

ECONOMIC COLLABORATION AGREEMENT WITH KOSLODUY, BULGARIA

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Cllr Elaine Woodburn
LEAD OFFICER: Fergus McMorrow, Corporate Director (Economic Prosperity and Sustainability)
REPORT AUTHOR: Fergus McMorrow

Summary: To seek members agreement to enter into an economic collaboration agreement with Kosloduy, Bulgaria, an area that has similar issues associated with Nuclear Decommissioning.

Recommendation:	The Executive are recommended to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Support the co-operating agreement.2. Sign and finalise the draft Agreement put forward within the report in draft with final approval delegated to Fergus McMorrow, Corporate Director in consultation with the Leader.3. Establish a Management Group of relevant West Cumbrian Partners.4. Develop a manageable programme of activity with resource input identified.
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Impact on delivering Copeland 2020 objectives: The Nuclear Issues and Healthy Economy sections of the Corporate Plan set out a number of objectives associated with nuclear decommissioning and the related process of economic transformation. This process is not unique and achieving our objectives would be assisted by working with others with similar issues to resolve. Developing Copeland as an international Centre of Nuclear Excellence is part of our vision for the future. Kosloduy, which has one of the world's largest nuclear power stations, will provide a good link with Eastern European markets for our partners.

Impact on other statutory objectives (e.g. crime & disorder, LA21): Kosloduv will face many similar issues both in relation to the impact of potential economic decline on law and disorder and environmental impacts of decommissioning, although these will be set in different economic and cultural circumstances.

Financial and human resource implications: Funding is available through the Department of Trade and Industry to assist the costs of the Kosloduv participation. Some funding is also available through the EU's Leonardo Programme to help develop good initiatives. Additional sponsorship may be sought from other sources. The main resource input will be the time and expertise of individuals from West Cumbria and Kosloduy. Cumbria County Council have offered to provide a co-ordinating role which would include co-ordinating the input of other West Cumbrian bodies to programmes of activity. Some resource requirement will be needed from the Borough Council especially from the Regeneration Service. I have delayed presenting this proposal to members until resources in Economic Regeneration have been brought up to capacity. It is not expected that the agreement will generate a requirement for an intensive input but this will be closely monitored.

Project & Risk Management:

The proposed agreement refers to the development of a Programme of Co-operation. This will be developed taking into account the potential of all parties to contribute and will set out a project plan.

Key Decision Status

- **Financial:** None
- **Ward:** None

Other Ward Implications: None

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Department of Trade and Industry have facilitated a link between West Cumbria and Kosloduy District in Bulgaria. Both areas share similar problems associated with Nuclear Decommissioning. A visit was held last year financially supported by Copeland Area Committee (CCC) to explore the potential for taking forward exchange of experience and joint work. The Department of Trade and Industry have funds available to financially support Kosloduy's involvement. A report on the visit is attached at Annex 1.

2. It is clear that a collaboration agreement would necessarily involve contributions from a range of West Cumbrian organisations which will need to be co-ordinated. The initiative is led in Bulgaria by the Mayor of Kosloduy District, Mr Milko Torbov, who is keen that any agreement is between his Authority and a similar body in West Cumbria. Copeland Borough Council is the comparable organisation in West Cumbria and Kosloduy's preferred formal partner. An initial draft agreement has been prepared for discussion and has been attached for illustration purposes only. (Annex II)

3. BENEFITS

3.1 The thrust of the programme from the Department of Trade and Industry's point of view is clearly to provide support and expertise to Kosloduy. Copeland and partners can make a significant contribution to this. However, we would also benefit from learning different approaches that are being considered and developed elsewhere. The history of strong Governmental control and intervention in Eastern Europe may provide good pointers to public sector action. Limited private sector development in Bulgaria may result in significant opportunities for our local nuclear supply chain to provide services to Bulgaria thus benefiting our local economy and developing our goal of developing an international Centre of Nuclear Excellence in Copeland.

3.2 The interaction will also provide considerable personal development opportunities for any staff and members involved.

4. PROGRAMME AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

4.1 If the co-operation arrangement is agreed a programme of activity will need to be agreed involving resource input from a range of West Cumbrian Partners. Copeland Borough Council would provide one of a number of inputs. Cumbria County Council have offered to provide a co-ordinating role. However, if Copeland Borough Council are to be signatories to the agreement we will need to take an active role on programme management and delivery.

4.2 Whilst developing an agreed programme consideration will need to be given to how each element of the programme will be funded. Depending on the specific activity different methods

of funding and sponsorship may apply. The E.U. encourages joint working of this kind by establishing funding programmes that are available to inter state partnerships and networks. Such opportunities will be utilised as fully as possible. Currently the County Council have some funding under the Leonardo Programme that may help support some elements of the programme.

- 4.3 No funding allocation is being sought from Copeland to take this framework forward. However, the Executive will need to approve the principle and the use of some staff resources.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The project not only provides benefits to Copeland but also creates an opportunity to contribute towards the needs of a parallel community with similar issues but less economically advantages with whom the Copeland community can benefit. The issue of managing the resource input is an important one and needs to be managed in the context of our own limited capacity. In this respect the approach must be to lead this on behalf of West Cumbrian partners who we will look to to provide inputs to a developed programme. The offer of co-ordinating support from the County Council is welcome and should be utilised. Taking these factors into account it is commended as a valuable programme.

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Agreement
Appendix B – Report on visit to Bulgaria

List of Background Documents:

List of Consultees: M Tichford, Head of Regeneration