

The Executive Report to full Council

The report follows the same format of replicating and reporting against the priority themes identified in the Council's Corporate plan.

This highlights to Members the progress we are making towards achieving our strategic objectives.

A Quality Council Delivering Quality Services

Copeland Parish Charter – Resources and Local Democracy

The national Quality Parish Scheme recommends the agreement of “charters” between Principal Authorities and local councils in order to promote partnership working and enhance the opportunities for citizen engagement in the design and delivery of local services. The publication of the Local Government White Paper (‘Strong and Prosperous Communities’) on 26 October 2006 reinforced that approach. The main principles of our draft Charter - better joint working, better communication and better consultations - remain unchanged and apply equally to council structures now and any possible changes in the future.

The deadline for consultation on our draft charter has passed (the draft was circulated to all Town and Parish Councils and Parish meetings in November with a closing date of 8th January 2007) and feedback has been received from individual councils and from the consultation event held at Drigg in December. The results of all the consultation are currently being drawn together into a matrix for further consideration before hopefully a final version can be agreed. My intention is to finalise a Charter which is acceptable to all parties for launch before our annual meeting with our Town and Parish Councils on 12th March 2007.

Performance Management – Deputy Leader

In 2005/6 the Council decided to automate the collation and reporting of its performance. Following procurement and initial preparation, the CoValent system is close to going live. It will be used for the first time in February to report to Executive on progress in the Corporate Plan objectives and Performance indicators.

Managers will update objectives for which they are responsible by logging on to the website and accessing their part of the database in which they record progress. The whole picture will be available for Members and employees to see, and the system will periodically produce reports for Executive and other meetings.

The system is capable of being used for a wide range of themes – risk management, personal targets, meeting action points and local performance indicators. It is our intention to expand our use of this powerful tool, in order to improve performance generally.

Enforcement – Environmental and Cultural Services

Executive have convened a cross-party Task and Finish Group to look into the current enforcement concerns and make recommendations for the future. The Group will meet three times prior to reporting back to the Executive in February.

Smoke Free Legislation – Health and Diversity

The smoke free provisions of the Health Act 2006 will come into force on 1 July 2007. This Council will be an enforcement authority under the new laws.

The legislation will make virtually all enclosed public places and workplaces smoke free.

The approach to enforcement will be non-confrontational, focussed on raising awareness and understanding to ensure compliance, and officers of the Council's Environmental Health Section will work closely with businesses to build compliance through education, advice and support before the legislation comes into force. Enforcement inspections will be based on risk and, where possible, combined with other regulatory inspections to reduce burdens on business.

The Department of Health is making £38,207 available to this Council to support it in its duties.

Scores on Doors – Health and Diversity

This Council, in conjunction with the other 5 District Councils in Cumbria, has committed itself to a scheme whereby information relating to its inspections of food premises in the Borough will be published on an independent web-site.

A significant number of local authorities in the country have already implemented such schemes and many others are proposing to do so. The scheme will show the rating (using a 5 Star system) of all food premises in Cumbria. An advantage of such a scheme is that well-run hygienic businesses will be publicised whereas, at present, press publicity based on information obtained under the Freedom of Information Act tends to concentrate on failing businesses.

It is hoped that the scheme will be in operation from 1 April 2007.

CCTV – Environmental and Cultural Services

A total of 42 responses were received following advertisement of the CCTV contract and of these 21 subsequently returned a completed pre-qualification questionnaire by the deadline of 3rd January. These are being evaluated to obtain a list of 6 potential

contractors to invite to tender. Invitations to tender will go out to the select listed companies by 26th January

A Well Managed Council Striving for Excellence

Waste Management- Environmental and Cultural Services

The Cumbria Waste Partnership at their meeting on 17 January will have been asked to endorse the preferred option for municipal waste management for the County. Seven different variant options are being appraised and the selected one is to be taken forward in the Cumbria Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy. The draft strategy document will be subject to public consultation. The consultation phase is programmed to be completed by the end of March 2007. After this the final strategy will be reported through the appropriate committee for approval and adoption by each of the local authorities in the County during April/May 2007.

