

INFRASTRUCTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 20 JUNE 2002 AT 10.00 AM

PRESENT: Councillor C Rutherford (Chairman),
Councillors Bowman (substitute for Councillor B
Hodgson), Crookdake, Dodd, S Fisher (substitute for
Councillor Parsons), Glover, E Mallinson and Martlew.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor G Prest attended the meeting as
an observer.

Five students from the Carlisle Institute for the Arts
attended the meeting as observers, and were welcomed
by the Chairman.

IOS.51/02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors B Hodgson and Mrs
Parsons.

IOS.52/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING DECLARATIONS OF "THE PARTY WHIP")

There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

IOS.53/02 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 25 April and 7 June 2002 which had been circulated
with the papers for the meeting were noted subject to an amendment to Resolution 2 to
Minute IOS.43/02 (Carlisle and City Centre Bus/Rail Interchange and Bus Priority) to make
the point that the further design work was required in respect of the whole of the area
surrounding the Court Square/Citadel Station forecourt area.

IOS.54/02 CALL IN OF DECISIONS

RESOLVED – That it be noted that there were no matters which had been the subject of
call in.

IOS.55/02 THE FORWARD PLAN

The Head of Corporate Policy and Strategy presented Report TC.101/02 highlighting the
Forward Plan (1 June to 30 September 2002) issues which fell within the ambit of this
Committee.

RESOLVED – That the issues contained within the Forward Plan (1 June to 30 September
2002) and which fell within the ambit of this Committee be noted.

IOS.56/02 WORK PROGRAMME

The Head of Corporate Policy and Strategy submitted an initial Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2002/03, which took into account matters scheduled to be dealt with by this Committee.

He indicated that the programme for this Committee would be developed at a workshop session scheduled to be held after this meeting to decide upon review/enquiry areas for 2002/03

In addition, items for consideration under Best Value Reviews and Performance Monitoring would be developed in consultation with the relevant Officers.

With regard to Best Value Reviews for 2002/03, a Member stressed that there should be Member involvement at an early stage and that Reviews should be properly scoped. It was important for Members to have a high degree of ownership of Best Value Review. In addition, Members should also be involved at an early stage in the monitoring of Best Value Action Plans.

With regard to Subject Reviews/Inquiries, a Member pointed out that there may be areas for review where policies overlapped and new legislation was planned and this would need to be taken into account when undertaking reviews.

Members stressed that they were keen to further consider the relationship between the City/County/Capita later in the year.

With regard to Performance Monitoring, Members asked to be supplied with detailed background information on specific indicators when undertaking monitoring and, in particular, whether the performance indicators being monitored were national or local.

RESOLVED – That the initial Work Programme be noted.

IOS.57/02 REGENERATION BEST VALUE REVIEW

The Director of Leisure and Community Development submitted a report from Vantagepoint, a firm of Consultants commissioned by the City Council to assist in carrying out a Best Value Review of Regeneration activity. The report detailed the work undertaken to date on the Best Value Review and to develop a comprehensive regeneration strategy for the City Council's area. The report recommended arrangements for clear leadership to take the strategy forward. Included within this process was the development of a set of performance indicators for the Regeneration Service.

The Head of Community Support and Head of Economic Development gave a presentation to the Committee on the content of the Consultant's report, which was a draft document at this stage intended to provide Members with an indication of the current position on this review.

The Head of Economic Development indicated that the Consultants had been requested to make changes/additions in the following key areas :

- (a) Provide more evidence on comparison with other Local Authorities (Page 31, Para 3.5.4 onwards).

(b) Provide better context for the limited consultation done so far (Page 39, Para 3.7.1 onwards).

(c) Seek more consultation with frontline staff.

(d) Provide more evidence to backup their conclusion on options (Page 49, Para 4.4 onwards).

(e) Provide better links with the proposed Organisational Review (Page 50, Para 4.9 and Page 52, Para 4.1.8).

Whilst similar conclusions were reached some misunderstanding of how the proposed new structure might work was evident.

(f) Clarifying the key immediate priorities for action (Table, Page 46). This did not relate to the Improvement Plan as required by Best Value but there should be a set of key priorities for early action.

(g) Following on from this and developing out of the final section 5 (Page 53), a further Action Plan should be provided to help the City Council to undertake area regeneration and tackle the key themes.

