

LSP/ Community Partnerships: New Arrangements

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor Elaine Woodburn

LEAD OFFICER: Fergus McMorrow, Acting Chief Executive

REPORT AUTHOR: Fergus McMorrow, Acting Chief Executive

Summary and Recommendation:

Following consideration of a number of reports and possible approaches to change over the past six months, the West Cumbria Strategic Partnership Leadership Committee agreed, in November, to revise the arrangements for Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP's) in the area. The proposals involve the formation of separate partnerships for each of the two districts to strengthen local input to Council decision making processes and to provide officer support from within the local authorities our staffing establishments.

The Executive is asked to recommend that Council:

1. Endorse the approach to LSP working in West Cumbria/Copeland with support being embedded within the mainstream of the principle authorities with the result that the posts in the West Cumbria Strategic Coordination Unit and the post of the Director of Public Service Delivery are deleted from the establishment.
2. Support improved district level engagement with communities of interest and place through a new Copeland LSP aimed at improving the ability of stakeholders to influence local public sector decisions in the Borough.
3. Maintain, subject to regular review, a direct involvement from the Council in any joint coordination and delivery arrangement that may continue at West Cumbria Level and beyond, where they are directly relevant to delivering the Councils priorities.
4. Ensure that, under the new arrangements an effective method of feeding the views of the new Copeland Partnership into decision making in the Council and other key delivery organisations is established.
5. In concluding the present arrangements, agree to allocate from general fund balances:-
 - a) £55k to fund the projected deficit on LSP/Community Partnerships budget for 2009/10, recognising the contribution from Allerdale is to be received

b) £19k to meet Copeland's share of the total costs of redundancy for the LSP/Community Partnership

6. Note the projected overspend and agree that Copeland's here are funded from within existing budget underspends for this year

7. Agree to continue to utilise the current base revenue budget allocation of £59,000 for the West Cumbria Strategic Partnership in 2010/11 to support the new Copeland partnership arrangements. The current budget build, developing through Resource Planning Working Group currently assumes the budget allocation remains for such purposes.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 A number of factors triggered the need to review the current arrangements. These have included :

- a. The need to strengthen the engagement of stakeholders and the community in the work of the Councils in Copeland following the results of customer surveys.
- b. The development of our strategy on Locality Working and the need to link these partnerships at Borough level and achieve best value in providing officer support for partnerships.
- c. To align the costs of partnership support with the current budget provision.
- d. To provide the most efficient ways of working within the changing environment.

1.2 The last three West Cumbria Leadership Committees have discussed future approaches to LSP arrangements in West Cumbria. There have been concerns about both the cost and effectiveness of current structures. These reflect the 'arms length' nature of the current secretariat and the perception of duplication of arrangements within the Secretariat and the three principal authorities. Additionally since the adoption of the current LAA process, the role of the secretariat has changed with many of the strategic performance monitoring responsibilities being undertaken at a sub-regional level. In addition, as Copeland introduces Locality working arrangements, the cohesive operation of community partnerships need to be reconsidered as does the cost of supporting them.

- 1.3 There are very few other examples nationally of cross authority LSP's. A cross authority LSP encompassing Carlisle and Eden was terminated some years ago in favour of District partnerships.

2. PROPOSALS

- 2.1 The principle behind the proposals is that a new local community partnership should be Copeland focussed so that it can feed directly views directly in to the Council (and the County Council) so that the Councils role as a responsive service provider and community leader could be strengthened by the focussed inputs it receives. Coupled with this, any arrangements that remain at West Cumbria level and beyond should be focused on coordination and delivery. The Council will directly provide support for and engage in these arrangements. Activities of the partnership shall be directly linked to the Councils own policy making processes and locality working through the same staff. This will ensure the greatest benefits and ensure the value of the partnership is fully utilised in supporting the work of the Council. The arms length support arrangements currently in place have not proved effective in providing integration with the Councils mainstream activities and avoiding duplication. Some issues have also arisen about how the Council is effectively represented at sub regional level. This has sometimes occurred through the LSP and sometimes directly from the Councils causing a lack of clarity in our position.
- 2.2 It was agreed by the three local authorities that two separate Local Strategic Partnerships focused around community foras in Allerdale and Copeland be formed to engage stakeholders on the future shape and direction of policy and on the delivery of services. A key element of these arrangements will be improved community and stakeholder engagement at the district level. Once the detailed membership of the Copeland Partnership is agreed consideration will be given to whether there is a need for the members to appoint a steering or management group. This will need to be considered in the context of a piece of work that has been commissioned into how the overall partnership arrangements in Copeland should work. A short term specialist appointment, financially supported by the North West Improvement and Efficiency Programme, is working with stakeholders and Council Officers and Members in advising on the design of the new community forum/partnership arrangements for Copeland Borough. A report on options and recommended proposals arising from this work will be reported back to the Executive.

