

**PORTFOLIO:**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Report of  
Portfolio Holder:

**COUNCILLOR**  
**MRS MARILYN BOWMAN**

### **Local Development Framework**

Members will note that on today's agenda is the Issues and Options Consultation Paper for the Local Development Framework Core Strategy. This will set the planning framework for the next 20 years. It is a priority of the Council to bring forward its new planning strategy and we are committed to providing it in line with our published timetable.

As well as dedicating officer resources to deliver this strategy the establishment of a *cross party* Member Working Group has helped progress this consultation paper. We have built on the large number of consultation responses from the first stage and are looking forward to involvement in this next consultation. Having an active involvement through the working group has helped to shape the options for people to consider and we look forward to working together to develop the strategy over the coming year.

### **Shop Doctor**

Local retail businesses in Currock and Harraby are currently being offered free business support from the 'Shop Doctor'.

The City Council backed scheme is to provide free specialist advice on how to make the most of window displays; how a shop and its goods are laid out; and how to improve customer care. To date, 16 shops have signed up to take part in the project and are receiving individual support.

The project will culminate in a workshop for all the businesses engaged. This will provide them with valuable networking opportunities and the chance to further enhance their business profiles. The initial feedback to the scheme from businesses taking part has been very positive. A formal evaluation will take place at the end of the project to assess the long term impact of the scheme.

## **City Centre Management Company and Business Improvement District**

Further progress has now been made in the plans to form a not for profit City Centre Management Company, and subsequently forming a formal Business Improvement District for Carlisle City Centre. The services of GJR Consulting (Gary Reeves) are now being secured to provide the necessary detailed advice and support to enable this to come to fruition with Gary Reeves leading on consultation with town centre businesses and other affected parties over the coming weeks. This will lead onto creation of a clear business plan for the proposed BID setting out the proposed geographical area, what activities the BID will cover such as marketing, events programme, and enhanced maintenance, and the budget available as derived from a small additional levy on business rates of most businesses in the agreed geographic area. This will then lead to a subsequent ballot of businesses on whether or not to support such a proposal. If successful the BID would be in place from around July 2012, with a 5 year initial lifespan of activity.

## **Business Start Up Support**

In conjunction with the County Council, European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and North West Regional Development Agency (NWDA) funding, the City Council continues to contribute towards The Intensive Start Up Programme (ISUS). The programme is delivered locally by the Cumbria Chamber of Commerce.

Up to the end of August 20 new business' have started in the current financial year against an overall target of 35 for the whole year.

Three 1 day workshops are being run during September as part of the programme to support new businesses, covering a range of topics including Marketing, Finance and employment regulations.

The workshops are available, free of charge, to those engaged on the programme, alongside 1-2-1 pre-start consultations.

**Councillor Mrs M Bowman  
Economic Development Portfolio Holder**