

COPELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL MEETING – 21 OCTOBER 2008

Effective Leadership – Councillor Elaine Woodburn – Leader

Councillor Allan Holliday – Deputy Leader

CLOSURE OF ACCOUNTS

Work is progressing in line with the agreed action plan. The 2006/07 Statement of Accounts have been revised and resubmitted to the external auditor for signing off. Work on the 2007/08 Statement of Accounts is expected to be finalised by the end of October. A special Audit Committee is being arranged for November to adopt the 2007/08 Accounts. They will then be submitted to the external auditor and arrangements will be made for them to be available for the statutory period of public inspection. The external auditor is then aiming to sign off these Accounts by the end of December.

To give Members an assurance the Council does not have any investments with the Icelandic banks. They were not on our approved list for investment institutions. Our limit with any one institution is £3 million at any time, so that the risk is spread. The Treasury Management officers have now been instructed that they should now only invest with the UK banks and building societies on our approved list. Our treasury consultants update the approved list by e-mail, usually on a weekly basis but on a daily basis where necessary as new information becomes available.

NEW ACUTE HOSPITAL

Further work is underway to develop options for locating the new Whitehaven Hospital. Previously five possible locations were identified by the Council and presentations made to the Acute Hospitals Trust. We are now focusing on developing more detailed proposals for two locations which are most likely to meet the operational requirements. The work will include examining detailed site development issues, partnering opportunities, the potential for shared ancillary facilities and economic impacts. In addition consideration will be given to the potential for creating a health park and campus which will contribute to the development of the knowledge economy by exploiting links with the nuclear industry to meet the broader vision of the Energy Coast Masterplan. Recent discussions with the health trusts suggest that a specific siting decision will not be made until May 09. The work we are doing will feed into the decision making process by the end of this year.

HEATH CAMPUS

A conference was held on the 10th October of which representatives from Copeland Borough Council were invited titled Health at the Heart of Regeneration: The development of a Health Campus in West Cumbria. This was run by NHS Cumbria (PCT) and all lead organisations from Cumbria were invited. It would be fair to say everyone supported the idea of a Health campus and recognised that this was a once in a lifetime opportunity for the area.

There are many forms of health campuses ranging from health service delivery campuses which host GP surgeries, dentists, out-patient clinics etc to health related business clusters, where health supply chain services work together, right through to health research and development campuses, the latter could use the fact that Sellafield is here as its unique selling point. To many the links with Sellafield and Westlakes Science Park are apparent but work has to be done with partners and possible funders to get the best we can possibly get.

Partnerships are vital to ensure the health campus progresses, but there is still the site siting process to go through and my thought is the partnership would flow more easily if the site was identified and agreed upon at the earliest possible time.

ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE DEPARTMENT

As we are all aware a new Energy and Climate Change Department has been set up with Ed Milliband as the new secretary of State. This new department will include the recently set up Office for Nuclear Development. Some of the Ministers we have been working with will remain within this department, including Malcolm Wicks, who has become a special representative to the PM on energy issues and Mike O'Brien who returns as Energy minister. There has also been a new joint minister for the new department and Defra in Lord Hunt, which does suggest he will deal with the radioactive waste issues. We will be endeavouring to set up a meeting with the new Secretary of State as soon as possible.

ENERGY COAST MASTERPLAN UPDATE

Nuclear New Build

As members are aware site nominations for Nuclear New Build need to be made by January 09, part of the nomination will include demonstrating community support. Copeland Borough Council has already voiced its support for new build but a communications process, led by ourselves will shortly start. This will include presentations to the West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group, Sellafield Alliance etc....I am confident that the Copeland community in the main will be behind nuclear new build and I am sure we can gather the support as needed.

Better Schools for the Future(BSF)

We have already witnessed the start of this project with the £30 million investment into the West Lakes Academy School in Egremont. Further funding has been secured for a second Academy school on which consultation will start shortly. As we

know CCC is carrying out a school review and has identified West Cumbria as their priority area. Expression of Interest have been requested by the end of November for earlier drawdown of BSF funding and as previously agreed the focus of that bid will be the West Cumbria region. This has still got to go through CCC Cabinet to secure political approval.

MANAGING RADIOACTIVE WASTE SAFELY (MRWS)

The first meeting has been held of the MRWS working group where the main topic of conversation was the soundings letter sent out by CCC. Basically this letter set out the County's position and sought the views of partners about CCC expressing an Expression of Interest. The letter emphasised that it was not a formal consultation but rather a soundings exercise and the County would await the responses before it decided whether or not it would support EOI's made by District Councils.

