

Executive Report to Full Council – 4 December 2014

Leader – Councillor Elaine Woodburn

National Grid Consultation

The proposed National Grid development will provide a connection for the new nuclear power station at Moorside. The existing Electricity North West system serving West Cumbria has insufficient capacity; therefore National Grid proposes to reinforce the network to provide the necessary connections. The introduction of new 400kV overhead lines could provide potential opportunities for inward investment which could have positive local economic effects in the long term. A copy of the Council's draft response was sent out to all Councillors for comment and the Executive recently agreed the Council's formal position at this stage of the consultation. In summary the response suggests that the Council should register its support for the development. However some key areas of concern are highlighted:

- The protection and enhancement of the borough's landscape, cultural and historic features and their settings in particular the protection of St Bees Heritage Coast.
- Ensuring the potential for economic growth and development within the borough, particularly in areas close to the edge of existing settlements where there is considerable risk of additional infrastructure development constraining opportunities for growth. To ensure the proposed development where possible rationalises the existing wire scape to reduce the negative cumulative visual impact on local settlements, communities and enhances the potential gains and overall acceptability of the project to the local community.
- The potential to ensure that improvements to the transmission network support improvements to the local distribution network, particularly in southern parts of the borough where the poor resilience of existing supply infrastructure compromises economic development and growth
- Maximising the community benefit to the area through the implementation of an economic strategy that seeks to invest in the local supply chain.

Health

Members were given the opportunity to attend a briefing on Monday 24th November to discuss the health needs of Copeland particularly with regards to the West Cumberland Hospital. We heard from campaign groups as well as commissioners and providers and I hope all members who attended found it informative. It would be fair to say there is still a lot of clarity needed over the services which will be provided from the new build hospital and I would urge all members to try to attend one of the "engagement" sessions Health Watch are coordinating to feed in your views over the Trust's proposals on Obstetric and Midwifery Care, Acute Medicine, Paediatrics and Planned Care and Outpatients. The session in Copeland is to be held on the 8th December at the Cumbria Sports Academy, Hensingham.

Beacon Museum

The Beacon Museum continues to receive very favourable comments from visitors and continues to pursue pro-active marketing within the resources available. Engaging with existing and potential partners is a key driver. Wherever possible, such meetings have been held at the Beacon to give the opportunity to appreciate first-hand what the Beacon Museum has to offer both as a potential partner across a range of business needs (e.g. training, learning, knowledge sharing) and as a community focussed museum presenting high quality, engaging exhibitions, activities and learning activities. Ideas are currently being exchanged with DSA, INSPIRA and UCLAN on potential joint working. Discussions with INSPIRA are around facilitating engagement between young people and potential employers. Those with UCLAN are around presenting a range of science activity-based activities over 3 consecutive 6-week blocks in 2016. Ideas for participating in a future International Science and Engineering week are being explored with Sellafield Ltd.

A small number of good calibre Visitor Hosts have been successfully recruited to the Visitor Host Pool. This allows other staff, particularly while acting as Duty Managers, to focus more on their key roles of Learning, Operations, Marketing and Administration.

In terms of the Business Plan and proposed developments, funding of £400,000 has been awarded by Copeland Community Fund and a bid for £901,000 has been submitted to the Coastal Community Fund. The outcome of this bid will be known in February 2015. The staffing implications of the proposed developments have undergone an informal week-long consultation phase followed by a formal 30 day Consultation Phase during November. The staffing proposals have been considered by STTUG.

The Beacon “Gone Fishing” project, funded externally enabled activities and events as an introduction to what is important to the local fishing industry. These included Seafood Cookery Demonstrations, Family Activities and the recent “Gone Fishing” Exhibition in the Harbour Gallery at the Beacon Museum. The project has successfully achieved all targets for school engagement.

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

Members of Economic Growth and Regeneration/ Community have worked with external partners and colleagues across the Council to continue to develop viable opportunities that can be considered as part of future Growth Deals and European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) strategies. Key priorities for Copeland are linked to the ongoing development of the Centre of Nuclear Excellence (CoNE) and are aimed at providing the infrastructure for investment aligned with our emerging Growth Plan; work & skills – linking our communities with opportunities in the nuclear and other sectors, as well as creating a platform for new innovation and research and development, through partners including the National Nuclear Laboratory (NNL) and the University of Manchester’s Dalton Nuclear Institute.

