

Executive Report to Full Council – 12 October 2010

Transformational Leadership

Budget Update - Councillor E Woodburn

At the time of writing we await the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review announcement. In anticipation and as previously reported service reviews are being carried out including "Star Chambers" which entailed our Corporate Leadership Team challenging the budget holders' savings proposals. It's essential that all saving options are considered to ensure members have all the relevant information to allow them to make the final decisions early in 2011.

The Latest Word – Councillor E Woodburn

The Council's Communications team has launched a new internal staff newsletter – The Latest Word. It is published on the Council's intranet weekly.

The Latest Word carries articles which are current, hot off the press and targeted at employees' needs and issues at work – including leisure time.

Learning at Work – Councillor J Bowman

Skills Award

Copeland will shortly be assessed again for the North West Local Government Skills Award. By signing the Skills Pledge to achieve the Skills Award, we reinforced our commitment to the importance of improving skills within our workforce. The assessment will take place during November, and the work on this is being steered by a group including Council employees, managers and partners offering advice for learning.

Apprenticeships

In conjunction with the Skills Pledge, we have created two Apprenticeship positions in the Information Technology and Building Control sections of the Council. The newly appointed Building Control Apprentice will be in place from later this month. The position of IT Apprentice is a 2 year course where the successful candidate will have an opportunity of completing a local college course whilst gaining valuable work experience. .

Skills Audits

We have been undertaking workforce Skills Audits to assess the needs for workforce development plans. Union Learning Representatives have been appointed to help in this process. The results of the completed Audits will give the organisation evidence of where the skills shortages are and where we need to concentrate our efforts with Learning and Development.

Equality and Diversity – Councillor N Williams

Copeland Borough Council is currently working towards the Achieving Level of the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG).

We have an Action Plan covering 5 Areas:

- 1 Knowing our Communities-Equality Mapping
- 2 Place Shaping, Leadership, Partnership & organisational commitment
- 3 Community Engagement and satisfaction
- 4 Responsive services and Customer Care
- 5 A Modern and Diverse Workforce

We have made steady progress to date; we have specific deadlines to meet regarding the collation of evidence to support our assessment which takes place 29-30th November 2010. All evidence and supporting documentation has to be submitted to the Peer Assessment Team by mid October which means the Narrative Report and Self Assessment has to be completed by end September.

The Assessment Team will be on site for two days and they will be interviewing staff and members as well as partners and public to determine if the Council has attained the Achieving Level of the Framework.

Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) – Councillor E Woodburn

It is hoped that by the time of Full Council Government has confirmed the funding for the Partnership to ensure continuation of the work programme. The recent initial geological study of West Cumbria carried out the British Geological Survey is nearly ready for publication and it is important that there is a programme of community engagement / information sharing to ensure there is an understanding of this piece of work.

There will be a wide range of activity, which will include:

- A newsletter to all homes in West Cumbria
- Public drop in sessions across Cumbria
- Discussions with a range of groups across West Cumbria
- Information stands at venues across West Cumbria
- Surveys
- Media appearances, and much more.

There is in addition a recently redesigned website at www.westcumbriamrws.org.uk.

Copeland Community Fund Board – Councillor E Woodburn

Copeland Borough Council is hosting and managing the Community Development Team set up by the Copeland Community Fund to increase capacity within the borough for local groups to apply for funding generally. The team comprises two

community development workers and a grants officer who are already working with groups and projects across Copeland on fundraising. The team is the conduit to apply to the Copeland Community Fund after its launch in Millom on 14th October, 2010. This launch is also a funding event and fair.

The team is already increasing the number of applications to existing funds in and outside Cumbria through their activities. Increasing the amount of external funding through grants to voluntary and community groups and local initiatives throughout Copeland is a key aim of the community development team.

Copeland Borough Council and Cumbria County Council are assisting the Fund Board through Service Level Agreements. The Council welcomes the opportunity to host the team and is already seeing the benefit in terms of strong liaison with existing council teams, particularly the locality team, in offering support to local projects, groups and partnerships looking to benefit from the Fund.

The Copeland Community Fund, obtained through joint working between Copeland Borough Council, Cumbria County Council and the NDA to secure Government agreement, creates a sustainable fund for investment in local socio-economic and environmental projects.

