

## **COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

**THURSDAY 11 JUNE 2015 AT 10.00AM**

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

**ALSO**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Mrs Bradley – Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder  
Councillor Ms Quilter – Culture, Leisure and Young People Portfolio Holder  
Councillor J Mallinson – Observer

**OFFICERS:** Deputy Chief Executive  
Director of Economic Development  
Communities, Housing and Health Manager  
Contracts and Community Services Manager  
District Environmental Health Officer  
Housing Development Officer  
Overview and Scrutiny Officer  
Policy and Performance Officer

### **COSP.27/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Osgood.

Apologies for absence were also submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs Riddle – Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder.

### **COSP.28/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Ms Franklin declared an interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of Riverside. The interest related to the fact that she is a member of the Divisional Board of Riverside Cumbria.

### **COSP.29/15 PUBLIC AND PRESS**

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

### **COSP.30/15 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

**RESOLVED** – 1. That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2015 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.

2. That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 April 2015 be noted.

### **COSP.31/15 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS**

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

## **COSP.32/15    QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Barker, Secretary of the Carlisle and Rural Tenants' Federation to the meeting.

### Riverside Carlisle

Pursuant to Procedure Rule 10.1, the Director of Governance reported the receipt of the following questions to the Chairman which had been submitted on notice by Mr Barker, Secretary of the Carlisle and Rural Tenants' Federation. Any views or opinions expressed in the questions were those of the person submitting the questions and did not necessarily reflect the position, views or opinions of the Council.

In response to a query the Chairman confirmed that Mr Barker would have the opportunity to ask a supplementary question.

#### Question 1

At the last meeting of the panel (April 9), the Riverside Housing Association representatives were asked about the composition of the Riverside Tenants' Scrutiny Panel. The representatives said that this panel comprised tenants and also representatives of Riverside and was considered independent of Riverside. The view was then expressed by the Council Panel Chairman that because of the inclusion of Riverside representatives, the Riverside tenants' panel could not claim to be independent and by implication have the power to hold Riverside effectively to account. Does the Panel agree with the view of its Chairman and if so, does the Panel feel that representations should be made to Riverside about this absence of independence?

The Chairman advised that at the time of the discussion with regard to the Tenant's Scrutiny Panel and how effective the Panel was, he thought it was appropriate to query whether the panel was independent. The Chair of the Tenants Scrutiny Panel provided further explanation on how the group was independent, although serviced by officers of Riverside and the Chairman and the Panel were satisfied with that explanation. The Chair further stated that he felt that there was no apparent evidence that residents were not happy with the work of the Tenants' Scrutiny Panel. He felt that the Panel believed that the Tenants' Scrutiny Panel were fulfilling their function and that as they were autonomous, the Council's Panel would not be making any further representation. Residents who were dissatisfied could make individual representations to Riverside if they felt they could not use the Tenants Scrutiny Panel to do so.

#### Question 2

Following serious criticisms of the working practises and of other aspects of Riverside Housing Association's activities, made at this Panel's meetings and at other places, there has subsequently recently been a praiseworthy involvement of the Council in attempting to address what apparently are complaints made by Riverside tenants and leaseholders which cannot be resolved. For at least three years this unsatisfactory situation has been causing real distress and hardship to Riverside tenants and leaseholders, particularly in Longtown. What further steps does the Panel consider necessary to end this unsatisfactory situation?

The Chairman advised that the issue was discussed at length at the last meeting and the minutes of that meeting noted that Mr Butterworth had explained how Riverside were dealing with the matter. There had been concern about the working practices of Riverside but the Panel were satisfied that Riverside were moving forward. The Panel had been given

assurances, which they accepted, that Riverside were setting up a Leaseholders Board which would provide leaseholders with a greater opportunity to deal with such issues.

The Chairman queried what Mr Barker meant by the phrase “praiseworthy involvement of the Council”.

Mr Barker explained that some of the issues had not been resolved by Riverside. The Leader of the Council had taken up the matter and was investigating the issues one by one with the relevant Councillors involved. Those investigations were currently ongoing. Mr Barker queried the Council could do more and take issues further.

The Chairman advised that those were issues for Riverside to resolve. He acknowledged that the Panel had raised concerns at a previous meeting in 2014 but the Councillor for the local area who had raised the matter, had subsequently been re-assured that things were moving in the right direction and that was also the view of the Panel.

