

Executive Report to Full Council – 4 August 2009

As reported previously the Executive report is aligned to the Corporate Plan.

1. Dispatches

All members will have recently received a copy of our new partnership newsletter 'Dispatches' which will be published every 6 weeks and is intended to cover any events or news in Copeland which may be of interest to you and other organisations. The publication will be sent to all CBC, CCC Copeland Councillors, all Parish and Town Councils, Libraries, Local Strategic Partnership and many more.

Transformational Leadership

2. CP Improve our Financial Management - Councillor E Woodburn

The Council met the statutory deadline for the production of the Annual Accounts 2008/09 and achieved this Corporate Improvement Plan target. The Audit Committee met on 26th June to consider the Council's draft Statement of Accounts 2008/09. Members received a presentation from the Head of Finance and MIS (s.151 Officer) and scrutinised the Accounts in some detail, asking a series of questions. After consideration of the Accounts and the explanations provided by the s.151 Officer and deputy s.151 Officer, the Committee agreed the draft Statement of Accounts on behalf of the Authority at the meeting. The substantive stage of external audit and inspection of the draft Accounts by the Audit Commission has commenced and their findings should be reported by 30th September.

3. CP Information Security Project – Councillor E Woodburn

Executive will have received a briefing at its meeting of 28th July on the updated Information Security Policy and Acceptable Use Policy. The existing policy has been revised to bring the policy up to date with standard government recommendations concerning information security and to ensure compliance with the government Code of Connection Compliance (COCO). All local authorities must be COCO compliant to ensure access to the Government extranet (GSCx network) by the deadline date of 30th September 2009. Council will be asked to formally approve the updated Policy. Training/briefing sessions have been arranged for Members and Staff during August and September to ensure users of the Copeland network understand the responsibilities COCO places upon

individuals and the organisation and how we can best respond. Training sessions will be arranged on a periodic basis for new users.

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

As colleagues know the Council made a without commitment Expression of Interest (EOI) to open discussions with Government on the possibility of hosting a geological disposal facility at some point in the future. The EOI made a clear commitment to the setting up of a wide partnership which will collect and consider the information upon which the decision to formally participate or not will be made.

The partnership, which is now a West Cumbria Partnership, and open to the public, has now met five times and is gathering information which will help shape its future recommendations. It has considered topics such as waste and radioactivity, environment and regulation, international experience and other such topics and which will help participants build their understanding of the MRWS context and process.

At the last meeting a presentation was made on lessons learnt from the Nirex process and the overwhelming message was the need for trust between local partners, local partners and the NDA and local partners and Government.

A discussion took place on draft criteria for a decision to participate and will shortly come to the Council for approval to ensure it includes our needs.

An information leaflet will go out to all residents in West Cumbria in September which will update residents on the MRWS process, what stage we are in the process and how they can be involved.

A file will be set up in the Members room with all the meeting reports from the partnership to allow members to read at their leisure.

5. CP Work Effectively with others to meet the needs of Copeland – Councillor J Bowman

The 6 Cumbrian Districts with assistance from Cumbria County Council have been successful in securing funding through CIEP (Cumbria Improvement and Efficiency Partnership) to enable the Districts to work jointly to improve their rating under the Equality Standard for Local Government. This includes provision

for the appointment of two project officers to work County wide on the project over the next two years. It is anticipated that all six Districts will work towards a joint bid for assessment at the "Achieving" level of the Equality Standard for Local Government by March 2011."

6. CP Improve our Performance – Councillor Geoff Blackwell

The Development Control Function continues to perform strongly, and amongst the top performing authorities in the Country. Notably, we have started the year with a strong performance on appeals being upheld.

