

Meeting Date: 27th April 2021

Public/Private*: Public

Title: **Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel Vice Chair's Report –
Councillor Keith Meller**

Panel Meeting – 4th March 2021

A detailed report from the M.D. of Kingmoor Park, Mr. McIntyre, was presented to the Committee. The occupancy rates of the Enterprise Zone is over 98% a very positive performance for the current economic climate we find ourselves in. The Panel were updated with ongoing projects within the Park such as the Solar Farm, the Modular Village for small enterprises and the Gateway Signage.

Clarification for future development was sought for initiatives such as the Incinerator and the opportunity for further re-cycling, for a Rail Head at the Park which would improve connectivity and encourage more business migrate to Carlisle, as well as measures taken to become fully green and sustainable.

One major drawback for investment in the Carlisle Enterprise Zone was the lack of a skilled workforce.

The Empty Property Grant was reported upon and found to work well in bringing properties back into use. The Panel supported an increase to the grant and were re-assured a five-year local land charge to recoup grants awarded was placed on the properties if they were sold within that period of time.

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

Cllr Keith Meller
Vice Chair

Report to
Council

Agenda
Item

13(iii)

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Title: **Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel Chair's Report – Councillor
Lisa Brown**

Monday the 12th of April saw our final Scrutiny meeting of the year. As always it was interesting and well attended.

As a mark of respect following the sad death of HRH Duke of Edinburgh, we called a minutes silence after the roll call of the meeting and I thank all the Members, Portfolio Holders, Officers and guests for joining me in that moment of reflection.

The Panel was pleased to hear from Riverside and had many questions over the plans for the future of affordable housing in Carlisle.

It was disappointing to here that Impact Furniture Services was now closed, having made the decision after the service became unviable financially. It has been a great help to many low income residents over the years and I hope that Riverside continue to work with partners and ensure that none of their residents in most need are affected. The Panel was also concerned by the empty office on Botchergate, and that given we are trying to boost the high street and Town Centre, would hope that they can work on finding an alternative use for the year rather than us having just another empty building on Botchergate.

We also received the draft version of the Carlisle Plan. Full details of the discussion can be found in the Minutes, but the Panel largely felt that the plan was lacking in various aspects. The need for public consultation is absolutely vital and this could not be stressed enough. The main driver of the plan should be people and tackling inequality, boosting the local economy and tourism and making Carlisle thrive. The Panel asked for the plan to be returned to Scrutiny in the new civic year and I know the Panel is looking forward to adding value to this.

We also accepted the Scrutiny Annual Report and thanks where given to the Overview and Scrutiny Officer for her excellent work over the year, and for all the assistance and advice she has provided to me as Chair. I would also like to take this opportunity again to

thank all the Panel members who have always fully engaged in the process and made every meeting interesting. Thanks also go to the Corporate Director of Economic Development who normally presents several Reports to the Panel at each meeting and faced many questions from the Panel this year, also to the Portfolio holders for attending and offering greater explanation and views on the Reports we have been presented.

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

Cllr Lisa Brown
Chair