

Report from Overview and Scrutiny

Lead Members: Councillors B Dixon, Mrs Y R T Clarkson, J Kane, Mrs W Metherell

Since Overview and Scrutiny last reported:

1. Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

(A) Cumbria Joint Scrutiny Overview Group

- The primary purpose of the County Joint Scrutiny Overview Group had been enhanced so that it now was to
 - take a strategic overview of the performance and delivery of the Cumbria Strategic Partnership's Community Strategy;
 - scrutinise the performance and delivery of Local Area Agreement targets and contribute to the document's annual 'refreshment'.
- The committee was to be comprised of 2 elected Members from each of the Cumbrian authorities plus one representative from Cumbria Association of Local Councils.
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee Management Chair and Vice Chair to be nominated to represent Copeland Borough Council on the Cumbria Joint Scrutiny Committee and the other Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairs be their Substitutes. (Agreed by full council at the 23 June 2009 meeting).

(B) Overview and Scrutiny Committees Meeting Dates

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee Management Committee meetings for the municipal year 2009-2010 be arranged at venues around the Borough and at various times.
- Scrutiny Support Officer to report on how this could be achieved through Overview and Scrutiny better engaging with the public. (Please see below)

(C) Executive Decisions

- The introduction of the Code of Connection regulations would mean that security would be tighter than the existing system and only authorised persons would be able to gain access to the Department of Work and Pensions records.

(D) Terms of Reference of Overview and Scrutiny Committees

- Consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny committees on the four potential options for changing the terms of reference of the Council's overview and scrutiny committees had revealed that:
- The Children, Young People and Healthy Communities and Economic Development and Enterprise Committees had confirmed Option 1 - Committees

- The Safer and Stronger Communities Committee and the Leader of the Council on behalf of the Executive had preferred Option 3 - Committees based on Task and Finish Groups. It was also the second preference of the Economic Development and Enterprise Committee.
- It was agreed that the idea of having more Task and Finish groups was worth pursuing and the Scrutiny Support Officer was asked to report to the next meeting on the details of how Option 3 could work at the council.

(E) Greater public involvement in Overview and Scrutiny

- A range of options for achieving Greater public involvement in Overview and Scrutiny were considered. These included:
 - incorporating an open 'Question and Answer' session for members of the public at Scrutiny meetings
 - allowing members of the public to put items onto a Scrutiny Committee agenda
 - allowing members of the public and parish council members to be co-opted on to Scrutiny Committees
 - inviting members of the public to raise subjects on an agenda and then being co-opted onto the Task and Finish group that explores the issue.
- It was agreed that these ideas were worth pursuing and the Scrutiny Support Officer was asked to report on the details of how these ideas would work at the council.
- It was further agreed that meetings of the Management Committee would be moved to Monday afternoons (or Tuesday morning when there is a Bank Holiday on the Monday) to enable the committee to have more time to consider the Executive's decisions.

(F) Work Plan

- Concern was expressed at the requirements for members of the council to speak at meetings of the Planning Panel and it was requested that the Planning Appeals/Enforcement Task and Finish Group be reconvened as soon as possible to look again at this issue

2. Children, Young People and Healthy Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Closer to Home Update

- North Cumbria University Hospitals NHS Trust representatives gave an update on the progress on Closer to Home that included that:

- there was no intention to remove the specialised Stroke Unit at West Cumberland Hospital.
- the stroke unit had merged with Palliative Care, but there had been no reduction in the number of stroke care beds.
- there would be no reduction in the numbers of acute beds or rehabilitation beds in the Stroke Unit.
- there were currently no changes planned to the Palliative Care service at The West Cumberland Hospital and this would be included in the new Hospital design.
- the Primary Care Trust and North West Ambulance Services Trust would continue to ensure the best Ambulance service would be provided.
- the new West Cumberland Hospital would be built as per the Closer to Home agreement with 220 beds and the possibility of increasing to 250.
- there were no plans to remove the Young Disabled Unit, Maternity Unit and Paediatrics.
- the number of beds would be regularly reviewed and the Council provided with the analysis.
- Major Trauma services be set up as per the Closer to Home agreement.
- options for Blood Science Services were being investigated for both sites. It was proposed that Coroner's Post Mortems would be conducted in Cumberland Infirmary only.
- Concern was expressed regarding the proposed change to the Post Mortem arrangements and it was felt that more detail was required before any changes could be supported. The NHS Trust would be giving a presentation to the Cumbria Health and Well Being Scrutiny Committee on this matter and the Deputy Chairman was asked to put forward the views of this Committee at this meeting.

Concessionary Travel

- The Department of Transport was undertaking a national consultation on possible changes to the administration of Concessionary Travel.
- Of the four options for the Statutory Scheme the committee recommended to the Executive that the council should support Option two – Only upper tier authorities administer the scheme.
- Of the three options for the Discretionary Scheme the committee recommended to the Executive that the council should support Option three – District Councils can only establish discretionary concessions jointly with the upper tier authority.

Presentation by Departments

- The Committee received presentations on the good work undertaken by Cultural Services and Environmental health during the last year.

West Cumberland Hospital Development

- This Task Group has now met a second time with Councillor Garrity be elected as its Chair. The meeting looked at the Outline Business case for the redevelopment of the Hospital as well as a Local Involvement Network survey of community views about the development.
- Concern was expressed regarding the proposed change to the Post Mortem arrangements and it was agreed that members of the Task Group would be invited to the meeting of the County Health and Well Being Committee on 21 July when a fuller presentation on the reasons for this change would be given.
- The Task Group will next meet in mid September.

3. Economic Development and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Terms of Reference of Overview and Scrutiny Committees

- Please see above

Work Plan

- The next meeting of the Committee on 20 August 2009 was likely to be all day with a meeting provisionally scheduled with a workshop with Cumbria County Council on highway improvements in the morning.
- A Task and Finish Group consisting of Councillors Banks, Mossop, Kane, Whiteside, Brennan and one member to be invited from Millom be established to look at Business Community Engagement. This Group could also look at the feasibility of establishing an Indoor market in Whitehaven.
- The Planning Appeals/Enforcement Task and Finish Group be reconvened to also look at how the council deals with Section 106 Planning Obligations. This Group was the second priority after the Business Engagement Group.
- The development of the Conservation Strategy and the Car Parking Strategy would be useful items for future meetings.
- A Joint Meeting should be arranged with the Local Development Framework Working Party to get a better understanding of the direction that the council's planning policies were taking.

Presentation by Departments

- The Committee received a presentation on the Development Strategy for 2009/10.

Wind Generated Energy

- Please see report elsewhere on this agenda.

Whitehaven Town Centre Regeneration and Business

- The Committee received a presentation on the regeneration projects within Whitehaven Town Centre and Pow Beck Valley which included schemes at:

- Civic Quarter.
 - Mark House
 - Bransty
 - Quay Street
 - Pow Beck Sports Village
 - Pow Beck Gardens
 - The Ginns
 - Albion Square/Newtown Quarter
- The Committee received a presentation on the regeneration projects within Whitehaven Coast which included schemes at:
 - Marchon/Rhodia Zone
 - Haig Zone
 - Haig Colliery Mining Museum
 - Mount Pleasant

4. Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- This Committee was due to meet after this report was written.

Liveability Task and Finish Group

- The Liveability Task and Finish Group continues to meet and is now close to reporting to the Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It will probably need one more meeting before it draws up its recommendations.