1. INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the session and gave an overview of the topics that were to be covered.

2. AREA PLANNING

The Area Manager gave members a brief overview of the Area Planning process for Eden. The plan was to hold a more detailed seminar later this year to discuss Area Planning in more detail.

a) Consideration of the council savings following the budget meeting

The Area Manager started by explaining that due to the recent council budget decisions to defer some of the savings that had been considered for community services, there was now time and space to think carefully about how to deliver the best services possible to the people of Eden on reducing budgets. This would be a challenging task for all members.

Members then discussed possible ways of modernising services, whilst keeping costs down, and in relation to this they specifically talked about library services and youth services, CDC’s and suggested possible changes that could be made to improve these services for the public. These ideas would be explored further during discussion of this item at the Area Planning seminar later in the year.

The Chair felt that it would be important for all members of Eden Local Committee to be involved in these discussions.
b) Information from the Cumbria Observatory

Alison Wilson the Strategic Advisor - Research Information and Intelligence from the Cumbria Observatory attended for this item to give the members an overview of Eden.

The presentation included information on:-

- Population and projections
- Economy & Skills
- Economic growth and forecasts
- Health
- Crime and Community Safety

In relation to population it was reported that Eden is the most sparsely populated district in the county, and over the next 25 years the 0-14yrs old and 15-64 years olds living in Eden were predicted to decrease, whereas the 65+ age range was forecast to increase at a faster rate than the rest of the county.

Members had concerns about the relationship between the population figures and housing, and asked if these demographics were considered when district councils produced their Development Plans. The Strategic Advisor said that Eden DC used the intelligence within the observatory to develop their plans. Members welcomed the announcement that there were to be some houses built in some of the villages in Eden, for local people. They felt it was crucial to make sure communities were sustainable in the future.

In relation to Economy and Skills members were pleased to hear that unemployment within the district were low, but concerned that Eden was losing employment. The Strategic Advisor said that a study had been commissioned by the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership which indicated that:-

- For economic growth a bigger work force is needed
- Workforce needs to be higher skilled and working in higher value sector
- Increase its employment in the professional services/IT sectors
- Increase land availability at key sites i.e. Gilwilly, Newton Rigg
- Wood and paper sector forecast to increase – further opportunities to increase employment in woodland resource
- Tourism and hospitality – higher quality hotels, additional attractions favoured by high spenders – higher skilled employment
- Manufacturing of food and drink an Eden specialism
- Opportunity to increase Eden’s presence as a centre of excellence in civil engineering and specialist construction

Health within Eden was good and in general better that the rest of England, however, they were shocked to find that nearly 69% of adults in the area were overweight, as were many children in Year 6.

The Strategic Advisor said that if any member wished to receive any further information/intelligence on anything discussed today to let her know, and she would try to assist.

The Chair thanked the advisor for her informative presentation.
3. LOCAL COMMITTEE BUDGETS

The Area Manager tabled the Eden Local Committee draft budget for 2015/16, which had been produced following the recently held County Council meeting. He reported that the figures had remained broadly the same as last year, unless funding was based on population.

Members discussed the budget for School Crossing Patrols which was based on last year’s figures, and it was suggested that any surpluses within this budget should be used to implement road safety schemes. This would be dealt with once the new budgets had been agreed.

The budget for 0-19 was based on the same figures as last year plus or minus the relevant population figures. There was additional funding for 2015/16 for local committees in relation to budgets for the 11-19 Youth Service Provision. This had been devolved to local committees from cabinet and work would need to be undertaken over the next few months to establish what the provision requirement would be for Eden.

One of the members had concerns over funding being given to the Citizen’s Advice Bureau, she had heard rumours recently about how this funding was being used and wanted to be confident this funding was being appropriately spent. The Area Manager agreed to investigate the issues raised (Action: PD)

The Chair asked why the Neighbourhood Area Support Team was funded from the general provision budget line. The Area Manager explained that there was currently a shortfall within the budget for the team, and the proposal was for this to be managed for this year and by next year the shortfall should have been resolved.

Members felt that discussions should be held with them on the structures for the Area Support Team, about the amount and level of support they needed. These comments were noted.

The draft budget for the year 2016/17 was agreed, in principle, and would be presented for approval by local committee to the next Eden Local Committee meeting being held on 24 March.

The Chair thanked the Area Manager for the budget details.

4. PENRITH CAR PARKING STRATEGY

Members considered a briefing from the Senior Manager – Network Management which aimed to inform discussion and assist a coordinated review of on-street and off-street car parking provision in Penrith. It was set in the context of a collective ambition among local public and private sector organizations for a better town-centre environment that met the needs of the local community, assisted the local economy and attracted visitors.
The briefing identified that car parking in Penrith was a key element of the transport network. It was a trip end and traffic attractor and an interchange with other modes. Adequate car parking supply to meet the access needs of residents, commuters, visitors and businesses was critical to the economic and social fabric of the area.

