

INFRASTRUCTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 25 APRIL 2002 AT 10.00 AM

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Rutherford (Chairman), Councillors Mrs Bowman, Mrs Crookdake, Dodd, Glover (as substitute for Councillor Weedall), Guest (as substitute for Councillor T G Hodgson), B Hodgson and Mrs Mallinson.

IOS.34/02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors T G Hodgson and Weedall.

IOS.35/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING DECLARATIONS OF "THE PARTY WHIP")

Councillor B Hodgson declared a prejudicial interest in accordance with the City Council's Code of Conduct for Members in respect of the item of business concerning the Carlisle and City Centre Bus/Rail Interchange and Bus Priority. The interest related to his work as a taxi driver.

Councillor Mrs 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 Carlisle and City Centre Bus/Rail Interchange and Bus Priority. The interest related to the fact that Councillor Mallinson was a Member of the County Council's Carlisle Area Committee which was due to make a policy decision thereon.

Councillors Guest and Mrs Rutherford declared personal interests in accordance with the City Council's Code of Conduct for Members in respect of the item of business concerning the Carlisle and City Centre Bus/Rail Interchange and Bus Priority. The Councillors stated that they were Members of the Carlisle Transport Steering Group which had considered the matter.

IOS.36/02 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 7 March and 3 April 2002 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meetings.

IOS.37/02 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS

RESOLVED – That it be noted that there were no matters which had been the subject of call-in.

IOS.38/02 MONITORING OF THE FORWARD PLAN

The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer presented report TC.81/02 highlighting Forward Plan (1 May 2002 to 31 August 2002) issues which fell within the ambit of this Committee.

The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer drew Members' attention to issues of particular note, namely:

- A further workshop/presentation on the draft Corporate Plan for all non-Executive Members of the Council was scheduled to take place on 7 June 2002, followed by individual meetings of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees to deal with their formal responses which would then be forwarded to the Executive.
- The City Centre Marketing Initiative would not now be considered by the Executive on 27 May 2002 and would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.
- A report on the Carlisle Enterprise Centre would be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee.

RESOLVED – That the issues contained within the Forward Plan for 1 May 2002 to 31 August 2002 and which fell within the ambit of this Committee be noted.

IOS.39/02 WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer presented an Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2001/02, which took into account matters scheduled to be dealt with by this Committee.

He indicated that a further report on dog fouling would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee and the submission of Service Plans within the remit of the Committee would continue in the new municipal year.

The Director of Environment and Development added that the Best Value Inspector would be undertaking the interim challenge stage of the Waste Management Best Value Review that afternoon and, depending on the Inspector's comments, a further report may be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee.

RESOLVED – That the 2001/02 Work Programme for the Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

IOS.40/02 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES 2001/02

The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer presented a draft Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for 2001/02 for comment prior to its submission to the City Council in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution.

In considering the report, Members noted that the Head of Corporate Policy and Strategy

had initiated an Officer Group for Authorities in Cumbria to compliment the region network. A Member commented that it was useful to learn from the experience of others and questioned whether the Group could be extended to Members.

A Member added that one of the biggest challenges Cumbria would face related to the development of a Health scrutiny role and the funding therefor.

The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer undertook to raise the above points at the next meeting of the Cumbria Group.

With regard to Best Value Reviews, Members were of the opinion that further training was required, particularly in respect of performance management and budget issues, and noted that the Best Value Officer would be happy to provide the same.

A Member expressed concern as regards the monitoring of Best Value Action Plans and the Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer indicated that it would be possible to look at the mechanisms currently in place to identify whether improvements could be made.

A Member commented that it was particularly frustrating that Members who had positive contributions to make on particular issues were not permitted to participate in Overview and Scrutiny under the Council's Constitution. He added that few, if any, members of the public attended such meetings and suggested that the Constitution be revisited to address these issues. He added that on occasions where an issue affected a particular area, then it may be worthwhile meeting at a venue in that area.

