

Council Meeting 3rd July 2007

Executive Report

This report follows the themes within the corporate plan and concentrates on the priorities within it.

These being :-

Effective Leadership	Leader Cllr Elaine Woodburn Deputy Leader Cllr Allan Holliday
Transformation	Deputy Leader Cllr Cath Giel Cllr Tim Knowles Cllr Norman Williams
Promoting Prosperity	Deputy Leader Cllr George Clements Cllr Geoff Blackwell Cllr Hugh Branney

Effective Leadership

Shaping the local agenda, working in partnership, providing clear direction through our policies and plans and ensuring we represent the interests of the local community at all times.

Cllrs. Elaine Woodburn. Allan Holliday

Coastal Fringe

The Haig / Coastal Fringe project is about the re-design and improvements scheduled for the Whitehaven Coast which will enhance the superb natural and historic qualities of this coastline and provide a high quality recreational resource for local people. The project is being funded by English Partnerships. This investment covers the area of the headland above the cliff tops (excluding the car park) and the area below the candlestick but including major structures such as Wellington pit, the retaining walls and candlestick.

Recently, the main aspects of work have revolved around the design scheme phase of the project (managed by Entec UK Ltd). This was signed off in principle on the 18 June 07 with an amended plan showing the boundary of the project being agreed by partners. There are still further investigations in relation to land/property issues in relation to Haig/Rhodia that require to be addressed.

The final design tweaks have been in relation to the proposed cycle ways, footpaths, landscaping, and candlestick terrace area, incorporating new seating, signage and art features and Kells rugby pitch. A copy of the proposed design scheme is available upon request.

After the scheme design is implemented the site will be transferred to the Land Restoration Trust (this is likely to be on a lease basis) and on-going maintenance will be carried out by the National Trust and funded through an endowment

In the lower coastal area some potential basic work is scheduled at Saltom Pit to both the monument and the access path. A funding application has been prepared by the National Trust to English Heritage to partly fund the works. If this project proceeds responsibility for ongoing management of the site is likely to be undertaken by the Land Restoration Trust on a lease basis with the National Trust maintaining the site.

The next stages of the project include drafting the relevant leases/legal agreements, tendering/appointing contractors, planning applications. Physical works are due to commence on site in September 07.

A number of the above issues in relation to this project will be included in future Exec Committee Reports.

Cleaner Safer Greener

Cleaner Safer Greener funding was made available to areas within South Whitehaven, comprising of Mirehouse East & West, Woodhouse, Kells and Greenbank. A total of £2.1 million was made available over a two year period, of which £970,000 was allocated to year 1. Cleaner Safer Greener activity has a direct impact on addressing crime and specific environmental issues such as fly tipping, dog fouling and the clean up of estates. 17 projects have benefited from the funding, these projects will run and complete during year 2. There are 2 new capital projects that will commence during 2007, these are Capital builds to include new changingrooms for Mirehouse AFC, and the regeneration of waste land for StBenedict's RUFC.

Total expenditure for year 1 amounted to £958,216, representing 98.75% expenditure as a whole. Success was achieved through partnership working with various agencies, including, the Environment Agency, The National Trust, Copeland Homes, Cumbria County Council, Copeland Borough Council, Woodhouse Family Advice Centre, and St Peters

Neighbourhood Management

South Whitehaven benefited from over £350,000 government funding to enhance the quality of life and liveability of residents within the South Whitehaven neighbourhoods through directing of services to meet their needs and aspirations. This years projects were delivered after consultation with the local communities and has resulted in the provision of neighbourhood wardens, a community engagement officer, community facilities, streetlights and a community pot which over 30 local projects have benefited from.

This programme is a pilot and the intention is to both mainstream and roll out neighbourhood management elsewhere in Copeland in due time.

Unitary Proposals

The Council submitted its response to government on the County Councils unitary proposal. Our submission voiced our opposition to the proposal which was supported by a letter from the Cumbrian MP's. Cumbria County Council made a further submission but would not allow sight of it, therefore we were not given the opportunity to make further comments on it before it was submitted. On reading the document there are no major changes from the original but what was disappointing was that they have still ignored the comments from the Cumbria Strategic

Partnership and all the Local Strategic Partnerships and have still recommended the abolition of the local partnerships.

The July date, to our knowledge, is still decision day but it is still possible that this date could change. As soon as we know all members will be notified.

Thanks should go to all involved in this process and we now hope it has the desired affect.

