

EXECUTIVE REPORT

FULL12.09.06

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**COUNCILLOR ALLAN HOLLIDAY - PORTFOLIO HOLDER****KEITH PARKER - LEAD OFFICER****1. KEY ISSUES - PROGRESS REPORT****1.1 Leisure and Environmental Services**

We rarely get to properly acknowledge the hard work and dedication of many of our staff. So I would really like to take this opportunity to thank the staff in Leisure and Environmental Services for their incredible hard work and dedication this summer. Although I mentioned Green Flags in my last report to Council I can now formally confirm Copeland has been awarded 4 Green Flag awards, of only 6 awarded in Cumbria. In addition to this the Green Heritage Award for Egremont Castle is one of only 21 in the whole country and is a true accolade for the team, and the community they work with. To add to this, as you will know, the team have been very active in our Cumbria in Bloom and Britain in Bloom entries and I am hopeful of some more positive results when the awards are announced this month. Perhaps unknown to you is at the same time the team have been assessed for this year's entry in the Excellence Awards. Last year we won an Excellence Award and an additional award for Customer Results. This year the challenge is greater as the award region has been expanded from the North West to the whole of the Northern region. In addition the assessment has been broadened from the Parks Team to the whole of Open Spaces. Again I am hopeful of another positive outcome, but irrespective of the result we should still be proud that our staff are prepared to stand up to external challenge and be compared against the best in both public and private sectors for the benefit of the community.

1.2 Parks Department

And it doesn't stop there either for I have recently been made aware that our Parks Section has been selected as a finalist by Business Link for a Pride of Cumbria Business Award. The award announcements will be made at a ceremony at Carlisle Racecourse on 6 October.

1.3 Plastic Bottle Recycling

I would like to update colleagues on the early success of Copeland's new plastic bottle recycling service. As of today we estimate that during the three months since banks were introduced 25 tonnes of plastic has been recycled. This is the

equivalent to half a million 2 litre drinks bottles. All of these would have otherwise been disposed in our diminishing landfill sites. The plastic bottles are baled and transported to Lincolnshire where they are re-processed into new plastic bottles ensuring a complete recycling loop.

Due to the early success of the scheme our waste officers are working on identifying potential additional sites for plastic bottle recycling in the area that will be the most cost effective to service. This will increase access to plastic bottle recycling and allow residents to manage their waste more sustainably, increasing diversion rates from landfill.

1.4 Cultral Services Team.

The Cultural Services Department is now in place with increased capacity to deliver arts and sports initiatives to all sectors of the Copeland community. New appointments include a Cultural Services Manager, Cath Coombs; Leisure Partnerships Officer Chris Davidson and Sports Development Officer Clare Buckle. Peter Tyas, previously an Arts Development Officer has been promoted to the new position of Senior Cultural Services Officer and the process of recruitment of the vacant Arts Development Officer post has already commenced.

The new look department has been funded by savings made during the transfer of the management and development of the Borough's principal leisure facilities to North Country Leisure and will enable the Council to offer improved access to leisure and cultural facilities and services.

1.5. Summer Activities Programme 2006.

Copeland's Sports Development team have once again delivered a varied and well attended Summer Activities Programme. This comprised a series of two hour sessions delivered by four sports leaders to children in Millom, Haverigg, Seascale, Whitehaven, Moresby, Parton, Lowca, Egremont, Greenbank, Woodhouse, Mirehouse, Distington, Cleator Moor, Frizington, St Bee's and Hensingham.

This programme provided an opportunity to participate in physical activity within a structured setting and contributes to the Council's Corporate Plan objective by encouraging participation in leisure activities by young people.

1.6. North Country Leisure Partnership.

A local board has now been formed to drive forward the development of Leisure Copeland. This board comprises user representatives with a variety of sporting interests, a member of the Copeland Disability Forum, a local secondary school Head of Physical Education and a member of the West Cumbria Older Persons' Forum. Representatives from local business, the voluntary sector, two Copeland

Elected Members as well as the Chair of the North Country Leisure main board also bring considerable strength to the team. A Chair of Leisure Copeland, David Henderson, has been appointed with the Vice Chair position filled by Susan Crooks. Three Leisure Copeland members will also form part of the main North Country Leisure Board.

Work has already commenced to improve the facilities and review the service to provide tangible benefits for Copeland residents.

1.7. National Trust Cleator Moor.

Arts Development Officers have been working in partnership with the National Trust in Cleator Moor. Here Dave Chapple worked with St. Patrick's, Montreal and Ennerdale School on a project led by artist Jane Dudman. This year-long project took young people to work in the Ennerdale Valley to capture their impressions of the outdoor environment.

An exhibition of the children's work was held at Bowness Knott on July 14th at 5.30pm with over 100 people attending. A second phase of this project is about to commence delivering the project to the wider community.

This initiative encouraged participation in cultural activity by young people and contributed to strengthening communities through cultural development.

1.8. Public Art at Whitehaven Civic Hall.

20 young people from Whitehaven School worked with professional Nick Dodds to create a mural that reflected the Whitehaven in Bloom theme of 'BIODIVERSITY'. The work is currently on display outside the Civic Hall in Whitehaven.

This is an excellent example of arts activity supporting economic development by providing refreshing and vibrant images within Whitehaven town centre.

1.9. Environmental Health

Once every three years all local authorities are required to submit an "Updating and Screening Assessment of Air Quality" for their area, in accordance with the National Air Quality Strategy. Officers have submitted our assessment to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Defra have subsequently approved the Council's report and made favourable comment on it. If colleagues would like a copy one can be obtained from the Environmental Health section.

2. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

None

3. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Subject: Christmas lights

Date of Decision: 15 August 2006

Context:

This report requests that Members waive Contract Standing Order 5 to add the approved budget for testing and renewing the Christmas lighting supports this year as an extension to the combined Footway and Christmas Lighting contract.

Decision

That Contract Standing Order 5 be waived to add the £20,000 non-recurring budget for work to the Christmas lighting supports to the new Footway and Christmas Lighting contract for this year under Contract Standing Order 11.4.

Subject: Leisure Transfer Reconciliation: Leisure Funds

Date of Decision: 15 August 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/06/0076

Context:

This report provides information in respect of the final reconciliation of the former Leisure Services budgets post transfer to North Country Leisure and identifies a method of funding the reconciliation.

Decision

That the Cleator Moor Bowls and Fitness Scheme sinking funds no longer required be utilised to fund the reconciliation amount of £58,941 with the remaining £12,938 being returned to contingencies.