Copeland Borough Council's proposed response emphasises that there is no County wide consensus for a County wide Expression of Interest and that we believe it is wrong for the County to proceed in these circumstances and believe it would be beneficial to all if the County work within any local partnerships promoted by District Councils where there is clear support for an Expression of Interest.

Regardless of the decision of CCC, we have already made an EOI which has been accepted by Government and which now allows us to formally have discussions with Government and the NDA. The White Paper suggests that a Siting Partnership is established but this would be at the "Decision to Participate" stage, what we are doing is setting up a "Shadow Siting Partnership". This group will be made up of Cumbria wide and local partners with the first formal meeting taking place in the New Year.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL FOR GEOLOGICAL DISPOSAL

The NDA recently held a two day workshop on the above. This follows the MRWS White paper where it says "Following publication of this White Paper the NDA will set out its framework for public and stakeholder engagement and communication during development of the geological disposal facility". It further states that the "Government is committed to ensuring the NDA's geological disposal facility programme fully assesses and accounts for environmental impact and sustainability issues through the application of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Sustainability Assessments (SA) and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA).

The workshop gave Copeland Borough Council the opportunity to ensure our views on the consultation are heeded. We emphasised that there was a need to ensure local communities who are intending to participate in the MRWS process are fully consulted upon on each stage of the NDA's consultation process to ensure they are aligned. We will be making an official Council response by the end of November. This will go through the MRWS working group.

PLANNING BILL 2007-08

Within the MRWS White paper reference was made to Government considering a new planning bill which would introduce a new system for the approval of major infrastructure projects of national importance, including energy generation. The Bill has been debated in the House of Commons and it is now in committee in the House of Lords which is debating various amendments, this debate is due to finish on the 23rd October.

At present development consent for nationally significant infrastructure projects is provided for in various pieces of legislation. With the new proposals a single consent regime would be introduced and a number of applications and permits required for major projects would be reduced. A new Independent Planning Commission would be established (accountable to Ministers and parliament in respect of its overall performance).

There is still some way to go with this Bill but as it could possibly affect planning decisions in Copeland. We will be keeping a close eye on how, or if it progresses.

LOW LEVEL WASTE REPOSITORY (LLWR)

LLWR have been carrying out a lot of work aimed at improving confidence in the knowledge of historic wastes disposed in the LLWR trenches. Over the last few years considerable effort has been expended on "Desk" studies, which have used available disposal records. Local stakeholders have also provided anecdotal evidence that wastes may have been disposed that were outside the acceptance criteria at the time, and this undermines their confidence in the safety of the repository in the long term. As part of the work programme addressing uncertainties the LLWR has invited EBM Strategic Consulting to investigate the use of RECALL. EBM is a small company that was funded by the NDA to develop and pilot an innovative digital archive of oral testimony from past and current practitioners in the nuclear sector. Initially there will be a small number of ex-LLWR or ex-Sellafield employees independently interviewed on their knowledge relevant to wastes consigned to the LLWR. The intention will then be to discuss these initial findings with stakeholders. The information gained will be used both to understand the uncertainties in the results of assessments of the trenches, and to inform an assessment of whether, or not the trenches should be remediated, something Copeland Borough Council has been requesting.

COPELAND COMMUNITY FUND

The Legal Agreement needed to confirm the Copeland Community Fund was signed by all parties on the 1st October. The signatories being the NDA, CCC and ourselves. This will now allow the first meeting of the Board to be arranged, though at this

moment in time there is only Copeland who has formally made their nominations. There is still a lot of work to be done agreeing criteria, fund management but at least as said the work can now formally start.

SELLAFIELD PBO

Members will have had the opportunity to meet some of the Nuclear Management Partners (NMP) at the Copeland Borough Council meeting. I thought it might be useful to explain what each of the newly appointed NMP Executive Board responsibilities are and who they will replace in the present BNG structure.

Bob Pedde – Managing Director, who replaces Barry Snelson. Bob formerly served as president of Washington Savannah River Company, which managed the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site until this summer.

Keith Case – Executive Director for Commercial and Contract Management replaces Steve Morgan. Keith has previously worked in senior commercial roles in utilities and the nuclear industry for companies including British Nuclear Fuels, National Grid and Southern water.

Paul Foster – Executive Director for Strategy and Transition. Paul was appointed to this position last September and will continue to serve under the new management.

Carol Johnson – Executive Director for Infrastructure. Carol previously held a similar position at the US Idaho National Laboratory.

Mike Johnson – Executive Director for Production Operations replaces John Storer. Mike has held a number of senior roles at US Department of Energy sites, focusing on nuclear operations, facility start-up and waste management.

