

**EXECUTIVE REPORT****LEADER'S REPORT****COUNCILLOR MISS E WOODBURN – PORTFOLIO HOLDER****Customer Satisfaction**

By working with the Customer First project, which includes members of the public, parish council representatives, media representatives their understanding and satisfaction with Copeland Borough Council has improved but it has become more and more apparent that customers are often dissatisfied with services which aren't provided by the Council but which the public perceive as being our responsibility, for example a large number of comments are in respect of Copeland Homes or Cumbria County Council. We are therefore working together with Copeland Homes on ways to improve our customers understanding of who provides which services. Additionally much time is currently being dedicated to the production of an A-Z of services, which will be delivered to all households late summer.

**Annual Ombudsman letter**

The Annual Letter from the Commission for Local Government Administration dated 21st June 2006 has been received. The letter explains the Ombudsman's consideration of the Council's performance in terms of official complaints sent to the Commission. The Ombudsman notes that official complaints about the Council are down and that the Council now "significantly outperforms" its target for handling complaints. We have also signed up for the liaison training offered by them

**Quote "**

I am pleased to note that in successive years the Council has rapidly reduced the time it has taken on average to respond to my enquiries upon complaints. In 2003/4 the Council took an average of 35 calendar days to respond to such enquiries. Last year (2005/6) that time had been halved and the Council responded within just over 18 calendar days to the enquiries made upon three complaints. Just over half of all district councils respond to the new target of 28 days for such enquiries, and I am pleased to note that Copeland Borough Council now significantly outperforms that target.

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Executive agreed to the posting of the letter on to Councils website

## **Nuclear Issues**

### **Energy Review**

As colleagues will know the Secretary of State Alastair Darling's statement to Government included the need for new nuclear power stations and how they would make a significant contribution to meeting the UK energy demand. Furthermore the review has highlighted the need for nuclear power to be part of the 'energy-mix' along with Renewables and reducing energy demand in order to tackle climate change.

For Copeland this is welcome news and we need to lobby and follow our MP's comments that we would welcome new-build nuclear power here in Copeland.

### **LLW Defra Consultation**

We have received an initial reaction from Defra in response to our comments made on the LLW consultation. In summary they will review the reference to the LLWR near Drigg been seen as a national asset. They have said that as a LLWR at Dounreay is still under consideration then it does constitute the UK's only current major operational LLW disposal facility, but as said they are willing to review the use of the term. They also recognise the unsustainability of the current position and make no presumption about the future of the site, but they also say that the NDA will lead the search for new LLW disposal facilities. As colleagues will know we did emphasise our request that only waste generated in Cumbria is sent to the LLWR until a community package is agreed and even though Defra have stated they cannot be prescriptive about this they have included the requirement that waste management plans should be based on, among other things consideration of the proximity principle and transport requirements. This gives a strong message to all waste producers that they must consider sustainability and equity issues in their disposal plans.

In the case of wastes from non nuclear users, particularly hospitals, research and educational establishments, their intent in the new policy, is for local authorities whose populations benefit from the activities giving rise to the waste to take some responsibility for it, which is news we should welcome.

The full response is available on request.

Defra have also confirmed that they will meet with us to discuss these issues further.

### **Kozloduy**

Kozloduy is a Municipality located in the North of Bulgaria on the River Danube with a population of approx 25,000. It is an area like Copeland in that it is experiencing a period of nuclear decommissioning. Following on from a visit to Kozloduy by Cumbria representatives and with facilitation and support by the DTI and Copeland Local Area Committee the Mayor of Kozloduy and 4 other Councillors recently attended a 5 day visit to Copeland. During this time they

met local Councillors and officers and visited a variety of places related to their primary interest, regeneration.

As agreed by the Executive a Co-operation Agreement was signed between Copeland borough Council and the Municipality of Kozloduy at a ceremony held at the Beacon. This Agreement will look at developing stronger links and partnership working between the two communities especially relating to economic, social and cultural benefits.

### **Cumbria County Council – Minerals and Waste Development Framework 2007 - 2018**

As part of the planning regulations, Cumbria County Council has recently issued its

discussion paper to look at the Issues and Options for the Cumbria Minerals and Waste

Development Framework 2007 to 2018. The Framework will set out proposals and policies for planning, mineral working and waste management developments (including radioactive waste) and for protecting the environment over the period until 2018. The Nuclear Working Group considered our response to the Radioactive Waste issues and a full response will be made by the end of this month.

In general we were disappointed that the discussion document clearly assumed that Radioactive Waste Management would be exclusively carried out in Copeland and that options elsewhere in Cumbria had not been considered.

The OSC Environmental considered the rest of the paper and their comments will be included within the response that will be presented to the Executive at the end of this month.

### **Draft Nuclear Policies – consultation process**

The Draft Nuclear policies as agreed by Full Council will now be going out to full consultation both internally and externally. The consultation process was agreed by the Nuclear Working Group.

### **Environment Agency – Studsvik consultation**

Studsvik UK Limited has applied to the Environment Agency to register premises at Lillyhall for open sources and for authorisation to accumulate and dispose of radioactive waste from non-nuclear premises. This will result in some transfer of some waste to the LLWR. Allerdale and County are both being consulted as the premises are within their areas. We will be making our response by the 14<sup>th</sup> July and will ask the EA to take into consideration the siting of the proposal, the increase in transport movements and the perception of creating a nuclear licensed site outwith of an established nuclear facility.

I will keep members updated.

