

**South Lakeland District Council**  
**Council**  
**Tuesday, 14 December 2021**  
**Health, Wellbeing and Poverty Alleviation Portfolio**  
**Holder Report**

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**Portfolio:** 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**

The Councils Health & Environment Team continue to work as part of the Governments 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 into the festive period with new restrictions in place requiring face coverings in certain businesses.

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

The Locality team have been working alongside the Events team working with Kendal Youth Zone to enable their activities on our parks such as the pop up music events and the cinema screenings. They have been working with Active Cumbria sharing the outdoor resources we have that are free and available for all to use to help with health and mental wellbeing. There is a link with Active Cumbria to the Park Play and we will be contributing to the development of weekly Park Play sessions at a pilot park in the near future. This will be similar to Park Run, which is being held in Rothay Park on a weekly basis making use of our land, alongside many other outdoor activities, runs, swimming and cycle events.

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

South Cumbria CSP's 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

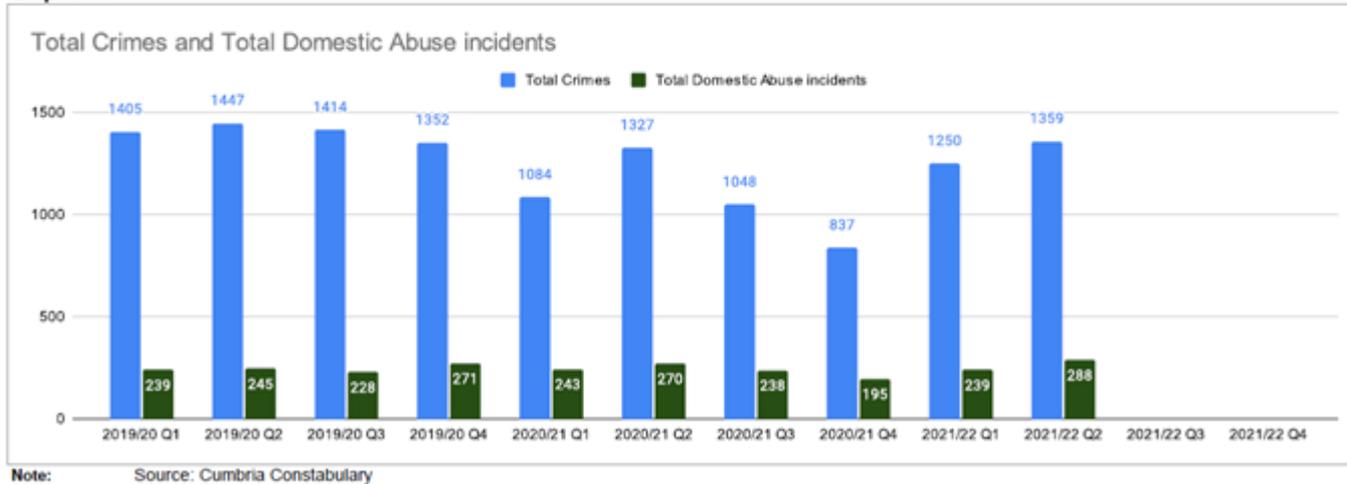
The CSP is establishing stronger links with Safer Cumbria's community safety group and the developing Local Focus Hubs in Kendal and Barrow.

Projects underway include:

- The healthy relationships offer will be made to schools from September onwards. It may also form part of the offer as part of the It's Not OK campaign.
- DHR Training delivered 29/04/21.
- Ensuring appropriate provision to aid victims to cope and recover from domestic abuse is effective and sustainable – based on a Changing Futures model which supporting people with multiple complex needs
- Embedding working practices to ensure Local Focus Hubs and Community Safety Partnerships work together to address local issues via a countywide approach – New Terms of Reference are being agreed and referral process in place.
- Currently there are 2 Domestic homicide reviews in South Lakes facilitated by the CSP.

