

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING
ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 17 OCTOBER 2013 AT 10.00 AM

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Bowman (Chairman), Councillors Bowditch, Graham, McDevitt, Mitchelson (as substitute for Councillor Bainbridge), Nedved, Watson and Whalen

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Bradley – Economy and Enterprise Portfolio Holder
Councillor Glover – Leader

OFFICERS: Deputy Chief Executive
Local Plans Officer
Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Planning Assistant
Planning Officer (Policy)

EEOSP.60/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Bainbridge.

EEOSP.61/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest in respect of the business to be transacted.

EEOSP.62/13 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meetings held on 12 September 2013 be noted.

EEOSP.63/13 CALL IN OF DECISIONS

There were no matters which had been the subject of call in.

EEOSP.64/13 LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

The Chairman expressed disappointment that the Chair of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) was not present at the meeting when the Panel had requested that he be invited at the last meeting. The Chairman queried whether any of the local representatives had been invited. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that he had contacted the Chair and the Vice Chair of the LEP but neither were available to attend the meeting. The Deputy Chief Executive stated that he had not been certain about who had been tasked with contacting the Chair. The Chairman of the Panel advised that in future she would ensure one person would be responsible for any given task.

The Deputy Chief Executive presented Report ED.34/13 that provided a briefing on Local Enterprise Partnerships and an update on the work of the Cumbria LEP.

The report gave the background to the Cumbria LEP and advised the Panel of the membership which consisted of six representatives from the private sector, three public sector members and three District Council representatives. Since preparation of the report Mr Martin, Leader of the County Council had been replaced by Mr Young. There were also a number of sub-groups that supported the LEP. The District Councils worked in

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pairs and Carlisle was the representative for Carlisle and Eden on the Board for the next two years. There was also a private sector advisory panel that supported the private sector board members. With regards to the public sector a working group had been established consisting of Senior Officers with responsibility for Economic Development, Planning and Housing and representatives from other public sector organisations.

A Strategic Priorities Business Plan drafted by the Cumbria LEP was approved by the LEP Board as a final draft in February 2013.

The report advised that LEPs varied in terms of capacity and whilst a number of LEPs had moved the resources from their Economic Development Companies to the LEPs in Cumbria there was very little full time resource available. The report outlined the funding issues in respect of the LEPs. The Cumbria LEP Board had recruited an Interim Business Manager, employed by Carlisle College. Although their base was at the college it was anticipated they will use various office locations throughout the county.

A number of funding programmes had been secured which the Cumbria LEP was now in the process of delivering. These included the Regional Growth Fund (RGF), Cumbria Infrastructure Fund (CIF) and the Rural Growth network.

Since LEPs were originally set up their importance had grown and the expectations regarding the breadth of influence had also increased. A report was considered at the February meeting of the LEP board on the Local Transport Body (LTB) and it was agreed that the LEP would nominate a representative to sit on that board.

The report outlined the key actions identified in the Government's response to the Heseltine review which was issued on 20 March 2013. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had recently advised that further funding would be made available to LEPs to prepare Strategic Plans and for EU investment strategies. They would need to link to the response to the Heseltine Review and the creation of a new Single Local Growth Fund from 2015 and an expectation that LEPs would develop long term strategies through a new multi-year strategic plan. The DCLG had accepted that that would be a significant change for some LEPs and therefore a further £250,000 per LEP was being made available for each over the next two years.

It was important for the public sector to engage with the LEP in a co-ordinated way to ensure that the key priorities across Cumbria were delivered, particularly as the responsibilities were extended to include areas which had traditionally been led by the public sector. The report explained that there were a number of issues which needed discussion and clarification as the LEP grows, including clear communication, protocols, good governance, transparent decision making and high standards of probity.

In considering the report Members raised the following comments and questions:

- *What influence did the City Council have on decision making? If there was none what could Members do to influence that process?*

The Leader advised that there were three representatives on the LEP for the six Districts. Carlisle worked with Eden District Council and the Leader of the City Council was the current representative on the LEP. The representatives had some influence but the Board had recently been refreshed and there were currently a number of people new to the Board and the governance of the Board was not clear. The City Council did have a voice

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on the Board but it was only one voice. The Board was private sector led which the Leader believed was the right approach and there was a large amount of work to be undertaken in a short space of time. Beneath the Board were a number of writing groups that were currently writing policies.

