

COPELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL**FULL COUNCIL MEETING – 29 JULY 2008****Effective Leadership – Councillor Elaine Woodburn – Leader****Councillor Allan Holliday – Deputy Leader****Sellafield Site**

The Sellafield preferred new Parent Body Operator was announced on Friday 11th July and as we all know by now the successful bidder was Nuclear Management Partnership (NMP). Even though NMP have been announced as the preferred bidder there is still a process to go through before final contracts are signed in October. This period of time will be used as an induction and the transfer of knowledge between the Directors, checking regulatory framework etc

The Council has met with representatives from all the bidders over a long period of time and on numerous occasions and we have clearly set out what our expectations are from both a Council and Community perspective.

As a Council our thanks should go out to the present Sellafield management who have done an excellent job in recent uncertain times and there will be much that NMP can learn from the existing senior team.

Nuclear New Build

A steering group with representatives from this Council, Cumbria County Council, WLR and others are working on this project and as Members can imagine it is not just a case of saying “We want new reactors”, it is a job that needs both lobbying and technical expertise. Discussions have been held with energy providers and for the proposal to move forward we need to secure the support of one of these and concentrated effort is being put into doing this. As Members know the area does have obstacles in its way including the availability of cooling water and the grid connection but it is thought that none of these are insurmountable.

Running in parallel with the above project, lobbying is being carried out for a change in Government policy with regards to the classification of plutonium. If government agree that the material need not be held for other purposes it could be released as a waste; the NDA could then consider managing it as a fuel component, thus having the potential to be an asset for electricity generation. Plutonium reactors could be built that would, at present estimates, generate energy for approximately 60 years just using the existing stock of plutonium. This proposition may be attractive to some energy suppliers.

The Nuclear Working Group recently received a presentation from Sellafield Sites Ltd which set out their thoughts on how the Sellafield site itself could contribute to a nuclear future here in Copeland.

There is a lot of work to be done but Nuclear is well and truly in the forefront of the mind of Government and we need to do all we can to help deliver this in Copeland.

NDA

The NDA recently issued a consultation document which includes proposals for the Research and Development Strategy to underpin the implementation of a geological disposal facility. This document has gone out for consultation to all Copeland's partners, and we will ensure any responses are included within our response to the consultation.

The consultation finishes at the end of November. If any member would like a copy please contact Democratic Services.

Copeland Community Initiative Fund

As Members know a community benefit fund was secured through a Section 106 Agreement attached to the Vault 9 Low Level Waste Repository planning application. It is envisaged that the fund agreement between CBC and the NDA will be agreed by 1st August with work planned to start on Vault 9 mid August.

Final negotiations on detailed governance arrangements are taking place. The main feature of the current proposal is that there will be a board of seven which will include two representatives each from Copeland Borough Council and Cumbria County Council, one from the NDA and two independents. It would be the responsibility of this board to manage the fund and award grants or loans all in line with the NDA's Socio Economic Policy.

Managing Radioactive Waste Safely

We are taking the opportunity to give a presentation to every Neighbourhood Forum informing them on the Council's decision to express a without commitment interest in the Managing Radioactive Waste process. The forums are a great way to exchange information and in general Copeland's decision has been welcomed. We will be utilising the forums again in the future as a way of getting information out to the communities.

EXECUTIVE DECISIONS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

Subject: Local Area Agreement 2008-11
 Date of Decision: 15 July 2008
 Decision Reference: EXE/08/0024

Context:

This report seeks the approval of the Executive for the Local Area Agreement for Cumbria 2008-11

Decision

That taking on Board comments made by Members Council be recommended to endorse the Local Area Agreement for Cumbria

(See Appendix “A”)

Achieving Transformation - Councillor Cath Giel - Deputy Leader

Councillor Tim Knowles - Portfolio Holder

Councillor Norman Williams - Portfolio Holder

Egremont MTI

The Egremont Gateway project has entered its final phase with the majority of work scheduled for completion at the end of July 2008 including completion of the Castle and Cemetery lighting schemes, renovation of street furniture and improvements to highways and pedestrian signage. The remaining work will be carried out in conjunction with the completion of the Community Resource Centre behind the Market Place in September 2008.

Some time ago I reported on the Royal Institute of British Architects' competition to design a pavilion for Egremont Castle, I am pleased to report that architects Decousterd-Cotting have been appointed by West Lakes Renaissance to take the design work to stage D. This will include the finalisation of detailed designs, costs and operational details along with pulling together the last parts of the funding package. When complete the pavilion will provide a fully demountable canopy for the castle keep, providing a performance space for seated audiences of 200.

Business Summit

Councillor Knowles, the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, has already reported on the success of the Business Summit held on 12th June 2008.

