

COPELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL MEETING – 11 DECEMBER 2007

Effective Leadership – Councillor Elaine Woodburn – Leader

Councillor Allan Holliday – Deputy Leader

Digital Switchover.

The final phase of the switchover from Analogue to Digital Television took place on 14th November as planned when the remaining analogue signals for BBC1, ITV and Channel 4 were turned off and replaced with a digital signal. The Council have played an active part in the process and helped coordinate the activities of all people involved in the switchover including local interest bodies. Experience of the first phase of switchover suggested that the main problems would be around retuning set top boxes and this proved also to be the case in phase 2. There was some concern that about 500 people had not made arrangements for the switchover and that there was a number of Copeland Homes tenants who had not responded to contact. Drop in sessions were arranged at four help centres across the Borough which were manned for the whole week from 8.00am until 7.00pm. Following on from the experience of phase 1 the majority of problems again centred on retuning and in the event there was no serious problems identified during switchover week. We estimate that fewer than 200 homes (less than 1% of the total) did not have equipment on the day of the switchover. The busiest day was switchover day when about 150 enquiries were made and this dropped back to 70 the following day which resulted in 25 home visits. Local retailers say they had a busy Saturday November 17, providing digital boxes and advice to customers.

Overall the switchover went as well as could be hoped for and the media interest in phase 2 did not match that of phase 1. There are lessons to be learnt from the Copeland experience and Digital UK and OFCOM in particular are keen to capture them and will therefore be arranging workshops in December with the aim of informing the national roll out. The first of these workshops will be held on the 4th December but there will be opportunities for further feedback and if members advise me of any messages they would like fed back I will ensure that they are relayed to the appropriate body.

Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) Consultation

The Nuclear Working Group formally agreed the Council's response to the MRWS consultation document, which is available for members to read in the Members room. The consultation was based on the proposed process for a solution to the long term management of nuclear waste.

Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) 2008 – 2011 Strategy

The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority has published its draft business plan for 2008 to 2011.

The plan, which is subject to consultation, outlines the key challenges and priorities for the NDA. With a budget of £8.5 billion for the next three years this will be the largest amount of expenditure on the UK civil nuclear clean-up programme and represents an increase of £671 million compared with the last three years.

The draft plan outlines how the NDA proposes to allocate its funding over the next three years in order to make further progress against its approved strategy. The draft plan places the highest priority on safety and shows an increasing focus of resources on the highest hazards. It also proposes continued investment in those facilities that generate revenue to offset the costs of decommissioning and a requirement on all our contractors to provide value for money and improved efficiency on behalf of the UK taxpayer.

The impact of the plan on Sellafield has to be looked into in more detail but the headlines are:-

- progressing the remediation, decommissioning and clean-up of historical legacy plant at Sellafield;
- spent fuel reprocessing, MOX fuel manufacture and waste management;
- the decommissioning and dismantling of enrichment plant at Capenhurst; and
- progressing the restoration of the Windscale site (following the planned relicensing of the site to Sellafield Limited from 1 April 2008).

Key Focus

- Hazard reduction
 - dealing with the high hazard legacy facilities at Sellafield to enable legacy waste retrieval and hazard reduction; and
 - the vitrification of liquid High Level Waste (HLW) and its safe storage at Sellafield.
- Delivering value and profit
 - fulfilling contractual obligations and securing revenue to help to fund decommissioning and clean-up.

The Council will be making a response in due course.

Dounreay Visit

A recent visit to Dounreay was made by the Chair (David Moore) and Vice Chair (Elaine Woodburn) and officer members of the West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group. The main intention of the visit was to share information with regard to Low Level Waste facilities. The visit was extremely useful and what information was gathered will be used in future negotiations with the NDA with regard to the long term future of LLW. The visit also highlighted the need for continuous communications with other nuclear sites as we all face challenging times ahead and the shared learning would prove beneficial to all.

Nuclear Site End States

A stakeholder event was recently held on feedback on the consultation which has been happening with regard to the options for the end state of the Sellafield and Low Level Waste Sites. The general feeling was that most people could not appreciate the need to choose options for the sites, especially when these options could and probably will change over time, as the sites are likely to be active for many years. The general consensus of opinion was that the Sellafield site should be used for the continuation of nuclear activities including nuclear new build or similar industrial activities and the Low Level Site should be returned to a nature reserve or something similar. It is worth noting that no notice had been taken of Copeland's Local Development Framework, a point that was made and which resulted in the need for a further meeting between the NDA, Sellafield Ltd and ourselves. As said this was just a preliminary look at possible end states and stakeholders have to be mindful of the many changes that will happen over the life of the sites.