Graham McKendry – Executive Director for Commercial Re-cycling Operations replaces Neil Longfellow. Graham formerly served as Head of Oxide Fuels at Springfields driving through improvements in the reliability of the Oxide Fuels Complex. He also spent more than four years with Westinghouse in South Carolina where he led the implementation of best practice techniques across six fuel facilities in the UK, US and Sweden

David McNerney – Executive Director of Capability replaces Jim Gibson. David has spent 23 years working in Human Relations, Change and Business services roles in the UK and abroad.

Achieving Transformation - Councillor Cath Giel - Deputy Leader

Councillor Norman Williams - Portfolio Holder

BUILDING CONTROL BUILT IN QUALITY AWARDS

Following their success at the Northern Regional round of the Building Control Built in Quality Awards for the conversion and extension at Duddon Hall Folly, this project has been shortlisted as one of the top six best projects in this category nationally. The National Finals taken place in London on 16 October. I will update members of the outcome at the Full Council meeting.

The Building Control team continues to develop as, having been sponsored by the Council, Deborah Fletcher Principal Building Control Officer, has successfully attained corporate membership of the Association of Building Engineers in Durham.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN COUNCIL BUILDINGS

Energy Display Certificates will be displayed in all Council operated buildings as from the 1st October 2008. Most are showing a reasonable/good result. The process also involves putting forward recommendations for reducing energy consumption, with further readings to be taken in 12 months time. Information is also provided for Performance Indicators 185 and 193.

NORTHWEST TOURISM AWARDS

For the second time in three years, the Beacon has been shortlisted as a finalist in the Tourism For All category of England's Northwest Tourism Awards 2008.

The awards ceremony is organised by the Northwest Regional Development Agency and will take place on 22nd October 2008 in St George's Hall, Liverpool. Other finalists include the Trafford Centre, Manchester, Wyre Estuary County Park and the National Wildflower Centre.

The award is for Access for All and the judges are not just interested in physical access. They have also been looking at our Schools and Outreach Services where people are welcome to visit the museum and the use of new technology through video conferencing, which enables us to teach in schools across the World. This is the second time in 3 years that The Beacon has been represented at a Regional final.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PERFORMANCE

The determination of planning applications have all exceeded national targets in the past quarter, with both major and general planning applications having achieved top quartile, with minor applications having fallen short of top quartile by only 0.6%.

	2 nd Quarter (July-Sept)	Cumulative (April-Sept)
PI 109 (a) Major planning applications dealt with < 13 weeks Target is 60% Top quartile is 80.71%	100% (6 out of 6)	92.31% (12 out of 13)
PI 109 (b) Minor planning applications dealt with < 8 weeks Target is 65% Top quartile is 83.66%	86.27% (44 out of 51)	83.06% (103 out of 124)
PI 109 (c) Other planning applications dealt with < 8 weeks Target is 80% Top quartile is 92.56%	97.67% (84 out of 86)	94.56% (174 out of 184)
PI 204 % of planning appeals allowed	50% (1 out of 2)	60% (3 out of 5)

WHITEHAVEN - CONSERVATION STUDY AND TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE INITIATIVE

Specialist consultants, Paul Butler and Associates, working with OMI Architects and Landscapes Projects have been appointed to undertake a two stage study. The first phase is a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Whitehaven Town Centre and High Street Conservation Areas. In addition, Design Guidance and specific design briefs for a number of town centre opportunity sites will be produced. This Phase 1 work is due to be completed by 6 October and the final reports will be made available in the Members' Room and will be presented to the November meeting of the Executive.

Phase 2 is a submission for Heritage Lottery funding for a Townscape Heritage Initiative in the town centre. These studies are being partly funded by West Lakes Renaissance.

CLEATOR MOOR TOWN SQUARE

The Cleator Moor Task Group held a stakeholder meeting on 30 September 2008 to put forward a vision for public realm services and regeneration in and around the Town Square. The early concept to work in partnership to improve the area and extend use of the public buildings and public space was supported by the range of stakeholders including key public partners with agreement made to develop the project further.

WEST CUMBRIA TOURISM STUDY

NWDA are funding a 12 week study on West Cumbria, due to report in December 2008. The study, supported by a steering group of Cumbria Tourism, NWDA, Cumbria Vision, Copeland and Allerdale Borough Councils and WLR, will

- a) improve knowledge and understanding of the market opportunities;
- b) identify and recommend the attractors that we should be investing in, existing and new;
- c) identify a set of strategic and tactical priorities for the area to assist investment and work programmes.

