

CONNECTED CUMBRIA PARTNERSHIP

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Cllr Norman Williams

LEAD OFFICER: Jane Salt

REPORT AUTHOR: Peter Crone

Summary: To consider Copeland Borough Council's membership of the Connected Cumbria Partnership and their representation on the Strategic Board.

Recommendation: That Members approve the report and that:

- Copeland Borough Council remain a member of the Connected Cumbria Partnership and that a budget bid be submitted for 2006/07
- The Chief Executive and Portfolio holder (or their nominees) represent Copeland Borough Council on the Strategic Board.

Impact on delivering the Corporate Plan: Will help to deliver the objectives and initiatives that are Cumbria wide.

Impact on other statutory objectives (e.g. crime & disorder, LA21): Will help to deliver the objectives and initiatives that are Cumbria wide.

Financial and human resource implications: The cost of membership for 2006/07 is £13,600, a bid has been submitted as part of the 2006/07 budget process. Membership will require attendance at the Strategic Board for quarterly meetings and at Partnership meetings for one half a day per month.

Project & Risk Management: The Partnership have appointed a new project manager on a three year fixed term contract.

Key Decision Status

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

Other Ward Implications: None

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Connected Cumbria is a partnership developed post IEG statement submission. The six District Councils in Cumbria and the Lake District National Park Authority together with other public and voluntary sector bodies have agreed a formal arrangement which will work to deliver a co-ordinated approach for Cumbria on the delivery of modern public services.
- 1.2 To date Connected Cumbria has been the main driver for the integrated approach to the electronic delivery of services within Cumbria. Connected Cumbria has undertaken

this role by initially funding an e-government resource unit. The unit has acted on behalf of the partnership, supporting the objectives of the partnership by seeking alternative methods of funding to support joint working arrangements and exploring alternative service delivery options for all members of the partnership.

1.3 The objectives of the Partnership are:

- to take a coordinated approach to the delivery of modern public services.
- to develop and facilitate partnerships for the implementation of electronic Government throughout Cumbria.
- to act as a vehicle for representing the Cumbrian perspective at regional and national level.
- where appropriate, to act as a focus for bidding for funds for the benefit of any or all of the parties.
- undertake a shared approach where possible to good practice, training and experience of initiatives
- share technical skills
- create joint project development teams
- share good practice.

2. ARGUMENT

2.1 The achievements of the Partnership are:

- it is an active and well recognised member of NWeGG (North West e-Government Group)
- it is recognised widely within government as an extremely effective partnership and the sub regional body for eGovernment
- it has gained £90,000 initial partnership grant
- it has gained £400,000 round 2 partnership grant
- it has gained ISB4 funding
- it has submitted a bid for ISB8 funding
- it has delivered and promoted the Cumbria Information Hub project
- it has saved an estimated £500,000 on CMS, eForms and licensing projects
- it has developed a common vision and high-level joint IEG2 statement.
- it has led to full co-operation on ieg3, ieg4 and ieg4.5
- it has formed a Cumbria wide GIS group
- it is an active partner on Project Access delivering broadband communications throughout Cumbria
- it is an active partner on the Business Development project
- it holds regular Members' Open days.

2.2 The partnership is currently conducting a series of “gap analysis” workshops to determine the future programme for the partnership (see attached report). This will address priority outcomes and other strategic areas. If this programme of work is delivered it will generate major benefits and achieve some significant efficiencies. The new project manager recognises that the partnership now needs to provide more than a e solution to achieve joined up services for the citizens of Cumbria. It would be prudent in a time of potential change to be seen to be as part of this “joined up “ approach to government in Cumbria.

The major risks are in committing time and resources to unsuccessful projects and perhaps relying on these to the exclusion of delivering results locally.

3. OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

There are only two options:

- 3.1 Stay in – to remain a member of the Connected Cumbria Partnership and have the potential to achieve efficiencies as well as delivering joined up Government in Cumbria.
- 3.2 Withdraw – to be the only Cumbrian local authority not a member of the Connected Cumbria Partnership and miss the potential to achieve efficiencies.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The funding fro 2005/06 has already been paid and a budget bid has been submitted for 2006/07
- 4.2 Significant benefits have been already been derived from the Partnership and funds secured. It would be in the best interests of the Council to remain a member of the Partnership to have the opportunity to work together with all of the other Cumbrian authorities and partner organisations.

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Consortium Agreement
Appendix B – Draft programme of work

List of Background Documents:

List of Consultees: Corporate Team, the Leader