

Allerdale Borough Council

Council – 28 July 2021

Portfolio Holder updates

Portfolio holder	Councillor Mike Johnson – Leader
Report from	Senior Management Team
Wards affected	As indicated in the main body of the report
Is this a key decision	No

1.0 The reason for the decision

- 1.1 To update Council on the activities and decisions of Portfolio Holders since the last meeting.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Members note the content of the report.

3.0 Background and Introduction

- 3.1 This is a regular report that comes to each meeting of Council. The purpose of the report is to provide full Council with an update and overview of the activities of individual portfolio holders.
- 3.2 The activities of the Portfolio Holders are given in the following sections.

4.0 Leader of the Council: Economic Growth, Community Development and Place-making Portfolio: Cllr Mike Johnson

Levelling Up Fund

- 4.1 With support from Cumbria County Council the Council has submitted an application to the Levelling Up Fund which seeks £8.19 million of Government funding towards a £9.1 million Workington Gateway project. If the funding bid is successful the proposed scheme will deliver improvements to the A66/A596 junction at Ramsay Brow along with widening of the road at Hall Brow. This will address existing problems for HGV traffic seeking to use this route for access to the Port of Workington and industrial uses to the north of the town and support further investment in these areas. Improved access will provide a viable alternative to the A596 for HGV drivers and benefit communities along the A596. Residents in Hall Brow will benefit from improved parking provision. The scheme also includes

proposals to improve pedestrian access across Washington Street and improve access to and within Curwen Park including the development of a new cycleway. This will improve access for pedestrians within the town centre and better link Curwen Park to the town centre providing a more attractive environment for residents, shoppers and other visitors. The proposals complement the projects to be brought forward as part of the Workington Town Deal.

Shop Local

- 4.2 The Council is supporting a Shop Local campaign to encourage people to support the local high street. A video has been produced <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xyi46YABeuM> to support the campaign along with banners in some of our towns and colourful window stickers which are being distributed to local shops.

Supporting Business Campaign and Events Programme

- 4.3 We continue to deliver a programme of activity to support local business including a weekly newsletter which offers information and advice to businesses who have subscribed. After some great work on this campaign our Business Services Co-ordinator, Ellie Jones, has been appointed to the Events Manager role and is working to deliver an exciting programme of festivals and events this summer including Taste Cumbria in Cockermouth and a new Taste of the Sea festival in Maryport. We have now appointed a new Business Services Co-ordinator to continue to deliver support to local businesses.

As part of our programme of support for the establishment of local business groups in areas where they are not already well established the Solway Coast Business Group is now fully incorporated and has elected a chair and secretary. The Council has provided £1,000 development funding to support the work of the group.

Maryport - Future High Street (FHS) update

- 4.4 Formal confirmation of funding of £11,527,830 was received for the revised future high street proposals on 4th June. A memorandum of understanding is shortly to be implemented which will confirm arrangements for £3,268,064 (year one 2021/2022 grant). This grant will be issued once the monitoring and evaluation process has been approved.

Procurement procedures are currently being considered for the programme. This is necessary to ensure the appropriate routes to the commissioning, setting of work packages also legal and economic considerations take place. Once agreement has been reached regarding procurement, then the process of engaging appropriate contractors will commence.

Additional support to deliver the programme is now being provided by Britain's Energy Coast (BEC) and a draft timeline of work has been produced. The programme includes design, planning and construction work all of which is due to be completed by the end of March 2024.

Regular meetings of the three stakeholder groups associated with both the FHS and HAZ programmes (The Advisory, Engagement and Delivery Groups) are now taking place. Members have been briefed on recent progress which includes the Council purchase of two key buildings. This relates to the unused former

Christchurch building which will form the new location for the Maritime Museum and the former Carlton Cinema which will form a new community hub. Keys to both buildings are now within the hands of the Council awaiting further inspection and survey work to be undertaken.

Maryport Heritage Action Zone (HAZ)

- 4.5 *Capital Programme:* Sketch plans are being worked up into preferred options for main capital projects. The proposals for Heron Foods frontage has gained planning permission and is expected to start on site this autumn. The shopfront grant scheme has been launched and there has been a very good response. The shops that have been put forward will go to a Design and Assessment panel in order to identify the eligible and priority shopfronts that will go forward for sketch schemes to be produced in line with the new Maryport Shopfront Design Guide.

Cultural Programme: This is a separately funded element of the HAZ programme and will be driven and overseen by a Cultural consortium of local cultural and community organisations. In recognition of Maryport's under-developed Cultural Sector, a cultural mapping research exercise has been undertaken to analyse its strengths and weaknesses and inform ways forward for developing the sector and the Cultural Programme. The report will be available soon.

Community Engagement: There is on-going community engagement on the Regeneration programmes through the new Governance structure and stakeholder engagement on the individual projects. An oral history recording project is in progress focussing on memories of Senhouse Street and Curzon Street in the 1930s and 40s.

Procurement and Commissioning Workshops

- 4.6 Our Procurement and Commissioning team has undertaken further workshops for officers, highlighting the importance of securing social value in all Allerdale contracts by reinforcing the message that the Council is keen to use its buying power to deliver social welfare. The team is available to provide similar workshops for elected members, including an introduction to procurement or a session to demystify some of the key processes involved in purchasing and supply, and what simple steps can be taken to add value.