With regard to the independence of the Tenants’ Scrutiny Panel Mr Barker queried whether a panel could be partly independent and whether the Panel were satisfied that the Scrutiny Panel was independent.

The Chairman confirmed that the Panel was satisfied that the scrutiny arrangements for Riverside tenants were sufficiently arms length and that it was not a matter for the Council to seek to interfere with the autonomous arrangements of another organisation.

The Chair stated that he felt it was disrespectful of the organisation which Mr Barker represented to suggest that the individuals who represented the tenants on the Tenants Scrutiny Panel could be influenced to not properly hold the company to account. He further stated that he felt a recent blog placed by Mr Barker which referred to members of the Riverside Tenants Scrutiny Panel as ‘donkeys’ was also disrespectful.

Mr Barker confirmed that he had no problem with the Councils’ Scrutiny Panel or the Council but he had complained about the Riverside Panel.

## **COSP.33/15    LOW COST HOME OWNERSHIP POLICY**

The Housing Development Officer reported (ED.26/15) that the Council’s Housing Team began managing a Low Cost Home Ownership Scheme over 15 years ago to help local people who had been priced out of the housing market. Properties were sold at a fixed percentage discount, with the owner passing on the discount upon each successive re-sale. For over 10 years properties provided through the scheme had been at a 30% discount from open market value; however, the older properties were at a 20% discount and a few of the earliest homes included in the scheme were at a 10% discount. The allocation of properties and the waiting list were managed using a bespoke Microsoft Access database but currently the Policy consisted of a double-sided leaflet.

The Housing Development Officer explained that the number of Low Cost Home Ownership Schemes had increased steadily over time, and the Council now managed 298 discounted sale properties (detailed in Appendix 1 of the draft policy) through its Low Cost Home Ownership Register, with many more currently in the pipeline, including 143 on schemes already on site or with planning permission approved.

Those affordable homes had been funded by substantial levels of planning obligation contributions, through Section 106 Agreements, with the cost borne by the landowner and developer. Yet despite the significant level of equity invested in the Scheme the Council had never had a detailed Low Cost Home Ownership Policy.

The Housing Development Officer added that the new policy sought to give increased priority to households in the greatest housing need for a particular property type. Low Cost Home Ownership properties were currently allocated to qualifying persons, based solely on the date of application, without taking into account the needs of a particular household. He further outlined the key recommendations to make the Low Cost Home Ownership Policy fairer and add clarity as set out in sections 2.2 and 2.3 to the report.

The Housing Development Officer highlighted the main issue within the report including percentage discounts, responsible borrowing, setting affordable values, owners occupiers, eligibility criteria and local connection criteria, prioritising applicants, new developments, re-sales, rights of succession, the legal implications of the Section 106 Agreements, rental options appeals. The Housing Development Officer explained that the list of applicants would be reviewed annually to check that people wished to remain on the list and ensure that their circumstances had not changed.

The report included a list of all properties included in the Council's Low Cost Home Ownership Scheme. Officers had consulted widely internally and with local developers on the policy and a stakeholder event was scheduled for the following week. Everyone involved had indicated that they were happy with the policy.

At the request of a Member the Housing Development Officer circulated a copy of the existing policy.

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

- *A Member believed that the Council did not have any interest in the equity people would have in the property and that was the reason why mortgage providers were willing to lend to prospective purchasers.*

The Housing Development Officer explained that the Council's interest lay in the investment made by landowners and developers. The policy stated that if someone bought a property at a fixed discount that discount had to be passed on when selling the property.

- *The existing policy was easy to understand and was being replaced by a fourteen page document. Originally to get onto the scheme a person had to be local and unable to get a mortgage. Why move to a complicated scheme that would put people off? Under the original scheme a person went to the mortgage provider who then contacted the Council. The Council did not take into account the mortgage multipliers. The new policy was a significant ramping up of a simple system.*

The Housing Development Officer explained that the Council had always taken multipliers into account and that the policy was still simple to understand. The new criteria would not stop people from applying and someone with a mortgage who was able to move could still secure a property. Officers were trying to make better use of housing stock. The Council were asking developers to provide properties at a discount and landowners to develop plots at a discount. There was a need for discounted housing. There had been little change to the policy and the changes were intended to provide clarity.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder explained that the income to property price multipliers policy followed Government guidance on the Help to Buy scheme and it was important that if someone was getting a mortgage and entering home ownership that they could keep up payments. In America lenders had loaned money to people who could not afford to repay it. In the concept of fairness the policy provided the opportunity for someone to acquire a home on the basis of need and was moving in line with Housing Associations' practices.

