

Local Matters in ACTION



Local Problem Identification and Solving

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Local Problem Identification and Solving



Resident Parking Problems...

Grange Traffic Issues

Area with problems with parking in part of Grange over Sands was identified by local councillors and colleagues from Cumbria Highways. In total 16 households were affected on a residential road; this problem being exacerbated by patients visiting the doctors' surgery at the end of the road. Each of the houses has its own driveway. However, commuters use the road for parking; some cars are even parked so that residents leaving their drives are left with little or no room to manoeuvre their vehicles. Further problems arise when residents have friends or family visiting, leaving no space for them to park, causing difficulties for one household due to an issue of disability.

To determine the extent of the problem and to arrive at an agreeable solution, survey work was undertaken. This exercise targeted households and leaflets were also affixed to the windscreens of parked cars. By taking this two-pronged approach it was hoped that the issue would also be brought to the attention of those non-residents using the road for parking.

In the initial letter, the context of the situation was set out. Explanations were given for the action and that Cumbria County Council was looking to make the best use of the highway and will act, where there is sufficient evidence, to show that there is inappropriate parking. It further explained the implications of implementing residents' parking schemes, whereby the problem is simply displaced to an alternative area.

Feedback was correlated and a resultant community meeting took place to pinpoint areas of concern, offer ideas and discuss options. An opportunity for people to give their views was given, if they were unable to attend, by completing a reply slip and dropping it in at Grange Town Council offices.

At the meeting preferences for solutions were discussed. Cumbria Highways were instructed to draw up plans for the preferred options to solve the parking problems.

The new plans were brought back to residents at a further meeting. It was at this meeting that it became clear that there was much division of opinion between residents as to the scale of the perceived parking problem. It appeared that those residents living at the opposite end to the doctors' surgery were not experiencing any adverse situations.

Options consisted of the installation of parking bays or parking restrictions, with exemptions for disabled badge holders.

As a result of there being no majority decision on which options to adopt, an on-site meeting was scheduled to alleviate individual concerns. As a result, revised plans, fully influenced by evidence from local residents, have been drawn up. These are being taken back to the community in an attempt to reach a majority decision regarding an appropriate and mutually agreeable way forward to resolve the parking problems for the residents in question.

Local Matters in ACTION

Local Neighbourhood Forum meetings can also highlight problems and ask agencies to work together to try and find solutions:

Helping sort out anti social behaviour...

Alley gates

In the Castle area of Carlisle the issue of anti-social behaviour has been frequently raised with City and County councillors. After a discussion at a Neighbourhood Forum meeting the City Council was asked to dismantle a shack that was being used by young people for drug-taking and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership began a project to install alley gates in various parts of the area.

Alley gating restricts access to the rear of homes in order to prevent crime being carried out. Alley gating isn't a new concept and it is believed that many alleys were gated prior to the Second World War. The gates and railings were removed for the war effort but were never replaced, as open alleys did not then pose a security problem. Nowadays, the design and layout of older properties play a major role in increasing the opportunities for criminal behaviour.

A questionnaire was sent out to all residents. A return of 75% was generated. This was followed by a public meeting to assess support for the project. The Neighbourhood Forum meeting brought together officers and elected members from the County and City Councils, Carlisle Housing Association, the Police, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and local residents. The problems have not been solved but the Forum has provided a venue to air views, for discussion and plans for action. Other alley gate projects are being supported by the Neighbourhood Forums in different areas of Carlisle and Barrow.

Alley gating has the potential to impact on almost all aspects of crime, fear of crime and other forms of anti-social behaviour, for example:

- Without access, usage of the alleyways as toilets is limited, together combating Health and Safety issues
- Without access, the opportunity for 'fly-tipping' is restricted
- Without access, dogs will not be able to foul or rip open bin bags
- Alleyways can become a secure compound for residents vehicles, (with agreement of all residents)
- Without access, vehicle crime is significantly reduced if the above is adopted
- Thieves will not be able to use this as a 'Rat-Run' to evade apprehension or hide stolen property for collection at a later date
- Drivers will not be able to use alleyways as 'Rat-Runs', safeguarding children who use the alleyway to play
- People of all ages cannot indulge in alcohol or drug abuse in alleyways, therefore no associated articles of drug misuse, empty alcohol cans/bottles or excess litter is created
- Without access children/youths cannot start any rubbish fires
- People who embark in all forms of street crime, will not be able to pounce on or drag their victims into the alley





Community Travel Plans...

