

Meeting Date: 3rd November 2020

Public/Private*: Public

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

ST CUTHBERT'S GARDEN VILLAGE

The preferred option masterplan has been finalised having been informed by a technical stakeholder consultation undertaken in July and August. This illustrative masterplan will be accompanied by a report, an infrastructure schedule and strategic design guidance. The status of the masterplan is that it is evidence which will underpin the Garden Village Local Plan.

Moving forward we are planning for public consultation on the masterplan, the Garden Village Local Plan, and a Design Supplementary Planning Document, starting 10th November. Given our good track record on innovation in engagement, we are developing animated digital tools to aid this process. In view of not being able to hold face to face consultations we are using October as a period of pre-consultation to raise awareness.

The Garden Village Local Plan will contain a number of strategic policies and will set out land allocations for the different land uses for the first phase of the Garden Village. It will be the primary planning document against which planning applications will be assessed.

We are shortly due to submit an expression of interest to the MHCLG Development Corporation Fund to seek assistance with exploring different delivery models and their feasibility. In addition, we have recently submitted to MHCLG a bid for further capacity funding for the Garden Village project.

With regards to the Carlisle Southern Link Road, the new road will unlock the delivery of the St Cuthbert's Garden Village and together these two projects will play a vital role in supporting the economic recovery of Carlisle following the impacts of Covid 19, as well as the continued long-term growth of the city. The planning application for the CSLR is due to be decided shortly by Cumbria County Council.

FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND

The final business case for investment from the Future High Street Fund (FHSF) was submitted to the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on 31st July.

MHCLG wrote to all the Councils involved in the scheme last month (September 2020), seeking further clarification on the economic outputs of their proposed FHSF schemes.

Officers have now submitted this information, although in Carlisle's case the outputs had been presented correctly and only very minor clarifications were needed.

An investment decision is anticipated later this year.

TOWN DEAL

Progress continues to be made on the development of a Town Investment Plan and Town Deal proposal for Carlisle, which will be submitted to MHCLG for consideration on 30th October of this year.

The Town Deal Board have developed a vision for Carlisle and a set of investment objectives that will provide the framework for the Town Investment Plan. The Board has also selected the seven projects to be taken forward for Town Deal Funding.

Carlisle Southern Gateway

- Improvements highway network and streetscape around the station and citadels
- Enhancing the new walking and cycling infrastructure linking St Cuthbert's Garden Village with the city centre

Digital and Community Learning Hub

- Redesign and refurbishment of the existing library building in Carlisle Lanes to create skills development, community, and digital facility for the benefit of local people

Start with the Park (St Cuthbert's Garden Village)

- The delivery of a large high-quality piece of green space for leisure and recreation that will be available for the residents of Carlisle to use and will ensure that St Cuthbert's Garden Village 'Starts with the Park'

Tullie House and City Centre events

- Assisting with the delivery of Project Tullie and transforming Tullie House into the creative and cultural heart of Carlisle and
- Combined with an enhanced high-profile events programme in Carlisle to encourage more local people, families and visitors into the city centre

Citadels Innovation Hub

- The Development of business incubation and innovation space on the Citadels site, adjacent to the development of the University of Cumbria campus that will attract businesses and jobs to the city

Carlisle Indoor Market

- The redevelopment of the Market Hall and exploring options to provide a food court and to create a distinctive experience in the Market Hall and supporting vibrancy of the city centre

An initial consultation of the proposed vision and objectives ran from the 27th July – 14th August. We are now running a further consultation and a new virtual exhibition has been launched and is available at www.carlisle.gov.uk/regeneration

It uses new technology to create a 360 Virtual Reality online exhibition for the Investment Plan. This includes details on the shortlisted projects for Carlisle's Investment Plan.

The next stage of work involves finalisation of the Town Investment Plan for submission on 30th October.

COVID-19 AND IMPACT ON CARLISLE'S ECONOMY

The City Council commissioned specialist support to undertake a detailed study on the short, medium and longer-term impacts of COVID-19 on the national and local economy and key employment sectors within the District – both urban and rural. This work has now been supplemented by detailed engagement with Carlisle's major employers, industry representative groups and community stakeholders.

This piece of work has been fed directly into the Future High Street Fund business case to ensure the strategy addresses the challenges to the City Centre presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. The work is also feeding into the development of the Town Investment Plan and the economic strategy to ensure that the strategy responds to the local economic challenges presented by COVID-19 and supports our key employment sectors.

ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Progress on the development of the Council's Economic Strategy continues to be made and the results of COVID-19 study has informed the approach. The work on the Town Deal and Investment Plan has also informed our thinking – and it is crucial that these two strategies are fully aligned.

In addition to driving growth, increasing productivity and growing our working age population the economic strategy must now – in light of COVID-19 - ensure that activity is also focussed on supporting economic recovery across future years.

A draft of the Strategy is nearing completion will be shared with Members at the end of November for consideration and feedback to help influence the strategy and emerging actions.

FREEPORT

A consultation on Freeports by the Government concluded on 13th July and the City Council has submitted its response, which covered issues such as customs, taxation, planning, regeneration and innovation.

It is anticipated that the Government will put out a call for expressions of interest from places interested in establishing Freeport areas in the coming months.

The City Council is in dialogue with Cumbria LEP and Cumbria County Council regarding a potential expression of interest.

CITY CENTRE BUSINESS GROWTH GRANT FUND

£35,000 has been allocated for Carlisle City Council's new City Centre Business Growth Grant Fund. This fund will look to give small business grants, of up to £5,000 to SME businesses looking to occupy vacant space in the city centre, including new businesses looking to take up space in a vacant unit, or existing businesses looking to expand into vacant space. The Council recognises that in order to support Carlisle and its city centre through the economic recovery after COVID 19, businesses and organisations need the confidence to invest in the city centre again.