### **Calder Hall Cooling Towers**

As I reported to the last Full Council these towers are now ready for demolition. At the Nuclear Working Group a presentation was made which gave further details over how this process was going to be managed and how more importantly traffic would be controlled on the day. In the final weeks and days leading up to the demolition project information will be distributed to all residents and businesses within the community sight line and the local media will also carry project details to ensure a high level of awareness across the County. At least 4 hours before the demolition signage will be placed along the A595 Trunk road and on the surrounding County roads, 196 in total. There will be no formal viewing areas. The boundaries for the traffic management plan will be to the:

- North – the roundabout at the bottom of Clintz Brow Egremont
- South - the junction of Ravenglass and the A595
- West - the coast line at Seascale
- East – Coldfell

A marshal will be situated at the North and South boundaries and at a 15 minute warning, all traffic will be stopped entering the A595. The intention will be to get the traffic flowing as soon as demolition is completed.

### **Sealine project**

British Nuclear Group at the end of last month successfully completed the 3 year project to remove three redundant pipelines (sealines) from the beach and offshore at Sellafield.

The complex and challenging project to recover 5702 metres of redundant pipeline included removal of two mild steel pipelines installed in 1949 and the recovery of a plastic Temporary Sealine installed in the early 1990s. The pipelines were historically used to discharge treated process effluent and rainwater from the Sellafield site into the Irish Sea. Commencing in August 2003, the project has overcome many challenges, not least battling with variable weather and carrying out diving operations in difficult conditions through poor visibility. The final stage of the project, to remove the remaining sections of the Temporary Sealine was completed on 25 June. Recovery of the final sections of this pipeline marked the end of a unique and challenging decommissioning project on land and at sea.

As Community leaders this has been one of the most communicated projects with weekly updates being made available and contact being made to relay any concerns, of which there were very few. It was an excellent example of stakeholder engagement from start to finish and one which we will be encouraging BNG and others to follow.

### **Budget**

The Budget and Policy Framework in the Council's Constitution includes a requirement for the Executive to publicise a timetable for making proposals to the Council for the budget, and its arrangements for consultation after publication of

those initial proposals. The new Corporate plan covering the next five years will be available in draft from August 2006 and it is imperative that the key objectives in the plan direct the allocation of the resources for the budget process.

The process in place worked very well during 2006/07 with the Resource Steering

Group (officer meeting led by the Chief Executive) providing detailed options, bids

etc to the Budget Working Party for onward recommendations to Executive. It had

been strengthened from the previous year due to new requirements under the CPA methodology and the requirements to meet the gershon Agenda. The OSC P&R approved the process currently in place at its meeting of 21st July 2005.

The additional requirements of CPA require a much more rigorous approach to scrutinising the budget process which will be built into the OSC workplan and included in the detailed timetable.

As part of the budget process, the Budget Working Party will look at all resources

available to the Council.

The Process undertaken for 2006/07, working with the Joint Neighbourhood Forums worked very well and it is proposed to build on this and consider other ideas

in consultation with the Communications Manager.

### **Final Accounts 2005/06**

This year the deadline for closing and approving the accounts was 30<sup>th</sup> June, a month earlier than in previous years. I would like to congratulate the finance team who not only met this tight deadline but also provided training to the Audit Committee prior to them formally approving the accounts. There was a small underspend in the year which will be reported to executive through the budget working party as part of the budget setting process for 2007/08.

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

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

Subject: Local Area Committee

Date of Decision: 13 June 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/06/019

Context:

This report seeks agreement of the Executive to participating in the arrangements for developing a Local Area Agreement in Cumbria. During consideration of this item it was confirmed that political input was done through the LSP and CSP

**Decision**

**That a) interest in developing a Local Area Agreement for Cumbria to commence in April 2007 be confirmed, along with the wish to be included in future consultation on the proposals for Cumbria; and  
b) the possible contents of the LAA as appended to the report be noted; and  
c) nominations to the group be subject to a further report to the Executive.**

Subject: Benefits Staffing

Date of Decision: 13 June 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/06/0028

Context:

To seek approval to retain additional subsidy to fund two Revenues and Benefits Technical Officers

**Decision**

**Approval be given to retain Housing and Council Tax Benefits subsidy to fund the additional posts; subject to the approval, via an urgent action by the Chair of Personnel Panel, to increase the number of FTE's employed in Revenues and Benefits Services (RBS).**

Subject: Annual Letter from the Local Government Ombudsman

Date of Decision: 4 July 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/06/0034

Context:

To inform the Executive Board of the content of the Annual Letter of the Local Government Ombudsmen

**Decision**

**That a) the report be noted; and  
b) the letter from the ombudsman be posted on the Council website.**

Subject: Budget Strategy 2007/08 to 2009/10

Date of Decision: 4 July 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/06/0035

Context:

This report recommends the budget strategy to be followed for the three years 2007/08 to 2009/10

**Decision**

**That taking on board comments made by Members**

- a) the budget strategy be approved; and**
- b) the process as detailed in the report be followed.**

Subject: Gershon Efficiency Agenda – Annual Statement of Efficiency Backward Look 2005/06

Date of Decision: 4 July 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/06/0042

Context:

To seek the approval of the Executive to the content of the Annual Efficiency Statement Backward Look 2005/6, before it is submitted to Government

**Decision**

**That Executive notes progress against the Gershon targets and approves the Annual Efficiency Statement Backward Look 2005/6**

Subject: Urgent Action 08/06

Date of Decision: 4 July 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/06/0049

Context:

To note actions taken on grounds of urgency in accordance with Council reporting procedures.

**Decision**

**That action taken on grounds of urgency by the Head of Regeneration in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holder - Business Growth in approving short term staffing issues**