



*Agenda item
15(d)*

PORTFOLIO AREA: CROSS CUTTING

Date of Meeting: 15th April 2002

Public

Key Decision: No

Recorded in Forward Plan: Yes

Inside Policy Framework

Title: STRATEGY FOR RURAL CARLISLE
Report of: Head of Economic Development
Report reference: EDU.06/02

Summary:

The Rural Strategy is now at the stage where the Action Plans for each of the four policy themes are being developed, the 'Strategy and Vision' elements having been considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committees and circulated for comment to all the Parish Councils.

The draft Action Plans in the attached report are intended to enable the Council to manage its rural policies and initiatives in a 'joined up' way. They are also intended to provide an overview of all the activities that contribute to the achievement of the vision statements in the Rural Strategy, whether they originate from the Rural White Paper, the Rural Action Zone, City Vision, the 'Listening to the Rural Voice' consultation, or elsewhere.

The report includes draft Action Plans that are still being worked on and which should be regarded as 'work in progress,' but which show how the Strategy will be taken forward. It also outlines a way of using the Action Plans to manage Rural Policy through a series of annual meetings. The report also comments on the relationship between the Carlisle Rural Strategy and the Rural Action Zone.

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

Recommendations:

That the 'Strategy and Vision' for Rural Carlisle is adopted by the Council

That the Executive notes the Action Plans in their current form and agrees to begin the cycle of annual meetings in June of this year at which the Action Plans will be reviewed.

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

The Status and role of the Action Plans

- 1.1 If the 'Strategy and Vision' part of the Rural Strategy sets out the aspirations for the Rural Area, it is the job of the Action Plans to show what will be done to translate vision into reality.
- 1.2 The four policy areas in the rural strategy are the same as in the City Vision and each has an action plan. They are 'Communities', 'Economic Prosperity', 'Infrastructure, Environment & Transport' and 'Health and Well being'.
- 1.3 The Action Plans are both working and monitoring documents and their effectiveness will depend on their being used as a matter of routine not only to co-ordinate the Council's own activities, but also to inform relationships with external bodies and their roles in rural Carlisle.
- 1.4 The versions attached to this report are incomplete and require more work, but give a flavour of the range of initiatives. Some, possibly most, of the actions will require individual project plans and specific consideration by portfolio holders and/or the Executive.
- 1.5 Subject to the approval it is proposed to continue to develop the Action Plans, using the mechanism of the officer Regeneration Group as the co-ordinating body. It is proposed to work to an annual cycle with reports three times per year to the Executive and to Overview and Scrutiny on overall progress on all of the four rural policy themes. The progress reports would have the following functions: - informing the budget process [Sept], reviewing policy [June], and assessing performance [Feb]. In this way it hoped that cross cutting approach to rural policy will eventually emerge. Individual initiatives would be reported for approval in the usual fashion but monitored and reviewed as part of the annual cycle. Arrangements joint working [e.g. with Parishes] on the monitoring and review of the Strategy have yet to be agreed.

The relationship with the Rural Action Zone [RAZ]

- 1.6 The Cumbria Rural Action Zone proposals and the emerging arrangements for the implementation of the RAZ will clearly impact on the implementation of the Rural Strategy.
- 1.7 The Carlisle Rural Strategy has its foundations in the 'Listening to the Rural Voice' consultation, but also reflects the content of the Rural White Paper. Although it has a wider remit than the RAZ, which is intended to promote strategic change in the rural economy, both documents have common themes.
- 1.8 The RAZ Strategy provides a framework for the sustainable regeneration of the rural economy in Cumbria. It takes the form of a vision supported by themes and objectives designed to direct the effort of delivery agents/partners through specific interventions and projects. The Carlisle Rural Strategy will direct and monitor this delivery at the local level. The RAZ will be a means of securing funding and support for projects and initiatives from the NWDA and potentially from other key funding sources. The themes and strategic objectives are set out in Appendix 2.
- 1.9 It is proposed to deliver the RAZ through a Rural Regeneration Company for Cumbria, to be in place by October 2002. The structure and operation of the Company has yet to be determined in detail but will emerge over the next couple of months. In the meantime, discussion will be needed with the NWDA and the County Council to secure a suitable mechanism for engaging the City Council, Parish Councils and other local partners in the work of the Company

Comments from the Overview and Scrutiny process

- 1.10 Need for speed in developing the Action Plans
- Need for the Strategy to be aligned with national, regional and sub-regional policy
- Need for local circumstances to be taken into account in the measurement of 'parish vitality'
- Need to take into account the links between planning and economic development and the Planning Green Paper
- Need to consider the capacity and resources needed to deliver the Strategy as part of the Regeneration and Organisational Best Value Reviews

2. CONSULTATION

2.1 Consultation to Date.

The Parish Councils have received copies of the 'Strategy and Vision' document and to date Brampton Parish has replied supporting the Strategy

2.2 Consultation proposed.

In the development of the Action Plans it will be necessary to engage with a wide variety of organisations and agencies. This will take place on an 'on-going' basis as individual initiatives are developed.

3. STAFFING/RESOURCES COMMENTS

3.1 The strategy, by its nature as a cross cutting document, will need to be pro-actively managed and co-ordinated. If the Strategy is to be the key local document that steers the regeneration of the rural area of Carlisle and provides the essential overview of progress for Councillors, then dedicated staffing resources will need to be identified. These will be needed both to co-ordinate and manage 'Rural Policy' and to implement initiatives where the City Council is in the lead role. This should be considered as part of the Organisational and Regeneration Best Value Reviews.

3.2 The report in its current ^{form} ~~form~~ does not identify a single budget for rural regeneration. References to the City Council in the resources columns of the Action Plan relate to budget and staff commitments that are agreed or budgeted for. City Council funding is likely to be required during the lifetime of the Market Town Initiative and requests to carry forward regeneration budgets for this purpose will be submitted to the Executive shortly. External funding will be critical to make progress across all policy areas.

4. CITY TREASURER'S COMMENTS

Not sought at this stage

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

Not sought at this stage

6. CORPORATE COMMENTS

The mechanism to take the strategy forward in the interim pending the findings of the Best Value reviews is the Regeneration officer group chaired by the Head of Economic Development. This has representation from all departments of the Council

7. RISK MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

Not applicable.

8. EQUALITY ISSUES

The strategy will be the mechanism to address exclusion and equality of access issues in the rural area.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No direct impact. The strategy should be the means to link environmental, economic and social objectives in the rural area of Carlisle

10. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

No direct implications. The strategy will include the rural elements of the local Crime and Disorder Strategy.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the 'Strategy and Vision' for Rural Carlisle is adopted by the Council.

That the Executive notes the Action Plans in their current form and agrees to begin the cycle of annual meetings in June of this year at which the Action Plans will be reviewed

12. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To support the City Vision process and to ensure the effective implementation of the Strategy.