- *It was important that information from the LEP meetings was made public. The minutes of the meeting in June were on the website and a meeting was scheduled for August but those minutes were not available.*

The Leader advised that an away day had been held looking at the priorities of the LEP. One of the four priorities was the M6 corridor. However that had since been removed and replaced by food and drink. Whilst that was important the Leader was worried that the M6 corridor would be left out on a limb. The M6 corridor would underpin all sectors within Cumbria. The Leader also believed that the LEP should also look at the digital creative industry as graduates were leaving university in Carlisle with good grades but moving out of the city as there was no work for them in that field.

The Deputy Chief Executive agreed that more transparency of the LEP Board was necessary. A Technical Officers Group was a key part of the LEP and a meeting was scheduled with the Officers involved in that group.

- *The M6 corridor had been a priority in the past then removed before the Board had discussed the matter. What projects has the City Council put forward? And if they were rejected why were they rejected?*

The Deputy Chief Executive agreed that some of the ideas put forward over the life of the LEP had been removed. The LEP had a private sector led approach and other private sector projects had gone ahead. The Deputy Chief Executive had been in negotiations with the private sector partners north of Carlisle but they did not feel that development around Kingmoor was appropriate at the present time. Ideas had been sought in respect of bids to the Regional Growth Fund but none had been submitted formally.

- *Nothing in the report was relevant to Carlisle.*

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that was because the Board had not signed up to anything in Carlisle. There were issues that were confidential at present and Officers were actively trying to pursue businesses to re-locate to Carlisle.

- *A report on the M6 corridor was being chased by the LEP in June. Had that report been written?*

The Leader advised that the report had been written and sent to the LEP but had not been circulated to the Board before the meeting. Members had received the report at the next meeting but by that time the matter had been removed from the list of priorities.

- *If the Leader and the Council stated that they had no faith in the LEP Board then Council and the Panel should do something about it. How would the Board be effective in future?*

The Deputy Chief Executive believed that apart from the current issues the LEP across the county provided the opportunity for Councils to bid for funding. The Board were able to bid for EU funding for a seven year period. The first drafts of the bid would be available next

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week and the bids judged in February/March. It was important that Carlisle received a fair share of any funding awarded as it could be used as capital or to support programmes. There were ten categories dealing with issues such as low carbon emissions.

The Deputy Chief Executive believed that the LEP was evolving and the recent private sector refresh of the board would enable better transparency from a district office perspective.

The Leader explained that the public sector representation on the Board had also been refreshed. The previous Leader of the County Council had particular views and that Leader had now been replaced and the group was a more stable public sector group. There was now a feeling that each District should be represented on the group. There were issues with the governance of the group and papers were not received until the night before the meeting. That did not allow the Leader time to discuss any of the issues with Members or Officers.

- *The Panel will make another request to the Chair of the LEP to attend a meeting.*
- *Did the Eden District Council representative pass on relevant information to the Carlisle representative?*

The Leader advised that he passed the papers to that representative. He had tried to determine the process if neither he nor his substitute could attend a meeting. He had been advised that the representative must be a Member and not an Officer.

- *The whole process seems bureaucratic. The Panel should do all that it can to find out what is happening and scrutinise the Board.*
- *It was surprising that issues were agreed at one Board meeting then gone at the next. There must be a Board within a Board. There was a concern that Carlisle was not getting a fair share of funding.*

The Leader explained that it was difficult keeping to Government timetables in respect of submitting bids. The writing and technical Officers groups were doing what they thought best. Meetings of the LEP lasted two to three hours and there was a lot on the agenda. There was a lot of reading ahead of the meeting and Members had to ensure that what was said was recorded. It was essential that Cumbria spent any money it was awarded. Other areas of the country had a stronger voice. Cumbria had to submit bids but they needed a solid base or the money would go to other parts of the country.

- *The LEP had to support Cumbria. Carlisle needed to see the development of the university and the southern bypass. Projects were not reaching the top table. What was the role of the Interim Business Manager?*

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that he had met with the Interim Business Manager and whilst it was an interim role the intention was to produce the relevant documents. Other LEPs looked different to the partnership arrangements in the Cumbria LEP but Cumbria had firm partnership working. The Deputy Chief Executive hoped that the LEP would look at the longer term issues.

The Deputy Chief Executive agreed that it was important to have transparency and that better governance arrangements were put in place. A lot of the work was done in

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improving areas of greater need. Match funding was required and that was not always 50/50. There were different rules for different funding. However it was still important to submit projects. Following the next LEP meeting it was anticipated that there would be a flurry of activity.

- *How much does the LEP have to spend over the next few years and on what will they be spending it?*
- *The LEPs have to bid for money. The Panel supported the Chair and Business Manager and the details of the schemes put forward. The LEP were previously involved in the provision of Broadband. Was that issue still being considered?*

The Leader advised that Broadband had not been discussed in the meetings that he had attended. Discussions around infrastructure had focussed on roads. The Leader believed that providing Broadband was more important than building roads.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that funds had not been allocated in respect of Connected Cumbria although the matter had been discussed at previous meetings of the LEP.