2009 1st Quarter (April – June)	
<p>PI 157 (a)</p> <p>Major planning applications dealt with < 13 weeks Target is 60% Top quartile is 81.64%</p>	<p>100% (6 out of 6)</p>
<p>PI 157 (b)</p> <p>Minor planning applications dealt with < 8 weeks Target is 65% Top quartile is 84.04%</p>	<p>95.45% (42 out of 44)</p>
<p>PI 157 (c)</p> <p>Other planning applications dealt with < 8 weeks Target is 80% Top quartile is 92.12%</p>	<p>100% (92 out of 92)</p>
<p>PI 204</p> <p>% of planning appeals allowed Target is 25%</p>	<p>0% (2 appeals – both dismissed)</p>

Promoting Prosperity

7. CP – Supporting Development of Health Facilities – Councillor E Woodburn

New West Cumberland Hospital Development

The Outline Business Case was approved by the North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust board in June to replace the majority of acute clinical services at West Cumberland Hospital in new fit for purpose buildings at a total capital cost of £100 million. The appointment of Laing O'Rourke as the construction contractor was made recently. The Trust Chief Executive has stated that they will use local workers as much as possible. In the meantime the detailed design brief is being prepared in consultation with and engagement of hospital staff in key departments which will be issued to the Contractor upon appointment.

It is intended that enabling works will commence on site in October 2009 with mobilisation and construction works on site commencing in May 2010 for completion in 2013.

The Council is in regular dialogue with the Project Director and his colleagues to ensure a smooth flow and compliance with the planning process

8. CP Economic Sustainability – Councillor C Giel

North West Community Coalfields Programme (Phase 2)

The North West Community Coalfields Regeneration Programme has been approved in principle by the North West Development Agency (NWDA) and a formal agreement is in place between the NWDA and Wigan Borough Council (lead body for the Programme).

The final allocations per Local Authority and approved by NWDA for Copeland and Allerdale is £369,695 each. This figure has changed since the last report to Full Council (23/06/09). Allocations have dropped slightly due to a £175,000 capital element now being a floating pot that can be attached to activity if needed and not split between all authorities.

Round 1 commissioning documentation was advertised on the following websites on the 26 June 09. Some information about the forthcoming programme is also on Copeland's website.

- wigan.gov.uk
- supply2.gov.uk

Commissioning documentation for Round 2 of the Programme will be available on the above websites on 18 September 2009.

It is still the plan to have a joint approach on phase 2 with Allerdale Borough Council and we are looking for the following activities to be commissioned:

- Tackling Barriers in hard to reach areas through delivery of smaller grassroot interventions.
- Engaging Incapacity Benefit Claimants
- Developing Intermediate Labour Market Opportunities

Worklessness Development

Copeland has submitted an application to the Future Jobs Fund. This is an exciting new initiative backed by significant money from the government, which will help to generate jobs for those in greatest need, particularly young people, and also those in areas of high unemployment. Due to submitting this bid, the Commissioning Panel has asked those agencies who have submitted projects in Commissioning Round 1 to outline how their project supports the Future Jobs Fund approach.

Key features of the Future Jobs Fund bid:

- Job placement in one of four settings (Public, Community, Nuclear and Small Business) or potentially a combination;
- Max 48 job outcomes;
- £6,500 per job available from FJ Fund – matched by targeted WNF;
- Targeting unemployed young people (18 – 24) and long term unemployed all ages;
- 12 months employment to fit Copeland specific issue of giving useful job experience that can move individuals on rather than returning to benefits;
- Links to our proposed apprentice scheme (national approach);
- Pre-care support during the induction period including: scheme familiarisation / benefits, diagnostic assessment , up front preventative work to assist in the job
- On-going support such as supervision, mentoring and training

9. CP Regeneration of Whitehaven Town Centre – Councillor C Giel

Civic Quarter Public Realm

Planning Permission for the scheme was secured in June 2009. Currently at the contractor procurement process stage, tenders assessed and recommendation made to delegated decision makers. Programme is to expected to commence on site late August/Early September 2009. Complete site works December 2009.

Mount Pleasant Public Realm

Planning permission submitted, decision due August 2009. Gillespies are currently finalising detailed design. 10 companies have submitted Pre Qualification Questionnaires and scoring has commenced, 6 companies will be invited to tender. Start on Site expected September 2009.

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

Audit Commission Re-inspection

We continue to make progress towards the re-inspection. By end August 2009 we will send the inspectors a self-assessment and evidential document list for their desktop analysis. They will be on site in Copeland for 6 days in the second half of October and expect to send us their initial report before the end of November. There will be a round table meeting in the third week of December and the final report will be published early in 2010.

