



Meeting Date: 28 February 2023

Public/Private*: Public

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

Youth Projects and Engagement

In November the Panel received a valuable presentation from City Council officers regarding engagement with young people by the Council's Healthy City team. The first Panel meeting for 2023 heard from Cumbria County Council officers regarding their work on youth participation activities in Carlisle. Cumbria County Council has a well-established Cumbria Participation Framework which describes how the council will 'Enable, Empower and Embed' the involvement of children and young people in decision making that affects their lives. The presentation gave a very helpful insight into this work, including background explaining how the Carlisle Youth Council has been actively involved for over ten years and how young people have identified their priorities and worked with partners to address them. Some of the key issues have been young people's mental health, youth sexual health education and treatment services, youth events linked to Zero Carbon Cumbria and the 'Make Your Mark' national referendum of teenage opinion.

Panel members welcomed the engagement with young people by City and County officers and urged Cumberland Council to build on this successful work, giving young people a voice, encouraging participation and shaping services for the future.

Corporate Project Status Report

The Panel received an update on a range of corporate projects within the Council's remit. These projects are transformational for Carlisle and the wider area and members are understandably keen to ensure that they are taken forward without a loss of pace into the new local government arrangements. Whilst many of the projects are within the remit of the Place Panel, they will undoubtedly have a significant impact upon the physical and mental health, and economic wellbeing of people in Carlisle and across Cumberland.

The Panel is delighted that after many years of planning and construction works, the new Sands Centre is now open and serving the needs of local people and visitors. Officers, staff and contractors are to be congratulated on this outstanding achievement and we look forward to a future phase when it will be possible to upgrade the arts and entertainment space.

The Panel received assurances that the governance of these major projects will now be built into Cumberland Council workstreams and the two new Councils for Cumbria will work together regarding accountability for the One Public Estate project.

Corporate Risk Register and Local Government Review Transition

Scrutiny of the corporate risk register has always been an important part of the Panel's work and the report this time took on a particular focus of ensuring that the new Council is able to incorporate all the identified risks into their own risk management processes going forward. Whilst, the Sustainable Warmth Grant programme had been added to the register, none of the existing risk ratings have escalated since the previous report. In the session, Members highlighted some risks that did not appear in the corporate risk register, for example the former Central Plaza site, but were reassured that they were included in departmental risk management processes. Risk management will fall under the Director of Resources within Cumberland Council and work is ongoing to ensure that strategic risks from each of the sovereign Councils are transferred and incorporated into the Cumberland Council strategic risk register.

LGR – Support for Staff and Assurance on Proposed Arrangements

All organisational restructures are a cause for concern and anxiety and local government reorganisation in Cumbria is no exception. Members recognise the impact that uncertainty is having on staff and the effect of significantly increased workloads as a result of keeping services operational at the same time as doing all the work required in preparation for the transfer to Cumberland Council. The Panel received an update on the process in relation to staff transfer (TUPE) and the appointment of Directors and Assistant Directors. Carlisle City Council has a strong track record for delivering mental health support and wellbeing activities for staff and Members expressed the wish that this work continues to focus on ensuring support is available to meet the differing needs of staff during this period of major change and is carried forward into Cumberland Council for all staff.

Cost of Living Task and Finish Group Report

The Cost-of-Living task and finish group has carried out an extensive piece of work and the final report was presented to the Panel at our January meeting. The group received evidence from a wide range of partners and officers, on various elements that are impacting on the effect of the cost-of-living crisis. Challenges and available support were examined in detail, covering energy costs, food security, financial support, benefits and debt management, housing, rural communities, and community support. The report sets out the difficulties and

potential solutions and includes links to sources of support. The task and finish report also highlights evaluation of the Thriving Communities partnership programme. Such was the success of this partnership that the Council, Tullie House Museum and Cumbria Community Foundation provided funding to continue the work in local communities for a further year. I recommend the report to you, it sets out thirteen key recommendations which I believe will be helpful to Cumberland Council in their work planning and as a useful resource for stakeholders and communities. Implementation of some of the recommendations has already commenced and I am grateful to Council staff who are highlighting sources of support through the Council's communication channels.

I would like to thank everyone who contributed valuable input to the report and in particular to our Policy and Scrutiny Officer who guided us and worked hard to craft the final report into an excellent document and resource for service planning and delivery, now and in the future.

Internal Audit Report – Sustainable Warmth Grant

Carlisle City Council is the accountable body for £19.955M grant funding on behalf of the Cumbrian Sustainable Warmth consortium of district councils. The aim of the grant is to address fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency through retrofitting mainly private sector homes with energy efficiency measures. This large-scale programme has faced significant challenges in delivery and was referred to the Panel for further scrutiny. Members received a detailed update on the background to the project together with the restructure of management of the programme and recruitment of additional staff which had resulted in a significant reduction in the backlog of applications. The Council has been working closely with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) who now seem confident in the Council's approach to delivering the project. It is known that other local authorities had also encountered issues in delivering the Sustainable Warmth Grants projects and it is understood that BEIS is taking that into consideration for design and delivery of future grant projects. Officers and the Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio holder assured the Panel that they are closely monitoring the project and a further update will be provided to the next meeting of the Panel.

Overview Report

The next and final meeting of the Panel will focus on subjects that will inform future service planning and development for Cumberland Council, including the GLL leisure contract update and future leisure services, heritage conservation requirements for the Turkish and Victorian Baths and the Cumbria Choice housing register.