

## **COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**THURSDAY 11 OCTOBER 2001 AT 2.00 PM**

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

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillors Bloxham, Mrs Bowman, Firth, Jefferson, Mrs Mallinson, Ms Martlew, Mitchelson, Mrs Pattinson, Mrs Southward attended the meeting as observers.

### **COS.4/01 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs Fisher, Knapton and Toole.

### **COS.5/01 AGENDA**

Under Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 8 within the City Council's Constitution, Councillors Weber and Boaden had given notice that they wished an item regarding the Leisuretime Improvement Plan and procedure for dealing with Leisuretime following the Best Value Review to be included on the Agenda. That item would be dealt with as Agenda item A.6.

### **COS.6/01 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING DECLARATIONS OF "THE PARTY WHIP")**

There were no declarations affecting any item on the Agenda.

### **COS.7/01 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Following the resignation of the Vice-Chairman it was

RESOLVED – That Councillor Boaden be appointed Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the municipal year.

### **COS.8/01 CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed Members to the first meeting of the Community Overview and

Scrutiny Committee.

### **COS.9/01 CALL IN OF DECISIONS**

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

### **COS.10/01 COMMUNITY SAFETY OVERVIEW**

The Community Safety Co-ordinator gave a presentation on Community Safety. He commented that the City Council had a statutory duty to be involved and worked in partnership with a number of bodies, principally the County Council and Cumbria Constabulary. Duties included an initial audit of Crime and Disorder and causal factors, a three year reduction strategy in identified areas and the monitoring of achievements.

The Carlisle and Eden Community Safety Strategic Group had performed well and, although a NACRO Healthcheck had identified a lack of co-operation from some key partners, this had since been addressed. Successes included internal and externally funded bids, projects and initiatives based on best practice and future schemes e.g. the Communities Against Drugs Initiative and Neighbourhood Wardens.

The Community Safety Co-ordinator then outlined the scope of the Best Value Review, together with the key issues. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that everyone would feel ownership for the Strategy and that it would continue to be successful.

RESOLVED – That the presentation be noted.

### **COS.11/01 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee, in setting a programme of work, considered the following:

#### **(a) Revenue Budgets 2002/03 to 2004/05 and Executive Budget Principles**

The City Treasurer presented Financial Memo 2001/02 No.77 summarising the likely cost of supporting current service levels and the potential resources available to the Council over the three year period to 2004/05, together with a range of issues which would impact on the provision of services and the level of Council Tax over that period.

He also drew Members' attention to the Executive Budget Principles which would inform the formulation of the budget for 2002/03, and which would be further refined as the budget process progressed.

The City Treasurer then responded to Members' questions.

A Member expressed concern that the theme of the budget for 2002/03 was one of

consolidation, particularly the expectation that Officers must identify a potential saving equivalent to each new spending bid proposed. It was felt that the requirement could potentially upset staff and that the manner by which the process would be undertaken should be clarified. In addition, he sought clarification regarding the potential capital injection into the Leisuretime facilities.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Executive be requested to provide additional detail on the process by which Officers must identify a potential saving equivalent to each new spending bid they proposed, together with clarification on the potential capital injection into the Leisuretime facilities, when future budget proposals were submitted to this Committee.

### **(b) Best Value Reviews**

Consideration was given to a reference from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee concerning Best Value Reviews to be undertaken by this Committee in respect of Community Safety, Bereavement Services and a Strategic Approach to Housing.

The Chairman suggested that work on the Community Safety Best Value Review should commence at the next meeting, with the Bereavement Services and Strategic Approach to Housing Best Value Reviews following on a cyclical basis, Officers' workloads permitting. He commented that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee had received a presentation on Best Value and suggested that copies be circulated to Members of this Committee.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive commented that the City Solicitor and Secretary was preparing a paper outlining the process to be followed, upon which the views of the Best Value Inspectorate and District Audit were required. It was proposed that the report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee.

The Director of Leisure and Community Development outlined staffing issues which would impact on the Bereavement Services Best Value Review. It was noted that the Review would require to be scoped by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee prior to being undertaken by this Committee.

RESOLVED – (1) That work on the Community Safety Best Value Review commence at the next meeting of this Committee.

(2) That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee be requested to scope the Bereavement Services Best Value Review, following which it would be undertaken by this Committee, staffing levels permitting.

(3) That the Strategic Approach to Housing Best Value Review be undertaken thereafter.

(4) That copies of the Best Value presentation be circulated to Members of this Committee.

### **(c) Golden Jubilee Celebrations**

The Committee gave consideration to possible celebrations to mark the Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II.

A Member expressed the view that the public's attitude to the Monarchy had changed since

the time of the Silver Jubilee and that should be borne in mind.

