



CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Committee Report

Public

Date of Meeting: 12th June 2008

Title: CUMBRIA WIDE PROPERTY REVIEW

Report of: Director of Development Services

Report reference: DS.71/08

Summary:

This report is brought to the Committee to update Members on progress with the joint work to review operational property assets with the County Council and other public sector agencies.

Questions for/input required from Scrutiny:

To consider the work carried out thus far.

Recommendations:

To note the progress and provide any feedback for officers and the Portfolio Holder.

Contact Officer: Catherine Elliot

Ext: 7502

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

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Members of Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been updated at their meetings since February 2008 about the work being done across the County to make more effective use of public sector property assets. The County and District Councils in Cumbria have joined together to look at how the use of their operational property might be managed in future to reduce costs, realise the value of surplus assets and improve access to services. Report DS.22/08 to CROS on 21st February 2008 gives the detailed background.
- 1.2 The initial phase of the work has had a focus on two pilot projects, in Longtown and Brampton. These locations were chosen because there are several property assets in public sector ownership, there are some pressing matters to resolve and there are several opportunities for partnership working. The direction of the work in future across Cumbria will be shaped by the experience of doing the Pilots. City Council Members have already asked that the Harraby area and the future of the North Cumbria Technology College site be brought forward for early examination in the next phase of work.

2.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 2.1 The Joint Project Boards have been meeting for each Pilot area, comprising the City, County and Parish Councils and others with a landholding interest. Councillor John Mallinson and Catherine Elliot, Director of Development Services, have been representing the City Council on the two Project Boards. Progress with each area is as follows.

Longtown

- 2.2 Given that Lochinvar School closes in July the County Council is aiming to consider the options for the future of the site at the Cabinet meeting in July. A parallel report will also come to the City Council's Executive on 28th July to update Members on developments and the information will be disseminated to all Members at that stage, as there is not a scheduled CRO&S meeting until September.
- 2.3 A consultation exercise locally is picking up views on potential uses and service needs and this will inform the reports to Cabinet and Executive. The intention is then for any agreed principles to be worked up into detailed proposals on which there would be full consultation. A copy of the May newsletter sent to local

residents is attached at Appendix A. This summarises the position with the Project and gives a flavour of local views.

- 2.4 The Project Board is due to meet again on 11th June so a verbal update on developments will be given to CRO&S at the meeting.

Brampton

- 2.5 The project is centred around the health modernisation programme under the Community Ventures banner. As a first phase the Primary Care Trust is bidding to obtain funding support for the modernisation of community based hospitals across Cumbria and including the facilities at Brampton. This matter is linked as a local priority to the provision of accommodation for GP services. The Department of Health will consider proposals in August/September with a decision due by October. The health project brings funding which can assist the wider aspirations for improving and supporting a range of facilities and services in Brampton, through shared use of premises and economies of scale. The bid timescale requires that a planning application is submitted to the City Council in October 2008. There is therefore a significant amount of work to do to develop the detailed proposals before then.
- 2.6 A schedule of potential accommodation and options for the mix of uses is being drawn up for discussion with the public sector partners and with the wider community. This will enable opportunities for shared space to be clarified. Given the range of uses being considered, a large site will be required and the availability of suitable sites is limited. Clearly, one site would be the Irthing Centre where the City Council and the Brampton Community Association are currently dealing with financial pressures at their operations, together with challenges from a building that is no longer fit for purpose. The project gives an opportunity for some of these uses, subject to funding, to be relocated and reconfigured.
- 2.7 The Council's Executive is due to receive a report on options for the future of the Brampton Business and Telecentre in September, following on from the Budget Resolution for 2008/09 which requires significant savings. This will come to CRO&S on 16th October.
- 2.8 Other sites for the health project are being assessed and by the time of the CRO&S June meeting the outcome of this work will be available. An update will also be given on plans being developed by the Pilot Project Team for public and stakeholder involvement during the summer.

As well as any decision the City Council will need to make on the service delivery and on ownership and occupation of potential sites, the County Cabinet will need to determine the funding implications of the Care Home element of the proposals. It is likely that this will be considered at the October Cabinet meeting.

Newsletter Two • May 2008

Mystery! solved!

In the last edition we asked for your help in shedding some light on an archive photo found in the council's collection. We're happy to report that Muriel Forsyth answered the call. Mrs Forsyth tells us "the photograph was taken around the early 1930's and shows the launch of a local taxi service by William Benson who also ran a filling station. Mr Benson was locally known as "Sketch" and the taxi service was hence known as "Sketch's" taxi. The girl in the white pinafore in the centre foreground was called May Jeffrey and the man with his back to her to the left with the white shirt sleeves is my father William Little. The dog belonged to a Carlisle couple who "rudded" door steps." So now we know!