With over 100 attendees and 35 businesses registering on the day there was no lack of interest or ideas - the community registered their concerns and put to us issues which they wish the Council to review, action and provide a feedback document on.

The "ball is now in our court" and we are responding. I have requested a small team including Officers from Communications and Economic Regeneration, representatives from Westlakes Renaissance, the Chamber of Commerce and others – to meet to review the events and prepare a feedback document. In addition, a meeting has been held to discuss the marketing of Whitehaven - this has been branded 'Enterprise Whitehaven' and comprises representatives from local retail, industry and this Council. Ideas are at an early stage in development and I will report progress in the future.

Development of the Pow Beck Valley

In partnership with West Lakes Renaissance the Council continues to pursue ambitious plans for the regeneration of the Pow Beck Valley. Recent events (ASDA's withdrawal from the Ginns site) have afforded an opportunity to review the project direction and scope taking into consideration current economic and market conditions. Despite these changed circumstances every effort is being made to ensure the earliest possible appropriate development of this key area of the Borough's regeneration programme.

Members may have heard that the Executive agreed to further support Whitehaven RLFC. This organisation is integral to the development of a first class sporting hub for Whitehaven and Copeland, something this Authority has been striving for for many years. We continue with our Partners, Westlakes Renaissance, to work with the new Club Directors to identify possible developments and the most appropriate model for ownership and governance as part of joint working arrangements.

Planning Policy

The issues relating to production of the Local Development Framework (LDF) have now been addressed. We are working on a new Local Development Scheme (the overall work programme) and the evidence base required to underpin the policy documents. A revised Local Development Scheme has to be submitted to Government Office later this year. Progress will be reported to Members in due course. The next stage of the work is the development of alternative options for the Core Strategy and there will be a series of meetings of the LDF Working Party before and after the New Year to steer the process.

Work has also commenced on a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) which is a key piece of work for the LDF evidence base. It identifies potential housing sites and assesses their housing potential and when they could be developed. It does not include a determination of whether a site should be allocated – this is the job of a Development Plan Document on land use allocations to be prepared as part of the LDF later in the process.

Building Control

I am delighted to report that once again our team in Building Control have "raised the bar" with the Folly at Duddon Hall being shortlisted as one of the best 6 in its category (Best One-off House/Conversion or Extension). This scheme will now go forward to the national final of the LABC Awards 2008 at the Grosvenor House Hotel, Park Lane, London on 16 October.

Contracts and Property

Good progress is being made on the disposal of the playing field at Wyndham School, Egremont for the new Academy, completion expected for September 2008.

Consultants have been appointed to undertake ground investigations at Birks Road, Cleator Moor where the Council is working with partners the Roman Catholic Church and the Primary Care Trust as a first stage to secure the provision of a new state of the art Health Centre and potential housing on the jointly owned site.

Members will have noted that work is progressing to address the problem of derelict buildings and eyesores in communities across the Borough. Officers are encouraged by the progress that is being made and I will report further as we move to deal with the first group of buildings identified and released to the local media.

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Promoting Prosperity – Councillor George Clements Deputy Leader