In particular, this study will help to underpin the direction and priorities of the existing Western Lake District Tourism Partnership in developing its next 3 year action plan, 2009-12.

ENTERPRISE WHITEHAVEN

The September 2008 meeting of this informal body agreed to formalise its operation. It has set out its governance framework building on the existing business networks and membership organisations which includes the Council as a key employer and business in the town. It has begun to develop a short and longer term strategic plan to deliver on its priority issues for businesses, particularly retail, in contributing to a vibrant Whitehaven.

CIVIC QUARTER PUBLIC REALM

This project, focused particularly on the Civic Hall and Library area will deliver a much improved visual identity for these key areas of the Town. Gillespies have been appointed for design team services and project management. A design review of the concept option has commenced.

MOUNT PLEASANT PUBLIC REALM

A high quality public realm scheme connecting the Coastal Fringe enhancements and harbour improvements. Consultants have been shortlisted for design team services and project management.

PAY AND GRADING REVIEW

The proposed pay and grading outcome of the Council's job evaluation exercise was communicated to all employees on 1 October, following an extensive

communications programme. The appeals process now takes effect over the next few weeks.

Negotiations have opened with the Trade Unions regarding the remaining issues of harmonisation of hours of work and other terms and conditions of employment. A constructive meeting took place on 2 October, attended by the Full-time officials of all three Unions, with the key issue of achieving a 37 hour standard working week for all Copeland employees at the top of the agenda. The Unions are strongly supportive of the principle, and have tabled some ideas for management to consider.

Promoting Prosperity – Councillor George Clements Deputy Leader

Councillor Geoff Blackwell - Portfolio Holder

Councillor Hugh Branney - Portfolio Holder

10TH OCTOBER 2008 - FLOODING IN EGREMONT, CLEATOR, FRIZINGTON, DISTINGTON AREA

Members will be aware that areas of Copeland experienced some flooding due to an unforeseen period of persistent rain falling onto ground already saturated from recent high levels of rainfall over the summer.

The Flooding & Coastal defence engineer was notified by Environment Agency that rainfall levels could cause a problem at 12.30am on 10th October 2008 in the Egremont area.

The warning was confirmed at 01.50am and swift action was taken to put in place a response to address the needs of residents in the affected areas in line with our Multi Agency Flood Action Plan.

During the early hours of the morning the Open Spaces department provided over 400 sandbags to vulnerable properties in the affected areas.

Requests for sandbags continued throughout the day and further 330 sandbags were delivered.

Throughout the daytime of 10th October contact was made with other properties known to be at risk of flooding to offer advice on protecting properties in flood risk situations. Out of hours arrangements were in place for 11th and 12th October, to ensure that any further incidents would have been dealt with.

In line with all incidents of this nature, a review is conducted considering such areas as communication and response times. For this incident, the response was swift and thorough, with fire and rescue control room commenting that a system to request sandbags out of hours enabled emergency resources to be directed effectively to areas most in need.

SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLANS (SMP) – UPDATE.

The process of producing a new Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) has commenced.

The first of the elected member forum took place on 16th September 2008 for the Walney Island to St Bees Head and St Bees Head to Scottish Border coastline. The forum was attended by Councillors George Clements, Keith Hitchin and Eileen Eastwood. The briefing was very useful providing an opportunity for local knowledge

and concerns to be discussed and influence the recommendations of the draft SMP which will then be subject to further consultation.

The next elected member forum is due to take place on 16th December 2008 and details will be confirmed one month before the event.

Full public consultation of the draft SMP is expected in August 2009

A stakeholders meeting is taking place on 7th November 2008 for those with an interest in or who might be affected by the final SMP. Stakeholders include agencies such as English Partnerships, industry/employers and others with an interest in the process. Those that have responded to initial consultation or who have registered will also be invited to the event.

RURAL TOURING SCHEME – ARTS OUT WEST.

The Arts Out West rural touring scheme has grown significantly in recent years, with more performances being delivered in a greater number of venues throughout West Cumbria. The range of service offered has also developed, with school performances and workshops being added to the programme.

To enable Arts Out West to become a sustainable organisation that will be able to take advantage of the opportunities, Arts Development staff have secured external funding from Arts Council NW to revenue support the delivery of the scheme in the short term, and to ascertain the best way forward.

The Arts Service commissioned an appraisal of Arts Out West in early 2008; the feedback from which suggested that Arts Out West was not large enough to become an independent organisation in its own right and that it would be more appropriate to seek a partner that would compliment existing activity, such as a theatre or charitable company. This partnership would enable Arts Out West to make efficiency savings in set up costs, administration, marketing and accommodation as well as obtain added value from the partner organisation.

