

Executive Report to Full Council – 2 March 2010

Transformational Leadership

CP Improve our financial management – Councillor E Woodburn

Budget preparation 2010/11 – 2012/13

The Council meeting today will receive reports setting out the budget proposals for 2010/11 – 2012/13. Council is asked to agree these reports, covering the revenue and capital budget and the treasury management and investment strategy. The revenue budget paper also provides an update to the medium term financial budget and sets the context for the corporate planning framework which has been considered by the Choosing to Change Board and is reported elsewhere on the agenda.

Internal Audit – Shared Services Business Case

The Audit Committee met on 3rd February and agreed the final business case for recommendation to Executive at its meeting of 10th February. The business case set out the rationale and approach for the provision of a shared internal audit service for Copeland, Carlisle City and Cumbria County Council, which would strengthen the robustness of the audit function.

Executive agreed in principle the shared services business case at its meeting of 10th February, however, Carlisle City confirmed on 10th February that their final and formal consideration of the business case would not occur until the May meeting of Full Council. Consequently, the implementation of the shared service cannot commence until after May. However, at the meeting, Executive stressed the need for the practicalities of planning for delivery of the shared service to continue and in particular, the finalisation of the governance arrangements to continue in this interim period. Executive and the Audit Committee will receive a report at their May/June meetings accordingly. It is worth reminding members that the proposed shared service will provide the Council with resilience and business continuity alongside a small financial saving.

CP - Work effectively with others to meet the needs of Copeland – Councillor E Woodburn

Managing Radioactive Waste Safely

The Partnership recently commissioned Ipsos Mori to carry out a research survey which shows 52% of Cumbria adults are aware of discussions on the geological disposal facility for higher level radioactive waste. The proportions are higher in West Cumbria with 70% of those surveyed in Copeland and 61% in Allerdale saying they were aware of the discussions. An overwhelming majority of people questioned in the county (95%) agree that it is the

responsibility of this generation to deal with radioactive waste rather than leave it for future generations. It is encouraging that so many people are already aware that these discussions are taking place. However, the figures also show the importance of the work that the partnership will be doing during 2010 to further raise awareness of the issues involved.

A day was recently held with a citizen's panel to explain the present process, what the partnership has been considering and their thoughts or perceptions of the process so far. The feedback was positive so much so that the panel would like to sit down again further into the process, something which would be beneficial for the Partnership.

CP Improve our performance – Councillor J Bowman

Achieving the Council's Priorities

The performance report for the third quarter of the year to Executive on 10 February showed that the Council was on course to achieve its Corporate Implementation Plan targets.

Overall the achievement rate was 74% against the expected 75% up to the end of the quarter. The following achievements were noted:

- Reduce the fuel consumption of our street cleaning team by 5000 litres of diesel by Mar 10: At the end of quarter 3 approximately 3200 litres of fuel savings has been achieved and the 5000 litre target is likely to be met.
- Half of garden waste collected from households will be composted locally in 09/10: All of the 5972 tonnes of green waste collected since April has been taken for composting locally. This includes 1230 tonnes of street sweepings
- Take action against 6 dilapidated buildings during 09/10: Court case for one property deferred from Q3 to Q4 due to non-appearance of owner; two buildings currently being renovated by their respective owners; one building CBC preparing to demolish; forced sale of one building to new owner who we are now working with to resolve issue; and one undertaken limited works where further action madder be required. On-going work to try to resolve appearance of 6 properties.
- Reduce household waste to landfill: The amount of waste being collected for landfill disposal continues to decrease with more than 3300 tonnes less being sent for landfill in the first 3 quarters of 2009/10 than in 2008/9.
- Increase recycling of household waste from 35% to 38% by March 2010: End of year projections at the end of Quarter suggest a recycling rate of 40% could be achieved for 2009/10.

