

Environment & Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:
A.4

Meeting Date: 10th April 2014
Portfolio: Economy and Enterprise
Key Decision: Not Applicable:
Within Policy and Budget Framework
Public / Private Public

Title: CARLISLE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP
Report of: Director of Economic Development
Report Number: ED 18/14

Purpose / Summary:

The purpose of this report is to brief Members of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel on the Carlisle Economic Partnership, its priorities and action plan

Questions for/input required from Scrutiny

1. Links with the Local Economic Partnership

Tracking

Executive:	
Overview and Scrutiny:	
Council:	

1. BACKGROUND

The Carlisle Economic Partnership (CEP) is a public/private board designed to assist the growth of the functional economic area. The partnership was established in August 2011 and has been modelled on the County-wide Local Economic Partnership (LEP) in order to feed into and support the LEP.

A fundamental piece of work for the partnership was the development of a robust and comprehensive evidence base which has helped inform the development and implementation of a range of actions to help improve the local economy and drive growth (Report to E&E O and S 29/11/12). These are categorised under the following headings:-

- Priority 1 – Business
- Priority 2 – Skills and Employment
- Priority 3 – Infrastructure
- Priority 4 – Image

Sub Groups have been tasked with identifying actions for each of the four priority areas. Priority 3 Infrastructure is split into two – the Digital Economy Sub Group and the Infrastructure Group.

Priority 1 – Business

The purpose of this group is to inspire and support businesses to reach their potential to grow Carlisle's economy and jobs. Actions include:

- Establish Carlisle Business Growth Hub to support businesses
- Promote and support enhanced international trade activity
- Establish a task group with key manufacturers to identify opportunities and agree
- plans to grow manufacturing
- Develop the food and drink supply chain
- Encourage and facilitate use of low carbon renewable to support sustainability and
- growth of Carlisle businesses

Updates on Priority Actions:-

- Business Growth Hub is now established
- European Structural and Investment (ESIF) – follow on Business Start-up Support and Growth Hub are identified in the ESIF as anchor projects
- Scottish Borders – the Chamber of Commerce are organising an event on 16th May on potential Scottish Independence with Dumfries & Galloway Chamber

Priority 2 – Skills & Employment

The purpose of this group is to ensure motivated and skilled people, both employees and entrepreneurs. Actions include:-

- Complete Carlisle skills audit
- Engagement in Cumbria's LEP's skills and Employment Commission to examine challenges of deprivation, job opportunities and attracting and retaining graduates
- Support high quality careers advice
- Engaging current and emerging skills and employment funding

Updates on Priority Actions:-

- Careers Event – was held on 30th January 2014 at the Sands Centre. Both the MP and University of Cumbria supported the event. Different training providers were available to give advice mid afternoon until mid evening. The event was aimed at Year 8 upwards including adults
- The Edge – This project is now at the stage of getting businesses on board and progress is being made collating training needs information.
- Carlisle College are looking to offer Institute of Leadership Management (ILM) units in Leadership & Management
- Employment Skills Group – are scheduled to meet again soon. Alan Wilson is the Chairman.
- Apprenticeship Breakfast Event was held at Carlisle College on Wednesday, 5th March

Priority 3 – Infrastructure

The purpose of this is to ensure the right infrastructure is in place to support business competitiveness and growth. This is split into two groups – Digital Economy and Infrastructure. The Digital Economy Sub-Group's key actions are firstly to stimulate demand and create relevant business cases for private sector superfast (and faster) broadband investment and universal/enhanced mobile phone coverage. Secondly to encourage take up of broadband opportunities/addressing availability of wifi.

The Digital Carlisle Group is leading on the work to develop a commercial model to provide free Wifi in the city centre. Tenders have been submitted by three companies interested in providing Wifi within Carlisle City Centre. The selection and appointment process took place in February, aiming for implementation by Spring 2014.

The Infrastructure Sub-Group have a number of key actions including:-

- Co-ordination of public transport provision
- Enhancing and developing key employment sites particularly along the M6 Corridor
- Support airport related activities
- Support and enhance Carlisle City Centre
- Ensure the strategic housing needs to support the economic growth forecasts in the
- Local Plan

Updates on Priority Actions:-

The Local Plan work is leading on this priority.