Pay and Grading Review - Resources and Local Democracy

A joint Management and Trades Union Steering Group has been formed and commenced the work required to progress the Pay and Grading Review which will be undertaken as part of the Council's development of a Pay and Workforce Strategy

The outline plan is to carry out preparation work and a pilot job evaluation exercise in the first half of 2007, and complete the full Review by 31 March 2008.

Procurement- Resources and Local Democracy

The Cumbria Procurement Board is moving forward the Shared Service Agenda for procurement. Executive has agreed to Copeland proceeding on the basis that all other authorities do so with the exception of Eden District Council which has opted out. It now only remains for Carlisle City Council to obtain Member approval programmed for this month.

Corporate Team agreed on 27 November to implementation of efficiencies related to use of paper, photocopiers/printers/scanners in the Council offices, so long as it is fully co-ordinated, with a target date of April 2007.

Information Computer Technology- Resources and Local Democracy

ICT has been identified as one of the services to be considered in the Shared service Agenda and information is currently being gathered by the Connect Cumbria partnership in order to prepare a Business case.

In November a questionnaire was sent out asking for feedback on E-mail provision, access to Council documents and development of use of laptops for meetings. Members are reminded that the deadline for replies is 31 January 2007.

Some changes and improvements have been made to the Council Intranet this month so Members should notice a difference.

Property Maintenance / Management – Resources and Local Democracy

With the sale of the Warehouse at Moresby Parks design work is underway to remove redundant steel gantries and large filters and to improve the layout and access for large vehicles at the rear of the property

An order has been placed for a further seismic stage of the investigations for a mineshaft located below the Egremont Car Park – work is expected to be completed this month. It may then be necessary to undertake borehole investigation subject to the details of the consultant report.

Some further minor works have been undertaken at William Pitt cliff. The consultants have provided a report giving options for longer term maintenance of this cliff. This is to be discussed with the expectation that a report will be taken to Executive shortly to consider these proposals.

Following representations from a resident about falling rocks the cliff to the North of William Pitt has been considered. Consultants have been appointed and have arranged for contractors to make a close inspection of the cliff face using abseiling techniques, following which a report will be provided on condition of rock face and any proposed maintenance. The Council Legal Section has been consulted on the Council liability and has advised that case law makes it clear that the Council does have a legal liability to deal with the matter.

A number of other properties are being assembled for a further round of disposals in February/March. Details are available from Finance and Business Development.

Beacon Education Services – Deputy Leader

So far this year, 1645 children have been taught by Beacon staff (1403 up to this point in 2006). This has been due to the creation of new school sessions, improvements in existing services and targeted marketing, and support CBC objectives to maximise educational achievement and learning. An additional 2016 have been taught via video conference.

Beacon Lifelong Learning - Deputy Leader

6 activity workshops took place during December and were attended by participants from age 3 upwards. Activity sessions during the Christmas holidays have included Christmas Crafts with Santa.

Copeland's Young Archaeologists Club experienced "Art Through The Ages" on 23 December with Michelle Kelly, Curator at The Beacon.

Beacon Redevelopment – Deputy Leader

Progress to date includes appointment of White Young Green for both Project Management and Building Construction Design Services. Over 400 artefacts have been collected by specialists Lancashire Conservation Studios to enable their restoration to

begin procurement of Building Contractors, Exhibition Design Team and Restaurant Franchise underway

Quality of Life

National Tree Planting Week – Environmental and Cultural Services

As part of the Tree Council's National Tree Week, the Open Spaces Section jointly worked with 5 Schools and 2 community groups. The Tree Council provided £640 of match funding towards this season's initiative aimed at enhancing the local landscape. It also indirectly supports links to exercise & recreational activities. The scheme is now in the fifth consecutive year in Copeland. The Council has managed to promote the importance of trees and the environment more broadly. The 2006 groups involved were:

St Gregory's & St Patrick's School, St James Infants School, Black Combe School (Millom), Friends Of Millom Park, Distington Community Group & School, St Mary's RC School – Kells & Lamplugh Parish Council & School.

