

EXECUTIVE REPORT

DEPUTY LEADER'S REPORT

COUNCILLOR M ASHBROOK – PORTFOLIO HOLDER

KEY ISSUES – PROGRESS REPORT

1. Sports and Leisure Trust

On 2 February 2006 Executive agreed to appoint North Country Leisure Ltd as preferred bidder for the management of our Leisure Facilities. NCL are a charitable organisation who currently operate in Tynedale and Alnwick. They are committed to working for the benefit of the community and employ their staff under local government 'green book' terms and conditions. They have admitted body status in the Local Government Pension Scheme.

They have dealt with similar transfers in the past and have a good mix of management and support skills available to them. We expect that they will be in a position to be innovative and invest in the facilities

Work is underway to finalise the legalities behind the partnership contract. In addition to the improved customer service expected from the arrangement, over £160,000 of savings are likely to be achieved enabling us to reinvest in our sport and arts development team to improve our services yet further. We are still on target for a 1 April go live date and more information will be given to employees as it becomes available.

Process Improvement Team

The Council's Process Improvement Team, led by Bob Gerry, has been in place since October 2005, and is now fully staffed and operational. The members of the team were selected for their experience and skills in process analysis and re-engineering. All members of the team have attended a training course in a particular method (SPRINT- Salford Process Re-engineering Method involving New Technologies). This enables the management of process analysis and finding solutions. Because of their attendance, the Council as a whole has been accredited as a SPRINT organisation.

The Process Improvement Team has a work programme that has been approved by the Resources Steering Group, which has identified a number of projects as priorities for the team to work on. Some of these projects are strongly linked to the introduction of new IT systems, such as the MVM system for Planning and Building Control. The Process Improvement Team will be reviewing current processes and recommending how the new IT system will help in reducing unnecessary paperwork.

Other aspects of the work programme are designed to help the Council meet the Gershon agenda – by increasing productive time, encouraging more use of the internet for helping customer access services and reviewing where Copeland Direct can take some additional work from technical officers, to free up their time.

Members of the Council will recently have received an email from Bob Gerry with a briefing document attached, which contains details of the PIT plan, how PIT approaches its work and how it measures its progress.

Customer Services

The Executive meeting on 21 February received a report in which draft Customer Service Commitments and a Customer Service Strategy were presented for agreement. The adoption of these documents is an important step for improving our performance as a customer-focussed organisation.

The Customer Services Commitments cover response times for various kinds of contact with the Council, and other standards, which cover how customers feel about the ease of making complaints, understanding information given and that they have been treated with respect and professionally. Although the standards are applicable to external customers, the Council' staff should also be attempting to provide a similar level of service to Councillors.

All departments will now have to look seriously at measuring their performance against the commitments as it is our intention to turn the commitments into standards that our customers can expect.

Managing Violence

Unfortunately these days all organisations which provide services for the public may have to deal with increasing risks of aggression and sometimes also violence. The employees most at risk of this are people in front-facing services, but anyone, including Members, can encounter behaviour that feels or is a danger.

As a responsible employer the Council has some guidance in place at present. However we are looking at expanding it, and a group of managers is intending to put forward guidance in the near future on dealing with aggression, abuse or violence.

As soon as it is available we will be letting all employees and members know how they can protect themselves better, and what the Council should do to minimise the risk from unacceptable behaviour.

Performance

Executive received a performance monitoring report at its meeting on 21 February setting out performance against targets in the Corporate Plan and Performance Indicators for the period 1 October-31 December 2005.

The report to Executive showed performance in achieving objectives in the Corporate Plan:

Out of 124 objectives in the Corporate Plan:

- 16% were “red” that is below target
- 40% were “amber”, that is on target
- 44% were “green”, that is ahead of target

The PIs show an overall position in which there is only one service with declining performance (Benefits). This is not unexpected and there is a substantial action plan in place agreed with Government agencies to rectify the situation.

Cleator Moor Co-Op

Works to the Cleator Moor Co-Op have been slightly delayed in February due to external render to the building being found to be defective. This is currently being addressed by the contractor. However the implication is that the practical completion date of the project has now slipped to end of April 2006.

A presentation to the Cleator Moor Neighbourhood Forum will be made in March by Joanne Crowe and Copeland Borough Council representatives to update the community on progress in the project and plans for the future of the building.

Tourism

The Beacon

- **Visitor Figures** for The Beacon during January were 2108, a considerable increase on last year (1528 in January 2005). These figures include paid admissions as well as visitors to the free harbour gallery, café and shop. 518 people **paid** for admission to The Beacon, the highest January figure since 1999.
- **Tourist Information Centres.** Whitehaven TIC received 1745 enquiries in January, a substantial increase on last year’s figure (1087 in January 2005). These enquiries include services and information for the local community as well as tourists, especially during the winter months.

