

**PORTFOLIO:**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Report of  
Portfolio Holder:

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

**1. Making Carlisle Magical at Christmas**

I am pleased to report a hugely successful range of events that took place with City Council support on the run up to Christmas.

The Santa Parade on the 24<sup>th</sup> November attracted around 5,000 people to the Castle, who enjoyed an hour long entertainment programme, and an additional 3,000 people who lined Castle Street to welcome the Parade to the city centre.

This ran alongside the high quality Christmas Market held in the city centre from the 24<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> November, with 28 chalets and stalls selling food, crafts and gifts from Cumbria and further afield.

There was an extremely positive response from many city centre retailers about the weekend with Hoopers, House of Fraser and The Lanes Shopping Centre all reporting an increase in footfall.

The Tourism Information Centre also played their part by hosting an absolutely magical Santa's Grotto in the Assembly Rooms, which then ran all the way through to 23<sup>rd</sup> December.

The City Council also were a major supporter of the "Live Local, Shop Local" campaign as heavily featured in the News and Star and Cumberland News throughout December, as well as supporting the Market Hall traders in their annual Christmas Fancy Dress and prize draw event..

## **2. City Centre Business Improvement District**

As part of the ongoing support for the vitality of the City Centre we are working closely with the business community in working up proposals for a Business Improvement District for the central retail area. There is now very firm support from all of the major retailers for this plan as well as several locally owned businesses.

Together with the business community we will be consulting widely throughout January and February on the benefits of a Business Improvement District with a view to publishing a draft Business Plan in March. City Centre businesses will then be balloted as to whether they wish to support this.

The benefits to businesses in the city centre area are likely to include:

- Improved communication and marketing of the city centre
- Continuation of a strong events programme
- Enhanced management and maintenance of the central area
- A safe, accessible and welcoming trading environment

Whilst we already have a vibrant city centre with comparatively low vacancy rates of retail units we must continue to work to maintain Carlisle as a strong retail centre. The formation of a Business Improvement District is exactly the sort of mechanism that was identified in the Portas Review (as published in December) to help ensure a successful and busy trading environment in a city centre.

The recent opening of Hotter shoes, White Stuff and Stormfront have all added to the retail strength of the city centre, and several existing retailers have recently improved their stores in Carlisle notably Hoopers, House of Fraser, Marks and Spencers and TopShop, with Debenhams about to make improvements and create further jobs.

Even areas such as London Road are now starting to improve, not only as a result of the developing Conservation area Plan for that area, but also by private investors and landlords spotting potential and providing new smaller shop premises for local traders, a good example being the Stanley Hall building.

## **3. Radio 1 Big Weekend Film Premiere**

As part of the ongoing legacy of the R1BW BBC Radio 1 DJ Scott Mills returned to Carlisle on Wednesday 7th December to host the premiere of the

movie all about Radio 1's Big Weekend in Carlisle, which took place earlier this year at the Airport.

The film, which stars Lady Gaga, Jessie J, Foo Fighters, Olly Murs, Black Eyed Peas, Radio 1 DJ's and their listeners was shown live from the University of Cumbria.

The making of the movie has been a massive collaboration between Scott and his listeners. They have helped with everything from filming themselves, creating music, making animations to designing posters, and spreading the word about the film in extremely inventive ways.

Scott Mills not only recruited the help of his Radio 1 listeners but also the help of some of the biggest music stars in the world to produce the film which tells the story of the two-day live music event at Carlisle Airport, which was attended by 40,000 people, mainly from the local area, and enjoyed by millions of people all over the UK who were listening on the radio and watching on TV and online.

Around 100 tickets for the film premiere were given away, live on air on Scott Mills show on Tuesday 6th December from the Santa's Grotto in the Assembly rooms here in Carlisle, all adding to the ongoing national coverage of Carlisle resulting from the R1BW event.

#### **4. Urban Design Guide Public Sector Award 2011-12**

I am also pleased to advise that the City Council has been shortlisted for an urban design award for the Castle Street public realm improvement scheme. From an original list of 30 nominated projects we have been shortlisted to the final six.

The Urban Design Group's annual awards event will take place in London in February at which we will have an opportunity to show case by way of a short video the Castle Street project and its benefits, and how it sits alongside other attributes of Carlisle.

#### **5. Local Development Framework**

The Consultation on the Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper has been concluded.

The total number of responses (via web based consultation, stakeholder groups, and meetings with internal departments) stands at approx 100. Whilst this is less than the number of responses received to the Key Issues paper, (which was well over 1000), respondents were required to give opinions on a total of 47 questions covering areas as diverse as housing, tourism,

infrastructure and climate change. Many respondents have tackled all these questions, indicating both their preferred option, and their reason for choosing that option. Furthermore, many respondents made additional detailed comments about specific topics within the consultation, and more general comments about the document as a whole, including anything they felt had been omitted. The Local Development Framework Member Working Group will be considering these comments as work progresses towards the Council's Preferred Options.

In addition to the consultation work has been continuing on the Evidence Base which supports the Council's Strategy. Three additional studies have been undertaking including:

- Housing Needs and Demand Study – looking at levels of housing required including open market housing, affordable housing and special needs housing
- Green Infrastructure Strategy – looking at the importance the Green Environment is to Carlisle and how we can ensure it continues to perform an important role
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – this updates the information in relation to potential flooding and determine where development could take place which would reduce impact from flooding
- Retail Capacity Study – this is now underway to determine the Council's future strategy for retail provision

## **6. Central Plaza**

The Council has served notice on the Owners of the Central Plaza to ensure that essential repairs are undertaken to make the building wind and watertight. The owners have not undertaken the work and we have tendered the urgent repairs in order for the Council to do the necessary work and claim back the costs from the owners. These works will soon be starting.

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