



Meeting Date: 26th April 2022

Public/Private*: Public

Title: **Economy, Enterprise & Housing Portfolio Holder's Report –
Councillor Marilyn Bowman**

REGULATORY SERVICES

Green Homes Grant Scheme

Due to an unprecedented number of applications for the Green Homes Grant (LAD2) Scheme in Cumbria, the scheme has now reached its target. Eon will inform applicants whether they have been accepted onto the scheme and will be progressing their application.

Those that met the criteria for the Green Homes Grant Scheme but have not been able to make an application to Eon can now apply to the forthcoming Sustainable Warmth Grant Scheme which is also available in Carlisle.

Sustainable Warmth Cumbria

The City Council, through its Homelife HIA, are currently taking expression of interest forms for funding for Sustainable Warmth Grant Scheme. The £20million scheme is for low-income owner-occupied and privately tenanted homes. The forms are now on the Homelife website and can be emailed or posted to Homelife Carlisle HIA. Please note that it may be a few months before applicants are contacted.

Rise In Hoarding, Filthy and Verminous Complaints

In the last quarter we have seen an increase in the number of hoarding and filthy and verminous property complaints to the Environmental Health Department. The Department would deal with around five severe cases of household hoarding a year, this has seen a significant increase over the last two years. In 2021/22 we received 50 complaints that have been recorded as filthy and verminous, in comparison to 39 in 2019/2020. The properties where hoarding is occurring isn't necessarily profiled to single individuals but is linked to families as well, the majority are owner occupied properties. Typically, where we deal with hoarding there will also be other housing standard issues and issues around mental health and general wellbeing.

The Department work alongside Homelife to support households to access grant funding to assist with house clearances and deep cleans.

TOWN DEAL

Business Case Development

Good progress continues to be made on the £19.7m Carlisle Town Deal.

- Six business cases have been completed and underwent independent assurance. An internal due diligence process was undertaken by the Programme Management Office and recommendations made to the Town Deal Board. The Town Deal Board met on 17th March 2022 and endorsed all six business cases
- The Executive met on 21st March and gave approval for the business cases to be submitted to Government for consideration by the deadline of 24th March 2022
- The seventh business case is being progressed for the Market Hall Project with an extension for submission to Government agreed

CITY CENTRE BUSINESS GROWTH GRANT

This grant is a pilot scheme provided by the City Council which is aimed at businesses looking to occupy vacant premises within the defined City Centre boundary. The grant has a fixed budget of £35,000 and will support businesses in the form of a cash grant up to £2,500 which can be extended to £5,000 for particularly strong cases. In order to qualify for the grant businesses must meet key criteria and provide the necessary evidence to support their claim to ensure business viability and sustainability.

The total spend against the grant is currently £26,500 which has been spread across six businesses and has been used for various purposes such as signage, renovation and equipment purchase which is vital to the running of the business.

ST CUTHBERT'S GARDEN VILLAGE

Work on the St Cuthbert's Local Plan continues at pace with the evidential commissions due to report between Spring and early Summer.

The main works on Carlisle South Relief Road were due to commence this Spring. However, the decision by the County Council to award the Stage 2 contract was deferred on 17th March 2022 and will be discussed at a future Cabinet meeting. This reflects the increasing financial risks and market uncertainty associated with supply chains, labour and material shortages as well as rising energy costs which are now exacerbated by the recent events in Ukraine. The County Council remains committed to addressing these challenges and is in regular dialogue with ourselves and Homes England to make progress with the scheme.

In the meantime we have now been informed that we are one of 25 areas selected by Government as one of its Design Code 'pathfinders'. Using the £120,000 awarded to us, we will be working with our communities over the next 12 months to work up more specific design standards for St Cuthbert's. It has also been confirmed by Homes England that

after a competitive process, we have been awarded £250,000 through its annual Garden Communities Funding Allocation. This funding will help us to continue moving forward with the project in terms of being able to access the specialist support needed to support the emerging Local Plan.

Work continues on preparing the business case for a long-term delivery vehicle and we will shortly be appointing the specialist legal and financial advice.

RURAL STRATEGY

- The Council is progressing the development a rural strategy for the District working jointly with Eden District Council
- This will involve developing a strong evidence base for Carlisle, which is developed in line and supported by strong stakeholder engagement – and the creation of a Rural Strategy with clear issues / opportunities identified and recommended actions
- Specialist support is being procured to support the production of the strategy. Members will be engaged in the development of the strategy, with a workshop session planned in the coming weeks