such as relief from business rates. In addition to the financial opportunities outlined, the Business Case also brought the proposed arrangements into the Council's Transformation Programme.

A Shadow Trust Board had been established and, after a rigorous recruitment process, Mr Roger Cooke had been appointed as the Chair. He had subsequently gone on to appoint Mr Alan Niekirk (Charities Lawyer and ex-Chair of the Friends of Tullie House) and Mr Andrew Smith (background in Accountancy) as fellow Shadow Board Members.

Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery was a very important part of the cultural offer available in the Carlisle City Region and the Tullie House Trust would play a vital role in safeguarding and enhancing the Museum's status. To that end, it was felt important that, in establishing a Trust, the Council identified its vision for the future of the institution as it became established and moved forward. The Assistant Director (Community Engagement) had worked with the Shadow Board and had produced the draft Vision Statement included at Appendix 1 to the report.

Details of the financial and legal context were also set out within the report.

In conclusion, Mr Crossley reported that the Business Case prepared by Armstrong Watson indicated that the establishment of a Trust was a viable way forward for the Museum and the City Council. The Executive would, however, wish to come to its own view on the Business Case and, to assist in that process, comments from Overview and Scrutiny would be considered.

The matter had been considered by Executive on 8 November 2010 (EX.178/10).

The Executive resolved that:

“That the Executive:

1. Noted the content of Report GD.43/10, together with the draft Vision Statement and Business Case appended thereto.
2. Referred the draft Vision Statement and Business Case to the Council's Community and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panels (25 November and 7 December 2010 respectively) for scrutiny and comment. Such comments were being referred back to the Executive for its meeting on 13 December 2010.”

Mr Crossley submitted slides that presented the Tullie House Vision Statement and Business Case and that would allow key issues and concerns to be raised and discussed and assist Members in forming their recommendations back to the Executive and Full Council. Mr Crossley stressed that it was not a Business Plan but a Business Case that had been developed by Armstrong & Watson during the summer and autumn of 2010. Following this Panel, the matter would be discussed by the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 December 2010 and the Executive on 13 December 2010 before being presented to Council on 14 December 2010 for approval of the principle.

The Chair of the Tullie House Shadow Board (Mr Cooke) advised that the work would build on the community involvement via the Trustees, Friends of Tullie House and wider groups. The Trust Board would be responsible for the financial and managerial autonomy. Mr Cooke confirmed that the Council would retain ownership of Tullie House collections, along with any new items. The services agreed by the Council and Tullie House would be reviewed periodically. The final agreement would be a legal agreement of up to 30 years and normal practice would be that the Council would have the right to terminate the agreement. The Vision Statement was a long document that built on work already done but due to the current economic climate a prudent approach would be required in the early years of the Trust. Ms Watts (Armstrong & Watson) explained how the figures in the presentation had been reached and that the charges for central services would no longer be required as some services would need to be commissioned externally.

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

- Members were advised in May 2009 that there would be consultation with residents but had been advised that none had been carried out. What have the Shadow Board or the Council done to engage with the people of Carlisle?

Mr Crossley advised that as there would be no outward change to the move to Trust status it would not be necessary to consult and there were no plans for widespread consultation.

- The Vision Statement and Business Case refer to aims and wishes but no hard facts. What will be delivered? How long will the process take? Is the plan viable for the Council?

Mr Cooke advised that the Vision Statement was an aspirational document but that the Shadow Board were trying to be realistic. Once there was a clear decision from the Council a Business Plan would be established.

Councillor Ellis stated that the project would be viable and that the move was being made to secure the future of Tullie House.

Mr Crossley explained that the Business Case was produced to ensure the costs of the projects were acceptable. The report from Armstrong Watson confirmed that the project was viable for both Tullie House and the Council. The Council would sign up to the same Vision Statement as the Board, and work with community support, education and tourism were the most important aspects.

- Under the financial section of the Vision Statement it states that the Trust will 'ensure that Tullie House is well-run and that the Trust is financially sound'. How will that be monitored and reported back?

Mr Crossley explained that, with the Panel's support, there would be clear transparency. Also the Performance Indicators would show whether targets were being reached. The Council would want to play a part in the project up to transfer and beyond. With regard to finance the Business Plan would show how the work would move forward. He asked the Panel to keep an open mind on the progress and advised that there was a possibility that more money may need to be put into the project.

- Arts Council funding has been reduced by 15%. Would that have an impact on the financial viability of the Trust? The Member was concerned whether there would be other funds available.

Mr Cooke advised that at present there were two important sources of external funding – the Museum, Library and Archive Council and the Hub for community education and the outreach programme. He was aware that funding would be reduced next year and that funding thereafter was uncertain. The Trust would need to find ways to bring services in house and that funding would be sought from the Arts Council for special exhibitions but that the programme may have to be reduced in the future. The Trust would be able to seek funding from private foundations and semi public organisations. With regard to operations the Trust would need to pull their belts in but it would be a difficult situation for everyone.

Ms Watts advised that there had been no assumptions that money would be available from other funds and the budget had been based on what was known and what was happening now.

- With regard to the cash funding shortfall would the new budget eliminate that shortfall?

Ms Watts advised that the approved budget had indicated that Tullie House would be able to operate as a viable concern.

- There would be no room for the Council to move in future budgets.

Mr Mason advised that most of the cash shortfall was the cost of services that the Trust would not be able to get from the Council. That had originally been a 20% saving but had been reduced to a 15% saving. £123,000 would be used to buy in services that the Council could no longer provide.

- There is a concern that there is no clear indication of the impact on the Council. The Business Case had been produced by a consultancy team selected by the Trust Shadow Board and there was a concern that the Council were not being given the full picture regarding the impact on the Council regarding the transfer. There was no proper risk management detail in the report. The Council were being asked to agree to the transfer in a short time but the full details are not clear. Previous papers stated that the project would be carried out under Prince 2 methodology. Has that been the case? There is no evidence that a Project Board is in place and where is the information being reported to? Each stage should be reported but Members have seen no reports.

