

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – SPECIAL MEETING**TUESDAY 8 JANUARY 2002 AT 10.00 AM**

PRESENT: Councillor Ellis (Chairman), Councillors Boaden, Mrs Crookdake (as substitute for Councillor J Mallinson), Mrs Fisher, Knapton, McMillan, Toole and Weber.

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Pattinson attended the meeting as the Portfolio Holder for Community Activities to answer questions in relation to the call-in of Minute EX.133/01 of the Executive meeting of 17 December 2001 relating to the Carlisle South Sure Start Programme – Interim Steering Group.

Councillor Mrs Geddes attended the meeting as an observer.

COS.1/02 WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Members and Officers to the special meeting, being the first meeting of the New Year.

COS.2/02 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor J Mallinson.

COS.3/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations affecting any item on the Agenda.

COS.4/02 CALL-IN – CARLISLE SOUTH SURE START PROGRAMME – INTERIM STEERING GROUP

Councillors Boaden, McMillan and Weber had called in for scrutiny Executive Decision EX.133/01 – Carlisle South Sure Start Programme – Interim Steering Group. Copies of the Executive Decision Notice and a letter dated 6 December 2001 from Mr R S Burns, Interim Chair of Sure Start South Interim Steering Group had been circulated to Members.

Mr Burns gave a brief introduction to the Sure Start Programme, which aimed to work with parents and children to promote the physical, intellectual and social development of babies and young children, particularly those who were disadvantaged, so that they could flourish at home and when they got to school. A partnership had been set up consisting of the City and County Councils, the Health Authority and other relevant agencies in order to progress the initiative.

In addition, a new Interim Steering Group was to be formed consisting of fifteen representatives, five of whom would be from public authorities i.e. the County Council (the

accountable body), the City Council (the lead agency) and one from the Carlisle Primary Care Team. The current Steering Group had particularly requested that representation should be from those Members who represented the Sure Start area i.e. Harraby, Upperby, Currock or Botcherby, and that substitutes also be nominated to ensure as full an attendance as possible at Group meetings.

Councillor Mrs Pattinson, the Community Activities Portfolio Holder, was present at the meeting and, together with Mr Burns, responded to Members' questions on the Executive's decision.

During discussion the following issues were raised:

The County Council had adhered to the request of the Sure Start Steering Group and nominated two Ward Members. That, when taken in conjunction with the City Council Executive's decision to nominate a Ward Member for Botcherby, meant that one of the four Sure Start areas would be left without representation at Ward level which was cause for concern.

Councillor Mrs Pattinson indicated that the Executive felt that the Sure Start Programme was important for the City as a whole and there was a need to look at "the bigger picture", particularly with regard to the City Vision. It was therefore considered to be vital that the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Community Activities be in attendance at meetings of the Steering Group in order that both she and the Executive could be kept fully apprised of developments. In addition, a Sure Start Programme would also be commencing in the Longtown area which reinforced this point.

A Member questioned whether the Council was obliged to adhere to the Steering Group's request. The Head of Legal Services advised that the Group's Terms of Reference did not specify that representatives must be Sure Start area Ward Members and therefore the request was not legally binding on the Council.

The scenario whereby, rather than being nominated as a member, the Portfolio Holder be co-opted onto the Steering Group (without voting rights) was raised. That course of action would enable an additional Ward Member to serve on the Steering Group and demonstrate that the Council had listened to and complied with the Group's request, whilst keeping the Portfolio Holder and Executive informed. The Portfolio Holder suggested that additional Ward Members could be co-opted.

In light of the above, it was moved by Councillor Boaden and seconded by Councillor Weber that the matter be referred back to the Executive for reconsideration.

It was further moved by Councillor Knapton and seconded by Councillor Mrs Fisher that the matter should not be referred back and the decision of the Executive (EX.133/01) should stand.

Following voting thereon, Councillor Boaden's motion of referral back of Executive Decision EX.133/01 was not agreed.

With regard to the Steering Group's request that substitute Members be nominated, it was suggested that Councillors Bloxham and Mrs Cartner be so nominated.

RESOLVED – (1) That this Committee does not object to the decision made by the Executive (EX.133/01) regarding the Carlisle South Sure Start Programme – Interim Steering Group.

(2) That this Committee supports the request of the Sure Start Steering Group that substitute Members be nominated to serve thereon and would request the Portfolio Holder to seek the Executive's approval to Councillors Bloxham and Mrs Cartner serving as substitute Members.

[The meeting ended at 10.40 am]