

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 9 JUNE 2011 AT 10.00AM

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Luckley (Chairman) Councillors Mrs Bradley, Glover, McDevitt (until 11.25am), Nedved, Mrs Parsons, Mrs Prest and Scarborough (until 11.55am).

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Geddes – Community Engagement Portfolio Holder (until 11.55am)
Councillor Bloxham – Environment and Housing Portfolio Holder
Councillor Mrs Riddle - Observer

COSP.38/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence submitted.

COSP.39/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs Luckley declared a personal and prejudicial interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of Agenda Item A.5 – Women and Families Replacement Homelessness Accommodation. The interest related to the fact that she had previously made a decision regarding the accommodation as a Member of the Executive.

Councillor Mrs Luckley declared a personal interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of Agenda Item A.4 – Performance Monitoring Report. The interest related to the fact that she was a Member of the Healthy City Steering Group.

COSP.40/11 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2011 and 24 March 2011 be agreed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

COSP.41/11 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS

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

COSP.42/11 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Officer (Mrs Edwards) presented report OS.14/11 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 June to 30 September 2011 had been published on 18 May 2011 and there was one issue contained in the Plan which fell into the remit of this Panel. Members were asked if they wished to scrutinise KD.014/11 – Food Law Enforcement Service Plan, at its meeting on 14 July 2011.

The Panel felt that the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan should be considered by this Panel and consideration should also be given to which Panel is the most appropriate Panel for the matter in future.

- the Young Persons Foyer had been included in the Panel's Work Programme and the Panel was asked whether they wished to keep the item in the Work Programme and if so, give consideration to appropriate dates for future updates.

The Panel agreed that the Young Persons Foyer was an important matter and would like the opportunity to scrutinise and input into the management contract. The Panel raised several detailed questions regarding the Foyer and asked for an update report as soon as possible.

The Assistant Director (Community Engagement) agreed to submit an update on the Young Persons Foyer and the Resource Centre at the Panel's next meeting.

- a date had not yet been set for the Development Session but it was anticipated that the work programme would be discussed in detail at the Session and Members were asked to give some consideration to any issues that they would like to have considered over the next year.

A Member asked for a brief update on the Customer Service Shared Business Case and when the matter may be considered by Scrutiny.

Mr Gerrard responded that there had been several meetings with Allerdale Borough Council and Cumbria County Council and further discussions were planned for June. He added that the matter would be appropriate for a Task and Finish Group.

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 Panel consider KD.014/11 – Food Law Enforcement Service Plan at its meeting on 14 July 2011.

3) That the Young Persons Foyer remains in the Work Programme for this Panel and an update report, including information on the Resource Centre, be presented to the Panel at its meeting on 14 July 2011.

COSP.43/11 NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING

The decision of the Executive on 18 April, Minute Excerpt EX.059/11, had been circulated. The Minute Excerpt was the Executive's response to the recommendations made by the Neighbourhood Working Task and Finish Group in its report OS.08.11 which had previously been agreed by this Panel.

The Community Engagement Portfolio Holder outlined some of the work that had been undertaken in response to the recommendations:

Recommendation 1 – A Workshop had taken place with Community Centres and Parish Halls. The workshop covered a variety of issues including future funding.

Mr Gerrard added that the recommendation was on the work programme for the Wellbeing team and would be progressed when the new Wellbeing Manager was in place. Mr Gerrard agreed that Ward members would be included in the meetings.

Recommendation 3 – The Portfolio Holder outlined a number of successful projects within in the City and was encouraged by the work that was taking place.

Recommendation 8 – The Customer Contact Centre now included the Police and the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Passport Office would be moving staff into the Centre in the near future. Discussions were also taking place with the Community Law Centre and other organisations to enter into the Customer Contact Centre.

Recommendation 10 & 11 – The Community Engagement Portfolio Holder was a Member of the Problem Solving Group which included the Police, Fire, Greenspaces, Anti Social Team and Riverside. The Group had shown great successes and had only 4 unresolved issues out of 29. The Group was a pilot for a six month period and it was hoped that the Group could be rolled out across the City. A report would be brought back at the end of the pilot period.

A Member asked if the Youth Magazine, Abstract, could incorporate information about what was happening in local communities for young people. Mr Gerrard explained that Abstract is driven and produced by young people. The Wellbeing Team worked closely with the young people and more work could be done to include local events.

Recommendation 12 – Both the Community Engagement Portfolio Holder and the Environment and Housing Portfolio Holder were on the Locality Working Group and felt that the City Council was well placed for community engagement.

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

- Members noted that there had not been a response for recommendation 2 and felt that it was important that this recommendation be progressed in communities to assist small but important projects. Members felt that there should be an officer in the community who had the ability to make small budget commitments without having to refer back to management.

