



Scrutiny Panel

Date: Thursday, 03 March 2022

Time: 16:00

Venue: Flensburg Room

Present: Councillor Lisa Brown, Councillor Ms Jo Ellis-Williams, Councillor Mrs Anne Glendinning, Councillor Mrs Ann McKerrell, Councillor Keith Meller, Councillor Mrs Linda Mitchell, Councillor Michael Mitchelson, Councillor Peter Sunter

Also Present: Councillor Ellis, Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder
Councillor Christian, Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder
Councillor Mrs Bowman, Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder
Ms J Lappin, Chief Executive of Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership

Officers: Corporate Director of Economic Development
Head of Regeneration
Policy and Performance Officer

EGSP.09/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence have been submitted.

EGSP.10/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were submitted.

EGSP.11/22 PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was agreed that the items in Part A be dealt with in public and the items in private be dealt with in Part B.

EGSP.12/22 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED – It was noted that Council, at its meeting on 1 March 2022, received and adopted the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2022. The Chair signed the minutes.

EGSP.13/22 CALL-IN OF DECISIONS

There were no items which had been subject of call-in

EGSP.14/22 LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP - UPDATE

The Chair welcomed Ms Lappin, Chief Executive of the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (CLEP) to the meeting.

Ms Lappin gave a very detailed presentation outlining the governance structure, framework and board membership of the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (CLEP). The presentation set out the Section 151 Assurance Statement and detailed the Scrutiny Board arrangements.

Ms Lappin set out the delivery of the CLEP including the Growth Deal, Getting Building Fund and an update on the Enterprise Zone and Growth Hub. The presentation also detailed the other programmes in operation including the Peer to Peer Networks, careers and Enterprise Programme and the Skills Advisory Panel.

Ms Lappin reported on the CLEP Strategy and Vision and set out the impact of the EU exit and Covid on the CLEP.

The Corporate Director of Economic Development highlighted the connection between the Council's Economic Strategy and the work of the CLEP.

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

- With regard to gender targets how would the CLEP ensure that the right people were recruited to the posts and how were the diversity requirements monitored?

Ms Lappin acknowledged that it was important to ensure that the right people were on the Board and that the Board represented the community. The targets were government targets and, in Cumbria, it should not be difficult to reach the right balance on the Board. The targets had to be managed sensitively to avoid positive discrimination. The equality and diversity information was gathered through regular questions regarding the nine protected characteristics.

The Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder reminded the Panel that gender was not a protected characteristic and should not be confused with sex, which was a protected characteristic.

- How many young people were involved in the Futures Forum and were they all from businesses?

Ms Lappin reported that the Forum usually had 16-18 young people involved to populate the structure. The Forum had a mix of business, public sector and representatives of the community, the age range was 18 - 35 years.

- Did the CLEP engage with schools and was the reach wide enough to include individuals from all backgrounds?

Ms Lappin outlined some of the work undertaken with younger children to develop skills. The skills labour supply and employment readiness of young people was a real concern for the CLEP. The pandemic and social media had eroded face to face confidence and the ability to work in teams for young people, in addition the mental health and wellbeing of young people had been seriously impacted. All of these issues also impact the economy and the CLEP was working to equip young people to be able to contribute effectively in work.

- It would be useful for Members to see the breakdown of the types jobs that were available across Cumbria and what salary they had.

Ms Lappin agreed that the quality of the employment was a concern. There was a very high level of people in work in Cumbria who were reliant on Universal Credit, more than double the number prior to the pandemic. There was ongoing discussions with businesses regarding how they could be the best employers. This worked looked at the reality of the terms and conditions offered along with salary and how the cost of living had affected the offer by businesses.

- Did the employment growth table count individuals who had more than one job?

Ms Lappin confirmed that the figures did not show how many individuals had more than one job, they would be counted twice. She confirmed that there needed to be some work undertaken to understand where this happens and what the problems may be.

- What was the Digital Strategy and how did it work in rural areas?

Ms Lappin informed the Panel that Cumbria County Council looked after the infrastructure for digital services, however, there had been a significant increase in digital take up during the pandemic, particularly with older people. The pandemic had made some of the proposed work redundant due to the unprecedented fast take up.

- What were the key areas in the Productivity Plan?

Ms Lappin explained that there were two key areas, 1, the actual structure of the economy. Cumbria had less businesses / sectors with high productivity. 2, when the sector was less productive than the same sector elsewhere. The CLEP had undertaken a deep dive into the specific sector in the economy and how it compared elsewhere. The sector was beginning to share best practice to increase innovation and productivity.

- How would remote working affect Cumbria?

Ms Lappin responded that individuals no longer had to live in the area they worked. This could attract people to live in Cumbria, whilst working elsewhere, and bring the economic benefits. The other side of the issue meant that salaries elsewhere could be higher and young people worked elsewhere further eroding the labour market.

Referring to the Business Decarbonisation Plan, the Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder highlighted a number of issues and asked if the CLEP were looking at what energy supply mix should be used and what should be planned for.

