

PORTFOLIO:

ENVIRONMENT & HOUSING

Report of
Portfolio Holder:

**COUNCILLOR
RAY BLOXHAM**

Environmental Health

The Environmental Health Service Plan for 2011 / 2012 is now complete. A greater emphasis is being put on promotional activities to improve health with activities being planned for: sun bed safety; dog fouling and food hygiene. The Full service plan will be available for inspection on the Environmental Health web pages from July 2011.

Following a number of pre event Safety Advisory Group Meetings for Radio 1's Big Weekend, health and safety and food safety inspections were carried out during the event. No major problems were identified and no notifications of reportable accidents have been received. The Section dealt with two noise complaints post event.

The section attended the North Lakes Tattoo Convention at the Shepherds Inn, Rosehill to carry out a site inspection and register new tattoo artists. 13 new artists from studios in the UK and abroad were attending the Convention therefore needed to be locally registered at a cost of £1,080 to the organiser. Over the last four years 98 individual artists have been registered to carry out tattooing through the event. Overall the inspection and event went smoothly and no problems were identified.

To celebrate Food Safety Week 2011 (6th–12th June), the Environmental Health Section delivered four outreach sessions in the community in association with Barnardos and East Cumbria Family Support Association. The aim of the sessions was to engage with a wide variety of individuals in order to promote the key aspects of food safety. A food safety information stand was also on display in the foyer of the Civic Centre to target staff and the general public accessing the Civic Centre. To attract interest, a competition was held which invited individuals to test their food hygiene knowledge in order to win a fruit hamper.

A promotional board and information leaflets in the foyer of the Civic Centre and a two page informational article in the News and Star were methods used

to promote Noise Action week which ran from 23rd to 27th June. The promotions sought to encourage neighbours to be considerate to one another. The Environmental Health Section dealt with 473 noise complaints in 2010 / 2011.

Highways

Castle Street & Roman Gateway – With the recent installation of the granite benches on Castle St these two schemes are now complete apart from the installation of some signs and lines which can only be completed when the relevant traffic orders are approved by the County Council.

Slurry Sealing of Roads – 52,500m² of slurry sealing has just been completed on 40 roads around the City. Work is now underway to renew the road markings which were covered by this surfacing. This work should ensure that these roads are fit for purpose for many years.

Slurry Sealing of Footways – In July 16,000m² of footways will be slurry sealed in 8 different areas of the City. As with the slurry sealing of roads this work will ensure the paths are free of trips and fit for purpose.

Repairs to frost damaged roads and car parks – During the severe winter much damage was caused to roads and car parks. Initially temporary patching was carried out until such time as the weather conditions permitted permanent repairs. Permanent repairs are now taking place around the City with more work to take place next month.

Burgh By Sands Drainage – Extensive repairs to the drainage in Burgh By Sands has now been completed. This work should minimise the risk of flooding in Burgh which has been a problem in recent years.

Waste Services

Final performance indicators are now in for 2010/11 and they show that the overall recycling rate was 46.5%. Whilst the amount of waste that ended up in landfill was 23,770 tonnes this does represent an increase.

The Council is in discussions with Tesco regarding the future of our popular recycling facilities at its Rosehill store. Proposals to replace our recycling containers with bins provided by Tesco would, we believe, have an adverse impact on our service. 25% of all the recyclables collected at our Neighbourhood Recycling Centres are collected at the Tesco site. I'm pleased to report that Tesco have recognised the importance of this site to us and are now discussing with us how we can work together to ensure that we continue to deliver a quality recycling service for all our residents.

Neighbourhood & Green Spaces

A Healthy Cities-funded, 'Fit to Grow in Currock' allotment project held a very successful work-day on Sunday 19th June when 25 gardeners of all ages took part. The first crop of new potatoes was dug, compost bins established, weeding done and beans planted. The idea is to bring people together to share their skills and knowledge of gardening while at the same time taking part in a healthy outdoor activity with the added benefit of fresh fruit and vegetables throughout the seasons.

The Yewdale ward will be the next location for a 'Big Tidy Up' in the week commencing 25 July. The format for Big Tidy up is that our teams work alongside community groups and partner agencies like Riverside Housing to 'blitz' a specified area. The City Council provides the refuse bags, gloves and litter pickers while the community groups provide the muscle-power! We also arrange for gully-cleaning and mechanical sweepers to ensure that the improvements are sustainable.

As promised at the last Council meeting a Ward Walk was undertaken in Botcherby at which the Assistant Director and the Neighbourhoods and Green Spaces Manager attended.

The inspection was to check levels of litter, detritus and dog dirt and was also to look at drainage issues and fly tipping. Overall litter standards were found to be very good. Detritus was acceptable in most areas but in patches were below the acceptable standard. These areas were highlighted and plans are in place to increase the level of mechanised sweeping to improve levels of detritus. Very low levels of dog fouling was found and only one area of fly tipping which has since been removed. Problems with drains were noted and were found to be already listed for gully cleaning. Where there were omissions, these have been added to the cleansing programme.

