

Meeting Date: 7 March 2017

Public/Private*: Public

Title: **Environment & Transport Portfolio Holder's Report –
Councillor Chris Southward**

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

Green Box - The TUPE transfer of the green box contract began in January 2017. This has included meetings with our staff, FCC staff and trade unions, and arranging training and occupational health assessments ready for the start date of 1st March 2017. The new split back recycling vehicles, which will be used to collect the green box materials (paper, glass and cans), were delivered ready to start the collections.

The green box service will be merged with the green bag service in the summer and all materials will be collected in a single pass so that the kerbside recycling service can be rolled out to more rural and new build properties.

A review is taking place to reduce the number of properties with more than one refuse bin. This should reduce the amount of refuse people are placing out and improve recycling rates

Waiting times for delivery of containers has reduced to within 2 weeks which has seen a reduction in the number of people chasing delivery of their container.

Almost 60% of boxes, bags, gull sacks are now collected from the Civic Centre rather than being delivered. All refuse and garden waste bins require delivery.

Due to the Food Waste Digester leaflet in the November Carlisle Focus Magazine, a total of 114 Food Waste Digesters were sold in December

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Air Quality The air quality analyser at Stanwix is proposed to be removed and replaced by a much cheaper to operate diffusion tube (see attached photo of tubes). This will allow us to continue to monitor Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) levels on Stanwix Bank. We no longer need the high accuracy monitor as the NO₂ results have been steadily dropping for around 5 years and the equipment is getting old and costly.

The tubes are small plastic tubes with a stopper at one end and a metal gauze/mesh inside. The mesh catches the NO₂ in the air, after 1 month exposed to the air we send them to the lab for analysis and replace each tube with a fresh one. There are currently 50 locations around the district where we do this. The results of some of these locations have consistently shown very low levels which hardly change from one year to the next. We have therefore decided that we no longer need to keep testing these locations. This will have a cost, but more importantly, an officer time saving.



We have only chosen to remove tubes from areas where any significant change is very unlikely. We have kept others in areas where new development is expected or the current levels are relatively high. If any of the remaining tubes showed a future increase we would direct more monitoring into the area to investigate this. If there was significant change in traffic volumes or new industrial activity in an area we could start monitoring in that area in future.

Prosecution - In January the City Council successfully prosecuted Pioneer due to a number of serious food hygiene breaches. Whilst a lot of attention has been rightly focussed on the legal offences and the large fine of £275,000 imposed by the Courts,

the significance of the proactive public health action taken by the City Council should not be overlooked.

A routine visit to Pioneer by Environmental Health Officers in September 2015 identified a significant issue with the food sampling programme relating to the acceptable levels of *Listeria monocytogenes* in samples of cooked meat. Following a reported sample failure in October 2015, indicating the presence of *Listeria monocytogenes* in cooked beef, a series of inspections were undertaken by Environmental Health Services. Inspections of food production areas and questioning by competent officers led to the identification of serious food safety breaches. Satisfactory evidence was obtained to ensure hazardous food was removed from the food chain and production ceased pending improvements. It was this technical and legally competent work that prevented a likely food poisoning outbreak. The prosecution and fine help to represent the serious nature of the offences but the lessons learnt from other outbreaks and the competence and diligence of the City Council's own officers prevented a serious public health outbreak. The £28,000 costs awarded by the court are a reflection of the time and resources required to investigate and prosecute business for serious food safety offences of this nature.

CAR PARKING AND CITY CENTRE MANAGEMENT

Castle Way Crossing – The contract for the construction of a Toucan Crossing over Castle Way and a Raised Speed Table at the junction of Annetwell Street/Finkle Street/Castle Street has been awarded. In addition the City Council is also funding improvement to the footway from Devonshire Walk to Bridge Lane. The Contractor is due to start work on the 13th March 2017 and works are expected to be completed by the end of June 2017. In conjunction with this contract the County Council will be resurfacing a section of Castle Way. The above works will be carried out in such a way as to minimise disruption to all road users, extensive use is being made of night-time working.

Car Park Surfaces and Asset Developments – surfacing work is programmed in for the new financial year. This will cover Viaduct, Caldew Riverside and Back Corporation Road car parks. Asset development work included CCTV upgrades and an LED lighting replacement programme to be rolled out over the next 2 years. We will continue to upgrade other car parks as soon as funding is available.

GREEN SPACES

Bitts Park – the City Council's play area at Bitts Park has been extensively restored and upgraded following the 2015 floods and the last job was completed in February when the water-play park was refitted ready for the summer. The job had to wait until the electricity supply was restored and was carried out by a specialist contractor. Work to replace the pavilion and toilets is now being brought forward with a tender specification process underway.

In addition to the summer concert by Bryan Adams reported previously we now have the news that the popular girl band, Little Mix, will play in Bitts Park the following night. The weekend of 15-16 July is set to be a treat for pop music fans and will bring thousands of visitors into the city, giving our tourism businesses a real shot in the arm. Hotel rooms for miles around are expected to be booked out.

Kingmoor Nature Reserve – a major new electricity cable had to be routed through Kingmoor over the winter and the resulting excavation work caused a degree of disruption and mess. After some tough negotiations with Electricity North West and their contractors an extensive restoration programme has been agreed, funded by the companies concerned. At the same time a long-standing flooding problem, caused by a collapsed culvert beneath the railway line, has been programmed for repair by Network Rail. Once all these projects and restoration works are complete our visitors will be able to enjoy much better access to the reserve without the fear of waterlogged or rutted paths.

Talkin Tarn – Talkin Tarn continues to flourish and will break records again this year for the number of car-park tickets sold (up by 33% in two years) and the turnover of the Boat House tea room. The funds generated by these activities will be reinvested at the Tarn as usual, to make sure it continues to attract more visitors every year.

BEREAVEMENT SERVICES

Cemetery Safety - The task of conducting safety checks on the many thousands of headstones and memorials in our cemeteries is an essential one and we have engaged expert contractors make sure it is done thoroughly and professionally. Stanwix and Upperby cemeteries have now been completed and work will start this year on the main cemetery at Richardson Street. It is envisaged that these checks will take place on a 5-year recurring basis.

David Francis is an expert in the field of memorial masonry who has been assisting with our headstone safety checks. David advised the Ministry of Justice on its guidance and wanted to check they were fit for purpose. He was very complimentary about Carlisle City Council's approach and said we had demonstrated that "the risk can be removed almost completely without the need to level every memorial and monument".

The full article can be found on this link.

<http://www.stonespecialist.com/news/memorials/memorial-inspection-and-testing-report-douglas-swan-sons>

Charging policy – I am personally very pleased to report that in the consideration of the City Council's budget for 2017-18, the Executive decided to abolish the fees for burial or cremation of anybody under the age of 18, in a move to reduce the financial burden on families already struggling to come to terms with the loss of a child. I only hope that many more Council's will find themselves able to follow our example, even without Government backing.