Ms Lappin acknowledged that it was a complex area, she felt that there was a right solution for each component part. The energy used would be dependent on the purpose.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder also asked if consideration had been given to joining various food themes together. Ms Lappin confirmed that there were plans to bring stakeholders together to discuss the huge issues relating to food supply.

- There was concern that the closure of the Newton Rigg College would create a gap in agricultural skills, had this been addressed?

Ms Lappin acknowledged the closure of Newtown Rigg and the potential impact on skills, however, other providers were offering the same courses in Cumbria.

- Had the CLEP lost funding due to Brexit?

Ms Lappin confirmed that EU Funding had been lost, however, it was being replaced by the Shared Prosperity Fund. The CLEP was seeking reassurance that this fund would be equivalent to the EU funding.

RESOLVED - 1) That Ms Lappin be thanked for her detailed, informative presentation and for her full responses to questions on the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership.

2) That Ms Lappin provide the Panel with the following information:

- Copy of the Digital Strategy
- Definition of seasonally adjusted - resident based

EGSP.15/22 PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT OFFICE UPDATE

The Head of Regeneration submitted an update on the Economic Development Programme Management Office (ED.02/22).

The Head of Regeneration reminded the Panel of the Carlisle Projects and Programmes that had received funding. The City Council would act as the accountable body for the Future High Street Fund, Town Deal and St Cuthbert's Garden Village Programmes. In order to undertake this role the Council established a Programme Management Office (PMO) for an initial three year period.

The two main areas of activity for the PMO in the current financial year had been to support the delivery of the Future High Streets Fund and the Town deal Programmes. Appended to the report was the Local Assurance Framework which had been produced to inform the development and sign off of individual business cases.

The next steps for the PMO were to support the process that would enable the Town Deal Business Cases to be submitted to government by 24 March 2022 as detailed in the report.

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

- Had the vacant posts been filled and how would LGR affect the posts?

The Corporate Director of Economic Development confirmed that the appointment process was taking place. The posts would be appointed for a three year term and would be transferred to the new authority. In response to a further question the Corporate Director responded that it was likely that the PMO would be extended after the initial three years as more funding streams were becoming available that the authority could bid for.

- Would the PMO have the capacity to deliver the big projects for Carlisle?

The Corporate Director of Economic Development responded that the capacity of the team was under constant review. The Head of Regeneration added that the PMO had two elements to it. One element was the physical support provided by the posts appointed to it, the second element was the additional support bought in from legal, finance and property.

- Was the proposed branding available for Members to view?

The Head of Regeneration explained it was felt that the Towns Deal should have its own identity that remained relevant to Carlisle. The branding was still being developed and it would be brought to the Panel at the appropriate time.

RESOLVED - That the Panel:

- noted the activity of the Programme Management Office to date in supporting the Future High Streets Fund and Town Deal programmes (ED.02/22);
- noted the Local Assurance Framework that had been produced to inform the development and sign off of individual business cases.

EGSP.16/22 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021/22

The Policy and Performance Officer submitted the Quarter 3 2021/22 performance against the current Service Standards and a baseline position for the Carlisle Plan 2021-23 actions as defined in the Plan (PC.03/22).

Performance against the Panel's 2021/22 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were included as a dashboard.

The Policy and Performance Officer highlighted the summary of exceptions and the reason for the performance.

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

- Was the city centre pedestrianised zone revenue expected to increase as footfall in the centre started to increase?

The Corporate Director of Economic Development confirmed that as the footfall increased in the city centre it was expected that events and hiring of the pedestrianised area would increase.

- It was important to the Council's reputation that the Building Control service maintained quality and consistency, was there a plan in place for the future of the service?

The Corporate Director of Economic Development explained that there had been a succession plan in place for the service, however, this was delayed due to Covid. It was difficult for the Council to appoint to the service as it had to compete with the private sector, she was pleased to report that two new members of the team had been appointed. She highlighted an upcoming change to legislation which would change Building Control Officers to Building Control Inspectors and impact on the work of the service.

In response to a further question the Corporate Director responded that new posts within the authority would mostly be advertised and appointed until 31 March 2022, given the difficulties in appointing within Building Control it was likely that the posts would transfer to the new authority and continue past this date.

RESOLVED - That the Panel had scrutinised the performance of the City Council with a view to seeking continuous improvement in how the Council delivers its priorities (PC.03/22).

EGSP.17/22 OVERVIEW REPORT

The Policy and Performance Officer presented report OS.07/22 which provided an overview of matters related to the Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel.

The Panel noted that a number of the resolutions from previous meetings were outstanding and asked that they be resolved as a matter of urgency.

The Chair asked if the Kingmoor Park Update, scheduled for scrutiny in April, would be staying

in the work programme and the Corporate Director of Economic Development agreed to provide confirmation to the Chair.

RESOLVED - That the Overview Report incorporating the Key Decision items relevant to the Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel be noted (OS.07/22).

The Meeting ended at: 17:55