

**BUSINESS GROWTH PORTFOLIO**

**COUNCILLOR JIM HEWITSON - PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

**MIKE TICHFORD - LEAD OFFICER**

**1 KEY ISSUES - PROGRESS REPORT**

**1.1 Economic Development and Tourism Section**

Two of the three posts in the Section have now been filled with the appointment of an Economic and Tourism Development Manager, Graham McWilliam in December and a Regeneration Project Officer, Sherrie Lewthwaite, in October.

The following short-term objectives have been identified to provide services to local businesses and prospective Inward Investors:

a) Develop a computerised, web-enabled, property/enquiry handling database to enable businesses to access sites and premises information on Copeland.

Timescale system to be installed by the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006 and fully operational by 30<sup>th</sup> April 2006.

b) Develop a Comprehensive database of businesses operating in Copeland, to enable the Council to communicate directly with the business community with details of initiatives, grant schemes etc.

c) Review the Council's grant scheme to assess whether they are meeting the needs of the local business community.

Timescale – complete review, following discussions with Business Groups in the Borough and Business Support Agencies by the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2006. Any revisions to the Grant Schemes to be introduced and communicated to local businesses, in April 2006.

**1.2 Industrial Estates Review**

West Lakes Renaissance have recently recruited a new Project Manager, Peter Thompson, to take responsibility for refurbishing some of the older Industrial Estates in West Cumbria.

The Council's Economic and Tourism Development Manager has been invited to join the Steering Group, overseeing the Project.

West Lakes Renaissance are engaging Consultants to undertake a 10 week assignment, assessing the priority sites for refurbishment, taking into account the opportunities for supply chain development linked to the decommissioning process at Sellafield.

The first meeting of the Steering Group will be held on Monday 16 January.

### 1.3 Millom and Haverigg

The Millom Network Centre project has been appraised by the North West Development Agency on the 20 December and has been recommended for approval. It is now envisaged that the capital scheme will commence shortly which will be project managed by Cumbria County Council.

A Manager for the facility is also to be appointed and is currently being advertised to enable business plan development to be undertaken during the course of construction, it is envisaged that this scheme will provide a new direction for business development and training development for Millom and Haverigg for the foreseeable future.

Consultants have been appointed by West Lakes Renaissance to review the Gateway entrances into Millom to enhance the appearance and accessibility to the town, public art is expected to be a part of any proposals identified and will engage community views.

### 1.4 Egremont

Florence Mine has been successful in securing revenue funding to support the manager which will now enable the development of the next phase of Florence Mine as a tourism/visitor centre. A feasibility study is being developed in partnership with West Lakes Renaissance to identify a capital scheme to expand and enhance the facility.

Consultants have been appointed to undertake a review and identify proposals for enhancing the rural connections between Egremont and the surrounding communities to improve the public accessibility to services and to create a more pedestrianised friendly environment.

## 2 **EXECUTIVE DECISIONS RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

None

### **3 EXECUTIVE DECISIONS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

**Subject:** Cumbria Inward Investment Agency

**Date of Decision:** 6 December 2005

**Decision Reference:** EXE/05/0117

**Context:** This report seeks the Executive's views on selling its share in the CIIA and seeks to identify how the Council would wish to be involved in its successor organisation

**Decision**

**That subject to the County Council agreeing to the Borough Council having a seat on the Board;**

**a) the recommendation that the Council sells its share in the current CIIA company be approved;**

**b) the Council continue to fund inward investment activities through the new organisation as detailed in the report and consider options three and four at annual reviews; and**

**c) £ 20,0000 be found from contingencies to provide funding for a 12 month period and reviewed after 6 months.**