Councillor Ellis confirmed that there was a Project Board and that they met regularly. While there had been no regular reports, reports had been made available to Scrutiny Members on several occasions and the Board had tried to follow the scrutiny process. The draft Business Case and Vision Statement were works in progress and work had been ongoing for the last 18 months. He agreed that risks did need to be properly managed.

Mr Crossley advised that while the Board did not have all the documentation of Prince 2 the process was being managed to the Council's timetable of meetings and that there had been the right level of documentation. The documents had been submitted to the Senior Management Team and the Joint Management Team other documents may expand on the consideration of the risks in a timely manner. The Executive had received sufficient information with regard to risks to enable them to make an in principle decision on 14 December 2010. If they agree with the Business Case then they would resolve to sign off the project and start the process to enable Trust status commencing in April 2011.

- A report approved by the Executive in June 2009 had agreed that Prince 2 methodology should be used with regard to the project. That would have produced in indication of every risk including the likelihood and impact of risk to the Council and how that risk would be managed. The Council cannot make a decision until that risk planning is in place. Without risk management there is no reassurance that the risks can be managed. Members need that reassurance.

Mr Crossley advised that that information had been through the scrutiny process in detail and that the risks had been considered by the programme management board who had been transparent in their work, and that the Business Case gave the mitigation of the risks involved.

- The risks need to be made available to the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel. If the Executive says it is going to do something then it must do it. The documents need to be available for scrutiny.

Councillor Ellis confirmed that he and Mr Crossley had discussed the risks and measures were being put in place that would ensure they had been resolved by 14 December, by the time of transfer or whenever they were expected to be resolved. He apologised that the information had not been presented to the Panel.

- A Member believed that it wasn't only a matter of the risks being resolved it was also looking at the assessment of the risks to the Council and whether they were high or lower category risks. The Council has a risk management policy and that should have been used.

Mr Crossley agreed to circulate documents that would indicate the full details of the risks involved. That information would be made available in time to be considered by the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel at their meeting on 7 December 2010.

- The Business Case stated that the Council would be responsible for the collection and the maintenance of the Tullie House building. What is the cost to the Council over the next 5/10/15 year period and is there a backlog of work? With regard to the collection what is the cost to the Council for the work carried out periodically on it?

Councillor Ellis explained the maintenance was not a new cost and there would be the same relationship as with the community centres and the Sands Centre. He confirmed that there were no problems with a backlog of work.

Mr Mason advised that there is a 5 year maintenance programme. There had been a reduction in energy costs due to work brought forward at Tullie House.

- The museum cannot show all the collection at any one time and there is currently no space for extra items. At some point in the future the Trust will want to expand the collection into buildings around Tullie House. Would the Council be responsible for the maintenance of those buildings? And who was picking up the costs Public Liability Insurance?

Mr Cooke confirmed that the Trust would pick up the Public Liability insurance. Mr Crossley advised that the City Council would be the landlord for the buildings if the building was within the facility. While there was capital available within the City Council the Council was in an era of looking for new opportunities.

With regard to the collections Mr Cooke explained that the Trust would be responsible for the conservation, maintenance and management of the collections.

- Education and learning are an important part of Tullie House and many residents do not visit regularly but take advantage of the educational resource. The Vision Statement states that ‘the Trust will continue to the best of its ability to provide educational resources and opportunities for local communities and tourists to learn.....’. However, the Business Case states “the Trust’s ability to maintain education and outreach services at anything like the present levels cannot be guaranteed.” How sure are the Board that the provision will be the same level as now? There is a concern that once it’s gone it’s gone.

Mr Cooke explained that when the Business Case was prepared it made the assumption that funding from the Hub would end in 2011 but it was now likely to continue until March 2012. That would allow some time to allow those costs to be brought into the mainstream Tullie House budget. While it would be difficult to continue the education and outreach levels at the present levels in the short term, Mr Cooke was more optimistic than he was a month ago. He stated that the Board were determined that the facility would not go altogether and were conscious that museums and art galleries had links to the community. There were some tough decisions to be made over the next few months.

- The Business Case states that there are a number of major critical steps that need to be completed prior to the point of transfer. Will that be done?

Mr Crossley advised that they would not have to be completed as the decision of the Council is ‘in principle’ and some of the work had been completed since the report was written. Subject to scrutiny the provisions in principle decision would affect the Business Case as it would need to inform as much as possible what had been done and seek approval in principle.

- The Business Case talks of appropriate support for the Shadow Board. Does the Council have the facility to provide that support and is the Council providing it now?

Mr Cooke confirmed that the level of support from senior members of the Council had been impressive. Mr Crossley confirmed that the Council would continue to give support until the Council had discharged all its obligations.

Councillor Ellis asked whether the Panel would wish to have a further briefing at the same time as the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The Chairman confirmed that the matter was being considered at the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the Community Panel would have sight of the additional information.

- There was concern that the current and proposed admissions policy may be illegal.

The Assistant Director (Governance) (Mr Lambert) advised that the issue had been raised by the Egeria report and that the scheme was open to challenge under two articles of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU treaty, namely articles 18 and 56. The Shadow Board were looking at ways to provide a reduced scheme for residents of Carlisle.

Ms Watts advised that there were also VAT implications as VAT could not be recovered on free admissions. Mr Mason advised that VAT was included in the risk management papers.

- Why does the Business Case refer to a 3 year business plan but the agreement in the report suggested 5 years?

Mr Mason advised that the 3 years included years 3, 4 and 5. Mr Cooke stated that the principle point of the Egeria report was for a long term agreement and that at a time when most corporations were not producing 3/4/5 year budgets as it was difficult to foresee what the future held the Business Case had delivered a 3 year budget. When the Business Plan was developed that would look at year 4/5.

- Is the Hub funding dependent upon achieving guaranteed numbers?

The Arts and Museums Manager (Ms Wade) advised that the Hub funding was based on the Performance Indicators and they had been exceeded each year and a PI would be created for the coming year that the Board hoped to meet. An application bid was currently in regarding funding from the Hub.

- Do we have consenture from the County Council and the Millennium Commission?

