

REPORT TO	ON
Scrutiny Committee	9 July 2020



TITLE	REPORT OF
Scrutiny Portfolio Update: Planning, Regeneration and City Deal	Director of Planning and Property

Is this report confidential?	No
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## PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. The purpose of the report is to provide an update to Scrutiny Committee on the activities since May 2019 in the Planning, Regeneration and City Deal Portfolio.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

2. The Scrutiny Committee note the contents of the report.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3. The Planning, Regeneration and City Deal Portfolio covers a wide remit including some of the key Council Services and a number of significant projects within the South Ribble Corporate Plan.
4. The services within the Portfolio make a significant contribution to the Council, the Borough, the wider Central Lancashire area, and the County as a whole. The key activities since May 2019 and current work areas are summarised in this report.

## CORPORATE OUTCOMES

5. The report relates to the following corporate priorities: *(tick all those applicable)*:

Excellence, Investment and Financial Sustainability	✓
Health, Wellbeing and Safety	✓
Place, Homes and Environment	✓

Projects relating to People in the Corporate Plan:

Our People and Communities	✓
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## **BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT**

6. Scrutiny Committee have asked for an update covering the Planning, Regeneration and City Deal Portfolio.

## **PROPOSALS (e.g. RATIONALE, DETAIL, FINANCIAL, PROCUREMENT)**

7. The Planning, Regeneration and City Deal Portfolio covers the following Council service areas:

- Planning – Development Management
- Planning – Planning Policy
- Investment and Skills
- Building Control
- Strategic Housing
- Homelessness
- Private Sector Housing

8. The Portfolio is also responsible for the following Corporate Plan Projects:

- Apprentice Factory Phase 2.
- Work with partners and developers to manage the rate of delivery of new homes and commercial floor space by unlocking City Deal sites, prioritising infrastructure development.
- Scope and prepare masterplans for Leyland, Bamber Bridge and Penwortham town centres.
- Implement Phase 2 of the Employment and Skills Plan (Cuerden).
- Prepare strategy for supporting new and small businesses.
- Review the projects listed in the City Deal Business and Delivery Plan 2017- 20, and identify priorities and commence delivery.
- We will review the Local Plan which defines planning policies, consulting on options and preparing a draft Central Lancashire Local Plan.
- We will work with the Environment Agency to develop the right plans for the River Ribble Green Links.
- Prepare and implement a Central Lancashire Economic Strategy.
- Identify actions to take forward from the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey.

9. Furthermore, the Portfolio shares responsibility for the following Corporate Plan Projects:

- We will seek to deliver different models to provide quality homes that people can afford to live in whether they choose home ownership or rental accommodation.
- We will work to reduce the number of homeless through developing a health and prevention focused approach.

10. In addition, the Portfolio is responsible for the following which is a key project currently not shown in the Corporate Plan:

- Leyland Town Deal

11. A summary of the services activities since May 2019 is provided in the sections below:

## 12. *Planning – Development Management*

13. The Development Management service processes planning applications, defends planning appeals, and undertakes planning enforcement investigations. The service is very busy with a high case load. Government measures the effectiveness of planning services by the speed of decision making. For minor applications the target is within 8 weeks. For major applications the target is 13 weeks (or 16 weeks for EIA development). The tables below summarise the performance of the service up until Quarter 3 2019/20 for minor and other applications:

**Table 1 – Performance for Minor Planning Applications**

	<b>Number of Applications Determined</b>	<b>Number of Applications Within 8 weeks</b>	<b>Percentage Within 8 Weeks</b>
Other	253	281	90.04 %
Minor	156	181	86.19 %
Householder	409	462	88.53 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>88.53 %</b>

14. The service is also measured in terms of how well it defends appeals made to the Planning Inspectorate. The table below shows the performance of the service up until the end of Quarter 3 2019/20:

**Table 2 – Performance for Major Planning Applications**

	<b>Number of Applications Determined</b>	<b>Number of Applications Within 13 or 16 weeks</b>	<b>Percentage Within 8 Weeks</b>
Major	23	21	91.30 %

15. The service has dealt with a number of key schemes for the Borough since May 2019 including the Leyland Test Track. The service has also led on the defence of the refusal of planning permission at Chain House Lane, which led to a public inquiry and is currently going through an appeal through the High Court.

