



Report to

# Council

Meeting Date: 9th November 2021

Public/Private\*: Public

Title: **Economy, Enterprise & Housing Portfolio Holder's Report –  
Councillor Paul Nedved**

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## **TOWN DEAL**

### **Business Case Development**

- Business Cases are required to be completed and submitted to Government by the end of March 2022. To help with the project delivery the Department of Levelling Up, Communities and Housing (DLUCH) have released an early payment of 5% of the Heads of Terms Offer – this equates to £985,000.
- Two business cases are to be accelerated:
  - Citadels Business Infrastructure and Lighting Up Carlisle
  - The five remaining business cases will be submitted in March 2022

## **ST CUTHBERT'S GARDEN VILLAGE**

Work on the St Cuthbert's Local Plan continues at pace with the commencement of vital additional evidence being commissioned. This is necessary to underpin the policies within the Plan. An early exploratory meeting with the Planning Inspectorate had been held to confirm the approach, especially in view of the recent changes to the NPPF.

In advance of the Local Plan being adopted, the decision-making framework is set by the recently adopted Strategic Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This document has recently been shortlisted for the Plan Making category of the RTPI NW Planning Awards.

Work has begun to prepare the business case for a long-term delivery vehicle. Over the next two years, this will explore the opportunities for a delivery and stewardship of strategic infrastructure such as green infrastructure, community facilities.

A national landscape design competition is currently being held for the central piece of strategic green infrastructure in the Garden Village. The competition 'Start with the Park' is being facilitated by the Landscape Institute and funded by the Town Deal capacity

funding with additional sponsorship from United Utilities (UU). Stage 1 of the competition is now complete and three successful entrants have been shortlisted to move to Stage 2 of the competition. A public drop in event was held at the Racecourse on 19<sup>th</sup> October <https://competitions.landscapeinstitute.org/st-cuthberts/> and was very well attended.

Following Cumbria County Council's approval of the Carlisle Southern Link Road in November 2020, Morgan Sindall have been appointed to deliver the Stage 1 detailed design contract.

Completion of the CSLR remains on track to be delivered by 2024. Consultation on the proposed art works for the roundabouts will commence in early Autumn.

### **CUSTOM & SELF-BUILD HOUSING EVENT**

An information and awareness raising session was held online on the evening of Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> October for customers on the Council's Custom and Self-Build Register. The varied agenda included updates from the Council's Housing and Planning Policy Officers, along with external speakers:-

- *Custom Build Homes* – gave a detailed overview on how to secure a suitable building plot for people interested in building or commissioning their own home
- *Build Store* – provided information on self-build mortgages and financing a self-build project
- *Cumbria and Lancaster Community-Led Housing Hub* – delivered a presentation on self-build for community groups
- *St Cuthbert's Garden Village* – an update on the emerging custom and self-build policies, in the draft SCGV Local Plan, was provided by the Council's Planning Policy Team
- *Self-build Grant Programme* – details of the Council's grant programme, providing grants of up to £2,000 towards set-up costs for people on the Council's Custom & Self-Build Register, were provided by the Council's Housing Development Officer

### **REGULATORY SERVICES**

Homelife HIA are waiting for a decision from BEIS this Autumn on the Sustainable Warmth Competition encompassing Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Green Homes Grants and Home Upgrade Grants (HUG) for off mains gas homes. Carlisle has applied as The Lead Authority on a Cumbrian consortium of District Councils for funding to deliver low carbon measures to homes across Cumbria.

### **Landlord Electrical Safety Enforcement**

In the summer I reported that by the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021 Private Landlords in Carlisle had been required to have the electrical installations in their rental properties checked by a qualified electrician, to ensure that they are safe. Although I can report that most Landlords have been found to be meeting their legal obligations, there are a significant number who think it is an excuse not to have the tests completed until asked to do so by Regulatory Services. It is the Landlords responsibility to ensure that their properties are safe and to comply with

their legal obligations, Regulatory Services have served a number of housing enforcement notices since June on non-compliant Landlords.

### **Emergency Accommodation**

150 people were accommodated in temporary accommodation in the last six months, with six clients placed in B&B due to additional vulnerabilities or health / care needs. The service remains fully operational 24 hours a day, with an ongoing need to relet units in line with covid guidance and to build resilience throughout the winter period. The service is required for example, to keep self-isolation zones, including separate safe areas for people with higher health needs, and to not have 'non-households' sharing certain facilities etc. This means there are less units available within the portfolio at any one time compared to pre-covid. By way of reassurance, the service has not experienced any issues throughout the pandemic where demand exceeds capacity.

In terms of demands, the service has seen an increase in cases during the last quarter for domestic abuse, hospital discharge and more complex cases for those with social care needs.

The service continues to manage a higher positive throughput rate by increasing access to all housing options via working closely with landlords in both the social sector and private sector and making incentivised offers such as funding and specialist floating support for a period throughout the tenancy from the Council's specialist Officers. There are currently four residents being supported by the team who are wheelchair users, as such two have been placed within adapted units within B&B with Council staff providing in reach support several times a week. Please note that this would have been the case pre-covid as there are only two fully equipped DDA units suitable for wheelchair users (one in the men's scheme and one in the women and family scheme).

Despite the additional challenges, there was an average positive move on rate of 78% from the accommodation services where people have successfully been supported to be rehoused or safely returned home; with an average move on time of 56 days.