Mr Lambert advised that in correspondence with regard to the gallery the County Council and Millennium Commission were in correspondence with the Council. AS landlord, the County Council could not reasonably withhold their consent. In relation to the Millennium Commission, this had been superseded by the Big Lottery Fund. There were conditions attached to the funding received from the then Millennium Commission but officers were not aware of any potential problems.

- With regard to Governance what would happen if the City Council ceased to exist in its present form? If the Council was taken over by a new body what would happen if that body did not wish to support the Trust?

Mr Lambert advised that the new body would stand in the shoes of the City Council. Equally, the position could change if there was a change of leadership within the City Council. There would be mechanisms in the legal agreement with regard to termination of the Trust. Mr Cooke advised that governance of Tullie House could be taken back in-house and if funding was

removed there would need to be negotiations between the Council and the Trust.

- A Member was pleased to see that staff were to be transferred under TUPE arrangements. Would new staff employed after the transfer be employed under the same terms and conditions? What are the views of staff on possible problems with the pension scheme?

Mr Cooke advised that they would be employed under comparable terms and conditions and that they would have the same salary and entitlements. The Board would need to consider whether to introduce a new pension scheme for new employees. However that would not be a final salary scheme. He was confident that the scheme would meet the test of compatibility.

Ms Wade advised that she had held regular meetings with staff to ensure they were updated with regard to pensions and the continuation and sustainability of Trust status.

- Would the new Chief Executive be a salaried post? Would other Board members be salaried? And would that person be in post by the formation of the new Trust?

Mr Cooke advised that the Board were not remunerated but that there was an issue around expenses to consider. The Chief Executive would be salaried but that salary had not been determined. Mr Cooke explained that it would be difficult to start the recruitment process until the project had the Council's approval. However, the job description had been written and the Board had appointed people to work with if it goes ahead so that things can move quickly following approval.

- How will the relationship with the Trust and the City council be developed?

Mr Cooke explained that the Shadow Board and the City Council had worked well together, both with Members and officers. There would be Members on the Trust Board and reporting of PIs as well as regular meetings of the Trust Audit Committee and officers of the City Council.

Mr Crossley stated that with Members of the Council on the Board there would be open accounting with regard to PIs and reporting on future plans. Members of the Board would also attend scrutiny meetings. Those details would be included in the structure when it was developed.

RESOLVED – 1) That the risk and mitigation strategy be presented to the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 7 December 2010 and that this is also circulated to Members of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

2) That the Panel recommends to the Executive that approval is only given on the satisfactory outcomes of the outstanding issues stated in the report

3) That the Shadow Board present its ideas on the admissions scheme

4) That there be a reasonable time period before a progress report is brought to the Community Panel

5) That the Chair of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel be requested to invite Members from this Panel to the meeting on 7 December 2010.

COSP.86/10 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT, MID YEAR – APRIL to SEPTEMBER 2010

The Policy and Performance Manager (Mr O’Keeffe) presented report PPP.43/10 which provided the corporate performance for the months April to September 2010.

Mr O’Keeffe explained that the report was presented in existing format but also in the proposed future format based around the delivery of the Corporate Plan. With the replacement of the National Indicator Set and the abolition of Comprehensive Area Assessment, Use of Resources and Place Survey, the Council was presented with an excellent opportunity to review performance management across the Authority.

Mr O’Keeffe outlined the background to the report and explained that the new report contained the standard performance information for the Mid Year Performance Report; however, the structure was different from previous reports. The information had been presented through the Corporate Plan key objectives and outcomes for the communities, and performance was measured against actions, performance indicators and risks. This approach provided an overview of the different types of activity the Council was taking to implement the plan and an opportunity to highlight their performance.

He added that a flag system would be developed for the new version of the report; green for good performance and red for poor performance. A red flag would highlight major challenges facing the Council where an intervention needed to take place to improve performance. A green flag would highlight areas of good practice or where the Council were achieving excellent outcomes in priority areas. He explained that there were many gaps in the information where activity may not be currently measured or recorded at a corporate level through Covalent.

Despite the abolition of the Local Area Agreement it was proposed that the reporting of relevant and useful National Indicators as local measures would continue to be measured until the end of the financial year. All indicators would be reviewed in January at a Member’s workshop and through consultation with the Portfolio Holder, Overview and scrutiny Panels, Executive and senior managers.

Mr O’Keeffe reminded Members that there had been a workshop regarding performance indicators.

Mr O’Keeffe then highlighted some of the relevant indicators outlined in the report and explained that the Senior Management team and Joint Management team would pull out exceptions to be looked at. They would be PIs that were at red or amber with no change.

In considering the performance information Members raised the following questions and comments:

- It would be useful if the performance indicators identified examples of excellent performance that recognised work that staff are doing.

Mr O’Keeffe agreed that would be useful.

- The Council reached ‘Achieving’ status of the Equality Framework for Local Government in October. The Panel wished to thank all officers and Members who took part and acknowledge the hard work that went into achieving this status. Equality Impact Assessments were not always fully completed at the end of reports. There was a general feeling that not all officers understood why that section needed to be completed. It would be useful if there was something at the beginning of the report that advised that that section needed to be completed to allow officers time for consideration of the impact of the report.

Mr O’Keeffe agreed to extend the Panel’s thanks to officers and also thanked Members for their work. Officers were trying to improve the awareness of the Equality Impact Assessment and proposed that more workshops could be held in view of the fact that there were several new service managers.

- The Panel could make a recommendation to the Executive to look at the way Equality Impact Assessments are completed and the impact the report may have.
- If a workshop is to be arranged could Members be invited? The Chairman agreed that could be looked at.

Mr O’Keeffe advised that the report to be presented to the Panel in January would focus on the peer assessment.

- The Key Issues/Risks included the Strategic Housing Authority. Given the changes in legislation there was a concern that if there was a hold put on purchasing houses and if builders were not building affordable housing how would the City Council address that issue. Housing would be a clear issue in the future. There was also a concern about young people leaving college/university with larger debts.

Mr O’Keeffe advised that there was a National Indicator with regard to affordable homes and temporary accommodation. That could be looked at as part of the Corporate Plan. The Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel would have the opportunity to look at the matter as part of the Corporate Risk register.

