

Allerdale Borough Council

Council – 6 March 2019

### Portfolio Holder Updates

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<b>The Reason for the Decision</b>	To update Council on the activities and decisions of Portfolio Holders since the last meeting
<b>Summary of options considered</b>	N/a
<b>Recommendations</b>	That Members note the content of the report
<b>Financial / Resource Implications</b>	None arising directly from this report
<b>Legal / Governance Implications</b>	None arising directly from this report
<b>Community Safety Implications</b>	None arising directly from this report
<b>Health and Safety and Risk Management Implications</b>	None arising directly from this report
<b>Equality Duty considered / Impact Assessment completed</b>	Not considered applicable to this report
<b>Wards Affected</b>	As indicated in the main body of the report
<b>The contribution this decision would make to the Council's priorities</b>	Portfolio Holder activity relates to the development and delivery of the Council's key priority themes
<b>Is this a Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Portfolio Holder</b>	Councillor Alan Smith – Leader of the Council
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Senior Management Team

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### Report Implications

Community Safety	N	Employment (external to the Council)	N
Financial	N	Employment (internal)	N
Legal	N	Partnership	N
Social Inclusion	N	Asset Management	N
Equality Duty	N	Health and Safety	N

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide full Council with an update and overview of the activities of individual portfolio holders.

## **2.0 Content**

The activities of the Portfolio Holders are as follows:

### **2.1 Leader of the Council: Cllr Alan Smith**

#### **Social Infrastructure Investment Programme (SIIF) and Loans Fund**

The full £500,000 for the current financial year has now been allocated to a wide range of businesses and projects. The Loans Fund established with Enterprise Answers utilising the SIIF funding is performing well. The Fund has approved six loans to date and has attracted significant interest from other businesses. It is expected that the current level of funding will be exhausted by the end of the financial year. The Council aims to augment this year's funding with a further £250,000 in the next financial year.

#### **Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership**

Cumbria LEP has recently completed its third and final round of consultation in the development of a Local Industrial Strategy for the county. The document will now be submitted to government for discussion on Cumbria's economic priorities. The LEP has been working with businesses and the public and voluntary and community sectors to develop the new strategy, which highlights Cumbria's strengths and makes a case to Government and the private sector for investment up to 2030.

The LEP has also been recruiting to the new governance structure. A number of Sector Panels and Strategy Groups have been formed in line with the new Assurance Framework. These new groups will be responsible for ensuring that Cumbria LEP's strategic priorities are aligned, taking forward the new Local Industrial Strategy and exploiting any funding opportunities which may arise. Allerdale Borough Council officers are playing a full and active part in a number of these new groups.

Cumbria LEP has also appointed three leading local business representatives to the Board. Emma Porter and Sarah Swindley join the LEP as private sector board members, whilst Professor Patricia Livsey, the Chief Executive of Eden Valley Hospice and Jigsaw Children's Hospice, joins as CLEP's first representative from the Voluntary and Community Sector.

#### **The Local Plan**

The Secretary of State has appointed David Troy BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI to conduct the Examination of the Local Plan. He is currently reviewing all the documentation and will shortly publish the issues to be discussed at the hearing sessions. The next step in this process will be to confirm the dates and timetable for the hearings.

## **Rugby League World Cup 2021**

Further to the success of the Council's bid to host the Rugby League World Cup in 2021 the Council have been in ongoing discussions with the Rugby League World Cup on the development of the hosting agreement. This process will be finalised in the coming months. The Council has received a positive response from the wider community to the success of the bid with many people delighted to see that Cumbria will be represented at this international event. Our Communications and Marketing Team has been making the most of social media and helped the Rugby League World Cup top the trending Twitter hashtags on the day of the host announcements.

## **2.2 Deputy Leader: Economic Growth Portfolio: Cllr Mark Fryer**

### **Hadrian's Wall Cycleway**

A planning application has been submitted on behalf of the Silloth Coastal Community Team to create a dedicated cycle path, largely off road, along the route of Hadrian's Wall Cycleway, from Allonby to Silloth. It will complement the existing stretch from Maryport to Allonby.

### **Business Engagement - Hadrian's Wall Cycleway**

We are holding drop in sessions in March for businesses in the Solway area to alert them to the business opportunities that the updating of signage to the cycleway offers. We are partnering with Sustrans and Solway Coast AONB to offer this service.

