

Meeting Date: 19th July 2022

Public/Private*: Public

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

CLIMATE CHANGE / TRANSPORT

Carlisle City Council is part of a wider partnership of public bodies that come together under the banner of 'One Public Estate' to exploit opportunities for efficiency in operations and service delivery. One example of the work of OPE is the roll-out of electric vehicle charging points across the county of Cumbria in anticipation of the ban on new petrol and diesel cars from 2030. Phil Gray of the Health & Wellbeing Team is the City Council's Lead Officer on the charge point project.

Notable achievements to date include a submission to the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund with the aim of rapidly expanding the number of publicly accessible charge points in the county. Currently at the 'pilot project' stage, the LEVI fund will eventually provide £400m nationally to support the roll-out of EV charge points.

The current bid is for £1.4m, with match funding of £0.47m to be provided by the private sector partners. Further bids will be submitted as the project evolves.

The overall aims of the project are to make it easier for residents of rural areas or dense residential streets to access a public charge point; to support the county's tourism economy; to make the choice of an electric vehicle more viable (as the cost of petrol and diesel escalates rapidly); and to improve air quality by reducing the proportion of petrol/diesel cars on our roads.

PARKING AND ENFORCEMENT

We are now into month four of the free weekend parking offer. All indications confirm an increase in use of our car parks at the weekends and anecdotal reports of increased footfall in the City Centre. It is too early to draw any clear conclusions from this and further work is planned from August to assess the impact of this, seeking feedback from visitors and businesses.

The Courts have worked hard on the backlog and apart from a handful of cases we are now mostly up to date, regular communication has been sent from the Team to Members on these updates. A reminder of a few of these cases are as follows –

- A man from Gateshead who failed to attend a PACE interview into the investigation of fly-tipping at Moor Road, Longtown has been found guilty and fined £2,000 together with costs of £1,000 and a victim surcharge of £190. **Total £3,190**
- Failing to attend PACE interview into the investigation of fly-tipping at Burgh Road, Carlisle has been found guilty and fined £660 with costs of £504.30 and a victim surcharge of £66. **Total £1,230.30**
- A woman who dropped litter in Carlisle City Centre was found guilty of the offence and fined £440 with costs of £295.55 and a victim surcharge of £44. **Total £779.55**
- A woman who failed to clean up after her dog had fouled was found guilty of the offence and was fined £220 with costs of £364.16 and a victim surcharge of £34. **Total £618.16**

The Team and colleagues have also been working with Trinity School. On 30th June 2022 Enforcement Officers visited the school to speak to Year 8 about ASB and Enviro-Crime, as well as this a number of events were carried out with 200 pupils as part of their Community Leaders Award, the Teams worked with Street Cleaning to carry out litter picks, the Health and Wellbeing Team to help with weeding and pollination surveys.

REGULATORY SERVICES

Export Certificates – As part of the work undertaken by the Food and Public Protection Team, the Authority issues Export Certificates to enable local manufacturers to export certain food commodities abroad; with the main exporter being Nestle based in Dalston. The Authority perform routine inspections of the food businesses to ensure compliance with relevant food hygiene legislation. The certification issued is a declaration from the Authority that the product is safe and meets the required hygiene requirements required by the importing country. The Council can charge for issuing an export certificate. A recent review of the service has shown a significant increase in the number of export certificates issued in the past five years, which is an indication of the growth of the worldwide market for certain food products. In 2017 /18 the Food and Public Protection Team issued 174 export certificates, last year that had risen to 335.

GREEN SPACES AND GROUND MAINTENANCE

£80,000 of capital works to transform the former 9-hole golf course and driving range at The Swifts in central Carlisle (Cathedral and Castle) were completed in May. Work undertaken on the site over the past two years includes: thinning out dense stands of non-native trees and shrubs; seeding of grassland areas to start the transition from amenity grass to hay meadows; planting native flowering tree species; and the creation of habitat scrapes for wetland flora and fauna. The project has been completed with the aim of providing habitat and feeding opportunities for pollinating insects and has been delivered in partnership with Cumbria Wildlife Trust.

Improvement works to park infrastructure at Hammond's Pond (Currock and Upperby) are now complete. The project, costing approximately £230,000, has involved: resurfacing poor quality paths; constructing a new path to allow safe pedestrian access to the Western side of the park; replacing four end of life timber foot bridges with new steel examples; and replacing collapsing sections of bank edge around the pond with new materials which are more environmentally friendly. A small number of additional minor works will be completed during the summer.

Leading up to the Cumbria Wildlife Trusts Pollinator Festival in September, Green Space Officers have been working with four schools and five classes to design a raised bed in Bitts Park specifically for pollinators. So far, the Officers have been into two schools and three classes, delivering half day sessions on the importance of Council work, green spaces, pollinators, wildflowers and wildflowers. Officers have worked with 95 school children (the plan is to work with 60 more) with interactive environmental education projects.

Quote from Year 4 Teacher: 'thank you very much for coming in on Friday to work with the children. *"I was back teaching in Year 4 again today and they all commented about how much they enjoyed the activities. Having something so different to the school day was great (even with the bad weather in the afternoon!)"*

Conservation grassland - Carlisle City Council aims to reduce cutting regimes in green spaces to better manage grassland habitat for wildlife. Over the Spring / Summer of 2022, a total of seven green spaces will be targeted to reduce the frequency of mowing, from regular cutting, to cutting the grass once a year in September and removing the grass cuttings. Eight hectares of conservation grassland will be created for the benefit of pollinators and other wildlife. This will be in addition to the 17 hectares of hay meadows, diverse woodland, and wet grassland that has already been carried out in the Swifts. These projects will provide essential habitat for pollinating insects and will also offer feeding and nesting opportunities for a wide range of bird and mammal species. Interpretation Boards and signage will be erected over the Summer informing local residents why the grass is not being cut and explain the benefits to wildlife. It is the intention of the Green Spaces Team that even more areas of amenity grassland will contain conservation grassland in future years.

The 'Festival of Nature' took place at Talkin Tarn Country Park over the weekend of 18th and 19th June. The two-day Festival celebrated nature around the themes of water, woodland and meadows. The Festival was organised by the North Pennines AONB together with Carlisle City Council, Eden Rivers Trust and in partnership with Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre. The University of Cumbria, 4Eden, Cumbria Wildlife Trust, Green PLACE, RSPB, Sustainable Brampton, and Carlisle Youth Zone were also in attendance. Activities included guided walks, nature spotting, species identification, family games and geology activities. The Festival was aimed at families, budding

naturalists, farmers, environmental organisations and the local community. The Festival was exceptionally well attended and the Team has received positive feedback from attendees.