

EXECUTIVE REPORT**RESOURCES AND LOCAL DEMOCRACY PORTFOLIO****COUNCILLOR NORMAN WILLIAMS - PORTFOLIO HOLDER****SUE BORWICK - LEAD OFFICER****1 KEY ISSUES - PROGRESS REPORT****Councillor Training and Development Strategy**

As we are now one third through the current financial year it is timely to remind colleagues that there is a Member Training and Development Strategy which was agreed by Council in April, and a programme of training for the current year which is being implemented by the Member Training and Development Panel. The Panel will shortly be reviewing progress on delivery of the programme, and I will report to Council in the autumn on any significant issues which emerge from this review.

There continue to be a variety of training and development opportunities available to Councillors and these are set out in detail in the Training and Development Newsletter which is now being issued to all Councillors every 2 weeks. I hope that colleagues find the newsletter useful and informative, and I am pleased that the last two editions have included some interesting feedback from Members who have attended courses or events.

The initial phase of IT training finished recently. During this we were able to offer training to all Councillors who identified IT as a training need in their PDP's, and to several others too. We will look at the need for a further phase later this year, when our external IT trainer, Katie Durber, expects to be back at work. In the meantime any Members who are interested in developing their IT skills can do so through the European Computer Driving Licence qualification, which is available to all Councillors under the current Member Training Programme.

One specific opportunity which I would like to draw to colleagues' attention is the North West Improvement Network offer of funding for bursaries of up to £5,000 to support innovative activities by Members or employees of any of the 46 north west local authorities. Activities which could qualify include academic study, research projects, community-based initiatives, study visits in the UK or abroad, or production or installation of web-based materials. There are requirements for applications to reflect the corporate objectives of the authority concerned, and there are detailed selection criteria. The closing date for the first round of awards is 5 September. If any Councillors are interested, further details are available from myself or Democratic Services.

Information Computer technology

Members Broadband – last month I confirmed that 20 Members have signed up for the Council Atlas Service. 18 have now been installed. Other Members are encouraged to apply to support our e-gov initiative which is to have all members connected.

The posts of IT Section Leader and Project Manager/IT Officer, (Systems) have been filled with new staff members Michael Everingham starting on 01 08 2006 and Richard Quayle starting on 17 07 2006.

Presentations on the new ICT Strategy are due to commence shortly with opportunities for staff and Members to be involved in the process.

Property maintenance/management

The new estates management contract with Capita Symonds commenced on 21 June 2006.

Consideration is being given to registering all the Council property with the Land Registry through a large scale application. This is available to the Council at a reduced cost.

When the Housing Stock Transfer was completed a proportion of the garage plot sites became the Property Section responsibility. Consideration is being given to reviewing the suitability and condition of these with a report to be taken to a future Executive.

LGA CONFERENCE 2006

The following brief notes were prepared to meet the deadline for this agenda. Further information on any of the subjects can be supplied if requested.

Reports are being prepared for submission to the Executive and OSC.

Lord Best, president of the LGA : local government is at a time of opportunity – centralism has failed and is going to be succeeded by localism.

The new LGA strategy document “People and Places” builds on new confidence, and campaigns for local services and local governance, based on improving local services, making better use of public money, improving the economies of cities and regions, addressing loss of trust in government and democracy.

Jeremy Beecham – urged authorities to test the limits of LAAs. Local authorities could be the leading agency in delivery of primary and community care. The Dept of Health's proposal for a single chief officer for adult services is “preposterous”.

Margaret Eaton – LGR is rumoured, but would undermine Government's approach to delivery. “People and Places” is the central agenda and the vision for the replacement of the CPA.

David Milliband – improving sustainable development should be a priority issue for all government, and local government should make it its main aim. Devolution of power to local people, combining national priorities and local responsibilities, is key to tackling climate change. Innovation in energy generation at local level needed to reverse the centralising tendency of power generation.

Michael Lyons – his job in heading up the Lyons review is making the case for change towards devolution and reshaping the relationship between central and local government. The Lyons report is likely to be published in December. The LGA strategy “People and Places” supports the the main themes and messages of the Lyons report. It won't be about new powers, but more likely about greater flexibility.

Lucy de Groot – drew attention to the need to examine how local government is handling democracy – through representative or participative democracy? An excellent council is consistently seeking to do better.

Vivien Lowndes – The emerging concept of “place shaping” is the ultimate purpose of local government- developing community identity, meaning different things in different places, supporting cohesion and moderating behavior.

