

## **Executive Report to Full Council – 22 March 2012**

### **Outside Bodies**

At the Council meeting in June 2011 when the Council's representation on Outside Bodies was reviewed, future reporting back arrangements required a number of member representatives on outside bodies to report back to Council annually. As the majority of these representatives are Executive members, for convenience the annual reports of outside bodies are attached for information as an Appendix to this Executive Report, as follows:

- Copeland Community Fund
- Cumbria Health and Well Being Scrutiny Committee Group
- Cumbria Housing Executive
- Cumbria Planning Group
- Cumbria Supporting People
- Home Steering Group
- Lake District National Park Partnership
- Nuleaf
- West Cumbria Site Stakeholder Group
- Western Lake District Tourism Partnership

### **Strategic Leadership and Nuclear Portfolio – Councillor Elaine Woodburn**

#### **Managing Radioactive Waste Safely Partnership**

Phase 3 of the Public and Stakeholder Engagement (PSE3) commenced in November and is due to close on 23<sup>rd</sup> March. The process involves a range of media activities and consultation events aimed at seeking stakeholder and wider community comment on the preliminary views of the Partnership on the information and evidence it has received over the last 18 months as contained within the consultation document. A Members briefing session was held on 7<sup>th</sup> December as part of the process. As of 28<sup>th</sup> Feb around 3000 consultation packs had been distributed and so far just over 500 responses submitted. 12 community events across Cumbria have been held with over 800 people attending. A range of discussion sessions through intermediaries such as Connexions and Cumbria Farmers Network are also underway aimed at reaching young people and wider community networks. In addition Ipsos Mori will be conducting the Partnership's final statistically representative opinion survey by telephone commencing on 8<sup>th</sup> March and continuing until mid-May. There was also an online event held on the 6<sup>th</sup> March which allowed members of the public to submit questions live to members of the partnership and other experts. There has also been specific presentation requests given to the Sellafield Trade Unions, Gosforth Probus club and the Energy Coast Business Cluster. Responses to the consultation and

opinion survey will be considered by the Partnership at its next meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> May and will be used to form the basis of its final report to the three Decision Making Bodies (DMBs), Copeland Borough Council, Allerdale Borough Council and Cumbria County Council. The draft final report is likely to be considered at the subsequent Partnership meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> June and subject to final agreement of the Partnership will be submitted to the three DMBs.

The final report from the Partnership will be the subject of a report to Full Council asking Council to agree/or not to make a formal decision to participate.

### **Nuclear New Build**

Discussions continue with NuGeneration Ltd regarding their proposals to develop the Moorside site for a new nuclear power station as the company progresses their assessment of the site. The company has committed to enter into a Planning Performance Agreement with local authorities to ensure that the resource implications for Councils of responding to the development consent process are identified and provided for. Negotiations continue on the drafting of such a document. The proposed site investigations have been held up while discussions on mineral rights are being held. The issue of mineral rights is rapidly becoming an issue for development in Copeland and Cumbria and further work will be carried out to understand the implications for both.

Upgrades to the electricity network to take the power generated from the Moorside project, and other power generating activities in Copeland and elsewhere in West Cumbria, are also required and National Grid have identified a number of strategic route options for potential enhanced grid connections. The original intention was for National Grid to commence stakeholder consultation around the route options early in the new year but this has now been delayed until the spring due to having to review the initial route options due to uncertainty about a number of power generating developments in Lancashire. As part of the consultation process National Grid have agreed to attend and provide a briefing on the options to a Member workshop to be arranged once the consultation process has been launched. Following the workshop the Council will prepare its formal response to the consultation. Again the resource implications for the Council from the engagement with National Grid are the subject of a Planning Performance Agreement which is drafted and awaiting signature by partners.

Copeland is part of the New Nuclear Local Government Group who last met in Copeland in October 2011. The next and third meeting is to be held in Anglesey in April. These meetings are a great opportunity to emphasise what Copeland is doing, especially as we have our nuclear history to share with others but also to learn from those areas who are ahead of us on new nuclear build, i.e. Somerset.

### **Sellafield Ltd**

Sellafield Ltd working with NDA, DECC, Civil Nuclear Constabulary and the Office for Nuclear Regulation have been developing a range of options to enhance security at the Sellafield site. This is part of a programme of continuous improvement, designed to enhance current security arrangements. The work is predominantly focusing on physical security

enhancements which include visible changes particularly around the site fence and access to the River Calder. To support these improvements new police accommodation and control rooms will also be required on site. The company is keen to point out that these changes are part of continuous improvement following periodic review and brings Sellafield into line with other nuclear sites. It is not due to any change in threat or specific intelligence. Sellafield Ltd keeps security arrangements under continuous review to ensure existing arrangements are robust and effective now and in the future.

In addition and as part of these new arrangements there is a desire to significantly reduce the number of private vehicles which access the site on a daily basis. This will require some improvements to the existing public transport infrastructure around the Sellafield site and an increase in the number of employees based off site in line with our socio-economic objectives to help boost the local economy. As part of this process an extensive programme of data collection and analysis of current vehicle access to the site has provided valuable information about vehicular movements which will be an important baseline against which to measure the impact of future changes. This work is ongoing and will support the Green Travel Plan aims to reduce traffic volumes on the A595 and Sellafield Ltd.'s drive to remove several hundreds of cars from the Sellafield site by the end of March and several thousand over the next two years.

A six-week Sellafield train trial began on 9 January providing additional trains with a view to attracting current car-borne Sellafield employees and other users to rail. On average 75 Sellafield workers used the service. This service has now stopped and Sellafield Ltd will be assessing the viability of the service based on demand, costs schedule and infrastructure (e.g. car parks)

A further change will see the Cumbria Nuclear Constabulary (CNC) increasing the number of Authorised Firearms Officers (AFO) it deploys on the Sellafield site together with a new control room facility. The CNC operating model will focus on armed policing and security of the Sellafield site, whilst Sellafield Ltd has appointed Mitie Security to provide a Security Guard Force to undertake personnel access checking on entry to the site. There will continue to be both guard force personnel and CNC AFOs deployed at all gates. The CNC Police recruitment is almost complete, bringing a significant number of new jobs into the area. Mobilisation of the new Guard Force is underway. Mitie Security is continuing with its extensive recruitment programme; however a number of applicants have already been recruited and began their training in early January. Initial roll-out has started at North Gate, with implementation at further gates planned from March 2012. Work is ongoing to support this implementation, which includes accommodation, command and control protocols and communication systems.

## **Finance and Resources Portfolio – Councillor Gillian Troughton**

### **Annual Audit Letter**

The Audit Commission have issued their Annual Audit letter for 2010/11. This report summarises their findings from the 2010/11 audit and covers two areas:

- The Audit of the financial statements; and
- Their assessment of Copeland's arrangements to achieve value for money in our use of resources.

The Audit Commission have issued an unqualified audit opinion and have also identified that the Council has proper arrangements in place for securing value for money. This clean bill of health reflects the hard work undertaken by the Council to improve our management arrangements.

In terms of the value for money conclusion the Auditor stated that "the removal of the previous year's qualification on strategic asset management and workforce planning represents significant progress for the Council". The fact that we have been able to remove the qualifications is a reflection on the hard work undertaken by staff in these areas to improve our service provision and management arrangements.

The Council has also received an unqualified audit opinion on its financial statements and this is a significant achievement for the finance team. This year saw the implementation of the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) code for the first time. This was a challenging task as the implementation was complex and involved significant changes to the way we presented the financial statements. To achieve an unqualified opinion is a huge success for the teams involved and is due to the effort of the finance and property staff and reflects the improvements the team is making to its systems and procedures to ensure that the service is modern, efficient and effective.

### **Finance**

Finance work has been dominated by the budget process which was successfully concluded on 23<sup>rd</sup> February with the agreement on the council tax and budget for 2012/13. Council Tax Leaflets and demands will be going out shortly.

Preparations for accounts closedown have commenced with detailed timetables being made available and staff and manager briefings and training sessions being held this week.

Revenues and benefits work with the shared service into the implications of the localisation of Council Tax Benefit and Business rates has started and will be picking up momentum in the spring. Information about these changes is still incomplete but some of the risks to the council are becoming clearer allowing us more accurate planning, and also allowing other bodies such as the County Council to understand their risks and responsibilities.

