

**MEETING OF EXECUTIVE OF CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL
WITH REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CARLISLE PARISH COUNCILS
MONDAY 3 DECEMBER 2001 AT 7.00 PM IN TULLIE HOUSE**

PRESENT:

Councillor Toole (Deputy Mayor in the Chair)
Councillor Mitchelson (Leader & Promoting Carlisle Portfolio)
Councillor Firth (Deputy Leader & Economic Prosperity Portfolio)
Councillor Bloxham (Health & Wellbeing Portfolio)
Councillor L Fisher (Strategy & Performance Portfolio)
Councillor Geddes (Corporate Resources Portfolio)
Councillor Pattinson (Community Activities Portfolio)
Councillor G Prest (Infrastructure Environment & Transport Portfolio)
Councillor Stevenson (Finance & Resources Portfolio)

A full attendance list is attached to these Minutes.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs Parsons (The Mayor) and representatives of Nether Denton Parish Council, Mrs Smith and Mrs Cherrie, Bewcastle Parish Council, Mr Graham and Mr Jackson, Hayton Parish Council, C Ridley, Brampton Parish Council, Mr Bell, Waterhead Parish Council and a representative of Westlinton Parish Council.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2001 between the City Council's Policy and Resources Committee and Parish Council Representatives were noted.

3. MATTER ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

A representative from Wetheral Parish Council indicated that he had raised at the last meeting the poor condition of direction signs in the rural areas.

The Director of Environment and Development undertook to raise this issue with the County Council, who were the responsible authority.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive undertook to raise this issue with the Crime and Disorder Strategic Group.

4. RELATIONSHIP WITH LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Mr White, Corporate Policy and Strategy Unit, reported that the Local Strategic Partnership had originally been set up by Carlisle City Council and Eden District Council in response to the Foot and Mouth outbreak. Since it had been established there had been a lot of interest from other groups wishing to join the Partnership. Discussions on the future of the Partnership and the possibility of widening the membership would be considered at a meeting of the Partnership on 10 December 2001 and at a meeting of the City Council's Executive on 17 December 2001.

Mr White also drew attention to a recent Government Consultation Paper on Quality Town and Parish Councils which looked at the relationship between Parish Councils and Local Authorities. The Local Strategic Partnership could be looked at in conjunction with this Consultation Paper.

Mr Moth and Councillor Wilkinson indicated that maintaining links with the Local Authorities and bodies such as the Local Strategic Partnership was a live issue for the Parish Councils, in order that a Parish Council input could be given as appropriate.

5. PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATION ON CITY COUNCIL FORUM/COMMITTEES

The City Solicitor and Secretary reported that the only body under the New Structures upon which there was a mandatory requirement for Parish Council representation was the Standards Committee. One Parish Council representative had been appointed to serve on the Standards Committee.

He indicated that the City Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees may wish to co-opt Parish Councillors from time to time when dealing with issues upon which the Parish Councils had particular expertise or affected specific communities.

The Leader indicated that Councillor Mrs Pattinson was the Executive Portfolio Holder for Community Activities and would consult with Parish Councils on community initiatives as necessary.

6. RURAL STRATEGY

The Parish Council representatives were seeking an update on the development of the Rural Strategy.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive indicated that there was currently a Rural Regeneration Scheme being worked upon. There had also been a Government Rural White Paper recently published along with a number of other Government initiatives affecting the rural economy.

Councillor Firth indicated that a lot of work had gone into developing a Rural Strategy through the Economic Development Unit working with local people, the North West Development Association and the Rural Action Zone.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive suggested that a presentation on a Rural Strategy be given to City Councillors and representatives of the Parish Councils at a special meeting of the City Council. It was agreed to hold this special City Council meeting on Monday 28 January 2002 in Tullie House.

7. REVIEW OF NEW POLITICAL CONSTITUTIONS/ARRANGEMENTS

The City Solicitor and Secretary reported to the meeting on the operation of the Council's New Constitution and Political Structures.

