

Executive Report to Full Council – 12 October 2006

As colleagues will have noticed this report to Full Council has vastly changed from previous ones following requests to align Executive Reports to the priority themes identified in the Councils Corporate Plan. This will allow a stronger focus on the Council's clear priorities.

I hope that this will help us to keep our attention on the things we have agreed that matter most and that all Members are aware of progress and have the fullest opportunity to support this work.

The report therefore takes each theme of our plan and sets out the progress being made towards achieving our objectives.

As well as assisting in the delivery of the Corporate Plan it will also allow more opportunity for topical debates, such as the one planned for this meeting on the future of the Health Service.

A Well Managed Council Striving for Excellence

Governance - Leader

The Annual Governance Report and opinion on the accounts for 2005/06 was presented to the Audit Committee. I am pleased to report that the Audit Commission gave us a clear opinion on the accounts and were satisfied that proper arrangements had been made to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in our use of resources.

Training – Resources and Local Democracy

As most members will know the Council has been awarded accreditation to the North West Employers' Organisation Member Development Charter, following an all day verification visit. Accreditation was one of the Council's key corporate objectives and means we have attained a benchmarked standard in helping Members identify their training and development needs, giving them adequate opportunities to undertake training both internally and externally, and are providing adequate resources to meet identified needs. Preparation for accreditation involved a great deal of hard work by the Member Training and Development Panel and the staff in Democratic Services, and thanks must go to all involved. The Charter Accreditation is not an end in itself and much hard work remains to be done by the Panel and each of us as individual Members in ensuring we make the most of the opportunities available to us.

Corporate Plan - Deputy Leader

The Council is progressing well with its new 5 year plan. Partners, Councillors and staff have been consulted on the main themes and work has been taking place to hear what the feedback told us on our first thoughts, and to amend the plan accordingly. We intend to consult again, on a fuller document from November onwards, with the target of completing the work and agreeing the 5 year plan by the end of January

Noise Enforcement – Health and Diversity

On 31 August at Whitehaven Magistrates' Court the Council successfully prosecuted the occupier of 80 Newton Street, Millom, for 3 breaches of a Noise Abatement Notice which the Council had served in March 2006. A fine of £100 and costs of £100 were imposed in respect of each offence and a Forfeiture Order was made in respect of sound equipment which the Council had previously seized. The Council's full costs were awarded. The case was an excellent example of joint working between the Council and the Police.

North of England Business Excellence Awards – Environmental and Cultural Services

Last year our Parks Section was successful in gaining two excellence awards from Excellence North West. These are especially significant awards because standards are measured against the best in the region in both public and private sectors. This year the region has expanded to cover the whole of the North meaning that any award is made against even stronger competition. Therefore I am really pleased to be able to let Council know the team have won again. Better still the Excellence Award is for our Open Spaces Team not just our Parks Department. The Awards Ceremony is being held on the 7th November when we will learn if the Council has won a special award, like the Customer Results certificate given last time round.

Quality of Life

Parish Charter – Resources and Local Democracy

A draft Parish Charter between us, CCC and all the Town, Parishes and Parish Meetings was agreed by the Executive to go out to consultation. The Charter includes expectations from all signatories on how we can work more closely together to improve the social, environmental and economic well-being of all the residents of Copeland. The Parishes will be given two months to respond and also to attend a consultation event to be held in December to make their views known.

Western Lake District Tourism Partnership – Deputy Leader

A 6 month review of the Western Lake District Tourism Partnership has taken place and it is good to report that they are performing very well against the following key activities:-

Western Lake District Visitor Guide – Completed ahead of schedule and being delivered in October on budget.

Top Visitor Attractions Leaflet – Approaching completion, on time and on budget with additional revenue generation and design being developed

Website - Currently being redesigned but will launch with online DMS booking January 2007

Generation of WLDTP newsletter - Publication is quarterly in digital format and initial business feedback and participation is encouraging

The Partnership is also currently working with various Market Town Initiative organisations and regeneration groups to ensure strategic alignment e.g. cycle network product development.

Whitehaven International Maritime Festival – Deputy Leader

The Council has supported the Whitehaven International Maritime Festival since its inception and as one of the major sponsors we are delighted that the 2007 event will go ahead as planned.

