

ECONOMIC GROWTH SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 4 MARCH 2021 AT 4.00pm

PRESENT: Councillor Meller (Vice Chair), Councillors Mrs Atkinson (until 4.50pm), Denholm, Ms Ellis-Williams (as substitute for Councillor Brown), Mitchelson, Mrs McKerrell and Tinnion (as substitute for Councillor Paton)

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor J Mallinson – Leader
Councillor Ellis – Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder
Councillor Nedved – Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder
Councillor Christian – Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder
Mr McIntyre - Managing Director of Kingmoor Park

OFFICERS: Corporate Director of Economic Development
Regeneration Manager
Principal Health and Housing Officer
Empty Homes and Grants Officer
Data Analyst Apprentice
Overview and Scrutiny Officer

EGSP.12/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Brown, Glendinning and Paton.

EGSP.13/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

EGSP.14/21 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.15/21 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED – It was noted that Council, at its meeting on 2 March 2021, received and adopted the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2021. The Chair would sign the minutes at the first practicable opportunity.

EGSP.16/21 CALL IN OF DECISIONS

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

EGSP.17/21 KINGMOOR PARK ENTERPRISE ZONE – PARTNER UPDATE

The Regeneration Manager presented an overview of Kingmoor Park Enterprise Zone (ED.08/21).

The Regeneration Manager reminded the Panel of the background to Kingmoor Park and the establishment of the Enterprise Zone.

Mr McIntyre, Managing Director of Kingmoor Park gave a detailed presentation on the work and challenges at Kingmoor Park over the last twelve months.

Mr McIntyre outlined the adjustments made at Kingmoor Park as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic including operational continuity, response support, rent holidays, tenant liaison, community support and on site works. He set out the performance indicators for the period March 2020 to February 2021 which showed that, despite wider spread economic uncertainty, the variety of tenants, a solid core of distribution sector serving properties and a pro active approach in dealing with tenants had resulted in a 98.7% occupancy rate in the Enterprise Zone. The figures showed 20 new leases which had been agreed in 2020 which had surpassed previous figures.

Mr McIntyre provided an update on projects within Kingmoor Park which included the completion and enablement of the Solar Farm which produced one third of the power for the site, new gateway signage in three locations and the construction of the MODVillage.

Mr McIntyre set out the positive outcomes and threats at the Park, along with the performance and marketing of the Enterprise Zone.

In response to a question from the Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder, Mr McIntyre gave a brief update on the incinerator proposals. He clarified that Kingmoor Park were the landlords and not investment partners. He explained that he had been in discussion with a number of operators about potential recycling but had not yet received information from the incinerator operators on their next steps or their sources for fuel stock. He did not know if the proposals from North West Recycling would impact the incinerator business, however, he was waiting on responses to a number of questions from the incinerator operators.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder thanked Mr McIntyre for his detailed presentation and asked how the Enterprise Zone was being recognised outside of Carlisle, what engagement was being undertaken with young people for future employment and he asked for an update on the aspiration to have a rail head at the site.

Mr McIntyre responded that there were enquires from international businesses, particularly with regard to logistics businesses due to the location of the Park. There were perceived issues in terms of the availability of a skilled workforce in the area and as a result Kingmoor Park worked closely with partners such as Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership to promote the opportunities such as apprenticeships for education leavers to work in a vast range of businesses that were based within the Park. Mr McIntyre added that the Park had excellent connectivity to the West Coast Mainline and it was the aspiration of the Park to engage partners to connect the Park to the rail infrastructure that was in place and encourage more businesses from the West Coast and the rest of the UK to the area.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder supported Kingmoor Park's vision for green investment and sustainability and asked for further information on the work being undertaken.

Mr McIntyre set out some of the measures that were in place to support Kingmoor Park in becoming fully green and sustainable which also benefited the tenants. He reported that engagement work would be carried out with the 160 organisations on site to carry out green audits and help each of them achieve environmental improvements such as car share or cycle to work schemes.