He drew attention to recent Government guidance on a new ethical framework for Parish Councils, whereby :

1. Each Parish Council would be responsible for adopting its own Model Code of Conduct, which had to be in place not later than 5 May 2002. This would replace the existing National Code of Local Government Conduct. The new Code had basic mandatory elements prescribed by the Government. Discussions had taken place with the Cumbria Association of Local Councils and it was understood that Parishes would be recommended to adopt the basic Mandatory Code.
2. Within 2 months of a Parish Council adopting the Code, each Parish Councillor had to sign a declaration that they would observe the Code. If a Councillor did not sign, then their seat would be automatically vacated. There was, therefore, an important role for Parish Council Clerks in monitoring compliance in this area.
3. Within 28 days of a Parish Council adopting the Code, each Parish Councillor must sign a Register of Interests Form containing information prescribed by law. Any Member who did not do so would be in breach of the Code and could be reported to the National Standards Board. The Register of Interests was a public document and had to be made available for public inspection at Parish Council Offices and the City Council Offices.
4. There was a requirement for Parish Councillors to register with the City Council details of any gifts or hospitality over £25 which they may receive in the course of their duties, within 28 days of receipt.

The City Solicitor and Secretary indicated that the City Council recognised that the above requirements would be onerous for Parish Clerks to administer. A meeting of the City Council's Standards Committee was being held on 19 December 2001, and he would be recommending the Committee to agree to the City Council putting on a series of Training Seminars for Clerks and Chairs of Parish Councils early in the New Year. He did not believe that

Parish Councils should adopt a new Code of Conduct until this training had been carried out and cascaded down to individual Parish Councillors.

Mr Moth indicated that the Cumbria Association of Local Councils was looking at this issue, and he endorsed the approach suggested by the City Solicitor and Secretary.

8. FINANCE CONSULTATION/RSG SETTLEMENT

The City Treasurer reported that the Rate Support Grant announcement had been postponed from 27 November and was now expected to be made in Parliament on 4 December 2001.

He indicated that the City Council's budget included £93,000 in grants to Parish Councils as follows :

	£
Concurrent Service Grant	55,000
Village Hall Grants	10,500
Capital Grants	18,500
IT Support Scheme	9,000

With regard to the budget for the City Council, for the second year running the Government had calculated the grant based on a reduced population. Last year, the City Council had lost £70,000 in grants which was equivalent to a 700 loss of population. This year, the allocation would be based on a further population reduction of 400 resulting in a further loss of £40,000 in grant.

He also drew attention to the impact on insurance rates of the events of September 11, indicating that premiums could increase by as much as 25%. He also indicated that interest rates had been badly affected. The City Council had been able to attract rates of 5½% last year, these were currently down to 3.8%. He indicated that every ½% reduction meant a loss of income to the City Council of £170,000.

The City Treasurer also indicated that the impact of the transfer of the Council's Housing Stock would have significant corporate implications, given that this important customer base would disappear.

He further reported that, under the New Constitution, the preparation of the budget would be a more public affair. The City Council's Executive would be finalising their draft budget on 17 December 2001 and it would then go out to a consultation process. Comments received would be considered by the Executive on 28 January 2002 with recommendations being made to the City Council at a special meeting on 5 February 2002. It seemed likely that the Government would allow an increase in spending of approximately 6%.

The Executive had indicated that they wanted a year of consolidation in 2002/03 and would be looking to contain Council Tax increases to no more

than 5%. At present, forecasts suggested that if the City Council's budget was restricted to the equivalent increase in Standard Spending Assessment, then this would result in a 3.8% increase in Council Tax, but would also require the City Council to make savings of the order of £750,000.

9. PARTICIPATION ALLOWANCES

The City Treasurer reported on a DTLR Consultation Paper containing proposals for Parish Councils to have a discretion to pay a participation allowance and also to introduce travel and subsistence allowances for Parish Councillors. The exercise by a Parish Council of any discretion provided by the Regulations would be subject to having regard to the City Council's Independent Remuneration Panel which would make recommendations as to an appropriate level of such allowances.

The consultation period had ended at the beginning of November 2001 and he expected Regulations would follow shortly.

10. PARISHING THE URBAN AREA

The City Solicitor and Secretary indicated that the possibility of Parishing the urban area had been raised during a consultation exercise on changes to Parish boundaries. He understood that, at present, there was no support for parishing the urban area. He indicated that under the Council's New Constitution there was an option to introduce Area working if it was considered necessary in the future.

The Leader confirmed that there appeared to be no demand or interest from communities in the urban area for achieving Parish Council status, and that there were provisions in the New Constitution to introduce Area working and Area Forums if needed at some point in the future.

The Parish Council representatives indicated that communities in the urban area may be unaware of any detailed information on achieving Parish Council status for the urban area and the benefits that would bring. Mr Moth drew attention to the forthcoming Parish Democracy Programme which would be coming to Carlisle in January 2002, and which was intended to raise awareness of Parish Councils with local communities. He indicated that it was the official view of the Cumbria Association of Local Councils that Parishing for the urban areas was to be encouraged.