Procurement support for elections

- 4.7 The Procurement and Commissioning team supported Allerdale's Electoral Services (and Copeland Borough Council) to manage procurement of essential supplies and equipment to successfully facilitate the recent PCC and local elections: polling station screens, hand sanitiser, face coverings, social distancing and other measures to ensure electors and staff were safe.

Supporting local business

- 4.8 The Procurement and Commissioning Team have also implemented a range of new ideas to reach and educate local businesses including input to the new business website <https://businessallerdale.co.uk/events-and-training/> . The team also filmed a Q&A session that has been published on the website and distributed to local business networks. A link to the video is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sy-BmqGniFA>

Estates

- 4.9 *Upgrade of Road Bridge, Port of Workington – Network Rail:* Network Rail have completed the upgrade of this bridge in order that it can take heavier traffic to the Port, this will improve the facilities for the Port and open up further development land in the nearby vicinity. Network Rail remain on site to carry out tidying up work but both carriageways on the bridge are now open.

Demolition of the Opera House, Workington: The main structure of the building is now mostly demolished however issues have arisen with firstly a Party Wall Act matter with an adjoining owner and the requirement on part of the site to provide retaining walls. Solutions are available for both matters and we are working closely with the vendor to agree a suitable and achievable conclusion.

The Old Station Building, Keswick: Detailed discussions have commenced with the Council's tenant of the above property in respect of a disposal to them, it is hoped that this will result in a capital receipt for a building to enable the wider development plans of the immediate area. The building is listed and therefore the re-development opportunities for the Old Station building are extremely limited.

Washington Square, Workington: It still continues to be a difficult period for this retail centre with settlements on rent renewals being at a lower rent than 18 months ago and the loss of key tenants including Debenhams. However this Centre continues to out-perform most other retail centres in terms of footfall as Washington Square benefits from a loyal customer base. It is not all bad news in terms of occupancy as a lease has recently been signed for a unit to be occupied for Food and Beverage purposes.

Property services

- 4.10 *Helena Thompson Museum:* Refurbishment and improvement works at the Helena Thompson Museum are now complete. The improvements have been well received by the operators (WHG) and members of the public. An official opening ceremony is planned for July.

Workington Hall: Tender documents are currently being prepared for the next phase of works at Workington Hall. Bat surveys have been taking place over the last couple of months and will continue for a further couple of months. Subject to receiving tenders within budget, scheduled monument consent and compliance with the ecologist requirements, we are anticipating being on site in late September.

Allerdale House: Works are taking place to facilitate the roll out of hybrid working arrangements for staff. An area on the first floor has been remodelled to provide up to 32 desks which will be able to be booked by staff who need to come into the office, once Covid-19 restrictions are fully lifted. Two further phases of work on the first floor will follow to the central areas to provide further desk space and a breakout area.

Riverbank works Millfield, Workington: Works have just been completed on the riverbank / access road leading into Millfield, Workington. ABC worked with the Environment Agency and Ashcroft contractors to design a solution to prevent further erosion of the riverbank and safeguard the access road.

5.0 Deputy Leader of the Council: Policy, Governance and People Resources Portfolio: Cllr Marion Fitzgerald

Policy

- 5.1 Due to the pandemic, it was agreed last year that there would be an Interim Delivery Plan covering a single year. It was the prudent action to take at the time because circumstances meant that we could not immediately pursue all of the objectives in our ambitious ten year strategy adopted in 2019. However, we have not abandoned the six main themes of the strategy. This year, with the lingering uncertainties surrounding the exact timing of the easing of lockdown restrictions, it was again considered prudent to adopt a one year Delivery Plan although, again the overall strategic direction does not need to change.

In the shorter term, some Council activity remains focused on supporting our communities and businesses and ensuring that residents have access to the services and support that they need from the Council. However, it is to be hoped that, along with the rest of the country, we are entering a much more positive phase of transition and recovery. For the Council, this means developing a dynamic approach, helping the local economy rebuild whilst, at the same time, looking forward and preparing the groundwork for future success.

As well as the Delivery Plan 2021/22, we have developed and adopted an Economic Recovery and Growth Strategy and a Resilient Communities Strategy. These have been discussed within the cross party Policy Group. The Growth Strategy is a wide ranging but detailed document which focuses on the considerable potential waiting to be unlocked within Allerdale, including in the farming and fishing economies.

The consultant team that produced the Growth Strategy are currently developing a suite of high-level regeneration plans for Cockermouth, Keswick, Silloth and Aspatia. A plan for Wigton is being undertaken by Cumbria County Council as part of the Borderlands Programme. These will complement the plans that have already been developed for Workington and Maryport to ensure that the Council develops a comprehensive project pipeline. It will put the Council in a good position to respond to funding opportunities in the future.

Throughout the pandemic, as well as administering the various support grants for businesses, officers have been available to respond to all enquiries and to offer advice on reopening premises safely in alignment with the changing restrictions.

Nuclear issues

- 5.2 The Geological Disposal Facility Working Group (Allerdale) continues to meet regularly and to make progress towards establishing a potential Search Area for a GDF within Allerdale. Although national restrictions have meant that large scale public engagement could not be undertaken in the earlier stages, virtual sessions for stakeholder groups have taken place and the Group is keen to carry out as much face to face engagement in the coming weeks and months as the gradual easing of restrictions will allow.

