
**EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE
COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON 26 AUGUST 2004**

COS.134/04 EAST CUMBRIA COUNTRYSIDE PROJECT

The Head of Culture, Leisure and Sport submitted Report CLS.12/04 regarding the future of the East Cumbria Countryside Project (ECCP).

At the Council Meeting on 3 August 2004, the issue of the future of ECCP was raised in a question relating to the Joint Carlisle and Eden Committee Meeting held on 14 May 2004. The Chairman of this Committee had therefore requested that this report be submitted to the Committee to enable Members to contribute to the issues raised.

Mr Beveridge introduced Mr Gray of ECCP.

The Committee had previously agreed that the Appendices to this report should be considered during the public part of the meeting, so the whole report was considered at this time.

The Report detailed the role of ECCP, including its relationship with Local Authority partners, namely Cumbria County Council, Eden District Council and Carlisle City Council, who are all joint funders of ECCP. The report also detailed the contribution that ECCP makes to the Council and provided details of some of the projects which ECCP has been involved in.

ECCP has an annual funding gap between core costs and core income from Local Authority partners. As an existing organisation, ECCP cannot receive external funding for core costs and the gap has therefore to be met from other sources including contract works, fees and sales. Options for the future of ECCP beyond 2008 were currently being considered and the options were detailed, these included :

- (a) maintaining status quo;
- (b) quasi independent status (community enterprise);
- (c) mainstreaming within Local Authority departments.

These longer term options would have to be considered if ECCP is to respond proactively to the challenges and opportunities arising in this new and still changing context.

In response to a Member's question, Mr Gray provided details of the type of work which ECCP undertakes and the impact this had for residents of the Carlisle urban and rural areas. In particular he focused on the work undertaken in maintaining footpaths around

the city, work on disabled access and health promotion work. ECCP were also involved in discussions on proposals for Talkin Tarn.

A Member queried the option about quasi independent status (community enterprise), commenting that he thought a Trust was more of an independent body and that if Trust status was being sought this was not essentially quasi independent.

Mr Beveridge responded that thinking has moved on and that the option was more likely to be Trust status as an independent body under a charitable trust as a legal entity in its own right.

The Portfolio Holder added that the Council was keeping an open mind at this stage, but that it was good for organisations of this kind to look at the best ways of attracting other external funding. A lot more information would have to be gathered and options considered before any decisions are made.

Mr Beveridge summarised the discussion saying that there was an issue of funding ECCP and that options were being looked at. A Trust may or may not be the best options and further examination of the options would have to be undertaken and reported back to Members at a future time.

A Member expressed hope that ECCP would be fully involved in any plans and discussions in relation to Talkin Tarn.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Committee stresses the importance of involving ECCP in discussions and formulation of options on Talkin Tarn.

(3) That the Committee looks forward to further reports in relation to the future of ECCP.