

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 22 MARCH 2012 AT 10.00 AM

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Luckley (Chairman) Councillors
Mrs Bradley, Glover, Nedved, Mrs Parsons, Mrs Prest, Mrs
Riddle (as substitute for Cllr McDevitt) and Scarborough.

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Geddes, Community Engagement Portfolio
Holder
Councillor Bloxham, Environment and Housing Portfolio Holder
Mr Barker, Secretary of the Carlisle and Rural Tenants'
Federation

COSP.29/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor McDevitt.

COSP.30/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs Luckley declared a personal interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of Agenda item A.1 – Questions by Members of the Public. The interest related to the fact that she was a City Council representative on the Riverside Carlisle Board.

COSP.31/12 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED – 1) That the minutes of the meetings held on 12 January 2012 be agreed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

2) That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2012 be noted.

COSP.32/12 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS

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

COSP.33/12 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:

"Question One

Given the expressions of improved relations between the city council and Riverside Housing Association made at the Panel meeting on February 9 2012, and given the emphasis by Panel members at the same meeting on the importance of these improved relations between the two bodies, what advice or form of condemnation does the Panel have to give/apply to Riverside Housing Association in order that it will improve its relations with community groups in the city, particularly in view of Riverside's well-documented attempts to block and deny Carlisle and Rural Tenants' Federation members their rights as taxpayers to participate in the business of the city council's Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel; and particularly in view of Riverside's attempts to block and deny the rights of some of its leaseholders to participate in negotiations over leaseholders' problems; and particularly in view of Riverside's denial of human rights and natural justice by exercising favouritism in giving financial and corporate help to a Carlisle community group, the Tenants' and Residents' Association of Morton Park (TRAMP, which is run by Carlisle City Councillor Nan Farmer) and not to give that corporate and financial help to other groups in the city?

Question Two

Given the expressions of improved relations between the city council and Riverside Housing Association made at the Panel meeting on February 9 2012, and given the emphasis by Panel members at the same meeting on the importance of these improved relations between the two bodies, what advice or help does the Panel have for Carlisle and Rural Tenants' Federation in its attempts to address issues concerning its members, particularly the issue of the city's desperate need for social housing (according to figures released by the National Housing Federation) when no details of how the shortage is being tackled are available from the city's principal landlord, Riverside, which announced on December 3 2011 via Mr Patrick Leonard, that it would not reply to any further requests for help from the Federation; and when the Federation is unable to get replies requesting help to break the impasse with Riverside from Councillor Joe Hendry, one of the four city council representatives on the Riverside governing board; and when Riverside would have been statutorily compelled to supply information about its activities had it not been excluded from Freedom of Information requirements?"

The Chairman answered Mr Barker's questions as follows:

"In respect of Question 1 the Panel is very supportive of Riverside's attempts to engage with representative groups that are prepared to engage properly in the process.

In respect of Question 2 the advice for Carlisle Rural Tenants' Federation is to engage reasonably in the processes available and act in the best interests of those it represents."

The Chairman gave Mr Barker the opportunity to ask a supplementary question and Mr Barker asked the following question:

"Given the expressions of improved relations between the city council and Riverside Housing Association made at the Panel meeting on February 9 2012, and given the emphasis by Panel members at the same meeting on the importance of these improved relations between the two bodies, and given the apparently insurmountable obstacles to Carlisle and Rural Tenants' Federation outlined in the previous questions, what advice or help does the Panel have for the Federation in its current campaigning to put an end to three aspects of Riverside's housing allocation policy which are as follows:

- (a) people who don't play by the rules get the best housing when it becomes available;
- (b) the practise of parachuting neighbours from hell from one area to another; and
- (c) the plight of tenants who unsuspectingly chose a property move then find they have landed themselves next to neighbours from hell?"

The Chairman responded to Mr Barker's supplementary question as follows:

"The advice for Carlisle Rural Tenants' Federation is to engage reasonably in the processes available and act in the best interests of those it represents."

The Chairman thanked Mr Barker for his questions.

