

**Report from Overview and Scrutiny**

Lead Members: Councillors P Connolly, Mrs Y R T Clarkson, J Kane, Mrs W Metherell

Lead Officer: T Capper

January 2008 to February 2008

Since Overview and Scrutiny last reported:

**1. Training and Self Evaluation**

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee at its meeting on 18 January 2008 considered and agreed the recommendations of the Dignity at Work and Compassionate Leave Task and Finish Group.

The Committee considered a report detailing key findings and actions for Overview and Scrutiny following joint training sessions between the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee and the Executive and Corporate Team. A special meeting of all four Overview and Scrutiny Committees had also taken place to consider the Scrutiny Self Evaluation Framework.

A proposed action plan that was appended to the report detailed a number of actions and ideas which could help to develop the process for Overview and Scrutiny in Copeland.

The Committee agreed with the proposals in the action plan and that it should be forwarded on to the Executive for its approval.

**2. Dignity at Work and Compassionate Leave**

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee at its meeting on 18 January 2008 considered and agreed the recommendations of the Dignity at Work and Compassionate Leave Task and Finish Group.

The recommendations were that:

**(A) in respect of the Council's Dignity at Work Policy:**

1. the Dignity at Work Policy be renamed the Respect at Work policy;
2. the importance of Dignity at Work needs to be communicated effectively to all employees, managers and members across the Council;

3. training be introduced on Dignity at Work across the Council for all managers and members and periodically refreshed;
4. regular assessment and monitoring of the number of informal and formal complaints under the Council's Dignity at Work policy be regularly reported to the Executive;
5. Human Resources undertake an audit within the next twelve months to:
  - (a) establish how the introduction of a range of Work Life Balance policies would support the Council's future service priorities and help to promote the Council as an employer of choice, and
  - (b) explore the feasibility of using "informal" advisers to allow staff to air concerns informally and confidentially;
6. Corporate Team highlight the Council's successes more effectively through the Team Brief process and encourages Head of Departments to use that process to highlight successes within their own teams; and
7. new members of staff receive a formal induction programme that includes a section on Human Resources policies and the importance of Work Life Balance within three months of beginning work at the Council.

**(B) in respect of the Council's Compassionate Leave Policy:**

1. the new draft Bereavement Leave and Family Illness policies be supported subject to the addition of Grandparents and Grandchildren within the definition of "close family member" in the Bereavement Leave Policy;
2. Human Resources ensure that Trade Union involvement at an early stage and consultation with employees and the Personnel Panel is standard practice in developing the Council's Human Resource policies; and
3. The Compassionate Leave Policy be renamed the Special Leave policy and all the policies within this area be included in one document in a similar manner to the South Lakeland Special Leave Document.

These recommendations are to be considered by the Personnel Panel and then Executive at future meetings.

### **3. Cumbria Primary Care Trust consultation paper "Closer to Home"**

The special meeting of the Children, Young People and Healthy Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 January 2008 considered how the Council should respond to the NHS public consultation on the "Closer to Home" proposals.

The recommendations from the committee were considered at the last council meeting.

The recommendations were also considered by the County Council's Health and Well Being Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 28 January 2008. The Committee agreed that the Council's comments should be appended to their report and that Cumbria Primary Care Trust should give a supportive response to the comments of Copeland Borough Council and share their response with that Committee.

### **4. Scrutiny of Localities**

The Children, Young People and Healthy Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 February 2008 considered proposals from the County Council's Health and Well-Being Scrutiny Committee on a suggested model for scrutiny arrangements of health and health services at District/Borough Council level.

The Committee thanked those Members who had been working on the Closer to Home consultation which had shown how local scrutiny could work well. It was felt that as much scrutiny that could be undertaken locally would be the way forward.

The Committee agreed that:

- (A) the County Council's Health and Well-Being Scrutiny Committee be advised that this Council is happy to support the use of 'Locality task and Finish Group of the Health and Well-Being Committee' and/or 'District Council led Scrutiny of Health' depending on the issue, to be looked at on a case by case basis; and
- (B) the opportunity to work more closely with the County Council on health issues be welcomed.

### **5. Mental Health**

The Committee received an update from Councillor Garrity on the latest position on work by the County Council's Health and Well-Being Scrutiny Committee on the Mental Health issues in Copeland.

Members were advised that consultation on changes to Mental Health Services in Cumbria was due to commence on 1 March 2008.

The Committee agreed that a special meeting be set up in March to hear from the NHS Foundation Trust on the proposed changes.

(Note: Update since last meeting – The PCT consultation will now start in June)