

INFRASTRUCTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY 15 JULY 2002 at 4.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor C Rutherford (Chairman); Councillors Dodd, S Fisher (substitute for Councillor Crookdake), Glover, B Hodgson, E Mallinson, Martlew and Parsons.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Bowman, Bradley, Firth, L Fisher, Guest, T G Hodgson, Joscelyne, Knapton, J Mallinson, Morton, G Prest and Styth attended the meeting and were allowed to participate in the meeting.

IOS.60/02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Crookdake, Mitchelson and Pattinson.

IOS.61/02 REGENERATION BEST VALUE REVIEW

The Chairman welcomed Jamie Fotheringham, Vantage Point Consultants to the meeting. She indicated that the Committee had considered in detail, at the meeting on 20 June 2002, the Consultant's draft report on the Regeneration Best Value Review when there had been a number of concerns expressed about its content. A copy of Minute IOS.57/02 of the Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 20 June 2002 detailing those concerns was circulated at the meeting. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive submitted Report TC.131/02 enclosing an updated draft of the Consultant's report.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive's report contained details of the appointment procedure relating to the appointment of Consultants for the Regeneration Best Value Review. Vantage Point had submitted the lowest tender, at a cost of £24,850, of two received. Both companies who had tendered had been interviewed and it had been considered that Vantage Point were also better placed to provide a service more tailored to the original brief.

Mr Fotheringham indicated that he had been provided with a summary of the comments made at the 20 June 2002 meeting but had only had sight of the actual detailed Minute on the morning of this meeting. He pointed out that the updated draft of the report was still a working document and that some of the issues raised by Members and Officers remained to be addressed in the revised report. He understood that one of the main criticisms of Members had been that environmental issues had not been included in the report. He indicated that consultations were now being carried out aimed at addressing these concerns.

The Chairman invited Members' comments on the updated draft of the Consultant's report and the following main points were made:-

- (a) Members continued to be concerned over consultation. A list of consultees was circulated at the meeting. In addition, consultation had taken place through the citizens panel and focus groups. Workshops for Members had also been held. Attempts had been made to arrange a workshop session with community groups but

that there had been a lack of interest.

Members considered that the Councillor workshop sessions had been of limited use. It was considered that consultation should be carried out with political group leaders, Councillors representing the most deprived Wards, Councillors representing Wards which had a degree of deprivation within the Wards, relevant Executive portfolio holders and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

In addition, the Carlisle Tenants Federation, the Carlisle Parish Councils Association, community organisations working in estates, Stagecoach, Housing, Social Services, the Policy Unit of Cumbria County Council and Copeland and Allerdale District Councils, which were actively engaged in regeneration initiatives, could be usefully approached.

- b. The definition of regeneration at Para 2.2 of the report had been decided upon after much deliberation by the Committee. The report did not follow the theme of the definition through.
- a. Para 1.2, bullet point three - A Member considered that the whole Review was flawed as national regeneration policy focussed on deprivation on a Ward by Ward basis. Deprivation affected estates which could be in more than one Ward or there could be pockets of deprivation in Wards which were otherwise considered prosperous. It was not appropriate to tackle regeneration on a Ward by Ward basis.
- b. Para 2.12 - A Member considered that the absence of a formal regeneration unit in the City Council was contributing to the difficulties in undertaking the Best Value Review.
- c. There was no reference to the Sheffield Hallam Housing study in the report. An appendices to the report detailing the sources of information would be useful.

Mr Fotheringham confirmed that the Sheffield Hallam study had been used in the compilation of the report.

- d. Para 2.18 referred to the City Vision themes. It was important for the report to reflect the performance indicators from the City Vision and the Corporate Plan wherever appropriate.
- e. Para 2.14 – the reference to the submission of a phase one bid to the New Opportunities Fund for a Healthy Living Initiative based in Petteril Bank should be deleted as the application had failed about 18 months ago.
- f. Para 2.23 – References to Sure Start should also include references to the Early Years Partnership.
- g. Page 8 – The reference to the Economic Development Unit running a number of initiatives to help local people into jobs was an isolated statement and should be expanded upon.
- h. Para 3.15 – The contention that the Raffles estate suffers from problems of abandonment and low demand due to the run down nature of the area was considered incorrect. It was because Raffles was not considered a socially desirable place to live that the problems of abandonment and low demand have occurred resulting in the run down nature of the area.
- i. Para 3.10 – This paragraph needed to be redrafted to identify the extensive further education opportunities available in Carlisle.
- j. The report did not address the role that community centres and Church Groups could have on regeneration.
- k. The Table at 3.20 relating to unemployment rates in Wards could be misleading.

