

Meeting Date: 8<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Public/Private\*: Public

Title: **Leader's Portfolio Holder Report –  
Councillor John Mallinson**

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### **CARLISLE AMBASSADORS**

**Meetings:** Carlisle Ambassadors continue to have the opportunity to join weekly Zoom meetings online each Friday morning at 10.00 a.m. Members are finding this useful and as from September, there will be a guest speaker kicking off each meeting. For information on how to join these online networking opportunities, look out for the alerts sent to Carlisle Ambassadors or contact Michelle Masters via email at [info@michellemastersconsulting.co.uk](mailto:info@michellemastersconsulting.co.uk). The next scheduled Carlisle Ambassador conference is still in the diary for Thursday, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020 pending guidance from Government on COVID safety and opening up for larger business meetings. A final decision as to whether it will be possible to hold a meeting along the lines of its usual format (albeit with COVID safe practise in place) will be taken nearer the time and in conjunction with Carlisle Racecourse as the venue.

Alternative options include online meetings such as a webinar which could be pre-recorded for Carlisle Ambassadors to enjoy at their leisure.

**Membership:** Despite lockdown, we are still receiving requests from businesses keen to join – membership is now 221. We have had 23 new members since our last meeting in March. The Zoom meetings are helpful for businesses new to the area as a way to meet people and make business connections.

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

The regular 'e' newsletter is still proving popular with nearly 1,600 subscribers and includes the latest information from Government, regional and local alerts. The website is currently being updated with four videos created in partnership with Carlisle Ambassadors to showcase their sector and share the latest news in how their business is operating as we come out of lockdown and begin to work in the 'new normal'.

## PROJECTS

**Young Carlisle Ambassadors:** a new date has been secured for the Talent Connect Event – 25<sup>th</sup> September 2021. The database of businesses keen to take part is growing and the Young Carlisle Ambassadors Committee will reconvene in early September to begin to plan for the event.

Meanwhile, we are preparing to engage young people with Carlisle City Council's priority projects such as the development of the Town Deal, Future High Street Fund and Borderlands. The approach will be to use technology to consult with young people in a flexible way (not bound by timeframes or deadlines). The support of partners is sought from within Carlisle Ambassador businesses, University of Cumbria, Carlisle College and our Secondary Schools to disseminate and encourage engagement with this project. It is hoped that this will have a significant reach as such digital media can easily be used as a teaching resource and a way to engage young people in planning for Carlisle's future.

**Business Support:** The 'Small Business Support Carlisle' established at the end of May by Michelle Masters is supported by several Carlisle Ambassadors. Membership is now in the order of 2,600 micro, small and medium Carlisle businesses. All contacts with businesses provide opportunities to signpost to the sources of help available e.g. Chamber of Commerce; Digital Cumbria; CLEP, Carlisle City Council's Business Support (Economic Development), Britain's Energy Coast Business Cluster, Federation of Small Businesses. We continue to work closely with these partners (who are also CA members) to support our local businesses.

**Carlisle Ambassador Mentor Programme:** Established earlier this year continues to grow and receive positive feedback from the businesses taking part. All mentors are volunteers and the businesses are very much valuing this free support. We have now had 25 mentees sign up to get help from the programme and 22 mentors signed up to offer their help and experience.

## ENGLAND'S HISTORIC CITIES CONSORTIA

Following England's Historic Cities Consortium submission of reports to Visit England Board and to the DCMS Select Committee on the impact of Covid-19 on tourism which was sent on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020. Plans are underway to invite the Minister to the next England's Historic Cities meeting to take place on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

The consortia continues to work together to deliver projects and a revised bid to Visit England for DEF 5 funding has been submitted. The project would focus on domestic tourism in our historic cities and their rural hinterland. The aim is to ensure that the international impact of COVID 19 on the visitor economy is mitigated by the England Originals project activity in 2020 -21. A decision on funding is awaited.

## **BORDERLANDS INCLUSIVE GROWTH DEAL**

I attended the Borderlands Shadow Partnership meeting on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> July. At the meeting the Board received an update on the projects and programmes included in the initiative and in particular progress towards a Full Deal. The Partnership are in discussion with the two Governments with the aim of getting a deal sorted early in the New Year. A number of projects have already been approved including Alnwick Garden and the Digital Voucher scheme. The Carlisle Station Gateway Outline Business Case was also presented to the Board and is ready for formal submission.

The Board also received a presentation on the Place Programme which is an important part of the Borderlands Initiative as it is Borderlands wide and will have an impact on a number of the smaller towns and villages in the area. The Partnership is in discussion with both Governments as to how to implement the scheme to avoid having to get Government approval for every individual project which would slow the process down. The next phase of the Governance structure had been put on pause due to Covid 19. However, the Board agreed that from September the Chief Economic Development Officers Group, Financial Officers Group and the Economic Forum will be set up. In addition, the rotation of Co-Chairs for the Borderlands Partnership Board, now being Carlisle City Council and Scottish Borders Council will take place in September.

### **Programme Level**

At the programme level, work to progress to Full Deal continues. This involves the production of the business cases for all projects and programmes, collaboration agreement, communications protocol and the monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

Work is also being undertaken to support the case for additional investment to be allocated to the delivery of the Inclusive Growth Deal to respond to the economic impacts of COVID-19. A proposal document is currently being prepared outlining the economic case for this additional investment – that will be submitted for the Compressive Spending Review in the Autumn.

### **Carlisle projects**

Good progress continues to be made on three Carlisle projects - Carlisle Station Citadels and Caldew Riverside:

- The detailed business case for the improvements to the railway station project has been finalised and shared with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government for comment
- Work on the detailed business case for the Citadels is well underway, with the current stage being the selection of a preferred option for the site in terms of types of use, layout and amount of floorspace. The University of Cumbria will be the main occupier of the site
- Proposals for the development of the Caldew Riverside (Lower Viaduct) site continue to be progressed. A detailed remediation appraisal has been undertaken which has provided a more accurate figure for the costs of cleaning up the site and

options for undertaking the works. A feasibility study is now in the process of being prepared for a residential development scheme

### **Central Plaza**

The redevelopment of the site continues to be progressed, with it forming one of the key projects in the Council's Future High Street Fund (FHSF) bid. The project included in the FHSF involves the construction of the middle-upper tier branded hotel on the site

A detailed appraisal of the hotel proposal has been prepared that includes further feasibility work and construction costings that demonstrate a new hotel is deliverable with 'gap' funding of around £5 million. A demand / capacity assessment has also been undertaken, which indicates that a new branded hotel would perform well and be profitable.

### **EMERGENCY PLANNING**

#### **Covid-19**

The Council continues to respond to the Covid-19 emergency through the Cumbria Local Resilience Forum, Health Protection Board and Strategic Recovery Coordination Group.

The frequency of meetings has been reduced and resources have shifted across to the Health Protection Board and the Local Outbreak Control Plan. This marks a clear change from a civil contingency response to a public health response, with recovery running in parallel.

#### **Multi-agency Flood Plan**

A countywide Task And Finish Group is up and running to update the Multi-agency Flood Plan. The District will be covered by local plans that will have all aspects of response included in them.

#### **Update on communications and public consultations**

We continue to support the countywide communications response to the Covid-19 emergency. In addition to this, work continues on key projects with communications support provided to Borderlands schemes, the Town Investment Plan and St Cuthbert's Garden Village, plus other Council services.

### **STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**

Strategic partners continue to feed into the recovery efforts across Carlisle. Carlisle Partnership continues to send a regular Partnership update emails on the latest national and local guidance and news updates. The Funding newsletter is also distributed. Feedback around communication continues to be positive.