

INFRASTRUCTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 8 AUGUST 2002 AT 10.00 AM

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Rutherford (Chairman), Councillors Crookdake, Dodd, Glover, B Hodgson, Martlew, E Mallinson and Mrs Parsons.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Firth, Guest and G Prest were also in attendance at the meeting.

IOS.68/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING DECLARATIONS OF "THE PARTY WHIP")

Councillor E Mallinson declared a personal interest in accordance with the City Council's Code of Conduct for Members in respect of the item of business concerning the Monitoring of the Economic Development Action Plan as her husband served on the Kingmoor Park Development Company as a representative of Cumbria County Council.

IOS.69/02 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 25 April, 20 May and 7 and 20 June 2002 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meetings.

The Minutes of the meetings held on 15 and 24 July 2002 were submitted for information. Councillor B Hodgson asked for his apologies for the 24 July 2002 meeting to be recorded as he had been in hospital when that meeting had taken place.

IOS.70/02 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS

There were no matters which had been the subject of call-in for consideration at this meeting.

The Chairman indicated that call-ins relating to Executive decisions on the Viaduct Estate Development Brief and the Viaduct Estate Development Opportunity had been dealt with by this Committee on 24 July 2002 (Minutes IOS.65/02 and IOS.67/02 refer).

RESOLVED – That the position be noted.

IOS.71/02 MONITORING OF THE FORWARD PLAN

The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer presented report TC.144/02 highlighting Forward Plan (1 August 2002 to 30 November 2002) issues which fell within the ambit of this Committee.

The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer indicated that he was seeking clarification from the Director of Environment and Development as to how he intended to submit his report on

the Car Parking Enforcement Review (KD.076/02) to this Committee for comment prior to consideration by the Executive. The Chairman reported on an informal meeting she had attended with certain other Members and the Director of Environment and Development on this issue. A further informal meeting was planned for Tuesday 13 August, 2002.

Members noted that KD.013/02 on the Carlisle Northern Development Route related to land and property issues but asked that any further reports on the actual route to be submitted to this Committee for consultation purposes.

Members also indicated that reports on KD.068/02 – Millennium Scheme Archaeological Excavations, KD.070/02 – Brampton Conservation Area Review and KD.071/02 – Designation of Talkin Conservation Area should be investigated by the Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer and considered for submission to this Committee for consultation purposes.

It was noted that KD.073/02 dealing with the Asset Management Plan – Review of Economic Assets was programmed to be dealt with by the Executive at their 19 December 2002 meeting. Members considered that it was important that the option to call-in this item should remain even though the call-in period would extend over Christmas.

RESOLVED – (1) That the issues contained within the Forward Plan for 1 August 2002 to 30 November 2002 and which fell within the ambit of this Committee be noted.

(2) That the Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer be requested to liaise with appropriate Officers and, where appropriate, to ensure that the reports detailed above are submitted to this Committee for consultation purposes.

IOS.72/02 WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer presented an Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2002/03, which took into account matters scheduled to be dealt with by this Committee.

He indicated that a report monitoring the Tourism Best Value Action Plan would be submitted to the 12 September 2002 meeting of this Committee. Performance monitoring reports on planning applications would now be submitted to the 12 September 2002 meeting and on household waste collected to the 31 October 2002 meeting.

The Committee's instructions were requested on the programming of the subject reviews/inquiries.

A Member indicated that there was useful national information to guide Councillors on carrying out subject matter reviews eg from the IDEA, which may be of use to Overview and Scrutiny Members.

RESOLVED – (1) That the 2002/03 Work Programme for the Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with the amendments indicated by the Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer, be noted.

(2) That with regard to the subject reviews/inquiries, the Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer be requested to:-

- a. submit an initial report on the Streetworks review to the next meeting in order that the

scope of this review can be determined;

- b. invite the Chief Executive of the Cumbria Tourist Board to the 31 October 2002 meeting to answer Members' questions. This will be a 'one off' session which will form the Tourism review. The County Council had recently undertaken a review of tourism and information from that source may prove useful in carrying out this review;
- c. liaise with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of this Committee over arrangements for undertaking the subject review of the Environmental Performance of the Council.

IOS.73/02 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MEMBER TRAINING

The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer sought Members' views on how the training needs of Overview and Scrutiny Members might best be met.