In the meantime, as members will recall from the email sent in early June, regular updates are provided in a monthly newsletter and a Virtual Exhibition can be

accessed via the Allerdale Working Group's website. As well as articles within the local press, a mail drop to each individual household in Allerdale is planned.

Members of the Working Group, including the Independent Chair and representatives from Radioactive Waste Management (RWM) will provide a full update for councillors on 27 July.

Following on from the above, a presentation for members from NuLeaf (Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum) is being arranged for 12 August. NuLeaf is an independent organisation and the representative body of the Local Government Association on nuclear matters. Over 100 Local Authorities are members. The briefing on 12 August is therefore a great opportunity to discuss issues around the GDF with experts who have had no direct contact with the Allerdale Working Group and who are therefore in a perfect position to offer neutral and balanced views.

Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and Local Focus Hub

- 5.3 All three Cumbrian CSPs are about to undergo a period of significant change as it was recently announced that all funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner will cease with effect from 30 September. Discussions are ongoing, both internally and between the Partnerships, as to how this change will be managed. It is the PCC's stated intention to provide additional resource to the Local Focus Hubs.

In the meantime, CSP (West) has been working closely with both the Allerdale and Copeland Local Focus Hubs. Our combined efforts have resulted in a successful bid for funding to address safety and security concerns in St Michaels, Workington. The Government's Safer Streets Fund has committed £311,358 to be spent on improved lighting and additional security where appropriate. Support and advice will also be available for residents who wish to enhance home security measures.

Unfortunately the bid to the Safer Streets Fund on behalf of Whitehaven was unsuccessful although a fresh submission is about to be made as part of the second funding round.

The Stronger Together Moorclose Group continues to meet regularly to provide support for the many and varied services which operate from the Community Centre. Moorclose Community Centre, along with other providers in Allerdale will benefit from the Holiday Activities Fund (HAF). This provides targeted funding for children to engage in educational and outdoor activities throughout the school holidays and is a direct result of the campaign initiated by Marcus Rashford.

Cumbria Housing Group

- 5.4 This group last met in June. Amongst the items under discussion was the recent controversy over proposals to alter the eligibility for local housing within the LDNP to include Cumbria-wide employment criteria. It has now been determined that the Local Occupancy Restrictions will remain unchanged but kept under review.

The National Park Authority also intends to establish a Task and Finish Group to examine how new homes are being occupied, and what can be done to ensure that they contribute to resilient communities.

An email was sent to all councillors on 27 May supplying contact details for each of the Registered Housing Providers in Allerdale. When made aware of maintenance and/or repair issues, it is requested that members ensure that the Council and the

relevant Registered Provider have been informed of the problem and that a response has been initiated.

The general advice is for the tenant to contact their landlord directly to arrange for any repair issues to be addressed. However, if the tenant is not satisfied with the landlord's response or if there is a serious/imminent risk to the health and safety of the tenant, then the Housing Enforcement Team should be informed so that the necessary and appropriate action can be taken to address the issues.

Homelessness

- 5.5 Cumbria County Council's bid to the Changing Futures Funding Programme, on behalf of the Cumbrian Districts, was unsuccessful. However, the process of assembling the bid has led to a strong commitment from all partners, including criminal justice and voluntary and community sectors, to redesign the existing services. There is now a general recognition that statutory thresholds for services are not always appropriate in terms of providing support when it is most needed and could be most effective. Work is ongoing to ensure that agencies work closely together and to improve the supported housing offer. This could be through specialist provision or incentives for landlords.

The Allerdale team continues to work hard providing accommodation for clients who find themselves homeless, with prevention advice and support for clients who face losing their homes or are in difficult situations.

After responding to the Government's "everyone in" campaign to accommodate rough sleepers during the pandemic, the team has continued to provide support through temporary accommodation units and local bed and breakfast establishments to keep rough sleepers safe.

In April we submitted a bid for funds to the MHCLG Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme. This programme is a national initiative run by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) which invites Councils, working closely with delivery partners, to submit proposals and bids for future years of the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP).

The bid was to provide accommodation and support for rough sleepers in 12 supported units and was developed in collaboration with local housing providers. Unfortunately, the bid was unsuccessful in this funding period, however we will be looking to revise and submit a new bid in the next round which opens shortly.

Within the team we are seeing some changes and saying goodbye to Jasmine Ritchie. Jasmine joined Allerdale as an apprentice before becoming Resilience and Safety Officer and we wish her well in her future career.

Climate Change Group

- 5.6 This group continues to go from strength to strength and has produced a comprehensive Action Plan for the Council. It has been circulated to Town and Parish Councils and is available to view on the Council's website. Before the publication of the plan, a virtual meeting was held with stakeholders to gather feedback and further suggestions.

The Action Plan is divided into seven separate themes with individual members of the group taking the lead on each these according to their own areas of interest and

expertise. We would like to welcome new members to the group and would encourage all councillors to read the Action Plan and to join us in this essential work.

A comprehensive course of Carbon Literacy Training is being arranged for members and officers across the Council. The Climate Change Group is also planning to set up a small funding scheme for local green initiatives as well as an ideas bank for larger sustainable projects which can then be signposted to larger sources of funding as it becomes available.

Elections

- 5.7 Following on from the successful delivery of the elections held on 6 May 2021, the Electoral Services team are undertaking the huge task of the Annual Canvass.

