

Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:
A.4

Meeting Date: 23 APRIL 2015
Portfolio: Economy and Enterprise
Key Decision: No
Within Policy and
Budget Framework YES
Public / Private Public

Title: CARLISLE STORY AND CARLISLE AMBASSADORS
PROGRAMME
Report of: DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Report Number: ED 19/15

Purpose / Summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the Carlisle Story and further details on the Carlisle Ambassadors Programme 2015.

Recommendations:

The Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel are asked to note the Report.

Tracking

Executive:	
Overview and Scrutiny:	
Council:	

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Economic Review of Carlisle identified the economic potential of Carlisle and the need to extend its city region influence outwards to capture the benefits of a larger labour pool, a more significant business base and greater retail/leisure footfall into the city centre.
- 1.2 In order to do this, Carlisle needs to raise its profile, put Carlisle on the map, on the list of choices for visitors and investors alike. Key elements already in place to help us in raising the profile of Carlisle are the Carlisle Story, Visual Expression (Brand) and the Carlisle Ambassador programme.

2. PLACE MANAGEMENT

- 2.1 A key initiative to help realise the Sense of Place agenda is the Carlisle Ambassador programme. This programme, which was launched in July 2013, has brought together businesses from across the City with the common purpose of bringing the Carlisle Story to life.
- 2.2 In December 2014, Michelle Masters of Michelle Masters Consulting and Kate Wilson of Business Toolbox Cumbria were appointed to drive forward the 2015 Carlisle Ambassadors' programme. Their remit is to ensure that the Carlisle Ambassador programme provides maximum support and benefit to businesses connected with the area, and to the city itself. The appointment is funded by contributions from members of the Ambassador Programme. The scheme aims to unite companies, organisations and individuals in a powerful network to change perceptions of Carlisle and raise the areas profile as a prime business location. Kate and Michelle can be contacted via Email: info@carlisleambassadors.co.uk

3. CARLISLE AMBASSADOR PROGRAMME 2015

- 3.1 The 2015 Carlisle Ambassador programme offers six meetings on a bi-monthly cycle, held at interesting venues that will showcase Carlisle and beyond. Social media channels have been established ready to support local business news and events, and the new website is up and running www.carlisleambassadors.co.uk . The programme will provide a powerful business network, where people can interact with others, forge stronger connections and learn first-hand about big decisions that affect Carlisle. It provides a forum to share ideas, collaborate on projects to make a difference and benefit Carlisle and the wider area.

- 3.2 **Carlisle Ambassadors** can be defined as.....*‘A proactive community of passionate individuals, businesses and organisations who participate in projects to raise the profile of Carlisle and make it a better place to live, work and visit. The Ambassadors have influence, and directly help to “give a voice” to Carlisle locally, within Cumbria, and further afield.’*
- 3.3 The 2015 Ambassador Programme was launched in January and was attended by over 150 people representing businesses across the City. A summary of the meeting is attached at appendix A.
- 3.4 The second meeting at Carlisle Racecourse was attended by 220 business people. A summary of the meeting is attached at appendix B.
- 3.5 The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 21st May 2015 and will take place in the newly opened Arts Centre in the Old Fire Station.

4. **OUTCOMES**

- 4.1 Both the January and March meetings have been oversubscribed with waiting lists for places. Delegates have been keen to stay to network, exchange ideas or collaborate on projects, with a positive energy already driving activity. The key message from the first meeting: ‘Positive things happen to positive places’ is being repeated and inspiring others to action.
- 4.2 High profile social media coverage includes:
- Carlisle Ambassador website and discussion forum established with 7,500 views in the last 2 months
 - Twitter account, 1051 followers
 - Facebook page, 265 ‘likes’
 - Google+, 329 in circles. Over 5000 views
 - LinkedIn group, 515 members.
- 4.3 The forum page on the website is generating discussion and some great ideas for projects. Businesses are taking up these ideas and running with them, with projects being delivered through collaboration. Individuals and businesses are also blogging, tweeting and writing articles.
- 4.4 Media activity has seen articles in the following publications: In Cumbria, Carlisle Living, News & Star and the Cumberland News. The press, local radio (CFM) and

ITV Border have conducted interviews and attended Ambassadors meetings with subsequent coverage.