The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer indicated that these points had been raised at the recent Overview and Scrutiny Workshop and would continue to be addressed as part of the ongoing review of the Overview and Scrutiny function.

RESOLVED – That the draft Annual report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for 2001/02 be accepted so far as this Committee was concerned.

IOS.41/02 REFERENCE FROM THE EXECUTIVE – CONCESSIONARY FARES BEST VALUE REVIEW

Further to Minute IOS.29/02, a copy of the Executive's response to this Committee's comments regarding the Best Value Review of Concessionary Fares had been submitted.

RESOLVED – That the position be noted.

IOS.42/02 LICENSING UNIT SERVICE PLAN

As part of a programme aimed at familiarising Members with Service Plans within the responsibility of this Committee, the Head of Legal Services presented report TC.78/02 enclosing the Licensing Unit Service Plan 2001-2003.

The Head of Legal Services provided an introduction to the Service Plan, commenting that it would be amended to reflect and deliver any new priorities engendered by the Council's Corporate Plan. He then gave a detailed overview thereof.

The Senior Licensing Officer was also present at the meeting, and he and the Head of Legal Services responded to Members' questions.

A Member questioned the amount of time which the Licensing Officers spent on administrative duties rather than issues such as enforcement, and whether it would be beneficial to recruit a clerical officer into the Unit to undertake the former. The Head of Legal Services advised that the Unit's workload was currently under consideration.

RESOLVED – That the content of the Licensing Service Plan 2001-2003 be noted.

IOS.43/02 CARLISLE AND CITY CENTRE BUS/RAIL INTERCHANGE AND BUS PRIORITY

Councillor B Hodgson, having declared a prejudicial interest in this item, withdrew from the meeting room whilst the matter was under consideration.

Councillor Mrs Mallinson, having declared a personal interest in this item, withdrew from the meeting room whilst the matter was under consideration.

Councillors Guest and Mrs Rutherford, having declared personal interests, took part in the discussion on this item.

Pursuant to Minute IOS.27/02, the Director of Environment and Development submitted report EN.57/02 concerning the Carlisle and City Centre Bus/Rail Interchange and Bus Priority.

The Director reminded Members that the Committee had on 7 March 2002 commented on the consultation from the County Council. A summary of that consultation and proposed way forward had been considered by the Carlisle Transport Steering Group (CTSG) at its meeting on 17 April 2002. The report would be forwarded to the County Council's Area Committee for consideration without any specific recommendation from the CTSG.

The Director drew Members' attention to the City Council's response, detailed at Appendix 5 to the report, together with the County Officers' comments and invited Members to assess whether their concerns had been adequately addressed. He added that he had been in regular dialogue with a member of the public who was unable to be present today and sent apologies.

The Director then responded to Members' questions.

In considering the matter, Members commented as follows:

- The changes to the bus priority measures in Botchergate required to be considered as part of the traffic assessment at the Court Square/Crescent junction and also in English Street.
- The proposed amendments to the Court Square/Citadel Station Forecourt area, resulting from the consultation feedback, and which would provide 16 parking spaces out of the original 20 were welcomed. There was, however, a need for effecting parking enforcement of the entire area.
- In order that the points raised at the last meeting of this Committee could be properly addressed further design work appeared necessary. Further, Members could not comment fully on the effectiveness and safety of the scheme until that information was forthcoming.

In addition, a Member was concerned at the current state of the gateway into the City and the Director undertook to raise that issue with the County Council.

RESOLVED – (1) That this Committee welcomes the proposed amendments to the Court Square/Citadel Station Forecourt area, resulting from the consultation feedback, and which retain much of the existing parking provision. The need for effecting parking enforcement of the whole area must be recognised.

(2) Further design work appeared to be necessary in order that the points raised by the City Council through the consultation process could be properly addressed. Members could not, therefore, comment fully on the effectiveness and safety of the scheme until that information was forthcoming.

(3) That the changes to the bus priority measures in Botchergate required to be considered as part of the traffic assessment at the Court Square/Crescent junction and also in English Street.

[The meeting ended at 11.40 am]