

**South Lakeland District Council**  
**Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
**Friday, 27 August 2021**  
**Portfolio Holder Report - Health, Wellbeing and**  
**Poverty Alleviation**

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**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Suzie Pye

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To work with other tiers of government, community groups and other relevant partners to enhance the health and wellbeing of residents.

Alleviate the harmful effects of poverty in the District, looking at issues to address those who are disadvantaged, focusing on fairness and reducing disadvantage and inequalities.

Working with key partners concerning welfare reforms.

Nominated representative on the Health and Wellbeing Board as appropriate.

The relationship of the Council with its citizens; civic participation and the Council plan objectives around leisure, health and wellbeing and working with communities.

Leading on inequality, deprivation and population health.

Working with key partners concerning public health and community safety.

#### Polices, plans and strategies

- Community Strategy
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Cumbria Joint Public Health Strategy
- Community Safety Plan

#### Key Areas

- Public Health
- Community Development
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy
- Voluntary Sector in relation to Public Health and Wellbeing Sector
- Health and Safety
- Poverty alleviation
- Young People/ projects
- Emerging community issues

## **Public Health**

Prior to the Covid crisis, the Committee held a workshop looking into Population Health and how the Council could address the wider determinants of health. Events have moved on since then and the Population Health agenda is being taken forward through the South Lakeland Health and Wellbeing Partnership and through influencing the Population Health Strategy being developed by the Population Health Strategic Group led by Morecambe Bay CCG.

Throughout the first lockdown in 2020, the Council funded the distribution of 16,000 self-help guides produced by 'Every Life Matters' to households and organisations across South Lakeland. The 'Wellbeing and Mental Health during Covid-19' guide included useful advice on how to look after your mental health during the pandemic. Council Locality Officers also distributed posters to key services areas regarding male suicide and the support available. The Council has continued to distribute wellbeing messages throughout the pandemic as well as direct communities to appropriate support networks.

In order to continue to protect the Health of our residents and visitors the Council has continued to reinforce safety messages within communities and across communication platforms reminding people of the importance of wearing a face mask, encouraging social distancing and the stay at home message during each lockdown period.

The Council's Health & Environment Team continue to work as part of the Government's Test & Trace scheme to help keep our residents safe and contain the spread of coronavirus. Environmental Health Specialists and Covid Marshals have ensured that Coronavirus Regulations are enforced, and that businesses have been safe to operate when restrictions have allowed. They will continue to work with businesses as we proceed with reopening.

The Council's Environmental Health Officers are continuing to work on the Government's Track and Trace scheme to help keep residents safe and reduce the spread of Coronavirus.

## **Community Development and Voluntary Sector in relation to Public Health and Wellbeing Sector**

In partnership with the Customer, Commercial Services and People portfolio, the Council has worked with a number of community groups across the district to improve local play areas such as Abbot Hall, Maryfell, Rayrigg Meadow and Millerground. These improvements have encouraged young families to utilise the facilities available, which in turn supports their health and wellbeing.

During the Covid-19, pandemic 99 volunteer groups were established across Cumbria. SLDC has been part of the Cumbria Local Resilience Forum establishing support through the emergency support helpline for people at high risk and those who do not have support available from family or friends. The helpline coordinated the supply of essential food, medicines and supplies. The Community Resilience group is continuing to work closely with community volunteer groups to match requests with local support networks.

As a result of the pandemic Cumbria has seen widespread community and voluntary sector support and informal support, including neighbourhood WhatsApp groups and community Facebook groups, alongside a commitment from existing community emergency planning groups, local churches, faith groups, and formal voluntary sector organisations who have been working with the County Council and partners including District Councils and NHS.

## **Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy and Young People/ Projects**

The South Cumbria Community Partnership (CSP) plan 2021/22 utilises effective collaboration between South Lakeland District Council, Barrow Borough Council, Cumbria Constabulary and partner agencies including Safer Cumbria.

