
EXCERPTS FROM THE MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES HELD ON 3 AND 4 APRIL 2002

INFRASTRUCTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 3 APRIL 2002

IOS.32/02 CORPORATE PLAN WORKSHOP

The Policy and Research Officer attended the meeting and submitted a report of the Town Clerk and Chief Executive reference TC.67/02 providing background to, and summarising the outcomes of, the recent Corporate Plan Workshop. He advised that the workshop had been set up to provide an opportunity for Overview and Scrutiny Committees to provide input into the Corporate Plan. The Members who had attended the workshop had been asked to comment on which aspects of the City Vision they felt the City Council could deliver either by itself, by working in partnership, or by enabling others to deliver. In addition, Members had been asked to identify aims and objectives which did not feature in the City Vision, but which the City Council felt were important and may wish to include in the Corporate Plan.

The Report contained a summary of the results of the Workshop session and Members were asked to comment on these outcomes. The Executive would then consider the comments of all the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and, taking into account the budgetary position, would formulate a Draft Corporate Plan and Best Value Performance Plan, which would be the subject of further consultation with Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The final deadline for publication of the Corporate Plan and Best Value Performance Plan was 30 June 2002.

Members then examined the results of the Workshop session and commented on the following:-

City Vision Theme - Communities:

- *Area Working* - the County Council and Parish Councils should be added. In addition, there was a comment that Area Committees rather than Area Working should be the phrase which should be used. There could be further development of Joint Working between the City and County Council in relation to Area or Neighbourhood Forums or Committees.
- *Ensure that Carlisle is a safe, clean and attractive place to live* - the Police and the County Council should be added.
- *Ensure the community has access to information and services 24 hours a day easily, promptly and at a local level* - add all Utilities, not just Cable Companies

- *Ensure all children have a good start in life* - this includes a number of factors and agencies including education, parents, social issues, housing, income and direct health care through the Health Service.
- *Have a clear voice for young people via their own Council* - in addition to the Youth Council a number of other agencies are involved, for example, Youth Christian Fellowships, Young Farmers Association etc. In relation to this and the following, key priority of *support education and citizenship for young people*, the Education Service and schools should be added.
- *Reduce Crime* - The Probation Service and Youth Offending Team and other agencies should be added. In relation to what the Council is doing or could be doing, planning policies such as Secure by Design were referred to and street lighting was recognised.

City Vision Theme - Economic Prosperity:

- In relation to a number of the Key Priorities, there should be identification of the existing partnerships which are in existence, for example, the Joint Eden Carlisle Partnership, Tourism Partnership and Regeneration Partnerships, and the Rural Action Zone as well as all other agencies which are already working in these areas.
- The potential to develop the Three River Strategy in the future was recognised and welcomed and it was suggested that there could be more work in the future on better utilisation of the river and the waterfront areas in Carlisle. In addition to the facilitation of on water activities, river walkways and restaurants could be developed.
- The advantages and disadvantages of being a University City were discussed, with a comment that in some cities there had been an effect on employment, as students were taking up a number of part-time jobs which were therefore not available to local people.
- In relation to a number of the key priorities within Economic Prosperity, there was reference to the difficulty of local organisations and agencies tapping into sources of funding. There was discussion on the resources which are available within the Council to access funding and resources available within the Community Support Unit to support local organisations and assist them to apply for funding. There was a recognition that the resources available within the Council were limited in relation to accessing funding, but that assistance was being provided by the Council to local organisations. Specific references were made to funding which was being sought by the East Cumbria Countryside Project in relation to work on rivers.
- *Encourage a diverse range of job opportunities and equal access to them for all sections of our community* - Members felt that this key priority was encompassed within the first one on the Economic Prosperity page.

- *Develop closer links between education and businesses to ensure a match between skills and job opportunities* - the Skills Council and Post-16 Education under Connections should be added.
- *Have a comprehensive small business support network which meets the needs of both those who have businesses and those who are trying to establish one* - there are a number of providers already working in this area, for example, the Small Business Enterprise Centre and independent privately and publicly-run agencies, as well as local colleges.
- *Support the Airport as a key economic driver and encourage its development as a centre for industry and communications* - planning developments, potential to promote bonded warehouses and the Council's role in getting local industries to use the Airport should be added.
- *Encourage and support local supply networks which allow local communities to buy local produce and goods easily and affordably* - the reference to encouraging Food Co-ops and Farmers' Markets was discussed and whilst the benefits were recognised, Members commented that there were some drawbacks in terms of hygiene and, in relation to food co-ops, the potential effect on local small businesses such as shops and retail outlets.

