

Executive Report

This report follows the same format of replicating and reporting against priority themes identified in the Council's Corporate Plan.

This highlights to Members the progress we are making towards achieving our strategic objectives.

Quality of Life

Homelessness – Housing and Community Services – Cllr G Clements

The mediation service we received funding for is now up and running, we are going to concentrate particularly on mediation for young people and their families. This will hopefully reduce the number of young people presenting as homeless. Monitoring will take place on a quarterly basis and Members will be kept informed.

Cumbria Housing Strategy Housing and Community Services – Cllr G Clements

The housing market assessments are now complete and will be posted onto the Copeland Website in May.

Private Sector Stock Condition Survey Housing and Community Services – Cllr G Clements

The Stock condition survey is now complete and a draft report will be available next month which will be brought to Executive.

Supporting People - Housing and Community Services – Cllr G Clements

I am pleased to be able to tell you that the financial position for the Supporting People (Cumbria) budget is much better than anticipated. Due to careful management there has been an underspend of £169,000, this coupled with the increased allocation for Cumbria puts us in an excellent position for the coming year. Resources are now available totalling £465,000 for new investment within Cumbria. For Copeland, this means funding of £100,000 which will be used to develop emergency accommodation for young people in West Cumbria, in particular to support the services provided at Lowther Street by Whitehaven Community Trust.

South Whitehaven Neighbourhood Management – Leader / Environmental Services – Cllrs – E Woodburn / A Holliday

Mirehouse Play Area

A total of £120,000 was allocated for the provision of play equipment, signage, 2 CCTV cameras, footpath improvements and landscaping. The playscheme equipment and area was chosen via public consultation with local residents, and a tender process was undertaken to decide upon the provider of equipment which was Play & Leisure Ltd. Local shop keepers were also fully supportive of the scheme. The official opening took place recently and a fun day was had by all who attended.

Mirehouse Pond Improvements

Funding totalling £47,195 was utilised to install fencing around the site to improve security, fund 6 motorbike inhibitors, purchase angling equipment for the junior members of the club, develop a wildlife management plan for the site, undertake vermin control, and purchase a shipping container for storage of angling and maintenance equipment. The majority of the funding was used to improve the pathways and car park improvements. The site has also been put forward as a green flag entry for Copeland.

Community Safety Booklet - Housing and Community Services – Cllr G Clements

A booklet is being delivered to every household in West Cumbria. The booklet focuses on West Cumbria being a very safe place to live. The aim of the booklet is to raise awareness of some of the Community Safety issues and what services are available to combat those issues.

There is advice on dealing with anti social behaviour, home security, advice for businesses, domestic abuse and hate crime, cyber crime, vehicle crime, road safety, drugs and alcohol and a list of useful telephone numbers to obtain support and advice.

Sponsorship has paid for the production of the booklet, and we wish to thank all of the service providers and local businesses that supported it.

Mainstreaming crime and disorder (Stat partners – LA's, Police, Fire and Rescue, PCT, CCC and Police Authority) Housing and Community Services – Cllr G Clements

Statutory partners are all equally responsible for reducing crime. Each partner must do all it can to reduce and prevent crime in their policymaking, strategy and day-to-day decision making.

Copeland Borough Council is well developed in its mainstreaming work; departments have identified that in the main we are responding to crime and disorder reduction. Some recommendations have been identified and would enhance the work already completed.

A couple of examples are – Develop a media strategy for reducing the Fear of Crime – Fear of Crime is out of proportion with actual crime levels.

Provide profiles of each department – this will enable communities, councillors and staff to identify immediately which department is able to deal with their complaint or query – ie barking dogs, licence enforcement etc.

EXECUTIVE DECISIONS RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

Subject: 5 Year Corporate Plan

Date of Decision:

Decision Reference: EXE/06/0178

Context:

This report seeks approval from the Executive to sign off the 5 Year Corporate Plan

Decision

That Council be recommended that the 5 year Corporate Plan be approved.