This year's Annual Canvass started on 28 June 2021 when 23,208 emails were sent requesting information from electors. In doing this, the Council saved the cost of printing and posting 16,569 paper forms. For the remaining properties, for which the Council has no current email address, 32,482 paper forms will be sent on 2 August.

Reminders will go out 8 on September and the process will conclude on 22 November with the publication of the new Register of Electors on 1 December.

A by-election will take place, if contested, on Thursday 19 August 2021 to fill two vacancies on the parish council of Underskiddaw. The notice of election was published on Thursday 15 July 2021 and the deadline to receive nominations is 4pm on Friday 23 July 2021.

Email newsletter

- 5.8 Our email newsletter system is one year old at the end of June and has shown itself to be a useful means of communicating with residents on important issues. There are ten main topic areas and we have the ability to expand this list as required. The newsletters have successfully conveyed messaging on the coronavirus pandemic and the Council's services. They have also helped us to communicate effectively with the business community.

In the past 12 months our subscriber base has grown from zero to just shy of 7,000 subscribers who, between them, have subscribed to almost 26,000 newsletters.

In total we have issued over 200 email newsletters over the past 12 months, with 176,856 emails having been opened at least once. When total email 'opens' are taken into account, this figure rises to 353,798, indicating that customers are finding the newsletters a valuable resource which they are returning to after they have first opened them. The 'open' rate, at just over 50%, is well above the rate enjoyed by the top 20% of UK councils. On average there were 16 links in each bulletin and the click rate is 7.5%.

As members will be aware, this system is also used to send out regular weekly updates to staff and councillors. Further information on this service is available at:

<https://www.allerdale.gov.uk/en/email-newsletters/>

Nextdoor

- 5.9 Allerdale Borough Council is now on Nextdoor - the newest community-based social media platform. Nextdoor looks and feels a little like Facebook and has many features such as a news stream, as well as "like" and "comment" functionality.

However, it differs from other social media in that subscribers have to provide their address when they join and are limited to only joining their own local community, based on Ward boundaries. As an organisation, the Council can send messages to specific communities, a number of areas, or to subscribers throughout Allerdale. This will prove useful when targeting specific communities in an emergency, for example. But Nextdoor can also be used to engage on issues that affect a particular community. The number of users is low at present but beginning to grow and we have seen some good examples of engagement. You can find this service at:

<https://nextdoor.co.uk/>

Corporate Restructure

- 5.10 The informal consultation process was launched with staff on the 21 June and closed on the 6 July 2021. This informal stage, is the first in a process that will include a formal consultation over the summer. The restructuring process is expected to be completed in September 2021.

6.0 Environmental Services Portfolio: Cllr Jim Lister

Waste and recycling

- 6.1 On behalf of Allerdale Waste Service WebaspX have been reviewing the current round structure to drive collection efficiency and potential savings. Initial results look favourable. The next step is to refine the rounds down to individual properties to ensure that all residents are included.

The Bulky Waste Collection Service has been reviewed recently. Long waiting times, limited numbers of collection slots and the likelihood that these two issues may be cause fly tipping instead of safe disposal were behind the initiative. The number of weekly collection slots will be increased by 20 and the towns collected on each day have been reorganised to ensure a more even workflow. Instead of a 4-week waiting list we are aiming to collect in a maximum of 2 weeks. Other technological efficiencies are also included.

Happily, summer carnivals and significant community sporting and social events are starting to resume after a yearlong absence. Allerdale Waste Services and Tivoli are both playing a full role in providing waste containers and litter picking and where possible doing this from within existing resources.

The collection of comingled recycling has been extended to an area in the north of the borough to support the Council Strategy of increasing recycling. This was accommodated within existing resources.

We have applied to be part of Keep Britain Tidy's new campaign which is aimed at encouraging residents to produce less waste. The pilot is fully funded and will target three higher-wasting collection rounds in each of the partnering authorities. Communications will be delivered and their effectiveness will be monitored and evaluated to identify any changes in waste tonnages (residual and recycling),

resident perceptions around waste prevention and the resources they received, any differences in the effectiveness of different messages and partner feedback on the communications and how they could be improved.

Allerdale Waste Services has recently launched an MOT and Car Repair Service at the workshop facilities at Solway House, Workington. The new business venture is called AWS MOT Services and is the first diversification for Allerdale Waste Services, providing a quality MOT and car repair service to all car owners in Allerdale and surrounding areas. In addition, Allerdale Waste Services has been awarded the contract to carry out Taxi Testing in Allerdale. This important work will ensure that private hire and hackney carriage Taxis are appropriately and safely regulated when operating in the Borough.

Allerdale Waste Services have introduced a pro-active approach to the repair of broken bin lids that allows repairs to be undertaken on-site where possible rather than exchange. A member of the team is following the paper collections round and repairing bins that are out and are damaged. This initiative has received many favourable comments and compliments.

Grounds maintenance and street cleaning

- 6.2 Tivoli along with Allerdale Waste Services have been a key player in Operation Respect the multi-agency fly tipping initiative. The first and very successful operation took place on the 4 June at Castles and Coasts properties in Workington. Further events are planned.

The Tivoli team have been working in partnership with Allerdale Waste Services to keep on top of fly tipping at bring banks in the area.

