

Meeting Date: 8th September 2020

Public/Private*: Public

Title: **Environment & Transport Portfolio Holder's Report –
Councillor Nigel Christian**

REGULATORY SERVICES

I am pleased to confirm that two Officers from the Housing and Pollution Team both successfully completed the Private Water Supply sampling. The City Council samples approximately 110 private water supplies in the District, which serve over 400 residential properties and commercial outlets.

Environmental Health have been heavily involved in the local management of COVID19 outbreaks within the Carlisle area. Working alongside our colleagues at Cumbria County Council and Public Health England, Officers within the Team have worked extremely hard to identify local clusters and try and prevent further transmission of the virus within the local community. The work includes obtaining customer track & trace details held by businesses implicated, contacting cases and contacts, working with Public Health colleagues in neighboring Districts and across the Border, arranging testing, updating the local track and trace database system, assistance in media releases and visiting business premises to check COVID controls, and where required, the customer track and trace arrangements. Infectious disease control is a key element of the work undertaken by Environmental Health and the support of COVID outbreak management will continue for the foreseeable future.

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

Car Parking And Enforcement

From Tuesday.1st September 2020 there will be a new check-in / check-out parking offer at West Walls Car Park providing a more flexible option for users of the car park. Motorists will check-in on arrival at the car park and check-out on departure and will be charged per minute for the time parked. This removes the pressure on people rushing back to their car when their ticket runs out with the aim of encouraging people to dwell for longer in the city centre. It also provides a more flexible option for those just popping to the shops or

the bank. If this proves popular, our intention will be to extend this offer to other car parks.

September will also see an extension of the Early Bird Offer to support those paying to park before 10:30 a.m. (previously 09:30 a.m.). This change provides more flexibility for commuters keen to stagger their start times to avoid peak traffic times etc.

The Enforcement Team have recently stepped up patrols at weekends in parks and open spaces to challenge those littering or failing to clean-up after their dogs. Civil Enforcement Officers have also produced new anti-litter notices advising of the penalties for littering and these are available for Councillors to use in their Wards or to circulate to community groups etc. to further raise awareness.

During the period of lockdown, the Neighbourhood Services Team has dealt with an increase in fly-tipping. Where there is evidence, the Enforcement Officers will investigate and take robust action against those responsible. Again, additional signage has been displayed and CCTV deployed to key areas.

For understandable reasons, the local Magistrates' Court in recent months has prioritised more urgent cases with a number of our enforcement cases on the back burner. Currently, there are 18 cases awaiting Court action with the Team continuing to take formal action against those responsible for littering offences (six fines issued), dog fouling (one fine), fly-tipping (three fines) and business waste offences (two fines).

As part of the Christmas campaign last year which focussed on tackling fly-tipping at recycling sites, Members may be interested to know that the Enforcement Team have carried out 35 investigations, issued 20 fly-tipping fixed penalties and 57 warning letters. This campaign will be repeated for Christmas 2020 and will be further enhanced with additional CCTV systems.

Fleet Update

To further highlight the commitment of the Council to tackling enviro-crime, orders have now been placed for three replacement vehicles for the Enforcement Team. The three vehicles will be fully electric and will replace three older diesel vehicles currently on the fleet helping to reduce carbon emissions and improve local air quality. Two fully electric cars (Renault Zoes) are expected to arrive in September with the fully electric small van (Renault Kangoo) expected in December.

This van will then be fitted with cameras and high-profile livery to firstly raise awareness, hopefully as a deterrent, but when needed to provide robust video evidence to support our enforcement activity for example targeting roadside littering from vehicles. Such litter is not only unsightly but is very expensive and often can be risky for staff to clean up. It is also very damaging to the local environment and wildlife further polluting water courses, rivers and seas.

Waste and Recycling

Our teams continue to do an excellent job, with the support of residents, collecting increased volumes of refuse and recycling. All services are operating, and my special thanks are recorded to all Neighbourhood Services Staff for their extra efforts at this time, but also for adapting to the new ways of working to stay safe. This involves the use of shuttle vehicles, to limit the times when staff travel together, additional hand hygiene and PPE, such as wearing face coverings when travelling inside vehicles.

For April to June 2020, compared to the same period for 2019:

- Paper and card is up over 13%
- Plastic, glass and cans is up over 41%
- 30% increase on recycling for this period.
- Refuse has also increased by 16%.

Garden waste collections were suspended in the early weeks of lockdown as the service coped with absences of staff and resources needed to be re-allocated to refuse and recycling collections. Garden waste collections were initially phased back in at 50% levels with households receiving a collection every four weeks instead of the usual two weeks. The service is now operating at full capacity providing a collection every two weeks for residents.

The Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership has now appointed a Partnership Development Officer, jointly funded by the Districts and County Council, to take forward the work of the partnership. This is a key appointment, three-year role, to develop a long-term waste and recycling strategy and to ensure we are best placed to respond to any changes arising from the Government's Resources and Waste Strategy.

