

Meeting Date: 27<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Public/Private\*: Public

Title: **Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel Chair's Report –  
Councillor James Bainbridge**

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### **18<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

Within the outturn reports reviewed, although impacted by continued Covid-19 exceptions on income and expenditure on one hand, and on the other continued support through national grants to local government, there is a sign of some normality returning to monitoring process. Of note to Members is the impact of the rent reviews on industrial and business units within the ownership of the City Council. After a number of delays whilst the necessary legal challenges were adjudicated upon, the increased flow of income has begun being seen in the monitoring process.

We moved onto the present update on the Sands Centre development. The project is reassuringly at present on track in terms of the revised budget and timescale and is being delivered in a Covid secure manner.

The update of sickness and absence. The key issues which I took away from that is whilst the Covid-19 impact, which will include an element of mental health wellbeing has impacted on attendance levels over the last twelve months, and the impact of the third lockdown is yet to appear in the data, it has not mushroomed as an issue beyond all comparisons. Of perhaps greater concern will be the detail that 42% of absence is allocated to depression, stress and mental health.

The Part B agenda items discussed the asset management of the Kingstown Industrial Estate and the present position of the Junction 44 development. Members can access the Part B agenda through Legal and Democratic Services, and the positive outturns of the present situation development.

### **1<sup>st</sup> April 2021**

The Panel met for the final time in the Civic Year, the main two items being the Corporate Risk Register and the Corporate Projects Report.

Members will be aware that Councils across the western world are having to pay more attention to the status and security of their IT. Not only is there a sea change occurring in the move from servers to cloud based storage, but legacy systems are becoming more out of date and less able to be 'patched' in a cost effective or secure way. Whilst Councils are rarely successfully attacked by hackers, when this does occur the effects, as seen in Copeland and in Hackney, are pretty extensive and far-reaching. With a new IT Manager in post and having undertaken a 'deep dive' of the service akin to Jacques Cousteau exploring the Mariana Trench, the results and the requirement for additional investment in IT was evident in the Report. With the needs identified, the IT Manager is proceeding with a funding request. The Panel felt that it was advisable to request a update on this in three months' time.

The Improving Attendance Policy was agreed by the Panel. Members who were initially a little concerned that the recent staffing vacancies in HR and revisions to the implementation process seemed to be reassured by the answers given. One more Task & Finish Group will be held before the policy is sent to the Employment Panel for their agreement.

We viewed the initial draft of the Carlisle Plan. Members raised their concerns over the elements that they felt were missing such as Tourism and had a firm view that the length and style of the document would prevent it being relatable with the wider public and our stakeholders. Our thoughts, along with those of the other Panels, will now go back into the review process.

The Annual Scrutiny Report is before you as a separate agenda item, but members will note that Scrutiny has performed online in a positive and progressive way. My thanks to all Members and Officers who have attended and contributed.

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

**Cllr James Bainbridge**  
**Chair**