- Promote healthier lifestyles through work with at least 6 community groups or 6 projects by March 2010: The Cleator Moor physical activity motivator has continued to deliver a range of activities and is on course to deliver against the target for participation. The project is currently developing new links with the community and developing trail blazing projects to provide additional services.
- Work with businesses and community groups to create and deliver a marketing strategy for Whitehaven by March 2010: Enterprise Whitehaven is concluding a Christmas/ New Year advertising campaign using part of the £15k LABGI money they have been allocated. General feedback indicated that the scheme has successfully helped to increase footfall and trade in the town
- Offer business support grants for at least 6 existing businesses to enable them to take on local people and stay in Copeland by March 2010: 8 business grants issued as at January. 20 f/te jobs created/.supported.

CP Improve our performance – Councillor N Williams

New Electoral Software

Our Elections Unit have just installed a new Elections and Electoral Registration system paid for with the help of a Government grant. The providers of the system are Halarose and it has replaced the old Pickwick system, which has been used since 1991.

Its benefits include more modern features, an integrated and very fast postal vote signature matching system and an ability to easily share information with Allerdale Council, who also use Halarose. As members will know the revised Copeland Constituency will include approximately 8,000 voters living in the Allerdale area.

Emergency Planning

Following a review of the way we deal with Emergency Planning responsibility for it has now been passed to the Environmental Health unit of Leisure and Environmental Services. The importance of Emergency Planning has been highlighted by flooding incidents and bad weather in recent months. Immediate tasks for Environmental Health will be in reviewing the Copeland Emergency Plan and setting up further training sessions to test our plan

General Election Count

There has been some speculation in the press over whether local Parliamentary Constituency counts will be taking place on Thursday night or Friday morning. The decision for Copeland is for the Acting Returning Officer to make and he tells me that he is minded to have the count on Friday morning for the following reasons:-

Uncertainty of the effect of the increase in the Copeland Parliamentary Constituency boundaries on the length of the count;

The effect of the need (the first Parliamentary election to require this) to have 100% signature and date of birth checking for all postal votes (voters are allowed to hand in postal votes at polling stations and these are handed to the Elections staff at the same time as the ballot boxes) ;

The difficulties caused by needing to locate a fresh pool of count staff for Thursday night in view of the fact that it would be difficult for Polling Station staff to stay alert for what could be a period of close to 24 hours;

The priority need to have an accurate count;

Health and Safety risks attached to the above.

Members will also be aware that a late clause has been added to the Constitutional Reform and Governance Bill requiring General Election Counts to start within four hours of the close of poll unless exceptional circumstances apply. What "Exceptional circumstances" means is yet to be decided. It is unclear whether the Bill will be enacted in time for the coming election. Nevertheless the Acting Returning Officer is aware of this possibility and will have a contingency plan in place should the Bill be enacted

CP Improve community involvement in decision making – Councillor J Bowman

Harbour Ward Project

The Harbour Ward Project is progressing well and should be completed by March/April 2010.

The Project has been designed and delivered by the Harbour Ward members (Councillors John Kane, Jeanette Williams and Henry Wormstrup), supported by Councillors John Bowman and Keith Hitchen. The purpose of the Project is to ascertain the views of the citizens in Harbour Ward on how public services are delivered in the Ward and their priorities for the future. This is being done by circulation of a questionnaire to 1000 household and 100 businesses in the ward. It is intended that the results will influence the way locality working arrangements are set up and delivered in Whitehaven.

Funding for the project of just over £3,000 has been made available from the North West Employers Innovation Fund, which has been set up to assist and encourage innovative projects driven and delivered by elected Members.

Improving Quality of Life

CP - Improve the living environment – Councillor A Holliday

Cumbria Waste Partnership Conference.

On 31 March 2010, the Cumbria Strategic Waste Partnership (CSWP) will be holding its second annual waste conference. The event being held at Carlisle Racecourse is entitled “Partnering Towards” and will explore how Cumbria can increase recycling by working in partnership with others. The conference is being sponsored by Envirolink and speakers include Philip Ward, WRAPs Director for Local Government Services and Tom Hall from Shanks who will manage the waste treatment plants being built in Cumbria. All Elected Members in Cumbria will receive an invitation to the event.