Members agreed with suggestions made by other Overview and Scrutiny Committees that training in Council Budgets, Best Value and Performance Management should be undertaken.

Members also considered that particular skills in Overview and Scrutiny eg, interviewing skills, identifying relevant information from reports, probing, analysing, monitoring and evaluation skills should be put forward for training.

Members further considered that training should not be confined to Overview and Scrutiny Members but be open to all Members of the Council. Training should be provided in house or externally as appropriate.

RESOLVED – That the above views be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for consideration.

IOS.74/02 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BEST VALUE ACTION PLAN

The Head of Economic Development submitted Report EDU.12/02 detailing progress which had been made since the Economic Development Best Value Review and Inspection. A detailed Action Plan was submitted highlighting the areas suggested for improvement by the Best Value Inspectors and the actions taken to date to progress their implementation.

Members asked a number of questions on the Action Plan:-

(a) Under Strategy and Analysis, a Member considered that the response to the improvement required "*With partners, improve data collection and research capacity*" to be too vague.

The Head of Economic Development indicated that tenders for work on property market research closed on 8 August 2002 and, once completed, this would highlight the strengths and weaknesses in the property market in Carlisle.

Improvements to data collection and research capacity was being progressed with a range of partners and across a number of service areas.

(b) A Member considered that the delay on the Regeneration Best Value Review may have an impact on developing a clear neighbourhood regeneration strategy.

The Head of Economic Development indicated that this improvement area did link into the Regeneration Best Value Review. The Head of Economic Development was heading that Review. In addition, it was intended to engage organisations which could bring new ideas and funding into neighbourhood regeneration projects.

(c) A Member considered that, in implementing a performance management framework, an emphasis should be put on performance indicators which were measurable.

The Head of Economic Development indicated that standard performance indicators in economic development were difficult to identify, given a range of external factors which were not typical across the country. Performance indicators which could be agreed with partners aimed at promoting shared long term aspirations would be investigated.

(d) A Member referred to the issues of credibility with business partners and clients.

The Head of Economic Development indicated that the Unit was continuing to develop stronger links with business partners with Officers carrying out visits and seeking to improve general contact with companies.

RESOLVED – That the progress made in implementing the actions arising from the Best Value Review and Inspection of Economic Development be noted and a further progress report be submitted to this Committee in six months time.

IOS.75/02 ANNUAL REPORT OF PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2001/02

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive submitted report TC.141/02 detailing how the City Council had performed against the Best Value and local indicators for 2001/02 and for year 2000/01.

He drew attention to the following indicators within the remit of this Committee where performance had either not been achieved or had been exceeded:-

(a) Planning applications determined within eight weeks – the actual figure was 72% for 2001/02 against a target of 75%.

The City Council's performance had dropped due to an increase in the number of planning applications lodged with the Authority and staff recruitment difficulties. A report had been considered by the Executive on 29 July 2002 and a recommendation was being made to the City Council to recruit two additional Development Control Officers to be funded from increased revenue. The Head of Planning Services indicated that there was a shortage of young people wishing to become Development Control Officers.

(b) Revenue generated into Carlisle Conference Group (CCG) venues through the CCG office – Revenue of £126,687 had been generated against a target of £71,500.

The substantial year end growth in revenue attained by the Carlisle Conference Group into its member venues was due to the increased pro-active marketing over the past couple of years. It was reported that the City Council provided funding for a Conference Group Marketing Officer and a consortium of hoteliers provided a marketing budget.

He further reported on revisions for the 2002/03 performance indicators to take account of the new corporate objectives of the Authority, community priorities suggested by the City Vision Partnership and new national Best Value performance indicators. These national indicators would feature heavily in the score allocated to the Authority during the 2003/04 Corporate Performance Assessment.

Members expressed the view that national performance indicators with specific performance measurement requirements were needed to ensure that all Local Authority performance indicators compared like with like.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive indicated that progress towards this goal was being made through DTLR issues standard definitions, standardising indicators through benchmarking groups and through Comprehensive Performance Assessments which would not include performance data that could not be validated.

