

# Allerdale Borough Council

Council – 22 September 2021

## Portfolio Holder updates

---

<b>Portfolio holder</b>	Councillor Mike Johnson – Leader
<b>Report from</b>	Senior Management Team
<b>Wards affected</b>	As indicated in the main body of the report
<b>Is this a key decision</b>	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**

#### **Shop Local campaign**

- 4.1 Our Shop Local video will be at the centre of a communications campaign to run through the remainder of 2021/22. The campaign, funded by the Government's Welcome Back Fund will encourage residents and visitors to support local business and jobs by shopping local.

#### **Maryport Taste of the Sea Festival**

- 4.2 The first Maryport Festival of the Sea took place on 14/15 August 2021 and attracted large number of residents and visitors. An independent evaluation of the economic impact of the Festival has been commissioned and results will be

reported later. The Festival was a mix of food traders, cookery demonstrations, entertainment for children and adults, special events put on by Senhouse Roman Museum, the Lake District Coast Aquarium, Maryport Maritime Museum and The Settlement supported by our funding. There was a sold-out comedy night with professional performers at The Wave and a number of pubs featured live music, which we again supported with funding. The Festival was made possible by our own growth funding and financial support from Maryport Town Council, Cumbria County Council, Grants Oak Smoked, Vicci and Taste of the Lakes. Taste Cumbria Cockermouth returns 25/26 September and 11/12 December 2021.

### **Solway Coast Cycling Festival**

- 4.3 The first Solway Coast Cycling Festival took place on Silloth Green on 11 September 2021 and was funded by our growth funding with support from Silloth Town Council. The celebration of all things cycling offered residents and visitors the chance to explore the Solway Coast by bike on a series of guided rides, brush up their cycling skills, watch grass-track cycle racing and have their own bikes check and fixed. The Festival promoted cycling as part of an active and environmentally friendly lifestyle and showcased the Solway Coast as a great cycling tourism destination.

### **Business forums and business support services**

- 4.4 Business forums led by the private sector have now been established in Workington, Wigton and the Solway Coast. The forums will become key partners for consultation on our business, regeneration and events focused programmes. Subscriptions to our weekly business eNewsletter continue to grow and now stand at 2,396. We continue to encourage businesses to sign up to receive these on a weekly basis.

### **Outdoor markets**

- 4.5 Keswick and Workington outdoor markets welcomed back more traders from 21 July 2021 in the light of the ending of Covid regulations following a risk assessment that showed it was safe to do so. Wigton and Silloth outdoor markets are also trading normally. Stand income levels are back to pre-pandemic levels.

### **Procurement**

- 4.6 The Procurement team supported the Britain's Energy Coast Business Cluster (BECBC) e-Group with a warmly received presentation with local suppliers in June. Going forward, the Council will continue to ensure more local based SME's are aware, bid for and are successful in delivering Council contracts. The event with BECBC covered a number of important themes to inform suppliers on:
- Vision for Allerdale – Impact of Council contracts
  - Understanding of what procurement is
  - What things the Council buys
  - Guidance on key activities - registering and using the Chest
  - Confidence to be able to apply for Council contracts

The team have now been approached by Cumbria Chambers of Commerce to undertake a supply chain event (following a similar format to that of the film and

Q&A session that has been published on our business website and distributed to local business networks) which will be delivered in September.

### **Maryport Future High Street (FHS) Programme**

- 4.7 A Memorandum of Understanding is now in place between the Council and the Government Future High Streets Department and funding for year one of the programme has been received.

Mott MacDonald consultants are being appointed as strategic partners to coordinate key elements of the planning and design work required prior to the construction phase being implemented. This will specifically relate to Empire Yard (market initiative), The Wave (pool and e-bike hub) and Christchurch (museum conversion).

British Energy Coast (BEC) have continued to work in partnership with the Council to progress plans for the former Carlton Cinema. Planning is progressing for the party wall survey work to commence for the adjoining empty property at 28 Senhouse Street. The aim is for this building to be demolished as part of the overall Carlton scheme.