Allerdale Local Transport Planning

Transport and travel strategies are essential in a largely rural county, such as Cumbria. Transport issues affect every resident in some way. In Allerdale, five areas - Moorclose, Mossbay, Aspatria, Broughton and Ewanrigg - have been selected as pilots for consultation on Community Travel Plans during 2006. These travel plans will become part of the County Council Local Transport Plan which is submitted to central government every five years. The process of consultation is aimed at increasing the participation of local communities in transport issues, promoting local understanding and discussion and, by agreeing a schedule of long and short-term schemes, improving the range of solutions to problems. Ultimately, the Local Transport Plan will reduce the impact of travel on the quality of life within local communities.

The consultation process first identifies a neighbourhood and begins with a blank sheet of paper. The Neighbourhood Forum meetings in December 2005 introduced the plan to the community and asked everyone to draw or write their transport issues on a large map of the area. Other maps were also given out to schools, residents' and tenants' associations, local libraries, shopping centres and sports centres. This process was supported by the local councillors who encouraged responses and identified useful venues to display the maps. After 2 months the maps are collected and a community 'wish list' is developed. This will include plans and strategies from other sources such as the Better Ways to School, Parish Plans and Route Studies and will show walking, bus and cycle routes. It will also exclude the impossible or illegal. This new plan is presented to the local community with an explanation of how it has been drafted and information, where necessary, on why certain options have been omitted. Residents are then asked to prioritise their areas of concern such as safe walking to school or improved public transport, as well as actual schemes which they see as most important. At this stage schemes which are achievable are given some priority.

This becomes the Community Transport Plan and will be used as the basis for funding bids alongside the Highways Maintenance programme. It can be distributed around the community, displayed in village halls and parish notice boards so that local people can have a say. The results will be used to inform all planning processes, with the confidence that it has the endorsement of the local people. It can also be changed and commented on over time, becoming a useful base to explain how the process of community planning, assessment and funding works. Residents feel part of the decision making system and have some confidence that resources are focused at the point of need in their community.

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Rural Wheels

Lack of good public transport is a real issue for people living in rural areas. There are areas in the County with few or no bus services and people are unable to access

essential services unless they have a car. Rural

Wheels is a unique transport scheme, providing door-to-door transport at a reasonable cost. The aim is to make better use of the various forms of transport available.

The scheme is one of the transport projects developed through the Rural Partnership Programme, which is funded by the Countryside Agency. The County Council has worked in partnership with many organisations to make this happen.



The scheme allows people to travel at 30p a mile, Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm. Passengers join the scheme and get a Smartcard, which is used instead of handing over money to the transport providers. The Smartcard can be topped up at local Post Offices, libraries, mobile libraries etc.

We are working in partnership to provide a service that meets the needs of local people, reduces isolation and dependence on car ownership and tackles social exclusion.

Why does it work? Because...

- by using existing transport providers we ensure they have an income during normally quiet periods of the day, ensuring the sustainability of their business
- by using existing outlets to top up Smartcards we are helping to support other vital rural amenities such as libraries, Post Offices and local shops
- information provided by users gives accurate details of the transport need in rural areas
- the service enables people to shop locally and therefore benefits the local economy
- it provides low cost transport to people in isolated rural areas
- the service is good for the environment as it only operates when required





Environmental Issues...

Eden Local Agenda21

There are also crucial and beneficial partnerships that local authorities need to make throughout the community in the voluntary and business sectors.