Whitehaven – Albion Square development

During September/October an additional 1,000 Sellafield staff were relocated to new office accommodation from the Sellafield site and the increase in people in the town is already impacting on our retail, services and food and beverage sectors.

Following the initial 'fact sharing' event hosted by the Whitehaven Locality Partnership, the Centre for Leadership Performance has delivered a programme of workshops for local businesses in Whitehaven, offering training and advice on issues such as marketing, window dressing and social media.

Accommodation Update.

As part of the annual budget setting process for the 2014/15 Revenue Budget and Capital Plan, full Council agreed a savings target of £500,000 to be achieved through a review of the Council's office accommodation. The agreed proposals stated this review had the potential to deliver revenue savings and additional income opportunities in the region of £500,000. In order to ensure the target can be achieved, it is important that some decisions are made at this stage.

The Executive agreed a set of five key Principles to govern the Working Differently Programme. Over the past few months, these Principles have been taken and applied to a series of options and scenarios. The report that went to the Executive on 25 November set out the options that have been considered and recommended preferred ways forward and sought approval to explore some of the options in more detail.

Five workstreams have now been set up to manage the work that now needs to be done to make the Working Differently Programme successful:

- Property and Enabling Works
- Agile Working
- PFI Review and Property Income Generation
- Archive Rationalisation and Document Management
- Customer Services Strategy

Principle One included specific reference to retaining the Millom Office so this was not examined any further. There are some health and safety works that have been carried out at the Millom Office to support staff and customer safety and confidentiality.

The proposal is to consolidate those office staff who support the organisation, but are not necessarily front-of-house facing staff, on to one floor in The Copeland Centre.

The proposal is to relocate our front of house services to the Market Hall.

Moresby Parks will remain the focal point for the Council's Waste, Recycling and Parks and Open Spaces services to the public. The Council's main archive facility will be situated at Moresby Parks.

The Civic Hall has been included as part of this accommodation review due to its potential for income generation from business use and to continue to look at community options. To fit in with any regeneration potential in the future, it is proposed to lease the property for up to 36 months in the first instance to support the delivery of the Council's savings target. The intention would be to achieve a mix of private sector and voluntary/community organisations

All members will have received either an electronic or hard copy of the Briefing that went to staff on 18th November. In addition there will be a full briefing to OSC on 2 December to which all members have been invited.

Finance and HR Portfolio – Councillor Gillian Troughton

Finance

Monitoring of the revenue budget at the end of quarter 2 (half year) and forecasting by managers for the rest of 2014/15 suggests a likely in year saving of just under 3.5% of our £11.25m budget. However, there are many variables within these figures not least of which is the need to spend reactively on things like building repairs which depend heavily on the type of weather that we get and could reduce or even wipe out these estimated savings altogether.

During the first half of the year, extensive work has been carried out to rationalise and realign budgets.

As a result of being able to secure better investment deals in year, it has been possible to over achieve on our Treasury Management Income target by £13k, although this is not huge it is still welcome.

Work has also been undertaken to establish the base budget for the 2015/16 budget. The public consultation on our 2015/16 budget strategy is currently underway ending 23 December and this feedback will be incorporated into the final budget. The Chancellors Autumn statement due on 3 December will indicate how public sector finances will be affected with us receiving our settlement figures week commencing 22 December, which will allow the compilation of the draft budget for 2015/16.

Transition and Performance Portfolio – Councillor Allan Holliday

Delivering Differently

Delivering Differently is the major change programme within the Council. It is designed to bring together and co-ordinate the complex portfolio of projects and other work, which will deliver the strategic priorities of the Council.

Since the last Full Council meeting a number of key changes have been made which include:

- The Delivering Differently Programme has been reviewed to ensure all key Council and partnership projects are included in the programme, so that the overall transformation of the Council is controlled effectively.
- New Terms of Reference and Governance Arrangements for the Delivering Differently Board have been implemented with clear lines of accountability and clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The Chief Executive is accountable for the programme and the Directors and Heads of Services are responsible for delivering individual projects within the programme.
- The Delivering Differently Programme has been split into three themes (Growth, Customer and Business). Each theme has a board. The Theme Boards are responsible for the projects at an operational level and are chaired by a member of Corporate Management Team and have two Members of the Executive assigned to each board.
- A clearly defined Project Management Framework has been updated to ensure our approach to managing projects is robust.

