

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENTERPRISE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 13 AUGUST 2007

Present: Councillors R Salkeld, Deputy Chairman in the Chair; D Banks; J Bowman; N Clarkson; Mrs M Docherty; D Moore; J Prince; C Whiteside; A Wonnacott; H Wormstrup.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor G Scurrah.

Officers: N White, Scrutiny Support Officer; T Capper, Democratic Services Manager; F Mc Morrow, Corporate Director, Economic Prosperity and Sustainability; M Tichford, Head of Regeneration.

EDE 04/07 Small Business Advice

The Committee received a presentation from West Cumbria Development Agency (WCDA) Chief Executive Godfrey Holden on the work of the WCDA.

The Committee noted that the WCDA was established in 1988 to help regenerate the local economy. Its central aim is to help create jobs in the Boroughs of Allerdale and Copeland. This job creation is achieved by helping new businesses start and grow, by assisting local companies to expand and by facilitating inward investment into the area.

RESOLVED – that the presentation by the West Cumbria Development Agency be received.

EDE 05/07 Update – Intermediate Level Waste Interim Storage

The Committee considered a report upon the current status of Intermediate Level Waste (ILW) storage.

The Committee noted that the current approach to interim storage of ILW was to build storage facilities at the sites where it was created. The issue for the UK as a whole was whether it makes sense to rationalize ILW interim storage at a smaller number of storage centres than currently planned, such as Sellafield, Dounreay (for its own waste) and perhaps one of the southern sites.

The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) could not take a fully informed decision on the best approach to ILW interim storage until the Government has decided on the long-term management arrangements for ILW (i.e. implementation plans for deep geological disposal) and until the

implementation timetable is clear. The NDA were however conducting a national review of waste arisings and storage conditions, which will inform the basis of a 'forward stores' strategy.

The Committee further noted that the Council's concerns about the lack of involvement of local authority stakeholders in the review of ILW storage options have been fed into the NDA review of stakeholder engagement via the Local Government Association's special interest group NuLEAF. The Council also has at every occasion responded to Government, Site License operator and NDA consultations on the interim storage of ILW.

RESOLVED – (A) the Council continues to lobby the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority for increased stakeholder engagement on the issue of Intermediate Level Waste storage and the decision making process, and

(B) a further report be submitted to the Committee once a consultation timetable for Intermediate Level Waste storage has been established.

EDE 06/07 West Cumbria Strategic Master Plan

The Committee received an update from the Head of Regeneration on the West Cumbria Strategic Master Plan.

The Committee were informed that the government had yet to make a final decision on the funding of the master plan. It noted the key projects within the master plan and the work that had been undertaken so far on them. A report would be submitted to future meetings as work on these projects developed.

RESOLVED – that the update on the West Cumbria Strategic Master Plan be received.

EDE 07/07 Update/Changes to Local Authority Business Growth Incentives

The Committee received an update from the Head of Regeneration on the Local Authority Business Growth Schemes Initiative (LABGI).

The Committee noted that the Executive on 24 October 2006 had agreed a programme of initiatives which had all been progressed and developed apart from The Whitehaven Town Centre Programme.

The Committee were informed that the recruitment of a Business Liaison Officer who would work closely with town centre businesses to represent their views on the Whitehaven Town Centre Task Group had had difficulty

in securing matched funding. However other options were now being considered to achieve the desired outcomes

RESOLVED – that the update on the Local Authority Business Growth Schemes Initiative be received.

EDE 08/07 Whitehaven Regeneration Programme

The Committee considered a report upon the Whitehaven Regeneration Programme (WRP).

The Committee noted that the Whitehaven Regeneration Programme comprised of four strands of activity which were Whitehaven Town Centre; Pow Beck; South Whitehaven – Housing and Community and Coastal Fringe.

The Committee further noted the latest updates from the Programme's Task Groups to the overall Steering Group for the programme. It agreed that reports to future meetings on this work should be made as progress was achieved.

RESOLVED – that (A) a report on the progress made on the Whitehaven Town Centre and Coastal Fringe be submitted to the Committee's meeting in October, and

(B) a report on the progress made on Pow Beck and South Whitehaven – Housing and Community be submitted to the Committee's meeting in December.

EDE 09/07 Work Plan

The Committee considered its current work plan.

RESOLVED – that the work plan be noted.

EDE 10/07 Work Plan

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group and these are detailed at the recommendations at the head of this report.

It also agreed that a report should be submitted to that Scrutiny Committee in six months time on the changes that the Panel has made to its procedures as a result of this review and the effect of those changes. This would enable an analysis and reassessment of these changes to ensure that they are giving the results that were intended.

It further agreed that another task and finish group should be established to look at the Council's Planning and Building Control Enforcement.

The Committee noted that in respect of recommendation (A) it was now only Government advice and no longer a target that the amount of planning decisions that a council should take as delegated decisions be 90%.

RECOMMENDED – that the Planning Panel:

(A) recommend to Council that the:

- (1) amount of planning decisions that are made by delegated authority should be increased,
 - (2) procedures for elected members to speak at Planning Panel meetings should be reviewed with the aim of ensuring that members rights to speak at Planning Panel are the same as those for members of the public,
 - (3) Panel's procedures should be amended to allow the possibility of a member of the public to speak at more than one meeting on a planning application if the need exists,
 - (4) Panel's members should be advised that the use of pre prepared written statements is not good practise and encourage them not to use such statements in future,
 - (5) Panel's Members be made aware that a decision to refuse planning permission made on unreasonable grounds could leave the council open to an award of costs against it,
 - (6) Chairman of the Planning Panel be involved in the process to ensure that a Planning Panel's reasons for refusal of planning permission are correctly recorded,
- (B) to the Executive that greater priority and resources should be given to ensuring that the publication of the final version of the Copeland Local Plan 2001 – 2016 is achieved in the near future,
- (C) to the Member Training and Development Panel that training sessions on the role of Councillors in Planning take place every year and be for all members of the Council,

- (D) a report be submitted to the Committee in six months time on the changes that the Planning Panel has made to its procedures as a result of this review and the effect of those changes, and
- (E) a further task and finish group be established to look into the Council's Planning and Building Control Enforcement.

The Meeting Closed at 15.25pm

Signed:.....

Date:.....