

Eden District Council

Executive

5 November 2019

**Borderlands Place Programme**

<b>Portfolio:</b>	Executive
<b>Report from:</b>	Assistant Director Planning and Economic Development
<b>Wards:</b>	All Wards
<b>OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>	

**1 Purpose**

- 1.1 This report outlines the Borderlands Place Programme purpose and process and asks the Executive to approve a submission of an Expression of Interest to the Programme.

**2 Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Executive approve Penrith as the town to be included in the submission of an Expression of Interest for the Borderlands Place Programme.

**3 Report Details**

- 3.1 The Borderlands Partnership was established in 2014, bringing together the five cross-border Local Authorities of Carlisle City Council, Cumbria County Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Northumberland County Council and Scottish Borders Council to promote the economic growth of the area that straddles the Scotland-England border.
- 3.2 Following the submission of a Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal proposal to the UK and Scottish Governments in September 2018, a Heads of Terms was signed with the UK and Scottish Governments on Monday 1 July 2019. It is anticipated that the investment will deliver an extra 5,500 job opportunities, attract more than four million extra tourists and unlock investment in towns across the area, boosting the region's economy by £1.1 billion.
- 3.3 Partners are now working on developing the Borderlands Programme. One of the elements within this initiative is a Place Programme to make town centres economically vibrant and resilient to change. The objectives of the Programme are to:
- Attract new businesses to our towns and town centres.
  - Increase and retain our working age population.
  - Raise the standard of the physical environment in our towns and town centres.
  - Increase the number of people living in our towns and town centres.
  - Deliver new jobs and opportunities for economic and social participation.

- Increase the number of visitors who spend time and money in our towns and town centres, smaller conurbations and rural communities.

3.4 The Borderlands Place Programme seeks to commission the production of Place Plans for the revitalisation of a number of towns across the region. It is proposed that there will be one town chosen per District Authority area in Cumbria. The basis for the selection of towns is to be informed by socio-economic criteria, local knowledge of the needs of each town and political priorities. The full methodology is included as Appendix 1. Cumbria County Council Area Teams have been tasked with working with District Authorities to select towns for inclusion within the Programme.

3.5 Within Eden, each of the Key Service Centres (Alston, Appleby, Kirkby Stephen and Penrith) has been considered against the town selection methodology. Penrith has been assessed as having the most likelihood of drawing down funding within Eden for the Place Programme. Set out below is the rationale for the selection of Penrith as the recommended town centre to put forward for the Place Programme.

- Population – Penrith has the highest population in Eden with a total population of 15,494 residents and contained within the adopted Local Plan has been highlighted as the location with most growth potential.
- Catchment Area – Penrith provides a shopping catchment for the whole of Eden District, serving a wide hinterland of over 50,000 people.
- Other Key Service Centres - Other Key Service Centres in Eden are, on a national level, comparable to villages in terms of their population numbers but the rural nature of these towns necessitate more services and shops to serve the local population.
- Recent Government town centre funding streams have focussed on how their funding can make the widest possible economic impact. As a large population centre and as a service centre for a wide population catchment across Eden District, benefits from investment in Penrith are likely to resonate for the other Key Service Centres in Eden as well as Penrith.
- Employment - Penrith accounted for 29% of the total population of Eden District at the last Census. However, employment is relatively concentrated in Penrith with 42% of all employees located in the town, 50% of all professional service jobs and 68% of all retail jobs – emphasising the town's role as the key economic driver for the whole of the District.
- Penrith has an existing working group set up to work on an action plan to develop Penrith for the future, this group comprises membership from all three tiers of local government, the Chamber of Trade, representatives from the towns Business Improvement Districts and the third sector. This existing partnership will be key in developing a Place Plan within the timescales required.
- With two Business Improvement Districts and a larger number of Eden's bigger businesses based in Penrith, Penrith provides more scope for Private Sector leverage.

