

EXECUTIVE REPORT

RESOURCES AND LOCAL DEMOCRACY

COUNCILLOR NORMAN WILLIAMS – PORTFOLIO HOLDER

1 Key Issues – Progress Report

1.1 Councillor Training & Development

As I have reported previously, arrangements are now in place for the North West Employers' Organisation (NWEO) to conduct Personal Development Interviews (PDP's) with all Councillors before the end of the 2005 calendar year, as part of the vital preparatory work for production of a new corporate training and development programme for Councillors. NWEO will be on site conducting the interviews on eight full days in November and December, details of which will be included in an information pack to be issued to all Councillors shortly.

Successful completion of the PDP interviews and production of a robust development programme will represent significant progress towards our objective of achieving accreditation to the NWEO Charter, which in turn is likely to score heavily for us in the next round of CPA. It is vital that the process over the next few months is completed successfully and with the active participation of as many Councillors as possible. I therefore look forward to the co-operation of all my colleagues in ensuring the success of this project.

1.2 Property maintenance/management

Following approval of Executive 26 July 2005 the Building Maintenance measured term contract has now been let to Mayson Bros. This commences on 01 September 2005, as from 01 October the contractor will take responsibility for all helpdesk enquiries and automatically undertake orders up to the value of £50.

The first round of property sales have been advertised in the press with offers to be submitted on 6 or 13 September. So far there has been an encouraging response to the advertisements.

1.3 Accommodation

Following approval of Executive on 5 July the relocation of staff within the Copeland centre to accord with the restructure is now progressing with amended layouts discussed with Service Heads, and a phased programme of minor moves taking place over the next few weeks.

Following the Housing Stock transfer the alteration works to the accommodation at Moresby Parks has now commenced, and is expected to be completed by October 2005. This comprises relocating Copeland staff into one part of the building, introducing new toilets, compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act. Copeland Homes is yet to decide on its own proposals. The opportunity to replace the Featurenet telephone system (to be taken out of commission by BT) will be taken shortly afterwards through an extension of the Copeland centre system and to provide additional resilience – telephone numbers will change.

1.4 Information Computer technology

Draft new Security and Acceptable Use Policies are to be presented to Executive on 6 September for approval. These will provide a specific framework for users, both members and employees, with measures to address misuse, and also confirm an allowed level of use of telephone and internet for staff.

A revised Agreement dealing with the loan of Computer Equipment to Members has been prepared to bring training, provision of laptops, use and maintenance up to date.

The Broadband connections through the Council Internet Service Provider are now available to Members. This new option offers greater security. In addition Members can choose to use their own Internet Service provider.

1.5 Website

Copeland's new web site is now live, and will be subject to continual improvement as new material is ready to be included on the site. Each department of the Council now has an officer who is responsible for the content of their pages and will be able to see that it contains the most up to date information. The Communications team will ensure that the website is a really effective means of communicating with the public.

The new site achieves the following specific IEG requirements:

Accessible to people with disabilities to required standard.

Online Council agendas and minutes.

Individual Councillor pages.

Ability for citizens to check their eligibility and calculate Council Tax and Housing Benefits.

Complies with Government technical standards (known as e-GIF and e-GMS).

Includes ability to monitor usage information.

Hosted on new more resilient servers, with better connections to the internet, so that it will be faster and more reliable for customers.

A range of application forms for various services, both electronic and printable.

Links to the Connected Cumbria Portal which provides joined-up searches across all local government services.

In addition the site has been prepared to add improvements such as:

- Ability to make payments on line.
- Ability to make planning applications on line.
- Establishment of a Single Business Account for all local businesses
- Ability to advertise tenders on line as part of e-procurement.

This investment will lead to an improvement to the Council's services and a more efficient service delivery

1.5 **Recruitment**

Following the implementation of the Council restructure on 1 June, there has been an intensive period of recruitment in order to bring all the new teams up to strength. By 31 August, 51 posts had been filled. Among others, the posts of Communications Manager, Customer Services Manager and Process Improvement Team Leader have been filled, and the new employees will be joining us in September. There are currently a further 17 vacancies in process. .

1.6 **Workforce Planning**

Work has begun to respond to the 2005 Pay and Workforce Strategy for local government, developed by the ODPM. The strategy provides an updated framework to help councils with the organisational transformation and workforce reforms required to deliver improved services, greater efficiencies and better customer focus in front-line services. The North West Employers Organisation has devised a template for workforce planning, designed to assist in dealing with the 5 priorities of the national strategy:

- Developing leadership capacity
- Developing the skills and capacity of the workforce
- Developing the organisation
- Resourcing local government
- Pay and reward structures

The intention is to embed the disciplines of workforce planning in the next round of corporate and service planning, so that in the future, whatever demands are made on it, the Council has the right people in the right jobs at the right time.

2 EXECUTIVE REPORTS RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

3 EXECUTIVE REPORTS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Subject: Strategic Risk Register 2004/7

Date of Decision: 26 July 2005

Decision Reference: EXE/05/0043

Context:

This report seeks agreement of the Executive to a revision of the Council's Strategic Risk Register

Decision

That subject to the amendment made during the meeting the Strategic Register for 2004/07 be approved.

Subject: Urgent Actions

Date of Decision: 26 July 2005

Decision Reference: EXE/05/0048

Context: To note actions taken on grounds of urgency under Executive Procedure Rules.

Decision

a) action taken by the Head of Customer Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder – Resources and Local Democracy in regrading the post of Revenues and benefits Services Manager due to a lack of applicants to the recent advertisement.

Subject: Mirehouse Service Station, Meadow Road, Mirheouse, Whitehaven – Disposal of Freehold Interest

Date of Decision: 26 July 2005

Decision Reference: EXE/05/0053

Context:

The tenant of the Mirehouse Service Station has requested that he be allowed to purchase freehold of the property he currently occupies under lease from the Council.

Decision

That Executive approve the disposal of the freehold interest of the Mirehouse Service Station property to the current Tenant.

Subject: Public Buildings Maintenance Contract Tenders

Date of Decision: 26 July 2005

Decision Reference: EXE/05/0054

Context: This report advises Executive of tender action taken with recommendation to accept a tender for the measured term building contract for Public Buildings

Decision

That the most economically advantageous tender submitted by Mayson Brothers be accepted.

Subject: Urgent Actions

Date of Decision: 16 August 2005

Decision Reference: EXE/05/0060

Context: To note actions taken on grounds of urgency

Decision

That actions taken by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services in consultation with the Portfolio holder – Resources and Local Democracy to

- a) **waive contract Standing Orders to allow the Council to enter into a contract with Local Government Information House for mapping services – REF 17/05; and**
- b) **to make an interim payment to the Community Law Centre; Citizens Advice Bureau; and Millom Citizens Advice Bureau**

be noted.