City Vision Theme - Health and Wellbeing:

- The Workshop had not addressed this area, it would be examined by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee. However the Health Service, the County Council Education Service, and parents should be added

City Vision Theme - Infrastructure, Environment and Transport:

- *Integrated Transport System* - the Council could only be a partner or lobbyist in any Integrated Transport System.
- *Promote a sustainable environment* - the importance of the image of Carlisle was recognised and the need for people to have pride in the City. Reference was made to some streets and railway bridges being dirty, in particular chewing gum on pavements was referred to. The City Council should ensure that its own properties are clean and encourage other organisations to clean their properties.
- Problems with the Gateways to the City Centre were recognised, in particular, Botchergate entrance to the City was highlighted as being in need of attention. Improvement of these areas would improve the image of Carlisle.
- Riverside walkways and facilities were again mentioned as being something which could be developed in the future.

In general, Members commented that it may be worthwhile highlighting some of the drawbacks or disadvantages, for example, the ones they referred to in relation to impact of food co-ops on local retail outlets, problems with students taking a number of part-time jobs. They suggested that some disadvantages or drawback areas could be built into the document in order to provide a balanced perspective.

In closing, Members commented that the whole area including City Centre, urban and rural areas were of equal importance in terms of having clean streets and areas, as they were all important to the promotion of Carlisle. Members also suggested that in the final document to the Executive, Officers should ensure that all existing partners and providers are included within that document.

RESOLVED - That the comments of the Committee as outlined above be forwarded to the Executive.

CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 4 APRIL 2002

CROS.41/02 CORPORATE PLAN WORKSHOP

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive submitted report TC.67/02 providing a background to, and summarising the outcome of, the recent Corporate Planning Workshop. The views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees were being sought with regard to various City Vision priorities which were considered appropriate for the Council to include in the Corporate Plan. This Committee's remit covered the priorities under the City Vision theme "Celebrating Carlisle."

A Member referred to the Workshop on the Corporate Plan held on 21 March 2002 to which an invitation to attend had been extended to all non-Executive Members of the City Council. He expressed disappointment that only eleven Members had participated in the Workshop.

Members of the Committee then considered the various priorities and made comments as follows:-

1. General

(a) Members considered that problems associated with fly tipping in dykes and grass verges on the outskirts of the City needed to be addressed.

It was also considered that entrances to some housing estates were dowdy and in need of environmental improvements.

(b) Reference was made to the fact that, in the summer months, hanging baskets were displayed on all the approaches to the City with the exception of the western approach. The Committee considered that this omission needed to be addressed.

(c) With regard to the City Vision priority of ensuring all children have a good start in life, a Member referred to the role Community Centres played in supporting young families through play groups, creches, etc. There were also private sector nurseries which could be targeted with leaflets about events for children being held by the City Council, for example at Tullie House.

2. Comments on "Celebrating Carlisle" City Vision Theme

(a) Key priority – *"Carlisle needs to have one strong, clear identity which is properly communicated and consistent across all sectors: tourism, inward investment, cultural sector and so on. Carlisle's rich inheritance and culture needs to be central to its external identity."*

Members considered that promotions such as the Open for Business campaign and the Border City campaign had proved to be successful and that further initiatives of this nature should be encouraged.

Members considered that the City Council needed to have one identity and that the use of the Sandcastle logo and the Coat of Arms logo was confusing. It was understood that this issue was being investigated through the Communications Best Value Review.

(b) Key priority – *"Make sure the gateways to the City Centre enhance Carlisle's image."*

Members considered that there should be better signage for Carlisle on the A routes into the City, at the extent of the rural area as well as within the urban area.

(c) Key priority – *"Have a vibrant river frontage on, for example, the Eden, Caldew, Petteril and Esk rivers which provides entertainment and leisure facilities."*

Members considered that the rivers in Carlisle could be exploited as tourist attractions with riverside cafes and leisure activities. The riverside frontage could be promoted with river walks.

(d) Key priority – *"Encourage continued investment in our museums and ensure they are able to provide a relevant and comprehensive profile of Carlisle's past, present and potential future."*

A Member considered that the former cotton mill adjacent to Dixons Chimney could be converted into a working museum and that a barge could be placed on the nearby River Caldew, perhaps as a floating restaurant.

It was considered that the private sector and the education sector, eg the Art College, could become involved in such an initiative.

(d) Key priority – *"Celebrate Carlisle via a variety of civic events."*

Members considered that the public were keen on civic events and that they should be encouraged. There were problems at Bank Holidays with the limited bus services and

Stagecoach and other transport providers could be approached with a view to improving services when events were on. It was also considered that events should be promoted more extensively to maximise public interest.

A Member referred to the variety of events held at Carlisle Racecourse on race days which may also benefit from more extensive promotion.

(e) Key priority – *"Have a football club of which we can be proud."*

Members referred to the fact that Carlisle United and Carlisle racecourse gave Carlisle national prominence and that sporting activities in Carlisle should be encouraged.

(f) Key priority – *"Develop Carlisle as a learning City."*

Members considered that this should be a priority as it could act as a catalyst for expansion of Carlisle in the future. Consideration could be given to combining all the Colleges in Carlisle to have a University for Carlisle.

