

**JOINT MEETING CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL
AND COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL COMMITTEE FOR CARLISLE**

Notes of a Joint Meeting with Carlisle City Council and County Council Local Committee for Carlisle held on Wednesday 1 October 2003 at The Courts, Carlisle commencing at 2pm

PRESENT

Carlisle City Council

Mr M Mitchelson
Mr R Bloxham
Mr J R Knapton
Mr P Stybelski

Carlisle Local Committee

Mr J R Collier
Mr J D Jefferson
Mr C J Southward
Mr D Sheard
Mrs L M Graham

1. WELCOME

Mr Collier welcomed all those present. Both the Local Committee and the City Council had expressed a wish for closer working relationships and it was hoped that this group would be a useful start to this process.

2. AREA WORKING

Mr Stybelski advised that the City Council had been considering improvements to its area working in order to work more closely with residents and to enhance the democratic role of Members. The City Council wished to avoid the creation of a further tier of areas/forums and during discussions the possibility of joint working with County Council Neighbourhood Forums had been raised. The City Council wished to explore this proposal further and had several questions for County Members including whether there was a standardised format of Neighbourhood Forums/meetings and queries regarding the boundaries of the Neighbourhood Forum areas which did not correspond with City Council ward boundaries.

Mr Sheard reminded those present of the original philosophy behind the establishment of Neighbourhood Forums and the ways in which they had since developed. It had always been the intention of the County Council that the format of Neighbourhood Forum meetings would not be prescribed. Each Forum had its own membership and rules of operation. Those County Members present advised that the Forums in their area all operated on a different basis. There were many different patterns for Forum meetings and membership. Some Forums had City Members attending every meeting and at some there was little City Council involvement.

The current Forum boundaries had evolved over the years and reflected natural community boundaries set by local people. Whilst in some areas the Forum boundary mirrored the County Electoral Division this was not always the case however the County Members had taken the view that wishes of the community regarding Forum boundaries were paramount. In one example the County Member attended three different Forums. It was also noted that on some occasions Parish Councillors were Members of Forums. The city Council suggested that it might be able to allocate some of its grants budget via the Forums.

In conclusion, County Members felt Forums attended by both District and County Councillors should be encouraged. The actual operation of Neighbourhood Forums e.g. including the arrangements for Chairing the meeting and their format should continue to be a matter for the individual forums concerned.

It was **AGREED** that the operation of joint County and District Forums would be recommended to the City Council executive and the County Council Local Committee and the officers would produce a joint report.

Should the proposal for joint Forums be acceptable to the County Council the City Council had considered whether it would be appropriate to have a relaunch of the joint forums and whether they should be run on a pilot basis in the first instance. During discussions it had become apparent that joint forums were all ready taking place in some areas and therefore it would not be appropriate for either a relaunch or pilots to be progressed.

3. HIGHWAYS DEVELOPMENTS

(1) City Centre

Mr Sheard updated the City Council Members on the current proposals for the City Centre Bus/Rail Interchange Scheme. The main aim of the scheme was to improve the relationship between buses, taxis and trains in the Town Centre by concentrating bus services in English Street, and the Crescent and improving pedestrian links. A small working group of County Members had been set up to consider the proposals and had presented their findings to a recent meeting of the Local Committee at which they had been endorsed. Proposals to provide two way traffic on Spencer Street and proposals for Court Square had been discussed however no budget was currently available to carry out these works.

In relation to Court Square Mr Bloxham expressed his concern at the lack of communication between both Councils regarding the underground public toilets. Although some problems were caused because of the toilets a solution could not be found if both Councils did not work together on this issue. It was hoped that closer working arrangements over such matters could be instigated as a result of meetings such as this one.

(2) Residual Budget from Botchergate Relief Road

Mr Sheard advised City Members that it had come to the County Council's attention that a residual sum of approximately £200,000 was being held by the County Council for works programmed to be undertaken by the City Council which had not been undertaken. It was agreed that County and City officers would meet to discuss the return of these monies.

(3) Park and Ride

The Local Committee had approved recommendations from the Carlisle Area Transport Steering Advisory Group regarding a park and ride scheme running from Kingmoor Park to the City Centre in the lead up to the Christmas period. Funding for the scheme had been provided from the City and County Council and the Chamber of Commerce. Members of both Councils had expressed reservations regarding the success of the proposed scheme as it was generally acknowledged that such schemes would only work well when all the appropriate infrastructure arrangements for park and ride were in place in the area concerned. Stagecoach, however, were willing to take the scheme forward and Members would be interested in the outcome.

4. JOINT OFFICER WORKING

Mr Sheard advised that officers of both Councils were working closely together to produce the Regeneration Bid to the North West Development Agency. On Youth issues, a County and District Youth Partnership meeting had been formed on which officers were working jointly. The Community Development Officers of the City Council and the Area Support Team of the County Council had been working closely together and were beginning to see benefits and reduction in duplications.

City Council Members voiced their concerns regarding highways comments on planning applications. On some occasions applications had been delayed because highway comments were not available. On other applications, Members were concerned when highway implications had been stated as "none" and Members felt that there were in fact implications for highways. County Members gave their assurances that this matter would be addressed.

5. NEXT MEETING

Members felt that this had been a very worthwhile meeting and that the Group should continue to meet. Recommendations regarding joint forum working would be considered at early meetings of the City Council Executive and the Local Committee and it was agreed that the views of these Committees should be reported back to the next meeting of this group which would be held on Thursday 13 November 2003 at 2.00 pm in the Slupsk Committee room at the Civic Centre.

The Meeting ended at 3.30 pm.