

Allerdale Borough Council

Council – 21 September 2022

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

Lillyhall North project

- 4.1 We have made good progress with our project to unlock 10.5 hectares of employment land for development including installation of utilities, services, power and enabling infrastructure this month. Works are underway on the highways access and roundabout, tarmac has been laid on the spine road, and the drainage and attenuation lagoon is complete. Works are on track for completion in early October and we are progressing positive discussions with major employers seeking to locate at Lillyhall North by 2024.

Procurement and contract management update

- 4.2 Government has repeated that changes to procurement regulations following publication of the 'Transforming Public Procurement' Green Paper are not expected until 2023, with local authorities due to receive 6 months' notice and training to be provided for contracting authorities before requirements are enforceable. In the interim, our Procurement Team remain committed to improving skills in procurement and contract management across the organisation. This summer, we have provided workshops for officers and Members focussing on improving tender processes, current challenges for buyers, and preparation for the proposed changes to Procurement Regulations.

Maryport Regeneration Programme

- 4.3 The Maryport Team are continuing to progress the Future High Streets (FHS) and Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) programmes. A presentation was delivered to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 July to provide an update.

FHS: Inflationary pressures on building materials continue to be a problem, and the team continue to manage and mitigate against fluctuating costs of materials which are affecting the construction industry internationally. The Wave Centre and Christ Church will therefore be subject to an open tender on The Chest with the aim of reducing costs compared to the Scape Framework Agreement. Prior to the new Maritime Museum opening at Christ Church, a suitable site has been identified as a temporary home for the Maritime Museum collection in the centre of Maryport (it is anticipated the lease will be signed shortly - full details can then be provided). This would allow a selection of artefacts to continue to be displayed after the existing museum at 1 Senhouse Street ceases operations at the end of August. The residential grants programme continues to go well, with the first refurbishment now underway. It is expected that the Public Realm Grant Funding Agreement will be signed with Cumbria County Council shortly, which will deliver over £900,000 worth of improvements, providing enhanced infrastructure, connectivity, car parking provision, green spaces, as well as helping to signpost the major projects and enhance the visitor experience, including for people arriving at Maryport station.

HAZ: Historic England visited Maryport on 18 August to view the site of the new art gallery at 1 Senhouse Street (the former Maritime Museum) along with other HAZ programmes, such as the Town Hall, which is due to re-open shortly, and the new shop fronts (the grant scheme is progressing well.) The first screenings of the Maryport oral history films, featuring historic material from the 1930s to 1950s, were shown at the Maryport 'Taste of the Sea' festival on the weekend of 13/14 August. The films have been formally launched and made available on the Council's You Tube site. The Team also worked with Maryport Business Group to produce posters publicising the Regeneration programmes, which were displayed in empty shop fronts prior to the Taste of the Sea event.

As well as progressing the FHS and HAZ programmes, the Maryport team have also been working with Senhouse Roman Museum and Cultural Trust on a bid for funding through the 'Borderlands' programme to provide an extension to the Roman museum, alongside a 'digital interpretation' project at the fort site (Camp Farm) – an expression of interest is due to be submitted by 2 September.

Workington Town Deal

- 4.4 Work continues to progress the further development and delivery of Town Deal projects. In particular survey work, including intrusive ground investigations, will be taking place at the Central Car Park site. Business engagement and public consultation in relation to the public realm and connectivity project is also due to take place during September and early October.

Levelling Up Fund

- 4.5 An application for funding to support the delivery of the Workington Gateway Project was submitted to the Levelling Up Fund Round 2 in August. The project has been developed in collaboration with Cumbria County Council and West House. If funding is secured the £10.5 million scheme would see improvements to the Ramsay Brow junction and road widening on Hall Brow. This is a key pinch point for traffic in the town and the proposed improvements will improve access to the Port of Workington via the A595 and A66. Improvements to the local cycling and walking network are also proposed with a cycle route through Hall Park. It is proposed to provide lighting to Workington Hall and, working with West House, a horticulturally based Social Enterprise Centre will be developed within the walled garden at Hall Park. A funding decision is expected in the autumn.