APPENDIX 1**DRAFT****The Action Plan for the Strategy for Rural Carlisle 2002-03**

The Action Plan develops the lists of proposals under each of the 4 'vision' statements on pages 16 –22 of the Rural Strategy to show what will be done to make progress, who will be responsible, the budget implications and what the outcomes are expected to be. Not everything will be achieved at once and progress will depend on the degree to which different organisations agreed to work with the strategy and use it as a template within the City Vision process to manage and co-ordinate rural policy locally.

The role of the Strategy is to provide an overview of all measures that will contribute to the achievement of the vision for Rural Carlisle. Many of the actions refer to programmes that are Cumbria-wide in their application. In these cases the local priority is to ensure access to, and take up of, these opportunities is as wide as possible within Carlisle's rural area

The final table is about Funding and how the issues raised by rural communities about access to and awareness of funding opportunities could be improved.

I Developing Communities Theme					
<i>"A rural society that is fully engaged in decision-making processes that affect local issues and has the capacity and the support to address local problems and opportunities."</i>					
How the vision will be taken forward		Actions	What happens and who is involved	Funding and Timetable	Targets and Outcomes
i	Support and training for Parish Councils Encouraging local democracy and the holding of Parish Elections	Rolling out of the Parish Democracy Programme	Part 1; -Local Council Activity and Development, including Training Part 2;- Raising Public Awareness Cumbria Association of Local Councils with support from Districts at low or no cost general training Carlisle Association of Parish Councils CALC Committees have representation from District Councils, Voluntary Action Cumbria, Cumbria C.C. and Countryside Agency	Parish Democracy Programme Funding from NWDA, Countryside Agency, Carlisle, Eden South Lakes. Copeland & Allerdale Districts, Workers Educational Association, Allen Lane Foundation Three year programme from 2001 £ Parish election facilitated and expenses funded by the City Council £	<u>Outcomes</u> Consultation completed with Parish Clerks [82% response] to set 'benchmark' standards Information used to set priorities and identify training needs Roadshow Promotional literature Advertising Use of Media Promotion through local Council activity <u>Targets</u> Better turnout at local elections Greater interest in serving as a local councillor Greater public understanding of, and interest in, local councils
ii	Application of IT systems and connections for Parish Councils to enable better communication between tiers of local government and new avenues of communication between Citizens and Parishes	Programme to supply hardware and systems to each PC clerk and linkages to local area network	City Council/Carlisle Parish Councils Association	City Council as part of a three year £28,000 programme ending	Target All Parish Clerks to be connected to local area network

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How the vision will be taken forward		Actions	What happens and who is involved	Funding and Timetable	Targets and Outcomes
iii	Recognising and developing the role of the Carlisle Parish Councils Association [CPCA] as the representative body for the Carlisle area	Consultation through CPCA on all issues relating to Rural Carlisle Representation of Parishes through CPCA on relevant joint bodies	Twice yearly meetings between Parishes and City Council Executive		Effective consultation & engagement and dissemination of information
iv	Working to agreed Codes of Practice between tiers of local government	Implementation of agreed Parish Charter Promotion of effective working between the three tiers of Local Government	Mechanisms to promote joint working to be agreed VAC Rural Community Officer City Council Rural Community Support Officer Cumbria CC Area Support Officer		
v	Encouraging devolution of decision making or service delivery to individual parishes or to the CPCA	Parishes use CALC to advise on devolution issues	To be determined		
vi	'Rural Proofing' decision making in higher tier authorities	Arrangements to be agreed			
vii	Ensuring that there are linkages with local Strategic Partnerships and that there are mechanisms in place to encourage joint working where appropriate	Carlisle Parish Councils Association takes full membership of the Carlisle Eden LSP	Dissemination of information to Parishes through CPCA Representation on LSP sub groups via CPCA		

How the vision will be taken forward		Actions	What happens and who is involved	Funding and Timetable	Targets and Outcomes
viii	The development of facilities in key locations for the shared delivery of services by all three tiers of local government.	Action to be determined			
ix	The promotion of a community led approach to the regeneration of Longtown and Brampton	Market Town Initiative programme in preparation for Longtown Proposals for Brampton to be formulated	Longtown Investment Partnership Brampton Parish Council	Programme for Longtown funded through MTI to run from 2002 – 2007 Proposals to be developed for Brampton in 2002/3 City Council finding to be determined	Approval of Longtown Action Plan in 2002 setting out comprehensive regeneration programme
x	The development of local community plans for agreed localities, using the vital villages programme where appropriate	Development of Parish Plans through the Vital Villages Programme	Proposals for pilot scheme based on Burgh by Sands VAC Rural Community Officer City Council Planning Officers Parish Councils		

The Economic Prosperity theme					
<i>"A well-diversified and prosperous local economy with a strong agricultural sector and local market towns & villages that are economically and socially buoyant".</i>					
How the vision will be taken forward	Actions	How will this be done and who is involved?	Funds and Timetable	Targets and Outcomes	
i	By promoting rural Carlisle as a place of work by identifying opportunities for investment that will encourage the creation of employment, particularly in Longtown, Brampton, Dalston and Carlisle Airport.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of rural development opportunities and their promotion to prospective investors and new businesses • Greater promotion of existing rural workspace 	Literature and supporting information for development opportunities in rural Carlisle. City Council Econ Dev Unit Cumbria Inward Investment Agency, Private sector agents and landowners, Local enterprise agencies, NWDA Planning Facilitation Service	External Funding to be identified. On going 'register' of rural development opportunities would require long term funding	Outcome; Continuously updated portfolio of opportunities for investment and business relocation, focussing particularly on Longtown, Brampton and Dalston and Carlisle Airport
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of new or converted workspace within planning guidelines where need is identified. 	By proposals being developed through NWDA Rural Workspace programme City Council NWDA Private landowners, developers and agents	External and private funding	Outcome; Opportunities linked to Market Town Initiatives, Vital Villages programme and initiatives by private landowners
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Carlisle Airport 	Depending on investment decisions by Haughey Airports Ltd., increased operational activity and investment at the Airport within the scope of local Planning Policy, leading to more air-related business activity & employment.	Private funding	High quality employment opportunities Air services