A presentation will be made by the team immediately before the next Full Council.

Cumbria Law Centre and Copeland CAB – Councillor N Williams

We have received a summer report from Cumbria Law Centre on their and the CAB's activities, sponsored partly by this Council.

In partnership the two organisations have now secured a three year contract from the Legal Services Commission to deliver social welfare law casework throughout the Copeland area. This would not have been possible without core funding from this Council amongst others.

The Law Centre has also won a contract with the Equality and Human Rights Commission to take on casework in the areas of anti-discrimination and human rights law.

The Law Centre's free service is available to everyone who lives and works in Copeland and more and more people are finding they need them. An improved telephone service has also been developed in the past year. The Centre holds weekly advice clinics at Copeland CAB in Whitehaven and they run the duty solicitor scheme at Whitehaven County Court.

The Law Centre, the 7 CAB's in the County and Shelter have also recently created the Cumbria Advice Network. The partners are developing together a common referral system and fostering better working links so that a member of the public entering one agency will thereby have access to the whole network.

We are very pleased to see the success of the progress being made by these organisations, assisted by core funding from this Council.

Electoral Registration Canvass Report – Councillor N Williams

At the time of writing, barely a week after the beginning of the normal electoral registration canvassing process, it is encouraging to see the take up rate of alternative methods of registration. Of over 35,000 forms sent out 1,283 (3.6%) have already been dealt with by alternative means. 501 respondents have used our web-site to reply, 361 have used the telephone and 421 have used SMS.

Cumbria Enterprise Partnership

The Council has been an active partner in the development of the submission to Government making the case for a Cumbria Enterprise Partnership. Work with private sector engagement and leadership continues through the formation of a transitional board, whose role is to draft the needed governance arrangements, including number of members, rules of engagement etc.. It is believed Government are considering an early announcement of some LEP's but at the time of writing we still await the Government response to the Cumbrian submission.

West Cumberland Hospital – Councillor Elaine Woodburn

As previously reported the Trust is currently making efforts to identify alternative sources of capital funding, however there remains a significant risk that replacement funding cannot be secured. The Project Board have therefore asked the Project Leads to work with clinical users and primary care colleagues to review options for delivering the scheme in a reduced budget, but still delivering the Closer to Home agreement with regards to number of beds, services etc.. . This review will be undertaken in conjunction with the lead GP commissioners for Copeland and Allerdale and it will include a review of the PCT plans for the new significant developments in Cockermouth and Cleator Moor to ensure they complement each other. This review is intended to be completed by the end of October.

Demolition of the former Windermere, Buttermere and Crummock wards and the former estates workshop is now complete with the one remaining area to be decanted and demolished being Yewdale. The Trust has reviewed and agreed on a “on site” location which would avoid the need for the service to be temporarily decanted off site during construction. There was a risk that the service would be moved off site and never returned. However their best estimates are that the time required to design and carry out the necessary conversion works will mean that Yewdale Ward may not now be able to be vacated until June 2011. This and the possible need for a revised Full Business Case due to funding shortfall is likely to

result in an on-site start of mid 2011. This in itself will impact on the overall project costs.

Nuclear New Build Conference

As recently as a few weeks ago Councillor David Moore and I, accompanied by Paul Walker and Pat Graham, attended a Nuclear New Build conference arranged by the three local authorities in Somerset, where plans for a new build Hinckley 3 are taking shape. We benefitted from presentations on the National Policy Statements, in which the representative from the Department of Energy and Climate Change confirmed, as I have reported previously, that the re-consultation on the statements will start in October and continue for 14 weeks. It might be that we need to arrange a special Full Council to agree our response but until we receive the documents it is too early to confirm this.

We also received presentations on planning performance, procurement, policy development and participation, all very valuable as Copeland, in some ways, is just starting on the new build road. Copeland gave the audience the benefit of hearing how we had successfully secured a community benefits package.

A Special Interest Group from the Local Government Association has been set up which allows Local Authorities with the common new build agenda to come together and learn from each other. There was also some discussion on the possibility of setting up a new build local enterprise partnership. There was not enough information on this and was more of a gathering of general thoughts.

