

JOINT WORKING

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Cllr Clements
LEAD OFFICER: Michael Tichford
REPORT AUTHOR: Michael Tichford

Summary: The report outlines progress in developing joint services with Allerdale Borough Council and West Lakes Renaissance, with particular emphasis on a joint work programme on housing matters. The report requests that progress be noted and that the approach is endorsed.

Recommendation: To note progress on the development of joint services with Allerdale Borough Council and West Lakes Renaissance and support the further development of this work by officers.
--

Impact on Delivering Corporate Objectives Joint services will improve the effective of the Council in delivery against key corporate objectives.

Impact on other Statutory Objectives Improved delivery of statutory housing and planning authority roles. Community safety already a joint activity for West Cumbria.

Financial and Human Resource Implications: Savings in financial and human resources will result but are yet to be quantified.

Key Decision Status

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

Other Ward Implications: None

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Regeneration Department team members and I have been pursuing for some months opportunities for joint working with Allerdale Borough Council in the areas of regeneration delivery, housing, planning policy and latterly building control.
- 1.2 This report provides an update on progress and outlines specific proposals with regard to joint working on housing and planning policy matters.

2. ARGUMENT

Housing

- 2.1 Joint working on housing between Allerdale and Copeland should be viewed in the context of the close working that has already developed in Cumbria between housing partners, particularly the strategic housing authorities. The Cumbria Sub Regional Housing Group is working on a County wide housing strategy and officers from the districts are meeting on a

regular basis to progress the work and where possible use a common methodology. For example, housing needs surveys are being undertaken by each authority but using on an agreed framework, making comparisons between areas much easier and the process more cost effective.

- 2.2 Further impetus has been given to partnership working by the effective joint working between Allerdale and Copeland (and Barrow) on the submission of a bid for Housing Market Renewal funding, with the prospect of a joint delivery team.
- 2.3 Thirdly, there are clear efficiencies to be made in the joint development of plans and strategies when the West Cumbria districts share so many common characteristics. On a practical basis this is reflected in agreement on one district representing both areas at certain meetings and leading on specific areas of work, freeing up valuable officer time. The latter point addresses the forth reason for pursuing joint working which is that with such a small residual housing team the Council would otherwise struggle to meet the demands placed upon it, and may still.
- 2.4 In addition to housing strategy work Copeland and Allerdale have agreed to work jointly on Houses in Multiple Occupation licensing, older persons strategies and empty property strategies.

Policy Planning

- 2.6 The option of creating a joint post to work on the Local Development Framework (LDF) for Allerdale and Copeland Borough Councils, as advised to the Executive in June 2005, is still being pursued. However, regardless of the outcome on a joint post it has been agreed with Allerdale Borough Council that alignment will be sought between the two districts on some core documents within the LDF, namely the Statement of Community Involvement and the Core Strategy. The area specific Action Area Plans will by necessity remain separate.

Regeneration Delivery

- 2.7 The Executive at a previous meeting has accepted the principle of a joint regeneration delivery team. The detail of how this would work is now being finalised between Copeland and Allerdale Borough Councils, the County Council and West Lakes Renaissance and will be reported back shortly with a detailed proposal on a joint team to deliver the Whitehaven Regeneration Programme.

Building Control

- 2.8 Joint working between building control services is on the regional and national agenda but recruitment problems have emphasised the need to evaluate the potential for joint working ahead of any more wide spread proposals. Discussions with Allerdale on this aspect of joint working are at an early stage.
- 2.9 Members will be updated on progress across the range of joint working initiatives as further developments occur.
- 2.9 Efficiencies derived from joint working will provide Gershon savings.

3. OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

- 3.1 It is good practise to examine a range of options for service delivery but the pressure on certain key services gives additional impetus. There may be other options in the medium to long term but current issues have highlighted the need to examine solutions in the short term

and as our close neighbour with similar issues joint working with Allerdale presents itself as the first alternative to pursue.

3.2 Having a foundation of joint working will provide opportunities, should both Councils wish to pursue it, for shared services in the future.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 With appropriate safeguards to ensure the ability of the partners to act independently and where necessary joint services provide an effective and efficient way of delivering services.

List of Appendices

None

List of Background Documents: None

List of Consultees: Corporate Team
Executive