Subject: Submission of Community Involvement

Date of Decision: 27 March 2007

Context:

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced many changes to the planning regime operating in England and Wales. The Council is required to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) as part of the new Planning system. The Statement of Community Involvement aims to set down how and when the Council will involve the local community in the planning process.

No consideration of this item took place as Members had not received the document prior to the meeting and therefore felt that it should be deferred for consideration and determination by full Council.

Decision

That this item be deferred to Council

A Well Managed Council Striving For Excellence

Performance Improvement – Deputy Leader – Cllr M Ashbrook

Councillors from the Audit Committee and Improvement Board met the External Auditors recently and received feedback on the Council's performance in 2005/6.

Under the CPA framework the Council's Direction of Travel showed progress in a number of areas including partnership working, environmental improvements, housing strategy, comparative cost of providing services and access to services for disadvantaged groups.

The areas for improvement include high levels of sickness absence, speed of processing major planning applications and meeting the highest national standards in the Environmental Health service. We should also be making information about the needs and expectations of communities more widely available to help us plan our services better.

An improvement plan is being developed from the Direction of Travel Statement to help us focus attention on those things that need it.

Financial Management System – Leader Cllr E Woodburn

The Council's new Financial Management System, procured from Consilium has gone live on 2 April. The system, which consists of a complete new Financial Ledger system, including Debtors, Creditors and Purchase Ordering has been fully implemented in less than 6 months by a dedicated project team. There has been a significant effort put in by all involved in Accountancy, IT and Debtors Recovery sections with a significant amount of additional hours being put in by staff in order to get the system up and running. Normally an implementation of this nature can take up to 12 months. All staff around the Council will be affected by the new system and have all received training on how to use it. There will be some significant improvements from the new system, such as increased control of invoices, better analysis and more effective reporting. The system has also been developed to reduce the risk of down time by having a backup server at Moresby which mirrors the main server constantly, so if the main server goes down, the backup will start immediately. This is the first such system the Council has that can do this.

'The system has been successfully delivered on time, within budget and according to scope; delivering all the business drivers and benefits used to justify the project at its initiation. A benefit management strategy has been drafted

along with realisation plans to ensure that the expected benefits are delivered which will be reported to OSC P & R

Information Computer Technology – Resources and Local Democracy – Cllr N Williams

The ICT Strategy and Action Plan has been considered by the IT Subgroup and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Policy and Resources), and will now proceed to Executive in April 2007.

The ICT Subgroup has reviewed its working practices and decided to hold monthly meetings. A number of proposals have been put forward in connection with governance to be discussed at the next meeting.

It is expected that the telephone installation at Moresby will be commissioned by the end of the month. Telephones will all be linked to the main 'switch' at Catherine Street, new numbers will be published although existing numbers will also remain for a further approx. three months.

A Report on the ICT Shared Service will be presented the Connect Cumbria Partnership Programme Board shortly with a further report to be taken to the Cumbria Local Authorities Strategic Board in April 2007. Any firm proposals arising from these meetings will need to be considered by OSC/Executive.

A new ICT 'firewall' is to be installed at the Catherine Street offices at the end of March 2007 to complete the process of improving protection levels to National Standards.

Procurement - Resources and Local Democracy – Cllr N Williams

The Cumbria Procurement Board has now obtained the necessary firm commitments from all participating authorities (with the exception of Eden District Council as previously advised) and has now rebranded with the name EPiC (Effective procurement in Cumbria). Limited access to the IDeA Marketplace through Quick Start (a read only viewer for commodities) will be available from 02 April with full access to the marketplace planned for September 2007. A sustainability exercise is being undertaken to ensure local suppliers providing services to the Council are not prejudiced by these changes.

The Council's Procurement Strategy and Action plan was approved by OSC, and by Executive on 28/03/2007. The Action plan will now be implemented to be monitored by the OSC.