Solway Cycling Festival

- 4.6 The event took place on Silloth Green for the second time on Saturday 23 July and unfortunately was impacted by poor weather. The festival had a range of cycling and family activities. Like last year, the festival had grass track racing, kids biking skills, bike hire and repairs, smoothie bikes, children's arts and crafts, children's story telling and fairground rides. However, this year, the grass track racing was placed on the same field as all the other activities to make use of the large field.

For this year's festival, we wanted to focus of health and wellbeing as well as cycling. With this in mind, we arranged for ICan fitness to carry out a bounce disco on mini trampolines and the University of Cumbria to do an outdoor assault course. 'Together We' (a mental health charity) also had an interactive stand at the festival. The Facebook posts reached 5,255 people and the posts were shared over 28 times. On Instagram the posts reached 429 people.

After reviewing the weekend there are some improvements we will consider for next year:

- Date of the event – the event will hopefully take place in September again to avoid a clash with the school summer holidays.
- A greater focus on cycling – potentially working with British Cycling to host an event as part of a north-west series of events and which could become an annual event.
- Contingency weather plan – plan for activities to be moved indoors (marquee) if the weather is bad.

Maryport Taste of the Sea

- 4.7 The second Maryport Taste of the Sea Festival was held on 13/14 August. Helped by some great weather the event was more successful than last year. An independent evaluation of the event was commissioned and some key points are:

- Economic impact was almost £1m - more than double that of last year;
- Return on investment was almost £25 for each pound invested -more than double last year;
- 85% of those interviewed were visiting specifically for the festival - up from 65% last year;
- 89% of people to went to the event said it was event better this year;
- There were more locals at the event than last year - 83% compared to 65%;
- On average people spent around half an hour longer at the event than last year;
- Return and recommend levels were almost 100%.

Business engagement

- 4.8 We continue to engage and work with the business community in Allerdale in a number of ways. Our weekly enewsletter provides sources of help and advice and has 2,985 subscribers. Open rates are very high with 47% opening the enewsletter. To subscribe, please go to <https://www.allerdale.gov.uk/en/email-newsletters/> We also continue to work with a range of business groups in the Borough.

High Street Task Force (HSTF)

- 4.9 Following representations to HSTF, the visit to Cockermouth scheduled for June 2023 has been brought forward and will take place on 4 November. HSTF was commissioned by government in 2019 as part of the Plan for the High Street in response to the recommendations of an expert panel led by Sir John Timpson. We await details from HSTF of the format of the visit, but the intention will be for HSTF to work with local businesses and stakeholders to identify and recommend ways to make positive change in retail areas of the town.

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

Electoral Services

- 5.1 Households in Allerdale have received a form asking residents to check whether the information that appears on the electoral register is correct for each address. This is part of Allerdale Borough Council's annual voter registration canvass.

The aim of the form is to ensure that the Electoral Register is up to date and to encourage any residents who are eligible to vote, but not currently registered to add their names to the Register.

There has been a positive response to the First Stage Canvass Communication B forms which are sent to properties where it is considered likely that electors' details may have changed. The next stage of the canvass will be to send reminder letters to non-responders. These are due to be posted in mid-September 2022.

Responses can be made phone or text if there are no changes to report, or online if an adjustment is required. For residents without internet access, the option is also available to return the amended form in the pre-paid envelope.

Residents are encouraged to respond as soon as possible to avoid a reminder letter and a visit from a Voter Registration Officer.

Anyone who has recently moved to the Borough, or who has changed their address in Allerdale, will be required to re-register. Residents who have recently turned 18 should also check that their names are on the Electoral Register.

An Invitation to Register will be sent to anyone who notifies the Council that they require a paper copy. However, a quick and easy alternative is to register online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

The Community Governance Review for Maryport/Flimby has restarted and informal meetings have been held with Flimby petitioners and members of Maryport Town Council. Background preparatory work and research is ongoing, and the working group will be soon meet to discuss consultation proposals. In accordance with the Cumbria (Structural Changes) Order 2022, the final decision on Community Governance Reviews will be made by Cumberland Council. Planning will also commence on the Embleton and District Community Governance Review, once the recommendation to proceed is approved by Council.