Waste Minimisation - Restricted Sack Refuse Collections.

It is almost 12 months since the first “blue bag” restricted refuse collections were introduced to Copeland residents of St Bees who were living in properties unsuited to wheeled bin collections. There are now almost 1400 properties in the Borough having their refuse collected in the distinguishable “blue bags”, the sack equivalent of the alternate week wheeled bin service. Collections have been successfully introduced in phases over the last twelve months to properties in Pica, Keekle, Moor Row, Hensingham and Sunnyhill and the most recent phase has seen the changed service in place in lower Bransty and Lonsdale Place. Members will be aware the rationale for introducing the restricted refuse service is to minimise waste collected for landfill and to encourage optimum use of the Council’s recycling services.

The Waste team have carried out monitoring surveys to measure participation in kerbside recycling prior to and after the changes have been made and have collected waste from specific areas or streets separately where it has been practical to measure the difference. Although some increase in the levels of participation in recycling has been seen, the most significant change has been in the volume of waste collected with the greatest reduction being almost a third less waste being collected from the Hensingham area. In Hensingham the amount of waste collected dropped from an average of 11 kgs to 6.9 kgs per property per week whilst in Sunnyhill the figure reduced from 10 kgs to 6.9 kgs per property. Assuming waste is produced at a consistent level it is anticipated that restricted sack collections will achieve a reduction in waste going to landfill by between 150 and 200 kgs per property each year.

Despite the changes outlined there are still around 6500 properties in the Borough whose refuse collections remain unlimited and we will be continuing to phase restricted collections to these properties.

CP - Increase quality of customer experience – Councillor H Branney

Copeland Pool £215,000 Improvements – Consultation Update.

Further to the last report on the Copeland Pool improvements, Cultural Services and North Country Leisure Copeland have conducted customer consultation throughout December 2009 and January 2010 to ensure that all residents' opinions are taken into account in the improvements.

The consultation included customers, stakeholders and user groups. In addition to this the consultation was covered on Radio Cumbria, in the Whitehaven News and over 3000 leisure card holders received the consultation by e-news.

The feedback from the comprehensive consultation has been encouraging, with 184 responses being received: 112 (61%) were positive, 35 (19%) had some questions about the project and 37 (20%) were not in favour of the project.

Where possible information from the consultation has been incorporated into the design of the pool improvements. This has resulted in extra private showers and additional private changing cubicles being added to the design. In response to feedback there will also be no closure to the pool and quality temporary changing facilities will be in place during the improvements.

The new changing rooms are projected to be open to residents by September 2010, subject to funding approval. It is hoped that funding approval will be received by April 2010.

CP - Improve life chances of children and young people – Councillor H Branney

Playbuilder Year 2 Plans.

The Council will be awarded £85,901 to spend on building or improving play areas across the borough in 2010/11. This funding is from Play England and is the second year of the Playbuilder scheme, aimed at creating inspiring, innovative play spaces as part of the National Play Strategy. A press release has been issued to alert relevant bodies of the need to express an interest and apply for an application pack.

Statutory bodies are eligible to apply to become one of the supported projects as are community led / third sector groups such as residents associations and community associations. All applicants should have a suitable constitution, accounting procedures and the ability/experience of managing capital projects of a similar size and nature. The Council will work in partnership with the groups to develop their projects. Proposed schemes must fit the ten design

criteria defined by Play England. Grants will be awarded based on the demonstration of social need and the suitability of schemes.

Promoting Prosperity

CP- Promote healthier lifestyles- Councillor E Woodburn

West Cumberland Hospital Development

The redevelopment of West Cumberland Hospital is gathering pace. Decanting of the areas that will be demolished as part of the redevelopment is underway and staff have been praised for the way they have handled the difficult and sometime fraught moves.

The Trust has now submitted its Outline Business case to the Department of Health and plans to have the Full Business Case ready for March.

Planning permission has been granted by Copeland Borough Council for the top field which will be used as the main contractors' compound to avoid too much congestion on the site. The main ring-road for the hospital will become two-way to ensure free flow of traffic. Extra car parking spaces are being provided to replace those lost due to the new road layout.