Mr Gerrard responded that each member of the Wellbeing team would take lead responsibility for a particular geography and further discussion would take place regarding resources and budgets.

The Environment and Housing Portfolio Holder acknowledged that there was staff who knew how budgets should be used and they had the ability to act on that knowledge. He agreed that there was a question regarding how the decision making could be devolved down further.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive (Ms Mooney) agreed that there should be budget training available for staff on a more practical level. She felt that the issue was how the Council could devolve financial responsibility to prevent decisions having to be taken by senior staff and the Council was committed to making that happen. She added that the Wellbeing Manager needed to be in place to begin this work and to begin the cultural change that was required.

- Had there been any progress with recommendation 16 and could village halls be included?

Mr Gerrard explained that access had not yet been given to the GRANTfinder database as there was an issue regarding the licences but he stated that it would be carried out and an update would be provided at the next meeting of the Panel.

- The Panel had expected to receive a response from the Executive on each of the recommendations. The Task and Finish Group had put a lot of work into the report and the recommendations and had hoped for a full response from the Executive. There was concern that Community Centres who had trained and dynamic staff would thrive and Centres without would struggle and community support would depend on where you lived. The implementation of the recommendations from the Task Group would prevent this happening.

Councillor Bloxham responded that he had spoken at the Executive regarding the environmental issues and he had said that was no reason why the recommendations could not be adopted. He added that recommendation 13 was been implemented and had some successes and some difficulties.

Mr Gerrard added that he could prepare an action plan in collaboration with the Assistant Director (Local Environment) if it was helpful to the Panel.

Mrs Edwards asked for the action plan to be available for the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel when they considered this item on 23 June and for the plan to be circulated to the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel for their Development Session.

- A Member asked how Community Led Plans (CLPs) would be implemented and how the Council would facilitate the development of them and how the Together We Can model would be rolled out.

The Community Engagement Portfolio Holder responded that the CLPs should come from leadership within the communities with support from the Wellbeing Team. The Together We Can model had provided many lessons and consideration needed to be given to whether it would be suitable in all areas as the Longtown Pilot had different successes to the Harraby Pilot.

The Environment and Housing Portfolio Holder added that the meeting the Panel held at Harraby Community Centre had proved very useful. Harraby had been a new group not attached to any parish or community groups and it had worked well. The rural area already had a Community Plan and it had taken a long time to put together and due to changes in the area they needed to be refreshed. Longtown had suffered a number of issues over recent years including foot and mouth and the closure of the school and this had impacted on the Community Plan. The Together We Can pilot had some success but not in a cohesive and co-ordinated manner. He felt that there should be a central model to assist parishes with their Plans. He agreed that the model should be in a format that was flexible enough to meet the needs of different communities.

- Some local communities had concerns regarding what would be put in place once the Neighbourhood Forums ceased.

Mr Gerrard reminded the Panel that the Neighbourhood Forums were organised by Cumbria County Council and there was an ongoing discussion regarding changes to resources. The City Council were working closely with the County Council to look at the implications of the proposed changes and the positive outcomes from the Together We Can pilots. He stated that there needed to be a new way of working that would pick up the lessons from the pilots and how they could be used across the City. A number of officers within the authority already did a lot of important work across the City and they also needed to be involved.

He added that a good lesson from the pilots was ensuring that the right officers and Members were available for face to face discussions to provide the right answers. Further information would be available in the Action Plan report.

- It had been agreed that the final report of the Task and Finish Group would be circulated to all partners, had this been carried out?

Mrs Edwards confirmed that the report would be circulated when a response had been received from the Executive.

RESOLVED – That the Assistant Director (Community Engagement) prepare a plan of the actions undertaken for each of the recommendations made by the Neighbourhood Working Task and Finish Group for the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 23 June 2011 and for this Panels Development Session.

COSP.44/11 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT FOR YEAR 2010/11

The Policy and Performance Officer (Mr Daley) submitted report PPP.07/11 (Amended) which provided the Panel with end of year performance for 2010/11.

Mr Daley explained that the report outlined the review, development and the summary changes to the Corporate Plan and added that Assistant Directors would give a more detailed analysis and update of progress at a future meeting.

A summary of the changes to the 2011/12 Plan were provided in the table in the report and included one new Local Environment action, one new Economy action and changes to others and a revised performance framework section to reflect the development of actions, risk and performance indicators to measure the performance of the key actions.

The report also highlighted the changes that had taken place throughout the year and gave an update on the Transformation Programme. The report finished with some good news stories and achievements.

Mr Daley explained that the next report to the Panel would be the 1st quarter report and it would be different to this report. It would contain key actions applicable to this Panel and any relevant sub actions, performance and risks that were related to the key actions. Some of the performance measures may look different than in previous reports because most of the National Indicators had been removed. The Council was also moving away from figure based performance reports and were developing measures that related to the key action.