Benefit Fraud – Leader – Cllr E Woodburn

The Council has a Fraud Team of two investigators and one admin support officer, led by the Fraud Team Leader. In 2006/07, they had 397 referrals from various sources and have carried out 291 investigations into Benefit Fraud. They have worked closely with the DWP on joint cases and with our own Legal section to take cases to court. In 2006/07, the Fraud Section achieved 7 successful prosecutions, gave 7 Administrative Penalties (fines) and carried out 7 Cautions. They ensure details of successful prosecutions are published in the local press. This acts as a good deterrent to fraud and leads to claimants, themselves, volunteering that they have failed to disclose financial information. Where we have proved that the claimant has fraudulently claimed Benefits, we can also recover the overpayments. They have also carried out a 3 months covert surveillance exercise, which resulted in a claimant withdrawing her claim. The Fraud team also carries out proactive fraud awareness sessions to promote an anti-fraud culture. All this helps to minimise the cost of benefits and ensures that officers can concentrate on processing the claims of only those entitled to benefits.

Single person discount – Leader – Cllr E Woodburn

People fraudulently claiming single person Council Tax discounts in Copeland will come under greater scrutiny than ever before this financial year. Copeland Borough Council is about to take part in a Cumbria-wide council tax initiative that's set to find council tax dodgers across the district.

Using the latest data matching technology, 10,000 households in Copeland that claim to be occupied by a person living on their own will be checked to make sure that the 25% discount they are receiving is still applicable.

People who are genuinely claiming this discount have nothing to fear they will continue to receive the discount to which they are entitled.

Council Tax collection – Leader – Cllr E Woodburn

During 2006/07 we have reached our target collection rate of 98% in respect of Council Tax due to Copeland Borough Council. The level of collection is important not only to improve cash flow of the organisation but to reduce the

amount of tax that we all have to pay, as any uncollected tax will impact on the level of Council Tax that the Council has to set

Pay and Grading Review – Resources and Local Democracy – Cllr N Williams

The Council plans to complete the job evaluation and pay review element of its Pay and Workforce Strategy by 31 March 2008, using the computerised version of the National Job Evaluation Scheme. A “Pilot” evaluation of a sample of 25 benchmark jobs is about to commence, to be completed in the next 2-3 months. After a review of any issues arising from the “Pilot”, a full evaluation of all jobs below Chief Officer grade will be carried out by a Job Analyst with extensive experience of the National Scheme, by the end of 2007. The new grading and pay structure will then be finalised.

Planning Policy – Health and Diversity – Cllr G Blackwell

The Executive approved a revised Local Development Scheme on 27th March which has been submitted to government. This is the Council’s proposed work programme for planning policy documents over the next three years and a copy of the document is in the Members’ Room for reference. It will be on the Council’s web site from the end of April.

One of the documents in the Local Development Scheme for early completion is the Statement of Community Involvement which sets out the way in which the Council will engage with local communities on all planning matters. A final draft of this document is on the Council’s agenda today with a request for approval and submission to government.

Coalfields – Economic Infrastructure – Cllr H Wormstrup

The coalfields programme has provided £450,000 funds to Copeland projects through the North West Coalfield Communities which has attracted a further £1.2 million of match funding. In addition Coalfield Regeneration Trust funding of £1.2 million has also attracted a substantial amount of match funding - £2.2 million. This equates to a direct contribution from Coalfields of £1.6 million and enabled Copeland projects worth over £5 million to go ahead. The outputs from this funding include – the refurbished sports stadium, environmental improvements, Moresby back lanes and the creation of several new jobs and businesses.

Creating and Sustaining a Local Economy

Graduate Placement Programme – Business Growth – Cllr C Giel

In conjunction with St Martin's College we have prepared flyers promoting the "wage subsidy" to Copeland businesses. Over 2,000 were distributed with Business Rates correspondence, last week. A press release will be prepared shortly, using some local case studies, to stimulate more interest.

