

**INFRASTRUCTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE****THURSDAY 15 APRIL 2004 AT 10.00 AM**

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Rutherford (Chairman), Councillors Aldersey, Mrs Crookdake, Dodd, Earp, Joscelyne (as substitute for Councillor C S Bowman), Miss Martlew, Im Thurn.

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor Bloxham - Portfolio Holder for Environment, Infrastructure and Transport.

**IOS.48/04 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor C S Bowman.

**IOS.49/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mrs Crookdake declared a personal and prejudicial interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct in respect of Agenda item A.8 – Review of Carlisle District Local Plan – Allocations. Councillor Mrs Crookdake stated that her family owned land in Carlisle under consideration in that regard. Councillor Mrs Rutherford also declared a personal interest in that item of business, particularly as regards the proposed allocation at 77-87 Burgh Road. The interest related to the fact that Councillor Mrs Rutherford lived close by.

**IOS.50/04 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2004 were noted.

**IOS.51/04 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS**

There were no matters which had been the subject of call-in.

**IOS.52/04 MONITORING OF THE FORWARD PLAN**

The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer presented Report LDS.20/04 highlighting the Forward Plan (1 April 2004 – 31 July 2004) issues which fell within the ambit of this Committee.

Dr Taylor then clarified the current position on the following items:

KD.005/04 – Parkhouse Electricity Supply Issues – the Head of Property Services would report to this Committee in the Autumn.

KD.115/03 – Street Lighting Improvements – as requested at the last meeting, a letter had been circulated to all Members seeking their views and input on the proposed programme of work, as a result of which it had not been possible for the Officer to report back in time for today's meeting.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Infrastructure and Transport commented that, as at the closing date, only six Members had responded to the consultation.

This Committee had particularly requested that all Members should have the opportunity to input into the work programme and expressed disappointment at the low level of responses received.

RESOLVED – That the Forward Plan (1 April 2004 to 31 July 2004) issues which fell within the ambit of this Committee be noted.

### **IOS.53/04 WORK PROGRAMME 2003/04**

The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer presented the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2003/04, which took into account matters scheduled to be dealt with by this Committee.

Dr Taylor highlighted, in particular, the Subject Review of Evening and Late Night Economy in Carlisle which was to be undertaken jointly by this Committee and the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In that regard there was a need for the Committee to nominate four Members to serve on the proposed Task Group.

Arrangements were to be made for a workshop session, followed by the first meeting of the Task Group, the tentative dates for which were 29 April 2004 (pm) and 25 May 2004 (am) respectively.

Following discussion, it was agreed that Councillors Aldersey, Earp, Im Thurn and Mrs Rutherford serve on the Task Group.

Dr Taylor then responded to Members' questions.

RESOLVED – (1) That the work programme be noted.

(2) That Councillors Aldersey, Earp, Im Thurn and Mrs Rutherford be nominated to serve on the Evening and Late Night Economy in Carlisle Task Group.

### **IOS.54/04 REFERENCES FROM THE EXECUTIVE**

#### **(a) Environmental Performance of the Council**

There was submitted Minute Excerpt EX.41/04 setting out the Executive's response to this Committee's concerns as detailed in Minute IOS.16/04 on the Environmental Performance of the Council.

The Executive had resolved that, as priority was currently being given to delivering the green box waste recycling initiative for the Council, it was likely to be the end of the calendar year before staff resources would become available for a base audit of the City Council's Environmental Performance to be undertaken.

The Chairman stressed that the issue related to environmental performance within the Council. There was a need to establish current practice with a view to putting in place a co-ordinated policy. It was pleasing to hear that the matter was likely to progress in the Autumn of this year.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Infrastructure and Transport advised that the Commercial and Technical Services Business Unit had recently been awarded a Gold Medal by the Carlisle and Eden Business Environmental Network. The award recognised current environmental practices and the programme of further improvements and was the highest level award, achieved by only a handful of organisations. He commented that clearly progress was being made which required to be taken forward.

The Chairman requested that the congratulations of this Committee be conveyed to the Head of Commercial and Technical Services on that achievement.

In response to a Member's question, the Portfolio Holder advised that during the recent office reorganisation the opportunity had been taken to revitalise staff accommodation throughout the Civic Centre and that, when coupled with the replacement window programme, had greatly improved the environment.

RESOLVED – (1) That the response of the Executive be noted.

(2) That the congratulations of this Committee be forwarded to the Head of Commercial and Technical Services on the achievement of the Gold Medal for environmental performance.

