

COPELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL MEETING – 25 SEPTEMBER 2007

EXECUTIVE REPORT

Effective Leadership – Councillor Elaine Woodburn - Leader
Councillor Allan Holliday – Deputy Leader

Better Government for Cumbria

As colleagues will know the bid by the County Council for unitary status was rejected, the reason being that a single unitary authority for Cumbria would not be capable of providing effective leadership given the particular circumstances of Cumbria.

As reported previously an initial meeting was held in August where the County reported that they were still in the process of considering a judicial review.

I can now report that the County has decided NOT to pursue this option therefore work will now start on further progressing the shared services agenda.

The Future of Nuclear Power – Government Consultation

As previously reported to Members Copeland is working with CCC, Allerdale, NWDA, Westlakes Renaissance and Cumbria Vision to examine how nuclear new build might be facilitated at Sellafield.

Amec were appointed to do this study and their initial draft report will be used to help formulate our response to Government to be in by 10th October.

On the basis of the Amec draft report our recommended overall key answers to this consultation are:-

- Yes to nuclear power as part of a balanced energy mix
- Cumbria is ready to play our part in implementing energy policy
- Yes to siting new nuclear power stations at Sellafield.

The final response will be ratified by the Nuclear Working Group

Managing Radioactive Waste Safely

As Members will know the Government is presently carrying out a consultation on Managing Radioactive Waste Safely, a proposed framework for implementing geological disposal.

Members of the Nuclear Working Group attended a workshop recently where a presentation of the document was received from Phil Woolas MP Minister for the Environment, whose job it will be to oversee the implementation of the repository, and other organisations.

The consultation covers the technical programme and design/delivery of a geological disposal facility and the process and criteria for site selection, the latter to include the development of voluntarism and partnership approach. The Council has arranged a meeting with stakeholders to inform them of the consultation and to gather any views to feed into our response.

The proposed response will be sent out to all Members for information on completion.

South Whitehaven Management Board

The Board and local community held a recruitment day at Valley Junior School recently, organised in partnership with the Police. This was an opportunity for the local community to hear about the opportunities available in the following organisations, armed forces, police, fire service, Sellafield Sites Ltd, ambulance and RNLI. As well as being an informative day it allowed the local community to try some of the skills needed in the armed forces etc...

Digital Television Switchover - Copeland

As the date for the switch over from Analogue to Digital television approaches there is significant interest being created in Copeland both locally and nationally. Following on from James Purnell's (Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport) visit to Copeland on 1st August we are now hosting a visit by Stephen Timms (Minister for Competitiveness at the Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform) on September 18th. Both ministers have been interested in how the switchover is progressing and how the Council has been involved in the process.

The National Audit Office have also been to Whitehaven and attended our stakeholder group meeting on 11th September. They are gathering information on the process to present a report to the House of Commons early in 2008 on lessons to be learnt from the switchover, how the process has been handled and

how it could be replicated on a national basis. When we agreed to form and manage a stakeholder group locally we recognised that this could be seen as a guide for the national switchover. We also recognised that the switchover would generate a significant amount of interest in the area and this is proving to be the case. On the two key dates for switchover in October and November it is anticipated that there will be a significant amount of National media interest in the area and Digital UK will be based in Whitehaven for the two weeks surrounding the switchover to deal with the media interest created.

Communications

The Senior Communications Officer has been meeting with a number of Councillors, Officers and Strategic Partners to ensure that closer working on communications takes place. From Copeland Borough Council's point of view, the intention is to ensure we are communicating the good news of our partners when we are involved, to ensure that Copeland's work does not go unnoticed. These discussions have led to a number of communications opportunities, a number of which will be visible in the next issue of Copeland Matters.

Achieving Transformation – Deputy Leader Councillor Cath Giel
Councillor Norman Williams
Councillor Tim Knowles

Egremont Market Town Initiative

Colleagues have been kept apprised of the Market Town Initiative scheme and may have noticed increased activity in Egremont over the past few months. This has included bringing back into use disused buildings, cycling and leisure walks, environmental improvements to the gateways, new business start up, employment advice, job creation and much more.

