



Report to Council

Meeting Date: 11 October 2022

Public/Private*: Public

Title: **Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder's Report –
Councillor Elizabeth Mallinson**

CUSTOMER SERVICES

Customer Services successfully went live with our new Contact Centre telephony system on Monday, 8th August. This is a huge step forward in improving the customer journey, especially from a resilience perspective. We can now work from home in the same manner as in the office and have full control of our automated messaging and call routing. This allows us to inform customers almost instantly if there are any service disruptions or exceptional demand for our services, which has been an ongoing challenge over the past two years.

The system also has advanced queuing functionality which appears to be dramatically reducing waiting times. Reviewing our last two weeks performance, average waiting times have reduced from 00:02:08 (two weeks prior to transition) to 00:01:15. The ongoing work to improve our internal process is further enhanced by the technical improvements to the telephony system.

As with most service areas, we are looking to the future and supporting the Local Government Reorganisation process. I'm pleased to report that the overall approach on how we will manage Customer Services contact channels on Day 1, in both Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness, has, primarily, been developed by Carlisle City Council. This approach received approval from the Customer and Digital Theme Board. This milestone means there is a focus on detailed actions that will help us deliver excellent customer service from Vesting Day.

RECRUITMENT OF SAFER STREETS OFFICERS

We are pleased to advise that we have successfully recruited three Safer Streets Officers, we are hoping by working in partnership with volunteers and the Police these new roles

will help support people to enjoy a safe Saturday night out in Carlisle and reduce risks to women and girls. Following vetting and training, we are expecting the posts to start work from September. Officers will mostly work Saturday nights through to Sunday morning. But they will also work on other days of the week when footfall is expected to be higher – for example, England playing in the World Cup.

Note: these roles are funded via the PCC / Home Office funding to improve safety for women and girls.

EQUALITY

The Annual Equalities Report and Action Plan was on the Agenda at the Place Scrutiny Panel in August.

DISABLED FACILITIES

The impact of the pandemic and various market factors slowed down the delivery of **Disabled Adaptations** over the last twelve months. Contractors on the Council's contract delivery framework for Disabled Adaptation found it unsustainable to continue working with the Cumbrian Authorities for certain types of adaptations due to the huge rise in materials costs. This resulted in some individuals having to wait over nine months for bathroom adaptations in Carlisle.

A new framework is now in place, with new contractors and new prices that are suitable to the current market. This will cover the service for the next twelve months.

In future we are looking at changing to a dynamic purchasing system specifically for home adaptations, this delivery system allows the Local Authority to change the schedule of rates to match the market and provides a support system to get smaller local contractors on board for delivery. It is currently being used by some of the larger metropolitan authorities with larger delivery needs and budgets, so should offer some service protection to future market changes.

COMMUNITY

Welcome to the City

Following on from the two successful events welcoming Refugees to Carlisle, the operator at Tribe has reported that the venue has been in regular use by the asylum seekers who have independently visited the site.

We have started the second season of the **Match Day Experience** project, where a community group are invited to come to visit the football ground, play a game of football and then watch a match, free of charge. There are normally a group of 25 per visit, which allows us to support members of the community who may not feel 'welcome', or have the confidence, to go along to local football matches.

Trinity Underpass Community Improvement Project

Local painting and decorating company Bell has kindly donated paint for the refurbishment and new design of Trinity Subway. Members of the Healthy City Team plan to work alongside Trinity School, Carlisle College and Carlisle Youth Zone in creating street art with a local artist (Beardy Synergy). Carlisle United are leading on the project alongside the various partners.

ACTIVE SPACES

Hammonds Pond Outdoor Exercise Area

Work to install a new outdoor exercise area at Hammond's Pond, Currock and Upperby, is now complete. The new equipment, consisting of an exercise bike, wheelchair accessible arm bike and a multi-user fitness unit, is in the area previously occupied by an end-of-life football kick wall and seating. The project has cost approximately £35,000 and was funded by S106 contributions from a nearby residential development.

Yewdale Park and Morton West Play Areas

Work is ongoing in a £70,000 investment into Yewdale Park and Morton West play areas, both in Sandsfield and Morton West Ward. A range of existing equipment which has reached the end of its serviceable life across both sites and will be replaced with new items. The selection of new equipment has been based on the responses from a public consultation held in April.

Briar Bank Play Area

Site works have recently commenced on a £75,000 total upgrade to play facilities at Briar Bank, Kingmoor and Belah. This project, replacing all existing play equipment and surfacing, will deliver a broad range of equipment, some wheelchair accessible, to youngsters aged up to their mid-teens. Funding is jointly from a major capital investment into play areas during the 2022/23 financial year and a S106 agreement relating to a nearby residential development. A public consultation, held throughout April, was used to guide the selection of new equipment.