PROCESS IMPROVEMENT TEAM – PROGRESS REPORT MARCH 2008

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the work carried out by the Process Improvement Team (PIT) over the six month period from September 2007 to date. The report describes:

- o the structure of the team and how this has changed
- o the work carried out by the PIT
- o The planned programme of work to September 2008.

The Process Improvement Team has been in place since November 2005, within the Policy and Performance Department. The original aims of the PIT were to assist the Council to:

- Focus on the customer, and as a result deliver a better overall service
- Release resource to areas of priority
- Build capacity within the services
- Learn from and apply best practice
- Meet its Gershon targets

These aims are still relevant in facilitating the Councils objectives with respect to the Strong and Prosperous Communities White Paper (published by the Department for Local Government and Communities in October 2006). They are also in line with DCLG guidance as to how this is to be achieved, as set down in the Business Improvement Package (published by DCLG in March 2007).

The team continues to use a team-based workshop approach to undertaking improvement projects. This has proved to be successful in that:

- o The projects are 'owned' by the process stakeholders
- o The team approach promotes innovation
- o The improvement process is quicker than the SPRINT methodology that was previously used
- o The improvement process has developed to include elements of best practice from other approaches, eg Vanguard consulting

The team has funding to support 3 full time equivalent (FTE) members, comprising the team leader and three process improvement officers (2 FTE). The team reports to the head of Policy and Performance via the Performance Improvement Manager.

PIT PROJECTS

During 2007/8 the team has been working with a number of service areas within Copeland Borough Council on a range of improvement projects.

A summary of the projects completed during the reporting period is provided in ANNEX 1.

A summary of the current projects is provided in ANNEX 2. The work programme for the next 6 months is currently being developed following the confirmation of continued funding for the PIT.

ANNEX 3 provides a list of potential projects identified in conjunction with service heads or department managers. In addition to these projects, we expect that the service review process currently being undertaken across the Council will identify a number of new projects. These projects have yet to be fully scoped, prioritised and programmed into the PIT work plan. The aim in doing this will be to optimise the use of the PIT resource by striking a balance of projects, ie those with quick wins and others that are longer-term but bring greater potential benefits.

ANNEX 4 provides an overview of the PIT work programme up until September 2008. This is currently in draft as we are awaiting the outcomes of the Website review, Business Architecture analysis by Aperia and any work arising, together with decisions with respect to service delivery within Open Spaces.

ANNEX 1.   COMPLETED PROJECTS – August 2007 to February 2008 inclusive

SERVICE AREA	PROJECT	IMPROVEMENTS MADE	BENEFITS	CASH / NON-CASH	REMARKS
Customer services	Parking Permits	• Replacement of the existing manual system for the control and issue of parking permits	• Will enable a cashless service • Reduced administration time	Non-cash	Undertaken as part of the Alternative Payments Project
Customer services	CRM	• Implementation of new waste management system • Automatic scheduling of bulky waste orders	• Reduced input time by Copeland Direct • Reduced administration time within Waste Management	Non-cash	PIT trained in developing service scripts for CRM
Finance & Business Development	Concessionary travel (follow on)	• Introduction of changes resulting from the review of the new process introduced in April 2007 and changes to the NowCard bus pass system.	• Simplified registration process for CBC residents • Elimination of duplicate issues • Simpler and quicker eligibility checking by Copeland Direct • Reduced rework by Finance Dept in resolving errors	Cash / Non-cash	A direct cash gain of £5800 was achieved from redeeming old travel tokens.
Regeneration	Major Planning Applications	• Formalisation of the pre-application process • Provision of a system to track major applications through the approvals process	• More structured approach to handling large major applications prior to formal submission • Better control of major applications	Non-cash	Copeland removed from Standards Authority list. Satisfactory Planning Advisory Service review.
	Minor applications	• Redesign of Householder Development and Planning Application forms	• Simpler for applicants to complete with reduced checking for planning staff	Non-cash	

SERVICE AREA	PROJECT	IMPROVEMENTS MADE	BENEFITS	CASH / NON-CASH	REMARKS
	1-app implementation	• Introduction of standard planning application forms • Provision of 'planning kiosk' in Copeland Centre foyer	• Improved self-service for planning applicants and those wishing to view planning information • Dedicated area for discussing planning queries	Non-cash	Implemented new national scheme ahead of schedule.
Leisure & Environmental Services	Time management	• Standardisation and reduction in the number of timesheets used by waste management and cleansing staff • Certification / authorisation levels for timesheets revised	• Release of supervisor time - 80% reduction in number of timesheets • Reduction in potential timesheet transcription errors	Non-cash	
	Trade sacks	• Provision of electronic data extraction from BTCC • Telephone payments via Copeland Direct • Semi-automated production of delivery notes / receipts • Development of customer data base to monitor orange sack usage rates	• Reduction in level of invoicing • increased income through improved control over process	Non-cash / cash	
	Trade waste data base	• Implementation of simple spreadsheet and mail merge facilities to capture and manage commercial waste management • Simplified procedures to capture information (and bill for) additional collections	• Simpler set-up and improved maintenance of waste management contracts and waste transfer notes • Improved control over waste collection rounds • Reduction in outstanding debt • Improved service costing data and decision support	Cash / Non-cash	

