

ECONOMIC GROWTH SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 1 OCTOBER 2020 AT 4.00pm

PRESENT: Councillor Brown (Chair), Councillors Mrs Atkinson, Mrs Bowman (as substitute for Councillor Mitchelson) Denholm, Mrs Glendinning, Meller and Mrs McKerrell.

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor Mallinson, Leader
Councillor Ellis, Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder
Councillor Nedved, Economy Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder

OFFICERS: Corporate Director of Economic Development
Housing Development Officer
Policy and Performance Officer

EGSP.44/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mitchelson and Councillor Paton.

EGSP.45/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

EGSP.46/20 PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was agreed that the items of business in Part A be dealt with in public and Part B be dealt with in private.

EGSP.47/20 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED – 1) it was noted that Council, at its meeting on 8 September 2020, received and adopted the minutes of the meetings held on 9 July 2020. The Chair will sign the minutes at the first practicable opportunity.

2) That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 August 2020 be agreed.

EGSP.48/20 CALL IN OF DECISIONS

There were no items which had been the subject of call-in.

EGSP.49/20 KINGMOOR PARK ENTERPRISE ZONE - PARTNER UPDATE

The Chair reported that Mr McIntyre, Managing Director of Kingmoor Park Enterprise Zone (KPEZ) had been unable to attend the meeting. She moved that the matter be deferred.

RESOLVED – That the Kingmoor Park Enterprise Zone – Partner Update be deferred to a future meeting.

The Housing Development Officer presented an update on the delivery of market and affordable housing, in respect of targets and identified need, along with updated and emerging housing developments in the district and county over the preceding year (ED.34/20).

The report provided updates on Strategic Housing Partnerships for Carlisle and Cumbria, emerging Economic Strategy for Carlisle including strategic housing, countywide Strategic Housing, Housing Delivery 2019-20 and Movers' Survey 2019/20.

In considering the update Members raised the following comments and questions:

- The report referred to a number of emerging strategies, one of which was the Economic Strategy, when would this Strategy be available for Members and did it bear any weight when making decisions?

The Corporate Director of Economic Development explained that the Covid-19 pandemic had disrupted plans to hold a workshop with the Panel to discuss the Strategy. The Council had requested a report detailing the impact of Covid-19 on economy and this would be used as part of the evidence base for a workshop in the autumn. She added that the draft Strategy did not impact decision making currently, however, the Council continued to undertake work which was part of the Strategy.

- Were there any criteria which underpinned the Carlisle Housing Partnership three key themes?

The Housing Development Officer explained that there were a number of criteria and performance indicators that the Partnership considered to ensure that the themes were met.

- In response to a question the Corporate Director of Economic Development clarified that the statistics for the projection of the population were used as a guide to consider what type of housing would be required in the future. The Housing Development Officer added that the Strategic Housing Market Assessment set out the categories of properties that would be needed and where.
- There was a large amount of housing stock in the city centre which was not suitable for city centre living, were there any plans to improve the stock?

The Corporate Director of economic Development reported that the Government had recently launched the Social Housing and Decarbonisation Fund. The Council would actively engage with the social landlords to explore options for a potential bid under the programme.

The Housing Development Officer explained that retro fitting of properties was being actively considered with a view to meeting the government's green agenda. However, many of the city centre properties were privately owned, as such the retrofitting of those properties would be the responsibility of the landlords. He added that the Council was also very active in bringing empty properties back in to use to increase the available housing stock, in line with the green agenda.

- Was information available on the age profile of Riverside tenants? There was some concern that Riverside would focus on extra care homes in the St Cuthbert Garden Village due to the increase in the ageing population instead of regenerating their stock.

The Housing Development Officer reassured the Panel that the Garden Village would provide a mix of housing, including properties that reflected the ageing population, however there would

be a strong emphasis on attracting economically active people into the area to stimulate the economy.

- A Member suggested that Riverside be invited to attend the Panel to provide an update on their regeneration and development plans and any issues that they were dealing with.
- Why did the Council look outside of the area for new developers?

The Corporate Director of Economic Development explained that a range of developers were required to increase the type and number of housing being delivered each year.

The Housing Development Officer drew the Panel's attention to the 'Help us Build our Growing City' developer prospectus which had been successful in attracting developers into the area. The prospectus would be refreshed and relaunched to continue the move to grow the City.

- How did the Council deal with developers who challenged the requirement for the number of affordable houses in a development?

The Housing Development Officer responded that affordable housing provision at housing developments were linked to viability, and the location of the development. Were a developer to challenge the number of affordable homes required, they would need to provide their own economic viability assessment which was then checked and assessed by an independent chartered surveyor.

- Would the Movers' Survey continue, and could it be undertaken digitally to increase the number of returns?

The Housing Development Officer confirmed that the Movers' Survey would continue, it had not been possible in 2020 due to Covid-19 but it was hoped it would be undertaken again next year, dependent on staff being able to return to the Civic Centre. There had been an increase in the number of returns, however, it would not be possible to send it out digitally as the survey was sent out with the Council Tax information to new properties.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder reminded the Panel of the critical developments that were taking place which would impact housing in Carlisle including the St Cuthbert's Garden Village, Caldew Riverside and the repurposing of the City Centre which would bring opportunity for city centre housing.

RESOLVED – 1) The Panel noted the key findings on housing need and delivery for 2019-20, and scrutinised the effectiveness of existing and emerging strategies, including the Carlisle District Local Plan, as well as highlighting any perceived issues for the development of future Housing and Economic strategy. (ED.34/20)

2) That Riverside be invited to submit a report and attend a future meeting of the Panel to discuss their regeneration plans.

EGSP.51/20 CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE – FOCUS IN SCRUTINY

The Policy and Performance Officer submitted report OS.20/20 which outlined the key findings of the Corporate Peer Challenge in respect scrutiny activity and outlined the Council's responses thus far.

The Scrutiny Chairs Group had met to consider the findings, at which the Chair and Vice Chair of the Panel had prepared four priorities for the Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel: housing delivery; transport and infrastructure; economic strategy development, and the Local Plan.

In considering the report Members raised the following comments and questions:

- Whilst Members may have an interest in a particular area, the workload of the Panel needed to remain manageable to ensure effective scrutiny of matters.

The Chair agreed that being focussed was essential to the work of the Panel. She moved the report recommendations, the Panel indicated its agreement.

RESOLVED – That the following areas be agreed as priorities for the Panel: housing delivery; transport and infrastructure; economic strategy development, and the Local Plan.

EGSP.52/20 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Policy and Performance Officer presented report OS.19/20 providing an overview of matters relating to the work of the Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel. Members' attention was drawn to the Panel's Work Programme for 2020/21. The Policy and Performance Officer noted that Members may wish to reallocate the Kingmoor Park Enterprise Zone Update which had been deferred earlier to another scheduled meeting of the Panel. After some discussion the Members agreed to add the item to the 4 March 2021 meeting.

The Chair invited Members to indicate the particular areas they wished the report on Carlisle Ambassadors to focus on (scheduled for the 26 November 2020 meeting). The following items were put forward:

- Background to the organisation;
- Their work in relation to economic growth and supporting SME's;
- How the funding provided by the Council was used by the organisation.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Kingmoor Park Enterprise Zone Update report be included on the Panel's Work Programme for its 4 March 2021 meeting.

2) That the report on Carlisle Ambassadors for the 26 November 2020 meeting cover:

- Background to the organisation;
- Their work in relation to economic growth and supporting SME's;
- How the funding provided by the Council was used by the organisation.

(The meeting ended at 5:32pm)