### **Maryport Heritage Action Zone (HAZ)**

- 4.8 *Capital Programme:* RIBA Stage 4 plans are being finalised for Maryport Town Hall and for 1 Senhouse Street (current Maritime Museum). Planning application has been submitted for the Town Hall and a project team has been set up to manage the move and interim storage of the Maritime Museum artefacts. Architects are working up sketch schemes for nine prospective shopfront improvement grant schemes. Heron Foods and 69 Crosby Street both have planning permission for proposed works and are expected to start this year.

*Cultural Programme:* A new Maryport Cultural Consortium has been established and is working well. Research into Maryport's cultural sector has led to a report which shows that the sector is under-developed and has received less public funding than many other local towns, but has confirmed it has considerable potential. These findings have led to Historic England offering to fund a part time cultural co-ordinator post for at least 12 months to help drive the Cultural Consortium, build capacity and co-ordinate a cultural programme bid to fund a calendar of heritage inspired events in Maryport from 2022-2024. Filming for the Oral History Recording Project of memories of Maryport's High Street in the 1930s and 40s is complete and is being edited. It is hoped that previously unseen film footage from the 1930s will be incorporated.

### **Public Realm Improvements - Maryport**

- 4.9 Both the FHS and HAZ Programmes include improvement to elements of public realm areas such as footpaths, lighting, landscaping and parking surface enhancements. For much of these planned improvements partners at Cumbria County Council will lead this part of the programme and will work closely with BEC, Allerdale BC and the Delivery Groups to ensure planned outputs are achieved.

### **Community Engagement - Maryport**

- 4.10 Community engagement needs to be on-going throughout the Maryport Regeneration Programme and features as a key requirement of both the FHS and HAZ Programmes. The governance structure will continue to oversee the work

through the Advisory Group, the Engagement Group and the Delivery Group. The next round of meetings is being organised for September and regular updates are planned through both the Council's and others' websites and publications, as well as a new newsletter, which is being designed to cover all Maryport Regeneration News.

The team were present at the recent Festival of the Sea to support activities and highlight key elements of the regen programme. The Maryport community and visitors from outside of the area were all supportive of the plans and keen to hear more as the work progresses.

### **The Maryport Business Group (MBG)**

- 4.11 This group was initially set up by Allerdale in 2019 is now going from strength to strength and is currently working to communicate with over 300 businesses in the area. MBG are keen to continue to work with the council to influence the development of events and interventions, which will benefit local businesses and increase footfall within the town.

### **Workington Hall**

- 4.12 Tenders have been returned and evaluated for the next phase of the restoration works at Workington Hall. Subject to obtaining Scheduled Monument Consent, we hope to start the works mid to late September. The works are programmed to last for four months.

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

### **Nuclear issues**

- 5.1 The Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) Working Group have now completed twelve face to face public engagement events in towns and villages across Allerdale. There has also been a mail shot to households throughout Allerdale to inform residents of the reasons why there is a search for a GDF and how the process will work. Allerdale Borough Council Members were invited to a further update from the Allerdale Working Group on Tuesday 27 July and also a presentation from NuLeaf, an LGA Special Interest Group, on Thursday 12 August.

Members are encouraged to visit the Working Group's website and to register for the monthly newsletter. The Working Group hopes to put forward a proposal in due course for the formation of a Community Partnership within Allerdale to take the process forward to the next stage.

### **Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and Local Focus Hub**

- 5.2 A new action plan with measurable targets was approved by the Partnership on 7 September. The targets are aligned with the Safer Cumbria strategy and there will be a campaign to raise the profile of the CSP and to attract additional funding bids from the community before the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) resources transfer to the Allerdale and Copeland Local Focus Hubs.

I attended a Get Connected meeting at West Lakes on 6 August. The Get Connected project has followed on from a CSP funded youth survey undertaken

early 2021 to help partners understand the risks of youth violence and knife crime in West Cumbria. 837 young people aged 11-16 years completed the survey. Some of the findings were that 23% were worried about knife carrying in their area, and that 12% knew someone in their school who had carried a knife. However, 86% reported that they felt safe in their community and 64% that they would be comfortable telling a police officer about their problems.