Green Homes Grants

- 5.2 A consortium of all six of the Cumbrian District Councils has successfully applied for £20m worth of grant funding from the Government's Sustainable Warmth Scheme which combines the Local Authority Delivery Phase 3 (LAD3) and the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG).

LAD3 has a refined scope to support low income households heated by mains gas whereas the HUG scheme is focused on homes without access to the gas grid.

Locally, the scheme is being led by officers at Carlisle City Council who are currently distributing promotional materials.

6580 letters are due to be sent to addresses in Allerdale using the following criteria:

- At least 35% anticipated fuel poverty anticipated in the area
- D, E, F or G Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating
- Owner Occupier or Private Tenant

The Sustainable Warmth Scheme will continue until March 2023. Eligible properties with a gas supplied central heating system could qualify for up to £10,000 worth of grant funding.

Properties with central heating systems that are reliant upon fossil fuels, as well as homes without a heating system at all, may qualify for up to £25,000 of energy efficiency measures. Where the main heating system is not powered by gas but there are gas appliances (such as a cooker), the property may still be considered under the HUG scheme.

Landlords of eligible privately rented properties are entitled to apply for up to £5,000 of grant funding subject to a contribution of a third of the cost of the measures.

A range of energy efficiency improvements are available, including:

- Solid wall and cavity wall insulation, as well as insulation for rooms in roof spaces
- Loft insulation
- Air source and ground source heat pumps

- High Heat retention electric storage heaters and first-time double glazing (Replacement double glazing is not available)
- Solar Photo voltaic (PV) Panels
- Under Floor Insulation

A free survey will be carried out to determine the most productive energy efficiency measures in each individual case.

The previous LAD2 scheme delivered by the Cumbrian Consortium received an unprecedented number of applications from across the region. Residents are encouraged to apply as soon as possible.

Affordable Housing

- 5.3 With funding from Central Government and with the support of Allerdale Borough Council, the Above Derwent Community Land Trust have developed four affordable homes in the village of Portinscale, near Keswick, which are now almost ready for occupation.

The Community Land Trust (CLT) was set up in 2016 and has worked closely with council officers on the project over the years. This successful collaboration has produced four, three bedroom homes, all to be sold under a shared ownership agreement to local families in need of affordable housing.

A further four affordable rental homes will soon be available in Keswick as a result of a Council led project to convert an empty former retail unit at Otley Road into single bedroom apartments. They will be leased to an Affordable Housing Provider for an initial period of five years. It is expected that the rent for each of the apartments will be charged at 80% of the open market rate. The lack of affordable, single bedroom properties has been identified as a particularly pressing need in Keswick and the surrounding area.

As well as contributing to the affordable housing supply, this development also brings an empty building back into use which, due to its central location, helps to maintain the general upkeep and appearance of the town centre.

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)

- 5.4 As reported at the July meeting, the delivery of the DFG scheme has fallen below target in recent months for a number of reasons which include the cost of materials and the withdrawal of some local contractors from DFG casework. To rectify the situation, an action plan has been implemented with the following steps already in place.

A new grant officer post has been filled with two part-time officers. Additional officers have been re-allocated to work with grants officers to process outstanding applications.

A highly experienced technical officer is also about to start work with the team and will be liaising with applicants, generating work specifications and dealing with contractors.

Discussions have taken place with the suppliers of the Council's software with the result that an additional licence and electronic forms are to be purchased which will allow more than one person to undertake financial assessments at any one time.

A performance dashboard is being developed to assist with monitoring workload and reporting on applications.

With a view to speeding up processes and removing unnecessary blockages, a map of the current system is being produced and will be kept under continuous review.

Alongside Carlisle City Council, a tender for a new contractors' framework has been fulfilled.

With all of the above measures in place, the team will continue working towards an improvement in the delivery rate of this crucial service.

Housing Options

- 5.5 In the first week of August, there were 85 Ukrainian individuals (44 households) accommodated in Allerdale. September/October marks the end of the six month period since the arrival of the first Ukrainian refugees in the UK following the Russian invasion. Where sponsoring households are content to continue with existing arrangements, the £350 government funding will continue to apply. However, it is reasonable to expect that there may be some urgent requests for alternative accommodation.