### **Property and Asset Management**

**Copeland Centre** was closed over the first weekend in March to allow the installation of a voltage optimisation unit. Voltage Optimisation works by reducing the incoming supply voltage to the optimum level, this reduction decreases the power consumption from the building and extends the life of its components. Voltage in The Copeland Centre is currently supplied at 243V. The unit that has been installed will reduce the incoming voltage by 7.3% to Approx. 225V.

EMSuk Ltd supplied and installed the unit on the council's behalf. The installation took place on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 2012 to minimise disruption to staff. C&P and IT staff were on site all day to ensure that the power to the building was returned and everything was back up running for Monday morning.

It is guaranteed that the unit will save the council £4,183.00 per annum and the unit will pay for itself in 5 years. The unit has an expected 35 year life so the expected saving over the life of the unit (at current energy rates) is £125,490.00 after the unit has paid back.

**Soil nailing stability works** have now been completed. These works have been tied in with the strategic cliff management plan, and have enabled us to stabilise the rock strata and soil embankment. In short protecting the properties along Bransty road and providing safe passage along Wagon Rd, allowing us to keep the footpath open. This project has a design life of 75 years.

Work to install rock protection fencing has commenced and once completed we will have provided 140mts of rock protection to the most vulnerable part of the Bransty foot path. This project has a design life of 40 years.

These works will complete a combination of projects around Wagon Road and Bransty Road that CBC have undertaken over the past 24 months, at a cost in excess of 1 million pounds.

**Cliff Management**, From the date of the implementation of the Cliff Management Strategy, 7 inspections have been carried out. Contracts and Property have put together a programme for the inspections as deemed to be required in the Strategy. We have also put in place a file management system making the photographic and survey records easily available and manageable.

We will continue to carry out inspections throughout the year.

**Moresby Parks plant holding stock area.** We have now completed this project, the project involved providing a transitional holding area for the parks department following the closure of Beck Green. We have provided a secure hard standing area with a greenhouse, modular building and container; the area has power, water and lighting and will enable the parks department to fulfil their objectives over the following years.

**Moresby Parks Fuel Tank.** We are currently undertaking the modernisation and refurbishment of our waste departments fuelling station. The ground works are due for completion on the 16<sup>th</sup> of this month. We are taking delivery of the new 25,000ltr tank on the 28<sup>th</sup> of this month. The tank will have a state of the art fuelling system which will monitor each vehicle's usage automatically and provide faster filling times. Following the commissioning of the new tank we will remove the old obsolete tank allowing increased parking and storage area within the depot. The completion date for this project is 20<sup>th</sup> April and will provide our waste department a safe, secure and cost effective way of managing the fuel costs for the next 25 years.

**At Senhouse Street Car Park** – We are currently working on a project to renew the Old Senhouse Street Car Park in Whitehaven. The car park is very heavily used and as a result

the surfacing is worn and the on-going maintenance liability is high. The project is to completely renew the surface dressing, removal of the majority of the cobbled area and replacement with resin bonded gravel & Improvements to the Street Scape. The work was commenced on the 28<sup>th</sup> February and will be complete on the 30<sup>th</sup> March.

As part of the work we have been liaising with Copeland Disability Forum and will be improving the disabled and access facilities to the site. The new car park will include a disabled bay. At present work is progressing on target.

**Seascale Recycling Centre** Contracts and Property on behalf of Waste Management Services successfully delivered a scheme to extend the existing recycling centre at Seascale to accommodate a container that was previously located in the middle of the car park. The work was undertaken by Ashcroft Plant Ltd and the extended recycling site is now in operation.

**Tamalder Nursery, Mirehouse** In November 2011 the roof of the council owned property blew off and caused extensive damage internally. We originally acted to make the building water tight and prevent further damage. We have had numerous meetings with the insurance company representatives and can now confirm that they have agreed to pay the claim for the reinstatement. Roland Hills Ltd have been appointed after a successful quotation exercise to undertake the work. We will be meeting with the contractor later this week to agree the project dates. Our main aim now is to completely refurbish the area and ensure that our tenant can re occupy.

As part of the work the council has also commissioned a structural engineer's survey of the part of the roof that was unaffected. We are currently awaiting his report.

### **Procurement**

Final preparations are being made for the transfer of the procurement support function to the County Council at 1 April 2012. A service level agreement will be in place with the county for 2 years and will include:-

- the provision of a full procurement service (using existing County Council contracts as well as the wider procurement team staffing in arranging new contracts and acting in a consultative capacity)
- the provision of regular weekly 'procurement surgery' meetings in Copeland's Whitehaven offices.
- the existing contracts are such, but any new specific contracts (**just for Copeland**) would need to follow Copeland's Contract Procedure Rules and also emphasise the use of local providers and SME's, as per our procurement policy, whilst adhering to the EU Procurement Regulations.

A baseline survey of existing contracts and contracts due for retender in 2012/13 is being completed in preparation.

### **Performance and Transformation Portfolio – Councillor John Bowman**

## **Absent Voting – Personal Identifier refresh**

The Electoral Registration Officer (Chief Executive) has a statutory duty to maintain the list of absent voters for Copeland, including a specimen of their signature and date of birth. These identifiers are stored securely and each time the elector returns their postal vote the personal identifiers are checked against those on file to check that they match.

The legislation requires the ERO to carry out the first annual refresh of signatures more than 5 years old by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012.

In Copeland we have a total of 10,064 absent voters on record, a total of 5,152 of these were issued with a refresh notice on 31<sup>st</sup> January. 1,109 reminders were then issued on 21<sup>st</sup> February to those who had failed to return the notice within three weeks. As of 1<sup>st</sup> March we have had 4540 notices returned (88.1%), the remaining 612 have until 12<sup>th</sup> March to return their notice or their absent vote facility will be cancelled.

## **2012 Annual Canvass**

The Electoral Registration annual canvass of all households in Copeland to update and maintain the register of electors would usually start in September and conclude on 1<sup>st</sup> December each year with the publication of the new Register.

Due to the Police Commissioner elections being held on 15<sup>th</sup> November the timing of this year's canvass has raised a number of issues/concerns around the quality of the register available for the elections and the increased burden on electoral administrators of conducting a canvass at the same time as preparing for an election.

In light of this the Government issued a direction on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2012 to all relevant registration officers to commence the canvass as soon as reasonably practicable after 2 July (if not already started); to conclude the canvass on 15 October and to publish the revised register on 16 October.

## **New Standards Regime**

The recently-enacted Localism Act 2011 repeals the ethical governance regime introduced in the Local Government Act 2000, including the requirements for all authorities to adopt a model code of conduct and to have a mandatory Standards Committee with a minimum quota of independent and parish members, including an independent chair.

The 2011 Act requires all authorities to have a Code of Conduct based on the 7 Nolan Principles. The Code will set out which categories of interests (other than Disclosable Pecuniary Interests – see below) the Council requires Members to register. There is a discretion for authorities to decide what other matters to include in their Code.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's) will be defined in Regulations to be made by the Secretary of State which have not yet been published. DPI's will require registration by Members and Members with DPI's in matters under discussion at meetings will not be able

to participate in the discussion. Failure to comply with either of these requirements will be a criminal offence.

The Association of Council Solicitors and Secretaries (ACSeS) and the Cumbria Monitoring Officer Network have undertaken to produce a model code that will be available to all authorities in the County to adopt. Clearly there is some merit in having at least some consistency of content for authorities in the same geographical area. This piece of work cannot be progressed further until the definition of DPI's is known.

The 2011 Act also requires principal authorities to have "arrangements" in place to process complaints of non-compliance with the Code of Conduct, including at least one "independent person" appointed by the Council to assist it on decisions on allegations of breaches of the Code and on any action required when allegations are proven.

Two informal workshops have been held in 2012 – for all Councillors on 30 January and for Standards Committee members and the Group Leaders on 25 February to discuss the new arrangements, and a progress report was submitted to Standards Committee on 5 March. The full package of proposals will need to be agreed by Council before the relevant provisions of the 2011 Act are brought into force, which at present is expected to be on 1 July 2012

### **Retention of Critical Knowledge ROCK**

The council has started work on a 2-3 year project called ROCK which aims to identify areas of knowledge that is critical to the running of our business. To systematically assess the risks of loss and run a programme of knowledge capture and knowledge transfer.