- Could Dr Gooding be requested to include financial variances within the Risk Register when it is presented to the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel?
- With regard to the Housing Strategy it would be useful to reinstate the Carlisle Housing Forum as it gave the opportunity for partners to get together. Also the Local Development Framework would look at the key features in mitigating risks within the Social Housing strategy.

Councillor Ellis advised that there would be a workshop in January regarding Performance Indicators. Although it was the second of two workshops it was believed that it would still be appropriate for Members to attend.

Mr O’Keeffe advised that the first workshop had looked at the priorities but they had since changed. The work was moving forward and was looking at services and how customers’ expectation could be met. As the Place Survey no longer existed it was difficult to gather information on the perception of the public. The Member Development Group were capturing information that Members were picking up from residents and that was passed to the Chief Executive’s team.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Panel were satisfied with the new style of reporting.

2) That the exception reporting should include areas of excellent performance and that thanks should be passed to staff where excellence was being achieved.

3) There should be a summary paragraph on the first page of all committee reports with brief details of the Equality Impact Assessment.

4) That the Risk Register should be reported with financial variances attached.

COSP.87/10 POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Assistant Director (Governance) (Mr Lambert) submitted report GD.61/10 concerning the Council's Policy Framework. He drew Members' attention to Appendix 1 to the report which set out where the Policy Framework sat in the Council's constitutional arrangements and the number of policies and strategies presently comprising that framework.

He outlined the relevance of the Policy Framework in the authority's governance arrangements, commenting that the policies within the framework, along with the budget, were the fixed parameters set by Council within which the Executive must act. Short of that, the Executive were entitled to take whatever decisions they deemed appropriate in respect of virtually all the functions of the Council vested in them. He added that the purpose behind the legislation which brought in the new governance arrangements was to streamline and speed up decision making and, more particularly, to produce

greater clarity as to where responsibility for actual decisions rested by vesting the decision making powers in a small, identifiable body (the Leader and Executive) or, where there was an elected Mayor, in that individual personally. Details of the intended checks and balances on the Executive's powers were provided. It should be noted that the legislation provided for a strict compartmentalisation of Council functions and responsibilities; and if the wrong body took a decision it would be ultra vires and potentially challengeable. It was also important to be able to identify clearly whether a decision was inside or outside the Policy Framework, since if it was inside then the Executive could take it but if it was outside then it would be a matter for full Council. The number of policies and strategies within the Policy Framework obviously had a bearing on the ease of identifying whether a potential decision was within or outwith the framework and thereby down to the Executive or the Council.

Mr Lambert explained that the legislation set out a limited number of core strategies which must be within the Policy Framework and therefore approved by full Council. Those were intended to be the most important governing strategies which went to the root of the authority's policy direction and aims, and must be included as part of the Policy Framework by law. For the purposes of the City Council those included the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy; Licensing Authority Policy Statements; Sustainable Community Strategy; and Plans and alterations which together comprised the Development Plan.

The legislation also allowed authorities to include other plans and strategies within its Policy Framework definition over and above the basic statutory core plans, the intention being to allow some local discretion in elevating a particular plan or strategy into their Policy Framework to reflect local preference and give some measure of local autonomy. When Carlisle first adopted its Constitution it took the view that all the authority's plans and strategies should be deemed to be part of the Policy Framework and thereby approved by full Council to reflect both their importance and the sovereignty of Council in setting policy. The thinking at that time was that, on top of the statutory core plans, there would be very few additional plans and strategies which would require to be adopted and so the governance arrangements could cope with their adoption. That had proved not to be the case since, as Appendix 1 indicated, there were currently 80 plans listed in the authority's framework which number was growing annually.

Mr Lambert further outlined the consequences of having a large policy framework, as set out in the report. He drew Members' attention to Appendix 2 which specified what must be included within the Policy Framework, together with what the Government guidance recommended be included. It was also recommended that a sentence be added to the Constitution to clarify that the term 'Budget' included documents such as the Medium Term Financial Plan; Capital Strategy; Asset Management Plan and Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Strategy (one document), the effect being that Council would retain the decision making authority over those documents.

It was proposed that the content of Appendix 2 became the Council's new Policy Framework as specified within Article 4 of the Constitution. In addition, there would be other policies, for example the Council's Gambling Policy, which were required by their respective enabling legislation to be dealt with by Council irrespective of what was specified in the Authority's Policy Framework. The table at Section 2.6 of the report illustrated, for comparison purposes, the number of policies reserved to District Councils rated as 'excellent' for CPA purposes and having gained a score of 4 in Use of Resources. There was no doubt that the leaner policy base assisted the Councils in achieving excellence.

In conclusion, Mr Lambert reported that, for the reasons mentioned, the case for reviewing the number of policies and strategies presently comprising the authority's Policy Framework was compelling, particularly given that the Transformation Programme was leading to a leaner Officer corps and would necessitate a much sharper focus by both Members and Officers on what was important to the authority and a more economical use of their time. A way forward would be to consider limiting the Policy Framework only to the statutory core strategies with (possibly) the addition of any other strategies which the authority concluded were of sufficient importance to warrant their inclusion, although the Council may be content to include only the statutorily prescribed strategies and nothing more. Although it was not possible to give a definitive estimate of what a smaller Policy Framework designation would save in monetary terms it should, apart from any other advantage, reduce the time demands on both Members and Officers and enable the reduced Officer establishment to service the authority's decision making processes from a lower staffing base.

He added that all of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels would consider the matter, following which it would be brought back to the Executive on 17 January 2011. Thereafter, if deemed appropriate, a report with a recommendation would be presented to the Council at its meeting on 1 March 2011.

The Performance and Development Portfolio Holder was pleased to see the report, commenting that the Policy Framework should have been reviewed some time ago.

The matter had been considered by Executive on 8 November 2010 (EX.171/10).

