

## **RESOURCES AND LOCAL DEMOCRACY PORTFOLIO**

### **COUNCILLOR N WILLIAMS – PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

#### **1. KEY ISSUES – PROGRESS REPORT**

##### **Health and Safety**

An HSE Inspector visited the Council on 3 August, following an earlier visit on 31 May. Both visits took place in the context of the HSE's programme to develop effective partnership working with local authorities.

The August visit focussed particularly on Waste Services, a business area which has become a priority interest for the HSE following serious accidents elsewhere. The visit included inspections of Waste Services crews at work in the Borough, and the Inspector was satisfied with what he saw. During the visit, he was also able to offer support to the Council in its on-going discussions with London & Regional regarding the working environment.

The Inspector recognised the progress being made by the Council in many areas of health and safety management, but made it clear that there was still work to be done, particularly in developing a health and safety culture.

As a consequence of the HSE's partnership agenda, we expect to see Inspectors more frequently in future.

##### **Member Training**

Our application to North West Employers for accreditation to their Member Development Charter will be determined this month. Assessors from NWEA will be conducting an all day assessment visit on 7 September, which will include interviews with a number of Councillors and officers, including 3 Members selected by NWEA at random. We have submitted a very full portfolio of evidence in support of the application, which the Member Training and Development Panel has been closely involved in preparing over the last few months. We expect to hear the outcome of the application in the week commencing 18 September.

The Member Training Programme will resume in September after a break over the summer holiday period. There will be a series of workshops on personal skills in September and early October, training on finance and the budget in October, and 2 Member Awareness Days on the work of the Local Strategic Partnership on 25 September and 18 October. The latter will be joint events for our own Councillors and those from Allerdale and the County Council also.

Details of these and other development opportunities for Councillors are in the Member Training and Development Newsletter published fortnightly.

## **Officer Training**

The programme of training which the Council supports is wide-ranging and related to current priorities as well as long-term plans.

Over the past six months there have been several comprehensive training initiatives to develop the Council's managers and improve their skills. Sixteen of the Council's managers have successfully been accredited under the Institute of Leadership and Management.

A wide-ranging set of Health and Safety courses have been arranged for staff at all levels in the Council. Corporate Team members and other managers have been accredited by the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health. Technical short-courses, such as manual handling and banksman training for refuse collectors, have been well-attended. It is planned to continue the programme of training into next year to assist with the development of a health and safety culture within the Council.

Members, managers and some front-line staff have attended Equality and Diversity courses, both at the Copeland Centre and at Moresby. There are several changes to the Equalities laws taking effect in 2006, and it is important that the Council is able to respond appropriately. The Council has a target to reach level 2 of the Equalities Standard for Local Government by March 2007 and this will require further training for the remainder of the year.

## **Local Elections**

With the local elections taking place in May 2007 preparations are already under way. It is expected that a large proportion of voters will vote by post again, and new arrangements are to be put in place to verify identity.

Residents of the Borough are reminded to ensure that they have a vote they must be on the Electoral Register, and the annual canvass is under way to review it. The Register will be published on 1 December and electors are advised to check that their name is included in it by contacting the Elections Officer.

The Council is proposing to invite schools to participate in mock elections during the run-up to the real election. This will be an opportunity for young people to experience politics and the democratic process at first hand.

## **Information Computer technology**

The number of Members signed up for the Council Broadband Atlas Service remains at 20. Further Members are encouraged to apply to support our e-gov initiative which is to have all members connected.

The two new IT Systems staff members have started work. They are concentrating on consolidating the position in respect of the various IT systems used by the Service Units to ensure IT appropriately supports the suppliers and Service Units. This work

includes obtaining details of licences, maintenance agreements, update procedures, and co-ordinating with the nominated Service Unit system administrators.

A new I T Service Level Agreement has been prepared for circulation. This includes a range of priorities for helpdesk responses.

A problem occurred during an e-mail server back up process on 23 August which has caused loss of data. I T has recovered all outlook addresses; and will recover historical data although this will take some time. An additional computer room has been created at Moresby to house servers to provide back up and more resilience than the current tape back up provision. This will be fully functional in early September 2006.

The new ICT Strategy has been further reviewed, to be discussed at IT sub group and will then be presented to Members.

### **Procurement**

The Cumbria Procurement Initiative has undertaken an exercise to join the IDeA marketplace. An evaluation has been undertaken to identify the potential savings and other benefits to each Authority that joint membership would offer and a report is expected to be presented to Executive in September 2006.

The Procurement Officer post has been re-advertised with an improved response. Interviews will be held in mid September 2006.

### **North West Employers Organisation**

At the AGM in August I was successful in being appointed to the Executive of the NWEO. I also retained my membership of the Human Resources Committee.

## **2. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

None

## **3. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

Subject: Pay and Workforce Strategy Project

Date of Decision: 25 July 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/06/0053

Context:

This report presents a project outline for the development and implementation of the Council's Pay and Workforce Strategy. During consideration of this item Members emphasised the importance of all Members buying into the strategy.

Consideration was also given to the proposed Membership of both the People Strategy Group and the People Action Team.

**Decision**

**That a) the draft outline for the development of the Council's Pay and Workforce Strategy be noted; and  
b) the Portfolio Holder be included in the People Strategy Group; and  
c) others be invited to attend the People Action Team as appropriate.**

Subject: Energy Costs Buildings Providing Council Services

Date of Decision: 15 August 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/06/0065

Context:

This report advises members of increases in the cost of energy for Council buildings, which will be applied from September 2006 onwards.

**Decision**

**That a) the increase in energy costs be noted;  
b) the additional budgetary provision of £28,000 this year, funded from contingencies be approved; and  
c) any underspend be put back into contingencies at the end of the year.**