

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CHAIRMAN:

INFRASTRUCTURE

Report of
Chairman:

**COUNCILLOR
CAROLE RUTHERFORD**

The Committee's first call-in on the 24 July relating to development on the Viaduct proved a definite learning curve. The Executive decisions were upheld but a couple of important principles were established. Firstly the need to establish, at the outset, the role and status of ALL those present, i.e. whether they are active participants or merely observers. Secondly, whether they are available for the whole of the proceedings or have other engagements they need to attend and are likely to disappear part way through. Nothing should be taken for granted! The Committee has also initiated a protocol for call-ins, whereby some written explanation as to why the decision(s) has been called-in is given at the outset of the proceedings so that everyone knows why they are there and can make the appropriate arrangements.

The Best Value Inspectors did a staged review on the Regeneration Best Value Review presently being undertaken and their draft report has been issued. As reported to the Council in July this review was causing some concern as it was felt by many that we were losing the thread a little. Having the inspectors come in at this stage was very helpful as it gave everyone involved the chance to pause and take stock of where we were and more importantly where we hoped to go. The general consensus was that we needed to be more focused both on the relevant base-line information needed, who our partners were and what their priorities were, what we meant and hoped to achieve by regeneration and what OUR priorities were.

As mentioned in my last report, training is an ongoing issue. Doug Thomas did a budget training session for some members that I for one found very helpful. The Best Value officer, Karen Hook has issued a questionnaire to members asking how and at what level they wish to be involved in the Best Value Reviews in future. I would urge everyone to respond in order that training needs can be identified as quickly as possible. I would stress that it is no good moaning that officers do not involve members in these reviews and then not responding when asked how and at what level they wish to be involved.

Finally, I will be attending the Carlisle meeting of the County's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 September as an observer to see how another authority manages Overview and Scrutiny.

Councillor Carole Rutherford
Chairman
Overview & Scrutiny Committee Infrastructure