

Meeting Date: 5 November 2013

Public/Private*: Public

Title: **Economy & Enterprise Portfolio Holder's Report –
Councillor Heather Bradley**

PLANNING

North West Coast Connections Project – National Grid

The public consultation on National Grid's North West Coast Connections Project has not taken place this autumn as anticipated. This decision was made following meetings National Grid has had with senior managers and new directors at NuGen (the company building the new Moorside power station). These ongoing discussions, and NuGen's own positive approach, about the outcome of choice of technology should enable National Grid to make an announcement about the start of the public consultation early in the New Year. This should allow for a more focused and informed consultation as the Project moves forward, and provide for easier understanding of all necessary works.

In the meantime National Grid is committed to undertaking a thorough and extensive consultation exercise and in the coming months will continue to work closely with NuGen, as well as all those organisations it has been working with on the Project over the past four years, to ensure this vital project can move forwards in a timely manner.

A Member briefing will be arranged in relation to the new consultation programme.

Local Plan

Consultation on the Local Plan came to a close on Monday 16th September. The Council have received 192 responses to date that have made 924 separate comments. Responses are still coming in. The Council will continue to welcome people's comments and any new information will be fed into the continued preparation process of the Local Plan.

Overall the responses have focused upon housing related issues and the location of sites. There is a mixture of supportive comments with alternatives put forward but also a healthy batch of objections but far fewer than previous consultations and not in the same intensity over certain sites. The responses have been more considered and specific to certain policies. Each response has been acknowledged and the team are currently producing a summary report that shall theme the main issues and how these will be considered as the Plan is progressed. This will then be available to view on the Council website.

Through the consultation process further sites have been put forward for development that will need to be assessed. The Council have also met with a Senior Planning Inspector who reviewed the Local Plan and offered advice. He recommended an additional stage of consultation in the New Year to allow the public the opportunity to comment on some of the possible changes that will need to be incorporated in the Local Plan. This includes updating the evidence base on viability, housing and employment land.

In other planning news Dalston Parish Council are still keen to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for their area and the consultation on the boundary concluded over the summer with no comments received. The Council will continue to support Dalston as they progress this Plan.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Small Business Saturday - 7th December

The aim of the day is to celebrate, support and promote small businesses at a key time in the shopping calendar. It is backed by a national media campaign and has already received cross party attention and support. This is the first time that the event has been run in the UK the campaign, however in the US, where it originated, it has become a national event.

The City Council is leading on delivery of activity on Small Business Saturday and discussions have already taken place with the University, Federation of Small Businesses, the City Centre Business Group and the Chamber amongst others, to promote the initiative in Carlisle. Primarily activity will take place in the Market Hall where empty stalls have been made available (Free of charge for SBS only) to small businesses who do not currently have a retail presence. The offer has also been extended to all schools within the district for students to have the opportunity to sell their products and/or services direct to members of the public on one of the busiest trading days before Christmas alongside other stall holders.

Brampton Business Association are also considering running a promotion to coincide with the event and are working with Economic Development to co-ordinate activity.

Member Workshop

Economic Development are the lead on several key projects within the Carlisle Plan. In order to engage Members in the process, a workshop day is planned for Wednesday 20th November. The day will cover three projects which would benefit from consultation with Members. These are: Old Town Hall Phase 2, Public Realm and City Centre Masterplanning. If you are able to attend, this would be the perfect opportunity to receive an update on each project and help inform officers as they begin the next phase of work.

Tourism Information Centre

The TIC is already preparing for the festive period with the Christmas grotto. There is a new Carlisle Christmas book in stock which is already selling well. A range of charity Christmas cards is also available. In fact the TIC is the only city centre location with such a good selection of cards.

It has been a busy time for TIC staff over the last couple of months with August and September seeing an increase of 10% on visitor figures compared with last year.

Councillor Heather Bradley
Portfolio Holder for Economy & Enterprise