
EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 20 OCTOBER 2011

EEOSP.66/11 TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Assistant Director (Economic Development) (Mrs Meek) submitted report ED.36/11 which briefed Members on the next phase of the transformation programme for the Economic Development Directorate.

Mrs Meek explained that the next stage of the programme would be a review that would investigate a number of issues in relation to Tourism and the Enterprise Centre.

The Tourism review would take in all of the Tourism Development and Support Services that were currently delivered by the City Council and outlined the timetable for the review.

The review of the Enterprise Centre would look at the role of the Centre and work with key partners to provide Start Up and Small/Medium Enterprise business space and support. She felt that the Panel's Task and Finish Group would ask more challenging questions and their work would feed into the broader review. She added that the Enterprise Centre required modernisation to ensure it met the requirements of tenants and encouraged new tenants and businesses.

In response to a Member's request Mrs Meek explained that the Economic Development Officer's role focused on business and business policy development. The Regeneration Officer's role brought together a range of knowledge and experience for project delivery. The Regeneration Officer would provide a strategic lead on projects and would be able to chair multi disciplinary teams. Mrs Meek confirmed that the Economic Development Officer had been appointed and consideration was being given to appointing an interim Regeneration Officer to support ongoing projects, this would allow time for the job description to be updated.

Councillor Craig, the Lead Member of the Enterprise Centre Task and Finish Group, commented that the work of the Task Group had been very interesting and they had a number of options that would be formed into recommendations. The options included a rebrand of the Enterprise Centre and some maintenance to the external building, a maintenance programme for the entire Centre, promotion of the Centre using the advertising budget and generation of income from energy suppliers.

The Task Group had met with building surveyors and understood that the building was in good condition but did require some cosmetic work. He explained that there were a number of options available to ensure that the Centre was sustainable and reminded

the Panel that many of the existing tenants used the Centre because it was a managed well maintained workspace.

Mrs Meek confirmed that the results of the Task and Finish Group would be included in the review for the Enterprise Centre.

The Panel's other area of concern was the redevelopment of the Old Town Hall. There had been three options available for the Old Town Hall and the Council had agreed to a full refurbishment using Lottery money. Unfortunately the bid for funding had been unsuccessful and Members were concerned that the work on the Old Town Hall would not be considered as part of the capital projects.

The Economic Development Portfolio Holder confirmed that there had been a small amount of funding received from English Heritage for some work at the Town Hall.

Mrs Meek agreed that the Old Town Hall was a very important building in the City and, as part of the review, the use of the building would be considered alongside how the Tourist Information Centre (TIC) was delivered. She added that the current TIC did not reflect a modern Centre or the needs of the customer. The review would look at TICs in other historic areas and how they delivered their service.

In response to a Member's question Mrs Meek confirmed that the Discover Carlisle website was active and consideration was being given to the development of the website and the opportunities that were available through it.

RESOLVED – 1) That the update on the Economic Development Transformation Programme be welcomed;

2) That the Executive give priority to the capital programme for the redevelopment of the Old Town Hall.