

INFRASTRUCTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**THURSDAY 23 JANUARY 2003 AT 10.00 AM**

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

IOS.001/03 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor E Mallinson.

IOS.002/03 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 23 October, 5 and 13 December 2002 were approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

IOS.003/03 CALL-INS

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

IOS.004/03 MONITORING OF THE FORWARD PLAN

The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer presented Report LDS.03/03 highlighting the Forward Plan (1 January – 30 April 2003) issues which fell within the ambit of this Committee.

In relation to KD.093/02 – the Local Plan Review, it was noted that this item would be the subject of a report to a special meeting of the Committee, probably in March 2003. A Member commented that all Members should be given an opportunity to have input to the Local Plan Review and that, if necessary, other Members could be invited to the special meeting of this Committee.

Members also referred to KD.102/02 – Amenity Lighting Programme and suggested that it should be the subject of a report to the next meeting of this Committee. The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer advised that the Executive would be making a decision on the Programme in February 2003, but that a report could be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Forward Plan (1 January to 30 April 2003) issues which fell within the ambit of this Committee be noted.

(2) That the Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer discuss with the Local Plans Officer, the means by which all Members would be given an opportunity to have input to the Local Plan Review.

(3) That a report on the Amenity Lighting Programme 2003/04 be submitted to the next

meeting of this Committee.

IOS.005/03 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.

The Chairman referred to the Streetworks subject review which was scheduled for this meeting. She advised that officers from Cumbria County Council and Capita had been invited to the Committee. However, the Cumbria County Council Chief Executive had expressed reluctance to let any County Council officers attend District Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings. It was therefore difficult to make any progress with the Streetworks review until this was resolved.

In response to a Member's question, the Overview and Scrutiny Officer advised that although the Committee could invite anyone to a meeting, it was not possible to force them to attend.

The Chairman had written to the County Council Chief Executive regarding County involvement in the Streetworks and Supporting Communities reviews. To date, she had not received a reply to this letter. If a satisfactory response was not received, the Chairman would pursue other avenues to progress the matter e.g. Carlisle Area Committee or Carlisle Transport Steering Group. She commented that on a positive note, there were officers and Members from the City and County Councils who worked well together.

The Infrastructure, Environment and Transport portfolio holder stated that he shared the Committee's concerns and supported any pressure they could put on the County to assist with this Review. The Town Clerk Chief Executive was raising the matter and the wider issue of working with the County Council with his counterpart at the County. The Portfolio holder also expressed concerns over the Carlisle Transport Advisory Group.

The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer suggested that until the situation with regard to the Streetworks Review is resolved, work could be started on the Environmental Performance of the Council subject review.

Members then referred to the Tourism Subject Review, which had been undertaken at the meeting on 13 December 2002. They suggested that it would be worthwhile to have a further report in a few months time, to monitor progress.

In response to a Member's question on the reserve topic of Abandoned Vehicles, the Head of Environmental Protection Services outlined the current problems which the Council and the Police were experiencing and possible solutions which were being discussed. Legislation was currently being developed nationally and this could form the basis of a future report to the Committee.

Members then referred to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment Update which they had received in September 2002 and commented that the situation must have changed since that time and it would therefore be appropriate to receive another update. In addition, the Chairman commented that the Committee had been advised that there would be Member training on Best Value and Comprehensive Performance Assessment. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer undertook to progress this with the relevant officer.

The Chairman then advised that she had seen a Development Brief in relation to Longtown

and she did not feel that it needed to be submitted to this Committee.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Town Clerk and Chief Executive be asked to continue to liaise with and put pressure on the Chief Executive of Cumbria County Council regarding the involvement of County Council officers in the Streetworks Subject Review and in the wider Overview and Scrutiny process.

(2) That, until the situation with the Streetworks Review is resolved, work should start the "Environmental Performance of the Council" subject review.

(3) That a report on Tourism be submitted to the Committee in a few months time, in order to allow the Committee to monitor progress. This could be included within the Committee's regular update on progress with the Tourism Best Value Action Plan.

(4) That the Head of Environmental Protection Services report on new legislation and regulations in relation to Abandoned Vehicles when the national situation is clarified.

(5) That the Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer liaise with the Head of Strategic and Performance Services regarding Member training and updates on Comprehensive Performance Assessment and Best Value.

IOS.006/03 MONITORING THE CONCESSIONARY FARES BEST VALUE REVIEW ACTION PLAN

The Head of Revenues and Benefits Services submitted report RB.07/02 on progress with the implementation of the Concessionary Fares Best Value Review Action Plan.

The Concessionary Fares Project Officer was present at the meeting to outline the contents of the report and give a verbal update on smart cards.

A Publicity drive to promote the Concessionary Fares Scheme had included a web page and there would be a feature in Carlisle Focus, including information on the extension to the scheme to include 60-64 year old men from April 2003. Good progress had been made towards achieving targets for rural and disabled residents and work was being undertaken with the County Council and Carlisle Access Group.

The City Council had acted as the District lead within Cumbria working in partnership with the County Council to introduce "smart" concessionary fare permits and supporting infrastructure during 2003/04. A Consortium approach had secured funding for the Scheme, including a City Council contribution of £50,000, although it was not certain at this stage if the City Council's contribution would be required.

It was hoped that the new smart card bus permits could be issued in March 2003, but this would be dependant on Stagecoach and other bus operators investing in the installation of smart cards readers by March 2004. Smaller operators could lease the equipment from the County Council. The situation with Stagecoach's investment in the technology should be made clear at a national meeting to be held on 24 January 2003.