## 16. *Planning – Planning Policy*

17. The Planning Policy service works on the production of the Central Lancashire Local Plan, other planning policy documents and monitoring of development. They also play a key role in City Deal.
18. In terms of Corporate Plan Projects the Central Lancashire Local Plan is a key item. Since May 2019 the Council has convened the Local Plan Member Working Group a number of times. The portfolio has represented SRBC at the Central Lancashire Joint Advisory Committee and also chaired that meeting on a rotation basis.
19. The Local Plan as a key corporate project recently went through the Issues and Options stage which is the first formal stage of preparing a Local Plan. The consultation finished on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020. At close of the consultation we had received over 1,200 responses to the consultation online through Citizen Space and have a few hundred written

representations to log on the system. The final number of responses is likely to be around 1,500. The Youth Questionnaire which ran alongside the issues and Options generated an additional 593 responses from 11-21 year olds which is a positive step to engaging this sector on the development of the Local Plan. Of the 401 responses received for the Call for Sites, 26 were for sites in Preston, 10 for Chorley and the remainder, 365, for sites in South Ribble.

20. A further key task for the Planning Policy service has been working to produce a Memorandum of Understanding on Housing Provision and Distribution with our Central Lancashire colleagues which was recently approved at Council in February 2020.

### **21. *Investment and Skills***

22. The Investment and Skills team provide three key areas of work. The first is to provide a traditional economic development function of providing support to businesses whether to source premises or signposting to grants and further advice. The service also leads on the forming of economic development policy and contributes to the work Lancashire Leaders on the economic development theme and in working on a Central Lancashire footprint. The final and more recent addition to the team is working on skills development. This is being achieved through the running the SRBC Apprentice Factory project.
23. The Apprentice Factory is a key corporate project and is now in Phase 2. South Ribble Apprentice Factory is a 5 year project which aims to increase the number of apprenticeship starts within the borough and to meet the 2.3% public sector apprenticeship target within the council. It aims to create an impartial information, advice and guidance hub for the residents and businesses of South Ribble. It will offer careers advice to young people in schools from year 7 through to college and university leavers, it will help people to access training opportunities to change career and it will assist businesses with staff recruitment to meet their skills needs. The Apprentice Factory aims to increase the number of apprenticeships starts within the borough by working with partners to ensure that skills supply is appropriate to local skills demand and that all residents, including people who are harder to reach, are able to access the work and training opportunities that exist.
24. The project is to continue phase 1 and implement phase 2 of the Cabinet approved Development Plan for the Apprentice Factory, running concurrently. Phase 1 is focused on addressing SRBC own skills issues whereas Phase 2 is focused on external support to businesses.
25. A Central Lancashire Economic Strategy is currently being developed alongside the Central Lancashire Local Plan the current phase is evidence base gathering and draft findings have been received. The next stage is to write the Strategy itself.
26. Other Investment and Skills corporate projects are providing Implement Phase 2 of the Employment and Skills Plan for Cuerden but this is on hold pending the submission of a revised proposal for the site. The team are also to produce a strategy for supporting new and small businesses. This work is currently being scoped out and will be informed by the Central Lancashire Economic Strategy work.

### **27. *Building Control***

28. The Building Control service is responsible for checking submitted drawings, specifications and calculations for compliance with building regulations. They inspect works on site throughout the borough to ensure standards of the health and safety of people; the

structural stability of buildings and energy efficiencies are achieved. They also deal with dangerous structures and buildings.

29. The service competes with private sector Building Surveyors as there is a free market in the choice for consumers. Currently the service is maintaining a market share of around two thirds of all builds in South Ribble. This is an excellent figure compare to other Local Authority Building Control.
30. The Building Control Service received an ISO rating for their service in 2019 on the back of the Grenfell Tower disaster. This ensures that there are stringent quality assurance controls in place.

### **31. *Strategic Housing***

32. The Strategic Housing service leads on ensuring that housing needs are met within the Borough including working very closely with Registered Providers operating in the area. The service operates a Registered Provider Forum which has met three times since May 2019 and this is run by SRBC on behalf of the Central Lancashire authorities.
33. Key achievements in the team are the completion of a Housing Needs Study which looks in to the detail of what housing needs are emerging in the Borough which the Council needs to address in the future. This study will be appended to a report on Council Homebuild at Cabinet in March 2020. A key project is for a new Housing Strategy to be formed which will build on the evidence from Housing Needs Study.
34. The strategic housing team is also at the forefront of the Council's ambitions to provide homes itself. An initial report is on Cabinet in March 2020. The Council has recently registered with the Regulator for Social Housing in February 2020 and the housing strategy team are currently developing a funding bid for the McKenzie Arms development. Furthermore, two projects are already underway with approvals to convert the former Council Offices on Station Road in Bamber Bridge to flats for those most in need. This project has achieved planning consent and the works have recently been out to tender. There is also the development of the McKenzie Arms site again in Bamber Bridge. The service is also leading on the Extra Care project.
35. South Ribble lead the Housing Growth Theme Project Group as part of Lancashire Leaders The recommendations for actions to be undertaken to help increase housing growth were supported in full by Lancashire Leaders.