#### **b. The Lanes Refurbishment Programme 2004**

There was submitted Minute Excerpt EX.42/04 detailing the Executive's response to the issues raised by this Committee concerning The Lanes Refurbishment Programme.

The decision of the Executive was that the Leader would arrange for Officers to be reminded that information about all relevant topics should be forwarded to the Communications Section for inclusion in the monthly Member Briefings.

The Chairman clarified that the issue had really been about the various groups which met in the authority of which Members were unaware. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive had undertaken to let her have relevant information, following which a decision would be taken as to the best manner of making that available to all Members.

RESOLVED – That the position be noted.

### **IOS.55/04 CORPORATE/PERFORMANCE PLAN**

The Policy and Performance Officer presented report SP.10/04 identifying the key issues emanating from the addendum to Circular 03/2003 – Local Government Act 1999: Part 1 Best Value and Performance Improvement on guidance on Best Value Performance Plans, published by the ODPM on 1 March 2004.

The main issue for the City Council was to incorporate the Performance Plan requirements for this year into a revised Corporate Plan.

Members' comments were sought as regards the list of proposed information to include in the Corporate/Performance Plan, attached at Appendix 1 to the report. In addition,

Appendix 2 provided the reporting timetable in respect thereof.

Ms Williams and Ms Mooney (Executive Director) then responded to Members' questions.

In considering the matter Members accepted the proposed information, subject to the addition of procurement, environmental issues and crime and disorder.

A Member requested that the document should be made available on disk to avoid the necessity for the production of numerous paper copies.

A Member further expressed concern that the Council was no longer required to provide certain information which she believed was useful in monitoring terms. Ms Williams clarified that such information could be included if the Council considered that it helped to improve the understanding of the document, and undertook to action that.

In response to a Member's question, Ms Mooney stated that the section relating to Risk Management may require expansion confirming that that point would be taken on board.

**RESOLVED** – That the list of proposed information for inclusion in the Corporate/Performance Plan, as detailed at Appendix 1 to report SP.10/04, be accepted subject to the addition of crime and disorder, environmental issues and procurement.

#### **IOS.56/04 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT - PLANNING SERVICES**

The Head of Planning Services presented the Planning Services Business Plan Monitoring report (P.23/04).

Mr Eales outlined the content of the monitoring report, which detailed the Unit's progress against the Business Plan, covering key developments and challenges since the last report of 22 January 2004; progress on Best Value; achievement of performance against Best Value Indicators; Corporate Issues; Key Decisions update; and Budget update.

In addition, the report had been presented to CMT and amended to include their comments.

Mr Eales, the Executive Director, the Local Plans and Conservation Manager and Planning Assistant then responded to a number of questions raised by Members, including:

- a. As regards the percentage of new homes built on brownfield land, then the figure of 47% quoted related to the period April to September 2003. Figures were updated on a six monthly basis and those relative to the last six months would be submitted to the Committee shortly.
- b. Officers had been in contact with the Strategic Rail Authority and Network Rail as regards the release of railway land. The organisations had differing views on that issue and clearly the Council could not force them to release privately owned land.
- c. Referring to key challenge 5, it was intended to utilise Planning Delivery Grant monies to improve the Council's performance in meeting major application targets, progressing the Local Plan and E-Government. Such monies could not be spend on air conditioning for example. There may in future be changes to the way in which Grant was awarded to take account of issues such as design guidance which may be problematic in Carlisle due to the limited number of Architects available.

- d. The current recruitment difficulties being experienced as regards Student Planner posts may not necessarily be finance related. Action could be taken to examine issues such as staff structures throughout the Authority and recruiting in a more effective manner.

Members requested that Officers investigate ways by which the Council may "sell itself" more effectively.

- e. It was hoped that working relations with the County Council would improve in the near future.
- f. The Development Advisory Group, which provided important joint working on development issues facing the Authority, consisted of the Leader, Deputy Leader, the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Infrastructure and Transport, and Officers from Planning Services, Economic and Community Development and Property Services.
- g. Work being undertaken in the Abbey Street area included the replacement of broken traditional materials. The limited availability of sandstone could prove problematic.
- h. The availability of accommodation for private meetings was a major problem for the Unit and Members requested that the Portfolio Holder flag up that particular issue.
- i. Referring to the electronic delivery of the Planning Service, Members were concerned to ensure that adequate backup systems were in place should a failure of the computer system arise.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That Officers be requested to investigate ways by which the Council may "sell itself" more effectively with a view to addressing the current recruitment difficulties as regards Student Planner posts within the Planning Services Business Unit.