How the vision will be taken forward	Actions	How will this be done and who is involved	Funds and Timetable	Targets and Outcomes
ii By supporting local agriculture including the development, marketing and consumption of local produce, encouraging partnership working and where appropriate, lobbying.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of the market for local produce through and the infrastructure for local production and distribution 	<p>Through the 'Distinctly Cumbrian' project, [which is a County-wide initiative] including the development of an internet based virtual market place, the development of processing and distribution networks, the development of demonstration projects and the provision of advice and financial support to producer groups.</p> <p>Cumbria Rural Partnership Carlisle 'Distinctly Cumbria' Local Action Group [to be formed]</p>	<p>To be confirmed within Distinctly Cumbria delivery plan</p> <p>'Distinctly Cumbria' is a 7 year programme which has a planned spend of £14.7 million over its lifetime. It assumes a total contribution of £75,000 from Cumbrian local authorities between years 2 and 7 of the programme, beginning in 2003/04. Individual local authority contributions have yet to be agreed.</p>	<p>Outcome</p> <p>Good local awareness of and local engagement with, programmes to develop producer capability and market opportunities leading to increased opportunities for local producer businesses</p> <p>Cumbria level outputs in the bid are not yet translatable to local level, but will include [among others] -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased use of and sales through, web based markets Additional commercial floorspace linked to local produce sales Increased local purchasing Local development groups and demonstration projects New business starts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The further development of local Producers' Markets and local food/produce events 	<p>Through a regular programme of local producers' markets.</p> <p>City Council Market Town Initiative Partnerships 'Made in Cumbria' Harrison & Hetherington Ltd Local Producers Carlisle Tourism</p>		

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	How the vision will be taken forward	Actions	How will this be done and who is involved	Funds and Timetable	Targets and Outcomes
iii	By encouraging non-farming enterprises, and diversification of the rural economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By improving access to informal planning advice about for farmers and other landowners alternative uses for farming land and buildings The provision of business advice and support to farmers on non-farming enterprises The review of the Local Plan 	<p>Carlisle City Council participating in and actively supporting the N.W. Region Planning facilitation scheme</p> <p>Cumbria Rural Enterprise Agency/Small Business Service</p> <p>By consultation on the planning framework within which a wider range of economic activity and alternative uses of agricultural land and holdings could be supported</p>	<p>Review to begin in 2002</p>	<p>Outcome Number of people living and working in the rural area sustained</p>
iv	<p>By supporting initiatives that help both rural businesses and individuals get local access to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training and advisory services Infrastructure and facilities [incl. I.T.], 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater clarity over the roles of local support agencies and how to access help The provision of IT training facilities 	<p>The publication of a 'Route map' outlining local support network for rural businesses with local protocols explaining who does what</p> <p>By providing training particularly at Community Development Centres through the 'Credits' programme and at the Brampton Business and Telecentre Cumbria 'Credits' Carlisle City Council Carlisle College/Learn Direct Cumbria Learning and Skills Council</p>	<p>To be determined</p> <p>Core funding for the Brampton Business and Tele-centre by the City Council</p>	<p>Outcome Widely distributed leaflet and web site link 'Support services for businesses in Rural Carlisle'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">

How the vision will be taken forward		Actions	How will this be done and who is involved	Funds and Timetable	Targets and Outcomes
iv	Continued from above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provision of Broadband infrastructure serving rural communities within a 7 km corridor along the routes of the A689, A69 and A7 	Through investment by the N.W. Regional Development Agency under the Cumbria Broadband ICT Initiative	Cumbria-wide programme Work due to begin 2002	
v	By promoting enterprise [including community enterprise] and new business starts in the rural area and by helping individuals in agricultural or related employment secure alternative work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provision of programmes that guide individuals through employment change options and provide specific targeted re-training for people involved in agriculture or related employment 	Through the 'Employment Alternatives' programme and by the identification and support for other initiatives that enable farmers to develop other sources of 'off farm' income [e.g. HGV training programme piloted in rural Carlisle] Learning and Skills Council	Employment Alternatives Current City Council budget of £6,000 Total annual programme valued at ***** including £30,000 private sector funding. Funded up to *** HGV training	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The encouragement of community enterprise 	Through the 'Enterprising Communities' programme managed by Voluntary Action Cumbria	Cumbria -wide three year programme beginning in 2002 with total programme budget of £850,000. City Council contribution £2,000 in current year Dedicated 'Carlisle' support worker based in Brampton	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

The Infrastructure, Environment and Transport theme					
<i>“ A high quality and bio-diverse environment that is an economic and cultural asset to the whole of the City of Carlisle and the region. An area with access to a communications infrastructure and services that meet the needs of visitors, residents and businesses”</i>					
How the vision will be taken forward	Action	What Happens and Who is involved	Funding and Timetable	Targets and Outcomes	
i	By making the best use of Cultural and Environmental assets of the area to provide direct economic benefits to the local rural community	Pro-active approach to the preservation and enhancement of the built environment including the restoration and re-use wherever possible of buildings at risk	Support for proposals linked to Brakenhill Tower and Lanercost Priory including the preparation of management plans for the future restoration and upkeep of the buildings Involves Private landowners	City Council	English Heritage
		Protection of the local landscape as a high quality landscape	Development of policies and projects to enhance the landscape of Carlisle outside current designated areas Involves Cumbria Landscape Forum Cumbria C.C. City Council		
		Protection of important assets to ensure attractiveness of the area is maintained			
		Hadrian's Wall World Heritage site Management Plan	Review of Management Plan		

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How the vision will be taken forward		Action	What Happens and Who is involved	Funding and Timetable	Targets and Outcomes
ii	By developing and supporting sustainable tourism initiatives that also help to meet general environmental objectives	Development of Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site National Trail	Opening of the Trail Countryside Agency [N.E.]		
		Marketing of the 'Northern Borderlands'	Promotional materials and campaign developed including web-site, leaflets, aimed particularly at the promotion of farm based accommodation		
		Development of cycling and walking trails	Joint initiative with Eden District, Cumbria Tourist Board,		
		Support for the Hadrian's Wall bus service			
iii	By promoting opportunities arising from countryside management and interpretation, in particular to support rural tourism and agricultural diversification and re-structuring.	Developing the role of the East Cumbria Countryside Project and linking its activities to the promotion of Tourism and rural economic diversification	To be determined		
.iv	Provide a mechanism to enable dialogue on planning policy, so the local plan and the Rural Strategy are aligned and seen to be so	The development of a planning facilitation service to improve dialogue between rural and agricultural businesses and the planning process	City Council Planning Services Cumbria Rural Enterprise Agency		
		Development of a plain English guide for farmers on the planning process	North West Regional Assembly District Councils County Council		

How the vision will be taken forward		Action	What Happens and Who is involved	Funding and Timetable	Targets and Outcomes
iv	Continued from iv above	Review of the Local Plan, ensuring rural residents, visitors and businesses are able to input into the process and that the social, economic and environmental needs of the rural area are met			
		Development of additional planning guidance on specific issues as identified by rural communities			