The Leader indicated that the City Council would monitor the level of interest from the urban area.

11. CITY VISION AND LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Mr White, Corporate Strategy and Policy Unit, indicated that the Council's City Vision document was being re-considered by the County Council, and it was expected that the final document would be published early in the New Year.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive further reported that there was a Community Plan in place for Carlisle for the next 10 years. He indicated that a draft Best Value Performance Plan for next year would be put out for consultation in January 2002 and would form the Council's Corporate Plan, which would demonstrate how the City Council intended to achieve the aspirations in the City Vision document.

He also referred to the Local Strategic Partnership with Eden and reminded the meeting that discussions which would take place shortly over the future of this Partnership.

12. IT REVIEW

The City Treasurer reported that as part of the initiative to support Parish Councils the City Council had provided £27,000 over 3 years to enable Parish Clerks to purchase computer equipment and to allow the Parish Clerks to connect to the Council's network services for e-mail, web and virus checking security, etc. A sum of £2,000 had also been provided to ensure that resources were available in the IT Section to give practical support to Parishes in the use of the equipment, where needed.

He indicated that, at present, 11 Parish Councils had been provided with full equipment and services, 5 were awaiting an assessment of requirements, 3 had been partially provided with equipment only, 2 had been provided with network services and 11 had been scheduled for equipment in the next financial year. The programme of IT provision to the Parish Councils would be completed in two years rather than three.

He indicated that from e-mail logs, 7 of the 11 Clerks with full access were using the systems provided for Web access and e-mail on a regular basis. However, the use of these services was not universal yet and the Community Support Officer had identified this as a priority area to be targeted during the forthcoming year.

Once all Parish Councils who had expressed an interest had been provided with computer equipment, it was intended to carry out a user survey.

13. VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENTS

The Director of Environment and Development reported on the City Council's wish for Parish Councils to develop Village Design Statements to provide guidance for the design of developments proposed for villages and which would assist the City Council in determining planning applications for developments in the rural area.

He indicated that Scotby Parish Council was the first Parish Council to have produced a Village Design Statement, and the City Council and Countryside Agency were working with Scotby Parish Council to develop the Statement.

He further drew attention to the Vital Villages Initiative which the Countryside Agency were developing, and indicated that Burgh by Sands Parish Council was acting as a pilot for this scheme. He understood that there may well be grants available for developing Village Design Statements under the Vital Villages Initiative.

Considerable discussion arose over the various initiatives of the Countryside Agency, which included Village Design Statements, the Vital Villages Initiatives and Parish Plans, and on the mixed messages Parish Councils seemed to be receiving from the Countryside Agency with regard to funding issues. Parish Council representatives indicated that these initiatives were very time consuming for Parish Councils to complete.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive undertook to clarify with the Countryside Agency the current position with regard to the various initiatives relevant to Parish Councils and funding issues.

14. M6 EXTENSION – CARLISLE TO GRETNA

The Director of Environment and Development indicated that the Government had recently issued a Consultation Document on proposals to extend the M6 from Carlisle to Gretna, and that consultation responses were required by February 2002. He indicated that the City Council could offer advice on highways or planning perspectives to Parish Councils. Parish Councils could either respond to the Consultation document direct or forward views to the City Council for incorporation in the City Council's response to the Consultation document.

Councillor G Prest indicated that he understood the reaction of the Parish Councils along the route had been positive to the proposals, although it appeared that it would be some 5 to 7 years before implementation.

15. THE QUEEN'S GOLDEN JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

Councillor Mrs Pattinson indicated that the City Council intended to theme its normal events around the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002. She indicated that funding may be available from the City Council for communities to hold street parties as part of the celebrations.

She also drew attention to the Commonwealth Games Baton which would be going round the country and was coming to Carlisle on 22 July 2002. Application forms were available for people wishing to carry the Baton who had achieved something for the local community.

She also indicated that the City Council would also consider grant aid for Golden Jubilee celebrations in the local community other than for street parties.

16. PARISH BOUNDARY REVIEWS

A Representative from Wetheral Parish Council asked a question relating to a referendum held for residents of The Limes, Scotby, asking whether they wished to remain in Scotby and, therefore, Wetheral Parish or whether they wished to be included in the Botcherby Ward.

He understood that 90% of respondents had wanted to stay in Wetheral Parish but that the City Council intended to include The Limes in Botcherby Ward.