The Concessionary Fares Project Officer then responded to a number of questions from Members' in relation to the following:

- Currently, Concessionary Railcards or Concessionary Bus Passes are offered, it would be very costly to issue both rail and bus passes.

- Smart cards would replace the bus passes but rail cards would remain unchanged.
- Smart cards would not be issued in Carlisle unless Stagecoach gave a commitment to have the equipment in place by March 2004.
- Actual usage of rail cards would be monitored through future surveys.
- The potential for use of smart cards on other vehicles in the future could be examined.
- From April 2003 onwards, the Scheme would be also open to men aged 60 to 64 regardless of whether they were still working.
- Annual targets for take up of passes by disabled people.
- Costings against specific items in the Action Plan.
- If the City Councils' contribution of £50,000 was not required, it would be up to the Executive to decide what to do with this money.

RESOLVED – That progress to date on meeting the Action Plan targets from the 2001-02 Best Value Review of Concessionary Fares be noted.

IOS.007/03 SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES BEST VALUE REVIEW

Further to Minute Reference IOS.109/02, the Head of Economic and Community Development submitted report ECD.02/03 providing an update on work undertaken to progress the Supporting Communities Best Value Review.

The Review Team had identified the following key areas and stages in the Review process:

Analysis of what the Review is trying to achieve - Based on the discussion at the last meeting, the Review Team had concluded that the outcome of the Review should be: "To work more effectively in partnership in order to lift Carlisle wards out of the top 20% of the Index of Multiple Deprivation and to prevent the decline of other Carlisle wards." This would enable the Review to focus on how to improve delivery in the most deprived wards of the District, using flexible broad principles so that a framework for supporting communities can be established to apply elsewhere.

Working with partners – The Review Team was continuing to work with partner agencies, in particular there needed to be further contact with partners in Health related activities and the development of work with Carlisle Housing Association as it continues to build its new Regeneration Team.

Joint working with Cumbria County Council at both Officer and Member level – the links with the County Council at member and officer level would need to be developed, particularly with those service departments which impact significantly on local communities.

Local Communities and the Voluntary Sector – work with local communities and the voluntary sector would also need to be developed further. Efforts were being made to progress this area, building on the work which had been done in the past.

The Head of Economic and Community Development asked the Committee to consider the

approach she had outlined and decide if they agreed with the broad scope of the Review, including the defined Outcome proposed by the Review Team. If the Committee did agree with this approach, then work could be undertaken on developing links with partners agencies to progress the Review along these lines.

The Policy and Performance Manager then showed members a map of the Wards in Carlisle and where they fit into the National Indices of Deprivation. In response to a Member's question, he acknowledged that the information was based on the Ward boundaries which were 4 years old, but stated that these figures were compiled nationally based on the 1991 census. All local authorities had to work off this national set of data. Members and officers recognised that although these figures were not "current", they could be supplemented with local knowledge and did give a fair indication of the overall picture in Carlisle.

The importance of the Action Plans from Carlisle Housing Association was recognised and Ms Elliot stated that the Plan had been requested and would be made available as soon as they had been finalised by the Housing Association. Officers were continuing to work closely with Carlisle Housing Association Officers on this and a number of other issues.

A member suggested that Residents Associations could be involved in the Review process.

Ms Elliot then answered a number of Members' questions. In response to a Member's concern that environmental factors may be overlooked in the Review, she stated that broad social, economic and environmental factors were underlying the whole Review process. She explained that if the Committee agreed with the approach and broad scope she had outlined, then a detailed timetable could be developed and partners approached. Thereafter a Project Plan could be submitted to this Committee, this could include report on meetings with Partners.

RESOLVED – (1) That the approach and scope of the Review, including the defined outcome, as detailed in the report be endorsed and that work be progressed in line with this approach.

(2) That a final scoping report and Project Plan be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

IOS.008/03 PERFORMANCE MONITORING – HOUSEHOLD WASTE COLLECTED

Further to Minutes IOS.97/02 and IOS.108/02, the Head of Environmental Protection Services gave a verbal update on the Council's performance on BV84: Total Waste Collected.

Mr Speirs advised that an adjoining authority had now introduced a charge for collecting bulky household waste. The initial results had shown that the Authority had experienced a reduction in the total amount of household waste collected. However, they have experienced a small increase in the amount of fly tipping and the County Council had experienced an increase in the amount of waste collected at Civic Amenity Sites. As the Civic Amenity Site figures were included in the "total household waste collected" figure this had effectively just moved the performance problem to the County Council.

In response to the Chairman's question about the development of an Action Plan for improving performance on this indicator, Mr Speirs stated that it was very difficult for a Council to reduce the amount of waste produced by households. He stated that any Action

Plan should be developed as part of the Council's overall review of Waste Management. He anticipated that this may be available in mid to late Summer 2003.

The Chairman stated that she was disappointed that an Action Plan was not available, but Members acknowledged that it would be best to include it as part of a comprehensive review of Waste Management.

Mr Speirs then updated Members on progress with the pilot recycling schemes. A report would be submitted to the Executive on 6 February 2003 on the continuation of the pilot schemes, which would have to be funded from the budget. There was also an option to extend the current kerbside collection of paper scheme in Morton, by providing each household with a container in which to place paper. Cumbria Waste Recycling would fund the purchase of the boxes, but the Council would have to meet the costs of promotional literature.

Mr Speirs then answered Members' questions in relation to the recycling container which had been removed from Morton and the fact that Landfill Tax money was now used specifically for recycling schemes.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That an Action Plan be produced in conjunction with the overall comprehensive review of Waste Management which would be undertaken in mid to late Summer 2003.

The meeting ended at 11.35am

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