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Health and Well being theme				
<i>"A rural area with facilities and services that meet local needs and [at least] national standards, and which provides the opportunity for rural residents to achieve a full and healthy lifestyle"</i>				
How the vision will be taken forward	Action	What Happens and who is involved	Funding and Timetable	Targets and Outcomes
i	By addressing health inequalities through rural regeneration programmes [Local Strategic Partnership and the Market Town Initiative]	Within the LSP and City Vision promote the adoption of a Social Health Strategy for Carlisle that includes a rural section linking to regeneration programmes.	Carlisle Local Health Group, supported by Partners	August/September 2002
	By determining the health needs of all Carlisle's rural wards and working with the Carlisle Local Health Group and Primary Care Trust on rural issues	Development of a model to provide a profile of the health and deprivation needs across all rural wards	Determination of a range of health domains that indicate the social determinants of health Agreement of an appropriate database and lead organisation to manage the information system Start profiling all wards within the district to determine health status Involves Public Health Department City Council	June/July 2002.
	By linking the Health agenda with relevant existing strategies [Crime and Disorder, Recreation, Housing etc.]	Ensuring that integration of health inequalities and determinants of poor health are incorporated in all appropriate strategies	Link the work associated with the establishment of the Health promoting audit and carry out an analysis of the health impact of relevant policies of the Council City Council Housing Dept.	Autumn 2002.

How the vision will be taken forward	Action	What Happens and who is involved	Funding and Timetable	Targets and Outcomes
Using the strategy, [through a rural forum or other mechanism] as the means of auditing and monitoring rural service provision.	By developing mechanisms for consulting and promoting participation by stakeholders in addressing health inequalities at a 'natural' community level	Creation of a consultative structure within the 'Partnership for Health' Promotion of a 'Health Activist' initiative to work in partnership with local people and the Local Health Group Engage in partnership arrangements with the Carlisle Parish Councils Assoc. to determine appropriate mechanisms for involvement and consultation Involves Carlisle City Council –Leisure and Housing Depts CPCA		June – August 2002. July-Sept 2002. June-August 2002.
	Mechanism to monitor rural service provision, access to facilities etc– to be determined			
	Survey and modernisation of Village Halls programme			

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	<p>Enabling communities, where there is a will to do so – to develop locally managed initiatives that address local problems or take advantage of opportunities.</p>	<p>Work in partnership with local people and community Groups to develop initiatives to tackle health inequality and to promote well-being</p>	<p>Initially establish a partnership mechanism [using existing health groups] to determine the role of local people and support agencies Identify a range of initiatives with pre-determined health outcomes at 'natural' community level in all wards Develop a 3-5 year 'Action Plan' to implement and monitor initiatives Involves Carlisle City Council</p>		<p>May-July 2002. Sept- December 2002. Jan – March 2003.</p>
		<p>Mechanism to support local groups with advice, access to funding etc --to be determined</p>			

Funding for the Carlisle Rural Area					
	How the vision will be taken forward	Actions	How will this be done and who is involved	Budgets and Programming	Targets and Outcomes
	Co-ordinating funding through the Market Town Initiative	Production of an Action Plans for Longtown and Brampton	Through the work of the Market Town Co-ordinator and the Longtown Investment Partnership. Through partnership arrangements in Brampton that have yet to be determined.		
	Disseminating information about rural funding opportunities	Event[s] to brief parishes and other local rural bodies about who does what			
	Supporting the community in project development and funding				

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APPENDIX 2

Cumbria Rural Action Zone – Next Steps: Aims, Objectives and Themes

The themes of the Cumbria RAZ are being integrated with the strategic aims and objectives of the Rural Recovery Plan for the North West. This will enable the NWDA to meet its aims and targets through the RAZ programme. The aims and the themes are listed below.

Cumbria RAZ themes

- A1 Empower communities
- B1 Environment and access
- B2 Forestry futures
- C1 Agri/Environment 'Fresh Start'
- C2 Farm business regeneration
- D1 Agricultural support industry
- D2 Other rural business support
- E1 Food brand Cumbria
- F1/F5 Tourism/Culture/Creative
- G2 Enhanced transport
- H1 Learning for the future

Rural Recovery Plan Strategic Objectives

- SO1 Broadening the economic base of rural areas
- SO2 Renew and strengthen sustainable recreation and tourism
- SO3 Assisting the restructure of agriculture
- SO4 Enhancing the competitiveness/capability of primary agriculture
- SO5 Rural skills development
- SO6 Development and promotion of countryside products
- SO7 Sustaining the rural environment
- SO8 Delivering social and community regeneration

'Listening to the Rural Voice'

A Strategy for Rural Carlisle

The Strategy and Vision

JANUARY 2002

Part One.

The Strategy and Vision

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 The Three Parts of the Strategy for Rural Carlisle
- 3.0 The Foot and Mouth Crisis
- 4.0 The Carlisle and Eden 'Local Strategic Partnership'
- 5.0 Summary of the Issues facing Rural Carlisle
- 6.0 Strategic Vision for Rural Carlisle
- 7.0 Implementing and Overseeing the Strategy
 - 7.1 Introduction
 - 7.2 Funding for Rural Carlisle
 - 7.3 Monitoring the Strategy and Performance targets

Appendix One [not included with this draft]

Action Plan Tables

- 1 Communities
- 2 Economic Prosperity
- 3 Infrastructure, Environment & Transport
- 4 Health and Well-being

Part Two [circulated as a separate report]

Listening to the Rural Voice.

Conference Proceedings and outcomes from Area Meetings in Longtown, Dalston and Brampton - 1999-2000

Part Three. [to be made available as a separate report]

The State of Rural Carlisle

Description of rural Carlisle and key facts and figures

Map of the City of Carlisle showing Parishes

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Strategy for Rural Carlisle has its origins in an extensive consultation process that began with the 'Listening to the Rural Voice' conference held in Brampton in October 1999 and local area meetings during the first half of 2000. These consultations were facilitated by the City Council and the Carlisle Parish Councils' Association and involved rural communities, Parish Councils, businesses, and a wide variety of rural agencies and organisations throughout the whole of Carlisle District.
- 1.2 The remit of the Strategy is the social, economic and environmental well-being of the rural Carlisle. It builds on the "Rural Voice" consultations undertaken in 1999 & 2000. It is also a response to the Rural White Paper published by the Government in November 2000 and shows how national policy could be interpreted locally.
- 1.3 Crucially, this strategy is also a key delivery plan of Carlisle City Vision, the community strategy for Carlisle district. This partnership strategy provides a ten year vision for the district and drew heavily from 'Listening to the Rural Voice' conference consultation. It is due to be published in Spring 2002.
- 1.4 The Strategy sets out a framework for policy in rural Carlisle for the next 10 years. Its purpose is also to secure the support of all those organisations that influence local rural affairs for a set of actions that will create the best opportunities for prosperity and an improved quality of life in rural Carlisle.