The Executive resolved that:

'That the Executive:

1. Noted the content of Report GD.54/10 and indicated that they were minded to recommend to Council the amendment to Article 4 of the Constitution and revision of its Policy Framework to those policies as specified in Appendix 2; and

2. Referred the report to all of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panels for comment.'

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

- A Member of the Panel stated that they had been on the working group which worked on the new constitution 7 years ago. There was the emphasis that Council was the sovereign body and Members were keen to reserve that decisions on Council policy remained with Council. Members agreed that there were currently too many policies. However the list of high achieving Council's indicated in the report that had fewer policies were largely under single party control so the comparison was not like with like. Most of the policies were largely operational but there was some concern over those listed under Article 4. Members did not want to delegate the decision making to the Executive when the whole Council may want some input. With regard to policies such as the Tullie House transfer, what was involved? Would a decision such as the transfer to Trust status be taken by the Executive? Members recognised that while they could call in decisions call-in meetings were not always easy to organise and were usually used as a last resort.
- If there was only one date on the Forward Plan for a matter to be considered by the Executive, and that was not close to a Scrutiny meeting, it would make it difficult for Panels to scrutinise issues. In the past Panels would only call in a decision reluctantly if it was necessary.

Mr Lambert advised that the call-in mechanism existed for the Panels to use as they thought necessary and was there to hold the Executive to account.

- How can policies develop if they were not available for discussion before going to the Executive?

Mr O'Keeffe advised that although many of the policies listed were single items many, if not all, of them would be covered by those on the Article 4 list. They would be seen as part of current working procedures.

In response to a Member's question Mr Lambert advised that Agenda 21 was so called under legislation.

- How inclusive are the new policies?

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive (Ms Mooney) advised that they were fully inclusive.

Mr O'Keeffe confirmed that the action planning part of the Corporate Plan would review or support the policies and where previously there would have been proposed policies presented to Panels, the new scheme would give Panels the opportunity to scrutinise proposed policies as part of the Corporate Plan.

- Are all of those under Article 4 covered by the revised Policy Framework?

Mr Lambert advised that a lot of the policies under Article 4 were operational. He confirmed that while the Executive were free to make decisions they had to be held accountable and it had to be clear who had made specific decisions with Overview and Scrutiny as the check and balance.

- A Member was less comfortable with call-ins to hold the Executive to account. Members were pleased that the number of policies that would go through scrutiny was being reduced as Members relied on scrutiny picking up issues as well as the call-in process. Policies were operational, strategic or some that the Council doesn't own, such as consultation. With regard to the strategic documents scrutiny should be made aware of the dates that they would be going to the Executive via the Forward Plan. The Member believed that the Executive might appreciate some input from scrutiny rather than a confrontational meeting following a call-in.

Mr Lambert believed that the Scrutiny Panels would have to work differently as well as the Executive and that call-ins would have to be done more regularly. The Forward Plan mechanism already existed and Mr Lambert stated that the Executive may ask the opinion of the Panels. The Executive are aware that they would be responsible for decisions made and would want views of other Members.

- There was still some confusion about how Members would play a part in policy development if Members did not get the opportunity to look at new or revised policies.

Mr Lambert advised that if Members were not happy with a decision they could call in that decision.

Mr Crossley advised that having worked in one of the Councils named in the report success was reliant upon the right culture within the authority. Scrutiny would consider the Corporate Plan that would look at policy development annually. He was confident that the Executive would liaise with Scrutiny.

Councillor Ellis advised that within the current process the matter was discussed by the Executive then the policy changed at Council. Under the new scheme a policy matter would be scrutinised then a decision made. Decisions could be marked as policy related matters and referred to the Executive.

- There could be a resource issue as call-in meetings require officers and Members to be present and the meetings to be minuted. The Member still felt uncomfortable with the proposed new scheme and stated as an example the Asset Management Plan as it was such an important document not to go through scrutiny.

Mr Lambert assured Members that documents may be raised that may be part of policies within the policies proposed in the revised Policy Framework (as the Asset Management Plan was), and that they would be included in the Corporate Plan and the Medium Term Financial Plan before consideration at Council.

- There has to be a balance. Overview and Scrutiny have to be involved in policy development as call-in has not always been the best method of dealing with an unsatisfactory decision. There needs to be some protection for Scrutiny for what it was meant to be doing.
- The key to success is the relationship between the Executive and Scrutiny. Mr Crossley had stated that there had been a culture change in the authority where he had worked and an informal relationship. The Member believed that there should be a workshop for the Executive Members and Members of Scrutiny. The Member asked Councillor Ellis to mention to the Executive that a change of culture would be needed within the Executive.
- The Scrutiny Chairs group would like to have a meeting with the Executive to discuss the issues raised at the meeting.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Executive and Scrutiny acknowledge that a change is required in their relationship so that the Executive are more willing to inform Scrutiny of policy developments and advance notice of items which will be contained in the Forward Plan.

2) That the Panel endorse the suggestion from the Scrutiny Chairs Group that a meeting be arranged between Executive Members and the Scrutiny Chairs Group to look at building a good relationship and establishing a clear process for both informing of, and involvement in, policy development.

COSP.88/10 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

COSP.89/10 CARLISLE COMMUNITY PLAN (SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY) 2011-16

The Assistant Director (Community Engagement) (Mr Gerrard) submitted report PPP.42/10 (amended) concerning the Carlisle Community Plan (Sustainable Community Strategy) 2011-16.

He advised Members that the existing Community Plan (Sustainable Community Strategy) for Carlisle expired in 2010 and, at the last meeting of

the Carlisle Partnership Executive a process for development of a new Community Plan for Carlisle was agreed, details of which were provided. The process had seen the content of the Community Plan developed directly by partners from across the LSP within the Partnership's Working Groups and a draft Community Plan 2001 - 2016 had been developed, a copy of which was appended to the report.

The Plan had appeared before the Carlisle Partnership's Executive on 15 November 2010 when a number of changes had been agreed.

Mr Gerrard further reported that the proposed Carlisle Community Plan 2011-16 would effectively be a live document as soon as the City Council adopted it onto their Policy Framework in the New Year. A formal launch was proposed for March 2011. He added that the Plan would be reviewed on an annual basis at the Carlisle Partnership AGM (June each year), and a performance report detailing progress against the headline measures contained within the Plan would also be produced for that meeting. Whilst those headline measures would be used to assess progress made towards delivering the Community Plan on an annual basis, the Partnership's Executive remained keen to instil a more focussed and performance orientated culture within the Partnership. All of the Priority Working Groups were in the process of developing delivery plans to support and deliver the aims of the Community Plan, which would be reported to the Executive on a quarterly basis.

