

Eden Locality Board 17.7.24

Report by Michael Hanley.

1. John Murray (JM, LD) elected chair, Lorna Baker (LB, LD) elected vice-chair.

2. Home to School Transport

Caroline Watson (CW, Senior Manager Home to School Transport): We have 456 SEND pupils (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) who we transport to school. We have a statutory obligation to provide transport. The financial burden is becoming increasingly difficult, especially for individual transport. This occurs sometimes due to the behaviour of the child (eg. some autistic children). From September there will be an increase in offers of parental grants. This will be cost-effective. There will be grants for breakfast clubs and for driving lessons for parents (to enable them to drive their children to school). There will also be encouragement for the child to walk to school under supervision. There will also be work done to help young SEND people to become more independent. Some situations where the child is being brought by taxi, negotiation is being done with parents to establish a budget to help them drive the child to school.

M Eyles (ME, LD): Are any other councils taking a similar approach ?

CW: Yes. All authorities are struggling with the rising demand.

P Dew (PD, C): Praised the service. This authority has a very thorough approach.

N Hughes (NH, LD): Can we allow members of the public to be involved in home-to-school transport?

CW: We try to use public transport where appropriate and encourage young people to travel independently. We have worked with Active Cumbria.

P Bell (PB, LD): Asked about feedback from parents.

V Taylor (VT, LD): Asked about the bursary scheme.

CW: £300k was allocated for Eden and a separate grant for Alston (to fund transport of post GCSE young people to schools which provide education for A levels, SKS secondary school in Alston provides education only to GCSE level).

VT: Are some of our students limited because of where they live?

CW: Discussed this. From next year we will be administering the bursary scheme for non-SEND children.

VT: I have a dream, an electric vehicle which is plugged in at night and used for school transport the next day.

MH: Asked about the grants. He also thanked the department for the years that they transported his autistic son from Alston to Ullswater Community College. Also asked about the grants to help parents to learn to drive and whether other grants were means tested.

CW: There is no means test. In other areas funding has gone to parents to learn to drive and pass the driving test. This has not happened here yet but we would not dismiss it.

NH: Is the fund available up to 25 year olds?

CW: No, up to 19.

3. Safe and Strong Communities.

N Wright (NW, Senior Manager of Safe and Strong Communities ): Discussed the report.

Appleby Horse Fair: MASCG (multi agency strategic coordination group) helped to make the fair safe and enjoyable.

Eden Resettlement Group: involved with Homes for Ukraine which helps secure housing for Ukrainian families to move from their hosts. An Afghan family has recently settled in Penrith and

the children are attending a local school.

Place Action Groups (PAGs) continue to develop. Eden and Lyvennet Vale PAG had their first session on 1st May. Other PAGs have also met. There have been delays in Alston and Fellside PAG but this is planned to start in September with the first meeting in Ainstable..

Eden Food Network Group met on 13 May to discuss food poverty and work towards local food security. An out-of-hours food parcel service is being developed.

Appleby Library has a highly successful craft group meeting twice weekly. It is hoped to have baby weighing scales in all libraries and extend baby vitamins to be available from libraries in Penrith, Alston, Appleby and Kirkby Stephen.

Community Grants: there will be three deadlines: 19.8.24, 11.11.24 and 17.2.25 with the Community Grant Panel meeting about four weeks later.

Alston Live recently submitted an application but this did not meet the timings. The project was still awarded £2000 based on officer advice.

At the last Eden Locality Board meeting. £50k was allocated from the Household Support Fund. Those funded included: Penrith Foodbank (£5k), Alston Foodbank (£3k), Upper Eden Foodbank (£4k), Carer Support (£5k), Riverside Housing (£5k), Cumbria Family Support (£5k), Barnardo's 0-19 Service (£5k),

NW: We are happy with the progress of the PAGs. We have had the input of Sue Castle-Clark.

NH: Commented on the amount of counterfeit products being sold at Appleby Fair. We welcome the Ukrainian refugees fleeing terror but the outgoing government changed the rules.

JM: What we saw on the ground was impressive, that worked very well (at Appleby Fair).

Asked for volunteers for the Community Grants Panel. JM, LB, PB and MH volunteered.

Next meeting: 6.10.24

JM: Commented that this would be PD's last ELB meeting.

PD: I will be decamping to Stockport, to revive my ministry. I will move lock, stock and barrel, quite why because God called me? I don't know why I ended up in local politics, it's not what I intended to do.

JM: I would like to add my thanks for all the work you have done with children. I know we didn't always see eye to eye.