Copeland's Arts Development team will work with a number of partners and consultants over the next six months to develop the right partnership for Arts Out West, meaning that the current hosting arrangements offered by Copeland BC may cease if more suitable arrangements are identified. This independence will enable Arts Out West to attract greater funding, focus more attention upon communities and develop new programmes of work. This development is a real success story, and demonstrates the value of hosting a relatively small project that, with the right level of support, has the potential to bring performances to rural areas and give people in isolated communities a chance to see live dance, music and theatre.

WASTE AND OPEN SPACES - WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

A single workforce development initiative has commenced across the Council's main front-line services of Waste and Open Spaces, in direct support of the Council's commitment to encourage learning opportunities amongst Copeland BC staff.

Thirteen staff from Waste Management and two from Open Spaces have recently taken the opportunity to start working towards a work based NVQ level 2 qualification.

Initial discussions with the Lakes College were held by the Waste Services Manager and Open Spaces Manager early in 2008 with both managers keen to encourage the introduction of work based NVQ training for operational staff in Leisure and Environmental Services.

Staff from the college gave a number of presentations to the workforce and individuals were encouraged to volunteer to undertake Level 2 NVQ's in their particular field of work. The Lakes College then tailored the subject areas or modules to the work carried out by each individual and work towards the qualifications started in earnest in July. A number of different modules are being covered across the various work areas, with the main themes running through the modules being health and safety, customer focus and team working. The first group to undertake the qualification are expected to complete their course by the end of January 2009 with the remaining completing by mid April 2009. It is hoped that if successful, further opportunities will be made available for more staff to undertake the same qualification.

COPELAND BC / ALLERDALE BC RECIPROCAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRIORITY LEISURE ACCESS CARDS.

Discussions have been taking place to enable residents of both Copeland and Allerdale boroughs to be able to use their priority leisure access cards at leisure centres within both boroughs. The scheme is a reciprocal agreement between Leisure Copeland (Copeland Borough Council) and Carlisle Leisure Ltd (Allerdale Borough Council), and offers greater choice and opportunity to those most in need of assistance. Regular participation in physical activity has a proven positive effect on health and well being, and this type of arrangement will encourage further participation.

Currently, both boroughs offer a priority leisure card (Leisure Copeland offer a 'green' calCARD), which enables priority groups of residents the chance to access sports and physical activities at a heavily discounted rate. The new joint scheme will allow residents who hold the Leisure Copeland 'green' calCARD to access facilities in Allerdale for the same price as residents who hold the Allerdale priority access card. This agreement also works in reverse for holders of the Allerdale priority access card.

The Leisure Copeland 'green' calCARD is available for residents of Copeland in receipt of:

- Income-based job seekers allowance.
- Housing benefit or Council Tax benefit.
- Incapacity benefit.

- Disability allowance, severe disablement allowance or members of the Blue Badge Scheme.
- Attendance allowance claimed by over 65s, income support or pension credit guarantee.

The scheme will be running for a six month trial period (October 2008 – March 2009) after this period the scheme will be reviewed.

HOUSING

- At its September meeting the Council agreed in principle to support a Cumbria housing authorities' funding bid to DCLG for a sub-regional choice based lettings system.
- At its September meeting the Council also approved its Homelessness Strategy and action plan for 2008-2013.
- On 8 October 08 the Strategic Housing Panel agreed to recommend to the Executive that the Draft Financial Assistance Policy be approved for the private housing sector.
- On October 08 the Strategic Housing Panel agreed to recommend the Executive to approve a draft Housing Allocations Scheme for consultation with housing associations and other stakeholders.

We are now close to signing contracts, and determining a start date, for the remediation works to the Trusteel properties in Millom. Residents will be informed as soon as the start date is certain. The next meeting of the Copeland Borough Homelessness Forum will be held in November 2008.

Empty Properties

We propose to write an empty property strategy in the New Year, officers are busy identifying empty properties throughout the Borough and are working with the communications team on press releases to get the public involved. Our first priority will as always, be unfit properties which are occupied, we do plan to have the team trained in enforcement action and will be taking action against owners of empty/dilapidated buildings once the strategy is in place.

Housing Multiple Occupancy (HMO's)

The team are busy trying to identify HMO's within the Borough. Several addresses were given to officers which were visited, none however were HMO's. Again, the team will be liaising with the press to ask the public and local landlords for help.

Housing Assistance Policy

Consultation has ended on the housing assistance policy, it was well received by our stakeholders and a full report will be made to Executive next month