

Executive Report**HEALTH & DIVERSITY PORTFOLIO****COUNCILLOR GEOFF BLACKWELL – PORTFOLIO HOLDER****MARTIN JEPSON – LEAD OFFICER****1. KEY ISSUES – PROGRESS REPORT****1.1 PCT AMBULANCE TRUST**

Following last Full Council the Member Task Group have looked in detail at both the Ambulance Trust and PCT Trust consultation documents. Subsequently a response was sent in respect of both by the 22 March deadline. Both responses have been acknowledged as received, with comments that their content will be taken into consideration. A copy of the Council's response has been left in the Members Room.

1.3 FOOD SAFETY – ENFORCEMENT

In March the Council's Environmental Health Section served "Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Notices" on 2 businesses, namely: "Little Hong Kong", Market Place, Whitehaven and "Ocean City", Gosforth Road, Seascale.

The notices required immediate closure of the businesses because of severe rodent infestations (rats at the "Little Hong Kong" and mice at "Ocean City".) The notices were subsequently converted to "Orders" by Whitehaven Magistrates who accepted all of the evidence offered by Council officers.

Both businesses worked hard to remedy the situation and were eventually allowed to reopen for trading.

Both cases received local media publicity.

The conditions in question came to light during routine evening inspections by Environmental Health Officers.

1.3 "SAFER FOOD BETTER BUSINESS" INITIATIVES

Further to my previous reports on this subject I am pleased to be able to report that the training courses are continuing and that interest amongst local businesses remains high. Feedback from participants has been very positive.

It is likely that some further funding will be available to enable the Council to arrange for training targeted specifically at persons for whom English is not their first language.

1.4 ASBESTOS IN THE WORKPLACE

Further to my report to the last Council meeting I am pleased to confirm that the county-wide 1-Day course regarding asbestos in workplaces went ahead at Newton Rigg near Penrith on 14 March and that Copeland businesses were extremely well represented. The event attracted local media (including television) publicity in which this Council featured prominently.

1.5 FIRE SAFETY

On 21 March the Council hosted a seminar aimed at small Copeland businesses run jointly by the Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service and the Council's Environmental Health Section dealing with new Fire Safety legislation and general Health and Safety matters, including asbestos. Approximately 30 businesses attended and feedback from them was very positive.

1.6 SMOKING BAN IN PUBLIC PLACES

Following the recent decision by Parliament to introduce a ban on smoking in public places with effect from a date sometime in 2008 the Council (through its Environmental Health Section) is working with the NHS and Cumbria County Council Trading Standards to raise the profile of the North Cumbria Smoke Free Alliance and to contribute to various educational and publicity campaigns in the run up to the law coming into effect.

1.7 HEALTH & SAFETY

- a) Safety Representatives a group of 15 safety reps have now been trained and are meeting regularly to discuss issues such as risk assessments and workplace inspections. The group have met twice and minutes are copied into H&S meetings held monthly with Corporate Team, where issues are discussed and tackled via Task Groups represented by Corp Team and nominated individuals for project completion.
- b) Task Groups – these are tackling issues such as “Work related Stress” “Violence & Aggression Procedures” “Sickness Absence” and “Workplace Environment” issues.
- c) Training – 85% of managers have been trained to IOSH standards with a final 4 day course booked for 15th/22nd/29th June & 6th July, also a senior exec course on 9th June. There are spaces on both courses if members want to take the opportunity (9 spaces on 9th & 4 spaces on the 4 day course). Internal courses are running for employees covering Manual handling, Banksman and Sharps courses lasting no longer than 3 hours each, planned

throughout April/May & June. First aiders will be having refresher training and fire wardens hands on extinguisher training during the rest of the year.

- d) Workplace Inspections – Both safety reps, managers and HSO (Health & Safety Officer) will be carrying out workplace inspections during this year, on a monthly basis to radically improve the safety culture of CBC. A random audit has been completed by HSO and the findings have been drafted to Corporate Team. JCSP will have the report presented to them at the next meeting to identify shortfalls and current position.
- e) Safety Inductions – it has been identified that safety inductions are not carried out and part of HSO plans are to conduct one of these periodically course content to be agreed and duration. An A5 safety induction booklet is currently being drafted by HSO to use in this induction.
- f) Budget – consideration needs to be given as to contingency funds required for future training and refresher training as well as aid and materials for keeping the safety culture going strong.

1.8 PLANNING POLICY ISSUES

- a) I would refer Members to the reports on Local Plan progress and the revised Local Development Scheme at the special Council meeting on 29th March. The Proposed Modifications to the Local Plan are now on deposit for 6 weeks ending on 19th May and a further report to Members will be made shortly thereafter.
- b) The North West Regional Assembly has prepared a new draft Regional Spatial Strategy. This is a key document in terms of the context for local development plan-making and transport investment. A full report will be made to the Executive in due course, setting out a formal response on all issues of concern to the Council and its Partners. The deadline for responses is mid-June.
- c) The Council has now received notification of its allocation of Planning Delivery Grant for this year. A total of just over £106,500 has been awarded which is slightly better than expected. It includes an Enterprise Area allowance and performance payments for development control, on-line capabilities and the Local Plan/LDF. A report on how the additional resources are to be employed will be made shortly.

EXECUTIVE DECISIONS RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

None

EXECUTIVE DECISIONS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

None