Friends of Melbourne Park have been busy with regular clean-ups of their local park. Recently their efforts have concentrated on removal of an invasive plant, the Himalayan Balsam, which colonises riverbanks and shades out the native wildlife. Friends of Acredale Road Play Area have seen the fruition of 3 years work with the completion of the new play area and adult fitness zone. The group themselves have raised over £40,000 towards the cost, with further contributions from Section 106 funds.

In the parks, Green Flag judging took place in May and June with the results due to be published in July. Preparations for Love Parks Week are almost complete. The programme of events is from 23 to 31 July. Highlights include 2 open-top bus tours of Carlisle's parks and historic attractions (which are already fully booked following a feature in the 'Carlisle Focus' magazine) and a repeat of the 'Flicks at Bitts' giant cinema screen at Bitts Park on Sunday 31st July. This year's family films are the Pixar animated 'Wall-E' and the 70s classic 'Grease'.

SPORT AND RECREATION

Trinity MUGA

Following the replacement of mains drainage pipes in the Caldewgate and Willowholme areas recently, United Utilities provided a 'community fund' to be spent on a suitable project. With help from the Castle ward councillors, youngsters from Caldewlees School, and the newly formed Trinity Area Community Trust group the idea of a new multi-games area at the old Trinity churchyard site was agreed. Additional funding has been provided by Carlisle City Council and local partners which include, CDRP, Riverside Housing and the County Council. The games area will be Floodlit and enclosed by high fencing and will have an all-weather surface.

As part of the project, the existing play area will be upgraded and moved to a new part of the site.

Work started on 20 June and is expected to take about 6 weeks. Once complete, the Sports team from Community Engagement will organise a programme of activities for youngsters.

Private Sector Housing

Housing Demand Study

This is a study to carry out an assessment of housing need within the Carlisle area. The study is being carried out by consultants GL Hearn who were commissioned jointly by Housing and Planning in March following a competitive procurement process. The study will provide information using primary and secondary data that will inform the Housing Strategy, Local Development Framework (LDF) and economic approaches of the authority. To gain primary data from residents 10,000 survey forms were sent to a sample of households in early June and their responses will be used to inform the study final report. This report is due in late July / early August.

Housing Strategy

A Housing Strategy for the 5 year period 2011 – 16 will be finalised by September 2011. 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 Carlisle Strategic Housing Partnership (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

Homelessness, Prevention and Accommodation Services

Homelessness Services

On the back of transformation, we have reviewed working practices to ensure that we can respond to the needs of vulnerable customers quickly and effectively.

From 1st April 2011 to date we have made decisions on 83 Homelessness applications and have accepted a duty to 34 of those applicants.

Hostel Services

John Street Hostel provides 28 units of emergency temporary accommodation for men who are experiencing homelessness. The main unit reopened last month following a six month closure to allow substantial improvements and upgrading of the provision as part of the 'Places of Change' funding from the Department of Communities and Local Government.

The new provision is high quality with all rooms now en-suite and the ground floor being fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act, a great improvement from the previous institutional accommodation.

Replacement family women and family accommodation

It is envisioned that the new accommodation will be self contained apartment/house provision with enough flexibility to enable a variety of use according to the needs of clients. It is anticipated at this stage that there will be 7-8 units providing 1, 2 and 3 bed-roomed accommodation, however we will try to maximise the number of units within the budget to ensure value for money and a unique modern flexible complex which meets the needs of all clients.

The anticipated next steps and timescales for the development of the build project are as follows:

Key Steps	Timescale
Commission and award design consultant	13/06/2011
Planning Approval	30/09/2011
Tenders to contractors	23/01/2012
Award construction contract	12/03/2012
Start on site at Water street	30/03/2012
Anticipated completion	30/03/2013

Shaddon Gateway Centre & Dispersed Foyer Services

An initial meeting took place with officers and Carlisle YMCA on 17 May 2011 to start the process of negotiating a working agreement and the development of the shared outcomes and provision. Regular monthly group meetings have been arranged to ensure that the scheme develops within the tight timeframe.

The YMCA successfully manage 2 resource centres in the Fylde Coast and Foyer services which provide support and opportunities for everyone within the local community. They intend to build on the success of these service models within the Shaddon Gateway ensuring its success and sustainability. Please note we are at a very early stage in the discussions and development with Carlisle YMCA and regular updates will be given on this development.

Supporting People

All Supporting People (SP) contracts are due to come to an end in September 2011, including 3 of the current contracts within Carlisle City Councils temporary accommodation service. The tendering process starts in July with new contracts in place by the start of the new financial year. We have a proven record of providing good quality support services in the City which currently provide value for money to Supporting People.

Councillor R D Bloxham
Environment & Housing Portfolio Holder