COSP.34/12 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Officer (Mrs Edwards) presented report OS.09/12 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 March to 30 June 2012 had been published on 16 February 2012 and there had been no items in the Forward Plan within the remit of this Panel.
- Two Minute Excerpts from the Executive held on 13 February 2012 had been included in the report:
 - EX.016/12 Housing Strategy 2012-16
 - EX.023/12 Disabled Facilities Grants
- The Homelessness Task and Finish Group had completed their evidence and a draft report had been circulated to the Panel. Members thanked Panel members and officers for the hard work that had been put into the report. Members were impressed with the level of services currently being offered by the City Council and feedback from partners and statutory and voluntary organisations had been

complimentary. An e-mail had been received from an officer of the County Council requesting that the Task Group consider making a recommendation to exempt single room rates for care leavers up to the age of 24 in line with leaving care legislation. It was agreed that that support should be included in the report after its validity had been checked with Officers within the benefits section.

Members believed that the recommendations within the report were achievable and sensible. It was agreed that a copy of the background information should be kept with the report to enable people referring to the report to access that information.

The Chairman thanked the members of the Homelessness Task and Finish Group for their work. The final report would be presented the next meeting of the Executive for a formal response to the recommendations.

- A briefing note prepared by the Director of Community Engagement which provided an update on the Women and Families Accommodation had been included in the Overview Report for information. The Environment and Infrastructure Portfolio Holder advised that work on the accommodation was on track.
- The draft of the Scrutiny Annual Report had been attached to the report and aimed to summarise the work carried out in the Civic Year and discuss issues for the future. Suggestions made by the three Overview and Scrutiny Panels would be used to amend the draft before it was considered by the Scrutiny Chairs Group for agreement prior to being submitted to full Council.

There was a concern that on occasion issues were made available for scrutiny after the decision had been made by the Executive. Mrs Edwards advised that the main issue was the formatting of the Forward Plan and suggested that issues be made available for the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel but not specify a date for scrutiny.

With regard to scrutiny support members were satisfied with the level of support they received from officers but added that if that was an issue for members of other Panels the issue would need to be addressed.

Mrs Edwards advised that the report would be discussed with the Environment and Economy and Resources Panels before being finalised by the Scrutiny Chairs Group at their meeting on 11 April 2012. The report would then be submitted to Council on 1 May 2012 for implementation by the new Panels in May/June.

- A meeting of the Joint CDRP has being scheduled for 28 March 2012 and the minutes will be circulated at a future meeting of the Panel.

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 following minute excerpts from the Executive held on 13 February 2012 be noted:

EX.016/12 Housing Strategy 2012-16
EX.023/12 Disabled Facilities Grants

3) That the current position regarding the Women and Families Accommodation be noted.

4) That the Homelessness Task and Finish Group Report be forwarded to the Executive for their comments on the recommendations.

5) That the draft Scrutiny Annual Report be amended to incorporate comments above.

COSP.35/12 WELFARE REFORM AND THE LOCALISATION OF COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT

The Director of Community Engagement (Mr Gerrard) submitted report CD.28/12 regarding the Welfare Reform Bill and the Local Government Finance Bill which would result in significant changes for the Revenues and Benefits Services within the Council. Mr Gerrard explained that there would be a significant amount of work to do and that it was important that discussions take place with all partners involved to ensure that the Council were able to respond to the changes. Mr Gerrard advised that the issue would be presented to the Panel for consideration on a number of occasions both prior to and within the early stages of the implementation. The three main areas of concern were the operational and reputational issues, financial implications and the impact on the Council's customers and residents in general.

The Shared Revenues and Benefits Services Manager (Mr Bascombe) gave a presentation to Members and reported that there was three main blocks to the reform:

- Benefits Welfare Reform including Localised Support for Council Tax and the Introduction of Universal Credit and working Age Benefit Reforms
- Retention of Business Rates
- Council Tax Discount and Exemption Charges

Mr Bascombe took the Panel through each of the main blocks giving an overview of the changes and the implications on Revenues and Benefits Services:

Benefits Welfare Reform

Under the Welfare Reform Bill, Council Tax Benefit would be abolished and replaced by Localised Support for Council Tax. Housing Benefit and Local Housing Allowance would be abolished and replaced by Universal Credit for working age claimants. Pension Credit would remain for claimants of pension age and a new Housing Credit would be introduced. Many other changes to means-tested benefits would occur in order to prepare for the full implementation of Universal Credit.