Environment Portfolio – Councillor Peter Kane

Apprentice of the Year Award

You may have already seen in the local media that our Parks Apprentice Sam Pagett was awarded the APSE Horticultural Apprentice of the Year for 2014 recently. Since I was fortunate to attend the Awards ceremony at APSE's Environmental Services Seminar at Stratford –upon-Avon I wanted to acknowledge this success as it is a significant achievement both for Sam and for the Council.

The Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE) local authority apprentice and trainee awards scheme is open to candidates from all stages of training from throughout the UK and has been running successfully for 11 years. The aim of the awards is not only to give recognition to the individuals themselves but also to the councils who continue to invest in the workforce of the future and who provide first class training and employment initiatives via modern apprenticeship and trainee schemes. This is the second time a Copeland Parks apprentice has won the award, which highlights the strength of the development opportunity provided by the Council.

The apprentice and trainee awards are specific to front line service areas and support excellence in training standards within local authorities and their partner organisations throughout the UK including APSE members and non-members.

Sam is currently undertaking a 4 week placement with the Royal Horticultural Society having secured a work placement at one of the leading gardens in the country "Great Dixter" in Surrey. While there he will be mentored by Fergus Garret who was taught by one of the leading horticulturists Christopher Lloyd.

Free Parking

We are pleased to be able to show support for both a national business campaign supporting high street business across the UK and a local Christmas event at the same time. The 6 December 2014 will see the second Small Business Saturday being held in the UK and as part of the national campaign all local authorities are being asked to offer free parking to encourage consumers to visit their local high street on 6 December and shop small.

To show our support for this and for the Whitehaven's Christmas Fayre which runs over the weekend of 6 and 7 December, Copeland's car parks will be available to use free of charge on Saturday 6 December.

We understand the response from local authorities has been encouraging and like Copeland, Councils across the UK are providing free parking offers to compliment Small Business Saturday activities and other seasonal events to support small businesses.

Promotion of the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme



This popular and well used scheme continues and I'm pleased to report that the number of premises in the Borough with the highest ratings of 5 and 4 continues to increase.

[5 rating – 398 premises, 4 rating – 132 premises, 3 rating – 81 premises, 2 rating – 11 premises, 1 rating – 7 premises, 0 rating – 0 premises]

Ratings are displayed by the distinctive green and black window sticker at the premise and the rating can be used on premise websites and any publicity material. The scheme is also supported by a national website <http://ratings.food.gov.uk/>

It is not mandatory for premises to display their rating but there are clear advantages to doing so for example not displaying could lead to an incorrect view that the rating was poor when it was not. So although not mandatory the Food Standards Agency (FSA) recognises the benefits of encouraging businesses to display ratings and for them to promote their rating more widely. Copeland have been awarded a small grant FSA grant of £2.5k to promote the national food hygiene rating scheme (nFHRS) - the grant covers staff time for monitoring display, visits to encourage display, costs of window certificates. This work is on-going and will continue through to late December.

I would recommend that any businesses who wish to know more about the national hygiene rating scheme or who would like to improve their rating contact environmental health who will be happy to provide support.

In addition to the hygiene rating grant the FSA have also awarded Copeland grant of £3k to implement links to national sampling database UKFSS – the grant is for additional licensing database costs and a laptop. Linking to UKFSS allows all CBC sample results to be viewed nationally and will assist in the early identification of trends such as high bacterial counts in pre packed salad and national reporting of planned sampling such as food fraud

Community Planning Portfolio – Councillor Geoff Garrity

Homelessness

The Housing Options Team has now introduced and is successfully working with new software, Abritas. The introduction of the software was a key project for the team, as it moves towards new ways of working while delivering a strong housing options and homelessness prevention and advice service to customers. Abritas is also used by the Cumbria Choice Based Lettings Allocation Scheme and it introduces consistency and efficiency between the Housing Options Team and social housing providers in Copeland.

Since Abritas going live on 8 October 2014 and up to 25 November 2014, the team gave housing options advice to 63 customers with a range of needs and queries. This is a similar number to those presenting for advice in the same period last year. However the needs of many of those seeking advice are increasingly complex and this has identified the need for the team to be developing stronger working partnerships with a number of partner agencies. This is something that will continue to be treated as a priority over coming months.