#### **IOS.57/04    ADDITIONAL    ITEM    –    SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES BEST VALUE REVIEW**

At the request of the Chairman Ms Mooney, Executive Director, provided an update on the current position as regards the Supporting Communities Best Value Review.

Ms Mooney advised that an expression of interest had been received from Ms Karen Baildon, an external consultant. Ms Baildon was lead Inspector on the CPA process, had provided helpful advice to the Council and was willing to assist in any way possible in the development of a policy for partnership working. A meeting of the Best Value Review Team would be held the following Tuesday to go through her expression of interest and the formal report back to this Committee was scheduled for July 2004.

The Chairman added that she and Ms Mooney had recently attended a Seminar in Birmingham which had examined scrutiny of partnerships and which had proved quite useful. A number of other authorities, e.g. Bradford, had a robust attitude to scrutiny and she would be looking to glean further information from them.

RESOLVED – That the position be noted.

The meeting adjourned at 11.30 am and reconvened at 11.40 am.

## **IOS.58/04 CARLISLE LOCAL TRANSPORT: UPDATE**

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Infrastructure and Transport had previously stressed the need for the City Council to input as far as possible into the Local Transport Plan. Issues such as the provision of Park and Ride, the A69 and the Northern Development Route required serious consideration.

A Member commented that areas such as Shrewsbury had excellent Park and Ride schemes in place and suggested that an Officer should investigate the same.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr Jim Smith, Area Engineer (Carlisle and Eden).

Mr Smith then introduced Mr Jonathan Smith, Principal Transport Policy Officer who presented a briefing note updating Members on the current position as regards the Cumbria Local Transport Plan, the development process, the Local Transport Plan 2 (2006/7 – 2011/2) and the Carlisle City Transport Strategy.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for their attendance at what she considered to be a particularly opportune time.

Members then raised a number of issues to which the Officers and the Head of Planning Services responded, including:

- a. The County Council wished to consult as widely as possible on the Local Transport Plan and therefore input from Members of the City Council was welcomed. Copies of the Issues Paper would be forwarded to the Head of Commercial and Technical Services for circulation to all Members with a view to facilitating the same.
- b. Mr Jonathan Smith undertook to discuss with his technical colleagues the manner by which this Committee's Subject Review of Transport: Modal Balance in Carlisle could link into the Carlisle City Transport Strategy.
- c. Reference was made to this Committee's proposed visit to York to progress the Subject Review, to which certain of the transport witnesses would be invited. The Chairman asked whether the County Council would also like to attend and Mr Jonathan Smith stated that he would discuss the matter with the relevant Portfolio Holder.

The Chairman further noted that a visit had been undertaken some years before and asked Mr Jim Smith to forward information obtained at that time. She would also speak to the Head of Commercial and Technical Services to ascertain the level of information held by the City Council with a view to ensuring that the visit to York would be as productive as possible.

- d. A Member stated that Virgin had recently announced the completion of their Station Feasibility Study, questioning whether that would be taken into account. Mr Jonathan Smith responded that account would be had to as wide a range of strategies as was possible.
- e. Members referred to the possibility of schemes such as a "south circular route" and "inner ring road" being incorporated within the Plan and were advised that the schemes chosen would be dependent on the weight given to them in the consultation exercise, funding, planning issues, etc. It was also important to be realistic as regards

what could be delivered during a five year period.

- f. The Planning Services Unit was involved in the consultation on the Local Transport Plan. As regards the additional pressure on roads/junctions caused by new housing development, then there was clearly a very close link between land use and transport and co-ordinated discussions were taking place in that regard. It was not, however, possible to hold back necessary development because of highway constraints. Rather consideration had to be given to addressing those pressures, an issue upon which the Planning Inspector had been quite clear.

Mr Jim Smith also updated Members on progress with the Northern Development Route (NDR), advising that he would confirm the timetable to the Committee.

A Member expressed the view that the NDR and de-trunking of the A69 should be separate from the Local Transport Plan. Mr Smith commented that the matter was quite controversial and would require to be taken up with the Highway Authority. At a meeting held the week before it had been resolved to compile a position statement to reopen the debate.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Officers be requested to take on board the issues raised by the Committee as outlined above.