Tivoli are working alongside the Cumbria Tactical Visitor Management Group who will provide additional bins and regular collection at tourist hot spots identified by Tivoli.

Working with the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership the Council and our waste and street cleansing partners we have responded to the Government's consultation exercise on the introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme and the concept of Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging. A final draft of our response to the Consistent Collection of Recycling consultation is being prepared for submission.

Tivoli worked with community groups and individuals throughout the Borough to support in removing waste from Community litter picks and supplying materials i.e. bags and litter pickers

They also worked with Cockermouth Civic Trust to help design and supply FOC signage for the - 800 Years since Cockermouth received market charter status event.

Enforcement

- 6.3 Targeted intelligence and complaint led high profile patrolling continues across the borough in areas with high instances of dog fouling, littering and fly tipping. Education and engagement activities have taken place including using leafletting, stencilling and signage in our hot spot locations. Since the last report three FPNs have been issued for Duty of Care for Waste transfer. We are also supporting a number of community volunteers with equipment and advice to ensure the amazing

work being delivered by residents of Allerdale can continue. Together, we can drive positive behaviours.

The team have supported the Multi Agency referral for fly tipping 'Operation Respect' and were leading on behalf of Allerdale Borough Council at the recent day of action in Newlands Gardens, Workington.

The team provide ongoing engagement and education to business customers in Allerdale in response to My Allerdale requests for service, we are working with the Trade Waste teams to explore new opportunities and tactics in addressing the issues of mismanagement of commercial waste.

Car parking services

- 6.4 Since the last portfolio report there has been a reduction in levels of pandemic related disruption. In our tourist areas along the West Coast and within the National Park the car parks have been increasingly busy. The installation of new technology into the parking machines in the National Park has improved the signalling issues the team faced in the summer of 2020. However, in some cases, our own teams and partnering organisations, have reported that mobile phone technology systems over the Whit holiday period struggled to cope with demand on connectivity in many locations throughout the National Park. This, on occasions, slowed down the speed at which credit card transactions could be performed, potentially resulting in a negative impact on a motorist's experience.

In addition to the improved technology, 5 new machines have been installed in Keswick and are awaiting commissioning. Once these machines are ready to be put into service the team also plan to move a smaller number of existing machine's into different areas of the car parks. This will help reduce the risk of damage to machines from flood water at Lakeside and also help us mitigate risk linked to the Covid virus from parking machines that are currently located side by side.

There is strong evidence to suggest that there has been a change in how people pay for their parking, it is largely linked to the pandemic, but customers are embracing a cashless way of paying for their parking.

Using May 2019 as a comparison to May 2021 we can see that:

- Cashless payments (credit card and mobile phone app) in May 2021 highlighted a surge in increased usage of up 49% of the total transactions as opposed to 18% in May 2019.
- The use of coins for the same period has fallen from 82% in May 2019 to 51% in May 2021.
- Long stay car parks have a higher rate of cashless usage than the short stay sites where cash is still widely in use.

To help assist motorists with their parking, the team have installed new and improved signage. In addition to this, new road markings continue to be installed on sites where it is required.

Bereavement Services

- 6.5 The new footpath at Flimby Cemetery has been installed, leading to what will become a small memorial garden area in the near future. Drainage work in both Dearham and Harrington Road cemeteries has been completed and the Health and

Safety memorial inspections planned for this year are now underway. The management agreement with Wigton Burial Joint Committee came into operation on 1 April for an initial 12 month period. The lack of burial space in Cockermouth Cemetery has been identified as an issue to be addressed over the next twelve month period in the Council Strategy Delivery Plan.

Public realm and open spaces projects

- 6.6 *Central Way Underpass:* Practical Completion has been achieved on the main public realm contract and Thomas Armstrong are now off site. Once signage has been installed the underpass will re-open. Artwork is in production and will be installed in July.

Workington Leisure Centre: Outdoor gym/exercise area is complete. Landscaping works for events and activity space are largely complete but “snagging” is ongoing to ensure establishment of grassed areas.

Play Areas: Improvements have been completed at Harris Park and Camp Road play areas, including new equipment and wet-pour safety surfacing.

Cumbria Coastal Community Forest: An Expression of Interest document has been submitted for funding for this project.

Northside non-statutory allotments/Community Plots and Siddick Pond: The demolition and site clearance contract has started and is scheduled to be complete by the end of July. The landscaping contract will commence immediately following completion of the site clearance works. A planning application has been submitted for major scheme to create new wetland habitat around the brackish pond.

Fairy Path reinstatement, Maryport Seabrows: Work has been completed and ideas for improvements to Mote Hill have been scoped. Opportunities to fund the schemes are under consideration.

7.0 Leisure and Tourism Portfolio: Cllr Anthony Markley

Cycling Promotion

- 7.1 The official opening of the Allonby-Silloth cycleway took place on 17 June. The project was managed by Allerdale Borough Council on behalf of the Silloth on Solway Coastal Community Team. We have commissioned a short promotional video which showcases the route and the fantastic opportunities for cycling on the Solway Coast, you can see it at the following link. <https://youtu.be/7Ko4w119xt0>

As part of the opening, the Council will also officially launch the very first Solway Coast Cycling Festival – taking place on Silloth Green on 11 September 2021, just a day after the Tour of Britain has been through Cumbria. This family-friendly event will showcase the Solway Coast as a fantastic cycling destination and encourage people to incorporate cycling as part of a healthy and environmentally friendly lifestyle.