For all groups the opportunity was taken to identify the benefits of tree planting, which links to the fact that geographically the area is below the national average for tree coverage. Other benefits for supporting these events were also given to each group. These included: visual impact, pollution control, climate change, enhancing wildlife habitats and land stabilization.

A total of 510 trees were planted during the first week of December 2006, including trees native to the British Isles such as: Common Oak, Beech, Silver Birch, Rowan, Hornbeam, Whitebeam, Poplar, Alder, Lime, Ash and Scots Pine.

Cumbria Housing Strategy – Housing and Community Safety

The action plan for Copeland, which was requested by Government Office, is now completed and will be presented to the OSC shortly.

The housing market assessments are also almost completed and will be consulted on during early spring.

Planning Policy – Health and Diversity

I can confirm that the Council's Annual Monitoring Report for 2005/6 was submitted to government before the 31st December deadline. This is a substantial document which monitors our performance on implementing planning requirements and is available on the Council's website. It is a statutory requirement and is also important as regards our application for further funding via the Planning Delivery Grant.

A revised Regional Spatial Strategy is currently in preparation and this month the Examination in Public will be dealing with Cumbria issues. The Council will be represented at these sessions which involve round-table discussions in front of a Panel of Government Inspectors. It gives an opportunity to focus on West Cumbria's needs

over the next 20 years and to argue for more appropriate policy treatment in the regional strategy.

Promoting Healthy Lifestyles – Health and Diversity

Within our Corporate Plan we have a number of objectives to improve health and wellbeing of the people of Copeland. Most of our objectives are outward facing but this year we introduced an initiative aimed specifically at our own staff which commits us to having at least one event to promote healthy behaviour within the Council this year.

What was planned and set up was two weeks of publicity of services available to improve the health of staff during an “Employee Health Wellbeing” week. This was offered throughout week commencing 8th January at Catherine St. and the following week at Moresby and was planned to fall in line with people who religiously make New Years Resolutions. A nurse was also on site during the first week offering Blood pressure and Cholesterol checks and advice.

A stand was erected in the reception areas, manned each day to capture staff entering/exiting who would like to leave their name for any of the services offered. The stand consisted of a series of information and an invitation to put your name down, possibly for some complimentary sessions including:

- Ayurveda Massage sessions
- Reiki Healing Calming treatment
- Private Counselling sessions on: Stress, Bereavement, Traumas, Depression, Addictions etc.
- Reflexology Therapy dealing with arthritis, asthma, migraine, back pain or blood pressure.
- Free in-centre Healthy Lifestyle Clinic, checking blood pressure, cholesterol, weight etc.
- Stress Awareness Workshops free 2 hour session introduction.
- Smoking Cessation Clinic appointment and referral system offering advice for kicking the habit.
- Physiotherapy and much more ...

The aim of our “health drive” was to raise employee’s awareness of services, sessions and assistance available locally (under one roof). Feedback and take-up has been very encouraging and due to the success it is hoped to expand on this initiative and make it a regular event

Digital Television.- Leader

As members will be aware the Border TV region is to be the first in the UK to switch over to all-digital television broadcasting. This will be done in stages – starting in the Whitehaven area (defined as nearly all of Copeland) later this year. The region will go completely digital in the second quarter of 2009.

The outline timescale for the Copeland area is:

January 2007	- Digital UK set up office in Whitehaven
	- Clarification of Help Scheme
April 2007	- Information on who is eligible
July 2007	- Help Scheme up and running
October 2007	- BBC2 analogue will be switched off, leading to 4 weeks later
November 2007	- The rest of the channels will be switched off complete the switchover.

The Council is working with partners and Digital UK to ensure that our community are informed and supported through the changeover period and we have set up a stakeholder group who are meeting regularly to monitor progress and help resolve problems. Age Concern who are part of the group are acting as the coordinating body for voluntary groups.

