



Report to Council

Meeting Date: 8th November 2022

Public/Private*: Public

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

CARLISLE LOCAL FOCUS HUB

The Local Focus Hub, now led by the City Council, is currently coordinating 16 referrals in relation to anti-social behaviour. A recent example concerns a local family subject to racial victimisation and property damage from local youths to the extent they had to be rehomed. Coordination through the Hub with partners ensures that we are best placed to work to tackle these concerns collectively. In this case, the Police have been able to take action against those responsible for the ASB, with other partners addressing wider preventative and improvement measures, including action to repair broken street lighting, to remove a long stretch of overgrown hedge, which had provided a place for those committing ASB to hide, repairing fences, cleaning graffiti and serving notices for improvement on residents whose gardens were full of rubbish leading to vermin and a general feeling of decline in the area.

The work of the Hub partnership will be enhanced following a successful bid, coordinated by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner under Round 04 of Safer Streets Funding. This will support projects both in Carlisle and in Barrow, to address ASB in the city centre and in local hotspots, through improvements to lighting in key areas, support for ASB workshops in schools, funding for Restorative Work / Mediation / Crime Prevention and to support Outreach ASB Workers.

Members will be aware that the City Council Civil Enforcement Officers have also recently taken on additional activity in relation to challenging city centre ASB with good examples of our staff working in partnership on joint patrols with the Police. The City Council allocated additional funding this year to support action to address ASB, supporting this additional activity and also helping to lever-in Safer Streets Funding, to pay for additional protective equipment, uniform for our Officers, body-cameras, and training to support them in this expanded role.

Carlisle Local Focus Hub will help facilitate further preventative work to be led by 'Edge', again funded through the Safer Streets Funding. Edge is a north-east based organisation, experienced in using outreach workers to interact with young people, forming positive relationships, encouraging responsible behaviour and providing diversionary activities including a mobile music recording studio and ball games. Edge will be working in Carlisle and will link in with existing youth provision and other partners, coordinated as necessary through the Local Focus Hub.

The Safer Street Funding is also being used to support awareness raising of the Community Trigger which is generally felt to be under-used locally and nationally. As we head towards bonfire night, Operation Roman Candle will again be initiated with Council staff, Police, Fire Service and Trading Standards coordinating action to address the under-age sale of fireworks and remove any unauthorised bonfires.

Notes / background: Introduced in 2014, the Community Trigger, provides a mechanism for repeat victims of ASB to request a review of their case if they are dissatisfied with the response from Police, Council, Health, social housing providers etc. This can be triggered by the victim or someone representing the victim. Whilst Carlisle City Council and the Police already have a process in place, awareness amongst the general public is not felt to be high, with the trigger widely felt to be under-used locally and nationally. To trigger the review, there must have been a number, no more than three, qualifying complaints of ASB in a six-month period, to require the relevant agency to conduct a review of the case (e.g. Police or Council). Locally this number is set at three qualifying complaints in a six-month period.

CUSTOMER SERVICES

Customer Service have been the first point of contact for the £150 Energy rebate which has now closed. This put significant strain on the service with contact volumes far exceeding normal volumes for the entirety of the application period.

Our new telephony solution has been in operation since August 2022. We now have much more control of our infrastructure meaning we are able to counteract increased volume with automated messaging and advance queuing functionality. We are monitoring its effectiveness and applying small changes as the new system beds in.

We have just completed an exercise in evaluating how customers contact us since the Covid Pandemic. We have found that demand for our services has changed. Customer contact is far more consistent throughout the day rather than experiencing significant peaks in early mornings and lunchtimes. This could be attributed to more of our customers working from home, enabling people to contact us more readily inside of standard office hours. As such, we have restructured the working hours of many of our Advisors and have advertised for three additional Advisors by carefully reprofiling our budget. We have had an excellent response with over 50 applications. We hope to have the additional Advisors in post by December 2022.

Customer Services are actively involved in the design of Day 1 delivery when we become Cumberland Council on 1st April 2023. Indeed, many of the solutions including telephony, email and website, along with support systems like knowledge bases, have been designed and implemented by the Carlisle City Council Customer Service Team. The recruitment of additional Advisors serves the additional purpose of being as prepared for Vesting Day as possible. We will continue to work hard on the LGR programme to ensure our customers can access services on Day 1 and beyond.

DISABLED ADAPTATIONS UPDATE

In the last quarter we have seen a steady increase in the number of referrals for disabled adaptations, the total number of referrals in the period for all disabled adaptation is 198. Total ongoing is 306 referrals. This is a marked increase in the number of recommendations being processed for disabled adaptations.

In the last quarter we have installed our first modular wash pod, these are small wash pods that can be installed for those with short term needs. They meet short needs in homes, where time is critical and waiting for installation of a permanent level access shower would be detrimental. The wash pods will then be removed when no longer required and will be recycled in the system. They offer a solution for palliative care patients nearing end of life, to offer them and their carers a solution for bathing to afford them dignity and respect in the final stages of care.

THRIVING COMMUNITIES

The Thriving Communities partnership has been recognised as best practice and is being presented at the World Health Organisation Annual Business and Technical Conference in November. The abstract submitted, highlights the successful partnership project with Tullie House, Carlisle City Council, Prism Arts, The NHS Social Prescribing Team and Cumbria Wildlife Trust tackling isolation and loneliness within the community which initially started in 2021 as a twelve-month project and now has funding for 2023.

COMMUNITY

Members of the Healthy City Team are working with Cumbria County Council Community Development Team Officers and third sector partners to plan a Community and Youth Work Conference which is to be held in Carlisle in December.

Through the Veg Cities project at Harraby Community Centre, there has been a series of Cooking Classes with a local chef which have been focussing on making healthy and affordable meals. Feedback so far has been very positive and the classes have been extended due to demand.