

**Report to Health &
Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel**

**Agenda
Item:**

A.2

Meeting Date: 25th February 2021
 Portfolio: Communities, Health and Wellbeing
 Key Decision: No
 Within Policy and Budget Framework: Yes
 Public / Private: Public

Title: COMMUNITY CENTRES UPDATE
 Report of: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE
 Report Number: CS 12/21

Purpose / Summary:

The report gives the panel an update on the Council's support for Community Centres and how they have responded to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Recommendations:

The Panel are asked to note the report.

Tracking

Executive:	
Scrutiny:	25th February 2021
Council:	

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1. Carlisle City Council supports Community Centres through grant funding as part of a wider support package for Third Sector organisations.
- 1.2. The Community Centres function as independent charities, each with their own Board of Trustees responsible for the operation of their Centre and for responding to the needs of their local communities.
- 1.3. Collectively the Community Centres are supported and co-ordinated by the 'Carlisle & District Federation of Community Organisations'. This organisation also operates as an independent charity.
- 1.4. Carlisle City Council's total budgeted spend on Community Associations / Centres for 2020/21 is £370,900 (discounting internal re-charges). This is made up of:
 - £190,200 - Grants to Community Centres
 - £9,000 - Community Association Training budget
 - £123,700 – Building Maintenance for the 9 Community Centres owned by Carlisle City Council. This does not include Downagate Community Centre which is on full repairing lease. Longtown is currently being held in trust and as part of this agreement Carlisle City Council also undertake any planned or reactive maintenance.
 - £38,700 - Building Insurances.
 - £9,300 - Horticultural Maintenance provided by Carlisle City Council to some Community Centres with grounds maintenance requirements.
- 1.5. Carlisle City Council also offer a range of in-kind and other support, including discretionary rate relief to the Community Associations as registered charities. The Council also offers Payroll services, charged at £97.00 per member of staff for the financial year 2019/20.

2. HEALTH AND WELLBEING BENEFITS

- 2.1. The Centres are an integral part of delivering Health and Wellbeing improvements to communities across the District.
- 2.2. A key outcome of the Healthy City Team's Service Plan is that: *A diverse mix of social and cultural opportunities offer residents (and visitors) enjoyment, social connections, creativity, mentally stimulating experiences and freedom of expression.*

Carlisle's Community Centres play an important role in delivering this outcome, through the range of vital services and benefits that they provide for communities across the District. Their role has been exemplified during the current pandemic.

2.3. The Community Centres use the financial support from the Council, alongside any other funding they obtain from other sources, to provide services for the benefit of their local communities.

2.4. Before the pandemic, services being delivered across the Centres included:

- Various types of exercise class
- Venue for community groups
- Nursery provision
- Lunch clubs
- Bowling
- Peer support groups for health conditions
- Local history groups
- Gardening clubs

2.5. Community Centres also work alongside the NHS with initiatives such as with post-natal clinics. The Healthy City will support further integration of NHS services with the community through, for example, social prescribing and healthy weight management as we come out of the pandemic.

3. RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC

3.1. The pandemic has impacted on Centres in different ways, ranging from those that have had to close, suspending services and furloughing staff; to those that have been able to stay open, to provide essential services to vulnerable groups during these difficult times.

3.2. Reduced income has had a significant impact on Community Centre finances, although all have been able to seek Government support through:

- Small Business Grant Fund - £10,000 for eligible business receiving Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rate Relief on 11th March 2020.
- Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund - £10,000 for eligible business with a rateable value up to £15,000, or £25,000 for eligible business with a rateable value of £15,001 or above and below £51,000, that would have been eligible for a discount under the Expanded Retail Discount Scheme if it had been in force on 11th March 2020.

- Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme – claiming 80% of eligible employee’s usual salary for hours not worked, up to £2,500 per month.

3.3. There have been many examples of where Community Centres have been able to provide essential services to the Community during the pandemic such as at Botcherby Community Centre:

- Due to the current lockdown restrictions Botcherby Community Centre has been unable to deliver their onsite health and fitness programme. On the 13th of January the Community Centre started to run a free online programme in partnership with Cumbria Community Foundation and the North East and North Cumbria ICS. The regular sessions are being delivered by a local trainer through online classes via Zoom and Facebook Live. This online service provides a Covid secure opportunity for people of all ages to maintain or increase their fitness levels while having an additional opportunity to have much needed social contact.

3.4. Other examples of services provided by Community Centres during the pandemic include:

- Hosting vaccination centres
- Pupil referral unit
- Hosting ‘Affordable Food Hubs’
- Providing school holiday activities as part of local partnership delivery
- Maintaining on-going nursery provision

4. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

4.1. “Continue to improve the quality of our local environment and green spaces so that everyone can enjoy living, working in and visiting Carlisle”

4.2. “Further develop sports, arts and cultural facilities to support the health and wellbeing of our residents”

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**Appendices
attached to report:**

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- None

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL –

FINANCE –

EQUALITY –

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE –