

Meeting Date: 7 January 2014

Public/Private*: Public

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

HOUSING & HEALTH SERVICES

Affordable Housing

The 2011/15 £2.4m HCA funded Affordable Housing Development Programme is on track to deliver 109 affordable rented units. Joint working between planning, property and housing has provided the platform to develop an affordable housing delivery programme.

Homelessness

During November we have taken 11 homeless applications and provided 59 advice and assistance appointments. We have issued nine decisions of which we have accepted a duty to one applicant and we have successfully prevented homelessness in 12 instances.

Accommodation and Support Services

The Accommodation and Support Services currently have a 92% occupancy rate; and the move on period from temporary accommodation is currently 8 weeks for singles and 6 weeks for families.

Partnership working with statutory and voluntary sector agencies is ongoing to deliver a programme of positive engagement activities for residents that improves their health and wellbeing, confidence and daily living skills. Programmes currently being delivered include:

- Financial / money management advice to be delivered in co-ordination with Barclays Bank
- ⇒ Christmas card competition raising £99.00 for Olivia Storey Trust (chosen by the residents)
 - ⇒ A programme of education and training sessions with students from Carlisle College for residents including childcare, health and beauty, daily living skills etc

- ⇒ Drop in sessions in partnership with Children's services and the Hebron church including a community cafe, crèche and child care services
- ⇒ Weekly art and crafts workshops are now taking place with families and children
- ⇒ A Christmas baking project with Hayton C of E school, Heathlands, Age UK, Carlisle Sustainable Food network and the hostel services to locally source and bake two Christmas cakes and 90 mince pies for the Christmas Fair

The Water Street Christmas Fair that took place on Saturday 14th December was a great success. The event was developed and co-ordinated by hostel services staff and residents, working in partnership with other local agencies and community groups to raise £200 for Macmillan Cancer. Everyone enjoyed seasonal carols and cakes; and the children particularly enjoyed the puppet show, face painting and visit from Santa.

Rough Sleepers

Carlisle City Council's Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) for rough sleepers sets out the types of arrangements that are in place to ensure people are not at risk of dying on the streets during cold weather. The SWEP arrangements are triggered when the night time temperature is predicted to be zero degrees or below for 3 consecutive nights.

No Second Night Out (NSNO) is focused on helping those who find themselves rough sleeping on the streets within the district of Carlisle for the first time. Details of how to report is being advertised and the website is in the process of being updated; and there a new phone number that people can use to report rough sleeping (01228 817428). The County wide promise is that:

'we will investigate every report of a rough sleeper; every person reporting a rough sleeper will be contacted with feedback on what we have found; every new rough sleeper will be offered a solution'.

Carlisle City Council has successfully bid and been awarded £20,000 from the Cumbria NSNO funding to develop and establish a digital tenant and landlord matching and advisory service within the district as part of its preventative approach to homelessness and promotion of automated digital information services.

The NSNO funding award will be used alongside Homeless Prevention Grant and Discretionary Housing Payment Grant to deliver the new service.

Based upon local intelligence and homelessness data (over 3 years) Carlisle City Council estimate that approximately 100 single non statutory homeless people will be directly assisted by this scheme;

Affordable Warmth

Following the Autumn statement announcements, we will be working over the winter with SIG energy management to target low income households who qualify for free measures

under the Home Heat Cost Reduction Obligation (HHCRO). Homelife Carlisle will be the main point of contact for HHCRO funding. SIG will also carry out direct marketing in the District.

Welfare Advice Service

The service operates within the Cumbria Advice Network and is a key partner in the delivery of the advice transitions fund (Law Centre lead) that will deliver a web based outreach service.