New NDA Structure

The NDA recently reviewed its senior management structure to ensure that it is best able to deliver its business objectives going forward.

The new structure places a greater focus on the primary functions in support of the NDA's obligations: Strategy, Assurance, Commercial and Finance. Each division will be led by a Divisional Director reporting to Chief Executive, Dr Ian Roxburgh. A number of other functions, such as HR and Communications will form part of an enhanced Chief Executive's office.

The independent Director of Health, Safety, Security and Environment will sit within the Assurance Division but the role will maintain direct access to the Chief Executive, Chairman, Chief Regulators and, if necessary, the Secretary of State. As at present the letters of compliance process and development of the generic repository safety case remain "organisationally separate" to ensure their

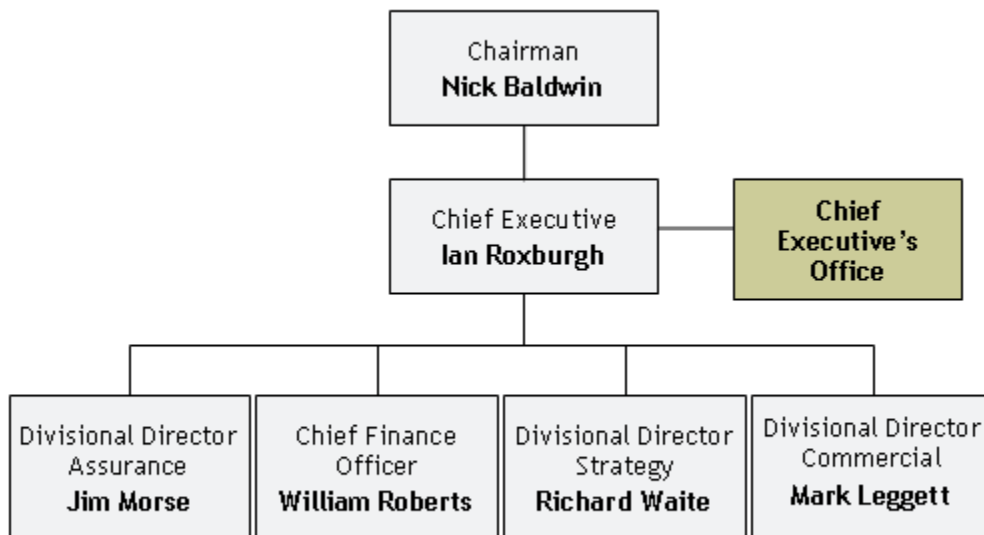
independence. The NDA has appointed four Divisional Directors who are also Executive Directors on the NDA Board, who are:

Richard Waite: Divisional Director Strategy

Jim Morse: Divisional Director Assurance

Mark Leggett: Divisional Director Commercial

William Roberts: Chief Finance Officer



NDA Management Organogram

Locality Arrangements

In October 2006 the Government published the Local Government White Paper, “Strong and Prosperous Communities”. Among its proposals for improving local governance, the Government set out a series of suggestions for working more closely with communities. Examples of locality arrangements described in the White Paper are given as having the potential to improve local services, raise customer satisfaction and strengthen democracy. (Strong and Prosperous Communities, para.2.61 and elsewhere). Following the decision on a unitary Council in Cumbria in July 2007, we are now considering how we wish to proceed with working more closely with the community and in particular on possible arrangements for area management. The Council’s Corporate Improvement Board will lead on this process but all members will be consulted as proposals come forward.

Local Housing Allowance

The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is the most radical change in Housing Benefits (HB) since its introduction in 1988. It is the cornerstone of the Government's HB reform programme that aims to simplify HB and ensure it supports the wider objectives for welfare reform. The main change for private landlords is that LHA will be paid to the tenant and the tenant will be responsible for paying their rent to the landlord. In recognition of the risk that some tenants may struggle with the responsibility of paying their rent, safeguards have to be put in place for vulnerable claimants. Therefore Executive considered the safeguard policy which I would advise all members to read to ensure they understand what the changes mean to their constituents. A copy of the policy is available on request and a copy is placed in the members' room.

Achieving Transformation- Councillor Cath Giel- Deputy Leader

Councillor Norman Williams- Portfolio Holder

Councillor Tim Knowles- Portfolio Holder

Councillor Development

Joint Working

The Member Training and Development Panel has met with its Allerdale BC counterpart to discuss opportunities for collaboration following the successful joint induction programme held this summer. A joint training course on Chairing and Managing Meetings has been held and work to continue this beneficial partnership continues.