### **Maryport Regeneration**

January saw the appointment of Paul Taylor as Programme Manager for Maryport. Paul has a wealth of experience in delivering area improvement projects and has most recently worked for Allerdale on the successful Community Housing Scheme.

This month the team has established a base in Maryport Town Hall which is currently benefiting from a programme of improvement works. A 'drop-in day' is currently being organised to give staff, councillors, residents and partners the opportunity to support the programme.

December saw the launch of the Future High Streets Fund by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. This is currently being reviewed in relation to Maryport and we are working with partners to ensure an expression of interest is submitted by the March deadline. The application, if successful, will assist us in reversing the decline of the town centre and provide funding to support the redesign of the town centre, bring new businesses into the area and ensure empty buildings are dealt with.

In addition, the Council has provisionally earmarked funding to create a 'container village' on the harbour side in the next financial year. Elsewhere in the country such developments have provided a major boost to local economies by offering a mix of retail and leisure based activities resulting in increased visitor numbers.

## **Business Engagement Manager**

A change to the roles of our two Town Centre Managers has seen one post re-designated as Business Engagement Manager. This post will help businesses in the seven towns grow, encourage start-ups, facilitate productivity improvements and champion the upskilling of employees delivered by partnership work with a range of organisations.

## **2.3 Environmental Quality Portfolio: Cllr Michael Heaslip**

### **Environment Heritage Initiatives**

The Siddick Pond education centre is complete and there will be an official opening in mid-April with Mrs Bacon unveiling a plaque in memory of the late Councillor Bill Bacon who championed Siddick Pond over many years.

There has been a public consultation on possible designs for brightening up the dank tunnel which leads from Central Way Workington towards the new Leisure Centre, and improving it as a route for pedestrians and cyclists; officers are reviewing the feedback.

### **Council Sport and Play Facilities**

Refurbishment of the gym and lavatories at Keswick Spa costing £180,000 and funded through the management contract, and provision of a completely new gym at Maryport Wave costing £106,000 with investment from Allerdale of £87,000. This is increasing participation and membership, which now stands at 97 (from nothing) at Maryport, and 513 (up from 430) at Keswick.

### **Sport Development**

ABC in partnership with Cumbria ICC and GLL have been successful in being awarded a Sport England Grant to deliver a new GP referral pilot scheme in Allerdale. The new Physical Activity Referral Scheme (PARS) will be overhauling the current exercise on referral scheme (GP referral scheme) to offer support to individuals to commence active lifestyle by offering access to a range of exercise opportunities.

The project offers various activities that are tailored to make sure they keep the people involved. Each patient is given options, such as walking groups, circuit classes, mindfulness / yoga or gym based sessions. Since the launch of the programme in November last year the PARS now has 41 active people on the scheme. The programme is now also being developed and delivered in Wigton with eight referrals receiving a gym based programme. We aim to roll out the programme to Cockermouth and Keswick later on in the year.

### **Parking**

Lakeside Car Park works start on 25 February and will provide over 20 new much-needed car parking spaces for Keswick.

## **Waste and Recycling**

Delivery of new bins for paper recycling has started ready for the roll-out of new collection arrangements from 1 April. New vehicle deliveries are now under way.

## **2.4 Tourism and Culture Portfolio: Cllr William Jefferson**

### **Encouraging growth in the visitor economy**

The roles of our Town Centre Managers, have changed to support delivery of our Business Growth Strategy. One post has been re-designated Tourism Development Manager to work with businesses and partner organisations to grow the value of the visitor economy in our borough. The sector supports over 6,500 jobs and brings £475 million into our local economy every year.

### **Visitor Website**

Work continues to add new content to [www.visitallerdale.co.uk](http://www.visitallerdale.co.uk) including additional information for visitors with disabilities. This has been carried out in partnership with the charity Lake District Disability. Since September 2018 we have had over 23,000 engagements on the web and social media.

### **Chinese tourism market**

As a founding member of the private-public partnership, the North Lakes China Forum, we are working with partners to grow the number of Chinese visitors to Allerdale. The other Allerdale members of the Forum are Honister, Lake District Hotels Ltd and Keswick Tourism Association. The Forum will be launched at an event at Theatre by the Lake on 19 March 2019. In attendance will be the Chinese Consul General Mr Zheng Xiyuan and Consul Amalia Lyu.

## **2.5 Housing, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio: Cllr Carni McCarron-Holmes**

### **Housing Company**

A report outlining the proposal to establish a new housing company and seeking approval to progress to the development of a full business case was approved by Executive in February. Work is now being undertaken to prepare a full business case following which approval will be sought from Executive to establish the company.