- 2.3 West Cumbria level thematic working groups continue to be important. There is no intention to duplicate these at District level as they should focus on coordination and delivery and link through to the continued role of the West Cumbria Public Service Delivery Board, which brings together major public sector providers to find ways of jointly improving services. These arrangements may change in time if district based approaches become more common.
- 2.4 The Leadership Committee, consisting of the three local authorities and the Chair of the (current) partnership forum agreed that it should continue to meet, as necessary, to consider development or changes in future arrangements at a West Cumbria wide level. Senior staff from the partner authorities will coordinate future management arrangements for this and theme groups as necessary.
- 2.5 Leadership Committee members have previously agreed the value of investigating further joint decision between County and District Councils at District level, involving shared decision making arrangements with borough cabinets and county local committees and where possible decision making at a locality level. This will be considered as detailed arrangements are developed
- 2.6 The mainstreaming of officer support and the integration with other partnership activities within the Councils' establishment officers will result in the termination of contracts of staff working within the existing 'arms length' secretariat in the West Cumbria Strategic Coordination Unit.
- 2.7 The role of Director of Public Service Delivery was established in addition to the role of the Coordination Unit. The post was created jointly by Copeland and Allerdale Borough Councils, and has a wider management responsibility which includes overseeing the West Cumbria Strategic Coordinating Unit, (proposed to be deleted), the managers of the West Cumbrian Neighbourhood Management Partnerships (which come to an end in March), and the management of West Cumbrian Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP). The latter partnership will need to be reviewed over the coming months. If these proposals are agreed, as an interim measure, the CDRP Manager will be line managed by the County Councils Safer Communities Officer. The above proposals mean that the Director of Public Service Delivery post will also be deleted from the establishment.

3. STAFF AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The total running cost of the LSP/Community Partnership activity this year is forecast to be £173,000. Copeland has allocated £59,000 in this years budget towards the costs. Allerdale have allocated an equal amount in their budget. Negotiations are underway to secure further contributions from Cumbria County Council. This would leave a maximum deficit of £55,000 to fund. This cost will fall jointly on Copeland and Allerdale Councils in equal measure..
- 3.2 The redundancy and pension costs are estimated to be £48,705 and Allerdale and Cumbria County Council are expected to contribute towards these costs. Copeland's estimated share of the cost is £19,000.
- 3.3 All three Councils will put in place its redeployment provisions in respect of individuals made redundant by these proposals that will be notified of any opportunities arising.
- 3.4 Staff have been consulted on the proposals. Their views will be communicated to the Executive and Council.

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 A further report will be prepared on the detailed working arrangements for the new Copeland partnership which will be in operation from April 2010.
- 4.2 The principles in this report have been formally considered and agreed by Allerdale Borough Council

5. IMPACT ON CORPORATE PLAN

- 5.1 These proposals are major component of delivering the review of strategic partnership priorities in this year's Corporate Improvement Plan

List of Appendices

List of Background Documents:

List of Consultees: WCSCU Staff. Director of Public Service, Allerdale Borough Council. Cumbria County Council. Corporate Team. Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee. West Cumbria Leadership Committee

CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH KEY ISSUES

Please confirm against the issue if the key issues below have been addressed . This can be by either a short narrative or quoting the paragraph number in the report in which it has been covered.

Impact on Crime and Disorder	Provision is made to deal with the management oversight implications for the CDRP.
Impact on Sustainability	Focus on Copeland should provide a positive indirect impact
Impact on Rural Proofing	Not direct
Health and Safety Implications	Not direct
Project and Risk Management	The new arrangements to be agreed will be the subject to a project plan to manage the implementation risks
Impact on Equality and Diversity Issues	More local focus for the new partnership will enhance our ability to engage with stakeholders and get better information on the delivery of our services to ensure equality of access
Children and Young Persons Implications	Creates the opportunity for better engagement with young people in Copeland
Human Rights Act Implications	none
Monitoring Officer Comments	Special care needs to be taken to ensure that any new Governance arrangements tie in with the Council's own arrangements.
Section 151 Officer Comments	Running costs of for the units and associated redundancy costs are set out in the report and contributions to meet some of these costs are expected from partner organisations. The balance is to be met from general (revenue) fund balances, totalling a maximum of £74,000.

Please say if this report will require the making of a Key Decision YES