Over the summer a series of free workshops have been facilitated by the Enthusiasm Charity for key partners working with young people to help shape a plan to address some of the issues highlighted in the survey. The session on 6 August brought all the outcomes together. The final report from Get Connected was shared with the CSP for adoption via their action plan.

### **Housing grant funding**

- 5.3 A bid has recently been submitted for funding from the BEIS Sustainable Warmth Competition by Carlisle City Council as the lead authority of a consortium of all Cumbrian district councils. The Sustainable Warmth competition is Phase 3 of the Local Authority Delivery of Green Homes Grants (LAD3) for mains gas connected homes and Home Upgrade Grants (HUG) for off-mains gas homes. The City Council has applied for around £25 million of funding on behalf of the Cumbrian consortium to address fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency and carbon savings in at least 1,000 mainly private sector properties. We hope to find out if this bid has been successful by late autumn.

### **Housing Options**

- 5.4 I am pleased to be able to report that the Housing Options team have successfully helped the majority of the clients housed temporarily in bed and breakfast accommodation across the area during the pandemic as part of the government "everyone in" initiative, into permanent accommodation.

Looking to the future the team have also worked closely with Home Group over recent months to develop a funding bid. A bid was submitted to MHCLG as part of the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP) for funding to provide supported accommodation for rough sleepers across Allerdale. If the bid is successful it will provide funding for 12 high quality "move on" homes for clients. Clients will be able to live in these homes for up to two years with the benefit of wrap around support to help them achieve their goals in independent living. The key objective is that our clients will be able to access social housing and assured tenancies using Home Groups proposed pathway.

Helen Banton, Allerdale Housing Options Support Worker, has been appointed to a new role with the Copeland Housing and Social Inclusion team. Fortunately, we are not losing her completely as in her new role she will be working across both Allerdale and Copeland.

### **Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment**

- 5.5 The Council has now received a final draft of the Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment. Whilst the document is still being finalised we can be relatively confident that the stakeholder and site assessment information is unlikely to change in the final document. The assessment has raised a number of issues for the Council to consider, especially with regards to a permanent council operated site.

Officers have now been asked to engage with the gypsy and traveller community locally to discuss the apparent preferred approach of smaller private sites. These discussions will be ongoing over the coming weeks and progress will be reported to future council meetings. The full document will be available to members once the final version has been received by the Council.

### **Climate Change Group**

- 5.6 We have now started delivery of carbon literacy training for officers and members, with the first sessions held in early September.

### **Elections**

- 5.7 The annual household canvass continues to progress well with a good level of response to the first stage Canvass Communication B forms (the forms sent to properties where we suspect changes to elector details). Reminder forms are due to be posted during September and a telephone canvass will follow up non-responders with a reduced door-to-door canvass during October.

Plans are starting to be made for the elections to the new unitary shadow authorities in May 2022 and the county election officer group meets regularly to contribute to the Local Government Reorganisation election process.

Work is due to start in September on the Maryport/Flimby community governance review (CGR), which was delayed because of the pandemic. The CGR working group will run a consultation process after which it will form its recommendations to Council.

### **Democratic Services**

- 5.8 The team would like to take the opportunity to remind members to review their Register of Interest forms if they haven't done so recently to capture any changes to circumstances. This will include any changes to address, property, employment and appointments to external bodies or groups - If you have been appointed to Outside bodies by the Council is this reflected in your register?

## **6.0 Environmental Services Portfolio: Cllr Jim Lister**

### **Environmental Enforcement**

- 6.1 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. A structured social media campaign is in place to promote both education and enforcement.

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 attended Netherton Infants School with partners from the Fire Service and the Police to thank the children for their weekly litter picking efforts in one of our priority locations.

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 Charles Close and Alexander Close, a fantastic event with over 30 people from various agencies supporting.