The following suggestions were tabled:

- A tree planting programme to enhance entrances to the City;
- Community Grant money should be made available to members of the community to plan appropriate events;
- Subject to the approval of the organisers, that Upperby Gala be arranged as a "Civic Carnival" for next year only;
  
- A central showpiece event be organised to promote a corporate image.

RESOLVED – That the Town Clerk and Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director of Leisure and Community Development, be requested to investigate the above suggestions and arrange for a report to be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee with detailed proposals and costings.

#### **(d) Suggestions from Members of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee for inclusion in the Work Programme**

A Member expressed concern that certain items of business, e.g. Raffles Community Buildings and the NHS Reform, were being considered by the Executive before this Committee had the opportunity to comment.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive commented that the new structures were a learning process for Members and Officers alike. The City Council's objective was to promote efficient, transparent and accountable decision making through open consultation, but it would take time for a natural pattern of working to emerge.

Councillor Weber moved and Councillor Boaden seconded that the Executive be requested to defer consideration of the items of business regarding Raffles Community Buildings and Shifting the Balance – NHS Reform until this Committee had the opportunity to consider them.

Following a vote the motion was declared lost.

Councillor Boaden moved and Councillor Weber seconded the proposal that it was important that this Committee look at revisiting the Large Scale Voluntary Transfer, in the light of changes nationally, and that it be included in the Work Programme.

Following a vote the motion was declared lost.

RESOLVED – That the position be noted.

#### **COS.12/01 SHIFTING THE BALANCE – NHS REFORM**

The Policy and Research Officer presented a Department of Health consultation document entitled "Modernising the NHS: Shifting the Balance of Power in Cumbria and Lancashire" which sought the views of stakeholders who may be affected by the proposed establishment of a new Health Authority for Cumbria and Lancashire. The matter would be considered by the Executive at its meeting on 15 October 2001.

The consultation document contained a number of proposals, including:

- a shift in the balance of power towards local communities;
- the identification of Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) as the lead NHS organisations in assessing need, planning and securing all health services and improving health;
- that NHS Trusts would continue to provide services and prepare delivery agreements with PCTs;
- envisaged a major change in the strategic management of the NHS by a substantial reduction in the number of Health Authorities, with the existing 95 Health Authorities being replaced by approximately 30 Strategic Health Authorities.

The Policy and Research Officer then outlined a number of local implications.

A Member questioned how meaningful the consultation actually was, commenting that the changes were likely to take place in any event.

The Head of Housing Provision commented that the City Council had established important partnership working with North Cumbria Health Authority. He added that currently influence could be brought to bear on local decision making and expressed concern that it would be lost under the new proposals.

In addition, he also commented that it was of equal importance to establish links with the PCTs to strengthen partnership working and retain a local perspective on health issues.

Members expressed concern that the options related to the North West and stressed the importance of maintaining the existing clinical links between Carlisle and the North East. It was suggested that the Chief Executive of North Cumbria Health Authority be invited to attend a meeting of this Committee to give his Authority's perspective on the document and answer Members' questions.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Chief Executive of North Cumbria Health Authority be invited to attend a future meeting of this Committee to give his Authority's perspective on the consultation document.

(2) That the Executive be advised of the above course of action and requested to postpone their response to the consultation until this Committee had the opportunity to comment.

### **COS.13/01 FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Chairman indicated that it was proposed that two special meetings of this Committee be arranged to consider the Leisuretime Improvement Plan and suggested that they take place on 17 and 24 October 2001.

Consideration was also given to the start time for future meetings of the Committee and it was agreed that they should commence at 2.00 pm.

RESOLVED – (1) That special meetings of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee be held as follows:

Wednesday 17 October 2001 at 2.00 pm; and

Wednesday 24 October 2001 at 2.00 pm.

(2) That future meetings of the Committee commence at 2.00 pm.

**COS.14/01 LEISURETIME IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND  
PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH LEISURETIME FOLLOWING  
THE BEST VALUE REVIEW**

Consideration was given to a letter dated 5 October 2001 submitted by Councillors Weber and Boaden requesting that the Leisuretime Improvement Plan and procedure for dealing with Leisuretime following the Best Value Review be considered by this Committee.

A Member expressed concern that the item had appeared on the draft Agenda and had subsequently been removed, and that a report had not been circulated in time for this meeting.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive commented that it was now accepted that the matter should come to this Committee, but the Director of Leisure and Community Development's report had yet to be finalised.

**RESOLVED** – That the Leisuretime Improvement Plan be considered at the special meetings of this Committee to be held on 17 and 24 October 2001.

[The meeting ended at 3.30 pm]