

**INFRASTRUCTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE****THURSDAY, 13 DECEMBER 2001 AT 10.00 AM**

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs C Rutherford (Chairman),  
Councillors Mrs Bowman, Mrs Crookdake, Dodd,  
Hodgson B, Hodgson T G, Mrs Mallinson and Weedall

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Firth attended the meeting  
in relation to the item on the Assembly Room at the Old  
Town Hall

**IOS.13/01 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Mr Mallinson declared a non-pecuniary interest in accordance with the National Code of Local Government Conduct in the item on the relationship between the City Council, County Council and Capita dbs.

**IOS.14/01 MINUTES**

RESOLVED – (1) That the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2001 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

(2) That the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2001 be noted subject to:

(a) IOS.8/01 (1)(b)

Although Members had expressed support for the introduction of car parking charges, one Member had stated that he thought car parking on a Sunday should be free.

(b) IOS.8/01 (1)(d)

In reviewing the time spent in attempting to secure grant aid, drainage had only being mentioned as an example.

**IOS.15/01 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS**

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

## IOS.16/01 – ASSEMBLY ROOM – OLD TOWN HALL

Further to Minute IOS.8/01(a)(iii) the Head of Economic Development submitted report EDU.43/01 on the usage of the Assembly Room at The Old Town Hall.

The Tourism Manager attended the meeting and presented the report commenting that the Economic Development Sub-Committee had identified usage of the Assembly Room as an issue which required further investigation. This had led to the preparation of three outline schemes which would increase income and usage, whilst maintaining the integrity of the building and continuing its use for community groups. The cost of each of these schemes was approximately £40,000. They were all basically a refurbishment of equipment with the addition of an interpretative facility which would allow a small fee to be charged for people wishing to see the display in the room. The schemes allowed the continuing use of the Room by community groups.

Councillor Firth, the Portfolio Holder for Economic Prosperity, attended the meeting and commented that the Assembly Room was currently used more predominantly as a community facility by community groups and that its current use had little to do with economic development or tourism. The proposals which had been set out as a result of the request by the old Economic Development Sub-Committee had attempted to address this by building in a tourism or economic development element through the displays.

The costs of the refurbishment had been the subject of a bid in last year's budget but the proposal was not supported. It was also a bid for the forthcoming budget but it had been assigned a low priority.

The Director of Environment and Development added that the Best Value Review on property management had indicated a need for a more corporate asset strategy, where investment decisions are judged as part of that strategy and a corporate portfolio managed, rather than making decisions on an individual basis. Members recognised the importance of managing assets corporately and expressed concern that putting a great deal of expense into what may be a quick fix solution would not address the overall problem.

In response to Members' questions the Tourism Manager and Councillor Firth commented that although grants may be available to help finance works to the Assembly Room, the Council would have to sort out what it wanted to do with the room in terms of its overall use before applying for any grants.

Members recognised the importance of managing assets corporately and commented that it might be best to wait for the outcome and finalisation of actions as a result of the Best Value Property Review. However, they suggested that there may be short term improvements at relatively low cost which could be undertaken to encourage visitors into the Assembly Room. They suggested that display boards could be installed and brochures placed in the room promoting Carlisle and the surrounding area, and that Officers could investigate other ways of increasing the usage of and footfall through the room through marketing.

**RESOLVED** – (1) That the importance of considering usage of the Assembly Rooms as a corporate asset and within a corporate framework be recognised, and therefore the final outcome of the Corporate Property Best Value Review be awaited before this Committee makes any further comments in relation to the Assembly Room.

(2) That the Committee express its wish to be consulted as part of any future considerations in relation to the Assembly Room.

(3) That in the interim, the Head of Economic Development and the Tourism Manager look at ways of increasing usage of the Assembly Rooms, both through increased marketing of the room amongst existing users, and by installing display boards and making brochures available in the room to attract people in from the Tourist Information Centre.

#### IOS.17/01 THE FORWARD PLAN

Members considered the Forward Plan for the period 1 December 2001 to 31 March 2002.

The Head of Corporate Policy and Strategy advised that a Plan covering the period 1 January to 30 April 2002 would be published on 18 December 2001. In addition, a report would be produced for future meetings of this Committee highlighting those Forward Plan items which were of particular relevance to this Committee.

The Chairman commented that a protocol was currently being developed which would seek to identify the types of report which would normally be considered at Overview and Scrutiny Committee before the Executive and vice versa. This protocol would be submitted to the Management Committee in January 2002.

Members then commented on the format of the Forward Plan suggesting that more detail could be provided particularly in relation to background papers. In addition, they referred to the Executive decision records and again commented that more information on decisions could be provided.

