12: We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations

Summary

Improving the quality of the physical environment is one of the council's key objectives, with the focus being through investment in town centres and addressing derelict and contaminated land issues.

Land development plans have been consulted upon and programmed through the recently adopted Local Plan and concerns over brown field sites have been progressed through the vacant and derelict/contaminated land programme.

LOCAL INDICATORS - LATEST TRENDS

12.1	Street cleanliness score	
12.2	Percentage of homes meeting the SHQS	
12.3	Number of properties at risk of flooding	
12.4	Number engaged in the Environmental Volunteer programme	
12.5	Number of acts of Vandalism	

OUR INTERVENTIONS - WHAT WE HAVE DONE

Awareness of sustainable development

- South Lanarkshire Council's Conference and Banqueting Service obtained a Green Tourism Award in recognition of their efforts to deliver a more environmentally sustainable service.

Making a difference: Children's Games Legacy Plan

As part of their commitment to the Games, the host councils agreed to prepare the first ever Children's Games Legacy Plan which was finalised in March 2010. The aim of the plan was to maximise the potential immediate economic, social and environmental benefits from the Games for the Lanarkshire area and for Scotland, both immediately and for the future.

The Lanarkshire 2011 Games took place over just a few days and, unlike other major sporting events, no new facilities were required. However, most of the travel to the Games was by air, which contributes to the problem climate change. Commitments made in the plan included: creating opportunities for volunteering, schools twinning, arts and sports development activities, the provision of recycling during the Games, an efficient transport operation for teams, the use of locally sourced food, the use of mains supplied rather than

bottled water, and the procurement of beds and dormitory furniture from the Glasgow based Royal Blind Craft Industry social enterprise. Environmental projects which took place to the mark the event included tree planting and peat bog restoration in several locations in both North and South Lanarkshire.

As well as showing their own commitment to sustainable development principles, the organisers wanted to highlight that Scotland is taking the challenge climate change seriously to help promote the concept of global responsibility.

Rural Strategy and Action Plan

- Continued implementation of the Rural Strategy and Action Plan. Leader programmes and projects delivered as agreed and Rural Partnership approved extension to the Leader programme to December 2013 as a result of increased funds

- Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership was launched in October 2010. Staff team and programme of board and steering group meetings in place and preparations underway for Stage 2 bid for Heritage lottery funding.

Promoting responsible public access to the countryside

- The Council invested £984,533 on clearing derelict and contaminated land in Rutherglen and Cambuslang, also spending £620,000 on land at Shawfield and at Clydesmill and a further £307,900 in Cairns, Cathkin and Fernhill. The Council received £5.7m from the Scottish Government's Vacant and Derelict Land programme for 2008-2011 to tackle such sites and stimulate growth and wealth generation, promote environmental justice and improve the quality of life.

- Completed the South Lanarkshire Core Path Plan following an extensive period of consultation with partner agencies and with local communities.

- During 2010/11 1.5m visits to South Lanarkshire's two country parks country parks were recorded.

- Developed an access initiative at a Whitelee Windfarm in collaboration with East Renfrewshire and East Ayrshire Council including developing a programme of events and activities run by the Ranger Service. A Visitor Centre on the site run by Glasgow Science Centre on behalf of Scottish Power and councils has recorded over 75,000 visits each year.

- Completed the Chatelherault to Bothwell Bridge section of the Connect 2 Cycle Project and progressed the Larkhall to Chatelherault and Bothwell to Uddingston (via Blantyre) sections.

- Completed the East Kilbride to Rutherglen Cycle Route (NCR 756).

- The Council contributed to the South of Scotland Longer Distance Routes programme with Southern Uplands Partnership and several other councils. This project aims to identify, implement and promote a network of longer distances access routes across the south of Scotland and the north of England.

- Publication of a Lanarkshire Cycling Guide through Herald on Sunday and Visit Scotland, identifying a selection of cycle friendly routes throughout both North and South Lanarkshire.

- Publication of an equestrian access route guide identifying a selection of horse rider friendly routes in South Lanarkshire.

- Central Scotland Green Network Partnership Strategic Route Network – identification of network of access routes throughout the central belt of Scotland including proposals for the 'John Muir Trail'.

- Undertook access improvements for canoeists at Smugglers Bridge', Hazelbank, to enable them to gain easier access to the River Clyde.

- Upgrading of car park and provision of on-site interpretation/access information Tinto Hill access improvement project.

- Publication of six local health promotion and natural heritage access guides and maps for sites at Cambuslang, Rigside, Backmuir, Langlands Moss, Morgan Glen and Udston/Glenlee Woods through the 'Routes Around Roots Programme'.

- Development of a Blacklaw Windfarm Access Strategy in partnership with North Lanarkshire and West Lothian Councils and Scottish Power Renewables.

- Undertook route repairs and path management works, small scale capital works programme of resurfacing, signage, drainage and vegetation management on the network of paths and tracks comprising the core path and wider access networks. See *making a difference: Working with Community Service teams to improve access* below.

Making a difference: Working with Community Service teams to improve access

In partnership with Community Services teams, the Council has undertaken a programme of improvements across the South Lanarkshire's community access network. The programme includes path resurfacing, drainage, signage, vegetation management, fencing and small scale construction projects for offenders on community service orders.

The programme not only helps improve the condition of paths but provides valuable new skills to those on the programme, which can assist in gaining future employment. At a time of very constrained public funding, the work carried out through Community Service is very welcome: over the last 12 months the teams have carried out work with an estimated value of in excess of £50,000.

- Developed the Countryside Access Management System, a GIS based computer system used for recording data and attribute information on the status, condition and extent of the South Lanarkshire access network.

- South Lanarkshire Outdoor Access Forum – quarterly meetings held with representatives from national agencies, organisations and local community/volunteer groups. Reports to South Lanarkshire Sustainability Partnership.

- Development of the electronic path counter installation and monitoring programme, installing a network of path counters across sections of the access network to monitor and record levels of path use activity.

- Early design work has been undertaken on the development of Cathkin Braes Mountain Bike Facility for the Commonwealth Games. Due for completion 2011, the facilities will be available for public use before and after the games and will likely become a nationally important venue for the sport.

Making a difference: former quarry becomes a wildlife haven and community asset

Redlees Urban Fringe Park is at the north end of Blantyre adjacent to Blantyre Farm Road. It is 27 hectares of disused industrial land that in the past has been everything from a quarry, military base, fishing pond and commercial woodland. A total of £300,000 was spent on the site in Blantyre to turn it into a public park which, as well as having amenity for local people, can be used by local schools and other groups for outward bound activities.

The funding from the Council and the Scottish Government's Vacant and Derelict Land Fund was used to build footpaths, car parking, pedestrian access and improving of the pond and trees on the site. A detailed conservation and management plan is now in place.

An additional application has gone forward to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the development of the old Anti Aircraft Battery as a feature in the park.