Members of the Housing Options Team are currently working closely with Cumbria County Council to monitor the situation, minimise emergency presentations and put appropriate support in place. A simple guide will be created to explain how to find accommodation in the Allerdale area and the support that can be offered. Ukrainian and Russian translations of the guidance will be available.

Nuclear Matters

- 5.6 Sellafield's Magnox Reprocessing Plant took its final feed of spent fuel just before midnight on Sunday 17 July 2022. This same process has seen approximately 55,000 tonnes of Magnox fuel reprocessed through the facility over 58 years of operations at the plant.

The building and its ancillary areas will soon enter a new era of clean-out and decommissioning. It is anticipated that any staff who are not involved in the clean-out will be re-deployed elsewhere on the Sellafield site.

The first batch of waste has been safely removed from one of the most hazardous buildings at Sellafield, the Magnox Swarf Storage Silo (MSSS). Teams are beginning to remove the waste held inside MSSS, placing it into purpose-built stainless steel waste containers and removing it to modern storage on the site. MSSS has stored nuclear waste in its water-filled chambers for the last 60 years, including the casings removed from spent fuel rods from Magnox reactors so that the fuel inside can be reprocessed. This key milestone marks an important step in the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's priority to have all legacy waste removed from Sellafield's ponds and silos by 2048.

The Allerdale Community Partnership hosted an interactive display on Geological Disposal at Hunday Manor Hotel on 6 July. The event was attended by subject matter experts from Nuclear Waste Services (NWS), formerly known as RWM, and included a presentation specifically designed for school students.

Going forward, a further mail drop to all addresses within the Allerdale Search Area is in preparation. Two public exhibitions are being arranged – at Workington’s Carnegie Theatre on 28 September from 11am to 8pm and at Maryport Rugby Club on 29 September from 10.30am to 3.30pm. A programme of visits to Town and Parish Council meetings within the Search Area is also being finalised.

As always, it is recommended that councillors subscribe to the Community Partnership’s regular newsletter and visit the website for the latest information about the ongoing discussion on Geological Disposal and updates on the Community Investment Fund: <https://allerdale.workinginpartnership.org.uk/>

Climate Change Advisory Group

- 5.7 Following a visit to Renewi Services at Hespian Wood, Carlisle, members of the group held a meeting to discuss actions that can be taken prior to LGR which will provide customers with more information and help to promote recycling – for example, the forthcoming campaign on the safe disposal of batteries. Members of the group will continue working with staff and the Communications Team to look for opportunities to build publicity around waste and recycling.

Discussions have been held with planning and policy officers on the possibility of implementing a pre application Climate Change Checklist to be taken into consideration by officers and members when determining planning applications.

The group was delighted to receive the news that the Cumbria Coastal Community Forest has been allocated almost £900,000 in additional funding by Defra to plant trees and create new woodlands along a 56 mile stretch of the western coastline. Cumbria County Council is leading on the development of this project in close partnership with Barrow, Copeland and Allerdale Councils, supported by a range of other organisations including Art Gene, the NDA and Britain’s Energy Coast.

Further Carbon Literacy Training is being arranged for staff and members of both Allerdale Borough Council and the shadow Unitary Authority. This is scheduled to take place in October and November with further details to follow.

6.0 Environmental Services Portfolio: Cllr Jim Lister

Education and Enforcement

- 6.1 The Enforcement Team continue to make progress tackling issues across Allerdale. Figures for July show the first ever decrease, and the lowest number recorded, for incidents of dog fouling. This is as a result of conducting early morning operations to tackle this issue.

Fly tipping remains a top priority which we have targeted with the use of the new Rapid Deployable Cameras. This has resulted in a significant increase in Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) and at 11 August there had been 96 FPNs issued in 2022. A significant number of the FPNs relate to the bring sites. The zero-tolerance enforcement at these sites will continue for as long as the problem of misuse remains.

