COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report details the Community Engagement Activity undertaken by the South Lakeland Area Support team.

2.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

2.1 Community Engagement Activity assists with supporting the aims of the Council Plan;

- To enable communities to live safely and shape services locally
- To promote health and wellbeing, and tackle poverty
- To support older and vulnerable people to live independent and healthy lives

2.2 All projects undertaken are assessed to ensure that the equality and diversity impacts are addressed.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 Members are asked to note the content of this report.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 This report outlines the activity of the Area Support Team in supporting community engagement work across the area.
4.2 The Area Support team continues to work alongside local members supporting them in their community leadership role and engaging with local communities to help shape council services. The team continues to work towards the objectives set which included a minimum of 2 Neighbourhood Forums/Community Grant Panels between the September, 2013 to March, 2014 period; providing bespoke engagement based around local issues, supporting the Neighbourhood Grants process and assisting with the development of the Local Area Partnerships.

4.3 In addition the team will continue to work alongside and encourage colleagues from across the Council to engage, listen and respond to the needs of local people. Community Engagement provides opportunities for council departments to shape their services in response to community needs. Engagement is valuable in assisting with maintaining the council’s reputation whilst enabling the development of effective and efficient services from the outset.

**Engagement Activity**

4.4 **Safety Concerns on the A590** – The Area Engagement Officer continues to work with the elected member and Haverthwaite Parish Council regarding their local concerns. Work has been undertaken with Cumbria Highways to identify possible highways improvements within the villages of Haverthwaite and Backbarrow. A scheme has been developed and a drop-in meeting was held for local residents to share the proposed initiatives. Local residents have been supportive of the scheme and once delivered pedestrian safety will be improved within sections of the villages. A comprehensive study is currently being prepared by Mouchel Infrastructure services and further engagement is planned with the community in the early Summer period.

4.5 **Grasmere Cycleway Consultation** – As part of the Go Lakes programme a scheme of works have been designed to develop a cycleway between Pelter Bridge and Grasmere. During the Summer of 2013 initial consultation took place with the local village societies, the parish council and local organisations. As a result of the initial conversations it was agreed that further consultation should take place with the wider community including both residents and businesses. Working with colleagues from the Lake District National Park Authority and Cumbria Highways a community drop-in meeting was held in November 2013 providing the opportunity to view the proposed scheme and offer comment. A Report has now been produced and issued to all participants regarding the next steps.

4.6 **Milnthorpe HGV Consultation** – Working with colleagues from Cumbria Highways, the Area Support Team have developed a survey to consult local businesses in Milnthorpe regarding HGV movements in the area. The long term aim is to reduce traffic congestion in the centre of Milnthorpe during peak times of the day in order to improve road safety. Results are awaited from the survey in order to explore the next steps in respect of the community.

4.7 **Lakes & Lyth Valley Community Wheels** – The Area Engagement Officer has previously worked alongside the Community Transport Officer to establish a steering group to oversee the development of a Community
Transport Service within the Lyth Valley. A successful recruitment campaign took place and the group now has a pool of 6 volunteer drivers. The Lakes & Lyth Valley Community Wheels was officially launched in the Autumn and offers a much needed weekly service for registered users within the service area. It is proposed to undertake further promotion and engagement with the community within the next few months in order to continue to raise the profile.

4.8 **Appleby Fair 2014** – The Area Engagement Officer has continued to work in partnership with colleagues in Highways, Cumbria Constabulary and South Lakeland District Council to engage with the local community about this annual event. A series of drop-in and debrief meetings are being arranged to enable residents to raise concerns and receive information regarding the fair were attended by the Area Engagement Officer, along with the other agencies involved. The Area Engagement Officer has continued to offer support to the Respect Group.

4.9 **Broughton Traffic Calming Group** – The Area Engagement Officer is working with the elected member and representatives from Cumbria Highways, Duddon Parish Council and the Broughton Traffic Calming Group to develop a coordinated scheme to reduce the volume of traffic in the area. A meeting is being developed with the local parish council and the above group to discuss current plans and the consultation process. The result of the meeting was to look at implementing speed reduction measures that would support the reduction of the volume of vehicles using the area as a cut through. Correspondence has been sent to Duddon Parish Council on these proposals.

4.10 **Hawkshead School Safety Improvements** – The Area Engagement Officer is working with the elected member and representatives from the Parish Council, Hawkshead School, Recreational Ground Committee and Cumbria Highways on making improvements to the crossing area outside the school and the recreational field in Hawkshead. Detail designs have been drawn up by Cumbria Highways on the above improvement. A meeting will take place to discuss the progression and any amendments to the plan, with the view to delivering consultation on this with the wider community. It is proposed to undertake further engagement with the group to determine the timescale and funding for the delivery of the project.

4.11 **A595 De Trunk Road** – The Area Engagement Officer is working with the elected member and representatives from Cumbria Highways on making improvements to the A595 De Trunk Road. A Community Meeting was held last year regarding the following concerns from the community: Speeding outside school going through Kirkby Lonsdale, maintenance issues of the road, lack of bus services and links to public transport and Grizebeck bends variation of speeding locations and volume of traffic. Details works have been developed with by Cumbria Highways to look at all of the above. A meeting with the community group will take place shortly to discuss the progression and any amendments on the above.