West Cumbria Masterplan

As members will know the plan was presented to Ministers on the 19th June. The plan was welcomed and endorsed by all and Government agreed to continue the partnership working to take the plan to the next stage which is the production of detailed delivery plans. A senior DTi civil servant has been appointed to act as a liaison.

An operational group is already working on project initiation documents which will detail costs, resources etc..

Members have all received a copy of the masterplan executive summary and the final document will be coming to full Council for final approval and listing what is expected of Copeland Borough Council.

Transformation

Working to transform Copeland, creating opportunities for community involvement, equality of opportunity, regenerating Copeland, improving skills and education.

Cllrs Cath Giel, Norman Williams, Tim Knowles

Graduate Placement Programme

A major joint promotional campaign with St Martins College has been undertaken to raise awareness of the scheme within local businesses. 2,000 flyers were sent out with the business rate demands in March, a press release was issued in April and was covered in both the Whitehaven News and the News & Star. In addition a full page feature was placed in the Futures supplement local newspapers in May as well as individual letters being sent to key employers within the borough. As a result of the campaign, which was launched on 1st April, a number of firms have shown a keen interest with 5 companies so far agreeing to recruit a graduate in the near future.

Western Lake District Tourism Partnership

Publication: After completing a selection process, Cypher Digital have been reappointed to design the 2007 holiday guide and top visitor attraction leaflet. The deadlines are mid October for the holiday guide and end of October for the TVA. Cypher have also been engaged to continue the redevelopment of the website which went live in March 2007.

Whitehaven International Maritime Festival

The Whitehaven International Maritime Festival held 15-17th June 2007 was an outstanding success. It is estimated that over 300,000 visitors were attracted to the event which was held over three sites, Whitehaven Harbour, St Nicholas Church Gardens and Castle Park over three days. Market research will be available from mid-July with official figures and impact on the local economy.

The event was covered in national newspapers and magazines, the festival website received 507,000 hits from the period 1st to 18th June. The National Weather was broadcast from Whitehaven on Friday. Over the festival weekend there was 28 hours of broadcasting on BBC TV & Radio. A documentary on the event was filmed over the weekend for ITV Border which will be screened on 22nd July.

A strategic review of engagement with the festival organisation will commence in August 2007.

Planning Policy

The Council's Statement of Community Involvement has been submitted to the Secretary of State and remains on deposit for people to submit objections up to 13th July. Details are on the Council's web-site.

A draft Pow Beck supplementary planning document has been produced and will be reported to the Council's Executive on 10th July with a view to going out to consultation for 4 weeks. The document will assist the Council's assessment of issues and options on this important regeneration site and it will also be discussed by the Local Development Framework Working Party at its first meeting on 4th July. The Member group will also be looking at our whole planning policy work programme for the next few years.

The report of the Inspectors examining the draft Regional Spatial Strategy has recently been published. The Council had objected to a number of policies and background text in the draft and had given evidence to the Panel of Inspectors in January.

The report includes a number of recommendations for change as a result of the Council's objections which include:

1. the re-designation of West Cumbria as a Priority Area for Regeneration in the North West,
2. equal standing for Whitehaven and Workington with Carlisle and Barrow as centres for investment in Cumbria and
3. the reduction in the recycling target for "brownfield" development sites from 80% to 50% in Copeland and Allerdale

The Inspectors' report is now with the Secretary of State who will issue an approved version of the Regional Spatial Strategy, now expected in early 2008.

Job Evaluation

Following a successful job evaluation pilot covering 25 bench marked jobs across the authority, the full scale evaluation of the Councils entire job population of over 200 posts will now commence in mid July and be completed by the end of the year.

Copeland Parish Charter

The Copeland Parish Charter was launched on Monday 25th June in the Copeland Centre. The Charter sets out the respective roles and obligations of all principal authorities and local councils and sets out how we will work together. The charter has been agreed between Copeland Borough Council, Cumbria County Council, Lake District National Park and the local councils in Copeland. It was especially pleasing as this is the first charter that the Lake District National Park Authority has signed up to.

This Charter formalises how we will all work together and builds on the Council's excellent track record of partnership working.

Promoting Prosperity

Working to ensure there is varied leisure and cultural activities, residents proud of their environment, access to healthcare, by 2010 homes will have met the decent homes standard, Copeland will be a safer place to live.

Cllrs. George Clements, Geoff Blackwell, Hugh Branney.

