

Overview & scrutiny Management Committee

Committee Report

Public

Date of Meeting:

30th May 2002

Title: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SUBJECT REVIEW/INQUIRY
PROGRAMME 2002/03

Report of: Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Report reference: TC 96/02

Summary:

The report sets out for Member's information the consultation exercise undertaken and the process to lead to the setting of an annual programme of Reviews/Inquiries for 2002/03.

Recommendations:

The committee:-

1. Notes the agreed process for producing an annual programme of Subject Reviews/Inquiries.
2. Agrees that all other consultation suggestions be referred to the Executive, Chief Officers and Heads of Service with a view to appropriate matters being addressed in future policy development and service planning.
3. Agrees that Chief Officers raise consultation responses outwith the authority's responsibility with appropriate partner organisations.

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1. Background

1.1 As Members are aware Subject Reviews/Inquiries form an important part of the work of Overview and Scrutiny Committees. These reviews give the opportunity to consider a topic in some depth over a number of meetings.

1.2 As Members will also recall it was agreed that consultation should take place to elicit ideas for suitable review topics in line with Best Practise.

1.3 Consultation has taken place with Members, staff and the Citizens Panel. Overview and Scrutiny Support staff have also put forward suggestions drawn from their own experience and from issues which seem topical in light of the authority's policy agenda.

2. Annual Programme

2.1 It is suggested that since, although important, this forms only one element of the committees' work it would be prudent not to set a programme that is too ambitious. Based on last year's work, and on experience elsewhere, it is suggested that each committee should programme one large, one medium and one to two small reviews for the year.

2.2 Should progress with the programme and officer capacity allow then further topic (s) could be added in during the year.

3. Decision Process

3.1 As previously agreed each Overview and Scrutiny Committee will consider the results of the consultation exercise in a Workshop Session. These will follow-on from the first formal meetings of the Civic Year. Also, as previously agreed, these Workshop Sessions will include substitute members of the committee.

3.2 The workshop will be facilitated by the Overview and Scrutiny support staff and will identify the particular committee's priorities from the various suggestions, which have come out of the consultation process.

3.3 Once each committee has completed their workshop then all the outcomes will be reported to the next meeting of this committee. This committee will then be able to agree an overall programme for the year bearing in mind the suggested make-up of that programme as set out in the previous paragraph and also reflecting the committees own views on the priorities which have emerged. The respective Committee Chairmen will obviously be able to input their committee's views to aid that discussion.

4. Outcomes of the Consultation

4.1 In addition to Members' responses there were 231 from the Citizens Panel and 39 from staff. Similar suggestions have been brought together to give a composite consultation report.

4.2 For the committee's information the outcomes of the consultation are attached as

the Appendix to this report. The suggestions are listed by reference to the respective committee under whose remit they fall. There are also, as expected, a number, which are crosscutting in nature, and these have been grouped together. The lists identify the proposed subject and give some supporting detail; the source of the suggestion is given, as is the likely scale of the review and the portfolio under which it falls. There is also a brief comment intended to provide relevant background information.

4.3 It is proposed that each of the three committees consider the crosscutting reviews to see if any are regarded as priorities. This committee can then take account of that, and if it wishes, allocate that review to a particular committee when it agrees the overall programme.

5. Sharing Consultation Results

5.1 Although guidance was given to consultees it was never expected that all suggestions would be suitable as potential reviews. This did not discourage this approach since all concerns expressed in this way are a valuable contribution to the authority's programme of consultation.

5.2 Indeed it is suggested that the various ideas, which are not chosen for review, should be referred to the Executive, Chief Officers and Heads of Service. Along with the request that Portfolio Holders and responsible officers discuss them with a view to appropriate matters being addressed in future policy development and service planning.

5.3 Some issues raised are outwith this authority's responsibility (e.g. County Council matters) and it is also suggested that Chief Officers refer these on to partner organisations.

6. Recommendations

The committee:-

1. Notes the agreed process for producing an annual programme of Subject Reviews/Inquiries.
2. Agrees that all other consultation suggestions be referred to the Executive, Chief Officers and Heads of Service with a view to appropriate matters being addressed in future policy development and service planning.
3. Agrees that Chief Officers raise consultation responses outwith the authority's responsibility with appropriate partner organisations.