Tourism and Conservation Partnership – Deputy Leader

The Tourism & Conservation Partnership is a not for profit organisation that works with tourism and related businesses, encouraging both fundraising for landscape conservation, and the development of environmentally sustainable practices within the industry. The partnership has 8 members in Copeland including Copeland Borough Council.

A recently completed project is Clints Quarry Scrub Clearance costing £805; these funds were raised by The Lakeland Coast Tour Association. The quarry is open and accessible to the public and lies within two miles of Egremont. In order to nurture and protect the rare plant species at the Quarry scrub clearance takes place annually.

A current project is Wild Ennerdale, costing £23,000, funds being raised by Honister Slate Mine. Wild Ennerdale is a Partnership between the main land owners in the Ennerdale Valley with a vision to 'to allow the evolution of Ennerdale as a wild valley for the benefit of people relying more on natural processes to shape its landscape and ecology.

Beacon – Deputy Leader

So far this year, 1299 children have been taught by Beacon staff during September (706 up to this point in 2005). This has been due to the creation of new school sessions, improvements in existing services and targeted marketing. This supports CBC objectives to maximise educational achievement and learning.

The Beacon is also proud to be able to launch its new Education Services brochure which is being sent to every school in Cumbria and has been funded by the Museums, Libraries & Archives Council.

Planning Policy – Health and Diversity

This month the Council has begun a 6 weeks consultation on our Statement of Community Involvement. This document sets out the way the Council will hope to involve local communities in the planning system – both in the production of the new-style development documents and decisions on planning applications. In this way we can ensure that the needs and aspirations of all sectors are taken into account at an early stage and that local people feel that their voice is being heard.

Housing Strategy – Housing and Community Safety

30th October sees the launch of The Cumbria Housing Strategy. This represents a major step forward in how we can maximise available resources to improve housing and housing environments throughout the County. The Council is a principal member of the group which has produced the Strategy and Local Action Plans are now being prepared on the back of this work focussing on the Borough's housing market areas.

Street Scene – Environment and Culture

The Street Scene team has completed an extensive painting programme at Cleator Moor Square which has rejuvenated all of the railings, seats, litterbins

and finger-pointers. The improvement has been acknowledged with expressions of thanks from the Town Council and compliments from many of the residents.

Additional works have been carried out in the Hensingham area including the installation of fencing around the car park and a knee rail around parts of the boundary.

The results from the Britain in Bloom competition awarded Whitehaven a silver medal in its category and St Nicholas Gardens in Whitehaven was second in the Royal Horticultural Society discretionary awards for Best Public Park in the Country.

Recycling – Environmental and Cultural Services

The winners of a recent competition received their prizes this month from the Deputy Mayor on the 17th October. The competition was to design a new banner for the harbour side around recycling and to encourage a number of youth groups to recycle. The schools won £250 for equipment and the youth clubs £200 each, kindly supported by the West Cumbrian Crime and Disorder Partnership, Frakin, Cumbria County Council and Copeland Council's Waste Management and Enforcement Units.

Leisure – Environmental and Cultural Services

5,612 juniors used the pool during the school summer holidays, an increase of 26.5% over the same period last year, stimulated by the reduced price admission funded by Copeland Borough Council.

23 new spinning bikes have now been delivered to the Sports Centre and are proving very popular with customers.

The Copeland Sports Club for Young People with Special Needs (Inclusive Club) has re-started. North Country Leisure is being supportive by providing a free venue and a nominal charge to take part. The session is being led by the Council's Sports Development Officer.

Our Sports Development team for the first time are organising holiday camps for young people in the October half term holiday. Camps will be held in Egremont and Millom, and will be led by the new Community Sports Coaches. These camps will give Copeland young people an opportunity to try their hand at hockey, cricket and multi-sports, and the development of these sessions has been made possible by the increased staff numbers in the department.

Arts Development - Environmental and Cultural Services

The Rural Touring Scheme performances commenced in September with an exciting programme of performances planned to the spring of 2007.

In September the Greenbank Youth Theatre Programme was launched. This programme is working with young people excluded from the majority of structured programmes due to their behaviour. These young people return week after week. This is an example of the arts development service improving the quality of people's lives in one of the most deprived areas of Copeland.

Arts Development staff have been working with the Norman Nicholson Society to develop a literary festival in October 2007, with early indications of support being received from Arts Council North West. To compliment this, a joint project is being developed with the John Ryland's Library in Manchester to develop a touring exhibition. This will fulfil the dual purpose of promoting the area and giving as many people as possible the opportunity to appreciate Norman Nicholson's work.

