

# Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel

Agenda  
Item:

**A.2**

Meeting Date: 14 April 2021  
 Portfolio: Economy, Enterprise and Housing  
 Key Decision: No  
 Within Policy and Budget Framework: Yes  
 Public / Private: Public

Title: Riverside Update  
 Report of: Corporate Director of Economic Development  
 Report Number: ED 12/21

## Purpose / Summary:

This update provides a progress report on various aspects of Riverside's operations across Carlisle District. In response to the Housing Need, Delivery and Strategy Update (ED 34.20) on 1 October 2020, Members of the Panel expressed an interest in learning more about Riverside's regeneration and development plans, so these areas will hopefully be of particular interest.

## Recommendations:

The panel are requested to take the opportunity to put pertinent questions to Andrea Thorn, the new Regional Director of the Riverside North Region.

## Tracking

Executive:	N/A
Scrutiny:	N/A
Council:	N/A

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1** The update on various aspects of Riverside's business activities and future plans, included in Section 2 of this report, has been provided by Andrea Thorn, the new Regional Director of the Riverside North Region, from April 2021.

## **2. RIVERSIDE UPDATE**

### **2.1 Customer Services**

We are still delivering most services remotely by phone, email or video call. The latest update on our repairs and maintenance service is:

- From Monday 1 March, customers can report all repair types to us as normal. We're working to a **56-day** target for routine repair appointments, so customers may wait longer than usual but we are aiming to revert this to the normal 28-day timescale from 6 April.
- If customers are shielding and they still want routine repairs or planned improvement work carried out in their home, we will complete it with all the necessary safety measures in place.
- Planned improvement programmes are continuing as normal, in line with government safety guidelines. However, customers can choose to delay works if they are self-isolating, shielding, working from home or were home-schooling.
- Aids & Adaptations and Disrepair work is continuing as normal.

Grounds maintenance is continuing as normal for the time of year.

It is likely that once the lockdown is eased, colleagues will mix working from home and working from the office as well as being out and about on estates and visiting customers at home where necessary.

### **2.2 Riverside Office, Botchergate**

We are committed to our current office on the first floor of English Gate Plaza for the foreseeable future, but the ground floor remains empty.

Last year we had hoped to be able to use the ground floor with the shop front on Botchergate as a furniture shop for the Impact Furniture Service (IFS). This did not progress due to the lockdown and the decision has now been made to close IFS completely (see below).

There is one year left on the lease of the office and so it is likely that the ground floor will now remain empty until the lease expires.

### **2.3 Impact Furniture Service (IFS)**

The IFS service collects and resells second-hand furniture throughout Cumbria including Carlisle with the depot and shop on Nelson Street where they also upcycled furniture.

Following a review of the service which considered all options, a decision has been made to close IFS this year because it has been losing money for some time and we cannot justify continuing to subsidise it.

The Carlisle shop will not re-open after the lockdown. We will retain the office and depot on Nelson Street for other uses.

### **2.4 Strategic Investment framework**

Over the past 6 months we have continued to work on our plans for Morton to identify the interventions and investment required to ensure the sustainability of the neighbourhood in the long term.

This work has assessed Morton as a whole including the movement, connectivity, location of housing types and tenure, economic growth, public realm, energy sustainability etc. Following the conclusion of this work in April 2021 we will be seeking internal approval to progress to the next stage of works.

It is then anticipated that during the summer, government restrictions permitting, detailed consultation and engagement on the proposed investment plans will commence with the community and residents.

The feasibility work has highlighted the oversupply of 1-bedroom flats within Morton, compared to the family nature of the area, showing disparity between the types of properties in demand in the area and those on offer. The consultation and engagement will seek to build on these findings to ensure the right housing types and tenures are available within Morton through the investment.

Views will also be sought on the number of 1 bed bungalows across Morton, the size and suitability of these properties to determine if the bungalow types and tenures are correct for the aging population of Morton. The investment will then look to address these issues.

### **2.5 New development**

We have a number of schemes in contract in Carlisle - see below. Impact housing association will be managing most of these on our behalf as part of the pledges we made when they joined The Riverside Group (TRG).

