

HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 11 JANUARY 2018 AT 10.00AM

PRESENT: Councillor Paton (Chairman), Councillors Bloxham (as substitute for Councillor Mrs Mallinson until 12.25pm) Burns, Coleman (as substitute for S Sidgwick), Finlayson (as substitute for Councillor Ellis), McDonald and McNulty.

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Bradley – Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder
Councillor Miss Sherriff – Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder
Peter Moran –Cumbria Law Centre
Judith Wilkinson – Department of Works and Pensions
Catherine White – Senior Analyst, Cumbria County Council

OFFICERS: Deputy Chief Executive
Corporate Director of Governance and Regulatory Services
Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager
Contracts and Community Services Manager
Policy and Performance Officer

HWSP.01/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs Mallinson, Councillor Ellis, Councillor Layden and Councillor S Sidgwick.

HWSP.02/18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

HWSP.03/18 PUBLIC AND PRESS

It was agreed that the items of business in Part A be dealt with in public and Part B be dealt with in private.

HWSP.04/18 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meetings held on 12 October 2017, 30 October 2017 and 23 November 2017, which had been approved by Council on 9 January 2018, be signed by the Chairman.

HWSP.05/18 CALL IN OF DECISIONS

There were no items which had been the subject of call-in.

HWSP.06/18 CARLISLE INTERAGENCY HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2015-20

The Chairman welcomed Mr Moran, Cumbria Law Centre and Ms Wilkinson, Department of Works and Pension to the meeting.

The Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Services (HPAS) Manager presented an update on key data and outcomes in relation to the Interagency Homelessness Strategy for

Carlisle 2015-20 priority areas and gave feedback on the partnership from stakeholders (GD.77/17).

The report detailed the background to the Strategy along with feedback from Carlisle Key, My Space Housing and Cumbria Law Centre. The appendices to the report set out the key data and outcomes in years one and two in relation to the priority areas within the Strategy.

The Corporate Director of Governance and Regulatory Services commented that, although the scrutiny of the statistics regarding homelessness was very important, it was useful to bear in mind that the cases were often complex and very stressful and impacted the members of the Homelessness Team and the partner agencies. The information in the report reflected real people with families who were in difficult circumstances and he commended the Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager, her team and the partner agencies for carrying out a difficult job to such an excellent level.

In considering the update Members raised the following comments and questions:

- A Member felt that the figure for the provision of housing and homelessness advice was very high.

The HPAS Manager responded that the figure had remained consistent and it was reassuring that members of the public sought advice and support at an early stage.

- There was concern that the figure of 638 households which had been accommodated in temporary accommodation was high for a small city.

The HPAS Manager reminded the Panel that the figure covered two years of data and it had reduced. She added that 85% of those accommodated had been assisted and supported to move on positively in an average of 9 weeks.

- The Panel asked for further information regarding Nightstop, the Carlisle Deposit Guarantee Scheme and Streetlink.

The HPAS Manager gave an overview of each scheme:

Nightstop worked to provide emergency accommodation for people who were in immediate housing crisis. The project worked with homeless and vulnerable people between the ages of 16 and 25 and provided overnight accommodation in the homes of volunteer 'hosts' who would provide a clean and safe environment along with an evening meal, breakfast and a 'listening ear' if required.

Carlisle Deposit Guarantee Scheme was a moneyless guarantee scheme which provided landlords in the private sector with a bond guarantee which was usually up to one month's rent to cover any damages that may occur at the end of the bond period. Officers would carry out a check on the standard of the property and it was hoped that this would lead to less substandard accommodation in the rental market.

Streetlink was a website which was available to encourage the public to report rough sleepers or people at risk of rough sleeping. Once a report had been made there would also be feedback on the outcome of the report.

- The Panel requested further details on the work being carried out with hospitals.

The HPAS Manager explained that officers worked closely with the hospitals to ensure that people being discharged had accommodation to go to. A protocol had been established which enabled officers to be part of the planned discharge and help stop people being discharged onto the street.

