

EXECUTIVE REPORT

FULL 12 04 05

RESOURCES AND LOCAL DEMOCRACY SERVICE PORTFOLIO**COUNCILLOR NORMAN WILLIAMS - PORTFOLIO HOLDER****MARTIN JEPSON - LEAD OFFICER****1 KEY ISSUES - PROGRESS REPORT****1.1 Investor in People Accreditation**

Following a four day visit by an IIP Assessor in March, he has confirmed that Copeland will retain its accreditation as an Investor in People. During the visit, the Assessor interviewed more than 50 people, employees and elected Members, from many different parts of the organization, and from all levels of responsibility. The full report of his findings will be available in 3 to 4 weeks. In the feedback session at the end of the visit, the Assessor recognized that the assessment had come at a very difficult time for the Council in view of all the uncertainty and concern generated by the restructure project. He complimented the Council on many examples of good practice, and will suggest one or two improvement areas for action before the next re-assessment in 2 or 3 years' time.

1.2 Public Buildings

Executive approved a report outlining expenditure proposals for Public Buildings for the forthcoming year. A breakdown of the revenue budget of £308,374 was given, showing expected expenditure against cyclical, building, mechanical and electrical engineering installations maintenance. £250,000 capital has been allocated for 2005/6, this budget to be spread mainly over works to the leisure buildings with allocations for building condition and asbestos surveys and compliance with insurer's requirements. A minor amount of Disability Discrimination Act works remains to be undertaken at Moresby Parks to be linked to proposed alterations to be commenced shortly. As part of continuing improvements minor maintenance items (up to £50) including helpdesk inquiries will in future be dealt with directly by the term maintenance contractors.

Executive also noted a progress report on expenditure on Public Buildings for the current year. Works are generally on target and in line with budgets. Executive approved a carry forward of part replacement windows at the Dunboyne hall (spread over two years) to next year to enable the windows to the entire room to be replaced in one year.

1.3 Parish Boundary Reviews

I have begun the process of meeting representatives of all Parish Councils to review all Parish Boundaries, asking the parishes themselves to tell us where they believe changes should be made. To date the meetings have been very positive. Subject to the successful conclusion of negotiations as between parishes a report on the proposed changes will be put to Members later in the year, parishioners will be formally consulted and the proposals will then be passed on to Government for approval.

One parish has made the decision to become a Quality Parish and, in line with the recommendations of a recently approved report, will receive support from this authority.

1.4 ACE Programme

A number of Members and Officers have attended training courses and seminars this year arranged as part of the Achieving Cumbrian Excellence (ACE) Programme, sponsored and part-funded by IDeA and ODPM as our joint response to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment of all the Cumbrian authorities.

ACE is due to come to an end in May 2005 but the Programme sponsors are currently considering a further Programme beyond May- to be known as "ACE2"- which will deliver further training and development opportunities, together with funding, for Members and Officers from all authorities in the County into the next year.

Continuation of ACE into ACE 2 should be encouraged and greatly welcomed. I will keep the Council informed of further developments.

1.5 Planning Delivery Grant 2005

This grant is awarded annually by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to give support to providing a quality planning service. The value of the allocation is based on the performance of the authority in respect of planning functions such as the efficient determination of planning applications, success rate on appeals and the production of a Local plan.

Copeland has been awarded £318,056, more than double last years award of £149,500. Copeland's award compares most favourably with five other Cumbrian districts, only one being marginally higher. Their awards were, in ascending order:

£zero
 £61,774
 £134,086
 £198,237
 £320,885

A report will be presented to the Executive recommending how this years award may best be spent to ensure that we continue to provide a quality planning service. In

doing this Copeland would remain in a good position for future substantial PDG awards.

Congratulations must go to the planning staff who achieved this through a time of mayor changes in the authority.

2 EXECUTIVE DECISIONS RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

3 EXECUTIVE DECISIONS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Subject: Communications Best Value Review

Date of Decision: 22 February 2005 **Decision Reference:** EXE/04/0158

Context: To consider the report of the Best Value Review for Communications

Decision

- a) the report be noted; and
- b) the recommendations be agreed in principle (with costs being subject to a further report).

Subject: Progress Report – Public Buildings Revenue and Capital Schemes

Date of Decision: 22 February 2005 **Decision Reference:** EXE/04/0167

Context: This Report sets out detailed proposals for expenditure of these budgets for the financial year.

Decision

That

- a) the current position be noted; and
- b) the carry forward to next year of £20,000 civic hall window replacement, as detailed be approved.

Subject: Proposals for Public Buildings and Revenue and Capital Schemes
2005/06

Date of Decision: 22 February 2005 **Decision Reference:** EXE/04/0168

Context: This Report sets out detailed proposals for expenditure of these budgets for the financial year

Decision

That

1. the proposed programme of work to the Public Buildings and in respect of Disabled Access to council buildings as set out be approved;
2. the proposal to transfer the Public Building helpdesk to the building maintenance contractor be noted.

Subject: Dispute Relating To The Publication Of The Copeland Guide And Map

Date of Decision: 22 February 2005 **Decision Reference:** EXE/04/0172

Context: This report advises Members of the detail of the dispute between the Council and the previous publisher of the Copeland Guide and Map and makes recommendations on ways of preventing similar occurrences

Decision

That

- a. **satisfactory arrangements be put in place in each department to flag up when contracts are due for renewal regardless of value;**
- b. **revisions to Contract Standing Orders currently being finalised (independent of this enquiry) are adopted.**
- c. **each department should hold a register for staff to reference before entering into any contract arrangement.**
- d. **if a potential claim against the Council is viewed as routine the appropriate portfolio holder should be advised of the fact that a claim has been received even if its chance of success are felt to be negligible.**
- e. **if circumstances warrant it, in addition to (d), a formal report should be presented to Members in a timely manner either as part of normal performance monitoring or in a separate report.**
- f. **the relevant Corporate Team member should be kept informed at all stages and the matter discussed by the Council's Corporate Team if it is other than routine at an early opportunity**

Subject: Preparation of a Parish Charter

Date of Decision: 10 March 2005

Decision Reference: EXE/04/0183

Context: This report looks at the development of agreements or charters between individual local Councils and principal authorities to clarify and improve working arrangements and exchange of information

Decision

That

1. **the content of the first draft of the Parish Charter be noted;**
2. **options for further development of Quality Parishes be considered; and**
3. **the Parish Review Working Party be recommended to develop the scheme in Copeland and consider a more effective liaison/influencing role in Principal Authority service delivery, i.e. new ways of involving parishes in client functions, service planning or scrutiny.**