Alongside partners the Enforcement Team carried out a stop and search day as part of Operation Respect. This saw 178 waste carrying vehicles stopped and

consequently several investigations are now in progress. This was a joint day with partner agencies and led by the Allerdale Local Focus Hub.

The Enforcement Team are in the process of tackling trade waste issues in the Keswick area, this is to ensure all those who are generating trade waste are disposing of this correctly and in line with legislation. It is important that domestic and trade waste are treated correctly as the use of domestic bins for trade waste is classified as fly tipping. We will continue to educate businesses on their responsibilities for waste management.

Pest Control

- 6.2 The team attended a meeting with Copeland Borough Council to discuss the pest control service, how they operate and what commercial contracts the council have. This will allow the LGR work stream to gain all accurate information regarding future working collectively. Still 100% satisfaction with service delivery, no issues identified during the period.

Terrorism/Prevent/Channel

- 6.3 Two further Channel requests have been submitted to Allerdale Borough Council from the North Area Channel lead asking for information of individuals and information shared as appropriate.

Corporate Health and Safety

- 6.4 All new staff appointments have been inducted from a Health and Safety point of view with no issues identified.

First Aid training (full 3 day training) is taking place w/c 15 August, three of our first aiders will be further qualified after this. One day appointed person training (first aid) is also taking place w/c 15 August for varying officers.

Various eye care vouchers have been given to staff to comply with DSE Regulations. We are working on two stress related issues with members of staff and HR.

We are currently revising the fire risk assessment and evacuation plan for Allerdale House. We worked on varying event management plans for events held or run by the Council.

Emergency Planning and Resilience

- 6.5 We attended two further Oscar Oracle area meetings to discuss the exercise which will be carried out on 14 September. This is a Sellafeld exercise involving multiple agencies in a radiological emergency on the public highway.

Allerdale Waste Services Limited

- 6.6 Following the reduction of one refuse collection vehicle and the associated saving reported previously, AWSL are now working to rebalance the recycling and garden waste rounds which is expected to lead to the roll-out of additional recycling (commingled, paper, card and garden waste) collections to both newly built and existing households who don't currently receive doorstep recycling. This rebalancing work has identified 1,500 properties requiring a paper and card week

change (i.e. they maintained the same day collection). These properties have been written to and the change implemented. This change allows for both the capacity needed for new housing growth and new properties to be added.

Once the work on the paper and card rounds is completed, we will commence work in rebalancing the commingled and garden waste rounds which should lead to similar outcomes in being able to accommodate additional housing growth and rollout the kerbside collections to those households that do not currently have these services.

Waste Services team

- 6.7 The team are heavily involved in the Waste LGR Workstream and are the Technical Leads on the Street Cleansing and Open Spaces Workstream. We took part in the recent Grime Scene initiative and the Salterbeck in Workington and Greenacres in Wigton clean-up events.

We are supporting Enforcement and Education colleagues with their Trade Waste Project in Keswick.

A member of the team has completed 'Super User' Training on the Whitespace platform.

We worked jointly with Tivoli to provide volunteering opportunities for over 30 students through the Inspira organisation. They litter picked and weeded the Harrington Marina and beach area. The marina area was immaculate when they had finished their work.

Tivoli Services

- 6.8 In addition to their contract role Tivoli provided support at the following events.
- Salterbeck, Workington - Operation Respect in the form of labour (including a sweeper) and Materials
 - Green Acres, Wigton - Operation Respect in the form of labour and Materials (bags & litter pickers)
 - Workington MP Mark Jenkinson's grot spot campaign – Helping clean some non-contractual areas
 - Enforcement and Education with the Grime Scene – fly tipping day in Town, collection of bulky items, supply and delivery of security fencing. Delivery and removal of the items
 - The crossover of Workington Partnership Team + transportation of machinery
 - Workington Town Council with the loan of plant and donation of summer bedding
 - Volunteer litter picking groups with removal of bagged waste, supply of bags, litter pickers and hi-viz vests.

7.0 Leisure and Tourism Portfolio: Cllr Anthony Markley

E-bike and cycling promotion

- 7.1 Following the E-bike destinations report, Lancaster and Lancaster were commissioned to upload 30 routes to Kamoot, an outdoors planning app. The routes have now been promoted on the Visit Allerdale website, Facebook, at the Solway Coast Cycling Festival and at the Tourism Breakfast briefing.