Localised Support for Council Tax

- To improve the incentives to work
- To ensure resources were targeted more effectively at reducing worklessness and ending the culture of benefit dependency
- Expenditure for localisation of Council Tax would realise a 10% reduction in overall expenditure
- The Billing Authority was responsible for the design, approval and implementation of the Scheme with certain elements built in
- The Local Scheme must be adopted by the Council before 31 January 2013 and fully operation from 1 April 2013 – the day after Council Tax Benefit was abolished
- The risks were financial and IT related

Universal Credit and Working Age Benefit Reforms

- Would replace the main income related benefits for working age people
- Would commence on 1 October 2013 for new claimants who were 'out of work'
- Claims for new claimants who were 'in work' would commence 1 April 2014
- Migration of existing benefit claimants would happen through change in their circumstances or as part of a managed transition throughout the period 1 October 2013 to 30 Sept 2017 – the date Housing Benefit would be abolished
- The Bill also made other significant changes to the benefits system including:
 - Introduction of Personal Independence Payments to replace the current Disability Living Allowance
 - Restricting Housing Benefit entitlement for social housing tenants whose accommodation was larger than they need
 - Uprating Local Housing Allowance rates by the Consumer Price Index
 - Amending the forthcoming statutory child maintenance scheme
 - Limiting the payment of contributory Employment and Support Allowance to a 12-month period
 - Capping the total amount of benefit that can be claimed.
- Housing Benefit expenditure, subsidy and administration grant was dependant on caseload and any reduction would impact adversely on funding
- The risks were financial, an impact on human resources required, failure to take opportunity to deliver services locally and/or through partner service delivery

Retention of Business Rates

Provisions within the Local Government Finance Bill enabled powers for local authorities to retain revenue as a result of changes within the local area. Recognition was given to the influence council could have through planning and investment in infrastructure as a means of stimulating growth within the private sector. There were safeguards to maintain fairness given the very different local economic and business environments across England.

Currently, the amount of business rates received by an authority therefore has no connection with the amount raised locally. From 2013/14, authorities would retain the growth in business rates but would also take the risk if rates fell or have slow growth. Mechanisms were proposed so that authorities with very high business rate

growth would pay some of the gains into a fund to protect any authorities otherwise suffering large losses.

The risk considerations involved in introducing the new scheme included financial and economic risks.

Council Tax Discount and Exemption Changes

Provisions within the Local Government Finance Bill were intended to provide greater flexibility to address levels of empty properties and to give scope to impose additional liability to encourage owners to take appropriate action to bring properties back into use. However, the ability of charge payers to bring properties back into use may be affected by the current financial climate. The changes would take effect in April 2013.

Mr Bascombe explained that this was a very complex issue and that there was a lot more information to come. Whilst he realised that the changes were technical and complicated implementing the changes within the timescales would be a huge task and that further reports would be submitted as that detail was received and the changes progressed.

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

Was the timescale for implementation achievable?

Mr Bascombe advised that the timescale was achievable but that decisions would need to be made from a financial perspective. Decisions would have to be made about who would receive the benefits and monitor progress over the first year. By that time officers would have a better understanding of how the legislation worked in practice.

Was there a template for the authorities who are part of the Revenues and Benefits shared service? Will there be separate templates for the County Council and the shared service authorities?

Mr Bascombe explained that no template had been produced to date and that he was advocating that the shared services authorities should have the same template. Dialogue had started with senior officers from those authorities.

Would there be a working group to follow progress and how would information about the scheme be passed to Members not sitting on Overview and Scrutiny Panels?

Mr Gerrard advised that he had met with the lead officers from Copeland and Allerdale and they had agreed that each needed to be independent but that they needed to continue discussions. Issues were emerging from the Officer Working Group in Carlisle. Mr Gerrard explained that JMT and the Executive would be included in the process and that political decisions would need to be made.