Since the 8 October 2014 Homelessness Prevention has been successful for 16 households. This has been achieved using a range of prevention tools including negotiation and awareness raising with parents and family, applying Homelessness Prevention Banding to Cumbria Choice Based Lettings

Applications, providing a Rent Deposit through the Council's Rent Deposit Scheme, referral to the County Council Supporting People Central Access Point and supported accommodation where suitable and use of the Council's Discretionary Homelessness Prevention Fund.

The Housing Options Team is currently compiling a response to the statutory annual Rough Sleeper Estimate. The Council's Rough Sleeper Estimate was taken on 12 November 2014. This is a statutory requirement aimed at identifying the number of rough sleepers in the borough on a 'typical night'. This is defined by Government guidance. The Housing Options Team has been working with a number of multi-agency partners to identify anyone sleeping rough on this particular night and the team is currently gathering the data. The figures, once compiled, will be verified by Homelesslink.

Now that Winter is approaching, the Housing Options Team are ready to put into action the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol. This protocol aims to provide an appropriate response during periods of extreme cold weather to engage entrenched rough sleepers. The protocol will be instigated in the event of a forecast of 3 days below zero and will be put into action on the first day. Forecasts will now be monitored on a daily basis as the colder weather approaches.

Disabled Facilities Grants and Private Sector Housing

We have again received a high record number of new referrals from Cumbria County Council since April 14 this year = 110 compared with last year 97. All staff have completed training on the updated Northgate system used for grants, unfit properties, HMO Licencing and immigration inspections cases. This system upgrade has streamlined the grants process further and will enable us to plot grants and collate clear statistics for the future. We have produced a full suite of new forms that will enable our customers to access on-line facilities.

Community Regeneration Portfolio – Councillor Hugh Branney

Leisure

We continue to work closely with our leisure contract provider to deliver the 2014/15 business plan. NCL have changed their opening hours and arranged additional classes early in the day to accommodate new workers in the town as a result of Albion Square opening in September. The reports from Be Active and the gymnastics and netball show continued high demand and use. The Exercise on Referral scheme continues to be over-subscribed despite only a small number of GP practices making use of this resource.

Copeland Pool Fitness Extension

The new Fitness Centre at Copeland Pool opened to the public on Monday 17th November and the official opening will take place after Full Council. The gym is already well used, and in the first five days of operation 32 people upgraded their pool membership and 15 new members joined.

Youth Regeneration and Engagement

- Twenty students from the Whitehaven Academy attended the Copeland Centre to learn about the services that the Council provides. Working with development and building

control, legal and licensing, housing options, waste, and revs and bens, the students were shown how the Council helps members of the public, and what is required of staff.

- Two youth groups — Shackles Off, Seascale and NCYP, Parton — have been identified to deliver a pilot project on intergenerational experiences. Young people from these groups are engaging with older adults from the local area, and learning about the social conditions from times past.
- In advance of the mayoral elections, young people are being introduced to the changes that this will bring, and will be asked to produce a range of questions to put to prospective candidates in 'Question Time' type event.
- Work has begun within primary schools to identify the issues around healthy weight as recognised by young children, this is in collaboration with CCC.

Community Regeneration

The following is a flavour of some of the work being undertaken in the localities with the support of the community regeneration team:

West Copeland

The West Copeland Lengthsmen scheme continues to progress well and involve the local community. Monthly grounds maintenance tasks continue to take place in West Copeland Parishes and in Egremont Castle grounds. The most recent volunteering activity was a beach clean / marine litter survey at Nethertown Beach in partnership with Egremont Youth Partnership. Community engagement / up-skilling activities that will be delivered over the next few weeks include a tree planting project in St Bees. An update on the scheme was recently delivered at the West Copeland Neighbourhood Forum.

A Community Growing project is at the early stage of development at a site off Clintz Road, Egremont. The aim of the project is to create a space encouraging different client groups, in particular young people, to get involved in community growing and gain an understanding about healthy eating. Potentially the site could incorporate provision of internal paths, raised planting beds for vegetables, planting/seeding, wildlife areas, planting of fruit trees and provision of seating and interpretation.