- *It may be useful to have a session on Broadband in Cumbria and invite partners to the scrutiny session.*

RESOLVED: 1) That Report ED.34/13 be noted.

- 2) There was concern about the lack of information from the LEP over recent months
- 3) There was concern about the lack of discussion in respect of the M6 corridor which was vital for Carlisle
- 4) That the Deputy Chief Executive draft a letter on behalf of the Chair of the Panel to the Chair of the LEP and invite him to a future meeting of the Panel
- 5) That details of schemes put forward by Carlisle City Council be made available
- 6) That the Panel hold discussions at a future meeting on Broadband issues.

EEOSP.65/13 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented report OS.24/13 which provided an overview of matters related to the work of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Details of the latest version of the work programme and Key Decision items relevant to the Panel were also included.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reported that:

- The Notice of Key Executive Decisions had been published on 29 September 2013. There were no decisions which fell into the remit of the Panel.
- There were no Minute Excerpts received from the Executive's meeting held on 30 September 2013.

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- The proposed visit to the Business Interaction Centre will be held on Wednesday 6 November 2013 at 2:00. Members and substitutes of the Panel will be invited. If a Member was unable to attend on that day it may be possible for a separate visit to be arranged.
- Work Programme – The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented the current work programme and advised that one of the issues for discussion at the next meeting was Claimed Rights. It was agreed that the Director of Local Environment would write to the relevant Officer from the County Council and invite him to attend the meeting.
- Recycling Task and Finish Group – a Member of the Task and Finish Group thanked the Director of Local Environment for the opportunity for the group to visit two rounds to see how recycling was collected. However Members did not have time to talk with the crews and hoped that could be arranged in the future. Issues were raised about mixed waste in green bins and materials that were put in the bins. Overall Members were pleased with the work undertaken. The Member suggested that a visit to the mechanical treatment plant may be useful.

A Member was concerned that there had been no opportunity to speak with the crews as he believed it was difficult for the crews to speak to Members while the Director of Local Environment was present. The Member was concerned about the heavy lifting involved and that when crews relayed complaints to the office there was often no-one available to deal with the complaint.

A Member was concerned that residents were not playing their part in recycling and believed that residents should be educated in better recycling.

RESOLVED –1) That, subject to the issues raised above, the Overview Report incorporating the Work Programme and Forward Plan items relevant to this Panel be noted.

2) That a visit to the Business Interaction Centre be held on 6 November 2013

3) That the Director of Local Environment writes to the relevant Officer of the County Council in respect of claimed rights and invite him to the next meeting of the Panel.

EEOSP.66/13 CARLISLE DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION

The Local Plans Officer presented report ED.32/13 which provided an update on the consultation on the Local Plan Preferred Options outlining the general issues that had been raised and an explanation of the next steps.

The report gave the background to the Carlisle District Local Plan (CDLP) which would set out a strategy and policies for the long-term vision for Carlisle, detailed development management policies and site allocations for a range of uses including housing. Consultation on the Preferred Options ran from 29 July 2013 to 16 September 2013. However, late submissions were accepted from Parish Councils due to difficulties of Parish Councils to organise meetings over the summer. The Carlisle District Local Plan would provide a statutory planning policy framework for Carlisle District that would provide developer and community confidence in decision making. The framework would enable the development and expansion of quality homes and businesses, the delivery of infrastructure and help to foster a wider cultural and leisure offer.

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The consultation had ended on 16 September 2013 and responses were still awaited from Parish Councils and other organisations that were in the process of finalising their comments. At the time of writing the report there had been 187 responses with 895 separate comments. An appendix to the report outlined the nature of the responses which had focussed on housing related issues and location of sites. There had been a mixture of supportive comments with alternative sites put forward, but there were also a number of objections.

From the assessment of the responses a number of sites had been put forward which would need to be assessed and scrutinised further. Work would also need to be undertaken to consider the viability of new sites and to carry out an up to date viability assessment.

The evidence based on gypsy and traveller sites had concluded that there was a need to allocate additional pitches over the Carlisle District Local Plan period. Together with the work that was forthcoming on the City Centre Masterplan and further updates to other evidence, it would be advisable to plan an additional stage of public consultation to allow the public the opportunity to comment on the changes and alternative sites being put forward.