Tony Travers – The Lyons enquiry is also about funding: it is important to embed a local tax in the public's understanding. Council Tax represents 5% of all the taxes we pay. We must continue the campaign against the post-code lottery argument. Local standards are consistent with local democracy. Competition between authorities drives up service standards. There could be powers for additional local taxation following a referendum.

Ruth Kelly – noted that the new DCLOG has drawn in additional responsibilities from DTI & Home Office. She expected to be overseeing a period of devolution, which meant that powers were vested at the right level: economy, equity and welfare were national responsibilities. Local government's role, as clear community leader, is to make communities work, to be better places to work and in which to invest.

A small number of councils are under-performing. Nearly all PIs are going in the right way. The nature of debate about central/local relations is transformed. “Places and People” shares Government's views of function of local government. In the past the need to gain improvements led to a centralising approach. In future national initiatives will rely on local commitment, innovation and energy.

The main themes of the White Paper will be:

- putting the citizen at the heart of everything we do
- people being able to get things done easily in communities
- elected mayors- but not one size fits all
- a strategic and scrutiny role for local government
- cities to get powers for urban renaissance
- a role in economic growth
- incentives to local government to support growth
- Gov departments to set the framework for delivery, but not interfering

Earned autonomy will be replaced by presumed autonomy. A lifting burdens taskforce will review the restrictions and rules on local government.

On LGR ,where there is consensus and a solid case based on criteria that we are still to get, LGR is not ruled out. Status quo in relation to how two tier authorities work together is not an option. The Government is looking for more efficient two tier working in the shire counties

Place shaping goes beyond delivery of services. Understand the place from where the primary school is. Local politics is no longer about power games, but is about an influence game. Councils get moral authority from quality of services. District councils are responsible for the spending of 5% of local government budget, and must find ways to influence the spend of the other 95%.

Examples of good practice from S Tyneside, Milton Keynes

Why Workforce Development Should be a Top Priority for Chief Executives and Leaders

Examples of workforce development (recruitment, retention, morale, ethos, service quality etc.) resulting from various approaches supported jointly by officers and members. Joined up approach is key.

Transformation depends on the motivation of individuals. Need to focus on customers. MORI research shows local govt employee low satisfaction with employers and service levels. £1 spent on technology needs £4 spend on cultural change.

A speaker for DCLOG pointed out that world class managers know their performance figures -are we doing better this year than last year? OD means looking at our scope and taking make or buy decisions. There is a collective failure in local government to produce the workforce of the future.

David Cameron – main themes – sustainable development and tackling climate change is a main priority of local government in 21st century. Very interested in local energy generation. Would scrap subsidy for nuclear power so that it had competition from other forms of power generation. Concerned that local communities should have opportunities to influence services in their areas.

NuLeAF – NDA presentation featured the future of Sellafield and Drigg but most of the questions and statements by delegates were about the past operation of these sites.

Transport – low cost airlines were used by delegates from Copeland BC and Carlisle CC. They provided a cheap, quick service. But it would have been even quicker if there had been a service from a Cumbrian airport.

2 EXECUTIVE DECISIONS RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

Subject: Childrens And Young Peoples Board – Framework Document

Date of Decision: 13 June 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/06/0027

Context:

This report asks Members to confirm whether they approve of the overarching Framework Document for the Children and Young Peoples Board as prepared by Cumbria County Council

Decision

That Council be recommended to approve the Framework Document for the Children and Young Peoples Board relating to Information Sharing as supplied by Cumbria County Council.

3 EXECUTIVE DECISIONS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Subject: Cliff Slippage at William Pitt, Bransty

Date of Decision: 4 July 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/06/0043

Context:

This report advises Members of progress made to resolve this urgent matter of cliff slippage at Bransty and confirms the current assessment of the financial implications.

Decision

**That a) the action taken on grounds of urgency be noted; and
b) the setting aside of additional funds to enable the works to be undertaken to a maximum of £50,000 be approved.**

Subject: Coaching and Mentoring – Chief Executive and Leader

Date of Decision: 4 July 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/06/048

Context:

This report makes proposals for the funding of the coaching and mentoring of the Council's Chief Executive and Leader

Decision

That

a) the proposed arrangements for coaching and mentoring as approved by the Personnel Panel be noted; and

b) £5,000 of the costs be taken from the Corporate Training Budget and the balance from the Contingencies Fund