

Report to

Council

Agenda
Item

12(iii)

Meeting Date: 8th September 2020

Public/Private*: Public

Title: **Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Panel – Councillor Lisa Brown**

The Panel was interested to hear what steps were being taken to address the challenges Carlisle faces and how the economy would recover moving out of the COVID-19 lockdown. The Corporate Director of Economic Development submitted report ED.26/20 which outlined these challenges and the move towards economic recovery and renewal. The report outlined the impacts of Covid-19 on the economy; a framework for recovery; business support measures; areas for transformation / renewal, and an update on several funding bids and the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal. The report also contained a Mott MacDonald technical report, actions plans and maps.

With such a broad issue, there were questions from members around many aspects of the report, such as stakeholder engagement in the Mott Macdonald report, indication of the number of retail premises that may not re-open in Carlisle, which may lead to likely loss of rental and rates income to the progress of schemes such as Borderlands. The Corporate Director responded that University was in discussions regarding the Borderlands' Citadels Project and it was confident that it had developed a strong Business Case. Moreover, it was looking at ways of securing student admissions and was also considering how working online may facilitate that. Delivering courses that would meet the needs of businesses in the District had been a strong element of the University's Business Case.

The report detailed several other future projects that would be delivered in the medium term. A Member asked if there were any shorter-term projects to support economic growth. The Corporate Director stated that in terms of the projects in the report, every effort was being made to draw down funding at the earliest opportunity so that they may be implemented. The Council's Development Management Team were also supporting economic activity through its work with the construction sector.

As we moved onto the Overview item on the agenda, the Panel agreed that they would like to look further into the role played by other organisations in response to the pandemic. A Member suggested that a representative from the Local Enterprise Partnership be invited to update the Panel on the work the organisation was doing to support economic recovery post Covid-19. It was also suggested that representatives from the Enterprise Zone and Carlisle Ambassadors be invited, so that the Panel may understand their roles in helping the city recover from the pandemic.

The Panel made the following resolutions:

2) That the Overview and Scrutiny Officer liaise with the Local Enterprise Partnership; the Enterprise Zone and, Carlisle Ambassadors in relation to attending the August or October 2020 meetings of the Panel to discuss their work regarding economic recovery post Covid-19.

3) That the Overview and Scrutiny Officer liaise with Officers regarding the submission of a report on events in the city for the August 2020 meeting of the Panel.

As always, the Panel members participated fully in the meeting and I would like to thank them for their contribution to the scrutiny process. Full details of the meeting, questions and responses can be found in the minutes.

Cllr Lisa Brown

Chair – Economic Growth Overview and Scrutiny Panel