This current funded programme will draw to a close in 2008. Although a good amount of improvement in the town will have been achieved by the end of March 2008, and hopefully decline will have been stemmed, a significant amount of work will still be required for the town to remain a commercial hub. This is recognised in West Lakes Renaissance's business plan which includes investment in Egremont until 2013. Work on how projects continue to be initiated, developed, funding identified and applications made, leading to delivery on the ground are now underway.

An Executive report will be brought forward proposing ways to sustain the work currently being commissioned through the Egremont Regeneration Partnership. At the same time discussions are being held to secure future support for our market towns and ensure that improvement programmes continue.

North West Community Coalfields Programme (Phase2 2008 – 2011)

Copeland Borough Council will again be one of eight Local Authorities who will be involved in the next phase of the Community Coalfield Programme (2008-2011). Over the last few weeks Local Authority representatives have been contributing to the development of the Phase 2 joint North West application to the North West Development Agency. This process is likely to continue over the next few months. The new themes for Phase 2 of the Programme are:

Promoting Enterprise
Tackling Worklessness and
Improving livability.

Expressions of Interest for potential projects in Copeland have been received. Discussions with Allerdale Borough Council have taken place with regard to having a shared dedicated Coalfields Officer for Phase 2 of the Programme.

Coastal Fringe/Haig Site

ENTEC have been commissioned to prepare the tender documentation with a planning application being submitted to Copeland Borough Council. A tender short list of 6 has been selected from the original 18 organisations who expressed an interest in undertaking the physical works. The appointment of the contractor will take place at the end of October. Physical works are due to commence on site early November 2007

Phoenix Enterprise Centre

Copeland Borough Council has agreed to act as Accountable Body for a scheme to refurbish Phase 2 of Phoenix Court, Cleator Moor. The scheme is currently under development/consideration and will look at converting ground floor office space to workshops, and upgrading first and second floor office space to improve support for SMEs in the area. This proposal offers an alternative to the Leconfield Industrial Estate Project which recently floundered, and utilises some of the potential under-spend in the current round of ERDF funding which has arisen as a direct result of the Leconfield situation. Copeland Borough Council is confident that the scheme can be delivered in the restrictive time scales available and within the constraints of available funding.

Cumbria Economic Plan and Sub Regional Action Plan 2008 – 2011

Cumbria Vision working with Cumbria County Council and the Cumbria Economic Development Officers Group (CEDOG) is working towards the finalisation of the Cumbria Economic Plan – based on 4 key themes around:

1. Business, Enterprise and Employment
2. Education and Skills
3. Infrastructure
4. Cross Cutting Themes

Copeland Borough Council's Economic Development Team is working closely with West Lakes Renaissance to populate the Action Plan with transformational local projects for the 2008 – 2011 period. This document will then be used by NWDA to inform funding allocations in its Sub Regional Investment Plan.

Economic Development Manager

I am pleased to announce that Peter Meadows took up his position as Economic Development Manager on Monday 3 September. He replaces Graham McWilliam who joined Invest in Cumbria. Peter's last post was with Nottinghamshire County Council where he managed the inward investment and business support function. He brings to the Council extensive experience across economic development and community regeneration.

Promoting Prosperity – Councillor George Clements Deputy Leader
Councillor Geoff Blackwell Portfolio Holder
Councillor Hugh Branney Portfolio Holder

North West Regional Housing Pot: Challenge Fund to Cumbria 2005/06 – Report on Outcomes

The Challenge Pot was offered to Cumbria in September 2005 by the North West Housing Forum to deliver affordable housing in new ways. The £4m grant allowed Cumbria to successfully produce 72 properties in high value/high demand areas of the County. The fund was managed jointly by representatives from the 6 District Housing Authorities; the group reported back to the Cumbria Housing Group; funding was hosted by Allerdale Borough Council. All schemes have now been committed successfully. In all, 72 properties were produced

Without the RHB Funding this project would not be feasible. We were unable to secure enough funding via the Housing Corporation to enable us to sell the properties at an affordable price. There is very high demand for affordable family homes in this area. Demand for the scheme is still very high and other areas have become unaffordable for local people. There is scope to extend the scheme if funding is made available.