GREEN SPACES

Hammonds Pond Refurbishment Project

Preparations progressing on a major, S106 funded, investment project at Hammonds Pond in Upperby:

- Permits from the Environment Agency have been gained to allow de-silting of the Wire Mire Beck, which flows through the Park. Clearing the beck will allow water to pass through more quickly, reducing the risk of overflows and flash flooding in the Park during periods of heavy rain. With permits in place these works will soon be put out to tender for specialist contractors to undertake the work
- Work has started on gaining the appropriate permissions to replace and upgrade three existing foot bridges over the Wire Mire Beck within the Park
- CCTV improvements will also form part of the Hammonds Pond refurbishment project and we are currently trialling a wireless 4G CCTV system currently in operation at Hammonds Pond. Improved CCTV will help us support Cumbria Police in the reduction of anti-social behaviour in the park

Spider Park / Tribune Drive

Land drainage work is due to commence in Spider Park, Belle Vue, this month and a similar scheme will take place in the green space at Tribune Drive, Houghton in October. Both drainage projects are aimed at reducing the effects of surface water flows and flooding on residential properties and well used pedestrian routes.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY WORK

Thank you to the Environment Agency for hosting the Carlisle Phase 2 briefing session for Members on 12th August. The up-dated Flood Hub website gives a very good explanation of all the different elements of Phase 2. The Environment Agency Contractor has started setting up a compound and securing off a work area using Swifts and Bitts Car Parks in preparation for the works. The work due to be completed by Spring 2021. Access to Bitts Park and play area maintained throughout, however many areas will be out of bounds due to construction work. In addition, we are working with the Environment Agency on a scheme to upgrade an area of the park to improve access and increase the wildlife friendly planting, with a focus on pollinators.

Melbourne Park

The Environment Agency is due to complete the bulk of the Phase 1 works this Winter. The embankments (raising and extending) are expected to be completed by Autumn. The EA are also aiming to construct a new stretch of embankment (Phase 1B) alongside Adelaide St allotments towards the end of this year.

National Tree Strategy

Green Spaces Officers have responded to the consultation on the new National Tree Strategy which aims to extend planting to 30,000 hectares per year across the UK. The consultation is open to everybody and closes on 11th September.

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

The Grounds Maintenance Team continue to work extremely hard to keep our parks, open spaces and cemeteries to a high standard.

Floral displays are now in place throughout Bitts Park, Carlisle Cemetery and the City Centre.

The team have started using battery powered trimmers and hedge cutters within our cemeteries alongside older petrol equipment. The battery powered equipment produces less noise and emissions and are more user friendly for staff. We will continue to increase the amount of battery powered equipment as we upgrade our machinery. Sunday league football is looking to start up again and we have been supporting the Carlisle City League and Junior Football by providing pitches at Melbourne Park for friendly games and training sessions. All teams must follow the Covid-19 guidance relating to grass roots football.

BEREAVEMENT SERVICES

Government guidance continues to affect the provision of funeral services and we continue to have restrictions in place, but where possible changes are being made to improve the experience of attendees:

- The number of funeral attendees has increased from 12 to 24 (services continue to be relayed via external speakers to all other attendees outside the Chapel)
- Funeral services held in the Crematorium Chapel remain restricted to 20 minutes to allow adequate time to clean the chapel between services
- The toilets at the exit to the Crematorium Chapel have been re-opened
- Contact details of funeral attendees are gathered via our Funeral Directors in line with the Track and Trace guidance
- From Saturday 8th August it became mandatory for all funeral attendees (except those that are exempt) to wear a face covering. Disposable face masks are available on site for anyone who requires one
- The Crematorium building and Office remain closed to the general public

The provision of a meaningful funeral, whilst ensuring the safety of the public and our staff, remains the priority at Bereavement Services.

LOCAL ENVIRONMENT (CLIMATE CHANGE) STRATEGY

A new Member Advisory Group (MAG) met in August to discuss the work need to move the draft strategy out for public consultation.

The Member Advisory Group (MAG) is a cross-party, informal group that will provide Elected Member input to the Local Environment (Climate Change) Strategy. Its role is as follows:

- To input to and steer a vision and set of objectives
- To receive and have input to a consultation document and plan
- To receive good practice examples to inform the work
- To consider options for the delivery of key actions
- To be advised of progress against agreed deadlines
- To promote the work being undertaken to all Members

The ultimate objective is to ensure that, subject to legal constraints, all strategic decisions, budgets, approaches to Planning decisions, and, in so far as the Council can influence, arrangements with Partners, are in line with a shift to zero carbon.

The Portfolio Holder completed an APSE Carbon Literacy Standard Training day in July. An intense but very worthwhile introduction to the subject suitable for any level of knowledge. Thank to the Member Development team for setting this up.

Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership

Cumbria's bid for £2.5 million of National Lottery funding to cut carbon emissions in the county has been successful.

Carlisle City Council is one of nearly 70 organisations in Cumbria that came together to submit the bid to the National Lottery Community Fund, the largest funder of community activity in the UK. The award to the Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership will fund a five-year programme of action aiming to make Cumbria the first carbon-neutral county in the UK, in a way that benefits communities and is led by them.

An ambitious programme will begin in January 2021 led by the Zero Carbon Cumbria Partnership, which spans the public, private and third sectors, including Community Groups, Councils, the NHS, Police, National Parks, businesses and the farming community, among others.

The programme will also build strong working relationships among a wide range of organisations across the county, raising their ambition to tackle climate change and sharing learning and resources.

The breadth of Partners and community involvement were strong points for Cumbria's bid, along with the fact that it will also contribute to climate action beyond the county, by trialling projects and ways of working that could be replicated elsewhere.