

Report from Overview and Scrutiny

Lead Members: Councillors P Connolly, Mrs Y R T Clarkson, J Kane, Mrs W Metherell

Lead Officer: T Capper, Head of Democratic Services

June 2008

Since Overview and Scrutiny last reported:

1. Corporate Team Meeting with the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

The first informal meeting between Corporate Team and the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee was held on 2 June 2008.

The aim of the meetings is to improve communication between Corporate Team and Scrutiny and to ensure a better and more effective working relationship.

It was agreed that the informal meetings should continue on a quarterly basis.

2. Closer to Home: Response to Copeland Borough Council

The Children, Young People and Healthy Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee received an update from Peter Clarke of the Cumbria NHS Primary Care Trust (PCT) on the response to Copeland Borough Council's comments on the Closer to Home consultation.

During discussion of this item, Members expressed their continued concern regarding the future of the Stroke Unit in West Cumbria. Members challenged the statement that stroke numbers were continuing to fall and also requested clarification regarding support for stroke victims beyond 72 hours. Mr Clarke agreed to supply the supporting data and provide clarification.

Members were advised that the lead GP for Copeland was Dr Dave Rogers, who would be happy to update the committee regarding the perspective of the GP community in the area. The Committee noted that the PCT intended to provide a Closer to Home update in September 2008 and six monthly thereafter.

Overall, Members were disappointed with the document from the Primary Care Trust and stated that there was nothing new and nothing definite contained within.

Members requested that the North Cumbria Acute Health Trust be invited to a future meeting of the Committee. Members also requested that Locality Commissioning Public Engagement Team also be invited to a future meeting, after an initial meeting with a smaller number of Members including the Portfolio Holder.

3. Consultation on Improving Mental Health Services in Cumbria

The Children, Young People and Healthy Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee discussed how the Committee wished to participate in the Public Consultation by Cumbria Primary Care Trust (PCT) on Improvements to Mental Health Service for Adults.

It was noted that a public meeting was to be held by the PCT in Whitehaven Civic Hall on 21 July 2008.

Members felt they would benefit from a presentation at its next meeting and requested the Scrutiny Support Officer to arrange.

4. Work Plan

The Children, Young People and Healthy Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered items for inclusion in the 2008/09 Work Plan.

During discussion of this item, it was suggested that regarding Dental Treatment, the Scrutiny Support Officer liaise with Cumbria County Council, that 'Youth Provision in Copeland' be linked with the 'Youth Council and engaging in the Council's decision making process' which was carried over from last year's Work Plan.

The Interim Accountancy Services Manager provided a brief update on Concessionary Travel. It was stated that there was concern in the district regarding billing. A report on this would be brought back to this committee's next meeting.

5. Post Office Closures

The Economic Development and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered its minutes of the Meetings held on 7 April 2008 and 23 May 2008.

Members expressed their disappointment at Post Office Ltd's decision to proceed with the proposed closure of eight Post Offices in Copeland.

Members noted that the issues raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee following the special meetings had not been addressed. Nor had a response been received from the Secretary of State.

The Committee agreed to update Full Council on 24 June 2008 and request Council to ask the local Member of Parliament to seek clarification from the Secretary of State as to why West Cumbria Proofing had not been used.

6. Work Plan

The Economic Development and Enterprise Committee considered items for inclusion in the 2008/09 Work Plan.

In addition to the items included on the draft Work Plan, it was suggested that the following be added:-

- a) Masterplan
- b) Community Involvement
- c) Economic Strategy
- d) Skills Agenda
- e) Marketing Copeland
- f) Tourism
- g) Housing Mix

It was agreed that items b) to g) would receive appropriate presentations. In respect of the Masterplan, it was felt appropriate that a Task and Finish Group should be established to look at the many external agencies working in this area on behalf of the Council.

7. Executive Decisions

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee considered the decisions made by the Executive at its meeting on 17 June 2008.

During consideration of this item, Members requested that the Five Year Corporate Plan is forwarded to the Committee every three months for review.

With regard to 'Searching for Best Value', Members were advised that the Staff Recruitment and Retention Task and Finish Group would be reporting back next month. It was suggested that the same Task and Finish Group undertake some pre-scrutiny of the policy framework for this Review.

8. Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan 2008/2009

The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee considered the Work Plans of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

During consideration of this item, Members were advised that the work plans for the Children, Young People and Healthy Communities and the Management Overview and Scrutiny Committees had been updated.

Members also discussed the suggested items for inclusion on the work plan of this committee and agreed that a Task and Finish group would look at the role of Honorary Aldermen.

This Committee also requested that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairs report back to this committee and that this be made an Agenda item. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairs were also requested to liaise with the relevant Portfolio Holder(s).

9. Meeting of the Executive with the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

The first informal meeting between the Executive with the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee was held on 23 June 2008.

The aim of the meetings is to improve communication between the Executive and Scrutiny and to ensure a better and more effective working relationship.

It was agreed that the informal meetings should continue on a quarterly basis.