West Copeland Partnership, with support from partners, is keen to drive forward a community led project that will enhance the front facade of empty / underutilised business premises that are a blight on Egremont High Street. The aim is to 'spruce up' the property frontages using a 'voluntary-led' approach either through external painting/cleaning, window displays or community artwork (or a possibly a combination of all three where appropriate). A number of properties have been identified and owners have been contacted.

North East Copeland

Regen North East Copeland continues to work with Venture Xtreme in developing the West Lakes Xtreme project. Discussions have been taking place in respect of options on land purchase and this stage is near completion.

The new Community Lengthsmen scheme incorporating areas of Howgate & Distington is well under way. The next up-skilling activity will be a Christmas Wreath Making Workshop in early December. An update on the scheme was recently delivered at the North East Copeland Neighbourhood Forum.

On-going support is being provided to Works 4 You with regard to the extension of the Skills 4 You project based in Cleator Moor. Funding applications are being submitted. A new phase of the scheme will incorporate a programme of Upcycling activities with the intention of attracting a wider range of clients.

The Cleator Moor Town Team continue to organise their monthly art, craft event where products are made and sold by local people. The next step is to encourage some of the stall holders to move to the next stage by taking up residence in one of the empty premises on the High Street in Cleator Moor.

Cross Locality Projects

The Building Improvement Grant scheme has now come to an end. The last business to receive a Facelift Building grant was Pelley Mounters Hardware on South St, Egremont.

Since 2011/12 grants have been taken up by businesses in Egremont and Cleator Moor to improve their external painting; signage; shop windows, doors and guttering. Businesses themselves have invested a significant amount towards the scheme through match funding which has been a vital contribution in supporting the local economy.

Coastal Interpretation – during a successful consultation on the content and options for coastal interpretation boards, Lowca school decided to involve their children in the project, with support from Radio Cumbria.

Growth Hubs – the Millom Network Centre has made significant progress in its refurbishment programme at Unit 3 on Devonshire Road Industrial Estate, bringing an empty building back into use to provide training facilities and workshops. Phoenix Enterprise Centre has secured RGN funds to refurbish phases 1 and 3 in Cleator Moor, supporting local business growth.

Whitehaven Townscape Heritage Initiative is now completing the first of its five year programme. Following on from a very successful Heritage Open Day at the former YMCA building, the THI is now organising an archaeological visit to the building to explore the history of the YMCA building, as part of our skills and training programme.

Community Safety

The Council is working with the Police and other Local Authorities in Cumbria on the implications and delivery of the 2014 Anti-Social Behaviour Act. All are keen to ensure a co-ordinated approach within Cumbria. The West Cumbria Community Safety Partnership continue to work to key priorities, engage with the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and have recently recruited a replacement part time partnership co-ordinator.

Copeland Work & Skills Partnership

Members of Copeland's Work & Skills Partnership are developing measures and projects to help address issues arising from Welfare Reform and to support local access into the nuclear supply chain. In line with this, Partnership members and the Council have been engaging with the LEP to look at potential calls for applications against Skills Funding Agency, Department of Work & Pensions and Big Lottery funds.

Inspira are continuing in their delivery of the Ready to Work during the early part of next year.

Whitehaven Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI)

We have recently held a series of successful skills development and engagement events, including a Heritage Open Day at the former YMCA building and a visit to the building and archives to explore the archaeological history of the building.

Young Peoples Priorities/ Dream Placement

On 14th November, Copeland Borough Council hosted twenty students from Whitehaven Academy for a day. Inspired by the Children's Commissioner Takeover Day, staff across most of the Council's departments worked with the students to show what services are offered, and how Copeland residents can be helped with a wide range of issues.

The students, who were all from years 10 and 11, were divided into groups to find out about building and development control, legal and licensing, housing options, revenues and benefits or waste services, and to share this information with the rest of the group. Over lunch the Council's democratic services held a mock-election.

Growth Hubs

The Millom Network Centre has made significant progress in its refurbishment programme at Unit 3 on Devonshire Road Industrial Estate, bringing an empty building back into use to provide training facilities and workshops. Phoenix Enterprise Centre has secured Rural Growth Network funds to refurbish phases 1 and 3 in Cleator Moor, supporting local business growth.