Within Carlisle District Members were aware that there was a lack for affordable housing of all types and that the Council would become more reliant upon Section 106 Agreements to meet those situations. Low Cost Home Ownership would be more important if the scheme was extended to housing providers. The Council were trying to regulate the policy to ensure that people with the greatest need were given the greatest chance.

The Director of Economic Development advised that what had been circulated in the meeting was a summary of the original policy and that a similar handout would be available with regard to the new policy.

- *How transparent was the policy? Was it clear what weighting was and the priorities?*

The Housing Development Officer explained that if there was a local connection the person would qualify register for the scheme.

- *What was the mechanism for appeal? If a person was rejected what would be the opinion of the Ombudsman if there was no route of appeal?*

The Housing Development Officer explained that legal advice had been sought and priority would still go on the length of time a person had been on the list. The policy was not complicated when compared to the banding scheme that other housing providers had.

- *How many applicants were there over the year and how long were people on the list?*

The Housing Development Officer advised that there were 300 properties and if someone was very prescriptive about where they wanted to live they may have to wait a long time. New developments often had a number of properties and the turnaround in that instance could be quite quick. Houses in the rural area did not become available as often so people may have to wait some time for houses in those areas.

- *The eligibility criteria was for 3 and 4 bedroom houses. That led to the assumption that 2 bedroom houses were allocated on a first come first served basis.*

The Housing Development Officer explained that the system was not like Cumbria Choice and people were allowed a spare bedroom. The prioritisation of families within the policy was for larger family properties.

- *How would the scheme be promoted?*

The Housing Development Officer explained that the scheme would be promoted on the Council's website and in the press. There was also promotion on new builds by the developers, as well as word of mouth.

- *Would key workers – doctors, nurses, police officers – coming into the area be given priority?*

The Housing Development Officer advised that that was not done at present as Officers had tried to keep the policy as simple as possible. If they were on relatively low income and struggling to buy a property they would be eligible to apply. House prices in Carlisle were lower than other areas and it was borderline whether those people would be on a salary low enough to meet the criteria.

The Director of Economic Development advised that there was mention in the Queen's speech about key workers but Officers would have to wait until legislation was passed to determine the impact on the policy.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder reminded Members that when the Council owned properties before the Riverside scheme key workers had access to houses for a period to ensure they had accommodation whilst looking for a permanent property.

- *Some areas had a policy with respect to ex-servicemen. Did the Council have anything similar?*

The Housing Development Officer explained that there was nothing at present as the intention was to keep the policy as straight forward as possible. If someone had a connection with the local area they would meet the local connection criteria.

- *One of the criteria for local connection was "any other reason for living in the District which is approved by the City Council". What did that mean?*

The Housing Development Officer explained that it was a catchall as it was difficult to list every eventuality and gave an example of someone who met that criteria. The Officer advised that it would not be used often as most people would meet other criteria.

- *Has the local connection criteria changed?*

The Housing Development Officer explained that it had not and was determined by the standard Section 106 Agreements which were covered by legislation.

- *What were the essential differences in the policy and what the Council currently do?*

The Housing Development Officer advised that main change was in the way in which house types were prioritised. The new policy simply formalised the process and ensured a right of succession to qualifying people.

- *Publicising the scheme was a priority as it was an essential scheme for the area, which, it was recognised, had some of the lowest salaries and wages in the country.*

The Housing Development Officer advised that the Council ran adverts on the scheme from time to time and there was publicity with regard to new builds. The policy could also be advertised in the Carlisle Focus magazine.

- *Who would be invited to the stakeholder workshop?*

A number of stakeholders had been invited to the workshop including the Access Group AWAZ who represented Black and Minority Ethnic people and communities in Cumbria, Age UK and DACE (Disability Association of Carlisle and Eden).

The Director of Economic Development requested that Members should inform her if they knew of anyone else who should be invited.

- *Young working couples were not part of those groups. The policy was not social housing and was a different pool to affordable housing. It appeared that the Council were putting up barriers that would put people off from applying. The Member proposed that the Panel considered that the Executive should look at the policy again and re-consider their decision to make the policy more complicated than it was.*

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder reminded Members that the policy was the formalisation of the existing policy and was available to anyone who was trying to get onto the property ladder.

