

BUSINESS GROWTH PORTFOLIO

COUNCILLOR JIM HEWITSON - PORTFOLIO HOLDER

MIKE TICHFORD - LEAD OFFICER

1 KEY ISSUES - PROGRESS REPORT

1.1 CONNECTING COPELAND PROJECT UPDATE

The scheme is now halfway through its full second year of operation, and continues to provide quality business advice and specialist support to businesses across the Borough. Since the start of 2005 to date, a total of 31 Copeland businesses have had their project applications approved for proposals which involve hardware & software, training and specialist ICT consultancy.

Since the scheme commenced in the autumn of 2003 a total of 76 Copeland businesses have now successfully implemented and completed their proposals and received financial support from the project. Total grant aid paid out to date is approximately £238,000.

1.2 LATEST DEVELOPMENT NEWS AT WEST LAKES SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PARK

The Montpellier Group Property Division has commenced work on Plateau 2 of the construction of a 16,200 sq. ft. building (Robinson House). Completion is expected by the end of 2005 and the building is fully let to two engineering companies (RWE Nukem [US Company], and Shepley Engineers Ltd).

In May 2005 construction work started on part of Plateau 6. The new 23,000 sq. ft. (18,000 sq ft net) building (Kelton House) will provide 10 office suites ranging from 950 sq ft to 4,200 sq. ft . Design work had been carried out by DGP International and the main contractor is Border Construction Limited. Kelton House has received funding from the European Regional Development Fund, West Lakes Renaissance and West Cumbria Development Fund. The units are now being marketed.

The Galemire Court building has now been completed and offers 23,000 sq ft (18,000 sq ft net) of accommodation, the building is being actively marketed.

oth Banner Court and Herdus House buildings which are being developed by Priority Sites will be completed during August 2005 ready for 'fit-out'. Discussions with both British Nuclear Group and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority about their occupation are ongoing.

All of Plots 5 to 11 are now available for development.

The latest phase of engineering work to develop Westlakes' infrastructure has been successfully completed this spring. The project has included investment of more than one mile of loop road creating access to seven more fully serviced plots. In addition power supply onto the site has been reinforced, ensuring that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate the anticipated demand from expansion of businesses and employment in the coming years.

Lowther Forestry are at an advance stage with landscape works to the grounds around the development plots. Planting includes some 25,000 trees, 12,000 shrubs and 12,000 bulbs, plus 4,000 aquatic plants in three new ponds. After the works are complete a new network of footpaths on the Park will be opened up to all Park users. The landscape works form part of the larger £6m project funded by the European Union, the North West Development and the West Cumbria Development Fund.

2 EXECUTIVE DECISIONS RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

None

3 EXECUTIVE DECISIONS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

None