

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE
20 December 2001**

OSM.33/01 CONSULTATION PAPER ON QUALITY TOWN AND
PARISH COUNCILS

The Head of Corporate Policy and Strategy presented a consultation paper issued jointly by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DETR), the Local Government Association, the Countryside Agency and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) in consultation with the Audit Commission, setting out detailed proposals for Town and Parish "Quality Councils".

He drew Members' attention to the summary of the proposals contained in the Consultation Paper, together with the list of questions upon which views were sought. He added that the closing date for responses was 31 January 2002.

In considering the matter, a Member questioned the procedure by which the Executive/Council would respond. The Head of Corporate Policy and Strategy commented that the paper could be considered by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10 January 2002 with comments being forwarded on to the Executive. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive added that he had already written to all Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committees and any comments received would be forwarded to the Executive.

Members then raised the following points:

With regard to the list of possible functions which may be considered for delegation to all Parish and Town Councils by the principal Authority (Appendix 2 Page 23 refers), it was felt necessary to look at the wider picture and how such delegation would impinge on the working of District Councils;

Within Carlisle, the majority of residents receiving these services lived in non-Parish areas and it may therefore not prove to be workable;

The proposal that Clerks of Quality Parish and Town Councils should be able to demonstrate that they possessed the necessary skills/competencies to carry out their duties may put people off serving in that capacity.

The Parish Councils should determine what happened and the response should be left to them.

Various new funds and assistance schemes (amounting to £37 m) were now operational under the Rural White Paper to support rural Councils who wished to improve the levels of service provision to their local communities. It was felt that the District Councils already provided good services and that money should be reallocated to them, rather than "reinventing the wheel".

RESOLVED – That the consultation paper on Quality Parish and Town Councils, together with the comments of this Committee, be referred to the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10 January 2002 for consideration.