

Report of:	To:	Date
Councillor Roger Berry, Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder	Council	8 July 2021

**Executive Report: Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder**

**1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1** To inform council of progress on key objectives and the current position on issues within the Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio as set out below.

**2. Housing**

**2.1 Funding to Support Homelessness Prevention**

I am pleased to report that earlier this year we were successful with a bid for funding from The Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) under the Cold Weather Fund with a view to assisting rough sleepers and anyone else in need of accommodation during the winter period. The bid was linked to the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) which kicks in when the temperature drops to zero degrees or below for three consecutive nights. The additional £6,000 funding helped to support this work.

- 2.2** Emergency accommodation provision is vital to protecting vulnerable people during the most severe weather. We also used this funding to support rough sleepers into longer-term support and to ensure two beds were available for between January and April for anyone presenting as homeless testing positive for Covid.

- 2.3** We also successfully bid for £5,000 as part of the Protect Plus Fund from MHCLG. This funding opportunity was launched in January as additional support to keep rough sleepers off the street during the pandemic. The funding secured five units of self-contained accommodation between January and April and enabled fifteen rough sleepers to be accommodated and provide them with the necessary support for them to be able to move on to secure accommodation.

- 2.4** We were awarded over £31,000 from MHCLG to enable us to support victims of domestic abuse up to the end of March 2022. Working together with Fylde Council we are funding Fylde Coast Women's Aid to provide a support worker and awareness training across the two boroughs.

- 2.5** We received over £70,000 as part of a new scheme from MHCLG to support ex-offenders into their own private rented sector tenancies. Again we will be working in partnership with Fylde Council to provide rent in advance, rent bonds, white goods/essential items and tenancy training to ex-offenders, as well as working with Human Kind to provide necessary support.
- 2.6** In addition as part of the ongoing Rough Sleeper Initiative (Year 4). We have been awarded over £40,000 to provide rent in advance/rent bonds for rough sleepers, as well as providing two units of accommodation under the Housing First model and a Housing First Engagement Officer. The Housing First model prioritises getting people quickly into stable homes. From this point, any other support needs they might have – such as interventions to address alcohol and drug dependency, physical and/or mental health problems – are addressed through coordinated and intensive support. The model is specifically tailored for homeless people with complex and multiple needs.

### **3. Disabled Facilities Grants**

- 3.1** The delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) has been significantly affected during the Pandemic. Many clients are in the clinically extremely vulnerable group and so works had to be paused in many cases. Updated risk assessments and safe systems of work were implemented and became of even greater importance than normal to ensure adaptations could start to be delivered as soon as it was possible. Despite the setbacks owing to covid we still completed 163 DFGs during 20/21 together with 473 minor adaptations. The service is in a strong position to make up lost ground this financial year.

### **4. Wyre Beach Management Scheme**

- 4.1** Phase 1 - Rock armour protection to toe of Rossall South seawall.

Conditional planning approval was granted 3 June 2021. Owing to condition 8 which sets limits on noise during construction a noise consultant has been appointed to provide a report on the works proposals and mitigation measures to reduce noise during the works.

An application has been submitted to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) for a licence to undertake the works.

A number of service diversions are required to facilitate the construction of a haul road between Jubilee Gardens and the beach access ramp adjacent to Café Cove. The administration for these, such as acceptance forms, invoicing and payment has now been completed allowing the work to progress.

The current programme predicts work starting on site 6 September 2021 with the initial site compound and enabling works through to starting the permanent works 11 February 2022 with completion 7 July 2022.

**4.2** Phase 2 - Installation of new rock beach groynes from Kingsway Cleveleys to Model Yacht Lake Fleetwood.

Jacobs are progressing the Environmental Impact Assessment which will support the Planning and MMO licence application.

Last month the Planning Policy and Economic Development Portfolio Holder approved a report to sign up to the government's Coastal Concordat and this allows coastal authorities to streamline the planning/MMO process.

**4.3 Flood Forum**

The Flood Forum has continued to meet remotely during the pandemic via the Teams app. The last meeting was on 10 June.