It was suggested that a presentation could be made to a special Council meeting in July/August to advise all Members on the changes.

Members and Officers should not underestimate the scale of the task and everyone would be affected in some way. Would the billing authority be responsible for the design of the scheme and would the City Council be working with Officers and Members from Copeland and Allerdale?

The Director of Resources (Mr Mason) advised that the City Council would continue to be the billing authority and that Carlisle, Copeland and Allerdale would be involved in all the schemes.

Will there be different schemes and will there be the same IT systems across the board?

Mr Bascombe stated that there would need to be flexibility in the IT system but it would need to meet the scheme requirements to match all systems. It was a concern to Officers and they would need to obtain details of the scheme before they could test any software.

Would the benefits advice agencies be involved in the scheme and would they be working at the same rate of change and with the same information as the City Council?

Mr Gerrard explained that the Benefits Advice agencies would be a part of the information process and it was planned to establish a working group within Carlisle to avoid duplication of work.

There are a number of areas of risk linked to the reform of Housing Benefit and Council Tax benefit. Would people who were eligible for full Housing Benefit as part of Income Support still be entitled to the same level of benefit? Homelessness should be included in the Corporate Risk Register as it could potentially be a huge problem.

Mr Mason explained that the benefit would be paid direct to the claimant under the new scheme and it would be their responsibility to pay their rent accordingly. That could impact on the landlords and on the homelessness team in the longer term. The issue would be considered by the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel at their meeting next week and would be included onto the Corporate Risk Register.

Mr Gerrard advised that the Project Assurance Group principally considered significant (often capital) projects. The matter may be included in its work programme as a specific project was identified to address the issues raised within the report. Mr Gerrard added that there would be real risks and pressures on, for example, the homelessness team, as well as the Customer Contact Centre, Riverside Housing and other registered providers.

The Community Engagement Portfolio Holder advised that she had attended a conference that had looked at the potential impact on Councillors as well s families with four or more children and the over-occupancy of homes. The Portfolio Holder

was concerned that the changes could lead to child poverty as well as poverty among people of pensionable age. Those concerns would need to be dealt with.

It would be important to maintain communication with all those likely to be affected by the changes. Was the City Council developing a timetable for communication?

Mr Gerrard advised that discussions had been held within the Community Engagement Departmental Management Team looking at what resources would be needed. There would also be liaison with the advice networks. Mr Mason explained that Officers would need direction on what type of scheme Members would wish to see; that could be part of the discussion at the special Council meeting in July/August.

Would benefits to claimants under the new scheme be means tested?

Mr Bascombe advised that the Council should not need to means test claimants as that work should have been carried out elsewhere. The system that would be in place in year one would be refined over the year. Mr Bascombe confirmed that the current 25% single persons discount would remain.

The Chairman thanked Mr Bascombe for the information and stated that there were concerns about how the work would be divided between the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

RESOLVED – 1. That report CD.28/12 be noted.

2. That the Scrutiny Chairs Group consider how best to undertake the scrutiny of Welfare Reform in 2012/13

COSP.36/12 CUMBRIA AFFORDABLE WARMTH PROJECT - UPDATE

The Fuel Poverty Development Officer (Mr Barlow) submitted report CD.29/12 which provided an update on the work of the Cumbria Affordable Warmth Project and the Government's 'Green Deal' initiative.

Cumbria Warm Homes Project

Mr Barlow reminded the Panel that the Cumbria Warm Homes Project had been launched in October 2011 and despite significant operation challenges the Project had managed to stay true to its intentions of providing a Warm Homes Energy Audit Report on request for all owner occupiers across the County.

He reported that over 81,000 homes would have Warm Homes Information packs dropped through their letter box by the end of March 2012 and referral networks had been established through links with Affordable Warmth Partnership Group, the Healthy Communities Group and the Cumbria Advice Network. In addition joint working with Action for Sustainability in Cumbria and the Cumbria Rural Enterprise Agency was developing opportunities for access.