Welcome

to the second edition of the Longtown moving forward newsletter. A lot has happened since the first edition back in March. Most importantly we've completed the first stage of public consultation.



Some of the consultation responses we received.

It's been hard to miss Longtown moving forward over the past couple of months and we're pleased that local people are taking their chance to have their say. We'd like to say a big thank you to everyone that took time to send in their views. We've received over 70 completed discussion booklets from groups and individuals, we estimate about 300 people have commented in this way. We've also had a great response to the "scribble posters" that were placed in the community centre and in locations around the town. Inside you can read more about what local people have said and what the councils are doing next.

A word from your local councillors

“ We've been delighted with the response to the consultation so far. Your feedback has raised some old issues but also some new ones. We'll be working hard to address the concerns you have raised in the development of our plans for Longtown. ”



John Mallinson, Geoff Prest
and Ray Bloxham.

To get involved in making decisions about the future of your town call 01228 606474 or email longtown@cumbria.gov.uk

A partnership project between:



Arthuret
Parish
Council

Longtown has its say

Longtown moving forward is about coming up with a plan for the future of the town's public facilities. The first stage of consultation asked you to give us your views on the public buildings and facilities in the town – what's good and what needs to be improved. In general people were very positive about the services delivered in the town but there was less satisfaction with the quality of the buildings and facilities.

Community centre

Opinions were mixed; some think the location's great, others that it's too far out of town. Some said the building was good quality with good facilities; others said facilities were poor and the building is not fit for purpose. It's certainly a building that divides opinion. But people did agree on the welcome from staff!



Community Development Centre

It's not a well known facility and several commented on it being under used and poorly advertised. But those that know it rate it highly: warm, modern and well equipped.



Library

It's seen as an important service in a good location with good staff. But there is frustration with the opening hours, complaints about the state of the building itself (cold!) and worries about exterior lighting and feeling safe on dark nights.



Lochinvar playing fields

People see a need for the playing fields; they're in a good location and can be used at any time, free of charge. But people point to bad drainage, dog fouling, poor access and anti-social behaviour as bad points. One person commented that there should be "less of it, better maintained."



Lochinvar school

People recognise the service it has provided the town over the years. They also point to the facilities in the building (IT, woodwork, sports, changing rooms) as being valuable assets. Location, parking and access are also positives. On the other hand people point out that the building is dated, with areas in a poor state of repair, and that it has poor disabled access. There were people who suggested reusing the building for a new purpose and also people who didn't want to keep the building but saw the site as the ideal location for something new.

Fire station

There's universal agreement that it's a great asset for the town and provides excellent service, people like its visibility in the heart of the town. But there are not many people who'd call the building attractive! Its closeness to the primary school and Sure Start was also raised by some as a danger.



Sure Start and the Nursery

These can be summarised quite easily: "great service and location, poor building/facilities", several commented on the cold loos!



Primary school

There were lots of positives about the school; reputation, staff, building and location. But some also mention parking at pick up/drop off times, narrow paths and that the surrounding grass area is unattractive.



Parish playing fields

The bad drainage was the most common comment for this area; people also mentioned dog fouling, vandalism, poor access and lighting. Some described it as a "forgotten area", "underused" and even "a waste of space". On the plus side people like the open space for kids to play and to walk their dogs, but are these conflicting uses?



Council centre

Having a council centre was seen as important and the central location was appreciated. However, people commented that the building was drab and unwelcoming, too small and dated. Some felt it gave a poor impression of the town. There were also comments about limited opening hours.



Medical centre

There were lots of positive comments about the quality of the building and the improvement on the previous clinic. There were mixed views on the design, some loved it; some thought it out of place. Generally many people commented on the lack of a dentist and also on difficult disabled access from the rear of the building.



Police station

The fact that there is one is appreciated and considered essential, but not everyone even knew it was there! People complained that "no one is ever there" and that the building is drab, empty and uninviting. There was a real demand for a more visible police presence in the town.



Care home

This is considered a real part of the town. People like the fact that it keeps older people in the centre of the town, a friendly wave really makes it part of the community. Its role as an employer is also recognised. But people also feel that the building is in need of serious modernisation or replacement. Some suggested making use of the former clinic to expand the home.



What were your ideas?

