

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT for INFRASTRUCTURE OVERVIEW
& SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There have been two meetings of this committee since the last Council meeting on 30TH October. Both were the normal scheduled meetings. At the time of writing this report (3rd January) there have been no additional special meetings nor have there been any call-ins.

The minutes of both meetings are before the council and if there are any questions on those minutes or on anything in this report that the vice-chairman is unable to deal with at the council meeting please contact me after 19th January.

The minutes are self-explanatory, however, there are some points I would like to raise re how the system is operating & how I would like to see it developing. Some of these are personal, others shared by members of the committee and others which have also been raised by members of other O&S Committees.

Firstly there is the development of a protocol which will help to identify which reports would go to O&S Committees before the Executive and vice versa. If O&S Committees are to play as full a part as possible it is essential that there is a mechanism in place which allows them to have some input **before** decisions are made and not just scrutinising decisions after the event. I understand that it is hoped to have such a protocol ready for the O&S Management meeting in January.

Concerns were raised by members of the Infrastructure O&S at its first meeting re all councillors being kept fully informed on council events and initiatives both city wide and particularly in their own wards. Procedures have now been put in place that will keep members better informed.

Information is however a two way process and I am anxious to give opportunities that allow non-committee councillors to ask questions and have an input into debates at O&S Committees as well as full council. I am told that there may be problems both constitution wise and on a practical level to having a large no of councillors turning up to any one committee meeting other than as non-participant observer. Ward councillors are allowed to attend and speak on an agenda item that affects their ward. I would like to encourage such attendance but realise that members may not always be alerted by an agenda report title that it is particularly relevant to their ward. If I see anything in a report that may be of specific interest to a member I will bring it to their attention. I

hope other members of this committee will do likewise. But if any member at any time has any concerns, comments or questions on any agenda items before this committee they should feel free to raise them with myself or any other member of the committee prior to the meeting.

In order to encourage a wider input from outside bodies I have asked Carlisle Environment Forum if they wish to participate more fully and be consulted on relevant reviews such as dog fouling re-cycling etc. They have agreed in principle to be included and the committee endorsed an invitation for representatives to attend the January meeting when dog fouling will be discussed.

Finally members have queried at what point officers' decisions can be scrutinised as well as those of the Executive. With the abandonment of the old committee structure when officers were more likely to have their decisions noted this may well be an area to watch in future.