A pool of facilitators has been trained in knowledge management techniques such as "pearls of wisdom" and "network maps" and will be available to use facilitation tools to help transfer the knowledge from the expert to the recipients using the most effective facilitation approach. The next phase of the Implementation Plan is the assessment of areas of critical knowledge and then the programme of transfer and facilitation will commence.

### **ICT**

The ICT service is nearing the completion of a project to offer the Council better business continuity. The project involves the ICT service offering better resilience should there be an incident which impacts on one of the sites. The project is expected to be completed in the next couple of months.

### **Locality Working**

Since the third Copeland Partnership conference was held in December, work has continued to finalise the Copeland Partnership Plan. This has now been published and replaces Future Generation as Copeland's sustainable community strategy. Work has continued also to develop the action plan to accompany the strategy. In a number of very productive

workshop sessions, community leaders and partners from all sectors worked to give detail to the outline actions agreed previously, agreeing how to implement the priorities that have emerged. This work will be completed at the next conference in May and light touch systems to ensure that progress is made against actions are being put in place. The conference will become a showcase to demonstrate the added value from partnership working at a local level.

Across the localities, the community partnerships are starting to engage with service providers to address issues which cut across agencies. For example, in West Copeland a series of meetings involving community leaders and youth providers has helped to increase understanding of current provision for young people and identify needs for the future. Additional Friday night youth facilities will be provided in the Rugby Union Club from April and a new group has formed with support from youth providers (including CCC, Inspira, Young Cumbria and others) to fill the gap left by Youthworks. Working through the locality partnership alongside the youth forum has enabled closer partnership working and helped to improve communication and avoid duplication. Locality Partnerships are represented on the Copeland GP Stakeholder Group and this will be the route for influencing local health services delivery, whilst they will also be engaged in Copeland Health Week in May. Members of the localities team regularly take crime and disorder issues to the Local Multi-Agency Problem Solving groups in order to represent their partnerships and this has resulted in work around the borough, for example in Whitehaven Castle Park.

### **Customer Services**

The Council recently introduced rural office surgeries and launching of these involved a lot of effort by the team and these were well received by our customers. We are now considering phase two of the rollout and we are looking at two further sites which will hopefully be operational from May 2012.

The Citizens Advice Bureau is currently offering weekly surgeries in the Copeland Centre and there has been training from the CAB to our customer services officers to ensure that they are aware of the services which can be provided. In addition there is on-going liaison with CAB staff and manager to discuss progress and future plans

The customer services team is also leading on the implementation of the new Discretionary Concessionary travel scheme for 2012/13 and the project is now in full swing to ensure all concessions issued under new criteria are done before the end of April 2012. This involves issuing all previous holders with an information letter and application

The Council has also recently implemented the Tell Us Once project where by when a person has to report a death, they only need to tell one agency, e.g. the Local Authority, and all the information will be passed on to other relevant organisations, e.g. the Department

for Works and Pensions. This helps us to help our customers during this difficult time by minimising the amount of red tape they need to go through when reporting a death.

## **Housing, Planning and Community Safety Portfolio – Councillor George Clements**

### **Development Control**

#### **Planning Policy**

This month Full Council is being asked to approve draft (pre-submission) versions of the Council's **Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD**. These are two of the main documents in the Local Development Framework and if they are approved they will go out to extensive consultation with local communities and other stakeholders during May and June. I would expect to be reporting back to Council on what alterations might be made to them in September when the Submission version is readied for the Secretary of State. It is the latter version which will be the subject of a Public Examination in the new year.

Also scheduled for Full Council decision is a revised **Local Development Scheme** – the programme management document for the LDF – and a report about the relaxation of the retail-only frontage policy for **King Street, Whitehaven** which was deferred at Council's October meeting.

In the meantime, the LDF Working Party met on 8<sup>th</sup> March to assess a draft of the **Whitehaven Town Centre and Harbourside Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)** which will go out to consultation in April. We are looking to bring this to Full Council for formal adoption before the end of the year. The Working Party also approved a training/awareness programme on design issues as part of production of another SPD on **design quality** which is currently underway. This will involve sessions for Locality groups as well as Councillors and details will be sent to Members shortly.

### **Housing**

#### **Housing Advice**

Between the 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2011 there were 318 requests for housing advice. Since 1 April 2011 there have been 231 requests, these are all cases where customers have been into the Copeland Centre and have been interviewed. The figure does not take into account the number of telephone enquiries made to the housing options team, which can range anywhere between 15 and 40 calls per day.

When a resident is threatened with homelessness because their property is due to be repossessed by the mortgage lender due to arrears the lender must inform us. Since the 1 April 2011 there have been 67 such letters, a member of the housing options team contacts the homeowner by letter to let them know that there may be options available to them which will enable them to remain in their home. This is a slight increase on the number received during 2010/11.

## **Rent Deposits**

When a resident is homeless or threatened with homelessness we can help with a deposit for a private tenancy. The property is inspected by a technical officer under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System and as long as there are no hazards and the landlord has provided all the certificates then the deposit is paid. This is claimed back from the customer at an affordable amount each month. There were 32 rent deposits provided in 2010/11 and there have been 31 from 1 April 2011 to 28 Feb 2012.

## **Full Homeless Applications**

The number of full homeless investigations carried out has risen steadily during 2009/10 there were 181 applications; during 2010/11 there were 220 cases and from 1 April 2011 to 28 Feb 2012 there have been 259 cases. This represents an increase of 43% in less than two years.

## **Prevention**

Prevention figures have increased this year from 39 cases in 2010/11 to 53 between 1 April 2011 and 28 Feb 2012.

Prevention measures include amongst other things, helping residents clear small amounts of rent arrears; helping residents if they are threatened with illegal eviction; referring residents to support agencies etc.

## **MARAC – Domestic Violence**

Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) are held monthly and attended by the housing options team leader. During the MARAC, high risk victims of domestic violence are discussed and partners who include social services, the police and probation make sure measures are in place to protect the victims and their families.

Two officers have undertaken training and are 'Domestic Violence Champions' for Copeland. The 'Champions' are involved in improving community and organisational responses to domestic violence and providing training and assistance to enable front line staff to support the lower and medium risk cases not picked up by MARAC.

## **Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's)**

Residents of the borough whether owner occupiers, tenants of a Registered Provider or private landlord can apply for a DFG. The resident is assessed by an Occupational Therapist and if adaptations are required they are referred to the Council for a grant. An application is then made and a means test carried out to see if the applicant qualifies, is the applicant is a child under 19 years there is no means test.

During 2010/11 there were 69 referrals for DFG's; from 1 April 2011 to 28 Feb 2012 there were 110 referrals, an increase of 59%. Of these, the majority are owner occupiers although we have seen a slight increase in the number of tenants who apply.

Technical officers have to visit a property at least twice when a DFG is applied for, firstly to assess with an Occupational Therapist what work is required, secondly to make sure the work has been carried out to the standards expected. Where more extensive works are required such as shower rooms, extensions to properties etc. many more visits may be required, payments are only made to contractors when an inspection has been made and the work signed off, so for example when an extension is being built several visits will be made. The number of referrals therefore does not adequately reflect the number of visits to a property.

There are monthly meetings throughout the year with adult social care to discuss cases that are ongoing or pending.

### **Empty properties**

During this calendar year visits have been made to 15 empty properties, the majority of the owners have been identified and written to. In addition to this, five properties are in the process of being refurbished due to the efforts of the team. Again, several visits can be made to ensure work has commenced etc.

An empty property strategy has been developed this year (discussed at Strategic Housing Panel in Feb 2012) and all Parish Councils' have been contacted and asked to identify empty properties in their area. An empty property can also be reported via the website.

### **Unfit Properties**

The council has a statutory duty to inspect tenancies where the tenant reports that the property is unfit. The property is inspected and contact is made with the landlord outlining a schedule of works required to bring the property up to a decent standard. This involves at least two inspections, there have been 47 inspections since April 2012, we have yet to prosecute a landlord, as they have complied with legislation due to our involvement.

### **Overcrowding and Immigration Inspections**

The team are responsible for inspecting properties if the tenant thinks they are overcrowded. There were no requests during 2010/11 and three requests from 1 April 2011 to date. This could be attributed to Choice Based Lettings as a higher band is available if overcrowding is established. Out of the three properties inspected, one was statutorily overcrowded.