Lowther Arms

- 7.2 As part of the opening of the Allonby-Silloth cycleway we were able to publicise the reopening of the Lowther Arms by the Lowther Arms Community Project in advance of the official reopening on 26 June. This community owned pub in on the route of

the cycleway and as well as being a valuable asset for the community is one of many attractions along the cycle route.

Fishing Faces Project

- 7.3 The Council has commissioned the Solway Firth Partnership to help deliver a 'Fishing Faces' Project for the Solway Coast. This builds a similar project produced for the Scottish side of the Solway Firth and aims to use the fishing heritage of the area to support and promote tourism in the area. Part of the commission includes the production of a promotional video and filming for this has started.

Tourism Breakfast Briefing

- 7.4 The latest in our series of breakfast briefings took place on 15 May. This was the second online breakfast briefing hosted jointly with Copeland Council and was well received by those attending. We will continue to host these meetings, which are a useful way of helping to support tourism businesses by providing information and advice. In addition, we are looking into hosting a tourism conference later in the year to provide another forum for local tourism businesses to share information and experience.

Cumbria Tourism

- 7.5 I am pleased to have been nominated by the Cumbria District Leaders to be the District Council representative on the Board of Cumbria Tourism and look forward to representing the interests of the District Council's in promoting Cumbria as a tourism destination.

Visitor Management

- 7.6 We welcome the return of visitors to Allerdale following the easing of restrictions, but recognise, that in some circumstances, this is placing pressure on local residents and the environment. We are working with partners through the Visitor Management Group to encourage responsible behaviour by visitors and address issue as they arise.

Creative People and Places

- 7.7 Allerdale are a partner in the West Cumbria CPP consortium and an application for over £800k has now been submitted to the Arts Council CPP Fund through the consortium for a 3 year community arts program. The outcome of the bid should be known in November.

Leisure Centres

- 7.8 All 4 leisure centres are now open and are steadily re-growing their memberships and activities. The target is to be back at pre-Covid figures by January 2022. A range of targeted summer activities will be delivered at Workington and the Wave for young people eligible for free school meals.

Members will be aware that a difficult decision has recently been taken to close Keswick Pool (although the gym remains open). It is clear from the reaction to the news the pool is to close permanently that there is a lot of interest in this issue. The Council is keen to hear people's views and have already committed to working with the Friends of Keswick Pool as well as reaching out to other key groups. It is

important that we speak to as many people as possible over the coming weeks and months.

A leisure options appraisal of delivery models for leisure services is underway, looking at what future leisure provision could look like from March 2024 when the current contract with GLL is due to come to an end.

Sports development

- 7.9 *SIIF Sports Development Grants:* A new round has opened for this year's allocation of £75,000, where clubs can apply for up to £10,000. Submissions will be reviewed in July.

Allerdale Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sport Strategy: The assessment report has been signed off by the steering group and draft strategy and action plan has been developed and is awaiting approval from the steering group. Final version to be approved in August.

Physical activity on Referral Scheme (PARS): The funded pilot is back up and running in partnership with the local Integrated Care Communities, working with those at risk of health problems through being inactive in the Workington, Wigton/Solway and Maryport areas.

Lakesman Triathlon

- 7.10 It was fantastic to see the return of the Lakesman event to Allerdale recently. The event took place in June in Keswick with a bike route across West Cumbria. Around 780 athletes took part in this great event. The economic findings report has estimated the total value of the event to the local economy at £2.27m.

8.0 Customer Experience and Innovation Portfolio: Cllr Alan Pitcher

Customer Service

- 8.1 As expected, April was a very busy month with annual billing creating additional customer demand which had the team speaking to over 8,000 telephone customers. The increased number of calls had an impact on telephone queue times for customers, which averaged 104 seconds during the month. Our telephone call-back service was well used with 1,700 customers choosing to leave their number and receive a call back from our advisors within 30 minutes. 30% of the calls in April were council tax related, 25% general enquiries and 17% waste enquiries. The remaining 28% were spread across other council services.

May however, brought customer telephone enquiries back to expected normal levels for the month with 6,700 calls and an average wait time of just 47 seconds for the month.

Face to face appointments were available from 12 April for customers who needed to visit our Wigton and Workington offices, though demand has remained low with just 10 appointments booked by the end of May. Appointments will be available at Keswick, Maryport and Cockermouth from 19 July in line with the lifting of restrictions.

On the digital front our on-line services continue to be popular with customers who use them 24 hours a day 7 days a week to able to report issues, apply for grants,

make bin enquiries, renew parking permits, make payments, view and submit planning applications and check their council tax accounts as well as using the website to access a wide range of council information.

We have had some staffing changes recently and have said goodbye to two of our experienced Customer Service Advisors with Annette Minshaw moving to Enforcement and Beverly Taylor leaving the organisation. We take the opportunity to welcome Maria McCarron, who has started training to become an advisor.

Customer Accounts

- 8.2 The Customer Accounts team delivered outstanding performance again, not only dealing with business as usual and annual billing, but continuing to process the Covid-19 related grants. We saw a last-minute surge in business grant applications as deadlines for applications approached and there was good news as the test and trace support payments scheme managed by the team, was extended until 30 September.