Community Safety – Housing and Community Safety

An Awards ceremony was recently held for residents within the community who have stood up against anti social behaviour called 'Take a Stand Awards'. These awards come under the 'Respect Action Plan'. There were 3 award winners from Copeland who were presented with gifts sponsored by local businesses, presented on the day by Jamie Reed MP.

A conference was held recently called 'Celebrating Success' which showcased the work our partners - i.e. housing associations, fire and rescue service, police etc are doing to deal with crime, disorder and anti social behaviour in our communities. Their presentations explained which partners had supported them, what different their work had done actually on the ground and the before and after effects - it was very positive.

Millom Pool – Deputy Leader

It seems apt given that we are in Millom that mention is given to the work that is continuing on the provision of a pool in Millom. A public meeting was held on the 19th Oct to update the local community and requesting support for the project. The consultant working on this project is busy contacting local organisations including ourselves and the County Council outlining the financial details of the proposals.

We have and will continually support this project and as more details come forward they will be made available.

Creating and Sustaining a Healthy Local Economy

Millom Market Town Initiative – Business Growth

The Business Network Centre funded through the Millom and Haverigg Market Town Initiative is due for completion on the 13 October 2006, a formal opening of the centre is anticipated in November. The centre will provide a new facility for residents in the South of the Borough that will assist and develop business development opportunities as well as encouraging training and skills development.

Nuclear Issues – Leader

The draft NDA Socio Economic Criteria Report is presently out for consultation and the Councils proposed response will be presented to the next Full Council meeting, after further consultation is carried out with Copeland stakeholders.

Low Level Waste Repository Community Prospectus

The Low Level Waste Repository (LLWR) is the first of the NDA's sites to be competed. The Council has taken the opportunity provided by the NDA to issue a community prospectus to the three short-listed companies bidding for the contract.

The purpose of this prospectus is to provide guidance to bidders on what the local community and the NDA expect from the tender submitters for the LLWR. It will form part of the NDA's 'Tender Data Room' and sets out:

1. The expectations of local partners as to what the bidders should include in their tender submissions to describe their socio-economic contributions.
2. The expectations with regard to engagement with local democratically elected bodies responsible for the area within which the site is located.

The NDA views the tenderer's socio-economic contribution, as an important part of the overall bid and amongst other tender elements will be a key differentiator in the selection of the successful bidder.

Economic Regeneration – Business Growth

Evolutionary enquiries – since the system was launched in June a total of 96 enquiries have been received. These have ranged from advice on business grants, available properties; start up grants, financial advice etc. This has allowed us to retain a monitoring data base of enquiries through to outcome, which has resulted in us being able to help businesses both locally and nationally.

Following discussions with colleagues at Invest In Cumbria (formerly Cumbria Inward Investment Agency - CIIA) and West Lakes Renaissance, a working group has been set up to share enquiry information and ensure that businesses, looking to relocate to Copeland, receive all the help they need from partner organisations, in a 'joined up' manner. They have also recently opened an office/marketing suite at Westlakes Science Park to facilitate meetings with potential inward investors.

Connecting Copeland - Business Growth

Applications are still being considered for Connecting Copeland. The project will finish in December 2006 or earlier if funds committed/outputs achieved. The outputs are 120 assisted businesses, 80 new products or processes, 12 jobs created, 72 jobs safeguarded, £900,000 of increased sales and £900,000 sales safeguarded. The scheme is on track to meet the overall outputs and of the 35 applications that have been assessed since June 9 of these are from Millom.

Neighbourhood Management in South Whitehaven - Leader

A new Neighbourhood Manager has been appointed to support the Regeneration of South Whitehaven, Mr. Eric Poole, started with the Council on the 10 October and will be key to the development and delivery of Neighbourhood Management for the South Whitehaven area.

Over the next four years Eric will be working with local organisations and service providers to enhance the level of service provision within local neighbourhoods and supporting initiatives which help address health, training and wider deprivation issues.

United Utilities – Business Growth

Following discussions with United Utilities we are delighted to learn that they are to make Whitehaven the base of their customer services centre and secure jobs at north shore long term with the potential of more employment growth in the future. This is a very positive outcome justifying the work this Council successfully carried out in getting the north shore centre developed. A key part of our strategy for increasing the diversification of the local economy