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

### **Waste and recycling**

- 6.2 Along with the rest of the country Allerdale Waste Services Limited (AWSL) suffered from the 'pingdemic' with many crew members having to self-isolate in accordance with the regulations at the time. Equally the national driver shortage has had a similar consequence with a shortage of agency drivers being available to cover holidays and sickness. The result was that green waste collections had to be reviewed and cancelled where it wasn't possible to crew a vehicle. Defra guidance is that green waste, which isn't a statutory service should have a lower priority than recycling or residual waste during periods of unexpected work pressure and as such AWSL have concentrated on those statutory services.

With regard to the review of the AWSL round routes the Shareholder Group are meeting in late August to consider the implications of the savings and costs relating to the proposed routes, of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Cumbria and the likely outcomes of the Environment Bill currently passing through Parliament.

Trade waste volumes have been increasing due to the lifting of restrictions and many businesses reopening in our area. The Waste Team have finished issuing the annual Duty of Care Waste Transfer Notes to all trade waste customers and will continue to chase up the return of the documents over the coming weeks.

Following the LGR announcement AWSL have already had preliminary discussions with the waste team in Copeland and have a diarised meeting with the team at Carlisle City Council in early September. The Waste Team are playing a full part in the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership discussions both in terms of LGR and the consultations on the Environment Bill which will have major implications for the waste industry from 2023 onwards.

### **Grounds maintenance and street cleaning**

- 6.3 Tivoli and AWSL contributed to the Home Housing event as part of the multi-agency Operation Respect in late July where the teams provided cleansing services and education. The next event will be held at Westfield Housing in September.

Tivoli donated their surplus bedding plants to the event above and to Workington Town Council for their Britain in Bloom activities. Similarly they also donated two trailer loads of bark chippings to Silloth Town Council.

Tivoli joined a 'Walkabout' in the Derwent Howe Industrial Estate area to see how the area could be enhanced to make the environment more attractive to inward investment. A list of actions was prepared, and a second 'walkabout' day has been organised for Aspatria in October.

Funding has been set aside for Tivoli to commission a tree survey of all the trees on Allerdale owned land. The survey will assess their condition, provide a location plan, tree tagging, proposed future survey schedules will be prepared and it will

provide substantial public liability cover should an accident (fallen branch etc.) occur. All the required works highlighted will be covered within Tivoli's contract.

### **Public realm and open spaces projects**

- 6.4 *Northside allotments and Siddick Pond:* Demolition and site clearance contract has been completed with the landscaping contract underway.

*Central Way Underpass:* The Underpass was re-opened on 29 July and the permanent lighting has been installed. The installation of the artwork commenced on 7 September.

*Planting for Pollinators:* Cumbria Wildlife Trust's bid to the Green Recovery Fund has been approved. This project, in which we are a key partner, is a follow-up to "Get Cumbria Buzzing" (which is ongoing well into 2022) and will run for 18 months. Twelve ABC sites form are included in the project, such as Camerton Brickworks and Mote Hill, Maryport.

*CCC Environment Fund:* A total of £32.5k has been secured to support environmental improvements and environmental volunteering/education at Mote Hill and replacement tree planting on Fleming Square.

*BMX track for Workington:* Following the removal of the cycle tracks in Hall Park earlier in the year and with the success of the Olympics, we are working with Cumbria County Council and Workington Town Council to come up with a list of potential site options for a feasibility study. We are discussing the possibility of funding with CCC.

*Climate Change Action Plan and Unregistered Land:* The Climate Change Action Plan Group is keen to look at First Registration of unregistered land where that land can contribute to delivering our strategic objectives (e.g. with tree planting or other environmental improvements). Initial stages of mapping potential sites and discussions with the Estates Team taking place around how it fits with the Council's Acquisitions and Disposal Policy.

### **Car Parking**

- 6.5 With national school holidays in full swing and the good weather we have seen a significant increase in car park usage. The technology we have in place to make for faster, safer, and more efficient payments seems to be working well. In particular the promotion of the MiPermit app means the Council is now well-placed to cope with residents' demand as well as the influx of visitors over the summer months.