- How did the Reconnection Policy work?

The HPAS Manager responded that anyone who presented as homeless in Carlisle that came from another area would be supported, if appropriate, in returning to the area where they had a connection. The support could include transport fare and contact with the relevant authority to ensure they were aware the person would be presenting in that authority. When someone presented in Carlisle the Homelessness Team carried out a background check on the individual where possible to find out if that person was vulnerable or if there was a reason they had left their local area.

- Were households offered accommodation in other areas if they were at risk in this area?

The HPAS Manager commented that at risk household cases were often very complex and had to be dealt with on a case by case basis. Often it caused more harm to households by moving them out of an area where they had a network of support however there was a provision to move people if there was a requirement to do so.

- Who were the members of the Interagency Group?

The HPAS Manager responded that there were 25 partners in the Group which included the Police, District Councils, Cumbria County Council and third sector organisations. She added that organisations were well represented and the Group worked very well.

Mr Moran, Cumbria Law Centre, addressed the Panel. He commented that that the Interagency Group was unique and it was unusual for local authorities and Law Centres to work in such an informal, pragmatic way. The Group allowed organisations such as the Law Centre to have a partisan role which meant they understood the pressures faced by the Council and were able to challenge the authority. It also meant cases were dealt with in a reasonable and practical way to help the individual as a whole rather than just from a legal perspective.

The Law Centre wanted to keep clients out of the formal legal process and the group overwhelmingly helped that process. The Law Centre considered other avenues before advising people to present to the Council. The Group allowed information to be shared and an opportunity to share cases and consider if the outcomes were sustainable. He added that the kind of collaboration that occurred in Carlisle did not happen everywhere and it was not typical to have such a level of openness, it was much more pragmatic.

Ms Wilkinson, Department of Works and Pensions (DWP), then addressed the Panel. She agreed that the collaboration of the Group was essential and key to the DWP as they implemented wide changes in the Welfare System. The Welfare Reform Act introduced changes to benefits and a vast majority of clients were managing the changes but there were people who were hard to help, who were vulnerable with complex needs and required extra support. They were often homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and the Group worked together to provide help in a bespoke holistic way.

The Group enabled the DWP to discuss issues with other agencies and provide a signposting service. In addition the DWP used the Group as a forum to give out important information on policy, key changes and information on services.

- A Member commented that agencies must find it frustrating when individuals in need did not want help or support.

Ms Wilkinson responded that it was often the case that those who struggled with the benefits system often struggled with other issues in life which may result in a reluctance to engage with agencies.

The Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder added that the Group was a very genuine partnership which worked well together and enabled a great deal of networking. It had a very flexible approach to dealing with issues and allowed an easy exchange of information which allowed more holistic support for individuals. She felt that the Council was very fortunate to have the HPAS Manager, the Homelessness Team and the partners all willing to work together for the benefit of the people of Carlisle.

- The partnership was very successful, was there a way of celebrating the partnership and the benefits of such a partnership?

Ms Wilkinson agreed that the partnership was very successful and she had been advocating the model across Cumbria and the North Lakes. A similar partnership had been established in Barrow and she was looking to expand the model into South Lakeland, Copeland and Allerdale. She wanted the best practices from the partnership to be used across the County.

The HPAS Manager added that the new Act introduced a duty to refer and it would be necessary for Local Authorities to engage with partners otherwise it would not work.

- A Member asked for details of the key priority area 'positive outcomes for young people experiencing homelessness'.

The HPAS Manager responded that the four priority areas were broad headings which each had an action plan underneath. The work undertaken so far included preventive work with schools, identifying key issues for young people, clear signposting for services, case discussions to identify young people at risk and engaging young people in a meaningful way to support training and employment. She reiterated that the preventative work was critical.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Panel note key data and outcomes in years one and two in relation to the priority areas within the Interagency Homelessness Strategy for Carlisle 2015-20 as set out in Report GD.77/17.

2) That the Panel congratulated the Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager, the Homelessness Team and the partner agencies involved in the Interagency Group for their dedication and outstanding work in delivering a successful partnership.