The Head of Community Support indicated that the report raised the following key issues for the City Council:

(1) The need to formalise the regeneration function within the Council.

(2) Clarifying and agreeing the key aims for the regeneration service and areas to be targeted.

(3) Clarifying the Council's role and that of partners.

(4) Agreeing the aims with partners and improving partnership working.

(5) Improving the research base.

(6) Developing an evaluation framework and robust monitoring process.

He drew Members attention to a suggested set of key objectives (Page 56) to set the context for regeneration work. He indicated that Members may wish to comment on the appropriateness of these and whether the elements within each objective had the right focus.

In considering the content of the Consultant's report, Members made the following main points:-

- a. the content of the Consultant's report was disappointing in that it added little information not already available within the Authority to enable the City Council to move forward on regeneration. The report lacked a degree of substance on delivery of regeneration initiatives to enable the City Council to put ideas into action and also contained a lot of obsolete, out of date information.
- b. The definition of regeneration in the Consultant's report bore no resemblance to the definition which had been agreed some time ago by this Overview and Scrutiny

Committee and the Executive. In particular, environmental issues had not been specifically addressed in the report. The regeneration of brown field sites and tackling dereliction were issues to address which would cut across planning policies.

- c. There was disappointment that Members had not had more involvement in this Review to date, the only input having been through a Member workshop. On other Reviews, individual Members had been interviewed to provide an input.
- d. On the Regional Policy Context (Page 16, Para 2.48), the moves towards Regional Government were likely to have a significant impact on delivering regeneration and the current Cumbria Sub-Regional Assembly had a role to play in dealing with the wider picture throughout the region. Partnership working was a pre-requisite for Government assistance nowadays.
- e. The report contained no details on the Raffles regeneration scheme which would be undertaken should the Housing Transfer proceed.
- f. Initiatives of the Learning and Skills Council could be included in Para 2.21 of the report (Page 7).
- g. The report was bland on the New Deal and could highlight how many jobs had been generated and how the New Deal could be developed.
- h. With regard to City/County working on infrastructure and transport, the position in the other five District Councils in Cumbria would have a bearing on Carlisle's position.
- i. With regard to Para 3.10 (Page 21), there was no evidence for the statement that higher and further education sectors were currently under represented within the District, particularly given the developments in educational establishments in these sectors in Carlisle in recent years.
- j. With regard to housing stock transfer challenges (Para 5.13 to 5.18 – Page 59/60), the regeneration of housing estates would be central to the work of the new Housing Association. There would need to be close co-operation between the Council and the Carlisle Housing Association should the transfer go ahead.
- k. The content of the first bullet point in Para 3.57 (Page 33) regarding economic activity was contradictory.
- l. The "Compare" section (Page 36) should be strengthened with more detailed analysis of other Authorities.
- m. The "Consult" section (page 39) should detail the type and size of the businesses which had been consulted on the Review. A similar exercise would be useful in respect of the community groups which had been consulted.
- n. Para 3.86 (page 42) should contain reference to the Rural White Paper, Sure Start and other initiatives which would bring money in for regeneration. There was no evidence as to how the actions suggested in Para 3.86 could be progressed.
- o. On Para 3.88 (Page 43), there should be consultation with front line staff who are involved in regeneration initiatives.
- p. It was noted that more regeneration projects would be performed by the private sector. The report could highlight issues of lack of accountability for actions.
- q. Regional Government boundaries may be on similar lines to the Health Authority areas. Any Regional Government may, therefore, cover Cumbria, parts of Lancashire and parts of Cheshire. How this might affect Carlisle's ability to deliver a regeneration agenda should be highlighted.
- r. The link between the Review and the organisational structure review in terms of how regeneration issues should be staffed should be clarified and included in the report. Just as there is to be a lead Officer for regeneration, a lead Member should also be identified.
- s. There was no mention of costs in the report. The Head of Economic Development

pointed out that currently, costs were difficult to quantify given the fragmented nature of the service delivery. Quantifying costs would be a time consuming exercise.