The Housing Development Officer advised that the discounts in relation to the policy were provided by developers and landowners based on housing surveys that indicated there was a need for such house types. If a couple applied for a property their application would still be considered. Developers were being asked for contribution through Section 106 Agreements and need had to be taken into account. Little had changed from the existing policy and anyone could apply. If someone had a greater need the Council would allow them the opportunity to purchase a property first.

There were no restrictions on 2 bedroom properties.

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the difference was between the criteria and the prioritisation.

- *Most of the properties on the list were 2 bedroom. What size would future properties be in the scheme?*

The Housing Development Officer advised that the housing need survey evidence was used to negotiate affordable properties based on tenure and property size and there was a difference in the discounts required between rental properties and low cost ownership. The Council were currently trying to obtain more bungalows which would be more suitable for the elderly.

The Director of Economic Development advised that Officers worked with colleagues in Planning who worked with developers but the process was complicated.

- *A Member was concerned about what would happen in the future if only 3 bedroom properties were built.*

The Director of Economic Development advised that there was future proofing in respect of housing included in the Local Plan and bungalows would be included in that Plan.

The Housing Development Officer added that there were a lot of 2 bedroom properties available.

- *A Member expressed concern that because of the prioritisation young working couples would never be at the top of the list and a proposal was made that the Executive reconsider the proposed policy to be based on basic housing need rather than affordability.*

*A vote was taken and the proposal was rejected.*

RESOLVED: That report ED.26/15, Low Cost Housing Ownership Policy, be noted.

## **COSP.34/15    END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT 2014-15**

The Policy and Performance Officer submitted report PC.07/15 that updated the Panel on the Council's service standards that helped measure performance, and included updates on key actions contained within the Carlisle Plan.

With regard to the information on the Carlisle Plan the intention was to provide the Panel with a brief overview of the current position without duplicating the more detailed reporting that had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels at earlier meetings.

As a new performance framework was developed using the peer review as an assessment it would be the 2014/15 data that would be used as a baseline. With that in mind a Baseline Report had been produced that included a selection of performance measures from inside and outside of the authority. The measures were not exhaustive and it was recognised that there were service areas that were not represented in the report, but PRISM would pick up all areas as 2015/16 progressed. A copy of the Baseline Report was attached to the report.

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

- *Some of the issues included were not relevant to the Panel.*

The Policy and Performance Officer explained that usually only those service standards relevant to the Panel were included in the report but as the report was the end of year report all service standards were included.

- *With regard to benefit claims the last update stated that it was the intention to improve the figures and in particular that the Shared Services arrangements may affect that service standard.*

The Shared Services Partnership Manager advised that there had been a lot of changes within the service which had previously experienced issues in respect of resource capacity. There were still some issues for example in West Cumbria where a hard recruitment drive by Sellafield was affecting staff numbers. Performance was now on target within the three services and there had been changes involving the localisation of services due to be implemented on 1 August 2015. It was anticipated that the current level of performance would be maintained if not improved.

- *Had the previous staffing issues been resolved?*

The Shared Services Partnership Manager explained that they had been resolved in Carlisle but there were still some issues in West Cumbria.



- *There appeared to be a high staff turnover. Were staff well trained? Was there sufficient budget for training?*

The Shared Services Partnership Manager advised that there was no budget specifically for training. Generally staff turnover was low and the workforce was stable. There had been some training last year which had been useful. The Shared Services Partnership Manager was not anticipating any issues with regards to staff.

- *The Carlisle Plan stated that the Council would support the growth and sustainability of business development. Did the Council follow up claims for business growth, e.g number of jobs to be created?*

The Director of Economic Development advised that business growth was monitored regularly. For example with regards to Durranhill funding had been received from the LEP and Officers had to feedback information to the LEP.

- *Would sanctions be imposed if the Council failed to meet standards?*

The Director of Economic Development advised that it took time to deliver outputs but service standards were generally achieved.

- *The Arts Centre appeared to be a success so far and would be included in the Work Programme for future updates. How were ticket sales going?*

The Culture, Leisure and Young People Portfolio Holder advised that there had been very positive feedback and a lot of promoters from around the country had contacted the Centre making enquiries about the venue. There had been enquiries from the promoters of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival with regard to putting on a pre/post Fringe event in Carlisle.