There is no doubt in my mind there is a lot to learn from maintaining close contact with other authorities to ensure we learn from others as we embark on a new nuclear adventure.

NDA Draft Strategy 2

Copeland is holding a joint workshop with the West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Groups where the NDA draft strategy 2 will be discussed in detail. This will be an opportunity for **ALL** Councillors to feed into the strategy and help inform the Councils response. The event will be held from 1pm to 4 pm on the **26th October at Cleator Moor Civic Hall.**

Improving Quality of Life

West Cumbria Community Safety Partnership – Councillor N Williams

Strategic Assessment 2010

The Allerdale & Copeland Strategic Assessment was completed Aug 2010 and provides an overview of crime across West Cumbria. The West Cumbria Community Safety Partnership (CSP) uses the assessment to determine priorities for the year ahead.

Analysis of the Strategic Assessment is currently underway; however as initial reading does not show major change, it is felt work will continue as it is. The CSP will continue to focus on:

Anti Social Behaviour - Copeland has seen a decrease in ASB, with 2009/10 being 3.1% lower than 2008/09 and an overall decrease of 24.9% over three years.

Burglary – Copeland has seen an increase in dwelling burglary with 2008/09 and 2009/10 offences increasing by 25.6% (23 Offences). Burglary other have also increased by 9.00% (15 offences)

Domestic Abuse - The number of incidents in Copeland has increased from 930 to 981 over the last three years; however the repeat victim rate has risen from 34.6% in 2007/08 to 39.7% in 2009/10

Violent Crime - Between 2007/08 and 2009/10 the number of offences has decreased by 23.4% (99 offences).

There was a decrease in offences between 2007/08 and 2008/09 (8.5%), followed by a further decrease in offences of 16.3% (63 Offences) between 2008/09 and 2009/10.

Copeland Priorities:

Reduce crime and disorder and help people feel safe

As part of the West Cumbria Community Safety Partnership Copeland Borough Council will:

- Deliver the Friday Nights project with 200 young people in Cleator Moor, Whitehaven and Egremont by July 10 – work underway with ASB Task Group
- Help reduce the number of alcohol related admissions to hospital compared to 2009/10 – work with underway Violent Crime Task Group

- Increase the proportion of respondents that agree the police and other local services are dealing with anti-social behaviour by 3% compared to 2009/10 – survey to be developed with CSP Communications Group

Playgrounds Update – Councillor H Branney

Big Lottery

The Parks Development Officer can now inform you that Copeland's BIG Lottery play portfolio will be coming to a close at the end of September. The monitoring on all 5 sites is proving their success with over 686 children recorded using the sites since February this year.

Green Flag sites – Councillor A Holliday

Four of Copeland's parks and open spaces have once again been given prestigious Green Flag Awards.

The Awards are given to parks and open spaces that are managed to the highest standards, and are the awards to have in the world of open spaces.

This year, Trinity Gardens, St Nicholas' Gardens, Egremont Castle and Distington Crematorium have all kept their Green Flags. In addition, Trinity Gardens, St Nicholas's Gardens and Egremont Castle have also retained their Green Heritage Awards. These are given to parks and open spaces that are managed in a way that promotes and protects the heritage of the sites.

Thanks must go to everyone who has helped each of these parks secure the awards, including the 'friends of groups, our parks and open space and waste management teams, and individuals. It is only by working together that we succeed in winning these prestigious awards.

The seven awards received is more than any other local authority in Cumbria, and is one of the highest award counts in the country overall. This is a fantastic achievement.

In Bloom Update- Councillor A Holliday

Copeland Schools

Success again for the schools in the Borough as the Mayor and Councillor Clements embarked on the judging for the schools competition. The winners were as follows and a ceremony will be taking place in October for the Mayor to present the cheques to winners and some plants/bulbs for all those who entered:-

First – Seascale Primary School

Second – Moresby Primary School

Third - Hensingham Primary School

Cumbria in Bloom

Congratulations have gone to all our staff and community groups involved in the great Cumbria In Bloom successes. Both Whitehaven and Nether Wasdale ensured Copeland succeeded with wins in the Best Large Town, and Best Hamlet categories. Whitehaven also successfully won Best Town and Urban Community, St Nicholas won the Best Churchyard and the RHS Discretionary Award 2010 “Local Roots” went to The Whitehaven Floral Ship.

