

Meeting Date: 4th January 2022

Public/Private*: Public

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

ST CUTHBERT'S GARDEN VILLAGE

Work on the St Cuthbert's Local Plan continues at pace. All of the necessary commissions to inform and update the Plan are now underway.

The adopted Strategic Design Supplementary Planning Document will provide interim guidance on early planning applications ahead of the Plan's adoption. In November, it was commended for Planning Excellence in the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Northwest Awards with judges stating: *'The work was well written, researched and well supported by technical survey and community engagement - the latter being praised for its innovative methods. Overall a fantastic example of long-term robust policy making.'*

A national landscape design competition is now drawing to a conclusion. The shortlist entrants to Stage 1 of the competition were consulted on at the Racecourse on 19th October attracting nearly 300 residents along with radio and TV coverage. The final entrants have now submitted their final schemes and the winning entry will be announced in January 2022.

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.

RURAL STRATEGY

Carlisle City Council is progressing the development of a rural strategy for the District. A brief and scope of works has been agreed:

1. Develop a strong evidence base for Rural Carlisle, which is developed in line and supported by strong stakeholder engagement.
2. Create a Rural Strategy covering the study area, with clear issues/opportunities identified and recommended actions.

Members will be engaged in the development of the Strategy in the same way as the recently approved Economic Strategy, with a workshop session planned in early 2022.

TOWN DEAL

Business Case Development

- Good progress continues to be made on the business case development for the £19.7m Carlisle Town Deal
- Two business cases have now been completed and are now in the process of being considered by the Town Deal Board and the Council as the Lead Authority and Accountable Body
- These will be submitted to Government for consideration in January 2022, subject to approval by the Executive
- The five remaining business cases will be submitted by the end of March 2022

Future High Street Fund

- There is a tender out for survey work and essential repairs for the Castle Street properties. The commission and works will be concluded by Spring 2022
- Consultants have appointed to identify options for the Central Plaza site and agents instructed to market the site. Both these workstreams will be concluded early January, with a report scheduled for the Executive to agree and approve next steps
- Current finalising the Grant Funding Agreement between the City Council and the County Council for the Devonshire Street / Market Square project. The Agreement will set out the roles and responsibilities for the delivery of projects

City Centre Taskforce

The first meeting of the City Centre Taskforce was held on 24th November 2021. The meeting was attended by representatives of the hospitality sector, the transport sector, the real estate sector, the developer sector, the independent retail sector and community representatives. The Taskforce received presentations from City Council's Regeneration Department on a recently undertaken city centre health check and a summary of the initiatives City Council are undertaking in the city centre. The meeting topics ranged from discussions on how events marketing could be more closely coordinated between City Council and sector representatives, to discussions on the long-term future of the high street.

HOMELESSNESS, PREVENTION & ACCOMMODATION SERVICES

The official annual rough sleeper evidence-based count was undertaken on the night of 13th - 14th October and recorded a zero return; this was done in conjunction with key partners and was verified by Homeless Link. The Homeless Prevention & Accommodation Services are currently providing support and accommodation to prevent rough sleeping to 17 individuals.

Additionally, over the past few weeks during the cold, stormy and wet weather, the services have enacted the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol to offer shelter and

provide a discretionary place of safety to those identified as at risk. This is in addition to the winter shelter provision for those who may not be owed a statutory duty by the Council.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) have released the guidance for the next phase of the Rough Sleeping Initiative which will fund initiatives for three years (RSI 2022-25). Carlisle City Council currently acts as the lead authority for all Cumbria authorities on the current funded project. The funding application will close on 4th February 2022.

REGULATORY SERVICES

Green Homes Grant – Local Authority Delivery 2 (LAD2) - I'm pleased to report that Carlisle City Council have signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Eden District Council for the LAD2 delivery. You will recall that LAD2 will release money for funding to local authority schemes that make energy-saving improvements to the homes that have poor energy efficiency and are on a low income or in receipt of a benefit. Eden DC are the accountable body for this scheme and need now to sign a MoU with EON their delivery partner. Carlisle expects to receive £73,380 in administration costs once all the contracts have been signed. Schemes need to have been assessed by end March 2022

Sustainable Warmth Cumbria (LAD3/HUG1) – The City Council's application as the Cumbria lead for the sustainable warmth grant has been successful. The MoU with Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) has been signed and the City Council is now due to receive £14,105,000 of Home Upgrade Funding (HUG1), this is for homes that do not have mains gas heating, and £5,850,000 of LAD3 funding for homes with mains gas heating. Owner occupied homes can receive between £10,000 and £25,000 per household depending on their current homes. Private landlords can also apply for grant funding up to £5K and are expected to contribute a third of the cost. Owner occupied homes are not expected to contribute to the cost. Negotiations are now occurring regarding procurement and Job Descriptions being written ready for recruitment of staff.

Households that have an income lower than £30K (income can be higher if have a larger household) and an energy performance certificate of D, E F or G should qualify.

The City Council's carrot (empty property grants) and stick approach (enforcement) to **empty properties** is showing signs of success. The annual empty homes data submitted in the October Council Tax Base Report 2021 showed a remarkable reduction of 35% in empty homes in the district in comparison to the 2020 submission. The total of empty homes reduced from 1,014 to 656.