Community

Subject	Detail	Source	Scale	Portfolio
CO1 Health	Contribute to new duty to scrutinise health	O&S Support	Large	Health & Well-being
	Comment: Local and topical issue. Partly dependent on the County's approach to the new duty and would need to be defined within that approach.			
CO2 Democratic Renewal	Consider poll turnout and other factors relating to public involvement in Council work and overall engagement with public.	O&S Support	Large	Community Activities
	Comment: Need to define boundaries of any review carefully. Could perhaps feed into the review of the constitution later in the year? Also, could be relevant to 'youth' ideas later – getting Carlisle's young people more involved with Council work and priorities.			
CO3 Theatre/Arts Centre	Consider why Carlisle does not have one and examine the possibility of setting one up in conjunction with CCC, Universities or Arts Council etc	Citizens Panel (No. 136-140)/ Staff (x2)	Medium	Community Activities
	Comment: Could be interesting to air the issues and explore any potential avenues of funding. However, this issue was (relatively recently) explored at length without a positive outcome. Note also that there are plans to broaden the usage of the Lonsdale City Cinema into music venue/theatre in addition to films (re News & Star, 30 Apr 2002) For any separate venture, there remain commercial viability questions.			
CO4 Sports Facilities	Consider adequacy of current arrangements, particularly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of permanent ice-rink (Lockerbie and Dumfries are closest at present) Under-cover running track and stadium at Sheep Mount. Better swimming pools, tennis court facilities etc 	Citizens Panel (Nos 141-149) /Staff	Medium	Community Activities
	Comment: Community Sports Development plan due to come to Committee. Also, there is a bid in progress for Sheepmount. As such, it is not clear what a review would add at this stage.			
CO5 Crime and Disorder	Calls for more/better policing, more CCTV cameras	Citizens Panel (Nos 175-183)		Community Activities
	Comment: Probably better dealt with as part of the Performance Indicators work which is likely to focus on this area.			

Subject	Detail	Source	Scale	Portfolio
C06 Health Promotion	Consider policy effectiveness and partnership.	O&S Support	Medium	Health & Well-being
	Comment: Has been recognised as an important component of health which the Council may be able to enhance.			
C07 Faith and Community	Consider the Council's policy in light of the recent publication by the LGA of "Faith and Community: A Good Practice Guide for Local Authorities"	Citizens Panel (No224)	Small/ Medium	Community Activities
	Comment: Could be interesting			
C08 Safety in Play Areas	Explore balance in play areas of safety <i>versus</i> fun Do safety concerns predominate to such an extent that they cease to be fun or to provide challenge?	Staff	Small/ Medium	Community Activities
	Comment: Could be interesting but this area is subject to extensive guidance from bodies like the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. Realistically, could any review challenge the orthodoxy of national bodies such as these?			
C09 Pigeons	Pigeons in city centre identified as nuisance and provoke strong feelings. Inquiry could focus on how to rid the centre of them.	Staff (x3)	Small/ Medium	Health & Well-being
	Comment: Could examine best practice – what other cities have done – various policies have been tried – culling (Barnsley), making buildings less 'pigeon-friendly', contraceptive pills. Also, there is the Pigeon Control Advisory Service (PICAS) which could offer expert input. Note that the subject provokes strong feelings on both sides – one comment from staff noted the pleasure provided by the pigeons.			
C010 Allotments	Consider current policy and contribution to corporate objectives.	O&S Support	Small/ Medium	Health & Well-being
	Comment: City does reasonably well in maintaining quite high occupancy rates. Could check on profile and see if enough young people are being attracted and if innovative policies are being introduced to help maintain vibrancy of sites.			
C011 Public toilet provision	Consider whether provision is adequate, particularly in the City Centre.	Citizens Panel (Nos 200-202)/ Staff	Small/ Medium	Health & Well-being
	Comment: Topic of public concern. Possibly covered in recent Best Value Review.			
C012 Dog fouling	Consider policy and possible improvements.	Citizens Panel (Nos 86-93) /Staff		Health & Well-being

Comment:

Was a subject review last year and is continuing into next year. A number of innovations in policy have already been adopted.
Maybe review again in 1 or 2 years time.