The Warm Homes project operated with marketing Carbon Energy Reduction Target funding from EON supported through a framework Memorandum of Understanding which made £20,000 available for marketing purposes. The funding would stop in July 2012 and had contributed to the printing of offer letters, leaflets and the purchase of clear pouches to retain the documents when delivered to households. The funding also paid for a new website and maintenance and updating of the site until the end of the project.

Mr Barlow outlined the outcomes from the project and informed the Panel that as of 31 January the number of referrals was 1,750 and the target for the County was 2,000 by July 2012.

The Government's Green Deal

Mr Barlow reminded the Panel of the background to the Green Deal and informed them that the work would end in March 2012 and would result in a Green Deal Guidance Document for Cumbria and a wider document produced by National Energy Actions based on the findings taken from all areas.

As part of the process a Green Deal workshop had been held in January 2012 to discuss the issues concerning Green Deal and identify the opportunities for Cumbria that Green Deal may offer. The results of the workshop would be built into the guidance document which would be evaluated at a final Green Deal Dissemination Event to be held at Penrith on 26 March 2012.

The Cumbria Warmth Strategy

Mr Barlow reported that the development of the Strategy had been delayed due to the introduction of the Green Deal and implications it held for various organisations across Cumbria. At present the Strategy was represented by District strategy documents and action plans that would support the Cumbria Warm Homes Project as the principle approach to tackling Fuel Poverty.

Warm Front

Mr Barlow reported that since it's re-launch in April 2011, and the takeover of EGA by Carillion PLC, Warm Front had continued to struggle and at present had over £30 millions of unallocated funding.

In February 2012 640,000 letters were sent out to households but despite such large scale mailings the new requirement for a Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating of less than 55, was making finding eligible clients more than difficult, as such conversions from enquires have dropped off the scale, leaving a trail of disappointed home owners with no heating and a frustrated company who could not deliver there remit.

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

Would it be possible to obtain a breakdown of the outcomes of which measures had been installed among priority groups?

Mr Barlow advised that there had been problems with the company that supplied the system for recording the information. The supplier had been given until the end of March to supply the information after which Mr Barlow would obtain the information via the paper process from an Excel database.

What was the new definition of fuel poverty?

The document containing that information was large and Mr Barlow explained that the work had been carried out by Professor Hills. Using the new methodology there was no difference in the figures of fuel poverty. He added that fuel poverty had not been addressed within the Government's Green Deal and there was nothing to say how the energy companies would spend funding to resolve fuel poverty issues.

Who was running the Carlisle boiler replacement scheme?

Mr Barlow advised that the scheme was run through Housing and Health department within the Community Development directorate and was funded through excess funding from the Cumbria Energy Efficiency Advice Centre (CEEAC) but that there had been a poor take up of the scheme. However it was a successful scheme and Mr Barlow believed that Local Authorities were well placed to deliver the scheme.

Would the £500,000 funding for the Warm Homes- Healthy People scheme be available in the future?

Mr Barlow explained that the funding was aimed at those people who could not afford to pay for their heating. The money had come from the Cumbria Community Foundations but Mr Barlow was not sure that it would be available next year or whether such an instant fix was the solution to the problem. A consultant had been employed to look at the effect of the scheme. When the report was available Mr Barlow agreed to present the information to the Panel at a future meeting.

The second part of the scheme, the Hot Spots project, looked at boiler repairs and heating replacement. Mr Barlow was unsure of the success rate of the scheme but advised that 38 clients had been successful in getting their heating system replaced. The results would be available when the scheme ended later this month and a report would be available for the Panel in towards the end of May or the beginning of June.

Mr Barlow stated that a scheme known as Community Angels had not been successful. That scheme enabled people to contact someone to do minor repairs in their homes or take them on shopping trips. Mr Barlow was not sure whether funding for the scheme would be available next year. A Member pointed out that organisations such as Age UK and the CVS provided a similar service. Mr Barlow explained that funding would be available from the Department of Health and that more thought needed to be given to a better delivery mechanism. He added that he had attended a networking conference where it had been raised that putting onto voluntary organisations would not be sustainable and that Officers needed to know

what was required from communities. Voluntary organisations needed to have the support and the resources available to enable them to carry out their work.

