

**Written response to question / issue
raised at Council**

Meeting Date: 8th September 2020
Public / Private*: Public
Minute Reference: C.94/20 – Portfolio Holder Reports
Written response to: Cllr P Birks
Written response from: Cllr S Higgs

Resolution / Question (b) (i):

The impact of COVID-19 on the occupancy levels of hotels and bed and breakfast establishments within the locality of Carlisle; and how that compared with other areas of a similar size.

Response:

Reply is based on Cumbria-wide figures. We do not have comparison data for other areas.

More than 150 tourism-related businesses from across the County have taken part in the latest in-depth survey, carried out in conjunction with independent Chartered Accountants, Lamont Pridmore. Almost half of respondents don't feel confident that their business can survive the next six months, and nearly two-thirds don't feel confident about their longer-term survival.

- It also highlights that:
- 10% of tourism businesses are still unable to reopen in a viable way
- Average capacity per business is just 75% of what it would normally be
- Average spend is significantly down
- Staffing capacities are reduced and 43% of businesses are keeping some staff on furlough
- 75% of businesses will not be recruiting - up from 50% a month ago
- 23% of businesses plan redundancies, with management posts amongst the most common to go

Resolution / Question (b) (ii):

The plans in place within the Tourism Strategy for advertising and building upon the accolades currently being received (e.g. in relation to the Cathedral, Walby Farm Park and the Military Museum) in order that Carlisle may stand out within a very competitive market.

Response:

A visitor economy COVID Recovery Plan is in place and being implemented by the Discover Carlisle Team. This works alongside the Re-Opening Highstreets Safely Action Plan in which the Discover Carlisle Team are delivering key actions. In fact, as a result of the work of the Team, English Heritage have reported that in the period since lockdown, Carlisle Castle has been one of the busiest sites in the North of England. Plans are also being made for City of Lights 2021, which will be an outdoor event. In 2020 the event directly contributed £166,000 to the local economy over a 3-day period. Plans are also being made to enhance the festive programme in 2020 by hosting COVID secure events at an appropriate scale for the City. The Discover Carlisle Team are working in partnership with Cumbria Tourism on recovery campaigns. This will include not only advertising, but public relations activity and working with social media influencers to boost tourism to the City and District as a whole. The Discover Carlisle Team and colleagues in Economic Development continue to work with the England's Historic Cities Consortium, which it is hoped can be used to market Carlisle alongside high profile tourist destinations like Chester, York and Durham.

Resolution / Question (b) (iii):

The potential for subsidised market stalls for small independent businesses at the Christmas Market with a view to assisting those businesses and the local economy.

Response:

A discounted rate is available to businesses based in the District of Carlisle. The provider is also working with the organisers of the Carlisle and Brampton Farmers' Market to make sure that everyone can benefit from the festive programme in 2020 and encourage as many shoppers as possible to support our High Streets.

Date: 25th September 2020

**Written response to question / issue
raised at Council**

Meeting Date: 8th September 2020
Public / Private*: Public
Minute Reference: C.94/20 – Portfolio Holder Reports
Written response to: Cllr Dr L Tickner
Written response from: Cllr N Christian

Resolution / Question:

Clarifying what the percentages quoted on page 19 of the document pack concerning Waste and Recycling mean in monetary terms.

Response:

The increase in recycling collected during this period generated an extra £2,600 from the sale of recycling and attracted an additional £36,843 in recycling credits from the County Council (total additional net income = £39,443) compared to the same period last year.

Date: 6th October 2020

**Written response to question / issue
raised at Council**

Meeting Date: 8th September 2020
Public / Private*: Public
Minute Reference: C.94/20 – Portfolio Holder Reports
Written response to: Cllr R Betton
Written response from: Cllr N Christian

Resolution / Question:

Detailing the cost of the three replacement vehicles being procured for the Enforcement Team; and clarifying details of the ownership of the riverbanks / riverbeds and responsibility in terms of maintenance thereof.

Response:

The Parking and Enforcement Team had four diesel vehicles (1 x car and 3 x vans) allocated. The like for like replacement cost of these four diesel vehicles would be £64,000.

The vehicles have however been replaced with three fully electric vehicles (2 x cars and 1 x van). The purchase cost of these replacement vehicles is £57,822.

This has generated a saving in capital this year of £6,177 when compared against the like for like replacement cost. It will also contribute to further revenue savings of £945 per year in road fund licence (road tax) and £2,500 saving in diesel costs. Over five years this represents a revenue saving of £17,600, less of course any costs for charging the electric vehicles.

In addition, and very importantly, the change to electric vehicles where there is a robust business case, supports carbon reductions and helps to improve local air quality.

This also represents a net reduction in one vehicle from the Council's fleet which will support further efficiencies in vehicle maintenance costs, tyres, brakes and oils etc. as well as freeing up space in the depot etc.

Note: *the above costs do not include any capital receipts from the sale of the four diesel vehicles, surplus to requirements.*

Resolution / Question:

Clarify details of the ownership of the riverbanks / riverbeds and responsibility in terms of maintenance thereof.

Response provided on my behalf by Phil Gray, Neighbourhoods & Green Spaces Manager:**River Petteril – City Council Responsibilities****Riparian Owner**

As the riparian owner (own the land on one or both sides of the watercourse), the City Council has a number of responsibilities:

- To report incidents of flooding; pollution; obstructions; changes in the flow; collapsed or damaged riverbanks
- Let water flow naturally – do not remove obstructions unless they could cause flooding
- Keep trash screens clear
- Prevent pollution – remove litter, animal carcasses
- Protect wildlife – including bird's nesting habitat, fish spawning areas etc and remove invasive species such as Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed

(Source: www.gov.uk/guidance/owning-a-watercourse)

Site Management - inspections

As the department with responsibility for managing the City Council's green and blue infrastructure (parks and waterways), the Green Spaces team carry out regular inspections of our land including watercourses. Obstructions are cleared as a matter of course.

Site Management - interventions

On the Petteril, upstream of Petteril Valley Road, we installed a major erosion control structure in the form of sheet piling with bioengineering to prevent undercutting of the West Coast Main Line.

Bridges

Where a bridge carries a public right of way across a river, structural maintenance is the responsibility of the Highway Authority (in our case Cumbria County Council). However, where debris has collected on the structure and is threatening to cause flooding it is up to the City Council, as riparian owner, to clear the obstruction. Examples of this are found lower down the Petteril on the land occupied by Stoneyholme Golf Course.

Flood Prevention

Flood prevention is the responsibility of the Environment Agency* (EA). Following Storm Desmond the EA carried out channel cleaning and tree removal work in Melbourne Park as a first response. Their current proposals to strengthen the flood defences on the river include extending the floodbanks upstream on the southern end of Melbourne Park.

*Source: www.gov.uk/guidance/owning-a-watercourse#manage-flood-risk-rules-and-responsibilities

Flood resilience

The City Council is responsible for regular clearance of a number of trash screens on watercourses it owns. This primarily prevents surface flooding where water would otherwise back up against the screen and flood the surrounding area.

Summary

In owning land crossed by significant watercourses, Carlisle City Council accepts those responsibilities conferred on the riparian owner.

The City Council's land management activities include regular inspection of channels and clearance of obstructions that could lead to flooding.

Where national infrastructure is threatened (e.g. West Coast Main Line), the City Council has acted to prevent erosion of riverbanks.

The City Council works in partnership with others to prevent and reduce the impact of future floods.

Date: 12th October 2020