

**ECONOMIC GROWTH
SCRUTINY PANEL**

Agenda
Item:
A.2

Meeting Date: 26 November 2020
 Portfolio: ECONOMY ENTERPRISE & HOUSING
 Key Decision: NO
 Within Policy and Budget Framework: YES
 Public / Private: PUBLIC

Title: UPDATE - CARLISLE AMBASSADORS
 Report of: CORPORATE DIRECTOR, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
 Report Number: ED 43/20

Purpose / Summary:

To provide Members with an update on the Carlisle Ambassadors initiative up to and including the 2020 programme activity.

Recommendations:

The Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel are asked to note the contents of the report.

Tracking

Executive:	
Scrutiny:	
Council:	

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Carlisle Ambassadors' was established in 2013 to liaise with businesses and enable businesses to talk confidently about what was happening in the city and help support the economic growth of the city. To support the initiatives, it was important to understand what is important to the city – the 'Carlisle Story' was produced and was supported by the brand.
- 1.2 In December 2014, external support was secured to drive forward the 2015 Carlisle Ambassadors' programme. Their remit was to ensure that the Carlisle Ambassador programme provided maximum support and benefit to businesses connected with the area and to the City itself. The appointment was funded by contributions from the Carlisle Ambassadors' membership and Carlisle City Council. The programme aimed 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.

2. CARLISLE AMBASSADOR PROGRAMME

- 2.1 In 2015, the Carlisle Ambassador programme offered six bi-monthly meetings held at venues which helped showcase Carlisle. A website and social media channels were established ready to support local business news and events.
- 2.2 The first meeting held in January 2015 was attended by 150 people representing businesses from across the district.
- 2.3 Over the course of the 2016/17 and 2017/18, Carlisle Ambassador meetings continued to be oversubscribed with waiting lists for places at events.
- 2.4 The **programme for 2019** was refreshed in format and included four Carlisle Ambassador meetings themed around the Council's economic and corporate priorities.
- 7 March at the Halston – Skills and Learning
 - 13 June at Carlisle Racecourse – Corporate Social Responsibility
 - 11 September at Carlisle Airport– Development and Regeneration
 - 27 November at The Shepherds Inn - Transport and Logistics
- 2.5 In addition, the 2019 the annual Marketeer event took place on 9 October 2019. The purpose was to bring together marketing experts from a broad range of businesses and organisations to share knowledge and to enable them to promote Carlisle at the same time as promoting their businesses. The event was held in Smiths Hotel Gretna

with delegates from England and Scotland in attendance. The agenda covered Place Making, Place Marketing, Digital Marketing, Marketing for a small business and Borderlands.

Promotion of Carlisle has been a corner stone of the Ambassador programme from the beginning. The 2019 programme included Ambassador attendance and showcasing of Carlisle at:

- CIPD Event at the Halston
- Lakes Hospitality Trade Show 13 & 14 March 2019
- Visit to Lancashire Shout Expo – 29 March 2019
- Greater Manchester Shout Expo – 17 May 2019

2.6 The 2020 Carlisle Ambassador Programme was set to deliver four themed events, plus a Marketeer event in early November. In addition, promotional activity including attendance at conferences and exhibitions across the North West in partnership with Shout Events including working in partnership to deliver the first Cumbria Expo which had been planned for summer 2020.

2.7 The impact of the COVID 19 pandemic meant that only the March Ambassador meeting was held at Carlisle Racecourse on 12 June 2020. The meeting was oversubscribed despite the pending lockdown. The remainder of the programme for 2020 had to be postponed due to the inability to hold large corporate events.

2.8 However, Carlisle Ambassadors have done what they do best during an emergency. Just as the Ambassador network responded during the flooding of 2015, businesses have again continued to come together to support each other and the local economy. The presentation following this report will provide members with further detail of the ability of the initiative to quickly 'pivot' the focus and continue meaningful business engagement and business support during the COVID 19 global pandemic.

3. Developing New Business Relationships

3.1 As part of the remit to expand the reach of Carlisle Ambassadors, meetings with new business contacts are undertaken to help build relationships and foster partnership working. During each annual programme, take place to secure keynote speakers or showcases for Ambassador events. This increases the reach of the Carlisle Story key messages.

