



Report to

Council

Meeting Date: 28 March 2023

Public/Private*: Public

Title: **People Panel Chair's Report – Councillor Colin Glover**

GLL Leisure Contract Update

Representatives of GLL attended the Panel and provided Members with a helpful update on the Sands Centre redevelopment project, community outreach activities and arrangements to work with Cumberland Council to deliver on the joint vision for services across the area. GLL currently operate leisure facilities and services across Carlisle, Allerdale and Copeland.

The re-opened Sands Centre has been well received by local people and is now fully operational and activities are being well used. Members discussed issues that have been raised by residents, e.g. public transport access, lack of free short-term parking for customers making bookings, and the 'cashless' policy at the Centre and in the café. Staff agreed to take these concerns away and review them.

Updates were also received on outreach activities, particularly for younger and teenage participants with further activities anticipated to develop at the Trinity School site.

Victorian and Turkish Baths update

The Panel has received a number of updates on the Victorian and Turkish Baths during the work programme this year and a further update was provided at our last meeting. The site has been handed over to Cumbria County Council in readiness for progressing the 'Carlisle Station Gateway' project. Whilst the 1970s pools are due for demolition, the Victorian and Turkish Baths are a listed building and appropriate conservation of the building and unique features has been a cause for concern.

The Friends group have a vision to create a health and wellbeing centre and are actively working on a viability appraisal that has been funded by the Architectural Heritage Fund. Positive discussions have taken place with the National Lottery Heritage Fund and subject to the outcome of the viability study, the Friends intend to seek funding to move the project on to RIBA Stage 4 with a development study. A community asset transfer is still

considered to be the most appropriate route to achieving the best outcome and we look forward to the Friends group and Cumberland Council working together in partnership as the work progresses.

Sustainable Warmth Programme Update

The People Panel received a further update on delivery progress of this programme. It is acknowledged that the programme got off to a slow start for various reasons that have been highlighted previously, but Members welcomed that good progress has been made since the previous meeting with expenditure on successful applications rising from £90k to £1million in a short space of time and this is likely to continue to increase as more applications are approved in the remaining time. Further applications received are being fast-tracked with the aim of delivering as many as possible before the end of the programme. Government has agreed an extension to the timetable, but Eden District Council will be acting as lead authority for the next tranche of funding and as government rules mean that the two programmes cannot run concurrently, the Carlisle led programme will cease once the next programme commences. It is hoped that any approved applications at the point of transfer will still be delivered.

Cumbria Choice Update

Members were provided with an update on the policy and useful data on the Cumbria Choice social housing applications and allocations across Cumbria. At 31st January 2023, of the 19,025 households registered for Cumbria Choice, 6,299 are identified as being in a priority need group and 558 of those are identified as being in urgent housing need to move.

There is anecdotal evidence that there has been an increase in sales of properties used in the private rented sector with some private landlords selling properties in response to the cost-of-living crisis, adding further pressure on demand for social rented properties.

Due to the larger population, there is greater demand for social housing in Carlisle with properties attracting 30-40 applications, a similar property in West Cumbria is likely to attract 10-20 applications.

Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring

Members received monitoring reports on revenue and capital budgets. Energy costs are understandably a matter of concern and members were advised that energy costs are a key part of consideration when replacing infrastructure. As an example, consideration is being given to the use of electric cremators when the facilities are upgraded, as these will have a lower energy demand than existing gas-powered facilities. Capital funds for this infrastructure work has been carried forward into 2023/24 budget planning and incorporated into the Cumberland Council budget proposals.

Scrutiny Annual Report and Overview Report

The draft annual scrutiny report provided an overview of the Panel's work programme and where information and recommendations will be useful to inform the Cumberland Council's considerations and future planning, this will be fed into the appropriate structures for Members and Officers in the new Authority.

And finally.....

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to Chair the People Panel for this municipal year. We have considered a wide range of important issues and hopefully our resolutions and recommendations have supported the good work of Carlisle City Council and made a difference.

I would like to pay tribute and offer thanks everyone who has worked so hard to make our efforts worthwhile. Thank you to officers and stakeholders who have prepared reports and presentations and attended meetings to respond to questions, to Members of the Executive who regularly attend and contribute, and to the People Panel members themselves, who have prepared and actively participated in our scrutiny work.

A special thank you to Democratic Services officers who make sense of our contributions and have prepared detailed meeting records and to our Policy and Scrutiny Officer who has guided and advised us and without whom the Council's scrutiny function wouldn't have been anywhere near so efficient and productive. They have made my job as Chair so much easier.

Thank you all for everything that you have done, serving the Council and the people of Carlisle. If you are going forward into the new Cumberland Council, as officers or elected members, please accept my very best wishes. If you are going on to do other things or retiring, good luck and best wishes for whatever comes next. Thank you.