

Meeting Date: 29th April 2014

Public/Private*: Public

Title: **Economy & Enterprise Portfolio Holder's Report –
Councillor Heather Bradley**

Local Plan

A four-week consultation on the Preferred Options Stage Two of the emerging Carlisle Local Plan commenced as envisaged on the 10th March. The consultation builds on the previous stage one consultation, with a number of policies and proposals having been refined in response to previous representations received.

The stage two consultation has sought to be as inclusive as possible with, amongst other measures, a number of drop in sessions having been held in the Old Town Hall in the City Centre and at Brampton Library. The published deadline for submitting representations on the Plan is the 4th April although there is some scope for flexibility within the programme to enable comments received and post this date to still be taken into account. Early indications are that publicity surrounding the consultation has succeeded in stimulating debate which is evident through the wide range of people and organisations who have contacted the Council with their thoughts on the Plan.

Beyond the close of the consultation efforts will focus on refining the Local Plan towards a 'publication draft' in light of the representations received. Refinements may also be necessary in response to new or updated evidence, including the viability assessment and City Centre Masterplan both of which are due to report in their final form shortly, and owing to further recent reforms to the system at the national level such as the introduction of the new National Planning Policy Guidance.

Durranhill Industrial Estate

Following further grant assistance from the Homes & Communities Agency, work has commenced on the environmental improvements to Brunel Way. Over the next few months a programme of works will take place to enhance the visual appearance of the estate entrance including new signage, landscaping and fencing.

Planning

In relation to Planning the Government has recently made two announcements of particular significance.

Firstly, on the 6th March 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government published the final version of the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) on a dedicated website. The NPPG is to be attributed the same weight as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and also led to the cancellation of further guidance documents.

Secondly, on the 6th April 2014 the (General Permitted Development) (Amendment and Consequential Provisions) Order 2014 comes into effect. In brief, this Order introduces four major changes to what needs planning permission

- a) Allow the change of use from shops (A1) and financial and professional services (A2) to houses (C3) – Class IA.
- b) Allow shops (A1) to change to banks, building societies, credit unions and friendly societies. This does not cover betting shops or payday loan shops.
- c) Agricultural buildings up to 500 square metres will also be able to change to state-funded schools and registered nurseries.
- d) Up to 450 square metres of agricultural buildings on a farm will be able to change to provide a maximum of 3 houses. This change of use will not apply to land protected – National Parks, the Broads, areas of outstanding natural beauty, conservations areas or World Heritage Sites.

Apprenticeship Event

As part of National Apprenticeship week, Carlisle City Council in partnership with the National Apprenticeship Service and supported by partners including Cumbria County Council and Cumbria Chamber of Commerce, organised a Carlisle Apprenticeship Breakfast meeting which was held on Wednesday 5th March at Carlisle College. The aim

of the event was to raise awareness of the benefits which employing an apprentice can bring to a business of any size.

Guest speakers and delegates representing over 50 local businesses took part in the event with some very positive feedback. There were speakers from businesses who already had apprentices and from former apprentices themselves. Many of the businesses attending were considering becoming part of the scheme. Information was made available to support them in this and hopefully understanding the different types of apprenticeships available, the opportunities for funding and hearing some of the positive experiences of employers and apprentices, will encourage more businesses to engage with the scheme.