Members also raised the question of the scrutiny of Officer decisions. The Head of Corporate Policy and Strategy advised that the Scheme of Delegation set out the level of delegation to Officers and it would be more appropriate for Members to comment on the Scheme of Delegation rather scrutinise individual Officer's decisions.

RESOLVED – (1) That the Forward Plan for the period 1 December 2001 to 31 March 2002 be noted.

(2) That the Members comments in relation to format of the Forward Plan and Executive decision records, and the scrutiny of Officer decisions be referred to the Management Committee for inclusion in any forthcoming review of the Constitution.

#### IOS.18/01 WORK PROGRAMME

##### **(a) Reference from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee – Securing Grant Aid**

Further to Minute OSM.21/01 the response of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee "that it did not consider it to be appropriate to have a specific review of the time spent on attempting to secure grant aid to finance drainage works, but the issue could be incorporated into a wider review should one be carried out in the future" was circulated to Members. Members commented that although drainage had been an example which had been quoted, the concern had been in relation to the amount of Officer time spent in attempting to secure grants and the lack of feedback on why some applications had failed. Their concerns were not specific to drainage. The Chairman advised that when the matter had been considered by the Management Committee she had stated that drainage was just

an example.

Members commented that it could be referred back to the Management Committee with concerns that it is an issue which is not being addressed corporately. The City Treasurer commented that although there were grant applications which were addressed at corporate level, there were also a host of grant applications which were dealt with by individual Officers who had the expertise and knowledge of the right bodies to apply to for funding. He advised that although it was right to apply a corporate approach to some of the larger more strategic grants there were smaller more specific grants which it was right for individual Officers to apply for.

RESOLVED – That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee be advised of the concerns of this Committee in relation to the amount of Officer time spent completing grant applications, the absence of feedback on why certain applications had failed and the need for a more corporate approach in relation to some applications. In light of this, the Management Committee be asked to consider whether this should be a subject of a specific review or incorporated into a wider review in the future.

### **(b) Reference from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in relation to this Committee's Work Programme**

Further to Minute OSM.22/01, Members considered the response of the Management Committee in relation to their references on dog fouling, the relationship between the City Council, the County Council and Capita and Smartcards.

The Chairman advised that she had invited the Environment Forum to nominate a representative to meet with the Committee when they were considering dog fouling. She asked the Committee to endorse this invitation.

RESOLVED – (1) That in relation to dog fouling the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee be asked to nominate a representative to attend the next meeting of this Committee when dog fouling would be considered.

(2) That the invitation to the Environment Forum to appoint a representative to meet with the Committee when dog fouling was being considered, be endorsed and that the Head of Corporate Policy and Strategy contact the Environment Forum to ask them to send a representative to the next meeting of this Committee.

(3) That the response of the Executive in relation to relationship between the City Council, County Council and Capita and Smartcards be noted.

### **(c) Work Programme of the Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny**

#### **Committee**

RESOLVED – That the work programme of the Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee, copies of which have been circulated to Members, be noted.

#### **IOS.19/01 REFERENCES FROM THE EXECUTIVE**

##### **(a) Economic Development Services – Revenue Estimates 2002/03**

The City Treasurer submitted Financial Memo 2001/02 No. 105 detailing the revised

revenue estimates for 2001/02 together with the estimates for 2002/03 for Economic Development Services (Executive decision reference EX.48/01). The City Treasurer then answered various Members' questions in relation to specific aspects of the estimates.

Members then referred to the budgetary training for Members which had been scheduled for that afternoon. Members had been advised that the training had been postponed and they commented that this training would have been beneficial. Members were also concerned that a question and answer session on budgetary issues would be held that afternoon but that only Members of the Executive and the Chairman of the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been invited to this training. They suggested that their concerns should be placed on record and communicated to Councillor Mrs Geddes, the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Member training.

The City Treasurer reminded Members of the relatively short notice in the request to arrange training and of the late announcement by the Secretary of State in respect of the key revenue and capital spending provisions for 2002/03, which posed special difficulties for the City Treasurer and his staff in meeting the conflicting requirements of the budget timetable.

RESOLVED – (1) That the contents of the report and the Executive's decision be noted.

(2) That the concerns of the Committee that the budgetary training which had been arranged for Members had not taken place and that a question and answer session was being provided for Members of the Executive and the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny only, be placed on record and communicated to Councillor Mrs Geddes, the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Member training.

### **(b) Environment and Development Services – Revenue Estimates 2002/03**

The City Treasurer submitted Financial Memo 2001/02 No. 106 detailing the revised revenue estimates for 2001/02 together with estimates for 2002/03 for Environment and Development services (Executive decision reference EX.49/01).