In response to a question, the Assistant Director and Carlisle Partnership Manager (Mr Capstick) advised that a verbal update on the changes agreed at the Carlisle Partnership's Executive would be provided to the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel, in addition to which a revised report could be provided.

The matter had been considered by Executive on 22 November 2010 (EX.194/10).

The Executive resolved:

“That the Executive :

1. Received the proposed Community Plan, its vision, ambition and aims for Carlisle, as appended to Report PPP.42/10.
2. Referred the draft Community Plan to the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel for consideration.
3. The Executive would consider feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel at a meeting in December 2010, following which the draft Community Plan would be recommended to the City Council for formal adoption onto the City Council's Policy Framework.”

Mr Capstick advised that a new Community Strategy was developed in May 2010 following a review of statutory evidence and a workshop. Following the

workshop the document was produced and presented to the Carlisle Partnership Executive then to the relevant working groups. There had been extensive input and in the last few weeks it had been discussed by the Carlisle Partnership Executive and approved as a travelling document. One of the issues that had been picked up was that the document referred to Carlisle. Mr Capstick confirmed that the document related to Carlisle and the districts.

Mr Capstick explained that housing targets were not included in the document as they were included in the core strategy and the development framework. He stated that officers would have to ensure that the document reflected the priorities of the CDRP and that work would be ongoing.

In considering the Carlisle Community Plan a Member raised the following comments and questions:

- Would the County Planning Group be picking up work with children and young people?

Mr Capstick advised that such groups would re-emerge as they were 2-3 years ago. There had been a divergence in priorities as part of the Community Plan but those issues were no longer on their agenda so were being brought back again to ensure that the work was part of the aims of the Carlisle Strategic Partnership. That would be for a 12 month trial period. If the group could not deliver the work then the Children and Young Peoples Group would be re-established.

- Is the structure of the Carlisle Partnership still in place as indicated in the report?

Mr Capstick advised that the structure was still in place but that it would change.

- The Children's Trust was a countywide initiative. Would a local team be involved? Would the Overview and Scrutiny Panels have sight of any delivery plans, particularly on the operational side?

Mr Capstick advised that it would remain countywide. He confirmed that the delivery plans would be available for scrutiny and that the community plan should be a vision for Carlisle in the medium/long term. If the right delivery plans were not in place then the vision would be worthless. The priority working groups and sub groups were working to ensure the plans were SMART. The groups welcomed the input of scrutiny but that community planning needed to come first and then it would be brought to the Panel when it was developed.

- When the targets are filled in, what will happen if the target is close to being met? Will there be a compulsion to achieve that target? There was concern that that may be difficult in the poorer wards. What can Members do to help to achieve those targets?

Mr Capstick explained that in the past there was the Local Area Agreements but as they had now gone all councils had to sign up and agree and that all partners would be held to account for decisions.

Mr Gerrard advised that some of the strategic and substantive issues would be done by partners and that they would benefit from the partnership.

Ms Mooney added that the City Council had made its own commitment in its Corporate Plans and had provided the funding. Most partners were focussing on more deprived areas. Scrutiny would now scrutinise the decisions before being considered by the Executive.

- With regard to higher education there had been a low take up of places and the partnership needs to keep a close eye on the numbers of young people leaving university and provide funding to assist young people coming out of university with large debts.
- Another issue that had been raised a number of times was the number of young carers in the community and that their needs were not met through the social care assessment. There was a fear that young people would be forced into caring for siblings/parents/grandparents and would miss out on things that young people do unless support was provided.

Mr Capstick agreed to take the concerns of Members on the issue of Young Carers back to the Partnership and reinforced that the move would be back to partnership working and that partners had a big stake in dealing with those issues before being taken back to the local planning groups. With regard to targets Mr Capstick advised that there would be a common approach in relation to targets. In the past the Local Area Agreement and statutory targets were set over a 4-5 year period that made it ambitious to maintain the targets.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Panel accepted the comments made and they appreciated that it was a work in progress.

2) The new delivery plans are to be presented to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Panel in February.

COSP.90/10 TRANSFORMATION SAVINGS UPDATE

The Assistant Director (Community Engagement) (Mr Gerrard) submitted report CD.23/10 which updated Members on the transformation savings delivered or proposed, including staff structure changes, as part of the Transformation programme.

Mr Gerrard reminded the Panel of the context and background of the Transformation Programme. He explained that as part of the process of management review and transformation, the Community Development Directorate had revised their management structure which had included the transfer of Bereavement Services to the Local Environment Directorate, the

establishment of Local Strategic Partnerships and the establishment of the Communities, Housing and Health service area which amalgamated the Community Support, Housing and Health and Sport and Recreational Teams.

He explained that the Housing and Health Services manager and Community Support Manager posts had been deleted and new post of Communities, Housing and Health Manager had been created. There had been no substantive change to Customer Contact Services or Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery. The establishment of the Revenue and Benefit as a shared service was being finalised. As Carlisle would be the employing authority, staff from Allerdale Borough Council and Copeland Borough Council had been transferred to Carlisle under TUPE on 1 October 2010.

Mr Gerrard outlined the established savings made in 2010/11 and the recurring savings up to 2014/15, an overall saving of £106,000 per year. He added that as part of the ongoing Programme the Directorate continued its programme of management restructure from phase 1 and review of revenue. Phase 2 of the review of management and staffing structures would go out to consultation with staff and trade unions in November 2010. He added that it was anticipated that as Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery move to Trust status there would be a reduction in running costs. The projected savings from Phase 2, including Tullie House, was £276,000 in 2011/12 and £423,000 thereafter.

With regard to Tullie House, Mr Gerrard advised that staff would be managed by the Arts and Museums Manager (Ms Wade) and that some of the moves would be taking place before the transfer to Trust status.