There were pockets of unemployment in many Wards which were rated well in the table.

- l. Para 3.22 – The increase in retail and leisure in Carlisle over the past few years should be highlighted.
- m. Para 3.33, 3.36 and 3.45 on whether regeneration should be dealt with in-house or in partnership were linked and could be combined.
- n. Should the Housing stock transfer proceed, there was a regeneration plan for Raffles in partnership with Lovells. This could be highlighted in the report.
- o. Para 3.42 – This paragraph should identify a Lead Member for regeneration issues.
- p. Para 3.55 – There was no evidence of the outcome of the surveys. It might have been preferable to use the Historic Cities Group for this comparison exercise.
- q. Para 3.62 – Whilst staff and Members may find visits to other Local Authorities useful, the report should contain more detailed information on regeneration activities as a starting point.
- r. Para 3.76 – This contained a bland statement regarding County Officers knowledge of road and rail transport link issues.

The Committee went on to discuss in detail the headline themes of regeneration at Para 5.6 and the key regeneration objectives at Para 5.8 of the report as follows:-

The "Headline Themes of Regeneration" at Para 5.6 should include Environment.

With regard to the objectives at Para 5.8:-

RO1: To create a joined up approach to regeneration in Carlisle

This objective was agreed.

RO2: To aim to concentrate resources on identified geographic areas of need

The objective was agreed. There was a need to list areas where there were pockets of deprivation, within the urban and rural areas, so that proper targeting of resources would result.

RO3: To improve the quality and choice of housing and create a more attractive living environment

The objective was agreed. Specific mention could be made of planning policy whereby low cost housing and housing for rent was sometimes included in large private housing developments.

RO4: To improve the quality of life of local residents by reducing crime and disorder by working in partnership with others

The objective was agreed. This objective could be closely linked to the Crime and Disorder Strategy objectives.

RO5: Dealing with the deprivation needs of rural communities

This objective could be deleted as it duplicated RO2.

RO6: To assist the development of education, training and lifelong learning programmes to meet the needs of local residents

The objective was agreed.

RO7: Working in partnership to reduce health inequalities by tackling the causes of ill health and encouraging health promotion in schools, workplaces and neighbourhoods

The objective was agreed. There were good Committees in Upperby and Currock working on the theme of health that could be spoken to. Contact could be also made with Social Services, Primary Care Trusts and the Carlisle Local Health Group.

RO8: To lobby highways authority and other agencies for improved transport infrastructure links to serve Carlisle's residents and businesses

It was agreed that this objective should be re-worded as follows:-

RO8: To lobby highways authority and other agencies for improved transport and communications services and links to serve Carlisle's residents, businesses and the education sector.

On this objective, the County Council could be usefully contacted as they were undertaking a Best Value Review of transport. The Carlisle Transport Steering Group could be a focus for lobbying on transport issues. There were differing needs in the rural areas where access to public transport was scarce for innovative solutions to be found on transport issues. Technological links to the rural areas e.g for Council services, could be an option to help overcome the sense of isolation and difficulty in getting to Carlisle to access services.

RO9: To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of regeneration activity

RO10: To gather intelligence and monitor the ongoing regeneration needs of Carlisle

It was agreed that these two objectives should be incorporated into one.

It was also agreed that the consultant would insert the relevant performance indicators beneath each of the objectives so as to clarify how success or failure would be measured.

RESOLVED – (1) That the above comments be referred to the Consultants for incorporation into their draft report.

2. That the Consultants be requested to submit a further progress report to the meeting of this Committee on 6 August 2002.

(The meeting ended at 6.00pm)