Parking was provided in Penrith in public and private off-street car parks and on-street where it does not compromise safe and efficient movement of highway users.

Penrith was well supplied with private off-street, public off-street and on-street car parking capacity (Penrith Parking Study 2005). Recent observations confirmed that whilst there were localized parking pressures, there remained surplus public car parking.

However, the management of car parking was a matter of concern to the county council acting as highway authority, to the District Council as operator of off-street car parks and to residents, businesses and visitors.

The County Council had taken direct responsibility for on-street enforcement with effect from 2 February 2015 and a countywide approach was being developed to TROs, on-street enforcement and exemption permits. Within this there would be flexibility for responsiveness to local conditions and needs.

Key issues for review included appropriate location, capacity and management of:

- Residents exemptions
- Affordable commuter parking
- "pop and shop" parking
- Shopper and visitor parking (2-6 hours)
- Rail user parking
- Lorry parking
- Parking for people with impaired mobility

For all elements of the available parking supply to play their part in providing for the demand they needed to be considered together and managed in a coordinated way as far as possible. Previous parking study work showed that car parks were not at capacity at any time and there were on-street spaces available at all times.

Publicly available parking is managed by:

- Private car park owners - principally large stores and truck stops
- Eden District Council – public pay and display car parks,
- Cumbria County Council – on-street parking.

There had been some early, informal discussion with the Chamber of Trade and Commerce, the Penrith Business Improvement District, Penrith Partnership and Eden District Council that confirmed a willingness to work together.

The County Council had responsibilities as Highway and Transport Authority to contribute to managing parking as part of the transport network. It was therefore proposed that the County Council’s Area Highways and Transport Team coordinated a joined up approach to develop a vision for car parking in Penrith and a set of actions to achieve this.
It was broadly agreed that there was sufficient car parking available but that it needed to be managed better. It was also considered that charging for car parking does not discourage visitors but that local people would go to considerable lengths to secure free short stay and long stay parking.

There were recognised issues about the availability and management of on-street residents parking and other exemptions, the availability of reasonably priced commuter parking, the management of town centre parking for economic benefit and environmental quality and localized over-night lorry parking.

Members understood the issues outlined by the Senior Manager around parking in Penrith but were frustrated that the issue kept coming back for discussion but never got resolved. It was proposed that the review should focus on the County Council’s responsibility for on-street parking as this would give a tight and clearly defined scope of work for review and that would be within the control of the local committee. The Senior Manager accepted that the issue had taken a long time and he felt the feedback given was valuable as a steer to officers to take this forward. The Traffic Management Team Leader outlined the process used to resolve similar issues in Carlisle, which also took a long time to resolve, but with the experience gained could be used in Eden to answer similar problems. A detailed discussion then took place and upon conclusion of these it was AGREED that a draft set of principles for on-street parking restrictions would be produced as the basis for consultation. These would then be shared with the Chair, Vice Chair and local members for Penrith before being presented to the local committee.

The Chair thanked everyone for their input.

5. HEALTHY WEIGHT GRANTS

The Area Engagement Officer outlined how a pilot grant stream had been identified from within the Public Health ring-fenced funding to help promote local projects that addressed the healthy weight agenda prioritising children and families. The fund would support projects that would change attitudes and behaviours towards healthy eating and physical activity using local assets. This could be through additional activity, education or improving access.

To raise awareness and encourage local projects that could address this, a county-wide pilot fund of £150k had been identified from carried over ring-fenced Public Health funding to be used for low cost, evidence based projects (up to £5,000). With the pilot fund being limited to £25k per Local Committee area it was anticipated that some projects may be jointly funded from the Healthy Weights Fund, other community grants and potentially partner contributions.

Grants for this fund will be awarded to community based projects and initiatives that would support the healthy weight agenda which included interventions/projects that aimed to:

- Increase physical activity
- Encourage/educate people to eat a healthy diet
- Improve access to healthy food
- Support individuals that are overweight and obese to lose weight
- Build knowledge, skills and capacity in the local community
- Evidence community need
The pilot fund would be delegated to the Area Manager, in accordance with the Neighbourhood Grants process, with consultation with Members undertaken through existing local arrangements (eg grants panels/working groups/neighbourhood forums) or as a minimum, consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair. The Area Support Teams would process the application in the normal way and ensure groups and projects met the standard criteria. The Public Health Team would provide specific advice and support and confirm that the project/initiative would support the general aims required. The local members would also be consulted prior to the final decision by the Area Manager.

Members had concerns about how the success of the projects would be assessed, and the Area Engagement Officer said she was working with colleagues in the public health teams on assessing outcomes for the projects. After discussion it was AGREED that a presentation be made to a future meeting of the local committee.

The Chair thanked the Area Engagement Officers for the update.

6. SUMMARY COMMENTS BY THE CHAIR

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and taking part in the discussions today, and said he hoped in future the seminars would be better attended as the Area Planning process would be crucial to the future of local committee services.

Meeting ended at 12.15pm