Modern Councillor

Work to develop this IDeA initiative for the benefit of all members, is continuing. All Councillors in Cumbria now have access to modern Councillors range of learning opportunities FREE through the ACE 3 Development Programme. Details of how to log on to Modern Councillor have already been circulated to members. Courses over the forthcoming months include:

- Negotiating and Influencing Skills
- Risk management for Councillors
- Local Government Finance
- Using Mobile Technology
- Data Protection and Freedom of Information for members
- Equality and Diversity
- Planning Legislation
- Community Call for Action

Alternative Payment Arrangements

Work is progressing to fully implement the changes in methods of payment for Council Bills in preparation for the closure of Cash Offices in April 2008. Contact has been made with all the relevant stakeholder organisations including Parish Councils, Age Concern and Credit Unions.

With over 45 local payment outlets available from December 2007, the general response has been positive and every effort will continue to be made to ensure that this transition is made with the minimum of disruption and inconvenience to bill payers.

Pay and Grading Review

Work on the Authority's Job Evaluation Programme is over 2 weeks ahead of schedule, with the majority of job holder interviews now complete. The next steps include the design of suitable pay arrangements and the use of Pay Modelling Software in the final design of the grading structure.

Copeland Direct

Measures to address the number of abandoned telephone calls to the Council's switchboard have resulted in a significant reduction. Historically abandoned calls were numbering 30-40%. Through the introduction of new working practices and the co-operation and commitment of the Copeland Direct staff this statistic has reduced to 10-20%. Additional work is planned for the new year to further improve this level of service.

Local Authority Business Growth Incentive Scheme

Executive approval has been received for the investment of the £419,000 of grant aid in a range of business support initiatives throughout the Borough. Funding beneficiaries will include partnership initiatives in the Millom, Egremont and Cleator Moor areas (£75,000 each), The Whitehaven Regeneration Programme (£100,000), A Copeland Business Grant Scheme (£24,000) and other development, tourism and business support activities. All recipients will be required to meet specific targets and outputs in order to draw down this funding.

Market Town Initiative (MTI)

Members cannot have failed to notice the work on the Gateways Landscaping Project at Egremont. This is one of a number of schemes coming to fruition over the next few months. Efforts continue to secure additional funding for this valuable initiative and ensure the continuation of projects in Egremont, Cleator Moor and Millom.

Whitehaven Regeneration Partnership

There has been significant progress in the development of projects within the scope of the partnership during the period. In particular, the relationship between local partners and Tesco is turning into a successful collaboration to ensure the provision of not only a suitable new store development but also significant benefits in terms of public transport, town gateway and public realm enhancement. Work is continuing in all these areas but it is hoped that more detailed information will be available to Members early in the New Year.

The Executive has appointed Councillor Knowles to act as Project Champion for the Pow Beck Regeneration Initiative. Councillor Knowles will work with The

Corporate Director, Economic Prosperity and Sustainability, to deliver the combined Enterprise Park, Sports and Leisure, Residential and Future Employment projects identified for that part of Whitehaven's regeneration programme.

On a more basic level, design concepts for Whitehaven Civic Hall frontage and Mount Pleasant have been completed and a funding submission has been made to Westlakes Renaissance, West Cumbria Development Fund and Coalfields for consideration. It is our intention to take the designs to the general public for consultation early in the new year providing an opportunity to feed into the detailed design phase which follows in April 2008.

Policy Planning

The Copeland Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is now available and forms part of a suite of documents required for the Local Development Framework. This document pulls together all the known information on flooding problems throughout the Borough and considers the implications and issues for new developments.

Promoting Prosperity – Councillor George Clements Deputy Leader

Councillor Geoff Blackwell - Portfolio Holder

Councillor Hugh Branney - Portfolio Holder

Housing Investment Programme – Properties to rear of Basket Road.

A scheme improving properties to the rear of Basket Road, Kells and funded through the Housing Investment Programme was approved by Members in October. Aspects of this project are now being moved forward and these include community consultation with residents and the appointment of the design team. It is hoped that this project can run in parallel with the Coastal Fringe Project.

Housing Market Renewal

After a slow start activity is now taking place on the ground to address housing market imbalance in Whitehaven through the Housing Market Renewal Programme. Wastwater flats are in the process of demolition and plans are well advanced to develop large scale plans for the redevelopment of significant areas of Greenbank and Woodhouse with smaller scale works in Kells. A design forum was organised by the lead partner, Copeland Homes, on 26 November to get views from stakeholders, including residents as to the type and style of development that they would like to see in the area. This work will assist in providing design guidance for the estate for everything from the size and type of houses to the preferred materials to be used, internal layouts, car parking arrangements and open spaces.

