



Report to

Council

Meeting Date: 13th September 2022

Public/Private*: Public

Title: **Resources Scrutiny Panel Chairman's Report – Councillor Christine Finlayson**

Resources Panel

Resources Panel did not meet during the summer period as the work that would have fallen within their remit, scrutiny of a Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was not required for Carlisle City Council due to Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). This work will need to be undertaken for the new Cumberland Unitary by the Shadow Council, and scrutinised by Shadow Scrutiny.

Resources Panel have meetings scheduled for 3rd November 2022 and 5th January 2023, in case they are required. But the City Council will not undertake budget setting activity for 2023/24 due to LGR. Budget setting activity will be undertaken by Cumberland Shadow Council.

My report contains information on issues that I feel are of particular importance for the City Council.

The Citadels Carlisle, University of Cumbria

It's a delight to reflect on good news that plans for Carlisle's Citadel Grade 1 Listed Buildings have been approved for development to the new University of Cumbria. These iconic buildings will be completely refurbished bringing them back to life, and not just the buildings themselves but the whole City will benefit from the project, putting Carlisle firmly on the map as a place to come to for higher education and learning.

The Campus development for the University of Cumbria will be high quality, accessible, and have a very modern approach to learning, benefiting all those desiring to go into higher education. This project will also enhance and keep this conservation area alive with all its historic value being protected.

Play Parks and Open Spaces

Some play parks and open spaces are soon to have work commence to upgrade equipment and surfacing. There has been significant investment made available to

enable this work to be done, which I'm sure will be very welcome to the children and families who use these play areas with nice new fun equipment, safe surfacing and even new benches .

This kind of investment and commitment to residents I'm sure is highly valued, as it has long reaching health and social benefits.

Finance

On 27th July 2022 the Audit Committee received a draft Statement of Accounts.

- I. It was noted that the 2021/2022 Statement of Accounts have been certified as giving a true and fair view by the Corporate Director of Finance & Resources and they will now be subject to audit
- II. It was noted that the internal quality review of the accounts is still ongoing and the accounts may be re-authorised for issue prior to the statutory deadline if required
- III. To confirm that the committee has been appropriately briefed on how the accounting estimates are used

Council Priorities

This is just one of the key priorities of Carlisle City Council's Statements amongst many vitally important priorities.

Economic Growth

We will continue to prioritise the current response to and rapid recovery from the economic impacts of the Covid 19 Pandemic on the local economy:

- Key Economic and Growth Programmes and Projects
- Delivering the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal
- Delivering St Cuthbert's Garden Village
- Delivering the Future High Street Fund, Towns Fund, Towns Deal Accelerated Fund and related regeneration Projects
- Building on success through new economic opportunities

Food Bank

On 14th July the People Panel had an update from the Chair of the Foodbank.

The Food Bank project started as a temporary response to the needs at the time of local people in need of essential food items.

Due to lockdown, during that very difficult time, the Food Bank model changed. There were a variety of reasons at that time, the need was also greater. We have since seen the establishment of affordable food hubs where people can access food without a referral

for a small fee. This has been very successful, giving people a bit more choice of food and accessibility to affordable food. They pay a small fee and become a member of the particular food hub or pantry, the difficulty is there is only enough food allocated to each hub for a certain number of people - this leads to waiting lists, not everyone all the time can join as it is dependent on the amount of food allocated to each agency.

It would seem attitudes are changing towards food banks in their original model, which it seems to have outgrown. Limitations are being felt, i.e. Foodbanks only open on certain days, people in rural areas having difficulty accessing them. Food was not always available in an emergency situation.

There is a lot of thought going into it to better meet the continuous need for those who need basic food.

The issue was well discussed at People Panel and it has become apparent a broader approach is becoming a necessity for a lot of different reasons.

Cllr Christine Finlayson
Chairman