## Council Plan Performance Monitoring Report Section 3.53 - Health and environment targets

Graphic 18



The Portfolio Holder attends the **Safer Cumbria** Board, which recently reviewed priorities for the partnership's programme in 2022 onwards. The meeting considered the refresh and assessment of evidence base November 2021. The Safer Cumbria Board will confirm its priorities, which are likely to promote the role of Public Health in Safer Cumbria. The PH has promoted the importance of continued focus on addressing Domestic Abuse, continuing the healthy relationships work in schools and developing a focus on the causes of rural crime.

The quarterly **SLDC Safeguarding Forum** is strengthening SLDC procedures around safeguarding in the following areas:

- Taking steps to make safeguarding training mandatory for employees and members
- Improving the coordination and awareness of SLDC safeguarding reporting processes
- Reviewing and raising awareness of staff procedures for safe home visits in the District
- Raising the profile and supporting the Changing Futures project in Cumbria - improved support for homeless people with complex needs (but below the MARAC/MAPPA threshold) and improving multi agency communications and joint working.
- Other work ongoing includes implementing a system where domestic abuse victims can seek help in a safe way at SLDC offices and improving SLDC staff security at reception areas.

### Young People

SLDC is a partner on the Children and Young People's Working Group (SLDC PH member) - This year Anti-bullying week will be marked by a county wide event and Safeguarding kits comprising a stress ball, fidget toy, torch key ring and spikey (to be used in a bottle top) have been collated for distribution.

Period poverty boxes placed across the District for girls and young women during Covid (brought on by schools shutting) - scheme still in operation. Funding for this has come from the Poverty Alleviation fund (created from Members' unclaimed allowances).

SLDC Portfolio Holder (PH) is on the CCC Panel for holiday and activity programme - bids from local orgs to put on activities and lunches for vulnerable young people and children receiving Free School Meals.

<https://cumbria.gov.uk/childrensservices/childrenandfamilies/cfis/holidayactivity/holidayactivities.asp>

SLDC officers and Councillors are collaborating with the work coaches at Kendal Youth Hub which operates out of the South Lakes Foyer and is run by local DWP representatives. The team at Kendal Youth Hub help bridge the transition from leaving mainstream education to entering employment, apprenticeship, or further studies. They engage with 16-24 year olds, particularly those with barriers to work, to help build confidence and develop employability skills.

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

The Council Plan includes 39 targets, 11 of which fall under the 'Fairer South Lakeland' council priority. Principal among them is the target to halve the proportion of households in poverty and eliminate child poverty.

The Council tracks **South Lakeland poverty indicators** on the **strategic project log** page on SharePoint – these figures are updated monthly and include:

- Indices of multiple deprivation
- % and total numbers of children in low income families
- % and total numbers of Households in fuel poverty
- Emergency food parcels numbers

A report was presented to Cabinet in October outlining the Council's work on poverty and gained approval to authorise the use of £20k of unclaimed councillor allowances held within the Poverty Alleviation Reserve to contribute to the formation of a Poverty Truth Commission.

Why develop a poverty truth commission in South Lakes?

Although affluent, South Lakeland has pockets of poverty, low income, poor housing, unemployment, isolation and loneliness:

- There are significant health issues as well as COVID – For example obesity and age related health issues
- The Economic and Social Impacts of COVID – unemployment, latent unemployment in furlough scheme, significant rise in universal credit claimants
- Because of the sparse, rural nature of the District, many of these problems are hidden – It costs more to live in rural areas and accessing services and decent housing is challenging.

Formed in 2016 the South Lakeland Building Financial Resilience Partnership developed an initial action plan covering better referral systems, access to skills and education, economic development and fuel poverty.

In 2020 the Building Financial Resilience Group, formed sub-groups focusing on Rural Inequalities, Food Poverty, Skills and Employment, and the development of a Poverty Truth Commission.

Work to develop a Poverty Truth Commission is designed to run alongside the other three sub-groups, complementing and informing them over time.

**A Poverty Truth Commission (PTC)** brings together a small group of people who have lived through severe financial difficulties, 'community commissioners', to share their experiences with each other before sharing them with 'civic and business commissioners',

key individuals from organisations that the community commissioners have identified as relevant to their experience.