Mr Barlow advised Members that he had been able to access funding to offer free insulation to households where there was a resident over the age of 60 or under the age of 5 who were at risk of fuel poverty. Mr Barlow had attended the Landlords Advice day held recently by the City Council and stated that the feedback from landlords was encouraging. They had been pleased that the Council had taken the time and trouble to offer them support and assistance.

RESOLVED: that report CD.29/12 be noted.

COSP.37/12 DRAFT EQUALITIES

The Policy and Communication Manager (Mr O’Keeffe) submitted report PPP.05/12 outlining the draft equality objectives, suggested actions and future monitoring by the Panel.

Mr O’Keeffe reminded the Panel of the general equality duties and specific duties which the Council had to have ‘due regard’ to under the Public Sector Equality Duty. He added that the Council had published the Equality Impact Assessments of services on the Council website. The evidence of the Council’s compliance with the general duty included a current workforce profile and links to related evidence on the Cumbria Observatory and Multi-Cultural Service websites.

He explained that to help prepare the equality objectives a Carlisle Equality and Diversity profile had been prepared by the Cumbria Observatory and the evidence base for draft equality objectives and actions had included the action plan drawn from the Peer Assessment Report. The Council continued to support a consortium of equality groups who in turn provided advice direct from their networks. He added that Cumbria County Council had commissioned work on the experiences of migrants and a report was expected within a month to provide further evidence for action planning.

Mr O’Keeffe set out the objectives for a 3 year period 2012-2015 which would be reviewed annually. The objectives had been coded against the general and specific duties and the themes within the Equality Framework for Local Government. The City Council’s assessment against this framework was ‘achieving’ and remained valid until 2013/14.

The objectives were:

- Improve the quality and volume of our customer information
- Improve access and inclusion for all our services and across our partnerships
- Diffuse community tensions and promote tolerance and understanding

Mr O’Keeffe outlined the actions that linked to the draft objectives and informed the Panel that an annual equality report would be available to the Panel in June each year.

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

Was the work done by the Migrant Workers Task Group been included?

Mr O'Keeffe that a information as a result of a survey among migrant workers would be included in the report. It was suggested that there should be an annual survey to avoid the same questions being asked repeatedly. Mr O'Keeffe added that he was planning to publish service standards looking at key areas of service delivery.

Mr O'Keeffe had recorded the headlines from the access and inclusion event held in July 2011 and had developed an action plan with regard to access for example among taxi drivers. There was also the opportunity to include access within schemes such as Best Bar None whereby accessibility could be given a rating.

It was hoped that a survey may provide an insight into the impact of incidents in the past. He believed there should be a media protocol that would deliver a clear message with regard to tolerance within the city. There would be ongoing monitoring of the objectives of the scheme and a report would be presented to the Panel within the annual report in June.

The word "tolerance" gives a negative tone to the report.

Mr O'Keeffe agreed that a different form of wording would be investigated.

How would the Council continue to challenge the myths associated with access to services and protected characteristics?

Mr O'Keeffe advised that detailed work was underway with service managers to look at what steps could be taken but there was the risk that undertaking that work would generate new myths. The detailed work would be embedded within services.

Were the views of young people included in the Corporate Equality Group and were the Youth Council involved?

Mr O'Keeffe stated that there was currently a survey in place and there had been a call for suggestions for the draft objectives but there had been no responses to date. There was a need to continue engaging with young people and that Officers needed to be aware of day to day issues. The ongoing annual reviews would look at what had been achieved and the objectives. The police had a lot of information on criminal issues and it would be made available.

Did the Council have a policy on burials?

Mr O'Keeffe advised that the Council had a good policy on burials and that the Council was seen as one of the better authorities.

Mr O'Keeffe advised that the Corporate Equality Group had not yet met but there was a Members Equality Group, which the Community Engagement Portfolio Holder advised continued to meet. The Corporate Equality Group would be reinstated.

RESOLVED: 1. That report PPP.05/12 be noted.

2. That the draft Equalities Objectives be amended to incorporate comments above.

(The meeting ended at 12.30pm