The City Solicitor and Secretary undertook to provide a written response to Wetheral Parish Council on this matter.

17. DISTRIBUTION OF CARLISLE FOCUS

Following a question from a Parish Council Representative, the Leader indicated that the Post Office were delivering Carlisle Focus this week and next week, and that problems with the last edition being distributed in the rural area should be alleviated.

18. PLANNING – ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

A Representative of Wetheral Parish Council indicated that his Parish Council found the lack of enforcement on planning matters to be frustrating.

The Director of Environment and Development indicated that two years ago the City Council had appointed one further Enforcement Officer making a staff of two. Whilst resources were somewhat limited, enforcement on planning matters was carried out. He indicated that the Enforcement Officers were looking at a number of issues relating to the Wetheral Parish Council area.

Mrs Wilkinson indicated that Parish Councils were particularly annoyed with temporary planning problems where signs had been put up in the countryside and trailers left. The Director of Environment and Development indicated that Parish Councils should let the Planning Section know of these issues so that they could investigate.

Discussion arose on retrospective planning applications, and the manner in which they had to be dealt with by the City Council was reported.

19. CUMBERLAND WEEK

A Parish Council Representative sought information on Cumberland Week.

Councillor Pattinson indicated that this would be a week of events promoting the best of Cumbria and Carlisle and would start on 20 July 2002, being the date of the Cumberland Show. There would be a week of events in the City Centre as part of Cumberland Week.

A similar event had been held in 2000 but had been cancelled in 2001 as a result of the Foot and Mouth outbreak.

20. THE FUTURE OF LEISURE SERVICES

Councillor Bloxham indicated that he had received a letter from a Parish Councillor expressing concern at the privatisation proposals for Leisure Services. Councillor Bloxham indicated that the City Council was not looking to privatise Leisure Services but was looking at all leisure facilities to seek possible partnerships with the private sector and leisure trusts which would enable the City Council to obtain investment in the infrastructure of various facilities.

21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of this forum would be held on 27 May 2002 at a venue to be arranged.

(The meeting ended at 8.30 pm)

ATTENDANCE LIST

Executive meeting with Parish Council Representatives 3/12/01

Name

Representing

Pat Jefferson	CPCA - Carlisle City Council
KOREN JOHNSON	ARTHUR P.C. - CLERK
Elizabeth Ewaak	Arthur P.C. - Chairman
CILIAN KARTACH	WETHERAL PC - CLERK
NIGEL HOLMES	- do - - CHAIRMAN
JILL THOMAS	MAYTON PC. CLERK
Daniel Rutherford	Irthington P.C. CHAIRMAN
Jane Rutherford	Irthington P.C. Clerk.
D. Hoag	WAZTON PC
Arthur	WAZTON PC
Judith Pattinson	Carlisle City Council
Jacqueline Giddes	Carlisle City Council
ANNE ARMSTRONG - FOXTON	UPPER DENTON P.C.
ANNA TOWNSEND	St Withaker Parish Council Clerk
John Stevenson	Carlisle City Council
Lawrence Fisher	do
Alan Dodd	G. Cuthbert, KPO P.C.
Geoff West	CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL
I. Pansley	S. Cumberts Without
R. Blaxh	C. City Council
Edward Firth	" " "
Jim White	Carlisle City Council
Chris Mohr	CPCA - SECRETARY
Jennie Wilkinson	Chair - CPCA
ALAN TOULK	City Council
D.L. Mike Milburn	Wetheral, Carlisle City Council,
Arthur	Carl. City Council.

ATTENDANCE LIST

Executive meeting with Parish Council Representatives 3/12/01

Name	Representing
Nana Robins- <u>Adams</u>	Bulthorne Chairman Bulthorne Clerk
Jane Johnston	Carlisle Parish Councils Assn.
Tony Inmy	Burgh by Sands P.C.
Pat Heaghe	" " "
J. PORTER	WESTHINGTON PARISH COUNCIL
A. JEFFERSON	" " "
S ROE	Beaumont " "
M. McKenna	" " "
Betty Jansan	Waterhead Parish Council
Elizabeth Reed	Orton Parish Council
William Little	" " "
Gnasek Ansel	Dalston Parish Council
Pauline Davon	Dalston P.C.
BE. WATSON	STANWIX R.P.C.
WM WANNOP	" "
	Wetheral Parish Council
N. BATTERSBY	CARLISLE CC.
JOHN EGAN	CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL
Euan MacLennan	"
Tony Branley	" —————
	" —————