We also asked for your ideas for the future, you came up with quite a few:

- Create a youth café, open late, somewhere where young people can hang out off the streets.
- Improve the play facilities available for children and youth provision generally.
- Build a Wet'n'Wild water park!
- Improve the "street scene" (litter, pavements, weeds, dog fouling, vandalism etc) was also a common idea, as were suggestions to do something to improve the appearance of local buildings.

A big idea that came up frequently was to use the Lochinvar site to create a multi-use, community/civic area that could join up the different facilities scattered about the town currently. People suggested that this could provide a central focus for the town and address many of the current problems that they had identified. **Find out what's happening now on the back page!**

What's happening now?

The next stage is to understand your comments and to work with the community, planners, architects, council staff and local Councillors to develop a proposal for what will happen with the Lochinvar School site and also with other community facilities in the town.

Right now, the Longtown moving forward team are working with the City Council planning department to work out what would be possible on the Lochinvar site. Using your comments as a start point, the planners will work with the architects to develop a 'block' plan to show, in theory, what could go where. For example this might include a park, new community facilities and perhaps some new housing. We hope to be able to show you progress with this by the next newsletter and will

give you the opportunity to comment on how it looks so far.

The County Council Cabinet and City Council Executive will meet in July and will receive a report on the Longtown moving forward project. They will be asked to decide whether to retain the existing Lochinvar buildings, or to demolish them. This decision will be made in light of your comments, whether there is a viable need for those buildings, and the estimated cost of keeping them. The councils will also be asked to approve further work on the project to allow us to produce a final design and proposal, on which there will be full consultation.

In terms of seeing new buildings or facilities, it is very important that what we do is right for Longtown. We have to be sure that all any proposed developments will last into the future. Again, this will take some time, and it is now unlikely that a planning application can be submitted to the city council before the autumn of 2009 – again, only after you have been given an opportunity to comment on the proposals.

Check cumbria.gov.uk/longtown for more information

Firefighters to be proud of!

Firefighters from Longtown and Brampton have been shortlisted for this year's national Council Worker of the Year Awards in the Team of the Year category. And it's up to you to decide who wins!

You've got until 3 July to vote and we're calling on everyone to rally behind the crews by voting to give them the recognition they deserve.

You find out more and vote via the Cumbria County Council website cumbria.gov.uk or by texting **LGATV 6 CUMBRIA** to **80039**.



Longtown fire crew

Changing times for football club



The future of football on the Lochinvar fields during any changes to the site has been assured by Cumbria County Council. The council is working with the clubs to ensure changing facilities are available to the teams. For more information contact us on 01228 606474.

If you require this document in another format (eg CD, audio cassette, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone 01228 606060.

আপনি যদি এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে 01228 606060 নম্বরে টেলিফোন করুন।

如果您希望通过母语了解此信息, 请致电 01228 606060

Jeigu norėtumėte gauti šią informaciją savo kalba, skambinkite telefonu 01228 606060

Useful contacts

Police:

Terry Hall (Community Policeman)

T: 0796 7572174

Control Room: 08453300247

E: terry.hall@cumbria.police.uk

Longtown Youth Project at the Community Centre

- Mon 7-8pm. Midnite Mixers
- Mon 7.30-9pm. Drop-In 12 and above
- Tues 7.30-9pm. Drop-In 12 and above (incl. Team Xtreme)
- Thurs 7-8pm Young Women's Group
- Fri 6-8pm Table Tennis Coaching

Longtown Primary School

(in association with Pear Tree Nursery & Longtown Learning Centre)

T: 01228 791203

E: head@longtownprimary.cumbria.sch.uk

Longtown Initiative

Enterprise and development projects in Longtown and District

T: 01228 792778

Longtown Library at the Lochinvar Centre

T: 01228 791638

E: carlisle.library@cumbriacc.gov.uk

Opening Times:

- Mon 1-3.30pm 5-6.30pm
- Tues 1-3.30pm
- Thurs 1-3.30pm
- Fri 1-3.30pm
- Sat 10.30-12pm

Don't forget - Longtown and Bewcastle Neighbourhood Forum - your chance to have your say on local issues!

Next meetings:
7pm Longtown Community Centre:
2nd July 2008
1st October 2008
25th February 2009

W celu uzyskania informacji w Państwa języku proszę zatelefonować pod numer 01228 606060

Se quiser aceder a esta informação na sua língua, telefone para o 01228 606060

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde görmek istiyorsanız lütfen 01228 606060 numaralı telefonu arayınız