### **36. *Homelessness***

37. The Homelessness team deal with those people most in need. They undertake work closely with other agencies such as social care and mental health to ensure that all people in the Borough have a place to live. They are currently working on a Homelessness Strategy for the Borough. The cases the team deal with are very complex and therefore it is important that the emerging strategy deals with the key issues. Recent benchmarking (2019) from MHCLG has identified that SRBC is achieving a good split of prevention and relief duties (i.e. "more prevention duties are accepted than relief duties and that the prevention work which is undertaken is positive".)

### **38. *Private Sector Housing***

39. The Private Sector Housing team run the Council's Disabled Facilities Grants service and energy efficiency grants. They also work closely with the Strategic Housing team in terms of dealing housing policy and approaches in existing stock in the Borough whether privately owned or through registered providers.
40. In terms of the DFG service since May 2019 they have completed 87 applications, have a current live case load of a further 89. In terms of customer service since May 2019 the service has received a rating of very good or good from 99% of applicants.
41. Earlier in 2019 the service completed a housing stock condition survey which identified some key issues that the Council should be looking to address. Presently the team is working on an action plan to address these issues as part of a corporate plan project.
- 42. Other**
43. The service, under the Direction of the Director of Planning and Property and the Portfolio Holder are leading on the Leyland Town Deal which was announced in September 2019. To date the Portfolio has submitted an initial response to Government in December 2019, held the first Town Board in January 2020 and a further workshop with the Board in February 2020. Presently the team are awaiting further guidance from Central Government on how to proceed. Meanwhile evidence base commissions are also being undertaken.
44. The Portfolio also works very closely with other internal departments on corporate projects specially schemes such as the delivery of improved Leisure facilities, the refurbishment and reuse of Worden Hall, and Climate Change.
45. The Portfolio is also very outward facing and works closely with not only the Central Lancashire authorities on the Local Plan but also takes the lead for the City Deal with Preston City Council, Lancashire County Council and Homes England.
46. The delivery of City Deal is a key element of the Portfolio, The City Deal is however at a hiatus whilst negotiations take place following the mid term review.

## **CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT AND OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION**

47. Some of the Portfolios projects include widespread consultation including planning applications, the Local Plan and Leyland Master Plan.

## **AIR QUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

48. The work undertaken in the portfolio of Planning, Regeneration and City Deal has a critical role to play in improving the Air Quality in South Ribble. The Climate Emergency Task group has engaged on the consultation for the Central Lancashire Local Plan. In Development Management all major applications are assessed on air quality impact and many minor applications are reviewed by Environmental Health Officers to assess their Environmental impacts. In addition, the apprentice factory has supported an Environmental Health apprentice to help deliver some of the actions in the Air Quality Action Plan.

## **COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER**

49. The approved budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy includes the forecast costs and income projections for the services within the Planning, Regeneration and City Deal Portfolio. It also includes budget provision for the projects within the South Ribble Corporate Plan which fall under this portfolio.
50. In addition to the core services and corporate plan projects, the Town Deal is an opportunity for significant investment in the borough. It is however at an early stage and the full financial and other implications will be reported in due course, when there is more clarity on the process.
51. With regard to the City Deal, negotiations are taking take place following the mid-term review. The budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy assumptions are based on the current City Deal Heads of Terms and therefore any changes to that agreement going forward would need Council approval.

#### COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

52. This report is for noting only and there are no legal implications arising from it

#### OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

▶ Risk	<i>None</i>
▶ Equality & Diversity	<i>Much of the Directorates key services have a focus on equality and diversity and key decisions made in those services are subject to separate equality and diversity assessment</i>

#### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS (or There are no background papers to this report)

*None*

#### APPENDICES (or There are no appendices to this report)

None

Report Author:	Telephone:	Date:
Jonathan Noad, Director of Planning and Property	01772 625206	4 <sup>th</sup> March 2020