

Meeting Date: 14th July 2020

Public/Private\*: Public

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

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### **COMMUNITY SAFETY CUMBRIA PARTNERSHIP**

During the Covid 19 pandemic Safer Cumbria agencies and partners have adapted their working practices in order to meet demand across the County and ensure key work continues, in order to help keep communities and individuals safe from harm. The Safer Cumbria Delivery Board last met on 3<sup>rd</sup> June and at this meeting reviewed the terms of reference and governance arrangements of the Board as well as the Business Area Groups. Safer Cumbria Outline Priority Areas were also discussed at this meeting. The Board is next due to meet in July 2020.

### **CUSTOMER SERVICES**

Customer Services have been available by telephone, email, web access and social media throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. We have been working from home since 1<sup>st</sup> April and have handled up to 200 calls per day in additional volume. We have handled over 14,000 calls and over 4,000 emails from home 1<sup>st</sup> April.

- Ongoing business continuity planning has made this relatively seamless as we were already operating on MS Teams, MS SharePoint and Salesforce using laptops to ensure portability
- We have ensured the most vulnerable still have appropriate support by running a telephone appointment system for people who struggle to use online applications for homelessness services, housing benefit and council tax reductions. Our Supervisors call vulnerable people and walk them through any application
- We have been working with the Foodbank to ensure our vulnerable customers have access to their services by automating referrals over email and have helped over 70 people access food since 23<sup>rd</sup> March

- We have been the first point of contact for businesses who have benefitted from the Small Business Grants, Retail and Hospitality Grants and the ongoing Discretionary Business Grants
- Customer Services continue to support other areas of the Council who need telephone functionality from home as we begin recovery from Covid-19

### **CARLISLE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE GROUP (CaCRG)**

CaCRG was established at the start of the Covid pandemic and brings together a range of community partners, organisations and groups. It is jointly chaired by Cumbria County Council and Carlisle City Council via telephone conference call, and has facilitated exceptional partnership working across the area. The group membership grew quickly reflecting the diverse and growing needs of our communities and utilising several members of the Carlisle Partnership. To support this pace of change and multiple sector communications a Shared Online Platform and Local Agency Situation Report was developed. This enabled effective communication of correct information, and has been used to support the development of a newsletter, partner email circulars, funding newsletter and social media content.

Although unprecedented and testing for all involved the crisis it has established new and effective ways of working across sectors. The virtual SharePoint and sitrep has enabled problem solving amongst agencies, swift support to local emergency response groups which have been established, ensured the gap between shielding food parcels being delivered has been supported by local support networks and groups, and the directing of local funds to the heart of those in need. The group has also seen a number of partners come together to address local issues and need. Moving forward the group is exploring sustainable local level community response structures to capitalise on the effective relationships, communities and future opportunities.

I would like to highlight a note of thanks to the amazing local emergency community response groups which have emerged in response to this crisis and additionally thank all of the exceptional partners who continue to play a key role in the emergency response.

### **COMMUNITY NEIGHBOURS**

We are continuing to promote the telephone befriending scheme for lonely and isolated residents but with a limited staff capacity we are not as responsive as we would like to be at the present time. The funding for the first year ends in September but we are hoping Electricity North West will continue to sponsor the scheme for a further year.

### **DISABLED FACILITY GRANT UPDATE**

The Disabled Facility Trusted Assessor is now in post and has started working alongside the existing grants team, to improve our service offer. The restriction imposed on everyone by the pandemic has resulted in the adaptation service being run as a reduced service for 8 weeks, however we have worked alongside Adult Social Care, our Private OT

Practice and our contractors to ensure safe systems of work are in place for future adaptations and Officers have continued to work at home to ensure application and referrals can be processed as far as possible. An information leaflet has been produced for our customers and the general public to explain the infection control changes we have made to the service to keep everyone safe.

## **EQUALITY POLICY AND EQUALITY OBJECTIVES 2020-24**

The revised Equality Policy was approved by the Executive on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2020. The Policy ensures that the Council continues to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty and promotes equality of opportunity in all of its functions. The updated Policy includes the Equality Objectives 2020-24, which have been developed to continue to strengthen the Council's work on equality.

The new objectives are to:

- a) Break the cycle of inequality and improve health, wellbeing and economic prosperity.
- b) Support a diverse workforce by improving the equality data of the recruitment and retention processes.
- c) Ensure all people have access to the services they need.
- d) Celebrate the diversity of our communities and bring people together.

The Equality Action Plan will be updated on how the Council will work towards achieving these objectives and will be reported through the Annual Equality Report later this year.

## **DEFENCE EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME**

The Council has submitted its application for the Silver Award of the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme. This scheme encourages employers to demonstrate and advocate support to defence and the armed forces community, and align their values with the [Armed Forces Covenant](#).

The Council achieved the Bronze Award in September 2019 and continues to support work with the armed forces community across the District. This includes the Council's support for the Carlisle and Eden Forces Link Project and partnership working through the Cumbria Armed Forces Covenant Partnership. The North West Silver Awards Board will assess the applications and announce the results in August.

## **HEALTHY CITY TEAM**

Play areas, the skate park and outdoor gyms have re-opened following Government guidance to close them in March. Social distancing measures are still in place and we will keep signage in these areas to encourage people to follow guidance.

We have supported Community Centres by supplying information, paying 20/21 Annual Grant up-front and assisting colleagues to issue Government Business Grants as speedily as possible. Petheril Bank and Botcherby Community Centres have been playing a

particularly central role on local community response in lockdown, providing hubs for food distribution through Meals on Wheels and the Food Bank. Brampton and Longtown Community Centres are also playing a vital role for their communities.

To maintain some health activity, we have been running Virtual Health Walks at Talkin Tarn and more recently at Bitts Park as well, for both healthy walk participants and members of the general public.

Cllr Elizabeth Mallinson promoted the Health and Wellbeing benefits of our green spaces on Border News on Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> June and outlined the partnership approach we were taking with the Police and Fire Service to tackle the minority causing anti-social issues.

### **Active Spaces (April, May & June 2020)**

The refurbishment and replacement of the play area at **Carliol Drive, Harraby** is complete. The majority of the existing end of life equipment and surfacing has been removed and replaced with a range of new play equipment and a small number of items of adult outdoor exercise equipment. Local residents were consulted on the proposals and many of their suggestions and preferences were incorporated in the scheme, including a wheelchair accessible roundabout, a range of 'classic' playground items and fencing around the play equipment.

Public consultation on the types of new equipment residents would like to see including in a refurbishment of the play area off **Tribune Drive, Houghton**, has ended. 98 responses were received, and these have been worked into the final specification which is currently out to Tender. All existing end of life equipment and surfacing will be removed and replaced with a range of new items. The £35,000 project is being funded by a capital pressure bid and consultation has been supported and promoted by Stanwix Rural Parish Council and Houghton Primary School. Work will be completed by early Autumn.