(2) That copies of the Issues Paper be forwarded to the Head of Commercial and Technical Services as soon as possible for distribution to all Members of the City Council. In addition, this Committee would welcome sight of any information held by the County Council following their previous visit to York.

The meeting adjourned at 12.35 pm and reconvened at 1.15 pm.

### **IOS.59/04 REVIEW OF CARLISLE DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN - ALLOCATIONS**

Councillor Mrs Crookdake, having declared an interest, took part in the discussion on the matter.

Councillor Mrs Rutherford, having declared an interest in the proposed allocation at 77-87 Burgh Road, took no part in the consideration thereof.

The Local Plans and Conservation Manager submitted report P.24/04 setting out the allocations of land to be considered for the review of the Carlisle District Local Plan.

Mr Hardman began by explaining the background to the matter, drawing attention to the plan of the urban and rural areas which was on display to assist Members in their understanding of the issues involved. Members' comments on the proposed allocations/requests were sought prior to the matter being referred to the City Council.

It was noted that certain of the sites were currently the subject of planning applications. Various Members indicated that they also served on the Development Control Committee and questioned their position in considering the proposed allocations.

The Head of Planning Services stated that clearly the Carlisle District Local Plan would remain valid until 2016 and therefore those applications would have to be determined by the Development Control Committee prior to that date.

The Chairman stressed that it was important for those Members to retain "open minds" as regards the particular sites in question otherwise declarations of interest would require to be made when the applications came forward to the Development Control Committee. She and the other Members involved indicated that they would make no comment today which may be construed as them having come to a decision in respect of the particular sites.

Mr Hardman explained in detail the proposed housing land allocations, economic and commercial growth land allocations, requests received for additional sites following publication of the Issues Paper in Spring 2003 and community use on a site by site basis, and responded to numerous questions from Members.

Members then gave detailed scrutiny to the matter, raising various issues to which Mr Eales and Mr Hardman responded, including:

- a. Referring to the Barker Report, a Member commented that areas now recognised as suffering from high unemployment differed from those identified two or three years ago.

The Committee was advised that the Plan covered a fifteen year period and employment land required to be considered in conjunction with housing. Strategies would be put in place and regeneration issues considered on a City-wide basis.

- b. A Member was concerned to ensure that when new development was proposed sufficient car parking was provided, particularly within the City, requesting that a policy to that effect should be put in place.

Mr Eales advised that the guidance contained within PPG3 was clear and that for certain inner city sites normal parking requirements could be relaxed.

- c. Proposed allocation of Carrs Field, Caxton Road – a Member had serious reservations as regards the allocation of the site for housing. He believed that a traffic assessment was vital and was concerned to ensure the protection of the nature park.

RESOLVED – (1) That the proposed housing land allocations in the urban area, as detailed in the table on page 5 of report P.24/04, be agreed so far as this Committee is concerned with the exception of –

- a. The proposed allocation of land at Greta Avenue where the Committee considered that flooding/drainage related issues required to be resolved.
- b. The proposed allocation of land at Waverley Gardens which the Committee considered should remain as greenfield land. Development of the area could be reconsidered at a future date.

(2) That the requests for additional sites in the urban area to be allocated as housing, as detailed on page 6 of the report, be not agreed so far as this Committee is concerned, with



the exception of –

- a. Urban 5 – land adjacent to H K Campbell School – which the Committee considered was, in principle, suitable for housing development.

(3) That the proposed housing land allocations in the rural area, as detailed in the table on page 7 of the report, be agreed so far as this Committee is concerned.

(4) That the requests for additional sites in the rural area to be allocated as housing, as detailed on pages 8 and 9 of the report, be not agreed so far as this Committee is concerned, subject to it being noted that the opinion of the Committee was split as regards Rural 19 – Land at Carlisle Racecourse.

(5) That the employment land allocations for the urban and rural areas, as detailed on pages 11 – 13 of the report, be agreed so far as this Committee is concerned.

(6) That the requests for additional sites to be allocated for employment development, as detailed on page 14 of the report, be not agreed so far as this Committee is concerned.

(7) That the proposed community use allocations, as detailed at Section 4 of the report, be agreed so far as this Committee is concerned.

## **SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE**

It was noted that during consideration of the Review of the Carlisle District Local Plan – Allocations the meeting had been in progress for three hours, and agreed that Council Procedure Rule 9 in relation to the duration of meetings be suspended in order that the meeting could continue over the time limit of three hours.

[The meeting ended at 4.05 pm]