With regard to the new Best Value Indicator (BV180) relating to energy consumption of local authority operational property and average lamp circuit wattage compared to national figures, a Member recalled that similar measurements had been made some years ago.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive indicated that he was not aware of any previous indicators on the subject. He expected that if any targets were to be set nationally then this would occur after initial data had been collected from Local Authorities.

Members noted that there would be a significant workload in collecting the information for this indicator and the Chairman undertook to liaise with the Town Clerk and Chief Executive and the Director of Environment and Development in order for a written report to be submitted to this Committee.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Town Clerk and Chief Executive's report be noted.

(2) That it is noted that the Chairman will arrange for a report to be submitted to this Committee on the national Best Value Indicator BV180.

IOS.76/02 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – PROPORTION OF NEW HOUSING ON BROWNFIELD LAND

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive submitted report TC.147/02 providing Members with background information on the City Council's performance under the Best Value Performance Indicator "*% of new homes built on previously developed land.*" The City Council performance for 2001/02 had been 35% against a locally set target of 40%.

In 2000/01, Carlisle's performance in respect of this indicator had been 35.2%. Audited performance for all Local Authorities showed that the 25th per centile was 35%, the mean was 55% and the 75th per centile was 75%.

The Government had recently set a national target of 60% of additional housing being provided on brownfield land by 2008. Brownfield land is identified as land which had been previously developed or conversions of existing buildings. Draft Regional Planning Guidance has refined the targets for sub-regional areas with Cumbria being set a target of 50% whereas Liverpool and Manchester have targets of 90%.

The Committee investigated the Council's current performance with the Head of Planning Services with a view to identifying where improvements could be made.

The Head of Planning Services indicated that the City Council had recognised the value of developing brownfield sites since the Urban Area Local Plan of 1984. The City Council's past performance in allowing homes to be built over The Lanes shops, the former tea warehouse development and St Martin's College development had been mentioned in the Government's Urban White Paper as examples of good practice.

The City Council had also been one of the first Councils in the country to undertake an Urban Capacity Study to identify brownfield sites within the district. This document was currently being reviewed and updated. There were also a number of specific Local Plan policies to encourage brownfield development. The Head of Planning Services indicated that he would investigate the basis upon which the Urban Capacity Study would be made available to the public to inspect.

The Head of Planning Services indicated that it was unclear whether the City Council's future performance on brownfield development would be measured against the national target of 60% or the Cumbria target of 50%. There may be merit in targets being set for each individual District in Cumbria as the availability of brownfield sites would vary throughout the County. This would need to be addressed through the County Structure Plan.

The Head of Planning Services further reported that an issues paper was being prepared for the Autumn 2002 and which would need to address brownfield developments, how the City Council could meet its targets and proposals for the phased release of greenfield sites alongside brownfield sites.

He considered that the City Council would be able to meet its targets for brownfield development for a number of years once the current redevelopment of Raffles begins. However, meeting targets after this time would be dependent upon landowners making brownfield sites available for development. Brownfield sites were often suitable for development for leisure and/or retail purposes as well as residential housing.

In considering this matter, Members noted the attention the City Council had given to encouraging brownfield development over many years and raised the following issues:-

- a. Whilst the Local Planning Authority could grant planning permission for brownfield developments, there was no guarantee that the developments would actually take place.
- b. There were difficulties in cleaning up contaminated land for brownfield development, particularly where previous owners could not be identified.
- c. Clarification should be sought on which target the City Council would be expected to meet in respect of brownfield development and whether individual targets would be set for each District in Cumbria to contribute to the overall Cumbria target.
- d. A Member understood that there were 1,400 empty houses in Carlisle in private ownership.

The Head of Planning Services was unaware of these figures but indicated that there had been an extensive improvement programme aimed at older terraced housing in the late 1980's. There may be opportunities in the future to have small clearance pockets of older housing upon which brownfield development could take place.

- e. A Member asked about the impact on brownfield development if the Holme Head

development in Denton Holme had not taken place. The Member also asked what impact the Morton development would have on the Council's ability to meet targets on brownfield development.