We have identified some issues with poor signal and locations of car parking machines, and with support from the Project Team improvements have been made by introducing 'Anywhere Sims'. These Sims can access O2, EE, Vodafone and Three networks all at the same time and provide the highest levels of communication, improving the experience users have when making card payments. A trial installation of 6 modems into various machines has helped provide us with information that suggests this new additional technology helps ensure a seamless payment system. Plans are in place to install another 19 of these modems into other high usage machines.

Machines in some of our car parks are being moved to better locations to help with signal issues, this work was scheduled to be completed after the August Bank



Holiday period as moving machines prior to a busy bank holiday was viewed as an unnecessary risk.

When set against the use of cashless payments systems the use of coins as a means of payment shows continued positive signs of slowing down. While there are some variations from town to town the recent data from a singular specific day in August across all of our machines suggests that the use of coins as a payment method has continued to fall and now makes up only approximately 37% of the total value of car park income, cards and the mobile phone app account for an improved 63% of the total value of income.

The car parks team continue to support events taking place on the Council's car parks, this support is normally delivered through making alternative plans to parking conditions on sites or perhaps with the pre warning to motorists that an event is imminent. The car parks team initially use temporary signage and leaflets to pre warn motorists before closing off the sites needed by event organisers with traffic cones.

Signage and markings continue to be improved with both a bolder and a greater number of markings being recently laid at Fairfield and plans for improved markings at Otley Road are in place to help the local market team and the storage of their equipment.

### **Bereavement Services**

- 6.6 The planned road repairs and creation of grave spaces work in Cockermouth Cemetery is due to start in the near future. As a service we have recently been assessed and awarded the Charter for the Bereaved gold standard for the 8<sup>th</sup> year running.

## **7.0 Leisure and Tourism Portfolio: Cllr Anthony Markley**

### **Fishing Faces**

- 7.1 Fishing Faces reveals the people behind the scenes of our fishing industry. It tells their stories and is now featured on the Visit Allerdale website. Featured are fishermen, producers, a café owner, the RNLI and many others who make such an important contribution to the life and economy in Allerdale. The aim is to market the stories to encourage visitors to our area and support our Taste festivals. Fishing Faces was made possible by our growth funding. We commissioned the Solway Firth Partnership to deliver the project following on from an earlier successful collaboration to produce the Cumbrian Beach Guide. Phase two will see short films also published on Visit Allerdale.

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

- 7.2 Following the recent opening of the multi-use path for cyclists and pedestrians, largely off road between Allonby and Silloth, a further section of the Hadrian's Wall Cycleway has been improved. Large sections of the path between Maryport and Allonby have now been resurfaced with tarmac making them more accessible for road bikes, wheelchairs and pushchairs. Funding for these works came from the Rural Development Programme for England via the Solway Coast Community Team.

## **E-bikes**

- 7.3 A Cumbrian company has been commissioned to produce a business plan to show how we can position Allerdale as a premier E-bike destination in this rapidly growing market to support recovery and growth. The business plan will be delivered in October 2021 and is being supported by our growth funding.

## **Welcoming returning visitors**

- 7.4 We continue to work with partners on the Cumbria Tactical Visitor Management Group to implement plans to safely welcome back visitors. This has included the provision of temporary car parking in Borrowdale and Buttermere provided by the National Trust, a regular shuttle bus service between Cockermouth and Buttermere and well as public information campaigns to help visitors safely get the most out of visiting Allerdale whilst respecting the needs of our local communities.

## **Perfect Day in Allerdale competition**

- 7.5 The second Perfect Day in Allerdale competition has closed and has once again a high number of entries from across the country. The competition invited visitors to describe their perfect day in Allerdale with the winning itinerary being turned into a short film to inspire others. The competition was sponsored by the Embleton Spa Hotel, the Lakes Distillery, Maryport Aquarium and Go Ape.

## **Arts and Culture**

- 7.6 Five museums have been supported with development of short promotional videos to use on their digital media platforms as they opened up for the summer following the pandemic.

Working in partnership with Copeland Borough Council we are in the process of commissioning consultants to develop a cultural strategy for West Cumbria. Arts Council England is financially supporting this piece of work.