Employment Sites Review – Business Growth – Cllr C Giel

£1.7 million of improvements are planned for Leconfield Industrial Estate in Cleator Moor. The Council have been asked by Westlakes Renaissance to be the client for the works which are due to start, in July 2007. The works will incorporate Environmental, Landscape and Security improvements which will make the site more marketable to potential investors.

The Council and Westlakes Renaissance are also looking to acquire additional land for commercial development, at Bridge End, Egremont. Site investigations works are due to commence shortly, prior to a firm offer being made for the land. A potential Developer has already been in discussion with the Council and partners over a new office building, on the site.

Business Networks – Business Growth – Cllr C Giel

Progress reports have been received from Cleator Moor and Egremont projects which have been progressing well. A new Marketing Officer has been appointed in Egremont and a major programme of business visits has been instigated by the Regeneration Manager in Cleator Moor.

Evolution – Business Growth – Cllr C Giel

The next phase of the project involves the development of a "Public Search" facility, on the Council's website. This will enable businesses to access property information directly without having to make a request to the Economic Development Unit. We plan to launch the new service jointly with Carlisle City Council, in July. The service has also been registered with the new "Business Link" website which will help to generate new customers.

Egremont Regeneration – Business Growth – Cllr C Giel

The Egremont Partnership has appointed our Marketing and Tourism post to start from 5 March. This post will work closely with businesses to look at ways to maximize the benefit that they bring to the town and to make the most of all Egremont's assets, including retailers, the improving Main Street and Market Place and the developments at the Castle to bring more visitors and shoppers into the town. We are beginning the process of commissioning an upgraded website for the town and will involve business in the development of that site, but looking to give an online presence to all the town's businesses with a central purchasing page that will allow even the smallest business to sell through the website.

Regeneration North East Copeland – Business Growth – Cllr C Giel

The funding allocated to Regeneration NE Copeland from the Business Growth Initiative has been directed towards the development of a business network for the 5 parishes involved in the partnership to support the growth of our local business sector.

At present the area does not have a business forum/network in place to support the dissemination of information, advice and support between local companies and to businesses from external support agencies. The Chamber of Trade has operated in the area for many years, but became dormant following the loss of the Chair around 2 years ago.

The aim has been to use the money to set up a high profile local launch and encourage the private sector to become involved in their local network; then support the local group to develop business links, events, area promotions etc to develop private sector growth.

Progress to date:

Initial delivery has focused on background research and compilation of information.

- Information, Advice and Guidance: Initial meetings have been held with Copeland BC, Phoenix Enterprise Centre, WCDA, Gen II, etc to provide a better picture of business support available in the area and involvement with businesses to date.
- Cleator Moor and District Chamber of Trade and Commerce: The Chamber of Trade is still in existence with a Membership and some funds, but has remained inactive for a period of around 2 years. It predominantly served retail businesses within Cleator Moor, despite its area remit and Officials within the Chamber of Trade intended to

resurrect the body with new leadership or cease to operate. It has been agreed that the Business Forum offers a route for the Chamber of Trade and that they will support the joint initiative.

Business Database:

The initial task was to pull together a comprehensive list of local businesses within all five parishes. The starting point for this information was the database collated for the CleatorMoor.com website, plus the list supplied by the Chamber of Trade. This has been developed through interviews with Phoenix Enterprise Centre, Cleator Moor Town Council and information from Cumbria Tourism, etc. All the contact information will be checked during the business survey.

Business Survey:

To date a cross section of businesses have been approached to discuss the key issues that they are facing, the local market and support needs, etc. The information is proving useful to provide an indication of areas to follow up through the business forum activity, plus the face to face interaction with businesses is a very valuable tool to help engage them in the network. This survey will be continued into April to provide the background and personal interface required to make the project a success.

Planned Delivery:

March – April: Completion of the local business survey

April: Meeting with the local Chamber of Trade to agree their support to the new Business Forum Initiative.

End April – May: Formal launch event of the Business Forum

September Planned programme of events/support initiatives in place.