If a resident wished to sponsor a person from abroad and they are to live in Copeland, an inspection needs to take place to make sure the property in which they are to live is of a decent standard and will not become overcrowded. This is then given to the customer and

sent to the British High Commission. There were two applications during 2010/11 and three this year, all of which were inspected.

### **Rent Deposit Property Inspections**

When a resident is threatened with homelessness, or is homeless and a deposit is required from the council, an inspection must be made of the property to ensure it is of a decent standard and that the appropriate certificates are available from the landlord. During 2010/11, 35 inspections were undertaken and since 1 April 2011 there have been 37 inspections. If a property fails an inspection the rent deposit is not given until the landlord has brought the property up to a decent standard.

### **Funding for Homelessness Prevention Services**

In light of the recent national, regional and local increase in homelessness applications the government have confirmed two funding streams to support housing authorities' prevention services.

The first is the Homelessness Prevention Grant which has existed in one form or another since 2002. Copeland's allocation from DCLG for 2012/13 is £50,400. It is a flexible grant for the Council to use its best endeavours to either help service users remain in their home or, if that proves impossible, to help them find alternative accommodation (for example, by rent deposit loans for the private sector). The amount of grant is the same as for 2011/12 but is an increase on the £36,000 we had for 2010/11.

The second is the Preventing Repossessions Fund, for which Copeland's allocation is £30,000 in 2012/13. The government intends housing authorities to offer struggling home owners small interest-free loans of less than £5000 or grants to help ease debt pressures and give them time to take back control of their finances.

There are legal and financial implications to be resolved prior to going live with Preventing Repossessions funding in the forthcoming year and it is essential that service users obtain independent money advice, which is obtainable through the Citizens' Advice Bureau, to make their recovery sustainable. We will work in partnership with the CAB to ensure that people who would benefit the most are able to use this service. Regular periodic reports will be made to the Council's Strategic Housing Panel.

### **Whitehaven Community Trust**

I am pleased to announce that Whitehaven Community Trust have won the tender from the Cumbria Supporting People Team to continue the accommodation and related support service they provide for young people aged 16 – 24 in Whitehaven. This includes training in life skills to sustain their independence when moving on into long term accommodation. It is a very valuable service which helps young people into adult life and prevents them from going through a "revolving door" when they gain access to either social housing or the

private rented sector.

### **Home TV**

Home Housing Group have begun a long term project to develop a TV service which will eventually enable their residents to access housing and related services. There is a long way to go and many stages before completion but there is a future prospect of, for example, residents accessing Cumbria Choice via the red button.

### **Cumbria Choice**

The Strategic Housing Panel held a special meeting on 3 February this year to begin the first review in Copeland of the Cumbria-wide choice based lettings scheme, which went live in May 2011. All Councillors were invited and there was a high level of attendance.

At about the same time the Cumbria Choice Project Board, composed of officers, began a review county-wide. Any changes to the lettings policy can only be made by the full Council for each participating authority. However, each Council has discretion to adopt local lettings policies providing that they comply with the statutory duties of the scheme and promote sustainable communities in their social housing markets.

Regular progress reports will be made to the Strategic Housing Panel before recommendations from the review come to that Panel in the first instance and on to the Executive and Full Council.

### **Copeland Community Safety Partnership**

#### **Annual Plan 2012**

This plan is being implemented and monitored through the Partnership's Tactical Delivery Group. Copeland continues to be actively engaged in the following actions:

- Multi Agency problem solving to address specific issues
- Active domestic Violence champions
- Continuing sanctuary measures through resources and shared action to assist victims of domestic violence who wish to stay in their own homes
- Attention on Hensingham and Harbour wards to reduce alcohol related youth anti-social behaviour
- Friday night initiative being developed by youth providers and led by Connexions supported by Copeland Community Fund grant
- Supporting the continuation of the Integrated Offender Management project
- Working with partners to increase the efficiency and take up of benefits by eligible Copeland residents

## **Environment and Sustainability Portfolio – Councillor Allan Holliday**

### **Waste Management**

#### **Recycling Reward Grant**

In Cumbria working through the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership the District Councils have had a long standing and successful partnership arrangement with the County Council. Over the years the County Council has faced pressures on its ability to dispose of waste to landfill and potential fines from disposing of biodegradable waste to landfill. These pressures were overcome by the Districts accelerating recycling performance and reducing household waste production tonnages. This arrangement has meant that the County was able to reduce investment in new waste treatment plants from an originally predicted three plants to the two being commissioned now, at a multi-million saving to the County Council. In return the County incentivised the Districts to meet the more challenging waste reduction and recycling targets by paying a “Recycling Reward Grant” at an enhanced rate over the statutory Recycling Credits rate.

The recycling reward grant paid to Copeland is in the order of £1.03 Million, a significant sum which underpins the Council’s services, reducing as it does the direct cost of recycling and composting. In the current year we anticipate of all household waste being produced in the borough some 12,500 tonnes or around 43% will be recycled.

Recently the County Council has indicated as part of its budget pressures the need to reduce its recycling payments to the lower statutory recycling credit. On current tonnages the impact on our budget would be an income of £690,000 a reduction of £340,000 over the previous reward grant. This is a large sum of money and one which is likely to have a significant impact on this Council’s ability to provide services to residents of the Borough. Our waste services team are working on a project to see how an already efficient service can reduce budgets yet further but at this stage I should make Members aware it is unlikely that the County’s decision if implemented can be absorbed without some direct impacts on the services we deliver to the people of the borough.

#### **Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Recycling**

Members will recall that we introduced facilities for the recycling of small electrical items just before Christmas. The bright pink containers for WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) are located on four of the Council’s large bring recycling sites in Whitehaven, Cleator Moor, Egremont and Millom. They were placed at these locations initially on a trial basis for 3 months. Whilst the trial still has a few weeks to run, early indications suggest that they have proven to be very successful. Around 1.5 tonnes of electrical, and therefore potentially hazardous, items have been collected in the first 2 months of the 3 month trial. Extrapolated to a full year these figures suggest around 10 tonnes of electrical waste a year will be recycled instead of being dumped.

## **HWRC Consultation**

In my position as relevant portfolio holder and member of the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership I took the opportunity to respond to the County Council's recent public consultation on proposed changes to Household Waste Recycling Centres. Here in Copeland the County Council's proposals if implemented would mean the loss of both the Frizington and Millom sites and leave Copeland as the only District in Cumbria with no Household Waste site at all. In my response I also took the opportunity to incorporate comments made by members when the consultation was discussed at the OSC meeting on 24 January.

## **Cumbria County Council Grounds Maintenance**

Members will recall that in May of last year, and at very short notice, our County Council colleagues asked if we could help to restore many schools grounds to an acceptable standard and thereafter manage the maintenance of these. The work which took place across the whole county included an initial grass cut to the schools undertaken by our own parks team, who successfully restored the maintenance standard within a two week period.

Subsequently, and following the transfer of the former Amey grounds maintenance staff to the County Council, the new arrangements with us resulted in the team being hosted and managed in parallel with our parks service. This initial arrangement was extended to the end of the financial year with the employees successfully working on a range of horticultural and countryside access activities.

As a direct result of this successful arrangement, I can now inform Council that we have been asked to continue with the arrangement for the 2012 season. In addition the County Council have also asked us to include the former Amey facilities grounds maintenance staff from 1 April with the aim being to integrate both activities. This brings a total of 28 staff, employed by the County Council but managed by us.

I am sure Members would like to recognise the good work of our Parks Team in managing and delivering a successful school grounds service for the County Council.

## **Sands Memorial Garden – Distington Crematorium**

I am pleased to inform members that the Council has been working to enhance the current SAND's memorial garden at Distington Crematorium.

Members who have visited the Distington Crematorium will be aware that the memorial garden is adjacent to the main car park and consists of a small area with simple memorial plaque and stone bird bath.

A larger memorial garden has been sympathetically designed by one of the Councils former horticultural trainees Carl Woodburn. The garden has been designed to provide a more discrete and tranquil environment more physically separated from the car park. The

establishment a larger more defined space allows for users to reflect in an environment freer of interruption.