Copeland Trusteel Project

Tender returns for the above project have now been received and it is hoped to discuss these with the Consultants WS Atkins in the week beginning the 24 September. We need to address how to proceed, taking into account the fact that several property owners have been in contact with the Council and the contractor to state they wish to opt out either because they have, or intend to carry out the repair work privately.

Proposed Schedule for Installation of new CCTV Network in Copeland

Task	Start	Finish by	Status
Deliver Equipment to Police Station	28.08.2007	29.08.07	Done
Supply Method Statements and Risk Assessments to Police Estates Office	07.09.07	22.10.07	Ongoing
Installation - Egremont	10.09.07	21.09.07	
Installation – Millom	24.09.07	05.10.07	
Installation – Cleator Moor	08.10.07	19.10.07	
Installation- Whitehaven	22.10.07	16.11.07	

Note: Due to possible problems which could delay installation of some parts of the links within the town centre at Millom, Cleator Moor may be brought forward for installation after Egremont

Choice Based Lettings

The project is subject to a successful funding application to the Department of Communities and Local Government for up to £100,000 with a project total of around £250,000. The project sponsor for Cumbria is Copeland's Chief Executive. Choice Based Lettings (CBL) comes under the Council's strategic landlord statutory function whereby the Council is still the local housing authority. This project seeks to introduce a market approach to allocation of social housing across Cumbria as opposed to the traditional allocation system. It is National Government policy that CBL is best practice. The project will modernise the allocation process to provide a clear, transparent, cost effective, fair and accountable service to all housing association customers. The outcome of the project will be to reduce void turnaround times, improve mobility across Cumbria, reduce property turnover and increase tenancy sustainment, and help reduce the use of temporary accommodation for homeless applicants. The project is currently supported by Copeland, Allerdale, Carlisle, South Lakeland, Eden, the County Council (under Supporting People) and their respective registered social landlords.

Private Sector House Condition Survey 2007

The Council received the Private Sector House Condition Survey 2007 from consultants in August. The survey was carried out in order to assess progress towards government fitness standards, against a new system of rating called the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.

The results of the survey provide the main evidence base for the Council to undertake a review of its intervention in the private sector housing through its grant allocation policy. This will be brought back to members for their agreement. The Regeneration Strategy Team are currently going through a recruitment process for a senior officer to lead on this activity as well as the Council's enforcement responsibilities. The post holder will work closely with colleagues in Environmental Health.

Seacote Hotel St Bees

Council will be aware the Seacote Hotel in St Bees is closed to the public. This arises as a result of the disconnection of the mains electricity supply following an unauthorised reconnection. Our Environmental Health Officers worked in joint action with the Police and Fire Service to address a number of issues of concern at the Seacote. Notice has been served to ensure it remains closed until such time as mains electricity is properly resupplied. It should be noted that this is on

health and safety grounds as the supply is needed for lighting (including emergency lighting), fire detection system and heating etc.

Smoke Free Legislation

There continues to be excellent compliance with smokefree requirements by businesses and the public throughout Copeland. Over 600 visits have been undertaken by the environmental health team, mostly the smoke free compliance officer, including a wide range of premises including pubs, clubs, garages and takeaway premises. It should be emphasised that the opportunity can still be taken by premises affected to gain information, advice and free signage from the Environmental Health section.

Environmental Health Manager

I am pleased to be able to let colleagues know following the departure of Vic Emmerson a new Environmental Health Manager has been appointed. Jackie O'Reilly previously Team Leader, Food, Health and Safety in Environmental Health has been internally promoted to the post. This promotion is well deserved and minimises the impact of Vic's departure. Steps are in place to fill the vacancy created.

Estuary Close, Millom

Work is still ongoing to complete the characterisation of the contaminated land issues as Estuary Close. The consultant's final report is anticipated towards the end of this month or early in October. It is planned to ensure residents are given a copy of the summary report and a further public meeting will be held once it is available.

Car Traders – The Ginns, Whitehaven

For some time there have been concerns concern regarding traders advertising vehicles for sale on Council land at the Ginns, Whitehaven. In an attempt to resolve the problem notices were erected on the land informing car owners that this activity is illegal and that any vehicles advertised for sale would be removed. Subsequently, on Thursday 6 September in a joint operation with the Police, the Enforcement Unit identified 12 vehicles as being advertised for sale.

