

Please find below a quick monthly update which highlights some of the work I'm involved in. I have included updates for the whole division, as many of you will be interested in work happening outside your area too. Some local updates, some on wider priorities for Cumbria County Council and Cumbria as a whole. At the end of the report you will also find a list of the committees I am appointed to.

- **Front Street, Alston**

The County Council have just issued a press release regarding the first phase of work due to be undertaken in 2020, which focusses on the re-laying of new setts in the carriageway in the area of the Market Cross. An excerpt from the press release below, the full release will also be uploaded to the dedicated website. The great news is that the sample setts from Alston Stone have passed the testing to be able to use them in the carriageway.

...The Front Street project team have been working with the local community over the last year regarding the road surface on Front Street and how its character can be maintained. As a result of these discussions, local people asked that the council look to focus some immediate efforts into delivering phase one. They also asked the council to investigate the possibility of reinstating natural stone setts, rather than asphalt, so long as it was safe, technically and financially possible, as any final road surface would need to meet the high safety requirements of an A road.

The council has identified suitable natural stone setts sourced from a local quarry, which have undergone a series of essential technical safety tests and have been approved for their suitability for use on a carriageway. Design work is ongoing and any final design will need to be within the funds now allocated by the council and will be subject to further consultation. Delivery of 'phase one' is likely to be carried out from spring 2020 (weather permitting)....

The information board has also been agreed by the steering group, which is now being produced and due to be erected shortly in the location agreed with the coop on the side of their building next to the existing parish notice board.

For any councillor who may not have read the latest updates on Front St, head over to the dedicated webpage: www.cumbria.gov.uk/alstonfrontstreet

- **Cumbria Health Scrutiny**

Cllr Michael Hanley has been appointed to the Health Scrutiny committee as the representative for Eden, and at last week's meeting it was clear that his clinical expertise are going to be invaluable to the committee as we consider the items at our meetings. At our meeting last week, we discussed the committee's desire to do some focused work on the Integrated Care Communities, looking at what's working well, and perhaps more importantly, what's not. We plan to have a series of visits to some of the ICC hubs and speak with staff and service users to try and build an informed picture of how things are progressing. A link to more info on Integrated Care Communities in Cumbria is below:

<https://www.cumbriapartnership.nhs.uk/the-trust/our-priorities/integrated-care-communities>

We also received a very encouraging report on a programme called Familiar Faces, which is a new way of working with those people who have contact with their doctor and other parts of the health service on a very regular basis, but who are not seeing any improvement in their health. The presentation outlined how by working with a dedicated small team of

professionals they have been able to reduce hospital and GP visits dramatically, in one instance a patient attending A&E over ten times a month reduced their attendance to none in the months following this work. Most importantly, those who experienced this new approach found great improvement in their physical and mental health, and would recommend it highly to others. This pilot scheme is now being reviewed in the hope of the service being recommissioned on a wider footprint across the county.

Councillors wishing to read previous agendas and minutes of the committee can do so at the following link:

<http://moderngov.ccc/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=152>

- **Rural Issues Working Group for Eden Local Committee**

Councillors will recall me asking for your top three priorities for the parishes to be considered during our priority setting for this working group of the local committee. We received excellent responses and it's no surprise that some key themes came through very clearly, some of the main ones being:

Rural Transport

Access to services & facilities locally

Affordable and sustainable housing

Roads maintenance

We also worked through community plans where they exist, and the plans of Eden District Council to ensure that we are identifying cross cutting priorities, of which there are many.

As you can see not all of these areas are under the direct control of the County Council, and it is essential that we continue to work very closely with both the district and parish councils and other organisations to work as effectively as possible to tackle some of these issues, many of which are long standing and hard to solve.

A key priority for me has always been access to skills and training for those in rural areas, and in particular promotion and support for rural skills, which have never been under greater threat than in the current, insecure economic climate. I have always believed that as a County, and more specifically here in Eden we have the makings of becoming a centre of excellence for rural skills training and development. We have some of the best trainers, courses and projects at Newton Rigg and Carlisle College, and a wealth of locally grown talent which has seen support through wonderful projects such as the Town Heritage Initiative in Alston, and the Fellfoot Forward project run by the AONB. I am happy to report that the working group share my desire to focus some attention and resources on how we might better support the excellent work that is already happening, and also identify where there may be gaps in provision or access, so that we can better work together raise awareness of opportunities, create new ones and ensure that our rural communities can have unimpeded access to them.

This work will be tied closely to the work of the CCC Skills and Learning board that Nick Wright, Eden Area Manager attends regularly, and as he states in a recent email regarding intergenerational fairness in access to skills development:

The concept of the country needing a lifelong learning strategy is getting more support. As well as the six ongoing reviews and commissions, the House of Lords Committee on

Intergenerational Fairness and Provision last week called on the Government to take steps to deliver a fairer society by supporting younger people in the housing and employment market, and deliver better in-work training and lifelong learning to prepare the country for the coming 100-year lifespan.

This has particular relevance for Cumbria (and Eden specifically) as the current focus on 0-19 is only a small proportion of our population given our demographic.

If the opportunity arises, Members may wish to support the call for a lifelong learning Strategy.

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/intergenerational-fairness/news-parliament-2017/tackling-intergenerational-unfairness-report/>

The Eden Area Team are now pulling together a core working document for the rural issues working group, based on the findings mentioned above and from the discussion at our last meeting. We will be keeping parishes informed of how they can continue to be involved in this work through the area planning approach as outlined below.

- **Area Planning**

The work on area planning continues, with a member session planned for early June at which we will discuss in finer detail what it means for us in Eden, and how this will proceed. When last discussing this with Nick Wright, the Eden Area Manager, he summed up area planning as follows:

“Area planning is the process of working with stakeholders from the private, statutory, third and community sectors to develop projects and deliver services with the aim of nurturing thriving communities, achieving local priorities and making the best use of local assets and shared resources.

The process is holistic and inclusive with complete consideration of all process outcomes – both intended and not.”

Also, the key to effective area working is collaborative work based on good intelligence. I would offer the following process....

- 1) *Gather the organisational intelligence.*
- 2) *Assemble the internal team.*
- 3) *Set up an external programme group.*
- 4) *Share area and organisational objectives.*
- 5) *Develop and deliver the area plan.*
- 6) *Continue the rolling programme.*

As you can see, the approach we've taken with the priority setting for the rural issues working group is following this model, and parishes will become more closely aligned with the work at the stage of setting up the external programme group.

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Committees I sit on, with links to more details on the County website:

- [County Council](#)
 - [County Council Local Committee for Eden](#)
 - [Cumbria Health Scrutiny Committee](#) (Chair)
 - [Local Enterprise Partnership \(LEP\) Scrutiny Board](#)
 - [Scrutiny Advisory Board - Adults](#)
 - [Scrutiny Advisory Board - Children and Young People](#) (substitute)
 - [Scrutiny Management Board](#)
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