For the period 1st April 2013 to 27 November 2013, the team have increased income to the local economy via benefits gains of £1,043,027.20. 334 people have made enquiries with a total of 744 interviews/appointments made including 106 home visits. A further 384 people have received in depth telephone advice. 110 people have assessed the service as excellent. The key referring agencies are the Hostels and Homelessness team, Adult Social Care, and Homelife Carlisle

Disabled Facilities Grants

Homelife - Home Improvement Agency (HIA)

In October and November, Homelife Carlisle carried out 33 home visits. Four referrals were received for the Sanctuary Scheme for victims of Domestic Violence and four referrals were received for the Keep Safe scheme for victims of anti-social behaviour. Homelife Carlisle also provided telephone help and advice to 163 clients.

The Community Neighbour Coordinator, whose role is to develop a volunteer network to provide low level support to older people in their own homes, has recruited 36 volunteers, of which 12 are currently being matched to clients. 6 are currently working with clients.

Landlord Accreditation

There are currently around 132 landlords participating in the Accreditation Scheme, covering just over 500 properties that includes licensed and unlicensed Houses in Multiple Occupation and single private rented properties. A Cumbrian wide approach to accreditation, involving a third party in the accreditation process is currently being developed. As part of the process, a consultation exercise with accredited landlords is taking place. The purpose of the consultation is to identify the benefits of the current scheme and how it can be improved. To date, we have received 31 responses. These will be analysed and inform how we go forward.

Communities & Housing (Equalities / Compact)

Over the last year the Compact has provided a shared framework for the development of Community Centre Business Plans, this work will continue to with a new Service Level Agreement for Community Centres. The Cumbria Compact annual event was held on 22 November; the programme was centred on 'supporting the Cumbrian Third Sector to Thrive' and included items on Social Value and Social Impact Bonds. The current Third

Sector Census was shared at the event, the highlights being that volunteers supporting registered charities in Cumbria add an additional £28.5 million per year to the economic value of the sector and increase the workforce of the sector by over 1,200 full time staff.

CUSTOMER SERVICES

The Civic Centre foyer re-design is now complete and has become a useable space which gives a welcoming fresh feel to anyone visiting the building. The foyer will be used to not only serve customers but to promote events and display information.

The foyer will be host to celebrations to mark the 50th birthday of the Civic Centre building from the 10th March to 23rd March 2014.

Love it or hate it there is no escaping the Civic Centre and its affect on the Carlisle Skyline.

The Civic Centre celebrates its 50th birthday on 12th March 2014. The Civic was officially opened on March 12, 1964. The programme boasted that “The new Civic Centre... is an attempt to produce, in modern terms, a nucleus for the civic activity of the City.”

The design by architects Charles B. Pearson, son and partners was chosen after a national competition which attracted 200 entries. Carlisle firm John Laing Construction built the 11-storey centre for a cost of £820,000. Materials were shipped in from all over the world: olive wood from East Africa; Japanese silk wallpapers; Finnish lampshades; Brazilian rose wood. There was also 37,000 sq ft of French white and Italian pink mosaic on the outside cladding, and “more electric lamps than in the whole of the city streets”.

An open day on the 12th March 2014 will offer the public a chance to see around areas including the council chamber and the councillor’s robing room etc. Further information will be distributed nearer the time.

If any members have any pictures or information they think may be used to form part of the display please contact Jill Gillespie or Ben Renucci in Customer Services.

COMMUNITY CENTRES

In line with the Service Level Agreement between Carlisle City Council and Community Centres, business plans for the individual centres were submitted to the council at the end of October 2013. These were reviewed individually by a panel of members and officers in early November and all community centres have now had feedback on the business plans they submitted.

It was extremely valuable to be reminded of the good work undertaken by the Community Centres. It was also interesting to be updated on development plans (both service and structural) over the coming years.

The individual centres have been provided with feedback on the areas the council panel considered to be strengths and weaknesses within the plan and have been informed of the proposed level of funding for their centre for next financial year.

Community Centres were also advised that the council would like to discuss with centres the extension of indicated funding to three years to allow them to plan more effectively. The Community Centres have responded positively to this suggestion.

Councillor Jessica Riddle
Portfolio Holder for Communities & Housing