In Eden local people responded to the problems of sustainability by setting up a group known as Eden Local Agenda21, which included county, district, parish councils, local schools and churches, businesses, voluntary groups and interested individuals. Eden LA21 began in 1998 and has developed lots of excellent projects concentrating mainly on recycling, waste reduction, energy, awareness raising and information sharing.

In 2004 Eden Local Agenda21 hosted a meeting of people interested in looking at problems of sustainability of local village halls. Village halls frequently apply to the county council for grant-aid with improvements and are often struggling to pay their normal running costs. In villages, with local shops and pubs closing, they are frequently the only venue where residents can meet together and so have a special place in maintaining social cohesion. They are run by volunteers and often house essential local services like the playgroup and the youth club. One of the major problems for village halls is heating and it was felt that if heating costs could be reduced then the building become more sustainable, cheaper to use and more accessible to local communities. A new project was launched by Eden Local Agenda21 called the 'Sustainable Buildings Project' which aims to help the any publicly owned building in Cumbria become more energy efficient and to encourage the use of sustainable materials and practices. It recently won a prestigious 'Green Apple' award.



This year, the Cumbria DEVICE Programme has been launched to tackle issues around energy efficiency and small scale renewable energy generation. The Cumbria Energy Auditors Group, made up of architects, surveyors and other buildings experts, has been set up to undertake comprehensive energy audits of community buildings. The communities are then given advice about the best, most sustainable ways to increase energy efficiency and comfort in the buildings, so that everyone can make the most of them.

Developing Youth Provision...

Parkside Youth Station

A number of residents addressed Barrow Local Committee highlighting the lack of youth facilities in the Parkside area of the town. Cumbria County Councillors took on board these concerns and the Ormsgill/Parkside Youth Project was born.

A multi agency partnership group was formed to address this identified need, involving County Councillors and officers, Police, Connexions, St. Matthews Halls, Barrow Celtic Football Club and residents from the area. County Councillors and officers went out onto the streets in the depths of winter to talk with the young people and ascertain their views.



Recently, permanent premises have been secured in the form of an old bakery shop. The young people have helped convert and decorate the premises to make it fit for purpose, choosing colours and furnishings to make the youth station warm and welcoming.

The project has had a very successful first start, with an average attendance of 20 young people each evening. A large number of young people are also being approached during the detached work, with an increasing rapport being developed between workers and young people. Young Cumbria are supporting the young people in Key Fund work, which builds the capacity of the young people in planning community projects and activities. Alongside these diversionary activities, workers have successfully engaged the young people in preventative work, undertaking drugs and alcohol awareness and education, together with positive sexual health sessions.

The project is benefiting from the continued support from County Councillors and officers and is evidence of the good practice and successful partnership working being undertaken by Cumbria County Council Local Committee to put the public first.

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Supporting Families...

The Lakes Children's Centre

The UK government has established a series of Children's Centres throughout the country to support families of children 0-5 especially in disadvantaged areas. A Participatory Appraisal approach was used to identify the long term needs of parents.

A team of 7 local people were recruited (most of whom are parents) and over a period of days and evenings trained in Participatory Appraisal. The project was divided into 2 phases and the team visited parents and carers in the following settings: outside schools, at play and toddler groups, parks, baby clinics, local play bus and through door to door visits.

Through the use of a coded sticker system, the team were able to monitor where parents were from and their status (male / female / parent / carer). During both phases of the project 81% of local parents (of children aged 0-5) were reached. The team used Opinion lines, Mapping, Problem trees, Photographs, Informal interviewing, Diary Charts, Problem to Solution charts and Matrices to answer the following questions:

- What are the main issues for you as parents / carers in the area?
- What would you like to see changed and how?



During phase two, the team went back out and spoke to 68 parents to identify solutions to the problems from the first phase.



At the start of the process a workshop on participatory project management was held with the Children's Centre project steering group. This aimed to ensure the long term involvement of the team and other community members in the project management decision making process. In July 2005, three of the team negotiated with steering group members to decide the allocation of the capital budget for the centre based upon the results of their consultation.