The team continue to meet the business targets for processing Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Scheme new claims and change of circumstances and I am pleased to say that both Council Tax and NNDR collection rates are up from last year.

Another goodbye and a thank you to a longstanding member of the Customer Accounts team as Mike Toner takes retirement to spend more time fell walking and supporting the Reds!

ICT – Anytime, Anywhere, Any-device

- 8.3 The technology team continue their work across several initiatives to further enhance and deploy the 'AAA Strategy' (Anytime, Anywhere, Any-device), therefore enabling a fully mobile and agile organisation.

This includes preparing a new corporate platform that will enable secure AAA working, providing access to traditional intranet, social intranet, applications, services and data all from within a single user-friendly interface.

Pest Control and Bulky Waste environments have been migrated into the MyAllerdale solution, allowing us to reduce licensing and hardware costs, while enabling improved customer experience and improved efficiencies through anytime anywhere access for staff.

Data Centre Infrastructure

- 8.4 The new data centre solution has been implemented and migration of services has started. The new solution, which can almost fit under a desk, replaces a room full of hardware; resulting in reductions in electrical usage, cooling requirements and environmental impact.

Cyber Security

- 8.5 We are continuously improving the security of the Council's architectures, especially with the move to hybrid working. Recent attempted cyber-attacks also accelerated our plans to introduce geolocation security and multifactor authentication services, which have been successfully deployed.

Digitisation

- 8.6 A project is underway to establish a comprehensive record of the Council's assets, deeds, contracts and liabilities. A large proportion of the Council's records remain in paper form alone; this creates a number of risks in terms of records being permanently lost or destroyed and conflicts with the Authority's aims of agile working. The project is progressing well and will utilise the Government's Kickstart scheme for the additional resource required to undertake scanning of the documents, creating a new work opportunity for a local young person.

Enterprise Resource Planning System

- 8.7 We are on track with our project to implement the new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, which will provide integrated applications to manage the business and offer greater opportunities to transform back office functions in Finance, Payroll and HR. The project team has agreed an approach for the migration of data from the outgoing Total Finance system to the new system with TechnologyOne. We also commenced departmental workshops in June to allow for the application to be fully configured to Allerdale's requirements, with those workshops due to be completed by the end of July in accordance with the project plan.

Resilience

- 8.8 The Emergency Planning and Corporate Health and Safety team worked closely with the elections team to ensure delivery of Covid-safe elections from the initial planning stages through to Election Day and the counts, carrying out risk assessments on all aspects of the election process and keeping voters and staff safe.

On the emergency planning front, we recently took part in a multi-agency emergency planning exercise as part of a national counter terrorism policing initiative. The team continue to work closely with partners as part of the Cumbria Local Resilience Forum who will be working with the team to review the Allerdale crisis management response to Covid-19 later this month.

Allerdale House and New Ways of Working

- 8.9 In the face of the unprecedented changes brought on by Covid-19, the Programme Office has been working with all staff and managers to look at new ways of working to provide officers, councillors and users of Council services with more flexible ways of providing services to customers and working together, which fits with modern working practices. Plans include the roll out of hybrid working arrangements with scope for the majority of officers to work from any location and an online booking system for teams and individuals to reserve desks, flexible workspaces and meeting rooms in Allerdale House. AV equipment will be installed in meeting rooms to facilitate hybrid meetings and we will introduce hot desks and informal collaborative spaces. The implementation of all plans will follow the Government guidance on social distancing and the roadmap for easing of Covid-19 restrictions.

Allerdale & Lakeland Lottery

- 8.10 Our community lottery recently celebrated its first sixth months and continues to go from strength to strength. We're now hoping to build on this success by

encouraging more organisations to sign up and more people to buy tickets and show their support for local good causes. It was set up late last year to help community groups and charitable organisations raise much-needed financial support and already the lottery paid out £18,000 to local causes and is on course to raise over £45,000 in its first year. It has around 770 players who have bought more than 1,400 tickets playing for 71 causes from nature conservation groups, school friend groups, scout groups, theatres and heritage charities, as well as sports clubs and even a chess club. It costs just £1 per game to play and participants could win up to £25,000 as part of the weekly draw. We have already had a few players win £250 and even a player win a £2,000 prize in June. Find out more at <https://www.allerdalelottery.com/>.

Allerdale Local Focus Hub

- 8.11 The Allerdale Local Focus Hub (ALFH) team are in Allerdale House alongside the Child Centred Policing Team, Licensing and Housing Options.

Monthly place-based newsletters are being published by Cumbria Constabulary and we encourage all residents to subscribe to stay up to date with all ALFH activity. We are experiencing an increase in the volume of referrals, the ALFH have received 80 referrals so far in 2021 (compared to 122 for the whole of 2020) - referrals range from anti-social behaviour, neighbour disputes, noise complaints, drug issues and complex location based problems. It is great to see referrals coming in from a wide range of partners.

The ALFH Manager is leading on a youth violence project across West Cumbria, and we received 837 survey responses from children aged 11-16 in four schools across Allerdale and Copeland. Due to the high level of engagement from our young people and the established partnership framework we have in place we have successfully received a funded place on the National Get Connected programme. The Strategic and Operational delivery groups are working through a series of fact finding workshops and the outcomes will inform a delivery plan to support young people at risk of youth violence in West Cumbria.