Mr Gerrard added that some of the work of the Community Plan touched on Community Engagement and that reinforced the rationale for having the Community Plan as part of the Carlisle Partnership. Mr Gerrard outlined the work done in the department and advised that Mr Capstick would manage work around anti-social behaviour and abandoned vehicles. There was also a Health Improvement Officer who was on an 18 month contract provided by the PCT. He believed they were a keen group of people who did not judge success by the number of strategies they had to write.

Mr Gerrard informed Members that the Customer Contact Centre would have an important role as it would be a point of contact where people could have their queries dealt with. The key role was to ensure that the processes were right and that things got done. Members also needed to feel that they could rely on that process. The move was to encourage people to come into the Customer Contact Centre and not contact by phone. The intention was to avoid excluding people from accessing the service.

Mr Gerrard explained the new service – Communities, Housing and Health and advised that it would be at the forefront of Community engagement providing community support, recreation and housing and that he would have developed the service even if there had not been the additional pressures of the saving pressures of transformation. He believed that inter-partnership

working would be the most challenging with regard to community cohesion with the main difficulties being around finances, social inclusion and older people's health and well-being. It had been apparent that there had been some duplication between partners but that organisations were moving to wards working differently. He had been more aware of the work of housing and dealing with people in hostels and benefits. The structure had been established and recruitment was underway for a manager for the service.

With regard to the Anchorage Centre, Mr Gerrard advised that it had been the decision of the Anchorage Committee to close.

In an attempt to reduce expenditure, as time limited contracts came to an end the contracts would be looked at.

Mr Gerrard advised that he had written to staff to gather their views on phase 2 of the restructure of the Directorate. He had meet with 2 play workers who had offered some suggestions for alternative ways of working. He has asked that they develop robust proposals for their ideas.

Mr Gerrard was hoping to establish and well developed team that would deal with social inclusion, entertainment, health and well-being and sport and would include a young people's champion on facilitating working with partners.

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

- While the Council has to deal with statutory issues there was a concern that the council could lose sight of prevention and that the Council needed to be an enabler in providing services. One example would be if there were a number of single parent families to encourage them to get back into employment the Community Centres could be encouraged to provide child care. There would be numerous savings and benefits. However that work would require staff capacity.

Mr Gerrard advised that he was conscious of the need for prevention work and that the establishment of a Homelessness Prevention Manager would see the officer getting out and engaging with the public rather than dealing with situations when they arose. The knock on effect of that work was the economic challenge and the need to look at the best way to serve communities. Facilitators would assist that work but it was essential to get the balance right and that officers acted as facilitators and guided people when required. With regard to young carers, there were programmes with Carlisle Leisure Limited that could be looked at.

- Young people should be encouraged to take part in sports and supported, as if they were keen and successful they could continue in that sport for 4-5 years.
- With regard to staffing, was the consultation with the trades unions underway?

Mr Gerrard advised that copies of the letters sent to staff had been sent to the trades unions. It had been useful practically to engage with the unions and ensure their comments were included in the process.

Ms Mooney advised that with regard to consultation with trades unions she had met with the CJC following the Comprehensive Spending Review announcement and she would continue to meet with them on the key issues relating to the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Ms Mooney believed that many other Councils would not be doing the work being proposed within the Communities, Health and Housing service and added that work around homelessness and hostels was a statutory responsibility, but the Council did not have to provide the staff to do that work. However, officers in Carlisle were delivering good work and Ms Mooney advised she would still have wished to restructure the Directorate in that way as she believed the work would help the Council meet the outcomes of statutory services.

- Members welcomed the approach to discretionary services. Who will deliver the proposed work when the Council had to streamline staff and budgets?
- With regard to the time limited posts will there be a reduction in costs when that post has gone? And will there be a reduction in services? How long has the post of Health Improvement Officer left to run?

Mr Gerrard advised that the Directorate was looking at doing things differently and getting more for less. The posts that were time limited were due to end in March 2011, and he would look at combining posts after that time. The Unit would also look at working with partners and supporting volunteers and building up relationships with schools, providers and clubs. He would also be liaising with Carlisle Leisure Limited in respect of provision of services to schools and asking why some schools were reluctant to use the facilities.

- Would it be possible to commission work from CVS or the Community Centres?

Mr Gerrard believed that there were good quality pitches, changing rooms, parking facilities, etc and that the Council should support local clubs, mum and toddler groups, etc.

Ms Mooney confirmed that the Council had to reduce costs and staffing was one of the most expensive of those costs. Merging manager posts had made some of the saving.

- How would services be delivered? What will the Executive say about the proposals?

Ms Mooney stated that the Council rightly guessed what the cuts in the Comprehensive Spending Review would be but were not aware that the cuts would be front loaded. It was this aspect of the Revenue Support Grant that was the most difficult, with the need to make approximately 12% savings in the 2011-2012 financial year.

- How many staff will there be in Communities, Housing and Health?

Mr Gerrard advised Members of the proposed staffing figures and that managers had been looking at how services would be delivered if posts were deleted.

- How would support and advice to community centres be delivered now that the post of Community Support Manager had been deleted? The Member believed that a promise had been made in public that support and advice would be maintained. Where will the advice be coming from until the new structure is in place?

Mr Gerrard explained that he would want to see the quality of services to community services increasing over the next 12 months. He was aware that there was a lot of work done with community centres and that work fits into the Corporate Plan. He stressed that the Council was not walking away from community centres but that they would work with the managers of the community centres providing support and advice.

Ms Mooney confirmed that there were other officers with areas of expertise. Expertise will be available Mr Gerrard advised that if support was needed he could be contacted in the first instance.

- Community Centres in rural areas run their own management scheme. If there was a precept in urban community centres to run their own finances would that be legal. Mr Mason advised that it would not.
- Community Centres needed to look at sharing information and good practice but some urban parishes would need more support and advice. The Panel recognised how important community centres are and that they were a priority, but the Council needed to look at how the relationship with community centres could be extended further. All community centres were dealing with major issues and would turn to the Council for support but that level of knowledge would be spread between officers.
- How far along was the work regarding the Customer Contact Centre?