Western Lake District Tourism Partnership

Interviews have taken place and the partnership have recruited a Marketing Specialist, Fiona McLeod, from Whitehaven. Short listing has taken place for the Marketing Administrator. Both positions are due to start on 1st April 2006 and will be line managed through Cumbria Tourist Board.

The joint SLA between Copeland Borough Council and Allerdale Borough Council is now complete.

Sellafield Visitor Centre

Copeland Borough Council has been invited to be a representative on a working group with the NDA, British Nuclear Group, Westlakes Renaissance and Cumbria Tourist Board to look at the future development of The Sellafield Visitor Centre.

The group is meeting fortnightly, progress will be reported. Graham McWilliam is Copeland Borough Council's representative.

Egremont Tourism Steering Group

Bowles Green Consultants are currently reviewing the tourism positioning of Egremont. Workshops have taken place which involved identifying the rational and emotional benefits which visitors to Egremont can enjoy in order to identify factors which could differentiate Egremont from its competitors. The consultants are now analysing the output along with other research to inform the action plan for Egremont.

Area Action Plan – Keswick & Western Lake District

An Area Action Plan for tourism development has been developed by Cumbria Tourist Board and partners for Keswick and the Western Lake District, it is presently in draft format for 2006/07. The area action plan is a definitive source listing all tourism development activities taking place in Keswick and Western Lake District Area. It is the detailed local plan that complements the Destination Management Plan for Cumbria 2006/7. Marketing Attractions Development , public realm, festivals and events, major projects and raising standards.

2. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

None

3. EXECUTIVE DECISIONS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Subject: Statements of Executive Decisions

Date of Decision: 17 January 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/05/0122

Context: Decisions made at the previous meetings requiring formal approval

Decision

That the Statements of decisions made at the meeting held on the 6 December 2005 be agreed as a correct record

Subject: Forward Plan

Date of Decision: 17 January 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/05/0123

Context: To consider the forward plan of Key decisions February 2006 – May 2006

Decision

That the Forward Plan of Key Decisions be noted

Subject: World Heritage Site Inscription for the Lake District

Date of Decision: 17 January 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/05/0126

Context: This report outlines a proposal to seek World Heritage Status for the Lake District and asks Executive whether they wish to support the initiative.

During consideration of this item Members felt that a list of questions/issues were still outstanding and felt that further reports were necessary prior to any final decision being made

Decision

That further reports be presented in due course on the outcomes of discussions, and if appropriate on the draft proposals

Subject: Statements of Executive Decisions

Date of Decision: 2 February 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/05/0127

Decision

That the Statements of decisions made at the meeting held on the 17 January 2006 be agreed as a correct record.

Subject: Forward Plan

Date of Decision: 2 February 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/05/0128

Context: To consider the forward plan of Key decisions February – May 2006

Decision

That the Forward Plan of Key Decisions be noted

Subject: Review Of The Opening Hours For The Copeland Centre

Date of Decision: 2 February 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/05/134

Context:

To consider delaying the opening of The Copeland Centre on Wednesdays to allow team meetings, team building and training to take place. This will allow Customer Service staff to further improve their service to Copeland Borough Council customers and partner organisations

Decision

That, in line with DWP the Council offices at the Copeland Centre do not open to the public until 10.00 hours on Wednesday mornings for a trial period, with a review of effectiveness after 3 months.

Subject: Best Value User Satisfaction 2006/2007 - Consultation

Date of Decision: 2 February 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/05/136

Context:

To consider the Council's response to the consultation document setting out the Government's proposals for the 2006/07 Best Value User Satisfaction Survey and invites views on the proposals set out in the consultation document.

Decision

That the responses and comments to the consultation document as laid out in the report be approved.

Subject: NPDB Procurement

Date of Decision: 2 February 2006

Decision Reference: EXE/05/142

Context:

This report seeks Executive approval to appoint a preferred bidder in relation to the 'Leisure Trust' procurement exercise and delegated powers to conclude negotiations. In addition recommendations are made in respect of the Council's Community Development (Arts and Sports Development) Team.

Members received a presentation from C Coombs and P Cluett of QLM Consultants.

Decision**That:**

- a) **North County Leisure Ltd (NCL) be appointed preferred bidder**
- b) **Carlisle Leisure Ltd be appointed reserve preferred bidder**
- c) **A further report be submitted to the Executive, Special if necessary, to confirm the level of pension deficit the final negotiated contract and impact on central establishment costs.**
- d) **the savings identified up to a maximum of £140,000 be reinvested in the Community Development Team as already agreed via last years restructuring report plus an additional Partnership Officer as outlined in the report.**
- e) **the Council confirms agreement to underwrite the costs of the condition survey conducted by NCL should negotiations fail, with the survey and costs being passed to the reserve bidder.**
- f) **a sum of up to £6,000 is approved from Contingencies to fund an application to an actuary to establish the level of pension under funding; and**
- g) **it be noted that any pension deficit would remain with the Council.**