In scrutinising the presentation Members raised the following comments and questions:

- A Member of the Panel acknowledged the success of Kingmoor Park and asked what the future plans were for the area, given that the Enterprise Zone was at 98% capacity and the City was moving ahead with a programme of development and growth.

Mr McIntyre informed the Panel that Kingmoor Park had prepared a Masterplan for the 120 acres which sat within the Enterprise Zone's current boundary. Discussions were underway with developers so that meaningful engagement with future markets could take place with a clear Masterplan, vision, and complete partner solution.

- Was the MODVillage completed and occupied?

Mr McIntyre confirmed that 10 of the 18 units in the first phase had been completed and had tenants. There had been a shift in the market and the demand for this type of flexible space remained and the village would be an incubation space for new businesses.

- Was the airport a requirement for businesses looking to move to the area?

Mr McIntyre explained that the nature of the businesses and dominant industries coming to the Park meant that the airport was not relevant to the businesses, however, it was a credit to Carlisle.

RESOLVED – 1) The Panel thanked Mr McIntyre for his detailed and informative presentation.

2) That the Kingmoor Park Enterprise Zone – Partner Update (ED.08/21) be noted.

EGSP.18/21 EMPTY PROPERTY GRANT

The Principal Health and Housing Officer presented proposed changes to the Empty Property Grant offer (GD.23/21).

The Principal Health and Housing Officer reported that it was proposed that capital funds be used to ensure an extension to the Empty Property Grant. The report also proposed an increase in the maximum possible Grant award from £3,000 to £5,000. She reminded the Panel that the Grant supported the work of the City Council in bringing long term empty properties back into use as set out in the Housing Renewal Assistance Policy 2018 and she detailed how the funding would be met.

The Empty Homes and Grants Officer set out the background to the situation regarding empty homes nationally and the profiles of the empty properties in Carlisle. He also gave details of the impact of the work that had been undertaken.

In discussing the report the Panel supported the increase to the proposed Grant and hoped it would assist more properties coming back into use.

In response to the Panel's questions the Empty Homes and Grants Officer explained that any further increase to the Grant would impact the number of properties that could be brought back in to use. He reported that there were 12 properties which remained empty following the 2015 flood and the owners would be invited to utilise the Grant. The criteria for the Grant required the completed properties to be free of Class 1 Hazards and safe, decent homes ready for occupation either by the owner or rented out. A Local Land Charge would be placed on the properties for five years, should they be sold during that period the Council would recoup the Grant money.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio thanked Officers for their hard work during the pandemic in continuing their excellent work.

RESOLVED – That the Panel had considered the proposed extension and increase of the Empty Property Grant by the use of £109,433.00 Capital funds from 2012/13 which were presently unallocated.

EGSP.19/21 QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020/21

The Data Analyst Apprentice presented the Quarter 3 Performance Report 2020/21 (PC.16/21).

The report contained the Quarter 3 performance against the current Service Standards and a summary of the Carlisle Plan 2016-19 actions as defined in the 'plan on a page'. Performance against the Panels' 2020/21 Key Performance Indicators were also included.

The Data Analyst Apprentice gave an update on the work of the Task and Finish Group which was reviewing the content of the performance reports and drew the Panel's attention to the summary of exceptions which showed as red:

CSe22 – Actual city centre revenue as a percentage of city centre expenditure.

In response to a question the Corporate Director of Economic Development outlined the details of a Communications Protocol.

RESOLVED – That the Panel had received the quarter 3 performance 2020/21 report PC.16/21.

EGSP.20/21 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented report OS.06/21 providing an overview of matters relating to the work of the Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel.

The Panel's attention was drawn to the Panel's Work Programme for 2020/21 for discussion.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Overview Report incorporating the Work Programme and Key Decision items relevant to the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel be noted (OS.06/21).

- 3) That the following matters be submitted to the Panel on 12 April 2021:
- Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21
 - Draft Carlisle Plan
 - Riverside Housing

(The meeting ended at 5.52pm)