The City Treasurer and the Director of Environment and Development then answered various Members' questions in relation to specific aspects of the estimates.

RESOLVED – That the report and the Executive's decision be noted.

### **(c) Carlisle Works Revenue Budgets 2002/03**

The City Treasurer submitted Financial Memo 2001/02 No. 108 and report EN.167/01 detailing the revised estimates and projected trading results for Carlisle Works in respect of 2001/02 and the estimates for 2002/03 (Executive decision reference EX.50/01). Members congratulated Carlisle Works on the level of profits but sought answers from Officers in relation to when definitive reports would be available on the impact for Carlisle Works of LSVT of Housing and transfer of Leisure.

The City Treasurer advised that the corporate implications across the authority had been taken into account in his budget report which would be considered by the Executive on 17 December and that they would be contained within the organisational assessment report which was currently being produced by HACAS Chapman Hendy. This report would be available within the next few months. The Director of Environment and Development added that the impact on Carlisle Works would be addressed within the corporate report but there would be an element which would be specific to Carlisle Works.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report and the Executive's decision that the estimates be approved for the purposes of formulating a recommended budget to Council be noted.

(2) That it be noted that the corporate implications and particularly the implications for Carlisle Works, of LSVT of Housing and transfer of Leisure would be addressed in the HACAS report on organisational assessment.

#### IOS.20/01 EXECUTIVE RESPONSES TO REFERENCES FROM THE

#### INFRASTRUCTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

#### COMMITTEE

##### **(a) New Spending Bids 2002/03**

RESOLVED – That the Executive's response at the concerns expressed by this Committee in relation to future reports on any new spending bids including potential savings equivalent to each bid be noted.

##### **(b) Information for Ward Members**

RESOLVED – (1) That it be noted that the Executive had put in place arrangements for information to be communicated to Ward Members of events/actions affecting their Wards.

(2) That Officers be thanked for the publication which had been produced informing Members of events/actions in their Wards.

##### **(c) Local Plan Roll Forward**

RESOLVED – The Executive's response that arrangements would be made for this Committee to attend an in-house training session on the review process for the Carlisle and District Local Plan, be noted.

#### IOS.21/01 IMPLEMENTATION OF CABLE TELEVISION

The Director of Environment and Development submitted report EN.190/01 advising that Omne Communications were currently installing a cable TV system within Carlisle which would provide television, telephone and broadband internet access. The first phase of their work programme would be focussed on the north of the City and meetings had been held with Officers to keep them informed of progress, specifically in relation to planning matters in Conservation Areas. It was anticipated that regular monitoring meetings would be held and that the City Council would be kept updated on the programme. The Director advised that he would circulate an updated programme to Members as soon as it was available. He anticipated that one would be available after a meeting which was being held that morning.

Members commented that it was difficult for Council's both County and City, to plan works on roads before they knew what this programme from Omne Communications was.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

2. That the Director of Environment and Development circulate the updated Programme

to Members as soon as it is available.

## IOS.22/01 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CITY COUNCIL, COUNTY COUNCIL AND CAPITA DBS

The Director of Environment and Development submitted report EN.185/01 providing details of the relationship between the City Council, the County Council and Capita dbs, following the termination of the Highways Agency Agreement. He detailed the various relationships and contacts which now exist under the Highways Claimed Right arrangements.

The Director commented that the City Council has never been made aware of the standards which Capita are required to deliver. He suggested that Members may wish to invite the County Council Area Support Manager to explain what service Capita is contracted to deliver and what service City Council Members and the public can expect from Capita dbs.

Members expressed concern that if there was confusion amongst Officers and Members on certain aspects of the new arrangements, then this would certainly be difficult for members of the public to understand. The public would need to be aware of who to contact over specific problems. Members welcomed the suggestion that the County Council Area Support Manager be invited to a future meeting to clarify a number of matters particularly in relation to:

- (a) Exactly what service Capita is contracted to deliver and what service City Council Members and the public can expect from Capita dbs.
- (b) The procedures which are in place to record details of requests received for minor improvements.
- (c) Any procedures in place for the agreed prioritisation of schemes across the whole area.
- (d) Mechanisms in place for City Council Members to be informed of schemes in their Ward.
- (e) Procedures for consulting and communicating with the public.

Members also commented that it would be helpful for the Transport Steering Group to be made aware of some of the problems and issues which had been identified.

RESOLVED – (1) That the contents of the report be noted and the Director of Environment and Development be authorised to supply each Member with a copy of Appendix A of the report, giving information on the Highway network in Carlisle District and who is responsible for each element.