The next step is focus on the business facing plan. Using information from Lancaster and Lancaster we plan to encourage businesses help Allerdale to become and E-bike destination to encourage a range of cyclist to this are.

Fishing Faces

- 7.2 Last year, the Solway Firth Partnerships were commissioned to deliver the Fishing Faces project. The project reveals the faces behind the fishing industry in the aims to encourage visitors to support the local industry and Taste Cumbria. Stories featuring are fishermen, producers, a café owner, the RNLi and many others are now on the website along with the videos produced. Leaflets have now been printed and planned to be distributed to businesses.

Tourism Breakfast Briefing, 19 July 2022

- 7.3 For the first time, we held a joint Breakfast Briefing with both Copeland Borough Council and Carlisle City Council. Around 25 businesses joined us at Theatre by the Lake in Keswick to find out the latest tourism updates. Each of the Tourism Officers gave an update on what is happening in each of the areas. Following this we were joined by Nick Lancaster from Lancaster and Lancaster who promoted the benefits of helping Allerdale become an e-bike destination. The final presentation was delivered by We Are Intro, from Carlisle. This presentation focused on the 'Doing all Digital' campaign that was created while working with Allerdale Borough Council using the Welcome Back Fund. The breakfast briefing ended with a Q&A which were largely focused events in the three councils.

Businesses expressed that they don't believe events that are not managed by the council are promoted enough. Following this, information on how we promote events has been posted on Facebook and in the Business E-newsletter.

We plan to host our next breakfast briefing along with Copeland Borough Council and Carlisle City Council again.

STEAM tourism market intelligence

- 7.4 Latest figures reveal that Cumbria's tourism sector continues to lag well behind pre-Covid levels. The statistics for 2021 come from the Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor, commonly known as 'STEAM'. The annual assessment has taken place for more than 20 years and is produced on behalf of a partnership led by Cumbria Tourism and supported by Cumbria's District Councils including ourselves and the Lake District National Park Authority. Key findings were:

- the total revenue generated across the county by the sector was £2.6billion in 2021, still 16% behind 2019 when revenue was £3.1billion;
- whilst visitor numbers increased last year compared to 2020, the various lockdowns meant visitor numbers remained 23% down on 2019;

- compared to 2019, day visitors were 24% down and staying visitors 12% down in 2021;
- there were 17% fewer full-time equivalent roles in 2021, compared to 2019 (a drop of 6,286 FTEs, which is estimated to equate to 10,809 actual jobs);
- in Allerdale in 2021, we had 9.6 million visitor days (11.4 million in 2019), generating £438 million spend in our local economy (£491 million in 2019), supporting 5,600 jobs (6,380 in 2019).

Web and social media performance

- 7.5 Visit Allerdale' social media platform is continuing to grow after making use of all the elements available. The Visit Allerdale Instagram account is back up and running. As well as regular post on this account, we have made use of Instagram stories. In the lead up to events we have countdown stories, and we also use the element to share information from other tourism businesses/destinations.

Instagram 'reels' is a relatively new feature which allows you to create videos. A recent reel we created was based on Maryport Aquarium which managed to reach 8,338 accounts.

We continue to update the Visit Allerdale website with new promotional materials and events.

Sport and Leisure

- 7.6 FMG have been appointed to do the next phase of work planning for leisure in Keswick. Over the next 6 months FMG will undertake an options appraisal, feasibility study and concept design for the development of appropriate leisure facilities in Keswick.

10p swims have been extremely popular again this summer with a total of 3945 swims taken up through the scheme during the holidays.

The feasibility study for the development of a BMX track in Workington has been completed. Next steps will be to look at the recommendations from the report and if there's commitment to progress an appropriate option, source the funding and agree a management approach.

More projects funded through the SIIF Sports Development fund 20/21 and 21/22 have been completed including a new all-weather wicket at Braithwaite and control signals for orienteering. An underspend from last year has been used on two further projects in Broughton and Oughterside.