Ticket sales were going well and information would be included in future as part of the monitoring by the Panel.

- *Were there any examples of people who had accessed the Homelife service?*

The Director of Economic Development explained that the service was more positive than just talking to people. It provided the services of plumbers/electricians/gardeners etc.

- *How did people find out about the service? The Member believed the service needed to be promoted more.*

The Director of Economic Development advised that it was a new service and was still building and growing. It had been decided to promote the service gradually to ensure it did not become overwhelmed as it was growing.

- *Would Councillors be included in the launch of the homelessness strategy?*

The Director of Economic Development confirmed that Members would be involved. The strategy was due to be launched on 8 July 2015.

- *At a recent meeting of the Development Control Committee a developer stated that new builds were usually bought by people from the local community. If that was the case what was happening to the properties they were leaving?*

- *Older properties were sold to be renovated.*
- *How many people who were buying properties were new to the City?*

The Director of Economic Development stated that that was difficult to know.

- *The baseline figure showed that the budget for 2014/15 was £13,364,700 and only £9,857,356 had been spent. Did that mean that there was a surplus of approximately £4,000,000 in the budget?*

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the budget figures took into account reserves and carry forward requirements. When they were netted off they showed a revenue underspend of £1.4million. The figure had been carried through from the previous year into the current budget.

- *Were there any services that the Council were not doing as there were not as many employees as in the past?*

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that all services were being carried out.

- *There was no indication of that scale of slack in the budget.*

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that it was not necessarily cumulative through the year and part of the difference was in relation to the Council preparing for gaps in service and to ensure there was enough to cover any restructure of the Council.

- *The Executive had not been transparent with regard to the scale of the underspend.*
- *The report was public and there would be more scrutiny of the figures at the forthcoming Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel.*

The Policy and Performance Officer stated that more textual information would be included in future.

- *There had been a large number of Welfare Advice claimants and the service was to be commended in the way they had been handled.*
- *Was the Council still continuing with the Empty Homes project?*

The Director of Economic Development explained that the Empty Homes project was one of the Council's key priorities and looked at the best value to be gained from bringing empty properties back into use.

RESOLVED – That Report PC.07/15, End of Year Performance Report 2014/15, be noted.

## **COSP.35/15 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented report OS.11/15 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 1 May 2015, included the following item which fell within the remit of this Panel.

KD.10/15 – Community Trigger – the matter had been considered by the Executive at their meeting on 1 June 2015. It was decided that the Executive:

1. Had considered the proposals for handling Community Trigger requests locally and approved the adoption of the countywide approach, as detailed in Report SD.07/15, to the arrangements about carrying out anti-social behaviour reviews by the relevant bodies pursuant to the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.
2. Published the Review Procedures.
3. Appointed the Community Development Officer as Point of Contact at the Council (S103(4)) of the said Act.

KD.11/15 – Low Cost Home Ownership Policy – the matter was considered by the Panel earlier in the meeting.

KD.14/15 – Food Law Enforcement Service Plan – the plan had been circulated for information only.

- The following references from the Executive meeting on 1 June 2015 fell within the remit of this Panel:

EX.43/15 – Community Trigger

EX.44/15 – Low Cost Home Ownership Policy

EX.47/15 – Food law Enforcement Service Plan.

- The Scrutiny Officer advised that there were two meeting dates that clashed with full Council meetings of Cumbria County Council; 14 January 2016 and 18 February 2016. As none of the Members were also County Councillors it was decided to leave the dates as agreed by Council.
- The Scrutiny Officer invited Members to consider issues for the Work Programme for the coming year. Guidance on Scrutiny Agenda Planning had been attached to the report. Members were encouraged to use the prioritisation aid contained in the guidance to ensure that items placed on the work programme were those that scrutiny could add value to. Directors had been asked to provide a short update on their work to allow Members to focus on specific areas for the Work Programme.

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

- *It would be an interesting year and the Council would be looking at the scrutiny process in general over the coming months. Important issues for the Panel included homelessness and the Arts Centre.*

The Director of Economic Development agreed that it would be an interesting year and that many of the issues would be cross cutting with the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

There were two strands to the work of Economic Development. There was the overall objective of delivering more homes and the prevention agenda to avoid homelessness and provide support to allow people to remain in their homes.

The Director of Economic Development advised that the issues the directorate would be dealing with included housing, the Supporting People Contract, the Homelife service, Riverside, the homelessness action plan and energy and efficiency with regard to reducing fuel poverty.