Recycling

Recycling rates in Copeland continue to go from strength to strength with the amounts of waste being collected through bring sites and at the kerbside for recycling increasing almost monthly. In 2006/7 31% of all household waste produced by Copeland's residents was collected for recycling or composting. At the same time the total amount of household waste produced, fell by over 1000 tonnes indicating the Council's waste minimisation and awareness raising activities are taking effect. In the early days of 2007/8 the prospect of an even higher recycling rate for this year is good with 40% of April's and 43% of May's waste being recycled or composted.

Clean and Green Team

The Clean and Green team in response to a number of requests from the public as well as parish councils have managed to clear a couple of local footpaths recently that have been unusable for a long time due to being severely overgrown. The footpaths at Distington and Parton were cleared by the two man team during May. With a view to sustainability, the majority of green material cleared from the site was taken for composting at the Council's own Beck Green site.

Maritime Festival

The clean-up operation for the recent Maritime Festival was carried out by the Council's Waste team who were employed as the cleaning contractor for the event organisers. This task for the waste team, which started the day before the festival and ended two days after the event involved a large number of waste staff along with a couple of volunteers from the parks team. Although litter clearance is carried out continuously during the event, due to the huge numbers of visitors access for vehicles is extremely restricted and a significant amount of the work can only be carried out overnight. The team therefore provided a comprehensive 24 hour service for the duration of the event in addition to providing the normal street cleansing service for the rest of the Borough.

Maritime Festival Policing

More than 100 extra officers were laid on to police this year's Whitehaven International Maritime Festival and the police hailed the weekend a great success.

High visibility patrols policed the streets throughout the weekend with dedicated patrols to both the festival and the town centre which ensured the event ran as smoothly and safely as possible. Officers wearing headcams monitored the event and were ready to respond should any incidents have occurred.

There wasn't a single incident in the patrolled areas over the three days and no arrests were made at the festival.

The mats are part of the Constabulary's ongoing Respect campaign which aims to tackle anti-social behaviour to create safer, stronger communities in Cumbria.

Shoreline Management Plan

In February of this year members were advised that the Council had been working closely with its partner Maritime local Authorities in the North West to commence the second round of Shoreline Management Plans (SMP's).

Throughout March to May the Council's Flooding and Coastal Defence Engineer represented the Council on a procurement panel to appoint a consultant to undertake preparation of the 5 SMP's across the North West region. The Procurement panel comprised the relevant local authorities, the Environment Agency and Natural England. Halcrow were chosen as the preferred consultant.

It was anticipated that the SMP's would be 100% grant aided by DEFRA but, unfortunately, there is a deficit between DEFRA's financial allocation and the consultant's price. The procurement panel is working hard to resolve this financial difficulty.

Herring Gulls in Whitehaven

In late May the annual survey was carried out by the Council's Environmental Health Section. In summary the number of nesting sites in most parts of Whitehaven was essentially the same as in 2006, the exception being a significant increase in the Kells /Woodhouse area, which is undoubtedly due to the disappearance of nesting sites at the former Huntsman/Rhodia site resulting from the demolition of the buildings there. The overall figure of 191 sites is the lowest since 1998.

Smokefree Legislation

At the time of writing everything is going well in the run-up to the coming into force of the Smokefree legislation on 1 July 2007. The shared smokefree compliance officer post arrangement with Allerdale is working well. Much advisory and publicity work, including talks to business groups and nearly 400 visits to businesses, has so far been carried out.

Crime and Disorder Partnership (CDRP)

It is pleasing to report that the CDRP has reported that they have achieved there 15% reduction target a year earlier than predicted within the priority locality areas. A report was taken to the Local Strategic Partnership outlining the outcomes of the CDRP for the last year. This success is due in the main to the introduction of the Police Community Support Officers and the very successful Nightsafe and Pub watch schemes. These schemes are also applicable to the West Cumberland A & E dept.

Cumbria Youth Games

The 2007 Cumbria Youth games saw teams from all 6 Local Authorities come together in Penrith on 23rd June for a competitive festival of sport. 13 different events took place including football, basketball, rugby union and league, orienteering, kwik cricket and netball. On the day Copeland secured the most wins and were crowned the winners of the 2007 Cumbria Youth Games, which put a stop to Allerdale's 3 year winning run. A huge thank you needs to go to all of Copeland's team managers and participants for their effort on the day.