## **Leisure centres**

- 7.7 An invitation to organisations to submit proposals to work with Allerdale Borough Council and the people of Keswick has been published and proposals are due back in this month (Sept). The work will involve an appraisal of local need and aspirations as well as carrying out a market supply and demand exercise based on the current industry models. The exercise will result in a number of potential options to support ongoing conversations around future investment for new leisure provision within Keswick.

A wider leisure options appraisal is also now underway to start to think about future leisure provision, as the existing leisure centre contract is currently due to end in 2024. Members were the first to have been given chance to put forward their initial thoughts on future leisure services for our area. We are now asking partners and stakeholders for their views.

## **Sports Development**

- 7.8 Eight organisations have been supported with SIIF Sports Development grants so far this year with £43,000 awarded and project costs totalling over £120,000.

A Borderlands project to improve the Hadrian's Wall cycle/walking path through a strategic, ideally wholly off road route are being developed to support active and sustainable travel, delivering benefits to local residents and visitors. The project is gathering momentum, with priority projects being assessed against prioritisation criteria from September.

GLL have delivered a successful summer holiday programme of 10p swims, Clip N Climb activity and a free scheme for young people who eligible for free school meals, supported by the Holiday Activity Fund.

The Allerdale Playing Pitch and Outdoor Strategy final draft has been sent out to the steering group for sign off.

## 8.0 Customer Experience and Innovation Portfolio: Cllr Alan Pitcher

### Customer Services

8.1 Since 1 April the team have spoken to over 30,000 customers on the telephone with over 1,300 of those customers choosing to use our free call back service. Overall, the average speed of answer was just 72 seconds.

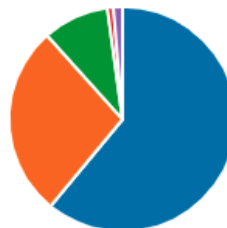
To put this into context, when asked how satisfied they were with the time it took to answer their calls to customer service during Quarter 1 of the year 88% of customers surveyed told us that they were either very or somewhat satisfied with the response times, the majority being very satisfied.

1. Following your recent call to Allerdale Borough Council how satisfied were you with the length of time you had to wait before your call was answered?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

● Very satisfied	142
● Somewhat satisfied	64
● Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	22
● Somewhat dissatisfied	2
● Very dissatisfied	3



Feedback from customers on the overall experience of dealing with Customer Service is positive with 94% of customers surveyed in quarter 1 indicating they were somewhat or very satisfied with the service they had received when contacting the customer service team.

2. How Satisfied were you with the service you received from Customer Services?

[More Details](#)

● Very satisfied	168
● Somewhat satisfied	51
● Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	5
● Somewhat dissatisfied	1
● Very dissatisfied	7



Key phrases and words used by customers surveyed included:



Our new appointments-based service went live across the borough on 19 July in line with the lifting of restrictions, and as I mentioned in my last report the demand for appointments after the initial telephone triage remains low.

On the digital front our on-line services continue to be popular with customers who use them 24 hours a day seven days a week from their PCs, tablets and smart phones. We continue to develop the digital services to make it easier for our customers to contact us at their convenience.

During July we also arranged a complaint handling training session for officers which was facilitated by the training team from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. The Ombudsman service is independent and the final stage for complaints against Councils and some other organisations providing public services.

Details of how councils are performing are published on the ombudsman website <https://www.lgo.org.uk/your-councils-performance/allerdale-borough-council/statistics> and alongside the performance information you can view the LGO annual review letter for each authority.

### **Customer Accounts**

- 8.2 As always, the Customer Accounts team delivered outstanding performance across business-as-usual processes whilst continuing to process the Covid-19 related grants.

Work is on-going to improve the digital offer to our customers with the development of a new on-line service to enable our customers to apply for new housing benefit and Council Tax Reduction Scheme claims on-line. The project will also mean that customers can submit change of circumstances, council tax discounts and exemptions claims on-line and this will help to process applications quickly and efficiently. The work is being carried out in partnership with Carlisle and Copeland councils.

