



A Report from the  
Overview and Scrutiny Committees

**Comments of the Overview and Scrutiny  
Committees on 'Listening to the Rural  
Voice'; A Strategy for Rural Carlisle**

March 2002

**1. Introduction**

1.1 Report EDU. 02/02 'Listening to the Rural Voice' – A Strategy for Rural Carlisle was considered by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2002. The committee decided that in view of the importance of the document, its corporate implications and thematic/cross-cutting nature it should be considered by each of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

1.2 The management committee also decided that comments of the committees should be consolidated, by officers, into a single report, to be approved by the Chairman of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee. That consolidated report would then be submitted to the Executive and the chairman attend the relevant Executive meeting to outline the committees' comments.

1.3 This is the report produced in fulfilment of the Management Committee resolution, the matter having now been considered by each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

## **2. The Strategy**

2.1 The strategy document itself was prepared in response to the Rural White Paper and the findings of the Rural Voice Consultations during 1999/2000. It is intended to be a Delivery Plan nesting within the City Vision. It will thus take forward the aspirations of City Vision within rural Carlisle.

2.2 The draft strategy reflects key developments affecting the rural economy including the Foot and Mouth crisis and the joint Local Strategic Partnership.

2.3 The document is at the 'draft for consultation' stage and initial consultation with the parishes has taken place and once the draft has been approved by the council will be consulted upon with partner agencies.

2.4 The document includes four themes and identifies aspirations, which could be developed to achieve them. The next stage of development, which will be carried forward during consultation, will be to produce a draft Action Plan to complete the strategy.

## **3. Comments**

3.1 The key comment of Overview and Scrutiny was undoubtedly the need to press forward to develop an Action Plan as quickly as possible. Coupled with this the need to identify funding to take that Action Plan forward.

3.2 Associated with this first comment was the importance of the strategy being well related to national, regional and sub-regional strategic documents and delivery mechanisms. In particular members stressed the need for this in relation to the Regional Development Agency's Strategy, the Rural Action Zone and the

County Council's Corporate Strategy. This was felt to be essential to the drawing down of funding.

3.3 As regards funding, performance and monitoring the specific proposals and approach set out in section 7 of the draft strategy were endorsed.

3.4 In relation to monitoring of performance there was concern expressed regarding the recent assessment of parish vitality, as it had been reported in the media, and which did not properly reflect the importance and achievements of parishes in rural Carlisle.

3.5 Another important comment was the need for particularly close and effective working between Economic Development and Local Plan officers in relation to rural planning policies. Members also raised related concerns about proposals in the Planning Green Paper needing to be fully taken into account.

3.6 Responsibility and resources for managing delivery of the final strategy by the council was an area which it was felt needed to be fully considered within both the Regeneration and Organisational Assessment Best Value Reviews.

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