3.2 Young Carlisle Ambassadors Talent Connect Event

This initiative introduced in 2019 has opened so many doors and provided the opportunity to engage with businesses not previously taking an active part in the

Carlisle Ambassador Programme. It also helped develop stronger connections with Cumbria LEP through the Cumbria Careers Hub and Enterprise Advisors network and increased engagement with schools, colleges and training providers by working in partnership to deliver an event which meets key objectives for all parties.

- 3.3** The next challenge for Young Carlisle Ambassadors is to plan for the next event in 2021 and engage with and support the development of Carlisle's Town Deal.

4. MEMBERSHIP AND BENEFITS

4.1 Membership

- In February 2015 the paid membership numbered just under 50 businesses. Numbers grew steadily to 194 businesses (as at 26 Sept 2019), in June 2020 membership had grown to 206 during lockdown. As of November 2020 membership has reached a new high of 263.
- Membership is inclusive – businesses of all sizes from sole trader to multinational, not for profit and individuals can all join Carlisle Ambassadors.
- Membership contributions are set on a scale based on the size of the company: from £50 per annum up to £995 per annum.
- **Member benefits** include:
 - Website directory listing which is interactive, where businesses can update their profile, engage with other businesses, promote offers, blog and upload articles.
 - Opportunities to showcase at Ambassador events and join CA when we take Carlisle 'on the road' to showcase our Carlisle offer
 - Social media channels: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter established. Great way for Carlisle Ambassadors and others to promote Carlisle.
 - Opportunities to collaborate on projects which either raise the profile of Carlisle as well as their business and often help support local organisations to improve the quality of life for local people.

4.2 Promotion and PR

- 4.2.1** Dedicated Press / PR support was secured for the initiative as part of the annual contract review in 2019. Gundog PR reports that over 2019, Carlisle Ambassadors had had a minimum of £45k in total coverage with TV, Radio and Press with a reach of 3 - 3.25 million people.

4.2.2 This included coverage by the following and their reach in terms of numbers of readers / viewers:

- Newsquest Newspapers Cumbria - 68,202
- InCumbria Magazine - 4,000
- ITV Lookaround - 162,000
- BBC North East & Cumbria - 206,000
- BBC Radio Cumbria - 73,000
- That's Cumbria TV - 7,100
- Cumbria Crack - 24,000
- Cumbria 24 - 9,300
- Business Up North - 31,000
- Life Up North - 23,000
- Entirely Northwest - 8,400
- The Business Desk Northwest - 9,300
- Northwest Business Insider - 14,167
- Business Desk - 16,300

4.2.3 High profile social media coverage includes:

LinkedIn Page 454 followers

LinkedIn Group 1031 members

Facebook page 1971 followers (huge increase)

Facebook CA group 1046 members

Facebook CA Marketing group 409 members

Twitter 4652 followers

5. PROJECTS

5.1 There is a growing list of Carlisle Ambassador projects with meetings inspiring the membership to come forward, share their ideas and collaborate to deliver them. Some of the amazing projects being brought forward from Carlisle Ambassadors include:

- Social Media groups
- Marketeer Group:
- Give a Day:
- Young Carlisle Ambassadors
- Digital meetings via Zoom (Weekly)
- Carlisle Ambassador Newsletter
- Business Mentors / Advice / Signposting

- Video project
- Development of a Small Business Support Group (Carlisle) during lockdown which now numbers over 3,200 members.

6. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1** Members are asked to note the contents of the report in order that they are appropriately informed with regards to current and forthcoming key initiatives associated with the Carlisle Ambassador programme.
- 6.2** The benefit to the City Council in supporting this initiative is the close working relationships with over 260 businesses and their employees. This has enabled us to engage with them more effectively, bringing greater understanding between public and private sector. These communication channels enable us to consult widely, engage in partnership to develop strategy or deliver projects, and be able to provide targeted support to our local businesses during the current pandemic.

7. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

- 7.1** The Carlisle Ambassadors' programme directly supports and cuts across a number of the City Council's corporate priorities including:
- Promote Carlisle as a place with much to offer – full of opportunities and potential, a place to visit, live, work and invest.
 - Support the growth of more high quality and sustainable businesses alongside skills development to improve employment opportunities and economic prospects for the people of Carlisle.
 - 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 Act 1972 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- None

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL -
FINANCE –
EQUALITY –
INFORMATION GOVERNANCE –