

ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Report of the Chairman

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The Skills and Economy Workshop held on the 15th November proved both interesting and useful. A cross section of organisations had been invited with representatives from the Richard Rose Academies, Carlisle College, The University and The National Apprenticeship Scheme giving presentations. The workshop had been organised to find out what were the existing links between education/training and employment in Carlisle, identify gaps in provision and suggest ways forward with the overall aim being to improve Carlisle's economy. It became clear that, whilst there were some very good examples of links between individual organisations, these were not widely known about outside those individual organisations. There is a clear need for a central communication point that can be accessed by all those involved. The report will be available for the Panel at the January meeting.

The December meeting was largely taken up by budget matters. The Panel were disappointed that there seemed to be little scope for flexibility, in particular that many charges or fixed penalty fines were fixed centrally rather than locally. The Panel had also been concerned that the issue of car parking had been delayed to obtain a consultant's report. This matter had been the subject of a Task and Finish Group some while ago and its recommendations not implemented. Whilst it was reassuring that the consultant endorsed the Groups recommendations the Panel accepted that the consultant had, because of his independent stance, been able to add depth and weight to the findings.

The Task and Finish Group that had looked at the Enterprise Centre presented its findings to the Panel and the Executive. Several issues have been

highlighted not least that the figure of £300,000 of backlog in repairs is totally inaccurate. Even allowing for some major roof repairs the sum is unlikely to reach even £100,000. The report will now go forward to the project board that is currently reviewing, among other things, the Enterprise Centre.