

HEALTH AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 8 OCTOBER 2020 AT 10.00AM

PRESENT: Councillor Paton (Chair), Councillors Dr Davison, Mrs Finlayson, Glover (as substitute for Councillor Ms Ellis-Williams), Mrs McKerrell, McNulty, Tarbitt.

ALSO

PRESENT: Councillor Ellis - Deputy Leader and Finance, Governance and Resources Portfolio Holder
Councillor Christian - Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder
Councillor E Mallinson - Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder

OFFICERS: Deputy Chief Executive
Regulatory Services Manager
Health and Wellbeing Project Manager
Partnership Manager
Funding and Development Officer
Overview and Scrutiny Officer

HWSP.51/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Ms Ellis-Williams, Councillor Miss Whalen and the Policy and Communications Manager.

HWSP.52/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Dr Davison declared an interest in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct relating to Agenda item A.3 – Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plans (CWIPs). The interest related to her being a member of Cycle Carlisle.

HWSP.53/20 PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED - It was agreed that the items of business within Part A be dealt with in public and Part B be dealt with in private.

HWSP.54/20 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Councillor McNulty noted that he had been omitted from the minutes of the meeting held on 27 August 2020 and asked that his name be added to the attendance.

RESOLVED – 1) That it be noted that Council, at its meeting on 8 September 2020, received and adopted the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2020. The Chair will sign the minutes at the first practicable opportunity.

2) That the minutes of the meetings 27 August 2020, with the addition of Councillor McNulty in the attendance, and 17 September 2020 (Special) be approved.

HWSP.55/20 CALL IN OF DECISIONS

There were no items which had been the subject of call-in.

HWSP.56/20 HOUSING GRANTS AND SUPPORTING HOSPITALS

The Regulatory Services Manager submitted a report informing the Panel of the activities taking place to meet the Council's commitment to use discretionary housing grants to assist the elderly, disabled or other vulnerable groups: to live independently; to improve their living conditions and well-being, and promote opportunities to return home after hospital attendance (GD.47/20).

The Regulatory Services Manager reminded the Panel of the City Council's Housing Renewal Assistance Policy 2018 and its source of funding. He detailed the mandatory and discretionary grants which the City Council offered along with the Housing Grant Performance since 2017.

In considering the report the Panel raised the following comments and questions:

- The Panel congratulated the Regulatory Services Manager and his team for the excellent support provided and work undertaken which provided a significant benefit to those in need.
- Did the criteria for the Housing Renewal Assistance Policy include families with young children or was it primarily based on health concerns?

The Regulatory Services Manager responded that individual grants had specific criteria, the majority of the grants were health related and means tested rather than based on a family situation. However, individual cases were considered, and the Homelife Team were able to signpost families to providers for alternative support.

- What work was undertaken to support individuals who had mental health issues which often led to houses falling into disrepair?

The Regulatory Services Manager acknowledged that often the most complicated cases were linked to mental health issues. He reported that he had previously worked with the Public Health Department to create an action plan and develop a referral process for individuals. This had not been as successful as hoped as often those with mental health issues did not acknowledge it and therefore did not want to engage in a referral process.

- How did the Housing Renewal Assistance Policy link to energy efficiency and sustainability in homes?

The Regulatory Services Manager explained that although the service was mindful of climate change issues, grants such as the Warmer Homes Grant looked to move individuals out of fuel poverty and were not always able to insist on sustainable options.

- Would any underspent Disabled Facilities Grant funding be carried forward in the next financial year?

The Regulatory Services Manager confirmed that underspent funding would be carried forward as part of the annual budget process. The Covid-19 pandemic had affected the mandatory grants, as a result the funding would be reprofiled resulting in carry forwards in 2021.

- Were there any concerns regarding the procurement of services or supplies as a result of Brexit?

The Regulatory Services Manager responded that he was not aware of any issues with the procurement of services or supplies at this time.

- Were there any examples of how the Dementia Friendly Grants supported people to remain in their home longer?

The Regulatory Services Manager reported that six grants had been issued totally £17,956. The Safe and Warm grants had been extremely successful and some of that funding also supported dementia related concerns.

- Could the City Council support individuals to access the new Green Homes Scheme which the Government had introduced?

The Regulatory Services Manager explained that the Council would not support individuals applying for the grant other than in a sign posting capacity. The Council had not applied for the first stage of funding due to the timing of the application, however, consideration would be given to making an application in the second stage.

- Was there any support for individuals who did meet the means test but did need additional support, due to mental health issues, in finding trustworthy tradesman and making arrangements for the work to be carried out.

The Regulatory Services Manager stated that Homelife Team worked hard to raise awareness of their work to provide a trusted service which individuals could contact. They were a very small Team and could only deal with those people who came through the service where they provided the best help possible.

The Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder reiterated the Panel's thanks to the Regulatory Services Manager and his team for their outstanding work in improving the quality of life for residents, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

RESOLVED – That the Housing Grants and Supporting Hospitals report (GD.47/20) be noted.

HWSP.57/20 CYCLING WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLANS (CWIPS)

The Health and Wellbeing Project Manager presented an update on progress with a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (L-CWIP) for Carlisle (CS.27/20).

