

EXECUTIVE REPORT

FULL 27.07.06

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO**COUNCILLOR ALLAN HOLLIDAY - PORTFOLIO HOLDER****KEITH PARKER - LEAD OFFICER****KEY ISSUES - PROGRESS REPORT****1. The Beacon**

The Beacon opened to the public 10 years ago, to commemorate the 10 years since 23 July 1996 I would like to draw out some facts and figures.

- ◆ Over 322,000 people have visited The Beacon since it opened on 23 July 1996.
- ◆ More than twice the number of artefacts are on display in The Beacon than were on show at Whitehaven Museum when in the Civic Hall.
- ◆ The Museum Collection has grown by around 1876 donations since moving to The Beacon in 1996 (some donations may include hundreds or even thousands of items).
- ◆ The Beacon achieved full status as a Registered Museum in 1998 (Whitehaven Museum was only provisional status) and has maintained standards to protect this status ever since. The high standards of collection care within the Beacon stores and library, and especially in the Resource Centre, means that the artifacts are safeguarded for both current and future Copeland residents and visitors.
- ◆ The Beacon also supports independent museums throughout the Borough by providing qualified Curatorial Advisors to Haig Colliery Mining Museum, Florence Mine, Ravenglass & Eskdale Railway Museum and Millom Folk Museum.
- ◆ The Harbour Gallery has featured over 100 exhibitions in the last 10 years, all of which have been free admission. The first exhibition "Fine Art, Fine Artists" featured the gems from the Museum's own art collection. Following a refurbishment due to Arts Council funding, the Gallery reopened with the stunning Percy Kelly show in June 1997, and remains the most coveted art gallery space in West Cumbria receiving over 100 applications for art exhibitions each year.
- ◆ The Beacon supports educational achievement and lifelong learning for all, in its Education Services. These range from National Curriculum related activity sessions in The Beacon to Reminiscence sessions for Older Learners; from Ships and Pirate days for the under 5s to video conference sessions with schools in Kent; from Family activity events to teacher training; from artifact loan boxes to adult art classes.

- ◆ Outreach services, where Beacon staff take the museum artifacts out to the community, have been gradually building over the past 10 years thanks to the efforts of the Beacon staff. The list now includes a dozen talks which are available to groups across Cumbria.
- ◆ The Beacon has received many awards in the last 10 years, both for the museum itself and for individual staff, including this year the 2006 Cumbria Tourist Board's Customer Excellence Award where Anne Cook and Ave Dawson are now through to the North West England finals.
- ◆ As lead organisation in the Cumbria Coast Learning Network - a cluster of Museums, Libraries, Archives and attractions across West Cumbria - The Beacon has enjoyed recent success at a North West Region Awards ceremony at the Palace Hotel Manchester. The Network received an "Inspiring and Innovating" award from the Museums, Libraries & Archives Council, second only to the Manchester Museum.
- ◆ The Beacon has played an important role in Whitehaven Harbour's Regeneration. The harbourside looked very different 10 years ago, and The Beacon has proved to be a useful catalyst in attracting the funds to transform the area to what we see today.

2. Environmental Health

2.1 Flooding

During the late evening of 3 July St Bees was hit by very heavy rain which totally overwhelmed the surface water drainage system and thus caused flooding. The staff from the Open Spaces Section of Leisure & Environmental Services responded to requests for sandbags from residents of the village. The Council's Flood and Coastal Defence Engineer subsequently visited the village to assess the situation. It is clear that the problem was exacerbated by water running off agricultural land and carrying much silt with it which blocked the road drainage gulleys. The Council's Engineer is working with Capita (who have responsibilities in respect of highway drainage) to determine what, if anything, can be done to deal with the problem of the water running off the agricultural land

2.2 Enforcement

A few months ago it came to officers attention that the proprietor of Breeders Choice at 43 Market Place Whitehaven was selling animals in contravention of the Pet Animals Act 1951, in that he did not possess a Pet Shop Licence. Although the proprietor was warned, Environmental Health Officers subsequently acquired evidence of the sale of a hamster. In consideration of all of the facts and in line with the Council's Enforcement Policy it was decided that the most appropriate course of action was the issue of a Formal Caution. The proprietor of the business agreed to accept a Formal Caution which has now been issued

3. Cultural Services

3.1 Cumbria Youth Games 2006

On Saturday 8th July Copeland hosted the 2006 Cumbria Youth Games. The day attracted just over 700 young people from all over the county to compete in 16 different events.

The host venues were St Benedict's School where the opening and closing ceremony took place, Whitehaven School, Whitehaven Sports Centre, Cleator Moor Bowls Centre and Astro Turf and Kelton Fell in Lamplugh.

At the time of writing Copeland came third overall, but a recount in an event may result in Copeland coming joint second with Barrow. Allerdale won overall for the third time running.

Lots of positive feedback has been coming back to the Sports Development Officer with Cumbria Sport quoting the day as being 'A Huge Success'.

Thanks go to this years sponsors with all young people on the day receiving a rucksack, T-Shirt, water bottle, pen, balloon and Gretna FC also provided a goodie bag for all young people. All volunteers and team managers received a rucksack, T-shirt, water bottle and pen. We were also able to provide water, fruit and packed lunch for all participants, team managers and volunteers.

Extra fringe activities such as drumming and face painting were also provided which gained additional feedback.

