

Executive Report**ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE PORTFOLIO****COUNCILLOR HENRY WORMSTRUP – PORTFOLIO HOLDER****FERGUS McMORROW – LEAD OFFICER****1. KEY ISSUES – PROGRESS REPORT****1.1 Transport Working Group**

Further to the discussion at the Council meeting in July on transport, I am pleased to report that a meeting of the Transport Working Group was held on 15 August to try to progress the issues raised.

The Group met with Members and officers of Cumbria County Council to discuss the need for infrastructure improvements, particularly in the context of the Local Transport Plan (LTP). I emphasised to the county representatives our view that there is a need for infrastructure improvements, from both the M6 west and south from the A66, particularly in view of current congestion levels and that such improvements need to be funded from outwith the current LTP. There is support for the need for improvements from both BNG and NDA in the context of decommissioning at Sellafield.

There was agreement in principle of the need for substantial improvements, including dual carriage-ways.

The county representatives explained that the county's resources were limited and could not fund major schemes over £6 m. There is also a problem of the geographical remoteness of the area, and the disadvantages this can bring in the current LTP funding regime.

The meeting explored the possibility of a special funding regime for infrastructure improvements in the area through a new jointly funded study, which would also look at evidence from similar infrastructure projects in other parts of the country, e.g. the A55 in North Wales. The core officer group for the Strategic Forum has been asked to draw up a brief for such a study.

The meeting also discussed briefly the issue of withdrawal by Stagecoach of services from certain bus routes in the area, and the possibility of providing some alternative transport on some of the withdrawn routes.

Both issues will be considered again at the next meeting on 21 September and I will keep Members informed.

2. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

None

3. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Subject: North West Coalfield Programme

Date of Decision: 26 July 2005

Decision Reference: EXE/05/0045

Context: To inform Members of the progress of the NW Coalfield Programme for 2004/05 and 2005/06 and to present monitoring reports on activity and spend

**Decision
That**

1. the agreed programme for 2005/06 be noted;
2. monitoring reports on approved projects up to June 2005 be noted;
3. progress on the Copeland Stadium Application be noted; and
4. proposals for the unallocated funding from North West Coalfields Programme including allocation of £50,000 from the Major Projects Fund be agreed.