In considering the report Members raised the following comments and questions:

- *Had the consultation now closed?*

The Local Plans Officer advised that although the consultation had closed Officers were aware that it may have been difficult for Parish Councils to hold meetings over the summer period. Therefore Officers had allowed Parish Councils to submit their responses at a later date. However draft responses had been received which would need to be confirmed at the next meeting of those Parish Councils. A draft response had also been received from the County Council with a full response expected later.

- *Brownfield sites had been allocated for a number of years. Would the new plan consider mixed uses for those sites?*

The Local Plans Officer advised that Officers had tried to review the sites as they were delegated which reflected their original uses. The use of the sites would be reviewed in the next stage of consultation. Part of the consultation period would be for people to put forward ideas for preferred sites and how they would be allocated.

- *A Member had met with the Leader of Cumbria County Council the night before the meeting of the Local Plan Working Group. The Leader advised that he was unaware that the interim report from the County Council had been submitted and there had been no discussion on schooling in the area.*

The Local Plans Officer advised that a meeting in respect of education scheduled to be held yesterday had been postponed.

The Deputy Chief Executive stated that it was good to know that such discussions were taking place as the Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Economic Development were clear on the implications of housing growth including schooling.

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- *How was it decided which options were pursued? There had been two areas of Corby Hill where development had taken place. The major development had taken place to the north west but most of the facilities were on the north east of the village.*

The Local Plans Officer explained that a number of factors were taken into account when deciding which sites were most suited to development. If residents had any comments or objections they could be made known through the consultation process.

Officers were currently looking at the responses which would then be presented to the cross party Local Plan Working Group meetings. A full day meeting was being planned to look at the responses and the advice of Officers. Officers were trying to keep to the timetable and put any decisions from the Local Plan Working Group back out for consultation. The process was ongoing and the Planning Inspector would make the final comments.

- *Communities were being lost as children from village schools were being bussed into the city to attend schools while children from city schools were being bussed into villages.*
- *Officers would also provide comments but the ultimate decision would be made by Council. What was the timescale for the process?*

The Local Plans Officer explained that recommendations made by the Local Plan Working Group would be submitted to this Panel for consideration. Officers were still working on a few evidence bases. The next consultation would include the City Centre Masterplan and gypsy and traveller sites. The next phase of consultation would start in January 2014 and would go through the Council's Committee system before being submitted to Council in March 2014. When the new Local Plan was finalised it would go out to final consultation before submission to the Planning Inspector for implementation in 2015.

- *The Planning Unit had coped very well with the enormous changes there had been in planning policies. Members praised the work undertaken by the Officers involved in the development of the new Local Plan.*

Officers had found the Member Working Group process invaluable in developing the new Local Plan.

RESOLVED: 1) That Report ED.32/13 – Carlisle District Local Plan Consultation be noted.

2) That Members looked forward to the next stage of the Plan being submitted to the Panel.

EEOSP.67/13 OLD TOWN HALL – PHASE 2 UPDATE

The Chairman expressed disappointment that the Culture, Health, Leisure and Young People Portfolio Holder was not in attendance at the meeting as the update to the Old Town Hall could impact on tourism. The Economy and Enterprise Portfolio Holder advised that the update also related to her Portfolio.

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The Deputy Chief Executive presented Report ED.33/13 that updated the Panel on Phase 2 of the Old Town Hall scheme. The matter had been given consideration by the Executive at their meeting on 30 September 2013 who had decided:

That the Executive:

1. Noted progress on the preparatory work for Phase 2 Improvements to the Old Town Hall and supported recommended ongoing actions to deliver the project.
2. Approved for recommendation to Council, the re-profiling and release of funding of £797,000, profiled £62,000 in 2013/14, £698,000 in 2014/15 and £38,000 in 2015/16 to commence work on the Phase 2 in line with the programme outlined in Report ED.27/13.

The report provided the background to the scheme and advised that the continued deterioration of the condition of the Old Town Hall had continued. That had necessitated progression of a Phase 1 repair programme to address structural and weatherproofing problems. In addition some internal refurbishment had been undertaken to the area occupied by the Tourist Information Centre and Assembly Room, including redecoration, new internal lighting and carpet. That work had now been completed with the support of English Heritage grant funding. The completed project did not include substantial features of the original project as drawn up in 2010 which now formed the subject for the Phase 2 project.

The report outlined the purpose of the Phase 2 project and the scope of the project. A Project Steering Group had been established to oversee delivery of the project. The project approach was for the Steering Group to review previously considered options and develop proposals for improvements to the building and public realm not covered by the completed Phase 1 project. Those improvements included restoration and upgrade of the building, retention and upgrading of the Tourist Information Centre in its current location, restoration of the Assembly Room and external upgrades. The report summarised the anticipated results of the project.

