

Report from Overview and Scrutiny

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Lead Members: Cllrs Mrs A Bradshaw; Mrs Y Clarkson
P Connolly; Mrs M Woodburn

Lead Officer: T Capper

Sep-October 2006:

Since Overview and Scrutiny last reported:

1. Economic well-being received a presentation with respect to the 'initial' thinking arising from the West Cumbria Strategic Forum's master-planning exercise and made several pertinent comments. The Chairs and Vice Chairs have also met with the Corporate Director for Economic Prosperity and Sustainability to discuss points arising, and hope that the draft masterplan will an agenda item for their next meeting.
2. The local business growth incentive scheme provoked much discussion, with Members very much in favour of a return to the graduate traineeship (to be fed into the review of the restructure). They voiced support for regeneration effort in Millom in particular (not profiting to any great extent from a more buoyant travel to work area) and called for an update on the Market Town Initiatives in the near future. Members of Economic Well-being also fed into the action plan arising from the review of the Tourist Information Centres.
3. Members of Social Well-being have taken a keen interest in the Concessionary Travel Scheme again this year and continue to be in favour of offering as wide a choice as possible to people who are eligible (they continue to be keen to include a railcard option dependent on overall costings). They are holding fire in making recommendations to the Executive until the overall picture on Government funding for the statutory scheme and the cost of free Cumbria-wide travel (in its first year of operation) are clearer. They noted the £25-30,000 saving that the introduction of vouchers had achieved.
4. The scrutiny of the West Cumbria Strategic Partnership continues. Members are monitoring the action plan arising from the Government's assessment this year, delivery of which will secure the Amber/Green marking. There will be a need to consider how to monitor delivery of the neighbourhood plans, Members being concerned that only 5% of funding can be carried over into the following financial year.

In looking at the procedures and processes of the West Cumbria Strategic Partnership, Members, having used an evaluation toolkit, acknowledged that the Partnership does add value and gives access to further funding. They are considering evidence from the Chief Executives on several other issues, particularly clarity of purpose, communication and the development process for a new community strategy. This joint committee also fed back comments on the draft local area agreement.

5. Copeland continues to be represented on the joint Cumbria-wide scrutiny working group on the development of the Local Area Agreement (LAA), and on the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership, in addition to the Cumbria Scrutiny Member network. The most recent report on the development of the LAA is attached along with the Chief Executives' comments. This work is continuing.

6. Members of Environmental Well-being are continuing their interest in matters enforcement and are expecting to feed into a further review of this area of the Council's business and are particularly keen to see the fruits of the Cleaner, Greener, Safer legislation.

7. Members of Performance and Resources have reviewed and put forward a revised set of budget evaluation criteria for approval by Members, based on the emerging Corporate Plan for 2007-12.

Scrutiny Support Officer
11 October 2006