- t. The links between the Review and the Economic Development Strategy should be investigated.
- u. On the "Compare" element of the Review, investigation could be made into some other Local Authorities which had already undertaken Best Value Reviews on regeneration. The Head of Community Support indicated that he had only found five Local Authorities that had done Best Value Reviews specifically on regeneration, although others had linked regeneration themes as part of Economic Development Best Value Reviews. Caradon District Council in Cornwall had been through a Best Value Review of regeneration and had received a favourable report from the Inspectors. The Director indicated that he would seek information from Caradon District Council on how they had undertaken their Review. Members also suggested that, given the amount of regeneration going on throughout Cumbria, the other five District Councils could be contacted to see how they structured their regeneration functions.
- v. The "mini" Sure Start scheme in Longtown should be mentioned in the report.

Members considered that a further meeting of this Committee should be convened to deal with the strategic objectives in the report.

RESOLVED – (1) That a special meeting of this Committee be called to deal with the strategic objectives in the Consultant's Report.

- 2. That invitations to attend the special meeting be sent to the substitute Members of this Committee, the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the other two Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the relevant Executive Portfolio Holders.

(3) That the concern of this Committee over the standard of the Consultant's Report and the obsolete information it contains, be communicated to the Executive.

IOS.58/02 DOG FOULING POLICY

The Principal Environmental Health Officer and Dog Enforcement Officer gave a presentation on the operation of the dog fouling policy.

The Dog Enforcement Officer indicated that the education programme for primary schools, which had included a poster competition, had been a success. Posters incorporating the successful design were now being displayed on the back of Stagecoach buses in a campaign that would run until mid-September 2002.

A total of 86 fixed penalty notices in respect of dog fouling had been issued in 2002 with 4 cases going to Court. The City Council had prosecuted successfully in all 4 cases. The number of fixed penalty notices being issued was reducing, suggesting that the message on clearing up after dogs was getting through to dog owners. Complaints were still being received but for isolated incidents rather than "hot spots."

Officers had attended meetings of the Environment Forum, County Neighbourhood Forums and a number of community groups and given talks on responsible dog ownership. Officers would be able to make arrangements to speak to Parish Councils on request.

The education programme would be extended to Secondary Schools in September 2002 and would also address litter problems.

Whilst an increasing number of dog owners were picking up after their dogs, they were using bags which they then disposed of as litter. Officers intended to investigate the option of issuing fixed penalty notices for litter offences as well as for dog fouling offences. This would be a more efficient way of dealing with these offences in terms of staff time.

Neighbourhood Dog Watch Schemes would be introduced shortly in the Morton, Dowbeck and Millcroft areas. Scheme co-ordinators would be able to discuss any problems with Officers who would offer guidance on the operation of schemes.

Officers also intended investigating producing a leaflet for Parish Councils and Ward Councillors detailing the dog fouling legislation for distribution in the community.

Since the Dog Fouling Order had been introduced, there had been a number of new housing developments and there was a need to revisit the Order to extend the designated areas where dog fouling is not permitted. Whilst formal action cannot be taken against dog owners allowing their dogs to foul in non-designated areas, the message was being put across that members of the public found it offensive that dog owners did not pick up after their dogs. Dog fouling in Rickerby Park was a particular problem as it was classed as agricultural land.

Officers then answered Members' questions.

The Principal Environmental Health Officer was requested to write to all Members of the Committee with details of the cost of installing a dog waste bin.

RESOLVED – (1) That the presentation be noted.

2. That an update on dog fouling initiatives be presented to this Committee in 12 months time.
3. That the suggestion to operate a system of fixed penalty tickets for litter offences be supported by this Committee and the Director of Environment and Development be requested to submit a report to a future meeting of the Executive on this issue.

IOS.59/02 PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE SERVICE PLAN

The Director of Leisure and Community Development submitted the Service Plan in respect of the Parks and Countryside Section of the Leisure and Community Development Department.

The Head of Parks and Countryside attended the meeting and gave a presentation to Members on the content of the Service Plan.

Members asked the Head of Parks and Countryside a number of questions arising from his presentation.

Discussion arose on the various types of play areas provided by the City Council, or in conjunction with private housing developments, with Members expressing differing views on the subject.

The Head of Parks and Countryside was requested to investigate the inclusion of facilities

for disabled people into the Service Plan objectives.

A Member asked the Head of Parks and Countryside to investigate the fencing of allotments at Currock.

RESOLVED – That the Service Plan be noted.

(The meeting ended at 12.52pm)

Lat gh Commin 291 Infrastructure O & S 20 06 02