Meeting Housing Need

We signed off nomination agreements with Home, Impact and Two Castles Housing Associations and a service level agreement with the Citizens Advice Bureau is nearing completion for people with complex debt problems, including housing debt. We began planning with Connexions some joint work with young people on homelessness prevention and pre-tenancy education and training. Impact Housing Association has purchased the former YMCA building in Whitehaven to secure it for future affordable housing use.

Housing associations completed 22 new social rented homes (including 4 acquisitions) in the year ending 31 March 2009 with more in the pipeline.

Kells Environmental Improvements

An update on the progress of the contractors (RH Irving) as reported at the meeting on the 1 July 2009 is as follows:

- The walls are complete apart from the copings.
- Work to the parking areas and kerb edgings is now ongoing
- Gate sizes have been measured and gates will be fitted towards the end of July

- Residents are due to be contacted giving them the date of the tarmacing and asking them to make sure they do not use the lane on those days.

Overall the scheme is still on programme and is due to be complete in early August.

Private Housing Sector Renewal

Our new financial assistance policy went live on 1 April 2009, designed to help homeowners achieve the Decent Homes Standard and remove housing health & safety hazards. Demand is vigorous with 89 new applications processed by 30 June.

Improving Quality of Life

11. CP Improve local environmental sustainability – Councillor G Blackwell

Consultation on the **LDF Issues and Options** document was extended to the end of July giving nine weeks of response-time. This was to coordinate with presentations on the document which have been made to all 10 Copeland Neighbourhood Forums throughout June and July. A report on the responses will be made to the LDF Working Party in due course and they will also feed into work which has now commenced on the next item in the LDF programme which is the Preferred Options report due in the autumn.

The support service for the programme has been subject to a new tendering process recently and **Tribal** has been awarded the contract for the next twelve months in place of Scott Wilson. There is some saving to the Council as a result.

Work on the **Evidence Base** for the LDF proceeds particularly as regards the Strategic Housing Market and Housing Land Assessments, Brownfield Land Study and the Infrastructure Plan. Support is also being secured from Sport England to ensure that proposed work developing a leisure needs assessment informs the LDF and will include identifying future planning needs for both indoor and outdoor recreational facilities. This is a joint Development Strategy / Leisure and Environmental Services project.

12. CP Improve the Living Environment – Councillor A Holliday

Members will recall that earlier this year, the Waste team started taking green waste collected from brown bins to a new composting facility in Whitehaven. Prior to this green waste was taken to the nearest available facility, which was in Carlisle. Recognising the environmental and economic benefits of composting locally, and as a sign of support for the local venture, an objective was subsequently included in the Corporate Improvement Plan for 2009/10 to ensure that at least 50% of the green waste collected within the Borough is composted locally.

I can now report that the Waste team's collaboration with West Coast Composting, the company who run the facility is proving to be very successful. As well as receiving 2,500 tonnes of green waste from the household brown bin collections in the first five months of operation, street sweepings from Copeland's streets are now being processed into compost. Following the introduction of the changed street cleansing service in April, West Coast Composting tentatively agreed to carry out some trial composting of street sweepings, initially from the two large mechanical sweepers. The resultant tests showed the material to be largely compostable and although some hand sorting of man made items of litter has to be done for every load, the "contamination" levels overall are less than 0.2% by weight meaning the majority of sweepings are now turned into compost. As part of this sifting process plastic and cans are separated and sent for separate recycling.

As an indication of the success and the likely positive impact on the Council's recycling rate for this year, data shows that in the first quarter of 2008/9 451 tonnes of street cleansing waste was taken to landfill. In the first quarter of this year 327 tonnes have been composted and around 350 tonnes taken to landfill. The increase in tonnage can also be regarded as a success and this can be attributed to greater productivity as a result of the new area-based cleansing system. The amount of green waste collected from brown bin collections has also been substantially higher than the same period last year with almost 2000 tonnes being collected this year compared to less than 1500 tonnes in 2008/9. The first collection of green waste from the Moor Row area, recently added to the alternate week refuse service, resulted in 3.5 tonnes of garden waste being sent for composting from less than 150 properties.

