

Meeting Date: 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Public/Private\*: Public

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

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## **PROJECTS**

### **Business Support / Mentor Programme**

This project has been funded under the Reopening the High Street Fund. After the successful first phase was delivered between January and March 2021 which supported 60 businesses, a second phase was launched in April and has successfully supported 46 businesses which had already exceeded the target of 40 before the end of June 2021.

### **St Cuthbert's Garden Village**

Once adopted, the St Cuthbert's Local Plan will be the primary document by which future planning applications will be assessed. Following the close of the consultation into the Preferred Options Draft, we have reviewed those comments received. Prior to advancing the Plan to its next formal stage, we are in the process of commissioning further evidence to inform and ratify the necessary infrastructure requirements to support the Garden Village and the Plan's eventual formal submission for Examination. In the meantime, decision making to the possible early submission of planning applications that may come forward ahead of the Plan's adoption will also be supported by Strategic Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which itself was adopted by Executive in April 2021. On 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021, we received confirmation that Homes England had awarded us £475,000 from its Housing Capacity Fund to support the continued delivery of the Garden Village. In parallel, MHCLG confirmed that through its New Development Corporation Competition, that we have been awarded £745,000. Over the next two years, this latter award will explore Innovative delivery and longer-term stewardship of the Village.

Following Cumbria County Council's approval of the Carlisle Southern Link Road in November 2020, Morgan Sindall were appointed to deliver the Carlisle Southern Link Road in April 2021 and a CPO Inquiry was held into acquiring the final elements of the land in June 2021. Completion of the CSLR remains on track to be delivered by 2024 that would help unlock St Cuthbert's.

## **COVID-19 AND IMPACT ON CARLISLE'S ECONOMY**

- The City Council has commissioned detailed studies on the short, medium and longer-term impacts of COVID-19 on the national and local economy and key employment sectors with the District – both urban and rural. A link will be provided to Members.
- This piece of work was fed directly into the Future High Street Fund business and Town Deal submissions. Demonstrating that the identified projects addresses the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic has been a key factor in the success of securing the funding from both funding streams
- The Council has commissioned the preparation of a city centre investment framework and action plan to respond to the impacts and legacy of COVID-19. This report is nearing completion and will be shared with Members for comment in the coming weeks for consideration and feedback

## **ECONOMIC STRATEGY**

- Excellent progress the development of the Council's Economic Strategy has been made, with the final version being presented to Economic Scrutiny before coming back to Council for approval. The five-year strategy sets out three overarching strategic priorities that our planning, economic development and regeneration activity must seek to achieve:
  - Driving the recovery from Covid-19
  - Levelling up our communities
  - Delivering clean, green growth
- The strategy supports and compliments the strategies set out on the Borderlands Growth Deal and the Town Investment Plan. The strategy also picks up on the actions recommended in the COVID-19 studies

## **ROUGH SLEEPING INITIATIVE**

Carlisle City Council as the lead authority for Cumbria, has been successful in securing £671,090 funding for 2021/22 from the MHCLG Rough Sleeping Initiative. This funding will enable the continuation of focused rehousing projects across the county to prevent and end rough sleeping.

## **FLEXIBLE SUPPORT FUND PARTNERSHIP**

Carlisle City Council has been successful in securing £99,000 from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to deliver a Flexible Support Fund partnership in Carlisle (from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022). This project will improve employment outcomes and prospects of future employment outcomes for long-term unemployed individuals experiencing homelessness, who are facing the most complex and intractable barriers to work. Over 12 months the project will support DWP clients:

- 150 to access emergency temporary accommodation; 20 into voluntary work experience; 60 to access employment related opportunities; 20 to move into work; 60 to obtain a new tenancy; 50 to sustain tenancies; 60 to access training; 100 with income maximisation, benefit claims, debt / budgeting support

## **WELFARE BENEFIT ADVICE SERVICE**

The Welfare Benefit Advice Service have received commendation for ***`an excellent performance overall'*** by the external audit quality standard who conduct an annual audit of the service and award the Quality Mark Standard. A significant number of areas of good practice were identified during the assessment, where the organisation exceeded the standard to a significant extent and has developed an innovative approach to service delivery during the pandemic.

## **HOMELESS ACCOMMODATION SERVICE**

The Homeless Accommodation services arranged and facilitated two in reach Covid-19 vaccination sessions safely within the schemes, in conjunction with health colleagues. This was offered to all residents; eight residents received a first vaccination and booked in for a second. These sessions also enabled wider health checks to be undertaken. In line with recovery plans, the service is currently recruiting staff to ensure that the additional 24-hour rota can be re-established and additional units made available after the summer in line with Government / PHE expected guidance changes; however occupancy will need to continue to be lower due to the ongoing Covid-19 risks in shared accommodation schemes in line with national guidance.

## **REGULATORY SERVICES**

### ***Landlord Electrical Safety Enforcement***

Since the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020, private landlords in Carlisle have been required to have the electrical installations in their rental properties checked by a qualified electrician to ensure that they are safe for all new tenancies. These regulations were further extended to all existing tenancies from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. Since the start of June this year the Environmental Health team have started to proactively request certification from Carlisle landlords who come into contact with the department, failure to comply with the formal request to supply the electrical installation condition report will result in a civil penalty.

### ***Green Homes and Sustainable Warmth Grants -Local Authority Delivery (LAD2)***

Homelife HIA are working with the other Cumbrian District Local Authorities on a consortium project for measures to raise the Energy Efficiency performance of homes with a poor EPC rating. Eden District Council are the lead authority for this LAD2 project. Householders in areas of Carlisle with high fuel poverty have been written to encouraging them to apply for a free grant. The City Council now has access to software, called 'Pathways', which enables the targeting of homes most likely to be in need of energy efficiency measures.

Landlords qualify for a grant for two-thirds of the cost of improvement works, up to a maximum of £5,000 for qualifying tenants, so are encouraged to contact Homelife if their properties have an EPC of E, F or G.