(2) That the County Council Area Support Manager be invited to the next meeting of this Committee in order that Members could raise a number of the issues outlined above.

(3) That the Director of Environment and Development make the Transport Steering Group aware of any problems.

## IOS.23/01 BEST VALUE REVIEW – REGENERATION

The Head of Community Support attended the meeting and gave a verbal update on progress with the Best Value Review of Regeneration. He advised that the Regeneration review had been scoped by a Scoping Panel before the new political arrangements came into place. Since that time an Officer Group had been set up to progress the review. He then outlined progress as follows:

1. The Officer Group had attempted to come up with a definition, copies of which were circulated to Members. The proposed definition of regeneration was "support local communities in addressing problems of economic and social disadvantage, to achieve improved prosperity, wellbeing and quality of life". This definition would need approval by the Executive or the Council, but it was the basis on which the Group were moving forward at this stage.
2. On the basis of the above definition Officers had proceeded with the review and had undertaken a mapping process setting out Council Officers involved in regeneration and identifying a baseline of regeneration activities which the Council is currently involved in.
3. The next step would be the challenge phase. This would involve relating current regeneration activities to the City Vision, the Community Plan and the Local Strategic Partnership Plan, to see where they fit in and challenging what we are doing, why we are doing it and the evidence of the need to be carrying out these activities. Then gaps in provision could be identified and decisions made on how to fill these.
4. A draft brief would be prepared for involving consultants in the consultation phase. These consultants would have specialist expertise in consultation, particularly in the area of regeneration and would work along with the Officer team.
5. It was anticipated that consultants would be appointed by 18 January 2002, with a deadline of a final report to Members on 20 May 2002, a project plan was being prepared along these lines and Officers were attempting to work to these deadlines.
6. The next steps in the process would be consultation, comparison through benchmarking and in the compete stage, looking at how we compete and can services be delivered by anyone else.
7. Other outcomes could not be pre-empted, but it was assumed that at the end of the process there may be a Regeneration Strategy and action plan in place together with Performance Indicators for monitoring and evaluating performance.

There was an issue in relation to how this review would fit in with the organisational review by HACAS.

Members in considering the information which had been circulated commented that the review covered an extremely wide area and also covered a number of other aspects which were responsibility of other agencies. It was felt that this was due to the fact that regeneration was such a wide issue. Members emphasised that there would have to be a recognition by Officers of which aspects they could address directly and which would have to be addressed through partnerships with other agencies.

The Head of Community Support commented that the review would highlight issues which could be addressed directly by the Council and should also clarify areas which can be influenced through partnership arrangements.

Members requested that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee, providing a breakdown of the work programme and timetable for the review. The Head of Community Support advised that he anticipated that he would provide regular update reports to each meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED – (1) That the definition of regeneration as "support local communities in addressing problems of economic and social disadvantage, to achieve improved prosperity, wellbeing and quality of life" be referred to the Executive with a recommendation that it be approved as the definition of regeneration for the basis of this Best Value Review.

(2) That the Head of Community Support report to the next meeting of the Committee providing a work programme and timetable for the review and that he provide progress reports to future meetings of the Committee.

#### IOS.24/01 SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE

RESOLVED – The Council Procedure Rule 9 in relation to the duration of a meeting be suspended in order that the meeting could continue over the time of 3 hours duration.

#### IOS.25/01 CONCESSIONARY FARES BEST VALUE REVIEW

The City Treasurer submitted Financial Memo 2001/02 No. 122 advising Members of progress made on the Best Value Review of Concessionary Fares since 1 November 2001.

The Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 1 November 2001 had considered Concessionary Fares and had set a number of challenges and made a number of observations on the scheme. The City Treasurer's report set out progress with each of these challenges and observations, commenting on ways in which the scheme could be improved.

There was circulated at the meeting the interim findings of a Concessionary Fares Scheme Rural Survey which had been conducted. The main findings of the survey were highlighted.

The Head of Revenues attended the meeting and answered various Members questions in relation to the report generally and specifically the results of the survey.

He then commented that due to the additional challenges set by the Members' and the Best Value Working Group, minor enhancements needed to be made to the scope of the review in the areas of timetabling, co-opting of expert review team members and reviewing challengers. He detailed a revised scope and boundaries of the Concessionary Fares Best Value Review and asked Members to consider approving this revision.

RESOLVED – (1) That the progress to date on the Best Value Review of Concessionary Fares be noted.

(2) That the amendments to the scope of the Concessionary Fares Best Value Review as detailed in paragraph 4 and Appendix 3 of the report be agreed.

(The meeting ended at 1.20 pm)

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