A key deliverable in the 2021/22 CSP Plan is *To help safeguard people against being exploited and abused and support those with mental health problems.*: The CSP is working through the Local Focus Hubs to proactively offer support and intervention for potential victims of domestic abuse (DA) and exploitation/ people trafficking. The CSP helped roll out the “*Its not OK*” campaign with Cumbria County Council (CCC) and Police to encourage reporting. During Covid, the CSP worked with organisations like Women’s Community Matters to proactively support victims of DA through contact and financial support.

The five priorities for 2021/22 are:

- Protecting vulnerable people and domestic abuse
- Alcohol and Drug abuse / supply and violent crime
- Ensure the needs of rural communities are mainstreamed within our partnership working
- Anti-social behaviour
- Emerging Community Safety issues

The CSP has been working with partners to tackle the above priorities whilst recognising the pressures arising from Covid-19.

The grant agreement between Police & Crime Commissioner and the Community Safety Partnership ends on 30th September 2021 and is not being renewed. Support is instead going to the Local Focus Hubs – a Police and local agencies partnership where issues are discussed at a local level and tackled collaboratively. Strategic CSP’s are looking at their role in this new funding and structural environment so they can continue to help reduce crime and support vulnerable residents.

## Domestic Abuse crimes and incidents – 2020/2021:

The number of crimes were low during February 2021 resulting in a reduction in crimes for quarter four 2021/22. However, numbers may increase again when lockdown ends.

Total Crimes And Domestic Abuse Incidents			
Year	Quarter	Total Crimes	Total Domestic Abuse incidents
2019/20	Q1	1405	239
2019/20	Q2	1447	245
2019/20	Q3	1414	228
2019/20	Q4	1352 ( <b>annual total 5618</b> )	271 (annual total 983)
2020/21	Q1	1084	243
2020/21	Q2	1327	270
2020/21	Q3	1048	238
2020/21	Q4	837 ( <b>annual total 4296</b> )	195 (annual total 946)
2021/22	Q1		
Source: Cumbria Constabulary			

### SLDC officers and members now meet quarterly as a Safeguarding Forum to:

- Ensure staff and members are able to understand and support safeguarding at work.
- Ensure safeguarding policies and procedures are up to date and carried out effectively.
- Assist in the completion of any audits.

David Sykes, the SLDC Designated Safeguarding Lead, Chairs the Safeguarding Forum, which is attended by the PH Cllr Suzie Pye and key members of staff from across the Council. Current work includes work with the County Council to improve multi agency working around vulnerable and complex needs homeless people and safety for staff and members both within Council premises and out on business in the area.

Meanwhile, SLDC, in collaboration with local partners (for example Every Life Matters and Dignity in Dementia), have run member and staff awareness briefings on adult and child safeguarding as well as domestic abuse and modern slavery.

### Young People

David Sykes (SLDC's Designated Safeguarding Lead) attends the Cumbria Children's Trust Board South Lakeland Sub group – the South Lakes Locality Children and Families Partnership Group – The Group draws together voluntary, education and public sector organisations to identify priorities and action plan for improving lives of children. The chair reports to the Cumbria Children's Trust Board, together with the chairs of the other sub groups across Cumbria. The current programme seeks to be informed of needs driven by the pandemic through close working with the South Lakeland Resilience Forum. The Group's current focus is on improvements to support services for teenagers, promoting healthy weight and physical activity and services for under 5's.

## **Health and Safety**

The Council has a duty to inspect workplaces to ensure they are obeying the law and help employers to understand the importance of health and safety and investigate any accidents or complaints reported. Inspections have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic however during the periods of time that restrictions were lifted the Council was very successful in supporting the Health and Safety Executive through an enforcement role by conducting inspections to ensure that businesses are adhering to regulations to prevent the spread of Coronavirus as well offering guidance and advice.

## **Poverty Alleviation, Financial Resilience, and Emerging Community Issues.**

Since the Council formed the Building Financial Resilience (BFR) Group in 2016/17, it has been working with partners to reduce financial hardship across communities.

