

JOINT AUTHORITY SCRUTINY WORKING GROUP: WEST CUMBRIA
STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP MEETING
21 FEBRUARY 2008

Present:

Cllr Yvonne Clarkson	Copeland Borough Council
Cllr Peter Connolly	Copeland Borough Council
Cllr Duncan Fairbairn	Cumbria County Council
Cllr Keith Hitchen (Chair)	Copeland Borough Council
Cllr John Hunter	Allerdale Borough Council
Cllr Mrs Willis Metherell	Copeland Borough Council
Cllr Ron Munby	Allerdale Borough Council
Cllr Martin Wood	Allerdale Borough Council
Jane Murray (Scrutiny Officer)	Allerdale Borough Council
Neil White (Scrutiny Officer)	Copeland Borough Council
Michael Heaslip (Co-ordinator)	West Cumbria Strategic Co-ordination Unit
Nicola Brooker (Policy Officer)	West Cumbria Strategic Co-ordination Unit
Ged Acton (Partnership Officer)	Allerdale Borough Council

Apologies:

Cllr John Ardron	Allerdale Borough Council
Cllr Bernard Kirk	Cumbria County Council
Cllr Ray Cole	Cumbria County Council

1. **Minutes**

Members agreed that the notes of the previous meeting held on 15 November 2007 be agreed as a correct record.

2. **Cumbria Community Strategy**

Members heard that the Cumbria Strategic Partnership had taken the opportunity to revisit the Cumbria Community Strategy following comments made on the initial draft.

The Working Group considered comments from the Strategic Co-ordination Unit on proposed changes to the updated draft to more accurately reflect the needs of West Cumbria.

The Group expressed concern whether the strategy had been sufficiently rural proofed and noted the strategy had been given a sustainability appraisal which would include an analysis of its effect on rural areas.

It was felt that the strategy needed to be stronger in depicting the diversity that exists across Cumbria. Throughout Cumbria there were areas of deprivation that needed urgent action and needed to be explicitly referred to.

In West Cumbria there was a real need for increased employment. The loss of jobs through the reduction in employment for agriculture needed to be addressed.

To do this the strategy needed to make greater reference to the Energy Coast Master Plan and its proposed employment opportunities rather than just the potential for new jobs in tourism described in the strategy.

The Group considered that there was little reference in the strategy to transport links across the county. It was crucial for better connections to the motorway from West Cumbria if major companies were to move into the area. Improvements to the coastal rail network were also needed to increase access for local people as well as creating tourism jobs.

It was also important to address the low aspiration of Cumbrian students to ensure that more graduates were encouraged to stay in Cumbria once they had graduated. Major companies needed a more skilled work force that was currently present.

The Group noted that Government agencies had been encouraged to set up regional offices in West Cumbria before and it could be done again if the right circumstances were created.

The comments in the strategy regarding the need for the facilities for young people were welcomed and this should also reflect the need for social and leisure opportunities (not just electronic networking).

Members felt that there was no link to the draft Cumbrian Climate Change Strategy and a link to this should be put into the Community Strategy.

AGREED – that these comments should be formulated into a response to the Cumbria Community Strategy.

3. Final report on the Implementation of Scrutiny Recommendations

The Joint Scrutiny Working Group considered the progress that had been made on the recommendations from the scrutiny review.

The Group noted that there had been progress made on a number of areas but there was still a delay in getting performance management information for all the neighbourhoods to Overview and Scrutiny.

In respect of recommendation 7 there was still work to be done on the improving formal reporting structures back to the relevant councils. It was felt that the majority of members did not understand the work that was being done through the Partnership. It was agreed that the way to improve the communication was to have a regular report to the council meeting of Allerdale and Copeland and the area County Committee.

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The Group queried the membership of the Partnership Forum particularly who represented the respective localities and it was agreed that a list of the full membership be sent to all members of the group.

Members felt that the role of scrutiny in the partnership process needed to be further clarified. There was still a question of whether scrutiny should be looking at the work of the Public Service Delivery Board as well as the Leadership Committee and the Partnership Forum.

AGREED – that (A) Allerdale and Copeland Council be requested to institute an arrangement whereby a report on the outcome from the West Cumbria Joint Leadership Committee meetings be submitted to its full council meetings and Cumbria County Council be requested to institute a similar arrangement to its area committee,

- (B) the membership of the West Cumbria Strategic Partnership Forum be sent to all members of the group,
- (C) further consideration be given to the focus of scrutiny in the West Cumbria Strategic Partnership, and
- (D) further consideration be given as to the role of locality partnerships involvement in the West Cumbria Strategic Partnership.

4. **Next Meetings**

It was agreed that a meeting should be held in April to look at the Implementation Plan for the West Cumbria Sustainable Communities Strategy and a meeting in June to look at the performance monitoring for the stretch targets for West Cumbria.

The meeting finished at 12.10.