- *How could the Panel have a positive impact on that work.*

The Director of Economic Development explained that the Panel would be interested in housing delivery which would also be key for the Executive and the economy and would impact on skills and employment. The Panel could also have an input in the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan to ensure it stayed on track and to monitor the work of Riverside which would affect the community.

- *It would be interesting how the Panel could take that work forward and be more constructive. It would be useful to have an extra session of the Panel to look at how the Panel could work more constructively as the issues were important and it was important that the Panel had an input into the delivery of the policies and how to deal with the issues in the future.*

The Deputy Chief Executive suggested that it may help the Panel if Officers simplified the depth of reports and would be better for residents and Members and would make it easier to look at the facts. That could lead to a more focussed discussion.

- *Last year the Panel looked at the Homeless strategy. The Panel could concentrate on either the Homelife Service or housing in the new municipal year.*
- *The Chairman proposed that the matter be included on the agenda for the next meeting, following an informal meeting of Panel members to discuss what issues they would like to priorities and pursue further.*

The Director of Economic Development explained that there was a long list of priorities and the Panel needed to understand what was of interest to the Panel and what the key issues were then take out the remainder.

- *Discussion with the Executive would also be useful.*

RESOLVED – 1. That the Overview Report (OS.11/15) incorporating the Work Programme and Notice of Executive Decisions items relevant to this Panel be noted.

2. That development of the Work Programme be included in the agenda for the next meeting of the Panel.

## **COSP.36/15 FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICE PLAN**

Report LE.16/15 had been circulated for information.

Officers were commended for producing a very comprehensive and thorough Plan.

The District Environmental Health Officer explained that the report highlighted some new initiatives and work which was being undertaken. There was a new method of food sampling and Officers now reported back to the Food Standards Agency.

He added that as part of the new food information regulations it was now a legal requirement that customers were able to ask providers about the food they were providing with regard to allergies.

RESOLVED – That report LE.16/15 Food Law Enforcement Service Plan be noted.

**COSP.37/15      LEISURE FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT**

(Public and Press excluded by virtue of Paragraph 3)  
(Culture, Leisure and Young People Portfolio)

The Deputy Chief Executive presented Report SD.07/15 regarding the development of leisure facilities in Carlisle. The existing leisure contract was due to expire in November 2017 and funding had been secured to procure specialist advice on both the procurement of a new leisure contract and investment in new leisure facilities.

The Deputy Chief Executive provided the Panel with the background in respect of the existing contract and the Council's investment plans. The Deputy Chief Executive advised Members on the legal compliance requirements, the relevant timings, the market engagement process and the necessary stages in the tendering process which would culminate in the award of a new leisure contract. The Deputy Chief Executive provided an indicative timeline, budget and funding provision and advised that the intention was to procure specialist advice and support on a stage by stage process, subject to the approval of the Executive when they considered the matter at their meeting scheduled to be held on 29 June 2015.

The Panel asked about parking arrangements at the Sands Centre and the Pools and were informed that GLL provided some parking at both the Sands Centre and the Pools and had recently purchased more spaces at both the Sands Centre and Pools. Any discussion with regard changes to the current provision would be discussed as part of the contractual changes.

The Panel discussed the James Street site and possible options for the future of the Turkish baths. The Deputy Chief Executive stated that the James Street site was included in the Local Plan for redevelopment and options would be looked at in the future. The Turkish baths were a listed building and options for the facilities would also need to be discussed in the future.

A Member asked about the facilities that would be provided at the new pool and the Contracts and Community Services Manager responded that a the need assessment conducted as part of the drafting of the Sports Facilities Strategy had identified the requirement for 20metre and 25 metre pools. However flexibility of space was critical, and while movable booms and floors can help provide this, he added that the authority had to be open minded with regard to both swimming and dry sports facilities.

The Deputy Chief Executive responded to Members questions with regard to the legalities of the process and the contractual arrangements that were in place

RESOLVED – That the Panel noted the proposals as set out in Report SD.37/15, Leisure Facilities Development, and asked to be kept involved in the process.

**COSP.38/15 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Chairman advised the Panel that the Scrutiny Officer was moving to a new position within the Council. The Chairman, and the Panel, thanked the Officer for her work. The Chairman added that the post was crucial to the development of scrutiny in the future.

(The meeting ended at 12.40 pm)