The Health and Wellbeing Project Manager reported that Cumbria County Council (as the Highway Authority) started work on a county wide CWIP early in 2020, the work had been significantly delayed due to the impact of Covid-19. However, work had progressed, and the County Council had agreed a contribution of £15,8000 towards the commissioning of a consultant to produce a CWIP for Carlisle. The City Council has been asked to provide the balance of £10,000 which the Corporate Director of Economic Development was considering the use of existing regeneration budgets to fund the balance.

In considering the report the Panel raised the following comments and questions:

- Discussions regarding walking/cycling and a movement strategy for Carlisle had taken place over a number of years but no big changes had materialised. What was different this time and how would community groups, cyclists and the Cycling Mayor be engaged in the plans?

The Health and Wellbeing Project Manager confirmed that work that had been undertaken previously, including work by cyclists, was being used as the basis of the current plans. He commented that there was now a much better understanding that cycling and walking were viable alternatives to driving, in addition there was a greater appetite amongst the public and politicians, nationally and locally, to make such changes. He explained that the County Council

had involved Members and partners including the Cycling Mayor in a workshop for the LCWIP and he would undertake to raise the matter at the next meeting.

- The Panel were concerned that the LCWIP would produce good infrastructure plans, but the funding would not be available to develop them as had previously happened. The Panel urged officers and the Executive to continue to push for Carlisle to be part of the next phase of funding to ensure a new infrastructure was developed to help reduce the carbon footprint and improve the health and wellbeing of its residents.
- The Panel stressed the importance of consultation with cyclists, groups and non-cyclists and suggested cycling zones be considered as they had proved successful in other countries.

The Deputy Chief Executive commented that a drawback of some funding, such as Section 106 money, had been how far it had to stretch to create a reasonable amount of pathway. This often resulted in the surface or lighting not being ideal. He highlighted an issue regarding the adoption of cycleways and ongoing maintenance and stated that this would have to be addressed to move forward.

He added that in addition to the right routes within the City, the safety and comfort of cyclists also had to be considered along with the start and end of journeys i.e. secure places for the bikes to be stored. The LCWIP was fundamental to the health and wellbeing of the City and it was important that healthy habits were formed, and people were encouraged to walk and cycle.

- A Member reminded the Panel of the work already being undertaken by the City Council to promote walking and walking routes and urged officers to promote what was already in place to help create a demand and suggested more walking and cycling maps.
- A Member highlighted the potential for Section 106 monies to be maximised to ensure infrastructure in new developments were linked with existing infrastructure.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder addressed the Panel. He felt that there was significant potential for good cycling and walking routes within the City and agreed that it was vital that consultation took place with cyclists, pedestrians and drivers. It was important that Carlisle offered positive choices for moving around the City. It was important to have the LCWIP plans in place to attract funding and move forward with the infrastructure. Referring to Section 106 monies, he reminded the Panel that there was a lot of demand for Section 106 money and Planning Officers worked hard to maximise the funding.

The Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder highlighted the walking routes that were promoted by Green Spaces and the activities that would be promoted in conjunction with Cumbria County Council through Healthy Cities.

- A Member highlighted a previous park and ride scheme which had been operated across the Christmas period, he suggested this may be a good scheme to reintroduce to reduce the traffic in the City.

The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder acknowledged the scheme and informed the Panel that he had met with representatives of local travel companies to discuss options for a similar scheme in the future.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plans (CWIPs) report be noted (CS.27/20)

2) That a further update on the Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plans (CWIPs) be submitted to the Panel in six months' time.

HWSP.58/20 EMERGENCY PLANNING AND EVOLVING APPROACH TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The Partnership Manager presented an overview of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic response and recovery, with an emphasis on the evolving approach to community engagement and climate change.

The Partnership Manager also highlighted the key statistics for the impact on health and wellbeing as detailed in the report. The report provided links to a Local Outbreak Control Plan and the Health Protection Board which the Panel had previously requested. The Partnership manager highlighted the funding application which had been submitted to The National Lottery in August to support further community resilience, unfortunately the bid had been unsuccessful.

In considering the report the Panel raised the following comments and questions:

- A Member asked for an update on the infection rate figures for Carlisle. The Partnership Manager responded that the updated figures had not been released however the infection rate in Carlisle was increasing.
- There was concern regarding licenced venues who were not closing at 10.00pm and were disregarding peoples' welfare.

The Partnership Manager reminded the Panel that there was an exceptional group of officers and partners who continued to work in difficult circumstances to deal with such matters.

- The Panel noted that the community response and partnership work regarding Covid-19 had been excellent in Carlisle and the work of the Carlisle Resilience Group had been very effective and accessible.
- A Member asked for information on the volunteering capacity for Carlisle.

The Partnership Manager confirmed that the information within the report was Cumbria wide and that it would be worthwhile having a better understanding of the Carlisle area, she agreed to discuss the matter with the Carlisle Resilience Group.

- Had the Local Nature Recovery Strategies identified any projects in the Carlisle area?

The Partnership Manager did not have details of any projects, however, she understood that the Council's Green Spaces Team were involved in the work. She agreed to provide the Panel with a written response.