- 4.5 Memberships - To date, over 45 businesses have applied to pay membership fees and become an official Carlisle Ambassador. Members are listed on the website membership directory, with each stating why they felt it was important to become an Ambassador for Carlisle.

5. RESOURCES

The range of resources available on the website is growing with individuals and businesses being encouraged to use them to promote the area. These include:

- 5.1 **The Carlisle Story Book:** The Carlisle Story provides the narrative and consistent positive message which can be used by all Ambassadors.
- 5.2 **The Carlisle Toolkit** which introduces and shapes a visual expression which is used to communicate and illustrate Carlisle's unique story. The expression (brand) is based on the city's big idea and themes and is being used more widely, with businesses applying the narrative, images and expression within their own publications, on websites, in signage, presentations and marketing materials.
- 5.3 **The Carlisle Prospectus** provides a great visual guide to why Carlisle is a great place to live, work, invest and visit. It is available in both mini and wide versions, electronic and hard copy. The prospectus has been used to promote Carlisle at events, as part of bids for funding and has also been featured on the website of a local business following the January Ambassador meeting.
- 5.4 **Images** - The growing image bank, 'e' banners and the Carlisle Ambassadors' Logo are also being widely used in print and via electronic means, especially websites and social media.
- 5.5 **Hoardings / Banners** – the design toolkits are being put to use around the City on banners, window decals, hoardings and signage associated with developments (The Halston, Old Town Hall, Durranshill) and marketing of events and in the City Centre.

The above resources and the Carlisle Ambassador Programme are important 'tools' to help raise ambition and aspiration amongst local residents, young people and businesses. They provide a mechanism to grow Carlisle by encouraging people to view us in a positive

light by explaining why Carlisle is special, how we are creating a better place, what we offer and our plans for the future. The initiative is already delivering results with increased interest in the City from Government (DCLG and BIS), potential developers and investors.

For further information, or to access resources, visit www.carlisleambassador.co.uk

CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Members are asked to note the content of the report in order that they are appropriately informed with regards to current and forthcoming key initiatives associated with the Sense of Place programme.

8. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

8.1 The programme directly supports and cuts across a number of the corporate priorities including:

- Promotion of Carlisle as a prosperous City, one in which we can all be proud.
- Supporting the growth of more high quality and sustainable business and employment opportunities.
- Working more effectively with partners to achieve the City Council's priorities.

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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:

- None

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS/RISKS:

Chief Executive's -

Deputy Chief Executive –

Economic Development –

Governance –

Local Environment –

Resources -

Carlisle Ambassadors Meeting Summary

Date: Thursday 29th January. **Venue:** The Halston Aparthotel Function Suite.

Despite the heavy snow and severe weather conditions, we were absolutely delighted that over 150 people still made it to the first Carlisle Ambassadors' meeting of 2015. To view the final list of attendees, please click this link: [Carlisle Ambassadors Final attendee list – January 2015 Meeting](#).

If you were unable to attend but would like to see the programme, please click here: [Carlisle Ambassador Final Agenda January Meeting](#).



After Michelle and Kate opened the meeting, we heard from an excellent range of speakers, who all share a common passion to influence the future of the city. Simon Harrison, co-owner of [The Halston](#) talked about developing the hotel within the much loved old post office and Lonsdale buildings, and his passion for making Carlisle the best it can be. It was a risky venture during difficult economic times, but “things that are truly worthwhile are rarely without effort” and as we listened to Simon in the stunning function suite, there was an overwhelming feeling that the Halston has really made a positive difference to the city.