- 3.6 It was also taken into account schemes which were already taking place in the other Key Service Centres including the Townscape Heritage Initiative and Front Street Project in Alston and the Heritage Action Zone project in Appleby. Kirkby Stephen have recently celebrated having no vacant units in the town, which is a positive sign of economic vitality in the town and therefore the need for investment may be difficult to justify, alongside the potential impact of investment given the relatively small population.
- 3.7 Following the selection of the towns from across the Districts, these will then be incorporated into an Outline Business Case for the Place Programme for approval by the two Governments as the framework for securing the funding required. Release of the funds from Government will be facilitated by the preparation of a Place Plan for each of the selected towns. The Place Plans are expected to be completed during March – August 2020 enabling delivery from September 2020 onwards.

## **4 Policy Framework**

- 4.1 The Council has four corporate priorities which are:
- Decent Homes for All;
  - Strong Economy, Rich Environment;
  - Thriving Communities; and
  - Quality Council
- 4.2 This report meets Strong Economy, Rich Environment corporate priority.
- 4.3 This report addresses the strategic action in the Council Plan to ‘Engage with Eden’s four market towns and the Chambers of Trade to increase their vitality, including the Townscape Heritage Initiative in Alston and the Penrith Business Improvement District (BID)’.

## **5 Consultation**

- 5.1 The Commercial Services Portfolio Holder has been consulted on the reasoning behind why Penrith had been chosen as the town in Eden for the Expression of Interest to focus on.

## **6 Implications**

### **6.1 Financial and Resources**

- 6.1.1 Any decision to reduce or increase resources or alternatively increase income must be made within the context of the Council’s stated priorities, as set out in its Council Plan 2015-19 as agreed at Council on 17 September 2015.
- 6.1.2 The production of Place Plan will require an amount of officer resource however the work is in line with the aims and objectives of both the existing Council Plan and also an action in the draft Council Plan 2019-23 to develop a town centre plan for Penrith including New Squares. If the Expression of Interest is successful then it is expected that this could potentially draw down £3 million of grant fund to support the development of the chosen town centre for the future, significantly increasing the Council’s budget to spend on supporting the local economy.

## **6.2 Legal**

- 6.2.1 There are no legal implications arising at this stage in the process as at this point only an Expression of Interest is being submitted and it is the County Council who are taking responsibility for leading on its submission.

## **6.3 Human Resources**

- 6.3.1 This work will have an impact on officer resources within the Economic Development Team but it is a key priority for the Council.

## **6.4 Statutory Considerations**

<b>Consideration:</b>	<b>Details of any implications and proposed measures to address:</b>
Equality and Diversity	There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.
Health, Social Environmental and Economic Impact	If Eden is successful in gaining funding through the Borderlands Place Programme then the funding will have a positive Environmental and Economic Impact on Penrith.
Crime and Disorder	There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.
Children and Safeguarding	There are no children and safeguarding implications arising from this report.

## **6.5 Risk Management**

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Controls Required</b>
The Council is not successful in the Borderlands Place Programme.	Loss of potential funding to support Penrith.	Strong partnership working to develop the Place Plan for Penrith.

## **7 Other Options Considered**

- 7.1 Alternative towns in Eden were considered for submission through an Expression of Interest but were considered less likely to draw down funding based on the assessment criteria.
- 7.2 The option of not submitting an Expression of Interest was considered but discounted due to the importance of town centre vitality for Eden and also because Eden stands a high chance of getting funding due to the proposal to include a town from each District in Cumbria in the proposal to Government.

## **8 Reasons for the Decision/Recommendation**

- 8.1 The Executive is being recommended to approve this as the vitality of Eden's Key Service Centres is a key priority for the Council, featuring in the existing Council Plan 2015-2019 and the emerging Council Plan 2019-2023 which focuses on developing plans for Eden's four towns for the future.

### Tracking Information

<b>Governance Check</b>	<b>Date Considered</b>
<b>Chief Finance Officer (or Deputy)</b>	
<b>Monitoring Officer (or Deputy)</b>	18 October 2019
<b>Relevant Director</b>	18 October 2019

**Background Papers:** None

**Appendices:** Appendix 1: Town Selection Methodology

**Contact Officer:** Oliver Shimell, Assistant Director Planning and Economic Development

## Appendix 1 – Town Selection Methodology

