

**Report of the
Corporate Resources
O & S Committee
Chairman
Cllr B.O.Earp**

On the 6th September 2007 the Corporate Resources O & S Committee met. The meeting began with one substitute Committee Member (a former Executive Member) declaring an interest in all but two of the twelve Agenda Items.

It was resolved that the Management O & S Committee give consideration to the role of former Executive Members sitting on Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Concerns were raised by Members with regard to the 3 year budget 2008/9 – 2010/11, specifically referring to the Renewals Reserve due to its importance in terms of operational efficiency.

The Head of I.T. Services gave a Strategy update and Members requested to view the draft Security Policy prior to its submission to the Executive.

The Head of Revenues and Benefits presented a Report detailing progress with the City Council's 2007/8 Use of Resources Self Assessment. Members raised their concern over the Business Continuity Planning and in relation to the Codes of Conduct for Members and Staff that robust monitoring was in place.

Members welcomed the 1st Quarter Monitoring Report of Corporate Performance to June 2007, and especially in relation to the reduction of Level of Sickness Absence. This being so low that it qualifies for top quartile status.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented an update on the Pay and Workforce Strategy. Specific reference was made to the recent Job Evaluation exercise which had recently taken place within the organisation. This was followed by an Overview regarding the future of Shared Services and stressed that it was most important for early Corporate Resources O & S Committee involvement, in a constructive way, in the proposals for Shared Services. The Committee requested that arrangements be made to plan a Workshop session, which would include input from an external facilitator.

Two main Agenda items on the Corporate Resources Committee (18th October 2007) reflected on Carlisle Renaissance.

1. Draft Economic Strategy for the Carlisle Region. This was produced under the guidance of the Economic Development and Enterprise Priority Group of the Carlisle Partnership (LSP). The Group comprises of 23 Members from Public, Private, Voluntary and Community sectors with only one being a Council Member. The Draft Strategy is only 60% complete and had gaps in the Benefits and Outcomes as well as Sustainability. Members were of the opinion that this Strategy was of such importance to the future of Carlisle that more time was needed to scrutinise before being presented to the Executive on the 19th November.

RESOLVED that a workshop be held prior to this date and we invite the Community and Infrastructure O & S Committees, in order that a meaningful Scrutiny takes place.

2. Workshop on the proposed setting up of a Local Asset Vehicle for Carlisle. A member of English Partnership had given a presentation on the 15th October 2007 regarding a Local Asset Vehicle with some Members attending.

The Workshop gave Members the opportunity to question the principles behind a Local Asset Vehicle and look in a more detailed way at issues relating specifically to the Council. Members, however, voiced concern about the setting up of a L.A.V. as to date, no other Local Authority had done so. We do need to improve the Infrastructure of some of our Industrial Estates and will require finance – this could be one way of doing just that.

The Carlisle Renaissance quarterly progress report was presented to the meeting and Members were perturbed at the speed with which work on the Carlisle Renaissance initiative was moving forward.

Reports were received for the Revenue and Capital Budget Overview and Monitoring, also the Treasury Management 2007/8 and 2008/9. The latter described in detail the updated position in relation to our investments in the Northern Rock. The details were noted and commented upon by Members.

The Corporate Risk Management report provided data of the updated Corporate Risk Register. Members reiterated the need to continue with a flood risk until all the flood defences were in place. Some amended dates should be added to the Current Action Status with regard to Ref. 3 – Potential loss of V.A.T. reclaimed.

A report by the Director of Corporate Services highlighted the progress being made by the Council's Procurement Unit. It provided particulars of the procurement-shared services activity throughout Cumbria. The Director also outlined the progress made in relation to the effectiveness of the controls surrounding the Council's partnership monitoring arrangements.

In Part B, Members considered the financial implications of the current and future Concessionary Fares Scheme.

RESOLVED that until more is known, only the statutory concessionary fare scheme should be implemented.

On Monday, the 22nd October 2007, I attended the Overview and Scrutiny Development Day by A.C.E. which was held in the University of Cumbria. "SCRUTINY now and in the future" encapsulated the day's programme with special emphasis being placed on Joint District/County Scrutiny of the LAAs, local area scrutiny plus the two forms of "Community Call for Action". One relates to the C.D.R.P. and the other to Local Government. Both have differing guidelines and this may cause some confusion.

Cllr B.O.Earp
Chairman Corporate Resources O & S Committee
23rd October 2007