He went on to say that “Carlisle, like all cities, is in business”. It is “in competition to develop and grow, attract new population, hold on to its young, develop and retain skills and jobs, and look after its ageing population”. Simon believes that the Carlisle Ambassadors is the vehicle for proactive partnerships between the public and private sector, combined with the people who live and own the city. “By joining us early you can have a real influence in shaping Carlisle and Cumbria. It is not just another networking group. It is a group of like minded people who are passionate about our county and capital city, and who want to influence it socially, economically and physically” His take away message was “positive things happen to positive people!” A rallying call that was echoed by all who followed on the day.



Jason Gooding, the Chief Executive at [Carlisle City Council](#) spoke to us next. He gave us the background to the birth of the Carlisle Ambassadors. A concept which started taking shape in his mind when he was in Coventry and saw how well they had constructed a narrative for the city, that was consistent, credible and compelling. When Burnley did something similar around five years ago, he began to think “so why not Carlisle?” The City Council started the programme eighteen months ago, but Jason and the team at the city council have always taken a back seat, whilst being there to support the initiative. They want others to shape its future in a collaborative way, in the way that Simon reflected in his speech. He left us with the compelling message that we need to make the place the hero, and to make it natural to be optimistic and proud of Carlisle. “We can’t choose Carlisle if it is not even on the menu!” so we all need to make sure it is there to select, whether it is to live, work invest or visit the City of the Lakes.



Fred Story, Chairman of [Story Homes](#) and CEO of [Story Contracting](#), addressed the room about his involvement in the Carlisle Ambassadors from the earliest days, and his desire for it to make a tangible difference to the city and the wider area. He said “at the heart of the project was the idea of collaboration to deliver projects of real value”. This includes sharing best practice and creating a stronger business network, using local suppliers to benefit the area, and having fun while we do it! Collectively we can make a difference by delivering on the big ideas from more sporting and cultural events to creating an iconic symbol for the city as the North East has done with The Angel of the North. “Anything is possible if we pull together.” Fred reminded that the council is supporting all of us in this and can help to facilitate projects. We also have a supportive local MP who was present at the meeting. He also entertained the audience with his passion for keeping Carlisle looking at its

best, admitting that he has been known to stop the car and clean the signs at the entrance to the city! His summary was “worthwhile projects, worthwhile meetings” and working collaboratively for “team Carlisle, team Cumbria”. The area (and all of us) will be much richer from the experience of getting to know each other, through working on a variety of projects that individually would not be so effective.



Next to speak was Andy King, formerly Chief Executive of [Carlisle Leisure](#) (CLL), and now Regional Director of [Greenwich Leisure Limited](#) (GLL), who gave us background to the merger between the companies, and the benefits this brings to Carlisle and Cumbria. Andy explained that, with an overwhelming vote of support from his staff at CLL for the merger, he goes forward with confidence and strong backing to make improvements to facilities locally. He also gave his support to the Carlisle Ambassadors, and the aims of the group. He then introduced Mark Sesnan, the MD of GLL, who gave more insight into this not-for-profit social enterprise, the amazing projects they have worked on nationally, and their hope that they will have our support in refurbishing The Sands Centre and other venues to put the area “on the map”.



One of the benefits of being part of the Carlisle Ambassadors, is hearing first-hand about emerging developments in the area. Jane Meek, Director of Economic Development at Carlisle City Council,

gave us a great overview of forthcoming plans. She outlined the Carlisle Local Planning Framework to guide location and planning development up to 2030, which includes the introduction of 8,500 new homes. The benefits include increased employment and contracts during construction, and subsequent increased expenditure (much of which will be local) when residents make their house a home after completion. She also outlined “Solway 45”, a major development and opportunity for the area with £3m LEP funding. You can find out [more here](#). Regular updates will be given at our meetings, and there is also the opportunity to chat to Jane and others from the council during lunch afterwards.

