South Lakeland District Council  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
26 October 2018  
Executive Report

Portfolio: Environment Portfolio  
Report from: Cllr Dyan Jones

Portfolio Responsibilities

To take the lead on Waste Management/Recycling and relevant Council Plan measures under the environment objectives.

Providing and maintaining parks infrastructure.

To develop and implement a Playground Strategy.

Policies, Plans and Strategies

- Waste Management Strategy
- Air Quality Strategy and action plan
- Active Travel Strategy and action plan

Key Areas:

- Waste Management and Recycling
- Streetscene
- Community microenergy schemes
- Carbon/ Greenhouse gas Reduction
- Green agenda – Low carbon reduction
- Public realm (Parks and open spaces, including cemeteries)
Waste Management and Street Scene

The Council has been working with Croppers, Cumbria Waste Recycling and the Westmorland County Agricultural Society to look at how coffee cups could be recycled at large events. A working group successfully delivered a trial facility at Country Fest in June 2017 and the Westmorland County Show in September 2018. The working group will continue to look at other future large-scale events where recycling facilities can be provided and continue to engage with the public about waste minimisation and recycling as a whole.

The Council has installed 3 litter bins for the segregated collection of plastic and cans, alongside general litter bins, as a trial at 3 locations in Kendal. This will be for a trial period to determine how well-used the bins are, the levels of contamination in the recycling bins; and the operational infrastructure required to provide the service.

Since 2015 the percentage of households with plastic and cardboard recycling has risen from 38% to 100% in 2017.

In 2017 68% of residents who took part in the Quality of Life survey stated that they are satisfied with waste recycling services. The Waste Management Service is continuing to review the recycling collections and ways to introduce further recycling and effective waste management opportunities. For example the Council is currently trialling sensors in 104 litter bins that measure the fill level of the bin and collate usage data. The software builds a dataset of these usage levels to predict when a bin will be filled and require emptying. The trial has already delivered some success in reducing the number of empties required for bins in the trial area from 80 per day to around 20-25 per day. The nature of any trial is also to highlight any problems that might arise; and this technology has not previously been used in rural areas. As issues arise we are working with the manufacturer to determine the impact on our services and how solutions can be found.

In-Cab Technology

The Waste Management Service is continuing to work on the procurement of in-cab technology for waste and recycling collection vehicles that will help deliver improvements to customer service and offer opportunities for service efficiencies as part of the Customer Connect Project.

Carbon/ Greenhouse Gas Reduction and Green Agenda

Throughout 2018/19 the Council is continuing to support the Cumbria Cycling Strategy and remain involved in the Cumbria Cycling Partnership. The Council supported Cumbria County Council in the delivery of the Tour of Britain 2018 which came through the district in September.

The Green Team has now been reintroduced to provide leadership in reducing effects of climate change and implement the single use plastic goal. The aim of the green team is to have the responsibility of informing, influencing and implementing actions to reduce the impacts of climate change and reduce carbon/ greenhouse gas reduction. Informative sessions for the community were held throughout the summer 2018 where suggestions were gathered from the communities. From this the Green team are currently establishing an action plan identifying the short term and long term actions the Council can undertake to help mitigate the effects of climate change.

The Council was involved in producing a report “Air Quality and Public Health – Reducing Deaths and Ill Health Caused by Poor Air Quality in Lancashire and Cumbria”.

The purpose of the report was to: improve awareness and engagement for action on air quality and understanding of everyone’s role in tackling air pollution, building on existing plans and strategies; start a conversation about the ways in which we can work together and hold each other to account for action to improve air quality; and outline potential areas for further action to reduce population exposure to air pollution. This will support the Council’s priority as identified in the Council Plan to influence and encourage others to reduce their carbon footprint as well as reducing our own levels.

The Council has reduced the number of Air Quality Management Areas to one across the whole district. The Council has also steadily reduced carbon emissions to 3,488 tonnes in 2017 compared to 4,877 tonnes in 2010. The Green Team will identify actions that can be taken forward to continue the reduction of emissions such as installation of energy saving equipment on Council Assets.

South Lakeland District Council are continuing to actively support the Lancaster Canal Regeneration Partnership (LCRP) ambitions to create a fully accessible, multi-user leisure route connecting Kendal and Lancaster along the route of the historic Lancaster Canal.

SLDC agreed to grant fund phase one of the project via £140k LIPs grant for path improvements from the outskirts of Kendal to Natland, which is being delivered throughout 2018/19. This funding has also been used to form the basis of further investment funding via applications to Sports England, Heritage Lottery Funding, Rural Development Programme, Fells and Dales Leader, with decisions expected on each of these funding applications throughout 2018.

**Public Realm**

The Council is continuing to work with Continental Landscapes Ltd to deliver quality grounds maintenance and support to community groups.

Throughout this year the Council is working towards completing various works to upgrade parks and open spaces across the district. These improvements will encourage communities to enjoy outside spaces and encourage active travel throughout the area.

Most recently a toddler playground at Howe Bank re-opened following a £45,000 makeover. The works included resurfacing and the installation of new play equipment. Following a public consultation on four parks within the Kendal area it was clear that residents felt it was important that toddlers have a play space of their own.

The Council is also investing in playareas to support adults as well as children by installing Gym equipment. Recently equipment was installed at Broadgate Meadow, Grasmere through the Locally Important Project funding (LIPs), a fundraising campaign lead by the local community with the support of the Council is currently underway to raise money for a new playground.

Another achievement from the Parks and Open Spaces teams is the re-opening of Nobles Rest park following Phase 1 of the improvement works. This phase included the installation of new drainage and pathways as part of a community led enhancement project.

Trees on land owned by SLDC are managed carefully for their amenity value and using a hazard assessment process on a regular cyclical basis; with risk reduction works being carried out in a risk priority basis, where required. The council also carry out tree works to comply with the Highways Act and in the interests of good woodland management.
SLDC endeavour to replace any trees that have to be felled with more than were removed, where possible, desirable and depending on the location.

For example in recent years we have worked with Continental Landscapes Ltd to utilise their carbon off set programme and planted whips (small trees) at Kendal Castle and other sites. Approximately 2400 tree whips and 40 standard form trees have been planted since 2015. During the same period 450 trees have been removed. We have not committed to a two for one policy of tree planting in the exact location a tree has been removed or that a standard tree will be planted, due to consideration of space and amenity of the area.

Planting is encouraged and supported on development sites that are coming on stream and where ever possible on our own land holdings, although these are not extensive and limit the opportunity for planting.

The management of our parks and open spaces needs to be balanced with a desire for woodland creation / extensive tree planting, and the team are always considering options to enhance and complement our own parks and open spaces with trees where appropriate.