An initial action plan developed by the BFR group in March 2018 resulted in:

- 90 local organisations signed up to MARS / Compass in Cumbria multi-agency referral system for vulnerable clients to access the help they need
- An Ulverston STEM day and Skills Fest, Kendal College for school leavers and other young people
- Work with Cumbria LEP on sector panels, enterprise advisers in schools and Cumbria Careers Hub.
- SLDC, Agility Eco and CAfS launching the LEAP / Cold to Cosy Scheme in South Lakeland tackling fuel poverty and financial hardship.
- School holiday play and eat provision – SLDC/ GLL Leisure

On 6th October 2020, following 6 months of Covid, South Lakeland's Full Council declared a Poverty Emergency with this background:

- The claimant count increased in South Lakeland by 211%, compared to last year and in the Lake District National Park by 346%, all well in excess of the county and national increases (94% and 115% respectively).
- South Lakeland and Eden having the two highest district furlough rates in England – in South Lakeland over a quarter (26%) of eligible employments were furloughed in February 2021 .
- The highest percentage increase of people on Universal Credit in Cumbria (over a year) was in South Lakeland (189%)
- Kendal Foodbank: 2012 total: 7340 meals. 2020, total: 35,000 meals

The subsequent SLDC Council Plan 2021 included targets of:

- halve the proportion of households in poverty and eliminate child poverty
- providing energy advice and additional support to households in fuel poverty
- commissioning services through the third sector

Officers and the Portfolio Holder now meet regularly to coordinate SLDC's response and working with County groups (for example the Cumbria Poverty Group) are tracking data and developing an internal action plan to reduce poverty across South Lakeland.

Covid also prompted a re-assessment of priorities for the SLDC led Building Financial Resilience group.

At a meeting in early 2021, the group decided to focus on:

- A Poverty Truth Commission for South Lakeland
- Rural poverty
- Skills and Employment
- Food
- Lobbying

SLDC, led by Councillor Suzie Pye, held an initial Poverty Truth Commission for South Lakeland meeting with interested partners in June and have since met individually with partners to explore their commitment to the project.

Funding from SLDC and the South Lakeland Health and Wellbeing Partnership has been approved. Discussions are ongoing to determine which organisation(s) might lead the project, recruit and host a project officer. A second steering group meeting, to be scheduled in early September, will then seek to agree the lead organisation and associated forward plan and then inform and monitor delivery thereafter.

The first meeting of the Skills and Employment group was held in June with Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, Industry reps, Chamber of Commerce, Education, Youth services, local authorities and 3rd sector. Work is underway on a website resource making it easier to access the right specialist help at the right time. The group will support collaborative promotions and outreach across South Lakeland in September around access to skills and employment and promoting the website.

A new Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Kendal Youth Hub launched in July - the hub will assist young people to get into training and/or employment by building confidence and employability skills and providing wrap around support to young adults, particularly those who have barriers to work. SLDC will work with DWP work coaches and youth workers with support for services that SLDC deliver, i.e. housing options, benefits as well as signposting our residents appropriately to access the Hub.

SLDC are active members of the South Lakeland Community Resilience Group - the Council supported local food initiatives to ensure that all pupils entitled to free school meals continued to receive them during half term holiday weeks.

We have continued to distribute Period Poverty Products during lockdown to 32 locations throughout the district to support those members of our communities that may otherwise not be able to readily access these products.

“The Tin Can’ Cook Books were distributed through a number of Food Banks in the district during lock down to support our communities with creative meal ideas that can be made from shelf stable products”

<b>Signed off by</b>	<b>Date sent</b>	<b>Date Signed off</b>
Section 151 Officer	N/A	N/A
Monitoring Officer	N/A	N/A
CMT	11/08/2021	15/08/2021

<b>Circulated to</b>	<b>Date sent</b>
Lead Specialist	11/08/2021
Human Resources Lead Specialist	N/A
Communications Team	N/A
Leader	N/A
Committee Chairman	N/A
Portfolio Holder	11/08/2021
Ward Councillor(s)	N/A
Committee	N/A
Executive (Cabinet)	N/A
Council	N/A