The garden design incorporates the original features whilst the use of new sustainable planting creates an environment to attract insects such as butterflies and ladybirds. A new yew hedge completes the design which once mature will provide a sheltering screen and privacy from the car park.

### **On Street Parking Enforcement**

Council will be aware that after considerable delay the County Council finally put in place interim arrangements with Allerdale for their enforcement officers to provide an on-street parking enforcement the service in Copeland. During the intervening period parking regulations went un-enforced across the Borough and despite not being the responsible authority, queries continued to be received at Copeland rather than Cumbria County Council. There were also a number of complaints and high profile articles in the local press, which highlighted that people were unaware who the responsible authority is.

In December the County Council invited all six District councils to submit proposals to manage the service at an appropriate level in their own area. Five of the six bids including ours have since been approved. An “in principle” agreement has now been reached which will see Copeland again managing the on street enforcement service in Copeland. As well as the on street enforcement activity the benefit to residents is that Copeland will provide the customer interface for the service including taking responsibility for issuing residents parking permits in the Borough. As the last permits expired almost 12 months ago and have not been renewed since, we are currently looking at how this process will be carried out. The new arrangements are expected to be in place from early July.

### **Environmental Health**

#### **1. National Food Hygiene Rating System (nFHRS) Launch**

In July last year I advised that we had been awarded a small grant of £11,000 to support accelerated implementation of the former star based food hygiene rating scheme to the new national scheme 2012.

I am pleased to be able to confirm this work is now complete. I’m even more pleased to say that the countywide launch of the national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme will take place at The Beacon on 26<sup>th</sup> March. The launch will recognise the many food businesses in Copeland who have had the highest ratings on the original star schemes and will now have the highest rating on the national scheme. The Food Standards Agency Chair Jeff Rooker will be attending the launch and also visiting selected food premises in Cumbria

Food businesses are currently being advised of their new rating and as part of the on-going support there will have been drop in sessions on the 12<sup>th</sup> March here at the Copeland Centre and on the 14<sup>th</sup> March at the Network Centre in Millom. The results of food hygiene inspections will be published on a national website and shown on distinctive black and

green window stickers with the Copeland logo and a rating of 0 – 5. 5 is the best rating.



The national scheme will build on the county based scheme which was very successful in promoting the excellent standards of most food business in Copeland and has been an encouragement to others to improve standards.

### **Environmental Management Award**

The Council has received a Gold Award for environmental management through Cumbria Business Environment Network's 'Gold at Heart' scheme. The scheme is designed to enable businesses to address their environmental impacts and uses a points system. Points were awarded by a CBEN Environmental Auditor for work including improving the energy efficiency of the Council's buildings, using recycled products and reducing the fuel consumption of the Council's vehicle fleet amongst others. In 2010 the Council adopted an Environmental Policy Statement and began work on the environmental management scheme achieving a CBEN Bronze Award. Cumbria Business Environment Network offers free, practical support to businesses on improving their environmental performance. The Council works closely with CBEN to promote this service and together in 2011 launched a Low Carbon Business Grant for businesses in Copeland.

### **Regeneration and Economic Development Portfolio – Councillor Phil Greatorex**

#### **Economic Blueprint**

The revised Blueprint will be the topic of a special Britain's Energy Coast Board Workshop in April. GVA, the consultants working on the Blueprint, held a session with members in February and continue to work with officers and the Blueprint Steering Group to produce an economic strategy for Britain's Energy Coast.

#### **Copeland Coastal Initiative**

The Coastal Communities Fund finally launched on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2012, with £18.2million available for 2012/13 to support economic development projects in coastal areas. As the co-ordinator of the Copeland Coastal Partnership we held a workshop for members of the Partnership to discuss a co-ordinated Copeland bid on the 7<sup>th</sup> March attended by 23 partners. Partners supported the co-ordinated approach and put forward potential projects for inclusion. A small writing group will now develop an Expression of Interest for submission by the 27<sup>th</sup> April.

#### **Dilapidated Buildings**

Our most recent success is the demolition of the offices and laboratory building on what was the Tamar Site at Kells. Once negotiations failed to secure action from the owner / administrators, the council chose to serve a Section 79 notice alongside an abatement notice from Environmental Health. This pressure finally resulted in the sale of the property to a new owner who has since undertaken the demolition works. Whilst a significant amount of staff time was put into achieving this result, the demolition was undertaken at no cost to the Council.

### **Copeland Apprentice Awards Event**

Apprentices and Businesses on the scheme were honoured at a well-attended Copeland Apprentice Awards Event held on the 7<sup>th</sup> February as part of National Apprenticeship week. The aim of the Event was to raise the profile of the training scheme and highlight the success of apprenticeships in Copeland. The young apprentice of the year award was given to Jamie Gill, who is undertaking his training with Hertel, Michaela Dockray, of PHX Training, was awarded the adult apprentice of the year title, and Catherine Graham, of Acorns Pre-School, won the Against All Odds prize. Employers were also recognised at the event – St Thomas Cross Garage, of Egremont, was named employer of the year.

The number of apprentices recruited to the Copeland Apprenticeship initiative currently stands at 53. The following employers have recently joined the scheme: Muncaster Castle, Copeland Citizens Advice Bureau, Allerdale Citizens Advice Bureau, Millom and District Credit Union, Global Travel, B & H Motors, Orgill Primary School and Global Travel. A more detailed breakdown of how the scheme is progressing is included.

It is the aim for all the apprentices on this scheme to be in place before the end of March 2012.

### **Copeland Community Apprentice Programme**

The Council is working together with Lakes College and Connexions on a focused apprenticeship scheme funded by Coalfield Regeneration Trust called Copeland Community Apprentice Programme. After holding two recruitment rounds, the full quota of 20 Apprentices are now in place. These apprentices are now in place with social enterprise and community anchor organisations which meets the criteria of the Coalfield Regeneration. The Programme is aimed at individuals (aged 16 - 24) who reside in Coalfield Regeneration Trust wards in Copeland. Below is a list of employers who have recruited apprentices and job titles of apprentices

Whitehaven Harbour Youth Project	West House x 2
Copeland Citizens Advice Bureau x 3	Age Uk
Phoenix Youth Project	Gosforth Nursery
Hospice at Home	Allerdale Citizens Advice Bureau
Cumbria Youth Alliance	Howgill Family Centre
Whitehaven Credit Union	Distington Club for Young People
Cleator Moor Credit Union	Carlisle Leisure

## Copeland Apprentice Scheme – Summary of Progress February 2012

- **53 individuals recruited to date**

<b>Apprentice Frameworks being undertaken</b>			
Customer Service	<b>2</b>	Business Administration (incl Adv)	<b>13</b>
Horticulture	<b>6</b>	Retail	<b>3</b>
Catering	<b>1</b>	Childcare	<b>3</b>
Motor Vehicle	<b>7</b>	Electrical	<b>1</b>
Hairdressing	<b>2</b>	Health & Social Care	<b>2</b>
Brickwork	<b>2</b>	Professional Cookery	<b>2</b>
Fabrication Welding	<b>2</b>	Teaching Assistant	<b>4</b>
Food & Drink Service	<b>1</b>	Food Production	<b>1</b>
Engineering	<b>1</b>		

### Ways into Successful Enterprise (WISE)

WISE has now become a recognised brand within communities and with business support partners, who recognise the value of this approach. On the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2012 WISE held their second Celebrating Enterprise event to promote WISE and its partners, showcase and recognise some of their success stories, highlight positive working with other key support organisations and celebrate and publicise the success of enterprise in West Cumbria. The current project finishes in October 2012 and funding to continue the scheme is now being sought. The council has earmarked a sum from our Working Neighbourhood resources to contribute to the scheme over the next two years.

### Business Support

In West Cumbria funding has now been approved for the continuation of West Cumbria Development Agency's (WCDA) Linkstart start-up programme. Partners are taking up the opportunity for Cumbria to seek funding through ERDF to deliver an intensive start-up programme locally commencing in April 2012. A bid has now been submitted for a county-wide business support package, which includes Britain's Energy Coast and Cumbria Chamber of Commerce delivery. The WISE programme is also an integral part of this offer. The Chamber of Commerce will be the accountable body and will deliver the ERDF element of the start-up support in Copeland and the Linkstart programme is available for the non-eligible clients or to add value to the process. The detail of the delivery of this programme will be developed once the bid is approved.