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that whilst a previous design team was appointed for the 2009/10 review, due to the time gap, further procurement exercises would be required to appoint a specialist design team and contractor to help develop and deliver the Phase 2 project. An initial programme was set out in the report but it was acknowledged that it would be further refined as the project developed. The programme of work would also include a workshop with Members on options to be held in November 2013.

The Executive had approved the re-profiling and release of funding to commence work on the Phase 2 project in line with the programme outlined in the report and outlined the budget breakdown. To enable the forecast main capital expenditure to be fully expended during 2014/15 a provisional budget of £25,000 had been approved to cover project management fees and appointment of a project team from October 2013. The budgets will be reviewed and adjusted as project content and costs were developed and confirmed.

In considering the report Members raised the following comments and questions:

- *What was the intended use for the Assembly Rooms?*

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The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the proposed programme would be circulated to the Executive, Portfolio Holder, Overview and Scrutiny and the Task and Finish Group for them to provide their views on what they would like to see as part of the update. The Project Management Group would also look at the future of the Tourist Information service and how the service had changed since the last review. Discussions on ideas would be held with the Portfolio Holder and those ideas would then be submitted to the Executive and the Panel to allow them the opportunity to discuss the options.

The Economy and Environment Portfolio Holder advised that there would be a workshop for Members in November that would explore any new ideas. Community use of the Assembly rooms was popular and the Portfolio Holder would like to see that continue and used more often. There had been a suggestion that the Assembly Rooms could be used as a venue for weddings.

- *The Assembly Rooms have great potential but would need to be used regularly. The use of the Rooms for coffee mornings had reduced due to the appearance of the Rooms.*

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that he had attended a meeting of the Project Management Group earlier that week and Officers had looked at the previous documents and work that had been undertaken in respect of refurbishment of the Old Town Hall. Those documents would be utilised when the procurement process began.

The Deputy Chief Executive further advised that work on disability access would be difficult due to the layout of the Assembly Rooms and the structure and age of the building. Technical solutions would be examined.

- *The retail offer was lacking. The Task and Finish Group had queried the use of the made in Cumbria label but that had been blocked. The Assembly Rooms needed to be commercial.*
- The Assembly Rooms were not viable as a meeting place.
- Signposting needs to be improved so tourists know how to get to the Assembly Rooms.

The Portfolio Holder advised that part of the scheme was to improve the public realm around the site and signposting would be part of the scheme. Officers were also investigating the latest availability of IT to improve the offer within the Tourist Information Centre. All of the ideas to date would be presented at the workshop in November.

In response to a query from a Member the Deputy Chief Executive advised that the Project Steering Group referred to in the report was the Project Management Group which consisted of Officers whose work included the Tourist Information Centre.

- *One of the proposals put forward by the Task and Finish Group was that the group met every six months to monitor the work being undertaken. However the Group had not met. The Member was concerned that the Project Management Group was Officer led and did not have any Members on the Group.*

The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the Project Management Group had received all of the information from the Task and Finish Group and the Manager of the Tourist

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Information Centre was part of that Project Management Group. The Group would listen to comments from Members and take note of their ideas.

The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that the nearby empty shop had now been let.

- *With regard to signage there was currently a group looking at de-cluttering the City Centre made up of City and County Councillors. The Group had already made some decisions in respect of the removal of some signage.*

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the options being developed took full cognisance of the public realm de-clutter.

- *Suggestions from the workshop in November would come before the Panel for discussion. When those discussions took place it would be useful to have information about the previous hire of the Rooms.*

The Portfolio Holder believed that the use of the Assembly Rooms must be flexible to make the Rooms as sustainable as possible.

The Overview and Scrutiny Support Officer reminded Members that the information regarding the hire of the Assembly Rooms over the previous four to five years was included in the Task Group report.

- *It may be useful to have proposed dates for consultation included in the programme. The programme indicated that an invitation to tender was scheduled for October*

The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the tender was for a technical consultant in respect of architectural advice although previously obtained information would also be used.

- *A Member proposed that the Task and Finish Group be recalled and that any dates for Councillor consultation be included in the programme.*

RESOLVED: 1) That Report ED.33/13 – Old Town Hall – Phase 2 Update be noted.

2) That the date of the workshop be circulated to all Members of the Council

3) That information within the Task Group report relating to the usage and income of the Assembly Room be updated and circulated to Members of the Panel by the Scrutiny Officer.

4) That a list of dates for consultation be included in the programme

(The meeting ended at 11:50am)