The Head of Planning Services acknowledged that the Holme Head development had a significant impact on development of brownfield sites in Carlisle. With regard to the Morton development, it was intended that housing development would be phased with approximately 100 to 120 houses per year being built. There would be a requirement for the City Council to meet its target of 50% green field/50% brownfield development each year as the Morton development proceeded.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Head of Planning Services be requested to submit a report to the next meeting of this Committee with a draft Action Plan to improve the Council's performance, th Plan should include timescales, targets, any costs involved and proposals for funding the same.

(2) That the Town Clerk and Chief Executive be requested to seek clarification over the target against which Carlisle will be assessed within the Comprehensive Performance Assessment regime. In particular, whether the target will be the one set for Carlisle within the County Structure Plan or the national target of 60%. Clarification will be included in the report brought to the next meeting by the Head of Planning Services.

IOS.77/02 REGENERATION BEST VALUE REVIEW - UPDATE

The Corporate Best Value Officer presented a report from the Director of Leisure and Community Development (LCD.25/02) indicating that the Regeneration Best Value Review had been the subject of a recent "Stage 2" inspection by the Audit Commission covering the following three main elements:-

1. progress of the Review against its original aims and objectives;
2. confirm that there has been successful application of "the 4 C's;"
3. check the review is on track to formulate a meaningful improvement plan.

The Inspector's full report was expected by the end of August 2002, but a summary of the key findings was as follows:-

- a) The scope of the Review was too broad and lacked focus;
- b. There were significant gaps in the agencies and groups represented on the Review Team, particularly Councillors and external partners;
- c. Lack of baseline information limited effective challenge;
- d. There has been insufficient consultation to date, particularly with external partners and community groups;
- e. There was limited evidence of good practice comparison with other Authorities;
- f. There needed to be more clear linkages with other Reviews e.g. Organisational Structure, Economic Development, Asset Management etc.

The Inspection had clearly highlighted most of the difficulties which the Review Team had been experiencing during the process and, in that sense, it was an extremely useful and helpful exercise.

It was clear that the Council now needed to re-assess its understanding and definition of 'Regeneration' and re-scope the Review in order to give it more focus and a clearer set of desired outcomes. The contract with the Consultants engaged to assist with this Review was to be terminated.

The Inspectors had classed their recent visit as a "Stage 1" inspection, giving the City Council the opportunity to get the Review back on track before a "Stage 2" inspection was carried out.

To this end, the Corporate Best Value Officer suggested that action be taken to:-

(a) talk to partners so that their input can be considered when the re-scoping of the Review is undertaken.

(b) obtain comparison information from other Local Authorities, seeking to ensure that such information was meaningful, given the range issues being tackled by other Local Authorities as regeneration.

(c) prepare a questionnaire for targeted members of the community in order that their aspirations for the Review could be taken into account.

She indicated that a report on consultation with partners and comparison information from other Local Authorities could be prepared for the next meeting of this Committee. At that meeting, the Committee may also wish to consider the content of a questionnaire to be circulated to the community.

Members considered that baseline information used in this Review should be as up to date as possible. The Corporate Best Value Officer indicated that much of the baseline information was taken from the 1991 Census and 1998 Update Census as this was the most recent statistical data available. She pointed out that information from the 2001 Census was expected to be published in Spring 2003.

Under the circumstances, Members asked the Corporate Best Value Officer to ascertain from the Inspectors whether the City Council could defer carrying out this Review until 2003 when more up to date baseline information would be available.

The Corporate Best Value Officer sought the Committee's instructions regarding Member involvement in this Review.

Once the necessary information had been collated, and clarification sought on the timing of the Review, the re-scoping exercise for the Review would be undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Director of Leisure and Community Development be requested to submit a report to the next meeting of this Committee with the outcome of consultation with partners and comparison information from other Local Authorities. Consideration would also be given to the content of a questionnaire to be circulated to the community for their aspirations for the Review to be considered as part of the process.

(2) That the Town Clerk and Chief Executive be requested to ascertain from the Best Value Inspectorate and submit a report to the next meeting of this Committee on whether the Regeneration Best Value Review could be deferred to 2003 when more up to date demographic information would be available from the 2001 Census.

(3) That consultations be carried out on this Review with the Group Leaders, the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, relevant Executive Portfolio Holders and Councillors representing Wards classed as having areas of deprivation.

(4) That it is noted that the re-scoping of this Review would be carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

[The meeting ended at 12.20 pm]