Corporate Resources

Subject	Detail	Source	Scale	Portfolio
CR1 Unitary Authority	Evaluate potential future options in light of likely developments in regional and local government	O&S Support	Large	Strategy & Performance
	Comment: Given questions posed over the future of two-tier local authorities and regional Government, an inquiry could provide a useful exploration of a very important issue.			
CR2 Area Working	Consider the options for a new 'committee' structure	O&S Support	Large	Strategy & Performance
	Comment: Considerable support amongst Members. Commitment from Executive last year to consider the issue and O&S could provide a good forum to mull over the options.			
CR3 'Remainders' from the Organisational Assessment	Consider in detail some of the issues raised by the HACAS Diagnostic Report for the Organisational Assessment but not explicitly tackled by the review	Member/ O&S Support	Medium/ Large	Strategy & Performance/ Corporate Resources
	Comment: Perhaps best for 2003/2004, once the organisational changes have had chance to settle down.			
CR4Childcare Facilities	Consider potential for provision of childcare facilities for staff, particularly with the possibility that space would become available in the Civic Centre.	Staff	Small/ Medium	Corporate Resources
	Comment As for CR3 (perhaps 2003/2004)			
CR5Low Morale of Staff	Gathered together from a variety of comments from staff and the HACAS Chapman Hendy diagnostic report.	Staff		Corporate Resources
	Comment: As for CR3 (perhaps 2003/2004)			
CR6 Policy on use of Consultants	Consider the rationale for the use of consultants within the City Council and examine the overall costs and effectiveness.	Member	Medium	Strategy & Performance
	Comment: Not clear that whether or not any policy exists. Could be useful to explore and help establish policy.			
CR7 Service Standards	Develop for publication and performance monitoring	O&S Support	Medium	Strategy & Performance

Subject	Detail	Source	Scale	Portfolio
	Comment: Could complement the Customer Contact Best Value Review			
CR8 Civic Centre	Future or management/operation of the Civic Centre	O&S Support/ Staff	Small/ Medium	Corporate Resources
	Comment: Picked up in the Organisational Assessment and Customer Contact BV Reviews. Possible review in 2003/2004?			
CR9 Partnership arrangements	Examine the existing partnerships and how effective these are.	Member	Medium/ Large	Strategy & Performance
	Comment: Would need define more clearly the scope and aims of the review.			
CR10 Co-operation with the County Council	Effectiveness of current arrangements (at both political and officer level) and how these could be improved	Staff	Large	Strategy & Performance
	Comment: Could be difficult to get anything positive from. Also, difficult to define boundaries of review.			
CR11 Flexibility of Council Tax Payments	Greater variety of mechanisms for paying Council Tax – switch cards, credit cards, telephone and internet routes.	Staff		Finance & Resources
	Comment: Treasurers are currently looking at replacing existing system of cash receipts with one which accommodates the changes requested – hoped that Phase 1 will be complete by November 2002, with the remainder by April 2003. Given this programme of change, no useful role for O&S review.			
CR12 Communications	Need for a 'one stop shop'	Staff		Corporate Resources
	Comment: Currently being dealt with as part of the Customer Contact Best Value Review. As such, O&S review would not be appropriate.			

Infrastructure

Subject	Detail	Source	Scale	Portfolio
IN1: Co-ordination of Street Works	Consider how these are co-ordinated – is there an overall plan for matters such as replacement/additional lights, pavement replacement/ improvement. How are these things decided? By whom?	Member	Small/ Medium	Infrastructure, Environment and Transport
	Comment: Not clear that there is a real 'review' in this – maybe just need for clearer lines of communication?			
IN2: Tourism	Possibles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-off session to scrutinise how Carlisle is promoted within the Cumbria Tourist Board's work Policy review in light of Foot and Mouth Disease 	Citizens Panel (Nos 184-191)/ Member/ Staff/ O&S Support	Small	Economic Prosperity
	Comment: Would be useful area to review – some consensus that Carlisle is being under-promoted.			
IN3: Botchergate	To consider environmental and economic issues relating to the redevelopment of Botchergate	Member	Medium	Economic Prosperity
	Comment: Would need to clearly define scope and aims of review.			
IN4: Refuse Collection	Consider the merits and drawbacks of using 'Wheelie bins' – potential benefits include reduced spillage of refuse, less lifting required by operatives	Citizens Panel (Nos 107-109)	Small	Infrastructure, Environment and Transport
	Comment: Could be a useful one-off session. Also links to idea below on waste minimisation.			
IN5: Abandoned Vehicles	Consider how to remove and deal with abandoned cars before they become a nuisance	Citizens Panel (Nos 111-112)	Small/ Medium	Infrastructure, Environment and Transport
	Comment: Would be interesting – also an area of developing policy as Government struggles to combat massive increase in number of abandoned vehicles.			
IN6: Waste Minimisation	Identified as 'difficult issue' in BV Inspection. Could examine best practice and try to assist policy development in this area.	O&S Support	Small/ Medium	Infrastructure, Environment and Transport

