

Meeting Date: 4 March 2014

Public/Private*: Public

Communities & Housing Portfolio Holder's Report

Title: **Councillor Jessica Riddle**

Community Safety and Support

The Carlisle and Eden Community Safety Partnership are in the process of setting their priorities for next year using the Strategic Assessment this will be presented to full Council in the coming months. In the meantime work towards delivering against the 2013-14 plan has continued.

Operation Street Safe

On the 26th and 27th November 2013 between 5-9pm a Street Safe event was carried out on Dowbeck Road, Weardale Road and Stanhope Road.

The theme of the Street Safe was to ascertain and begin addressing community concerns around anti-social behaviour, criminal damage, burglary and to increase involvement in community groups & meetings. Officers from Cumbria Police, Trading Standards, Cumbria Fire and Rescue, Carlisle City Council and Riverside visited over 200 houses to speak to members of the local community about the area and identify any concerns that they have.

A public meeting was being held on Monday 10th February. Residents were given an update from the Street Safe event and were given the opportunity to raise concerns and ask questions.

Operation Roman Candle

A multi-agency initiative to tackle anti-social behaviour and deliberate fires (operation Roman Candle) was hailed a success by partners. The operation resulted in significant reductions in incidents of anti-social behaviour across the District.

- 53 % reduction ASB – City East
- 43% reduction ASB – City West
- 9, 16yrd skips of waste removed to prevent unauthorised fires
- Continual reduction in fires over the last 5 years

Community Website

A number of community websites are being developed across the District. The websites aim to provide residents with access to local community information, improve access channels for Police and local authorities, increase sense of local responsibility and result in better connected communities. Websites are being designed for:

- Friends of Rickerby Park
- Friends of Hammonds Pond
- Abstract online magazine
- Longtown Youth Group

Design out Crime Project

Work has now been completed on the following projects:

- Painting project at Hammonds Pond
- Tidy up of St Aidan's flowerbeds involving local community groups
- Improvements to the fencing and look of the multi-use games area on St James' Park
- New and improved Rosemary Lane on Scotch Street
- Environmental enhancements at the skate park in Brampton
- Alley gate improvements in St Aidan's and Castle Wards.

Community Centres

8 of the Community Centres have signed up to become Third Party Reporting Centres for Hate Crime. They will be attending refresher training in February 2014.

The community kiosk that was installed in Yewdale Community Centre has been well received and is being used on a regular basis. Since December 2013 there have been over 500 hits on the kiosk. The most visited sites are the Community Centre, Leisure and Culture and Jobs and Careers.

A revised Service Level Agreement to cover the financial year 2014-15 is currently being developed and consultation with Community Centre's on its contents will commence from the end of February.

Housing & Health Services

Affordable Housing

The prospectus for the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) £1.7 billion Affordable Homes Programme 2015-18 to deliver 165,000 homes was launched on 27th January. Bids close 30th April, with decision expected around July. The Housing team have been in discussions with local Housing Associations to develop a pipeline of schemes, and attended a consultation event on the new programme hosted by the Homes and Communities Agency in Penrith on 7th February.

Completion dates for housing developments within the current 2011 to 2015 programme are:

- Borland Avenue - 11 units due for completion in April 2014
- Arnside Court - 10 units due for completion in May 2014
- Thomlinson Avenue - 21 units due for completion in December 2014
- Dalton Avenue – 37 units due for completion in February 2015

Better Care Fund

From 2015/16, the Disabled Facilities Grant for Local Authorities will be provided by the Department of Health as part of the new Better Care Fund, described as a “single pooled budget for health and social care”. The current Disabled Facilities Grant funding will be paid from the Better Care Fund with the County Council and Clinical Commissioning Group acting as the accountable body.

Plans for the use of the pooled budget are being developed jointly by the Clinical Commissioning Group and the County Council and signed off jointly by these parties, as well as the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Department of Health will oversee the plans.

It is intended that the BCF provides opportunities for transferring funding from the acute health sector into community based services that focus on prevention.

District Councils will retain their mandatory duty to award a DFG in circumstances where it is reasonable and practicable to do so.

The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Department of Health have prescribed DFG grant levels for 2015/16. The continuation of the BCF and level of DFG grant in 2016/7 is unconfirmed.

Private Sector Engagement

Following a meeting with all the District authorities at the beginning of February, a Cumbrian wide landlord accreditation scheme, administered by the National Landlord Association, is now in its final design stage.

Following consultation with the other local authorities and local landlords, Carlisle City Council is now finalising its local incentives package to encourage landlords to become accredited members of the National Landlord Association, prior to reporting to Members.

Homelessness

The number of people approaching the City Council about housing and homelessness remains fairly constant, at around 100 people per calendar month. A greater emphasis on homelessness prevention is reflected in a reduction in the numbers of people to whom the local authority owes a statutory duty to secure settled accommodation. In the current year to date, we have prevented 228 people from becoming homeless, by developing tailored solutions with partners and using specific funding streams where appropriate, for example homeless prevention grant.