## **Other Workless Initiatives**

The Council continues to work closely with the job centre (DWP) and other partners to assist with a range of initiatives including supporting firms and employees facing redundancies.

### **Whitehaven bid to be a “Portas Pilot”**

The Council facilitated two development meetings to assist Whitehaven businesses and stakeholders agree a Town Team and approach to making a competitive bid for Whitehaven to become a Portas Pilot. The Council are represented on the 9 member Town Team and are taking the support role including accountable body at this stage. The Town Team are meeting weekly to set out the vision and actions to test as part of the Pilot. The agreed spatial focus for the pilot bid is King Street recognising its importance to the image of the town. Communications are being shared weekly via local business and community networks and via the Whitehaven News who are also represented on the Town Team.

## **Leisure Culture and Youth Portfolio – Councillor Hugh Branney**

### **Copeland Olympic Plans**

#### **Olympic Torch Relay**

The Olympic Torch Relay is visiting over 1000 cities, towns and villages in the UK over 70 days with 8000 torchbearers.

The Olympic Torch is visiting Whitehaven on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2012. The exact route and timings will be revealed on the 19<sup>th</sup> March. Activities will be taking place in Whitehaven throughout the day to celebrate the torch coming, and the Sport and Health team are working with all schools across the Borough through an Olympic Roadshow in which all schools are being offered a cultural opportunity to help decorate the route when the torch passes through and a sporting opportunity. The sporting opportunity involves working with local clubs to provide sessions to establish and strengthen school club links, to ensure sustainable exit routes into sport and physical activity for young people.

#### **Copeland’s Free Weekend of Sport**

To celebrate the start of the Olympic Games Copeland BC are working with sports facilities, clubs and organisations to provide free sports activities and taster sessions. The free weekend will take place on 21<sup>st</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> July at venues right across the Borough. We want as many people taking part in sport and physical activity over the weekend, as well as highlighting the sporting opportunities that are on offer throughout the Borough.

Venues already signed up & committed to providing activity are:

Millom Recreation Centre

Whitehaven Harbour Youth Project

Whitehaven Sports Centre

Cumbria Sports Academy

Copeland Swimming pool

Egremont RUFC

We are also involved in a number of other Olympic themed programmes to ensure maximum impact on the Borough and promoting the benefits of taking part in sport and physical activity.

### **Local Leaders**

This is your chance to get involved and plan a celebration for the Games in your local community. Get your friends involved or the whole community and [www.london2012.com](http://www.london2012.com) will provide you with all the tools to make your celebration fantastic.

*Line the streets* – get all your family and friends to line the streets when the Olympic torch passes through Whitehaven.

*Super Saturday* – On the 4<sup>th</sup> August which is the middle weekend of the games a massive 25 gold medals will be awarded at the London 2012 Olympic Games. What better way to celebrate the gold rush than getting your whole community fired up with a sizzling BBQ? Find delicious recipes and hints & tips at [www.London2012.com](http://www.London2012.com)

### **Sports Makers**

Copeland are involved in the Sports Makers Programme which is part of the Volunteer Programme for the Olympics. Sports makers are people who make sport happen by taking their friends along to exercise classes, organise runs and recruit new members into clubs. People can register to become a sports maker, they attend a 3 hour workshop, in which they receive an Addidas polo shirt and rucksack, then just log their hours online for the chance to win Olympic and Paralympic Tickets. Copeland have already ran one workshop with others scheduled for the 29<sup>th</sup> March in Whitehaven and 22<sup>nd</sup> March in Millom.

Please check our Facebook & Twitter pages for up to date information on Olympic Plans in Copeland.

Twitter@copelandsports

Facebook – facebook.com – Copeland Olympic Programme

## **Beacon**

It's been a busy February half term at The Beacon. On 11 February, "New Horizons", the new Medieval Gallery opened to the public, celebrating Copeland during the Middle Ages. The Gosforth Cross interactive and the "Horn of Egremont" stained glass window are among the key attractions. Funded from the Beacon's sinking fund, this is the second of 3 new galleries required as a condition of external grant funding, and has been delivered on time and well within budget (approx. £80K of £105K available).

On the same day, a major loan of artifacts from the Victoria & Albert Museum in London went on display in the Harbour Gallery as part of the exhibition "Oliver Messel – An International Story of Local Significance". Telling the life and history of this internationally renowned theatre designer, the exhibition displays nearly 60 examples of his designs and explains his connections with Rosehill.

Due to these high profile exhibitions and the promotional activity which goes alongside them and includes a dozen Viking re-enactors with their longboat, The Beacon achieved over 2,700 visitors during half term alone.

## **End of year key events**

For the Beacon, this was the year of the Dinosaurs. During 10 weeks in the summer, visitors from across the region flocked to Copeland to see the biggest show to have ever been seen in Whitehaven. Visitor number projections for this year are approximately 82000 (69000 in 2010/11). By the end of the financial year, targets will also have been met for pupil visits to The Beacon (4650 pupils) and adult learners (currently 1403 and target was 1200).

Copeland's tourist information centre at Whitehaven celebrated British Tourism Week by providing drop in workshops for taxi drivers. With the aim of creating tourism "ambassadors" for the Borough, the tourism information packs are now issued along with their taxi licenses.

In addition to delivering the West Cumbria Arts Engagement Programme, Pathways to Art and the Pop Up Shop programme, Copeland's grant funding of arts development has supported Arts Out West and Rosehill Theatre to become National Portfolio Organisations.

## **Creative People and Places**

Copeland have the opportunity to make an application to the Arts Council England recently launched Creative People and Places Fund. The focus of the Fund is to increase arts participation across the borough. The Council is facilitating a range of meetings and discussions to develop and submit a co-ordinated bid for up to £2million over a three year grant period. The Arts Council are keen to ensure that any application to the Fund is supported by a longer term vision to creative people and places and the opportunities of arts and culture in everyday life and business. A key element of our developing bid will be

action research and a focus on longer term social and economic opportunities and outcomes for our residents.

### **Copeland Youth Council sets priorities for 2012-13 and secures £10 000**

In the January meeting of Copeland Youth Council members discussed and set priorities for 2012-13. They did this by looking at and discussing youth forum and Children's Trust priorities for this period, highlighting the issues that are important to young people across the borough. The following priorities were agreed by the Youth Council:

- Transport, including home-to-school transport issues.
- Job opportunities and more apprenticeship places in varied businesses
- Drug and alcohol related violence within the community
- Activities for young people
- Young people need to be listened to more – every organisation should be asking young people what they think.

The priorities have been discussed at each of the six youth forums in Copeland making sure they have a chance to add issues and what they would like to see happen. Each Youth Forum will feed back through their members to the next meeting of the Copeland Youth Council. The Youth Council has also secured £10 000 from Cumbria County Council Neighbourhood Forum 0-19 Fund to help to work towards these priorities, with this the council will also arrange 3 youth events throughout the year, again working towards their priorities.

**Outside Body Report**

**Copeland Community Fund – Councillor Elaine Woodburn**

The fund was established in 2008 to recognise the unique role the Copeland community plays in hosting the national Low Level Repository. The NDA pay £1.5 million per year into the fund for every year that the current operation vault receives waste: in addition to an initial endowment of £10 million.

The fund looks to allocate both to smaller (under 50K) grants at 50% match funding as well as to larger (over 50K) 60% match funding.

Grants have been made to :-

<b>Locality</b>	<b>Grant</b>	<b>Leverage</b>	<b>Total</b>
West Copeland	157.589	491.466	649.055
Whitehaven	441.016	844.778	1.247.761
NE Copeland	344.606	1.247.761	903.155
Howgate / D.ton	99.593	301.746	401.339
Mid Copeland	269.000	519.595	788.595
South Copeland	516.372	1.116.434	1.632.806

The fund is more than just grant giving, community development workers are employed by the fund to work and work in partnership with other organisations will aim to increase the amount of external funding being drawn into Copeland for community projects and work by

- Making organisations aware of the support available to them
- Support organisations to widen their income generation through fundraising techniques and applications for funding
- Better utilise funding made available to groups
- Explain to organisations why capacity building is important to CCF
- Give support to applicants throughout the application process and support declined applicants to revise their bids
- Have an open and transparent decision making process
- Ensure ongoing consultation to enhance the delivery of the Fund

One of the most beneficial projects the fund has supported was the Copeland apprentice initiative which targeted individuals not in employment, education or training. Its aim was to support 45 people but has surpassed all expectations and over 55 people have benefitted from the £98K contribution from the fund.