4.12 **Safer Ways to School Croftlands Infant /Junior School** – The Area Engagement Officer is working with elected members and representatives from Cumbria Highways, Active Travel Team, Cumbria Constabulary,
Schools and local residents on making improvements to the amount of vehicles parking outside of the schools. A steering group has been developed with representatives from the above agencies attending. The group have developed a survey which would identify how children were travelling to school. 150 responses were received indicating that this was not just a concern to the school but the majority of parents. Responses received from the survey have developed a plan of works to trial new initiatives such as the development of joint working with enforcement officers and the PCSO, development of a lift sharing scheme, walking bus in the nicer weather, safety induction talks to new parents, Park and Stride new pilot scheme on Croftlands and encourage more children to bike to school. It is proposed to undertake further engagement and promotion with the community within the next few months to in order to determine the affect of the above Initiatives.

4.13 **Community Resilience Planning** – In conjunction with the Environment Agency and the council’s Local Flood Risk Management Team, the Area Engagement Officers have undertaken a series of engagement events within the Ambleside, Ulverston and Kendal areas as part of the EA’s Rapid Response Catchments Project. The overall aim is to establish working groups to support the development of a Community Emergency Plan for each of the areas. Work is ongoing and further reports will be provided.

4.14 **County Council Budget Consultation** – In order to support the Cumbria, Our Area, Our Future consultation the Area Support Team organised a series of drop-in meetings across South Lakeland. The drop-in meetings were held to enable local residents to meet with officers and discuss the proposals in detail. A total of seven events were held across the District providing the opportunity to respond locally.

4.15 **Neighbourhood Forums** – As part of the Neighbourhood Forum/Community Engagement Review it was agreed by Members at the July Local Committee meeting to develop a programme of engagement appropriate to each of the local areas, giving consideration to the mechanism of distributing Neighbourhood Grants. As a result of this review 4 areas now host Neighbourhood Forums whereas 4 operate grant panels alongside issue based engagement as and when appropriate. Up until the 3rd March a total of 166 members of the public have attended the Neighbourhood Forum meetings. The forums have covered a wide range of topics and aim to provide a platform of engagement for other County Council departments and encourage consultation with residents where appropriate.

4.16 **Community Grants Panels/Issue Based Engagement** – As a result of the community engagement review 4 areas now host Community Grant Panels alongside issue based engagement as and when appropriate. Up until the 3rd March a number of engagement activities have taken place through various engagement mechanisms relating to issues that are bubbling within communities such as Health Services, Bus Services, Highways, Local Schools and Flooding. Alongside the above engagement work promotional events to raise the awareness of Community Grant Funding is taking place in Kendal and Ulverston to promote community grants within the three tiers of council to provide more joint working. We have engaged with a high level of members of the public who we might not have engaged with previously,
as the engagement has been led by issue and need. Work is ongoing and further reports will be provided.

4.17 **Community Grants** - During the course of the year the team have supported 69 groups and organisations through the Neighbourhood Grant application process. A sum of £52,306 has been allocated to community projects during this period.

4.18 **Local Area Partnerships** – The Area Engagement Officers continue to support the development of the LAPs and work closely alongside officers from South Lakeland District Council.

4.19 **Local Revenue Schemes** - The Area Engagement Officers continue to support members in the development of Local Member Scheme projects for Local Committee. The officers have worked closely with local groups and organisations to assess the viability of the projects and undertake specific engagement as and where necessary. To date a total of 39 projects have been supported and a sum of £90,020 has been allocated.

4.20 **Support to Internal Directorates** - The Area Support team continues to offer support to Council colleagues within other directorates in order to engage with the wider community. The team have worked closely with the following directorates and departments; Highways & Transport, Resilience, Cumbria Highways, and Community Transport.

4.21 **Electoral Division Profiles** – The team are currently working upon profiles for each of the 18 electoral divisions within South Lakeland. Profiles will provide an overview of each area, highlighting key statistics, community assets, networks and organisations. Once completed each profile will serve as a resource for future engagement and community support and assist with targeting resources effectively.

4.22 **Future Activity** – In the coming months the team will be working closely with internal departments such as the Integrated Transport team and Adult Social Care to explore options for proposed local changes.

5.0 **OPTIONS**

5.1 Members are asked to note the content of the Community Engagement Activity Report

6.0 **RESOURCE AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no direct financial implications contained within this report.
7.0 **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 This report is for noting and there are no specific legal implications arising from the report.

8.0 **CONCLUSION**

8.1 Community engagement and community development work at a grass roots level is paramount to ensure that service delivery is tailored to meet residents’ needs. As members are the community champions of their division’s officers are keen to ensure that work with members continues to be driven forward with residents being given every opportunity to be involved, participate and empowered in their communities.

Jim Savege  
Corporate Director Environment & Community Services

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*Please ensure that every part of this section where there is an asterisk* is completed in accordance with the instructions before sending the report to Democratic Services, following which please delete this sentence.

**APPENDICES**

*No appendices*

Electoral Division(s): All in South Lakeland

* Please remove whichever option is not applicable

Executive Decision  
Key Decision  
If a Key Decision, is the proposal published in the current Forward Plan?  
Is the decision exempt from call-in on grounds of urgency?  
If exempt from call-in, has the agreement of the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee been sought or obtained?  
Has this matter been considered by Overview and Scrutiny? If so, give details below.  
Has an environmental or sustainability impact assessment been undertaken?
Has an equality impact assessment been undertaken? N/A*

N.B. If an executive decision is made, then a decision cannot be implemented until the expiry of the eighth working day after the date of the meeting – unless the decision is urgent and exempt from call-in and necessary approvals have been obtained.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT COUNCIL OR EXECUTIVE DECISIONS [including Local Committees]

“No previous relevant decisions”.

CONSIDERATION BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

“No considered by Overview and Scrutiny”.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

“No background papers”

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