The Housing Market Renewal business plan was submitted to DCLG on 2 November and the response is expected in January/February. The business plan builds on the first two years of housing market renewal in Furness and West Cumbria and provides for a further three years of development.

Strategic Housing Inspection

As noted at the last Full Council the Audit Commission will be undertaking a Strategic Housing Inspection early in the new year. The Council's working group has prepared an assessment of our performance along several Key Lines of Enquiry and this has been submitted to the Commission along with supporting documentation. The Inspection itself will take place between 14 and 18 January when Commission staff will be based in the Copeland Centre and they will be interviewing Officers, Members and various stakeholders. Their report will be finalised by the end of March next year.

Potentially contaminated land at Estuary Close and Lancashire Road, Millom

We have received the Interpretive Site Investigation Report for Estuary Close and Lancashire Close in Millom. I am pleased to announce that the summary report concludes that the ground gas and arsenic detected on the site are not at levels that pose a risk to current or future residents. I can confirm that the Council will remove any comment regarding contaminated land from the relevant CON 29 property searches. A full copy of the report is available at the Millom Council Centre.

Christmas Waste Collection Arrangements

This year collections of garden waste for composting are suspended from Monday 10 December and recommence on Monday 14 January. All collections between those dates except for Christmas week, will be black bin refuse collections. There will be no domestic refuse collection for the entire week beginning the 24th of December. Refuse collections will re commence on Monday the 31st of December but as there will be no collection on the 1st of January, collections for the rest of that week will be one day later

EXECUTIVE DECISIONS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

Subject: Licensing Act 2003 – Review of Licensing Policy
Decision Reference EXE/07/0122

Decision

That Council be recommended to approve the statement of Licensing Policy as Council's policy and statement under section 5(1) of the Licensing Act 2003 in respect of the exercise by the Council (as licensing authority) of its licensing functions under the said Act such policy and statement to be effective from the 7th January 2008

Subject: Energy Coast
Decision Reference: EXE/07/0131

Decision

That the report be noted and submitted direct to Council for consideration and determination.

Subject: Press Release Protocol
Date of Decision: 27 November 2007
Decision Reference: EXE/07/0138

Decision

**That a) the draft protocol be adopted in respect of all matters after which the
and**

**b) Council be recommended that the draft protocol be adopted in respect
of all remaining aspects of Council activities.**

Subject: Proposals to Make Changes to the Financial Regulations and
Constitution
Decision Reference: EXE/07/0125

Decision

**That subject to the change for contracts over £10,000 and under £50,000
being amended to include a reference to contract standing orders the
report be submitted to Council for approval.**

Draft Press Release Protocol

The quality of our Press Releases has a direct effect on the way others perceive Copeland Borough Council.

It is therefore worthwhile taking time to ensure that the information given in the Press Release is clear, understandable, accurate and presents the Council in the best possible light.

Government guidance is contained in the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity (Circular 20/88), which is attached. As a general principle, draft Press Releases should always be vetted by at least one other person other than the author.

In accordance with the Council's Communication Strategy, Press Releases should normally be drafted by the Communications Manager. In such case it shall not be released unless approved by the relevant Portfolio Holder and a member of Corporate Team. The member of Corporate Team may have reason to ensure it is checked by the Monitoring Officer and S.151 Officer.

Otherwise where a Press Release is:-

- (a) Drafted by a Member (normally Portfolio Holder or the Mayor) it shall not be released unless approved by a member of Corporate Team, the Communications Manager and where relevant the Monitoring Officer and S.151 Officer. Where there is disagreement over the wording the Chief Executive or in his absence a Director shall be the final arbiter.
- (b) Drafted by an Officer below Head of Service Level it shall not be released unless approved by the relevant Portfolio Holder or Committee Chairman and Member of Corporate Team, the Communications Manager and where relevant the Monitoring Officer and S.151 Officer. Where there is disagreement over the wording the Chief Executive or in his absence a Director shall be the final arbiter.
- (c) Drafted by a member of Corporate Team it shall not be released unless approved by the relevant Portfolio Holder or the Committee Chairman the Communications Manager and where relevant the Monitoring Officer and S.151 Officer. Where there is disagreement over the wording the Chief Executive or in his absence a Director shall be the final arbiter

The above arrangements do not affect the day to day exchanges of information between members of the Communications Section and the press.

Chief Executive
November 2007

