

Meeting Date: 6th March 2018

Public/Private*: Public

Title: **Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel Chairman's Report – Councillor
Paul Nedved**

The Panel met on the 18th January to consider a Flood Update Report, the Draft Chatsworth Square and Portland Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, the Affordable and Specialist Housing Supplementary Planning Document, the Draft Economic Strategy for Carlisle District Report and finally the Overview Report and Work Programme.

Can I thank the Panel, Officers and Portfolio Holders for the attention and scrutiny given to these complex set of Reports over a period of almost four hours .

Final Flood Update Report

The Deputy Chief Executive has provided update Reports to the Scrutiny Panels since the 2015 floods and was thanked for his informative Reports on flood recovery.

This final update outlined the work associated with recovery and emerging plans for future events. This included asset recovery and details of flood grants and household payments made. The Panel were made aware of a Special Panel Meeting arranged for 8th February to consider the future of flood risk management in Carlisle.

Panel Members raised a series of questions which included the recovery of the Sheepmount, proposals for the Civic Centre, future of the Council Chamber building, information request on work being undertaken by the E.A. and County Council and whether the economic impact and cost of the flood would be addressed.

Draft Chatsworth Square and Portland Square Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

The Panel scrutinised the proposed changes in light of the response to the consultation.

The Plan was welcomed by Members as being comprehensive and informative and examined the character and quality that existed within the Conservation Area, as well as the measures that could be taken to preserve and improve its character which included issues such as public realm, parking and unlisted properties.

Questions were asked on the consultation responses, the open space at Portland Square, inclusion of the area around Trinity School on part of Strand Road and the land at Chatsworth Square.

There were also queries as to how will the Management Plan deal with issues such as private gardens, neglect of trees and Adoption of rear lanes. Following consultation the Panel were informed no significant issues had arisen that would prevent progress towards adoption.

Affordable and Specialist Housing Supplementary Planning Document

This SPD was looked at in depth by the Panel and was the subject of considerable discussion. It had also been examined by the Local Plan Working Group.

The document provided more detailed guidance on Affordable Housing and Housing to Meeting Specific Needs and had been subject to a number of amendments having been out to public consultation.

The Report was outlined by the Housing Development Officer emphasising the key priority to develop Affordable and Social Housing.

Questioning revolved around social housing units, minimum space standards, differences between social and affordable housing, and engagement between Developers and Housing Associations and partnerships between the City Council with providers. This was illustrated by the 'Demonstration Project' for 40 new affordable rented homes at Beverley Rise in partnership with Riverside.

Housing Strategy would also be considered by the Panel in March.

Draft Economic Strategy for Carlisle District

The Panel had been involved in the scrutiny of the emerging five year Strategic Plan for the District throughout 2017 and the Draft Strategy would return to the Panel in June 2018 after the proposed consultation process. The progress made to date was outlined by the Investment and Policy Manager .

A series of comments were made by Panel Members who raised queries as to whether the document seemed to be urban led when Carlisle had a large rural area, clarity on the

branding of the City, issues revolving round an ageing population and the reduction in the economically active workforce.

Retention of young people and need to attract new jobs and encourage them to remain. Improved connectivity by road and rail were deemed to be important.

The Government's Industrial Strategy recently published and the developing Borderlands proposition were providing further national and sub regional direction.

The Panel also queried how the Tourism and Regeneration strategies would evolve .

Overview Report and Work Programme

The newly adopted table setting out progress on resolutions from previous meetings was felt beneficial by Members and was working well.

A number of resolutions had been completed since the publication of the Economic Growth Panel Report.

However the Panel received updates by Officers on progress with the Business Interaction Centre, Retail Occupancy Rates within the City Centre and it was also agreed that training dates for the Development Control Committee be circulated to all Members of the Council.

Special Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel

The Panel met on 8th February to consider Reports and Presentations on Flood Risk Management provided by representatives from the Environment Agency, Cumbria County Council and Carlisle Flood Action Group.

The Agenda concentrated on the following :-

1. Economic Impact of the Winter Floods 2015 to 2016
2. Flood Recovery - Shortlisted Options and Timeline for Implementation
3. Cumbria Strategic Flood Partnership including an Update on Section 19 Reports

I would wish to extend the thanks of the Panel for the substantial and informative contributions from Mr Brown and Mr Lawton from the Environment Agency, Mr Coyle from the County Council and Mr Kelsall and Mr Milne from the Carlisle Flood Action Group. Several Ward Members representing Wards who had been impacted by flooding were also in attendance and contributed to the discussions and the Q&A.

1. Economic Impact of Winter Floods 2015/16

Mr Andy Brown provided a detailed Report and Presentation on the estimates of the economic impact in England following Storms Desmond, Eve and Frank had amounted to £1.6 billion and also a Cumbria Impact Assessment gathered from the Cumbria Observatory detailing the scale of the impact in the County (details contained in the Minutes).

Members raised a number of far reaching questions, which included :-

- Whether an evaluation of the Health and Wellbeing of Communities affected by flooding had been undertaken?
- Confidence of businesses and organisations in the future flood resilience of the City?
- Factors used to build the business case for flood defence options?
- Cost of domestic insurance claims and split between building repairs and household contents?
- Who made the final decision on the release of funding and what influences could be made locally on the outcome of the business case?

A request was made by the Panel that a document or advisory note be prepared with partners to support the Development Control Committee with decisions when considering Planning Applications in flood risk areas.

2. Flood Recovery - Shortlisted Options and Timeline for Implementation

Mr Iwan Lawton from EA provided a Presentation on the options for Carlisle and lower Eden area. A full detail of the proposals are contained in the Minutes.

The next steps of the project were outlined with the whole scheme to be completed by Summer 2022 working with partners such as the City Council, County Council, Network Rail and United Utilities.

3D modelling was being used to give a clearer understanding of what the scheme could achieve. There would also be work to define the residual flood risk for Carlisle.

Members raised a number of questions on the £25m cost of the scheme and was there any additional funding available for Carlisle?

Could Eden Bridges and Botcherby Bridge resist further flooding, and also a series of queries relating to the River Petteril as to maintenance and riparian works?

3. Cumbria Strategic Flood Partnership including an Update on Section 19 Reports

The Panel received Reports from Mr Doug Coyle from the County Council on specific recent flooding events at Oaklands Drive, Carlisle and on the flooding at Rockcliffe (high rain and coastal flooding). He responded with a series of thorough responses to questions from Members.

These reports were not related to Storm Desmond however was felt valuable to understand the response of the Lead Authority (County Council) to these events, feedback from the communities and the consultation process and sign up rate of the Flood Warning Alert System.

A request was made to receive feedback from the Strategic Flood Partnership.

Full details of the discussions are to be found within the Minute Book.

Cllr Paul Nedved
Chairman