The User Groups are now very close to signing-off the designs for the new hospital and a number of artists' impressions are shown here to give a flavour of how the new hospital is beginning to look.



A full planning application for the whole site has been registered with us on the 12th Feb and it is good to read in their newsletter that the Trust recognises how supportive CBC is being of their plans for the redevelopment of the hospital site. The application will be considered in April. The Trust is keen to maintain effective communication on the progress of the project and the third newsletter has just been distributed and is available to read on the Councils

intranet. A link to the dedicated project website will also be added to the Councils internet.

CP – Housing to meet the needs of the future – Councillor G Clements

Housing

The Housing Renewal team have again reduced the time taken to approve Disabled Facilities Grants. The average last quarter was 16 weeks, slightly better than the 2009/10 target average of 17 weeks and just under half the time it took in 2007/08.

A new private sector housing strategy has been developed and was supported by the Strategic Housing Panel on 10 February. It will be presented to Executive in March, together with a strategic housing plan for 2010/2011.

The next landlord forum will be held on 4 March in the Bainbridge Room at 5.00pm. Any members who would like to attend will be welcome at that meeting and at the next Homelessness Forum on 30 March at 10.00am, again in the Bainbridge Room.

In February the Strategic Housing Panel resolved their satisfaction with progress to date on the emerging Cumbria Choice Based Lettings Scheme. County-wide consultation has begun with a closing date of 30 April 2010.

Agree a strategic housing plan to help meet these needs by September 2009: Strategic Housing Panel agreed the plan for 2010/2011 at their meeting on 14/01/2010.

Information released by DCLG this week shows that in the NW region Copeland is second only to Manchester in successfully using its Preventing Repossessions Fund to helping local people avoid repossession and homelessness. In the 6 months ending 31 December 2009 –

Manchester assisted 17 households from this fund

Copeland assisted 13 households

Bolton assisted 12 households

In the rest of Cumbria the DCLG figures show that 3 households had been assisted.

CP – Creating sufficient and diverse jobs – Councillor C Giel

Copeland Future Jobs Fund Initiative

By mid February 2010 nearly 50% of our 48 paid work placements for long term unemployed young people will be filled, 15 full time, 8 part time. We have 56 vacancies in the system, seven from the council, ranging from wardens and operatives to data and administration to catering and marketing activity. 10% of the vacancies are within the private sector, 50% voluntary and community sector and 40% public sector. The delivery partnership with Job Centre Plus, Phoenix Enterprise Centre, West Lakes College and Home Housing is working effectively.

CP - Economic sustainability – Councillor C Giel

Town Centres

To date there has been a steady take up of this initiative in the Borough's town centres. Displays in vacant shop windows have included photographs (CBC), details about the Federation of Small Businesses and Blue Skies Group. A display by the One World Group will soon be added to promote Fair Trade fortnight. Greater involvement by the community is being encouraged.

Cleator Moor

Following success in securing funding for the feasibility study (WLR) the tender stage is underway for the design team. This work will result in improvements been made to the town square area.

Egremont

As Members will know the Market Town Initiative finished in 09 but Egremont regeneration partnership supported by Copeland Borough Council carried forward resources which in total have resulted in 6 properties on the Main Street been brought back into use. These have enabled a cycling barn, two offices, three shops, a café and a restaurant to be created, with a total of 14 jobs being attributed to the grant funding. An improvement to these buildings has been complemented by improvements to other properties, the De Lucy Resource Centre at 15 Market Place and the Two Castles Housing has developed the former Old Hall Nightclub.

Millom / Haverigg

The Haverigg lighthouse project requested Copeland BC to act as accountable body for funding secured from Energy Coast Vision board. Executive considered this and were more than happy to continue supporting this project which will result in:

- 3 jobs created
- 7 jobs safeguarded
- £255K income
- 225 beneficiaries participating in training
- 1 social enterprise set up

- 1 social enterprise assisted

As well as becoming a major asset for Haverigg and Millom.