

**WHITEHAVEN COMMERCIAL PARK, MORESBY**

**EXECUTIVE MEMBER:** Cllr Jim Hewitson  
**LEAD OFFICER:** Mike Tichford  
**REPORT AUTHOR:** Graham McWilliam

**Summary:** The report outlines a proposal to generate additional interest in a key employment site in Copeland and help to create 20 new jobs and safeguard a further 61 existing posts by relocating two expanding local businesses to Whitehaven Commercial Park.

**Recommendation:** It is proposed that Members agree to provide funding towards the site acquisition costs of the two companies concerned, up to a maximum of £5,000 per acre subject to a similar offer from North West Development Agency. The maximum land contribution from the Council will be limited to £25,000. In addition, it is proposed that a sum of £10,000 be set aside to market both the Moresby Parks site and other key sites within the Borough. It is recommended that a maximum of £35,000 be released from the Major Projects Fund to cover the contribution to land acquisition and site marketing. The current balance in the Major Projects Fund is £552,247.

**Impact on Delivering Corporate Objectives** The project will help create 20 additional jobs towards the Council's target to create 5,000 jobs over a ten year period.

**Impact on other Statutory Objectives** None

**Financial and Human Resource Implications:** Funding to be sought from Major Projects Fund.

**Project and Risk Management** None

**Key Decision Status**

- **Financial:** None  
- **Ward:** None

**Other Ward Implications:** None

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 There are currently over 30 acres of land available for development at Whitehaven Commercial Park, Moresby. The site is owned by the North West Development Agency (NWDA) who report very few enquiries for land, at Moresby.

- 1.2 In early December, the Council were approached by two local companies, who have outgrown their existing sites, in Whitehaven, and need to relocate to expand their businesses and create additional jobs.

## **2. ARGUMENT**

- 2.1 The two companies concerned have been approached by a developer who has offered them sites at Lillyhall, in Workington. They approached Copeland to see if the Council could offer any suitable sites within the Borough. The developer concerned has also expressed an interest in building a 'speculative' development on the site, should the two companies relocate to Whitehaven Commercial Park.
- 2.2 The Council's Economic and Tourism Development Manager has had discussion with the NWDA who are prepared to discount the land value from £20K per acre to £15K per acre for a 5 acre development. In order to secure the future of the two businesses in Copeland and 20 new jobs, it is felt that the Council will need to offer some additional financial support.

## **3. OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED**

- 3.1 Offer no financial support to the businesses and risk the likelihood of their moving to Lillyhall with the consequent negative publicity for the Council.
- 3.2 Offer a financial contribution towards the costs of site acquisition, on the same basis as the NWDA, of £5K per acre which would enable the companies to purchase the land at £10K per acre.
- 3.3 Undertake a marketing campaign to promote Whitehaven Commercial Park and other key industrial sites in the Borough as location for local company expansion and inward investment.

## **4. CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 Interest in Whitehaven Commercial Park has been dormant for many years. The relocation of two long established local businesses up to the site would help to kick start interest in the site and ensure take up of 20% of the available land. A further marketing campaign could then be introduced to generate further interest from businesses
- 4.2 If Members are minded to support the proposal it will create 20 additional and safeguard a further 61 jobs in Copeland. Consideration will be given to support from the Council's Business Grants Scheme when the additional jobs are created.
- 4.3 Should the companies relocate to another site, it will free up their existing premises for further development.

## **List of Appendices**

**List of Background Documents:** NWDA monthly list of available sites (January 2006)

**List of Consultees:** Corporate Team, Finance, Cllr Jim Hewitson