Members considered that there should be more activities aimed at students in Carlisle.

Members also considered that local people who have been successful in their field should be invited to promote Carlisle events and perform book signings etc in Carlisle.

(g) Key priority – *"Have excellent, high class hotel and conference facilities."*

Members considered that the availability of the City Council's own facilities at Tullie House, Brampton Business Centre, etc should be promoted.

Members did not consider that the City Council could be a provider of hotel and conference facilities but could seek to work in partnership with hotel operators to encourage them to come to Carlisle.

(h) Key priority – *"Develop dedicated regional theatre and arts facility in Carlisle."*

Members referred to the Green Room and Stanwix Arts Theatre which operated successfully in Carlisle. Members considered that there may be merit in carrying out further research into whether further theatre facilities could be viable in Carlisle, perhaps learning from the successful theatre in Keswick.

It was recognised that private finance and sponsorship was needed to enable a theatre to be provided by the City Council.

RESOLVED – That the above comments be referred to the Executive at their meeting on 15 April 2002.

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 4 APRIL 2002

COS.62/02 CORPORATE PLAN WORKSHOP

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive submitted report TC.67/02 providing a background to, and summarising the outcome of, the recent Corporate Planning Workshop. The views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees were being sought with regard to various City Vision priorities which were considered appropriate for the Council to include in the Corporate Plan.

The Chairman indicated that discussion on certain of the priorities which were under the remit of this Committee had been dealt with at the Workshop but that the City Vision Theme of "Health and Wellbeing" had still to be considered at Member level. The Committee agreed to concentrate on this Theme at this meeting.

Members of the Committee then considered the various priorities and made comments as follows:-

- (a) Key priority – *"Ensure health improvement, reducing health inequalities and improving health care is focused at a local level wherever possible; ensure that health information and advice is easily accessible and of a high standard."*

In particular we will focus on:

*reducing infant mortality;
increasing life expectancy;
tackling child poverty;
targeting smoking;
tackling teenage pregnancy;
promoting health pregnancy."*

Members noted that the Carlisle Local Health Group had been set up as a means of developing partnerships and identifying those organisations which would play a role in the health improvement agenda. The Committee was supportive of this initiative and the move towards delivering joint agendas in relation to health issues. The key priorities focused on NHS targets and could be expanded to include factors upon which the Local Authority could make a significant impact.

- (b) Key priority – *"Exploit and promote the potential toward a fresh healthy food from community organisations."*

Members noted that the City Council currently worked with local communities to promote Food Co-operatives and that there were now approximately 20 operating in the district. It was noted that the North Cumbria Health Action Zone had led on Food Co-operatives and the City Council had supported groups to ensure that they could sustain their operations. Members considered that the Council should continue its enabling role for community groups interested in setting up Food Co-operatives.

- (c) Key priority – *"Support action to prevent drug misuse and promote drug rehabilitation."*

Members considered that the Council's involvement in these issues should be to the extent to which they impinge upon community safety, crime and disorder and housing issues. The Council should have a secondary supportive role rather than a lead role in drug issues, being involved in partnerships with other agencies at a strategic level.

- (d) Key priority – *"Combat the causes and effects of poverty on the health of our communities."*

Members considered that the outcome of the Best Value Review on Regeneration would give guidance on this issue.

- (e) Key priority – *"Support and expand the Farmers Markets."*

Members considered that the Council's role as an enabler in allowing Farmers Markets to operate in the City Centre should continue.

Members also considered that the Council should have a lobbying role in attempting to get local shops and supermarkets to stock and sell local produce. It was reported that a supply chain project was ongoing as part of the Local Strategic Partnership and Members were supportive of this initiative.

- (f) Key priority – *"Encourage healthier life styles via partnership health, fitness and sports programmes for all."*

Members noted that the Council's Sports and Recreation Strategy was being reviewed and would include a preventative approach to health issues. The Council was involved in a clinical exercise practitioner pilot working with the Primary Care Trust to promote health programmes for people who have had major health problems with a referral process through GPs. Members considered that there was a role for the Council's Leisure Centre and Community Centres, particularly in the rural area, to promote these initiatives.

- (g) Key priority – *"Support independent living for elderly residents and other vulnerable sections of the community wherever possible."*

Members pointed out that Carlisle had an ageing population which placed an ever increasing strain on care services. The City Council should be supportive of new models on care services and their possible introduction in partnership with other bodies. The Council had a mix of roles in this issue but particularly as a strategic enabler.

- (h) Key priority – *"Ensure all residents have access to leisure, sports and cultural opportunities."*

Members considered that the City Council had a key role to play as a provider of such services. It was also noted that the Council was developing a Cultural Strategy which could inform the Corporate Plan.

RESOLVED – That the above comments be referred to the Executive at their meeting on 15 April 2002.