

Meeting Date: 20th July 2021

Public/Private*: Public

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

EV CHARGEPOINTS

Eleven new electric vehicle chargepoints are now available in Carlisle, as Carlisle City Council works to make the city more accessible for electric vehicle drivers.

The chargepoints are the result of a partnership between the Council and local Community Benefit Society Charge My Street, who are partners in an innovative project funded by the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles to install electric vehicle chargepoints in community settings.

We are in a good place already with 22 locations across Carlisle, providing capacity to charge up to 44 electric vehicles at the same time.

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

In addition to the electric vehicle charge points installed under the project with Charge My Street, I am pleased to report that we are now moving forward with a project to install further charge points across our pay and display car parks, at our fleet depot to support the shift to electric for our own vehicles and at the Civic Centre as part of the ground floor refurbishment. Carlisle attracted a lot of interest from potential suppliers, very keen to talk to us at two virtual supplier days held on 8th and 10th June 2021. This was shortlisted down to a mix of five suppliers with representatives giving very interesting presentations to a panel of Officers and two members from Executive. The information and advice received has been very valuable and Officers are now taking this work forward to the next stage to initiate a formal procurement exercise as we support the shift to electric vehicles as part of our climate change plan. Further information to follow.

CAR PARKING AND ENFORCEMENT

The Enforcement Team have been delighted to be able to work alongside the 1st Wetheral Brownies following their fantastic effort and action to raise the profile of dog fouling, displaying posters on Wrea Lonning as they were working towards their 'Speak Out'

badge. The Brownies received a letter of thanks from the outgoing Mayor, Cllr Bowman, and I would like to take this opportunity to add my special thanks to the Brownies and the Leader in Charge, Janice Brown, for their efforts. The Brownies received a visit from our Civil Enforcement Officers who handed out goody bags and spoke to them about their work. The Brownies have now signed-up to our Community Litter Champion Scheme and we will be using the posters designed by the girls in social media and in a press release.

The camera enforcement van has been out and about in a number of areas including the City Centre, Brampton and Currock area. We continue to promote this through social media.

Since April 2021 we have issued 38 fixed penalties. We have seen a number of successful prosecutions in Court with fines totalling over £5,000 being imposed, this included littering and failing to turn up for an interview into the investigation of fly-tipping. There are still 25 outstanding cases awaiting consideration by the Courts, with a further seven being submitted in recent weeks.

Although, not back to pre-pandemic levels, it is good to see our car parks busy again as the lockdown restrictions ease.

REFUSE AND RECYCLING

Due to a number of external factors beyond the control or influence of the Council, the value of the recycling we collect remains volatile. This continues to create a pressure on income targets although it is positive to see values rising again in recent months. Officers are monitoring the impact of this and working with our contractor and through targeted intervention to ensure we present high quality, low contamination material that will achieve best price when presented to market.

The demands on our collection teams remain high with the tonnages collected across all our activities when compared against 2019/20:

Recycling: Kerbside	+20%
Recycling: Bring sites	+8%
Garden waste	+4%
Refuse	+13%

Well done to our two Apprentice Technical Clerks who have passed their Business and Administration Course with Distinction overall and secured permanent roles within the Council as part of the Neighbourhood Services Team.

FLEET

The Fleet Team have welcomed the delivery of two electric pool bikes. Cycling Competency Training is being sourced and risk assessments developed to ensure their safe use. Staff will be encouraged to use the e-bikes as an alternative to travel by vehicle

where this is a safe and practical alternative. This is a positive step towards further reducing our local carbon emissions and improving employee physical and mental wellbeing.

COVID: WORKPLACE TESTING

Thanks to the ongoing support of a small group of Council staff volunteering to help out with the workplace test site at Bousteads Grassing depot, we are still continuing to offer weekly testing at work for operational staff. The test site has been in operation since March this year where at the peak week, we tested over 100 staff from Neighbourhood Services and Green Spaces. This number has now dropped to about 40 or so in recent weeks as staff have been encouraged to test at home. Fortunately, and without tempting fate, I am pleased to report that not a single positive test result has been returned from those testing at work.

GREEN SPACES AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

Managing Green Space For Biodiversity

The work of the two teams to manage green spaces for biodiversity is already paying dividends; a local naturalist spotting his first ever Grasshopper warbler at The Swifts last month and a previously regularly mown bank was covered in wild flowers at the entrance to Brampton. The teams are assessing sites for further opportunities, mindful of the need to balance amenity with environmental improvements. Cumbria Wildlife Trust are supporting the City Council with this work.

Green Spaces Volunteers

The Green Spaces Volunteer team are back up and running after Covid-19 restrictions with sessions, consisting of small conservation tasks, every other week during the summer and weekly sessions over autumn and winter.

Fellfoot Forward at Talkin Tarn

Funding was obtained through Fellfoot Forward to bring environmental education back to the Tarn. Various education packs have been written linking into the key stages of the national curriculum. The Tarn has recently had visits from various school groups from across North Cumbria to trial the packs and provide feedback prior to the packs going 'live' in September. The intention is for them to then be available on the Talkin Tarn website and therefore accessible for all schools to download whilst visiting the Tarn. As part of the grant scheme there will also be free training available to teaching staff to allow them to lead environmental education sessions independently.

BEREAVEMENT SERVICES

The Bereavement Services Team will continue to follow Government guidance on funerals at Carlisle Crematorium following changes on the 19th July.

CARBON FARM SCHEME

Carlisle City Council is exploring potential support for farmers to access grant funding to insensitive farmers to undertake a carbon audit, undertake training and implement recommended changes once an audit has been completed.

CUMBRIA LRF FUNDING PILOT EOI CARLISLE AND EDEN

Carlisle City Council have supported Cumbria CVS to submit an EOI to the Local Resilience Funding pilot. Building on previous local community response work, and the learning that has come from the community groups involved in this work, it has been highlighted that there is a need to look again at coordination between groups, and a collective local approach to regular and long term planning, prioritising and being prepared for future shocks. The project aims are the development of a clear, connected, community centered network of organisations who are resourced, prepared and practiced in preparation for future emergency responses across Carlisle and Eden District.

A Community Coordinator role will put in place a framework for community groups, Carlisle and Eden Resilience Groups, Carlisle Partnership, Cumbria CVS and Local Authorities to continue to work with across the District. The project will also identify and support meeting the needs for any additional resources. For example, community wardens, future training, and will work with partners to ensure these are in place (Local Funders, Local Training e.g. ACT)

REGULATORY SERVICES

New Restrictions On Sale Of Coal And Wet Wood

New restrictions on the sale of house coal and wet wood have come into force with the intended outcome being to cut air pollution. Stoves and open fires can still be used but people will be required to burn cleaner fuels. While just 8% of households now use log burners, they are the biggest source of the tiny pollution particles that are most damaging to health, with domestic wood burning responsible for 38% of particularly dangerous pollutant particles under 2.5 microns in size, three times as much as road traffic.

There are five smoke control areas in Carlisle. Although the precise number of wood burning stoves in the District are unknown a considerable amount of time was spent by Regulatory Services investigating the 63 smoke complaints received in 2020/21.

Food Safety

The Food Standards Agency have issued a COVID Recovery Plan for the City Council's delivery of official food controls (for example food safety inspections and sampling), which have been significantly impacted by the pandemic. The plan begins on 1st July 2021 and sets out guidance and advice to the City Council for the period from July 2021 to 2023/24. The Plan provides a framework for re-starting the inspection system in line with the Food Law Code of Practice for new food establishments and for high-risk and/or non-compliant food establishments, while providing flexibility for programming inspections of lower risk establishments.