Good communication is seen as key to a successful switchover and the Local Press are active within the stakeholder group. In addition all Neighbourhood Forums have been visited and a presentation was made to our quarterly Parish and Town Council meeting in December when representatives agreed to look for nominated links in each parish area to identify any special needs etc. A first public meeting was held in September 2006 and a further one is being planned for February 2007. Members will be kept informed of progress

Homelessness – Housing and Community Safety

The number of applications has reduced over the last two months as the number of housing option assessments which are used to try and prevent homelessness has increased. We only have one applicant in B&B and now have an extra property from a private landlord.

As you are all aware we are working with our partners to try and prevent homelessness wherever possible. With this in mind, officers from Copeland and Allerdale made a joint bid to the DCLG for extra funding for mediation. I am pleased to be able to tell you the bid was successful and we received £30,000 for West Cumbria. This will be used to fund mediation where it is most needed, in particular with young people who need support to stay at home.

Private Sector Stock Condition Survey – Housing and Community Safety

David Adamson and Partners were the successful tenderers for the stock condition survey; officers are currently collating addresses etc ready for the consultants. Members will be receiving an information sheet shortly on the Borough-wide survey.

North Country Leisure – Environmental and Cultural Services

North Country Leisure have started a comprehensive refurbishment programme at Whitehaven Sports Centre, that will see the creation of a new crèche, children's party and fitness rooms in the former rifle range area. A new multi level play area and refurbished balcony fitness suite including complete replacement of the equipment is also taking place. The complex refurbishment programme has been designed to minimise disruption for customers and regular information has been provided to keep customers informed. All the work will be complete by early March and a new Copeland Card will be launched providing incentives for local people to use the new facilities. Investment is also being seen at the Whitehaven Civic Hall, with the Ennerdale Room and main staircase being re-decorated. This will be followed by new carpets and new vending machines being provided in the reception area.

Sports Development – Environmental and Cultural Services

Sports Development Officers and Copeland Sports Clubs attended a Step into Sport conference in November. This event assisted young people in understanding the sports volunteering opportunities on offer and how Sports Clubs can grow with committed volunteers.

Violent Crime – Housing and Community Safety

The task group is hoping to launch the Best Bar None awards early in 2007. The scheme is seeking Chief Executive Endorsement at present. The scheme supports bars and clubs who achieve a good standard of service, providing clean and safe facilities to customers across Copeland.

The Lock Em Inn campaign was launched before Christmas, which explained that if you drink too much and get yourself in to trouble you could end up spending the weekend at the newest hotel (ie Whitehaven Police Station). At the same time, we have been working with the NHS to promote a booklet on 'How much is too much', which gives detailed information about safe drinking levels and the long term affects of binge drinking.

Creating and Sustaining a Local Economy

Transport – Economic Infrastructure

A595 Parton-Lillyhall Improvement Preparatory work is scheduled to begin on the scheme this month. A Liaison Group meeting is also scheduled for 12th January – a verbal report and update will be given to Members at the meeting.

Coalfields – Economic Infrastructure

Presently projects are getting worked up a new programme. Through successful lobbying Copeland has secured £2 million to be spent from April 2008.

Low Level Waste Repository – Leader

A meeting was held alongside the LLW Site Stakeholder Group to discuss the communities' expectations with the companies interested in running the LLW site. This proved quite a fruitful meeting and has resulted in separate meetings with the companies and CBC. The messages given are ones agreed within the Copeland Community Prospectus.

Thorp – Leader

British Nuclear Group has been carrying out final preparations in order to get Thorp operational again. All the physical modifications and necessary improvements to the plant have now been made and the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII) has also now issued British Nuclear Group with a License Instrument Consent granting permission to restart production in Thorp.

This consent has only been granted following detailed submissions of evidence that BNG have completed all the recommendations and actions necessary to safely start-up the plant. The NII has also had to approve their revised Safety Case for the Feed Clarification Cell detailing the modifications to bring the plant back into service and the necessary safety improvements.

However, Thorp will not commence full production until BNG have completed all the checks associated with the highly active evaporator which is used to process the Thorp effluents. It is likely that Thorp will not recommence shearing fuel until after the turn of the Financial Year.