The meeting adjourned at 11.08 for a short break and reconvened at 11.10am.

HWSP.07/18 THE HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION ACT

The Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Services Manager presented report GD.78/17 which gave an overview of the Homelessness Reduction Act.

The Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Services (HPAS) Manager reported that the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) would significantly reform England's homelessness legislation by placing duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas (regardless of priority need status, intentionality and local

connection); and to provide homelessness services to all affected, irrespective of their priority need status, as long as they were eligible for assistance.

The HPAS Manager outlined the key changes to the legislation as set out in the report drawing particular attention to the changes regarding local connection, the introduction of an agreed personalised plan and the changes to timescales for the prevention duty and the relief duty.

Section 2.10 detailed the additional rights of review that an applicant would have under the Act and section 3 detailed the potential impacts and risks of the Act.

She added that training sessions would be arranged for all local key partners, stakeholders and Members.

In considering the report Members raised the following comments and questions:

- In response to a question the HPAS Manager explained that there would be a provision for applicants to co-operate with Local Authorities in terms of their personalised plan and if the Local Authority considered that the applicant had 'deliberately and unreasonably refused' to co-operate they could serve notice on the applicant details of which were set out in section 2.6 of the report. Each case would be considered individually and the impact of the decision would be taken into account.

A Member commented that it was a difficult situation for Local Authorities to deal with as it was not easy for officers to uncover underlying issues. The HPAS Manager agreed that officers had to act on the information they were being given by the applicant and there may be issues that the applicant did not want to discuss with strangers. She explained that the bigger picture would need to be taken into account when dealing with each case. She added that case law would eventually give authorities parameters but guidance had not yet been published.

- A lot of work in the Strategy emphasised younger people, what work was being undertaken to support older people at risk?

The HPAS Manager responded that age was a factor in terms of vulnerability and that had not changed in the legislation. The prevention and relief duty meant the local authority had to assist everyone.

- It was clear that the Act would impact on resources and increase the pressures on officers, would the additional resources be covered by the government funding?

The HPAS Manager responded that the new burden funding for the Council had been announced. She explained that the existing team had many transferable skills and would be reorganised to ensure that the skills were being used in the necessary areas. In addition work was being carried out to procure a new bespoke IT system which would streamline the work between teams and help free up officer time to address other matters. She added that the Council was fortunate that the skilled officers within the team already carried out some of the work being introduced by the Act.

- Was it envisaged that there would be an increase in household presentations to the Council?

The HPAS Manager felt that the duty to refer would spike initially especially regarding prison releases but the team was already doing pre-release work and were putting pathways in place for complex offenders.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Panel note the key legislative changes and potential impacts of the Homelessness Reduction Act as detailed in report GD.78/17.

2) That an update on the introduction and impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act be submitted to the Panel in six months' time.

HWSP.08/18 FINAL FLOOD UPDATE REPORT

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the final update report (CS.06/18) on flood recovery activities and any future programmed work.

The Deputy Chief Executive stated that the report set out a final update of the work associated with recovery from the 2015 floods and emerging plans to deal with any such future events. During the last two years an extensive range of recovery activities had been undertaken, the work areas had been outlined in the report. The Chief Executive detailed the City Council asset recovery programme and outlined the flood grants and household payments which had been made.

He informed the Panel that the Council continued to work in partnership with the Environment Agency, County Council and other partners on resilience and resistant measures to address specific issues which arose from the floods in December 2015 and manage flood risk in the future. A further round of public engagement would take place in the new year on a shortlist of interventions, this would be followed by tenders for design and build, business case development followed by implementation. A special Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel had been arranged for 8 February 2018 to consider the future of flood risk management in Carlisle.

The Carlisle Emergency Plan had been reviewed and signed off by Senior Management Team. Additional locations for Reception centres had been identified and a risk assessment for each location had been carried out. Once an agreement had been reached with the centre's owners and operators they would be added to the Carlisle Emergency Plan and Cumbria Resilience Forum Welfare Plan.