Whitehaven International Maritime Festival – Deputy Leader – Cllr M Ashbrook

Plans made to date suggest that this year's event will be the biggest and best yet. The festival will be over three full days with activities and entertainment all day long and into the late evening.

Seaborne activities include The Grand Turk, The Matthew of Bristol, The Zebu, The Vilma, and The Balmoral Passenger Ship offering cruises and displays from The British Jet Ski Champions.

In the Air, The Red Arrows display team take to the skies once again along with other air displays which are yet to be confirmed.

Festival firsts for 2007 include The Catalina flying boat, BBC News and Sport on Tour, Tour de France display and an 8 seater hovercraft.

The Beacon & Tourism Services Deputy Leader – Cllr M Ashbrook

- **Beacon Visitor Figures** The Beacon has been visited by nearly 44000 people during 2006/07 (53000 in 2005/06). This figure is higher than expected considering that the museum floors have been closed since 7 November 2006.
- **Harbour Gallery** exhibitions have been visited by 30,000 people during 2006/07. The current exhibition “Legacy” marks the bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1807. Admission to the Harbour Gallery is free, encouraging repeat visits to the Museum and supports CBC’s aim to be socially inclusive.
- **Education Services.** During 2006/07, 1894 children have been taught by Beacon staff (1919 in 2005/06). This does not include an additional 2500 pupils who have been taught via video conference. This has been due to the creation of new school sessions, improvements in existing services and targeted marketing, and support CBC objectives to maximise educational achievement and learning.
- **Excellence in Customer Service.** Beacon staff Anne Cook and Ave Dawson are guaranteed to win either a gold or silver award at the Enjoy England Awards for Excellence at The Banqueting House, London on 18th April. Following success within Cumbria, and then beating off the competition in the North West England awards, the two have now been shortlisted as representing Outstanding Customer Service in the National final. This is an amazing achievement and is raising the profile of The Beacon and Copeland generally to a National audience.

Whitehaven Regeneration Deputy Leader – Cllr M Ashbrook

Hotel Development

Following a positive presentation on likely demand for a quality hotel, the consultants are now working up a proposal to attract an 'end user' to the project which is expected to take around 4 months to achieve. Partners are now looking to put a funding package together to pay for this next stage of the project.

Car Parking

Celia McKenzie organised a further meeting with District and County Council representation to start the development of a car parking strategy for Whitehaven. The group considered recent data on traffic flows and car park usage. It is hoped to involve the major supermarkets in further meetings.

Transport Study

Following the survey work undertaken in October 2006, a draft report was issued by the County Council in December. A large number of comments have been received which has caused the seminar planned for February 2007 to be postponed until all responses have been considered.

Business Liaison Officer

Copeland Borough Council Executive has approved a contribution towards the salary of the new post, from LABGI funding. Further discussion needs to take place with West Lakes Renaissance regarding the linkages with the Whitehaven Delivery Team, due to be established later this year.

Development Sites

The sub group has examined the planning position relating to the sites identified in the Sea Change Study. They will look at the proposals contained in the Implementation Plan when it is issued before looking at proposals to attract a development partners for the town centre.

Low Level Waste Review – Leader – Cllr E Woodburn

Government has recently issued its policies for the long term management of the UK's solid low level radioactive waste. The policies cover all aspects of the generation, management and regulation of LLW. The report is very detailed but the main areas that affect Copeland are:

- The presumption towards early solutions to waste management
- Appropriate consideration of the proximity principle and waste transport issues
- Maximum use of the existing LLW facilities]
- Encouragement of the decay, incineration, reduce, reuse recycle philosophy
- Disposal either above or below ground with no intent to retrieve should be the end point for LLW that remains after the reduce, reuse and recycle options.

The NDA will also be expected to assess the extent to which other LLW disposal options (other than the existing LLW facility) might be employed to manage waste arising, and to assess if and at what time a replacement or replacements for the LLWR near Drigg might be required and planned for.