2.0 The Three Parts of the Strategy for Rural Carlisle

- 2.1 **Part One** of the Strategy begins by summarising the issues facing rural Carlisle. It continues by linking the rural strategy to the City Vision community planning process, and sets out the aspirations for rural Carlisle in 4 vision statements. These are concise descriptions that say what the strategy is trying to achieve. Each 'vision' is followed by a list of initiatives that show how progress will be made. Lastly, annual action plans [to be worked up and not included with this draft] will show what is proposed to take each initiative forward.
- 2.2 **Part Two** is a report of the 'Rural Voice' consultation process

2.3 **Part Three** of the Strategy is a reference document that pulls together data from a variety of sources to paint a picture of Carlisle's rural area at the end of the 20th Century. This information is intended to provide a 'baseline' against which progress can be charted over future years. The geographical descriptions of the different parts of rural Carlisle are also included in Part Three

3.0 The Foot and Mouth Crisis

3.1 The Rural Strategy was begun as a response to the vulnerability of the local rural economy and its society arising from the recession in agriculture and changes in the rural life. The consultations and the initial drafting of the Strategy took place before the Foot and Mouth crisis hit the District in February 2001.

3.2 The effect of the outbreak has been traumatic, emotional and profound and has touched everyone living locally. It has been alarming to see how the loss of local agricultural production has impacted on the local economy and the extent to which businesses and jobs of many kinds depend either directly, or indirectly on the agricultural spend.

3.3 The effect on people and communities has been described, more than once, as similar to a natural disaster, such is the impact on the lives of those involved. The long term environmental implications, including the consequences of burning and burial, and the impact on a landscape, have yet to be assessed.

3.4 The need for a different approach to rural regeneration in response to the crisis was acknowledged early and is being handled at a number of different levels. The North West Regional Development Agency has prepared a regional rural regeneration strategy. This sets the policy framework for rural regeneration and identifies the resources needed. At a Cumbria level the concept of a 'Rural Action Zone' [RAZ] has been put to Government. The Government has accepted that Cumbria is a special case, but the issue of additional funding from Government for the implementation of the RAZ has yet to be resolved [Jan 2002]

3.2 The Cumbria Task Force Rural Action Zone [RAZ] document is not an action plan in the conventional sense, but a visionary statement with a set of strategic, exemplar projects. The RAZ document acknowledges the role of Local Strategic Partnerships as delivery vehicles for local rural recovery programmes, engaging a wider range of local interests than would be practical at the county level. The mechanism for the delivery of the RAZ at a County level is yet to be resolved at the time of writing [Jan 2002]

4.0 The Carlisle & Eden Local Strategic Partnership

- 4.1 Carlisle City and Eden District are two of the areas within Cumbria [and in the Country as a whole], which have been hardest hit by the Foot and Mouth crisis. This has led to collaboration between the two authorities and the drawing together of public, private and community interests into an embryonic 'Local Strategic Partnership'. This has the immediate task of developing a recovery plan that could be delivered across both local authority areas.
- 4.2 The Strategy for Rural Carlisle will not duplicate the responses to the FMD crisis in the Carlisle –Eden recover plan. Its focus is local to the 37 parishes in Carlisle and it is about how the response to the Rural White Paper, the Community Strategy and the issues raised in the Rural Voice consultation can be drawn together in a single shared policy document.

5.0 Rural Carlisle –A Summary of the Issues.

- 5.1 This section lists the issues that the Rural Strategy must attempt to tackle [using the topics discussed at the Rural Voice Conference as key headings]. They are derived from:

- the findings of discussion groups that met in 1999 and 2000 as part of the 'Rural Voice' conference: [these findings are set out in more detail in part two of the Strategy];
- the available data on the state of the Carlisle Rural area [part 3 of the Strategy],
- the need to respond to national policy issues from the Rural White Paper

5.2 Farming and Rural Economy Issues:

- 5.2.1 *The issues identified by the 'Rural Voice' task group on Farming and the Rural Economy were*

- The scale of bureaucracy
- Equality –requirement for a level playing field within the European Community
- Funding support and inequalities within the system
- Effect of decreasing farm industry support income upon the rural and urban economy as a whole
- Effect on people involved in economic decline; e.g. stress related illness
- Marketing /collaboration to increase margins to help keep people in business
- New job opportunities in the rural area

- Retraining for those leaving the agriculture industry
- Recognition of the role of women and young farmers
- Government guidance as to where the agricultural industry is going, coupled with local evidence to support the case

5.2.2 What local information tells us

- The changes in the CAP regimes will eventually lead to a loss of subsidy payments into the area
- There is a 'pull' of investment and jobs into Carlisle - most evident in the Longtown area
- While unemployment [the claimant count] is generally low there is a history of relatively high unemployment levels in Brampton and Longtown. 'Under-employment' and 'hidden' unemployment are also thought to be issues.
- There is the perception [particularly from farmers] that the planning system is over restrictive
- There is a low level of new business starts compared with the UK. and the region
- Population in Longtown fell between 1991 and 1998 compared with increases over the rest of rural Carlisle.
- Longtown has the highest levels of deprivation in the Carlisle rural area as measured in the 2000 Index of Multiple Deprivation

5.3 Health Issues in Rural Carlisle

5.3.1 *The issues identified by the 'Rural Voice' task group on Health were*

- Difficulty of getting access to some services
- Health Information/Promotion/work accident prevention
- Mental Health and Stress
- Involving the public in identifying their own health needs
- Economic decline and hidden poverty
- Home and After care

5.3.2 *What the local data tells us*

- North Cumbria has a higher level of ill-health than the national average
- Arthuret [the pre 1998 ward, along with 4 wards in Carlisle, and 'rural north Cumbria' are designated for special consideration in the North Cumbria Health Action Zone

- Local surveys [village hall community questionnaires] indicate that a high proportion of rural residents would wish to see local services for health screening

5.3.3 Education and Training issues

5.4.1 *The issues identified by the 'Rural Voice' task group on Education and Training*

- Access and physical costs of training in isolated areas
- Identifying training needs at community level
- Re-training in the workplace due to diversification, necessity, or general changes in business operations
- Childcare issues relating to education and training
- Funding for rural schools and the Government's perception of distance to travel to schools and educational establishments.
- Co-ordinated approach to training of Parish Clerks and Councillors to fulfil their statutory and community leadership roles

5.4.2 *What local data tells us*

- There are 3 'Credits' Community Development Centres in rural Carlisle at schools in Longtown, Dalston and, Brampton. Two schools, at Castle Carrock and Hayton are part of a federated group that includes the Brampton Business and Tele-centre. Typically, each centre would have 12 PC s for community use. Village Halls at Bewcastle and Nicholforest also have IT facilities.
- The Brampton Business and Tele-centre has approx. 25 PCs and offers 'one to one', open learning and certificated courses in partnership with Carlisle College.