Funding fairs have also been held all over Copeland, aimed at organisations looking to apply for funding. This provides support and hands on help and is proving beneficial to many.

## Outside Body Report

### **Cumbria Health and Well Being Scrutiny Committee – Councillor Geoff Garrity**

The Cumbria Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee is county wide and is attended by Cllr G Garrity and Cllr L Hogg (reserve). Since April 2011, the committee has held 6 meetings of which Copeland Borough Council has been represented at all. The committee is responsible for reviewing the provision of and operation of healthcare services across Cumbria and reviewing any relevant issues concerning health care. It receives regular reports from NHS Cumbria, the North Cumbria NHS Trust and LINK.

Over the last year the committee has considered: Patient Transport Services; Fuel Poverty; Drug and Alcohol Misuse in Cumbria; Cumbria Dementia Strategy; Smoking and Tobacco Control; Maternity Services and Wider Governance at University of Morecambe Bay Hospital Foundation Trust; Older People in Hospital Care and Breast Screening Services in North Cumbria.

A key part of the committee's work this year has been the on-going West Cumbria Hospital Development Task Group which has scrutinised delivery of services and the hospital new build project.

## Outside Body Report

### Cumbria Housing Executive – Councillor George Clements

Cumbria's six district Councils have statutory housing responsibilities. The County Council and Lake District National Park also have some housing responsibilities. Together with representation from the registered housing providers they form the Cumbria Housing Executive Group (CHEG). They recognise that by working together they can add real value to creating and sustaining homes and communities across Cumbria and responding to changing social and economic needs.

In these changing times housing is going through the biggest review for many years so it is important that we have a strong CHEG. The objective to lobby and feed into consultation locally, regionally and when appropriate nationally for a fair share of resources, as well as to influence and give Cumbria a voice to the Northern Housing Consortium, North-West Housing Forum and other local, regional and national consultations.

This year 2011/12 started slowly with us all anticipating what the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review would bring. In the meantime all partners contributed to the development of the Cumbria Housing Strategy, endorsed by our Full Council in January this year and successfully launched at Rheghed on 24<sup>th</sup> February.

One of the Government's new funding streams the New Homes Bonus has been looked at and we have been informed by the Policy and Strategy Manager from the Northern Housing Consortium that initial calculations suggest the Districts and County Councils in Cumbria will lose out as formula grant will be top sliced at a flat rate nation-wide, and the amount of New Homes Bonus brought in by the new houses built in this area will not reimburse the loss. Furthermore the access to housing was raised as a concern as New Homes Bonus is not received unless the property is occupied. We have drafted a letter from CHEG to the Housing Minister and are working together to lobby our MP's to raise the concerns highlighted in this report.

Grants of up to £13m have been submitted to the Homes and Communities Agency for up to 657 affordable homes in Cumbria. The HCA are to map by local authority and rural. Our problem is who will fund expensive support if HCA can't.

We are looking at the effect of the new right to buy which will be on a future meeting agenda.

We are also looking at the removal of the 10% subsidy on council tax for second home owners, we have an estimated 8000 second homes in Cumbria so a potential to bring extra revenue in for investment in housing.

We have been in discussions with Children's Services to decide the best approach to establish the process for dealing with 16/17 year old homeless clients. A scoping report has been drafted, which children's services are in support of, and a report will be presented at our next meeting.

We are now working with Cumbria County Council's Elderly Care to see if we can work closer when allocating our DFG's, this is on-going and a pilot scheme will be presented to us shortly.

In November the Government introduced a new National Housing Strategy, this document has many challenges. CHEG has touched on most of them at length. The document is too far reaching to list in this report. Within Copeland we have had numerous presentations that have highlighted the implications.

CHEG has met three times this year in Penrith, Workington and Whitehaven. Our next and final meeting of the municipal year is scheduled to take place in Barrow

## Outside Bodies Annual Report

### Cumbria Planning Group - Councillor M A McVeigh

Cumbria Planning group is made up of the six districts plus National Parks and County Council, with both Member and officer representation. It meets every two months or so to discuss items of common interest between the Planning Authorities.

Previously issues were taken to Regional meetings held every quarter at the Wigan Investment Centre. This was at the time when Regional Strategies were in place and there was a lot of debate across the North West about such matters as housing provision, flagship employment sites and targets for energy production. With the NWDA now dismantled and the Regional Spatial Strategy scheduled for revocation it becomes more important than ever for the Cumbrian authorities to band together and act in concert. Their approach to planning policy, infrastructure investment and how they deal with planning applications needs to be coordinated and in-step with the development of the Cumbria LEP. Indeed, the Planning Group now provides an important debating arena for the work being undertaken by the expert group on housing and planning feeding into the LEP Board.

Subjects which the Planning Group have covered this year include:

- housing allocations – particularly with the removal of RSS targets and the consequential uncertainties thrown up
- affordable housing – dealing with the differing markets around the county and how new approaches in Eden might provide options elsewhere
- implications of the Localism Act – much is still to be explained and digested especially as regards the working of Neighbourhood Plans and the role of planning authorities
- Wind energy development – a number of authorities now concerned about proliferation and cumulative impacts
- Nuclear energy development – more acceptance of a role for nuclear in the energy sector and a willingness to discuss development requirements, especially grid connectivity and options for the “Cumbria ring” including underground sections
- Landscape Character – the continuing importance of protecting landscapes in a county like Cumbria

Presentations are provided on a regular basis for discussion on all aspects of planning and environment issues as changes demand.

## Outside Body Report

### Cumbria Supporting People Commissioning Body – Councillor George Clements

This body went live in 2003 following a period as a shadow organisation preparing for the transfer of many different funding streams into just one overall grant to pay for housing related support services across Cumbria. It was part of a national reorganisation under the title of Supporting People.

The Commissioning Body is a partnership between the six District Councils, the County Council, Probation Services, NHS and Primary Care Services. It is chaired by Cumbria County Council which, as the grant receiving authority, is also the accountable body for the grant provided by the DCLG. The County and District Councils are represented by elected members accompanied by officers.

Housing related support is the non-landlord services provided to help vulnerable people live independently in the community. Typically, but not exclusively, it refers to the personal support services provided, for example, by the wardens in sheltered housing schemes for older people and by visiting staff (often referred to as floating support) in homes dispersed around the community. The most numerous group who receive such support are older people (because of historic provision and demographic trends) but there are many other schemes. These include, but are not limited to, those for people with learning disabilities, mental health needs, younger people and other vulnerable groups who are able to live independently but need support to prevent crises like unplanned hospital admissions or homelessness.

Until 2010 the annual grant for Cumbria (called the programme grant) was ring-fenced, meaning that it could only pay for housing related support services. Many providers were (and still are) traditional housing associations but some specialised in delivering support to schemes owned and managed by others. In that year the ring-fence was removed and, sadly, the County Council is in process of making savings to reduce the spend on housing support from over £10M to around £7.5M over the next 3 years. These include some efficiency savings, for example on not funding the maintenance of equipment or "landlord" services but there will be no overall growth in the provision of housing support in Cumbria over the short term.

The Commissioning Body's current major issue is completing the formal tendering process for all housing related support contracts that have come to an end. This is a major task that is too complex for explanation in an outline report such as this but outcomes for Copeland will be reported to our Strategic Housing Panel at the first opportunity together with an update on changes to the provision of community alarm services (commonly referred to as Careline).

## Outside Body Report

### **Copeland Homes Joint Steering Group – Councillor Jon Downie/Councillor Alan Jacob**

#### **Background**

The Copeland Homes Joint Steering Group came into existence in 2011 in order to replace the Copeland Homes Board. The latter was formed to oversee the management of the housing stock transferred to Home Group under the large scale voluntary transfer completed in 2004.

Under the stock transfer agreement all investment and improvement works (“the Works”) to the transferred stock would be completed within 10 years of the transfer (i.e. by 7 June 2014). This is also known as the investment agreement.

The transfer agreement provided for the eventual dissolution of the Copeland Homes Board but Home Group sought a dialogue with the Council in order to agree on replacing the Board with another body to oversee compliance with the investment agreement.

