

Report to: Council

Agenda
Item

Meeting Date:

Public/Private*: Public

Title: Environment & Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel - Chairman's Report –
Councillor Layden

The Small Scale Community Projects Task and Finish Group report had been completed and circulated. The lead member reported on the valuable discussion that had taken place, leading to the recommendation of some slight amendments that would give more clarity to members about the scheme. The Task Group wished to retain the scheme.

The Panel agreed that the budget was extremely valuable to local communities where it made a big impact. It was resolved that the Executive be requested to include a non-recurring budget for 2013/14 for £40k for Members' Small Scale Projects.

The Panel received an update on the establishment of a Carlisle City Centre Business Improvement District. The E & E Portfolio Holder expressed disappointment that the result of the September ballot had been against the formation of a BID. The turnout had been disappointing.

Members felt they wanted a re-ballot to go ahead, although there was concern that it may achieve the same result. The importance of engaging more with small business holders, who had been the least supportive group, was emphasised. A Panel member, who was also a BID voter gave a valuable insight into some of the difficulties, which largely revolved around inadequate communication. Further conversations were needed to gain as much feedback as possible.

It was resolved that the Panel recommend the Executive to continue to support all efforts to establish a BID.

The Higher Level of Stewardship Grant Offer covering various areas of agricultural land within the Council District and worth nearly a quarter of a million pounds over the next decade was discussed.

Several members were concerned about the implications for Rickerby Park, which could attract up to a third of the funding. It was felt that the general conditions that had to be agreed in order to receive the grant could be too limiting on the activities that would be allowed, impacting on any organised games, sports, rallies, shows or sales. It would depend how strictly the conditions were interpreted.

After much discussion, the Panel rejected accepting the grant in whole by 4 to 3. They resolved to recommend accepting the grant in part by 5 to 2.

The Panel received and noted the report on Car Parking recognising the implementation of the pay by phone service and the excellent work undertaken by enforcement officers often in difficult circumstances. Some members felt more work was required in dealing with the abuse of on-street parking.

A report updating the Cleaning Up Carlisle project was welcomed by the Panel. The delivery of educational messages followed up by robust enforcement was beginning to pay dividends. New machinery had led to a marked improvement in street cleaning since March 2012 and the new street cleansing machines would be used in all areas including Brampton, Longtown and the rural roads.

The Panel was updated on Transformation Savings draft proposals and commented that it was important to ensure that all statutory services were looked at to achieve good value for money and to be fit for purpose. The Director of Economic Development outlined changes to the structure of the Directorate and changes to the planning system, together with the need to have an up to date Local Plan to deliver growth and address Localism.

The Director of Local Environment stated that the Executive wished to minimise redundancies and making savings from non staffing budgets. Highways Claimed Rights changes plus reductions in CCTV services were mentioned together discussions on an allotment mutual, on Talkin Tarn and on non-staffing savings and overtime.

The view was expressed that it was hoped that the hours of charging at Talkin Tarn would remain the same to continue to encourage a healthy lifestyle for Carlisle citizens.

It was hoped the smaller details of the Highways Claimed Rights were included in current discussions.

The Panel noted the report.

Cllr Stephen Layden

November 2012