Councillor Geoff Blackwell - Portfolio Holder

Councillor Hugh Branney - Portfolio Holder

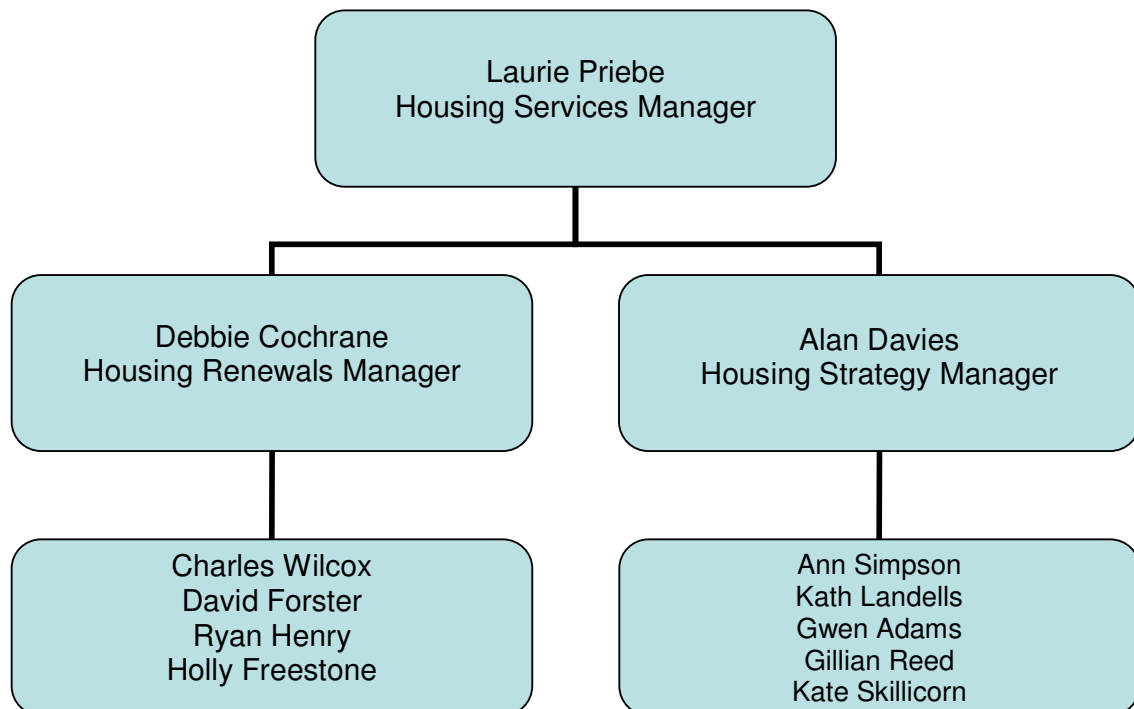
Housing

The Member Housing Strategic Panel will meet for the second time on 30 July.

Amongst items it will consider are:

- The final draft of the new Homelessness Strategy following consultation
- A progress report on the work on revising the Private Sector Housing Strategy
- An update on the Action Plan to improve the Housing service following the Audit Commission report

As colleagues will know we have been interviewing candidates to increase the staffing structure approved by Members to the Housing Team. After interviewing numerous excellent candidates appointments have been made, and I am pleased to report the new housing team as follows:-



Discussions are continuing with West Lakes Renaissance about future funding for the Housing Market Renewal Programme for 2008 to 2011 and with Home HA/Copeland Homes about their regeneration proposals for South Whitehaven and other areas for the next 5 years.

Future Management of Waste in Cumbria

Members may recall that Cumbria County Council is involved in an ongoing procurement process for a contractor to provide waste management (disposal) facilities for the next 25 years. Although negotiations continue with the preferred bidder, Shanks, some information on the number and locations of proposed facilities for Cumbria are now known. Initially it was anticipated there would be a need for 3 major waste treatment plants in the county. However, largely due to the district councils rolling out waste minimisation and recycling schemes, there has been a significant decrease in the amount of waste requiring final treatment and as a result only 2 treatment plants are now anticipated.

Early indications are that the 2 plants will be located in the Carlisle area serving the north of the county and Barrow or Kendal for the south. The likelihood is that the solution for West Cumbria will be a waste transfer station at Lillyhall where Copeland's and some of Allerdale's waste will be bulked up and taken to one of the large treatment plants.

All of these facilities need to go through the public consultation and planning process led by the County Council. With landfill sites becoming full alternatives to landfill are becoming ever more important.

Learning and Skills Agenda

In line with Copeland's new corporate priorities, a primary focus of the Cultural Services team this year will be the skills and education agenda. The arts development team are launching a literacy project to engage adults and families in reading and writing groups. The project will create groups who meet to discuss stories, share experiences of literature and discuss the relevance of what they read within their everyday lives. This project will develop basic literacy and communication skills and raise the confidence and aspirations of those involved to develop their skills and knowledge further.

This literacy work will begin within the Pathways to Art project, targeting deprived communities and adults on working age benefits. The Pathways project has received sufficient funding to enable it to proceed for a further year. This will include at least 80 workshops in South Whitehaven working with over 200 adults on a range of art forms. The Pathways project has begun to develop links between participants and various workplaces within the district, for example the Rosehill Theatre. This enables participants on the Pathways project to get involved as volunteers at the theatre, gaining

experience of the modern work place and taking part in work-related training programmes.

The Cultural Services team is also involved in a broad range of other initiatives that support Copeland residents to access training and skills development projects. The Pathways to Sports Employment project will link identified employer need with training opportunities and provide support for Copeland residents on long term incapacity benefit to enter the sports sector. Other priority groups will also be targeted. This work strand is being delivered with a number of partners including the County Council's Sports Economy Champion and West Lakes Renaissance.

A number of additional training related opportunities are also under development including the provision of apprenticeships within leisure facilities managed by Leisure Copeland. This initiative will provide residents with the opportunity to build up valuable workplace experience and gain the practice skills necessary to take the next steps into employment.

The Sports Development team are also working with community partners to promote volunteering amongst young people. This work will grow the number of young people volunteering in sports clubs and taking a more active role in their community. This will introduce young people to the cultural sector as a potential career path and give them a range of practical and transferable skills preparing them for further education and eventually the workplace.

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