

Meeting Date: 27th April 2021

Public/Private*: Public

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

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

The Enforcement Team have adopted new powers to request drivers of parked vehicles to switch off their engines to reduce harmful emissions from engine idling. The Team will be focussing their efforts in the city centre initially but have also been in discussion with interested schools to reduce emissions from parents parked when dropping off / picking up children. New signage has been produced and this action has also received positive coverage through the local media. We hope to see a positive change in the behaviour of some drivers as awareness of this issue grows. Officers will however take enforcement action where needed; an offence is committed should a driver fail to switch off their engine when requested to do so by an Officer. The Parking and Enforcement Team are keen to hear from any Members on suggested locations for signage or increased patrols so this can be programmed in amongst the many other activities carried out by this Team. Any queries, please email enforcement@carlisle.gov.uk

Following the Christmas campaign to reduce the incidence of fly-tipping at recycling sites, 81 investigations have now been carried out resulting in 36 fixed penalty notices (fines) issued. A further five interviews are scheduled. In addition, over 120 warning letters have been issued.

Executive confirmed the release of £60,000 additional funding, approved by Council, to support clean-up and enforcement. This will fund for a further year the appointment of an additional Civil Enforcement Officer as well as providing additional staffing resources to support the Clean Neighbourhoods Team at key times of the year as well as supporting additional planned litter clearance activity from roadside verges. The funding will also support new awareness raising campaigns to target the stubborn problem of dog fouling with the potential to involve school children in a competition to design new posters for dog fouling and littering.

The camera van continues to carry out its programmed patrols and has raised its profile in a number of areas where issues have been raised. We welcome reports of any areas that should be considered.

Since April 2020 we have issued the following:–

OFFENCE	NUMBER OF NOTICES ISSUED
Litter	60
Fly tipping	27
Dog fouling	4
Dog off lead in a designated area	2
Household duty of care (passing their waste onto an unauthorised person)	2
Microchipping	50
Breach of a community protection notice	9
Abandoned vehicle	1

The Enforcement Team also have 34 prosecutions awaiting to be heard in the Magistrates Court for the past year. Members will be aware of the current pressure on the Court system in bringing cases forward.

NEW CHARGES ETC

Members are reminded that from 1st April 2021, residents now have the option to purchase a new 180l bin size for £20 as opposed to a 240l bin for £40 or the 140l bin for £16. The new 180l size is three quarter the size of the 240l bin that will be familiar to most. This new bin represents a more achievable step down for families keen to reduce their household waste, increase recycling, support the climate change strategy and provide a cheaper alternative for replacement bins.

Members will also be aware that residents will now also be able to apply to purchase a second garden waste bin. Applications will be reviewed to determine if there is capacity on the round to approve the award of the second additional bin, taking into account the pressures and demands on the individual collection round that day.

Residents can now also take advantage of a more flexible bulky waste offer. Bulky waste items can be collected for a charge of £25.00 for the first three, plus £5.00 for each additional item up to a maximum of six items. Four bulky items therefore now costs £30.00. Previously, residents would have had to pay £50.00.

WORKPLACE TESTING OF STAFF

Staff in Neighbourhood Services have taken advantage of workplace Lateral Flow Covid Testing in recent weeks. This has allowed a return to more typical working arrangements and allowed the Waste Team in particular to return to three-in-a-cab working with the confidence that staff have all returned a negative test. Members will be aware that for the last year, the service has operated with two-in-a-cab with the second loader using a pool car or shuttle bus to travel around. I would like to place on record my thanks for the fantastic effort and resilience of our frontline teams throughout this pandemic. And,

thanks to the small team of volunteers (Council Staff) for supporting the testing process for our teams.

REGULATORY SERVICES

Rules and practices to keep us safe from Covid infections have dominated our lives over the last year. Regulatory Services have been responsible for the enforcement of most of the business Covid controls. Since March last year 512 complaints or enquires have been responded to by Regulatory Services in relation to the new Covid requirements. From October 2020 Regulatory Services has reported its enforcement activities to the Cumbria Enforcement Subgroup, a group set up from the Health Protection Board. Since October the Service has reported a total of 1,019 business contacts, including 824 visits and 195 records of advice following these visits. Despite the large amount of proactive activity only 12 Statutory Notices have had to be issued, these include: 5 Prohibition Notices for businesses operating when they should be closed; 1 Immediate Restriction Notice issued for serious Covid control concerns; 1 Improvement Notice, and 5 fixed penalty notices. I am grateful to the vast majority of businesses who have complied over this challenging time.

CLIMATE CHANGE

On April 22nd is Earth Day, an event aimed at promoting environmental and ecological awareness, around the world. Members of the Advisory Group (MAG) on Environment (Climate Change) will meet with our colleagues from Carlisle, Pennsylvania that day to share ideas. This follows a meeting at the end of March where Officers and Members introduced our Environment (Climate Change) Strategy and our plans for the Garden Village. The latter in particular was well received.

GREEN SPACES

Tree work at the Swifts Urban Nature Site plus removal of non-native shrub species, was completed in early March. The timber arising from these operations will be removed from site when ground conditions allow for use as bio-energy. This fits into the wider work that the team does across the district in managing sites for biodiversity e.g. - woodland and meadows at Talkin Tarn and Kingmoor Nature Reserves, Yellow Hay Rattle Meadow at Chances Park and Conservation grass areas in closed churchyards, cemeteries and parks throughout the district.

BEREAVEMENT SERVICES

Government guidance continues to affect the provision of funeral services and we continue to have restrictions in place. During February and March, the service was working at near capacity. The live streaming has proved very popular with approximately 70% of families taking advantage of the service.