The grant may be used for:

- Physical improvements to the premise, including improvements to the frontage of the building and signage - subject to the relevant planning permission being secured
- To provide equipment essential for the operation of the business
- To support marketing and advertising for the business

HOMELESS, PREVENTION AND ACCOMMODATION SERVICES

From 1 April 2020, the Homeless Prevention and Accommodation Services have assisted:

- 408 households with housing and homelessness assistance
- 84 households assisted under a prevention duty with 89% positive outcome (75)
- 95 households assisted under a relief duty with 61% positive outcome (58)
- 21 households assessed under the main housing duty, 29% of which (6) were owed a full housing duty
- 84 households have been assisted with emergency accommodation and support
- Supported 80 individuals to move into long term rehousing
- 6 people rough sleeping, and 27 at risk of rough sleeping assisted to immediately access emergency accommodation and support
- 75 low cost housing applications assessed with 25 approvals
- Benefit gains of £985,999

Covid-19 Crisis Response And Winter Readiness:

The ongoing coronavirus pandemic means the services continues to operate in differing ways to ensure that we can ensure that clients and staff are safeguarded as much as possible. This means that within the emergency accommodation we continue to follow changing Government guidance in ensuring shared accommodation environments meet stringent safety and distancing measures. It is not deemed appropriate currently to safely reinstate all the units within the accommodation portfolio, therefore the service is working hard to ensure that throughput can be maintained in order to meet demands. Service Managers continue to work closely with MHCLG specialist advisors monitoring and reporting weekly trend data and have appropriate systems in place to ensure we are winter ready.

The chart below (figure 1) highlights the weekly snapshot trend data of the rough sleeper numbers that have been accommodated as part of the Government's mandate during lockdown to 'get everyone in', and the number of rough sleepers confirmed by outreach staff as rough sleeping; please note the official annual rough sleeper count was undertaken last week with partners, one individual was recorded (despite not being seen) as we are aware that this person has ongoing entrenched issues, and has had offers of support and accommodation which have been repeatedly refused; Officers continue to work with this individual along with other professionals.

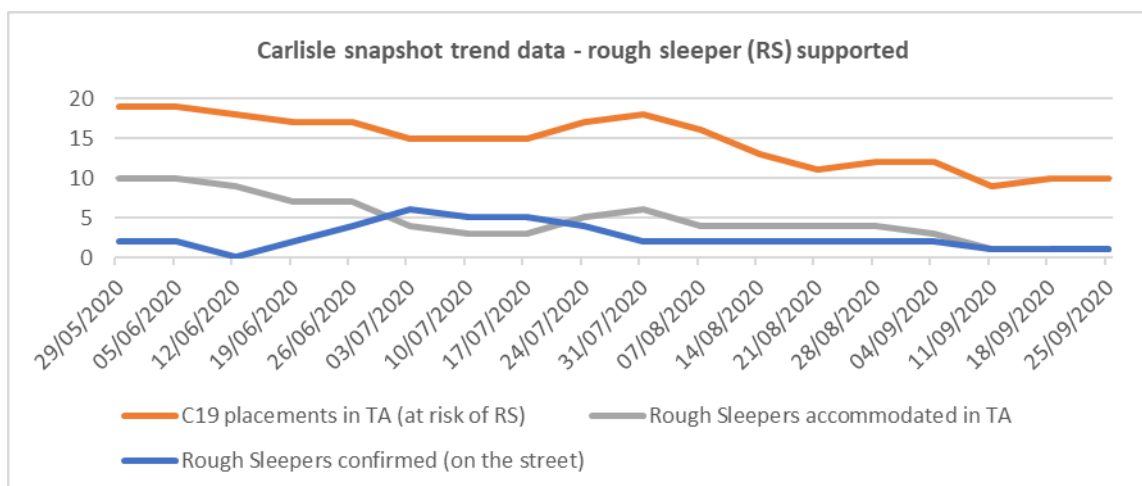


Figure 1

Next Steps Accommodation Funding

Carlisle applied for and has been awarded £46,600 from the MHCLG Next Steps Accommodation Programme. This is to make available resources to support local authorities and their partners to ensure that the current provision that has been set up to safeguard people who were taken safely from the streets is able to continue for an appropriate length of time. Organisations who have put in successful bids demonstrated in their proposal how the funding will be used to rapidly support those in COVID-19 emergency accommodation. The funding is for use during 2020/21 only.

Carlisle will work with Carlisle Key and Cumbria Gateway over the next six months to create 8 self-contained tenancies for people who have been accommodated as a result of Covid-19 due to a risk of rough sleeping; 4 of which will be for those aged 16-24 years.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY (2019/20)

The total affordable housing delivered in the last financial year numbered 151 properties (almost 23% of the record overall housing delivery for the year of 663.) of which 74 were for social/ affordable rent and 77 intermediate low-cost home ownership. This figure is very close to the annual target of 158 affordable homes (60% rented and 40% low cost home ownership) set in the Council's most recent SHMA (Strategic Housing Market Assessment).

CUMBRIA CHOICE

The updated policy for the Countywide choice-based lettings social housing allocation system has now been approved by all partners (having been to Council on 8 September). The Cumbria Choice Project Board are anticipating the new system will 'go live' from 1st April 2021 – work is ongoing on getting the new IT system in place.

WARM HOMES FUND FOR FIRST TIME CENTRAL HEATING

New applications for first time central heating from our Warm Homes Fund project ended on 30th September 2020. There were more applications than funding available. Through the fund Homelife have installed first time central heating to 55 private sector homes and are now progressing 45 applications that are to be completed before end of November. Homelife are working with our delivery partners to get as many of these applications completed before the scheme ends in November 2020.