In considering the report Members raised the following comments and questions:

- A Member had concerns that the flood work being undertaken was reactive and not preventative and asked what the Environment Agency had done in terms of prevention work.

The Deputy Chief Executive reminded the Panel that a Special Economic Growth Scrutiny Panel which had been arranged to look at the future flood elevation plans for Carlisle. The Environment Agency would be at the meeting as part of their inclusive consultation process on their data analysis of all the options and ideas. Cumbria County Council would also be in attendance.

A Member commented that the Parish Councils should be invited to take part in the Environment Agency's consultation as there was concern regarding the work being undertaken in rural areas.

The Deputy Chief Executive agreed to check if Parish Councils had been invited to take part in the consultation process.

- A Member noted that many householders had not yet returned to their homes due to insurance and contractor issues and he asked what the Council would do to address the issues.

The Deputy Chief Executive agreed that it was a difficult time for householders but the issues were not the responsibility of the Council and the Council could only try and influence the process.

- Were Flood Resilience Grants available for recently flooded properties?

A Member responded that the issue had been raised at the Business and Transformation scrutiny Panel on 4 January 2018. There were no grants available for newly flooded properties and the Panel had asked the Town Clerk and Chief Executive to write to the Environment Agency asking that flood resilience grants were made available as a matter of course for flooded properties.

RESOLVED – That the Final Flood Update reported be noted (CS.06/18)

HWSP.09/18 COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

The Panel welcomed Ms White, Senior Analyst, Cumbria County Council, to the meeting.

The Contracts and Community Services Manager presented report CS.05/18 which provided the draft Crime and Community Safety Assessment for Cumbria.

The Contracts and Community Services Manager reported that the Crime and Community Safety Assessment (CCSA) provided an overall assessment of the issues that impacted on the safety of Cumbria's communities. Research, evidence and intelligence had been gathered from local, regional and national sources and analysis undertaken to understand which communities had the greatest need for support to stay safe in Cumbria. The CCSA had been appended to the report (Appendix A).

The report also provided an update on the Bridgeway (Sexual Assault Referral Centre) and the North Cumbria Multi Agency Hub. The Bridgeway was a dedicated service that helped men, women and young people in Cumbria who had been raped or sexually assaulted, either recently or in the past. The Bridgeway continued to be successful and received 180 referrals between 1 January 2017 and 21 September 2017. Carlisle City Council supported the services with a £20,000 annual grant. The Bridgeway was in the process of integrating the Independent Domestic Violence Advisors and the Independent Sexual Violence Advisors in order to provide a more resilient service and avoid duplication. Appendix B of the report provided an in depth review of the services and a breakdown of the referrals.

The Contracts and Community Services Manager reported that a new Multi-Agency Crime and Anti-social behaviour Hub had been launched in September 2017; he gave an overview of the aim of the Hub and explained that it was hosted by the City Council at the Civic Centre and led by Cumbria Constabulary. The Hub brought together key partners from the Carlisle District Solving Problem Solving Group (PSG) as a co-located team to solve problems in partnership on a daily basis. Between September and December 2017 there had been over 180 visitors to the Hub and 22 referrals.

Ms White gave a presentation on the Staying Safe Joint Strategic Needs Assessment which highlighted relevant statistics as detailed within the report.

In considering the report and the presentation Members raised the following comments and questions:

- What was the reason for the data gaps for black and minority ethnic drug and alcohol problems?

Ms White responded that there could be many reasons including differences in cultures or potentially less access to support or less likely to seek support.

- Modern slavery and human trafficking had been listed as a Cumbria Constabulary priority but there were no statistics included in the report or presentation.

Ms White responded that there was no data available but it was now a priority.

The Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder added that it was prevalent but data was difficult to gather as often the people involved were not aware of what was actually happening to them.

- Unity provided services for over 18s, was there a similar service for under 18s?

Ms White explained that under 18 year olds reported to Cumbria County Council Support Services not Unity.

