

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** **- ECONOMIC WELL-BEING**

### **MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON 13 JUNE 2005**

**Present:** Councillors P Connolly (Chair); K Hitchen (Deputy Chair)  
D Banks; A Johnston; J Prince;

Apologies were received from Cllrs Mrs M Docherty; D Moore

**Also present:**

Allerdale Borough Council: Cllrs Mrs J Minto; D Thompson; J Heathcote,  
Community Scrutiny Committee

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs M Jackson (Chair)

Copeland Borough Council: Cllr Miss E Woodburn; G Clements;  
E Eastwood; F Gleaves

Apologies were received from Cllrs M Ashbrook; J Hewitson

West Cumbria Strategic Partnership: M Heaslip; Ms C Killeen; J Sidney;  
Ms C McGlennon; J Head; B Lightowler; J Grainger; Ms R Mathisen; N  
Catherston; Ms L Parvin

Apologies were received from Tim Knowles, Chair, WCSP

Officers: F McMorrow, Corporate Director; M Tichford, Head of  
Regeneration; M Williams, Principal Investment Promotion Officer; B  
Kirkbride, Principal Community Regeneration Officer; Ms Z Bergmann,  
Investment Promotion Assistant; Ms J Murray, Scrutiny Support Officer

### **Cumbria Vision**

Chris Collier, Chief Executive, Cumbria Vision:

The intention when the Chief Executive was appointed was that

- Cumbria Vision would have a strategic focus and would improve the quality of evidence available to inform decision-making.
- It would bring together regeneration partners and have them working in the same direction. Liverpool and Manchester had partners getting behind 2-3 major projects and the intention was that this same approach would be adopted for Cumbria.

There had been some changes since:

- It was felt there was a need for regeneration partners to work more closely together to avoid duplication of effort and central administrative costs.
- Such a move would free up funding and funding would be more targeted to need.
- It was envisaged that skilled and experienced practitioners would be retained but work together in a more co-ordinated and integrated way.
- The model would support anywhere on a spectrum of 1 single regeneration company to the existing 26 regeneration partners – there was an entire range of options and opportunities.
- The Nuclear Opportunities Group model was cited as a good example, with roles clearly defined.

An organogram for Cumbria Vision was distributed and attached as an appendix to these minutes. Key points made:

- The Board sits at the centre, responsible for strategy and performance.
- To one side sits a strengthened research capability, whose data would be made available to delivery agencies. This unit would also be responsible for monitoring, evaluation, commissioning and procurement. The importance of good data was stressed.
- To the other side sits a policy advisory group which would take some of detail from the Board to allow them the strategic focus required. It would be a melting pot looking at various policy options tied into evidence available. It would be staffed by Chief Executives of regeneration companies and local authority officers.
- The delivery teams proposed would address the areas of need already identified and it was likely would be headed by people already involved in regeneration delivery – people that were already known to partners.

The Chief Executive felt that a key point was:

- There was £90m funding coming into Cumbria through the NWDA, £60m Cumbria-specific and £30m through skills' initiatives. There were not enough 'big bangs for the bucks'.

As far as process was concerned:

- The first Board meeting would take place on June 14<sup>th</sup>, the day after this meeting.
- There would be a need to evaluate feedback from the consultation process (it was acknowledged that this had not been particularly well-handled), and while not all of the responses had been received, there was support for a single regeneration company, although there were concerns about areas of need, ring-fencing of resources and other areas (Carlisle, Penrith, Kendal) coming into the arena.
- A business plan for 2006-07 would come out for consultation in September.

An example of the practical benefits that a more co-ordinated approach might bring was given as the development of a Nuclear City Region, a world-class location for nuclear excellence. But there would be a need for more targeted funding for the nuclear opportunities group were this to be achieved.

On questioning, the Chief Executive continued:

- If Cumbria gets behind 2 or 3 big initiatives, then assurance has been given that voices will be heard by the NWDA (in response to concern that West Cumbria knows what it wants but no-one listens).
- That there was benefit in speaking with a Cumbria 'voice' and that Cumbria Vision should be seen as an 'ally'(this in response to concerns raised that the issues being faced in West Cumbria and Barrow were on a different scale to the rest of Cumbria. There was a need to transform the whole economy. West Cumbria already had a direct voice to Government). The different needs of West Cumbria and Barrow would be addressed by the 'industrial transition' delivery team on the organogram. It would be expected that Fergus McMorrow, for example, Corporate Director of Copeland Borough Council, would be on the Policy Advisory Group

- That there were 3 places on the Board for local authorities and that the Chief Executive would approach the Board again on this issue, given representations made that one local authority did not have sufficient knowledge to speak on behalf of another.
- Assurance was given that unemployment issues would be addressed and the focus would not just be on the creation of high value jobs.
- That there were four direct private sector representatives on the Board, appointed through Nolan Committee procedures. There were a further three in addition to the Chairman with strong private sector backgrounds.
- That funding from the NWDA for regeneration activity would be directed through the Regional Economic Strategy, and it was essential that projects were included in the 'RES', that the RES was 'right' (this in response to who would deliver the local area agreements).
- Cumbria Vision was funded from the NWDA to the tune of £0.5m (which also financed the Cumbria Strategic Partnership), but also had influence with the North West Regional Assembly, Defra, Eu Funding streams etc.

Additional points in the room:

- It was pointed out that there was no Lake District National Park representative on the Board and given that 2/3rds of Copeland sits within the National Park, it was argued that there should be representation.
- There were calls for another Sellafield alongside renewable energy projects.

The Committee **RESOLVED** that the Chief Executive of Cumbria Vision be Invited back in 6 months time for a further update.

The meeting closed at 12.15 pm.

Chair:.....

Date:.....