Subject	Detail	Source	Scale	Portfolio
	Comment: Important to limit scale of review and focus on what Council <i>could</i> do.			
IN7: Recycling Policy	A few main aspects have been suggested: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater integration of charity shops into council's recycling policy – for example having 'pitches' at the local amenity sites; • Consider plan to meet Government recycling targets in short-medium term. • Plastics recycling • Furniture and White Goods recycling 	Citizens Panel (Nos 113-126)/ Staff/ O&S Support	Medium	Infrastructure, Environment and Transport
	Comment: Would need to be a focused review (eg furniture recycling or white goods re-use) – for example, see CREATE elsewhere (Liverpool etc) or could pick out plastics recycling.			
IN8: Various aspects of Street Cleaning	Concerns raised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fly tipping, • chewing gum, • litter dropping (and number of litter bins) • fixed penalties for litter notices. 	Citizens Panel (Nos 94-106)/ Staff (x4)	Medium	Infrastructure, Environment and Transport
	Comment: Popular concerns of both staff and Citizens Panel but this area just undergone Best Value Review and Inspection – may be best to either (i) leave until at least 2003/2004 or (ii) select relatively small and specific area for a one-off session.			
IN9: Sustainable Local Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible need for a marketing company to co-ordinate city centre management. • Some concern about the number of empty shops and perceived decline of small businesses. • The need to regenerate the city centre whilst preserving the historic environment. • Concern at availability of jobs for school leavers 	Citizens Panel (Nos 192-199, 219)/ Staff	Medium	Economic Prosperity

Subject	Detail	Source	Scale	Portfolio
	<p>Comment</p> <p>Difficult to derive a 'review' from this idea. If tightly defined review could be derived from this area, could be interesting.</p>			
IN10: Regulation and Licensing	Policy contribution to corporate objectives	O&S Support	Small/ Medium	Infrastructure, Environment and Transport
	<p>Comment:</p> <p>Seen as regulatory functions, their contribution to wider objectives eg Crime and Disorder could be explored</p>			
IN11: Travel to Work Plan	Consider ways of reducing the environmental impact of council staff's commuting journeys and work travel.	Staff	Small/ Medium	Infrastructure, Environment and Transport
	<p>Comment:</p> <p>Council is weak in policy area of 'promoting sustainable transport'. Review could contribute to promoting such a plan and enabling the Council to set a positive example for other local businesses.</p>			
IN12: Lane Rental	Consider the merits of charging utility companies 'rental' for road lanes when they carry out road works.	Member	Small/ Medium	Infrastructure, Environment and Transport
	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Pilots currently being carried out in Middlesbrough and London Borough of Camden. Could aim to draw on these pilots to determine whether this was something Carlisle wished to pursue.</p>			
IN13: Home Zones/Traffic Calming	Consider policy in this area, with particular reference to technological advancements (less noisy rumble strips) and developing best practice	Citizens Panel (Nos 9-15)/ Member	Small/ Medium	Infrastructure, Environment and Transport
	<p>Comments:</p> <p>Not our responsibility but could exert pressure on County for coherence of approach and greater consultation?</p>			
IN14: Improving the City Centre Environment	<p>A large number of comments. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subways at Hardwicke's Circus could do with being repainted; • more seating along Scotch Street; • external aspects of Civic Centre and environs; • cycling/skateboarding; • state of bus station; • potential for better conditions for pedestrians (including extension of pedestrianised area); • city centre signage; • lack of working lifts in Millennium Bridge. 	Citizens Panel (No 43)/ Staff (Many)	Small/ Medium/ Large	Infrastructure, Environment and Transport