5.5 Community, Social and Housing issues

5.5.1 *The issues identified by the 'Rural Voice' group on Community, Social and Housing matters were*

- Affordability, type and allocation of housing
- Loss of services
- Modernising and extending the use of village halls and community buildings
- Access to Information Technology
- Communications/Consultation/Participation
- Perceptions of Crime and safety issues
- Degradation of the local natural environment
- Lack of development work to provide strategic approach to community vision

5.5.2 *What the Local Data tells us*

- 44% of the City Council's rural housing stock has been sold with 1,060 properties remaining [year 2000 figs.]
- Transfer of the City Council's housing stock to the Carlisle Housing Association will be the subject of a ballot in 2002.
- Lyne, Gt. Corby & Geltsdale, Irthing, Burgh and Dalston [pre 1998] wards are within the 1,000 'most deprived' in England in terms of access to services [Ref - Index of Deprivation 2000]
- A programme of Building condition surveys is underway for the 43 village halls in rural Carlisle

5.6 *Rural Transport Issues in Carlisle and District*

5.6.1 *The issues identified by the Rural voice group on Transport were*

- Lack of Infrastructure to promote integrated transport systems
- Government perception of rural transport and the influences [it] has on the economic and social well-being of an area
- Availability of transport in rural areas
- Quality of services
- Networking of public/private transport
- Safety
- Information and publicity
- Feedback from communities

5.6.2 *What the local data tells us*

- There is a Carlisle – Eden Rural Transport Partnership in being
- 13 % of the 11,000 bus passes issued by the City Council in 2000 were to rural residents. 32% of the district's resident population aged over 60 [7,700 people] live in the rural area of Carlisle [Oxford University estimates for 1998]

5.7 **Funding for Rural Areas**

5.7.1 *The issues identified by the 'Rural Voice' Funding group were*

- Complexity and number of funds available, lack of expertise to draw down funding, lack of comprehensive education on European, national, regional, local and other funds
- Speed of decision making, bureaucracy and complications in getting access to funding, differing timetables among grant making bodies
- Short-term funding some programmes one year only – cannot plan ahead

- Identifying need – business and social audit. Long term funding for re-structuring the local economy. Lack of co-ordinated approach between funding bodies

5.7.2 *What local data tells us*

- Part of the rural area is eligible for Objective 2 [Based on pre 1998 ward boundaries, Lyne, Irthing, Gt Corby & Geltsdale and Hayton wards are fully eligible, Brampton and Arthuret wards have transitional status.] These wards are also within the North Pennines 'Leader' area. Part of the area is also with the Rural Priority Area [approx. that area north and east of the Longtown – Brampton A6071.]

6.0 A Strategic Vision for Rural Carlisle

6.1 The Strategy for Rural Carlisle sits within the City Vision process. When it was being developed City Vision drew on the findings from the Rural Voice conference and took account of the issues identified in section 5.0 in developing its five themes: these are;

Communities

Economic Prosperity

Health and Wellbeing

Infrastructure Environment and Transport

Celebrating Carlisle.

6.2 These five themes are also at the core of the **Vision for Rural Carlisle**. Embedded within the 5 themes are the following aspirations

Communities theme

- *To ensure we effectively act upon the views of the people of Carlisle, involve our communities more actively in decision making in the City area and improve voter turn out at elections.*
- *Ensure the Community has access to information and services 24 hours a day easily, promptly and at a local level.*
- *Have a city where all people have equal access to goods, services and opportunities.*
- *Have a strong community network that encourages all residents to participate and contribute to their communities.*
- *Respond to crime and the fear of crime and continue to make our communities safer.*

Economic Prosperity theme

- *Have a diverse, mixed economy which embraces new technologies and a vibrant rural economy which nurtures and supports the best of traditional industries whilst encouraging new ventures and opportunities.*
- *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.*
- *Encourage and support local supply networks, which allow local communities to buy local produce and goods easily and affordably.*
- *Have in place local planning guidance, which balances the needs of strategic planning and the environment with those of the business community.*

Infrastructure, Environment and Transport theme

- *Have a safe public transport system for all – whether young, old, disabled or from a rural community – which is affordable, reliable, easily accessible, frequent and an attractive option. This will require a fully integrated transport system which balances the needs of both our Urban and Rural Communities*
- *Have a high quality and bio-diverse environment that is an economic and cultural asset.*

Health and Wellbeing theme

- *Ensure health improvement, reducing health inequalities and improving healthcare is focused at a local level wherever possible; Ensure that health information and advice is easily accessible and of a high standard.*
- *Ensure all residents have access to leisure, sports and cultural opportunities.*
- *Combat the causes, and efforts, of poverty on the health of our communities.*
- *Support and expand the Farmers' Markets.*
- *Encourage healthier lifestyles via partnership health, fitness and sports programmes for all.*
- *Support independent living for elderly residents and other vulnerable sections of the community wherever possible.*

- 6.3 These four themes **Communities; Economic Prosperity; Infrastructure, Environment & Transport and Health and Wellbeing** provide the basis for action in rural Carlisle.
- 6.4 Below are suggestions of how the above aspirations could be developed, taking into account the particular needs and circumstances of rural Carlisle.
- 6.5 Each section begins with a short 'vision' statement that tries to capture the essence of the theme. Each statement is followed by a list of proposals that suggest how the theme will be developed.
- 6.6 An Action Plan to be included as an Appendix to Part One will set out an annual programme to show what commitments are being made to progress the strategy.
- 6.7 **Developing the Vision for Communities in Rural Carlisle**

“A rural society that is fully engaged in decision-making processes that affect local issues and has the capacity and the support to address local problems and opportunities.”

- 6.7.1 This involves people living in the rural area being fully involved in developing their community, safeguarding its valuable features and helping to shape the decisions that affect them.
- 6.7.2 It also involves strong and purposeful working relationships between county, district and parish councils and other organisations. This means supporting and encouraging rural communities on matters which local Parish councils and voluntary organisations can manage themselves and working in partnership on wider local services and initiatives.

It also covers the actions that are needed to support those towns and villages that show signs of economic or social disadvantage and where a comprehensive approach to community regeneration is needed.

6.7.3 In Carlisle progress will be made by:

- [i] Making support and training available for parish councils
- [ii] Encouraging the application of IT systems and connections for Parish Councils to enable better communication between tiers of Local Government and new avenues of communication between citizens and Parishes
- [iii] Encouraging local democracy and the holding of Parish elections
- [iv] Recognising and developing the role of the Carlisle Parish Councils' Association [CPCA] as the representative body for local councils in the Carlisle area
- [v] Working to agreed codes of practice [e.g. Parish Charter between the City Council and the Parishes, and the Code of Conduct agreed between Parishes and the County Council]
- [vi] Encouraging devolution, where appropriate, of decision-making or service delivery to individual Parishes or to the CPCA

- [vii] Introducing procedures to 'rural proof' decision-making in higher tier authorities.
- [viii] Ensuring that there are effective linkages with Local Strategic Partnerships and that there are processes in place that encourage joint working where appropriate
- [ix] The development of facilities in key locations for the shared delivery of services by all three tiers of Local Government.
- [xi] The promotion of a comprehensive community led approach to the regeneration of Longtown and Brampton.
- [xii] The development of local community plans for agreed localities, using the 'vital villages' programme where appropriate

6.8 Developing the vision for the Economic Prosperity theme

“A well-diversified and prosperous local economy with a strong agricultural sector and local market towns & villages that are economically and socially buoyant”.