## Schemes in Contract

<b>Scheme Name</b>	<b>Developer</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>SOS</b>	<b>Tenure</b>	<b>Mix</b>	<b>Forecast Completion</b>
<b>Beverley Rise, Carlisle, CA1 3RX</b>	<i>Esh</i>	50	<i>On site</i>	<i>Rent</i>	2, 3, 4 Bed Houses	Scheme now complete. End of defects Dec 2021
<b>Tarraby View, Carlisle, CA3 0FN</b>	<i>Persimmon (S106)</i>	31 + 2 additional stock plots	<i>On Site</i>	<i>Rent</i>	2, 3, 4 Bed Houses & 3 Bed Bung	Acquired 2 additional stock plots Dec-20 6 bungalows handed over November 2020, 4 houses due June 2021, with remainder due late 2021.
<b>Meadowbrook, Carlisle, CA1 2GW</b>	<i>Taylor Wimpey (S106)</i>	16	<i>On Site</i>	<i>Rent</i>	2, 3 Bed Houses & 2 Bed Bung	First handovers due Sept 2021. Phased to Dec 2023
<b>Meadowbrook, Carlisle, CA1 2GW</b>	<i>Taylor Wimpey (S106)</i>	15	<i>On Site</i>	<i>Shared ownership</i>	2, 3 Bed Houses	First handovers due Oct 2021 to Dec 2023
<b>The Ridings, Carlisle, CA2 4NH</b>	<i>Story Homes (S106)</i>	8	<i>On Site</i>	<i>Shared Ownership</i>	3 Bed Houses	In contract. Phased completions from March 2021 to Jan 2022
<b>The Ridings, Carlisle, Ca2 4NH</b>	<i>Story Homes (S106)</i>	32	<i>On Site</i>	<i>Rent</i>	1 Bed Flats, 2 & 3 Bed Houses	In contract. Phased completions from March 2021 to Jan 2022

<b>Dalston Road, Carlisle, CA2 5NP</b>	<i>Atkinsons</i>	68	<i>On Site</i>	<i>Rent</i>	2, 3, 4 Bed House s	<i>First 10 Units to be handed over March 2021. PC October 21.</i>
<b>Amberwood, Carlisle, CA2 6DP</b>	<i>Persimmon (S106)</i>	15	<i>On Site</i>	<i>Rent</i>	2 Bed House s	<i>Final units completed Nov' 2020.</i>
<b>Amberwood, Carlisle, CA2 6DP</b>	<i>Persimmon (S106)</i>	15	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Shared ownership</i>	2, 3 Bed House s	<i>Completed</i>

**Pipeline schemes not yet in contract**

<b>Scheme Name</b>	<b>Developer</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>SOS</b>	<b>Tenure</b>	<b>Mix</b>	<b>Forecast Completion</b>
<b>Leabourne Road, Carlisle, CA2 4QL</b>	Eddie Wannop Construction	12	<i>On site</i>	<i>Rent</i>	2 Bed House s	<i>Contract negotiations are ongoing with a view to acquiring all 12 in March 2021.</i>
<b>Tarraby View Phase 2, Carlisle, CA3 0FN</b>	<i>Persimmon (S106)</i>	13	<i>TBC</i>	<i>Rent</i>	3 & 4 Bed House s	<i>Phase 2 is going through Gate approvals. G3 due May 2021. Handovers phased: 2 units due June 2021. Remainder due June 2022 to Dec 2023</i>

Beverley Rise was completed in December and was delivered by Riverside in partnership with Carlisle City Council, developer Esh and Carlisle College. The partnership project provided hands-on training to local young people. Eight construction students and apprentices were able to gain practical onsite training by doing nine-week placements a few days a week in painting, decorating, plastering, bricklaying, joinery, plumbing and electrics to develop their skills to help secure future employment. Employers are looking for skilled people, so this work experience benefitted students by gaining hands-on training but also helped them

develop life skills to boost their employability prospects. Please take a look at the film [Working in partnership in Carlisle to deliver new homes and training opportunities - YouTube](#) Riverside produced in partnership celebrating the success of this partnership.