Mr Gerrard explained that officers were looking at financing and IT with Allerdale and the County Council and they were at the point where the Councils needed to decide whether to take the next step with what's on offer. The Panel were part of a Task and Finish group looking at the issues but there had been no clear indication from other partners.

- Now is the best time to look at service delivery and look at working with partners.

RESOLVED – 1) That the matter would be a standing item on the next 3 agendas for the Panel

2) Advice to be sought as to whether future reports should be considered in Part B.

COSP.91/10 BUDGET 2011/12

Revenue Budget Reports

(a) Summary of New Revenue Spending Pressures

The Assistant Director (Resources) (Mr Mason) submitted report RD.56/10 summarising the new revenue spending pressures and reduced income projections that had emerged as part of the 2011/12 budget process. The issues were to be considered in the light of the Council's corporate priorities.

The Executive had on 22 November 2010 (EX.186/10) received the report and forwarded it to Overview and Scrutiny Panels for consideration as part of the 2011/12 budget process.

Mr Mason advised that all the pressure grant incomes had been reduced including a reduced grant settlement. The Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) had had their admin grant reduced that resulted in a reduced grant to the Council in the form of housing benefits of 7%.

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

- **Housing Benefit Administration Grant**

The Government's announcement on reduction in funding would impact on the level of specific grants receivable. Until further details were provided later in 2010, a budget pressure of £60,000 had been included for a potential reduction in Housing Benefit admin grant in 2011/12 with a phased increase in future years.

- Would the proposed savings for Tullie House be met?

Mr Mason advised that the saving would be £174,000 in year 2011/12.

RESOLVED – That Report RD.56/10 be noted.

(b) Summary of Savings Delivered and New Proposals

Report RD.57/10 had been circulated to the Panel by way of background information.

Mr Mason advised that the saving in year 2011/12 would be £75,000. All reviews had indicated a saving of between £149,000 and £157,000 over the years on community development.

RESOLVED – That Report RD.57/10 be noted.

(c) Review of Charges 2011/12

- **Local Environment**

Report CS.28/10 was submitted, setting out the proposed fees and charges for the services falling within the remit of the Local Environment Directorate.

The Executive had on 22 November 2010 (EX.181/10) decided that the report be noted and referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for their consideration.

Mr Mason advised that there had not been any budget saving pressure and that there would be no leeway in the coming year.

Councillor Cape declared a personal interest in the item relating to allotments in respect of being an allotment holder.

- With regard to charges for allotments all allotment holder would be charged the same for water supplies regardless of their size.

Mr Mason advised that some charges had to be increased and that allotments were already heavily subsidised.

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

- **Community Engagement**

Report CD.21/10 was submitted, setting out the proposed fees and charges for the services falling within the remit of the Community Engagement Directorate.

The Executive had on 22 November 2010 (EX.182/10) decided that the report be noted and referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for their consideration.

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

- **Licensing**

GD.51/10 was submitted for information setting out the proposed fees and charges for areas falling within the responsibility of the Licensing Section of the Governance Directorate. The Regulatory Panel had responsibility for determining the licence fees. The fees were approved.

The Executive had on 22 November 2010 (EX.185/10) noted that the Licensing Charges had been approved by the Regulatory Panel on 13 October 2010.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

Capital Budget Reports

(d) Revised Capital Programme 2010/11 and Provisional Capital Programme 2011/12 to 2015/16

The Assistant Director (Resources) (Mr Mason) submitted report RD.53/10 detailing the revised capital programme for 2010/11, together with the proposed method of financing as set out in Appendices A and B. The report also summarised the proposed programme for 2011/12 to 2015/16 in the light of the capital bids submitted for consideration, together with the estimated capital resources available to fund the programme.

The Executive had on 22 November 2010 (EX.188/10) considered the report and decided:

- “1. Noted the revised capital programme and relevant financing for 2010/11 as set out in Appendices A and B of Report RD.53/10;
2. Recommended that the City Council approve slippage of £3,654,300 and savings of £99,700 from 2010/11 identified in Phase 1 of the Review;
3. Had considered the proposed criteria, as suggested by the Senior Management Team, to be used in determining the revised Capital Programme (Phase 2) based on capital resources available;
4. Had given initial consideration to the capital spending requests for 2011/12 to 2015/16 contained in Report RD.53/10 in the light of the estimated available resources; and
5. Noted that any capital scheme for which funding had been approved by the Council may only proceed after a full report, including business case and financial appraisal, had been approved.”

Details of the new capital spending proposals which fell within the area of responsibility of the Panel were as detailed on the Agenda for the meeting.

- **Rickerby Park** – A five year enhancement plan had been detailed in report CS.17/10 which had been considered by the Executive on 4 June 2010.
- **Customer Contact Centre** – The spending proposal was for Phase 2 and 3 of the refurbishment of the Customer Contact Centre which would generate additional revenue income.

Details of the potential capital resources available which fell within the area of responsibility of the Panel were as detailed on the Agenda for the meeting.

- **Regional Housing Pot** – The regional Housing Pot grant reduced by £354,000 in 2010/11, and initial indications from the Government Spending Review indicated that the grant could be cut completely. On that basis, estimated receipts of £1.22m for future years had been removed from the projections. A further report would be presented to the Executive once the position of Regional Housing Pot grant had been received.
- **Disabled Facilities Grants** - The Disabled Facilities grant allocation would not be announced until January 2011, although it had been indicated that the grant would be protected at the 2010/11 levels/ A further report would be presented once the 2011/12 allocation had been received.

- The same figure is projected for 2015/16 and as people are living longer there is likely to be an increase in the number of people requiring this grant. How will the Council resolve or tackle the issue?

Mr Mason stated that it would be a major issue for the housing section and there was an assurance any grant from Government would be matched. Money would be sourced from elsewhere and criteria amended. The matter would be referred back to Government following discussion at the Executive.

- Has any progress been made re RSL?

Mr Mason advised that there had been discussions with Riverside as they had statutory responsibility.

- What is the position regarding purple sacks for refuse?

Mr Mason explained that the matter was out for consultation and would be dealt with by the Executive and that the charges were set before the start of the budget process.

RESOLVED: To accept the recommendations

(The meeting ended at 2:45pm)