- 6.8.1 Over the next ten years the rural area of Carlisle should be able to offer more local job and business investment opportunities than it does now. There should be more people working from home and in the market towns and villages. There should be better access to training, learning and business support in the rural area with facilities in [at least] Longtown, Brampton and Dalston.
- 6.8.2 The level of prosperity, investment and economic activity in the service centres of Longtown, Brampton and Dalston will act as a key indicator for the rural area as a whole. The Market Towns Initiative and the Vital Villages programme will be important in this respect.
- 6.8.3 The rate at which the Farming economy recovers and how it evolves will be an important determining factor for the local economy. Most of the programmes to support agriculture are directed centrally but there is a local role to support, facilitate and help 'join up' local delivery and to identify gaps & local needs, working with the NFU and others.

6.8.4 Longer term regeneration programmes for Cumbria's rural economy in the aftermath of Foot and Mouth are still at a developmental stage. In Carlisle and Eden there will be a joint approach to regeneration for those initiatives that can be delivered over both districts.

6.8.5 To achieve the aspirations for the rural economy there will be a need to; –

- [i] Promote the rural area of Carlisle as a place of work, by identifying opportunities for investment and encouraging the creation of employment, particularly in Longtown and Brampton and Dalston and at Carlisle Airport
- [ii] Support local agriculture, by encouraging non-farming enterprises, alternative employment opportunities, and diversification, by lobbying and local marketing where appropriate, working with the NFU and other agencies.
- [iii] Support initiatives that facilitate access by both rural businesses and individuals to;
 - training and advisory services, [including planning advice],
 - infrastructure & facilities, [including I.T.],in order to sustain and where possible expand the rural business & service base and the range and choice of employment for rural people
- [iv] Support and promote enterprise and new business starts in the rural area, local trading by businesses and local purchasing by consumers.

6.9 **Developing the Vision for the Infrastructure, Environment and Transport theme**

“ A high quality and bio-diverse environment that is an economic and cultural asset to the whole of the City of Carlisle and the region. An area with access to a communications infrastructure and services that meet the needs of residents, visitors and businesses.”

6.9.1 The third element in the vision is about a different approach to the rural environment and its management that would help to sustain a living and working countryside and promote a closer relationship between town and country.

6.9.10 In the future, while the quality and diversity of Carlisle's rural environment will continue to be safeguarded, the management of the local countryside and its heritage should be more closely linked to the need to support a viable rural economy. Decisions on development in the rural area will also need to take this into account.

6.9.11 Transport and communications investment will need to be linked more closely to the economic and social needs of the rural area with more innovation to ensure sustainable solutions to rural access issues

6.9.12 To achieve this vision the strategy will seek to

- [i] Make best use of the heritage, cultural and environmental assets of the area to provide direct economic benefits to the local rural community.
- [ii] Develop and support sustainable tourism initiatives that also help meet general environmental objectives
- [iii] Develop the role of the East Cumbria Countryside Project so that its work is more closely linked to the economic opportunities arising from countryside management and interpretation, in particular to support rural tourism and agricultural diversification & re-structuring.
- [iv] Provide a mechanism to enable dialogue on planning policy, so that the Local Plan and the Rural Strategy are aligned and seen to be so.

6.10 **Developing the vision for the Health and Well-being theme**

“A rural area, with facilities & services that meet local needs and [at least] national standards and which provide the opportunity for rural residents to achieve a full and healthy lifestyle.”

6.11 The fourth element in the vision for Rural Carlisle is about enabling rural communities to sustain themselves by ensuring that there is reasonable access to services, amenities and all the opportunities for modern life.

6.12 It is about ensuring that rural dwellers' health, social and educational and housing needs are met in ways that are accessible to all.

6.13 It is also about how the Rural Services Standard set out in the Rural White Paper is interpreted and applied locally. This standard covers access to Government Services, Education, Childcare, Post Offices, Transport, Libraries, ICT learning Centres, Health and Care Services, Social Care, Emergency Services, Community Legal Services, Access to Courts, Access to Benefits and Employment.

6.14 This element of the vision will be achieved by;

- [i] Addressing health inequalities through rural regeneration programmes, [Local Strategic Partnership and the Market Town Initiative]
- [ii] Mapping and determining the health needs of all Carlisle rural wards and working within the Carlisle Local Health Group and the Primary Care Trust on rural issues
- [iii] Linking the Health agenda with appropriate existing strategies [Crime and Disorder, Recreation, Housing etc]
- [iv] Using the Strategy [through a rural forum or other agreed mechanism] as the means of auditing and monitoring of rural services in partnership with the County Council, parish councils and other agencies.
- [vi] Enabling communities, where there is a will to do so, to develop locally managed initiatives that address local problems or take advantage of opportunities.

7.0 Implementing and Overseeing the Strategy

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 The Rural Strategy will need to be recognised by all of those organisations that are stakeholders in rural Carlisle. The implementation of the Strategy cannot be taken forward by any one organisation. It will depend on partnerships and co-operation to deliver and develop the Strategy over time.
- 7.1.2 The proposals within the Strategy identify the need for a arrangement linked to City Vision through which Carlisle's Rural voice will be heard and through which 'ownership' of the Strategy by the people living in rural Carlisle will be achieved.
- 7.1.3 A consideration is the emerging Carlisle and Eden Valley Local Strategic Partnership [LSP] covering Carlisle and Eden districts. At the moment this is focussed on the regeneration of the rural economy in the aftermath of Foot and Mouth. There will be overlap between some of the initiatives in the Carlisle Rural Strategy and those in being pursued by the LSP. Some of these will be most appropriately managed and delivered across both districts and in these cases the sponsoring body is likely to be the Carlisle and Eden Valley LSP.

7.2 Funding for Rural Carlisle

- 7.2.1 The issues that emerged from the 'Rural Voice' consultation were;
- Complexity, both the number of funds, bureaucracy, and the differing rules under which funds operated
 - The need for expertise and support to access funding
 - Speed of decision making
 - Inability to plan ahead because of annual allocations
 - The need for longer term commitment and planning
 - The need for greater co-ordination among funding bodies and programmes
- 7.2.2 The current position on the eligibility of Rural Carlisle for European and other funds is set out in Part 3 of the Strategy.
- 7.2.3 The means to implement many of the actions in the strategy will originate from local regional, national or European sources and in many instances a mix of funding streams will need to be accessed, particularly for major projects.