- 2094 volunteers registered with Support Cumbria, why were only 1202 volunteers matched to organisations, what happened to the other 42%?

The Partnership Manager agreed to take the question back to the partner organisations as an action, however, she did know that some individuals had registered then were unable to carry out the role due to their own personal circumstances.

- How would the work of Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership fit in with the work to build back better from the pandemic?

The Partnership Manager commented that the pandemic had caused a shift in the consideration of climate change and assured the Panel the matter would be kept on the agenda for a number of partners moving forward. The Partnership Manager suggested that due to growth of the area and work a separate item on Climate Change may be warranted.

- A Member asked for assurance that the Local Nature Recovery Strategies included urban areas within Carlisle to protect nature and ensure the health and wellbeing of local people.

The Partnership Manager assured the Panel that there would be some focus to ensure the Carlisle district was considered as part of the Strategies.

- The Government had placed a ban on evictions during the pandemic, there was concern that once the ban was lifted there would be a significant impact on the homelessness in the City and a significant impact on available resources.

The Partnership Manager reported that there was a group in the recovery structure which considered homelessness matters and the Council's Homelessness Prevention and Accommodation Manager fed into the group. She added that the situation would be closely monitored.

- There had been a considerable increase in the number of Universal Credit claimants, were the Council able to address issues such as practical problems individuals would face alongside mental health issues, were there any interventions available?

The Partnership Manager acknowledged that the increase of Universal Credit claimants had been a concern across the country. There was a group within the Resilience Structure that looked at welfare and hardship and it monitored matters such as Universal Credit claimants, the impact the end of furlough would have and the loss of jobs. In addition, Cumbria County Council were developing an Anti-Poverty Strategy and she had requested that information from it was relayed into the local level recovery sub-groups.

- Would it be possible to engage local community groups such as 'friends of' groups to help improve local spaces?

The Partnership Manager thanked the Member for highlighting the groups and agreed it would be beneficial to engage those who wanted to continue to volunteer in friends or groups or work such as the Place Standard in the future.

- The Environment and Transport Portfolio Holder asked for an update on the Winter Ready Campaign and wardens.

The Partnership Manager reported that the Winter Ready Campaign was being addressed by a Task and Finish Group of the Cumbria Resilience Forum and the City Council were active participants on the Group. The Group had to consider being winter ready though the Covid-19 lens and consider how concurrent events such as Covid-19 and severe weather would be dealt with.

The Funding and Development Officer explained that an application for Local Wardens to support communities during the pandemic and future weather shocks had been the basis of a National Lottery bid, this had been unsuccessful due to not being the right fit for that funding programme. A future application was to be developed and submitted when the next funding programme opened in December. This programme would be a better fit for the projects aims. In the meantime, work was being undertaken to support groups in developing or

updating their own Community Emergency Plan with a COVID focus. Organisations were also being supported through signposting to funding and advice.

The Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder thanked Officers and Members for their ongoing exceptional work, she drew attention to the award the High Sherriff of Cumbria had given to the Partnership Manager and she urged Members to promote the steps for keeping safe from Covid-19.

- A Member highlighted the difficult work that many Officers had undertaken and that many would be becoming fatigued. The situation was likely to be long term and it was important that staff and Members were taking care of themselves and that the City Council supported them in doing so.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Emergency Planning and evolving approach to community engagement and climate change report (PC.25/20) be noted.

2) That an update on the Emergency response to Covid-19 be submitted to the Panel at their meeting on 25 February 2021.

HWSP.59/20 CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE – FOCUS ON SCRUTINY

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer submitted a report highlighting the key findings from the Corporate Peer Challenge with regard to scrutiny activity along with the steps that had been taken so far to respond to the findings (OS.21/20).

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer summarised the findings of the Corporate Peer Challenge with regard to scrutiny and set out the key points from the Scrutiny Chairs Group review. She requested that the Panel consider and agree a list of strategic priorities for Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel and consider the initial steps taken.

A Member felt strongly that more work should be undertaken on the recommendations set out in the Peer Challenge feedback. She commented that the Council needed to take the report seriously and the Panel should look closely at their priorities and really consider which ones could make a real difference to the Council's performance and the service given to the community.

The Panel discussed the potential priorities which they felt could benefit from scrutiny and RESOLVED – That the Panel agreed the following list of priorities that impact the local community which could benefit from scrutiny by the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel:

- Community Support and Involvement and Neighbourhoods and Rural Support
- Opportunity for Outdoor Exercise, Recreation, Learning and Active Travel
- Homelessness/Hostels/Homeless Prevention
- Disabled Access
- Environmental Health
- Climate Change and Extinction of Wildlife
- Cultural Resilience

HWSP.60/20 OVERVIEW REPORT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented report OS.22/20 providing an overview of matters relating to the work of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel.

RESOLVED 1) That report OS.22/20 be noted.

HWSP.61/20 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

During consideration of the above item, it was moved, seconded and RESOLVED that Council Procedure Rule 9, in relation to the duration of meetings be suspended in order that the meeting could continue over the time limit of 3 hours.

[The meeting ended at 1.03pm]