- The report included information on male alcohol specific mortality across Cumbria; why had information on female mortality rates not been included?

Ms White responded that in the older age range male alcohol related mortality rate was still higher however the split in younger drinkers was more even.

- Members were still concerned that the statistics for Wards which included the town centre and Botchergate did not reflect the ward accurately as the statistics reflected the night time economy in the area.

The Contracts and Community Services Manager reminded the Panel that previous discussions had taken place regarding the statistics in those wards. He had previously spoken to the Police about filtering out the figures for city centre wards but there was concern that it would take up Police time and they questioned the value of it. He reassured the Panel that the Police were aware of the impact that the city centre and Botchergate had on the statistics.

- The Chairman asked if it was possible to ask the Police to reduce the number of car chases within the City.

The Contracts and Community Services Manager responded that operational Police matters were not within the remit of the Partnership and he reminded the Chairman of the response the Police had given at a previous meeting regarding the procedures which were in place for car chases.

- A Member was concerned about the distance people potentially had to travel to access The Bridgeway services.

The Contracts and Community Services Manager explained that the new service was based in Penrith and meant that victims of sexual abuse no longer had to travel to Preston to access services. Some services were offered at Penrith and other services were in satellite offices. There was support available to those who required assistance to physically access the services.

- There was no longer a dedicated Hate Crime Officer within the Police, was this something that the Partnership was concerned about?

The Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder had been assured that the role of the Hate Crime Officer had been incorporated into the day to day work of all Police Officers.

- The report referred to 11,460 Vulnerable Child Referrals, did the figure reflect the number of individuals or did it include repeat referrals?

Ms White agreed to provide a written response to the Panel.

- The report stated that 'victim data under-represented the impact of health and wellbeing'; the Panel asked for clarity on the statement.

Ms White responded that the victim data did not include information on those who had been affected by a crime it only included data on those that reported the crime.

The Contracts and Community Services Manager suggested that the issue be raised at the Leadership Group to see if any information could be gathered from victim support.

RESOLVED – 1) That the data presented within the draft Crime and Community Safety Assessment from Cumbria in preparation for supporting the North Cumbria Community Safety Partnership in setting their priorities for 2018/19 be noted (CS.05/18)

2) That the Senior Analyst, Cumbria County Council, provide a written response to the Panel on the breakdown of the Vulnerable Child Referrals as detailed above.

HWSP.10/18 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

During consideration of the above item it was noted that the meeting had been in progress for 3 hours and it was moved, seconded and RESOLVED that Council Procedure Rule 9, in relation to the duration of meetings be suspended in order that the meeting could continue over the time limit of 3 hours.

HWSP.11/18 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Policy and Performance Officer presented report OS.02/18 which provided an overview of matters relating to the work of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel.

The Policy and Performance Officer reported that the most recent Notice of Executive Key Decisions, copies of which had been circulated to all Members, had been published on 18 December 2017. The following items included in the Notice fell within the Panel's remit:

Items which had been included in the Panel's Work Programme:

KD.31/17 – Proposed introduction of a Public Space Protection order for Carlisle

KD.33/17 – Sands Centre Redevelopment (to be scrutinised at a special meeting on 29 January 2018)

Items which had not been included in the Panel's Work Programme:

KD.35/17 – Action Plan – Disabled Facilities Grant 2017 to 2019

The report included a table of the progress on resolutions from previous meetings.

The Sands Centre Redevelopment would be considered by a special joint meeting of the Business and Transformation and Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panels on 29 January 2018.

The Panel's Work Programme had been attached as appendix 1 to the report for the Panel's consideration.

The Vice Chairman asked that an invitation to join the Green Spaces Strategy Task and Finish Group be extended to all Members.

RESOLVED –1) That the Overview Report incorporating the Work Programme and Key Decision items relevant to the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel (OS.02/18) be noted.

2) That an invitation for Members to join the Green Spaces Strategy Task and Finish Group be circulated.

(The meeting ended at 1.13pm)