

Executive Report

DEPUTY LEADER PORTFOLIO

COUNCILLOR MIKE ASHBROOK – PORTFOLIO HOLDER

HILARY MITCHELL – LEAD OFFICER

1. KEY ISSUES – PROGRESS REPORT

1.1 Performance Management

The Council's performance management processes were highlighted in the CPA report in 2004 as needing improvement, in common with most local authorities in England, even some excellent authorities.

Work has been undertaken since the CPA report was published to review and refine how we manage performance and how we can engender a performance culture. The Improvement Programme Board recently approved a Project Initiation Document (PID) which sets out the main steps to get us to where we need to be.

Two major changes are in our planning and in our reporting. A review of the Council's Corporate Plan is getting under way to ensure that we concentrate on what is most important. One of the aims of the review is to ensure that resources are available for the objectives at the time they are needed. Members will be invited to help with this review later in the year.

A change to the format of performance reporting is to be trialled at the next Executive meeting. It is designed to provide performance information "at a glance" for members. The process of gathering information for the performance reports will involve managers and Corporate Team, as well as briefings for Portfolio-holders. This itself should start to raise awareness of the Council's level of performance and allow discussion of how to move forward.

1.2 Customers First

As I reported to the last meeting of Council a further customer stakeholder meeting has been held on 4th October. This was a follow up to the first meeting held in April this year and was an opportunity for our customers to challenge what we have been doing to address areas of concern and to influence our thinking on future plans.

The group reviewed progress on the development of our customer strategy and commitments and fed ideas in to improve what was proposed from a customer perspective. Further discussions are now taking place within each department of the Council to engage service

providers and determine how we are going to monitor progress and learn from our current performance.

The stakeholder group also considered improvements in the Council's website along with a range of outcomes from action plans developed including:

- A refurbished disabled changing facility at the swimming pool
- Lids for black box recycling now available
- Positive progress towards plastics recycling
- The clean and green teams progress including working in partnership with Amey Mouchel to clear 7 tonnes of litter from a dangerous section of the A595 at Howgate.
- Cleaning litter from other areas which are not the responsibility of the Council but which are of concern to the public.

Further ideas are now being developed as part of the stakeholder challenge and a series of mystery shopping will take place. The general feel from the challenge was that improvements are being noticed.

A further initiative to raise awareness during customer services week saw members of the Council's Corporate Team spending time in Copeland Direct on the front desk and the contact centre shadowing employees. This was very much a two way process of improving understanding and generating proposals for improved customer service.

1.3 The Beacon & Tourism

- **Visitor Figures** for The Beacon during September were 5680, a considerable increase on last year (3956 in September 2004). This has largely been due to the popular exhibitions on show.
- **Beacon Redevelopment** On 15th September, Heritage Lottery Fund awarded The Beacon redevelopment project £624,000.
- **Harbour Gallery** visitors for September were 2376 (1476 in September 2004). The current exhibition "Titanic – Honour and Glory" is proving very popular and attracted over 800 visitors during its first weekend. The exhibition will continue until 5th November.
- **Room hire** was arranged for 46 occasions during September (44 in September 2004)
- **Schools & Groups.** 38 children were taught by Beacon staff during September (0 during September 2004), bringing the total number of pupil visits (BV170c) for the year so far to 706.
- **Family Events.** Half term workshops for both children and adults are fully booked. Activities to promote The Big Draw, a National event to get people of all ages drawing, include Underwater Odyssey for children and Life Drawing for adults.

- **Whitehaven Young Archaeologists' Club.** On 24 September, the Young Archaeologists learned the skills of Underwater Archaeology with local diver Colin McCourt.
- **Outreach Talks** 3 outreach talks were arranged for September (3 talks in September 2004).
- **TIC.** Whitehaven Tourist Information Centre received 4290 enquiries during September, just short of last year's figure (4425 in September 2004).

2. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

None

3. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Date of Decision: 27 September 2005

Decision Reference: EXE/05/064

Context: Decisions made at the previous meetings requiring formal approval

Decision

That the Statements of decisions made at the meeting held on the 16 August 2005 be agreed as a correct record

Subject: Forwards Plan

Date of Decision: 27 September 2005

Decision Reference: EXE/05/0065

Context: To consider the forward plan of Key decisions September - November 2005

Decision

That the Forward Plan of Key Decisions be noted

Subject: CPA - Annual Use of Resources Assessment

Date of Decision: 27 September 2005

Decision Reference: EXE/05/0072

Context: This report seeks agreement of the Executive to the Value For Money self-assessment required under Comprehensive Performance Assessment

Decision

That the Value for Money self-assessment for submission to the Audit Commission, as required by 30 September 2005 be approved.