Culture

- 7.7 The West Cumbria Cultural Strategy is complete, this has been developed over a number of months with input from a wide range of cultural and wider partners. Work will now start on the development of an action plan.

8.0 Customer Experience and Innovation Portfolio: Cllr Alan Pitcher

Digital and technology services

- 8.1 To ensure we are best positioned for transfer into Cumberland Council we have begun the process of removing servers that have been archived and are no longer

required and removed aged versions of Windows, SQL etc. from servers and desktop devices.

We have also started the process of upgrading the virtual infrastructure that supports our server estate to improve functionality, security and stability upgrades, which are being undertaken in a staged manner to ensure no disruption to services.

Our work on cleaning up the Active Directory is nearing its end. The process has included updating all telephone numbers for officers and Members, removing disabled accounts and cleaning up the email system.

The Firewalls are being updated to enable virtual domains that will allow us to create secure zones ensuring that Allerdale Waste Services, Workington Town Council, Cumberland Council and Allerdale all operate in their own private networks.

Public Services Network (PSN)

- 8.2 The Council have received notification from HMG Cabinet Office that we have achieved compliance with PSN for 2022/23.

Customer & Digital

- 8.3 Time for staff changes in Customer & Fulfilment Services with a number of colleagues departing to pastures new, some internally and others leaving the organisation. Lisa McCourt is taking an exciting new role with our own Risk & Audit team, and to Kelly Glaister our Service Manager for the past six years soon to be leaving the Council to take up a position externally. Sad as we are to say goodbye to our colleagues, we wish them all the best in their new roles and the same to Jill Rider, taking over as Hub Leader and to Phil Hughes being successfully appointed as Customer & Fulfilment Services Manager.

Over recent weeks we have been carrying out a customer survey asking customers how easy or difficult they found contacting the Council, and what their contact preferences are.

We asked our customers **'How easy was it to contact the Council today?'**

92% of customers told us they found it very or reasonably easy to contact the council which is really positive news given that one of our corporate objectives is to make it easy for customers to contact us.

1. How easy was it to contact the Council today?

[More Details](#)

● Very easy	172
● Reasonably easy	65
● Not very easy	12
● Difficult	6



When asked ‘How you would prefer to be able to contact the Council?’

83% told us they prefer to be able to phone us, 10% prefer to go on-line with 7% opting to travel to a Council Office. This information from our customers shows that we are on the right track in allocating our staff resources effectively by focusing on phone, on-line and an appointment service for our face-to-face customers.

2. How would you prefer to be able to contact the Council

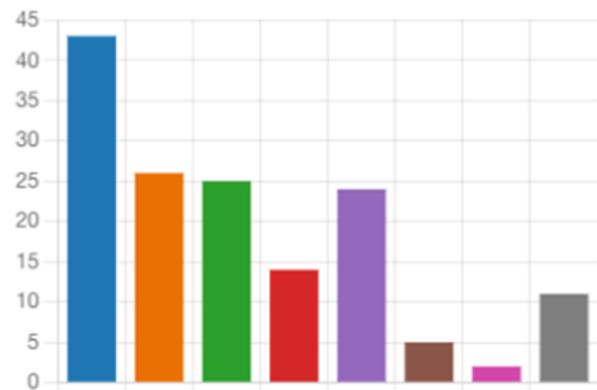
[More Details](#)

● Telephone	211
● Travel to the Council Offices to s...	18
● Online	25
● By letter	1
● Request a Home visit	0



As part of the exercise, we also noted which area the customers were contacting us from and there were no great surprises in the distribution of customer contact across the district as illustrated in the graph below.

● Workington	43
● Maryport	26
● Cockermouth	25
● Keswick	14
● Wigton	24
● Aspatria	5
● Silloth	2
● Out of area	11



As part of Local Government Reorganisation Allerdale and Copeland Customer Service staff recently visited colleagues at Cumbria County Council Service Centre in Carlisle to enable district council customer service staff to gain a greater understanding of county council services, the visit was really successful and reciprocal visits by county staff coming to visit the districts are now being arranged as part of the LGR readiness within the Customer and Digital workstream.

