

CONSULTATION ON A POSSIBLE WHITEHAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: Councillor Norman Williams
LEAD OFFICER: Martin Jepson – Head of Legal and Democratic Services
REPORT AUTHOR: Martin Jepson – Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Summary:	Reports on the results of consultation on a Whitehaven Town Council and recommends a way forward.
Recommendation	1. That further consultation of the public in Whitehaven takes place on the possibility of a Whitehaven Town Council being formed including through consultation at Neighbourhood Forums as well as other means of consultation; 2. That Council notes that the Parish Review Working Party has asked that a bid be submitted to the Resources Planning Steering Group for an allocation of £15,000 within the 2009/10 budget for the purposes of a possible referendum.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Following the approval of the Council to do so, draft consultation took place over the summer on the possibility of a Whitehaven Town Council being formed.
- 1.2 The Consultation included:-
- (a) Writing to all Councillors;
 - (b) Press Releases;
 - (c) A notice board in the Copeland Centre and Whitehaven and Whitehaven Library inviting the public to take and return questionnaires;
 - (d) A full page item in the most recent "Copeland Matters";
 - (e) A letter to business addresses within Whitehaven;
 - (h) An item on the homepage of the Council's web-site with all relevant articles/notices including the questionnaires available for completion.
- 1.3 Despite inviting Members to ask for public meetings in their areas only Millom requested such a meeting. That meeting, which took place on August 6th, was well attended and produced a very useful and worthwhile debate.
- 1.4 However, the number of formal written responses to the consultation was disappointing, with only in the region of 75 responses (depending on how some joint responses were calculated) from individual members of the public and 20 responses from members of the business community.

2 REACTION OF PARISH REVIEW WORKING PARTY

- 2.1 Members of the Working Party were disappointed by the small response to consultation. It considered that the response was so small that it was not possible to reach a conclusion one way or the other over whether to recommend a Whitehaven Town Council to Council.

- 2.2 Further information was also needed as to whether other parts of Copeland were effectively subsidising expenditure on Whitehaven, and particularly the town centre. If this were found to be the case then an alternative to a Town Council might be the levying of Special Expenses of Whitehaven Town council tax payers to reflect this.
- 2.3 For the moment, the Working Party recommended that further consultation takes place over the coming months, including through making presentations to, and seeking feedback from, Neighbourhood Forums. Members of Council are also asked to note that the Working Party has asked for a formal bid to be made to the Resources Planning Working Party for funding of up to £15,000 for 2009/10 to allow for a referendum to take place.

List of Appendices: None

List of Background Documents:

Feedback Responses

List of Consultees:

Chief Executive, Acting Head of Finance, Cllr Norman Williams, Cllr George Clements