

PORTFOLIO:

ENVIRONMENT & HOUSING

Report of
Portfolio Holder:

**COUNCILLOR
RAY BLOXHAM**

**Councillor R D Bloxham
Environment & Housing Portfolio Holder**

Housing Demand Study

This study was commissioned in March to carry out an assessment of housing need within the Carlisle area. The study has looked at information from primary and secondary sources and will inform the Housing Strategy, Local Development Framework (LDF) and economic approaches of the authority. Primary data has been obtained from residents through distribution of 10,000 survey forms in early June from which a 21% response rate was obtained. The final report for the study will be delivered in late August / early September.

Housing Strategy and Carlisle Strategic Housing Partnership (CSHP)

A Housing Strategy for the 5 year period 2011 – 16 will be finalised by September 2011 and will be taken to Executive on 31/10/11. The strategy will be informed by the information provided within the Housing Demand Study and has been developed through consultation with key partners within the CSHP. The Housing Strategy has three key priority areas that follow on from the previous 5 year strategy. These are:-

- Supporting Vulnerable People
- Decent and Healthy Homes (including empty property)
- Balancing the Housing market

The CSHP chair Mr Phil Houghton of Lovells now sits as part of the Local Strategic Partnership. The three sub groups of the CSHP mirror the three priority areas under the Housing Strategy and each group will take forward the action plan relating to their specific area.

Dalton Avenue

In partnership with Carlisle City Council, Lovell Partnership Limited has secured funding from the Homes and Communities agency to build 37 affordable rented homes at Dalton Avenue. The mix of new dwellings comprises:

4x 4 bed houses
4x2 bed bungalows
14 x 3 bed houses
15x 2 bed houses

It is expected that 17 houses will be built in 2011/12 and 20 houses built in 2012/13

Homelessness, Prevention and Accommodation Services

Homelessness Services

For the period 1/4/11 – 31/7/11 we had 405 approaches to the homeless section and have accepted a duty to 59 applicants. There is no significant increase over the corresponding period in 2010.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Love Parks and scoop the poop week - Environmental Health attended the Love Park week to promote responsible Dog ownership in relation to: picking up after a dog has fouled; keeping a dog under control; not allowing a dog to stray, and preventing dogs from causing a nuisance by excessive barking. The promotion was also supported by a press release in the local paper.

A competition for children was held at the love Parks events where they had to answer questions on responsible dog ownership. The first correct answers out of the basket each day won a puppy. There were over 80 entries from children into the competition on the opening day in the city centre, as well as contact with adults. Over the 8 days we had 337 entries. A press release was sent regarding the 8 winners.

Unusual Blue Water - Environmental Health investigated complaints from a resident with a private water supply who had unusually blue water which was staining sink and bathroom surfaces. It was found that the high acidity of the private water supply was causing the copper in the pipe work to leach, resulting in the strange water colouration. The owner of the supply has now installed a treatment system which reduces the acidity and removes bacteria, ensuring a safe and wholesome water supply for the tenant.

New Hygiene Rating System for Food Businesses - Carlisle has been successful in receiving funding of over £7,000 from the Food Standards Agency for changing from the "Scores on the Doors" to the national "Food Hygiene Risk Rating" scheme. The popular schemes advertise the hygiene and safety assessment of food businesses. The funding will help with costs associated with data management and transfer. All six Cumbrian authorities submitted and received funding to assist with the switch. Work to enable this change should begin in the autumn, with a view to completing the arrangement by the 1st April 2012.

WASTE SERVICES

Monday 1st August 2011 represented a major milestone in the history of household waste collection in Carlisle. For over a hundred years, almost all of the household waste collected in our city was simply landfilled. More recently, with the introduction of this Council's recycling schemes, nearly 50% of the waste stream is now reused and recycled. However, that still left half of all the rubbish we throw out ending up in a hole in the ground.

From 1st August onwards, all of the non-recyclable rubbish we collect is now treated at the Waste Disposal Authority's new Mechanical Biological Treatment plant (or MBT plant) at Hespin Wood north of the City. The waste that's treated here is converted into a 'solid recoverable fuel' for use in energy intensive industries, helping to reduce our reliance on carbon derived fuels such as coal and oil and therefore reducing CO₂. This represents the final piece in the waste collection jigsaw and ensures that all of the household waste collected in Carlisle is either re-used, recycled or treated in an environmentally sustainable manner. Something that I think we can all be justly proud of.

NEIGHBOURHOOD & GREEN SPACES

Love Parks Week 2011

Since the City Council started taking part in Love Parks Week 3 years ago, it has grown into one of Carlisle's most popular events, bringing thousands of people into our parks and green spaces for a week of fun and fascination. The programme for 2011 was more varied than ever, and over 8,000 people attended the 57 events spread over 9 days.

Highlights included the transformation of the city centre into a woodland glade for a day, complete with traditional woodcarvers and craft stalls; open-top bus tours of Carlisle's green heritage; and a Forest Adventure in Chance's Park.

The week was rounded off in fine style by Flicks at Bitts, featuring the giant cinema screen. This year's films were Pixar's 'Wall-E' and the old favourite 'Grease'. Thank you to all those involved, including staff from Neighbourhoods and Green Spaces; Communications; City Centre Management; Community Engagement; Tourist Information Centre; Environmental Health and Waste Services. I would also like to thank the many local firms who contributed, including ASW Timber, Jenkinson's Forest Products, Stagecoach and Reay's Coaches.

Green Flag Awards

It was timely to hear that a record number of our parks and gardens, 8 in all, had been awarded the coveted 'Green Flag' in 2011 for the standard of their presentation and the involvement of local communities. The 8 sites are: Bitts Park; Hammond's Pond; Carlisle Cemetery; Tullie House Gardens; Talkin Tarn; Kingmoor Nature Reserve; and for the first time Rickerby Park and Chances Park. Congratulations to all concerned.

Big Tidy Ups

Big Tidy Ups, organised by Neighbourhoods and Green Spaces staff, have taken place at various locations across the district. Big Tidy Ups involve local communities, volunteers, Ward Members, Council workers and staff from partner organisations working together to clear up a neighbourhood. In Yewdale ward, Councillor Fiona Robson took part in the clean up, doing a range of jobs from litter-picking to graffiti removal and was full of praise for the efforts of the 'neighbourhood' team and the level of effort and commitment they put into their work. We are grateful for the support of councillors, communities, volunteers and partners in making the Big Tidy Ups so successful.

HIGHWAYS

Footway Slurry Seal - work has started on 8th August and subject to weather should be completed in 3 weeks. Work will take place in the following locations but may only involve certain parts of the following roads:-, Tree Road, Hurley Road, Greenacres, Hespek Raise, Stockwell Road, Mayfield Avenue, Lightfoot Drive, Whernside and Dalston Cycleway.

Footway Reconstruction - work is imminent at Petteril Bank Rd (near Shops) and Greystone Rd.

Strand Road Cycleway - Work has just started to construct a cycleway along the tarmac verge of Strand Road. This work is taking place during the school holiday to avoid causing inconvenience to the many students in the area. Further work will take place on Newark Terrace at a later date to construct a further length of cycleway thus completing this Link to Schools which formed part of the Connect 2 proposals.

Carriageway Repairs - are imminent at Knowefield Rd and Holmacres Drive, also minor repairs on parts of Currock Road.