After closing comments from Jason Gooding, [Kate Wilson](#) reminded everyone that we are working on your behalf and accountable to you. There is a passion to make a real difference through the Carlisle Ambassadors, and we are putting solid foundations in place to support individuals, organisations and businesses who want to be part of the group. This includes the website with a membership directory, news updates and a project forum where ideas can be openly shared, the Carlisle Toolkit (which has already been put to use by local companies since the meeting), and membership support through email, social media and media updates. [Michelle Masters](#) wrapped up the meeting by asking everyone to use the feedback forms to help us shape the future of the Carlisle Ambassadors, and announced that there will be the opportunity for two companies to have a showcase at each meeting and for one company to give a short introduction to their business.

We are very grateful to [The Halston Aparthotel in Carlisle](#) who sponsored this event, and provided an amazing lunch in such a stunning function room. I think we were all delighted to enjoy such an excellent setting for this first meeting of 2015. The feeling of optimism in the room was tangible, and we are looking forward to developing the programme with you. We have already received lots of project suggestions, and delighted that so many have already submitted their membership forms. It is nothing without your active support!

The next meetings is on March 26th at Carlisle Racecourse. [You can book your free place here](#). It is already getting very full, so it would be worth doing so sooner rather than later....

And if you haven't done so already, please do sign up for [future email alerts here](#). Thank you!

Carlisle Ambassador Meeting Summary

Date: Thursday 26th March

Venue: Carlisle Racecourse



James Westoll, Chairman of Carlisle Racecourse, welcoming all to the venue

Firstly, we would like to thank **Carlisle Racecourse** for their generosity in sponsoring this event, and providing such a wonderful venue and delicious lunch! We also want to thank every one of you who joined the Carlisle Ambassadors' meeting in March. We know it was a packed agenda, but we did want to show the step change from goals at first meeting to showing action at this one. It is because of so much energy and support from you that there are so many exciting developments to talk about! It shows just how great the potential is for us collectively to make a real difference to Carlisle and Cumbria. "Positive things happen to positive people!" as Simon Harrison said at our **first meeting** this year.

If you were unable to attend the meeting but would like to see the agenda, please click the following link **Carlisle Ambassadors Final Agenda 26th March Meeting Carlisle Racecourse**.

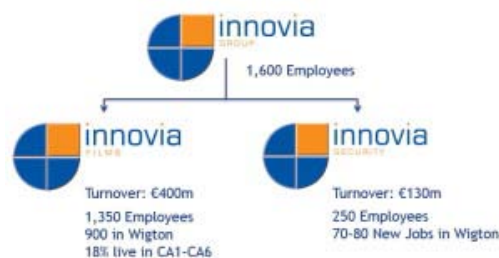


David Beeby, former MD of Innovia

After initial introductions from Kate and Michelle, the shape of the meeting was laid out. The emphasis was on local business and what this does and can bring to Cumbria, and then on to project developments – some in progress already, and some ready for us all to roll our sleeves up and get involved! This was to be followed by an update from Carlisle City Council on public realm developments, and the new “business hotspot”.

Carlisle Ambassadors – Business

First to speak was David Beeby, ex MD of Innovia. David is still adviser to the board, and was at the helm of this Wigton based company through an extraordinary time of growth and globalisation. His passion and pride was evident as he detailed their achievements, including the fact that the site of the new factory will be built at “home” where it all began in Cumbria, generating 70 – 80 jobs and boosting the local economy.



Innovia – Wigton / Carlisle employment statistics

David reminded us that, whilst they have centres all over the world, a significant proportion of their 1600 employees, are based in Wigton, and 18% live in central Carlisle postcodes. The next big news for the Innovia Group, as the pioneer and clear global leader in polymer substrate, is their contract to provide the banknote substrate for £5 and £10 notes over the coming years. All in the room were clearly excited to hear about such developments for the area.



Steve Errington, CEO of Story Homes

Steve Errington, CEO of Story Homes, presented to us about local spending plans. This is a spot that many requested in the initial feedback forms. We want to be part of raising awareness of opportunities to “keep business local”, and helping companies of all sizes feel equipped to seize openings to work with strong businesses in Cumbria such as Story. Steve took us on a whistlestop tour of their extraordinary growth over the last few years, and their ambitious plans to be a volume UK National house building business.

