

## **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

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### **SUMMARY:**

This report sets out an overview of business support developments in Copeland and how we are working with partners to deliver to four key priority areas.

## **1. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES**

“Business” incorporates all forms of enterprise development including social and community enterprises

Our current approach sets out four key priority areas:

- A Encouraging enterprise as a route to employment;
- B New start business support;
- C Sustaining and supporting indigenous business growth;
- D Attracting new businesses to the area.

## **2. CURRENT ACTIVITY**

### **2.1 Encouraging Enterprise:**

The WISE enterprise coaching initiative is a joint project between Allerdale, Copeland and West Lakes Renaissance. The current 3 year programme with 2 workers in Whitehaven and Cleator Moor is ending in March 2009 and was funded by Copeland through the LABGI resource. We are continuing this partnership initiative for a further 3 years and extending the team to a third worker in Copeland to specifically help local people in South and Mid Copeland who are interested in looking at self employment.

### **2.2 New Start Business Support:**

Core business support work is undertaken by partners, specifically WCDA, Business Link and The Hub. Copeland's role currently is to offer specific support in the following ways:

- Premises and planning issues;
- Start up grants;
- Enabling local networking;
- Sector specific initiatives;
- Information, referral and local data.

### 2.3 Existing Business Support:

Local agencies offer specific training, support and development help to businesses wishing to improve their sustainability and identify new products and markets. Copeland Borough Council specifically works with businesses and agencies on:

- Premises and location issues, including planning and grants;
- Health and safety issues through our legal enforcement role;
- Specific sector developments;
- Strategic Regeneration initiatives;
- Information, networking and referral;

### 2.4 Attracting New Business to Copeland:

We fund through an annual grant and work closely with Invest in Cumbria to pro-actively seek inward investment opportunities for Copeland. Our focus is currently on improving our infrastructure offer for businesses choosing to locate here specifically enabling a supply of appropriate brownfield employment sites.

## 3. COPELAND ACTIVITY PRIORITIES

### 3.1 Accepting that entrepreneurial activity is relatively low in West Cumbria activity in each of the four priority areas still require continued activity.

The core priorities for the next 3-5 years are likely to be:

- Premises support and developments;
- Planning infrastructure and guidance;
- Continue with enterprise coaching WISE initiative;
- Engage actively with the Business Support Simplification Programme in Cumbria and set our local priorities from our evidence base;
- Strategically target sectors for business growth and development particularly linked to local economic activity and opportunities in the borough and area;
- Strategic Regeneration Programmes and action including Sustainable Town developments to develop infrastructure for business development;
- Use the skills and work plan to enable appropriate skills development for effective business;
- Work with business networks;
- Target any business grants to most effective use in line with other business funding available locally.