

Report to:

**Council**

Agenda  
Item

10(b)(v)

Meeting Date: 29<sup>th</sup> April 2014

Public/Private\*: Public

Title: **Communities & Housing Portfolio Holder's Report –  
Councillor Jessica Riddle**

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## **Customer Services**

### Smarter Service Delivery

The Automating Services Project has progressed and expanded into a programme of delivering services in a smarter and more customer friendly way. The project team will deliver a new transactional website which will have the capability of use on mobile devices. The current website is mainly information based and does not meet user expectations in the current environment for transactional internet based service delivery.

The project will incorporate full end to end improvements in service delivery. Officers will be trained on following a customer journey from a users perspective to ensure services are delivered in a customer friendly manner. The request for service will be fully integrated into back office systems through the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. The customer will be able to track their request for service. The same method of customer friendly service delivery will be used whichever way customers choose to contact the council. This will build a database of knowledge regarding service requests which can be intelligently used to inform decision making regarding services.

## **Community Safety Partnership**

The Carlisle and Eden Community Safety Partnership (CSP) has developed their draft Partnership Plan for 2014/15 using data from the community safety strategic assessment. The plan has been developed by the Leadership Group with input from a number of other

agencies and is supported by a series of actions plans being developed and delivered by the task groups.

It is envisaged that CSP funding for 2014/ 2015 will be managed by the Office Police and Crime Commissioner and CSP's across the County will have to apply directly for funding.

### **Multi-Agency Problem Solving Groups**

The PSG's were set up in 2012 with the following vision 'to create safe and confident communities through collaborative working at a local level. Problem Solving Groups will develop quick and effective responses to emerging issues in order to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and address issues that are important to our communities.'

The PSG is an operational and delivery focussed group with the key aim of developing early interventions and providing intelligence led targeted services. The group meets on a 6 weekly basis and includes officers from Cumbria Constabulary, Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service, Riverside Housing Association, Impact Housing Association and Carlisle City Council officers and members.

Since the launch of the PSG over 300 different cases have been discussed, with measures being put in place to support victims and prevent or reduce further incidents from taking place.

In March 2014 the multi-agency problem solving groups (PSG) across Carlisle merged to form one group covering both the East and West of the city. The rural areas are not covered by a specific PSG group however multi-agency meetings are called on an ad-hoc basis as and when required.

Meetings are held on a monthly basis. Members are welcome to attend the PSG to raise issues or alternatively, if members are aware of any issues or concerns regarding anti-social behaviour in their wards the information can be passed directly to Ruth Crane, Community Development Officer who will ensure the information is passed to the group for discussion.

## **Design out Crime Project**

Work has now been completed on the following projects.

- Fencing improvements to Lancaster Street gardens.
- Improved signage in Rosemary Lane and Arcade lane.
- Tidy up of Longtown flower beds involving local young people
- Painting project at Hammond's Pond
- Tidy up of St Aidan's flowerbeds involving local community groups
- Improvements to the fencing and look of the multi-use games area on St James' Park
- New and improved Rosemary Lane on Scotch Street
- Environmental enhancements at the skate park in Brampton
- Alley gate improvements in St Aidan's and Castle ward.

## **Community Centres Kiosks**

Using funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner 2 new community kiosks are soon to be installed in Brampton Community Centre and Greystone Community Centre. The information provided on the kiosks will be tailored to the local area and will provide residents with free access to local information and services.

New signage and leaflets to promote the kiosks are in the process of being produced.

## **Community Centres Hate Crime**

The Community Development Officer and Media and Communications Officer will be working closely with Community Centres over the next month to promote the services they offer to local residents and to raise awareness of the centres that have recently signed up as third party hate crime reporting centres.

## **HOUSING AND HEALTH**

### **Disabled Facilities Grants**

In the 13/14 financial year, 117 people benefitted from a disabled facilities grant enabling them to stay in their homes for longer. The most common adaptations were level access showers and stairlifts.

## **Homelife Carlisle**

In the 13/14 financial year, Homelife Carlisle has helped 519 households to keep safe and live independent in their homes for longer, via the provision of advice, information, securing funding and organising the installation of affordable warmth measures, and small repairs.

## **Affordable Housing**

### Brampton Extra Care Scheme (Irthing Centre)

Impact Housing Association aim to submit a planning application on 7th April, to provide 38 new Extra Care apartments, for people aged 55 and over, as well as some younger disabled people, to live independently within a supported environment. The scheme includes a new glazed link between the Extra Care facility and the main reception of the Community Centre and the existing café area. The design will ensure wheelchair users have seamless access to all accommodation and facilities within the scheme and the garden area will have raised planting beds with areas of seating.

This Extra Care scheme is a result of ongoing collaboration between Carlisle City Council, Cumbria County Council, Brampton and Beyond Community Trust and Impact Housing Association. Funding has been secured through the Home and Community Agency's Care and Support Specialised Housing Fund.

## **Homelessness**

To date, 1211 applicants have sought advice and information about homelessness. . This compares to last year's figure of 1070. Despite the increase in the number of people approaching the Council for advice and information about homelessness, the number of homeless acceptances has fallen to 48 from a figure of 78 for the last financial year. This demonstrates the recent shift towards more effective prevention based work.

## **Women and Families Accommodation**

Fair Meals Direct have been awarded a contract by the County Council to prepare 20 meals per day from Monday to Friday in the Women and Families Accommodation for distribution to older or housebound people living in the community. The meals are prepared by a professional chef using fresh local produce and distributed by volunteers. Residents get the opportunity to interact with the Chef and local volunteers and the service

raises awareness of healthy eating and stimulates interest in local food and food preparation. The excess meals are frozen and will be used to support rough sleepers using John Street.

Sustainable Food Carlisle have also been awarded funding from the County Council's Ways to Welfare fund to provide a free monthly community meal for hostel residents and people referred to the food banks at Shaddon Gate Community Resource Centre. At each monthly meal an advice agency will provide informal advice. People attending the meal will be given the opportunity to join a food buying group enabling them to buy food at more affordable prices. The buying group will be supported to buy, cook and eat a weekly evening meal at Water Street, and grow produce in the garden.

### **Benefit Advice**

In the 13/14 financial year, the Benefit Advice team increased income into the local economy by £1.65m.

From Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2014 the Benefit Advice Service will be holding a weekly advice surgery at the Water Street hostel for both hostel residents and members of the public.