This year the reduction in the extended Retail, Hospitality and Leisure relief provided by government has reduced from 100% to 66% relief with effect from 1 July 2021. The NNDR collection rate was initially calculated on the 100% and consequently this reduction will show on our collection rate figures as a net debit increase for the year with the amount to be collected increasing from £15,835,645 up to £22,490,510 and showing as a fall in the collection rate. This debit will reduce as payments on the new rate, which will begin in August and continue through to March, are collected.

## **Technology Architecture**

- 8.3 Technology Services continue to develop the new Digital Workspace in readiness for its launch in September. This highly secure platform will provide staff with a single environment that is accessible on any device that will provide access to all of their applications, files and email no matter where they are located, as well as traditional intranet services including policies, procedures, council news and a social area where groups can discuss their interests. The solution will enable Technology Services to simplify its architecture and also make best use of our investments in the Microsoft365 platform.

## **Spatial Information**

- 8.4 All of the Council's spatial information is updated daily and is then vetted by a central body (GeoSpace) before it is added to the National Mapping Systems. GeoSpace have recognised the Council in its efforts, confirming the data is highly accurate and awarded us with their highest level of certification – the Gold Standard.

## **Starlink**

- 8.5 Starlink (satellite based internet access) was successfully tested at Silloth meaning that we have capability to deploy on-demand broadband services across the majority of the region, enabling us to deploy Wi-fi for events and business continuity purposes.

## **Business Transformation**

- 8.6 Improvements have been developed across business applications including:
- A new customer interface for Waste Management;
  - The migration of the payments platform into a cloud-based service;
  - The implementation of a secure communication technology supporting over the internet communications between ourselves and central government;
  - A new e-forms solution that enhances customer online access to Revenues and Benefits.
  - The implementation of desk booking system and a hot desk environment to support hybrid working models;
  - Within the Arcus project we are now developing the online form functionality to support customer access and have supported the first migration of regulatory data into the Arcus environment.

## **Allerdale House and New Ways of Working**

- 8.7 Further to recent updates on our move to hybrid working arrangements, we have launched our online desk booking system and fully equipped hot desk environment, refurbishment and reconfiguration of flexible workspaces in Allerdale House, and work is ongoing to install AV equipment in meeting rooms to facilitate hybrid meetings. There will also be engagement with elected Members regarding the use of Allerdale House and other Council buildings as more 'in person' meetings return to diaries. The implementation of all plans will follow the Government guidance on social distancing and the roadmap for easing of Covid restrictions.

## **Enterprise Resource Planning**

- 8.8 The implementation of the new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system will provide integrated applications to manage the business and offer greater opportunities to transform back office functions across Finance, Payroll and HR services. The project is on schedule and budget with the design workshops now completed and training and system configuration meetings taking place in August and September. Team members now have access to a test system and preparatory work is being undertaken to extract data from legacy systems for cleansing prior to being uploaded into the new system.

## **Health, Safety and Resilience**

- 8.9 Over the last 12 months we along with the other authorities across Cumbria have been working on revised flood plans specific to Cumbria, but following the national strategy.

As we head towards winter, preparations are underway to carry out several emergency planning exercises with partners to test these plans. In total there are six exercises, one full day exercise and five shorter table-top exercises. Allerdale BC will be taking part in four of those events.

The objectives are:

- To exercise multi-agency working at a Strategic and Tactical Command level;
- To validate Multi Agency Flood Plan (MAFP) Part 1 and 2 for efficiency and identify areas for improvement;
- To identify whether lessons learnt from Storm Desmond (2015) have been taken on board and improvements implemented;
- To ensure all organisations are aware of their and other organisations' roles and responsibilities as set out in the MAFP;
- To ensure all organisations are implementing their roles and responsibilities in accordance with the MAFP;
- To promote awareness of the limitations of all response organisations;
- To validate a blended coordination utilising Microsoft Teams and a physical Emergency Coordination Centre.

We also tested our business continuity and building evacuation plans for real recently when a suspicious package was delivered to Allerdale House. Working with the Police and Fire & Rescue services the building was evacuated whilst investigations were completed, the building declared safe for use, and we were allowed back in.