During this high profile operation, a number of the vehicle owners turned up and were encouraged to remove their vehicles. Of the 12 vehicles for sale, a total of 4 vehicles were removed and taken to the vehicle compound. The owners these vehicles are able to reclaim their cars on proof of ownership and payment of a recovery fee.

Officers from the Enforcement Unit will continue monitor the area to ensure car sale traders do not operate at Ginns.

Single Improvement Tool for Sport and Cultural Services.

Following Members agreement for Copeland to take part in this Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) led pilot project, a detailed project plan was developed and the self assessment phase took place.

This involved running three group sessions to discuss the eight themes with emphasis on identifying ways that the services we offer can be improved. Alongside this the groups discussed the tool itself and compiled feedback to inform further development of the tool by the IDeA. An appraisal of our performance by external partners such as the Arts Council and the West Cumbria Strategic Partnership was also completed, facilitated by an external body, which will provide a useful 'reality check' and assist in service planning for the next financial year.

These pieces of work were followed by an internal review of the pilot with IDeA consultant Gary Hughes, who was impressed by the approach that the Council had taken within the timescales available and the honest and open way in which the self assessment had been conducted. It was evident that the investment that has taken place in previous years is providing real benefits, and that the tool was highlighting further development areas.

The results of both the internal and external assessments will be available in October. These will then form the basis of an improvement plan.

Copeland Borough Council Summer Holiday Activity Programme.

The summer holiday programme took place within August with numbers gradually increasing on the borough wide free multi skills activity sessions. The programme was much more 'joined up' than in previous years, with arts activity featuring alongside sports sessions. Free transport was also available to community groups. The total number of children that have attended our summer multi skills sessions was 1,350, with attendance numbers at the coached and arts sessions still subject to final evaluation. Attendance numbers were slow at the beginning, mostly due to unseasonably poor weather, but steadily increased during the weeks. The new dance sessions turned out to be particularly well attended and three dance sessions have been launched for the Autumn.

Quality Coast Working Group

The Quality Coast Working Group set up at the request of the Executive on 7 August has now met three times. The group with members representing each of the Council's four amenity beaches is looking in detail at the requirements of the

awards and is seeking community support and involvement that is hoped will ultimately lead to a successful award application. The group have acknowledged the difficulties of the new award scheme and have recognised that to pursue the awards a new way of working must be developed. The group will be visiting all four amenity beaches on 17 October.

Waste First Quarter Performance

The reduce reuse and recycle message is clearly being heard and acted on by Copeland's residents better than ever before. Statistics show that Copeland is not only recycling more materials than ever before, but we are also producing less waste. At the end of the first quarter of 2007/8 all waste best value performance indicators show an improvement when compared to the same period in 2006/7.

During the first three months of this financial year, over 41% of all Copeland's household waste was either recycled or composted. This is an increase of 10% on the same period last year. At the same time, the amount of waste being collected for landfill has decreased by over 18%. The total amount of waste produced by residents (including material collected for recycling and composting) has decreased by 9%.

Cleaner Safer Green Waste Awareness Project

One of the main objectives of the South Whitehaven Waste Awareness Project was to carry out an intensive "door stepping" campaign over the summer, speaking directly to as many residents in the South Whitehaven area as possible about the Councils' recycling services. The aim of this is ultimately to increase levels of recycling and composting in the area.

The "door stepping" campaign, carried out during June, July and August by two temporary Recycling Rangers was extremely successful in reaching significant numbers of residents. Almost 90% of homes in the south Whitehaven area were visited during the campaign. Of the 5600 homes visited, the rangers managed to speak directly to residents at half of these, the remaining homes were left information packs on recycling and waste minimisation. The two recycling rangers reported that whilst there were a few residents who remain unconvinced about the benefits of recycling, and not keen to change their waste disposal habits to recycle more, the vast majority of householders either already recycled, or were willing to change their habits, given the necessary advice and education about the services available

In addition to the door stepping campaign, the Waste Awareness Officer has attended a number of events in the south Whitehaven area such as the recent Greenbank and Woodhouse estate fun day events as a way of distributing information packs and talking to people to spread the recycling message. The

Waste Awareness Officer is currently encouraging schools and community groups to get involved in the next event in the Waste Awareness Campaign and create outfits from waste for a recycling fashion show.