Operation Respect – the multi-agency response to fly tipping in Allerdale has gained momentum, our partners Castles and Coasts led on a day of action in Newlands Gardens, Workington supported by the Police, Fire Service, Allerdale Borough Council, Tivoli, Allerdale Waste Services, residents and even Border TV. This referral has a huge scheme of work planned over the next three to six months and our aim is to deliver a Cleaner, Greener Allerdale for everyone.

The ALFH have worked closely with the OPCC on the Safer Streets funding bid, St Michaels were successful in achieving a funding award of over £311,000. This is absolutely amazing for our area, the ALFH Manager will be responsible for supporting the Officers in delivering the activity in the St Michaels community.

9.0 Finance and Legal Portfolio: Cllr Colin Sharpe

2020-21 Financial Year Close-down and Statement of Accounts

- 9.1 Over the course of the last quarter the Financial Services Team have been working hard to close-down the 2020-21 accounts, prepare the revenue and capital outturn

reports for 2020-21 and complete the tasks necessary to delivering the 2020-21 Statement of Accounts, in line with the statutory timetable.

For 2020-21 the statutory timetable requires the Authority to publish its unaudited statement of accounts by 31 July 2021 and its audited statements by 30 September.

This has also been the first financial year end for Allerdale Waste Services Ltd, and the Financial Services Team have been involved in producing the company's accounts and working with the company's external auditors, ahead of the company statutory filing date of 19 August 2021.

Covid-19 financial monitoring

9.2 The Financial Services Team have continued to monitor the financial impact of Covid-19 and within the last quarter have:

- maintained the processing of grant payments to businesses for government schemes in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and preparation of weekly monitoring returns to government in respect of these grant payments,
- prepared monthly returns to government in respect of Covid-19 local authority financial management information,
- submitted the third government claim in respect of the Sales, Fees and Charges income compensation scheme, and
- continued to support Service Managers in monitoring the use of Covid-19 specific grants, received by the Authority.

Enterprise Resource Planning system (ERP)

9.3 The work in relation to the Council's new ERP system is progressing and members of the team have attended regular Project Team meetings. Within the last quarter, finance staff have also attended several meetings with the supplier, to work on the detailed specification of the new system.

Training

9.4 We are pleased to share that a member of the Financial Services Team has achieved their Payroll Technician Certificate, with the Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals.

Audit

9.5 The Audit Committee meeting on 29 June 2021 included the Year End Report and annual audit opinion as well as performance against the 2020/21 plan, assurance and consultancy activities, fraud work and agreed action follow up.

The National Fraud Initiative (NFI) is a data matching exercise conducted by the Cabinet Office which requires annual data to support the early prevention and detection of fraud in organisations. This year saw the need for additional data sets for a separate exercise and also grant information adding additional work load to the responsible officers. The team worked hard to submit their data sets. Teams including audit are now working through their matches for the October completion deadline.

The Assurance Risk and Audit (ARA) Officer has been supporting the grants teams with fraud work. Any suspected fraud identified is forwarded to all necessary parties. The reduction in resource continues within the audit department and the 21/22 Audit Plan was set accordingly.

The ARA Officer also supports the ERP team with assurance and risk in relation to the implementation of the Council's planned ERP System (to replace the current finance system) and attends the Project Team meetings.

Food and Occupational Health

- 9.6 Since the Government announced the roadmap out of lockdown for England on February 2021 and introduced new Regulations to support the roadmap (The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Steps) (England) Regulations 2021), the Food and Occupational Health team have focused on the four parts of the plan to help support businesses reopening and continue to support those who have remained open during lockdown.

The team's work is to help businesses to open safely by providing support and guidance where necessary but also to deal with Covid-19 complaints and request for Covid-19 advice. Compliance is checked by a variety of means i.e. telephone calls, emails, visits and monitoring checks. Overall, compliance by businesses is good and interactions by officers have been with advice/guidance rather than having to resort to legal action.

An increasing part of the work is working with event organisers to support them in provide a Covid-secure event. There is a multi-agency approach to supporting these events through the county wide Enforcement group. The team continues to work closely with the Police, other agencies and neighbouring local authorities to provide a co-ordinated approach and effective use of resources.

Covid-19 enforcement and compliance work continues to be the main aspect of the Food and Occupational Health team. However, as businesses have reopened, the pressure is on the team to return to routine food and occupational health work.

10.0 Delivery arrangements

- 10.1 Not applicable to this report.

11.0 Implications and Impact

11.1 Contribution to Council Strategy Priorities, Outputs and Outcomes

This is an update on Portfolio activity in line with the Council's priorities as set out in the Council Strategy 2020-2030.

11.2 Finance/Resource implications

None directly associated with this report.

11.3 Legal and governance implications

None directly associated with this report.

11.4 Risk analysis

Not applicable to this report.

- 11.5 Increasing satisfaction and service**
None directly associated with this report.
- 11.6 Equality impacts**
None directly associated with this report.
- 11.7 Health and Safety impacts**
None directly associated with this report.
- 11.8 Health, wellbeing and community safety impacts**
None directly associated with this report.
- 11.9 Environmental/sustainability impacts**
None directly associated with this report.
- 11.10 Other significant implications**
None.

Appendices attached to this report

Appendix number	Title of appendix
None	

Background documents available

Name of background document	Where it is available
None	

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