Copeland’s success in the In Bloom Awards is becoming an annual event and now Whitehaven will be representing Cumbria at the awards in Birmingham on the 29th of September and representatives will be attending the ceremony. They have also been asked and have agreed to represent Cumbria again at National level for 2011.

Re-Launch of Kerbside Black Box Recycling Scheme – Councillor A Holiday

The Waste Management Section are currently in the process of re-launching the Council’s Kerbside Black Box recycling scheme after successfully securing funding from both WRAP and Resource Cumbria. The re-launch coincides with the introduction of ‘box hats’ which are provided free of charge. It is hoped that these will encourage more residents to take advantage of the service and help the Council hit this year’s recycling target of 45%.

The first event took place in Whitehaven on Thursday 2nd September; the event was attended by MP Jamie Reed, Leader of the Council Elaine Woodburn and Portfolio Holder Allan Holliday. The CFM Road show was also on hand running their famous ‘phrase that pays’ with a recycling themed twist. The event was hugely successful with over 700 box hats and 500 recycling boxes being given out. The full waste team was on hand to answer any questions that residents may have had and as a result over 100 properties currently not on the recycling scheme were identified and have since been added.

Two further events were scheduled in Cleator Moor on 17th September and Millom on 1st October. These were attended by the Waste Team and Staff from the County Council’s recycling team.

Lake District National Park “Big” Plan – Councillor Hugh Branney

The Lake District National Park Partnership and Park Authority have signed off the Partnership’s Plan. This sets out the vision, management plan and strategic priorities for the Park Authority and its partners. It includes direct and management development actions and a set of measures by which to judge progress and success. All partners including the District Councils are being asked to endorse the plan and deliver activities in support. We will be bringing a paper back to full council in December 2010 for endorsement of the Plan detailing the implications following the outcome of this Autumn’s Comprehensive Spending Review and relating it to our corporate service planning and regeneration plan delivery. A copy of the Plan is in the members’ room.

Promoting Prosperity

Tesco Update – Councillor C Giel

Following extensive negotiations with Tesco, Heads of Terms have been agreed subject to legal completion of the sale and exchange of Council owned land. This transaction will facilitate the development of a replacement Tesco supermarket at Bransty Row, a public plaza and a new transport interchange. Following legal completion we can expect an early submission of a planning application for the new store.

Transport Interchange – Councillor C Giel

Completion of negotiations with Tesco will enable the delivery of this County Council led Transport Interchange project. Copeland Borough Council is working closely with the County in delivering this gateway scheme which is financially supported by Britain's Energy Coast as well as the County's Capital Programme. The County Council are using Compulsory Purchase Powers to assemble land for the Interchange and they will also need to acquire land from Copeland Borough Council.

It will be important to align the programme for this development with the new Tesco store development.

Housing Issues – Councillor G Clements

Financial Assistance Policy for Housing Renewal

Following approval by the last meeting of Full Council officers have begun implementing the new policy. This directs our capital programme towards helping economically vulnerable households who are unable or least able to meet the cost of removing the most serious statutory Housing Health & Safety Rating System hazards from their homes. The policy also provides assistance to first time buyers of homes which have been empty for at least six months and which contain a minimum of one Category 1 hazard under the system.

There will be a further review of the policy for 2011/12 in light of the government's forthcoming comprehensive spending review and available sources of public and private sector investment.

Home Insulation

Further to my last report, in which I described our pilot scheme offering assistance with the cost of cavity wall and loft insulation, I can announce that the scheme was successful.

By 6 September £7,200 had been spent on the installation of 288 measures. When completed the Council will have spent all the £10,000 that was allocated. The results so far are as follows:

154 cavity wall insulations

104 loft insulations

30 loft insulation top-ups.

Sadly, the scheme cannot take any more applications this year because the allocation has been fully committed. We intend, subject to funding, to repeat this or launch a similar scheme next year. In the meantime we will examine the potential for further energy and fuel costs saving investment from private sector sources.