It was a truly memorable event and I would like to give my personal thanks to Kimberley Wilson our Sports Development Officer and all the other organizers for their efforts in making the day such a success (despite the weather during the closing ceremony!)

3.2 Leisure Facilities

(a) General

Leisure Copeland Board Ten people have now joined the new Leisure Copeland Board which will manage the four facilities which transferred to North Country Leisure on 1st April; the first meeting will be held on 24th July.

Super Six All local children will soon receive their Summer 6 holiday programme that includes a Summer 6 promotion. The programme has a back page card with six boxes to be stamped at every junior session attended at Whitehaven Sports Centre and Copeland Swimming Pool.

With the additional financial support provided by the Council, all public swimming and activity/multimix sessions at the pool and sports centre will cost just £1 for each of the first five sessions, with the sixth one free. This promotion will be monitored closely; it is hoped that it will encourage lots of young people to take part in sports activities this summer.

Investors In People Assessment of the 'Investors In People' award took place during June and this was successfully retained for North Country Leisure, now including the Leisure Copeland staff.

(b) Copeland Swimming Pool

On the 24th July Copeland's swim school will begin and will run for the 6 weeks of the school summer holidays. There are already 100 children on the list, which it is hoped will increase due to further advertising.

Contractors were at the pool at the beginning of July to paint the outside railings blue and turquoise to match the outdoor Copeland swimming pool sign, whilst in mid-July the bottom brick work in the male and female changing rooms was painted.

The new locks for the changing lockers are due to be installed in mid-July. These will be operated on a return coin basis and will require the customer to use a one pound coin. It is hoped that this will end all current locker problems.

Copeland Pool's National Pool Lifeguard Qualification course starts on the 8th of July, run by Duty Manager, Wayne Rudd. There are nine people enrolled. This year the candidates will also receive their First Aid at Work certificate.

The pool is now stocking a range of items from Zoggs, this includes everything from armbands to swimming costumes. The new Zoggs range will soon be launched and should be available to customers by mid-July.

At the beginning of July Copeland Pool was approved as a baby friendly pool. This award was given in association with the Amateur Swimming Association, ISRM and Huggies Little swimmers and was based upon the excellent facilities that Copeland provides which encourage parents and carers to bring children swimming.

(c) Copeland Bowls Centre

The Bowls Centre will be starting their children's summer activities event, this will start on the 24th of July and run through until the 25th August.

During the first week of July the Bowls Centre received a face lift, both the inside and the outside of building was painted.

By the end of the month the car park at the Bowls Centre is to be leveled out in order to improve access to the centre.

(d) Sports Centre

A Shape Up for Summer Promotion is on offer to customers at £30 for 30 days unlimited use of the Gym and Classes.

The Passport to Activity programme is running in conjunction with Cumbria Outdoors where they are funding free use of our Activity sessions during July for young children from the Whitehaven area.

The 6 a side league will commence shortly with 12 local teams participating.

A Trampoline instructor's course is to take place in conjunction with the Sports Development section from the Council.

Three members of the Crèche staff attended a first aid course and successfully passed the course.

(e) Whitehaven Civic Hall

The installation of new windows and doors on the Lowther Street side of the building is almost complete. The ceiling at reception is finally being reinstated following a number of difficulties in obtaining and fitting appropriate door closures to allow disabled access.

4. WASTE MANAGEMENT

4.1 Twin Bins

The roll-out of the twin bin scheme has got off to a flying start with almost 65 tonnes of additional garden waste being collected from the 2000 properties new to the service in the first two collection cycles. It is anticipated that the additional properties will increase the Council's recycling rate by 1.5% as well as contributing to the county-wide landfill diversion targets.

4.2 Plastics

The new plastic bottle recycling containers have been warmly welcomed throughout the Borough. In the first few weeks of operation the containers have been extremely well used and almost 3 tonnes of plastic bottles were collected for recycling in a 3 week period. At Tesco's in Whitehaven, arguably the Borough's busiest site the plastic bottle container is being emptied almost every other day to keep pace with demand. Initial feedback on the new style cardboard recycling containers has also been positive.

2. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

None

3. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Subject: Fleet and Equipment Contract

Date of Decision: 4 July 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/06/0036

Context:

This report seeks funding to undertake the fleet procurement exercise in order to facilitate the re-tendering of this contract. During consideration of this item members felt that repayment of the money was essential and recommended that the funding from the major projects budget should be on a loan basis only.

Decision**That**

- a) **the arrangements made with the Office of Government Commerce be noted;**
- b) **a loan of £30,000 be made available form the Major Projects Fund to fund project management support, advertising and associated costs of the project and repaid by either saving in the tender or elsewhere;**
- c) **if practical a partnership arrangement be entered into with Eden District Council to share project management resources for up to 12 months and if not independent consultancy support be procured to assist with project management; and**
- d) **the Overview and Scrutiny – Performance and Resources be requested to provide an arm’s length challenge to the tender process.**

Subject: Procurement of Services to Develop Shoreline Management Plans

Date of Decision: 4 July 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/06/0038

Context:

The purpose of this report is to advise members of the proposed procurement route for Shoreline Management Plans and seek their approval for this route. It is necessary to secure funding so that the Council develops Shoreline Management Plans in conjunction with neighbouring coastal Authorities within the Cell 11 area (from Llandudno to the Scottish Border)

Decision**That**

- a) **the report be noted;**
- b) **the proposed procurement strategy be approved; and**
- c) **a proportion of any non-grant-aided elements be funded.**