The two sets of commissioners then meet regularly, both individually and collectively, and identify key areas for improvement. These areas are addressed by the relevant organisations with a view to helping improve policies, processes and ways of working. This evidence-based approach to policy making is designed to build trust in the community, better client / agency interactions and a more tailored empathic approach. The whole process takes two to three years and typically costs between £60 - 90k

- South Lakeland's PTC promises to be unique as the first PTC with a largely rural focus, which the national Poverty Truth Network is particularly keen to investigate and support.
- We held an initial start-up meeting in May 2021 with strong support from relevant partner agencies including the DWP, Citizen's Advice, Manna House, South Lakes Housing and County and District Councils.
- We held a series of 1:1 meetings with key partner agencies exploring funding and hosting capacities
- We have secured £20k of SLDC funding and £40k from CCG (Public Health Investment Fund) (typically a PTC costs £90k over 3 years)
- We have now agreed in principle a host organisation to take the PTC forward (Cumbria CVS).

The **Food Poverty Group** has focused on establishing and strengthening links between the food hubs in South Lakes. Topics discussed include:

- Sustainability, financial and remit
- Referral routes, including training and support
- Food hubs service

The South Lakeland Food Forum is facilitated by Cumbria County Council officers, along with the SLDC Portfolio Holder for Health, Wellbeing and Poverty Alleviation. The team is continuing to support the 25 individual voluntary and community Food Hubs which have stood up across South Lakeland and also collectively supporting them through a South Lakeland Food Forum.

The Food Forum meets every 4 to 6 weeks and offers an opportunity for the co-ordinators to come together, to share experience and ideas to support each other with particular issues or concerns. Over the few months they have been meeting, they have grown into a strong, energetic and highly effective group. The Community Team are facilitating the Food Forum and continue to introduce a range of partners who share details of their services and encourage the volunteers to signpost people who may need support.

During the pandemic, these groups of volunteers rose to the challenge of supporting their communities to ensure there was ready availability of food if and when it was needed. They each took a slightly different approach, which included lunch clubs, hot meal deliveries, community cupboards/pantries and community fridges, drawing on the unique assets and opportunities within their communities. These volunteers go above and beyond to sensitively and discreetly support individuals within their community.

While food may have been the catalyst, which brought the communities together and cemented relationships, the groups are now looking to the long term and how they can support their communities to thrive and be more resilient. They are looking at

projects which bring the community together and adding value to the work they have already started.

Some are considering tree-planting projects; others are concentrating on arts and crafts activities, while others are actively involved in training their volunteers in Mental Health awareness. They are supporting each other with their ideas and introducing each other to the expertise within their own communities (e.g. arborists). What started as a series of food initiatives supporting people at a time of need is growing into something much more sustainable and a springboard for even more. The **skills and employment group** led on an autumn campaign promoting access and opportunities for skills and education in South Lakeland with an item on the Cumbria Careers Hub. South Lakeland News also raised the profile of the new to the area Pennine Community Credit Union, the Cold to Cosy Scheme and SLDC's Handy Person Scheme.

SLDC are exploring the nature of **rural inequalities** in South Lakeland with partners to identify how the communities they work with are affected by barriers to accessing services and their relationship to rurality. So far issues such as pride, resistance to help and relationship with debt have been identified as barriers to accessing services for rural communities. Conversations are ongoing with partners and the results will be discussed at the next full Building Financial Resilience meeting in January.

Key themes from the conversations are:

- Reluctance to seek help.
- Rural infrastructure (transport, high cost local shops, lack of service facilities).
- Digital literacy/connectivity.

We have continued to distribute Period Poverty Products during lockdown and beyond with a total spend of £2,950. We distributed to 8 schools, 10 food banks, 11 shops and 3 resident associations. Over 10k products were delivered, some of which were eco products 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”

### Tracking Information

Signed off by	Date sent	Date Signed off
Section 151 Officer	N/A	N/A
Monitoring Officer	N/A	N/A
CMT	N/A	N/A

Circulated to	Date sent
Lead Specialist	03/12/21
Human Resources Lead Specialist	N/A
Communications Team	N/A
Leader	N/A
Committee Chairman	N/A
Portfolio Holder	03/12/21
Ward Councillor(s)	N/A

<b>Circulated to</b>	<b>Date sent</b>
Committee	N/A
Executive (Cabinet)	N/A
Council	N/A