Mutual agreement was reached to create the Copeland Homes Joint Steering Group (JSG) to replace the Board when the latter was dissolved. The JSG provides the means by which Home Group and the Council monitor the delivery of the investment programme embedded in the stock transfer agreement.

#### **Role & terms of reference**

The Steering Group has overall responsibility for the following:

- Receiving progress reports on the investment programme
- Monitoring performance of contractors and sub-contractors employed on the works
- Commenting and making recommendations on the designs and plans for the works
- Considering any proposed variations to the phasing of the investment programme and making recommendations on the same
- Monitoring the Community Investment Fund
- Considering the impact of change on the commitments made under the stock transfer agreement.

#### **Membership & Meetings**

The Group consists of eight members. Two are nominated by the Council and are currently Councillors Jon Downie and Alan Jacob. Two are nominated by the Home Group. The remaining four are current tenants or leaseholders of a property transferred to Home Group

under the stock transfer agreement. The Group must meet at least four times annually. They elect their own chair and vice chair. The Group was created in September 2011 and has since met twice.

### **Dissolution**

Unless Home and the Council agree otherwise the Steering Group shall automatically be dissolved 12 months after the date of completion of the investment programme. As referred to above, the programme is currently scheduled to complete by June 2014.

## Outside Body Report

### **Lake District National Park Partnership – Councillor Hugh Branney**

Alongside our member representation at the Lake District National Park Board the Council are active partners in the Lake District National Park Partnership which meets quarterly.

These meetings are focused around the delivery of the Partnership Plan with the Council contributing performance data quarterly. The Plan has four key themes and we report to Full Council annually on progress through the State of the Park report produced for the Partnership. The council has a number of actions it leads on and a number of others it contributes to. The Locality Partnership's in the borough have good relationships with the Park and Park staff are active partners on a number of Copeland initiatives including the Coastal Regeneration Initiative.

## Outside Bodies Annual Report

### Nuleaf – Councillor Allan Holliday

The Nuclear Legacy Advisory Forum (NuLeAF) remit encompasses all aspects of the management of the UK's nuclear legacy. NuLeAF is a local authority membership organisation linked to the Local Government Association.

This includes the implications for legacy management of any developments that are likely to impact on that management.

NuLeAF now has 101 member authorities comprising: 17 contributing authorities, 80 corresponding members and 4 Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) co-optees.

#### **Significant Developments:**

The last year has seen significant developments in nuclear legacy and radioactive waste management and in NuLeAF's associated work programme. The developments include:

- the nuclear accident at Fukushima, Japan and Dr Mike Weightman's report on the implications for the nuclear industry in the UK;
- consultation by the Nuclear Decommissioning Agency (NDA) on its Business Plan 2011-14 and revised Strategy, and discussion with member authorities about key aspects of strategy implementation;
- continued involvement in the West Cumbria Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) Partnership, which is developing its preliminary views on the key issues associated with potential participation in the siting process for a Geological Disposal Facility;
- following a public inquiry, the Secretary of State's approval of an appeal against refusal of permission for the disposal of LLW to the hazardous waste landfill site at King's Cliffe in Northamptonshire; and
- Consultation on revised draft Nuclear National Policy Statements and subsequent parliamentary approval.

NuLeaf activities over the past year include:

#### **NuLeAF/NNLAG Protocol**

A draft protocol setting out the relationship between NuLeAF and the New Nuclear Local Authorities Group (NNLAG) has been prepared in liaison with NuLeAF's Chair and Vice Chair and the NNLAG secretariat. NNLAG is a local Government Association group which represents the needs and concerns of the Local Authorities which are proposed to host new nuclear power stations. The protocol covers:

- The remits, objectives, membership, and governance and working arrangements of each organisation;

- The areas of mutual interest, and arrangements for communication and liaison between the two bodies.

#### **The Radioactive Waste Planning Group (RWPG)**

The RWPG is a sub group of NuLeAF and has met four times in the last year. It continues to provide a mechanism for officer review and discussion of key issues relating to radioactive waste planning prior to preparation of reports for the Steering Group. During the course of the year issues it has considered include:

- implication of the King's Cliffe landfill application, subsequent inquiry, appeal and Secretary of State's decision;
- development of a potential community benefits protocol;
- discussion with Low Level Waste Repository Ltd on LLW inventory forecasts;
- treatment of radioactive waste in Minerals and Waste Development Frameworks; and
- radioactive waste and new nuclear power stations.

#### **Input to the West Cumbria Managing Radioactive Wastes Safely Partnership**

NuLeaf has made a substantial input to the Partnership in the last year including participation in the Public & Stakeholder Engagement (PSE) Sub-group and Technical Review Group (TRG).

#### **Radioactive Waste Management and New Nuclear Power Stations**

A detailed report was tabled at the Nuleaf Steering Group meeting on 25 January, covering:

- the granting of interim acceptance by the regulators of the generic designs for two nuclear reactors proposed for construction in the UK;
- the application for approval to construct a new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point in Somerset;
- an initial review of the current position on proposals for managing radioactive wastes and spent fuel from new nuclear power stations; and
- the publication of Government guidance on the Funded Decommissioning Programme for new nuclear build.

## Outside Body Report

### West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group – Councillor Elaine Woodburn

The WCSSG is an independent body whose role is to provide public scrutiny of the nuclear industry in West Cumbria.

The Group exists to:

- Provide an active, two-way channel of communication between the sites operators, the NDA and local stakeholders.
- Represent local views, input timely advice to the NDA and give an opportunity for questioning the operators, the NDA and regulators.
- Allow stakeholders the opportunity to comment on and influence strategies and plans.
- Comment on the performance of NDA and its contractor with regard to achievement of performance plans, value for money etc.
- Commission and receive reports about site activities and their impact on for example safety, the environment and health.
- Review arrangements for matters including emergency response.
- Scrutinise and input into the prioritisation of work programmes.
- Provide views and comments to the NDA on the future of the site.
- Provide views on the NDA contract and the performance of the operators.
- Set up working groups to address specific issues as required.
- Set up wider local consultation via public meetings and other mechanisms as required.

The Group meets four times a year but has numerous sub committees who carry out more detailed scrutiny. The long standing sub committees which cover Environmental Health, Emergency Planning, Low Level Waste Repository remain and new sub committees covering Risk & Hazard Reduction and Waste Management, Spent Fuel Management and Nuclear Materials and Decommissioning and End States have just been agreed and have , as of yet, not met.

Sellafield has recently produced a performance plan which clearly sets out the tasks that needs carried out and the cost of this. This will allow a more detailed and proactive scrutiny of the site with each meeting receiving a performance report, this helps both the Group and the Council to monitor the site.

## Outside Body Report

### **Western Lake District Tourism Partnership – Councillor Hugh Branney**

Copeland Borough Council continues to be a key partner in the Partnership and has taken on accountable body status for the Destination West Cumbria Programme. This public private partnership is focused on delivering the Destination West Cumbria initiative during 2011-13 and is resourced by both Copeland and Allerdale Councils, Britain's Energy Coast and local tourism businesses. The Partnership is recognised as the appropriate mechanism to co-ordinate and deliver tourism strategy within the Energy Coast. The partnership meets quarterly and is chaired by the Cumbria Tourism chair to ensure connection and integration into the tourism strategy and developments across Cumbria. The Board monitor progress against strategy and action plan using this performance data to evaluate impact and identify future issues and opportunities.

A large focus during 2011/12 has been on marketing and cluster development with a new campaign for the Western Lake District – the other side of the Lakes. The year has seen a stronger integration of West Cumbria Coast and Western Lake District within the Cumbria Tourism marketing and PR activity. Copeland partners and businesses have engaged with all the cluster activity with the Heritage Cluster being rooted in the Muncaster partners. The partnership has been integral to the development and delivery of a range of our marketing, cultural project and destination planning including Chairing the Whitehaven Marketing Group, being an active partner on the Rugby League World Cup bidding team. Our Coastal Initiative has a core element linked to tourism opportunities. The Partnership provides support and mentoring to the South Copeland Tourism Partnership. Our member representative on this partnership also sits on the recently formed Cumbria Tourism Partnership. The Partnership has started its forward planning post its current Destination West Cumbria programme ending in March 2013.