Inclusion and Diversity

- 8.3 In-house training sessions are being planned to ensure that staff are aware of the importance of inclusion and diversity in their day-to-day roles and the importance of ensuring that our services are accessible to everyone and working to support teams

to make any necessary changes which will in turn allow us to best advocate for our community's needs.

We have secured funding with the Community Safety Partnership to deliver a training programme for professionals, the focus of which is on creating sustainable and positive approaches to tackling anti-social behaviour. We are one of three local authorities to be part of this pilot project and will take part in a rigorous evaluation exercise.

This means we can start the planning phase for the training programme. The programme will be run by a highly credible organisation who have a long-standing track record for delivering excellent outcomes. This programme will take place in November, and we will be reaching out soon for expressions of interest for the limited places.

Allerdale Local Focus Hub

- 8.4 Allerdale Community Alcohol Partnership (CAP) has won a national award for its work tackling underage drinking and promoting the health and wellbeing of local young people. One of the key factors to the success of this project was the delivery of the Young Health Champions initiative at Netherhall School, Maryport. 28 young people have now achieved a level two qualification which will allow them to support the health and well-being of their fellow pupils. An award of £250 was pledged to the Young Health Champions for the CAP of the Year prize and the Senior Manager, Community Safety and Resilience at Allerdale Borough Council attended Netherhall School end of year award ceremony to present them with their prize.

Allerdale Local Focus Hub partners are joining forces to help tackle the issue of fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour in the borough as part of an ongoing multi-agency collaboration known as Operation Respect.

With the first of four events taking place during Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) Awareness Week (19-25 July), the Operation Respect Community Days consist of four key activities taking place throughout the borough and a social media campaign that aims to highlight services available to residents across Allerdale.

The events have been organised so that members of the public have the chance to engage with representatives of agencies covering housing, homelessness, crime prevention, fire safety, how to budget, and how to create a cleaner, greener Allerdale. There will also be a focus on Food and Fuel hardship at all of the Community Days being led by our local housing partners.

The first Operation Respect Community Day at Hillside, Maryport and the second at the Oval Centre, Salterbeck, Workington was a huge success.

9.0 Finance and Legal Portfolio: Cllr Colin Sharpe

Revenues and Benefits

- 9.1 Both the revenues and benefits teams are working on alignment of documents and processes as part of the preparation towards local government reorganisation.

The Revenues team are planning to introduce an online form in September which will allow residents to apply for discounts and exemptions in respect of their council tax in a simpler and more convenient method.

Officers continue to deliver the Council Tax Energy Rebate to help households with rising energy bills. As of 26 August, we have paid 26,685 households directly into their bank accounts and issued 13,347 Post Office vouchers.

The visiting team have been busy over the summer conducting the annual empty homes review, and have contacted or visited approximately 1,600 empty properties.

Legal and Information Governance

- 9.2 The Legal Services Team continues to support the Council in the delivery of its priorities and objectives across the board. Work continues in respect of Planning and Building Control enforcement matters, Housing enforcement, Estates and Procurement. Work is also ongoing to support the Flimby Community Governance Review. The Team continues to provide support to the larger projects in Maryport, advising on procurement and contractual matters.

The Information Governance Team continues with business as usual, and both Legal and Information Governance are heavily involved in the LGR programme in a number of workstreams.

Statement of Accounts 2021-22

- 9.3 In line with the statutory timetable the Council's unaudited 2021-22 Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement (AGS) was published on the Council's website on 29 July 2022. The audit of the 2021-22 Statement of Accounts is scheduled to take place during October and November 2022, after which the audited Statement of Accounts will be presented for approval by the Audit Committee.

Enterprise Resource Planning system (ERP)

- 9.4 Since the last update, configuration work has been completed by members of the finance team, to allow for the collection of forecasting information from budget holders. The team has continued to support budget holders in their use of the system, including its use in the collection of forecasting information for 2022-23.

Local Government Reorganisation – Finance and Commercial

- 9.5 Members of the finance team are participating in several workstreams within the LGR Financial and Commercial Theme to support the work required to establish the new Unitary Authorities.

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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