The council has continued to work with partner agencies (Lancashire County Council, the Environment Agency, United Utilities and the Wyre Rivers Trust) and local Flood Action Groups to consider and resolve flooding issues in the borough.

Extensive works have been undertaken or are due to commence in Thornton, Hambleton, Churchtown and Preesall to reduce the impact of flooding on local communities.

**5. Community Safety**

**5.1** During 2020 the violence reduction network produced a Pan Lancashire trauma informed strategy to tackle crime in the Lancashire area.

<https://www.lancsvrn.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Lancs-VRN-Strategy.pdf>

**5.2** As part of this work the network produced a profile of violent crime for each District Local authority including Wyre. The profile has been considered by Wyre Community Safety Partnership and is now providing a focus for the work of the partnership. The government are planning to make reducing violence a statutory duty during this parliament and the work we are now doing will help the partnership produce an action plan to deal with this issue going forward.

**5.3** Building on Martyn's Law named after Martyn Hett who died in the Manchester Arena attack the Government is consulting on proposed legislation which would make it a legal requirement for venue operators to consider the risk of a terrorist attack and to take steps to protect the public. Currently private and public owners of venues and sites are not obliged to act on advice about threats of a terrorist attack and mitigate the risk.

**5.4** The consultation is intended to work out who should be subject to the duty and the extent of it and to make sure the balance is right between the need to protect people and the need to make sure it is proportionate. Among the protect duty proposals are the introduction of free counter terror training for event staff, assessments of locations to see how vulnerable they are, the need for venues and local authorities to have

clear counter terror action plans and more thorough security checks including bag searches.

- 5.5** In taking part in the consultation the council will consider the nature of the venues and the entertainment and social activities being carried on there and their capacity, the level of risk and the financial implications so as to reflect a proportionate approach
- 5.6** I attended an Elected Members briefing on counter terrorism in April 2021. During that meeting the role of councillors was discussed. As representatives of their local communities, Elected Members often understand the challenges, tensions and concerns facing the local area. This means that they are well positioned to listen to and raise community concerns, and to be identified as the public face of Prevent delivery for the area. This provides the opportunity for Elected Members to talk to communities openly about Prevent, to listen to their concerns, explain the duty and role of the Local Authority in protecting individuals, and help to raise awareness about referral mechanisms and supportive interventions. In order to assist Councillors in undertaking this task Wyre Council will be issuing the Prevent Elected Members Handbook to every Councillor.
- 5.7** During 2020 the council completed its safeguarding review, which aligned concerns about health with concerns that people are in danger of being radicalised, modern slavery, child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation. In essence any officer that has concerns about a particular individual should report the matter to their line manager and they will consult safeguarding officers within the council. The council also operate a Wyre & Fylde integrated team to assess vulnerability that may not reach the safeguarding threshold but is still a concern.
- 5.8** Youth anti-social behaviour (ASB) continues to be a priority and we work in partnership with many agencies including Lancashire Police, Lancashire County Council and the Child and Youth Justice service to reduce ASB. We have introduced a graduated approach and this has improved the early identification of young people who are starting to become involved in ASB and also includes hot spot areas. This involves a number of interventions which can tackle the behaviour much earlier to prevent escalation and is undertaken with the involvement and agreement of parents. Since the easing of lockdown we have seen an increase in location based ASB and along with our partners plan a targeted approach over the summer to engage and educate young people who may be at risk of engaging in this type of behaviour.
- 5.9** ASB is not just a youth related matter, there has been an increase and escalation in inter neighbour disputes, often between two sets of neighbours with no one else involved. These cases make gathering evidence to support either one of the residents version of events difficult to prove. As a consequence obtaining a legal remedy to the alleged anti-social behaviour is not simple, and before embarking on this route residents should be aware that this could fracture their relationship with their neighbour further. Therefore residents are advised that before they embark on this process they see if the matter can be resolved by a

friendly discussion as this can often be more effective than a request from the council.

## **6. Comments and questions**

- 6.1** In accordance with procedure rule 11.3 any member of council will be able to ask me a question or make a comment on the contents of my report or on any issue, which falls within my area of responsibility. I will respond to any such questions or comments in accordance with procedure rule 11.5.

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