

EXECUTIVE REPORT**RESOURCES AND LOCAL DEMOCRACY PORTFOLIO****COUNCILLOR NORMAN WILLIAMS - PORTFOLIO HOLDER****SUE BORWICK - LEAD OFFICER****1 KEY ISSUES - PROGRESS REPORT****CLEATOR MOOR CIVIC HALL**

I am now able to confirm the arrangements for the sale of Cleator Moor Civic Hall to the Freemasons have been concluded and contracts were exchanged. The contract contains provisions which will ensure the Hall remains available for community use as now.

One final issue remains to be resolved, that of ensuring equivalent pension provision is made for transferring staff. Protecting the interests of both the community and our staff under such arrangements is important to us. I have agreed to an urgent action request that retains the Civic Hall under our management for up to two months until the outstanding issue is resolved. As far as the Hall's customers are concerned there should not be any discernable change to the service during this period of change.

PAY AND WORKFORCE STRATEGY

The Pay and Workforce Strategy (PWS) is a Government initiative supported by the Local Government Association and the Employers' Organisation. It is a framework for delivering improved services, greater efficiency, and better customer focus. All three objectives are key priorities for the Council. In particular it's about ensuring there is effective leadership and capacity (particularly the right people with the right skills) within the Council.

There are 5 key priorities within PWS:

- Developing the Organisation (including updating processes and improving productive time by reducing sickness etc)
- Developing the Leadership of Councillors and officers
- Developing the Skills of the Workforce (including management development)
- Ensuring resources meet requirements (by having a longer term Workforce Plan, and tackling issues of recruitment and retention)
- Pay and Rewards (including Job Evaluation, Equal Pay, Single Status, flexible working)

Local authorities are working individually and jointly to make progress in this area, and in Cumbria the ACE programme is providing some opportunities to work together.

This is a really substantial area of work, and it possible to make progress only if we are realistic about the pace and amount we can achieve. If fully achieved it would also have

significant financial implications. It is important therefore to keep in touch with developments locally and nationally and adopt a proportionate approach.

Copeland BC will be embarking on this work through seconding the HR Manager to work on aspects of this work full-time from April. Among his priorities for the first part of the work will be to develop a project plan which sets out what we will work towards over the next year, including:

- Pay and Grading Review (A complete review of the Council's pay and grading arrangements, probably involving organisation-wide job evaluation)
- Equal Pay (Completing an audit to ensure that the Council is meeting Equal Pay requirements, and taking remedial action where required).
- Single Status (completing the harmonisation of terms and conditions envisaged in the 1997 National Agreement)
- People Policies & Terms and Conditions (A complete review of all HR policies)
- Workforce Development Plan

It is likely that these individual parts of the project will continue beyond the first year covered by the plan

PARISH CHARTER DEVELOPMENT

A further version of a draft charter, which should lay the foundations for how a charter or written agreement may look between principal authorities in Cumbria and all local councils, has been produced by CALC following feedback from principal authorities.

The formulation of a charter is part of the Quality Parish Development Programme to which all Cumbrian authorities give financial support. Joint discussions are taking place, which will hopefully give

- a relatively standard 'core' charter (bits on which all authorities can agree),
- scope for expression of individual authority's local circumstances
- an initial easy template for communicating, consulting and joint working
- scope for specific benefits which an authority may wish to give to Quality accredited parish or town councils

A series of meetings are now taking place to get a preliminary feel of what individual authorities will want to see in the document. The proposals are:

- a. To discuss the charter content with individual Authorities
- b. When that is complete, convene a joint all-officer meeting of the QPSG to iron out any anomalies
- c. Completed document formally proposed to Councillors. CALC begins in-depth consultations with local councils
- e. Re-consult with QPSG officers when results from authorities and local consultations are known.

QUALITY PARISH CELEBRATION EVENT

I attended a presentation event in Penrith on 22nd March where Lamplugh Parish Council received a certificate in recognition of their Quality Parish accreditation. Lamplugh are the first Copeland Parish or Town Council to become accredited under the scheme.

The Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC) has been running the Quality Parish Development Programme since September 2004. At the end of 2005, five additional Cumbrian local councils were accredited with Quality status, bringing the county total to six. A county-wide audience drawn from all strands of the project partnership was in attendance.

TRAINING

2006 is year in which there will be notable increase in the amount of training taking place for many of the Council's people including Councillors. There has been a period during which some aspects of training have paused while other changes have taken place (stock transfer and corporate restructure). TO ensure that the organisation is fit to face the challenges of this year and years to come it is important that our training reflects what we will need, in terms of skills, capacity and competence.

So far in 2006 our training activities have included:

- management development for middle managers, with more to follow
- health and safety at all levels
- manual handling at Moresby, with Copeland Centre to take place throughout April
- equalities and diversity, with more programmes to follow in June and July, and e-learning to become available shortly

Information Computer technology

Councillors Broadband – at the time of writing 9 Members have signed up for the Council Atlas Service, they have been provided with modems; IT staff have visited their homes and configured the installations. The Council remote access facility has also been installed for these members. A further 2 Councillors have signed up with installations expected within next 1 -2 weeks. Other members are encouraged to also apply and to check with their colleagues to find out the benefits Perhaps they will then take up the offer..