Ms Mooney added that it was now the responsibility of the relevant officers and directorates to supply the information for the monitoring reports. The reports would not only provide statistical information but would also provide an update on the Transformation Programme and inform the Panel of good new stories within the authority. She felt that the new reports would be a more robust mechanism that picked up local and national indicators.

The Community Engagement Portfolio Holder highlighted the success of the Lean Systems Thinking course that had been held at Hull University. Bereavements Services were piloting the approach and it was hoped that it would be rolled out across the authority.

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

- Had there been any issues in receiving the required information from officers or Directorates?

Mr Daley responded that the information had been received despite many changes to staffing structures and there had been a willingness from officers to provide the information and be involved.

- Members understood that this report was a summary and asked that future reports set out the time limits and targets to allow for appropriate scrutiny and to identify areas where they could provide more support and direct resources. Members would also like the opportunity to identify gaps in the performance monitoring.

Mr Daley explained that some of the indicators would be retained and a trend analysis would be included in future reports. All information was fed into Covalent and short term trends were measured against the last time it was reported and the long term trends were measured against the previous year.

- The Panel asked for a blank template of the new report to be circulated prior to their Development Session.
- The report did not identify which officer or Directorate was responsible for delivering the actions or who was accountable.

Mr Daley explained that the officer and Directorate information was available in Covalent and would be available in the next report to the Panel.

RESOLVED – That Report PPP.07/11 be noted and the Panel looked forward to the new 1st quarter monitoring report in September.

COSP.45/11 REPLACEMENT WOMEN AND FAMILY ACCOMMODATION UPDATE

Having declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the matter Councillor Mrs Luckley left the meeting and Councillor Glover chaired the item.

The Assistant Director (Community Engagement) (Mr Gerrard) submitted report CD.04/11 which provided an update on the development of replacement family and women's temporary accommodation.

Mr Gerrard reminded the Panel of the background to the proposed development and outlined the chosen site for the new accommodation and what would be available.

The report gave a brief summary of the work that had been carried out since 30 September 2010 which included a meeting with Ward Councillors, a media briefing, letter and questionnaire to residents and businesses in the surrounding area of the proposed site, reports to Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Executive and arrangements with the leaseholder of the site.

Mr Gerrard explained the next stages and timescales of the project to the Panel. He stated that the City Council would award the Design commission on Monday 13 June 2011 following which the Council would work with the Design team to prepare the project plans for planning submission in September 2011. During this time the Council would continue to consult with service users and staff in order to ensure that the design adequately reflected the needs of the current and future service users and ensure that the building had adequate flexibility to meet all the needs and priorities of the support provision.

He added that as part of the tender negotiations with contractors the Council would be looking to replicate the successful Supported Employment Project which had been used in the construction of the Shaddon Gateway Resource Centre. The Project enabled two long term unemployed people, who had previously experienced homelessness, to be employed full time and receive construction training and support for the duration of the build.

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

- Members asked for clarification with regard to the first question for input as they were not looking at an adaptation of an existing building.

Mr Gerrard confirmed that the Council was not looking at adapting a building but he felt that the question should be highlighted to ensure a robust approach. He added that he was confident that a purpose built bespoke building was the only option for the new accommodation.

In response to a further question he confirmed that there had been no negative feedback or issues regarding the new accommodation from the residents questionnaire or the internal review.

- Members asked if the timescale for the project was realistic and if there was any way in which the completion time could be brought forward.

Mr Gerrard responded that the timescale was based on independent standards which had been put together by the Council's Property Team. He agreed to go back and look at the timescale and investigate if there was any way of improving it.

- How could Members be involved in the design of the accommodation? Would there be some criteria that the design would be required to meet?

Mr Gerrard informed the Panel that awarding the Design commission was just the beginning of the process and was a good opportunity for the Council to take as much advice as possible. He felt that Members should be involved in the design process and agreed to seek advice on the best way for Members to input into the design without compromising the Members who were on the Development Control Committee.

The Environment and Housing Portfolio Holder agreed that Scrutiny should be involved in a positive way in the design process.

- If the project ran over the March 2013 completion date would it affect the funding that the Council received for the project?

Mr Gerrard understood that it would not affect the funding but agreed to confirm this and inform the Panel.

- The Panel asked that the new accommodation be included as a key issue in the Corporate Plan.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Replacement Women and Family Accommodation be included as a key issue in the City Council's Corporate Plan.

2) That the timescales for the project be noted.

3) That the Assistant Director (Community engagement) take advice on the most appropriate mechanism for involving Members in the design process of the accommodation without compromising the Members who sit on the Development Control Committee.

4) That the Assistant Director (Community Engagement) report back to the Panel on any funding implications should the project run over the planned completion date of March 2013.

5) That the Panel continue to monitor the progress of the project in particular any slippage in timescales.

(The meeting ended at 12.20pm)