CCTV Update

Members will be aware that the Council awarded its CCTV contract to ADT for the supply, installation and maintenance of a new CCTV and upgraded system across the Borough including the links to the Allerdale CCTV monitoring station in Workington.

Following consultation with the relevant agencies (to satisfy operational health & safety requirements, to secure the relevant work permits and to access the police stations) physical work commenced during the second week of September. Starting in Egremont, installation is expected to take up to 3 months to fully complete. However as each individual town of Egremont, Millom, Cleator Moor, Frizington and Whitehaven is completed it will become fully operational independently of the others.

Cumbria in Bloom

The Cumbria in Bloom Presentation Awards took place on the 3 September in Penrith. For the Copeland Borough area 12 awards were received. This represents 26% of the total awards handed out on the day, which is clearly a wonderful reflection of the Councils' and the communities' commitment in taking pride in Copeland.

Details:

- 1) The County Chairman's Rose Bowl for Industry
 - a. Runner up – CJP of Millom
- 2) The Continental Landscapes Trophy for Best Landscapes
 - a. Winner – Mr JB Middleton of Distington
 - b. Runner up – Mount Pleasant Steps, Whitehaven
- 3) The Doreen Parsons Young Persons Trophy for Best Project/Effort by Youngsters
 - a. Joint Winner – Schools Planting, Whitehaven Trinity Garden
- 4) The Royal Horticultural Society Discretionary Award for Best Wildlife Area
 - a. Winner – Mirehouse Ponds, Whitehaven
- 5) The Holmes of Natland Nurseyman's Trophy for Best Hamlet
 - a. Runner up Nether Wasdale – Royal Horticultural Society Silver Gilt Award
- 6) The Marchon Trophy for Best Town
 - a. Runner up Whitehaven - Royal Horticultural Society Silver Gilt Award
- 7) The Rickerby Lt Trophy for best Town/Urban Community

- a. Runner up Whitehaven - Royal Horticultural Society Silver Gilt Award
- 8) The Royal Horticultural Society Neighbourhood Awards
 - a. Mount Pleasant Steps, Whitehaven – Merit Award
 - b. Beckermest School & Village – Merit Award.

EXECUTIVE DECISION FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

Subject: Overview and Scrutiny Committee Urgent Actions

Date of Decision: 4 September 2007

Decision Reference: EXE/07/0065

Context:

To consider a report of Overview and Scrutiny Committee following their review of the use of Urgent Action.

Decision

That

- (1) **Corporate Team be asked to advise all officers that there have been too many urgent actions used over the last two years;**
- (2) **the recommendation to ensure that part A of the guidance note requiring that the reasons for urgency are adequate be more stringently applied be approved,**
- (4) **reports back to the Executive following actions taken on grounds of urgency must include the results of the action that has been taken,**
- (5) **a list of urgent actions detailing the current position of the actions covering the financial position particularly the effect on contingencies be made available to all members of the council,**
- (6) **once an urgent action has been signed by all the relevant signatories a copy of the completed form be sent to all those signatories,**
- (7) **the use of urgent actions be monitored and a report be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in six months time; and**
- (8) **Council be recommended**
 - (a) **to review the financial limit that can be used as delegated authority by Executive Portfolio Holders, and**
 - (b) **the Councils constitution be amended to formalise the guidance notes and used as the Council's procedure for urgent action.**

Subject: GIS Budget

Date of Decision: 4 September 2007

Decision Reference: EXE/07/0081

Context:

This report seeks agreement from the Executive to transfer an existing budget to another budget head.

Decision

That Council be recommended that

- a) £13,900 be vired from the IT budget to the Head of Policy and Performance's budget to cover the cost of annual renewal of the GIS system licences; and**
- b) to review the amount which a Head of Service can vire within a single Portfolio under financial regulation B13.**