He outlined their planned developments up to 2018, and the key challenges they face. Quite apart from the issue of finding suitable land to build on and recruiting the right people into the business at the right time, they need a supply chain that can deliver consistently high quality and timely customer service. The message was that there are many opportunities to collaborate with Story Homes providing that you are prepared to invest in your business on a curve with their own, that you can deliver on the same standards of customer care as they do, and primarily that their driver is value more than cost. If anyone would like copies of the detailed slides, let us know and we can point you to them.



Richard Wise presenting Carlisle Road Cycle Network

Carlisle Ambassadors – Projects

At this point, we moved from business development and opportunities to projects! At the first meeting of 2015, everyone agreed that the aim of the Carlisle Ambassadors was to make the city and wider Cumbria a better place to live, work, invest and visit! What better way to kick this initiative off than with two exciting cycling projects? The first one presented by Richard Wise, has been an idea in his mind for some time. However, it was at the last meeting of Carlisle Ambassadors that he saw the potential to develop it within the Ambassador programme.

Richard felt that there was a need for excellent, professionally promoted, circular cycling routes in this part of Cumbria, and set about creating the network. The result? A well signed and resourced road cycle network with Carlisle at it's hub, exploring 500 miles of



quiet roads & stunning scenery. It also has an “epic” 200 mile cycle route around the perimeter, giving an additional tourist and cycle attraction for the area. Great for locals & tourism! The benefits to the area could be in the millions, and you can find out much more [here](#), including a walk through Richard’s presentation. If you would like to be more involved, and wish to pledge support to the crowdfunder to help move this project forward, we will include you on the website here as project supporters with your name or business logo, and you will also be included on the bespoke CRCN website once it is created! The deadline for the £3000 target is 21st April, and as at 8th April £1705 has been pledged.



Mike James – Endurance Sports

After the presentations at the last meeting, someone else in the audience began to think that their dream of bringing a major sporting event to Cumbria seemed more “in reach”. Mike James of Endurance Sports gave a rousing presentation on the possibility of hosting the British National Cycling Championships in Carlisle. “No offence to Lincoln, but if they can do it, so can we – we are Carlisle”.

With existing strong links to the powers that be in the sport (there is already a four year deal to host a stage of the Tour of Britain), and with the potential for collaboration between public and private sector which embodies what the Carlisle Ambassadors is all about, there are less obstacles in the way than might be imagined! So watch this space for developments on both of our fantastic cycling projects, and a big thank you to Richard and Mike for sharing their inspiration with us at the meeting.



Andy Fearon shares his passion

And on to Andy Fearon of **Carlisle Vineyard**, and his wonderful call to participate in “Give a Day to the City”. He asked us all to “Find your passion, find your project, find your partner!”

The idea is simple. Collectively, we will find ways to make a difference to the city, and the people who live there. This might be through a DIY SOS type project, where we hope businesses might donate their services or products for free, while we chip in to transform a place for those in need. Or it might be a health inspired fun day, an alternative career day or shadowing/mentoring events, brighten up lives in care homes with events, litter picks, brighten up and refurbish playgrounds..... we are just collating the amazing suggestions that came in and working out the best way to connect people to take the ideas forward so watch this space for next steps.



The number and variety of suggestions that were put up on the boards during our interactive session combined with the feedback afterwards, shows that there is the grounds for making this a real flagship event for the city in early October. Perhaps one that other cities may copy in the future?

So these are all exciting plans that are in development. Last spot in the project section was filled brilliantly by Mike Hunt of **More Handles**. Immediately after the last meeting, Paul and Mike from More Handles got chatting to the team at **Carlisle Brass** about ways in which they could act on the call to improve life in the city. They came up with Carlisle’s “Best Dressed Front Door” not-for-profit scheme, where they offer a smart door set for under £20 compared to retail of over £50. The synergy between the two companies is clear, and this is also a great way to remind people of the rich heritage in ironmongery.