I can also report that West Coast Composting is currently working to achieve accreditation that will lead to compost being available for Copeland residents to use in their own gardens. The accreditation process is quite lengthy. However it is hoped that by early summer 2010 Copeland's collected green waste will be returned as a quality product available for use locally.

13. CP Increase opportunities for physical activities – Councillor H Branney

The Cultural Services unit is seeking to build upon the success of the Sport and Physical Activity Alliance by submitting a £0.8 Million bid to Sport England. The bid is designed to increase the level of participation in sport amongst those sections of the community that are least active and to engage with individuals who face significant barriers to participation.

The application covers activity from Millom to Whitehaven and was developed in partnership with the Cumbria Sports Partnership and the National Governing Bodies for Rugby, Cricket, Gymnastics, Golf, and Basketball. The total value of the application was £872,500 and this covers a period of three years.

The application has two parts: the capital costs associated with the development of Haverigg Cricket Club; and the employment of six development workers to drive forward participation in a number of sports within the Copeland area. It has been shown that regular participation in sport and physical activity contributes to good health and this initiative is much needed within some areas of Copeland.

Proposed new sports specific coaches (cricket, rugby, and gymnastics) will work with schools and clubs to encourage continued participation from physical education classes and after school clubs in a school setting into youth and junior sections within clubs. This will assist in the retention of participation with the critical 16 to 18 year age group, an age when it has been demonstrated a large number of young people become less physically active.

An inclusive sports coach is proposed to assist individuals who are not able to access mainstream provision by providing tailored activity. This coach will work to establish connections with clubs wherever possible and to enrich the current provision to appeal to a broader range of individuals.

A South Copeland Community Sports Coach is also proposed who will engage with the community to develop a range of services to attract more people to increase their level of physical activity. Finally a volunteer Development Officer will grow and sustain sports volunteering within schools and community settings.

The application will be assessed by Sport England over the next two months. Successful applicants will then submit a more detailed proposal for final agreement.

14. CP Promote Healthier Lifestyles – Councillor N Williams

Recruitment of a Health Improvement Officer is underway, with a work plan being developed to improve the health of Copeland staff and the wider community. The

post has been developed in partnership with the PCT and is funded for two years.

The new post holder will contribute to the delivery of work streams identified within the West Cumbria Health Improvement Action Plan such as encouraging smoking cessation, reducing alcohol consumption amongst young people, support healthy weight management and promoting walking and cycling. There will also be support to address identified issues in localities as this agenda moves forward. The post holder will work with Copeland staff to develop initiatives such as health MOT's and aims to reduce sickness absenteeism through the adoption of healthier lifestyles. The post is to be hosted within the Environmental Health Department

EXECUTIVE DECISION FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

Subject: Whitehaven Town Centre and High Street Conservation Areas – Character Appraisal, Management Plan and Design Guidance

Date of Decision: 30 June 2009

Decision Reference: EXE/09/027

That a) the report be noted;

- (b) the Planning Panel be recommended that the three areas shown hatched and marked A, B and C on Plan 3 and described in paragraphs 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4 of the report and the proposal to merge and extend the Town Centre and High Street Conservation Areas as described in paragraph 5.5 be endorsed for consultation with local residents, business and other local interests (in a manner to be determined by the Head of Development Operations) and a report be made available to the Executive reporting the outcome of this consultation;
- (c) the principle of establishing a Conservation Area Advisory Committee be approved and that a further report be brought to the Executive on the proposed terms of reference, membership, powers, procedures and funding of such a committee;
- (d) a detailed photographic survey of the town be undertaken with the estimated cost of £20,000 being allocated from the provisional 2008/09 under spend;
- (e) in support of the Council's Enforcement Concordat that a strategy for the regulatory function of planning enforcement be developed in accordance with paragraph 7.4 of the report and submitted to the Planning Panel for approval;
- (f) **a recommendation be made to Council that a Design and Heritage Champion be appointed with that Champion being supported by the Head of Development Operations;**
- (g) That future Public Realm and environmental works should take in to account the Public Realm Appraisal referred to in paragraph 7.11; and

- (h) the Conservation Area Management Plan and the Action Plan be endorsed for consultation at a public meeting and, if appropriate, in a manner to be determined by the Head of Development Operations, and a further report be made to the Executive advising of the outcome of that consultation