Considering that the proximity principle and waste transportations have to be considered in options it would not be wrong to assume that another LLW facility on or near Sellafield will be needed in the near future, as always when we have to consider this we must ensure benefits outweigh detriments.

West Cumbria Development Fund / BNG – Leader – Cllr E Woodburn

Through the support (£1.5M) to the West Cumbria Development Fund (WCDF) from BNG and substantial contributions from the Council the Westlakes Science Park continues to develop and provides first-class facilities for established and new businesses to expand. There are currently 62 organisations employing over 1170 people on the park.

The WCDF has provided the financing (and leveraged further funding of some £4M from regional partners and the European Regional Development Fund) to support such projects as:

- West Cumbria House, Lillyhall which will be new office accommodation for around 200 people.
- Boat repair facilities for Whitehaven and Maryport
- Upgrading of the 'Beacon' visitor centre in Whitehaven and supporting the new 'Destination Maryport' visitor centre

BNG Employment Trends – Leader – Cllr E Woodburn

BNG - British Nuclear Group
CSW - Contract supplied workers
ASW - Agency supplied workers

	Sept 06	Oct 06	Nov 06	Dec 06	Jan 07	Feb 07
British Nuclear Group SMC	54	53	53	53	52	50
Clean up	1842	1852	1894	1905	2252	2259
Functions	2594	2615	2605	2600	2661	2685
Infrastructure	2099	2107	2134	2136	1959	1968
Production Operations	2459	2460	2417	2474	2349	2353
Other business	1626	1595	1658	1661	1682	1690
Totals	10674	10734	10815	10829	10955	11005

This was included to show how Sellafield is going through a major employment drive most notably in the clean up arena, as we would expect. This is positive for the area but we need to be mindful of how this drive is impacting on other employment needs. Other local organisations cannot compete with the Sellafield high wages and the poaching of staff is happening more then it has in the past. As said this is a positive but it means us as a council and other organisations need to look internally at how this is affecting ourselves and what we can do to help mitigate against this.

Plutonium Contaminated Materials Consultation – Leader – Cllr E Woodburn

British Nuclear Group is carrying out a strategic review of treatment processes for Plutonium Contaminated Material, otherwise known as PCM. As a key part of the review, stakeholders are invited to play a part by providing their views, perspectives and concerns. This invitation extends to a wide range of people and groups including the general public, employees, local community groups, local government and technical specialists.

The company is also seeking to explore views on the possibility of treating similar wastes at Sellafield from two other NDA owned sites, Harwell in Oxfordshire and Dounreay in Caithness. The quantities of material at both Harwell and Dounreay are low compared to those at Sellafield.

Plutonium contaminated materials have been managed safely and securely for many decades at Sellafield. They consist of tools, protective clothing and other

items of equipment which have become contaminated with plutonium during reprocessing and other operations.

The views of all stakeholders will help to inform a current strategic review of the management of plutonium contaminated materials at Sellafield. This is one of the many periodic reviews of practice which BNG carry out to ensure that risks and hazards are kept as low as reasonably practicable and that their operations meet with contemporary environmental standards.

To find out more and play a part in this consultation visit the 'Have your say' pages on the British Nuclear Group website at www.britishnucleargroup.com or telephone June Shield for further information on 019467 85828.

West Cumbria Site Stakeholder Group- Leader – Cllr E Woodburn

A group of 23 Site Stakeholder Group (SSG) Chairmen and Vice Chairmen from 10 Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) sites across the country came to Sellafield recently, as part of a familiarisation visit hosted by the NDA. Chairmen and vice Chairmen from Trawsfynydd, Oldbury, Hinkley, Winfrith, Harwell, Culham, Sizewell, Dungeness, Springfields and Hunterston visited the Site, touring the Separation Area including the Magnox Reprocessing Plant and Magnox Swarf Storage Silo as well as visiting the Thorp viewing gallery and High Level Waste Plants. It was a very successful visit and visits to other sites to widen stakeholders knowledge are being considered.