## **2.6 Decarbonisation Strategy**

The Riverside Group have employed a consultant (Savills) to undertake a sample stock condition survey across its properties within its national portfolio. As part of the work we have requested feedback on our decent homes criteria both current and anticipated, and also the requirements to achieve carbon zero by 2050. We are expecting this report in the summer and will be presenting to our board alongside our business plan and Asset Management Strategy.

Once we get the three documents approved we'll be in a stronger position to start to understand our requirements for the stock and the measures we intend to take to reach our targets. The group have already set aside £200m in the life of the thirty-year plan to support our requirements to achieve carbon zero by 2050. Our current strategy is to focus on 'fabric first' which will see us concentrating on reducing heat loss, improving energy consumption and cutting carbon emissions. During the financial year 2021/2022 we will be carrying out the following investment aligned to our fabric first approach:

- Double Glazed window replacements
- Secure by Design Doors
- Energy efficient boilers

With over £1.8m of local investment we are looking to maximise the impact by developing a programme of apprenticeships to support the programme and other activities we have in Cumbria.

We will look at funding opportunities that align with our strategies going forward and that includes working closely with the council to maximise the opportunities.

## **2.7 Manchester Utd Foundation (MUF)/Carlisle Utd Community Sports Trust (CUCST) project**

As reported previously, we are joint sponsors with MUF, CUCST and Richard Rose Central Academy of a project aimed at developing young people to achieve their potential by building confidence, self-esteem and leadership skills as well as health & wellbeing.

Despite the challenging circumstances in school due to social distancing some great outcomes were achieved last term including mentoring to improve attendance or behaviour, running an 'Attendance League' and leadership sessions.

Outside of school, there has been football bubble nights for KS3 girls with 30 attending; and a lunch provision football league for year 7 boys attended by 40-50.

## **2.8 Cumbria Skills Shortage Project**

Whilst developing our new Regional Plan for 2020-23, it was highlighted that the constructions skills shortage in Cumbria affects teams across Riverside: Evolve our in-house contractor, our planned investment team in that there is a limited pool of contractors as well as our development team. A team of people from across those teams came together last summer and have developed an action plan. The project will aim to deliver against the following themes: recruitment, engagement with local schools, increasing apprenticeships and a possible construction skills hub.

The last couple of months we have met with a range of people from DWP, Cumbria LEP, Carlisle College, Cumbria Enterprise as well as a group of people who set up a hub in Hull. The group are now reviewing the opportunities to contribute towards addressing the skills shortage and will agree what actions to take forward shortly.

## **2.9 Neighbourhood Plans**

Last year we reviewed which of our neighbourhoods in Carlisle should be prioritised for Neighbourhood Plans. We took into account the density of stock, levels of deprivation, those most impacted by Covid, where they sit within the timetable for our Strategic Investment Framework, and engagement opportunities. This identified our first 4 Neighbourhood Plans.

Having consulted with Emma Dixon (Carlisle Partnership) about using the Place Standard we agreed to look at Raffles first and Botcherby second. We are progressing well on the Raffles Plan with customer surveys taking place next week. We are continuing to work with Emma to finalise how we do the Place standard work and we're aiming to do this in the last week in March. The plan will be launched on the 31<sup>st</sup> March.

We've also started the appraisal for Botcherby and will then move onto Upperby and then Petteril Bank/Harraby. We'll keep you updated on our progress.

## **3. RISKS**

- 3.1** The content of this report contains no risks to the Council.

## **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1** The Council holds formal partnership meetings with Riverside through the Carlisle Liaison Group, which replaced the former Divisional Board. The minutes to the meetings are shared with all City Councillors. Riverside have also consulted Carlisle Partnership regarding their Neighbourhood Plans.

## **5. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1** To ensure ongoing effective collaboration between the Council and Riverside to deliver our mutual objectives of providing quality affordable housing and associated services to the people of Carlisle.

## **6. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES**

- 6.1** “Address current and future housing needs to protect and improve residents’ quality of life.”

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**Appendices**           **None**  
**attached to report:**

**Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government Act 1972 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:**

- **None**

### **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:**

**LEGAL – None**

**PROPERTY SERVICES – None**

**FINANCE – None**

**EQUALITY – None**

**INFORMATION GOVERNANCE – None**