The ICT section leader (Systems) is now due to take early retirement on 23 April, and I wish to thank him for his work at the Council for almost 23 years In that time he has seen great changes in IT.

This post and one other vacant IT posts are currently advertised in the press.

The first official draft of the new IT strategy will be issued to Corporate team and considered by the IT sub group. An implementation programme has also been prepared.

Property maintenance/management

Executive at its meeting on 4 April considered a report on an ad hoc list of Tenderers for Valuation and estate management services. Tenders are to be issued this month. The current contract expires in June 2006.

Procurement

Following the difficulties in obtaining a procurement officer, discussion with the Chief Executive has resulted in consideration being given to the developments in procurement, including partnership working and minor restructuring. Further consideration is being given to options for obtaining the necessary resources to deliver the function. Following this reports are expected to be provided to OSC and Executive.

2 EXECUTIVE DECISIONS RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

None

3 EXECUTIVE DECISIONS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Subject: Recommendation from Joint Consultative and Safety Panel

Date of Decision: 21 February 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/05/146

Context: Recommendations from JCSP on changing car parking arrangements for staff at the Copeland Centre to resolve a funding deficit of £5,503 in a full year.

Decision

That the report be deferred to the meeting on 14 March and resubmitted taking account of the views of the Enforcement Unit.

Subject: Open Cell Ceiling To The Copeland Centre Atrium

Date of Decision: 21 February 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/05/150

Context: This report advises Executive of a proposal to install a ceiling in the atrium to enhance the appearance and working conditions.

Decision

That Executive approve improvements to the building up to a value of £10,000 from the Public Building Fund revenue contingency 2005/6 with details to be agreed by the Head of Finance and Business Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Subject: Remote Working

Date of Decision: 21 February 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/05/151

Context: This report informs Members of the proposal to trial remote working at Copeland Borough Council, and to seek member approval for implementing a six-month trial.

Decision

1. That the following is noted:
 - The possible benefits of implementing a remote working policy
 - The risk assessment associated with carrying out a remote working policy trial
2. That members support in principle the implementation of a limited six-month trial of remote working as outlined in Option 1, subject to further consultation with the Portfolio-Holder on details
3. That members agree to the costs of the pilot being taken from the Major Projects Fund. The current balance on the Major Projects Fund is £517,248.
4. That a further report describing management arrangements be brought to Executive

Subject: Web Master\Graphic Designer Post

Date of Decision: 21 February 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/05/162

Context: Presents a report on the creation of a composite Web Master\Graphic Designer post

Decision

- 1. that a new post of Graphics Technician\Webmaster is created; and**
- 2. that the attached composite Job Profile is agreed; and**
- 3. that the grade of the post be agreed by the Personnel Panel**
- 4. Funding of £23,965 for 2006/07 be from contingencies and the contingency provision be re-imbursed from compensatory savings in the salaries budget in future years**

Subject: Local Land Charges

Date of Decision: 21 February 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/05/168

Context: This report recommends use of the New Initiatives Fund to provide further support in the Local Land Charges Section.

Decision

That the report be deferred until the meeting on 14 March and a further report submitted on how IEG funding has been utilised on staffing costs on MVM implementation in Local Land Charges to date.

Subject: Disposal of Land at Lowca and Egremont

Date of Decision: 14 March 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/05/183

Context: This report advises members of recommendations for the sale of two pieces of land surplus to Council requirements, and seeks approval of sale.

Decision That Executive approves the sale of land at less than valuation for the reasons given, with delegated authority given to the Head of Finance and Business Development in consultation with the Head of Legal & Democratic Services to agree Heads of Terms.

Subject: Pay and workforce Strategy

Date of Decision: 14 March 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/05/187

Context: To consider the implications of the Pay and Workforce Strategy and agree some early actions.

Decision: That Executive:

1) Note the importance and implications of the Pay and Workforce Strategy (PWS)

2) Agree that a detailed project plan for PWS should be developed by the end of June 2006

3) Agree to the provision of additional HR resources as soon as possible to deal with operational HR workload, for an initial period of 6 months, to enable the Human Resources Manager to develop the Council's approach to Pay and Workforce Strategy (option 1 in 3.2).

4) Agree that a further report is presented to the Executive in June/July, and that update reports are also submitted to Personnel Panel.

Subject: Local Land Charges

Date of Decision: 14 March 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/05/188

Context: This report recommends approval of a virement to cover the cost of support in the Local Land Charges Section.

Decision: That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Resources & Local Democracy, to agree virements of £2,000 from Licensing Fees to Salaries, and the use £11,500 from the contingency provision agreed by executive on 18 October 2005, to fund the employment of an additional officer in Local Land Charges in 2005/2006 as a result of the MVM project

Subject: Urgent Actions

Date of Decision: 14 March 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/05/189

Context:

Reports decisions taken under urgent action provisions.

Decision: That the decisions taken under urgent action procedures be noted.