7.2.4 Understandable information about what is available and access to expertise appears to be the key to the funding issue. Networks and services exist to address these problems, but with limited resources and success.

7.2.5 The following actions are proposed to address funding issues:

- Programmes such as the Market Towns Initiative will provide a context for pulling together funds against an agreed action plan in Longtown and subsequently Brampton.
- Proposals for the co-ordinated dissemination of information need to be discussed with funding agencies and the resources found to do this
- Resources, capacity and expertise in the City Council and in other stakeholder organisations to support local projects needs identifying and co-ordinating.

7.3 Monitoring the Strategy and Performance Targets

7.3.1 There will need to be a periodic assessment to see if 'progress' is being made towards the aims of the Rural Strategy. The ways of measuring progress should relate to the 4 vision statements. This means that for each 'building block' in the strategy – Community, Economic Prosperity, Environment, Infrastructure & Transport and, Health and Well-being, a set of targets and measurable indicators is needed.

7.3.2 Of the current set of performance indicators used by the City Council for example, only three [related to the Parish Charter, Parish Council capital grants and village hall surveys] are specifically rural

7.3.3 The following are proposed as a way to judge the well being of the rural area of Carlisle. They will need to be refined as part of the development of the strategy in discussion with partner agencies.

Community

- Targets measuring Parish Council 'vitality'
[e.g. number of Parish Elections, voter turnout]
- Use of IT by parish officers *[number of Parishes 'on line']*
- Parish Charter *[existing]*

Economic Prosperity

- Change in the number of properties on the non-domestic rating list *[local economic activity proxy]*

- Employment and Unemployment indicators [*from the bi-annual Household survey carried out by the Cumbria Economic Intelligence Partnership*]
- No of people living and working in the rural area [*growing/falling – source – as above*]

Infrastructure, Environment & Transport

- Take up of stewardship or similar schemes
- Tourism visitor numbers [*trends from TICs, attractions etc*]
- An access indicator [*to be defined*]

Community

- Rural Services standard [*application of the standard and its usefulness will need to be discussed with relevant agencies*]
- Vitality of Longtown, Dalston and Brampton [*Town Centre Health Check*]
- No of community plans in place
- Village Halls and community buildings meeting current standards
- Parish Councils capital grants [*existing*]



A Report from the
Overview and Scrutiny Committees

**Comments of the Overview and Scrutiny
Committees on 'Listening to the Rural
Voice'; A Strategy for Rural Carlisle**

March 2002

1. Introduction

1.1 Report EDU. 02/02 'Listening to the Rural Voice' – A Strategy for Rural Carlisle was considered by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on 14th February 2002. The committee decided that in view of the importance of the document, its corporate implications and thematic/cross-cutting nature it should be considered by each of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

1.2 The management committee also decided that comments of the committees should be consolidated, by officers, into a single report, to be approved by the Chairman of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee. That consolidated report would then be submitted to the Executive and the chairman attend the relevant Executive meeting to outline the committees' comments.

1.3 This is the report produced in fulfilment of the Management Committee resolution, the matter having now been considered by each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

2. The Strategy

2.1 The strategy document itself was prepared in response to the Rural White Paper and the findings of the Rural Voice Consultations during 1999/2000. It is intended to be a Delivery Plan nesting within the City Vision. It will thus take forward the aspirations of City Vision within rural Carlisle.

2.2 The draft strategy reflects key developments affecting the rural economy including the Foot and Mouth crisis and the joint Local Strategic Partnership.

2.3 The document is at the 'draft for consultation' stage and initial consultation with the parishes has taken place and once the draft has been approved by the council will be consulted upon with partner agencies.

2.4 The document includes four themes and identifies aspirations, which could be developed to achieve them. The next stage of development, which will be carried forward during consultation, will be to produce a draft Action Plan to complete the strategy.

3. Comments

3.1 The key comment of Overview and Scrutiny was undoubtedly the need to press forward to develop an Action Plan as quickly as possible. Coupled with this the need to identify funding to take that Action Plan forward.

3.2 Associated with this first comment was the importance of the strategy being well related to national, regional and sub-regional strategic documents and delivery mechanisms. In particular members stressed the need for this in relation to the Regional Development Agency's Strategy, the Rural Action Zone and the

County Council's Corporate Strategy. This was felt to be essential to the drawing down of funding.

3.3 As regards funding, performance and monitoring the specific proposals and approach set out in section 7 of the draft strategy were endorsed.

3.4 In relation to monitoring of performance there was concern expressed regarding the recent assessment of parish vitality, as it had been reported in the media, and which did not properly reflect the importance and achievements of parishes in rural Carlisle.

3.5 Another important comment was the need for particularly close and effective working between Economic Development and Local Plan officers in relation to rural planning policies. Members also raised related concerns about proposals in the Planning Green Paper needing to be fully taken into account.

3.6 Responsibility and resources for managing delivery of the final strategy by the council was an area which it was felt needed to be fully considered within both the Regeneration and Organisational Assessment Best Value Reviews.

Contact Officer – John Mallinson - Ext. 7010

**EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF
EXECUTIVE
HELD ON 15 APRIL 2002**

EX.118/02 STRATEGY FOR RURAL CARLISLE (Key Decision)

Portfolio Community Activities, Health and Wellbeing, Economic Prosperity

Subject Matter

To consider a report from the Head of Economic Development (EDU.6/02) enclosing the document "Listening to the Rural Voice" - A Strategy for Carlisle which set out the City Council's aspirations for the rural area, together with a number of Action Plans which were being developed to show what will be done to translate that vision into reality. These Action Plans were both working and monitoring documents and their effectiveness would depend on their being used as a matter of routine, not only to co-ordinate the Council's own activities, but also to inform relationships with external bodies and their roles in rural Carlisle.

Subject to approval, it was proposed to develop the Action Plans, using the mechanism of the Officer Regeneration Group as the co-ordinating body. It was intended to work to an annual cycle with reports to the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Committees three times a year. Arrangements for joint working eg with the Parishes on the monitoring and review of the Strategy had yet to be agreed.

The rural strategy document had been referred to the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees for comment and their views, which had been taken into account when revisions to the plan had been made, were submitted.

Summary of options rejected

None

DECISION

1. That the document "Listening to the Rural Voice" - A Strategy for Carlisle be recommended to the City Council for adoption.
2. That the Action Plans be noted in their current form and the arrangements to begin the cycle of annual meetings in June 2002 at which the Action Plans will be reviewed be agreed.

Reasons for Decision

To consider and make a recommendation to the City Council to adopt the document "Listening to the Rural Voice" - A Strategy for Carlisle.

To make arrangements to monitor and review the Action Plans accompanying the Strategy document.