SERVICE AREA	PROJECT	IMPROVEMENTS MADE	BENEFITS	CASH / NON-CASH	REMARKS
	Trade waste spreadsheets	• Rationalisation of multiple reporting spreadsheets	• Reduction in officer effort to compile waste management reports • Improved data accuracy	Non-cash	
	Trade waste cost model	• Development of a comprehensive cost model for commercial waste collection	• Used in conjunction with the trade waste date base, provides comparison information regarding income and collection / disposal costs • Provides facility to undertake 'what if' scenarios to support pricing policy decisions	Non-cash	
Legal & Democratic Services	Land Charges	• Land charges data holdings across the Council identified and where possible rationalised • Opportunities to utilise GIS identified • Clarification of Con29 requirements with responding departments • Adoption of standardised baseline date	• Reduction in unnecessary work by Con29 respondents • Correct responses to Con29 (Search) questions	Non-cash	

ANNEX 2.   CURRENT PROJECTS

SERVICE AREA	PROJECT / DESCRIPTION	EXPECTED BENEFITS	CASH / NON-CASH	REMARKS
Customer Services	Alternative Payment Arrangements: • Introduction of payment cards and bar-coding as alternative to cash	• Increased payment points and opening hours • Reduced costs for cash handling • Reduction in cash office staffing	Cash / Non-cash	Currently on-track to implement alternatives to cash payments across the Council by 1st April 2008. Savings of approx £5k in first year and expected savings of £41k In following years
	Customer Service Delivery Agreement • Introduction of a standard methodology to formalise the relationship between Copeland Direct and back offices	• Provide a consistency of customer service • Allow better resource planning within Copeland Direct, particularly as new services are taken on board • Provide a method to identify / support training needs for Copeland Direct staff • Provide the basis for the development of service scripts within CRM	Non-cash	Being done in conjunction with the Customer First initiative and to support the implementation of the new CRM
Leisure & Environmental Services	Chipside implementation: • Transition of the existing complaints system into Chipside • Transition of the pest control service into Chipside including links to the CBC website • Provision of a system to manage the markets • Integration with website and CRM	• Improved access to service - reporting of complaints via website and Copeland Direct • Improved response times and follow-up • Improved access to service – On-line (and via Copeland Direct) booking and payment of pest control service • Improved COSHH • Reduced process administration • Improved control over markets and income collection	Non-cash	

SERVICE AREA	PROJECT / DESCRIPTION	EXPECTED BENEFITS	CASH / NON-CASH	REMARKS
	CNEA Sect 46 – Domestic & Trade Waste: • The integration of waste management and enforcement activities to meet the requirements of the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act	• Reduction in contamination of green waste • Improved enforcement of the CNEA for both trade and domestic waste	Non-cash	Project held due to resource constraints within L&ES
	Street cleansing: • Development of system for recording and potentially rationalising waste bin collections	• Reduction in complaints about un-emptied bins • Improved response in replacing missing / damaged bins	Non-cash	Project held due to resource constraints within L&ES
Corporate	Website: • To improve the accessibility, clarity and flexibility of the website to allow people to access information and transact electronically with the Council.	• Increased transactions using the website • Reduced demand on Copeland Direct (queries and mediated transactions) • CBC communications and image improved	Non-cash	Input to Blueprint completed. Awaiting decision on way ahead from SocITM review.

ANNEX 3.   POTENTIAL PROJECTS

SERVICE AREA	PROJECT / DESCRIPTION	EXPECTED BENEFITS	CASH / NON-CASH
Leisure & Environmental Services	CNEA Sect 46 – Trade Waste: • The integration of waste management and enforcement activities to meet the requirements of the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act	• Improved enforcement of trade waste, eg fly tipping, conformance with waste transfer notes	Non-cash
Customer Services	Benefits - scanning review: • A successful trial to assess direct scanning was undertaken in July 2006. This project will examine direct scanning in relation to the totality of the scanning team's work, including indexing and post. It will also address whether and by what means direct scanning might be done in the area offices	• Direct scanning offers considerable advantages in terms of the direct labour and material cost savings arising from removing the photocopying activity. It also leads to less rework as the quality of the scanned images is greatly improved	Non-cash
	Benefits - 'Front desk' in the area offices: • This scheme is currently operating at Catherine Street in Whitehaven and this project will look at how the same or a similar scheme might be operated at the area offices in Cleator Moor and Millom.	• Introducing a 'front desk' system at the area offices will lead to similar levels of improvement to that realised at Whitehaven, ie average processing time reduced from 58 to 35 days..	Non-cash
	Benefits - Document receipt: • Development and implementation of a simpler form to make it clearer to benefits claimants exactly what additional information will be required to be able to process their application	• Copeland Direct staff find revised form easier to use • Benefits claimants find form easier to use • Reduced effort by Benefits staff in chasing up missing documentation	Non-cash

ANNEX 4.   PIT workplan – draft

ID		Task Name	January	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October
			11 18 25	03 10 17 24	31 07 14 21 28	05 12 19 26	02 09 16 23	30 07 14 21 28	04 11 18 25	01 08 15 22	29 06
1		**CUSTOMER SERVICES**									
2		APA									
3		CSDA									
4		CRM - Ph2									
5		**L&ES - OPEN SPACES**									
6		Bereavement Services									
7		Chipside Markets									
8		Chipside - Enforcement Complaints									
9		Chipside - Pest Control									
10		CNEA - integration									
11		**L&ES - WASTE MANAGEMENT**									
12		WM Spreadsheets									
13		JIT bins									
14		**CORPORATE**									
15		Business Architecture - Ph1									
16		Business Architecture - Ph2									
17		**POLICY & PERFORMANCE**									
18		HR Services									
19		Absence recording									
20		Website									