

Environment and Communities Committee – March 2025

Written responses to questions raised by Committee Members

Question 1:

Councillor S Firkin, Congleton Town Council, addressed the committee in relation to agenda item 6 (Cemeteries Investment Programme). Cllr Firkin stated that there had been concerns in relation to Congleton cemetery, Howey Lane, and its limited future capacity for some time. It was stated that poor drainage onsite caused significant problems for burials on land previously thought to be suitable, and therefore, Congleton welcomed the commitment to invest in drainage and the potential future groundworks to mediate the site. Cllr Firkin asked what the current best/worst case scenarios were for continued operation onsite for burials. Finally, it was suggested that officers looked to utilise the Streetscape team, as originally intended, for ongoing maintenance and groundworks of the cemetery

Response 1:

The current drainage issues at Congleton Cemetery are not considered a constraint to utilising the remaining capacity. However, it is currently unclear what mitigatory measures may be possible until further ground investigation is undertaken. The worst-case scenario is assumed to be the continuation of localised pumping to remove accumulated surface water from grave plots, allowing for their normal use.

Regarding the utilisation of the Congleton Streetscape team, the current staffing model for the council's Bereavement Services operational teams relies on the ability to deploy staff to all sites throughout the borough, which is considered to offer the best value in terms of service provision.

Question 2:

It was highlighted that a recent Officer Decision Record (ODR) published on the mobile recycling service stated that there was no growth in 2025-26 however a net growth in environmental services was reported. It was queried if the ODR would result in a budget cut or was within current budgets and how this would sit within budget lines 83 and 84 (Environmental Services Growth 2025-26 onwards / Environmental Services Savings 2025-26 onwards). A detailed breakdown of lines 83 and 84 were requested. Officers committed to providing a written response.

Response 2:

Awaiting response

Question 3:

In relation to Household Waste and Recycling Centres, it was noted that there was a total of £1.490m in capital projects, including £900k for a review. A detailed breakdown of this funding and what it would mean for Macclesfield HWRC was requested. Officers committed to providing a written response.

Response 3:

There are two elements in the capital program relating to Household waste centres the first £860,000 relates to structural repairs and drainage repairs to the lower level of Macclesfield Centre a project that is underway though the Council Assets team to be concluded this year. The second Review of Household Waste centres is a provision of up too £1,000,000 and relates to the current procurement for a new contractor to enable repairs as part of the change in contracts requiring the council to deliver the sites in a good state of repair to an incoming new contract. The exact works associated with that money are agreed as part of the procurement dialogue with each bidder and will be dependent on the outcome of the procurement. A full list of repairs can be provided once the procurement is concluded.

Question 4:

It was noted that, in relation to libraries, £297k income was anticipated. It was queried if this included an allocation for Town and Parish Council's contributing through the 'Top Up Service' and if so, how many T3 libraries had signed up to this.

Response 4:

Awaiting response

Question 5:

Officers committed to articulating the definition of sites such as 'brownfield' within the plan.

Response 5:

Previously developed land

Land which has been lawfully developed and is or was occupied by a permanent structure and any fixed surface infrastructure associated with it, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed). It also includes land comprising large areas of fixed surface infrastructure such as large areas of hardstanding which have been lawfully developed. Previously developed land excludes: land that is or was last occupied by agricultural or forestry buildings; land that has been developed for

minerals extraction or waste disposal by landfill, where provision for restoration has been made through development management procedures; land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments; and land that was previously developed but where the remains of the permanent structure or fixed surface structure have blended into the landscape.