### **Homelessness**

The team have successfully secured Supporting People funding for the fourth year (of a four year contract with CCC) - this funding is used to employ an officer to deliver additional support to help our homelessness customers.

All district councils in Cumbria have been working together to submit a funding bid for the Rough Sleepers Initiative support from MHCLG. This money, if the bid is successful, will provide additional support for rough sleepers within the borough.

All district councils within Cumbria have also jointly applied for the PRS (Private Rented Sector) bid, this is to provide additional resources to work with private landlords to enable them to accept applications from people who are homeless.

During the recent period of severe weather conditions Allerdale provided accommodation to one homeless person under the Severe Weather Emergency Policy.

Members of the Housing Options team who deal with our homeless customers have recently completed Homeless Reduction Act training.

### **Community Led Housing Enabling Hub**

Allerdale and representatives from neighbouring local authorities (South Lakeland, Eden, Copeland, Carlisle and Lancaster) have engaged in discussions about setting up a Community Led Housing (CLH) Hub initiative.

The Hub will:

- be a single point of contact across the geographically defined region;
- have a dedicated website;
- encompass a promotional role in respect of CLH - raising awareness, engaging more individuals and groups, supporting capacity building within communities and growth of numbers of homes within the sector;
- offer a signposting, advice and support role and be able to assist through sharing experience and good practice. It would also provide links to appropriate, individuals, partnerships, services, consultants and contractors as required.

A tendering process has taken place and the successful contractor was Action for Communities in Cumbria (ACT). The service will commence at the beginning of the new financial year. The plan is for the Hub to run indefinitely, but is funded initially for a 12 month period.

It is anticipated that in future further guidance and funding may be made available to support the development of CLH Enabling Hub initiatives across the UK. At this point, there is no final definition on the requirements or timescales for future funding for such initiatives, although local authorities are being encouraged to support this methodology.

## **2.6 Corporate Resources (Finance and Property) Portfolio: Cllr Barbara Cannon**

### **Making our towns attractive and welcoming**

Maryport Groyne Refurbishment – works have started to repair and refurbish the timber groyne south of the harbour. The groyne has been identified as providing crucial protection to the harbour. Once the works are complete, the structure will help maintain beach levels and prevent further areas of scouring taking place. The work is being funded through a grant from the Environment Agency.

### **Allerdale House**

Twelve workstations have been provided on the first floor of Allerdale House to accommodate the 'Police Hub', which currently operates from Cockermouth. This will allow a closer and more efficient working relationship with existing council services and reinforces the Council's commitment for working with partner agencies.

### **Finance Team**

Allerdale Borough Council's finance department has been short-listed for a national award. The team are one of six nominees for the Finance Training and Development Initiative category in the CIPFA Public Finance Awards. They are up against the likes of Transport for London, the Ministry of Justice and NHS Wales Finance Academy. The nomination recognises the work they have been doing to educate colleagues on budget and finance issues. In the past few years this has included regular budget updates for staff and 'knowledge college' events to help answer any tricky questions.

The team will find out if they have won the top spot at the prestigious awards ceremony in London on 1 May 2019.

## **2.7 Governance and People Resources Portfolio: Cllr Joan Ellis**

### **Legal Services**

The Legal Services Team continues to support the Council in the delivery of the Council's priorities and objectives. A number of property matters are ongoing and recent planning enforcement work led to a successful prosecution at the Magistrates' Court in respect of an untidy site.

The Investigatory Powers Commissioner and his office (IPCO), have a statutory responsibility for ensuring public authorities that may employ investigatory powers under the Investigatory Powers Act (2016) and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (2000) act in compliance with this legislation, all associated Codes of Practice and guidance previously issued by the OSC. This oversight includes the conduct of routine inspection of public authorities by IPCO. The IPCO has advised that an inspection will be carried out on 6 March 2019. I will update you following the inspection.

### **Assurance Risk and Audit**

The team continue to deliver the planned audit work and support the facilitation of risk management with the Audit Committee and officers. They have undertaken the self-assessment for the Public Sector Internal Auditing Standards compliance and have found no significant issues.

### **Licensing**

The Licensing Team has now appointed a provider for the practical taxi driving test following a successful procurement, and tests are underway. This, in conjunction with the knowledge test, will improve the quality of the service provided in the Borough. The Team are now concentrating on reviewing and

updating a number of policies and procedures which will be presented to the Licensing Committee in due course.