City Council Planning Policy Team are about to go out for Stage 2 Preferred Options Consultation.

Durranhill Industrial Estate £250K obtained from Homes & Communities Agency for improved infrastructure

Priority 4 - Image

The Sense of Place/Carlisle Story is fundamental to this and Action Plan has been developed.

Updates on Priority Actions:-

The Carlisle Ambassadors Group was launched last September on the back of the Carlisle Story. The Ambassadors meetings are designed to bring people together from businesses and organisations across Carlisle and the Region. The meetings are held on a bi-monthly basis in different venues to enable the Ambassadors to see new developments and initiatives. The last meetings of the Carlisle Ambassadors took place on 27th March 2014 at the Business Interaction Centre and included presentations from UKTI and Virgin Trains.

Cumbria Tourism have used the Carlisle Story narrative and images within their latest marketing

A marketing workshop was held in January to demonstrate how to use the Carlisle Story Toolkit, with 38 attendees from a range of sectors receiving their own copy of the Toolkit to take away.

Government Departments such as; Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) and Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) have been in contact having picked up on the Carlisle Story, so it is starting to have the affect of raising awareness of Carlisle at this level.

2. CEP ACTION PLAN 2013/15

Over the last 12 months the Partnership has achieved a number of its objectives and is currently in the process of reviewing its actions and has identified 17 actions it wishes to explore over the next 12 months.

Recommendations for Development:-

Recommendation 1: CEP gives consideration as to how Carlisle can extend its economic reach to bring more business and consumer spend into the city region.

Recommendation 2: The CEP should consider conducting further research into the long term economically inactive to establish potential partnership actions.

Recommendation 3: Conduct further research into outmigration of young people from Carlisle to establish potential partnership actions.

Recommendation 4: The CEP should carry out research into the footprint and nature of manufacturing in Carlisle and derive issues / opportunities from this.

Recommendation 5: City partners establish a commission for education and skills development to focus on key areas of underachievement.

Recommendation 6: The proposed Education commission also focuses on improving business / education links to improve awareness and understanding of the opportunities for an employability of young people.

Recommendation 7: The CEP conducts further research to establish the potential (within key sectors) for improving 'exports' (domestic and international) and establish support to ensure that products and services with identified potential reach new markets beyond Cumbria and the UK.

Recommendation 8: The CEP explores with partners a reviewed tourism strategy that is in keeping with developing the city as a historic destination.

Recommendation 9: The CEP develops a focussed campaign to further Carlisle's image as a place to visit, learn, do business and invest.

Recommendation 10: The CEP develops clear actions for improving the number of new start-ups from all sectors, but particularly focussed on high growth.

Recommendation 11: The CEP and Carlisle City Council ensure that maximum value is gained for the Growth Hub / Rural Growth Network / Business Interaction Centre by aligning communications, monitoring and agreeing a pathway for growing and securing established businesses.

Recommendation 12: The CEP carries out mapping of broadband provision and uptake across Carlisle and works with any relevant parties to improve provision for and uptake by Carlisle Businesses.

Recommendation 13: CEP to establish Carlisle's position regarding investment and external funding.

Recommendation 14: CEP works to establish the factors that attract and dissuade businesses and lenders from investing in Carlisle.

Recommendation 15: CEP establishes an inward investment plan for Carlisle, working with Invest in Cumbria, UKTI and the Chamber of Commerce.

Recommendation 16: *CEP conducts further work with the Cumbria Intelligence Observatory and University of Cumbria Centre for Regional Economic Development (CRED) to understand better the sector issues and future needs.*

Recommendation 17: *CEP conducts an annual 'facing the future' exercise to assess the direction of the economy and employment trend.*

2. CONCLUSION

The CEP set itself a challenging agenda, however by working in partnership a number of initiatives and projects to support Carlisle economy have been delivered. The CEP are now looking to build on these initiatives and will be developing a new Action Plan based on the recommendations above.

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**Appendices
attached to report:**

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: