

Meeting Date: **5 March 2013**

Public/Private*: Public

Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel -

Title: **Chairman's Report – Councillor Stephen Layden**

Meeting held Thursday 17th January 2013

The Business Interaction Centre item was taken first on the Agenda and the Chairman welcomed Dr Stephen Bulman of the University of Cumbria. The Director of Economic Development provided details of the proposal to set up the BIC and the proposed contribution from the Carlisle City Council of £100k towards capital costs. It was stated that supporting economic growth was a key Council priority, which necessitated attracting new investment to the city, developing an enterprise culture and raising skill levels. The University was a key partner in this; its Corporate Strategy has four themes: sustainability, creativity, employability and enterprise. It wishes to establish BIC as part of That strategy.

Paternoster Row had been identified as the preferred location where. To provide a modern, fit for purpose facility £160k capital expenditure was required. The operating costs, of initially £180k would be covered by the University which had asked for £100k from the City Council towards capital costs of refurbishment of the building.

Members were concerned that there had been issues in the past with partner bodies including the University and asked about due diligence and future Scrutiny input. The Panel was assured that the Council's financial contribution would be used to upgrade the building but the University had the responsibility to deal with the dilapidation of the Paternoster Row and Castle Street buildings.

It was anticipated that the centre would open in late Spring 2013. The lease with the University was active until 2017 with the hope that it could be extended if successful.

The report ED 04/13 was noted, with the Panel approving the Executive's recommendations, as well as asking the Executive to ensure the £100k was used to develop the Business Interaction Centre and not for the University's lease agreement. It was further resolved that, in order to enable closer working with the Council, a request be made to the University for a City Council representative to sit on the University's board.

The Overview Report incorporating the Work Programme and Forward Plan items was considered leading to the following resolutions: the Terms of Reference of the Talkin Tarn Task & Finish Group be approved; a Tourist Information Centre sub-committee be set up to meet three or four times a year to deal with issues as they arise; the designation of the Kingmoor Nature Reserve be added to the Work programme for the 28th February meeting.

The Director of Local Environment provided a report summarising and updating the Panel on the **Cumbria Strategic Partnership Enhanced Partnership Working Project**.

The last Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership meeting had been held in June 2012. There were several pressures on the partnership: the Government had announced the end of Landfill Allowance Trading Schemes in 2012/13; the payment mechanism from the County Council to districts for recycling had changed; other than South Lakeland and Carlisle, other district councils had recyclates tied up in existing contracts; the current economic climate. There was also a lack of consensus between the Districts and the County Council.

In noting the report, the Panel suggested the City Council investigates the use of Section 106 Agreements to offset increased costs to the Council such as refuse/recycling arising from planning applications for new housing estates. The Panel also supported the suggestion of sending a letter to the Chairman of the Cumbria SWP to encourage continuation of partnership working.

The Panel received a report from The Neighbourhood and Green Spaces Manager on the **Use of Green Infrastructure** and heard a summary of the Carlisle Green Infrastructure Strategy that would be incorporated into the local plan. A positive and wide-ranging discussion of issues and initiatives (EEOSP.09/13) ensued before the Panel formally noted the report.

The final item considered was the **Environmental Performance of the Council**. The Safety, Health and Environmental Manager highlighted how the renewals of equipment embraced new environmentally friendly technologies and sought to continue the 'invest to save' ethos of the Carbon Trust.

Carlisle City Council had made a large reduction in emissions (11.1%) in 2011-12 from the previous year. There had been substantial reductions in gas and electricity consumption. In 2012/13 the City Council retained or achieved eight Green Flag awards. Positive developments were continuing with Solar Panels. The Chairman acknowledged that the new administration had signed up to the continuing programme of energy reductions and paid tribute to the work of the previous administration in endorsing the work that had led to the substantial reductions.

Cllr Stephen Layden

February 2013.