

Minutes of the Joint Meeting between Carlisle Parish Councils and Carlisle City Council

30th June 2014, 7 p.m.

Scaleby Village Hall

Present: 14 Parish Council representatives, 4 City Council Members, 5 City Council Officers, 1 County Council Officer and 1 CALC Officer.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Ronnie Auld welcomed all those present and thanked Kirklington WI for providing the refreshments for the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Quilter and Martlew, Carlisle City Council, Darren Crossley and Mark Lambert, Carlisle City Council, Jocelyn Holland, Wetheral Parish Council, William Bundred, Kirkandrews on Esk Parish Council, Ian Howatt, Farlam Parish Council, William Little, Orton Parish Council and David Moorat, Brampton Parish Council.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 2nd December 2013 were agreed as a correct record.

4. Matters Arising

Parish Charter – Planning Agreement

Craig Nicholson reported that a further draft of the planning agreement of the Parish Charter has been developed following changes suggested by City Council Members. It was agreed that this would be considered by the CPCA Executive on 30th July with a view to a further consultation with the parishes. It is still envisaged that the planning agreement of the Charter will be approved at the autumn joint meeting.

It was also clarified that the new Charter is between the Parish Councils and the City Council and that the existing agreements with the County Council still stand.

5. Parish Council and Village Hall Grants

Ronnie Auld reported that the Parish Council and Village Hall grant budget for 2014/15 from the City Council had been cut by over 40%. The implication of the cut is that there had been some tough choices to make in terms of grant allocations.

In future it is proposed that grants will only be given to non-preceptable bodies. In answer to a query it was stressed that priority would be given to village halls. However existing financial reserves of the organisation will be evaluated.

In addition the City Council is considering ring fencing the Parish Council and Village Hall grants to allow projects to be funded over more than one year and ensure that underspends are not lost.

6. Digitalisation of Carlisle

Ronnie Auld reported that the broadband project operated by the County Council will come to an end in 2015. At the moment the programme is on schedule and has been delivered to approximately 37,000 residencies. Cabinets have been enabled in Carlisle, Dalston, Thursby, Rockcliffe and Brampton. Work is also ongoing in Burghby-Sands, Castle Carrock, Hayton and Wetheral.

By 2015 the 7% of residencies in the County which will not have access to superfast broadband will be identified. Cumbria County Council will then be able to bid for additional funds to improve services in these areas. It was stressed that those areas in the 7% can expect a minimum of a 2 mb service.

In addition the Carlisle City Wifi project is providing 23 free access points in high footfall areas of the City Centre. In addition Brampton, Longtown and possibly Dalston will benefit from this project. This project will be launched in late October 2014.

7. Local Plan Update

Jane Meek and Gary Legg, Carlisle City Council gave an overview of the progress with the Carlisle Local Plan. A copy of the presentation will be circulated with the minutes.

Following the presentation a wide ranging discussion was held which raised issues around converting the number of consents given for housing to completion. It appeared there still remained an issue with build rate. Some of the solutions include increasing the volume of consents and encouraging other developers to come to Carlisle rather than relying on a smaller number of known developers.

It was also highlighted in a response to a query on rural affordable housing that the policies in the new plan were much more proactive and would look at a spread of development to ensure investment in the rural areas. Linked to this was the need for provision of infrastructure services including negotiations with United Utilities.

8. Rural Tourism

Jane Meek updated the meeting on the developments taking place at the Tourist Information Centre at the Old Town Hall. It was stressed that the Tourist Information Centre should be seen as a gateway to the whole district. The City Council is keen to work with Parish Councils to promote rural tourism development. It was suggested that Parish Councils could nominate tourism representatives to work with the City Council on possible projects and look at the plans for improvements at the Old Town Hall.

The CPCA agreed to discuss the issue at its next Executive on 30th July. Jane Meek agreed to provide a short paper on the developments currently taking place.

9. Any Other Business

A suggestion was made that presentations and papers are submitted by the City Council ahead of the meeting to allow for circulation to the parishes and for comments from those parishes unable to attend the meeting.

10. Proposals for Future Meetings

It had been suggested at a previous meeting that rather than the current system of one joint meeting with the County Council and two joint meetings with the City Council per annum, two tri-partite meetings should be held with a rotating chair from the County, City or Parish Councils. This proposal has been agreed by both the City and County Councils.

It is therefore proposed that the planned joint meeting to be held in early December be moved to a November meeting with a further meeting in May each year.

All Parish Councils will be notified of the date of the next meeting once agreed.