And finally, we welcome Nick Bragg to join us as a permanent member of the Health, Safety and Resilience team. Nick brings with him a wealth of experience and knowledge to the team.

## **Allerdale Local Focus Hub**

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

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 106 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, (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 have worked through a series of fact finding workshops and the outcomes are being delivered in a partnership event on 5 August. The outcomes from this event and the workshops 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 Home Group led on an event in the Charles and Alexander Close area, supported by the Police, Fire Service, Allerdale Borough Council, Tivoli, Allerdale Waste Services, Bell Care and residents. 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 Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner on the successful Safer Streets funding bid, the PCC have now recruited the two Safer Streets Assistants. This is absolutely amazing for our area, the ALFH Manager will be responsible for supporting the delivery of the activity in the St Michaels community. Lots of work is in progress with partners to ensure the network of people are available to support successful delivery of the project.

Three hugely successful events were hosted by the Hub in Aspatria, Silloth and Workington for Anti-Social Behaviour Awareness Week. We had some fantastic feedback from the community, over 200 people stopped to talk to us and provide their feedback. The Youth Council joined us and led an interactive session with young people, the Youth Parliament member was also there to support.

## **9.0 Finance and Legal Portfolio: Cllr Colin Sharpe**

### **Legal Services**

- 9.1 The Legal Services Team continues to support the Council in the delivery of its priorities and objectives across the board. The team has carried out extensive work to assist with the Oldside project, attending court regarding unlawful encampments and assisting with signage, cameras and securing the site. There have been a number of planning and building control enforcement matters which the team continues to assist with, and there has been significant input to a number of significant procurements such as the appointment of a strategic partner to help with the larger projects in Workington and Maryport.

### **Licensing**

- 9.2 The Licensing Team has appointed a temporary Licensing Enforcement Officer for six months who has a wealth of experience, to assist with an audit of premises post-Covid. This is with a view to ensuring that the Authority holds the most up-to-date

information and is receiving the appropriate income. The pandemic has presented a number of difficulties in terms of ensuring that premises are compliant and it is anticipated that the relaxation of restrictions will increase workload significantly in the next few months as premises re-open and more events are planned. The taxi testing function has been successfully transferred over to the Council's Local Authority Trading Company, AWSL, and regular meetings are being held to ensure that service provision is of the highest standard.

### **Assurance, Audit and Risk**

- 9.3 The next Audit Committee meeting is scheduled for 27 September 2021. 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. The teams responsible for the data match work including audit have been working through their matches for the October completion deadline. To date, 33 errors, which equates to a value of £2,732.46 has been identified, all of which is being recovered.

The Assurance Risk and Audit (ARA) Officer continues to support the grants teams with fraud work. Any suspected fraud identified is forwarded to all necessary parties. As part of the restructure the Audit Service will have a shared manager with Copeland Borough Council.

The ARA Officer also continues supporting 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.

### **Statement of Accounts 2020-21**

- 9.4 In line with the statutory timetable the Council's unaudited 2020-21 Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement (AGS) was published on the Council's website on 30 July 2021. The audit of the 2020-21 Statement of Accounts is scheduled to take place during August and September 2021, after which the audited Statement of Accounts will be presented for approval by the Audit Committee.

### **Covid-19 financial monitoring**

- 9.5 The Financial Services Team continue to monitor the financial impact of Covid-19 and completing monthly government returns in respect of Covid-19 local authority financial management information. Finance support continues to be provided to service managers around their use and monitoring of Covid-19 specific grants and the preparation of grant claims, in respect of these, where applicable.

### **Enterprise Resource Planning system (ERP)**

- 9.6 Members of the finance team are now heavily involved in regular training sessions around the configuration and use of the system. Preparation work in respect of planned data migration has also commenced.

## **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**

<b>Appendix number</b>	<b>Title of appendix</b>
None	

## **Background documents available**

<b>Name of background document</b>	<b>Where it is available</b>
None	

## **Report author(s) and contact officer(s):**

*Alex FitzGerald*  
*Policy Manager (Corporate, Performance and Information)*  
*alex.fitzgerald@allerdale.gov.uk*  
*01900 702719*