### **People Resources**

There have been a number of excellent training initiatives taking place at Allerdale BC, such as 100 staff participating in free Excel Training after the HR team managed to secure EU funding. A package of training has also been developed for our Customer Service staff. And, by working in partnership with other authorities to deliver training in-house, we have managed to half the cost by selling training places to other organisations. We have also secured training locally by offering our facilities free of charge to large training companies based in the South to deliver training in the North. They do all the advertising and coordinating and we get free places on their events by allowing them to use our Council Chamber.

In addition to all of the excellent training initiatives, the HR team are working on designing a careers fair to help young individuals within Allerdale. This will allow us to provide advice on writing a CV and interview tips whilst at the same time, promoting Allerdale as an excellent place to work.

### **Electoral Services**

Preparations are well under way for the Allerdale and parish elections on 2 May. Candidate briefings were held in February 2019 and were well attended. The Notice of Election is due to be published on 18 March and this will trigger the start of the nomination process and the start of the Pre-Election Publicity Protocol period (Purdah).

The new Allerdale wards, parish changes and polling district boundaries have all been set up and a new register of electors based on the new wards was published on 1 March.

### **Democratic Services**

The team continues to support the Member Development Group in developing a comprehensive Induction Programme for newly and re-elected Councillors.

All Councillors will have received an invitation to review their PDP and are encouraged to respond accordingly.

There will be training sessions in Allerdale House on 'Safe and confident use of Social Media' and 'Managing challenging people and difficult situations' on Thursday 4 April. Contact the team for details and to book your place.

### **West Cumbria Community Safety Partnership**

I'm pleased to report that the Allerdale multi agency Local Focus Hub will be moving from Cockermouth Police Station into Allerdale House next week.

## 2.8 Transformation Portfolio: Cllr Konrad Hansen

### Message from the Portfolio Holder

As this is my final Portfolio Holder report I want to take this opportunity to thank all the staff in my current portfolio, as well as those I have previously worked with, who have worked extremely hard and have delivered fantastic results. I would also like to thank the Democratic Services team and the PAs who have been incredibly supportive.

To my colleagues, fellow councillors, from all parties and none, thank you for your trust, support and advice over the years. I am incredibly honoured to have served the people of Allerdale alongside you all.

### Programmes and Projects

The Programme Office has put in place a range of resources to support programme and project managers across the Council involved in the delivery of our four key programmes. This includes a Programme and Project Management Framework, which is a practical 'tool kit' for all programme and project managers comprising guidance and templates for each stage of the project lifecycle from project initiation through to project planning, project execution and finally project closure.

### Procurement

Our Procurement Officer attended the Allerdale Expo in January to network with local groups that support sole traders and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to learn about how we can link our opportunities and ensure SMEs don't miss out on potential public sector contracts. The inclusion of procurement in this event was very well received. Since the Expo, we have circulated details of our internet supplier database among local businesses and we have updated the Council's webpage to make it easier for local suppliers to register their interest in doing business with the Council.

### Customer Operations

Earlier this month we received the national Housing Benefits processing times for Q2 2018/19, the figures are collated by the DWP and I'm pleased to be able to announce that the Allerdale Customer Operations team are delivering powerful results as can be seen in the table below.

	<b>National Average</b>	<b>Allerdale Actual</b>	<b>Regional ranking</b>	<b>National ranking (of 379 LAs)</b>
<b>New claims</b>	22 days	12 days	2 <sup>nd</sup>	24 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Change of Circumstances</b>	8 days	4 days	1 <sup>st</sup>	23 <sup>rd</sup>

## **Customer Service**

January saw an increase in customer contact with over 5,500 telephone calls, 4,800 face to face visitors and over 600 on-line service reports submitted by customers taking advantage of being able to contact the Council 24/7 through the myAllerdale on-line reporting service.

Customer satisfaction remains high with 98% of customers surveyed in the rating the service received from the customer service team as satisfied or highly satisfied, and over the last 3 months 90% of on-line customers rated the experience of using myAllerdale as very satisfied.

## **IT**

Our IT team continue to manage network security with recent cyber security enhancements installed onto the network to increase security levels. The team are also delivering new ways of working training to all staff and the feedback from those who have attended the initial sessions has been positive.

## **3.0 Recommendations**

- 3.1 That Members note the content of the report.