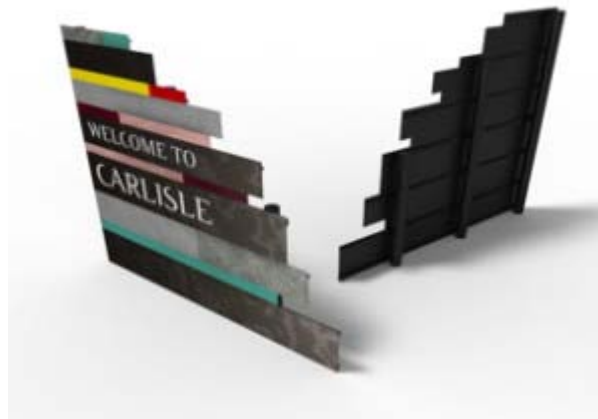


Mike Hunt – More Handles

They thought how they could turn this for the wider benefit, and after discussions with Sara Oldham from Cash for Kids, introduced a scrappage scheme. For any returns of scrap metal, More Handles and Carlisle Brass will donate the money generated from Mountelm to the charity. To add even more weight to this, Story and Simon Harrison stepped forward and confirmed they would donate their scrap in the month of May – this is now turning into a fantastic project to smarten the city and give to charity.

Update since the meeting: Matt of **Cito Cleaning** is going to throw in cleaning front windows and pressure washing drives for £10, **Top Notch Contractors** have confirmed they will donate their scrap, and Village Link Magazine are providing free space to advertise the project. Fantastic! Now they need a fabulous company to donate a prize for the winner of the Best Dressed Door Competition! Any volunteers? A meal for two, a weekend stay? A day out somewhere? If you would like to donate a prize, please contact mike@morehandles.co.uk. Again, this project is still gaining ground, so we'll keep you updated!

Carlisle Ambassadors – Public Realm



New signage Carlisle City

Following on from these excellent projects, there was some great news from Carlisle City Council. Mark Walshe gave a great demonstration of active steps to improve signage in the city. There will be a range of new signs welcoming visitors to Carlisle, and there are sponsorship opportunities for businesses who would like to get involved. The new signs will be complemented by better information points in car parks, and at the railway and bus station. the entrance to the historic quarter and Rickergate.



Mark Walshe – Carlisle City Council

Car parks will be renamed to be more in keeping with the heritage, and areas that have become disused and unattractive smartened up and made more pedestrian friendly. There is much to feel positive about, and anyone who would like to know more or would like to discuss sponsorship, should contact Mark by email mark.walshe@carlisle.gov.uk

Carlisle Ambassadors – Business Hotspot



Helen Landy – Six Degrees Recruitment

Each meeting we pull business cards out of the hat. For this meeting, we were delighted to have showcase stands for **H&H Reed Printers** and **More Handles** during lunch. The 2 minute business hotspot went to **Six Degrees Recruitment**, and Helen Landy gave a great overview of the business, and demonstrated why so many companies choose to use their expertise. **Update since meeting:** Huge congratulations to Helen and Mark who have won the **CN Business Boost 2015**. Fantastic achievement!

Carlisle Ambassadors – Member presentations

Last but not least, and we do apologise that the meeting over ran – we know how to shape it more tightly next time – Jason Gooding, Chief Executive of Carlisle City Council, rounded off the meeting by summing up our thanks for the support from businesses,



Jason Gooding – Carlisle City Council

organisations and individuals for the Carlisle Ambassadors' programme, and presented new members with their member lanyards and certificates. We are delighted that we have 50 members now, and this is growing all the time. **To join please visit this link,** and if you have any questions contact Kate or Michelle **here**.

As Jason said "If Carlisle isn't on the menu, it can't be chosen" so join us in making Carlisle and wider Cumbria the best it can be, and a great place to live, work, invest and visit. We look forward to seeing you at the next meeting. To sign up **please click here**. Thank you again to Carlisle Racecourse for their exceptional hospitality, and to all who attended the meeting and contributed to a really positive event.



Carlisle Ambassadors Membership Presentation