In advance of a move to full production, which is subject to the approval of the NDA, many parts of Thorp continue to operate including flask handling, sampling, ventilation and effluents. We are planning to bring back into operation more of the plant which does not require the highly active evaporator to be operational.

Nuclear Decommissioning Authority - Leader

The Council has written to Alistair Darling, Secretary of State for DTi, airing our concerns about the shortfall in the NDA's 2007 budget of £160 million. The government has already agreed an additional £290 million but due to the problems at Thorp and the lower than expected profits from MOX a shortfall is still predicted. Recent correspondence has reported that the effects of this shortfall will be minimised particularly at Sellafield but this has reinforced our concerns about not having a secure budget, in that socio economic responsibility is to be paid from savings; if there is none then this funding is jeopardised. BNG have stated that they were aware of the potential issues surrounding Annual Site Funding limits for the 2007-08 Lifetime Plan for Sellafield. BNG are working with the NDA to assess the impact of any shortfall. Senior programme and site managers are looking urgently at the implications for the Sellafield Site Licence Company and they have been asked to report back to the NDA by 15th January 2007.

Pow Beck – Deputy Leader

PMP Consultancy have been appointed to examine the potential for a Sport Village within Whitehaven to bring together the various elements of the Pow Beck Valley project. At present within the Pow Beck Valley site there are four separate initiatives taking place – these are the possible leisure centre relocation, the Miners Welfare relocation, the Whitehaven Amateur FC development and the Whitehaven RLFC stadium improvements. A common thread within all projects is a need to secure substantial funding and ascertain the extent of any possible developments. By drawing together these main strands and also looking at non-sporting use of the site it is likely that a mini-master plan will emerge that proposes solutions for joined up working and assists in all four projects becoming viable.

Whitehaven Town Centre – Deputy Leader

Hotel Development:

The 'TRI' report is looking at potential demand for a '4 star' hotel in Whitehaven. The consultants will be asked to give a presentation outlining their findings to a group of funders and key stakeholders within the next month. The consultants will then be engaged to sell Whitehaven as a potential location to hotel developers and end users.

Business Liaison Officer:

A draft job description has been prepared. Consideration of how the post fits in with the work of the Whitehaven Delivery Team now needs to take place. It is hoped that the post will enable the views of the town centre businesses to be put forward to the Task Group.

Development Sites:

A small sub group of the task group has been set up to actively promote the development sites in the 'Sea Change' report. Initial work is being undertaken to look at the planning position on each of the sites.

Whitehaven International Festival – Deputy Leader

Planning for the event in 2007 is ongoing. Applications for air displays are currently being processed by the Ministry of Defence. Tall ship negotiations are taking place and contacts being drawn up. A major concert is planned for the Saturday evening of the event. Another major sponsor has been secured which will result in the festival committee being able to offer transport to and free entrance onto the tall ships.

RAF Museum Millom – Deputy Leader

An initial meeting has taken place with key stakeholders for developing the RAF Museum in Millom. A further meeting will be held this month to develop an action plan.

Cycle Tourism – Deputy Leader

Audits of existing and planned facilities are currently being completed by Western Lake District Tourism Partnership Marketing Specialist. A meeting will take place next month to progress further. These audits will aid with map developments and review gaps in support to eventually develop a family of maps which will cascade from the Cumbria Cycling map.

Enterprise Development Programme – Business Growth

Interviews for the 5 Development Workers, to cover Allerdale and Copeland, were held in December. All posts have been filled with the expectation that all staff will start work before the end of January. An induction programme is currently being produced, in conjunction with colleagues, in Allerdale. The standard of applicants was very high with over 40 applications for the 5 jobs. The two Copeland workers will be based in South Whitehaven and Cleator Moor.

Business Networks – Business Growth

£10k of funding has been allocated to each of Cleator Moor Regeneration, Millom and Egremont Market Town initiatives, to establish Business Networks, in their areas. Progress reports will be received, by 31st March 2007.

Inward Investment – Business Growth

The first meeting of the Inward Investment Working Group, recently set up by CIIA and WLR, was held in December. The Council will be represented on the group which will share enquiry databases, in the near future.

EXECUTIVE DECISIONS RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

None