Subject	Detail	Source	Scale	Portfolio
	Comments: Would be difficult to define if tried to cover all aspects. A review based on one or two areas would, however, be manageable. Perhaps one-off sessions? Could help to tweak policy to reflect public's concerns?			
IN15: Parks	Policy, contribution to corporate objectives. Also, to what extent policy needs to be updated in light of the final report of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce "Green Spaces, Better Places"	O&S Support	Small/ Medium	Infrastructure, Environment and Transport
	Comments: Some potential here and a number of City Vision themes include elements of Parks policies			
IN16: Bypass	Urged to ensure that CCC does not let the West/North bypass slip further since congestion is set to worsen.	Staff		Infrastructure, Environment and Transport
	Comments: Not really an inquiry subject – more a point for the Portfolio holder			
IN17: Transport: Modal Balance in Carlisle	Many comments which argue that facilities are inadequate for (i) pedestrians, (ii) cyclists (iii) bus users, (iv) train passengers, (v) car drivers (particularly parking) and (vi) taxis.	Citizens Panel (Nos 1-8, 17-85)/ Staff (x5)	Medium/ Large	Infrastructure, Environment and Transport
	Comments: Almost definitely too large to tackle in one review and the City Council's role is a limited one. Could be possible to examine conditions for one or two groups in one-off sessions? Note that a large number of Citizens Panel comments reflect various and different views of this area – comments particularly centre around cycle facilities, bus lanes and car parking.			
IN18: Fuel Supply	Two separate points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> suggestion that electricity supply problems to North Carlisle are inhibiting major development there (also one Citizens Panel comment expressed concern at the power-cuts experienced in rural areas) how can natural gas supply be extended to rural areas 	Staff	Small	Economic Prosperity/Health & Well-being
	Comments: Very specific points – pass on to portfolio holder? With regard to the power-cuts issue, this point could be raised in a one-off session with the Chief Executive of United Utilities			
IN19: Local Produce	Consider how local produce could be promoted to a greater extent	Citizens Panel (No 227)	Small	Economic Prosperity
	Comments: Could do a one-off session to consider this – also identified in City Vision as desirable.			

Subject	Detail	Source	Scale	Portfolio
IN20: 'Smart' Bus Stops	Consider the merits of bus stops which provide real-time information on services	Citizens Panel (No 76)	Small	Infrastructure, Environment and Transport
	Comments: Increasingly used in other cities with some success. Could have a one-off session to consider whether or not it would be worthwhile for Carlisle.			
IN21: River Erosion	How to stop it	Staff		
	Comments: Specific point: not really subject for an inquiry			

Cross-Cutting Reviews (No Committee Assigned)

Subject	Detail	Source	Scale	Portfolio
CC1: Environmental Performance of Council	Pursuit of environmentally sensitive policies within Council to set good example for others – could include waste minimisation, water use, procurement policy, energy efficiency, travel to work (see above)	O&S Staff	Medium/ Large	Cuts across quite a few and this review could be carried out by any of the Committees.
	Comment: Weak area of policy (hinted at in Waste Management BV Inspection) and could be considerable potential for improvement. Would need to consider to what extent covered in Local Agenda 21 and Community Plan.			
CC2: Facilities for Young People (13-17 years old)	Need for better facilities for this group, particularly with reference to stopping anti-social behaviour.	Citizens Panel (Nos 150-174)/ Member/ Staff/ O&S Support	Medium/ Large	Again cuts across portfolios and committees
	Comment: Strong support from Citizens Panel for this area. Would need to clearly define purpose of inquiry and boundaries of any work. In conjunction with County Council?			
CC3: Facilities for Students/ 24-hour City	Community and recreational facilities for those in higher and further education. What facilities are needed? How can we deliver them? 24-hour city: consider whether it is desirable and, if so, how we can achieve this?	O&S Support	Medium/ Large	Cuts across portfolios and committees
	Comment: Has often featured in workshops on vision/future. Good inquiry could help shape future policy.			
CC4: Carlisle United	Consider the future of the club and what the Council could do to assist	Citizens Panel (No 228)	Small	Community Activities and Economic Development
	Comment: Topical but would need to have clear idea of what purpose the inquiry would serve and who possible witnesses would be.			
CC5: Regeneration	The quality of life on housing estates and the role of City Council in tackling this	Staff		Community Activities/Infrastructure, Environment & Transport

Comment: Best Value Review ongoing. Not an appropriate time for an O&S Review
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